

HANDOUT 2.2.7 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES IN BERLIN – EXCERPTS

1. JOHN F. KENNEDY SPEECH

Date: June 26, 1963

Two thousand years ago the proudest boast was “civis Romanus sum.” Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is “*Ich bin ein Berliner*.”

Freedom is indivisible, and when one man is enslaved, all are not free. When all are free, then we can look forward to that day when this city will be joined as one and this country and this great Continent of Europe in a peaceful and hopeful globe. When that day finally comes, as it will, the people of West Berlin can take sober satisfaction in the fact that they were in the front lines for almost two decades.

All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words “*Ich bin ein Berliner*.”

2. RONALD REAGAN SPEECH

Date: June 12, 1987

General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall! [...]

As I looked out a moment ago from the Reichstag, that embodiment of German unity, I noticed words crudely spray-painted upon the wall, perhaps by a young Berliner: “This wall will fall. Beliefs become reality.” Yes, across Europe, this wall will fall. For it cannot withstand faith; it cannot withstand truth. The wall cannot withstand freedom.

3. BILL CLINTON SPEECH

Date: July 12, 1994

We stand together where Europe’s heart was cut in half and we celebrate unity. We stand where crude walls of concrete separated mother from child and we meet as one family. We stand where those who sought a new life instead found death. And we rejoice in renewal. Berliners, you have won your long struggle. You have proved that no wall can forever contain the mighty power of freedom. Within a few years, an American President will visit a Berlin that is again the seat of your government. And I pledge to you today a new American Embassy will also stand in Berlin.

Moments ago, with my friend Chancellor Kohl, I walked where my predecessors could not, through the Brandenburg Gate. For over

two centuries in every age, that gate has been a symbol of the time. Sometimes it has been a monument to conquest and a tower of tyranny. But in our own time, you, courageous Berliners, have again made the Brandenburg what its builders meant it to be, a gateway. Now, together, we can walk through that gateway to our destiny, to a Europe united, united in peace, united in freedom, united in progress for the first time in history. Nothing will stop us. All things are possible. *Nichts wird uns aufhalten. Alles ist möglich. Berlin ist frei.* Berlin is free.

4. BARACK OBAMA SPEECH

Date: July 24, 2008

...This city, of all cities, knows the dream of freedom. And you know that the only reason we stand here tonight is because men and women from both of our nations came together to work, and struggle, and sacrifice for that better life.

Ours is a partnership that truly began sixty years ago this summer, on the day when the first American plane touched down at Tempelhof.

On that day, much of this continent still lay in ruin. The rubble of this city had yet to be built into a wall. The Soviet shadow had swept across Eastern Europe, while in the West, America, Britain, and France took stock of their losses, and pondered how the world might be remade.

Look at Berlin, where the bullet holes in the buildings and the somber stones and pillars near the Brandenburg Gate insist that we never forget our common humanity.

People of the world - look at Berlin, where a wall came down, a continent came together, and history proved that there is no challenge too great for a world that stands as one.

Sixty years after the airlift, we are called upon again. History has led us to a new crossroad, with new promise and new peril. When you, the German people, tore down that wall - a wall that divided East and West; freedom and tyranny; fear and hope - walls came tumbling down around the world. From Kiev to Cape Town, prison camps were closed, and the doors of democracy were opened. Markets opened too, and the spread of information and technology reduced barriers to opportunity and prosperity. While the 20th century taught us that we share a common destiny, the 21st has revealed a world more intertwined than at any time in human history.

4. BARACK OBAMA SPEECH

Date: June 19, 2013

It was here that Berliners carved out an island of democracy against the greatest of odds.

During that time, a Marshall Plan seeded a miracle, and a North Atlantic Alliance protected our people. And those in the neighborhoods and nations to the East drew strength from the knowledge that freedom was possible here, in Berlin—that the waves of crack-downs and suppressions might therefore someday be overcome.

...When the wall finally came down, it was their dreams that were fulfilled. Their strength and their passion, their enduring example

remind us that for all the power of militaries, for all the authority of governments, it is citizens who choose whether to be defined by a wall, or whether to tear it down.

...Today's threats are not as stark as they were half a century ago, but the struggle for freedom and security and human dignity—that struggle goes on.

And if we lift our eyes, as President Kennedy called us to do, then we'll recognize that our work is not yet done. For we are not only citizens of America or Germany—we are also citizens of the world. And our fates and fortunes are linked like never before.