

Radio Address to the Nation on Foreign Policy

September 21, 1985

My fellow Americans:

During the next 10 days at the White House, matters of central importance to our country's role in the world and to the peace and prosperity of all nations will be dealt with.

This week I will meet President Mubarak of Egypt; next week with King Hussein of Jordan. In both meetings, one item will dominate the agenda—peace between Israel and her neighbors. King Hussein has made clear his wish for a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict which has plagued the Middle East and the world for so long. He foresees a peace negotiated directly between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and is committed to begin those negotiations, if possible, by the end of the year. We're doing all we can to support the efforts to make this vision a reality. Egypt, President Mubarak's nation, has already proven that peace between the Israelis and Arabs is possible and now faces other problems—a troubled economy at home and danger on some of its borders. We're doing all we can to help Egypt meet these challenges because we know that a secure and prosperous Egypt is the cornerstone of peace and stability in that region.

King Hussein, President Mubarak, and I will also discuss the war between Iran and Iraq. America and other nations have worked for years now to bring this war to an end—so far, to no avail. Yet if we cannot end the fighting, we and close friends like Egypt and Jordan can keep it from spreading. In particular, we're determined to preserve the free shipment of oil through the Persian Gulf.

Next Friday I'll meet the new Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. He and I will discuss human rights, regional conflicts such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, bilateral issues such as trade between our two countries, and security matters including our efforts to achieve genuine, verifiable reductions in nuclear arms. As Mr. Shevardnadze and I meet, it will be 6 months since Mr. Gorbachev became the new Soviet leader, and this will give our meeting special significance.

As you know, the Soviet Union frequently has been bent upon expansion. Indeed, since the 1970's the Soviet Union has been engaged in a military buildup which far exceeds any rational definition of its defensive needs. These policies have inflicted bitter costs upon the Soviet peoples. Every week Russian soldiers are dying in Afghanistan, while their standard of living has suffered accordingly. Mr. Gorbachev can change this; he can set in train a policy of arms reductions and lasting peace. By shifting resources from armaments to people, he can enable his nation to enjoy far more economic growth. Given the nature of the Soviet system and its ideology, we must not raise false hopes, but during my meeting with Mr. Shevardnadze, I will express the good will of the United States and search for signs of a Soviet willingness to engage in genuine give and take.

Mr. Shevardnadze and I will both have in mind the approaching meeting between myself and Mr. Gorbachev. Again, with regard to this meeting, we must not raise false hopes. The differences between communism and democracy are profound. There will inevitably be competition between us, but it's the central responsibility of the leaders of the United States and the U.S.S.R. to ensure that this competition is peaceful. In these meetings, we will make clear to the Soviet leaders that we are determined to protect Western interests, but willing at the same time to do our part to improve American-Soviet relations. If there's comparable seriousness and flexibility on the Soviet part, cooperation between our two great nations will be enhanced. Already many in our administration are toiling on preparations. On Friday I will tell Mr. Shevardnadze how genuinely we wish this meeting to bear fruit.

Turning from foreign affairs to international trade, in recent weeks there has been sentiment growing in the Congress for some form of protectionism—legislation which would make it difficult or impossible for us to exchange whole categories of goods with our trading partners. On Monday I'll address our absolute commitment to trade that is both free and fair. For now, let me simply state that the answer to our trade problems isn't anti-trade legislation; it's more economic growth worldwide.

My friends, the dangers to world peace and prosperity are ever present. But I believe that with your support, during the next 10 days, we'll be able to promote peace and advance the cause of free and fair international trade.

Now, in closing, I want to talk about the tragedy of the Mexican earthquake, which has brought a great outpouring of sympathy and offers of assistance from the American people. We greatly admire the bravery and resolve of the Mexican people to dedicate all their resources to overcome this calamitous event. A tragedy like this reminds us that the desire to be a good neighbor is basic to the American character and to our foreign policy. We have already

provided some technical assistance, as requested by the Mexican Government, and stand ready to help in every way in the days and months ahead. To aid in that effort, Nancy will go to Mexico within the next few days to express the support of the American people for our courageous friends in Mexico and to explore how we can lend a hand in this ordeal.

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

Note: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. from Camp David, MD.

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