

We should by all means try to achieve mutual and verifiable cuts in nuclear arms to the lowest possible level consistent with the requirements of deterrence and strategic stability. But we must ask ourselves this question: Given NATO's current inferiority in conventional power, are we more likely to advance the cause of peace and stability by totally eliminating nuclear arms?

My answer would have to be no -- not unless we are willing to accept Soviet military superiority as a fact of life in Europe. And if we don't want to accept Soviet domination in Europe, it is crucial that we recouple arms control policy to our basic strategic goals -- ensuring the survival of free societies in the West. We need to pair conventional and nuclear arms control to underscore the crucial link between political purpose and military power.

There are signs that the Soviets may be ready to move on conventional arms control. Last September, the first successful arms control agreement in this decade was concluded at the Stockholm Conference. And at the Helsinki Review Conference in Vienna, the Soviets have renewed their call for a new conference on disarmament in Europe and have proposed steep reductions in conventional forces. They have even signalled an unprecedented willingness to permit verification in the western region of the Soviet Union itself. We ought to test Moscow's sincerity in this regard.

To be sure, the Stockholm Agreement's provisions for notification and on-site inspection of troop movements are modest achievements, but they do contribute to the security of both East and West by reducing the risk of surprise attack, miscalculation and the indirect use of force for political intimidation.

In contrast, the Vienna talks on mutual and balanced force

reductions have dragged on for over thirteen years without result. And even if agreement is reached, the reductions now contemplated would have only a negligible impact on military security in Central Europe.

I'd like to see both sides make bolder and more imaginative proposals. We need particularly to lessen the risk of a conventional surprise attack, which means moving to real constraints on military activities...to significant cuts in weapons and combat troops...and to the comprehensive verification measures that will be necessary to eliminate the threat of chemical and biological warfare.

Finally, we will have to face up to the politically difficult step of ensuring our mutual ability to verify such agreements all the way from the Atlantic to the Urals. Otherwise, fears of rapid Soviet mobilization will continue to hold Europe hostage to the spectre of war.

Of course, the Soviets may not welcome the idea of a true "military detente" in Europe through this conventional arms control framework. They may fear the loss of influence on both sides of the East-West divide. But they have vastly more forces in Europe than they need to keep their Warsaw Pact allies in line. In that margin there may be room for conventional arms agreements that could stabilize the East-West conflict. That, in turn, would allow a resumption of more normal social and economic relations among the nations of Europe.

I believe we should challenge Soviet leaders to embark on such a mutually beneficial course. It would require courage, foresight, and self-assurance for them, to recognize that the

achievement of a durable peace, a peace based on ending the division of Europe, would win the respect of adversaries and allies alike and add much to the legitimacy of their rule.

But for the present, the Atlantic Alliance needs to be clear about the nature of the threat we face. We can't allow a single-minded obsession with ridding the world of nuclear weapons to obscure the political realities that gave rise to them in the first place.

It's time for the West to face the facts: If we want to diminish the risk of nuclear war, we must first diminish the risk of conventional war. And that means redoubling our commitment to achieve a stable conventional balance in Europe.

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FOR SPRING 1987
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
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FORGING A NEW FOREIGN POLICY

Good evening, and thank you for coming again.

I'm not sure whether to interpret your presence as a tribute to my rousing oratory...or as a sign of selfless devotion to George Mason University...but, in any case, I'm glad you are here.

Last week, in the third installment of this five-part lecture series, I addressed what I believe to be the principal national security challenge facing our country: raising the nuclear threshold by redressing the conventional force imbalance in the heart of Europe.

Tonight, I'd like to focus on U.S. foreign policy, which is the face America presents to the rest of the world. And I'd like to begin with a simple truth: our country can't be effective abroad when we are deeply divided at home.

This puts a special burden on our political leaders to compose their differences when vital national interests are at stake. Outside observers often find the frequency and heat of our foreign policy disputes baffling. On matters large and small, domestic politics spills over into foreign policy, and we appear to steer a zig-zag course that throws friends and foes alike off-balance. And it's difficult to inspire much confidence abroad in the consistency of our policy when we don't seem to know our own minds.

Compounding the confusion is our constitutional system of checks and balances, which imprecisely divides foreign policy responsibility between the executive and legislative branches. In the relentless game of tug-of-war between the White House and the Congress, it's hard to tell who is ultimately in charge. And, of course, misadventures like the Iran-Contra scam have their roots in that unresolved conflict.

Now it's often said that politics should stop at the water's edge. But that presupposes broad public agreement on the fundamental aims and means of U.S. foreign policy -- something we don't have today.

After World War II, this country did manage to build a remarkably sturdy consensus behind an enlightened policy that stimulated Europe's and Japan's recovery...that encouraged the spread of political and economic freedom...and that sought to check the spread of Communism. For once, Democrats and Republicans agreed on basic premises: that isolationism offers only the fleeting illusion of safety...that America's security depends on the preservation of strong democratic allies elsewhere...and that the U.S. should support those fighting to resist takeover by armed minorities.

And, on balance, I'd judge our post-war policy a success.

With some exceptions, Soviet expansionism has been largely contained, and without a major war...Western Europe and Japan have flourished behind the shield of collective security...developing nations with private market economies have outstripped those that chose the statist path...and despite pervasive social inequality and lapses into military dictatorship, most of Latin America has moved steadily closer to civilian democratic rule.

To be sure, we paid a high price for these accomplishments,

and we made plenty of mistakes as well. But we showed that a democratic society could lead a global alliance and keep powerful adversaries at bay without becoming a garrison state like Sparta or, like Athens, corrupting its free institutions.

However, two developments have forced us to redefine America's role in the world. The first, of course, was the Vietnam War...that shattered the domestic consensus on which our post-war foreign policy was based.

For many Americans, particularly on the left, Vietnam cast our international conduct in a new and dubious light. In a sudden reversal of roles, America became for them not the solution, but the problem, not the peacekeeper, but the peace-breaker.

Conversely, the right saw in the Vietnam debacle a loss of nerve...a failure of will...an inability to stay the course. And so the war opened a deep schism that hasn't yet healed, to the detriment of our ability to conduct a concerted and coherent foreign policy.

The second development is a fundamental realignment of economic and military power in the world. The U.S. no longer operated in a vacuum. Once almost limitless, our power today seems greatly circumscribed.

As the historian Ronald Steel has said, "The reason that (America) cannot always call the tune is to be found not in the decline of American will, but in the recovery of the world -- a recovery that we did so much to make possible. Now we have to learn to live with that recovery."

The bi-polar world order has given way to a more crowded and complicated reality, one that requires America to fashion new and more sophisticated ways to advance our interests. One forum for

exploring and debating such approaches is the Democratic Leadership Council, an organization, as I've said in past lectures, that is determined to infuse our Party and our country with a new sense of national purpose at home and abroad. And I still speak from that perspective.

The DLC represents a new generation of Democrats...a generation deeply divided by the controversy over the Vietnam War. We've seen our own Party -- once bold and confident in advancing the cause of freedom -- sometimes appear hesitant and ambivalent about asserting American leadership abroad.

We are united, however, in opposing any foreign policy based disproportionately on military bluster and ideological zeal. Built principally on armaments and superpower arrogance, such a policy reaches too quickly for military options and too reluctantly for diplomatic openings. And it provides no answer at all to the questions of poverty and injustice around the globe. Instead, it allows our adversaries to pose as the champions of hope and progress in the Third World.

In the Middle East, U.S. policy has been marred by strategic and tactical incoherence: the ill-defined intervention in Lebanon's civil war, which ended in failure and tragedy...the inability, after six years, to build on the historic achievements of Camp David...and the collapse of our U.S. anti-terrorism stance in the wake of the Iran arms deal.

We disagree with a foreign policy that temporizes with the evil of apartheid in South Africa...that shrugs off human rights abuses in non-Communist countries...that fawns over friendly autocrats...that veers erratically between all or nothing on arms control...and that insists on interpreting all tension and conflict in the context of the East-West rivalry.

And, of course, we reject the folly of ransoming hostages

from terrorists...and of trying to promote democracy in Nicaragua by undermining it in the United States.

On the other hand, I believe Democrats should equally reject the strain of isolationism that has infected our Party since Vietnam. It is both bad policy and bad politics -- bad policy because neo-isolationism in the United States emboldens our adversaries and enervates our allies; bad politics because the public won't stand behind a Party that won't stand up for American values and interests abroad. And neo-isolationism counts America out in the fight for justice and progress in the Third World, where millions who yearn for better lives want to be able to count on our support.

So the central point I'd like to make is this: our nation needs to unite behind a course of energetic engagement -- a policy that vigorously asserts America's ideals and defends our interests abroad.

We need a foreign policy that reestablishes America's role as a revolutionary inspiration to oppressed peoples everywhere. We need a foreign policy that draws a clear moral distinction between those who fight to enlarge the scope of freedom and human rights and those who conspire to shrink it. We need a foreign policy that neither renounces nor relies exclusively on the use of force...a policy tempered, but not paralyzed, by the lessons of Vietnam. And we need to use all of America's strengths -- a robust economy, credible military power, dogged diplomacy and universal appeal of freedom -- to make our policy work.

Our challenge today, then, is not to abdicate the responsibilities of world leadership, but to redefine them in the light of new realities. And it's imperative that we pursue a course that embodies our basic values...a foreign policy that commands respect abroad because it inspires broad support at home.

With these introductory comments, I'd like to offer six recommendations for forging a new policy of energetic U.S. engagement in the world.

FIRST, U. S. LEADERSHIP ABROAD DEPENDS ON A STRONG DEFENSE.

America's influence in the world is partly moral, partly economic, and partly a function of our ability to deter aggression and keep the peace. We must never allow others to doubt that ability, or our resolve to defend our basic values.

Yet in Europe, the balance of conventional power is tilted heavily against the West, forcing NATO to rely on nuclear weapons to assure equilibrium. That reliance is dangerous in both military and political terms. (A) Because it means that a Soviet conventional attack would quickly confront us with a stark choice between a nuclear response, or defeat and (B) because it gives the Soviets an opportunity to pose as more ardently in favor of nuclear disarmament, sewing seeds of discord in a Western alliance torn between its desire to be rid of nuclear weapons...and its reluctance to pay for a stronger conventional defenses.

To assure a stable military balance in Europe, we need to build our conventional might up...or negotiate the other side's down...or some combination of both. Otherwise, we'll continue to be vulnerable to Soviet attempts to drive a wedge between us and our NATO partners.

America also needs to be able to deal with regional conflicts and state-sponsored terrorism. And that will require changes in the way we plan, organize and finance our armed forces. And we can't delude ourselves that these changes won't cost money.

Yet record-shattering budget deficits ensure that defense

spending will be under severe pressure for years to come. So the challenge facing us now is to produce real increases in our defense capability without large real increases in defense spending.

Under the leadership of Senators Sam Nunn and Al Gore and Representative Les Aspin, the DLC has proposed a detailed strategy for making our military more efficient in peace and more effective in war

In addition, I think we ought to explore a program of national service -- both military and civilian -- not only to bolster our national defense but also to underscore the shared obligations of citizenship. I believe the American people understand that freedom has a price, and that they are willing to pay it.

SECOND, WE NEED A STEADY AND PATIENT POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION.

Since the end of the Second World War, our policy toward the Soviet Union has been anything but constant: swinging from partnership to paranoia...from the bitter enmity of the Cold War to the inflated hopes for friendship in the era of detente...from President Carter's exorcism of our "inordinate fear of Communism" to President Reagan's excoriation of the Soviet Union as the "focus of evil in the modern world."

A consistent policy toward the Soviets should combine firm resistance to Soviet ideological imperialism with a relentless probing for diplomatic openings that can lead to a relaxation of tensions and, above all, reduce the likelihood of a nuclear confrontation.

While pursuing arms control -- especially conventional arms control -- with more vigor and imagination, we ought to resist

the false appeal of panaceas that promise to deliver us from nuclear dread. A single-minded pursuit of either a nuclear freeze or Star Wars won't make us safer if we ignore more modest and more realistic opportunities to strengthen deterrence and reduce nuclear arsenals.

We should probe as well for the economic pressure points that might increase our leverage in dealing with Moscow. Faced with a stagnant economy and a severe hard currency crunch, the Soviets are having trouble importing enough goods and machinery to satisfy both their military and their industrial requirements.

That is why Mikhail Gorbachev has made economic revitalization his top priority, and recent press reports indicate that the Soviet economy may be responding. Naturally, we should encourage Soviet progress toward economic and political liberalization. "Glasnot" is great, but let's recall that Nikita Khrushchev also began his career as a reformer -- and ended it as a non-person.

To really revive their economy, it's likely that the Soviets are going to need Western technology -- and they're probably going to want to buy it on credit. Our challenge in the West is to muster a unified and consistent policy which uses our technology and our credit to induce progress on arms control, to curb Third World meddling and to promote human rights.

THIRD, WE SHOULD REASSESS OUR RELATIONS WITH EUROPE -- WEST AND EAST.

For forty years the junior partner in the Atlantic Alliance, Western Europe now roughly equals the U.S. in economic power. In keeping with their political stability and growing economic clout, our European allies should accept added responsibility -- military, economic, and diplomatic -- in international affairs.

Let me make it clear that I am not proposing any unilateral backing away from our commitment to Europe's defense. For Americans, the defense of Europe is self-defense. But a more assertive Europe could and should assume a greater and growing share in its own defense.

And I believe that Western Europe can be a more resolute force for freedom and democratic development around the world. Sharing as we do a distinct cultural and political heritage, we ought to be working in concert to promote our common values from South Africa to Central America.

And we should encourage greater European independence on both sides of the East-West frontier. The United States should never accept the Soviet domination of Central Europe as a permanent fact of life.

Our policy should always recognize the aspirations of the people of Central Europe for self-determination and national autonomy. We should apply what diplomatic and economic leverage we can to nurture such developments as the Solidarity movement in Poland and the continuing free market experiments in Hungary.

And our Western European allies ought to blend commercial, cultural and political incentives in a patient, long-term effort to nudge Central Europe toward economic liberalization and independence.

FOURTH, OUR POLICY SHOULD EXPLOIT THE WEST'S GROWING ADVANTAGE IN ECONOMIC COMPETITION.

Two converging trends present a tremendous strategic opportunity for the West: widespread disenchantment with state socialism...and the accelerated pace of economic change.

Everywhere, it seems, economic liberalism is gaining ground.

as free market economies outperform centrally-planned and state-controlled economies. From China to France to the developing world, nations are moving to denationalize, decentralize and deregulate -- to expand the scope for private enterprise and entrepreneurial behavior in open markets.

At the same time, the global economy is putting a premium on the swift and unimpeded exchange of information...on rapid technological innovation...and on the wide distribution of knowledge, skills and adaptive capacity throughout the workforce. This represents a boon to the West, where information flows freely, and a dilemma for the East, where it is monopolized by the state. If Communist states keep the clamps on information, they are likely to fall further behind in economic innovation and growth.

Our challenge is to adapt to economic change, not resist it...to compete, not to protect...and to use our economic assistance to promote the twin development of market economies and political freedom in the developing world.

In this effort, Japanese resources and ingenuity ought to play a much larger role. With its huge trade surpluses, Japan should increase significantly its contributions to multilateral international agencies providing assistance to the Third World.

FIFTH, THE U. S. MUST RSTORE THE CREDIBILITY OF ITS
ANTI-TERRORISM POLICY.

When America cuts deals with terrorists, it's not just a mistake, it's a demoralizing defeat for civilized people everywhere. If the world's strongest democracy caves in to extortionists, how can weaker countries be expected to face criminals down?

At a minimum, we've got to make it clear that there will be

no more ransoming of hostages -- no rewards for seizing Americans.

But more than that, the United States -- indeed, any self-respecting nation -- has not only the right but also an obligation to respond to the kidnapping, abuse and murder of its citizens. Retaliation may not prevent future acts of terrorism. But I believe that inaction in the face of spreading violence and lawlessness is a positive encouragement to terrorism -- and a threat to civil order everywhere.

The West must join forces to combat the scourge of terrorism. We need to strengthen our joint intelligence gathering activities, to identify those responsible for violence, and to penetrate terrorist networks in the hope of preventing future outrages. We should also make better use of the other weapons at our command -- diplomatic pressure...economic sanctions...and, in the last resort, military force.

SIXTH, THE U. S. NEEDS A COMPREHENSIVE, LONG-TERM POLICY DESIGNED TO FORTIFY THE DEMOCRATIC CENTER IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

Earlier this month, I traveled to four Central American nations: Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. It didn't take long to understand that the reality in Central America is more complicated and more multi-faceted than the debate in Washington suggests. There are more than two sides to the story, and each country sees the situation through the prism of its own peculiar problems and interests.

I'm going to have more to say about the conflict in a future speech. But for now, let me offer just four general propositions about how we might approach the issue in Central America.

First, we need to put the controversy over Nicaragua in the broader context of a dramatic expansion of freedom and democratic

pluralism in Latin America. In the last ten years, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru and Uruguay have all replaced military rulers with popularly elected civilians.

There are exceptions to this encouraging trend, notably Paraguay, Panama, Chile and Cuba. And there has been one aborted democratic revolution: in Nicaragua.

In my view, the acrimonious debate in Washington over Contra aid shouldn't obscure the more urgent question of what the U.S. can do to foster democratic development in Latin America.

Second, the central aim of U.S. policy should be to buttress the Central American democracies, not to impose democracy on Nicaragua.

Nicaragua's neighbors say they fear what will happen if the Sandinistas, backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union, suppress all internal opposition and consolidate their power. They point to El Salvador, which despite solid gains on democracy and human rights, remains under attack by Marxist guerrillas backed by Nicaragua and Cuba.

In my talks with the presidents of Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica, and with citizens representing diverse points of view in all four countries, the refrain I heard over and over was this:

"There will be no peace in Central America until there is freedom in Nicaragua."

The fundamental issue, then, is inter-American security. Our neighbors in Central America are looking to us for help. And they appeal to us not as clients or dependents, but as fellow Americans who have embraced the political principles first proclaimed in this hemisphere.

We ought to support them, as a matter of strategic interest and because we believe that democracy offers the best hope for advancing social reform, human rights and economic progress in Central America. It provides the fairest and most humane framework for correcting the grave injustices that have given rise to social strife and political instability in the region.

Regardless of their positions on Contra aid, Americans of all stripes should be able to agree on support for Central American democracies. I believe we need to proceed with a long-term program of military and economic aid, as recommended by the bi-partisan Kissinger Commission.

Third, the United States needs to develop a stable and sustainable policy toward the Nicaraguan resistance.

Americans need to recognize the enormous influence that the United States exerts, almost unconsciously, on our small neighbors to the South. Every change in the political wind in Washington has gale-force repercussions in Central America.

In Nicaragua or anywhere else, our friends need to know that they can count on us over the long haul. In my judgment, it is immoral for the United States to encourage the Contras to fight one year, and then to abandon them the next.

Much of the blame rests with the current Administration, whose shifting rationales for Contra aid and extra-legal misadventures have done much to discredit U.S. policy toward Nicaragua. Still, I hope Congress will think long and hard before halting aid without reliable assurances that the Sandinistas won't try to destabilize their neighbors.

I don't know if the Contras can win, or if they can unite the opposition to the Marxist Sandinistas. I only know that they will never have the chance to win if we continue with an

indecisive, on-again, off-again policy -- a policy that is tantamount to playing with peoples' lives. I'd prefer that we keep faith with those who have been wounded and maimed...and with those who are risking their lives to keep the democratic option in Nicaragua alive.

My fourth and final point on Central America is that the time has come to move beyond the stalled Contadora formula for a negotiated settlement of the conflict offered by Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia.

Not only has it failed to achieve any real progress, but many Central Americans view it as imposed from the outside. They also doubt that the Contadora countries, particularly Mexico, are willing to put sufficient pressure on the Sandinistas to relax their grip on Nicaragua.

Besides, there is now a homegrown alternative -- the peace plan offered by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias. Though far from perfect, the Arias plan would focus attention on the internal situation in Nicaragua, and it would require the Sandinistas to take concrete steps toward democratic pluralism.

The big question is whether the plan can be modified in a way that provides objective criteria for judging whether the Sandinistas are truly in compliance.

But even if it fails, the Arias plan has the potential to clarify the situation -- to reveal the Sandinista's true intentions -- and thereby to unite committed democracies throughout the Americas on the question of Nicaragua.

I think it's essential that the issue be put in its proper perspective -- not as a David-and-Goliath confrontation between Nicaragua and the United States...but as a confrontation between the Sandinistas and all of Latin America.

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For the American people, support for democracy and human rights -- and vigorous opposition to tyranny -- are fundamental values. However, we have a way to go before we achieve a sturdy consensus on foreign policy, especially on how to respond to the threat of totalitarianism dressed in the garb of Third World revolution.

I hope that my Party will lead the effort to rally the broad public support on which an effective policy must rely. After all, Democrats have a long tradition of fostering democracy abroad. From Woodrow Wilson's call for self-determination...to Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms...to John Kennedy's pledge to assure the survival and the success of liberty...to Lyndon Johnson's courage and determination in Southeast Asia, our Party has stood for America's energetic engagement in the worldwide struggle for freedom, hope and opportunity.

In a new era...and in the face of new challenges...a new generation of Democrats must carry that grand tradition forward. And we shall.