

JUNE 16, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE
EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT,
WALTER SCHEEL
PRESIDENT OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
AND
JOHN J. McCLOY
AT THE
CEREMONY FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE
JOHN J. McCLOY FUND
THE ROSE GARDEN

1:00 P.M. EDT

PRESIDENT SCHEEL: Mr. President, Mr. McCloy, ladies and gentlemen:

To begin with, I wish to thank you most cordially, Mr. President, for having allowed this small ceremony to take place in the White House.

Your gesture is the finest present that could have been made to mark the baptism of the fund. Its name is the John J. McCloy Fund for German-American Exchanges.

It is a fund made available by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany as one of its contributions to the celebration marking the Bicentennial of the United States of America.

The fund also is to honor the man whose name it bears and whom we want to thank, John J. McCloy, Germany's great American friend.

It is not for a German President to pay tribute to the work which this great patriot did for his own country, but what I can do is to express our gratitude for the invaluable service he has rendered to German-American relations.

In working for that cause, he has ever served his country. But to us, he became the great friend, a symbol of German-American friendship.

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In 1949, a few days before the Federal Republic was founded, John McCloy came to Germany as the first civilian United States High Commissioner. He assumed his office at a time when the Marshall Plan had already become operative, at a time when a fundamental change had come underway in relations between the two nations.

The aid provided under the Marshall Plan saved millions of Germans from great misery. Never before had the vanquished received so much active and unbiased support from the victor.

John McCloy was able to build on the basis of this great and truly humane American policy. The years of his term of office as High Commissioner for Germany, 1949 to 1952, were of decisive importance for the future cause and destiny of my country.

The Federal Republic was founded, its basic law enacted, a free and democratic State formed. The heaps of debris were removed. The people began to show initiative again. The foundations were laid for the subsequent economic recovery.

Slowly, the Federal Republic re-entered the circle of the family of nations. The occupation regime was gradually relaxed and in the end almost totally abolished.

The freely elected German Government took the families fortunes into its own hands. It was a period of new beginnings.

Today, hardly anyone can still imagine the thousands of problems we had to contend with. Building a new State for 60 million people was a tough job, to be sure. Yet, it all developed at surprising speed.

The people seized and used opportunities that freedom had for them. No doubt, things would have progressed less quickly had we not had friends who knew our problems as though they were their own, friends who gave advice or warnings, who explained our trials and worries to their own Governments, who encouraged their Governments to show confidence, who organized help wherever they could, and here it is John J. McCloy whom I have to name first and foremost.

Nor should I forget to mention his wife, who -- as a big weekly wrote on the occasion of John McCloy's 80th birthday -- was a good star of many Germans at that time.

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As High Commissioner and head of the Marshall Plan administration in Germany, John McCloy attended to practically all problems with which we were confronted, offering his help, advice and good offices.

I can hardly imagine that the United States ever assigned a more difficult, a more complicated task to any of its servants that John J. McCloy has accomplished in a manner that will ever assure him an honorable memory in the history books of both countries.

Wisdom and tact, reliable judgment, inexhaustible imagination, combined with profound humaneness, humor and a great gift of understanding, of listening to others -- in short, his outstanding personal qualities -- were the roots of his success.

He stayed with us for only three years, but was there ever another man who came to a country as a representative of a victorious power and after three years' work left behind him a reputation which President Kennedy fittingly circumscribed by calling John J. McCloy the godfather to German freedom.

On the 2nd of July, 1973, the President of the United States invited the Federal Republic of Germany to contribute to the celebrations in memory of the American Revolution in 1776. We have gladly accepted that offer, for on that anniversary our nation, our Republic, too, celebrated the birthday of free Western democracy.

The John J. McCloy Fund for German-American Exchanges is one of our contributions. It will be equipped with a stock of \$1 million. The fund will be set up under the aegis of the American Council in Germany, with whom John J. McCloy has been associated for many years and whose Chairman he still is.

The fund shall serve to interest gifted young people of both countries in continued close German-American relations and to equip them with the necessary knowledge and information. The aim is to exchange young politicians, representatives of free professions, young trade unionists and youth leaders, to arrange German-American conferences and to support important publications on German-American relations.

One might ask, are there not already thousands of links in all fields? Is it useful and necessary to add another? Can such a fund produce anything new?

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I think it is useful and it is necessary. What determines today what nations think of each other? History and the mass media are the main factors. No doubt, both help to enhance understanding, but they can also produce false opinions.

Do people in this country, when the name of Germany is mentioned, not frequently think first of the atrocities committed under dictatorship? Is the general public already aware of the facts that there is a totally different, free democratic Germany today that has nothing in deed, nothing in common with those 12 years.

What are things like in my country? Of course, we learn something about America every day in the press, through radio and television. This is a land of justice, but it is not always the positive side that appears in the mass media. It is often the negative ones. This is a land of freedom, but the reports on freedom meet with less attention than the reports on violence.

This is why I think that the John J. McCloy Fund is useful and necessary. It can help to do away with rash opinions about each other. The fund alone will not be able to do this, but it will make an essential contribution to this.

If it shows itself worthy of the man after whom it is named, if it helps us to get to know each other as you, Mr. McCloy, know and view Germany with criticism, fairness and full of sympathy, it has served its purpose.

Mr. McCloy, I now take great pleasure in presenting to you the deed of establishment of the John J. McCloy Fund for German-American Exchanges.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. President, let me, on behalf of the American people, thank you for two things.

First, of course, we thank you for this very generous gift to the American people on our Bicentennial. It will be, I think, used most beneficially in cementing relations in the future between your Government and ours.

Secondly, let me thank you for recognizing one of our great citizens, John J. McCloy. Unfortunately, the American people have not, in my judgment, adequately understood and recognized the significant contributions that John J. McCloy made to the postwar era and the development of relations between the Government of West Germany and our own.

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I believe the establishment of this fund will, in this case, give recognition to a man who was always available for public service, a public service that seldom got proper public recognition, but a public service that was absolutely essential in the difficult times following World War II.

So this, in my judgment, is greatly appreciated not only by the people of the United States for what it can do in the future, but it does, at the same time, indelibly make, as a matter of record, a career of a person in John J. McCloy that needs that proper public exposure and recognition.

So, I thank you in both cases, and congratulate John J. McCloy for his never-ending service to our country.

John?

MR. McCLOY: I don't want to keep you out in the rain, but I can't let all those accolades be cast on my head without disavowing them to some degree.

When I think of the number of people that were involved in this period which the President has referred to, which President Scheel has referred to, there are many names that come to my mind that I wish this fund could be more appropriately named.

I am thinking of my great predecessor, that soldier-statesman, Lucius Clay, whom I succeeded, and President Truman himself and his very brilliant Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, and a number of others.

I can also think of some Germans that could be named, like Conrad Adenauer. Conrad Adenauer used to have a little trick of calling me the pro consul from time to time.

He was very sensitive to all the Roman traditions in his homeland and, of course, all over the Rhineland there were all sorts of Roman reminders, reminders of the Roman conquest, so I never quite knew how to take it.

I would also like to mention Chancellor Erhard, whose effective work in the administration of the Marshall Plan had a great deal to do with its success.

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Secretary Kissinger just reminded me that I had recently my 80th birthday. I have been getting too many reminders of the fact that I am very old, but I was thinking the other day about that.

Here is my 80th birthday, and this is the Bicentennial of the life of the country. My one lifespan represents 40 percent of the entire life of the Nation. It shows that either I am awful old, Mr. President, or the span of the life of this country is very short. (Laughter)

It is short, and both our countries have a very short span.

The Federal Republic I used to refer, Mr. Scheel, Mr. President, to some sense of disillusionment on the part of those who were not part of the old period, some feeling of cynicism and some lack of sense of responsibility for the past.

There are many noble things that occurred in the genesis of the Federal Republic. I think of the names and the men who emerged at that time, and some noble spirits, men and women, who this youth of today can take great satisfaction in having association with.

My great hero statesman -- there are a number of them, but I suppose the one that I think of most as my hero statesman -- was Henry Stimson, who was Secretary of State and twice Secretary of War, and Secretary of War during the great war when I had the privilege of serving under him.

He left that clarion note to those who came after him, to the youth that were succeeding his generation, bidding them to go off and do better, if you can, don't waste your time in criticizing, bear up your faith in mankind, never lose the will to strive, and then he ended it up by saying that the only deadly sin he knew was cynicism.

If this little foundation can really bring people together from both sides of the water, with that sense of spirit, the founders' purpose will be fulfilled.

Let me say again how deeply I appreciate, Messrs. Presidents, the fact that you should come out on this gracious occasion the way you did.

Thank you very much indeed.

END (AT 1:17 P.M. EDT)