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MESSAGE

from the President of the Confederation to the Swiss
abroad on the occasion of the National Day 1968 —

Dear compatriots living abroad,

This year's National Day Celebration gives us, once more, the opportunity to meditate on the very special significance of the First of August. It invites us to face the present and an uncertain future with the principles of direct democracy and federalism, which have determined Switzerland's path through centuries.

The Federal Council has, in a report to the Federal Assembly, set forth in which way it intends to apply these principles during the legislative period 1968/71. For the first time in history, the Government is tracing and publishing the guiding principles which shall be followed during a relatively long period of time.

Although the proceedings are new, the principles are permanent and policy remains constant. The report relates its adaptation to changing conditions in a world and civilisation in turbulent movement; it further establishes the priorities for those numerous tasks which Switzerland has to fulfil in order to maintain its independence, to protect the freedom and rights of its citizens and to promote general prosperity.

Since its existence, our country has been confronted with these tasks. In the past they were difficult and they still are; it appears as if they shall be even more complex tomorrow. In particular, very close co-operation is required of all those people uniting themselves in the concern for a common well-being. These problems, furthermore, demand an open mind, capable of understanding the consequences of scientific and technical progress as well as the continuous advances and interpretation in economics and cultural and social developments.

No doubt you will realise that the Swiss living abroad can contribute towards the accomplishment of these tasks through the role they play in their country of residence and thanks to the contacts they maintain with their homeland. In an epoch of interpenetration and international co-operation, their experiences, expressions of opinion and suggestions constitute an irreplaceable contribution.

In the name of the Federal Council, I wish to thank you for the loyalty you have constantly manifested towards your country, and I am happy to be able to transmit my most sincere wishes to you as well as to your relatives.

Willy Spuehler,
President of the Confederation.