**(9:15) President Reagan Calls for a Second American Revolution (1985)**

Source: *New York Times*, February 7, 1985: B8

**Background:** These are excerpts from President Ronald Reagan's State of the Union Message at the start of his second term in office. President Reagan’s nickname was the “Great Communicator.”

**Questions to Consider**

1. What does President Reagan see as the basis for a Second American Revolution?

2. Why did President Reagan believe the United States was “poised for greatness”?

3. Based on this speech, why do you think President Reagan was known as the “Great Communicator”?

4. In this speech, President Reagan equated freedom with economic growth and fewer government control over the economy. Four decades later, do you agree with President Reagan? Explain.

A. Four years ago, we began to change - forever, I hope - our assumptions about government and its place in our lives. Out of that change has come great and robust growth - in our confidence, our economy, and our role in the world. Tonight, America is stronger because of the values that we hold dear. We believe faith and freedom must be our guiding stars, for they show us truth, they make us brave, give us hope, and leave us wiser than we were. Our progress began not in Washington, D.C., but in the hearts of our families, communities, workplaces, and voluntary groups which, together, are unleashing the invincible spirit of one great nation under God.

Four years ago, we said we would invigorate our economy by giving people greater freedom and incentives to take risks, and letting them keep more of what they earned. We did what we promised, and a great industrial giant is reborn.

B. We have begun well. But it's only a beginning. We are not here to congratulate ourselves on what we have done, but to challenge ourselves to finish what has not yet been done . . . My fellow citizens, this nation is poised for greatness. The time has come to proceed toward a great new challenge – a Second American Revolution of hope and opportunity; a revolution carrying us to new heights of progress by pushing back frontiers of knowledge and space; a revolution of spirit that taps the soul of America, enabling us to summon greater strength than we've ever known; and, a revolution that carries beyond our shores the golden promise of human freedom in a world at peace. Let us begin by challenging our conventional wisdom: There are no constraints on the human mind, no walls around the human spirit, no barriers to our progress except those we ourselves erect. Already, pushing down tax rates has freed our economy to vault forward to record growth.

C. We stand on the threshold of a great ability to produce more, do more, be more. Our economy is not getting older and weaker, it's getting younger and stronger; it doesn't need rest and supervision, it needs new challenge, greater freedom. And that word - freedom - is the key to the Second American Revolution that we mean to bring about . . . History is asking us, once again, to be a force for good in the world. Let us begin - in unity, with justice, and love.