

SPEECH

Most of you know my experience in the military service, and some of you are familiar with my record in the United States Senate.

I am proud of that record.

But today I am asking you to support me for President of the United States. I want to go beyond my record -- to look ahead -- and share with you my vision of the future of our country. I want to give you a sense of where I would lead America.

Ours is a beautiful, fragile, precious planet. I have seen its wondrous image against the blackness of space, and have come away with a special awareness of our responsibilities to this earth, and to its people.

I believe that the United States has been given the task of world leadership -- not only militarily, politically, and economically -- but also as a living symbol of the moral values of freedom and justice. We must be strong, and in addition we must be a beacon, representing those values to all the world.

First, in foreign and defense policy, the greatness of America rests in her principles. A foreign and defense policy reflecting those principles -- of reason, strength, and compassion -- will prevail. A policy based on suspicion and fear will surely fail.

We must assure the world of our firm commitment to the goals of arms control and world justice.

It won't be easy. The Soviets have engaged in an arms build-up that began after the humiliation during the Cuban missile crisis.

That build-up is real and unrelenting. We ignore it at our peril. And wishing won't make it go away.

But our current overreaction is equally counterproductive and dangerous. There is a third alternative which acknowledges the Soviet reality, and is based on common sense in a nuclear age.

We must negotiate down. The world must confront this uncontrolled arms race and say, enough is enough.

It is time for a mutual, verifiable nuclear freeze.

More than that, it's time for serious reductions in all weapons -- conventional as well as nuclear. And it's time to stop the spread of nuclear weapons to other nations -- a fight that I have been proud to lead in the United States for many years.

As a nation committed to peace, this is our most profound obligation.

Hear me well.

No one -- no one -- will work harder than I to prevent war.

No one -- no one -- will work harder to achieve real arms control.

I've seen war -- twice. I've seen its horror. I've seen its destruction. I've made the trip to the front door to tell wives and children about the loss of their loved ones. I've looked war in the face, and I don't want my children and grandchildren to do the same.

In foreign policy we have the same dilemma and the same opportunity. We have an adventurist Soviet Union that invades Afghanistan, crushes Solidarity in Poland, finances revolution at every opportunity and suppresses dissidents at home. And they fly under the false banner of liberation and justice. But that banner is perceived by some to have merit.

How ironic. How tragic.

We are a nation born in revolution that has remained true to the principles of individual and human rights. Not the Soviets.

We are the nation that has lifted up the poor and disadvantaged and sought equal opportunity for all. Not the Soviets.

Yet in recent years the world has found some of our actions hard to understand, hard to reconcile with their best understanding of what we represent.

We have supported a regime in El Salvador without insisting upon an end to government terror, without insisting upon true land reform and without insisting on the prosecution of those who killed our church women. Is that what America is about? I think not.

We have supported insurgents in Nicaragua whose history is one of insensitivity to human values. Instead, we should support movements that embrace the sense of justice that made our country.

The Soviet meddling is serious and must be met. But not with mindless reactionary criteria that contradict our own principles.

Let us be firm in those principles and be ready to stand up for their survival abroad.

But let there be no more Vietnams. Instead let there be a foreign policy of reason and strength, rooted firmly in our own moral values.

Let the campesinos of El Salvador, let the unionists in Poland, let the blacks in South Africa, let the Jews in the Soviet Union, let all oppressed people see us as their champion -- committed to the moral values that America is all about.

At home, we face two severe challenges.

One is economic; one is social.

I, for one, am sick and tired of watching the Japanese and the Germans and the French continue to outhustle us. I am sick and tired of watching the United States struggle desperately to keep from falling further and further behind in international trade; and I am sick and tired of American products losing their competitive edge in market after market around the world.

We are not a second-class people.

And we will not be a second-class industrial nation. We will not sacrifice long-term growth for short-term profit.

We must act. We must put together a national industrial strategy.

Instead, what are we doing? We are cutting back on basic research. Destroying the opportunities for research by our finest minds, by our Nobel Laureates of the past and our creative pioneers of the future. We are turning our backs on the innovative research that leads to future economic strength. We are eating our seed corn. The Japanese aren't. The Germans aren't.

We are.

The current attitude of benign neglect towards our industrial capacity has cost us dearly. Eleven million people are unemployed -- many of them victims of misguided policies that dismiss the public-private cooperation needed to forge a competitive America.

Let us work together. Labor. Management. Government.

We have the national resources.

We have the human resources. We have the spirit and the will.

We must have a government that wants to fight back, to reassert the primacy of America as the land of innovation, of industrial competitiveness, of full employment, in order to tap that spirit and that will.

We need a President committed to reindustrialization, not record deficits. And I intend to lead America back to belief in herself and her capacity to be, again, the leading industrial nation on earth.

The social challenge is every bit as serious.

This is the land of opportunity. That proud heritage brought millions of immigrants to our shores. Many have died over the years, trying to reach our ports, trying to reach our system of justice and opportunity.

That tradition which drew so many who became Americans has been sullied in the past few years. We have seen curtailed access to education. We have seen hampered enforcement of civil rights. We have seen continued denial of equal rights to women. We have seen our environment despoiled by the tragic fanaticism of James Watt. We have seen the poor and elderly and disabled brutalized by budget cuts while the wealthy received windfalls.

We have seen enough.

We must reverse this slide into selectivity and exclusion. We must return to opportunity and equality and justice and love of land as our guiding social values.

That is the real America, and we must return our nation to those fundamental truths.

Finally, I ask your help to make America whole again.

I do not try to represent one group over another, or one interest, or one constituency. America is more than the sum of all its special interest groups -- it is far greater than its parts, it is indivisible.

All of us -- men and women -- Democrats and Republicans -- liberals and moderates and conservatives -- Blacks and Whites and Hispanics and American Indians and Orientals -- the man on the assembly line and the man in the board room. I will represent all of us.

I love my country. And I make no apology for that love. I love her values, her principles, her morals -- but above all, I love her people.

And as President I will try to be a President to all her people, for that, ultimately, is the strength and the glory of America.

I hope you will help me.