

Ronald Wilson Reagan (1911-2004)

Address to the Nation on the Investigation of the Iran Arms and Contra Aid Controversy

given on December 2, 1986

Good afternoon. Since the outset of the controversy over our policy relating to Iran, I've done everything in my power to make all the facts concerning this matter known to the American people. I can appreciate why some of these things are difficult to comprehend, and you're entitled to have your questions answered. And that's why I've pledged to get to the bottom of this matter.

- 5 And I have said earlier that I would welcome the appointment of an independent counsel to look into allegations of illegality in the sale of arms to Iran and the use of funds from these sales to assist the forces opposing the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. This morning, Attorney General Meese advised me of his decision that his investigation has turned up reasonable grounds to believe that further investigation by an independent counsel would be appropriate. Accordingly, consistent with his responsibilities under the Independent Counsel Act, I immediately urged him to
10 apply to the court here in Washington for the appointment of an independent counsel.

- Yesterday I had my first meeting with the Special Review Board. That Review Board is made up of three men of unquestioned integrity and broad experience in foreign and national security policy. In the meeting with the Board, they promised me a tough, no-nonsense investigation; and I promised them the full cooperation of the White House staff and all Agencies of the executive branch. No area of the NSC staffs activities will be immune from review. And
15 when the Board reports to me, I intend to make their conclusions and recommendations available to Congress and to the American people. With the appointment of an independent counsel, we will have in place a dual system for assuring a thorough review of all aspects of this matter. If illegal acts were undertaken, those who did so will be brought to justice. If actions in implementing my policy were taken without my authorization, knowledge, or concurrence, this will be exposed and appropriate corrective steps will be implemented.

- 20 I recognize fully the interest of Congress in this matter and the fact that in performing its important oversight and legislative role Congress will want to inquire into what occurred. We will cooperate fully with these inquiries. I have already taken the unprecedented step of permitting two of my former national security advisers to testify before a committee of Congress. These congressional inquiries should continue. But I do believe Congress can carry out its duties in getting the facts without disrupting the orderly conduct of a vital part of this nation's government.
25 Accordingly, I am urging the Congress to consider some mechanism that will consolidate its inquiries—such a step has already been requested by several Members of Congress. I support the idea.

- In closing, I want to state again that it is my policy to oppose terrorism throughout the world, to punish those who support it, and to make common cause with those who seek to suppress it. This has been my policy and will continue to be my policy. If the investigative processes now set in motion are given an opportunity to work, all the facts
30 concerning Iran and the transfer of funds to assist the anti-Sandinista forces will shortly be made public. Then the American people—you—will be the final arbiters of this controversy. You will have all the facts and will be able to judge for yourselves.

- I am pleased to announce today that I am appointing Frank Carlucci as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. A former Deputy Secretary of Defense, Deputy Director of the CIA, and Ambassador to Portugal, Mr.
35 Carlucci has the depth of experience in foreign affairs, defense, and intelligence matters that uniquely qualify him to serve as my national security adviser. The American people will be well served by his tenure.

Thank you, and God bless you.

(646 words)

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