COLD WAR CARD 3

PRESIDENT REAGAN AND THE COLD WAR

Summit in Geneva, Switzerland | November 16 – 21, 1985

Background:

The election of the Soviet Politburo of Mikhail Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union created a new opportunity for President Reagan to reach out to the Soviets in his goal of nuclear disarmament.

Prior American Presidents had supported a policy of deterrence. This meant they believed that if the Soviet Union and the United States both maintained nuclear arsenals, each country would be deterred or kept from using them for fear of mutual annihilation. President Reagan's approach differed from earlier administrations in that he wanted to eradicate nuclear arms.

Yet, President Reagan believed that in order for this to happen, the United States would need to negotiate from a position of strength. To President Reagan, strength involved "building up to build down" – creating more nuclear weapons in the United States to create a threat to the Soviet Union. "Peace through strength" was the motto of the Reagan Administration which came to reflect the era of the 1980s and became a symbol for American military prowess and pride.

Quotes:

"I am cautiously optimistic. I like Mr. Gorbachev. We can do business together."

-Margaret Thatcher on the subject of Mikhail Gorbachev, December, 1984

"The real report card will not come in for months or even years." **-President Reagan on the Geneva Conference, November, 1985**

Questions:

- Examine the picture on the back of this paper. Guess what the mood in the room is. List an adjective to describe the mood.
- Does there appear to be anyone else in the room with the two leaders?
- If you were a U.S. citizen in 1985, how might you have felt about President Reagan meeting with Gorbachev in 1985? Use two adjectives to describe your feelings and then explain why you chose those adjectives.

Research:

- Were any treaties signed at the Geneva Summit in 1985?
- What did the two leaders expect to accomplish at the Geneva Summit in 1985?

Extension Activities:

Write a two paragraph letter to the editor explaining whether or not the Geneva Conference was a success. In the first paragraph, discuss the goals of the Geneva Conference. In the second paragraph, discuss the outcome of the Geneva Conference. You may choose to write the letter from the perspective of someone living in 1985 or the perspective of someone living today.

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum 1981 1989

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