

(NSC/Myer/BE/RR)  
January 12, 1984  
8:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS  
~~NATIONAL PRESS CLUB~~  
JANUARY 16, 1984

During these first days of 1984, I would like to share with you -- and the people of the world -- my thoughts on a subject of great importance to the cause of peace -- relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Tomorrow, the United States will join the Soviet Union and 33 other nations at a European disarmament conference in Stockholm. ~~We intend to uphold our responsibility as a major power in easing potential sources of conflict.~~ The conference will search for practical and meaningful ways to increase European security and preserve peace. We will <sup>be in</sup> ~~go to~~ Stockholm <sup>with</sup> bearing the heartfelt wishes of our people for genuine progress.

We live in a time of challenges to peace, but also of opportunities for peace. Through times of difficulty and frustration, America's highest aspiration has never wavered: We have, and will continue to struggle for a lasting peace that enhances dignity for men and women everywhere. I believe 1984 finds the United States in its strongest position in years to establish a constructive and realistic working relationship with the Soviet Union.

We have come a long way since the decade of the seventies -- years when the United States seemed filled with ~~self-doubt and~~ ~~self-reproach~~ and neglected its defenses, while the Soviet Union increased its military might and sought to expand its influence by armed force and threats. During the last decade, the <sup>Soviets</sup> ~~USSR~~ devoted twice as much of <sup>their</sup> ~~its~~ gross national product to military

expenditures as the United States. <sup>They</sup> It deployed six times as many ICBM's, five times as many tanks, <sup>and</sup> twice as many combat aircraft, <sup>And they</sup> ~~and, of course,~~ <sup>^</sup> began deploying the SS-20 intermediate-range missile at a time when the United States had no comparable weapon. X

As the Soviet arsenal grew, so did Soviet aggressiveness. From Angola to Afghanistan, from El Salvador to Kampuchea, the Soviet Union and its proxies ~~have~~ <sup>^</sup> tried to force their will on others. History teaches that wars begin when governments believe the price of aggression is cheap. To keep the peace, we and our allies must be strong enough to convince any potential aggressor that war could bring no benefit, only disaster. So when we neglected our defenses, the risks of serious confrontation grew. X

Three years ago we embraced a mandate from the American people to change course, and we have. With the support of the American people and the Congress, we halted America's decline. Our economy is <sup>now</sup> in the midst of the best recovery since the sixties. Our defenses are being rebuilt. Our alliances are solid and our commitment to defend our values has never been more clear. X

America's recovery may have taken Soviet leaders by surprise. They may have counted on us to keep weakening ourselves. They have been saying for years that our demise was inevitable. They said it so often they probably started believing it. If so, <sup>I think</sup> <sup>^</sup> they can see now they were wrong. X

This may be the reason we've been hearing such strident rhetoric from the Kremlin recently. These harsh words have led some to speak of heightened uncertainty and an increased danger

of conflict. This is understandable, but profoundly mistaken. Look beyond the words, and on <sup>e</sup> fact stands out: <sup>America's</sup> Deterrence is more credible and it is making the world a safer place; safer because <sup>^</sup> where is less danger <sup>^</sup> now that the Soviet leadership will underestimate our strength or question our resolve. X

Yes, we are safer now. But to say that our restored deterrence has made the world ~~is~~ safer is not to say that it is safe enough. We are witnessing tragic conflicts in many parts of the world. Nuclear arsenals are far too high. And our working relationship with the Soviet Union is not what it must be. These are conditions which must be addressed and improved.. X

Deterrence is essential to preserve peace and protect our way of life, but deterrence is not the beginning and end of our policy toward the Soviet Union. We must and will engage the Soviets in a dialogue as serious and constructive as possible, a dialogue that will serve to promote peace in the troubled regions of the world, reduce the level of arms, and build a constructive working relationship.

Neither we nor the Soviet Union can wish away the differences between our two societies and our philosophies. But we should always remember that we do have common interests. And the foremost among them is to avoid war and reduce the level of arms. There is no rational alternative but to steer a course which I would call credible deterrence and peaceful competition; and if we do so, we might find areas in which we could engage in constructive cooperation.

Our strength and vision of progress provide the basis for demonstrating, with equal conviction, our commitment to stay

secure and to find peaceful solutions to problems through negotiations. That is why ~~I say that~~ 1984 is a year of opportunities for peace. X

But if the United States and the Soviet Union are to rise to the challenges facing us and seize the opportunities for peace, which are at hand, we must do more to <sup>find</sup> ~~seek out~~ areas of mutual interest and <sup>then</sup> build on them. I propose that our governments make a major effort to see if we can make progress in three broad problem areas. X

First, we need to find ways to reduce -- and eventually to eliminate -- the use and threat of force in solving international disputes. X

The world has witnessed more than 100 conflicts since the end of World War II alone. <sup>Today,</sup> There are ~~now~~ armed conflicts in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Central America, and Africa. In other regions, independent nations are confronted by heavily armed neighbors seeking to dominate by threatening attack or subversion. X

Most of these conflicts have their origins in local problems, but many have been exploited by the Soviet Union and its surrogates -- and, of course, Afghanistan has suffered an outright Soviet invasion. Fueling regional conflicts and exporting violence only exacerbate local <sup>tensions,</sup> ~~problems,~~ increase suffering, and make solutions to real social and economic problems more difficult. Further, such activity carries with it the risk of large <sup>r</sup> confrontations. X

Would it not be better and safer if we could work together to assist people in areas of conflict in finding peaceful

solutions to their problems? That should be our mutual goal. But we must recognize that the gap in American and Soviet perceptions and policy is so great that our immediate objective must be more modest. As a first step, ~~I believe~~ our governments should jointly examine concrete actions we both can take to reduce the risk of U.S.-Soviet confrontation in these areas. And if we succeed, ~~in this~~ we should be able to move <sup>beyond this</sup> ~~further toward~~ ~~our ultimate goal.~~   
~~immediate objective.~~

X

X  
X

Our second task should be to find ways to reduce the vast stockpiles of armaments in the world.

It is tragic to see the world's developing nations spending more than \$150 billion a year on armed forces -- some 20 percent of their national budgets. We must find ways to reverse the vicious cycle of threat and response which drives arms races everywhere it occurs.

With regard to nuclear weapons, the simple truth is, American's total nuclear stockpile has declined. We have fewer nuclear weapons today than we had 28 years ago. And our nuclear stockpile is at the lowest level in 25 years in terms of its total destructive power.

Just <sup>3</sup>~~2~~ months ago, we and our allies agreed to withdraw ~~and~~ ~~additional~~ 1,400 nuclear weapons from Western Europe. This comes after the removal of a thousand nuclear weapons from Europe over the last 3 years. Even if all our planned intermediate-range missiles have to be deployed in Europe over the next 5 years -- and we hope this will not be necessary -- we will have eliminated five existing nuclear weapons for each new weapon deployed.

X

X

OTTAWA  
 NPG  
 OCT 27  
 LINHARD

But this is not enough. We must accelerate our efforts to reach agreements that will greatly reduce nuclear arsenals, provide greater stability and build confidence.

Our third task is to establish a better working relationship with each other, one marked by greater cooperation and understanding.

Cooperation and understanding are built on deeds, not words. Complying with agreements helps; violating them hurts. Respecting the rights of individual citizens bolsters the relationship; denying these rights harms it. Expanding contacts across borders and permitting a free interchange of information and ideas increase confidence; sealing off one's people from the rest of the world reduces it. Peaceful trade helps, while organized theft of industrial secrets certainly <sup>hurts.</sup> ~~important to arms~~ X

~~control.~~ <sup>and understanding are</sup> ~~Cooperation~~ <sup>especially important to arms control.</sup> X  
In recent years, we have had serious concerns about Soviet compliance with agreements and treaties. Compliance is important because we seek truly effective arms control. Unfortunately, there has been mounting evidence that provisions of agreements have been breached and that the Soviet Union takes advantage of any ambiguity in an agreement.

In response to a ~~C~~ congressional request, a report to the Congress on these Soviet activities will be submitted in the next few days. It is clear that we cannot simply assume that agreements negotiated will be fulfilled. We must take the Soviet compliance record into account, both in the development of our defense program and in our approach to arms control. In our discussions with the Soviet Union, we will work to remove the X

obstacles which threaten to undermine existing agreements and the broader arms control process.

The examples I have cited illustrate ~~clearly~~<sup>clearly</sup> why our relationship with the Soviet Union is not what it should be. We have a long way to go, but we are determined to try and try again. We may have to start in small ways, but start we must.

In working on these tasks, our approach is based on three guiding principles: realism, strength, and dialogue.

Realism means we must start with a clear-eyed understanding of the world we live in. We must recognize that we are in a long-term competition with a government that does not share our notions of individual liberties at home and peaceful change abroad. We must be frank in acknowledging our differences and unafraid to promote our values.

Strength is essential to negotiate successfully and protect our interests. If we are weak, we can do neither. Strength is more than military power. Economic strength is crucial and America's economy is leading the world into recovery. Equally important is our strength of spirit, and unity among our people at home and with our allies abroad. We are stronger in all these areas than we were 3 years ago.

Our strength is necessary ~~not only~~ to deter war <sup>and</sup> but to facilitate negotiated solutions. Soviet leaders know it makes sense to compromise only if they can get something in return. America <sup>can now</sup> ~~renewed strength permits us to~~ offer something in return.

Strength and dialogue go hand-in-hand. We are <sup>determined</sup> prepared to deal with our differences peacefully, through negotiations. We

are prepared to discuss the problems that divide us, and to work for practical, fair solutions on the basis of mutual compromise. We will never retreat from negotiations.

I have openly expressed my view of the Soviet system. I don't know why this should come as a surprise to Soviet leaders, who have never shied from expressing their view of our system. But this does not mean we can't deal with each other. We don't refuse to talk when the Soviets call us "imperialist aggressors" and worse, or because they cling to the fantasy of a communist triumph over democracy. The fact that neither of us likes the other's system is no reason to refuse to talk. Living in this nuclear age makes it imperative that we do talk.

Our commitment to dialogue is firm and unshakable. But we insist that our negotiations deal with real problems, not atmospherics.

In our approach to negotiations, reducing the risk of war -- and especially nuclear war -- is priority number one. A nuclear conflict could well be mankind's last. That is why I proposed, over 2 years ago, the "zero option" for intermediate-range missiles. Our aim was and continues to be to eliminate an entire class of nuclear arms.

Indeed, I support a zero option for all nuclear arms. As I have said before, my dream is to see the day when nuclear weapons will be banished from the face of the earth. Last month, the Soviet defense minister stated that his country shares the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. These are encouraging words. Well, now is the time to move from words to deeds.



The opportunity for progress in arms control exists; the Soviet leaders should take advantage of it. We have <sup>proposed</sup> ~~undertaken~~ a set of initiatives that would reduce substantially ~~the size of~~ ~~our~~ nuclear arsenals and reduce the risk of a nuclear confrontation, ~~by providing greater stability.~~

X  
X  
X

The world regrets -- certainly we do -- that the Soviet Union broke off negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces, and has not set a date for the resumption of the talks on strategic arms and on conventional forces in Europe. Our negotiators are ready to return to the negotiating table to work <sup>forward</sup> agreements in INF, START, and MBFR. We will negotiate in good faith. Whenever the Soviet Union is ready to do likewise, we will meet them halfway.

We seek ~~both~~ to reduce nuclear arsenals, and to reduce the chances for dangerous misunderstanding and miscalculation. So we have put forward proposals for what we call "confidence-building measures." They cover a wide range of activities. In the Geneva negotiations, we have proposed to exchange advance notifications of missile tests and major military exercises. Following up on congressional suggestions, we also proposed a number of ways to improve direct ~~U.S. Soviet~~ channels of communication. Last week, we had productive discussions with the Soviets here in Washington on improving communications, including the "Hotline."

X  
X

These bilateral proposals will be broadened at the conference in Stockholm. We are working with our allies to develop practical, meaningful ways to reduce the uncertainty and potential for misinterpretation surrounding military activities, and to diminish the risks of surprise attack.

Arms control has long been the most visible area of U.S.-Soviet dialogue. But a durable peace also requires both of us to defuse tensions and regional conflicts.

Let us take the Middle East as an example. The Soviet Union has made the situation in that part of the world more dangerous for all concerned by introducing <sup>and</sup> thousands of its military personnel, ~~and thousands~~ sophisticated weapons into Syria, during the past year. ~~Our efforts in that region are aimed at limiting these dangers.~~ Everyone's interests would be served by stability in the region. <sup>Our efforts are directed toward that goal.</sup> ~~I call upon~~ <sup>^</sup> the Soviets <sup>to</sup> use their influence to reduce tensions in the Middle East. <sup>should</sup> The confidence created by such progress would certainly help us to deal more positively with other aspects of our relationship.

Another major problem in our relationship with the Soviet Union is human rights. Soviet practices in this area, as much as any other issue, have created the mistrust and ill will that hangs over our relationship.

Moral considerations alone compel us to express our deep concern over prisoners of conscience in the Soviet Union and over the virtual halt in the emigration of Jews, Armenians, and others who wish to join their families abroad. <sup>We cannot remain silent to the tragic plight of such courageous people like Andrei SAKHAROV, Anatoly Scharansky and</sup> Our request is simple and straightforward: <sup>^</sup> that the Soviet Union live up to the obligations it has freely assumed under international covenants -- in particular, its commitments under the Helsinki Accords. Experience has shown that greater respect for human rights can contribute to progress in other areas of the Soviet-American relationship. <sup>Yosif Begun.</sup>

Conflicts of interest between the United States and the Soviet Union are real. But we can and must keep the peace between our two nations and make it a better and more peaceful world for all mankind.

~~These objectives of~~ our policy toward the Soviet Union, a policy of credible deterrence, peaceful competition, and constructive cooperation that will serve <sup>our two</sup> both nations and people everywhere. It is a policy not just for this year, but for <sup>the</sup> long term. It is a challenge for Americans. It is also a challenge for the Soviets. If they cannot meet us half way, we will be prepared to protect our interests, and those of our friends and allies. But we want more than deterrence; we seek genuine cooperation; we seek progress for peace.

Cooperation begins with communication. We seek such communication. As I have said, we will stay at the negotiating tables in Geneva and Vienna. Furthermore, Secretary Shultz will be meeting this week with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko in Stockholm. This meeting should be followed by others, so that high-level consultations become a regular and normal component of U.S.-Soviet relations.

Our challenge is peaceful. It will bring out the best in us. It also calls for the best from the Soviet Union.

We do not threaten the Soviet Union. Freedom poses no threat, it is the language of progress. We proved this 35 years ago when we had a monopoly of nuclear weapons, and could have tried to dominate the world. But we didn't. Instead we used our power to write a new chapter in the history of mankind. We helped rebuild war-ravaged economies in Europe and the Far East,

including those of nations who had been our enemies. Indeed, those former enemies are now numbered among our staunchest friends.

We can't predict how the Soviet leaders will respond to our challenge. But the people of our two countries share with all mankind the dream of eliminating the risks of nuclear war. It is not an impossible dream, because eliminating these risks is so clearly a vital interest for all of us. Our two countries have never fought each other; there is no reason we ever should. Indeed, we fought common enemies in World War II. Today our common enemies are poverty, disease and, above all, war.

More than 20 years ago, President Kennedy defined an approach that is a <sup>S</sup> valid today as when he announced it: X

"So, let us not be blind to our differences --" he said, "but let us also direct attention to our common interests and to the means by which those differences can be resolved."

Well, those differences are differences in governmental structure and philosophy. The common interests have to do with the things of everyday life for people everywhere.

Suppose, for a moment, Ivan and Anya found themselves in a waiting room, or sharing a shelter from the rain with Jim and Sally, and there was no language barrier to keep them from getting acquainted. Would they debate the differences between their respective governments? Or, would they find themselves comparing notes about their children, and what each other did for a living? X

Before they parted company they would probably have touched on ambitions, hobbies, what they wanted for their children and the problems of making ends meet. And as they went their

separate ways, Anya would be saying to Ivan, "Wasn't she nice, she also teaches music." Jim would be telling Sally what Ivan did or didn't like about his boss. They might even have decided that they were all going to get together for dinner some evening soon. X

Above all, they would have proven that people don't make wars. People want to raise their children in a world without fear, and without war. They want to have some of the good things over and above bare subsistence that make life worth living. They want to work at some craft, trade or profession that gives them satisfaction and a sense of worth. Their common interests cross all borders.

If the Soviet Government wants peace, then there will be peace. Together we can strengthen peace, reduce the level of arms, and know in doing so we have helped fulfill the hopes and dreams of those we represent and indeed of people everywhere. X

Let us begin now. X