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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
HELMUT SCHMIDT
CHANCELLOR OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

THE GORCH FOCK

8:00 P.M. EDT

CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT: Mr. President, Mrs. Ford, ladies and gentlemen:

I am delighted to welcome you here this evening aboard the Gorch Fock. We feel highly honored by the fact that you, Mr. President, and Mrs. Ford have accepted my invitation, thus underlining the special character of this ship's presence in Baltimore, as well as the significance of our personal meeting to mark the Bicentennial.

Let me please answer a question which is always being asked about this ship. Gorch Fock, whose proper name was Johann Kinau, died on 31 May 1916 on board the cruiser Wiesbaden in the battle of Jutland during the First World War. He is not so well known here in America as in my native city of Hamburg where he recounted heartwarming stories of the life at sea.

The title of his most successful book is "Seafaring Is Necessary." This motto, under which seaports like Hamburg and Baltimore have become great may today in the age of space travel and intercontinental missiles appear to have lost some of its significance, but one thing is certain -- navigation was necessary for the discovery of America, and it has always featured prominently in the 200 year history of the United States.

Over the centuries, navigation was the only means of maintaining the links between the New World and the old continent. That is why on the occasion of the Bicentennial I do find it appropriate to mark the bond between Germany and the United States with a visit to this sailing ship.

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Even today, in the age of flying machines, we cannot imagine the close economic cooperation we all desire without efficient maritime communications. The North Atlantic is the most important route for trade between America and Europe in both directions.

This world trading route, like other such, as the all route around the Cape of Good Hope, is at the same time of eminent strategic importance. The security of the democratic countries of Europe which are linked in friendship with America depends very much on these sea routes being safeguarded, and this calls for the maintenance of an adequate maritime presence.

To this latter we Germans are making our contribution. With our Federal Navy and the men of this training ship who are preparing for their future responsibilities, we are helping to fortify NATO's northern flank.

This training ship of the Federal Navy did take part in the Operation Sail parade in New York as part of our contribution to the festivities marking the Bicentennial of the United States.

The fighting, yet spoiling spirit which led the captain and his crew to victory is admired just as much in Germany as it is here. To all of you, many thanks for that.

When I heard you were to moor in Baltimore, it was the obvious thing for me, coming as I do from Hamburg, to invite American guests here. May the fact that we meet today aboard this ship make us conscious of the fact that Americans and Germans are in the same boat.
(Laughter)

Ladies and gentlemen, like the master of a ship, also the political leader has the task of guiding the ship entrusted to him safely through often stormy waters. At certain intervals he is faced with the question of whether he would stay at the helm. Usually at such times strong crosswinds are blowing, but it is the task of the political leader, as of the seamen, to cope with all the winds -- both must even love storms a little if they like their profession.

On this note, I wish us all, and I personally wish you, Mr. President, at all times bon voyage.

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THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very, very much.

Mr. Chancellor, Mrs. Schmidt, Captain von Stackelberg, distinguished guests:

In the atmosphere of the outstanding Baltimore Harbor, the atmosphere of Fort McHenry and the wonderful ship on which we are enjoying ourselves this evening, I thank you for your kind and gracious remarks and I express to you, Mr. Chancellor and Mrs. Schmidt, the very best wishes of Mrs. Ford and myself and all 215 million Americans.

About a year ago, I had the privilege of making some comments over at Fort McHenry, which is a very integral part, now, but even more importantly, a very vital part of the Port of Baltimore in the difficulties we had with Great Britain back in the War of 1812. And looking at Fort McHenry today, one can't help but get the feeling that it represents the kind of spirit which was so prominent during our Bicentennial experience over the 4th of July when there seemed to be an upsurge of tremendous movement among the American people to have a reaffirmation of our true patriotic feeling in this country..

And I wish to thank you, Mr. Chancellor, for the generous gift and the thoughtfulness of you and the people from the Federal Republic on behalf of our 200th anniversary.

May I say to Captain von Stackelberg that you deserve congratulations for winning the contest between Bermuda and Newport. Mrs. Ford and I had the opportunity to view by helicopter and, to some extent, from the deck of the Forrestal the Operation Sail and the tall ships.

As we looked from the air particularly, we had the feeling that the many ships representing many countries, gave us the feeling that if you, in a good naval exercise, could operate in that somewhat limited area without incident and with success it ought to be an inspiration for those of us in Government to do the same as we try to meet the problems, both at home as well as throughout the globe.

So, I congratulate you on winning, but I also congratulate you on representing all of the tall ships that participated in Operation Sail in New York Harbor.

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Let me conclude by simply saying to you, Mr. Chancellor, it has been my privilege and pleasure to meet with you on a bilateral basis three times and it has been an equally fine experience for us to be together in multilateral experiences eight times.

I can say without hesitation or qualification, the personal relationship, the relationship on a bilateral basis between your country and mine, could not be better and I thank you personally and I thank you on behalf of all Americans for the close alliance between your country and ours, a friendship, a rapport and a dedication which does more for freedom, does more for the good things in this globe, than any relationship that I know.

May I say to the Captain and to his crew and to your country, I hope and trust that you will have fair winds and a following sea.

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(AT 8:10 P.M. EDT)