

# 54 Radio Address About the Third Annual Foreign Policy Report to the Congress. *February 9, 1972*

*Good morning:*

Today I have submitted to the Congress my third annual report on United States foreign policy. I want to share my thoughts with you now on some of the highlights of that report.

For the first time in a generation, the most powerful nation in the world and the most populous nation in the world, the United States and the People's Republic of China, have begun a process of communication.

For the first time in a generation, we have taken a series of steps that could mean a new relationship with the Soviet Union.

For the first time in a generation, our alliances with the nations of Europe, Japan, and other nations have been reshaped to reflect their new capacity to assume a greater responsibility for their own defense.

For the first time in a generation, we have laid a new basis for fair competition in world trade that will mean more jobs for American workers.

These are great changes. They have brought the world closer to a stable peace. They did not happen by accident. These breakthroughs toward peace took place in the past year for good reason.

Three years ago we stopped reacting on the basis of yesterday's habits and started acting to deal with the realities of today and the opportunities of tomorrow.

Where has this new attitude taken us?

In our relations with the Soviet Union, these were the elements of the breakthrough that took place over the past 12 months.

We broke the deadlock in the arms limitation negotiation and agreed on a framework for progress in the SALT talks.

We agreed on a treaty barring weapons of mass destruction from the ocean floor, and on another treaty to remove the threat of germ warfare.

We agreed on a more reliable "hot line" between Washington and Moscow, and found new ways to consult each other in emergencies which will reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war.

And in a step of the greatest importance, we reached an agreement on Berlin. If there was one city where World War III could have broken out in the past 20 years, it was Berlin. This new agreement reduces the danger of the super powers in direct confrontation.

There are other areas where we have had, and continue to have, serious differences with the Soviet Union. On balance, however, I have concluded that Soviet willingness to take positive steps toward peace in the past year makes a meeting at the highest level timely, particularly in arms limitation and economic cooperation.

And that is why, for the first time, a President of the United States will visit Moscow. I will go to that meeting in May with no naive illusions, but with some reasonable expectations.

Our relations with the Soviet Union were helped by the fact that our two nations have had long-established communications. Because we deeply understood what our real differences were, we could move to negotiate them.

When it came to dealing with the People's Republic of China, 25 years of hostility stood in the way. Accordingly, I began what is now 3 years of the most painstaking and necessarily discreet preparation for an opening to the world's most populous nation.

In 2 weeks, I shall begin my journey for peace to Peking. The agreement to meet, and the mutual trust needed to make the arrangements for the first American state visit to the People's Republic of China is a breakthrough of great importance.

We do not expect instant solutions to deep-seated differences. But the visit is a beginning. Now, in the relations between our countries, the old exchange of denunciations can be replaced with a constructive exchange of views.

Just as we have established a creative relationship with our adversaries, we have developed a more balanced alliance with our friends.

Not so long ago, our alliances were addressed exclusively to the containment of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. But now there has to be more to our alliance. It is fairly simple to unite about what you are against. It is a lot more complicated to hold together an alliance on the basis of what you are for.

We do not shy away from this complexity because now, in this time of breakthroughs, there has never been a greater need for a sense of common purpose among the non-Communist nations. There is no requirement that we all march in lockstep; but there is a need to move forward in the same direction.

And that is why we encourage initiative and self-reliance on the part of our allies.

That is why our alliance is becoming what we need in the real world of the seventies—a dynamic coalition of self-assured and independent nations.

Our former dependents have become our competitors. That is good for them, and it is also good for us.

But as the roles change, the rules change. The old international monetary and trading system had become unfair to the American workers and to American business. Facing vigorous, healthy competitors, the United States could no longer be expected to compete with one hand tied behind its back.

Nothing would have happened unless we made it happen. Last August, we took action to stimulate a worldwide settlement of the problem. Within a few months, a general realignment of currencies took place, the first step toward complete reform.

We succeeded in moving the non-Communist world away from the constant state of monetary crisis of the past decade, and we removed a danger to the unity of the free world.

Let me turn now to Vietnam. This has been America's longest and most difficult war. It began long before I became President. And I have been doing everything I can honorably do to end it.

I have brought almost one-half million men home from Vietnam. As high as 900 a week were being killed in action when I took office. This week there were two. We have reduced air sorties, budget costs, and draft calls. And we have made the most generous peace offer in the history of warfare.

I have no complaint over the fact that during this period, when I have been ending a war I did not begin, I have been subjected to vigorous criticism. I do not question the patriotism or the sincerity of those who disagree with my policies to bring peace, but as I said in 1968 when I was a candidate for President, we have only one President at a time, and only the President can negotiate an end to the war.

There should always be free debate and criticism, so that our policy will represent the best thinking of our Nation, but a candidate for President has a higher responsibility than the ordinary critic. A candidate should make any criticism he believes would contribute to bringing an honorable peace. But I would hope that anyone seeking the Presidency would examine his statements carefully to be sure that nothing he says might give the enemy an incentive to prolong the war until after the election.

Trust in the United States among the 45 nations with which we have treaty commitments is essential if peace and freedom are to be preserved in the world. Let us end our involvement in the war in Vietnam in a way which will not destroy that trust.

Looking ahead on the world scene, how can we move ahead to make the most of the breakthroughs of the past year? We must advance the delicate process of creating a more constructive relationship between ourselves and the People's Republic of China.

We must bring the arms race under control, and by so doing, lay the basis for other major steps toward peace that can be taken together by the United States

and the Soviet Union. And equally important, we must continue to strengthen the partnership with our friends. We must work with friends and adversaries to build an international structure of peace which everyone will work to preserve because each nation will realize its stake in its preservation.

We must continue the process of reforming the world's financial and trading systems so that workers and consumers can benefit in America and in every country that has a competitive spirit.

Those are by no means the only items on our international agenda. We want to see the cease-fire in the Middle East, which we initiated, moved toward a more secure and permanent peace. We want to work out with our friends in Latin America, Africa, and non-Communist Asia new ways of helping them help themselves. We want to shore up the eroding confidence in the United Nations.

There is much unfinished business. But there is a new awareness of reality growing in the world. Movement and progress can be felt today where there was stagnation and frustration before.

By facing the realities of the world today—as this breakthrough year has shown we are capable of doing—we can make peace a reality in the generation ahead.

Thank you and good morning.

NOTE: The President spoke 11:05 a.m. in a room adjoining the Oval Office at the White House. His remarks were broadcast live on nationwide radio.

He spoke from a prepared text. An advance text of his remarks was released on the same day.