

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library  
Digital Library Collections

---

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

---

**Collection:** Matlock, Jack F.: Files  
**Folder Title:** 1985 Correspondence – Related  
Material (1)  
**Box:** 7

---

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digital-library>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection>

Contact a reference archivist at: [reagan.library@nara.gov](mailto:reagan.library@nara.gov)

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/citing>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

# WITHDRAWAL SHEET

## Ronald Reagan Library

**Collection Name** MATLOCK, JACK: FILES

**Withdrawer**

JET 3/30/2005

**File Folder** 1985 CORRESPONDENCE RELATED MATERIALS (1/5)

**FOIA**

F06-114/1

**Box Number** 7

YARHI-MILO

708

ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
6552	MEMO	MATLOCK TO MCFARLANE RE REDRAFT OF PRESIDENT REAGAN LETTER TO GORBACHEV [16-30] <i>R 3/3/2011 F2006-114/1</i>	15	4/25/1985	B1
6554	LETTER	GORBACHEV TO PRESIDENT REAGAN [31-39] <i>R 11/27/2007 NLRRF06-114/1</i>	9	6/10/1985	B1
6553	MEMO	SAME TEXT AS DOC #6552 [40-54] <i>R 3/3/2011 F2006-114/1</i>	15	4/25/1985	B1

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

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

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

Correspondence 1985  
Related Materials

JF406 2

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

I appreciated receiving your letter of March 24 and believe the heightened pace of our high-level dialogue in recent weeks has been useful. Vice President Bush has reported to me on your good discussion on the occasion of Chairman Chernenko's funeral. I have reviewed the records of the most recent exchanges between Secretary Shultz and Ambassador Dobrynin in Washington and Foreign Minister Gromyko and Ambassador Hartman in Moscow. I have also had reports from Congressman O'Neill on his discussions with you and Mr. Gromyko during his visit to Moscow.

I welcome the agreement that Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Gromyko will meet in Vienna on May 14. I am hopeful that they will be able to work out specific steps to move our relationship forward. As promised in the letter Speaker O'Neill passed to you, I would now like to reply to your March 24 letter at some length.

I agree with you that the task before us is to provide impetus to our relations through concerted action at the political level, and that we should focus on issues where a practical, businesslike approach can lead us forward on substantive matters. It would be a mistake to underestimate our differences and to invite needless disappointment by ignoring the difficulties before us. I hope I have made it clear in my previous correspondence with the leaders of your country that I have a strong preference for serious, quiet diplomacy as the best approach to making progress on hard issues. I welcome the willingness to pursue the same approach which you expressed in your letter.

DECLASSIFIED / (RE)EAS (M)  
Authority NUSF 99-051 #335  
BY CW, NARA, Date 6/11/02



I hope that the response to the tragic killing of Major Nicholson will turn out to be an example of this approach in action. I hardly need to tell you that I and all Americans were appalled at that senseless act. It makes absolutely clear the necessity to end the pattern of Soviet military actions which threaten to undo our best efforts to put our relations on a stable and constructive basis for the long term. I understand from the exchanges between our military commanders that your troops in Germany are taking measures to prevent further tragic incidents of this kind; this is a constructive first step.

In any discussion of how to avoid threats to the prospects for constructive progress in our relations, I think it is fair to point out that in recent years such threats have arisen most frequently and most seriously from various regional tensions in the world. In general, as I have stated on a number of occasions, our concern is over the pattern of threatening or using force to impose outside solutions in regional situations. At this moment in particular, I would like to discuss an issue I find particularly troubling: Afghanistan.

I believe the time has more than come to move to a political resolution of this tragic affair, one that would enable the Afghan people to live in peace without the presence of foreign troops. We support the United Nations Secretary General's effort to achieve a peaceful, negotiated settlement among the parties. We remain committed to a political solution that will deal equitably with the related issues of withdrawal of your troops to their homeland and guarantees of non-interference. Your present course will only lead to more bloodshed. We are prepared to work with you in a different direction.

I am confident that the Government of Pakistan shares this approach. I want to make it very clear to you personally that Pakistan is a trusted ally of the United States. It must be completely understood that political or military threats against Pakistan are a matter of special concern to me.

As you know, I have stressed the importance of dialogue between our two governments on regional issues as a means of avoiding miscalculation, reducing the dangers of confrontation, and encouraging peaceful solutions. It was for this reason that I proposed in my UNGA speech last September that our two countries agree to periodic consultations at the policy level about regional problems. Secretary Shultz has informed me of your recent proposals for a possible series of regional discussions. We are prepared to move forward and will be providing a detailed reply.

In addition to avoiding and managing negative developments that threaten the prospects for progress, I believe we should focus our energies also on issues where mutually beneficial forward movement could and should be possible. We have made progress in certain areas, thereby demonstrating that we can work together on specific issues despite our differences on other issues. As I mentioned in the letter Speaker O'Neill carried, I see opportunities in every area of our relationship, and I would like to suggest some of them for your consideration.

The interrelated issues under negotiation at Geneva provide us with our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity. These negotiations have just begun. I would like to believe that the Soviet side, like the American side, is committed to serious, substantive exchanges, with full respect for the confidentiality so necessary for the talks to be successful. Our negotiators have very flexible instructions to work with your negotiators in drafting agreements that can lead to radical reductions in nuclear weapons and, ultimately, toward their complete elimination. This is why, to be absolutely frank, we were disappointed in your public espousal April 8 of a proposal that we had earlier made clear was one-sided and unacceptable. I could not agree more with the point in your letter about conducting business in a manner not aimed at deepening differences and making policies to revitalize the situation.



With regard to defensive and space weapons and strategic stability, I want to point out some facts. The Soviet Union already has deployed ABM and anti-satellite systems. Judging by your research programs in the defensive field, you also appreciate the potential further contribution that defensive systems could make toward the establishment of a more stable balance. The research being done as part of my Strategic Defense Initiative holds great promise for enhancing the security not just of our two countries but of all mankind. It is my hope that we will be able to discuss these issues and their interrelationships in a frank and thoughtful manner in Geneva. Direct, personal involvement at our level will be needed if we are to be successful.

I suggest that we also give new attention to other negotiations and discussions underway between us in the security and arms control field. We know that some progress has been made in the Stockholm Conference toward narrowing our differences. Meaningful progress toward an agreement should be possible even this year on the basis of the framework which I have already suggested both privately in this channel and publicly in Dublin last June. Specifically, the United States will consider the Soviet proposal for a declaration on the non-use of force as long as the Soviet Union is prepared to consider the concrete measures needed to put that principle into action. Unfortunately, the response of your representatives to date to this offer has not been encouraging. I hope that we may soon see a more favorable attitude toward this idea and toward the confidence-building measures that we and our allies have introduced.

One area where our two countries have been able to work together for mutual advantage has been the area of nuclear non-proliferation. Our consultations in this area have been constructive and useful. I think that we ought to recognize their good work and seek to build upon it in order to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

One pressing issue of concern to us both is the use of chemical weaponry in the Iran-Iraq war. This situation illustrates the importance of curbing the special spread of chemical weapons, and I suggest that it might be useful in the near future for our experts to meet and examine ways in which we might cooperate on this topic. Of course, the lasting solution to this problem will be achievement of a complete global ban on these terrible weapons, and I ask you also to consider carefully the proposed treaty we have advanced in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

We continue to feel that it would be in both our interests to arrive at an equitable and balanced agreement in the MBFR talks in Vienna which would reduce the level of conventional forces in central Europe.

In addition to the implementation of our agreement on upgrading the Direct Communications Link, which is proceeding on schedule, we hope we can expand our ability to communicate rapidly during the time of crisis into other areas. We remain ready to discuss with you a number of concrete proposals in this field.

There are several important bilateral issues on which we can make progress relatively quickly if we seize the opportunities now before us. We should be able to conclude an agreement on improving safety measures in the North Pacific at an early meeting and move to discussions of civil aviation issues. Our efforts to negotiate a new cultural exchanges agreement have, after six months, reached the point where only a handful of issues remain to be resolved. And we are ready to move forward at the earliest possible date to open our respective consulates in New York and Kiev. I am also hopeful that the meeting of our Joint Commercial Commission in May will succeed in identifying areas of non-strategic trade that could be substantially increased.

Finally, let me turn to an issue of great importance to me and to all Americans. As the Vice President informed you in Moscow, we believe strongly that



human rights are an important element of our bilateral relationship. While we recognize your sensitivities on this question, human rights is an issue that must be addressed. Last year we suggested that Ambassador Hartman meet periodically with Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko to discuss confidentially our mutual concerns. I am also prepared to appoint rapporteurs as you suggested to the Vice President, perhaps someone to join Ambassador Hartman in such a meeting. Whatever procedures we ultimately establish, I hope we can agree that this channel will be used for trying seriously to resolve human rights problems and not for exchanging propaganda. Progress in this field will create a positive environment for progress in a number of other areas.

I have taken the liberty of speaking candidly in this letter. I take it that you agree with me that is the best approach, and I hope we can continue to speak frankly in our future correspondence. Let me close by reaffirming the value I place in these letters and my desire to use this correspondence to build stronger relations between the two of us and between our two countries.

Finally, I was glad to receive your views on a meeting between the two of us. In the spirit of your suggestion that we return to the question of time and place of such a meeting, let me suggest that we meet in Washington this fall, in either September or October. We also look forward to the meeting between Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Gromyko in Vienna in May, which we hope will provide an opportunity for us to move forward across the agenda I have discussed in this letter.

Sincerely,

His Excellency  
Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev  
General Secretary of the Central Committee  
of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
The Kremlin  
Moscow



April 4, 1985 8

back up  
materials

~~SECRET~~

SYSTEM II  
90382

9

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Received 3/6

1985 APR - 4 PM 2 46

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

April 4, 1985

ACTION

**SIGNED**

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. MCFARLANE *RCM*  
SUBJECT: Letter to General Secretary Gorbachev

Issue

Letter to Gorbachev.

Facts

You indicated to Speaker O'Neill and Bob Michel yesterday that you would give them a letter to Gorbachev for delivery on their upcoming visit.

Discussion

Your letter encourages Gorbachev to move the current negotiations ahead, refers to the shooting of Major Nicholson and promises a more detailed reply to his last letter.

Recommendation

OK

No

*RC*

\_\_\_\_\_

That you sign the letter at Tab A to Gorbachev.

Attachments:

Tab A Letter to General Secretary Gorbachev

Prepared by:  
Jack F. Matlock

DECLASSIFIED

White House Guidelines, August 28, 1997

By *CAS* NARA, Date *6/14/02*

cc Vice President

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
Declassify on: OADR

~~SECRET~~

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

April 4, 1985

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

FROM: JACK F. MATLOCK

**SIGNED**

SUBJECT: Presidential Letter to Gorbachev

A letter from the President to Gorbachev, for the O'Neill delegation to carry with them, is at TAB A.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the Memorandum to the President at TAB I.

Approve  Disapprove

Attachments:

TAB I Memorandum to the President

Tab A Letter to Gorbachev

Tab B Platt-McFarlane Memorandum

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
Declassify on: OADR

DECLASSIFIED  
White House Guidelines, August 28, 1997  
By CJS NARA, Date 6/12/02

PS

WASHFAX RECEIPT  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

B

S/S #

WHSR  
032041 MAR  
CPS

MESSAGE NO 001230 CLASSIFICATION SECRET/SENSITIVE No. Pages 3

FROM B. McKinley S/S 632-3126 7224  
(Officer name) (Office symbol) (Extension) (Room number)

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION Platt/McFarlane - SUBJECT: Draft Presidential  
Letter to Gorbachev

TO (Agency)	DELIVER TO	Extension	Room No.
NSC	EYES ONLY Robert Kimmitt	456-2224	
NSC	EYES ONLY Robert Pearson	395-3044	
NSC	<del>EYES ONLY [REDACTED]</del>	395-5112	

FOR CLEARANCE  INFORMATION  PER REQUEST  COMMENT

REMARKS ADVANCE COPY

S/S Officer: C. Coleman for (8)

DECLASSIFIED  
Department of State Guidelines, July 21, 1997  
NARA, Date 6/22/02





12

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

April 3, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROBERT C. MCFARLANE  
THE WHITE HOUSE

SUBJECT: Draft Presidential Letter to Gorbachev

In a meeting with Speaker O'Neill April 3, the President agreed to provide the Speaker with a letter to present to Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev during the Speaker's upcoming trip to the Soviet Union.

The attached draft stresses the importance of high-level dialogue in building a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union. It emphasizes the importance we attach to the arms control negotiations in Geneva and the President's outrage over the killing of Major Nicholson. The draft letter calls on Gorbachev to take steps to prevent such tragedies in the future, but does not request an apology. This would be inappropriate in Presidential correspondence, since the Soviets have already expressed regret on several occasions.

*Nicholas Platt*  
for Nicholas Platt  
Executive Secretary

Authority NLSF99-051 #328  
BY AS, NARA, Date 6/12/02

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
DECL:OADR



~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

13

Dear Mr. General Secretary;

The visit to Moscow of a congressional delegation headed by the distinguished Speaker of our House of Representatives provides an important, new opportunity for a high-level exchange of views between our two countries. I hope your meeting with the Speaker and his colleagues will result in a serious and useful discussion.

I believe meetings at the political level are vitally important if we are to build a more constructive relationship between our two countries. I believe my meetings in Washington with First Deputy Premier Gromyko and Mr. Shcherbitskiy and your discussion in Moscow with Vice President Bush and Secretary Shultz both served this purpose. As you know, I look forward to meeting with you personally at a mutually convenient time. Together, I am confident that we can provide the important political impetus you mentioned in your last letter for moving toward a more constructive and stable relationship between our two countries.

I believe that new opportunities are now opening up in US-Soviet relations. We must take advantage of them. You know my view that there are such opportunities in every area of our relations, including humanitarian, regional, bilateral and arms control issues. In improving stability there is no more important issue than the arms control talks we have jointly undertaken in Geneva. Our negotiators have very flexible instructions to work with your negotiators in drafting agreements which can lead to radical reductions, and toward our common goal, the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In seizing new opportunities, we must also take care to avoid situations which can seriously damage our relations. I and all Americans were appalled recently at the senseless killing of Major Nicholson in East Germany. In addition to the personal tragedy of this brave officer, this act seemed to many in our country to be only the latest example of a Soviet military action which threatens to undo our best efforts to fashion a sustainable, more constructive relationship for the long term. I want you to know it is also a matter of personal importance to me that we take steps to prevent the reoccurrence of this tragedy and I hope you will do all in your power to prevent such actions in the future.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

DECL: OADR

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NLSF99-051 #329  
BY [signature] NARA, Date 6/12/02

14

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

- 2 -

Let me close by reaffirming the value I place in our correspondence. I will be replying in greater detail to your last letter. I hope we can continue to speak frankly in future letters, as we attempt to build stronger relations between ourselves and between our two countries.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

~~No 4~~  
~~sent~~

cloud

15



## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

April 25, 1985

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

FROM:

JACK MATLOCK *JM*

SUBJECT:

Redraft of President's Letter to Gorbachev

I have redrafted the President's letter to Gorbachev to take account of the Soviet action Monday in disavowing an essential part of what we had understood to be the Otis-Zaitsev agreement.

So that you can quickly see what I have done, I have put a red line to the right of those paragraphs added, and a dotted line where there was some revision.

As you can see, I have tried to couch the comments on Nicholson in terms of principle that the Soviets can understand, and have toughened the tone of some other comments. I tried to focus on the nub of the issue, and to state it very plainly. I have also included a few implicit hints that Gorbachev may not be in a position to control his own military. I believe this is done in a way as not to seem provocative, but rather to challenge Gorbachev to demonstrate that he is in control. I believe these comments by the President will be a useful backdrop for other actions we might take on this matter.

Since the letter contains other points which I believe it is useful to get on the record at the highest level, I would hope that the President would be willing to sign it tomorrow so that we can get it to Hartman for delivery early next week. I have not yet attempted to clear the revised text with State, but will do so if you approve.

Recommendation:

That you approve or amend the attached text, following which I will clear with State (if you instruct) and send a memorandum to the President requesting his signature.

Approve Disapprove 

## Attachment:

Tab I -- Redraft of President's Letter to Gorbachev

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
Declassify on: OADRDECLASSIFIED  
NLRR F06-1141 #6552  
BY RW NARA DATE 3/3/11

Redraft of Letter to Gorbachev

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

As I mentioned in my letter of April 4, delivered by Speaker O'Neill, I have given careful thought to your letter of March 24 and wish to take this opportunity to address the questions you raised and to mention others which I feel deserve your attention. Given the heavy responsibilities we both bear to preserve peace in the world and life on this planet, I am sure that you will agree that we must communicate with each other frankly and openly so that we can understand each other's point of view clearly. I write in that spirit.

I had thought that we agreed on the necessity of improving relations between our countries, and I welcomed your judgment that it is possible to do so. Our countries share an overriding interest in avoiding war between us, and -- as you pointed out -- the immediate task we face is to find a way to provide a political impetus to move these relations in a positive direction.

Unfortunately, certain recent events have begun to cast doubt on the desire of your government to improve relations. In particular, I have in mind the public retraction of what we understood to be the commitment made earlier by a responsible Soviet official to take steps to make certain that lethal force is not used against members of the United States Military Liaison Mission in Germany.



18

Mr. General Secretary, this matter has importance beyond the tragic loss of life which has occurred. It involves fundamental principles which must be observed if we are to narrow our differences and resolve problems in our countries' relations. For this reason, I will give you my views in detail. The principles are those of dealing with each other on the basis of equality and reciprocity. The current Soviet position recognizes neither of these principles.

Now, I can understand that accidents occur in life which do not reflect the intention of political authorities. But when they do, it is the responsibility of the relevant political authorities to take appropriate corrective action.

For decades, members of our respective military liaison missions in Germany operated pursuant to the Huebner-Malinin agreement without a fatal incident. That encouraging record was broken when an unarmed member of our mission was killed by a Soviet soldier. Our military personnel are instructed categorically and in writing (in orders provided to your commander) never to use lethal force against members of the Soviet Military Liaison Mission, regardless of circumstances. Our forces have never done so, even though Soviet military personnel have been apprehended repeatedly in restricted military areas. In fact, some Soviet officers were discovered in a prohibited area just three days before the fatal shooting of our officer and were escorted courteously and safely from the area.

The position which your Government most recently presented to us, therefore, is neither reciprocal in its effect nor does it reflect a willingness to deal as equals. Instead of accepting the responsibility to insure that members of the United States Military Liaison Mission receive the same protection as that we accord members of the Soviet Military Liaison Mission, what we see is the assertion of a "right" to use lethal force under certain circumstances, determined unilaterally by the Soviet side, and in practice by enlisted men in the Soviet armed forces.

Now I will offer no comment on the desirability of allowing subordinate officials -- and indeed even rank-and-file soldiers -- to make decisions which can affect relations between great nations. If you choose to permit this, that is your prerogative. But in that case, your Government cannot escape responsibility for faulty acts of judgment by individuals acting in accord with standing orders.

I hope that you will reconsider the position your Government has taken on this matter, and take steps to see to it that your military personnel guarantee the safety of their American counterparts in Germany just as American military personnel guarantee the safety of their Soviet colleagues. If your Government is unwilling or unable to abide by even this elementary rule of reciprocity, the conclusion we will be forced to draw will inevitably affect the prospects for settling other

20

issues. After all, this is not the first time American lives have been lost as the result of a policy on the Soviet part of using lethal force without determining whether the circumstances justified it. And no agreements will be possible between us if one of the sides insists on preserving unitateral advantages.

Your letter mentioned a number of other important principles, but here too our agreement on the principle should not be allowed to obscure the fact that, in our opinion, the principle cited has not been observed on the Soviet side. For example, I could not agree more with your statement that each social system should prove its advantages not by force, but by peaceful competition, and that all people have the right to go their chosen way without imposition from the outside. But if this is true, what are we to think of Soviet military actions in Afghanistan or of your country's policy of supplying arms to minority elements in other countries which are attempting to impose their will on a nation by force? Can this be considered consistent with that important principle?

Mr. General Secretary, my purpose in pointing this out is not to engage in a debate over questions on which we disagree, but simply to illustrate the fact that agreement on a principle is one thing, and practical efforts to apply it another. Since we seem to agree on many principles, we must devote our main effort to closing the gap between principle and practice.



21

In this regard, I am pleased to note that we both seem to be in agreement on the desirability of more direct consultation on various regional issues. That is a healthy sign, and I would hope that these consultations can be used to avoid the development of situations which might bring us to dangerous confrontations. I believe we should not be discouraged if, at present, our positions seem far apart. This is to be expected, given our differing interests and the impact of past events. The important thing is to make sure we each have a clear understanding of the other's point of view and act in a manner which does not provoke unintended reaction by the other.

One situation which has had a profoundly negative impact on our relations is the conflict in Afghanistan. Isn't it long overdue to reach a political resolution of this tragic affair? I cannot believe that it is impossible to find a solution which protects the legitimate interests of all parties, that of the Afghan people to live in peace under a government of their own choosing, and that of the Soviet Union to ensure that its southern border is secure. We support the United Nations Secretary General's effort to achieve a negotiated settlement, and would like to see a political solution that will deal equitably with the related issues of withdrawal of your troops to their homeland and guarantees of non-interference. I fear that your present course will only lead to more bloodshed, but I want you to know that I am prepared to work with you to move the region toward peace, if you desire.

22

Above all, we must see to it that the conflict in Afghanistan does not expand. Pakistan is a trusted ally of the United States and I am sure you recognize the grave danger which would ensue from any political or military threats against that country.

Turning to another of your comments, I must confess that I am perplexed by what you meant by your observation that trust "will not be enhanced if, for example, one were to talk as if in two languages...." Of course, this is true. And, if I am to be candid, I would be compelled to admit that Soviet words and actions do not always seem to us to be speaking the same language. But I know that this is not what you intended to suggest. I also am sure that you did not intend to suggest that expressing our respective philosophies or our views of actions taken by the other is inconsistent with practical efforts to improve the relationship. For, after all, it has been the Party which you head which has always insisted not only on the right but indeed the duty to conduct what it calls an ideological struggle.

However this may be, your remarks highlight the need for us to act so as to bolster confidence rather than to undermine it. In this regard, I must tell you that I found the proposal you made publicly on April 7 -- and particularly the manner in which it was made -- unhelpful. As for the substance of the proposal, I find no significant element in it which we have not made clear in



the past is unacceptable to us. I will not burden this letter with a reiteration of the reasons, since I am certain your experts are well aware of them. I cannot help but wonder what the purpose could have been in presenting a proposal which is, in its essence, not only an old one, but one which was known to provide no basis for serious negotiation. Certainly, it does not foster a climate conducive to finding realistic solutions to difficult questions. Past experience suggests that the best way to solve such issues is to work them out privately.

This brings me to the negotiations which have now been underway in Geneva for several weeks. They have not made the progress we had hoped. It may now be appropriate to give them the political impetus about which we both have spoken. Let me tell you frankly and directly how I view them.

First, the January agreement by our Foreign Ministers to begin new negotiations was a good one. The problem has not been the terms of reference on the basis of which our negotiators met, even though each side may in some instances interpret the wording of the joint statement somewhat differently in its application to specifics. The problem is, rather, that your negotiators have not yet begun to discuss concretely how we can translate our commitment to a radical reduction of nuclear arsenals into concrete, practical agreements.

24

A particular obstacle to progress has been the demand by Soviet negotiators that, in effect, the United States agree to ban research on advanced defensive systems before other topics are dealt with seriously. I hope that I have misunderstood the Soviet position on this point, because, if that is the Soviet position, no progress will be possible. For reasons we have explained repeatedly and in detail, we see no way that a ban on research efforts can be verified, nor do we think such a ban would be in the interest of either of our countries. To hold the negotiations hostage to an impossible demand creates an insurmountable obstacle from the outset. I sincerely hope that this is not your intent, since it cannot be in the interest of either of our countries. In fact, it is inconsistent with your own actions -- with the strategic defense you already deploy around Moscow and with your own major research program in strategic defense.

In this regard, I was struck by the characterization of our Strategic Defense Initiative which you made during your meeting with Speaker O'Neill's delegation -- that this research program has an offensive purpose for an attack on the Soviet Union. I can assure you that you are profoundly mistaken on this point. The truth is precisely the opposite. We believe that it is important to explore the technical feasibility of defensive systems which might ultimately give all of us the means to protect our people more safely than do those we have at present, and to provide the means of moving to the total abolition of

25

nuclear weapons, an objective on which we are agreed. I must ask you, how are we ever practically to achieve that noble aim if nations have no defense against the uncertainty that all nuclear weapons might not have been removed from world arsenals? Life provides no guarantee against some future madman getting his hands on nuclear weapons, the technology of which is already, unfortunately, far too widely known and knowledge of which cannot be erased from human minds.

This point seems, at one time, to have been clearly understood by the Soviet Government. I note that Foreign Minister Gromyko told the United Nations General Assembly in 1962 that anti-missile defenses could be the key to a successful agreement reducing offensive missiles. They would, he said then, "guard against the eventuality ... of someone deciding to violate the treaty and conceal missiles or combat aircraft."

Of course, I recognize that, in theory, the sudden deployment of effective defenses by one side in a strategic environment characterized by large numbers of "first-strike" weapons could be considered as potentially threatening by the other side. Nevertheless, such a theoretical supposition has no basis in reality, at least so far as the United States is concerned. Our scientists tell me that the United States will require some years of further research to determine whether potentially effective defensive systems can be identified which are worthy of consideration for deployment. If some options should at some



26

time in the future be identified, development of them by the United States could occur only following negotiations with other countries, including your own, and following thorough and open policy debates in the United States itself. And if the decision to deploy should be positive, then further years would pass until the systems could actually be deployed. So there is no possibility of a sudden, secretive, destabilizing move by the United States. During the research period our governments will have ample time to reduce systems which could pose a "first-strike" threat and to develop a common understanding regarding the place of possible new systems in a safer, more stable, arrangement.

If such defensive systems are identified that would not be permitted by the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the United States intends to follow the procedures agreed upon at the time the Treaty was negotiated in 1972. In particular, Agreed Statement D attached to that Treaty calls upon the party developing a system based upon other physical principles to consult with the other party pursuant to Article XIII, with a view to working out pertinent limitations which could be adopted by amendment to the Treaty pursuant to Article XIV. I presume that it continues to be the intention of the Soviet Union to abide by Agreed Statement D in the event the long-continuing Soviet program in research on directed energy weapons were to have favorable results.



27

I hope this discussion will assist you in joining me in a search for practical steps to invigorate the negotiations in Geneva. One approach which I believe holds promise would be for our negotiators on strategic and intermediate-range nuclear systems to intensify their efforts to agree on specific reductions in the numbers of existing and future forces, with particular attention to those each of us find most threatening, while the negotiators dealing with defensive and space weapons concentrate on measures which prevent the erosion of the ABM Treaty and strengthen the role that Treaty can play in preserving stability as we move toward a world without nuclear weapons. Proceeding in this fashion might avoid a fruitless debate on generalities and open the way to concrete, practical solutions which meet the concerns of both sides.

I believe we also should give new attention to other negotiations and discussions underway in the security and arms control field. We know that some progress has been made in the Stockholm Conference toward narrowing our differences. An agreement should be possible this year on the basis of the framework which we have discussed with your predecessors. Specifically, we are willing to consider the Soviet proposal for a declaration reaffirming the principle not to use force, if the Soviet Union is prepared to negotiate agreements which will give concrete new meaning to that principle. Unfortunately, the response of your representatives to this offer has not been encouraging up to now. I hope that we may soon see a more favorable attitude toward this idea and

toward the confidence-building measures that we and our allies have proposed.

One pressing issue of concern to us both is the use of chemical weaponry in the Iran-Iraq war. This situation illustrates the importance of curbing the spread of chemical weapons, and I suggest that it might be useful in the near future for our experts to meet and examine ways in which we might cooperate on this topic. A verifiable complete global ban on these terrible weapons would provide a lasting solution, and I would ask you therefore to give further study to the draft treaty we have advanced in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Steps to improve our bilateral relationship are also important, not only because of the benefits which agreements in themselves can bring, but also because of the contribution they can make to a more confident working relationship in general.

Several of these issues seem ripe for rapid settlement. For example, we should be able to conclude an agreement on improving safety measures in the North Pacific at an early meeting and move to discussions of civil aviation issues. We are ready to move forward promptly to open our respective consulates in New York and Kiev. Our efforts to negotiate a new exchanges agreement have, after six months, reached the point where only a handful of issues remain to be resolved. But if I had to characterize these remaining issues, I would say that they result from efforts on



29

our side to raise our sights and look to more, not fewer, exchanges. Shouldn't we try to improve on past practices in this area? I am also hopeful that the meeting of our Joint Commercial Commission in May will succeed in identifying areas in which trade can increase substantially, but it is clear that this is likely to happen only if we succeed in improving the political atmosphere.

Finally, let me turn to an issue of great importance to me and to all Americans. As the Vice President informed you in Moscow, we believe strongly that strict observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Helsinki Final Act is an important element of our bilateral relationship. Last year we suggested that Ambassador Hartman meet periodically with Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko to discuss confidentially how we might achieve greater mutual understanding in this area. I am also prepared to appoint rapporteurs as you suggested to the Vice President, perhaps someone to join Ambassador Hartman in such meetings. Whatever procedures we ultimately establish, I hope we can agree to try, each in accord with his own legal structure, to resolve problems in this area. If we can find a way to eliminate the conditions which give rise to public recrimination, we will have taken a giant step forward in creating an atmosphere conducive to solving many other problems.

I was glad to receive your views on a meeting between the two of us, and agree that major formal agreements are not necessary to



justify one. I assume that you will get back in touch with me when you are ready to discuss time and place. I am pleased that arrangements have been made for Secretary Shultz to meet Foreign Minister Gromyko in Vienna next month, and hope that they will be able to move us toward solutions of the problems I have mentioned as well as others on the broad agenda before us.

As I stated at the outset, I have written you in candor. I believe that our heavy responsibilities require us to communicate directly and without guile or circumlocution. I hope you will give me your frank view of these questions and call to my attention any others which you consider require our personal involvement. I sincerely hope that we can use this correspondence to provide a new impetus to the whole range of efforts to build confidence and to solve the critical problems - which have increased tension between our countries.

Sincerely,

His Excellency  
Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev  
General Secretary of the Central Committee  
of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
The Kremlin  
Moscow

31

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

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

June 10, 1985

Dear Mr. President,

I noted the intention expressed in your letter of April 30 to share thoughts in our correspondence with complete frankness. This is also my attitude. Only in this manner can we bring to each other the essence of our respective approaches to the problems of world politics and bilateral relations. In this regard I proceed from the assumption that in exchanging views we shall look to the need to move forward on key issues, otherwise one cannot count on a turn for the better in Soviet-American relations. I understand that you agree, too, that such a turn for the better is necessary.

To aim at a lesser goal, say, at simply containing tensions within certain bounds and trying somehow to manage from one crisis to another, is not, in my opinion, a prospect worthy of our two powers.

We noted the fact that you share our view on the need to give an impetus to the process of normalizing our relations. That, in and of itself, is not insignificant. But to be candid: a number of points in your letter perplex and puzzle, and those are the points on which a special stress is made.

*MSUR  
wally*

What I mean is the generalizations about Soviet policy, contained in your letter, in connection with the deplorable incident with an American serviceman. As to the incident itself, we would like to hope that the explanations which were given by us were correctly understood by the American side.

Now turning to major problems. I also believe that agreement with regard to general principles alone is not sufficient. It is important that such agreement also be reflected in the practical actions of each side. I emphasize precisely each side, since it clearly follows from your letter that you see disparities between the principles and practice in the actions of the Soviet Union.

DECLASSIFIED

NLRR F06-7141 #6554

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

DECL: OADR

BY CU NARA DATE 11/27/07



That is very far from reality. There is nothing corresponding to the facts in the assertion that the USSR in its policy allegedly does not wish to conduct affairs with the U.S. on the basis of equality and reciprocity. No matter what area of our relations is taken, a really objective assessment indicates that it is precisely the Soviet Union that comes out consistently for equality and reciprocity and does not seek advantages for itself at the expense of the legitimate interests of the USA. And it was precisely when a similar approach was taken by the American side, too, that substantial agreements could be achieved.

*Refute*

It is not an accident that all agreements reached on the subject of arms limitation became possible only because both sides adhered in working them out to the principle of equality and equal security. At no point in time did the Soviet side demand more for itself. But as soon as the USA departed from that principle, the process of arms limitation and reduction was interrupted. Regrettably, this continues to be the case at present, too.

*US did not depart from the principle*

If, nevertheless, the question of equality and reciprocity is to be raised as a matter of principle, then it is the Soviet Union that is surrounded by American military bases, replete with nuclear weapons, rather than the USA by Soviet bases. Try to look at the situation through our eyes, then it will become clear who can have a real, substantiated concern.

*on the weapons owned by us*

Take practically any issue from the sphere of our bilateral relations, whether trade or, for example, air or sea communication. Is it, in fact, the case that the actual state of affairs in those areas is determined by the Soviet Union's being against equality and reciprocity? Quite the contrary: the low level of those relations is a direct consequence of the American side's policy, which is not compatible either with conducting affairs as equals or with reciprocity in the generally recognized meanings of these concepts.

*Refute -*

Or take the following aspect of the question of principles and adherence to them. With regard to third countries, we impose neither our ideology nor our social system on anybody. One should not ascribe to us that which does not exist. If the question is to be raised without diplomatic contrivances as to who contributes to international law and order and who acts in a different direction, then it appears that it is precisely the US that turns out to be on the side of groupings working against legitimate governments. And what about direct pressure on governments whose policy does not suit the USA? There are enough examples of both on various continents.

*Afghanistan? Czechs?*



I addressed these issues frankly and in a rather detailed manner not to embark upon the road of mutual recriminations, but, rather, in the hope that it will help you to understand correctly our approach to principles and their practical implementation, and to appreciate our willingness to build our relations with the USA on the basis of equality and reciprocity with a positive and common understanding of these concepts.

*important*

I think a lot about the shape the affairs between our countries can take. And I ever more firmly believe in a point I made in my previous letter: an improvement in the relations between the USSR and USA is possible. There is objective ground for that.

Of course, our countries are different. This fact cannot be changed. There is also another fact, however: when the leaders of both countries, as the experience of the past shows, found in themselves enough wisdom and realism to overcome bias caused by the difference in social systems, in ideologies, we cooperated successfully and did quite a few useful things both for our peoples and for all other peoples. Of course, differences and different views remained, but it was our working together that was the determining factor. And it opened up confident, peaceful vistas.

I noted you also express yourself in favor of each social system's proving its advantages in peaceful competition. Yes, we proceed from the assumption that in this competition the USSR and USA will defend their ideals and moral values as each of our societies understands them. But it will result in nothing good if the ideological struggle should be carried over into the sphere of relations between states. I believe, you understand, what I mean.

*Ignel*  
*define*

The main conclusion that naturally follows from the mutual recognition of the need for peaceful competition is the need to renounce attempts to substitute the dispute of ideas with the dispute of weapons. One can hardly count on serious shifts in the nature of our relations so long as one side tries to gain advantages over the other on the path of the arms race - to talk with the other side "from a position of strength".

Mr. President, for understandable reasons the political leadership of both our countries must judge in a competent manner both existing and prospective weapons systems. This is extremely important in order to avoid miscalculations whose irreversible consequences will manifest themselves, if not today, then at some point in the future.



34  
Yes, but  
provision  
to review  
periodical

In the past a rigid but at the same time quite fragile relationship was jointly defined between strategic nuclear weapons and anti-ballistic missile systems. The only correct conclusion was drawn - a treaty of indefinite duration to limit ABM systems was concluded. Only because of that did it become at all possible to tackle as a practical matter the problem of the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons.

Attempts to develop a large-scale ABM system inevitably set in train a radical destabilization of the situation. Just the factor of uncertainty in and of itself will not only block any limitation of nuclear weapons, but will lead to their build-up and improvement. Therefore, when we resolutely raise the question, and state that the militarization of space is impermissible, it is not propaganda and not a consequence of some misunderstanding or fear of "falling behind technologically." It is a result of a thorough analysis, of our deep concern for the future of relations between our countries, and for the future of peace.

*state seriously*  
There is also another aspect of the program of "strategic defense" which remains as it were in a shadow for the general public. But not for responsible leaders and military experts. They talk in Washington about the development of a large-scale ABM system, but in fact a new strategic offensive weapon is being developed to be deployed in space. And it is a weapon no less dangerous in its capabilities than nuclear weapons. What difference does it make what will be used in a disarming first strike--ballistic missiles or lasers? If there is a difference, it is that with the new systems it will be possible to carry out a first strike practically instantaneously.

Thus, from no matter what point of view you approach it, the mere beginning of efforts to realize this program has a destabilizing character, even regardless of its final results. And it is precisely for this reason that it cannot fail to serve as an impetus to a further upswing of the arms race.

I think you will agree that in matters affecting the heart of national security, neither side can or will rely on assurances of good intentions. Any weapons system is evaluated by its military capabilities, and not by public statements regarding its intended purpose.

*R*  
All facts unambiguously indicate that the USA is embarking on the path of developing attack space weapons capable of performing purely offensive missions. And we shall not ignore that. I must say this frankly. I must confess that what you have said about the USA's approach to the question of a



35

moratorium on space and nuclear weapons enhances our concern. The persistent refusal of the American side to stop the arms race cannot but put in question the USA's intentions.

And what is going on at the negotiations in Geneva? The American side is trying to substitute only a part of the agreed mandate of the negotiations for the whole of it. An integral element is being removed from the actually agreed upon formula for the negotiations - the obligation to prevent an arms race in space, to consider and resolve all issues in their interrelationship. The American side has so far done nothing to bring agreement closer. On the subject of preventing an arms race in space the U.S. delegation has not presented a single idea. I emphasize, not a single one. Why should one be surprised after that, why indeed, that there is no movement on nuclear arms reduction?

*efute*

I wish to mention in passing that the American representatives maintain - this point is also contained in your letter - that it is impossible to verify a ban on scientific research. However, a different thing is involved here: a federal program of research activities directly and specifically oriented towards the development of attack space weapons, a large-scale ABM system with space-based components. The very announcement of such a program is in clear contradiction to the ABM Treaty. (Incidentally, if one is to take the entire text of the "agreed statement" to the ABM Treaty, and not only the part which is quoted in your letter, it is easy to see that it is aimed not at weakening but at strengthening the central provision of the treaty on both sides' renunciation of the development of large-scale ABM systems).

*rasnov  
arsk*

As to the assertions that the USSR is allegedly engaged in its own "large scale research program in the area of strategic defense", here, as Americans put it, apples are being confused with oranges. The Soviet Union is doing nothing that would contravene the ABM Treaty; it is not developing attack space weapons.

*ren why  
research  
- same  
areas?*

Thus, the question of verification is in this case a far-fetched question, if one is clearly to proceed from the premise that nothing can be done - no matter what names one can come up with for it - that is unambiguously prohibited by the ABM Treaty.

*how can  
verifica-  
tion be  
far-fetched?*

Mr. President, I would like to hope that you will have another close look at the problem of non-militarization of space, at its interrelationship with solving the problem of nuclear weapons, and from that angle, at the prospects for the



30

Geneva negotiations. It is in this objective linkage that there lies a resolution of the problems of the limitation of nuclear arms, a real possibility to get down to their radical reduction and thereby to proceed to the liquidation of nuclear weapons as such. In any case we shall not be able to avoid having precisely this complex of issues as a determining factor both for our relations and for the situation in the world as a whole. This follows from the special responsibility of our two countries.

I am convinced that we must and can rise to this responsibility. In this connection I note with satisfaction your words to the effect that our two countries have a common interest prevailing over other things - to avoid war. I fully agree with that.

Now, with regard to what other steps could be taken, including steps to stimulate progress in Geneva, we are convinced that of very important - and practical - significance would be the cessation of all nuclear weapons tests. In this area a lot can be done by our two countries. Specifically, we propose the following practical steps. To put into effect the hitherto unratified Soviet-American treaties of 1974 and 1976. To come to terms on the resumption of trilateral - with the participation of Britain - negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapons tests and, acting vigorously, to work towards their speedy and successful conclusion. Finally, we propose that the USSR and USA cooperate in carrying out such a specific and very substantial step on the part of all nuclear powers as a moratorium on any nuclear explosions would be. We are in favor of introducing such a moratorium as soon as possible.

take  
up  
in this

The problem of prohibiting chemical weapons needs to be resolved. But its resolution should be sought realistically. I must say that the positions which the USA has so far had on a number of important aspects of this problem do not meet this criterion. We would like the American side to turn its attention to the proposals we have put forward. We agree that bilateral consultations between our representatives would be useful, for example, within the framework of the Geneva Conference on disarmament. It should be recognized, however, that the efforts which are being made in the USA for chemical rearmament, above all as concerns binary weapons, are not a favorable prerequisite at all for removing chemical weapons completely and forever from the military arsenals of states.

think  
forward

The state of things at the Stockholm Conference leaves one with an ambiguous impression. On the one hand, it would seem



that there is common understanding regarding the need for an agreement on the basis of an optimal combination of major political obligations and military-technical confidence-building measures. On the other hand, the Western representatives, particularly the American representatives, clearly are not in a hurry to fill this understanding with specific, mutually acceptable - I emphasize, mutually acceptable - content. We favor a substantial understanding, genuinely facilitating enhanced confidence. Such are the instructions of our representatives. They are prepared to listen to constructive considerations which the American delegation may have. To put it briefly, we are for working towards a successful conclusion of the conference.

*o just understand why our proposals should not be mutually acceptable if principle of reciprocity is observed*

I would like, Mr. President, to draw your attention to the negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. Sometimes we hear from the American representatives that our proposals made last February "stimulate interest." But it does not show at all at the negotiations themselves. It would seem that reaching agreement on initial reductions of the Soviet and American forces in that area would be in your and in our interests, in the interests of a military relaxation in Europe. Could you look into it to see whether you might find it possible to advance things in this area?

*agreed statement*

One of the sources of tension in the relations between the USSR and USA is a difference in the assessment of what is going on in the world. It seems that the American side frequently ignores the in-depth causes of events and does not take fully into account the fact that today a great number of states operate - and most actively, too - in world politics, each with its own face and interests. All this immeasurably complicates the general picture. A correct understanding of this would help avoid serious mistakes and miscalculations.

In the past we had a positive experience of joint action in lowering tensions in some areas and in preventing dangerous outbreaks. But it worked this way when a readiness was shown to take into account the legitimate interests of each other and the positions of all the sides involved in a certain situation.

We positively assess the agreement of the American side to have exchanges of views on some regional problems. We expect it to accept our proposal that a wider range of regional problems be the subject of such exchanges and that those exchanges look to seek specific ways of settling tense situations. In this connection I noted the readiness expressed in your letter to work together with the Soviet Union so that the situation around Afghanistan would move toward a peaceful settlement. I would



38

like to have a maore clear understanding of how the American side sees this. Such an opportunity is provided by the upcoming consultations of our experts.

*2 facts*

However, our opinions in this matter as well will be based upon practical deeds of the USA. From the point of view of achieving a political settlement, and not only from that point of view, we cannot accept what you say in your letter with respect to Pakistan. We perceive the behavior of that country not only as not corresponding to the goal of a political settlement around Afghanistan, but also as dangerous and provocative. We expect that the U.S., being closely linked with Pakistan and also taking into account its own interests, will exert a restraining influence on it. The curtailing of its direct support to antigovernment armed groups intruding into Afghanistan from Pakistan would be a positive signal from the American side. In other words the USA has the opportunities to confirm by its actions its declared readiness to achieve a political settlement around Afghanistan on the basis of a just solution of the questions connected with it and to eliminate tensions in this region as a whole. Such a mode of action would not be left unnoticed by our side and would clearly work toward straightening out Soviet-American relations.

*we are also in negotiations have no doubt impact on relations*

Some kind of movement seems to be discernible in the area of strictly bilateral relations between our countries. You, obviously, have noticed that we support this trend. However, there should be no misunderstanding concerning the fact that we do not intend and will not conduct any negotiations relating to human rights in the Soviet Union. We, as any other sovereign state, have regarded and will regard these questions in accordance with our existing laws and regulations. Let us, Mr. President, proceed from this in order not to aggravate additionally our relations. The development of our ties can be based only on mutual interest, equality and mutual benefit, and respect for each other's rights and legitimate interests.

We consider it positive that in some instances the once diffuse structure of Soviet-American relations is beginning - although not very intensively, to be frank - to be restored and to be filled with content. In particular, we consider useful the talks between our ministers of trade which took place in Moscow recently. We intend to look for mutually acceptable solutions in other areas as well, which constitute the subject of discussion between us, and to expand the range of such areas.

It is encouraging that contacts, including those between parliaments of our two countries, have become more active recently. As I have already said to the representatives of the



29

SECRET/SENSITIVE

-9-

US Congress, we live in a time when people shaping the policy of the USSR and the USA must necessarily meet and have contacts with each other. To speak in broad terms, we stand for vigorously building a bridge to mutual understanding and cooperation and for developing trust.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm my positive attitude to a personal meeting with you. I understand that you feel the same way. Our point of view on this matter was outlined by Andrey A. Gromyko to Mr. Shultz during their stay recently in Vienna. As to the place for holding it, I understand there are reasons which make you prefer the meeting to be held in the USA. But I have reasons no less weighty which, taking into account the present state of Soviet-American relations, make this variant unrealistic.

*free*  
Important international problems are involved and we should use the time to search for possible agreements which could be readied for the meeting. For our part, we entirely favor that such should be the case.

Sincerely,

M. Gorbachev

SECRET/SENSITIVE

Referral  
40

MEMORANDUM

SYSTEM II  
90419 re-do

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

April 25, 1985

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

FROM: JACK MATLOCK *JM*

SUBJECT: Redraft of President's Letter to Gorbachev

I have redrafted the President's letter to Gorbachev to take account of the Soviet action Monday in disavowing an essential part of what we had understood to be the Otis-Zaitsev agreement.

So that you can quickly see what I have done, I have put a red line to the right of those paragraphs added, and a dotted line where there was some revision.

As you can see, I have tried to couch the comments on Nicholson in terms of principle that the Soviets can understand, and have toughened the tone of some other comments. I tried to focus on the nub of the issue, and to state it very plainly. I have also included a few implicit hints that Gorbachev may not be in a position to control his own military. I believe this is done in a way as not to seem provocative, but rather to challenge Gorbachev to demonstrate that he is in control. I believe these comments by the President will be a useful backdrop for other actions we might take on this matter.

Since the letter contains other points which I believe it is useful to get on the record at the highest level, I would hope that the President would be willing to sign it tomorrow so that we can get it to Hartman for delivery early next week. I have not yet attempted to clear the revised text with State, but will do so if you approve.

Recommendation:

That you approve or amend the attached text, following which I will clear with State (if you instruct) and send a memorandum to the President requesting his signature.

Approve \_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_

Attachment:

Tab I -- Redraft of President's Letter to Gorbachev

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
Declassify on: OADR

DECLASSIFIED  
NLRR FD6-114/1 #6553  
BY RW NARA DATE 3/3/11

Redraft of Letter to Gorbachev

41

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

As I mentioned in my letter of April 4, delivered by Speaker O'Neill, I have given careful thought to your letter of March 24 and wish to take this opportunity to address the questions you raised and to mention others which I feel deserve your attention. Given the heavy responsibilities we both bear to preserve peace in the world and life on this planet, I am sure that you will agree that we must communicate with each other frankly and openly so that we can understand each other's point of view clearly. I write in that spirit.

I had thought that we agreed on the necessity of improving relations between our countries, and I welcomed your judgment that it is possible to do so. Our countries share an overriding interest in avoiding war between us, and -- as you pointed out -- the immediate task we face is to find a way to provide a political impetus to move these relations in a positive direction.

Unfortunately, certain recent events have begun to cast doubt on the desire of your government to improve relations. In particular, I have in mind the public retraction of what we understood to be the commitment made earlier by a responsible Soviet official to take steps to make certain that lethal force is not used against members of the United States Military Liaison Mission in Germany.



Mr. General Secretary, this matter has importance beyond the tragic loss of life which has occurred. It involves fundamental principles which must be observed if we are to narrow our differences and resolve problems in our countries' relations. For this reason, I will give you my views in detail. The principles are those of dealing with each other on the basis of equality and reciprocity. The current Soviet position recognizes neither of these principles.

Now, I can understand that accidents occur in life which do not reflect the intention of political authorities. But when they do, it is the responsibility of the relevant political authorities to take appropriate corrective action.

For decades, members of our respective military liaison missions in Germany operated pursuant to the Huebner-Malinin agreement without a fatal incident. That encouraging record was broken when an unarmed member of our mission was killed by a Soviet soldier. Our military personnel are instructed categorically and in writing (in orders provided to your commander) never to use lethal force against members of the Soviet Military Liaison Mission, regardless of circumstances. Our forces have never done so, even though Soviet military personnel have been apprehended repeatedly in restricted military areas. In fact, some Soviet officers were discovered in a prohibited area just three days before the fatal shooting of our officer and were escorted courteously and safely from the area.

The position which your Government most recently presented to us, therefore, is neither reciprocal in its effect nor does it reflect a willingness to deal as equals. Instead of accepting the responsibility to insure that members of the United States Military Liaison Mission receive the same protection as that we accord members of the Soviet Military Liaison Mission, what we see is the assertion of a "right" to use lethal force under certain circumstances, determined unilaterally by the Soviet side, and in practice by enlisted men in the Soviet armed forces.

Now I will offer no comment on the desirability of allowing subordinate officials -- and indeed even rank-and-file soldiers -- to make decisions which can affect relations between great nations. If you choose to permit this, that is your prerogative. But in that case, your Government cannot escape responsibility for faulty acts of judgment by individuals acting in accord with standing orders.

I hope that you will reconsider the position your Government has taken on this matter, and take steps to see to it that your military personnel guarantee the safety of their American counterparts in Germany just as American military personnel guarantee the safety of their Soviet colleagues. If your Government is unwilling or unable to abide by even this elementary rule of reciprocity, the conclusion we will be forced to draw will inevitably affect the prospects for settling other

issues. After all, this is not the first time American lives have been lost as the result of a policy on the Soviet part of using lethal force without determining whether the circumstances justified it. And no agreements will be possible between us if one of the sides insists on preserving unitateral advantages.

Your letter mentioned a number of other important principles, but here too our agreement on the principle should not be allowed to obscure the fact that, in our opinion, the principle cited has not been observed on the Soviet side. For example, I could not agree more with your statement that each social system should prove its advantages not by force, but by peaceful competition, and that all people have the right to go their chosen way without imposition from the outside. But if this is true, what are we to think of Soviet military actions in Afghanistan or of your country's policy of supplying arms to minority elements in other countries which are attempting to impose their will on a nation by force? Can this be considered consistent with that important principle?

Mr. General Secretary, my purpose in pointing this out is not to engage in a debate over questions on which we disagree, but simply to illustrate the fact that agreement on a principle is one thing, and practical efforts to apply it another. Since we seem to agree on many principles, we must devote our main effort to closing the gap between principle and practice.



45

In this regard, I am pleased to note that we both seem to be in agreement on the desirability of more direct consultation on various regional issues. That is a healthy sign, and I would hope that these consultations can be used to avoid the development of situations which might bring us to dangerous confrontations. I believe we should not be discouraged if, at present, our positions seem far apart. This is to be expected, given our differing interests and the impact of past events. The important thing is to make sure we each have a clear understanding of the other's point of view and act in a manner which does not provoke unintended reaction by the other.

One situation which has had a profoundly negative impact on our relations is the conflict in Afghanistan. Isn't it long overdue to reach a political resolution of this tragic affair? I cannot believe that it is impossible to find a solution which protects the legitimate interests of all parties, that of the Afghan people to live in peace under a government of their own choosing, and that of the Soviet Union to ensure that its southern border is secure. We support the United Nations Secretary General's effort to achieve a negotiated settlement, and would like to see a political solution that will deal equitably with the related issues of withdrawal of your troops to their homeland and guarantees of non-interference. I fear that your present course will only lead to more bloodshed, but I want you to know that I am prepared to work with you to move the region toward peace, if you desire.

46

Above all, we must see to it that the conflict in Afghanistan does not expand. Pakistan is a trusted ally of the United States and I am sure you recognize the grave danger which would ensue from any political or military threats against that country.

Turning to another of your comments, I must confess that I am perplexed by what you meant by your observation that trust "will not be enhanced if, for example, one were to talk as if in two languages...." Of course, this is true. And, if I am to be candid, I would be compelled to admit that Soviet words and actions do not always seem to us to be speaking the same language. But I know that this is not what you intended to suggest. I also am sure that you did not intend to suggest that expressing our respective philosophies or our views of actions taken by the other is inconsistent with practical efforts to improve the relationship. For, after all, it has been the Party which you head which has always insisted not only on the right but indeed the duty to conduct what it calls an ideological struggle.

However this may be, your remarks highlight the need for us to act so as to bolster confidence rather than to undermine it. In this regard, I must tell you that I found the proposal you made publicly on April 7 -- and particularly the manner in which it was made -- unhelpful. As for the substance of the proposal, I find no significant element in it which we have not made clear in



the past is unacceptable to us. I will not burden this letter with a reiteration of the reasons, since I am certain your experts are well aware of them. I cannot help but wonder what the purpose could have been in presenting a proposal which is, in its essence, not only an old one, but one which was known to provide no basis for serious negotiation. Certainly, it does not foster a climate conducive to finding realistic solutions to difficult questions. Past experience suggests that the best way to solve such issues is to work them out privately.

This brings me to the negotiations which have now been underway in Geneva for several weeks. They have not made the progress we had hoped. It may now be appropriate to give them the political impetus about which we both have spoken. Let me tell you frankly and directly how I view them.

First, the January agreement by our Foreign Ministers to begin new negotiations was a good one. The problem has not been the terms of reference on the basis of which our negotiators met, even though each side may in some instances interpret the wording of the joint statement somewhat differently in its application to specifics. The problem is, rather, that your negotiators have not yet begun to discuss concretely how we can translate our commitment to a radical reduction of nuclear arsenals into concrete, practical agreements.

48

A particular obstacle to progress has been the demand by Soviet negotiators that, in effect, the United States agree to ban research on advanced defensive systems before other topics are dealt with seriously. I hope that I have misunderstood the Soviet position on this point, because, if that is the Soviet position, no progress will be possible. For reasons we have explained repeatedly and in detail, we see no way that a ban on research efforts can be verified, nor do we think such a ban would be in the interest of either of our countries. To hold the negotiations hostage to an impossible demand creates an insurmountable obstacle from the outset. I sincerely hope that this is not your intent, since it cannot be in the interest of either of our countries. In fact, it is inconsistent with your own actions -- with the strategic defense you already deploy around Moscow and with your own major research program in strategic defense.

In this regard, I was struck by the characterization of our Strategic Defense Initiative which you made during your meeting with Speaker O'Neill's delegation -- that this research program has an offensive purpose for an attack on the Soviet Union. I can assure you that you are profoundly mistaken on this point. The truth is precisely the opposite. We believe that it is important to explore the technical feasibility of defensive systems which might ultimately give all of us the means to protect our people more safely than do those we have at present, and to provide the means of moving to the total abolition of



49

nuclear weapons, an objective on which we are agreed. I must ask you, how are we ever practically to achieve that noble aim if nations have no defense against the uncertainty that all nuclear weapons might not have been removed from world arsenals? Life provides no guarantee against some future madman getting his hands on nuclear weapons, the technology of which is already, unfortunately, far too widely known and knowledge of which cannot be erased from human minds.

This point seems, at one time, to have been clearly understood by the Soviet Government. I note that Foreign Minister Gromyko told the United Nations General Assembly in 1962 that anti-missile defenses could be the key to a successful agreement reducing offensive missiles. They would, he said then, "guard against the eventuality ... of someone deciding to violate the treaty and conceal missiles or combat aircraft."

Of course, I recognize that, in theory, the sudden deployment of effective defenses by one side in a strategic environment characterized by large numbers of "first-strike" weapons could be considered as potentially threatening by the other side. Nevertheless, such a theoretical supposition has no basis in reality, at least so far as the United States is concerned. Our scientists tell me that the United States will require some years of further research to determine whether potentially effective defensive systems can be identified which are worthy of consideration for deployment. If some options should at some

time in the future be identified, development of them by the United States could occur only following negotiations with other countries, including your own, and following thorough and open policy debates in the United States itself. And if the decision to deploy should be positive, then further years would pass until the systems could actually be deployed. So there is no possibility of a sudden, secretive, destabilizing move by the United States. During the research period our governments will have ample time to reduce systems which could pose a "first-strike" threat and to develop a common understanding regarding the place of possible new systems in a safer, more stable, arrangement.

If such defensive systems are identified that would not be permitted by the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the United States intends to follow the procedures agreed upon at the time the Treaty was negotiated in 1972. In particular, Agreed Statement D attached to that Treaty calls upon the party developing a system based upon other physical principles to consult with the other party pursuant to Article XIII, with a view to working out pertinent limitations which could be adopted by amendment to the Treaty pursuant to Article XIV. I presume that it continues to be the intention of the Soviet Union to abide by Agreed Statement D in the event the long-continuing Soviet program in research on directed energy weapons were to have favorable results.



51

I hope this discussion will assist you in joining me in a search for practical steps to invigorate the negotiations in Geneva. One approach which I believe holds promise would be for our negotiators on strategic and intermediate-range nuclear systems to intensify their efforts to agree on specific reductions in the numbers of existing and future forces, with particular attention to those each of us find most threatening, while the negotiators dealing with defensive and space weapons concentrate on measures which prevent the erosion of the ABM Treaty and strengthen the role that Treaty can play in preserving stability as we move toward a world without nuclear weapons. Proceeding in this fashion might avoid a fruitless debate on generalities and open the way to concrete, practical solutions which meet the concerns of both sides.

I believe we also should give new attention to other negotiations and discussions underway in the security and arms control field. We know that some progress has been made in the Stockholm Conference toward narrowing our differences. An agreement should be possible this year on the basis of the framework which we have discussed with your predecessors. Specifically, we are willing to consider the Soviet proposal for a declaration reaffirming the principle not to use force, if the Soviet Union is prepared to negotiate agreements which will give concrete new meaning to that principle. Unfortunately, the response of your representatives to this offer has not been encouraging up to now. I hope that we may soon see a more favorable attitude toward this idea and

52

toward the confidence-building measures that we and our allies have proposed.

One pressing issue of concern to us both is the use of chemical weaponry in the Iran-Iraq war. This situation illustrates the importance of curbing the spread of chemical weapons, and I suggest that it might be useful in the near future for our experts to meet and examine ways in which we might cooperate on this topic. A verifiable complete global ban on these terrible weapons would provide a lasting solution, and I would ask you therefore to give further study to the draft treaty we have advanced in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Steps to improve our bilateral relationship are also important, not only because of the benefits which agreements in themselves can bring, but also because of the contribution they can make to a more confident working relationship in general.

Several of these issues seem ripe for rapid settlement. For example, we should be able to conclude an agreement on improving safety measures in the North Pacific at an early meeting and move to discussions of civil aviation issues. We are ready to move forward promptly to open our respective consulates in New York and Kiev. Our efforts to negotiate a new exchanges agreement have, after six months, reached the point where only a handful of issues remain to be resolved. But if I had to characterize these remaining issues, I would say that they result from efforts on



53

our side to raise our sights and look to more, not fewer, exchanges. Shouldn't we try to improve on past practices in this area? I am also hopeful that the meeting of our Joint Commercial Commission in May will succeed in identifying areas in which trade can increase substantially, but it is clear that this is likely to happen only if we succeed in improving the political atmosphere.

Finally, let me turn to an issue of great importance to me and to all Americans. As the Vice President informed you in Moscow, we believe strongly that strict observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Helsinki Final Act is an important element of our bilateral relationship. Last year we suggested that Ambassador Hartman meet periodically with Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko to discuss confidentially how we might achieve greater mutual understanding in this area. I am also prepared to appoint rapporteurs as you suggested to the Vice President, perhaps someone to join Ambassador Hartman in such meetings. Whatever procedures we ultimately establish, I hope we can agree to try, each in accord with his own legal structure, to resolve problems in this area. If we can find a way to eliminate the conditions which give rise to public recrimination, we will have taken a giant step forward in creating an atmosphere conducive to solving many other problems.

I was glad to receive your views on a meeting between the two of us, and agree that major formal agreements are not necessary to

54

justify one. I assume that you will get back in touch with me when you are ready to discuss time and place. I am pleased that arrangements have been made for Secretary Shultz to meet Foreign Minister Gromyko in Vienna next month, and hope that they will be able to move us toward solutions of the problems I have mentioned as well as others on the broad agenda before us.

As I stated at the outset, I have written you in candor. I believe that our heavy responsibilities require us to communicate directly and without guile or circumlocution. I hope you will give me your frank view of these questions and call to my attention any others which you consider require our personal involvement. I sincerely hope that we can use this correspondence to provide a new impetus to the whole range of efforts to build confidence and to solve the critical problems which have increased tension between our countries.

Sincerely,

His Excellency  
Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev  
General Secretary of the Central Committee  
of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
The Kremlin  
Moscow