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Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Paterson, New Jersey)

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED TO THE
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

CLEVELAND, OHIO

I am honored, once again, to address the National Conference of Christians and Jews. You are striving to make brotherhood more than just a phrase. You are enriching the lives of all Americans by working to keep our democracy real and flourishing.

You have tonight given the Human Relations Award to my dear friend Frances Bolton, with whom I had the pleasure of serving in the Congress for twenty years. I know, from personal experience, her contributions to our country and her dedication to humanity. She liberated herself long before the age of woman's liberation. The first woman to be elected to the Congress from Ohio, the first woman member of the Congress to head an official mission abroad, the first woman to be appointed a Congressional delegate to the United Nations, and one of the first members of the Congress to recognize the special importance of Africa and the Middle East in international affairs. She is the best proof of women's equality in America. I am proud of her; you are proud of her.

This organization works to promote harmony and brotherhood -- and I must say sisterhood -- among people of all religions and races. Frances Bolton, very early, understood America's interest in promoting harmony and peace among all countries and peoples of the world.

You know, when I start to talk about foreign policy, it sounds like I am talking about foreign problems. Actually, I am talking about people: people like me who represent people like you. When I am at the negotiating table with a foreign leader, I am not looking across the table at a nation. I am looking at another person. The differences between nations that keep us apart are less important than the similarities that bring us together as people. This is the lesson of our common humanity. Our foreign policy today is based on man's respect for man; on our understanding that we are indeed "...riders on the earth together..."; and a constant effort to make reason the strongest force in the conduct of nations.

This is why America has long sought to use its strength for peace. This is why America has always stood for freedom and justice, self-determination, the duty of the strong towards the weak, of the prosperous towards the poor. Americans have learned that we cannot police every remote corner of the earth nor fill every empty bowl. But we can be an immense influence for good and for justice -- for reason and for peace in the world. We have made mistakes; we have learned from those mistakes rather than being disillusioned by them. We must now carry out our responsibilities with the wisdom and maturity we have gained.

I pointed out in my first State of the Union message in January, 1975: "At no time in our peacetime history has the state of the Nation depended more heavily on the state of the world. And seldom, if ever, has the state of the world depended more heavily on the state of our Nation.

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I spoke then at a time of trouble -- a time of division among Americans of economic recession and energy shortage, of Constitutional crisis and national self-doubt. Now we are in the midst of gathering recovery -- in our unity, in our economy, in our self-confidence. Yet it has become increasingly apparent that the interconnection between peace, prosperity, and justice in the United States, and in the world, is a permanent fact of international relations. On this shrinking planet, our self-interest and our ideals compel us to use our vast power to help shape the world's future. This will be our challenge for as far ahead as we can see.

In my travels across the country, I have found that the American people know this. They know that we cannot have security for ourselves unless we maintain the global balance of power. They know that we cannot remain prosperous, and spread prosperity to more Americans, in a world which is deeply divided by confrontations between rich and poor, producers and consumers, free-market economies and centrally-planned economies. They know that America cannot continue to exist as a just society by turning its eyes away from injustice elsewhere in the world.

The American people are ready to do their share. But we are tired of those who deliberately belittle our Nation, running down our strengths and poisoning the political debate. The American people know that this is a strong country and that this is a good country. In my meetings with world leaders, I have found that they are getting this message. The resilience of our economy and society, after all we have been through, is clear to everyone. Today our allies and friends have new faith in our commitments; our potential adversaries have no doubt about the risks of further adventurism. The simple fact is, we are winning. The foundation of our world role is American military strength. Throughout my career I have been a champion of a strong defense, which is essential to our own security and to international stability. Largely because of this strength we are at peace. On this day -- the anniversary of D-Day -- no American soldier is fighting on any battlefield anywhere in the world. And we are engaged in realistic negotiations with adversaries to reduce the dangers of future confrontations, and wars. As a Nation, we have pulled our economy back onto the road of prosperity and stable growth. Nothing else we do has such benefit not only for every American family but for millions of families around the world whose well-being depends in large measure on the vigor of the world economy. Finally, we are at peace not only with others but with ourselves. In overcoming the doubts and dissension of the past, we have regained our position as a vital moral force in the world. Now, as much as ever, America is a beacon of hope to all who yearn for freedom, well-being and justice. In this, our Bicentennial year, we rightly celebrate our past. We have earned it. But it is also a moment to think about our future. The quest for peace will always be unfinished. What are the real issues that the country will face over the next four years? The real issues of today are not always the issues that make headlines or attract the attention of campaigners.

-- Although we are at peace; we must consolidate this peace for ourselves and for our children and children everywhere. We must never forget the tremendous responsibility we bear as the world's strongest military and economic power. What we do -- or fail to do -- can often have decisive impact. Therefore, I will continue to propose defense programs to the Congress that fully meet the requirements of our security. We can no longer afford the trend of thoughtless cutbacks in defense programs. We will vigorously resist future reductions in expenditures for adequate defenses.

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--Secondly, we must have the vision and courage to use that strength, with diplomacy--to build a better world for our children and children everywhere. We must conduct an imaginative, bold diplomacy, that shows creative American leadership, instead of just reacting to events as they come.

--Thirdly, we must move ahead on the road of economic recovery, strengthening our economy, guarding against inflation, and working with other nations to promote global economic expansion. With the emergence of new nations and the economic impact of the Communist countries, major changes have taken place in the world's economic system. We must adjust the world economy for these new conditions. These basic issues are one of the subjects the leaders of the major industrial democracies will discuss at the Puerto Rico Summit I have convened for later this month. I envisage further such summits in the future. Also, we will reach important agreements in the multi-lateral trade negotiations in Geneva. We will continue discussions with our major partners on strengthening the monetary system.

--Fourth, our alliances with the great industrial democracies must be relevant to the concerns of a new era--an era of economic issues, and an era of intensified negotiations with adversaries. We must maintain our unity in these positive endeavors as we maintained it in periods of threatening danger. This means cooperation on a more equal basis among allies; and a regular practice of close consultation. I will continue my practice of frequent contacts with my colleagues, the leaders of our major allies in Europe, Canada and Japan.

--It is clear now that relations with our adversaries must be managed on a long-term basis. We have successfully maintained the balance of power, but where do we go from here? The answer is carefully planned, patient efforts to negotiate, to lower tensions, to find solutions to problems, to be willing to mold coexistence into cooperation. There will be obstacles and disappointments. But confident in our purpose to maintain freedom, we will persevere. This is a President's responsibility.

--We have embarked on the path of halting and reversing the strategic arms spiral; we must continue with both vigilance and perseverance until we have banned the horrors of nuclear war. I will seek a successful conclusion of this round of the SALT negotiations, to finalize the accord I reached with General Secretary Brezhnev at Vladivostok a year and a half ago. When concluded, I will submit such an agreement to the Congress and the American people regardless of any alleged political advantage or disadvantage.

--We must continue and develop our new relationship with China. China is a major country, a great country. It contains a quarter of mankind. No stable global peace can be built without its constructive contribution. The United States will carry on in this process, with fidelity toward our friends and goodwill toward all.

--We have taken important initiatives towards helping resolve the problems of the Middle East and Southern Africa. Peaceful solutions may be more possible now than at any moment before--or in the future. Regional conflicts can pose wider dangers. The world community cannot let them fester and explode. We are morally committed to the survival and security of Israel; we also have significant and growing friendships with the moderate nations of the Arab world. Because of the steps we have taken, the time is approaching when successful effort can be made for a just and lasting negotiated peace in the Middle East.

--We will continue America's efforts to help resolve local conflicts, whether in Lebanon or Cyprus or elsewhere. And we are redoubling our efforts to combat the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

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--We have opened a hopeful new dialogue with the less developed nations. We must continue that process on the basis of mutual respect, making it a fruitful vehicle for developing their economies and contributing to international prosperity. America will continue to offer bold proposals in the economic dialogue with the developing countries, as we have done. We will not be pressured or blackmailed. But talks between producers and consumers of energy, between rich nations and poor, will continue until cooperative solutions are reached to the common challenge of interdependence.

--And most importantly, we are regaining our self-confidence and pride at home. Let us face the future confidently. Our role abroad should be a continuing source of pride. We must live our ideals, so that America will find true peace, prosperity and justice at home and thus help to realize these dreams around the world. I intend to see that Congress and the Executive find a cooperative way of working together, so that essential national policies can be forward with full national unity behind them.

This is a program for peace. I intend to make it a reality. Let us heed the words of the 34th Psalm, which urges us all to "seek peace, and pursue it."

As we never cease our vigilance, let us never lose our vision of what we want the world to be. This is the spirit of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. This is the highest responsibility of a President.

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