

**The original documents are located in Box C35, folder “Presidential Handwriting, 2/19/1976” of the Presidential Handwriting File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

---

Copies of Presidential Handwriting left  
in Q&A book which was sent to Jim Shuman  
GF 2/19/76

RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION

Q: Isn't it inconsistent for you to denounce the Soviet Union for their involvement with Angola but at the same time negotiate a SALT II agreement with the Russians?

A: No, there is no inconsistency.

The only way we can have peace is through strength. That means standing up to the Russians whenever they try to expand their influence by military means or whenever they take any action which raises tension in the world and threatens world peace. We must be strong in order to stand up to the Russians and that is one reason I am so disappointed that Congress tied my hands and prevented the United States from helping its friends in Africa to oppose Russian and Cuban military activities in Angola.

On the other hand, I believe however we can reach a SALT II agreement with the Russians that would be in our own interest and would reduce the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It is my obligation to pursue those negotiations. The preliminary agreement I reached with General Secretary Brezhnev in Vladivostok allowed the United States to keep all or most of its missiles, submarines, and bombers. On the other hand, it required the Russians to cut back considerably on their plans for a nuclear arsenal. There was tough negotiating, and I believe we got a good bargain.

*Comparing these words which are completely different.*

Incidentally, if we don't reach a SALT II agreement with the Russians, I will have to ask the Congress for at least \$20 billion for new weapons because the nuclear arms race surely would be renewed and we would have to keep up with the Soviet Union.

Let me say a word about those who suggest that we should not pursue a policy of reducing tensions and the threat of war when it is ~~not~~ in our own interest, who say we should not pursue this policy which has been given the name "detente":

In my 18 months of day in and day out experience dealing with life and death issues of foreign policy, I have found that these issues are extremely complex. They cannot be dealt with in a simplistic way or with a gun slingers' mentality. I know it is tempting for some to look on complex foreign policy issues as a kind of "shoot-out at OK corral!"

But we live in an extremely complex and dangerous world and if we try to go back to the dark and dangerous days of confrontation of the cold war, if some people get an itchy trigger finger, the chance of war increases and this period of peace in which we are now living will be endangered.

REAGAN

Q. Since you are an incumbent President with all the power and publicity that goes with that office, isn't it embarrassing and probably fatal to your chances that you are running no better than you are against Ronald Reagan?

A. Where did you get the impression that I am not running well?

*Time poll.*

## DIFFERENCES WITH REAGAN

Q: You told us several weeks ago that there is no basic philosophical difference between you and Ronald Reagan. But in Florida you said Reagan was too extreme to be elected in November. Why have you changed your position?

A: The former Governor does seem to share many of the broad philosophical positions I have taken over the past 25 years in Congress, when I was Vice President, and now that I am President. Our differences come in the ways that these broad philosophical positions are translated into day-to-day policies and decisions.

I am more moderate, in the middle of the road. And I believe most Americans reject extreme approaches of politicians on both the right and the left. In addition, I have had 18 months of experience here in the White House making the hard decisions that a President must make day in and day out.

Let me give you a few examples of where I believe the former Governor and I differ on important matters of policy:

-- He has talked about making social security voluntary and about investing the social security trust fund in the stock market. My approach is, first to give all retired Americans the full cost of living increase on their social security this year, and, to make the social security system financially sound so that Americans now retired and those who will retire in the future are assured of the social security payments they have counted on all their working lives.

-- The former Governor has proposed doing away with \$90 billion in federal programs which help individual Americans as well as our cities and states. He wants to turn the problems back to the states and require the states to raise their own money to pay for these programs. My approach is just the opposite. I want to give the states the money in the form of tens of billions of dollars in revenue sharing and bloc grants and let them use the money to solve their problems in the way best suited to their own local conditions.

-- Former Governor Reagan's <sup>*Strong supporter Gov. of N.H.*</sup> ~~campaign manager~~ in New Hampshire has said that the 14th amendment to our Constitution, or parts of it, which guarantees equal justice under the law, should be repealed. Now I don't know whether Governor Reagan agrees with <sup>*the Gov. of N.H.*</sup> ~~his campaign manager~~ on that or not.

-- And finally, I have had day in and day out experience for 18 months dealing with the extremely complex foreign policy issues which can make the difference between peace and nuclear holocaust. These life and death foreign policy issues are too important and too complex to be treated like some bar room shoot-out in a Western movie.

REAGAN ATTACK ON  
FOREIGN POLICY

Q: Ronald Reagan has launched a broadscale attack on your foreign policy, suggesting in effect that your administration is too soft on communism. How do you respond to these charges?

A: Well, I would begin by saying that I hope Mr. Reagan is more faithful to the first 10 commandments than he has been to the 11th.

As to the substance of his comments, I don't think it is appropriate for me as the Chief Executive to comment upon the details of every charge hurled at us by political candidates of either party.

What I find generally is that our foreign policy is criticized most strongly by people at the extremes: on one extreme are those who want us to turn tail and run from every challenge. Those are the remnants of what used to be called the "bug out brigade", and we have seen them rise up in force on the Angola issue. I cannot and will not agree to that philosophy. America can secure peace only through a willingness to defend peace. I subscribe to the motto of "peace through strength", and I will never waver in that basic commitment.

*Partly from challenge in our study*

On the other extreme are those who want us to present a much more belligerent face to the world. My 18 months of dealing with life and death foreign policy issues in the Oval Office makes me realize that those who sound "trigger happy" when they start talking about nuclear weapons

have a dangerous and simplistic view of the world.

The dangers of nuclear holocaust and the spread of nuclear weapons are so strong today that we must continue negotiating with our adversaries for a mutual reduction in the arms race. That challenge may not seem so urgent today because our nation is at peace, but the last thing I want to wish upon our children is a return to the worst days of the Cold War. That is why I am pursuing a strong, balanced foreign policy -- and to be candid about it, I think that is the main reason we are at peace today.