

## **Radio Address to the Nation on Foreign Policy Achievements**

*August 27, 1988*

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My fellow Americans:

I want to talk to you today about some good things that are happening around the world, a move toward peace that shows how successful this nation's commitment to peace through strength has been.

In the Persian Gulf, a cease-fire has been declared in one of this era's most horrible conflicts, the Iran-Iraq war. In Asia, half the Soviet Union's invasion force has left Afghanistan, and the rest are due out early next year. In Southeast Asia, Vietnam has promised to withdraw its occupation force from Cambodia. In southern Africa, we're brokering an agreement that may lead to the departure of all Cuban and South African forces from Angola. And we seem to have a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union because of the Afghanistan withdrawal, human rights improvements, and the INF treaty that eliminates an entire class of U.S. and Soviet nuclear missiles.

Peace is gaining ground, but the gains haven't just come in the last few months. It's taken 7 1/2 years of effort. We came into office convinced that the word "peace" is just an empty slogan unless the word "strength" follows hard upon it. Peace is a godly thing, but men are seldom godly. What we've learned is that peace is hard to achieve unless the forces of good have the strength to stand firmly for it.

Before we took office in 1981, the globe was reeling from an explosion of international turbulence. Our nation had neglected its defenses for years while some assured us that a passive America would enjoy a peace that was more, not less, secure. But that's not how things turned out. Soon we saw Vietnam invade Cambodia and the Soviet Union invade Afghanistan. Iraq and Iran began their war during this period as well. Over and over, we Americans saw that when our nation does not maintain her strength, peace has no anchor in the world.

Our resolve was tested early on. The Soviet Union had deployed highly destabilizing intermediate-range missiles in Europe and Asia, a threat to peace. With our NATO allies, we went to the Soviets with a proposal: Get rid of those missiles, we said, before we match them with missiles of our own. And the Soviets turned us down. They were daring us to deliver, and we did. Our determination, and that of our allies, to see our missiles installed in Europe convinced the Soviet Union that the days of unilateral disarmament were over. And once the Soviets learned they could not intimidate us or cajole us into giving them the advantage, they came to the bargaining table. They did business because we proved we meant business.

We also meant business when we said we would not sit idly by as noble and brave Afghan freedom fighters resisted an invasion of their country. Our aid to the Afghan resistance has been of critical importance in the Soviet decision to go home. Once again, they did business because we proved we meant business.

In Angola, Jonas Savimbi's UNITA has been fighting for 13 years against the Marxist regime and its Cuban protectors. In 1975, President Gerald Ford wanted to help, but some in Congress felt our standing with the freedom fighters would only prolong hostilities. A law was passed that made aid illegal, and the war dragged on—the Cubans multiplied. In 1985 Congress repealed the law and began supporting UNITA. Now the Cubans are talking of a pullout. They're doing business because we showed them we meant business. We've proved that we can stand united as a country that means business—business for peace.

Our bipartisan policy in the Persian Gulf has been to stand firm against Iranian aggression and for the principle of free navigation. Now the Iran-Iraq war is coming to a close. Why? One reason, as retired Admirals Elmo Zumwalt and Worth Bagley put it, was that the allied naval operation—designed to be a deterrent—worked.

Contrast these successes with the tragic situation in Nicaragua. It's been almost 2 years since Congress has approved any military aid to the brave freedom fighters there. Here's the results: The Sandinistas come to the bargaining table making promises to bring democracy and end the war, and then they violate those promises with impunity. They kick out our Ambassadors, oppress their people, arrest their opposition, muzzle the media, and engage in vicious assaults on civilians to get them to stop aiding the freedom fighters. They feel free to do all this because they do not believe that we mean business.

Our policy of peace through strength has been vindicated wherever it's been tried.

There is still time to turn the tide in Nicaragua. We shouldn't be overly optimistic, for freedom still faces serious challenges, whether in South Asia or Eastern Europe. But the future for world peace is bright if we Americans continue to stand firm, stand tall, and stand for freedom.

Until next week, thank you for listening, and God bless you.

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*Note: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. from the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles, CA.*

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