



Department of Justice

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EXCERPTS FROM ADDRESSES PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
BY ATTORNEY GENERAL ROBERT F. KENNEDY
West Berlin, June 26, 1964

EXCERPTS FROM REMARKS AT THE DEDICATION OF THE JOHN F. KENNEDY PLATZ:

...A new President leads our land, but our course is unchanged, for under President Johnson as under President Kennedy, we are committed to your freedom...

When President Kennedy left this city just one year ago today, he remarked to those with him: "I shall leave a note for my successor, telling him that in a moment of discouragement or despair...go to Germany, go to Berlin."

I know what he meant because I have done so. I see again what he meant because I look out at all of you. I know what he meant when he surveyed the wall of shame and measured it against your courage and said: "Ich bin ein Berliner"... Here on a front line of freedom you serve not only for yourselves and for your country. You defend freedom for my country...

Surrounded by hostility, besieged by enemies, your future threatened, your freedom in jeopardy, you have emerged from each of these assaults stronger, greater and more resolute.

For this President Kennedy congratulated you and on behalf of free men everywhere he thanked you.

From him, for what you do today in his memory, a strong, courageous and free people, I thank you...

EXCERPTS FROM THE FIRST JOHN F. KENNEDY LECTURE AT THE FREE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN, WHERE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL RECEIVED AN HONORARY DEGREE, FOLLOWING THE PLATZ CEREMONY:

...The presence of American troops in Europe is a visible guarantee that, as President Kennedy said last year at Frankfurt, we will risk our cities to defend yours.

And this American army will stay in Germany so long as it has a role to play in the defense of freedom...

The present economic and social renaissance of Europe does not stem from the abrasive national rivalries of the past. It is the result of the development of imaginative common institutions...

But however successful these institutions have been, their true measure is their capacity for continued growth and change. The Atlantic nations must constantly renew the vitality of the institution which brought success yesterday...

Atlantic partnership can promote unity and freedom for all Europe. It can set up a kind of gravitational pull on the countries to the east, permitting them, by slow stages of internal transformation eventually to achieve their true destiny...

There is widespread support among the young Europeans for European unity as the best way of assuring peace and progress. And I am sure they are right in their confidence that European integration runs with the grain of history. Of course, there will be delays and disappointments: history is rarely a painless process. But, if we are not diverted or discouraged, it is in a truly united Europe that your children may grow to manhood...

The explosions of change which shook the old world...continue at a faster and faster pace to shake the political foundations of our contemporary world...The awakening underdeveloped nations remind us that Europe and America may not be the final and permanent center of human affairs. They have caused us to reexamine the western role and the western responsibility. Even in our own America and Europe the winds of change blow more strongly than ever.

In my country there has developed in the last three years an accelerating movement for human rights -- a revolution which is steadily and surely bringing our Negro citizens to full equality in American society.

In western Europe, the movement toward unity is overcoming the national antagonisms fostered by centuries of rivalry and strife. In eastern Europe the forces of diversity are weakening the bonds of rigid doctrine.

In Asia, the Communist empire is torn by conflict approaching the proportions of religious war. The Sino-Soviet split probably is the major fact of present international affairs...

The wall that scars your city is a monstrous, tangible demonstration of the truth that fixed answers are no answers at all in a changing world. They are rather, a response of frustration to the tides of change which no man can predict, shape or repel...

There are others who seek easy solutions to problems which have no easy solutions. They are those who feel that a threat or a bomb can make

our difficulties disappear and can demonstrate our courage. But it is these people who do not recognize the true strength and the true courage of humanity. It is these people who have no confidence in the future.

The future does not belong to such men of rigid certitude. The future belongs to those who have confidence in it, to free men dedicated to the importance of the individual and to the proposition that the state exists for the individual, not for the state...

We all know that it is not freedom which is under siege here. It is not freedom which has been afraid of being infected. Freedom has been walled out, not in. My own country has repeatedly pledged its support to the defense of free Berlin. We are proud to share in that defense, not only through those Americans who serve in the allied garrison in this city, but also through those who stand guard elsewhere in Germany and the men behind them in the United States.

They are here not only in your interest but in our own and in the interests of a peaceful world. For we who live across the seas have learned twice in this century that aggression in Europe is aggression against the United States...

Today, youth is not only destiny and the future. To an accelerating extent youth is the present...

The older leaders of established states cannot hope to speak effectively to the young, impatient, rebellious men of the developing states. It is up to the coming generation in the West to clasp hands across the world and show its contemporaries in the new nations that we share a common cause and a common goal...

We cannot tolerate passive citizenship and passive commitment to freedom today any more than could the fathers of the first democracy. [in Greece.] And the responsibility to participate in your government and community is even greater for you...

The commitment of the educated man who would be free cannot be reserved for times of stress. It cannot be selective commitment -- unless we choose to allow our freedom to become selective...

No amount of courage alone can make freedom live. No army, however watchful or powerful, alone can defend freedom. But if, on the other hand, the defense of freedom is supported by the active will and the educated dedication of all those who would remain free, then however, perilous the path, however great the obstacles, we can go forward in confidence.