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Collection: Executive Secretariat, National Security
Council: Head of State File: Records
Folder: U.S.S.R: General Secretary Gorbachev
(8690024-8690124)
Box: 40

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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

Collection: National Security Affairs, Assistant to the President for:
Records: Head of State File

Archivist: dlb

File Folder: U.S.S.R.: General Secretary Gorbachev (8690024-8690124) Box 40

Date: 6/10/97

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
Lettercase (8690024)			
1. Memo	to Reagan from Shultz, re: Gorbachev letter, 1 p. R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #109A	1/14/86	P1
2. Letter	to Reagan from Gorbachev, 2 p. (unofficial trans.) R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #110	1/11/86	P1
3. Memo	to Reagan from Shultz, re: further Soviet response, 1p R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #111	1/16/86	P1
4. Letter	Copy of item #2, 2 p. (unofficial trans.) R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #112	1/11/86	P1
5. Letter	to Reagan from Gorbachev, 2 p. (Russian) R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #113	1/11/86	P1
6. Draft Letter	to Gorbachev from Reagan, 5 p. R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #114	2/12/86	P1
Lettercase (8690124)			
7. Memo	to Shultz, Weinberger, Casey from Poindexter, re: Presidential Letter to Gorbachev, 1 p. — R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #115	2/17/86	P1
8. Memo	Copy of item #7, 1 p. R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #116	2/17/86	P1
9. Memo	to Reagan from Poindexter, re: Reply to Gorbachev's Handwritten Letter, 2 p. — R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #117	2/15/86	P1
10. Draft Letter	to Reagan from Gorbachev, 5 p. (translation) R 10/22/99 NL5597-001 #118	12/24/85	P1

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P-1 National security classified information [(a)(1) of the PRA].
- P-2 Relating to appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA].
- P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA].
- P-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA].
- P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA].
- P-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA].

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- F-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA].
- F-2 Release could disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA].
- F-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA].
- F-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA].
- F-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA].
- F-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA].
- F-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA].
- F-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA].

RECEIVED 14 JAN 86 12

TO PRESIDENT

FROM SHULTZ, G

DOCDATE 14 JAN 86

GORBACHEV, MIKHAIL S

11 JAN 86

UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL
OF CLASSIFIED ENCLOSURE(S)

KEYWORDS: USSR

HUMAN RIGHTS

HS

SUBJECT: GORBACHEV RESPONSE TO PRES HUMAN RIGHTS LTR

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

DUE:

STATUS IP FILES SII

FOR ACTION

FOR CONCURRENCE

FOR INFO

PRESIDENT

VICE PRESIDENT

REGAN, D

MATLOCK

COMMENTS

REF#

LOG 8591243

NSCIFID

(B 83)

ACTION OFFICER (S)	ASSIGNED	ACTION REQUIRED	DUE	COPIES TO
	C 1/14	Pres noted		

DISPATCH

W/ATTCH FILE (C)

**National Security Council
The White House**

86 JAN 14 A10: 37

System # II
 Package # 90024
 DOCLOG _____ A/O _____

	SEQUENCE TO	HAS SEEN	DISPOSITION
Bob Pearson	_____	_____	_____
William Martin	_____	_____	_____
Don Fortier	_____	_____	_____
Paul Thompson	_____	_____	_____
Florence Gantt	_____	_____	_____
John Poindexter	<u>1</u>	<u>J</u>	_____
William Martin	_____	_____	_____
NSC Secretariat	<u>2</u>	<u>BT</u>	_____
Situation Room	_____	_____	_____

I = Information A = Action R = Retain D = Dispatch N = No further Action

cc: VP Regan Buchanan Other _____

COMMENTS Should be seen by: _____
 (Date/Time)

*I have sent original to the President.
 Route info copies to Regan & Watlock
 & VP. ✓
 J done ✓*

RECEIVED 14 JAN 86 12

TO PRESIDENT FROM SHULTZ, G DOCDATE 14 JAN 86
 GORBACHEV, MIKHAIL S 11 JAN 86
 SHULTZ, G 16 JAN 86

UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL OF CLASSIFIED ENCLOSURE(S)

KEYWORDS: USSR HUMAN RIGHTS

HS

SUBJECT: GORBACHEV RESPONSE TO PRES HUMAN RIGHTS LTR

 ACTION: FOR INFORMATION DUE: STATUS C FILES SII

FOR ACTION	FOR CONCURRENCE	FOR INFO
PRESIDENT		VICE PRESIDENT
		REGAN, D
		MATLOCK

COMMENTS

REF# LOG 8591239 8591241 NSCIFID (B / B)

ACTION OFFICER (S)	ASSIGNED	ACTION REQUIRED	DUE	COPIES TO
	C	1/17 Noted by Pres		

DISPATCH _____ W/ATTCH FILE _____ (C)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

RR

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

January 14, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: George P. Shultz ^{MPS}
SUBJECT: Gorbachev Response to Your Human Rights Letter

Dobrynin came by Monday evening to deliver Gorbachev's response to the letter on human rights which Mac Baldrige delivered when he was in Moscow. It smacked of having been drafted by bureaucrats.

The letter is non-polemical in tone, and reiterates the assurance Gorbachev gave you directly that individual cases of divided spouses can be resolved "on the basis of humanism and taking into account the interests of the people concerned." But it holds out little hope of broad-based progress on human rights issues.

As in Geneva, Gorbachev affirms that Soviet law is not a barrier to the emigration of Soviet citizens who meet its criteria, and rejects bending the rules to resolve specific cases. He reiterates that Moscow will not be swayed in this respect by U.S. pressure, and suggests that human rights cases continue to be "blown out of proportion" in the U.S. - Soviet relationship. Finally, he warns "in passing" against attempts to link trade and economic issues to "questions of a different nature."

The letter did not address the three specific cases raised in your letter (Sakharov, Shcharanskiy and Orlov) or those I mentioned in my earlier letter to Shevardnadze. Dobrynin indicated, however, that we could take up specific cases tomorrow with the Soviet Embassy here. We will, of course, do so.

It is not surprising that Gorbachev has formally stayed with the party line on an issue as touchy as this one is for the Soviets. As we have understood from the beginning, the important thing is not what they say, but what they do. The resolution late last week of the case of Irina McClellan's daughter is a sign that the positive steps which began before the Geneva meeting are continuing for the moment. So is the fact that Gorbachev is prepared to continue the dialogue. Disappointing as the substance of Gorbachev's response is, it only underscores the need to consider how we can best encourage and broaden the fragile process underway.

I've attached the Soviets' unofficial translation of Gorbachev's letter.

DECLASSIFIED

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

DECL: OADR

NLS 597-001 *109A

RY *and* NARA DATE 10/22/89

United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520



January 27, 1986

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

MEMORANDUM FOR VADM JOHN M. POINDEXTER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Gorbachev's Letter of January 11, 1986

The signed Russian-language original of General Secretary Gorbachev's letter to President Reagan dated January 11, 1986, concerning human rights issues and an unofficial English translation provided by the Soviet Embassy are forwarded with this memo.

BMckinley
for Nicholas Platt
Executive Secretary

Attachment: As stated.

UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL
OF CLASSIFIED ENCLOSURES
9/15/04

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
DECL: OADR

His Excellency
Ronald W. REAGAN
The President of the United States of America
Washington, D.C.

January 11, 1986

Dear Mr. President,

Your letter of December 7, transmitted through Secretary Baldrige, addressed the questions on which we had a rather thorough discussion in Geneva. At that time I outlined in detail our approach to these questions, and, it seemed to me, you took in what was said with certain understanding.

It is hardly necessary to repeat, that the questions involved pertain to the internal competence of our state and that they are resolved in strict conformity with the laws. I would like only to point out, that the Soviet laws do not create impediments when decisions are taken on the questions regarding departure from the USSR by Soviet citizens who have legal grounds for that. This is attested to also by the fact that as a practical matter the overwhelming majority of such questions is resolved positively.

The existing laws are obligatory to everybody - both to those who apply to leave and those who consider exit applications. Such is the essence of our law and order and nobody is entitled to violate it - whether under any pressure or without it. I would think this should be understood in the the U.S.

We, of course, take into account, that due to various circumstances, divided families appear, which live partially in the USSR and partially - in the USA. Only in the past 5 years there have been over 400 marriages between Soviet and American citizens. And the overwhelming majority of those marriages - to be precise, more that 95 percent - encountered no problems with regard to the reunification of the spouses and to living together. Yes, there are exceptions, and we have frankly and repeatedly told you what they are about. But generally, and I want to stress it once again, questions

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NLS 592-001 * 110

BY AM, NARA, DATE 10/22/99

of this kind are resolved by us on the basis of humanism and taking into account the interests of the people concerned.

I share your desire to channel the relationship between our countries to a more constructive course. And the breaks are being put on this process in no way due to the existence of the cases of such sort - though I do not tend to belittle their importance from the point of view of the lives of individual persons - but because of the attempts to blow them out of proportion in the general balance of Soviet-American relations. The key issues in this area are awaiting their resolution.

I would like to note in passing: as it can be seen, the continued attempts by the American side to tie up trade and economic relations with questions of a different nature will bring no benefit. It is high time to take a realistic look at this whole issue from the position of today, rather than yesterday.

It would seem that much will now depend on how accurately we are going to follow jointly the real priorities in our relations, if we wish to bring about their tangible normalization already in the near future. I think, the chances are not bad here.

Sincerely,

M. GORBACHEV

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

January 16, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: George P. Shultz *GPS*

SUBJECT: Further Soviet Response to Your Human Rights Letter

When Dobrynin delivered Gorbachev's response to your letter on human rights Monday, he told me we could take up specific cases with the Soviet Embassy here. To follow up, Mark Palmer asked Soviet Embassy Counselor Isakov to meet with him today.

Isakov came in with a list of individuals who will be allowed to leave the Soviet Union and stated that this gesture was specifically connected to your letter to Gorbachev. We knew of most of the cases, but a number were new, including two cases that you had mentioned in your letter.

In your letter you raised the case of a 77-year-old U.S. citizen who had traveled to the Soviet Union during a school break in 1932 and had not been permitted to leave since that time; Isakov told us he would be given exit permission. You also raised the case of a 16-year-old boy whose father was killed in a car accident last fall, leaving him alone in Leningrad; we were told he will be permitted to join his mother in the U.S.

In addition, the Soviets told us they would resolve a longstanding U.S. citizen case I had raised in a letter to Shevardnadze, as well as four other cases we had raised earlier.

On the negative side, Isakov stated that the Soviets could not resolve two cases you raised: a blind Soviet woman in her sixties who has been separated from her husband for almost thirty years; and the Soviet husband of an American wife and father of two small children in the U.S. The first they could not resolve because her husband had "violated Soviet law" (he defected in 1956); the second, because of "state security".

In addition, they made no response on the Soviet Jewish pianist Vladimir Feltsman; on the general question of increased emigration; or on Sakharov, Shcharansky, and Orlov, all of whom you raised in your letter.

It is encouraging that the Soviets have been prepared to respond to your interest. Isakov left the door open for the resolution of more such cases, but stressed that any overt attempts to "pressure" Moscow would abort the process. His remarks underscore the importance of proceeding with sensitivity as we seek to encourage further progress.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
(DECL:OADR)DECLASSIFIED
NLS 597-001 # 111

His Excellency
Ronald W. REAGAN
The President of the United States of America
Washington, D.C.

January 11, 1986

Dear Mr. President,

Your letter of December 7, transmitted through Secretary Baldrige, addressed the questions on which we had a rather thorough discussion in Geneva. At that time I outlined in detail our approach to these questions, and, it seemed to me, you took in what was said with certain understanding.

It is hardly necessary to repeat, that the questions involved pertain to the internal competence of our state and that they are resolved in strict conformity with the laws. I would like only to point out, that the Soviet laws do not create impediments when decisions are taken on the questions regarding departure from the USSR by Soviet citizens who have legal grounds for that. This is attested to also by the fact that as a practical matter the overwhelming majority of such questions is resolved positively.

The existing laws are obligatory to everybody - both to those who apply to leave and those who consider exit applications. Such is the essence of our law and order and nobody is entitled to violate it - whether under any pressure or without it. I would think this should be understood in the the U.S.

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NLS 597-001 # 112

BY snf, NARA, DATE 10/22/99

of this kind are resolved by us on the basis of humanism and taking into account the interests of the people concerned.

I share your desire to channel the relationship between our countries to a more constructive course. And the breaks are being put on this process in no way due to the existence of the cases of such sort - though I do not tend to belittle their importance from the point of view of the lives of individual persons - but because of the attempts to blow them out of proportion in the general balance of Soviet-American relations. The key issues in this area are awaiting their resolution.

I would like to note in passing: as it can be seen, the continued attempts by the American side to tie up trade and economic relations with questions of a different nature will bring no benefit. It is high time to take a realistic look at this whole issue from the position of today, rather than yesterday.

It would seem that much will now depend on how accurately we are going to follow jointly the real priorities in our relations, if we wish to bring about their tangible normalization already in the near future. I think, the chances are not bad here.

Sincerely,

M. GORBACHEV

Уважаемый господин Президент,

В Вашем письме от 7 декабря, переданном через министра М.Болдриджа, затронуты вопросы, по которым у нас был довольно обстоятельный разговор в Женеве. Тогда я подробно изложил наш подход к этим вопросам, и, как мне показалось, Вы восприняли сказанное с определенным пониманием.

Видимо, нет необходимости повторять, что вопросы, о которых идет речь, относятся к внутренней компетенции нашего государства и что они решаются в строгом соответствии с законами. Хочу лишь отметить, что советские законы не создают затруднений при решении вопросов выезда из СССР советских граждан, у которых есть для этого правовые основания. Об этом свидетельствует и тот факт, что в практическом плане подавляющее большинство таких вопросов находит положительное решение.

Существующие законы обязательны для всех - и для тех, кто ходатайствует о выезде, и для тех, кто рассматривает выездные заявления. Таково существо нашего правопорядка и нарушать его - под каким-либо давлением или без него - никому не дано. Думается, в США должны это понимать.

Мы, разумеется, учитываем, что в силу разных обстоятельств возникают разделенные семьи, часть которых живет в СССР, часть - в США. Только за последние 5 лет между советскими и американскими гражданами было заключено более 400 браков. И у подавляющего большинства из них, если быть точными, у более чем 95 процентов не возникло никаких проблем в отношении воссоединения супругов и совместного проживания. Да, исключения бывают, и в чем они состоят, мы Вам неоднократно и откровенно говорили. В целом же, и я это хочу вновь подчеркнуть, вопросы такого рода решаются нами с позиций гуманности, учета интересов людей, которых это касается.

Я разделяю Ваше желание перевести отношения между нашими странами в более конструктивное русло. Торможение же этого процесса происходит отнюдь не из-за наличия такого рода дел - хотя я не склонен преуменьшать их значения с точки зрения судеб отдельных лиц, - а из-за попыток придать им непомерный вес в общем балансе советско-американских отношений. Ключевые вопросы в этой области ждут своего решения.

Его Превосходительству
Рональду У.Рейгану,
Президенту Соединенных
Штатов Америки

г.Вашингтон

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NLS 597-001 # 113
BY Amf, NARA, DATE 10/22/99

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Попутно замечу: как видно, сохраняющееся стремление американской стороны увязывать торгово-экономические отношения с вопросами иного плана пользы не принесет. Пора реалистически посмотреть на весь этот вопрос с позиций сегодняшнего, а не вчерашнего дня.

Как представляется, многое сейчас будет зависеть от того, насколько верно мы будем совместно следовать действительным приоритетам в наших отношениях, если хотим добиться их ощутимой нормализации уже в ближайшее время. Думаю, здесь имеются неплохие шансы.

С уважением



М. ГОРБАЧЕВ

11 января 1986 года

dh 12/14/85
RECEIVED 29 JAN 86 15
SLIP/STG/STG/STG/STG

TO PRESIDENT

FROM GORBACHEV, MIKHAIL S DOCDATE 14 JAN 86

KEYWORDS: ARMS CONTROL USSR
SDI

SUBJECT: CY OF GORBACHEV LTR TO PRES RE ARMS CONTROL

- See Matlock, Jack Arms Control: Gorbachev's Proposals (i) for letter

ACTION: APPROPRIATE ACTION DUE: STATUS S FILES SII

FOR ACTION

FOR CONCURRENCE

FOR INFO

MATLOCK

LINHARD

WRIGHT

COMMENTS **STAFFED FM CY GIVEN TO POINDEXTER BY SHULTZ**

REF# LOG NSCIFID (J /)

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DISPATCH _____ W/ATTCH FILE _____ (C)

National Security Council
The White House

86 FEB 28 P5: 13

System # II
Package # 9024
DOCLOG _____ A/O _____

	SEQUENCE TO	HAS SEEN	DISPOSITION
Bob Pearson	<u>1</u>	<u>P</u>	_____
Rodney McDaniel	_____	_____	_____
Don Fortier	_____	_____	_____
Paul Thompson	_____	_____	_____
Florence Gantt	_____	_____	_____
John Poindexter	_____	_____	_____
Rodney McDaniel	_____	_____	_____
NSC Secretariat	<u>3</u>	<u>ABT</u>	<u>R</u>
Situation Room	<u>2</u>	<u>SVS</u>	<u>decmm</u>
			<u>eyes only to Jmp & ABT</u>

I = Information A = Action R = Retain D = Dispatch N = No further Action

cc: VP Regan Buchanan Other _____

COMMENTS Should be seen by: _____
(Date/Time)

Secret Sensitive

CLASSIFICATION

CIRCLE ONE BELOW

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PRIORITY

ROUTINE

MODE

SECURE FAX # 12

ADMIN FAX # _____

RECORD # _____

PAGES 6

DTG 130006Z

RELEASER LVS

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FROM/LOCATION

1. The White House Situation Room

TO/LOCATION/TIME OF RECEIPT

1. _____
2. Paul Thompson for USADM. Poindexter

3. Paul Thompson / SANTA BARBARA

TOR: 130036Z

INFORMATION ADDRESSES/LOCATION/TIME OF RECEIPT

1. _____

2. _____

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/REMARKS:

Eyes Only - Deliver in Sealed Envelope

Secret Sensitive

CLASSIFICATION

EYES ONLY

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

TO: Adm. Poinderster

John:

I have revised p1, para 2, p3, para 5 (sentence "Aside from..." added), and p5, para 3 from bottom to take account of the Secretary's suggestions.

I have started a translation on a contingency basis. I can make any changes necessary myself on Saturday & run off a copy of the translation. (I will have it on disk.)

I will be back from Palo Alto mid-afternoon Saturday. Leave message on prof's or with Sit Room if I need to take care of anything over the weekend.

Jack

SYSTEM II PROFILE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

ID 8690124

RECEIVED 17 FEB 86 16

TO GORBACHEV, MIKHAIL S FROM PRESIDENT

DOCDATE 16 FEB 86

POINDEXTER

17 FEB 86

UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL OF CLASSIFIED ENCLOSURE(S)

KEYWORDS: USSR

ARMS CONTROL

HS

SUBJECT: PRES HANDWRITTEN REPLY TO GORBACHEV

ACTION: PRES SGD LTR DUE: STATUS C FILES SII

FOR ACTION FOR CONCURRENCE FOR INFO

COMMENTS NO COPIES PER POINDEXTER

REF# LOG NSCIFID (J / F)

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STATE C 2/17 for dispatch - sealed

C 2/17 Poindexter sgd chiron

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL DISTRIBUTION RECORD

UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL
OF CLASSIFIED ENCLOSURE(S)

Log Number 90124

Date February 17, 1986

Subject: Presidential reply to Gorbachev

DOCUMENT CLASSIFICATION: TOP SECRET SECRET CONFIDENTIAL UNCLASSIFIED

INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION

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<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. De Graffenreid	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. Levine	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. Ringdahl	<input type="checkbox"/> Ms. Tahir-Kheli	

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THE VICE PRESIDENT				
THE SECRETARY OF STATE Exec sec/Room 7241	orig	2/17	1600	D. McMillon
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY Main Bldg/Room 3422				
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE The Pentagon				
DIRECTOR, ACDA Room 5933/Dept. of State				
CHAIRMAN US START DELEGATION C/o ACDA, 5933 State				
CHAIRMAN US INF DELEGATION C/o ACDA, 5933 State				
DIRECTOR, CIA Langley, Va/or Pickup				
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Log Number 90124

Date February 17, 1986

Subject: Presidential reply to Gorbachev

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2/12/86

DRAFT REPLY TO HANDWRITTEN LETTER FROM GORBACHEV

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

Your letter of December 24, 1985, was most thought-provoking and I would like to share my reactions with you. I have of course also received your letter of January 14, 1986, and will be responding to it shortly. However, since the substance of the latter is already in the public domain, I believe it is well to keep our private communications separate. Although the issues overlap, I would hope that our informal exchange can be used to clarify our attitudes on some of the fundamental questions.

I agree with you that we need to set a specific agenda for action to bring about a steady and -- I would hope -- radical improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations. I suggested two such topics in my previous letter, and I would hope that we can identify others as ripe for immediate progress. For example, some of the obstacles to an agreement on intermediate-range missiles seem to be falling away. I would also hope that rapid progress can be made toward agreement on a verification regime that will permit a global ban on chemical weapons.

Regarding arms reduction in general, I agree with you that we must make decisions not on the basis of assurances or intentions but with regard to the capabilities on both sides. Nevertheless, I do not understand the reasoning behind your conclusion that only a country preparing a disarming first strike would be interested in defenses against ballistic missiles. If such defenses prove feasible in the future, they could facilitate further reductions of nuclear weapons by creating a feeling of confidence that national security could be preserved without them.

Of course, as I have said before, I recognize that adding defensive systems to an arsenal replete with weapons with a disarming first-strike capability could under some conditions be destabilizing. That is why we are proposing that both sides concentrate first on reducing those weapons which can be used to deliver a disarming first strike. Certainly, if neither of our countries has forces suitable for a first strike, neither need fear that defenses against ballistic missiles would make a first strike strategy possible.

I also do not understand your statement that what you call "space strike weapons" are "all purpose" weapons. As I understand it, the sort of directed-energy and kinetic devices both our countries are investigating in the context of ballistic missile defense are potentially most effective against point targets moving at high velocity in space. They would be ill-suited for mass destruction on earth, and if one were planning to strike earth targets from space, it does not seem rational to resort to such expensive and exotic techniques. Their destructiveness can

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never approach that of the nuclear weapons in our hands today. Nuclear weapons are the real problem.

Mr. General Secretary, in the spirit of candor which is essential to effective communication, I would add another point. You speak often of "space strike weapons," and your representatives have defined these as weapons which can strike targets in space from earth and its atmosphere, and weapons in space which can strike targets in space or on earth. I must ask, "What country has such weapons?" The answer is, only one: the Soviet Union. Your ABM system deployed around Moscow can strike targets beyond the atmosphere and has been tested in that mode. Your co-orbital anti-satellite weapon is designed to destroy satellites. Furthermore, the Soviet Union began research in defenses utilizing directed energy before the United States did and seems well along in research (and -- incidentally -- some testing outside laboratories) of lasers and other forms of directed energy.

I do not point this out in reproach or suggest that these activities are in violation of agreements. But if we were to follow your logic to the effect that what you call "space strike weapons" would only be developed by a country planning a first strike, what would we think? We see the Soviet Union devoting enormous resources to defensive systems, in an effort which antedates by many years our own effort, and we see a Soviet Union which has built up its counterforce weapons in numbers far greater than our own. If the only reason to develop defensive weapons is to make a disarming first strike possible, then clearly we should be even more concerned than we have been.

We are concerned, and deeply so. But not because you are developing -- and unlike us deploying -- defensive weaponry. We are concerned over the fact that the Soviet Union for some reason has chosen to deploy a much larger number of weapons suitable for a disarming first strike than has the United States. There may be reasons for this other than actually seeking a first-strike advantage, but we too must look at capabilities rather than intentions. And the fact is that we are certain you have an advantage in this area.

Frankly, you have been misinformed if your specialists say that the missiles on our Trident submarines have a capability to destroy hardened missile silos -- a capability your SS-18 definitely has. Current Trident missiles lack the capability for such a role. They could be used only to retaliate. Nor is the Pershing II, which cannot even reach most Soviet strategic weapons, a potential first-strike weapon. Its short flight time is not substantially different from that of the more capable -- and much more numerous -- Soviet SS-20's aimed at our European Allies whom we are pledged to defend and most of whom have no nuclear capability of their own. Our forces currently have a very limited capability to strike Soviet silos, and we are improving this capability only because we cannot accept a

situation in which the Soviet Union holds such a clear advantage in counterforce weaponry. Even if we are required to complete all planned deployments in the absence of an accord which limits them, they will not match the number of Soviet weapons with a first-strike capability.

If our defense and military specialists disagree regarding the capability of the weapons on the other side, then by all means let us arrange for them to meet and discuss their concerns. A frank discussion of their respective assessments and the reasons for them could perhaps clear up those misunderstandings which are not based on fact.

In any event, we have both agreed to the principle of a 50% reduction of nuclear arms. Implementing that agreement is surely the first task of our negotiators at Geneva. Let me stress once again that we remain willing to reduce those weapons systems which the Soviet Union finds threatening so long as the Soviet Union will reduce those which pose a special threat to the United States and its Allies. Our proposals in November included significant movement on our part in this direction and were a major step to accommodate your concerns. I hope that your negotiators will be empowered to respond to these proposals during the current round and to engage us in identifying which strategic systems are to be included in the 50% reduction.

So far as defensive systems are concerned, I would reiterate what I wrote before: if your concern is that such systems may be used to permit a first-strike strategy, or as a cover for basing weapons of mass destruction in space, then there must be practical ways to prevent such possibilities. Of course, I have in mind not general assurances but concrete, verifiable means which both sides can rely on to avoid these contingencies, neither of which is a part of United States strategy or planning. I honestly believe that we can find a solution to this problem if we approach it in practical fashion rather than debating generalities.

I would like nothing more than to find, by our next meeting, an approach acceptable to both of us to solve this problem. But I believe that will require two things: accelerating negotiations to reach agreement on the way to reduce offensive weapons by 50%, and discussion of concrete ways to insure that any future development of defensive systems cannot be used as a cover for a first-strike strategy or for basing weapons of mass destruction in space. Aside from these broader issues, I believe that your recent proposal brings settlement of the problem of intermediate-range missiles closer and that there are improved prospects for agreeing on effective verification measures in several areas.

Regarding regional conflicts, I can see that our respective analyses of the causes are incompatible. There seems little point in continuing to debate those matters on which we are bound

to disagree. Instead, I would suggest that we simply look at the current situation in pragmatic terms. Such a look would show two very important facts: that the Soviet Union is engaged in a war in another country and the United States is not. And furthermore, this war is one which is unlikely to bring any benefit to the Soviet Union. So why is it continued?

Certainly not because of the United States. Even if we wished we do not have the power to induce hundreds of thousands of people to take up arms against a well trained foreign army equipped with the most modern weapons. And neither we nor any country other than the Soviet Union has the power to stop that war. For who can tell the people of another country they should not fight for their motherland, for their independence and their national dignity?

I hope, as you say, that there is an open door to a just political settlement. Of course, we support the U.N. process and hope that it will take a practical and realistic turn. However, 1985 was marked by an intensification of conflict. I can only hope that this is not what the future holds.

As I have said before, if you really want to withdraw from Afghanistan, you will have my cooperation in every reasonable way. We have no desire or intent to exploit a Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan to the detriment of Soviet interests. But it is clear that the fighting can be ended only by the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the return of Afghan refugees to their country, and the restoration of a genuinely sovereign, non-aligned state. Such a result would have an immediate positive effect on U.S.-Soviet relations and would help clear the way to progress in many other areas.

The problem of superpower military involvement in local disputes is of course not limited to the tragic conflict in Afghanistan. And I must say candidly that some recent actions by your government are most discouraging. What are we to make of your sharply increased military support of a local dictator who has declared a war of terrorism against much of the rest of the world, and against the United States in particular? How can one take Soviet declarations of opposition to terrorism seriously when confronted with such actions? And, more importantly, are we to conclude that the Soviet Union is so reckless in seeking to extend its influence in the world that it will place its prestige (and even the lives of some of its citizens) at the mercy of a mentally unbalanced local despot?

You have made accusations about U.S. policy which I cannot accept. My purpose here, however, is not to debate, but to search for a way out of the pattern by which one of us becomes militarily involved, directly or indirectly, in local disputes, and thus stimulates the reaction of the other. This transforms what should be of local concern into a U.S.-Soviet confrontation. As I have said, we believe it is the Soviet Union which has acted

without restraint in this respect. You say it is the United States.

But agreement as to who is to blame is not necessary to find a solution. The point I would make is that we must find a way to terminate the military involvement, direct and indirect, of both our countries in these disputes, and avoid spreading such involvement to new areas. This was the goal of the proposal I made last October. Let us encourage the parties to these conflicts to begin negotiations to find political solutions, while our countries support the process by agreeing to terminate the flow of weapons and war materiel into the area of conflict.

Mr. General Secretary, there remain many points on which we still disagree, and we will probably never reach agreement on some of them. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the critical problems can be solved if we approach them in the proper manner. I have the feeling that we gradually are finding some additional points on which we can agree, and would hope that, by concentrating on practical solutions, we can give greater momentum to this process.

But we do need to speed up the negotiation process if this is to occur. Therefore, I hope you will instruct your delegations in Geneva, as I have instructed ours, to roll up their sleeves and get seriously to work.

When you announced to the public the ideas contained in your letter of January 14, I made a statement welcoming them. Our study of that message will shortly be completed and when it is I will be responding specifically to the points you made in it.

Nancy joins me in sending our best regards to you and your wife.

Sincerely,

~~SECRET~~

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February 17, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE GEORGE P. SHULTZ
The Secretary of State

THE HONORABLE CASPAR W. WEINBERGER
The Secretary of Defense

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM J. CASEY
Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Presidential Letter to Gorbachev (U)

The President has written the attached letter to General Secretary Gorbachev in reply to his letter of December 24, 1985. The letter with a courtesy translation will be pouched to Moscow this evening. Please limit access to and knowledge of the letter only to those who have a need to know. It is requested that no other copies be made. *ter*


John M. Poindexter

Attachment
Presidential Ltr to Gorbachev

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February 17, 1986

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John M. Poindexter

Attachment
Presidential Ltr to Gorbachev

bcc: Vice President
Donald Regan

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ПЕРЕВОД ЛИЧНОГО ПИСЬМА
16-ого февраля 1986 г.

Уважаемый Г-н Генеральный Секретарь!

Ваше письмо от 24 декабря прошлого года вызвало серьезные размышления, и я хотел бы поделиться с Вами своими ответными мыслями. Конечно, я также получил и Ваше письмо от 14 января с.г., и вскоре отвечу на него. Однако, так как суть последнего уже широко известна, я считаю, что целесообразно вести нашу частную переписку отдельно. Хотя вопросы частично совпадают, я надеюсь, что наша частная переписка может уточнить наше отношение к некоторым основным вопросам.

Я согласен с Вами, что нам нужно определить конкретную программу мер, ведущую к постоянному и, я надеюсь, резкому улучшению американо-советских отношений. Я указал на две таких области в моем предыдущем письме, и я надеюсь, что мы сможем определить и другие, по которым в ближайшее время можно будет продвинуться вперед. Например, отпадают, повидимому, некоторые из препятствий к соглашению по ракетам промежуточной дальности. Я также надеюсь, что можно будет быстро продвинуться вперед к достижению соглашения относительно режима контроля, позволяющего всеобщий запрет химического оружия.

В отношении сокращения вооружений вообще, я согласен с Вами, что мы должны принимать решения не на основе заверений и намерений, а с учетом возможностей обеих сторон. Однако, я не понимаю, почему Вы приходите к заключению, что только та страна, которая готовится к первому (безоруживающему) удару заинтересована в обороне против баллистических ракет. Если такая оборона окажется возможной в будущем, то она могла бы способствовать дальнейшему сокращению ядерного оружия, потому что она создала бы уверенность, что национальную безопасность можно обеспечить без ядерного оружия.

Конечно, как я говорил раньше, я понимаю, что добавление оборонительных средств к арсеналу, в котором уже большое количество оружия, имеющего способность нанести первый (безоруживающий) удар может в определенных условиях быть дестабилизирующим. Поэтому мы предлагаем, чтобы обе стороны сначала сосредоточили внимание на сокращение тех вооружений, которые могут быть использованы для нанесения первого

(безоружающего) удара. Совершенно ясно, что если ни одна из наших стран не располагает силами, способными нанести первый удар, ни одна, ни другая не должна бояться, что оборона против баллистических ракет создаст возможность стратегии первого удара.

Я также не понимаю Ваше утверждение, что то, что Вы называете "космическим ударным оружием" – "универсальное" оружие. На сколько я понимаю, средства направленной энергии и кинетическое оружие, исследуемые обеими нашими странами в контексте противоракетной обороны были бы наиболее эффективными против точечных целей, движущихся с большой скоростью в космосе. Их трудно было бы применить для массового уничтожения на земле, и если имелись бы планы поражения земных объектов из космоса, не представляется разумным прибегать к такому дорогостоящему и необыкновенному оружию. Его поражающая способность никогда не приблизится к поражающей способности тех ядерных вооружений, которыми мы сегодня располагаем. Самая важная проблема, стоящая перед нами, это проблема ядерного оружия.

Г-н Генеральный Секретарь: в духе откровенности, необходимой для настоящего разговора, я хотел бы добавить еще одно. Вы часто говорите о "космическом ударном оружии" и Ваши представители определили его как оружие, способное поражать объекты в космосе с земли и из ее атмосферы, а также оружие в космосе, способное поражать объекты в космосе или на земле. Я должен спросить—"какая страна имеет такое оружие?" Только одна – Советский Союз. Ваша система ПРО, развернутая вокруг Москвы, может поражать цели за пределами атмосферы, и она была испытана с такой целью. Ваше коорбитальное противоспутниковое оружие предназначено для уничтожения спутников. Кроме того, Советский Союз начал исследовать оборонительные средства, применяющие направленную энергию до того, как Соединенные Штаты начали такие исследования и, повидимому, значительно продвинулся вперед в исследовании (и, кстате, с некоторым испытанием вне лабораторий) лазеров и других форм направленной энергии.

Я не указываю на это как упрек и не хочу сказать, что это нарушает соглашения. Но если бы мы следовали Вашей логике в том плане, что то, что Вы называете "космическим ударным оружием" создается только страной, готовящейся к первому удару, что бы мы думали? Мы видим, что Советский Союз использует огромные средства на оборону, и что он это начал за много лет до того, как мы это начали. И мы видим, что Советский Союз создал гораздо больше

вооружений безоруживающего удара, чем мы. Если оборонительное оружие создается только для того, чтобы сделать возможным первый (безоруживающий) удар, то нам безусловно нужно было бы еще больше беспокоиться, чем мы беспокоимся сейчас.

Мы обеспокоены, очень обеспокоены. Но не из-за того, что Вы создаете (и, в отличие от нас, развертываете) оборонительное оружие. Мы обеспокоены тем, что почему-то Советский Союз решил развернуть гораздо больше вооружений, способных нанести первый (безоруживающий) удар, чем Соединенные Штаты. На это могут быть причины, помимо стремления к приобретению преимущества в плане первого удара, но нам тоже надо смотреть на возможности, а не на намерения. И дело в том, что мы уверены, что у вас преимущество в этой области.

Откровенно говоря, Вы неправильно информированы если Ваши специалисты говорят, что ракеты на наших подводных лодках типа "Трайдент" могут поражать защищенные ракетные шахты (а Ваши ракеты СС-18 определенно могут это сделать). Настоящие ракеты типа "Трайдент" не имеют такой способности. Они могут быть использованы только для ответного удара. И ракета Першинг-2, которая не может даже достичь большинства советских стратегических вооружений также не имеет способности нанести первый удар. Ее короткое время подлета не отличается существенно от более мощных советских ракет СС-20 (которых гораздо больше), направленных на наших европейских союзников, которых мы обязались защищать, и большинство которых не располагают своими собственными ядерными силами. В настоящее время у нас очень ограниченная способность поражать советские шахты, и мы улучшаем эту способность только потому, что мы не можем смириться с тем, что у Советского Союза такое явное преимущество в области оружия безоруживающего удара. Даже если нам придется завершить все планы развертывания вооружений в отсутствие соглашения, ограничивающего такое развертывание, их не будет столько, как советских вооружений, обладающих способностью первого удара.

Если мнение наших военных специалистов не совпадают относительно возможностей, которыми обладают вооружения другой стороны, тогда нам безусловно следует договориться о том, чтобы они встретились и обсудили то, что их беспокоит. Откровенное обсуждение их соответствующих оценок и лежащих в их основе причин возможно могло бы прояснить любые ошибочные представления, которые не основаны на фактах.

Во всяком случае, мы оба согласились о принципе пятидесятипроцентного сокращения ядерного оружия. Осуществление этого соглашения должно быть первоочередной задачей наших представителей в Женеве. Я хочу снова подчеркнуть, что мы готовы, как и раньше, сократить те средства, которые Советский Союз считает угрожающими, если Советский Союз сократит средства, создающие особую угрозу Соединенным Штатам и их союзникам. Наши предложения в ноябре содержали существенный сдвиг с нашей стороны в этом направлении и были значительным шагом навстречу Вам. Я надеюсь, что Ваши представители на переговорах будут уполномочены ответить на эти предложения как можно скорее и вместе с нами приступить к определению того, какие стратегические средства следует сократить на 50 процентов.

В отношении оборонительных средств, я хочу повторить то, что я писал раньше: если Вы обеспокоены, что такие средства могут быть использованы для создания стратегии первого удара или в качестве прикрытия для базирования оружия массового уничтожения в космосе, то должны существовать практические пути к предотвращению таких возможностей. Конечно, я имею в виду не общие заверения, а конкретные, подлежащие контролю меры, на которые обе стороны могут положиться для избежания таких возможностей, ни одна из которых не входит в стратегию или планы США. Я действительно уверен, что мы сможем найти решение этой проблемы если мы к ней подойдем конкретно, а не будем вести дискуссию только в общем плане.

Мне очень хотелось бы к нашей следующей встрече найти подход к решению этой проблемы, приемлемый для нас обоих. Но мне кажется, что это потребует двух вещей: ускорения переговоров с целью достижения договоренности о том, как сократить наступательные вооружения на 50 процентов, и обсуждения конкретных путей, гарантирующих, что любое создание в будущем оборонительных средств не может быть использовано как прикрытия для стратегии первого удара или для базирования оружия массового уничтожения в космосе. Помимо этих более крупных вопросов я считаю, что Ваше недавнее предложение приближает нас к разрешению вопроса ракет промежуточной дальности и улучшает перспективы согласования эффективных мер контроля в нескольких областях.

В отношении региональных конфликтов, я вижу, что несовместимы объяснения наших сторон о причинах этих конфликтов. Мне кажется,

что нет смысла продолжать дискуссию тех вопросов, по которым у нас обязательно будут разногласия. Вместо этого, я предлагаю просто посмотреть на нынешнюю обстановку с практической точки зрения. Это выявило бы два очень важных момента. Советский Союз участвует в войне в чужой стране, а Соединенные Штаты этого не делают. Кроме того, эта война вряд ли принесет выгоду Советскому Союзу. Так почему же она продолжается?

Не из-за Соединенных Штатов. Если бы мы даже этого хотели, у нас не было бы сил заставить сотни тысяч людей воевать против хорошо подготовленных иностранных войск, имеющих самое современное оружие. Ни мы, ни любая другая страна, кроме Советского Союза, не имеют возможности положить конец этой войне. Ведь кто может сказать народу другой страны не воевать за свое отечество, за свою независимость и национальное достоинство?

Я надеюсь, что, как Вы говорите, существует открытая дверь к справедливому политическому урегулированию. Мы, конечно, поддерживаем переговоры в рамках ООН и надеемся, что они пойдут по практическому и реальному пути. Однако, в 1985 году военные операции стали более напряженными. Я могу лишь надеяться, что это не будет продолжаться и в будущем. Как я говорил и раньше, если Вы действительно хотите вывести войска из Афганистана, я буду оказывать Вам всякое разумное содействие. У нас нет ни желания, ни намерения использовать вывод советских войск из Афганистана во вред советским интересам. Но ясно, что война кончится только если будут выведены советские войска, афганские беженцы вернуться в свою страну, и будет восстановлено действительно суверенное, неприсоединившееся государство. Такой исход немедленно имел бы положительное влияние на американо-советские отношения и помог бы открыть дорогу для продвижения вперед во многих других областях.

Проблема участия сверхдержав в локальных вооруженных конфликтах не ограничена, конечно, трагическим конфликтом в Афганистане. И я должен откровенно сказать, что некоторые недавние шаги Вашего правительства весьма не обнадеживающие. Как нам рассматривать ваше резкое увеличение военной поддержки местного диктатора, который объявил войну терроризмом против многих других стран мира, и в частности против США? Как можно в свете таких шагов серьезно относиться к заявлениям о том, что Советский Союз против терроризма? И что более важно, должны ли мы заключить, что Советский Союз так безответственно хочет

расширить свое влияние в мире, что он готов на то, чтобы его престиж (и даже жизнь некоторых из его граждан) зависели от поведения неуравновешенного местного деспота?

Вы высказали обвинения в отношении американской политики, с которыми я не могу согласиться. Однако, мне здесь хочется не спорить а искать выход из повторяющейся схемы событий, где вооруженные силы одной из наших стран участвуют в локальных конфликтах и тем самым вызывают реакцию другой стороны. Таким образом, то, что должно иметь чисто локальный интерес, становится областью конфронтации между США и СССР. Как я говорил, мы считаем, что Советский Союз действует здесь несдержанно. А Вы говорите, что США так действуют.

Но, чтобы найти решение, не нужно приходить к единому мнению о том, кто виноват. Я хочу сказать, что нам нужно найти путь, как прекратить прямую и косвенную военную поддержку нашими странами сторон этих конфликтов, и не распространять такую поддержку на новые районы. На это направлено то предложение, которое я сделал в прошлом октябре. Давайте будем поощрять стороны в этих конфликтах начать переговоры, направленные на нахождение политических решений, а наши страны будут поддерживать этот процесс, согласившись прекратить поток оружия и военных материалов в район конфликта.

Г-н Генеральный Секретарь – остаются многие вопросы, по которым мы все еще не согласны, и наверно по некоторым из них мы никогда не согласимся. Однако, я убежден, что критически важные вопросы можно решить, если мы правильно к ним подойдем. Мне кажется, что мы постепенно находим некоторые дополнительные вопросы, по которым мы можем согласиться и я надеюсь, что направив усилия на достижение практических решений, мы сможем дать толчок этому процессу.

Но нам нужно ускорить ход переговоров если мы хотим этого добиться. Так что я надеюсь, что Вы дадите указания Вашим делегациям в Женеве, как я дал указания нашим, засучить рукава и серьезно приняться за работу.

Когда Вы обнародовали мысли, содержащиеся в Вашем письме от 14 января, я заявил, что их приветствую. Мы вскоре завершим изучение этого письма, и тогда я отвечу конкретно на те вопросы, которые Вы там подняли.

Прошу Вас и Вашу супругу принять от нас с Нэнси наилучшие пожелания.

Искренне Ваш,

Рональд Рейган

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

February 15, 1986

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JOHN M. POINDEXTER 

SIGNED

SUBJECT: Reply to Gorbachev's Handwritten Letter

Issue

Whether to reply to Gorbachev's handwritten letter of December 24, 1985

Facts

Gorbachev answered your handwritten letter with one of his own dated December 24, 1985. You have also received a more formal letter dated January 12 making proposals for a three-stage process for the elimination of nuclear weapons by 1999.

Discussion

The handwritten letter was obviously the more personal one, particularly since Gorbachev immediately announced the content of his letter of January 12 and wrote in the same vein to several other Chiefs of State. Therefore, it would be appropriate to answer the two letters separately, keeping the handwritten exchange more personal, private and direct. I think it is important to give a specific reply to the handwritten letter both to sustain this private exchange and to reply to some of the unacceptable allegations in it. This can be done without getting into the details of his letter of January 12.

The proposed draft at Tab A attempts to achieve the following:

-- It answers the principal arguments advanced by Gorbachev against SDI, implicitly reminding him that Soviet programs are such that his arguments can be turned against him, while still leaving the door open to concrete negotiation of legitimate issues.

-- By separating the reply to his handwritten letter from that to his "public" letter of January 12, the draft indicates clearly, without saying so, that the use of "proposals" for propaganda is not helpful to the negotiating process, and that such "proposals" will not be given the status of private messages.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
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-- By devoting special attention to regional conflicts and Afghanistan in particular, it lays the ground for a linkage of restraint in these areas to the reduction of nuclear weapons beyond the initial 50 percent. It also includes a strong statement regarding Soviet involvement with Qaddhafi, based on the danger posed to the Soviet Union by his unpredictability. (This is a factor the Soviets probably worry about, and it will not hurt to play on it a bit.)

You will note that the draft contains no mention of the Washington summit. Given the Soviet delay in suggesting a firm date -- or reacting in any way officially to our proposal made in early December -- I think it is desirable to avoid showing any exceptional eagerness. Also, in his letter, Gorbachev made no mention of the meeting other than to say that he considered the correspondence "a very important channel" for preparing for it.

One other small matter is that Gorbachev did not pick you up on your effort to develop a less formal salutation. (You had written "Dear General Secretary Gorbachev," while his reply was addressed "Dear Mr. President." You may, therefore, wish to revert to "Dear Mr. General Secretary.")

Although the draft reply is longer than I would like it to be, it is only slightly longer than Gorbachev's letter (a translation of which is at Tab B for your reference). Nevertheless, I consider it important to provide answers to Gorbachev's allegations in some detail, and this cannot be done much more briefly. Providing him with a detailed reply does indicate that you take his arguments seriously and have given them careful thought.

If you decide to write out a letter along the lines of the draft, I would recommend that we do a courtesy translation (on very close hold) and send it through Hartman in a sealed envelope, as we did with your previous handwritten letter.

Regarding the letter of January 12, we will be consulting the Allies over the next few days and should have a formal reply ready for you to consider at the end of next week.

Recommendation:

<u>OK</u>	<u>No</u>	
_____	_____	That you write a reply to Gorbachev along the lines of the draft at Tab A.

Attachments:

- Tab A Draft Reply to Handwritten Letter from Gorbachev
- Tab B Translation of Gorbachev's Handwritten Letter of December 24, 1985

Prepared by:
Jack F. Matlock

To Gorbachev

SYSTEM II
90124

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①

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Feb. 16, 1986

Dear Mr. General Secretary

Your letter of Dec. 24, 1985 was most thought-provoking and I would like to share my reactions with you. I have of course also received your letter of Jan. 14, 1986, and will be responding to it shortly. However, since the substance of the latter is already in the public domain, I believe it is well to keep our private communications separate. Although the issues overlap, I would hope that our informal exchange can be used to clarify our attitudes on some of the fundamental questions.

I agree with you that we need to set a specific agenda for action to bring about a steady and I would hope - radical improvement in U.S. - Soviet relations. I suggested two such topics in my previous letter, and I would hope that we can identify others as ripe for immediate progress. For example, some of the obstacles to an agreement on intermediate-range missiles seem to be falling away. I would also hope that rapid progress can be made toward agreement on a verification regime that will permit a global ban on chemical weapons.

Regarding arms reduction in general, I agree with you that we must make decisions not on the basis of assurances or intentions but with regard to the capabilities on both sides. Nevertheless, I do not understand the reasoning behind your conclusion that only a country preparing a disarming first strike would be interested in defenses against

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ballistic missiles. If such defenses prove feasible in the future, they could facilitate further reductions of nuclear weapons by creating a feeling of confidence that national security could be preserved without them.

Of course, as I have said before, I recognize that adding defensive systems to an arsenal replete with weapons with a disarming first-strike capability could under some conditions be destabilizing. That is why we are proposing that both sides concentrate first on reducing those weapons which can be used to deliver a disarming first strike. Certainly, if neither of our countries had forces suitable for a first strike, neither need fear that defenses against ballistic missiles would make a first strike strategy possible.

I also do not understand your statement that what you call "space strike weapons" are "all purpose" weapons. As I understand it, the sort of directed-energy and kinetic devices both our countries are investigating in the context of ballistic missile defense are potentially most effective against point targets moving at high velocity in space. They would be ill-suited for mass destruction on earth, and if one were planning to strike earth targets from space, it does not seem rational to resort to such expensive and exotic techniques. Their destructiveness can never approach that of the nuclear weapons in our hands today. Nuclear weapons are the real problem.

Mr. General Secretary, in the spirit of candor which is essential to effective communication, I would add another point. You speak often of "space strike weapons", and your representatives have defined these as weapons which can strike targets in space from earth and its atmosphere, and weapons in space which can strike targets in space or on earth. I must ask, "What country has such weapons?" The answer is, only one: the Soviet Union. Your ABM system deployed around Moscow can

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Strike targets beyond the atmosphere and has been tested in that mode. Your co-orbital anti-satellite weapon is designed to destroy satellites. Furthermore, the Soviet Union began research in defenses utilizing directed energy before the United States did and seems well along in research (and - incidentally - some testing outside laboratories) of lasers and other forms of directed energy.

I do not point this out in reproach or suggest that these activities are in violation of agreements. But if we were to follow your logic to the effect that what you call "space strike weapons" would only be developed by a country planning a first strike, what would we think? We see the Soviet Union devoting enormous resources to defensive systems in an effort which antedates by many years our own effort, and we see a Soviet Union which has built up its counterforce weapons in numbers far greater than our own. If the only reason to develop defensive weapons is to make a disarming first strike possible, then clearly we should be even more concerned than we have been.

We are concerned, and deeply so. But not because you are developing - and unlike us deploying - defensive weaponry. We are concerned over the fact that the Soviet Union for some reason has chosen to deploy a much larger number of weapons suitable for a disarming first strike than has the United States. There may be reasons for this other than actually seeking a first-strike advantage, but we too must look at capabilities rather than intentions. And the fact is that we are certain you have an advantage in this area.

Frankly, you have been misinformed if your specialists say that the missiles on our Trident submarines have a capability to destroy hardened missile silos - a capability your SS-18 definitely has. Current Trident missiles lack the capability for such a role - They could be used only to retaliate. Nor is the Pershing II, which cannot even reach most Soviet strategic weapons, a potential first-strike weapon. Its short flight time

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is not substantially different from that of the more capable — and much more numerous — Soviet SS20's aimed at our European Allies whom we are pledged to defend and most of whom have no nuclear capability of their own. Our forces currently have a very limited capability to strike Soviet silos, and we are improving this capability only because we cannot accept a situation in which the Soviet Union holds such a clear advantage in counterforce weaponry. Even if we are required to complete all planned deployments in the absence of an accord which limits them, they will not match the number of Soviet weapons with a first-strike capability.

If our defense and military specialists disagree regarding the capability of the weapons on the other side, then by all means let us arrange for them to meet and discuss their concerns. A frank discussion of their respective assessments and the reasons for them could perhaps clear up those misunderstandings which are not based on fact.

In any event, we have both agreed to the principle of a 50% reduction of nuclear arms. Implementing that agreement is surely the first task of our negotiators at Geneva. Let me stress once again that we remain willing to reduce those weapons systems which the Soviet Union finds threatening so long as the Soviet Union will reduce those which pose a special threat to the United States and its Allies. Our proposals in November included significant movement on our part in this direction and were a major step to accommodate your concerns. I hope that your negotiators will be empowered to respond to these proposals during the current round and to engage us in identifying which strategic systems are to be included in the 50% reduction.

So far as defensive systems are concerned, I would reiterate what I wrote before: if your concern is that such systems may be used to permit a first-strike strategy, or as a cover for basing weapons of mass destruction in space, then there must be practical ways to prevent such possibilities. Of course I have in mind not general assurances but concrete, verifiable means which both sides can rely on to avoid the

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Contingencies, neither of which is a part of United States strategy or planning. I honestly believe that we can find a solution to this problem if we approach it in practical fashion rather than debating generalities.

I would like nothing more than to find, by our next meeting an approach acceptable to both of us to solve this problem. But I believe that will require two things: accelerating negotiations to reach agreement on the way to reduce offensive weapons by 50%, and discussion of concrete ways to insure that any future development of defensive systems cannot be used as a cover for a first-strike strategy or for losing weapons of mass destruction in space. Aside from these broader issues, I believe that your recent proposal brings settlement of the problem of intermediate-range missiles closer and that there are improved measures in several areas.

Regarding regional conflicts, I can see that our respective analyses of the causes are incompatible. There seems little point in continuing to debate those matters on which we are bound to disagree. Instead, I would suggest that we simply look at the current situation in pragmatic terms. Such a look would show two very important facts: That the Soviet Union is engaged in a war in another country and the United States is not. And furthermore, this war is unlikely to bring any benefit to the Soviet Union. So why is it continued?

Certainly not because of the United States. Even if we wished we do not have the power to induce thousands of people to take up arms against a well trained foreign army equipped with the most modern weapons. And neither we nor any country other than the Soviet Union has the power to stop that war. For who can tell the people of another country they should not fight for their motherland, for their independence and their national dignity?

I hope, as you say, that there is an open door to a just political settlement. Of course, we support the U.N. process and hope that it will take a practical and realistic turn. However, 1985 was marked by an intensification of conflict. I can only

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hope that this is not what the future holds.

As I have said before, if you really want to withdraw from Afghanistan, you will have my cooperation in every reasonable way. We have no desire or intent to exploit a Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan to the detriment of Soviet interests. But it is clear that the fighting can be ended only by the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the return of Afghan refugees to their country, and the restoration of a genuinely sovereign, non-aligned state. Such a result would have an immediate positive effect on U.S.-Soviet relations and would help clear the way to progress in many other areas.

The problem of superpower military involvement in local disputes is of course not limited to the tragic conflict in Afghanistan. And I must say candidly that some recent actions by your government are most discouraging. What are we to make of your sharply increased military support of a local dictator who has declared a war of terrorism against much of the rest of the world, and against the United States in particular? How can one take Soviet declarations of opposition to terrorism seriously when confronted with such actions? And more importantly, are we to conclude that the Soviet Union is so reckless in seeking to extend its influence in the world that it will place its prestige (and even the lives of some of its citizens) at the mercy of a mentally unbalanced local despot?

You have made accusations about U.S. policy which I cannot accept. My purpose here, however, is not to debate, but to search for a way out of the pattern by which one of us becomes militarily involved, directly or indirectly, in local disputes, and thus stimulates the reaction of the other. This transforms what should be of local concern into a U.S.-Soviet confrontation.

As I have said, we believe it is the Soviet Union which has acted without restraint in this respect. You say it is the United States.

But agreement as to who is to blame is not necessary to find a solution. The point I would

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make is that we must find a way to terminate the military involvement, direct & indirect, of both our countries in these disputes, and avoid spreading such involvement to new areas. This was the goal of the proposal I made last October. Let us encourage the parties to these conflicts to begin negotiations to find political solutions, while our countries support the process by agreeing to terminate the flow of weapons and war material into the area of conflict.

Mr. General Secretary, there remain many points on which we still disagree, and we will probably never reach agreement on some of them. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the critical problems can be solved if we approach them in the proper manner. I have the feeling that we gradually are finding some additional points on which we can agree, and would hope that, by concentrating on practical solutions, we can give greater momentum to this process.

But we do need to speed up the negotiation process if this is to occur. Therefore, I hope you will instruct your delegations in Geneva, as I have instructed ours, to roll up their sleeves and get seriously to work.

When you announced to the public the ideas contained in your letter of January 14, I made a statement welcoming them. Our study of that message will shortly be completed and when it is I will be responding specifically to the points you made in it.

Nancy joins me in sending our best regards to you and your wife.

Sincerely

Ronald Reagan

DRAFT REPLY TO HANDWRITTEN LETTER FROM GORBACHEV

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

Your letter of December 24, 1985, was most thought-provoking and I would like to share my reactions with you. I have of course also received your letter of January 14, 1986, and will be responding to it shortly. However, since the substance of the latter is already in the public domain, I believe it is well to keep our private communications separate. Although the issues overlap, I would hope that our informal exchange can be used to clarify our attitudes on some of the fundamental questions.

I agree with you that we need to set a specific agenda for action to bring about a steady and -- I would hope -- radical improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations. I suggested two such topics in my previous letter, and I would hope that we can identify others as ripe for immediate progress. For example, some of the obstacles to an agreement on intermediate-range missiles seem to be falling away. I would also hope that rapid progress can be made toward agreement on a verification regime that will permit a global ban on chemical weapons.

Regarding arms reduction in general, I agree with you that we must make decisions not on the basis of assurances or intentions but with regard to the capabilities on both sides. Nevertheless, I do not understand the reasoning behind your conclusion that only a country preparing a disarming first strike would be interested in defenses against ballistic missiles. If such defenses prove feasible in the future, they could facilitate further reductions of nuclear weapons by creating a feeling of confidence that national security could be preserved without them.

Of course, as I have said before, I recognize that adding defensive systems to an arsenal replete with weapons with a disarming first-strike capability could under some conditions be destabilizing. That is why we are proposing that both sides concentrate first on reducing those weapons which can be used to deliver a disarming first strike. Certainly, if neither of our countries has forces suitable for a first strike, neither need fear that defenses against ballistic missiles would make a first strike strategy possible.

I also do not understand your statement that what you call "space strike weapons" are "all purpose" weapons. As I understand it, the sort of directed-energy and kinetic devices both our countries are investigating in the context of ballistic missile defense are potentially most effective against point targets moving at high velocity in space. They would be ill-suited for mass destruction on earth, and if one were planning to strike earth targets from space, it does not seem rational to resort to such expensive and exotic techniques. Their destructiveness can

never approach that of the nuclear weapons in our hands today. Nuclear weapons are the real problem.

Mr. General Secretary, in the spirit of candor which is essential to effective communication, I would add another point. You speak often of "space strike weapons," and your representatives have defined these as weapons which can strike targets in space from earth and its atmosphere, and weapons in space which can strike targets in space or on earth. I must ask, "What country has such weapons?" The answer is, only one: the Soviet Union. Your ABM system deployed around Moscow can strike targets beyond the atmosphere and has been tested in that mode. Your co-orbital anti-satellite weapon is designed to destroy satellites. Furthermore, the Soviet Union began research in defenses utilizing directed energy before the United States did and seems well along in research (and -- incidentally -- some testing outside laboratories) of lasers and other forms of directed energy.

I do not point this out in reproach or suggest that these activities are in violation of agreements. But if we were to follow your logic to the effect that what you call "space strike weapons" would only be developed by a country planning a first strike, what would we think? We see the Soviet Union devoting enormous resources to defensive systems, in an effort which antedates by many years our own effort, and we see a Soviet Union which has built up its counterforce weapons in numbers far greater than our own. If the only reason to develop defensive weapons is to make a disarming first strike possible, then clearly we should be even more concerned than we have been.

We are concerned, and deeply so. But not because you are developing -- and unlike us deploying -- defensive weaponry. We are concerned over the fact that the Soviet Union for some reason has chosen to deploy a much larger number of weapons suitable for a disarming first strike than has the United States. There may be reasons for this other than actually seeking a first-strike advantage, but we too must look at capabilities rather than intentions. And the fact is that we are certain you have an advantage in this area.

Frankly, you have been misinformed if your specialists say that the missiles on our Trident submarines have a capability to destroy hardened missile silos -- a capability your SS-18 definitely has. Current Trident missiles lack the capability for such a role. They could be used only to retaliate. Nor is the Pershing II, which cannot even reach most Soviet strategic weapons, a potential first-strike weapon. Its short flight time is not substantially different from that of the more capable -- and much more numerous -- Soviet SS-20's aimed at our European Allies whom we are pledged to defend and most of whom have no nuclear capability of their own. Our forces currently have a very limited capability to strike Soviet silos, and we are improving this capability only because we cannot accept a

situation in which the Soviet Union holds such a clear advantage in counterforce weaponry. Even if we are required to complete all planned deployments in the absence of an accord which limits them, they will not match the number of Soviet weapons with a first-strike capability.

If our defense and military specialists disagree regarding the capability of the weapons on the other side, then by all means let us arrange for them to meet and discuss their concerns. A frank discussion of their respective assessments and the reasons for them could perhaps clear up those misunderstandings which are not based on fact.

In any event, we have both agreed to the principle of a 50% reduction of nuclear arms. Implementing that agreement is surely the first task of our negotiators at Geneva. Let me stress once again that we remain willing to reduce those weapons systems which the Soviet Union finds threatening so long as the Soviet Union will reduce those which pose a special threat to the United States and its Allies. Our proposals in November included significant movement on our part in this direction and were a major step to accommodate your concerns. I hope that your negotiators will be empowered to respond to these proposals during the current round and to engage us in identifying which strategic systems are to be included in the 50% reduction.

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Regarding regional conflicts, I can see that our respective analyses of the causes are incompatible. There seems little point in continuing to debate those matters on which we are bound

to disagree. Instead, I would suggest that we simply look at the current situation in pragmatic terms. Such a look would show two very important facts: that the Soviet Union is engaged in a war in another country and the United States is not. And furthermore, this war is one which is unlikely to bring any benefit to the Soviet Union. So why is it continued?

Certainly not because of the United States. Even if we wished we do not have the power to induce hundreds of thousands of people to take up arms against a well trained foreign army equipped with the most modern weapons. And neither we nor any country other than the Soviet Union has the power to stop that war. For who can tell the people of another country they should not fight for their motherland, for their independence and their national dignity?

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without restraint in this respect. You say it is the United States.

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Mr. General Secretary, there remain many points on which we still disagree, and we will probably never reach agreement on some of them. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the critical problems can be solved if we approach them in the proper manner. I have the feeling that we gradually are finding some additional points on which we can agree, and would hope that, by concentrating on practical solutions, we can give greater momentum to this process.

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Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

(TRANSLATION)

LS NO. 118545
DZ/GT/WH/LB
Russian

His Excellency
Ronald W. Reagan
President of the United States
Washington, D.C.
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

I consider your letter important and also value the form you used in writing to me.

I say this to you because I see the desire to continue and to strengthen what we achieved in Geneva. I am glad that we began there -- both in substance and in spirit -- a direct and frank discussion. I attach special significance to the fact that we have been able to overcome the serious psychological barrier which for a long time has hindered a dialogue worthy of the leaders of the USSR and USA.

I have the feeling that now you and I can set formalities aside and can get down to the heart of the matter -- establishing a specific topical agenda for discussion over the next few years on the basis of our understanding, and straightening out Soviet-American relations. I visualize this task very concretely: we have to broaden areas of agreement, strengthen the elements of responsibility in our policy, and make the appropriate practical decisions. In my opinion the ideal situation would be one in which you and I would give impetus to a constant forward movement. I agree with what you said: in the final analysis no one besides us can do this.

The first thing we should do is to take upon ourselves the task of undoing the knot which has been tied around the issues of nuclear and space weapons. I was encouraged by the fact that you, Mr. President, also consider that this is of key significance.

I think you understood from what I told you in Geneva that our decisive opposition to the development of space-strike weapons is dictated by the fact that weapons of this class which, due to their specific nature, possess the capability of being used both for defensive and offensive aims, represent in the final analysis an extremely dangerous build-up of offensive potential, with all the consequences inevitably ensuing therefrom from the point of view of further escalating the arms race.

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You say, Mr. President, that the U.S. has no intention of using the SDI program to obtain military superiority.

I do not doubt that you personally may really have no such intentions. But you must agree that the leadership of one side has to evaluate the actions of the other in the area of developing new types of weapons, not in accordance with intentions, but in accordance with the potential capabilities which may be attained as a result of the development of these weapons.

Examining the SDI program from this perspective, the Soviet leadership comes to the same conclusion every time: given the realities of the current situation, only a country which is preparing for a first (disarming) strike needs a "space shield"; a country which does not base its actions on such a concept should have no need for such a weapons system.

After all, space-strike weapons are all-purpose weapons. The space-strike weapons that are being created in the U.S. are kinetic energy weapons and also long-range, directed energy systems (with a range of several thousand miles and great destructive power). As our experts and scientists and yours confirm, those weapons are capable of destroying in space, as well as from space, within a very short time, in great quantities and selectively, objects which are thousands of miles away. I stress -- thousands of miles away.

For example, how should we regard the space weapons of a country which have the capability of destroying another country's centers for controlling space objects and of destroying its space devices for monitoring, navigation, communication etc. within very short time intervals measured in minutes? Essentially, these weapons can only be intended for "blinding" the other side, catching it unprepared and depriving it of the possibility of countering a nuclear strike. Moreover, if these weapons are developed, the process of perfecting them and giving them even better combat characteristics will begin immediately. Such is the course of development of all weaponry.

How then, Mr. President, should the Soviet Union act in such a situation? I would like to repeat what I already told you in Geneva. The USSR cannot simply reduce and will not reduce nuclear weapons to the detriment of its security, when the SDI program is being implemented in the U.S. Whether we like it or not, we will be forced to develop and improve our strategic nuclear forces and increase their capability of neutralizing the U.S. "space shield." At the same time, we would also have to develop our own space weapons inter alia for the purpose of

a territorial ABM defense. Probably, the U.S. would in turn then take some other additional steps. As a result, we will not get out of the vicious cycle of measures and countermeasures, out of the whirlpool of an ever-increasing arms race. The consequence of such competition for our peoples and for all of mankind is unpredictable.

I am convinced that the only sensible way out is not to engage in this at all. From every point of view the correct path for our countries is negotiation on the prevention of an arms race in space and its cessation on earth. And we need to come to agreement on the basis of equal and mutually acceptable conditions.

You and I agreed to accelerate the negotiations. I took satisfaction in hearing you say that the U.S. would not "develop space-based offensive weapons."

As I see it, some kind of common basis is emerging between you and me for a very significant part of the problem of preventing an arms race in space. Let us have our representatives at the negotiations proceed on this basis to begin working out specific measures to prevent the development of offensive space weapons, i.e., all space-based weapons which can destroy targets in space and from space.

In the spirit of the frankness in which we are talking, I would like to say that this issue has now become very acute: either events will determine policy or we will determine policy. In order not to be governed by events, it is especially important once again to conduct a profound analysis of all aspects of the objective interrelationship between offensive and defensive weapons and to hear each other out on this issue. However, it seems to me that there will be little meaning to such discussions if in tandem with them weapons of war start coming out of the doors of our laboratories, weapons whose influence on strategic stability we must not now miscalculate. Common sense dictates that until we determine together those consequences, we must not permit anything to go beyond the walls of the laboratory. We are prepared to negotiate to reach agreement on this matter as well.

It appears to me this is a practical way to implement the joint accord you and I confirmed in Geneva concerning the inadmissibility of an arms race in space and concerning the ultimate elimination of nuclear arms.

In line with such an approach it would also make sense at the Geneva negotiations to discuss the issue of eliminating the danger of a first (disarming) nuclear strike. I would like to

state to you again very definitely: we are not making a bid for a first nuclear strike, we are not preparing our nuclear forces for one.

I cannot agree with the way you formulate the issue of first strike nuclear forces. This issue, of course, is not merely one of ICBM warheads. For example, there is no difference between U.S. ballistic missile warheads on "Trident" submarines and warheads on modern Soviet land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles as far as their kill capability is concerned, i.e. in terms of such indices as accuracy, power and range. And if one considers this issue from the point of view of warning time, then, for a significant portion of submarine missiles, where the U.S. has a three-fold advantage in warheads, the warning time is significantly shorter.

And can we view the "Pershing II" missiles deployed in Europe with their high accuracy and short flight time to targets on USSR territory as anything other than first-strike weapons?

Please forgive me for dealing with technical details in a personal letter like this. But these are vitally important realities, and we simply cannot get around them.

Believe me, Mr. President, we have a genuine and truly serious concern about U.S. nuclear systems. You talk about mutual concerns. This matter can be resolved only through considering and counting the sum total of the respective nuclear systems of both countries. Let our delegations discuss this matter as well.

Mr. President, I would like to give you my brief reaction to what you said concerning regional conflicts. At the time when we touched on these issues in Geneva, I stressed that it is most important to view things realistically, to see the world as it is. If we recognize the fact that independent states exist and function in the international arena, then we also have to acknowledge their sovereign right to have relations with whomever they wish and the right to ask for assistance, including military assistance.

Both you and we offer such assistance. Why apply a double standard and assert that Soviet assistance is a source of tension and U.S. assistance is beneficial? It would be better for us to be guided by objective criteria in this matter. The Soviet Union is assisting legitimate governments which come to us because they have been and are being subjected to outside military interference.

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And, as the facts indicate, the U.S. incites actions against governments and supports and supplies weapons to groups which are inimical to society and which are, in essence, terrorists. Looking at things objectively, it is such actions and outside interference that create regional tension and conflict. If such actions cease, I am convinced tensions will decrease and the prospects for political settlements will become much better and more realistic.

Unfortunately, at present, developments are proceeding in a different direction. Take, for example, the unprecedented pressure and threats which the government of Nicaragua is being subjected to - a legitimate government brought to power through free elections.

I will be frank: what the United States has done recently causes concern. It seems that there is a tilt in the direction of further exacerbation of regional problems. Such an approach does not make it easier to find a common language and makes the search for political solutions more difficult.

With regard to Afghanistan, one gets the impression that the U.S. side intentionally fails to notice the "open door" leading to a political settlement. Now there is even a working formula for such a settlement. It is important not to hinder the negotiations in progress, but to help them along. In that event a fair settlement will definitely be found.

Mr. President, I would like to have you take my letter as another one of our "fireside talks." I would truly like to preserve not only the spirit of our Geneva meetings, but also to go further in developing our dialogue. I view our correspondence as a very important channel for preparing for our meeting in Washington.

The new year will be upon us very soon, and I would like to send you and your wife our very best wishes.

Sincerely,

M. Gorbachev

Moscow, December 24, 1985