

Remarks to Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London

given on June 3, 1988

My Lord Mayor, Prime Minister, Your Excellencies, my Lords, aldermen, sheriffs, ladies and gentlemen, I wonder if you can imagine what it is for an American to stand in this place. Back in the States, we're terribly proud of anything more than a few hundred years old; some even see my election to the Presidency as America's attempt to show our European cousins that we, too, have a regard for antiquity. [Laughter]

- 5 Guildhall has been here since the 15th century, and while it is comforting at my age to be near anything that much older than myself— [laughter] —the venerable age of this institution is hardly all that impresses. Who can come here and not think upon the moments these walls have seen, the many times that people of this city and nation have gathered here in national crisis or national triumph? In the darkest hours of the last World War, when the tense drama of Edward R. Murrow's opening, "This is London," was enough to impress on millions of Americans the mettle of the
- 10 British people, how many times in those days did proceedings continue here, a testimony to the cause of civilization for which you stood? From the Marne to El Alamein, to Arnhem, to the Falklands, you have in this century so often remained steadfast for what is right—and against what is wrong. You are a brave people, and this land truly is, as your majestic, moving hymn proclaims, a "land of hope and glory." And it's why Nancy and I, in the closing days of this historic trip, are glad to be in England once again. After a long journey, we feel among friends, and with all our hearts
- 15 we thank you for having us here.

- Such feelings are, of course, especially appropriate to this occasion; I have come from Moscow to report to you, for truly the relationship between the United States and Great Britain has been critical to NATO's success and the cause of freedom. This hardly means that we've always had a perfect understanding. When I first visited Mrs. Thatcher at the British Embassy in 1981, she mischievously reminded me that the huge portrait dominating the grand staircase was
- 20 none other than that of George III, though she did graciously concede that today most of her countrymen would agree with Jefferson that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing. [Laughter] So, there has always been, as there should be among friends, an element of fun about our differences. But let me assure you, it is how much we have in common and the depth of our friendship that truly matters.

- I have often mentioned this in the States, but I have never had an opportunity to tell a British audience how, during my
- 25 first visit here 40 years ago, I was, like most Americans, anxious to see some of the sights and those 400-year-old inns I had been told abound in this country. Well, a driver took me and a couple of other people to an old inn, a pub really—and what in America we would call a "morn and pop" place. This quite elderly lady was waiting on us, and finally, hearing us talk to one another, she said, "You're Americans, aren't you?" And we said we were. "Oh," she said, "there were a lot of your chaps stationed down the road during the war." And she added, "They used to come in here
- 30 of an evening, and they'd have a songfest. They called me morn, and they called the old man pop." And then her mood changed, and she said, "It was Christmas Eve, and you know, we were all alone and feeling a bit down. And suddenly they burst through the door, and they had presents for me and Pop." And by this time she wasn't looking at us anymore; she was looking off into the distance, into memory, and there were tears in her eyes. And then she said, "Big strapping lads they was, from a place called Ioway." [Laughter]

- 35 From a place called Ioway—and Oregon, California, Texas, New Jersey, Georgia; here with other young men from Lancaster, Hampshire, Glasgow, and Dorset—all of them caught up in the terrible paradoxes of that time: that young men must wage war to end war, and die for freedom so that freedom itself might live. And it is those same two causes for which they fought and died—the cause of peace, the cause of freedom for all humanity—that still brings us, British and American, together.

- 40 For these causes, the people of Great Britain, the United States, and other allied nations have for 44 years made enormous sacrifices to keep our alliance strong and our military ready. For them we embarked in this decade on a new postwar strategy, a forward strategy of freedom, a strategy of public candor about the moral and fundamental differences between statism and democracy, but also a strategy of vigorous diplomatic engagement; a policy that rejects both the inevitability of war or the permanence of totalitarian rule, a policy based on realism that seeks not just
- 45 treaties for treaties' sake but the recognition and resolution of fundamental differences with our adversaries.

The pursuit of this policy has just now taken me to Moscow, and, let me say, I believe this policy is bearing fruit. Quite possibly, we're beginning to take down the barriers of the postwar era; quite possibly, we are entering a new era in history, a time of lasting change in the Soviet Union. We will have to see. But if so, it's because of the steadfastness

of the allies—the democracies—for more than 40 years, and especially in this decade.

50 The history of our time will undoubtedly include a footnote about how, during this decade and the last, the voice of retreat and hopelessness reached a crescendo in the West—insisting the only way to peace was unilateral disarmament, proposing nuclear freezes, opposing deployment of counterbalancing weapons such as intermediate-range missiles or the more recent concept of strategic defense systems. These same voices ridiculed the notion of going beyond arms control, the hope of doing something more than merely establishing artificial limits within which
55 arms buildups could continue all but unabated. Arms reduction would never work, they said, and when the Soviets left the negotiating table in Geneva for 15 months, they proclaimed disaster.

And yet it was our double-zero option, much maligned when first proposed, that provided the basis for the INF treaty, the first treaty ever that did not just control offensive weapons but reduced them and, yes, actually eliminated an entire class of U.S. and Soviet nuclear missiles. This treaty, last month's development in Afghanistan, the changes we see in
60 the Soviet Union—these are momentous events; not conclusive, but momentous. And that's why, although history will duly note that we, too, heard voices of denial and doubt, it is those who spoke with hope and strength who will be best remembered.

And here I want to say that through all the troubles of the last decade, one such firm, eloquent voice, a voice that proclaimed proudly the cause of the Western alliance and human freedom, has been heard. A voice that never
65 sacrificed its anticommunist credentials or its realistic appraisal of change in the Soviet Union, but because it came from the longest-serving leader in the alliance, it did become one of the first to suggest that we could "do business" with Mr. Gorbachev. So, let me discharge my first official duty here today. Prime Minister, the achievements of the Moscow summit as well as the Geneva and Washington summits say much about your valor and strength and, by virtue of the office you hold, that of the British people. So let me say, simply: At this hour in history, Prime Minister,
70 the entire world salutes you and your gallant people and gallant nation.

And while your leadership and the vision of the British people have been an inspiration, not just to my own people but to all of those who love freedom and yearn for peace, I know you join me in a deep sense of gratitude toward the leaders and peoples of all the democratic allies. Whether deploying crucial weapons of deterrence, standing fast in the Persian Gulf, combating terrorism and aggression by outlaw regimes, or helping freedom fighters around the globe,
75 rarely in history has any alliance of free nations acted with such firmness and dispatch, and on so many fronts. In a process reaching back as far as the founding of NATO and the Common Market, the House of Western Europe, together with the United States, Canada, Japan, and others—this House of Democracy—engaged in an active diplomacy while sparking a startling growth of democratic institutions and free markets all across the globe; in short, an expansion of the frontiers of freedom and a lessening of the chances of war.

80 So, it is within this context that I report now on events in Moscow. On Wednesday, at 08:20 Greenwich time, Mr. Gorbachev and I exchanged the instruments of ratification of the INF treaty. So, too, we made tangible progress toward the START treaty on strategic weapons. Such a treaty, with all its implications, is, I believe, now within our grasp. But part of the realism and candor we were determined to bring to negotiations with the Soviets meant refusing to put all the weight of these negotiations and our bilateral relationship on the single issue of arms control. As I never
85 tire of saying, nations do not distrust each other because they are armed; they are armed because they distrust each other.

So, equally important items on the agenda dealt with critical issues, like regional conflicts, human rights, and bilateral exchanges. With regard to regional conflicts, here, too, we are now in the third week of the pullout of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The importance of this step should not be underestimated. Our third area of discussion was bilateral
90 contacts between our peoples, an expanding program of student exchanges and the opening of cultural centers—progress toward a broader understanding of each other. And finally, on the issue of human rights—granting people the right to speak, write, travel, and worship freely—there are signs of greater individual freedom.

Now, originally I was going to give you just an accounting on these items. But, you know, on my first day in Moscow Mr. Gorbachev used a Russian saying: "Better to see something once than to hear about it a hundred times." So, if I
95 might go beyond our four-part agenda today and offer just a moment or two of personal reflection on the country I saw for the first time.

In all aspects of Soviet life, the talk is of progress toward democratic reform—in the economy, in political institutions, in religious, social, and artistic life. It is called glasnost—openness; it is perestroika—restructuring. Mr. Gorbachev and I discussed his upcoming party conference, where many of these reforms will be debated and perhaps
100 adopted—such things as official accountability, limitations on length of service in office, an independent judiciary,

revisions of the criminal law, and lowering taxes on cooperatives. In short, giving individuals more freedom to run their own affairs, to control their own destinies.

To those of us familiar with the postwar era, all of this is cause for shaking the head in wonder. Imagine, the President of the United States and the General Secretary of the Soviet Union walking together in Red Square, talking about a growing personal friendship, and meeting together average citizens, realizing how much our people have in common. It was a special moment in a week of special moments. My personal impression of Mr. Gorbachev is that he is a serious man seeking serious reform. I pray that the hand of the Lord will be on the Soviet people—the people whose faces Nancy and I saw everywhere we went. Believe me, there was one thing about those faces that we will never forget: They were the faces of hope—the hope of a new era in human history and, hopefully, an era of peace and freedom for all.

And yet, while the Moscow summit showed great promise and the response of the Soviet people was heartening, let me interject here a note of caution and, I hope, prudence. It has never been disputes between the free peoples and the peoples of the Soviet Union that have been at the heart of postwar tensions and conflicts. No, disputes among governments over the pursuit of statism and expansionism have been the central point in our difficulties. Now that the allies are strong and expansionism is receding around the world and in the Soviet Union, there is hope. And we look for this trend to continue. We must do all we can to assist it. And this means openly acknowledging positive change and crediting it. But let us also remember the strategy that we have adopted is one that provides for setbacks along the way as well as progress. Let us embrace honest change when it occurs. But let us also be wary; let us stay strong; and let us be confident, too.

Prime Minister, perhaps you remember that upon accepting your gracious invitation to address the members of the Parliament in 1982, I suggested then that the world could well be at a turning point when the two great threats to life in this century—nuclear war and totalitarian rule—might now be overcome. In an accounting of what might lie ahead for the Western alliance, I suggested that the hard evidence of the totalitarian experiment was now in and that this evidence had led to an uprising of the intellect and will, one that reaffirmed the dignity of the individual in the face of the modern state. I suggested, too, that in a way Marx was right when he said the political order would come into conflict with the economic order; only he was wrong in predicting which part of the world this would occur in, for the crisis came not in the Capitalist West but in the Communist East. Noting the economic difficulties reaching the critical stage in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, I said that at other times in history the ruling elites had faced such situations and, when they encountered resolve and determination from free nations, decided to loosen their grip.

It was then I suggested that the tides of history were running in the cause of liberty, but only if we, as free men and women, joined together in a worldwide movement toward democracy, a crusade for freedom, a crusade that would be not so much a struggle of armed might, not so much a test of bombs and rockets, as a test of faith and will. Well, that crusade for freedom, that crusade for peace is well underway. We have found the will. We have held fast to the faith. And, whatever happens, whatever triumphs or disappointments ahead, we must keep to this strategy of strength and candor, this strategy of hope—hope in the eventual triumph of freedom.

But as we move forward, let us not fail to note the lessons we've learned along the way in developing our strategy. We have learned the first objective of the adversaries of freedom is to make free nations question their own faith in freedom, to make us think that adhering to our principles and speaking out against human rights abuses or foreign aggression is somehow an act of belligerence. Well, over the long run, such inhibitions make free peoples silent and, ultimately, half-hearted about their cause. This is the first and most important defeat free nations can ever suffer, for when free peoples cease telling the truth about and to their adversaries, they cease telling the truth to themselves. In matters of state, unless the truth be spoken, it ceases to exist.

It is in this sense that the best indicator of how much we care about freedom is what we say about freedom; it is in this sense that words truly are actions. And there is one added and quite extraordinary benefit to this sort of realism and public candor: This is also the best way to avoid war or conflict. Too often in the past, the adversaries of freedom forgot the reserves of strength and resolve among free peoples; too often they interpreted conciliatory words as weakness; and too often they miscalculated and underestimated the willingness of free men and women to resist to the end. Words of freedom remind them otherwise.

This is the lesson we've learned and the lesson of the last war and, yes, the lesson of Munich. But it is also the lesson taught us by Sir Winston [Churchill], by London in the Blitz, by the enduring pride and faith of the British people. Just a few years ago, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and I stood at the Normandy beaches to commemorate the selflessness that comes from such pride and faith. It is well we recall the lessons of our alliance. And I wonder if you might permit me to recall one other this morning: Operation Market Garden. It was called 3 months after Overlord and

the rescue of Europe began—a plan to suddenly drop British and American airborne divisions on The Netherlands and
155 open up a drive into the heart of Germany. A battalion of British paratroopers was given the great task of seizing the
bridge deep in enemy territory at Arnhem. For a terrible 10 days they held out.

Some years ago, a reunion of those magnificent veterans—British, Americans, and others of our allies—was held in
New York City. From the dispatch by the New York Times reporter Maurice Carroll, there was this paragraph: "'Look
at him,' said Henri Knap, an Amsterdam newspaperman who headed a Dutch underground's intelligence operation in
160 Arnhem. He gestured toward General John Frost, a bluff Briton who had committed the battalion that held the bridge.
'Look at him—still with that black mustache. If you put him at the end of a bridge even today and said "keep it," he'd
keep it.'"

The story mentioned the wife of Cornelius Ryan, the American writer who immortalized Market Garden in his book,
"A Bridge Too Far," who told the reporter that just as Mr. Ryan was finishing his book-writing the final paragraphs
165 about General Frost's valiant stand at Arnhem and about how in his eyes his men would always be undefeated—her
husband burst into tears. That was quite unlike him; and Mrs. Ryan, alarmed, rushed to him. The writer could only
look up and say of General Frost: "Honestly, what that man went through." A few days ago, seated there in Spaso
House with Soviet dissidents, I had that same thought and asked myself: What won't men suffer for freedom? The
dispatch about the Arnhem veteran concluded with this quote from General Frost about his visits to that bridge.
170 "'We've been going back ever since. Every year we have a—what's the word?—reunion. Now, there's a word.' He
turned to his wife, 'Dear, what's the word for going to Arnhem?' 'Reunion,' she said. 'No,' he said, 'there's a special
word.' She pondered. 'Pilgrimage,' she said. 'Yes, pilgrimage,'" General Frost said.

As those veterans of Arnhem view their time, so, too, we must view ours; ours is also a pilgrimage, a pilgrimage
toward those things we honor and love: human dignity, the hope of freedom for all peoples and for all nations. And
175 I've always cherished the belief that all of history is such a pilgrimage and that our Maker, while never denying us free
will, does over time guide us with a wise and provident hand, giving direction to history and slowly bringing good
from evil—leading us ever so slowly but ever so relentlessly and lovingly to a moment when the will of man and God
are as one again.

I cherish, too, the hope that what we have done together throughout this decade and in Moscow this week has helped
180 bring mankind along the road of that pilgrimage. If this be so, prayerful recognition of what we are about as a
civilization and a people has played its part. I mean, of course, the great civilized ideas that comprise so much of your
heritage: the development of law embodied by your constitutional tradition, the idea of restraint on centralized power
and individual rights as established in your Magna Carta, the idea of representative government as embodied by the
mother of all parliaments. But we go beyond even this. Your own Evelyn Waugh, who reminded us that
185 "civilization—and by this I do not mean talking cinemas and tinned food nor even surgery and hygienic houses but the
whole moral and artistic organization of Europe—has not in itself the power of survival." It came into being, he said,
through the Judeo-Christian tradition and "without it has no significance or power to command allegiance. It is no
longer possible," he wrote, "to accept the benefits of civilization and at the same time deny the supernatural basis on
which it rests."

190 And so, it is first things we must consider. And here it is, a story, one last story, that can remind us best of what we're
about. It's a story that a few years ago came in the guise of that art form for which I have an understandable
affection—the cinema. It's a story about the 1920 Olympics and two British athletes: Harold Abrahams, a young Jew,
whose victory—as his immigrant Arab-Italian coach put it—was a triumph for all those who have come from distant
lands and found freedom and refuge here in England; and Eric Liddell, a young Scotsman, who would not sacrifice
195 religious conviction for fame. In one unforgettable scene, Eric Liddell reads the words of Isaiah. "He giveth power to
the faint, and to them that have no might, he increased their strength, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew
their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary."

Here, then, is our formula for completing our crusade for freedom. Here is the strength of our civilization and our
belief in the rights of humanity. Our faith is in a higher law. Yes, we believe in prayer and its power. And like the
200 Founding Fathers of both our lands, we hold that humanity was meant not to be dishonored by the all-powerful state,
but to live in the image and likeness of Him who made us.

More than five decades ago, an American President told his generation that they had a rendezvous with destiny; at
almost the same moment, a Prime Minister asked the British people for their finest hour. This rendezvous, this finest
hour, is still upon us. Let us seek to do His will in all things, to stand for freedom, to speak for humanity. "Come, my
205 friends," as it was said of old by Tennyson, "it is not too late to seek a newer world." Thank you.
(3837 Wörter)

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