

We have travelled far to get here—from past treaties that only codified the nuclear build-up, to the point where we may soon see the dismantling of thousands of these agents of annihilation. We are hopeful—we are expectant—but we face many difficulties still. As our negotiators continue to work toward a sound agreement, we are not going to abandon our basic principles—or our allies' interests—for the sake of a quick fix, an inadequate accord.

We will work for truly verifiable reductions that strengthen the security of our friends and allies in both Europe and Asia and that cannot be circumvented by any imbalance in shorter-range INF systems. In short, America will stand where she always stood: with her allies, in defence of freedom and the cause of peace.

We must continue to keep in mind, as well, that a major impetus in our reduction talks has been the growing reality of our Strategic Defence Initiative. SDI supports and advances the objectives of arms control—

Mr. Robinson: No way.

Mr. Reagan:—offering a more stable and secure environment as we pursue our goal of deep reductions in nuclear weapons. We must move away from a situation of Mutual Assured Destruction—so aptly called MAD, the MAD policy. We need defensive systems that threaten no one, that would save human lives instead of targeting them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Reagan: We must remember that the Soviet Union has spent 15 times as much on strategic defences as we have over the last 10 years, while their record of compliance with existing arms treaties continues to be a cause for concern. Most people do not understand that Mutual Assured Destruction has left our populations absolutely defenceless. This is an intolerable situation; the truly moral course is to move forward quickly with a new strategy of peace—based not on the ability to threaten lives, but on our confidence that we can save them. Let us choose a defence that truly defends.

As we have pursued better relations with the Soviet Union, we have laboured to deal realistically with the basic issues that divide that nation from the free world. Our insistence that the Soviet Union adhere to its Helsinki human rights agreement is not just a moral imperative; we know that no nation can truly be at peace with its neighbours if it is not at peace with its own people.

In recent months, we have heard hopeful talk of change in Moscow, of a new openness. Some political prisoners have been released; the BBC is no longer jammed—we welcome these positive signs and hope that they are only the first steps toward a true liberalization of Soviet society.

To the extent the Soviet Union truly opens its society—to that extent its economy and the life of its people will improve; to that extent we may hope its aggression will diminish.

Disappointingly, however, there so far has been little movement on the Soviet side toward the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts that today are flaring across the globe.

Despite announcements of ceasefires and talk of national reconciliation, the Soviet's terrible war against Afghanistan remains unabated—and Soviet attacks on neighbouring Pakistan have escalated dangerously. In Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Angola, the Soviet Union continues to support brutal wars of Communist Governments against their own people. In Nicaragua, we see such a campaign on our own shores—

Mr. Parry: Shameful!

Mr. Reagan: Is there an echo in here?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Reagan: Thank you. In Nicaragua, we see such a campaign on our own shores, threatening destabilization throughout Central America. This is not just a question of self-protection; the higher principle is that the people of Nicaragua have the right to decide their own future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Reagan: The surest sign that the Soviet Union truly wants better relations, that it truly wants peace, would be to end its global strategy to impose one-party dictatorships—allow the people of this world to determine their own futures, in liberty and peace. We know that when people are given the opportunity to choose, they choose freedom.

Truly, the future belongs to the free. In our own hemisphere, we have seen a freedom tide sweep over South and Central America: Six years ago, only 30 per cent of the people of Latin America lived in democracies—today, over 90 per cent do. Around the world, resistance movements are rising up to throw off the totalitarian yoke. Even in China, they debate the pace of reform but acknowledge its necessity.

• (1515)

On the border between Canada and the United States stands a plaque commemorating over a century and a half of friendship. It calls the border: "a lesson of peace to all nations", and that is what it is: a concrete, living lesson that the path to peace is freedom, that the relations of free peoples, no matter how different, no matter how distinct their national characters, will be marked by admiration, not hostility.

Go stand along the border at the beginning of July. You will see the Maple Leaf and the Stars and Stripes mixed in a swirling cloud of visitors and celebrants. As a Canadian writer once put it: "What's the difference between Dominion Day and July 4? About 48 hours".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Reagan: Yes, we have differences, disputes, as any two sovereign nations will. But we are always able to work them out, *entre amis*.