

Arms Control: Soviet Compliance

Q: There is a long record of serious charges of Soviet cheating on SALT I and the ABM Treaty, on the agreement banning biological weapons and on the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. Recently, there have been questions about whether the Soviets are really abiding by all the limits in the SALT II Treaty while it is pending ratification.

What is your Administration's record on raising -- and satisfactorily resolving -- compliance issues with the Soviets? Has your Administration ever held back pursuing a SALT or other arms control compliance issues with the Soviets? Do you believe the Soviets abide by arms control agreements? In short, can they be trusted?

Response: I am appalled by the ill-informed -- and irresponsible -- charges by the Republican Party that my Administration is "covering up" Soviet violations of SALT I and SALT II, as well as other arms control agreements. It is an insult to my integrity and patriotism to allege that I, or any official in my Administration, would suppress evidence of a Soviet violation of an arms control agreement, or would fail to take appropriate action to resolve any outstanding question.

The simple fact is that the Soviet Union has, on certain occasions, pushed to the limits of the SALT I agreement. The Soviet Union seems to abide by the letter, certainly not the spirit of its arms control obligations. This is why my Administration, and all Administrations, Republican as well as Democratic, since President Eisenhower, have sought to negotiate carefully drafted arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. There were

unfortunate ambiguities in the SALT I Interim Agreement negotiated by President Nixon. In SALT II, my Administration has taken enormous pains to draft an agreement that avoids such ambiguities and loopholes.

The Soviet Union has abided by its obligations in the SALT I Interim Agreement and the ABM Treaty. And the Soviet Union continues to observe the limits of the SALT II Treaty, as is the United States, while it is pending ratification. United States monitoring and other intelligence capabilities are capable of detecting potential Soviet violations. I state categorically to the American people that my Administration has raised with the Soviets every serious compliance question which we were justified in doing on the basis of our monitoring and intelligence information. All of these SALT compliance issues have either been satisfactorily resolved, or are still under active consideration in the periodic meetings of the SALT Standing Consultative Committee, which meets regularly to consider compliance and other SALT matters.

September 11, 1980

Arms Control: TNF Negotiations

Q: Why did your Administration recently agree to meet with the Russians to have "preliminary discussions" about theater nuclear arms control talks in Europe? Wouldn't it be better to wait until after November 4 to begin such discussions? What do you hope to achieve by such talks? Aren't we really entering these talks to pacify our allies who fear a nuclear arms race in Europe? Do you believe there is any serious prospect of reducing Soviet SS-20 deployments?

Response

In an historic action last December, NATO decided to modernize theater nuclear forces with the deployment of 572 U.S. long-range Pershing ballistic missiles and Ground-Launched crisis missiles. These new missiles will be capable of striking targets in the Soviet Union from bases in Western Europe.

The NATO decision was in response to an ongoing Soviet buildup of its theater nuclear forces, in particular with the new mobile, triple warhead SS-20 missile, and the Backfire bomber.

At the same time, NATO agreed that the U.S. should offer to negotiate equal limits on long-range theater nuclear weapons with the Soviets. The U.S. expressed its readiness to conduct such negotiations in the context of SALT III. Further, we stated our willingness to begin preliminary discussions of theater nuclear limitations even prior to the start of SALT III. I believe such preliminary exchanges could be helpful. Negotiations on

theater nuclear systems will be a new area, with new concepts to work out and new objectives to define.

However, the Soviets chose to set totally unacceptable preconditions to accepting our offer of negotiations. They demanded that NATO renounce or at least suspend its decision to deploy new missiles, before they would begin talks. The Soviets would continue their own SS-20 and Backfire deployments unabated. Clearly, the Soviet goal was to divide the Alliance on the modernization decision, which was politically very sensitive in several European countries.

We and our allies stood firmly together on our December decision. Finally, late this summer, the Soviets recognized the true extent of NATO's determination; and agreed to our December offer of talks. We immediately began consulting with our allies in preparation for the preliminary exchanges. With the agreement of our NATO partners, the initial exchanges will take place this fall.

NATO is firmly agreed that these talks, and subsequent negotiations will not delay in any way implementation of the December modernization decision. We are prepared to enter into an equal, balanced agreement limiting these weapons on both sides. But we will not hold up our essential TNF deployments while awaiting the outcome of negotiations.

These preliminary exchanges on TNF arms control are extremely important for the future of the SALT process.

They will take place in the framework of SALT III, and will deal directly with issues of vital concern to our NATO allies. This is another urgent reason for ratifying the SALT II Treaty and getting on to SALT III without delay.

Arms Control: Sverdlvosk and BW Convention

Q: What is your Administration going to get to the bottom on the anthrax outbreak last year in the Soviet city of Sverdlvosk? Why didn't you charge the Soviets with a violation of the Biological Weapons Convention at the Review Conference on this Agreement last March? Are you going to lodge a complaint at the UN Security Council? What do you intend to do if the Soviets refuse to give a satisfactory explanation? Will the US withdraw from the BW Treaty? Doesn't this episode prove the Russians do cheat on arms control agreements?

Response

Before I state my Administration's position on the Sverdlvosk incident, let me just put the Biological Weapons Convention into context.

In 1969, President Nixon ordered the unilateral destruction of all US biological weapons because it was clear that such weapons had no practical military value and were morally repugnant.

In 1975, the US joined a multilateral treaty or convention -- now signed by most nations, including the Soviet Union -- banning the development, production, possession or use of biological weapons. The Nixon Administration told the Senate, in seeking ratification, that the ban had only limited verifiability. Nevertheless, with the support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, President Nixon believed, and the Senate agreed, that ratification was still in the US interests: we had already given up our own biological weapons, and it was hoped the Convention would discourage others from developing these ghastly and useless weapons.

Even though the limited verifiability of the Convention was deemed acceptable by an earlier Administration, I am deeply disturbed by evidence that an outbreak of anthrax in the Soviet city of Sverdlovsk, in the spring of 1979, could have been caused by an accident which released a deadly cloud of anthrax spores. This raises a serious question as to whether the Soviets were engaged in work banned by the Biological Weapons Convention. But beyond this, it raises very serious questions about Soviet willingness to cheat on arms control agreements, even ones of lesser importance where there are few or no advantages to such cheating. This episode underscores my determination not to enter into any arms control agreement with the Soviet Union that is not adequately verifiable, as is the case with the SALT treaty.

My Administration raised this matter with the Soviets as soon as we had sufficient information to justify an approach. We proposed consultations to clarify the circumstances of that incident. The Soviets have refused such consultations and have explained that the incident was caused by people eating anthrax-infected meat, a common source of the disease. This explanation is not consistent with our information.

My Administration has not yet charged the Soviets with a violation of the BW Convention. We do not yet have sufficient information to do so. I have directed

the Intelligence Community to continue to collect and evaluate evidence about this incident. At the same time, I am reviewing alternatives for seeking a satisfactory resolution, including appropriate steps by the United States and other concerned nations in the United Nations. I will state categorically that my Administration will not let the matter rest with the Soviet rejection of our legitimate request for consultations under Article V of the Convention; and I will take appropriate measures when we determine the most effective course of action and coordinate our plans with other parties.

September 27, 1980

Arms Control: Soviet Use of Chemical Weapons in Afghanistan

Q: What is your Administration's assessment of the reports of Soviet use of chemical weapons in Afghanistan, and by Soviet clients in Laos and Kampuchea? Why hasn't your Administration charged the Soviets with a violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol? Why are you continuing negotiations on a chemical weapons treaty at the same time the Soviets are violating an international ban on use of CW by dropping gas on Afghan villages?

Do you believe the US should start modernizing its own stockpile with binary chemical weapons?

Response: There is significant evidence that the Soviet Union has used incapacitating -- and perhaps lethal -- chemical weapons against the villages of Afghanistan. If this evidence is true, the Soviets are engaged in a barbarous immoral and illegal practice which merits the repugnance of all humanity.

I have directed the intelligence agencies of the United States Government to seek intensively all possible information about reported Soviet use of chemical weapons in Afghanistan. Further, I have directed the State Department to engage in worldwide consultations with our Allies and friends, as well as the non-aligned to share and exchange information that is available regarding possible Soviet use of chemical weapons in Afghanistan, as well as reports of use of chemical weapons by Soviet-supported regimes in Kampuchea and Laos.

Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Laos are not signatories of the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning first use of chemical

weapons, and technically are not protected by it. But such an argument is sophistry. International law and practice now universally condemns first use of chemical weapons.

U.S. CW Modernization

The United States maintains a chemical weapons capability as a deterrent to Soviet use of chemical weapons. Our chemical weapons are to retaliate against Soviet use against us or our Allies.

Congress has approved funds for beginning construction of a new chemical weapons production plant to manufacture the so-called "binary chemical weapons" (in which two relatively harmless chemicals are combined to make a toxic agent).

I did not request these funds. Building new chemical weapons is a complex issue with potentially significant military, foreign policy and arms control implications. Earlier this year, I directed that a major study be undertaken of chemical weapon modernization, including the military, foreign policy and arms control aspects.

For that reason, I believe Congress' action in funding construction of a production facility in the Fiscal Year 1981 budget was premature. When the chemical weapons study is completed, I plan to make specific recommendations in the FY 1982 budget process.

September 26, 1980

Response to the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

Q: The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. Nine months later 85,000 Soviet troops are still there. The Soviets appear to be no closer to achieving their goal of subduing the Afghan people now than they were in December. Given this situation, would it not be fair to say that your actions to force the Soviets to end their aggression in Afghanistan have failed? What further actions should be taken?

Response

The Soviet effort to destroy the national independence of Afghanistan through military force must be sternly resisted by the international community. This attempt to subjugate an independent, nonaligned Islamic people is a callous violation of international law and the United Nations Charter, two fundamentals of international order. Hence, it is also a dangerous threat to world peace. For the first time since World War II, the Soviets have sent combat forces into an area that was not previously under their control, into a nonaligned and sovereign state.

The firm actions the United States has taken in recent months -- on grain sales, on technology, on fishing rights, on exchanges and on the Olympics -- are meant to demonstrate that aggression bears a price. These actions are intended not to provoke confrontation, but to avoid confrontation by discouraging future Soviet adventures that could lead to new crisis. These are measured responses, not reckless proposals as Governor Reagan's suggestion that we should blockade Cuba with military forces until the Soviets are out of Afghanistan.

By the steps we have taken -- on grain, on technology, on the Olympics, on draft registration -- we have conveyed, clearly and concretely, the seriousness of the American people.

Most Americans support the steps we have taken. For they understand that we cannot express our national resolve without individual sacrifice -- from farmers, from businessmen, from athletes, and others. Governor Reagan apparently does not understand this. He has opposed many of the steps I have taken.

We have also moved to address the security situation in the Persian Gulf region. We have:

-- increased and accelerated our military preparedness for contingencies in the area (greater naval presence in the Indian Ocean; RDF; prepositioning of equipment; new base and port access rights);

-- placed potential adversaries on notice that we would regard an attempt to control the Persian Gulf region as an assault on our vital interests, to be met by any means necessary, including military force;

-- worked to strengthen the security and stability of nations in the region (e.g. Western aid to Turkey, Pakistan; Camp David peace process).

And, finally, we have worked with other nations to strengthen the international response to this Soviet aggression:

-- few nations have been so sharply and broadly condemned (104 nations in the UN; Islamic nations - twice);

-- have pressed our friends and allies to support the direct measures we have taken and to sustain their own sanctions against the Soviet Union.

When we undertook these policies, we had no illusions that they would bring about an immediate reconsideration of Soviet policy. The Soviet Union is a superpower. It will take time for the Soviet Union to realize that its aggression against Afghanistan represents a major miscalculation. But the actions we have taken -- and those of our Allies -- are having an impact. For example, evidence continues to mount that the grain embargo is having a substantial, adverse impact on the Soviet economy, and, in particular, on the livestock industry. By suspending grain sales above the 8 million metric tons (MMT) required by our bilateral agreement, we denied the Soviets 17 MMT. We estimate that they will be able to make up only 8-9 MMT of this amount. As a result, meat production in the Soviet Union has suffered. Soviet plans to provide their citizens more meat and dairy products have been stymied.

But it will take time for the Soviet Union to reassess its policy. When it does, we are prepared to consider realistic arrangements to restore a neutral, nonaligned Afghanistan. With the withdrawal of Soviet troops, we would end our sanctions.

At this time, however, we must never be so unsure of ourselves that we fear negotiation with the Soviet Union. I do not believe that our national interests would be served if we adopted Governor Reagan's position of absolutely "no communication" with the Soviet Union until they are out of Afghanistan. We can protect our interests while we

seek to achieve balanced and enforceable agreements to limit the growth of arms. I intend to move ahead with preliminary talks with the Soviets to limit long-range, theater nuclear forces in Europe. I also intend to press for ratification of the SALT II Treaty -- an agreement that is clearly in our national interest -- as soon as that goal is achievable.

To conclude, I believe we will strengthen our long-term security, not through rhetoric as offered by Governor Reagan, but through a clear and lasting demonstration of our national will to oppose aggression. And we will also strengthen our security through a willingness to seek concrete agreements that serve our national interests.

Governor Reagan on the Response to the
Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

Of the three steps the President initiated to counter the Soviets, Reagan opposed both the grain embargo and draft registration, and he vacillated on the Olympic boycott.

Grain Embargo

Reagan has long been an opponent of selling wheat to the Russians. He has, on two occasions, advocated halting grain sales to the Soviet Union.

"But isn't there also a moral issue? Are we not helping the Godless tyranny maintain its hold on millions of helpless people? Wouldn't those helpless victims have a better chance of becoming free if their slave masters collapsed economically?...Maybe there is an answer -- we simply do what's morally right. Stop doing business with them. Let their system collapse, but meantime buy our farmers' wheat ourselves and have it on hand to feed the Russian people when they finally become free."

Radio Transcript
October 29, 1975

After disclosure of a Russian brigade in Cuba, Reagan said:

"If the Russians want to buy wheat from us...I wouldn't sell it to them."

L.A. Times
Sept. 30, 1979

However, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan Reagan commented:

"I just don't believe the farmer should be made to pay a special price for our diplomacy, and I'm opposed to what's being done (proposed Soviet grain embargo)."

Washington Post
January 8, 1980

Olympic Boycott

Reagan proposed boycotting the Moscow Olympics even before the Afghanistan invasion.

"What would happen if the leaders of the Western world told the International Olympic Committee and the Soviet Union that torch must be lit in some other country...If they don't and we participate in these games anyway, what do we say to our young athletes about honor?"

Radio Transcript
October 3, 1978

However, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan Reagan vacillated. First he opposed the boycott.

"...threats to refuse to attend the olympics are not responsive to the Soviet call of our hand."

Washington Post
January 25, 1980

Finally Reagan stated his support for the boycott:

"I support the boycott today. I supported it yesterday. And I supported it when the President first called for it."

Philadelphia Inquirer
April 11, 1980

The Reagan Response to Afghanistan

Opposing several of the President's actions, Reagan proposed his own plan to counter the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Soon after the invasion, Reagan advocated sending advisers and war planes to Pakistan. He also suggested that the United States send weapons to Afghanistan.

"(W)e ought to be funneling weapons through there that can be delivered to those freedom fighters in Afghanistan to fight for their own freedom. That would include those shoulder-launched, heat-seeking missiles that could knock down helicopter gun ships that the Soviets are using against them."

Washington Post
January 10, 1980

Reagan also proposed that the United States blockade Cuba in retaliation for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

"One option might well be that we surround the island of Cuba and stop all traffic in and out."

New York Times
January 29, 1980

Even though Reagan advocated military options to counter the Soviet invasion, he opposed draft registration.

"Indeed, draft registration may actually decrease our military preparedness, by making people think we have solved our defense problem..."

Quoted by Senator Hatfield
Congressional Record
June 4, 1980

And finally, he recommended:

"So when they invaded Afghanistan, maybe that was the time for us to have said, 'Look, don't talk to us about trade. There will be none. Don't talk to us about treaties, like SALT II. We are not going to have any communication with you until (those forces in Afghanistan) are back in the Soviet Union.'"

Time
June 30, 1980

September 18, 1980

The End of Detente

Q: US-Soviet relations have reached the lowest point since the Cold War. Detente, for which the American people had so many expectations, is apparently finished.

US-Soviet relations have gone through a number of stages since World War II, with the emphasis on detente being the most recent. Are we, in fact, at the end of detente? What is the likely nature of this relationship in the years ahead, in view of the steady increase in the Soviet military buildup and in its expanding activities in the Third World, culminating in the invasion of Afghanistan? Will the relationship be basically one of conflict and confrontation, or are elements of cooperation still possible?

Response

That relations between the United States and the Soviet Union are severely strained is undeniable. And that this strain is largely created by Soviet behavior is also undeniable.

What does this recent tension mean for the future? Let me make several points.

First, the relationship between the two great powers, both of whom have the power to destroy the other, is the most decisive single influence on peace in the world. And so a stable, balanced relationship between our country and the Soviet Union remains our goal. That is why I continue to favor arms control between our two nations, specifically the SALT II Treaty which Governor Reagan rejects.

Second, while we remain interested in lessening tension and broadening cooperation with the Soviet Union, detente cannot be divorced from deterrence. To oppose aggression now is to provide peace in the future. To assume that detente is

divisible, that aggression need be met only when it directly threatens one's own region, could encourage aggression elsewhere. The Soviets must understand they cannot recklessly threaten world peace -- that they cannot commit aggression -- and still enjoy the benefits of cooperation with the United States and the West. They must understand the invasion of Afghanistan has had a profound adverse effect on world opinion, including here in America. We are prepared to impose costs on aggression for as long as necessary.

Having said that, a third point is necessary, namely that the way to better relations is open if the Soviets alter their conduct. That is clearly the path we prefer. We are prepared to accept the Soviet Union as a world power with its own legitimate interests. We seek no Cold War, no indiscriminate confrontation. We have no interest in holding the Soviet Union responsible for all the world's instabilities. We know the world is too complicated for such simple-minded notions as those advanced by my Republican opponent. But we will insist that Moscow respect the legitimate interests of other nations.

Finally, the American people, and its political leaders, must come to understand that our relationship with the Soviet Union has always contained elements of competition and confrontation as well as cooperation. Our differences are profound. But it is also true that our two countries share many important interests, survival being the most critical. We must, therefore, attempt to avoid the excessive swings in

our policies toward the Soviet Union, from detente one day,
to Cold War the next. It is not a question of a "hard"
policy or a "soft" policy, as Governor Reagan would like
to simplify, but of a clear-eyed recognition of how most
effectively to protect our security and further our mutual
interests.

Gov. Reagan on Detente

Reagan believes detente was one way in which the Soviets exploited the West's weaknesses to their own benefit.

"Detente, which started our worthily and with a good purpose, has become a one-way street. I think the Soviet Union has become more truculent, more aggressive in the world. And we have been responding with preemptive concessions without getting anything in return. I think it is time for us to rebuild our strength and at the same time make detente if it is to exist a two-way street by telling the Russians that is the only way we will observe it."

Christian Science Monitor
June 3, 1976

Asked whether he wants to return the nation to cold war days, Reagan said:

"When did the Cold War end?"

Wall Street Journal
June 30, 1980

Nature of the Soviet Union

Q: Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan you stated that your opinion of the Russians had "changed most dramatically in the last week." And, in your Notre Dame address in 1977, you stated that we are now free of our "inordinate fear of communism."

The Republican party has taken issue with you on both of these statements. In their Platform the Republicans state: "Unlike Mr. Carter, we see nothing 'inordinate' in our nation's historic judgment about the goals, tactics and dangers of Soviet communism. Unlike the Carter Administration, we are not surprised by the brutal Soviet invasion of Afghanistan..."

There would appear to be a fundamental difference in your views on the Soviet Union and those of the Republicans. Would you spell out how you see the Soviet Union today? What are its ultimate goals? Have these goals changed over the years? Do you believe they will change in the future, and is it possible for the United States to influence these goals?

Response

The Soviet Union of today is different from the country we dealt with in earlier periods of acute US-Soviet discord. The USSR has become a superpower. It is a strategic equal. It defines its interests in global terms. For the first time, moreover, it possesses the military and other capabilities to advance those interests globally.

For some time now, we have witnessed the continued growth of a Soviet military machine in excess of any reasonable defense requirements. This has stimulated a heightened military competition that can only result in diminished security for itself and the rest of the world. At the same time, the Soviet Union has used its increasing military capabilities to seek to increase its influence in the Third World. With extraordinary shortsightedness, it has done so in the belief that these actions

would not destroy the trends toward moderating its relations with the United States and the West which had a modest beginning a decade ago.

As we have seen, this Soviet calculation was clearly wrong. Our relations with the Soviet Union have reached the lowest point in years, particularly accentuated by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

We must recognize, however, that not all of our difficulties in the world today can be blamed on the Soviet Union, as Governor Reagan has suggested. The world is much more diverse, interdependent, and unstable than in the past. There is no question that the Soviets, when they feel they can get away with it, will take every opportunity to expand their influence at Western expense. But we do them undue homage, and ourselves a disservice, when we blind ourselves to the roots of the problems we face by fixing our attention too rigidly on the Soviets.

The profound differences in what our two governments believe about freedom and power and the inner lives of human beings are likely to remain for the indefinite future, and so are other elements of competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. That competition is real and deeply rooted in the history and values of our respective societies. But it is also true that our two countries share many important, overlapping interests. So long as the Soviet Union pursues its interests through accepted and peaceful means, and so long as it shows it is prepared to respect the legitimate interests of other countries, a cooperative relationship is possible between our two countries.

What we cannot accept is when the Soviet Union seeks unilateral advantage through means which challenge the international system built up since World War II.

Ahead lies the uncertainty of the directions in which a new generation of leadership will take the Soviet Union, in the solution of its internal problems, and the advancement of its interests abroad. We cannot directly affect the choices they will make, but we can continue to make it clear, with steadfastness and patience, that if future Soviet leaders see their national self-interest in a policy of restraint and responsibility, they will find the United States responsive to that course.

Our best hope of evoking such a response from the Soviet Union will be to demonstrate firmness and strength in the defense of our interests, together with a readiness to work toward a return to cooperation between our two countries when this becomes feasible.

Gov. Reagan on the Nature of the Soviet Union

Reagan repeatedly states his belief that the Soviets are engaged in a relentless drive for world domination, driven by their belief in communism and their basic expansionist tendencies.

"Every Russian leader, every Soviet leader from the very beginning has... proclaimed to their own people their belief in the Marxian philosophy that communism can only succeed if it is a one-world communist state...going to aid social revolutions all over the world until the whole world has been liberated to communism. And I think this explains what they're doing."

New York Times Interview
December 19, 1979

Reagan believes that the Soviet Union is responsible for nearly all of the world's troubles.

"We are blind to reality if we refuse to recognize that detente's usefulness to the Soviets is as a cover for their traditional and basic strategy for aggression."

Radio Transcript
October 31, 1975.

And, more recently:

"Let's not delude ourselves, the Soviet Union underlies all the unrest that is going on. If they weren't engaged in the game of dominoes, there wouldn't be any hot spots in the world."

Wall Street Journal
June 3, 1980

Geopolitical Issues

Q. The Republican party points to takeovers by the Soviet Union (or their clients) in several countries and regions of the world since you took office in 1977. These include Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia and South Yemen. The Republicans further state that "The Soviet noose is now being drawn around southern Africa..." and "Soviet military power poses a direct threat to the petroleum resources of the Persian Gulf."

Have there been serious geopolitical losses since you became President? Do you believe the Soviet Union is attempting, either directly or indirectly through proxies such as Cuba and Vietnam, to extend its power and influence throughout the Third World? And, if so, what should be the response of the United States?

Response

For several years we have witnessed Soviet attempts to extend its influence -- either directly or indirectly through their Cuban and Vietnamese proxies -- into the Third World. And, last December, the Soviet Union sent combat forces into Afghanistan. This attempt to subjugate an independent, nonaligned Islamic people is a callous violation of international law and the UN Charter. The United States has taken the lead in opposing this latest example of Soviet adventurism.

That the Soviet Union has moved to extend its influence abroad is undeniable. That the Soviet Union is marching to world domination according to some carefully orchestrated "master plan" -- as Governor Reagan would have us believe -- is nonsense. Over the past several years, the Soviet Union has lost as much influence in the world as it has gained, starting with the People's Republic of China in the late

1950s. Indonesia, Egypt and Somalia have all sent the Soviets packing. They are not alone. The Soviet Union has fewer friends in the Third World today than a decade ago. The brutal invasion of Afghanistan has reduced -- not increased -- Soviet influence among Moslem nations. I might also add that just a short time ago there was considerable alarm in the West about the spread of Eurocommunism. Portugal was seen as particularly vulnerable. Today we no longer hear these expressions of concern and Portugal remains solidly in the democratic camp.

There are other important elements of influence in which the Soviets simply are not in the running: the attraction of Western cultural values and our democratic political institutions; the appeal of Western educational systems, the Western tradition of scientific and technological innovation and experiment. These factors, too, draw countries toward the West and increase the ability of the United States and its allies and friends to exert influence.

I want to make clear, however, that by influence I do not mean political, economic or cultural control or predominance. One of the more significant factors in international relations in the last 15 or 20 years has been the emergence of a large number of new Third World countries determined to be free of dominance by either East or West. This has drawbacks, of course: We get

voted against in the United Nations; we get criticized for some of our policies. And it means older forms of influence must give way to leadership based on persuasion, example and cooperation. It is a more difficult world, perhaps, but the total sum of freedom is larger than in the days of colonial empires and political and economic domination by the great powers.

And, in this newer, freer world, I am convinced that the United States has more to offer than the Soviet Union, a nation with a bankrupt ideology, a repressive political system and an economy in shambles.

Gov. Reagan on Geographical Losses

"Then there is the Soviet, Cuban and East German presence in Ethiopia, South Yemen, and now the invasion and subjugation of Afghanistan. This last step moves them within striking distance of the oil-rich Arabian Gulf. And is it just coincidence that Cuban and Soviet-trained terrorists are bringing civil war to Central American countries in close proximity to the rich oil fields of Venezuela and Mexico? All over the world, we can see that in the face of declining American power, the Soviets and their friends are advancing. Yet the Carter Administration seems totally oblivious."

Veterans of Foreign Wars
May 18, 1980

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"One wonders why the Carter Administration fails to see any threatening pattern in the Soviet presence, by way of Cuban power, in so much of Africa, which is the source of minerals absolutely essential to the industrialized democracies of Japan, Central Europe and the U.S."

Human Rights and the Soviet Union
(including CSCE)

Q: The Republicans have charged that you have "ignored" human rights in the Soviet Union and that a Republican Administration will press the Soviet Union to end its "harrassment and imprisonment" of dissidents.

How would you respond to this charge? Do you believe you have "ignored" human rights in the Soviet Union? Do you believe that your human rights policy has been counterproductive for US-Soviet relations? What is the best approach the United States can adopt to enhance human rights in the Soviet Union?

Response: The Republican charge that I have "ignored" human rights in the United States is false, and Governor Reagan knows it. One of my first acts as President was to send a letter to Andrei Sakharov, expressing my admiration for him as one of the world's leading defenders of human rights. Since that time, my Administration has pressed Soviet authorities to adopt a less repressive human rights policy and to honor their commitments under the Helsinki Final Act. In addition to my letter to Andrei Sakharov:

-- I and a number of my Cabinet members have personally met with leading Soviet dissidents.

-- I personally raised human rights issues with President Brezhnev at the Vienna Summit in June 1979.

-- At the Belgrade CSCE Review Meeting in the fall of 1978, we raised the full range of human rights violations by the Soviets.

-- We have presented annually a US list of divided families and, more frequently, a special list of hardship cases. We have also made frequent private representations to the Soviets on individual cases.

-- In the summer of 1978 we cancelled a number of high-level visits in response to the Soviet decision to try the leading Soviet dissidents, Anatoliy Shcharanskiy and Aleksandr Ginzberg.

-- And, in April 1979, we obtained the release of five leading Soviet dissidents: Valentin Moroz, Georgiy Vins, Aleksandr Ginzberg, Mark Dymshits, and Eduard Kuznetsov.

While pursuing our concerns about human rights, we have sought to make it clear to the Soviet Government that the commitment of my Administration to human rights is an integral element of our foreign policy.

Our policy is exactly what it appears to be: the positive and sincere expression of our deepest beliefs as a people. It is not directed against the Soviet Union. I regret to say, however, that the Soviet Government continues to view our human rights policy as undue interference in their internal affairs. Depsite this, there has not been and there will not be any slackening in our commitment.

Specifically, we will continue to assert our policy

at the forthcoming Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Madrid. Governor Reagan, however, has suggested that we should stay away from Madrid, that we should drop out of the Helsinki process. He has even compared the meeting in Madrid to the Moscow Olympics, suggesting that since American athletes chose not to go to Moscow, that American diplomats should not go to Madrid. This reasoning is, of course, very confused. Such ideas spring from ignorance of the meaning of Madrid.

The Helsinki Accords commit the 35 signatories, including the Soviet Union, to respect human rights. To their dishonor, Soviet authorities have intensified their repression of the freedoms which they pledged at Helsinki. The banishment of Andre Sakharov into internal exile is the best known of such violations. It is not, however, the only one. More than 40 courageous men and women are now in prison or exile just because they took seriously the Soviet Union's commitments at Helsinki. Their only "crime" was to monitor Soviet compliance with the Accords.

The Helsinki provisions have also helped Soviet Jews to emigrate, although the encouraging record level set in 1979 is being reduced this year. At Madrid, we will seek an explanation for that decline and a commitment by the Soviet Union to reverse it.

To stay away from Madrid, as Governor Reagan has suggested, would be folly. It would only please those who are most guilty of violating the principles of Helsinki, including human rights. I do not intend to let the Soviet Union and other violators be freed of their obligation to account for their actions before world opinion. A Republican administration signed the Helsinki Accords in 1975. My Democratic Administration is deeply committed to carrying out those agreements.

Gov. Reagan on CSCE

Reagan considers the Helsinki accords another means of legitimizing the Soviet Union's imperial ambitions by de jure recognition of the satellite empire.

"In signing the Helsinki pact we gave the Russians something they've wanted for 35 years. In effect, we recognized the Soviet Union's right to hold captive the Eastern and Central European nations they have ruled since World War II. We signed the pact apparently because of one clause which had to do with human rights. Those making the decision to sign claimed the Soviet Union by its signature had agreed to let people have some (if not all) of the rights the rest of us take for granted. They are (for example) supposed to be able to leave the Soviet Union and the captive nations if they choose. But the Russians make promises; they don't keep them.

Radio Transcript
January, 1978

In June, he announced that he was opposed to U.S. participation in the Madrid CSCE meeting:

"Frankly, I have an uneasy feeling that goin to Madrid is negating what we thought we could accomplish by boycotting the Olympics. If the athletics can't go, why should the diplomats go?"

Time
June 30, 1980

September 27, 1980

Western Europe and NATO: US Leadership

Q. Republicans and other critics say there has been a loss of European confidence in your personal leadership and in the reliability of the United States. Critics say your policies and leadership have been erratic, with sudden flip flops. The neutron bomb is one example; the stress on human rights in certain areas and not in others another, and our arms sales policies a third.

Do you have the confidence and trust of Allied leaders? How can you lead our allies in meeting the challenges of economic problems, energy vulnerabilities, Soviet military buildup and global interdependence if they do not respect or trust your judgment, steadiness and resolve?

RESPONSE

I think the NATO alliance is as strong today as it has been in any time in my memory, since the war. I also believe that the challenges from the alliance today are profound.

Under very difficult economic circumstances, the major nations in the alliance have committed themselves to a three percent real growth in defense expenditures. Under heavy pressure, and propaganda efforts by the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact nations, the allies voted last December to go ahead with a modernization of theater nuclear forces -- a very difficult decision. And my own personal relationship with the leaders in those countries shows a very strong commitment to the alliance and very strong support for the United States.

Under U.S. leadership, NATO is acting decisively to deal with Soviet challenges. I have met with allied leaders

in five summits. I have had innumerable bilateral discussions with individual allied leaders on every issue confronting the alliance today. The record will show an unprecedented volume of correspondence and exchange at the highest levels with our Allies on major foreign policy issues, most of it quite sensitive. In short, no U.S. Administration has consulted as intensively with the Allies as has mine.

Over the past three and one-half years, NATO has developed a broad, coordinated and cohesive strategy for strengthening conventional and nuclear forces, for increasing real defense spending, and on redistributing security burdens in the Alliance so the U.S. can direct more effort at protecting our common interests in the Persian Gulf. This has been achieved under U.S. leadership. Without a vigorous effort by myself, my top foreign policy and defense advisors, and the concerted effort of my Administration, NATO could not have organized and begun the difficult task of implementing this tremendous effort. I am proud of what we have accomplished and I am determined that we shall do even more to strengthen the Alliance.

Gov. Reagan on Western Europe and NATO

Reagan states that as president he would consult with our European allies on important issues. He criticizes the Carter Administration for not consulting with our European allies on the Iranian rescue mission, and suggests that if we had handled the situation properly, the Europeans would have more effectively backed the United States on the Afghanistan and Iranian sanctions.

Reagan has suggested that NATO should expand its security responsibilities to include the Persian Gulf:

"There would be nothing wrong with us at the same time appealing to our NATO allies and saying, 'Look, fellows, let's just make this an extension of the NATO line and you contribute some forces in here too.' They're the ones who'd be worse off than we were if the oil goes. They would, if the oil goes, literally have to be like Finland and accept Finlandization by Russia...I happen to know that the Soviet Union has been appealing to West Germany to break away and sign its own agreement and treaty with them, and the bait that they have been holding out is Iranian and Saudi Arabian oil. I know that for a fact."

National Journal
March 8, 1980

Concerning NATO, Reagan's primary concern is that if the United States does not appear a strong and dependable ally, the nations of Europe will seek an accommodation with the USSR.

"I think there is every indication that some of our European friends are beginning to wonder if they shouldn't look more toward -- or have a rapprochement with -- the Soviet Union, because they are not sure whether we are dependable or not."

Time
June 30, 1980

To prevent such action, Reagan proposes to consult with the allies and reassure them of our interest in preserving the alliance.

"I think the Reagan Administration, first of all, would do it by action, by consulting with them, making it evident to them that we do value that alliance and want to preserve it."

Time
June 30, 1980

September 18, 1980

Western Europe and NATO: Detente

Q: The Europeans seem to place a very high value on detente with the Soviet Union. They are reluctant to take strong actions toward the Soviets which might jeopardize it. In your view, are our allies too committed to detente and not firm enough toward the Soviets? Do you see signs, as Gov. Reagan apparently does, of "neutralism" in our allies, or a tendency to accommodate Soviet desires? If the US is moving away from detente and the allies remain committed to it, aren't our interests and policies beginning to diverge seriously? If they are unwilling to risk detente even after open military aggression by Moscow, how can there be US-Allied cooperation in dealing with the USSR?

RESPONSE

Unlike Governor Reagan, I do not accuse our allies of drifting toward "neutralism" or a desire to accommodate the Soviet Union. An Alliance which is vigorously implementing a Long Term Defense Program to improve its collective military capabilities, which is committed to increasing real defense spending by 3%, and which has decided to implement a major modernization of theater nuclear forces, is not trying to appease the Soviet Union. It is nonsense, and damaging to the Alliance, to make such a charge.

I understand our Allies' desire to preserve limited forms of cooperation with the Soviet Union, particularly where this can help ease the lot of their fellow Europeans in the East. We do not seek nor are we asking our Allies to dismantle the framework of detente. We ourselves are ready to resume the cooperative aspects of our relationship

with the Soviet Union. But this cannot be done against a background of callous disregard for elementary principles of international conduct.

Detente cannot be divorced from deterrence. To oppose aggression now is to promote peace in the future -- to foster the conditions for progress in East-West relations. To assume that we can obtain the benefits of detente while ignoring the need for deterrence would be shortsighted and dangerous. To assume that detente is divisible, that aggression need be met only when it directly threatens one's own region, could encourage aggression elsewhere.

Deterrence requires sacrifice. The United States is willing to bear its share. It is vital that the burden of sacrifice be shared among all our allies -- for the sake of peace, for the sake of our alliances, and for the sake of the public support which makes those alliances strong.

The Soviet invasion is not only a challenge to our interests but to those of our allies as well. While there should be a division of labor, it must be an equitable one.

could cause serious strains in the Alliance. Governor Reagan ignores one essential fact: NATO is an Alliance of sovereign states. We do not tell our Allies that we are going to deploy a weapon on their territory. We consult with them, we examine the military requirements, we consider the political implications, then we as an Alliance decide.

On December 12, 1979, NATO adopted a plan for modernizing the theater nuclear forces (TNF) through the deployment of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles. This plan is focused on long-range TNF because of their special contribution to deterrence. This decision was the product of model political and military consultations with our Allies.

Western Europe and NATO: Alliance Disunity

Q: When your Administration began, you said strengthening the Atlantic Alliance would be one of your principal aims. Yet, over the last four years the US and the NATO allies seem to be drifting apart on a whole range of important issues: East-West relations, defense policies, energy problems, inflation and economic stagnation, relations with the Third World, the Middle East--the list could go on. Isn't it clear NATO is in serious disarray? Can the Alliance remain unified and effective in the face of such deep problems? What future do you see for NATO and for US relations with Western Europe?

RESPONSE

At the outset of my Administration I emphasized the primacy of our Atlantic relationship in this country's national security agenda. The Atlantic Alliance, together with our Alliances with Japan, Australia and New Zealand, is now and will remain the bedrock of Western collective security. We have made important progress toward making the Atlantic Alliance still more effective in the face of the Soviet military buildup and in light of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the threat to common Western interests in the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia.

What my Republican opponent would call "rifts and tensions" -- and what I would call "healthy expression of independent views" -- are inevitable in an Alliance of free democratic partners. We are not the Warsaw Pact, which rules by coercion and decree from a central ministry in Moscow.

This does not mean that there is no room for improvement in our consultative practices and in the coordination of our actions. Obviously there is, on both sides of the Atlantic. I feel that the record of my Administration has been very good in this respect; indeed, these past three and one-half years show an unprecedented volume of high-level contact with our major Allies both bilaterally and multilaterally on a broad range of issues of common concern: defense, economy, energy. In my term of office, I have met with Alliance leaders at five summits to coordinate our policies. I have had innumerable bilateral discussions with Western leaders. And we have agreed on vigorous steps to improve our collective defense and respond to Soviet challenges. Let me cite just a few examples.

-- My Administration launched a Long-Term Defense Program in NATO 18 months before the Soviet invasion. We also led an Alliance-wide effort to commit our governments to the three-percent real increase in defense spending. Last September many of the countries of NATO were having difficulty meeting that commitment. Today, the Germans, the Italians, the British, and the Canadians are meeting it, and the Dutch are quite close to meeting it.

-- We are working hard in NATO to ensure that the U.S. will have more flexibility and capability for moving military forces into Southwest Asia, and the Europeans have been quite responsive on measures to pick up the slack in Europe.

-- Last December NATO agreed in an historic decision to modernize theater nuclear forces.

-- Our Allies cooperated with us in substantially reducing the flow of wheat to the Soviet Union this year and we are making progress in reducing the flow of high technology to the USSR.

NATO is a healthy, strong alliance of free, equal and sovereign nations. From time to time, disagreements among free allies over the proper responses to the challenges we are facing is understandable. But, our common goals -- mutual security and preservation of our democratic way of life -- are deep and enduring. We should work even harder at coordinating our actions in Europe and wherever our interests are threatened. But the Alliance is dynamic and vibrant; it is not in disarray.

Western Europe and NATO: Defense Efforts

Q: We are trying to increase US defense spending significantly. Our European allies are very wealthy and could afford to spend much more on defense and allow the US to concentrate on other areas where our mutual interests are more immediately threatened. What are our allies doing to improve their contribution to Western defenses in light of the Soviet buildup, the invasion of Afghanistan, and threats to the Persian Gulf? Are the allies doing enough or are they letting us carry an unfair share of the burden while they devote a larger share of their economies to competing with us?

Should the US shift some of its forces out of Europe to strengthen our ability to protect US interests in Southwest Asia? Do you plan to seek an extension of NATO's geographic area of responsibility to cover threats to Persian Gulf oil, which is vital to Europe's security? What do our allies think about this idea?

RESPONSE

A central objective of my Administration has been to strengthen the Atlantic Alliance -- the bedrock of Western security. We and our NATO allies are responding vigorously to the Soviet military buildup, specifically:

-- At the 1978 NATO Summit, the NATO Allies agreed to join with us in increasing real defense spending by 3% every year until 1986. In general, our Allies are meeting the commitment, although, frankly, a few of them have not done all they should.

-- In 1978 we launched a Long Term Defense Program to improve NATO's capabilities in ten key areas, ranging from air defense to maritime posture. This program is being vigorously implemented.

-- NATO has made a historic decision to modernize theater nuclear forces with the deployment of long-range Pershing and Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles in Europe which can strike the Soviet Union. This program will strengthen NATO's flexible response strategy and deny the Soviets the opportunity to try to exploit a gap in NATO defenses.

But, our Allies can do more. The commitments they made in 1978 are all the more important in light of the security situation in Southwest Asia. NATO must face the possibility that U.S. forces we previously had hoped would be available for the defense of Europe might have to be committed to a conflict or crisis elsewhere, especially Southwest Asia. I am not talking about a major diversion of U.S. resources or a drawdown of U.S. forces in Europe, but rather about some reinforcements and support.

We have recently discussed this situation with our Allies and have agreed with them that we need to accelerate implementation of critical Long-Term Defense Program measures, and some countries must make a renewed effort to achieve three percent real growth in defense spending. We are specifically looking to our Allies to provide more reserve forces, to build up their war reserve stocks, to provide airlift to assist us in deploying to Europe, and to take steps, such as increased land-based air capability

and to improve their naval forces. These steps will help ensure the security of Europe in the event of a conflict elsewhere involving U.S. forces.

The challenge to the NATO Alliance is great. Our response must be a collective one, with the burden fairly shared. I think the military contribution our allies make to collective defense is not always sufficiently recognized. Our Allies provide nearly half of NATO's defense spending, almost 60 % of its armed forces, about 75% of its tanks and more than 90% of its armored divisions. As the United States takes the lead to protect common interests in the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia, our allies will take on a greater share of NATO's strength in Europe.

And, let us not forget that our allies are true partners; several of them -- France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Britain and Italy -- are important military powers in their own right. The Soviet Union, in contrast, cannot rely on any of its allies. The Warsaw Pact is more an organization to hold Eastern Europe under Soviet domination than it is an alliance of nations with common interests and values.

Western Europe and NATO: Coup in Turkey

Q: Turkey, the anchor of NATO's Southern Flank, has been experiencing profound political, economic and social problems. Pressures have been building and some say there could be a radical Islamic or anti-Western revolution there. Now, the Turkish military have stepped in and overthrown the democratic government. What is your position on the Turkish coup: are you pressing the Turkish military for a return to civilian government?

What steps are you--and our NATO allies--taking to prevent the loss of Turkey and the unraveling of our position in the Eastern Mediterranean?

RESPONSE

Turkey is a reliable and important ally and friend of the United States. It is trying to cope with severe problems and we and other NATO allies have sought to help them. I regret that the Turkish military felt compelled to suspend the democratic institutions of that country. I hope that this step will be temporary and that there will be a return to civilian rule as soon as conditions permit.

The OECD has organized an economic aid package of over \$1 billion -- to which we contributed -- for Turkey. We have also concluded a Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement with Turkey to help Turkey play its role in the common defense and to support important U.S. military activities in support of NATO goals. We will continue to help Turkey in every way we can.

(Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean)

The preservation of a strong southern flank in the Eastern Mediterranean is a vital U.S. and NATO interest. We strongly support the earliest possible reintegration of Greek armed forces into the NATO integrated military structure. General Bernard Rogers, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, has been given the task by our NATO allies of working out a formula to work out the military details of reintegration. We strongly support his important effort and have made this abundantly clear to all concerned.

(Cyprus)

Resolution of the Cyprus problem is vitally important. I have made personal efforts to achieve progress in solving this problem.

One of my first acts as President was to send a high-level mission to the Eastern Mediterranean to try to help with the Cyprus problem. I believe this mission, headed by Clark Clifford, contributed to progress in the Cyprus problem during the spring of 1977. In 1978, the United States, together with the United Kingdom and Canada, presented some ideas on the possible substance of a fair Cyprus solution. These ideas contributed to the UN's success in getting the talks resumed. I myself have met

with President Kyprianou as well as with Greek and Turkish leaders on this issue. Hopefully, the talks will continue on a sustained basis and lead to a solution to the problem acceptable to all Cypriots. My Administration supports the efforts of Secretary General Waldheim in this regard.

Western Europe and NATO: Poland

Q: Should the US and our Western allies give more open support to the Polish workers? What should the US, as leader of the West, do to support the aspirations of Poles and other Europeans for more freedom from Soviet domination? Do you accept the view that Eastern Europe is an integral part of the Soviet empire where we cannot interfere?

RESPONSE

All Americans have been filled with admiration for the peaceful determination of the working men and women of Poland to win a real place for themselves in deciding their own fate and future. We have expressed that feeling strongly but in a way that shows that we recognize that the decisions being made in Poland are ones for the Poles themselves -- and only for them -- to make.

I decided as a matter of national policy to make minimal comments about developments there in order not to exacerbate a very delicate and serious situation, or to strengthen any Soviet pretext to intervene. As I said, we believe that the internal problems in Poland are for the people of Poland and the Polish authorities to work out for themselves.

The United States has a real interest in the well-being of the people of Poland and in the stability of their economic development. We have been able to help, especially with agricultural credits, in past years.

Last year we gave Poland over half a billion dollars in food credits. In mid-September I approved a \$670 million Commodity Credit Corporation for Poland for FY81. We are encouraging others to help Poland with its economic problems. We will monitor closely the Polish government's compliance with its commitments to the workers. Failure of the Polish authorities to honor their agreement would obviously have to be taken into account in our willingness to give Poland further credits and loan guarantees.

We would be very disturbed by any effort by anyone outside Poland to interfere by force or in any fashion in Poland's domestic affairs. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, it earned the condemnation of the whole world, as it did when it entered Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. I do not believe it has forgotten.

Iran: Hostages

Q. Fifty-two Americans remain captive in Iran. The response of the Carter Administration has been to try several diplomatic initiatives, invoke economic sanctions against Iran and attempt a military rescue mission. The latter, we know, was a failure. Less clear has been the effect of the diplomatic initiatives and economic sanctions. Now, of course, we have the war between Iran and Iraq which will surely complicate the release of our hostages.

Now that you have had the perspective of time and thought, please evaluate for us the effectiveness of the diplomatic and economic measures you have taken, and the wisdom of the rescue mission and why it collapsed. Finally, what do you propose we do now to win the release of the hostages?

Response

No single international issue has caused me greater personal concern as President than the continued, illegal detention of our hostages in Iran. Since the first day the hostages were taken, we have kept two goals in mind. First, to preserve the honor and integrity of our nation and to protect its interests. Second, to take no action in this country that would endanger the lives or safety of the hostages nor interfere with their earliest possible release back to freedom. These goals have not changed during the long captivity of our hostages. Nor will they as long as their cruel torment continues.

We have pursued a policy of firmness and restraint. We have not issued ultimata, as Governor Reagan has said he would do. Nor have we attempted to "literally quarantine" Iran as he has suggested. I believe such actions would be reckless and would pose a serious threat to the lives of the hostages.

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International condemnation of Iran, and the economic sanctions which we have imposed, have raised the costs to Iran of their illegal actions and are bringing home to Iranians the fact that the holding of the hostages is hurting their country and bringing dishonor to their revolution.

But divisions within Iran have prevented progress and this has been my greatest frustration as President.

I do not regret having gone an extra mile to find an honorable solution to this problem. And I have no regret that we attempted to rescue our hostages. Our rescue plan was well conceived and had an excellent chance of success. To the families of those who died and were wounded, I again want to express my admiration for the courage of their loved ones and the sorrow I personally feel for their sacrifice.

The current conflict between Iran and Iraq may again setback our efforts to gain the release of our hostages. We will, however, continue to work for their prompt and safe release and continue to hold the government of Iran responsible for their safety and well being.

Gov. Reagan on Iran

In reference to the fall of the Shah of Iran, Reagan asserted the revolution somehow could have been averted.

"I believe there was a time this revolt (against the Shah's government) could have been halted. I can't tell you exactly how. But I think it could have been done."

San Francisco Chronicle
November 15, 1979

In dealing with the hostage crises he has suggested:

"But some place along the line there had to be an ultimatum. Here again, because we have lost so much influence with friends and allies, we were not in a position to go to the rest of the world and say, look, this is a violation of international law, and present to them the idea of the world literally quarantining Iran."

Time
June 30, 1980

September 29, 1980.

Defense of Persian Gulf -- Carter Doctrine

Q: You have stated that the United States will, if necessary, use military force to protect its vital interests in the Persian Gulf area. This statement implies, of course, that the U.S. is capable of defending its interests in that part of the world. Yet, outside analysts agree that the Soviet Union could bring far larger military forces to bear in the Persian Gulf area than could the U.S. A Defense Department study has reportedly admitted as much, concluding that the U.S. would have to use nuclear weapons to deny a Soviet victory.

Do you believe the U.S. can credibly defend its "vital interests" in the Persian Gulf?

Response:

In recent years the Persian Gulf has become vital to the United States and to many of our friends and allies. Over the longer term, the world's dependence on Persian Gulf oil is likely to increase. The denial of these oil supplies -- to us or to others -- would threaten our security and provoke an economic crisis greater than that of the Great Depression 50 years ago. Loss of this oil would create havoc not only in the world economy, but for the security of our alliances.

The twin threats to the flow of Persian Gulf oil -- from regional instability such as the current conflict between Iraq and Iran, and now potentially from the Soviet Union as a result of its invasion of Afghanistan -- require that we clearly state our intention to defend our vital interests if threatened. As I said in my

State of the Union address -- an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force. The purpose of my statement was to eliminate the possibility of any gross miscalculations by the Soviets about where our vital interests lie, or about our willingness to defend them. I am sure this is well understood.

The fighting between Iran and Iraq represents a danger to the peace and stability of the region. There should be absolutely no interference by any other nation in this conflict. And, it is important that I add my own strong support and that of our nation to the declaration which the nine European community nations made recently. Freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf is of primary importance to the whole international community. It is imperative that there be no infringement of that freedom of passage of ships to and from the Persian Gulf region.

Should external aggression occur, however, the United States could and would respond with significant force in the Persian Gulf. Today, we have combat-ready forces in the region in the form of warships, carrier-based aircraft, and prepositioned ground force equipment. We also have

-- In the military sphere, we can also expect cooperation. Some, like the British and the French, have small but capable military forces that can play a stabilizing role. Others can allow us to use their airfields if we have to move forces into the region quickly.

-- Most important of all, we expect all of our allies to increase their total defense effort, as we are increasing ours, to meet the overall challenge to our security interests in Europe, in East Asia, and now in a very vital new theater surrounding the Persian Gulf. Our allies are moving in this direction.