Center for Policy Issues: Open Forum

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Cover Page Footnote

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GEORGE McGOVERN

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I am delighted to be here in this community and at this university. It is true my wife's ancestors have a much longer association with this part of Connecticut than I do, coming here in the mid-seventeenth-century. What we discovered in digging back into that part of my wife's side of the family tree is that one of her ancient ancestors was hung in Stratford as a witch. I hope we're treated a little better on this visit than we were at that time. Notwithstanding the fact that I am a Professor of American history, that was the first I learned that there was an epidemic of witchcraft in Connecticut before it hit Salem, Massachusetts. Perhaps some of you who are natives here are aware of that. But in any event, so far we haven't detected any witches around that end, so we're hopeful for a little smoother sailing this time.

I am pleased to be at this university. As John Bordeau said in introducing me tonight, I did come in second in a race for the presidency in 1972, but I think this is the first time since I made a visit to Munich a couple of years ago that anybody has phrased it just that way. The way the press usually phrases it is that I lost 49 out of 50 states. I like it much better when somebody says I came in second. It's interesting that 38 people won the presidency whereas 43 came in second. I was trying to do a little quick mathematics to figure out how that could be and it suddenly dawned on me that some of the people who came in first came in first more than once: they stayed around for a second term — in the case of FDR, three terms — whereas most of the people who came in second were not allowed to try it again. Now there are some exceptions. My first hero in American politics after Franklin Roosevelt is Adlai Stevenson. I was involved in World War II and I wasn't as conscientious about making sure that I took care of things like registration back in those

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years, I was concentrating on winning the war so I didn't vote in the mid-1940s but after the war was over I finally got around to registering and I landed in one place long enough to qualify as a registered voter and my first vote was for Adlai Stevenson. He was my great political hero. To indicate how that rubs off on other members of the family, we had a three-year-old daughter in 1952, the year Adlai Stevenson came in second to President Eisenhower in a hard fought race, and my wife and I were listening to our little daughter playing with the neighbor's little boy, also three or four years old. We heard this little boy say that his three favorite people in all the world were his mother, his father, and his baby sister, whereupon our daughter, Kerry, who has always been something of an individualist, said, "Well, they are not my three favorite people. My three favorite people are God, Jesus, and Adlai Stevenson." So I told that story to Adlai Stevenson at a conference in Chicago some months later and he said, "Well George, that's a wonderful story but I don't think that even you and I will ever be able to sell that version of the trinity." So I give that to you for whatever it's worth.

What I would like do here today is just talk informally. I don't have any speech notes or anything of that kind. I would just like to talk informally for awhile about America's role in the world and how rapidly the challenges to this country are changing and how we ought to respond to some of those opportunities. Then we'll throw it open to questions on anything that you want to raise from the floor.

I think it's fair to say that in the years since the Second World War, the dominant theme of American foreign policy, the driving force if there was any single force behind American policy that was more important than all others has been anti-communism. We've had our eye primarily on the Soviet Union and also the satellite communist states which we saw within the orbit of Soviet influence. Sometimes this has been described as the free world headed by the United States vs. the slave world, the communist world headed by the Soviet Union. President Truman said many, many years ago, in enunciating what came to be known as the "get tough policy," that people all over the world now have to stand up and make a choice between freedom or communism, and more or less that's the way both Republicans and Democrats have seen American foreign policy, no matter who was in the White House, over the last four and a half decades or so. There are obviously other aspects of American

policy but that's been the one recurring and guiding theme. Sometimes that policy has been referred to as the containment policy, meaning the containment of the Soviet Union, holding them within their borders, preventing their spread into other parts of the globe, preventing the spread of communism from whatever source.

I suppose that's what took us into Vietnam. It's always been my feeling that if the North Vietnamese under Ho Chi Minh had not been communists we would not have paid much attention to what they were doing in South Vietnam. Most of us would never have heard of it. But the fact that this was a communist challenge led our policy makers to think that we had to stand in Vietnam, not simply because of the problems in South Vietnam, but because we saw that as a symbol, or a domino as it was called, and the view was that if Vietnam fell to communism, the next one to go would be Thailand, then Indonesia, then the Philippines, then Australia, then New Zealand, all the way to San Francisco eventually. I think it turned out to be a mistake in theory, but at least that was the assumption that led us to sacrifice some 60,000 some young American lives trying to stem the communist challenge in Vietnam. It was the same thing that took us into Korea or has had us involved in Nicaragua in recent days, or that prompted the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in the Kennedy administration.

It didn't seem to make much difference if you had a Republican or a Democrat in the White House. The policy was the same, a policy of containment, anti-communism, and we saw the whole world divided between these two camps: Moscow on one side and Washington on the other. And even in the Third World we tried to shape America policy on the basis of what would keep the Soviets and the communist ideology out of there and what would advance the influence of the United States and capitalism and free markets.

What I would like to suggest this morning is that that day is about over in American foreign policy, and that both the Soviet Union and the United States are going to have to change their policy. Most people around the world are no longer particularly interested in the competition between Moscow and Washington. That is largely irrelevant to their problems. If you are living in Asia or Africa or Latin America or the Middle East, where about two-thirds of all the people of the planet reside, you don't get up every morning to count the score between Moscow and Washington. You're concerned, even

as we are in our country, about supporting your family, about how to get enough to eat, about medical care, about trying to get an education. And people are not particularly excited about who is ahead in the arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States. And interestingly enough, that arms race as it has proceeded over the last 40 years, instead of making life safer for Russians and for Americans has probably insured one thing: that is, if war should come between these two great blocs, the Soviet bloc and the American bloc, either by accident or design, the one thing you can be fairly sure of is that Russians and Americans would be the first countries to disappear from history. They never would be heard from again in a total nuclear exchange. Accumulating more and more of these nuclear weapons and other forms of death is not going to make life any more secure in the two strongest countries in the world.

Furthermore, it's been an enormous drain on economic and financial strength especially in the Soviet Union. First of all, they are spending a higher percentage of their gross national product on armaments than we are, and secondly they are much poorer than the U.S. Life is not particularly rich for most people in the Soviet Union. Except in armaments and the space race, they are almost on the level of a Third World country in terms of standard of life, the quality of housing, food supplies, productivity, and other things that measure the wealth and economic power of a country, and so I think that what is happening in the Soviet Union under Mr. Gorbachev is a very tough-minded, realistic assessment through which they have come to the conclusion that this arms race doesn't make much sense. From the standpoint of their interests, in a sense they are bankrupting the economy of the Soviet Union, bleeding off resources in the production of tanks and weapons and missile systems, ships and all of these things. If they're ever going to lift the standard of life and in the long run maintain the confidence of their people in their system, they're going to have to get out of at least a portion of this arms race and the only way they can find that to be a safe and acceptable policy is to get us to join with them in mutual verifiable reductions.

Now I think that explains why in the summer of 1985, Mr. Gorbachev simply announced to the world that they were going to halt the further testing of any nuclear weapons anywhere. He said they were doing it on the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and he invited our leaders to join in halting any further

testing of nuclear weapons. I don't say this in any partisan sense, but I personally think that the previous administration made a mistake in rejecting that possibility. The surest way to stop an arms race is to stop testing nuclear weapons, because no military commander is going to deploy a weapon system without first testing it, and if you can't test you can't produce and deploy. So I think we missed an opportunity there some four years ago to put a halt right then on the further production of nuclear weapons. In any event, they stayed with that on a unilateral basis for about a year and a half and then decided that if we were going to continue testing that they would resume testing. But they didn't do that to please us. They didn't do that to demonstrate that they're Boy Scouts or Jeffersonian Democrats. They did it out of hard self-interest in the belief that they had to take the lead in getting discussions going, looking toward a reduction on both sides in the production of arms in a race they can no longer afford.

In any event, a couple of years later we did accept an initiative that led to the banning of intermediate range nuclear weapons and I give the Reagan administration credit, not only for pushing that idea but for going along in negotiations that have led to the elimination of intermediate range missiles both in Europe and in the Soviet Union that were targeted on Europe. It's my own strong hope that President Bush now will move ahead with Gorbachev in negotiating further mutual verifiable reduction in arms because I think it's clearly in our own self-interest to push in that direction.

Now there are other things that we can do that signal the new opportunities that we now have. There are certain other interests that we have in common with the Soviet Union. Over the last 40 years or so we have concentrated on the area of differences between communist Russia and ourselves and we all know what those differences are: we have a capitalist system they have a communist system; we have a system of free speech and freedom of religion, freedom of expression, they have an authoritarian closed society, where up until the last few years there hasn't been much freedom of dissent. All that's changing very fast now, but we know about those differences between our two systems. What I would like to suggest to you this morning is that we begin to devote at least a part of our energy and leadership to identifying areas of mutual interest: What is it that we have in common with each other? This is where I think

policy in both the Soviet Union and the U.S. has been weak in recent years, recent decades: it has not looked imaginatively enough at the areas of mutual interest.

If we were to ask ourselves "What do we have in common with the Soviet Union?" possibly the most important thing is that we both might like to stay alive. I haven't seen any evidence that the Soviet Union wants to commit suicide or that they have any less affection for their children than we do for ours. I think Soviet parents weep for their fallen in combat even as our parents do. Presumably we share an interest in the air being reasonably clean and the oceans being protected against contamination, in the greenhouse effect that threatens to heat up the whole planet to the point where life may be come unlivable all around this planet. We have the AIDS epidemic in common. We have the drug problem in common. We have trade, investment, economic development, and problems in the Third World, the Middle East, Central America, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and all other areas in common. So I would plead here today, while recognizing the obvious differences between the communist system that the Soviets and their allies have and the system of democratic capitalism that we have, that we also not forget about these areas of mutual interest that I think we ought to be emphasizing in the years ahead. In any event, this is my view.

I think with regard to some of these other communist countries we ought to keep open the possibilities of change. We've refused, for example, for fifteen years, since the end of the Vietnam war, to have anything to do with Vietnam. Is that because they're communists or because we feel humiliated that we didn't win that struggle? After World War II, notwithstanding the fact that we were attacked by Nazi Germany and by Japan at Pearl Harbor, we quickly at the end of that war undertook a policy of rebuilding the very countries we were at war with. We spent billions of dollars on Germany and Japan helping them rebuild. I think it was a wise investment, notwithstanding the fact that they're giving us awful tough competition in international trade. I don't think anyone anticipated 40 years ago or even 15 years ago that the Japanese would be the #1 automobile producers around the world. But in any event, we made the decision despite the fact that these countries systematically tried to destroy us that we would rebuild them at the end of the war. By contrast, Vietnam never had anything against the U.S. The last thing in the

world the Vietnamese leaders wanted was a war with the U.S. They just wanted us to go home and leave them alone. Notwithstanding that fact and that they never attacked the U.S. or any of our interests, we found it impossible all these years even to recognize them. Diplomatically we don't even admit they exist; we carry on no trade, no aid. Here's an impoverished little country that probably had three million people killed in that struggle in which we were involved. We dropped more bombs on Vietnam than we did on the whole world during World War II. It seems to me the time has come at long last to begin to recognize that these Vietnamese are humans, that they are part of a family of nations and that we ought to be treating them with the same consideration as the Russians and the Chinese who are also communist countries.

I would also argue that the same policy be applied to Cuba, I know that Americans are fearful about Cubans. I still don't quite know why we're so much more fearful of Cubans than we are of a billion Chinese or 300 million Russian communists, but for some reason or other these nine million people in Cuba just bug the daylights out of American policy makers. You would think it was the hordes of Genghis Khan that face us. People say "Well they are only 90 miles away." Well, for 40 years Russian submarines were only five or ten miles away carrying nuclear tipped warheads. What I'm suggesting here is that if it makes any sense for us to have an embassy in Moscow and Beijing and carry on international trade with these communist giants, we ought to begin applying the same standards to little communist countries. If we're not afraid of Russia and China, we ought to stop quaking in our boots about a little impoverished state like Nicaragua that is probably a threat to no one except themselves.

These are some of the thoughts I wanted to leave with you this morning. I think I should stop at this point, and I'll be more than happy to respond to questions from any of you.

Some argue that the appeasement policies of the 1960s and 1970s were responsible for the thaw in the cold war rather than the tough policies in the 1980s.

I reject the fact that the U.S. ever followed an appeasement policy

since the end of World War II. We've had the "get tough" policy in effect for 45 years. Ronald Reagan didn't invent that. He was no tougher than any other President. For example, he wasn't the one who put the grain embargo against the Soviet Union: he lifted it and I think he was right in lifting it, but I also don't want him to claim he was the "get tough" president. To be tough you have to be more than an orator, and I think that the policies the U.S. have pursued ever since Harry Truman have been on the side of maintaining an adequate military containment of the Soviet Union. We've always had this tremendous nuclear deterrent in effect. That was not invented in the 1980s either: that's been here ever since the end of World War II.

Curiously enough, the Soviet Union was more belligerent when we had a monopoly on nuclear weapons than they were in the years since they have achieved relative parity and I think if you stop to think of the psychology of that, sometimes people who are outgunned, cornered, intimidated, and living in fear are harder to live with than people who feel somewhat confident about their strength. In any event, for whatever reason the Soviet Union has been easier for us to deal with since they achieved relative parity with the U.S. than they were in those years when we either had a monopoly on nuclear weapons before they got the bomb or in the next ten years when we were so far ahead of them. I think probably the healthiest diplomatic and political situation between the two great super powers exists when they're in relative balance. I think both of them behave better under those conditions and so what I'm pleading for today are mutual reductions that maintain more or less the relative military balance between the two countries.

I know there are a lot of Americans who think the Soviets are ten feet tall and have us overwhelmed in every category. But when I was in the U.S. Senate, and the generals and admirals would come to Capitol Hill to lobby for additional support for new weapons systems and so on, and they would describe a situation in which the U.S. was far behind the Soviet Union militarily, I would always ask them on the record, when they were giving sworn testimony, if they would be willing to trade the American air force for the Soviet air force: "If we're so weak would you make a switch, General? Would you trade the American Navy for the Soviet Navy? Would you trade the Marine Corps for theirs, our tanks for theirs?" I never could find

anybody to make that switch. I think the truth of the matter is, as far as I'm concerned, I've always had more confidence in the strength of American arms and American military forces and our allies since World War II than in Soviet arms and their allies. We didn't do very well in Vietnam but they didn't do very well in Afghanistan, notwithstanding the fact it was right next door to where they were, and they had the whole Red Army, all the tanks, air force, and so on. I think the truth is that we've been relatively equal in military power over the last ten years or so and that's probably about the way it should be except the overall level ought to be greatly reduced on both sides.

Senator, a couple of classmates and I have been talking about the current situation in Cambodia. Could you talk some about how you perceive what is going on there and what position the U.S. should take.

The worst thing that's happened, in my opinion, since the end of the Vietnam war has been the fact that within Cambodia, their own leadership under Pol Pot proceeded some 10 or 12 years ago to start a genocide campaign against their own people. This wasn't done from the outside, this wasn't the domino theory, this was done by Khmer Rouge political leadership inside Cambodia, native Cambodians killing each other. Some two million were killed, and what stopped that some ten years ago is when the Vietnamese intervened and sent in about 100,000 troops. They halted the slaughter. They didn't do it again out of love, they did it because a lot of their own people living in Cambodia were being slaughtered by Pol Pot and the regime that he set up inside Cambodia. I may be in the small minority but I'm frankly glad the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia because it halted what otherwise might have been a genocide that would wipe out the rest of the population. They already lost two million. Now after ten years, this week they're pulling out as they had pledged they would do some months ago and I'm personally very nervous about what's ahead. I think the strongest military force in the country now remains Pol Pot. His guerilla forces have been out in the jungle the last ten years while the Vietnamese have been stationed there but I worry about it. I'm very hopeful that the present regime, which was a

Vietnamese-installed Cambodian regime — if you want to refer to it a little critically, you could call it a puppet regime — I'm very hopeful they will be able to withstand the guerilla challenge from Pol Pot and his forces but it's not clear to me that they can. I'm not predicting this but I'm saying that it's a distinct possibility we could see this genocidal campaign begin again now that the Vietnamese have withdrawn. One has to hope and pray that doesn't happen, but there is no guarantee.

Do the U.S. and the United Nations officially support a coalition that includes Pol Pot?

This is the thing that disturbs me. In all these years, we have not recognized the government of Cambodia, we've recognized the people out in the jungle, under Sihanouk and under Pol Pot and these other dissident elements. There is a coalition of about three or four anti-government groups out there in the jungle. By far the most potent of them is the Pol Pot Khmer Rouge force, and I can tell you it's going to be a very bloody situation if that group prevails and once again takes over. You might be interested to know that when this genocidal campaign began, notwithstanding the fact that I had taken the lead in the Senate in opposing our involvement militarily in Vietnam, I was the senator that organized a resolution signed by some 78 other senators of both parties calling on the United Nations to intervene militarily in Cambodia with the United States taking the lead on it to halt this genocide slaughtering the people of Cambodia. If I had been young enough, it was the one war going on that I would have been proud to participate in to halt this human slaughter taking place in Cambodia.

It was not pacifism which led me to oppose our involvement in Vietnam. I've always been ready to respond to a military challenge of that kind that we faced with Hitler or the Japanese 50 years ago, or that we faced in Cambodia where we saw whole people being slaughtered. That government had so brainwashed even the children in Cambodia that they had them watching their parents and had them reporting even the slightest criticism of the government. Little children, eight, nine ten years old were given clubs and guns to shoot people and to kill dissenters, directed by that rotten regime under Pol Pot literally to kill their own parents or report them to the authorities

if there was any kind of a hint of dissent. They just automatically killed all the teachers in Cambodia. They killed everybody that wore glasses on the theory that if you wore glasses you must be able to know how to read and you must be something of a student. Most of the doctors and nurses and shopkeepers were slaughtered because of who they were; they had enough independence and intelligence so they were considered marred. If you want to see all this dramatically portrayed, see the movie *The Killing Fields*. This is about Cambodia, Cambodia under this miserable murderer, Pol Pot who still is lurking out there in the jungle.

About Reagan being so tough, I could never understand that if the Russians were so strong, and we were so weak under Carter, and they are such bad people, how come they didn't attack us then?

Well, that's a good question. I think it's a great myth that Carter was a kind of namby-pamby appeaser. Carter was a distinguished naval officer in World War II, an honor graduate of the Naval Academy, and worked on nuclear submarines in the period when Admiral Rickover was developing the submarine. There is no more patriotic citizen in this country than Jimmy Carter. Let me hasten to add he wasn't my choice as the Democratic nominee in 1976, but in all fairness, I wasn't his choice in 1972. But I don't buy this notion that somehow Ronald Reagan swooped in from Hollywood and saved us from the appeasement policies of Jimmy Carter. Jimmy Carter had a better grasp of international affairs than Ronald Reagan had even after eight years in the White House and I know a good many thoughtful Republicans who would agree with that.

Senator, perhaps you can speculate on the last presidential elections that have occurred over the last two decades. Why is it that Democratic presidential candidates such as yourself cannot win the American presidency.

Well, it's a good question. We've lost five out of the last six presidential campaigns and the question is why? I think that countries do go through cycles. I agree with Professor Schlesinger's view on the cyclical theory of American politics, that we go through a period of 25 or 30 years when you have a more or less conservative

swing in politics and then it goes back to about the same length of time to more affirmative or liberal progressive policies. According to the Schlesinger theory the mid-1990s on into the first 25 or 30 years of the next century are going to be the time when the Democrats take over the White House again. We'll have to see how close that prediction is.

I think there's some other factors that have complicated national elections for the Democrats. Number one, we used to win regularly when I was growing up partly because we had what was called the "solid South." Those states of the old Confederacy just automatically came in the Democratic column. If you were the Democratic nominee you were guaranteed 11 states in the South: Florida, Texas, the Carolinas, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Tennessee, nobody ever heard of those states supporting the Republican candidate for president. Why have we lost them the last 25 years or so? I think because of civil rights. Once the Democratic party became identified with the blacks — and I'm glad they did — once they became identified with the leadership on the civil rights issue, presidents like Kennedy, Johnson, leaders like Hubert Humphrey, and others inside the Democratic party, we lost a majority of the white vote in the South, and in a sense forfeited the solid South. It's still solid, but it's now solidly Republican. And if you ask why we don't lose the House and the Senate, its partly because the southern Democrats who run for the House and the Senate run on a conservative platform in terms of civil rights, so that people in Mississippi feel perfectly comfortable voting for Democratic senators and congressmen — or at least they used to — but they're very nervous about anybody by the name of Hubert Humphrey or George McGovern or Walter Mondale, or Michael Dukakis, these northern liberals, who they see as the champion of the black and of civil rights. Now personally I'm proud that the Democratic party has that problem, because I wouldn't want to belong to a party that's weak on civil rights, human rights, and human justice, but it does cost us politically.

Now the other issue that tore the Democratic party right in half is Vietnam, and there's no question that complicated my election in 1972. A great many people especially in the West and in the South that are slightly more hawkish than the rest of the country could not abide my pledge to get out of Vietnam within 60 to 90 days. They saw

that as a kind of appeasement policy. I saw it as common sense that was in the interest of the U.S.: to stop that stupid war, to stop killing young Americans and young Vietnamese. But that's not the way it was read in much of the South, much of the West, out where I come from, where we have a very high volunteer rate even for unpopular wars, and so it cost the Democrats heavily. It cost the hawks inside the Democratic party when they were running for president too, because a lot of the Democrats were doves.

Now in the Republican party for some reason or other they kind of finessed the Vietnam issue. Most Republican presidential contenders did what Nixon did when he was running in 1968: he said "Well I'm not going to second-guess Lyndon Johnson while this campaign is on, but I want you to know that I have a secret plan to end the war, and I'll unveil that after the election." It took him four years to put it into effect, but believe it or not even at the end of that four years, when I was running against him, he announced a week before the election that peace was at hand. Remember that, you older people: the October 25 press conference a week before the election announcing that peace was at hand, that the war would be over in a few days? Then after the election they unleashed the most murderous aerial bombardment campaign of the war. I think that the shattering impact of the Vietnam war is still a lingering problem inside the Democratic party. Democrats really don't trust each other on that hawk-dove business even yet and there is still some lingering division there as there is on the civil rights question, so I think that's been a problem for us. Those are just some of the factors.

If I can mention just one practical thing, I think that Republican presidential campaigns have been more skillful in exploiting the new techniques of the mass media on national campaigns. Bush did a job on Dukakis last summer and fall. I didn't like it, I was for Dukakis, but I have to admit that Bush, very cleverly with the use of fear techniques, raised questions: about Dukakis' dependability on the flag, where he stood on Willie Horton, where he stood on the ACLU. We haven't heard about any of those things since the election, but they were raised in a very skillful way in negative advertising on TV and in Bush's speeches. And the same kind of job, I must say, was done by the same advertising experts on me, 17 years earlier in 1972. I can still tell you what was in those ads, and they weren't very complimentary.

Senator McGovern, are you in support of the Collins-Danforth bill, which would require the candidate who speaks out against his opponent actually to do it in person on a TV commercial rather than by using, say, a film of Willie Horton walking out of a state prison?

I am for that bill. I detest these paid political spots where the candidate hides in the background and these advertising firms on Madison Avenue sell the candidate like a bar of soap and a can of beer. I'm not sure that that bill will withstand the First Amendment test. I'm not sure that Congress can legislate on how campaign commercials are presented, but if it does stand a court test I would support it. What it says in effect is that if you want to go on and discredit your candidate you have to do it yourself: you can't hire some advertising agency in New York to paint a picture of what an SOB your opponent is. I personally wish we could go back to the old Lincoln-Douglas style of campaigns where candidates met each other on the stage like this. Let the TV cameras come in but get them on the same stage and give them a free hand to go at each other. I miss that. I don't mean that I was around in Lincoln's day but I miss that technique. I think that's what we need to get back to.

Senator, it seems that the change that has been taking place in the relationship between the Soviet Union and the U.S. is coming from the Soviet Union. Do you think that this is an accurate perception? If it is, why isn't the U.S. taking more of a lead in some of these changes taking place?

I think it is an accurate perception. I tried to indicate here a while ago that maybe one of the reasons that Gorbachev is taking the lead on all this, as he clearly is, is that he is under more economic pressure than we are. As a matter of fact, living as we do under a system of democratic capitalism, which I personally endorse, it's something of an economic problem for us to unravel this arms race. We have so many defense industries and so many military bases around the country that if we start scaling down what we're spending in these areas a lot of people see their jobs on the line. Now in the Soviet Union where you have a system of state planning they can more quickly direct workers away from the production of tanks, let us say, and into the production of housing, trucks, farm equipment,

and things of that kind. They can almost issue those orders out of the Kremlin overnight, and give the go-ahead on new patterns of production. We have to do it under the profit system here, and it's kind of a disruptive switch when you move from a war economy to a peace economy.

That's why for some 30 years now I've been advocating the creation of an economic conversion planning commission in the U.S. to work with private industry and the labor unions and the industrialists and financiers in this country and plan an alternative agenda if we have to cut back. Take, say, General Dynamics' production in St. Louis, or Texas, or wherever it is, of military aircraft. What could that company do that would provide a similar number of jobs and what is the role of the U.S. government? Many of these defense plants have only one customer and that's the Pentagon. Who's going to replace that customer if they lose a contract for production of a Stealth bomber, or if we decide not to build Star Wars, which I firmly hope we will decide. But in any event, I think the reason the Soviets are taking the lead on this is that they feel the economic pinch more than we do. They don't have the resources we do, they don't have the standard of living we do, and they have a much more restless population out there. It's true that they're under an authoritarian system, but if you visit the Soviet Union these days, you can feel that dissent, an agitation and impatience with their system. Even in an authoritarian system the public has some power and I think the agitation going on now is forcing the leaders to look for ways to reduce military spending and begin diverting those resources to housing and other things that will make life more livable inside the Soviet Union. So perhaps, that's why they're taking the lead.