

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary
For Immediate Release
June 07, 2011

**Remarks by President Obama and Chancellor Merkel in Official Arrival
Ceremony**

South Lawn
9:36 A.M. EDT

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Good morning, everybody. Chancellor Merkel, members of the German delegation -- on behalf of Michelle and myself, it is our great pleasure to welcome you back to the White House. And on behalf of the American people, it is our great honor to welcome you back in the United States. (Applause.)

Today marks the first official visit and State Dinner for a European leader during my presidency. It's only fitting. The transatlantic alliance is the cornerstone -- is the heart -- of our efforts to promote peace and prosperity around the world. And Germany -- at the heart of Europe -- is one of our strongest allies. And Chancellor Merkel is one of my closest global partners.

Our alliance, at its core, is a partnership between our peoples. The generations of German Americans who helped build a strong America. The Americans who, during a long Cold War, helped to defend a free Germany. And citizens of both our countries -- entrepreneurs, innovators, students, scientists, and soldiers -- who work together, and forge the future, every day.

At a time when some have asked whether the rise of new global powers means the decline of others, this visit reaffirms an enduring truth. Our alliances with nations like

Germany are more important than ever. Indeed, they're indispensable to global security and prosperity.

As two of the largest and most dynamic economies, the United States and Germany can show that the prosperity we seek is best achieved when nations invest in our greatest resource -- our people and their ability to compete and innovate in the 21st century.

As members of the most successful alliance in human history, our commitment to our common defense is also a pillar of global security, from completing our mission in Afghanistan to preventing terrorist attacks to achieving our vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

And finally, as people around the world imagine a different future, the story of Germany and our alliance in the 20th century shows what's possible in the 21st. Wars can end. Adversaries can become allies. Walls can come down. At long last, nations can be whole and can be free.

Madam Chancellor, the arc of our lives speaks to this spirit. It's obvious that neither of us looks exactly like the leaders who preceded us. (Laughter and applause.) But the fact that we can stand here today as President of the United States and as Chancellor of a united Germany is a testament to the progress, the freedom, that is possible in our world.

Chancellor Merkel, to the members of the German delegation -- we are honored to have all of you here -- as allies, as partners, but most of all, as dear friends. So, herzlich willkommen. (Applause.)