

**Remarks to the Nixon Center for  
Peace and Freedom Policy  
Conference**

*March 1, 1995*

To Tricia and John Taylor and all the people from the Nixon Center; our distinguished guests from Germany and from Russia; of course, to Henry Kissinger—I was thinking when he said we both spoke with accents, judging from the results of the last election, his native country is still claiming him more than mine is claiming me. [*Laughter*] But I'm a big one for reconciliation—[*laughter*—and there's plenty of time to achieve it.

I am honored to be here tonight. Just a month before he passed away, President Nixon wrote me the last letter I received from him about his last trip to Russia. I told some people at the time that it was the best piece of foreign policy writing I had received, which angered my staff but happened to be the truth. [*Laughter*] And as with all of our correspondence and conversations, I was struck by the rigor of his analysis, the energy of his convictions, and the wisdom of the practical suggestions that he made to me.

But more than the specifics of the letter, which basically argued for the imperative of the United States continuing to support political and economic reform in Russia, I was moved by the letter's larger message, a message that ran throughout Richard Nixon's entire public life and all of his prolific writings. President Nixon believed deeply that the United States simply could not be strong at home unless we were strong and prepared to lead abroad.

And that made a big impression on me. When I was running for President in 1992, even though there was this little sticker up on the wall of my campaign headquarters that said, "It's the economy, stupid," I always said in every speech that we had to have two objectives. We had to restore the American dream for all of our people, but we also had to make sure that we move into the next century still the strongest nation in the world, and the world's greatest force for peace and freedom and democracy.

Tonight I want to talk about the vital tradition of American leadership and our responsibilities, those which Henry Kissinger men-

tioned and those which President Nixon recognized so well. Our mission especially I want to discuss: to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons.

Today if we are going to be strong at home and lead abroad, we have to overcome what we all recognize I think is a dangerous and growing temptation here in our own land to focus solely on the problems we face here in America. I want to focus on the problems we face here in America. I've tried to do it for the last 2 years. I look forward to working with this new Republican-led Congress in the next 2. But not solely.

There is a struggle now going on between those of us who want to carry on the tradition of American leadership and those who would advocate a new form of American isolationism. A struggle which cuts curiously across both party and ideological lines. If we're going to continue to improve the security and prosperity of all our people, then the tradition of American leadership must prevail.

We live in a moment of hope. We all know that. The implosion of communism and the explosion of the global economy have brought new freedoms to countries on every continent. Free markets are on the rise. Democracy is ascendant. The slogan says, "after victory." Today, more than ever before, people across the globe do have the opportunity to reach their God-given potential. And because they do, Americans have new opportunities to reach theirs as well.

At the same time, the post-cold-war world has revealed a whole web of problems that defy quick or painless solutions: aggression of rogue states, transnational threats like overpopulation and environmental degradation, terrible ethnic conflicts and economic dislocation. But at the heart of all these complex challenges, I believe, lies an age-old battle for power over human lives, the battle between the forces of freedom and tyranny, tolerance and repression, hope and fear. The same idea that was under attack by fascism and then by communism remains under attack today in different ways all across the world, the idea of the open society of free people.

American leadership is necessary for the tide of history to keep running our way, and for our children to have the future they de-

serve. Yet, there are some who would choose escapism over engagement. The new isolationists oppose our efforts to expand free trade through GATT or NAFTA, through APEC and the Summit of the Americas. They reject our conviction that democracy must be nurtured with investment and support, a conviction that we are acting on from the former Soviet Union to South Africa. And some of them, being hypocritical, say that we must trumpet the rhetoric of American strength, and then at the same time, they argue against the resources we need to bring stability to the Persian Gulf or to restore democracy to Haiti or to control the spread of drugs and organized crime around the world or even to meet our most elemental obligations to the United Nations and its peacekeeping work.

The new isolationists both on the left and the right would radically revise the fundamentals of our foreign policy that have earned bipartisan support since the end of World War II. They would eliminate any meaningful role for the United Nations which has achieved, for all of its problems, real progress around the world, from the Middle East to Africa. They would deny resources to our peacekeepers and even to our troops and, instead, squander them on Star Wars. And they would refuse aid to the fledgling democracies and to all those fighting poverty and environmental problems that can literally destroy hopes for a more democratic, more prosperous, more safe world.

The new isolationists are wrong. They would have us face the future alone. Their approach would weaken this country, and we must not let the ripple of isolationism that has been generated build into a tidal wave.

If we withdraw from the world today, mark my words, we'll have to contend with the consequences of our neglect tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. This is a moment of decision for all of us without regard to our party, our background, or our accent. This is a moment of decision.

The extraordinary trend toward democracy and free markets is not inevitable. And as we have seen recently, it will not proceed easily in an even, uninterrupted course. This is hard work. And at the very time when more and more countries than ever before

are working to establish or shore up their own freedom in their fragile democracies, they look to us for support. At this time, the new isolationists must not be allowed to pull America out of the game after just a few hours of debate because there is a modest price attached to our leadership.

We know now, as President Nixon recognized, that there must also be limits to America's involvement in the world's problems, limits imposed by clear-headed evaluation of our fundamental interests. We cannot be the world's policemen. We cannot become involved in every problem we really care about. But the choices we make must be rooted in the conviction that America cannot walk away from its interests or its responsibilities.

That's why, from our first day in office, this administration has chosen to reach out, not retreat. From our efforts to open markets for America to support democracy around the world, to reduce the threat posed by devastating weapons and terrorists, to maintaining the most effective fighting force in the world, we have worked to seize the opportunities and meet the obligations of this moment.

None of this could have happened without a coalition of realists, people in both Houses of Congress and, importantly, people from both parties; people from coast to coast in our towns and cities and communities who know that the wealth and well-being of the United States depends upon our leadership abroad. Even the early leaders of our Republic who went to great pains to avoid involvement in great power conflicts recognize not only the potential benefits but the absolute necessity of engaging with the world.

Before Abraham Lincoln was elected President, our farmers were selling their crops overseas, we had dispatched the trade mission all the way to Japan trying to open new markets—some problems don't go away—[laughter]—and our Navy had already sailed every ocean. By the dawn of this century, our growing political and economic power already imposed a special duty on America to lead, a duty that was crystallized in our involvement in World War I. But after that war, we and the other great powers abandoned our responsibilities and the forces

of tyranny and hatred filled the vacuum, as is well-known.

After the Second World War, our wise leaders did not repeat that mistake. With the dawn of the nuclear age and the cold war, and with the economies of Europe and Japan in shambles, President Truman persuaded an uncertain and weary Nation, yearning to shift its energies from the frontlines to the home-front, to lead the world again.

A remarkable generation of Americans created and sustained alliances and institutions, the Marshall Plan, NATO, the United Nations, the World Bank, the IMF, the things that brought half a century of security and prosperity to America, to Europe, to Japan, and to other countries all around the world. Those efforts and the special resolve and military strength of our own Nation held tyranny in check until the power of democracy, the failures of communism, and the heroic determination of people to be free, consigned the cold war to history. Those successes would not have been possible without a strong, bipartisan commitment to America's leadership.

Senator Arthur Vandenburg's call to unite our official voice at the water's edge joined Republicans to Truman's doctrine. His impact was all the more powerful for his own past as an isolationist. But as Vandenburg himself said, Pearl Harbor ended isolationism for any realist.

Today, it is Vandenburg's spirit that should drive our foreign policy and our politics. The practical determination of Senators Nunn and Lugar to help Russia reduce its nuclear arsenal safely and securely, the support from Speaker Gingrich and Leader Gephardt, from Chairman Livingston and Representative Obey for aid to Russia and the newly independent states, the work of Senators Hatfield, Leahy, and McConnell, and Chairman Gilman, and Representative Hamilton for peace in the Middle East; the efforts of Senator Warner to restructure our intelligence: all these provide strong evidence of the continuing benefits and vitality of leadership with bipartisanship.

If we continue to lead abroad and work together at home, we can take advantage of these turbulent times. But if we retreat, we risk squandering all these opportunities and

abandoning our obligations which others have entrusted to us and paid a very dear price to bring to us in this moment in history.

I know that the choice to go forward in a lot of these areas is not easy in democracies at this time. Many of the decisions that America's leaders have to make are not popular when they're made. But imagine the alternative. Imagine, for example, the tariffs and barriers that would still cripple the world trading system for years into the future if internationalists coming together across party lines had not passed GATT and NAFTA. Imagine what the Persian Gulf region would look like today if the United States had not stepped up with its allies to stop Iraqi aggression. Imagine the ongoing reign of terror and the flood of refugees at our borders had we not helped to give democracy a second chance in Haiti. Imagine the chaos that might have ensued if we had not moved to help stabilize Mexico's economy. In each case, there was substantial and sometimes overwhelming majority opinion against what needed to be done at the moment. But because we did it, the world has a better chance at peace and freedom.

But above all now, I ask you to imagine the dangers that our children and grandchildren, even after the cold war is over, still can face if we do not do everything we can to reduce the threat of nuclear arms, to curb the terrible chemical and biological weapons spreading around the world, to counter the terrorists and criminals who would put these weapons into the service of evil.

As Arthur Vandenburg asked at the dawn of the nuclear age, after a German V-1 attack had left London in flames and its people in fear, "How can there be isolation when men can devise weapons like that?"

President Nixon understood the wisdom of those words. His life spanned an era of stunning increases in humankind's destructive capacity, from the biplane to ballistic missiles, from mustard gas to mushroom clouds. He knew that the atomic age could never be won but could be lost. On any list of his foreign policy accomplishments, the giant steps he took toward reducing the nuclear threat must stand among his greatest achievements. As President, I have acted on that same imperative.

Over the past 2 years, the United States has made real progress in lifting the threat of nuclear weapons. Now, in 1995, we face a year of particular decision in this era, a year in which the United States will pursue the most ambitious agenda to dismantle and fight the spread of weapons of mass destruction since the atom was split.

We know that ours is an enormously complex and difficult challenge. There is no single policy, no silver bullet, that will prevent or reverse the spread of weapons of mass destruction. But we have no more important task. Arms control makes us not only safer, it makes us stronger. It is a source of strength. It is one of the most effective insurance policies we can write for the future of our children.

Our administration has focused on two distinct but closely connected areas, decreasing and dismantling existing weapons and preventing nations or groups from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. We've made progress on both fronts.

As the result of an agreement President Yeltsin and I reached, for the first time in a generation Russian missiles are not pointed at our cities or our citizens. We've greatly reduced the lingering fear of an accidental nuclear launch. We put into force the START I treaty with Russia that will eliminate from both our countries delivery systems that carry more than 9,000 nuclear warheads, each with the capacity to incinerate a city the size of Atlanta.

START I, negotiated by two Republican administrations and put into force by this Democratic administration, is the first treaty that requires the nuclear powers actually to reduce their strategic arsenal. Both our countries are dismantling the weapons as fast as we can. And thanks to a far-reaching verification system, including on-site inspections which began in Russia and the United States today, each of us knows exactly what the other is doing.

And again, through the far-sighted program devised by Senators Nunn and Lugar, we are helping Russia and the other newly independent states to eliminate nuclear forces in transport, safeguard and destroy nuclear weapons and materiel.

Ironically, some of the changes that have allowed us to reduce the world's stockpile of nuclear weapons have made our non-proliferation efforts harder. The breakup of the Soviet Union left nuclear materials dispersed throughout the newly independent states. The potential for theft of nuclear materials, therefore, increased. We face the prospect of organized criminals entering the nuclear smuggling business. Add to this the volatile mix, the fact that a lump of plutonium the size of a soda can is enough to build a bomb and the urgency of the effort to stop the spread of nuclear materials should be clear to all of us.

That's why from our first day in office we have launched an aggressive, coordinated campaign against international terrorism and nuclear smuggling. We are cooperating closely with our allies, working with Russia and the other newly independent states, improving security at nuclear facilities, and strengthening multilateral export controls.

One striking example of our success is Operation Sapphire, the airlift of nearly 600 kilograms of highly enriched uranium, enough to make dozens of bombs from Kazakhstan to the United States for disposal. We've also secured agreements with Russia to reduce the uranium and plutonium available for nuclear weapons, and we're seeking a global treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Our patient, determined diplomacy also succeeded in convincing Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty and give up the nuclear weapons left on their territory when the Soviet Union dissolved. One of our administration's top priorities was to assure that these new countries would become non-nuclear nations, and now we are also achieving that goal.

Because of these efforts, four potential suppliers of ballistic missiles, Russia, Ukraine, China, and South Africa, have all agreed to control the transfer of these missiles and related technology, pulling back from the nuclear precipice has allowed us to cut United States defense expenditures for strategic weapons by almost two-thirds, a savings of about \$20 billion a year, savings which can be shifted to vital needs such as boosting

the readiness of our Armed Forces, reducing the deficit, putting more police on our own streets. By spending millions to keep or take weapons out of the hands of our potential adversaries, we are saving billions in arms costs and putting it to better use.

Now, in this year of decision, our ambition for the future must be even more ambitious. If our people are to know real lasting security, we have to redouble our arms control, nonproliferation, and antiterrorism efforts. We have to do everything we can to avoid living with the 21st century version of fallout shelters and duck-and-cover exercises to prevent another World Trade Center tragedy.

In just 4 days we mark the 25th anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nothing is more important to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons than extending the treaty indefinitely and unconditionally. And that's why I've asked the Vice President to lead our delegation to the NPT conference this April and to work as hard as we can to make sure we succeed in getting that indefinite extension.

The NPT is the principal reason why scores of nations do not now possess nuclear weapons, why the doomsayers were wrong. One hundred and seventy-two nations have made NPT the most widely subscribed arms limitation treaty in history for one overriding reason: it's in their self-interest to do so. Non-nuclear-weapon states that sign on to the treaty pledge never to acquire them. Nuclear-weapon states vow not to help others obtain nuclear weapons, to facilitate the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and to pursue nuclear arms control and disarmament, commitments I strongly reaffirm, along with our determination to attain universal membership in the treaty.

Failure to extend NPT infinitely could open the door to a world of nuclear trouble. Pariah nations with rigid ideologies and expansionist ambitions would have an easier time acquiring terrible weapons, and countries that have chosen to forgo the nuclear option would then rethink their position. They would certainly be tempted to reconsider that decision.

To further demonstrate our commitment to the goals of the treaty, today I have ordered that 200 tons of fissile material,

enough for thousands of nuclear weapons, be permanently withdrawn from the United States nuclear stockpile. Two hundred tons of fissile material that will never again be used to build a nuclear weapon.

A second key goal of ours is ratifying START II. Once in effect, that treaty will eliminate delivery systems from Russian and American arsenals that carry more than 5,000 weapons. The major reductions under START I, together with START II, will enable us to reduce by two-thirds the number of strategic warheads deployed at the height of the cold war. At my urging, the Senate has already begun hearings on START II, and I am encouraged by the interest of the Senators from both parties in seeking quick action. I commend the Senate for the action taken so far, and I urge again the approval of the treaty as soon as possible.

President Yeltsin and I have already instructed our experts to begin considering the possibility after START II is ratified of additional reductions and limitations on remaining nuclear forces. We have a chance to further lift the nuclear cloud, and we dare not miss it.

To stop the development of new generations of nuclear weapons, we must also quickly complete negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty. Last month I extended a nuclear testing moratorium that I put into effect when I took office. And we revised our negotiating position to speed the conclusion of the treaty while reaffirming our determination to maintain a safe and reliable nuclear stockpile.

We will also continue to work with our allies to fully implement the agreement we reached with North Korea, first to freeze then to dismantle its nuclear program, all under international monitoring. The critics of this agreement, I believe, are wrong. The deal does stop North Korea's nuclear program, and it does commit Pyongyang to roll it back in the years to come.

I have not heard another alternative proposal that isn't either unworkable or foolhardy, or one that our allies in the Republic of Korea and Japan, the nations most directly affected, would fail to support.

If North Korea fulfills its commitment, the Korean Peninsula and the entire world will

clearly be less threatened and more secure. The NPT, START II, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the North Korean Agreement, they top our agenda for the year ahead. There are other critical tasks we also face if we want to make every American more secure, including winning Senate ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, negotiating legally binding measures to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, clarifying the ABM Treaty so as to secure its viability while permitting highly effective defenses against theater missile attacks, continuing to support regional arms control efforts in the Middle East and elsewhere and pushing for the ratification of the Convention on Conventional Weapons which, among other things, would help us to reduce the suffering caused by the tens of millions of anti-personnel mines which are plaguing millions of people all across this world.

My friends, this is a full and challenging agenda. There are many obstacles ahead. We cannot achieve it if we give in to a new isolationism. But I believe we can do no less than make every effort to complete it.

Tonight, let us remember what President Nixon told the joint session of Congress when he returned from his historic trip to Moscow in 1972. He said, "We have begun to check the wasteful and dangerous spiral of nuclear arms. Let us seize the moment so that our children and the world's children can live free of the fears and free of the hatreds that have been the lot of mankind through the centuries."

Now it is within our power to realize the dream that Richard Nixon described over 20 years ago. We cannot let history record that our generation of Americans refused to rise to this challenge, that we withdrew from the world and abandoned our responsibilities when we knew better than to do it, that we lacked the energy, the vision, and the will to carry this struggle forward, the age-old struggle between hope and fear.

So let us find inspiration in the great tradition of Harry Truman and Arthur Vandenburg, a tradition that builds bridges of cooperation, not walls of isolation; that opens the arms of Americans to change instead of throwing up our hands in despair;

that casts aside partisanship and brings together Republicans and Democrats for the good of the American people and the world. That is the tradition that made the most of this land, won the great battles of this century against tyranny, and secured our freedom and our prosperity.

Above all, let's not forget that these efforts begin and end with the American people. Every time we reduce the threat that has hung over our heads since the dawn of the nuclear age, we help to ensure that from the far stretches of the Aleutians to the tip of the Florida Keys, the American people are more secure. That is our most serious task and our most solemn obligation. The challenge of this moment is matched only by its possibility. So let us do our duty.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Tricia Nixon Cox, daughter of Richard Nixon; John Taylor, director, Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace; and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

### **Remarks on the Senate Vote on the Balanced Budget Amendment**

*March 2, 1995*

Good afternoon. I have a statement I'd like to make about the vote on the balanced budget amendment and what happens now. And I look forward to taking your questions tomorrow. We're going to have a press conference then, and so I'll just read the statement now.

The balanced budget amendment has been defeated because Republicans could not provide enough Democratic Senators with the simple guarantee that Social Security would be protected in any balanced budget amendment procedures.

Let me begin by simply congratulating the people on both sides of this issue who argued with great depth of conviction and sincerity and people on both sides who want to bring down the deficit and eliminate unnecessary spending but who differed on the consequences and the necessity of using an amendment to the Constitution to do it.