

Address to the National Association of Evangelicals | MARCH 8, 1983

Background:

On March 8, 1983, President Reagan delivered what became known as the “Evil Empire Speech.” In this speech, he condemned the Soviet Union for promoting world revolution and class warfare.



Quotes:

Below are pertinent excerpts from the speech. The entire speech can be found in the attached supplemental materials. President Reagan is quoted:

... the Soviet leaders have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is that which will further their cause, which is world revolution.

...This doesn't mean we should isolate ourselves and refuse to seek an understanding with them. I intend to do everything I can to persuade them of our peaceful intent, to remind them that it was the West that refused to use its nuclear monopoly in the forties and fifties for territorial gain and which now proposes 50-percent cut in strategic ballistic missiles and the elimination of an entire class of land-based, intermediate-range nuclear missiles.

At the same time, however, they must be made to understand we will never compromise our principles and standards. We will never give away our freedom. We will never abandon our belief in God. And we will never stop searching for a genuine peace. But we can assure none of these things America stands for through the so-called nuclear freeze solutions proposed by some. The truth is that a freeze now would be a very dangerous fraud, for that is merely the illusion of peace. The reality is that we must find peace through strength...

...A freeze would reward the Soviet Union for its enormous and unparalleled military buildup. It would prevent the essential and long overdue modernization of United States and allied defenses and would leave our aging forces increasingly vulnerable.

Questions:

- Which country did President Reagan say is a “force of evil in the modern world”?
- Why did he believe the above country was a “force of evil in the modern world”?
- In this speech when President Reagan talked about the totalitarian “phenomenon in the 1930s”, which regime was he referring to?
- Why did President Reagan feel a nuclear freeze was not a good idea?
- What might the term “peace through strength” mean?

Research:

- Did the United States Congress ever vote in favor of a nuclear freeze?
- Do we hold more or less nuclear weapons in our arsenals today than in 1983?
- Who was the leader of the Soviet Union in March, 1983?
- What is a ballistic missile?
- Did President Reagan think the Soviet Union was an Evil Empire when he left office in 1989? Explain.

Activity:

- Write a letter to the editor. Explain whether you think it was a good idea or a bad idea to use the term “Evil Empire” to describe the Soviet Union.



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