

# Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

---

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

---

**Collection:** Reagan, Ronald: 1980 Campaign Papers,  
1965-1980

**Series:** XV: Speech Files (Robert Garrick and Bill Gavin)

**Subseries:** B: Bill Gavin File

**Folder Title:** Drafts and Back-up Documents –  
Anne Armstrong (National Security, Foreign Policy)

**Box:** 437

---

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Inventories, visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: [reagan.library@nara.gov](mailto:reagan.library@nara.gov)

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

August 28 1980

Memo to : Chairman Ann Armstrong

From: Bill Gavin

*Bill*

Re: Draft of "National security, Foreign Policy" speech.

Attached is a draft for your consideration. Bill Van Cleave and I spoke about this and it was his suggestion that we take RR's two foreign affairs speeches of the week of August 17, 1980 (VFW, American Legion) and use them as a basis for your remarks. I have done this. All of the factual material and quotations in this draft come ~~from~~ those speeches.

I think that there should be five minutes or so at the beginning of the speech for current topics taken from that morning's headlines. Thus, the speech would run 15-20 minutes. As circumstances change, certain sections of the speech can be discarded and new facts put in place of the outdated ones. But the basic form of the speech should serve throughout the campaign.

As we gear up for the next few ~~w~~weeks, I will be working on speech drafts. But don't hesitate to let me know if I can be of help in your speechmaking role.

## Peace Through Strength: a Vision for the 80's.

In order to understand what the United States is faced with in foreign affairs today, after four years of Carter mismanagement, it is necessary to first understand that we are living in an historically unique period.

For the first time in our nation's history we are faced with two dangerous situations at the same time, either of which is capable of threatening our survival.

We are confronted by a well-armed and determined adversary in the Soviet Union, capable of inflicting fatal damage by either conventional or nuclear means.

We are at the same time confronted with the effects of a deteriorating economy which is eroding the foundation of national security, threatening our capacity to respond to challenges and bringing into question our reliability as an ally.

We have been faced with armed threats before--but never when our economic situation has been as bad.

We have been faced with economic crises before--but not at the same time we faced a strong and confident rival.

In order to clearly define the current situation, I am forced to speak of these threats as if they existed independent of each other.

But of course in the real world, they feed upon each other, in a never-ending cycle of cause-and-effect.

2.

Economic weakness contributes to national security problems and national security needs make more and more demands on a weakened economy.

We thus face a crisis different in kind, not just in degree, from those of the past.

And what does Jimmy Carter say about all this?

In his acceptance speech he gave his definitive answer to those who believe he has failed as a leader.

"I am wiser tonight than I was four years ago" he said in his acceptance speech.

I will not offer an assessment of Mr. Carter's wisdom. But I will say that the very fact that he thinks he is wise, given the current crises his policies created, is frightening. When his own Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown, admits that our land-based ICBM's are now vulnerable to Soviet attack--not five years from now, but at this very moment--one seriously wonders about the wisdom that has brought us to this predicament.

Mr. Carter is complacent and even a bit pleased with his performance as President. He insists all is well. Are there problems? Well, none he is responsible for, according to his version of reality.

Is it not true that Jimmy Carter inherited an inflation rate of 4.8% from President Ford and through mismanagement, raised it to as high as 18%?

3.

Well, yes, says Mr. Carter, that is true. But you see, he goes on, its all because of the OPEC price rises. They have caused this dreadful rise in inflation.

But he doesn't explain why Germany and Japan who import twice the OPEC oil we do have half our rate of inflation. Perhaps he has never really thought about it. Whatever the reason, he has never successfully explained why some countries dependent on OPEC can fight against inflation while Jimmy Carter's administration cannot.

And what about our perilous military situation? Our ICBM's are vulnerable to attack, our conventional forces are short of equipment and thousands of trained military personnel leave the military each year because of dissatisfaction with pay and benefits.

Well, yes, Mr. Carter says, this is all true. But there's a reason for it. It seems that under recent Republican administrations, defense budgets were cut. That's why we're in such dreadful shape today.

What he does not tell us is that those cuts were made by a Congress dominated by his own Democratic friends. What he does not tell us is that in 1976 he said we needed a seven billion dollar cut in defense spending. What he does not tell us is that under President Ford we began to remedy this situation but that under Jimmy Carter, President Ford's programs have been cut by \$38 billion.

4.

I'm afraid we're not going to get much out of Mr. Carter by way of explanation. He stays away from his own record as much as possible, an understandable political strategy given his policies but hardly reassuring to those looking for leadership.

But despite Mr. Carter's reticence about his record, that record is known, all too well, in this country and around the world.

Jimmy Carter cannot escape from history. He cannot flee from his own record.

In conversations I have had with European leaders in recent years, the Carter record is always mentioned. And hardly in flattering terms.

Our allies look at the United States and this is what they see:

--An economy in disarray. The greatest productive economy in the history of the world shackled by regulation, crippled by inflation, wracked by unemployment, lagging in research and development, unable to compete and unsuited to the needs of the 80's. And they know Jimmy Carter has either contributed to this situation or is incapable of dealing with it.

--our friends and allies also see something else. They see the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff telling Congress this year: "There is no question that Soviet momentum has brought them from a position of clear inferiority to their present status of at least strategic

5.

equality and that trends for the future are adverse."

They see the commander of the strategic air command telling a Senate committee that our nation is already strategically inferior.

They see the Secretary of Defense admit our ICBM's are now vulnerable, something many of us knew for a long time but which the Carter administration would never admit.

They see Jimmy Carter cancel the B-1 bomber and claim it was never any good after all, an assessment disagreed with by military experts all over the nation and the world. They see Jimmy Carter stop production of the Minutemen III missile. They see delay in the MX program and cutbacks in the Trident program.

They see an American navy with only 415 ships, a one-and-one-half ocean navy at best.

They see the Soviet Union spending up to one-fifth of its gross national product on its military establishment while we spend one-twentieth of ours.

They see the Soviet Union outspend us by over \$240 billion in arms investment during the past ten years.

They see all of these things. And what is more, they see a President who will not or perhaps cannot grasp the gravity of the situation. And, in private conversations, European leaders will leave you with the impression they

6.

believe we have, perhaps, passed beyond the point of no return, that Jimmy Carter has so dreadfully failed that nothing can stop the downward trend in the economy and in defense.

I do not know what they think of Mr. Carter's claim of wisdom.

But I can guess.

When our allies say things like this, I always tell them that our nation remains basically strong. I tell them despite the errors and blunders of the past four years, we retain the capacity to amaze the world with our productivity, our imagination, our inventiveness, our willingness to compete and our absolute refusal to surrender our freedom or to allow our allies to lose faith in us.

I tell them that we can have a new beginning for our nation.

But we need leadership to do it.

And in 1980 that means Ronald Reagan and George Bush and the ideas they will bring to the White House.

I'm talking about the need for a tax cut that will simultaneously lift from the shoulders of the American people a crushing burden and stimulate the economic growth needed to create jobs. The Carter administration had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, into the new world of tax cuts. Mr. Carter's latest economic package of band-aids shows he still doesn't know what the trouble is or how to cure it. (HERE: a section on the Carter



7.

Economic package, not yet out as this is being written)

Ronald Reagan wants the government to work for the people and that is best accomplished when the people are free of burdensome regulations and taxes and government-caused inflation and unemployment. He knows that the best way to build the economy, the best way to create productive jobs, is to let American go to work, as they have always done. And that means that government policy should always keep in mind the effect of programs on the wages and savings of families and the capacity for growth and development of our nation's industries and farms.

In defense spending, the Reagan-Bush team wants:

--a rapid move toward solving our most immediate military vulnerabilities and deficiencies.

--reversal of the four-year trend toward impotence that has made our once-great navy a mere shadow of itself.

--provisions of spare parts and equipment for our armed forces.

--a committment to human beings as well as hardware in the rebuilding of our armed forces. We are losing too many trained men and women. We need to retain them and to attract a higher caliber of recruits. This is going to take money. But equally important it is going to take an understanding on the part of the next President that our

8.

armed forces are a vital part not only of our national defense, but of the essence of our nation. We have to stop treating the military as if it were some kind of necessary evil, barely tolerated and usually ignored. We have to rebuild that spirit among the American people that sees our military forces as part of our system of freedom, an integral part of our democratic way of life.

Jimmy Carter's call for a seven billion dollar defense cut in 1976 gave the military a good idea of where they fit into his view of high priorities. No wonder we've been losing thousands of skilled, highly trained servicemen during the Carter years. We need to have leadership that says once more: It is an honor to serve one's country and those who serve deserve the full support of the government and the people.

To sum up, the ideas that Ronald Reagan and George Bush bring to Washington will be better able to deal with our historically unique situation. They will not make artificial distinctions between domestic and foreign affairs or between economic needs and defense needs. They know that in the real world no such distinctions exist.

They know that what this nation desperately needs is a vision that sees the entirety of American interest and American needs, the connections between seemingly separate problems and the links between various policies.

9.

Jimmy Carter has approached our problems on an ad-hoc, patch-work basis, with no continuity and no suggestion of understanding the complexities and the connections of our various problems.

We need a new vision.

We need leadership that is not afraid to lead.

We need a new beginning. And Ronald Reagan and George Bush have shown they have the ideas and the will to provide that leadership.

The 1980's can be a new age of progress for America. Or it can be a time of continuing decline, of the dominance of the philosophy of despair that is Jimmy Carter's legacy to the American people.

I think the choice is obvious. I hope and pray that the right choice is made.

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE RONALD REAGAN  
AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL CONVENTION  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
August 20, 1980

---

STRENGTH

When I addressed the Veterans of Foreign Wars the day before yesterday in Chicago, I took as my theme PEACE -- How it is endangered through weakness, and how it is more confidently assured through strength. Today I would like to continue that theme by speaking about the deterioration of American military strength, which puts peace and freedom at high risk, and what we must do to restore that strength, that margin of safety to promote peace while we safeguard American interests in the world.

Peace through Strength -- As embodied in the greatness of the Eisenhower Administration -- has long been an established principle of the Republican Party. I believe it is consistent with American world interests and responsibilities, and with the desires of the American people.

In this election year, the Carter Administration has begun giving lip-service to this theme, and his Secretary of Defense actually used the words "Peace through Strength" in a recent speech on American policy. Unfortunately for all of us, there remains a very wide gap between this administration's rhetoric and its action.

Before I address the military situation as it exists and what we must do about it, let us get something straight about the

real defense policies and philosophies of the Carter Administration; and may I say how they would contrast with the convictions and policies of a Reagan Administration. Please note I make this contrast in terms of administration rather than parties because I do not believe this administration's defense policies are representative of the thinking of millions of rank and file democratic party members. The Carter Administration, dominated as it is by the McGovernite wing of the party, has broken sharply with the views and policies of Harry Truman, John Kennedy, and many contemporary leaders of the party.

After campaigning on a platform which promised to slash defense spending by seven billion dollars, this administration took office with the naive view that military strength is less important than it has been in the past; that Soviet advantages in military strength could be offset by American advantages in non-military areas, such as the health of our political and economic system. Consequently, it believed that the U.S. did not have to compete vigorously with a Soviet military effort that by 1977 was already widely recognized as directed toward military superiority over the United States.

Mr. Carter resurrected a discredited philosophy of the 1960's that military strength beyond a certain minimum is irrelevant.

He sees the maintenance of a robust military capability as not only burdensome and unnecessary, but also troublesome and provocative to the Soviet Union. Never mind that in the decade between 1965 and 1975 -- when we unilaterally limited our military

strength the Soviet Union reciprocated by vastly increasing its own. The Carter Administration still believed that military self-denial would set an example that others would follow.

The lesson of history, that among the great nations only those with the strength to protect their interests survive, was ignored.

The direct and necessary connection between strength and foreign policy has not been grasped by the Carter Administration. Having backed away from one challenge after another, Carter now pronounces doctrines to extend American commitments without the strength to support them.

It is easy to become confused about the Carter Administration's views, since they change frequently, are so often contradictory, and there is so much difference between what is SAID and what is DONE.

In some respects, the Carter Administration seems to be playing catch up with the Republican Party and the American people. Recently it has announced a so-called new strategic doctrine which in general was the doctrine of the Republican administration six years ago. Even the Secretary of Defense concedes that "the name is newer than the strategy." The difference is that six years ago the doctrine was in timely anticipation of changes, rather than as a belated reaction to them. We then had the programs to support the strategy in a timely and effective manner whereas the Carter Administration merely announced a "New" strategy without the forces or programs to support it.

In other respects the Carter Administration is not merely behind, it is totally out of step. It has twisted and turned on

the issues of American strength to the point that even leading Democrats accuse it of inconsistency and hypocrisy. Last June, Senator Sam Nunn, Democrat, Georgia stated that Carter "has revised his own course of national defense at least four times since last November." And Senator Ernest Hollings, Democrat, South Carolina recently accused him of the "height of hypocrisy" on the budget.

Recently, forgetting that he had declared the U.S. is number one militarily, Carter charged the Republican Party with irresponsibility or simple-mindedness for supporting as an objective the very superiority he asserts we now enjoy.

Only three weeks ago Secretary of Defense Brown proclaimed that "the impulse and passion for military superiority must be seen for what they are: unrealistic, simplistic, dangerous." Since when has it been wrong for America to aim to be first in military strength? How is American military superiority "dangerous?" What ever happened to the words of John F. Kennedy:

"There can only be one defense policy for the United States," he said, "and that is summed up in the word "first." I do not mean first, but, I do not mean first, when. I do not mean first, if. I mean first, period. Only then can we stop the next war before it starts. Only then can we prevent war by preparing for it."

What is the Carter Administration's real view? He has promised "As long as I am in the White House we're going to stay number one in defense." In his State of the Union Message this year, he said: "We must pay whatever price to remain the strongest nation in the world." And, earlier, he asserted flatly in an address to we of the American Legion that we remain the world's most powerful force. How do you "remain" what you no longer are?

Our allies are totally mystified by this on-again, off-again approach to matters of such grave importance to western security. Even our adversaries cannot understand U.S. policy and, since they don't believe we understand it either, they invade Afghanistan and expand their empire.

Tremendous forces of national pride and concern over the growing weakness of American foreign and defense policies are merging in the United States as the American people become aware of the Administration's weakness in foreign and defense policy. Now cynically and belatedly, in an attempt to play to these forces while seeking reelection, the President would have the American people believe that he is responsible for improving American defenses and increasing defense spending. He argues that defense spending dropped more than 35% between 1969 and 1976 under Republican administrations, and it has risen 10% under his administration.

As you know, there are two kinds of statistics: those that you look up, and those that you make up. But the picture is too clear for the people to be fooled by such inventiveness.



The truth is that defense spending did go down between 1969 and 1976 -- and may I point out for the record that it went down by six percent not 35 percent as Mr. Carter erroneously charges. But the fundamental problem I have with Mr. Carter's rewriting of history is its sheer, blatant hypocrisy. Who was it who was principally responsible for the decline in defense spending in those years? You and I know the answer very well: The Democrats who controlled the Congress -- men like Walter Mondale and Teddy Kennedy. Those Democrats in Congress cut more than \$40 billion from the Republican defense budget, and they block or delay almost every new weapons system but even more incredibly, let me ask: Who was it in 1976 who campaigned up and down the land against Gerald Ford's attempts to restore those defense cuts? Who said the military budget had to be slashed even more? You know and I know that it was Jimmy Carter.

President Ford had begun the restoration of our margin of safety in 1976 with a five-year program for increasing our defense capability. In these last three years, President Carter has cut that program by \$38 billion. His defense budget authorization requests reverted to the annual decline that he had been halted by the Ford Administration.

He has since lobbied steadily against congressional efforts to increase defense spending.

Now, by such untruthful devices as manipulating inflation factors, shifting the base from authority to outlays, changing base years, and even ordering planned defense spending this year reduced so it would look as if he had met his promised percentage increase for next year, the Carter Administration tries to manufacture incr-ases that in fact are largely phony.

By giving you these troublesome, even alarming, facts about our military strength, I'm not unnecessarily inflating our opponents' strength. Nor is it poor-mouthing our armed forces, who are in this situation through no fault of their own. It is just that recognition of the true situation is the first step toward restoring the strength necessary to the security of America, our allies and our values. John F. Kennedy once observed, "If the day ever comes when the American people are not able to face the facts, or are not allowed to face the facts, then we will be all through as a nation." "The first test of leadership in this country," he said, "is the ability to tell the people to meet it." I agree. It is time to face our problems and to reverse this dangerous situation before it is too late.

Every single analysis of which I am aware directly contradicts this administration's smug assertion that the U.S. is and will remain militarily superior, or at least "second to none." We are already second to one.

In their annual report to Congress last year, the Joint Chiefs of Staff warned that we are "another year closer to a potentially unstable and acutely dangerous imbalance."

That was last year. This year, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reported to Congress that, "There is no question that Soviet momentum has brought them from a position of clear inferiority to their present status of at least strategic equality, and the trends for the future are adverse." "We face an adversary," he said, "at least our equal in strategic nuclear power and possessing substantial advantages in theater nuclear and conventional forces."

He went on to say that momentum would give the Soviets an advantage over the United States in most indicators of strategic strength by the early 1980's and that this shift will continue during the decade ahead.

Remember these harsh judgments come from the senior military leaders under this administration. They confirm that the Carter Administration is failing to maintain a secure military posture for this nation. In fact, there are Department of Defense studies and analyses that paint an even darker picture. The Commander of the strategic air command testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee in February that the United States is already strategically inferior.

In the early months of this Administration, the President cancelled the B-1 program; stopped production of the Minuteman III; delayed, in a fit of indecision, the planning MX program by four years; cut the Trident building program, limited deployment of the

Trident I Missile, and now has apparently postponed or decided against the Trident II Missile. In short, the carefully balanced defense program which he inherited from the last Republican Administration, has been undercut and our security placed in jeopardy as we enter the dangerous decade of the 1980's. By fiscal year 1979 NATO procurement was 13 percent below that proposed by Ford, and the rug was pulled from under our allies by the President's decision not to deploy the enhanced radiation warhead essential to countering Soviet tanks.

In 1969, Admiral Thomas Moorer, then Chief of Naval Operations, told Congress that a Navy of 850 ships should be attained by 1980. By the end of this fiscal year, only 5 or 6 weeks away, our conventional Navy will consist of only 415 active ships. Carter has slashed the Navy shipbuilding program in half, and has provided for -- at the very best -- a one-and-a-half ocean Navy for a three-ocean global requirement.

The situation is equally dismal in all the other areas of military strength.

And this has occurred in the face of rapid and overwhelming growth in Soviet military capabilities. The Soviet Union is spending up to one-fifth of its gross national product on its military establishment. We are spending one-twentieth of ours. Soviet spending continues to grow at a steady pace of from 8 to 10 percent per year.

The major part of our defense spending is for people costs. Soviet military spending goes into weapons. The Soviets outspent us in arms investment by over \$240 billion during the past ten years.

Their theater and conventional forces have increased in quantity and in quality far beyond our own.

Because of this continued disparity in efforts, the situation we face is grave. But it is not irretrievable.

The Republican platform pledges judicious application of defense spending, to critically needed requirements. This is what it means.

✓ We must provide the defense spending and programs necessary to correct immediate and short-term vulnerabilities and deficiencies. Our nuclear deterrent forces must be made survivable as rapidly as possible to close the window of vulnerability before it opens any wider.

✓ We must immediately reverse the deterioration of our naval strength, and provide all of the armed services with the equipment and spare parts they need.

We must restore true essential equivalence for our own security and for the political perceptions of our adversaries, our allies, and Third World countries.

✓ We must formulate a coherent strategy and defense program for the long haul. The most important part of military strength, is the people involved, their quality, their sacrifices and their welfare. In defense matters, we hear too much about hardware and not enough about hard work. We have tended to take our armed forces for granted; assumed that our dedicated fighting men will be there when they are needed.

✓ It isn't pay that attracts people to military service, much less to careers in the military. It is pride in participating in one of history's most honored, respected, and necessary professions. Military service entails many sacrifices, it can also be satisfying and rewarding. Unfortunately, under this administration, there has been an unconscionable reduction of both satisfaction and reward.

✓ Morale - the very fiber of the military has fallen to new lows as pay, support, equipment, training and readiness have been allowed to deteriorate under the policies of this administration.

Because our national security is so dependent upon the people in our armed forces, we must do all in our power to assure that they are of the highest caliber, that their economic sacrifice is not disproportionate to that which we ask of others, that they feel proud and secure in their profession, and, most important, that they are equipped to do their jobs, backed by a leadership that is both responsible and caring.

The key to building and retaining effective military forces is to encourage people to pursue a career in the service of their choice. At present, nearly 30 percent of males who enlist will not even complete their first enlistment term and, since 1976, the armed forces have been losing 75 percent of those who do complete their first term.

There are many reasons for our inability to attract and retain outstanding people in our armed forces -- long hours, separation from family, unpleasant duty assignments and the like -- but these have

always been bearable in the past, Today, however, the most important reason is the lack of adequate pay and benefits, and the imposition of unnecessary family hardships.

- The typical enlisted family has a standard of living 17 percent below the minimum standard for Americans and 50 percent below a moderate standard;
- More than half a million military personnel, regardless of their skills, educational background or the length of the work week, are paid no more, and in many instances far less, than the minimum that would be paid for a 40-hour work week in the private sector;
- Faced with the challenge of finding suitable housing, the average enlisted person cannot qualify for a loan and as a result, many military men must leave their families behind and undergo the hardship of separation, not for reasons of duty but because they cannot afford to house their families;
- As a result of low pay, thousands of servicemen must find a second job in order to make ends meet.

An enlisted man on a nuclear powered carrier works 100 hours a week handling a \$25 million F-14 aircraft, and helping to operate a \$2 billion ship. But he lives below the poverty level and is eligible for food stamps. On top of that, he may have to remain separated from his family for six months at a time.

I believe there is a way to reverse this shameful and potentially disastrous situation. If I have the opportunity I

will implement a program of compensation and benefits for our valued military personnel comparable to what is available in the private sector.

✓ We must provide the resources to attract and retain superior people in each of the services. We should take steps immediately to restore the G.I. Bill, one of the most effective, equitable and socially important programs ever devised. In short, our country must provide these persons and their families with a quality of life that is equivalent to the sacrifices they make on our behalf.

✓ With your support, and working closely with Congress, a Republican Administration can and will do these things to restore and maintain America's strength. It will not be easy, nor will it be inexpensive. Neither, however, is the task insurmountable or beyond what we can readily afford. I am aware of the complexities of military planning, of defining missions and standards by which the adequacy of our military strength can be evaluated, and of the ways our military programs may influence or interact with the military programs of others, particularly those of the Soviet Union. I am also aware of, and share, the desire of the American people for arms limitations consistent with American and allied security. But we must proceed from a basis of a strength in which we have confidence, a strength that our enemies will not be tempted to challenge. Any other approach is one that risks peace, encourages accommodation, and courts submission.



Once we have the programs to reverse the trends now in favor of the Soviet Union, we must strive for arms limitation agreements that will further that security -- including significant arms reductions -- so long as they are equitable and based on strict reciprocity. The reason that a decade of SALT has failed to accomplish those objectives for which we originally entered SALT is that the Soviet Union has not shared those objectives.

I don't know whether the Soviets will ever sincerely share our aspirations for strategic stability, and our desire to reduce nuclear armaments. I don't know whether they will ever be willing to moderate arms competition in favor of cooperative arms limitations. But I believe we have given them little incentive to do so since our policy has provided them the opportunity to use arms negotiations to mask their global trouble-making!

We must convince them that their ambitious strategic goals must be lowered because the cost of pursuing them is too high and the chance of success too low.

When we demonstrate our determination not to allow the Soviets to achieve a strategic advantage over us, I believe they will become interested in legitimate arms control.

We must diagnose our situation calmly and methodically; we must be sure of our objectives in setting out to remedy the situation, and we must be prudent as we proceed to apply the necessary remedies.

History teaches us that hasty, unwarranted reactions can bring undesirable consequences. We must, therefore, guard against

overreacting. We are a strong and resourceful people, and we know that we can solve our problems if we proceed with determination and care.

The military policies of the Carter Administration are in disarray. The weakness of those policies can ultimately become provocative. We must hope that this administration will not be tempted to take reckless actions designed to reassure Americans that our power is undiminished. The facts are we lack the capability to project our power to many areas of the world. It will take a responsible, balanced long-term program to restore our respectability.

And it will take a strengthening of our will, our unity and our resolve to be free for another 200 years.

Let me close with this thought. As I travel across America, I find people yearning for a change. They are bone-tired of leaders who always tell us why we can't conquer inflation, why we can't build a bigger economy, why we can't compete with the Japanese and the Germans, why we can't become militarily secure, and why we can't contain the Russians.

Don't tell us anymore what we can't do, they say; tell us what we can do -- and I tell you today that what we can do is get this country moving again.

For the past four years this Administration has acted as if we can preserve the peace eventhough we have lost faith in ourselves. We are scolded for suffering a crisis of confidence -- a crisis they blame not on Washington but on the people themselves.

I wholeheartedly disagree. I believe America's greatest moments have come when America dared to be great -- when we believe in ourselves and in our values and we reached out to do the impossible.

That is the spirit, ladies and gentlemen that I would like to restore to our Presidency.

I am deeply troubled, as I know many of you are, about the perilous times in which we live. It seems to me that what's going on in Washington in foreign policy is much the same thing we have seen in domestic policy. Politicians keep on borrowing from tomorrow in order to live well today.

On the home front, the results are now too obvious to ignore, as prices and unemployment both skyrocket. But the decay setting in on the foreign front is less visible to the eye. But our security, just like our currency, is now being mortgaged. Unless we reverse course it could well be "five minutes to midnight" for the United States of America.

With your help and the help of millions of others, we can begin to reverse course this November. We begin to choose a new road for America -- a road not just to peace in our time but to peace for all time. ?

Thank you very much.

# # #

EMBARGOED UNTIL:

delivery on:  
August 18, 1980,  
11:00 a.m. CDT.

CONTACT: Lyn Nofziger  
or  
Ken Towery  
(703) 685-3630

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE RONALD REAGAN  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS CONVENTION  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
AUGUST 18, 1980

---

PEACE:

Restoring the Margin of Safety

Thank you Commander Vanderclute.

Four weeks ago, I was deeply honored to go before a national convention of my party and accept the greatest honor they can bestow: their nomination for the Presidency of the United States.

What a wonderful pleasure it is now to come before you and accept your endorsement for that same high office.

I know you have broken an 80-year precedent to make this endorsement, and I only hope that four years from now you will be as happy with me as I am with you today. Because, my friends, nothing would mean more to me as President than to live up to your trust.

I also know full well today that the last four commanders of the VFW have all been Democrats. But this endorsement sends a message ringing across the land: when it comes to keeping America strong, when it comes to keeping America great, when it comes to keeping America at peace, then none of us can afford to be simply a Democrat or a Republican -- we must all stand united as Americans.

And that is what I intend to do in this campaign and in the next four years: to unite people of every background and faith in a great crusade to restore the America of our dreams.

America has been sleepwalking far too long. We have to snap out of it, and with your help, that's exactly what we're going to do.

The high and noble purpose of your great organization, to "honor the dead by helping the living," is personified by your gratuitous representation of veterans, their widows and orphans in claims with the Veterans Administration through your nationwide network of skilled service officers and, also, before the various discharge review and correction boards within the Department of Defense.

With respect to your legislative efforts to assist veterans, my colleagues inform me that your representatives in your Washington office, under the dynamic leadership of Cooper Holt, are highly professional, highly effective and highly respected within the halls of Congress. True, and most unfortunately your impressive legislative accomplishments of Congresses past have not been duplicated this second session of the 96th Congress. Not because your representatives have been found wanting in this area, but solely because this present anti-veteran administration has stacked the deck against you through the vast power of the White House. It has not escaped me that the Carter Administration has cut the Veterans Administration budget each and every year of its incumbency with respect to the Federal budget while our veteran population of 30

million is the highest in the history of our great republic. Where has the money denied our deserving veterans gone? Surely not to our national defense which is in shambles.

-- to me it is unconscionable that veterans in need are denied hospital and medical care because of inadequate funding which has closed hospital beds and cut health-care personnel within the VA.

-- to me it is a breach of faith that compensation for those with service-connected disabilities has not kept abreast of inflation and that the administration rammed through Congress a pension program admittedly designed to deny such to World War II and subsequent veterans and their survivors.

-- to me it is the height of hypocrisy for the administration in high sounding words to repeatedly tell us how much we owe our Vietnam veterans and, then, only in this election year recommend a stingy 10 percent increase in the GI bill when these veterans have not had an increase since 1977 and the Congressional Budget Office has stated they now need a 30 percent increase to catch-up.

-- to me the cruelest betrayal of all was the administration's proposed national health plan which, if passed, would have made the VA hospital and medical care system the nucleus of national health insurance. This, following repeated statements by the President that he supported the continued presence of an independent, progressive system of VA hospitals.

-- to me it is regrettable and insensitive of the administration to drag its feet in providing open national cemeteries in which

veterans can be interred near their survivors. And finally today let me personally pledge to uphold veteran's preference in Federal employment and to see it is strictly enforced in all federally funded program.

These are matters of great concern to your great organization. Let us turn now to a matter which vitally concerns our nation - "PEACE".

It has always struck me as odd that you who have known at firsthand the ugliness and agony of war are so often blamed for war by those who parade for peace.

The truth is exactly the reverse. Having known war, you are in the forefront of those who know that peace is not obtained or preserved by wishing and weakness. You have consistently urged maintenance of a defense capability that provides a margin of safety for America. Today, that margin is disappearing.

But because of your support for military preparedness, there are those who equate that with being militant and desirous of war. The great American humorist, Will Rogers, had an answer for those who believed that strength invited war. He said, "I've never seen anyone insult Jack Dempsey."

About 10 days ago, our new Secretary of State addressed a gathering on the West Coast. He took me to task about American military strength. Indeed, he denounced the Republican Party for pledging to restore that margin of safety which the Carter Administration had allowed to evaporate. Actually, I've called for whatever it takes to be strong enough that no other nation will dare violate

the peace. This is what we mean by superiority -- nothing more, nothing less. The American people expect that the nation will remain secure; they have a right to security and we have an obligation to provide it. But Mr. Muskie was downright angry. He charged that such a policy would lead to an all-out arms race. Well, I have a message for him -- one which he ignored for years as a Senator when he consistently voted against a strong national defense -- we're already in an arms race, but only the Soviets are racing. They are outspending us in the military field by 50 percent and more than double, sometimes triple, on their strategic forces.

One wonders why the Carter Administration fails to see any threatening pattern in the Soviet presence, by way of Cuban proxies, in so much of Africa, which is the source of minerals absolutely essential to the industrialized democracies of Japan, Western Europe, and the U.S. We are self-sufficient in only 5 of the 27 minerals important to us industrially and strategically, and so the security of our resource life line is essential.

Then there is the Soviet Cuban and East German presence in Ethiopia, South Yemen, and now the invasion and subjugation of Afghanistan. This last step moves them within striking distance of the oil-rich Arabian Gulf. And is it just coincidence that Cuban and Soviet-trained terrorists are bringing civil war to Central American countries in close proximity to the rich oil fields of Venezuela and Mexico? All over the world, we can see that in the face of declining American power, the Soviets and their friends are advancing. Yet the Carter Administration seems totally oblivious.



Clearly, world peace must be our number one priority. It is the first task of statecraft to preserve peace so that brave men need not die in battle. But it must not be peace at any price; it must not be a peace of humiliation and gradual surrender. Nor can it be the kind of peace imposed on Czechoslovakia by Soviet tanks just 12 years ago this month. And certainly it isn't the peace that came to Southeast Asia after the Paris Peace accords were signed.

Peace must be such that freedom can flourish and justice prevail. Tens of thousands of boat people have shown us there is no freedom in the so-called peace in Vietnam. The hill people of Laos know poison gas, not justice, and in Cambodia there is only the peace of the grave for at least one-third of the population slaughtered by the Communists.

For too long, we have lived with the "Vietnam Syndrome". Much of that syndrome has been created by the North Vietnamese aggressors who now threaten the peaceful people of Thailand. Over and over they told us for nearly 10 years that we were the aggressors bent on imperialistic conquests. They had a plan. It was to win in the field of propaganda here in America what they could not win on the field of battle in Vietnam. As the years dragged on, we were told that peace would come if we would simply stop interfering and go home.

It is time we recognized that ours was, in truth, a noble cause. A small country newly free from colonial rule sought our

help in establishing self-rule and the means of self-defense against a totalitarian neighbor bent on conquest. We dishonor the memory of 50,000 young Americans who died in that cause when we give way to feelings of guilt as if we were doing something shameful, and we have been shabby in our treatment of those who returned. They fought as well and as bravely as any Americans have ever fought in any war. They deserve our gratitude, our respect and our continuing concern.

There is a lesson for all of us in Vietnam. If we are forced to fight, we must have the means and the determination to prevail or we will not have what it takes to secure the peace. And while we are at it, let us tell those who fought in that war that we will never again ask young men to fight and possibly die in a war our government is afraid to let them win.

Shouldn't it be obvious to even the staunchest believer in unilateral disarmament as the sure road to peace that peace was never more certain than in the years following W.W. II when we had a margin of safety in our military power which was so unmistakable that others would not dare to challenge us?

The Korean tragedy was really not an exception to what I am saying, but a clear example of it. North Korea's attack on South Korea followed an injudicious statement from Washington that our sphere of interest in the Pacific and that our defense perimeter did not include Korea. Unfortunately, Korea also became our first "no win war," a portent of much that has happened since. But reflect for a moment how in those days the U.S. led free nations in other

parts of the world to join together in recovering from the ravages of war. Our will and our capacity to preserve the peace were unchallenged. There was no question about our credibility and our welcome throughout the world. Our erstwhile enemies became close friends and allies, and we protected the peace from Berlin to Cuba.

When John F. Kennedy demanded the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba and the tension mounted in 1962, it was Nikita Krushchev who backed down, and there was no war. It was because our strategic superiority over the Soviets was so decisive, by about a margin of 8 to 1.

But, then, in the face of such evidence that the cause of peace is best served by strength not bluster, an odd thing happened. Those responsible for our defense policy ignored the fact that some evidence of aggressive intent on the part of the Soviets was surely indicated by the placement of missiles in Cuba. We failed to heed the Soviet declaration that they would make sure they never had to back down again. No one could possibly misinterpret that declaration. It was an announcement of the Soviet intention to begin a military buildup, one which continues to this day.

Our policymakers, however, decided the Soviet Union would not attempt to catch us and that, for some reason, they would permanently accept second place as their proper position. Sometime later, in 1965, Secretary of Defense McNamara stated unequivocally that the Soviets were not attempting to compete with the U.S. on strategic Forces and were resigned to inferiority.

Fifteen years have passed since that exercise in self-delusion.

At that time we led the Soviet Union in about 40 strategic military categories. Today, they lead us in all but 6 or 8 and may well surpass us in those if present trends continue.

Soviet leaders talk arrogantly of a so-called "correlation of forces" that has moved in their favor, opening up opportunities for them to extend their influence. The response from the administration in Washington has been one of weakness, inconsistency, vacillation and bluff. A Soviet combat brigade is discovered in Cuba; the Carter Administration declares its presence 90 miles off our shore as "unacceptable". The brigade is still there. Soviet troops mass on the border of Afghanistan. The President issues a stern warning against any move by those troops to cross the border. They cross the border, execute the puppet President they themselves installed in 1978, and carry out a savage attack on the people of Afghanistan. Our credibility in the world slumps further. The President proclaims we'll protect the Middle East by force of arms and 2 weeks later admits we don't have the force.

Is it only Jimmy Carter's lack of coherent policy that is the source of our difficulty? Is it his vacillation and his indecision? Or is there another, more frightening possibility -- the possibility that this administration is being very consistent, that it is still guided by that same old doctrine that we have nothing to fear from the Soviets -- if we just don't provoke them.

Well, W.W. II came about without provocation. It came because nations were weak, not strong, in the face of aggression. Those same lessons of the past surely apply today. Firmness based on a strong defense capability is not provocative. But weakness can be provocative

simply because it is tempting to a nation whose imperialist ambitions are virtually unlimited.

We find ourselves increasingly in a position of dangerous isolation. Our allies are losing confidence in us, and our adversaries no longer respect us.

There is an alternative path for America which offers a more realistic hope for peace, one which takes us on the course of restoring that vital margin of safety. For thirty years since the end of World War II, our strategy has been to preserve peace through strength. It is steadiness and the vision of men like Dwight Eisenhower that we have to thank for policies that made America strong and credible.

The last Republican defense budget, proposed by President Ford, would have maintained the margin.

But the Carter Administration came to power on a promise of slashing America's defenses. It has made good on its promise.

Our program to restore the margin of safety must be prudent and measured. We must take a stand against terrorism in the world and combat it with firmness, for it is a most cowardly and savage violation of peace. We must regain that margin of safety I spoke of both in conventional arms and the deployment of troops. And we must allow no weakness in our strategic deterrent.

We do not stand alone in the world. We have Allies who are with us, who look to America to provide leadership and to remain strong. But they are confused by the lack of a coherent, principled,

policy from the Carter Administration. And they must be consulted, not excluded from, matters which directly affect their own interest and security.

When we ignore our friends, when we do not lead, we weaken the unity and strength that binds our alliances. We must now reverse this dangerous trend and restore the confidence and cohesion of the alliance system on which our security ultimately rests.

There is something else. We must remember our heritage, who we are and what we are, and how this nation, this island of freedom, came into being. And we must make it unmistakably plain to all the world that we have no intention of compromising our principles, our beliefs or our freedom. Our reward will be world peace; there is no other way to have it.

For more than a decade, we have sought a detente. The word means relaxation. We don't talk about a detente with our allies; there is no tension there that needs relaxing. We seek to relax tensions where there are tensions -- with potential enemies. And if those potential enemies are well armed and have shown a willingness to use armed force to gain their ends (for ends that are different from ours) then relaxing tensions is a delicate and dangerous but necessary business.

Detente has meaning only if both sides take positive actions to relax the tension. When one side relaxes while the other carries out the greatest military buildup in the history of mankind, the cause of peace has not been advanced.

Arms control negotiation can often help to improve stability but not when the negotiations are one-sided. And they obviously have been one-sided and will continue to be so if we lack steadiness and determination in keeping up our defenses.

I think continued negotiation with the Soviet Union is essential. We need never be afraid to negotiate as long as we remain true to our goals -- the preservation of peace and freedom -- and don't seek agreement just for the sake of having an agreement. It is important, also, that the Soviets know we are going about the business of restoring our margin of safety pending an agreement by both sides to limit various kinds of weapons.

I have repeatedly stated that I would be willing to negotiate an honest, verifiable reduction in nuclear weapons by both our countries to the point that neither of us represented a threat to the other. I cannot, however, agree to any treaty, including the SALT II treaty, which, in effect, legitimizes the continuation of a one-sided nuclear arms buildup.

We have an example in recent history of our ability to negotiate properly by keeping our objective clearly in mind until an agreement is reached. Back in the mid '50's, at the very height of the "cold war", Allied and Soviet military forces were still occupying Austria in a situation that was virtually a confrontation. We negotiated the Austrian State Treaty calling for the removal of all the occupying forces, Allied and Soviet. If we had negotiated in the manner we've seen these last few years, Austria would still be a divided country.

The American people must be given a better understanding of the challenge to our security and of the need for effort and, yes, sacrifice

to turn the situation around.

Our government must stop pretending that it has a choice between promoting the general welfare and providing for the common defense. Today they are one and the same.

Let our people be aware of the several objectives of Soviet strategy in this decade and the threat they represent to continued world peace. An attempt will be made to divide the NATO alliance and to separate, one at a time, our Allies and friends from the United States. Those efforts are clearly underway. Another objective I've already mentioned is an expansion of Soviet influence in the area of the Arabian Gulf and South Asia. Not much attention has been given to another move, and that is the attempt to encircle and neutralize the People's Republic of China. Much closer to home is Soviet-inspired trouble in the Caribbean. Subversion and Cuban-trained guerilla bands are targeted on Jamaica, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Leftist regimes have already taken over in Nicaragua and Grenada.

A central concern of the Kremlin will always be the Soviet ability to handle a direct confrontation with our military forces. In a recent address, Paul Nitze said; "The Kremlin leaders do not want war; they want the world." For that reason, they have put much of their military effort into strategic nuclear programs. Here the balance has been moving against us and will continue to do so if we follow the course set by this administration.

The Soviets want peace and victory. We must understand this and what it means to us. They seek a superiority in military strength that, in the event of a confrontation, would leave us with an



unacceptable choice between submission or conflict. Submission would give us peace alright -- the peace of a Czechoslovakia or an Afghanistan. But if we have the will and the determination to restore the margin of safety which this Administration seems bent on losing, we can have real peace because we will never be faced with an ultimatum from anyone.

Indeed, the men in the Kremlin could in the face of such determination decide that true arms limitation makes sense.

Our best hope of persuading them to live in peace is to convince them they cannot win at war.

For a nation such as ours, arms are important only to prevent others from conquering us or our allies. We are not a belligerent people. Our purpose is not to prepare for war or wish harm to others. When we had great strength in the years following W.W. II, we used that strength not for territorial gain but to defend others.

Our foreign policy should be to show by example the greatness of our system and the strength of American ideals. The truth is we would like nothing better than to see the Russian people living in freedom and dignity instead of being trapped in a backwash of history as they are. The greatest fallacy of the Lenin-Marxist philosophy is that it is the "wave of the future." Everything about it is primitive: compulsion in place of free initiative; coercion in place of law; militarism in place of trade; and empire-building in place of self-determination; and luxury for a chosen few at the expense of the many. We have seen nothing like it since the Age of Feudalism.

When people have had a free choice, where have they chosen Communism? What other system in the world has to build walls to keep its people in"?

Recently academician Andrei Sakharov, one of Russia's great scientists and presently under house arrest, smuggled a statement out of the Soviet Union. It turned up in the New York Times Magazine of June 8, where Sakharov wrote: "I consider the United States the historically determined leader of the movement toward a pluralist and free society, vital to mankind."

He is right. We have strayed off course many times and we have been careless with the machinery of freedom bequeathed to us by the Founding Fathers, but, somehow, it has managed to survive our frailties. One of those Founding Fathers spoke the truth when he said "God intended America to be free."

We have been a refuge for the persecuted and down-trodden from every corner of the world for 200 years. Today some of us are concerned by the latest influx of refugees, the boat people from Southeast Asia and from Cuba -- all fleeing from the inhumanity of Communism. We worry about our capacity to care for them. I believe we must make a concerted effort to help them, and that others in the world should share in the responsibility.

But let's do a better job of exporting Americanism. Let's meet our responsibility to keep the peace at the same time we maintain without compromise our principles and ideals. Let's help the world eliminate the conditions which cause citizens to become refugees.

I believe it is our pre-ordained destiny to show all mankind that they, too, can be free without having to leave their native shore.