

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
Digital Library Collections

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

Collection: Speechwriting, White House Office of:
Research Office, 1981-1989

Folder Title: 12/10/1987 Address to the Nation-
Summit with Gorbachev (Tony/Staff) (5)

Box: 358

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

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

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

(Griscom/Dolan)
December 9, 1987
9:00 p.m. SS

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE NATION: SUMMIT
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1987

Good evening. As I am speaking to you now, General Secretary Gorbachev is leaving American airspace on his return trip to the Soviet Union. His departure marks the end of 3 historic days here in Washington, 3 days in which Secretary Gorbachev and I put in place a foundation for better relations between our governments and our peoples.

During these 3 days we took a step -- only a first step, I should point out, but still a critical one -- towards building a more durable peace; indeed, a step that may be the most important taken since World War II to slow down the arms race.

I am referring to the arms treaty that we signed Tuesday afternoon in the East Room of the White House. I believe this treaty represents a landmark in post-war history because it is not just an arms control but an arms reduction agreement. Unlike treaties of the past, this agreement does not simply establish ceilings for new weapons; it actually reduces the number of such weapons. In fact, it altogether abolishes intermediate missiles in Europe and elsewhere. And so, for the first time, we are eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons.

The verification measures in this treaty are also something new. On-site inspections and short-notice inspection will be permitted within the Soviet Union. Again, this is a first-time event, a breakthrough.

That is why I believe this treaty will not only lessen the threat of nuclear war but can also speed along a process that may someday remove that threat entirely. Indeed, this treaty -- and all that we have achieved in the past 3 days -- signals a broader understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is an understanding that will help keep the peace as we work towards the ultimate goal of our foreign policy: a world where the people of every land can decide for themselves their form of government and way of life.

Yet as important as the I.N.F. treaty is, there is a further and even more crucial point about the last 3 days: Soviet-American relations are no longer based strictly on arms control issues, they rest now on a far broader basis, one that has -- at its root -- realism and candor.

Let me explain this with a saying I have often repeated: Nations do not distrust each other because they are armed, they are armed because they distrust each other. And just as real peace means the presence of freedom and justice, as well as the absence of war, so too, summits must be discussions not just about arms but about the fundamental differences that cause nations to be armed.

Dealing then with the deeper sources of conflict between nations and systems of government is a practical and moral imperative. That is why it was vital to establish a broader Summit agenda, one that dealt not only with arms control but other issues such as bilateral, people-to-people contacts between


our nations and -- most important -- the issues of human rights and regional conflicts.

This is the summit agenda we have adopted. By doing so, we have dealt not just with arms control issues but more fundamental problems such as Soviet expansionism and human rights violations, as well as our own moral opposition to the ideology that justifies such practices. In this way, we have put Soviet-American relations on a far more candid, far more realistic, far sounder footing.

It also means that while there is movement -- indeed, dramatic movement -- in the arms reduction area, much remains to be done in these other critical areas I have mentioned, especially -- and this goes without saying -- in advancing our goal of a world open to the expansion of human freedom and the growth of democratic government.

But while much work lies ahead, I am pleased to report to you the significant progress we have made in these area in addition to arms control.

-- On the matter of regional conflicts, I spoke candidly with Mr. Gorbachev on the burning issue of Afghanistan. The Soviet invasion and occupation of that sovereign nation, an act condemned overwhelmingly by every session of the United Nations General Assembly, is a matter of utmost concern to the United States. I can tell you that Mr. Gorbachev confirmed to me that Soviet forces will leave Afghanistan and.....

-- So too on the issue of human rights, we continued the progress made at earlier summits. (insert) 

-- And finally with regard to the last item on our agenda -- bilateral or people-to-people exchanges -- we signed several important agreements that will increase such contacts between our nations.

As I say the progress we made on this broad front reflects a better basis for understanding between ourselves and the Soviets. But it also reflects something deeper as well. You see, since the summit process began in 1985, I have always regarded you, the American people, as full participants in our discussions. Though it may surprise Mr. Gorbachev to discover that all this time there has been a third party in the room with us, I do firmly believe the principal credit for the patience and persistence that brought success this year belongs to you, the American people.

Your support over these last 7 years has laid the basis for these negotiations, your support made it possible for us to rebuild our military strength; to liberate Grenada, to move against terrorism in Libya, and more recently, to protect our strategic interests in the Persian Gulf. Your support made possible our policy of providing aid to freedom fighters like those in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and other places around the globe. And when last year at Reykjavik, I refused Soviet demands that we trade away S.D.I. -- our Strategic Defense Initiative that would erect a space shield against incoming missiles -- your overwhelming support made it clear to the Soviet leaders that the American people prefer no deal to a bad deal and will back their President on matters of national security. In short, your

support for our foreign policy goals -- peace through strength as we advance the cause of world freedom -- have helped bring the Soviets to the bargaining table and made possible the success of this summit.

You know, the question has often been asked whether democratic leaders who are accountable to their people aren't at a grave disadvantage in negotiating with leaders of totalitarian states who bear no such burden. Believe me, I think I can answer that question, I can speak from personal experience. Over the long run, no leader at the bargaining table can enjoy any greater advantage than the knowledge he has behind him a people who are strong and free -- and alert; and resolved to remain that way. People like you.

And it is this kind of informed and enlightened support, this hidden strength of democratic government that enabled us to do what we did this week at the Washington summit.

And that's why tonight I am again asking your support. In a very short time, the treaty I signed with Mr. Gorbachev will go to the United States Senate for ratification. And I am asking you tonight to tell your Senators this treaty has your full support.

To this end, let me explain the background. In the mid and late 1970's, the Soviets began to deploy hundreds of new intermediate missiles, most of them mobile, that were targeted on cities and military installations in Europe. This action gravely upset the balance of power in Europe; they represented a totally

new nuclear threat to Europe and Japan for which the democratic nations had no comparable deterrent.

Despite intense pressure from the Soviets, NATO proceeded with what we called a "two-track policy." First, we would deploy our own intermediate missiles as a deterrent but at the same time, push hard in negotiations to do away with this entirely new and unprecedented nuclear escalation. And we proposed to do this with something I first proposed in 1981 -- it was called the zero-option; it meant the complete elimination of intermediate missiles on both sides.

At first, the Soviets called this a mere propaganda ploy and some even here in this country agreed. But we were persistent and eventually the Soviets returned to the bargaining table. The result is our I.N.F. treaty.

As you see from the map on the screen now, the Soviet missiles which will be removed and eliminated under the treaty have been a major threat to the security of our friends and allies on two continents, Europe and Asia. Under the terms of this treaty, we will be eliminating 400 deployed warheads while the Soviet Union eliminates 1,600 or 4 times more.

Now let me also point out that this does not, however, leave NATO without nuclear deterrent. In fact, we still have thousands of battlefield nuclear weapons in Europe.

And with regard to verification, as I have mentioned, we have the breakthroughs of on-site inspections and short-notice inspections not only at potential missile sites but at the factories where the missiles and their components are produced.

And finally we have a verification procedure that assures
each side that the missiles of the other side have been
destroyed. And here the world will witness a remarkable sight.
After we have removed the warheads, the United States will start
firing off our intermediate missiles from the West Coast of
Europe into the Atlantic Ocean. Simultaneously, the Soviets will
begin launching their missiles eastward, where they will burn out
and fall harmlessly into the wastes of Siberia.

Here then will be one missile launch for peace, one that
shows how persistence and consistency eventually can pay off in
arms negotiations. And let me assure you too that this treaty
has been accomplished with unprecedented consultation with our
allies. I have spoken personally with the leaders of the major
European democracies as has Secretary Shultz and our NATO and
diplomatic personnel. This treaty has their full support.

But if persistence is paying off in our arms reductions
efforts let me also say that with your continued support we are
making progress in the areas of regional conflicts and human
rights.

Now I have already mentioned that Mr. Gorbachev and I have
discussed the importance of Soviet troop withdrawals from
Afghanistan. Once again, let me only state that progress on this
front is vital to the improvement of Soviet-American relations.
In addition to Afghanistan, I can also report to you tonight that
I spoke with Mr. Gorbachev about Soviet intervention in other
critical regions or strategic chokepoints. In Angola, where
Soviet aid and 40,000 of Castro's Cuban mercenaries sustain an

unpopular and tottering Communist regime; in Cambodia where armed resistance continues to North Vietnam's brutal rule; and, most of all, here in our own hemisphere, in the Central American nation of Nicaragua.

On this point, many of you may not be aware that the Soviet Union has poured in more than \$1 billion of military aid to prop up the Communist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. With this aid and with the help of Soviet bloc advisers, the Sandinista Communists have built a gigantic military machine that oppresses its own people and wages aggression against the neighboring democratic nations of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica.

Now I have often said that the establishment of a Soviet base camp for subversion on the mainland of North America -- only a 2-day drive from our own border -- is intolerable. Only a few years ago, that seemed the bleak prospect we would have to deal with. But then the Nicaraguan people -- angry at how the Communists had betrayed their democratic revolution of 1978 and taken control of the government -- organized resistance to the Sandinistas. Known as the contras, these freedom fighters now comprise the largest peasant armies in history of this hemisphere. With our assistance they have waged a heroic fight against the Communists and forced them not only to come to the bargaining table but, under the terms of a peace plan worked out last September in Guatemala, to enact limited democratic reforms. Thanks to these freedom fighters and the democratic leaders of the Central American nations involved in the Guatemalan peace

process, there is now a chance for democratic and peaceful change in Nicaragua. But tonight I want to ask you to remember that the Sandinista Communists did not come to the conference table willingly -- only the presence of the freedom fighters and our support for them has given peace a chance in Central America. Until a full and free democratic government is installed in Nicaragua we must continue to support the democratic resistance. Some in Congress seem to be taking at face value the promises of the Communist Sandinistas and are threatening to stop our funding of the contras -- here I need your help and your support.

Ask your Representatives and Senators to back continued support for the contras; it is the right thing; it is important to the cause of freedom. But it is also important to the matters we are discussing tonight: the work of this summit. Believe me, if we suddenly show a lack of resolve and commitment in Central America, it will jeopardize the progress we have made in the other areas of regional conflicts and arms reductions.

To sum up on regional conflicts then: I reaffirmed to the General Secretary Gorbachev our support for political solutions among the warring parties in such conflicts as Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia. The U.S. stands ready to assist these negotiations as appropriate, and to join actively in the important work of economic reconstruction following settlement of these needless and costly conflicts. At the same time, I emphasized the American commitment to the cause of freedom around the world. We will continue to support freedom-fighters in their struggle for genuine national

self-determination for their countries, particularly where foreign troops have intervened to install or prop up regimes lacking popular support.

Now let me talk on the third issue on the summit agenda, that of human rights. As I say, since our first discussion in 1985, progress has been made and in recent months, our human rights dialogue with the Soviets has become much broader. Without in any way dismissing the important and welcome steps taken recently by the Soviet Union to improve policy and performance in this area, I made it clear to Mr. Gorbachev that much more must be done in this area to open the way for a more normal relationship between our countries. Here, political, artistic, and especially religious freedom are key: And we will continue to urge the Soviets to allow all those who wish to leave the country to do so freely. On all of this, we will not be satisfied with sporadic gestures or half measures; the human rights issue will not be put to rest until our present concerns are resolved, and new ones cease to emerge.

And finally let me briefly address the fourth item on the summit agenda: that of bilateral, people-to-people contacts between our two nations. On bilateral issues, Mr. Gorbachev and I expressed our satisfaction at the growing number of private exchanges which are affording our citizens unprecedented opportunities to learn about each other. This is a worthwhile investment in future relations; and we signed a number of bilateral agreements on ____ and ____ . Also, Nancy and I are looking forward to seeing the Soviet Union next spring where

Mr. Gorbachev and I will take up the unfinished work of this summit.

Now in addition to making the progress, that I have already outlined on our 4-part agenda, Mr. Gorbachev and I did do some important planning for the upcoming Moscow summit. We agreed that we must redouble our efforts to reach agreements on reducing the levels of U.S. and Soviet long-range nuclear weapons now under discussion in the START negotiations. General Secretary Gorbachev and I reaffirmed this week our commitment -- made at Reykjavik -- to achieve deep, 50 percent cuts in our arsenals of those frightening weapons. We agreed that we should accelerate our efforts to achieve agreement on a START treaty by the time of the Moscow summit; and we have instructed our delegations in Geneva accordingly.

Now, I believe deep reductions in these offensive weapons -- along with the development of S.D.I. -- would do much to make the world safe from nuclear war. Which is why I am also glad to report to you the the Soviets have now dropped their insistence that we abandon S.D.I. Indeed, Mr. Gorbachev has admitted that the Soviets are building their own.

About the future, Mr. Gorbachev and I also agreed that as nuclear weapons are reduced; it becomes all the more important to address other arms control issues including conventional and chemical weapons, weapons in which the Soviets now enjoy significant advantages over the United States.

I think then from all of this you can see not only the direction of Soviet-American relations but the larger framework

of our foreign policy. As I told the British Parliament in 1981, we seek to rid the world of the two great nightmares of the post-war era: the threat of nuclear war and the threat of totalitarianism. That is why by building S.D.I., which is a defense against offensive missiles and by going for arms reduction rather than just arms control, we are moving away from the so-called M.A.D. policy, the policy of Mutual Assured Destruction where nations hold each other hostage to nuclear terror and destruction. So too, we are saying that the post-war policy of containment is no longer enough, that the goal of American foreign policy is both world peace and world freedom -- that as a people we hope and will work for a day when all of God's children will enjoy the human dignity that their creator intended, a dignity best assured on this Earth by free and democratic government.

I have heard some say that this is a philosophy of "rollback" of communism. But this is the wrong description because it concedes the idea that direction of history has been towards totalitarianism. Since my first days in office, I have argued that the future belongs not to repressive or totalitarian ways of life but to the cause of freedom -- freedom of the marketplace, freedom to speak, assemble, and vote. And when we see the progress of democracy in these last years -- from Central America to Asia -- we must be optimistic about the future of our children.

When we were together in Iceland, Mr. Gorbachev told me that this sort of talk is sometimes viewed in the Soviet Union as a

threat. I have said since then that this is no threat at all but only a dream, the American dream.

And it is a dream that has meant so much to so many -- a dream that still shines out to the world. You know a few years ago, Nancy and I were deeply moved by a story told by former New York Times reporter and Greek immigrant, Nicholas Gage. It is the story of Eleni, his mother, a woman caught in one of the terrible struggles of the post-war era: the Greek civil war at the end of World War II, a mother who was tried and executed because she smuggled her children out to safety in America.

It is also the story of how her son secretly vowed to return to Greece someday to take vengeance on the man who had sent his mother to her death. But at the end of the story Nicholas Gage finds he cannot extract the vengeance he promised himself. Mr. Gage writes it would have relieved the pain that had filled him for so many years but it would also have broken the one bridge still connecting him to his mother, that part of him most like here. As he tells it: "the final cry of my mother....was not a curse on her killers but an invocation of what she died for, a declaration of love." These simple last words of Mr. Gage's mother, of Eleni, were: "My children."

How that cry echoes down through the centuries, a cry for all children of the world, a cry for peace, for a world of love and understanding.

And it is the hope of heeding such words -- the call for freedom and peace spoken by a chosen people on a desert journey to a promised land, the call spoken by the Nazarene carpenter

standing at the Sea of Galilee -- it is these words that we remember as the holiday season approaches and we reflect on the events of this week here in Washington.

So, let us remember the children, and the future we want for them. And let us never forget that this promise of peace and freedom -- the gift that is ours as Americans -- the gift that we seek to share with the entire world -- depends for its strength on the spiritual source from which it came.

So during this holy season, let us also recall that in the prayers of simple people there is more power and might than that of all the great statesmen or armies of the Earth. Let us then thank God for all his blessings to this Nation and ask him for his help and guidance; so that we might continue the work of peace and foster the hope of a world where human freedom is enshrined.

(Griscom/Dolan)
December 9, 1987
9:00 p.m. SS

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE NATION: SUMMIT
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1987

Good evening. As I am speaking to you now, General Secretary Gorbachev is leaving American airspace on his return trip to the Soviet Union. His departure marks the end of 3 historic days here in Washington, 3 days in which Secretary Gorbachev and I put in place a foundation for better relations between our governments and our peoples.

During these 3 days we took a step -- only a first step, I should point out, but still a critical one -- towards building a more durable peace; indeed, a step that may be the most important taken since World War II to slow down the arms race.

I am referring to the arms treaty that we signed Tuesday afternoon in the East Room of the White House. I believe this treaty represents a landmark in post-war history because it is not just an arms control but an arms reduction agreement. Unlike treaties of the past, this agreement does not simply establish ceilings for new weapons; it actually reduces the number of such weapons. In fact, it altogether abolishes intermediate missiles in Europe and elsewhere. And so, for the first time, we are eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons.

The verification measures in this treaty are also something new. On-site inspections and short-notice inspection will be permitted within the Soviet Union. Again, this is a first-time event, a breakthrough.

That is why I believe this treaty will not only lessen the threat of nuclear war but can also speed along a process that may someday remove that threat entirely. Indeed, this treaty -- and all that we have achieved in the past 3 days -- signals a broader understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is an understanding that will help keep the peace as we work towards the ultimate goal of our foreign policy: a world where the people of every land can decide for themselves their form of government and way of life.

Yet as important as the I.N.F. treaty is, there is a further and even more crucial point about the last 3 days: Soviet-American relations are no longer based strictly on arms control issues, they rest now on a far broader basis, one that has -- at its root -- realism and candor.

Let me explain this with a saying I have often repeated: Nations do not distrust each other because they are armed, they are armed because they distrust each other. And just as real peace means the presence of freedom and justice, as well as the absence of war, so too, summits must be discussions not just about arms but about the fundamental differences that cause nations to be armed.

Dealing then with the deeper sources of conflict between nations and systems of government is a practical and moral imperative. That is why it was vital to establish a broader Summit agenda, one that dealt not only with arms control but other issues such as bilateral, people-to-people contacts between


our nations and -- most important -- the issues of human rights and regional conflicts.

This is the summit agenda we have adopted. By doing so, we have dealt not just with arms control issues but more fundamental problems such as Soviet expansionism and human rights violations, as well as our own moral opposition to the ideology that justifies such practices. In this way, we have put Soviet-American relations on a far more candid, far more realistic, far sounder footing.

It also means that while there is movement -- indeed, dramatic movement -- in the arms reduction area, much remains to be done in these other critical areas I have mentioned, especially -- and this goes without saying -- in advancing our goal of a world open to the expansion of human freedom and the growth of democratic government.

But while much work lies ahead, I am pleased to report to you the significant progress we have made in these areas in addition to arms control.

-- On the matter of regional conflicts, I spoke candidly with Mr. Gorbachev on the burning issue of Afghanistan. The Soviet invasion and occupation of that sovereign nation, an act condemned overwhelmingly by every session of the United Nations General Assembly, is a matter of utmost concern to the United States. I can tell you that Mr. Gorbachev confirmed to me that Soviet forces will leave Afghanistan and.....

-- So too on the issue of human rights, we continued the progress made at earlier summits. (insert) 

-- And finally with regard to the last item on our agenda -- bilateral or people-to-people exchanges -- we signed several important agreements that will increase such contacts between our nations.

As I say the progress we made on this broad front reflects a better basis for understanding between ourselves and the Soviets. But it also reflects something deeper as well. You see, since the summit process began in 1985, I have always regarded you, the American people, as full participants in our discussions. Though it may surprise Mr. Gorbachev to discover that all this time there has been a third party in the room with us, I do firmly believe the principal credit for the patience and persistence that brought success this year belongs to you, the American people.

Your support over these last 7 years has laid the basis for these negotiations, your support made it possible for us to rebuild our military strength; to liberate Grenada, to move against terrorism in Libya, and more recently, to protect our strategic interests in the Persian Gulf. Your support made possible our policy of providing aid to freedom fighters like those in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and other places around the globe. And when last year at Reykjavik, I refused Soviet demands that we trade away S.D.I. -- our Strategic Defense Initiative that would erect a space shield against incoming missiles -- your overwhelming support made it clear to the Soviet leaders that the American people prefer no deal to a bad deal and will back their President on matters of national security. In short, your

support for our foreign policy goals -- peace through strength as we advance the cause of world freedom -- have helped bring the Soviets to the bargaining table and made possible the success of this summit.

You know, the question has often been asked whether democratic leaders who are accountable to their people aren't at a grave disadvantage in negotiating with leaders of totalitarian states who bear no such burden. Believe me, I think I can answer that question, I can speak from personal experience. Over the long run, no leader at the bargaining table can enjoy any greater advantage than the knowledge he has behind him a people who are strong and free -- and alert; and resolved to remain that way. People like you.

And it is this kind of informed and enlightened support, this hidden strength of democratic government that enabled us to do what we did this week at the Washington summit.

And that's why tonight I am again asking your support. In a very short time, the treaty I signed with Mr. Gorbachev will go to the United States Senate for ratification. And I am asking you tonight to tell your Senators this treaty has your full support.

To this end, let me explain the background. In the mid and late 1970's, the Soviets began to deploy hundreds of new intermediate missiles, most of them mobile, that were targeted on cities and military installations in Europe. This action gravely upset the balance of power in Europe; they represented a totally

new nuclear threat to Europe and Japan for which the democratic nations had no comparable deterrent.

Despite intense pressure from the Soviets, NATO proceeded with what we called a "two-track policy." First, we would deploy our own intermediate missiles as a deterrent but at the same time, push hard in negotiations to do away with this entirely new and unprecedented nuclear escalation. And we proposed to do this with something I first proposed in 1981 -- it was called the zero-option; it meant the complete elimination of intermediate missiles on both sides.

At first, the Soviets called this a mere propaganda ploy and some even here in this country agreed. But we were persistent and eventually the Soviets returned to the bargaining table. The result is our I.N.F. treaty.

As you see from the map on the screen now, the Soviet missiles which will be removed and eliminated under the treaty have been a major threat to the security of our friends and allies on two continents, Europe and Asia. Under the terms of this treaty, we will be eliminating 400 deployed warheads while the Soviet Union eliminates 1,600 or 4 times more.

Now let me also point out that this does not, however, leave NATO without nuclear deterrent. In fact, we still have thousands of battlefield nuclear weapons in Europe.

And with regard to verification, as I have mentioned, we have the breakthroughs of on-site inspections and short-notice inspections not only at potential missile sites but at the factories where the missiles and their components are produced.

And finally we have a verification procedure that assures each side that the missiles of the other side have been destroyed. And here the world will witness a remarkable sight. After we have removed the warheads, the United States will start firing off our intermediate missiles from the West Coast of Europe into the Atlantic Ocean. Simultaneously, the Soviets will begin launching their missiles eastward, where they will burn out and fall harmlessly into the wastes of Siberia.

Here then will be one missile launch for peace, one that shows how persistence and consistency eventually can pay off in arms negotiations. And let me assure you too that this treaty has been accomplished with unprecedented consultation with our allies. I have spoken personally with the leaders of the major European democracies as has Secretary Shultz and our NATO and diplomatic personnel. This treaty has their full support.

But if persistence is paying off in our arms reductions efforts let me also say that with your continued support we are making progress in the areas of regional conflicts and human rights.

Now I have already mentioned that Mr. Gorbachev and I have discussed the importance of Soviet troop withdrawals from Afghanistan. Once again, let me only state that progress on this front is vital to the improvement of Soviet-American relations. In addition to Afghanistan, I can also report to you tonight that I spoke with Mr. Gorbachev about Soviet intervention in other critical regions or strategic chokepoints. In Angola, where Soviet aid and 40,000 of Castro's Cuban mercenaries sustain an

unpopular and tottering Communist regime; in Cambodia where armed resistance continues to North Vietnam's brutal rule; and, most of all, here in our own hemisphere, in the Central American nation of Nicaragua.

On this point, many of you may not be aware that the Soviet Union has poured in more than \$1 billion of military aid to prop up the Communist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. With this aid and with the help of Soviet bloc advisers, the Sandinista Communists have built a gigantic military machine that oppresses its own people and wages aggression against the neighboring democratic nations of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica.

Now I have often said that the establishment of a Soviet base camp for subversion on the mainland of North America -- only a 2-day drive from our own border -- is intolerable. Only a few years ago, that seemed the bleak prospect we would have to deal with. But then the Nicaraguan people -- angry at how the Communists had betrayed their democratic revolution of 1978 and taken control of the government -- organized resistance to the Sandinistas. Known as the contras, these freedom fighters now comprise the largest peasant armies in history of this hemisphere. With our assistance they have waged a heroic fight against the Communists and forced them not only to come to the bargaining table but, under the terms of a peace plan worked out last September in Guatemala, to enact limited democratic reforms. Thanks to these freedom fighters and the democratic leaders of the Central American nations involved in the Guatemalan peace

process, there is now a chance for democratic and peaceful change in Nicaragua. But tonight I want to ask you to remember that the Sandinista Communists did not come to the conference table willingly -- only the presence of the freedom fighters and our support for them has given peace a chance in Central America. Until a full and free democratic government is installed in Nicaragua we must continue to support the democratic resistance. Some in Congress seem to be taking at face value the promises of the Communist Sandinistas and are threatening to stop our funding of the contras -- here I need your help and your support.

Ask your Representatives and Senators to back continued support for the contras; it is the right thing; it is important to the cause of freedom. But it is also important to the matters we are discussing tonight: the work of this summit. Believe me, if we suddenly show a lack of resolve and commitment in Central America, it will jeopardize the progress we have made in the other areas of regional conflicts and arms reductions.

To sum up on regional conflicts then: I reaffirmed to ~~the~~ General Secretary Gorbachev our support for political solutions among the warring parties in such conflicts as Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia. The U.S. stands ready to assist these negotiations as appropriate, and to join actively in the important work of economic reconstruction following settlement of these needless and costly conflicts. At the same time, I emphasized the American commitment to the cause of freedom around the world. We will continue to support freedom-fighters in their struggle for genuine national

self-determination for their countries, particularly where foreign troops have intervened to install or prop up regimes lacking popular support.

Now let me talk on the third issue on the summit agenda, that of human rights. As I say, since our first discussion in 1985, progress has been made and in recent months, our human rights dialogue with the Soviets has become much broader. Without in any way dismissing the important and welcome steps taken recently by the Soviet Union to improve policy and performance in this area, I made it clear to Mr. Gorbachev that much more must be done in this area to open the way for a more normal relationship between our countries. Here, political, artistic, and especially religious freedom are key: And we will continue to urge the Soviets to allow all those who wish to leave the country to do so freely. On all of this, we will not be satisfied with sporadic gestures or half measures; the human rights issue will not be put to rest until our present concerns are resolved, and new ones cease to emerge.

And finally let me briefly address the fourth item on the summit agenda: that of bilateral, people-to-people contacts between our two nations. On bilateral issues, Mr. Gorbachev and I expressed our satisfaction at the growing number of private exchanges which are affording our citizens unprecedented opportunities to learn about each other. This is a worthwhile investment in future relations; and we signed a number of bilateral agreements on ____ and ____ . Also, Nancy and I are looking forward to seeing the Soviet Union next spring where

Mr. Gorbachev and I will take up the unfinished work of this summit.

Now in addition to making the progress that I have already outlined on our 4-part agenda, Mr. Gorbachev and I did do some important planning for the upcoming Moscow summit. We agreed that we must redouble our efforts to reach agreements on reducing the levels of U.S. and Soviet long-range nuclear weapons now under discussion in the START negotiations. General Secretary Gorbachev and I reaffirmed this week our commitment -- made at Reykjavik -- to achieve deep, 50 percent cuts in our arsenals of those frightening weapons. We agreed that we should accelerate our efforts to achieve agreement on a START treaty by the time of the Moscow summit; and we have instructed our delegations in Geneva accordingly.

Now, I believe deep reductions in these offensive weapons -- along with the development of S.D.I. -- would do much to make the world safe from nuclear war. Which is why I am also glad to report to you the the Soviets have now dropped their insistence that we abandon S.D.I. Indeed, Mr. Gorbachev has admitted that the Soviets are building their own.

About the future, Mr. Gorbachev and I also agreed that as nuclear weapons are reduced; it becomes all the more important to address other arms control issues including conventional and chemical weapons, weapons in which the Soviets now enjoy significant advantages over the United States.

I think then from all of this you can see not only the direction of Soviet-American relations but the larger framework

of our foreign policy. As I told the British Parliament in 1981, we seek to rid the world of the two great nightmares of the post-war era: the threat of nuclear war and the threat of totalitarianism. That is why by building S.D.I., which is a defense against offensive missiles and by going for arms reduction rather than just arms control, we are moving away from the so-called M.A.D. policy, the policy of Mutual Assured Destruction where nations hold each other hostage to nuclear terror and destruction. So too, we are saying that the post-war policy of containment is no longer enough, that the goal of American foreign policy is both world peace and world freedom -- that as a people we hope and will work for a day when all of God's children will enjoy the human dignity that their creator intended, a dignity best assured on this Earth by free and democratic government.

I have heard some say that this is a philosophy of "rollback" of communism. But this is the wrong description because it concedes the idea that direction of history has been towards totalitarianism. Since my first days in office, I have argued that the future belongs not to repressive or totalitarian ways of life but to the cause of freedom -- freedom of the marketplace, freedom to speak, assemble, and vote. And when we see the progress of democracy in these last years -- from Central America to Asia -- we must be optimistic about the future of our children.

When we were together in Iceland, Mr. Gorbachev told me that this sort of talk is sometimes viewed in the Soviet Union as a

threat. I have said since then that this is no threat at all but only a dream, the American dream.

And it is a dream that has meant so much to so many -- a dream that still shines out to the world. You know a few years ago, Nancy and I were deeply moved by a story told by former New York Times reporter and Greek immigrant, Nicholas Gage. It is the story of Eleni, his mother, a woman caught in one of the terrible struggles of the post-war era: the Greek civil war at the end of World War II, a mother who was tried and executed because she smuggled her children out to safety in America.

It is also the story of how her son secretly vowed to return to Greece someday to take vengeance on the man who had sent his mother to her death. But at the end of the story Nicholas Gage finds he cannot extract the vengeance he promised himself. Mr. Gage writes it would have relieved the pain that had filled him for so many years but it would also have broken the one bridge still connecting him to his mother, that part of him most like here. As he tells it: "the final cry of my mother....was not a curse on her killers but an invocation of what she died for, a declaration of love." These simple last words of Mr. Gage's mother, of Eleni, were: "My children."

How that cry echoes down through the centuries, a cry for all children of the world, a cry for peace, for a world of love and understanding.

And it is the hope of heeding such words -- the call for freedom and peace spoken by a chosen people on a desert journey to a promised land, the call spoken by the Nazarene carpenter

standing at the Sea of Galilee -- it is these words that we remember as the holiday season approaches and we reflect on the events of this week here in Washington.

So, let us remember the children, and the future we want for them. And let us never forget that this promise of peace and freedom -- the gift that is ours as Americans -- the gift that we seek to share with the entire world -- depends for its strength on the spiritual source from which it came.

So during this holy season, let us also recall that in the prayers of simple people there is more power and might than that of all the great statesmen or armies of the Earth. Let us then thank God for all his blessings to this Nation and ask him for his help and guidance; so that we might continue the work of peace and foster the hope of a world where human freedom is enshrined.