

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED
TO THE CHICAGO COUNCIL OF
FOREIGN RELATIONS

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PALMER HOUSE HOTEL
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I welcome this opportunity to answer your questions about the foreign relations of the United States. Founded shortly after the first World War, your organization recognized much earlier than many Americans the importance of the international role which had been thrust upon this country by the course of history.

For more than half a century you have contributed significantly to greater understanding by our citizens of the foreign policy issues facing the United States. In the crucial years of the thirties just before World War II broke out in Europe, one of your former Council presidents, the late Governor Stevenson, pointedly stated your purpose.

"Only if we make ourselves aware of the problems that confront this tormented world of ours can the freedom and privileges which we have come to take for granted be assured to the future generations yet unborn." Years later, when I was campaigning ardently for General Eisenhower against Governor Stevenson, I never dreamed that I would be quoting both of them here in Chicago today.

But I can do so because the record-books of public service to America clearly show that, political rivals though they were, when the chips were down and the national interests of the United States were at stake, both President Eisenhower and Governor Stevenson were effective and dedicated champions of our bipartisan post-war policy of peace through strength.

President Eisenhower clearly stated our national purpose in these words:

"We seek peace, knowing that peace is the climate of freedom. And now, as in no other age, we seek it because we have been warned, by the power of modern weapons, that peace may be the only climate possible for human life itself..."

"We are called to meet the price of this peace. To counter the threat of those who seek to rule by force, we must pay the costs of our own needed military strength, and help to build the security of others." Our policy of peace through strength is not something that I have recently invented. It is something we first found in our history books when we read George Washington's wise counsel: "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace." Peace through strength was an issue in my first political campaign, when I followed the late Senator Arthur Vandenberg, my friend and mentor from Grand Rapids, in supporting NATO, the Marshall Plan and aid to Greece and Turkey.

Peace through strength was my consistent guide in the 553 votes I cast on defense and foreign policy issues while a member of the Congress of the United States, as ranking Republican on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, and as Minority Leader of the House. Peace through strength has been my constant goal as your President. Let me tell you what I mean by peace through strength, not with election year rhetoric, but by the record. Let me define our national security policy not with words, but with what we have actually done to advance peace in the world and maintain strength at home.

In my very first words after taking the solemn oath as President, I pledged an uninterrupted and sincere search for peace. I said: "America will remain strong and united, but its strength will remain dedicated to the safety and sanity of the entire family of man, as well as to our own precious freedom." One need only remember Pearl Harbor to know that weakness invites war. But now Americans are no longer fighting on any front. There are many sincere -- but in my judgment shortsighted -- people who believe that the billions for defense could be better spend for other programs.

I am convinced that adequate spending for national defense is an insurance policy -- an insurance policy for peace that we cannot afford to be without in today's world. We must have this life insurance because we face a powerful adversary armed with deadly weapons whose principles and purposes are fundamentally different from ours. We will work to reduce confrontations and avoid nuclear catastrophe. But we must also be prepared to meet challenge wherever and whenever they occur.

It is no secret that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have fundamental differences in political and economic ideology. We will never cease the defense of the principles for which we stand -- freedom, individual rights, and our deep belief that government exists to serve its citizens. Our task is a dual one: to defend and promote the ideals of the American people and to seek to reduce, wherever possible, the tensions and confrontations which could lead to nuclear holocaust. To do this, we must maintain a position of unquestioned strength.

That's why, a few months after becoming President, I sent Congress the highest peacetime budget in the nation's history -- more than \$104 billion. Regrettably, Congress cut over \$6 billion from my request.

This year again I have gone to the Congress with another record defense request of \$112.7 billion dollars.

My current defense budget requests before the Congress reflect my determination to maintain America's defenses -- both strategic and conventional -- at the levels our national security requires. They include an increase in real dollars of 7.4 billion dollars to buy new weapons systems, continue to improve the readiness of existing forces and to increase selected forces, while trimming off all the fat we can find.

Funds are included for 16 new ships for our Navy and continued modernization of the fleet including nuclear powered submarines and guided missile frigates. I will ask for more if a current study shows the Navy needs a faster buildup.

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Work will continue on the Trident submarine, the B-1 strategic bomber, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles, a new combat fighter for the Navy and Air Force, and advanced tanks, amphibious and infantry vehicles.

Just as I have persistently worked to maintain elements of America's strength, so have I diligently sought peace through that strength. Three times as President I have gone to Europe to reaffirm our NATO commitment with our Western allies, to coordinate our economic and energy policies with the industrialized democracies, and to improve our trade and contacts with the peoples of Eastern Europe and reassure them of the bond between us.

I went to Europe to say to the leaders of the Warsaw Pact nations -- indeed, to the leaders of 33 European nations, East and West, that the descendants of Europeans in America still live by the principles set forth here 200 years ago, that all men -- not just Americans, but all men and women everywhere -- are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I told them plainly -- and I am proud to say it again today -- that we Americans still believe in these principles -- that they remain the guidelines of our national policy -- and they continue to give hope to millions of people who long for liberty in Europe and around the world.

Twice as President I have travelled to Asia, to strengthen our vital partnership with postwar Japan and our other free allies and to further improve our relations with mainland China, which are essential to peaceful progress under my Pacific Doctrine. I also met in Vladivostok with General Secretary Brezhnev where we reached preliminary agreement on limits to the uncontrolled strategic nuclear arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States. As you know, we are still negotiating the details of such an agreement, and I cannot say when or even whether this will be completed. But I can say that ever since the Russians set off their first nuclear explosion in 1949, every President of the United States has been trying to slow down or stop this deadly duel and this is the closest we have ever come. And I will also say without hesitation that I will never agree to any such treaty or submit to the United States Senate for ratification unless I am totally convinced that it is in the best interests of the United States and of peace in the world.

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If we do get a good SALT II agreement, it will keep a lid on strategic arms for the next seven to ten years. It will compel the Russians to cut back on their current plans. To fully verify any such agreement, we will have to maintain our United States intelligence capability as the finest in the world.

That is why I have ordered a basic reform to strengthen and improve our foreign intelligence operations and at the same time stop any future abuses of the rights of Americans. Both these duties are the job and the responsibility of the President of the United States. But I will not let anybody wreck our worldwide intelligence capability.

I happen to believe it's time we stopped down-grading America and America's institutions. I have faith in this country, in the goodness of its people and the rightness of its purposes. Because we have used our great strength and our great abundance to help others, the United States is able to play a positive role as peacemaker in the world.

The Sinai Agreement between Israel and Egypt reached last September is working well and is a milestone toward a permanent settlement in the Middle East. We are strengthening our old and new friendships with the nations of Latin America and Africa, and I have warned Castro's Cuba and his Soviet sponsors against any further armed adventurism on either continent. We are standing up and speaking out for our principles in the United Nations and will continue to do so. We are promoting our overseas trade and have restored a favorable balance, in large part through the efforts of American farmers whose productivity is one of our Nation's greatest strengths for peace.

Peace and strength are part of a single policy, two sides of the same coin. Secretary of State Kissinger and your fellow Illinoisan, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, are carrying out a single United States policy. A good example of this appears in this week's U.S. News and World Report, which contains extensive interviews with both of my Cabinet members. They were questioned separately, and neither knew the other's answers. But the policy they set forth is clearly and completely consistent. They have different responsibilities, but a single goal. That goal -- peace through strength -- is the right policy for this country in the very difficult and dangerous times in which we live.

Lincoln told troubled Americans of his time to have faith that right makes might. He did not neglect the strength that material might provides. Nor can we. But neither must we forget the rightness of what we stand for in the world. We stand for freedom -- because freedom is right. We stand for peace -- because peace is right.

We stand for strength -- our national strength that makes both peace and freedom secure -- for ourselves and for others -- because that kind of strength is right and will certainly prevail.

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