

Remarks at the “Thank You America” Celebration in Rotterdam, The Netherlands

May 28, 1997

Thank you. Mr. Mayor, Mrs. Peper; to His Royal Highness, the Prince of Orange; Prime Minister and Mrs. Kok. To all of America’s Dutch friends here and my fellow Americans who are here tonight, thank you for a wonderful, wonderful welcome.

I thank Gustaaf Sedee for his words. You know, this afternoon at The Hague, he spoke and introduced me and told the story of being a young boy growing up under the Marshall plan. Tonight he spoke and spoke so well. Who knows, I may be remembered as the man who accompanied Gustaaf Sedee to Rotterdam. [*Laughter*] He did not explain to you what he told us today, which is that as a young man, he actually got to go to the United States because he won an essay contest. And each of the nations participating in the Marshall plan picked a young person who won an essay contest to go and tour America and meet the President. He met President Truman on February 4, 1949. And I have secured a copy, an actual copy of the newspaper, the New York Herald-Tribune, on that day. And I thought that I would give it to him as an expression of our gratitude for all of you and what you have meant in friendship to the United States. So here it is.

And Mr. Mayor, thank you for your wonderful reference to my campaign and my Presidency and my belief and hope in that we should never stop thinking about tomorrow. I think you would be a wonderful Ambassador to the United States. [*Laughter*]

When President Truman met with the young visitors from the Marshall plan nations years ago, he said he hoped that when they were as old as he was then, the world would know only democracy and peace. Well, today, the world knows things other than democracy and peace, but we stand closer to that dream than at any point in human history.

For the first time ever, more than half of the people on this Earth live under governments of their own choosing. And here in Europe, the Marshall plan that President Truman launched helped to rebuild a con-

tinental ravaged by war, gave strength to fragile democracies, and sparked unparalleled prosperity.

Tonight, in honoring those remarkable accomplishments begun 50 years ago, our purpose must be to summon the spirit of the Marshall generation to create a structure of opportunity and freedom and security for the next 50 years and beyond, to give the young people here in this crowd tonight, throughout Europe, and the rest of the world, as many as we can, the chance to grow up and live out their dreams.

The generation we honor tonight fought and won a war, then built the institutions and understandings that prevented war’s return. Now, closer to the start of a new century than to the end of the cold war, our mission is to shape the peace they made possible, to reach for a long-sought, yet never-realized goal: a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in all history.

America wishes to join in building a new Europe because Europe literally built America and because our futures are bound together. No nation contributed to our building more than did yours. From this great pier, more than a million Dutch men and women started their journey to America. As the mayor said, after the first Dutch vessel arrived on our shores in 1609, it was just a decade later, from the tiny port of Delft’s Haven, that the Pilgrims set sail for Plymouth Rock, giving birth to the experiment that became the United States of America. The values of those early settlers became America’s values: hard work and industry, individual freedom and tolerance, a willingness to take risks for boundless opportunity, a pride in country and community that knows no bounds.

Here in Rotterdam, those values faced their most terrible test 57 years ago when Nazi bombers rained fire on this city, killed 900 people, destroyed homes for 25,000 more, turned downtown Rotterdam into rubble, as we saw in the marvelous film. Even as your buildings burned, you kept your spirit going. The American people today know that the strength and courage of the Dutch Resistance helped to conquer Hitler and ensured your ultimate recovery. And I am especially proud tonight that the allied forces had

a little help from a remarkable descendant of a Dutch farmer by the name of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Ever since the end of World War II, Rotterdam sails have been turned to the wind. You rebuilt this city with daring modern architecture, a reflection of the daring and vision of your people. You transformed Rotterdam into the biggest and busiest port in the world. And when you did it, I might add that you took that title of biggest port in the world away from a small trading outpost you stumbled upon centuries earlier in the New World. [Laughter] It used to be called New Amsterdam, but we forgive you. [Laughter]

We are proud that the Marshall plan gave Rotterdam a new start. Through this port most of the aid flowed to the rest of Europe. Today, the generosity of the Dutch people and your courage and your commitment to build a future better than the past—in all of this, the spirit of the Marshall plan lives on. From Africa to Asia, you do not forget those who are hungry in this world, who yearn simply to put food on their table and clothes on their backs. From Bosnia to Haiti, your sons and daughters have kept the peace and helped people turn from conflict and hatred to cooperation and community. America could not hope for a closer ally or a better friend, and the world could not have a better example than this great nation, large beyond its numbers in landmass and its influence and its power of example.

Two centuries ago, our first Ambassador to your nation and our second President, John Adams, said this: “America has considered this nation as her first friend in Europe, whose history and the great character it exhibits in the various arts of peace have been studied, admired, and imitated by every State in our Union.” Well now our Union and your nation have an opportunity to practice those arts of peace as surely as past generations stood together in world war and cold war.

Together, we can complete the journey Marshall’s generation began and bring all of Europe together not by the force of arms but by the possibilities of peace. Together, we have it within our power to turn the hope

we share into a history we will all be proud of.

So, to all of you, the people of Rotterdam and all the Netherlands, let me say that this celebration and its simple message, “Thank you, America,” is a great gift to all of us. In turn, I bring you a message from the American people. For all that you have given to my country, for all that you give to the world, for the example you set that shines so far beyond your borders, America says, thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:25 p.m. at Wilhelmina Pier. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Bram Peper of Rotterdam, and his wife Nelie; Willem Alexander, the Prince of Orange; and Prime Minister Kok’s wife, Rita.

Memorandum on Assistance to Turkey

May 23, 1997

Presidential Determination No. 97-24

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver of Statutory Restrictions to Permit Assistance to Turkey

Pursuant to subsection (b) of section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, I hereby determine that it is in the national security interest of the United States that assistance be furnished to Turkey without regard to the restriction in subsection (a) of section 620I. You are authorized and directed to transmit this determination and justification to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., June 3, 1997.]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 29, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on June 4.