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THE WHITE HOUSE

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MEETING WITH SOVIET LEADER IN GENEVA:
THEMES AND PERCEPTIONS (U)

It is important that all agencies have a clear understanding of what I consider key themes that need to be emphasized as we approach my November 19-20 meetings with General Secretary Gorbachev. I will be emphasizing the opportunity that the Geneva meetings provide to address a variety of important issues in a businesslike and constructive manner. For their part, the Soviets are trying to focus public attention almost exclusively on arms control, particularly my strategic defense initiative, while virtually ignoring a host of regional and bilateral issues that separate us. (X)

To help ensure that my message reaches as wide an audience as possible, I urge all government officials who will be discussing the Geneva meetings in public forums to draw from the attached themes and perceptions. (X)

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ROAD TO GENEVA AND BEYOND

Themes and Perceptions for Public Presentation

Theme: BUILDING A SAFER WORLD

Basic Messages:

- We want countries to stop trying to expand their influence through armed intervention and subversion.

That is why we are proposing negotiated settlements, withdrawal of outside forces, and international efforts to build economies and meet human needs.

- We have the mandate and opportunity to reduce the danger of nuclear war by drastic cuts in nuclear arsenals.

That is why we are proposing radical, verifiable and balanced reductions of offensive nuclear weapons and are pursuing research to identify defensive technologies - which threaten no one.

- We must defend human rights everywhere, since countries which respect human rights are unlikely to unleash war.

That is why we insist that the Helsinki accords and other international commitments be observed.

- We must establish better communication between our societies, since misunderstandings make the world more dangerous.

That is why we are proposing dramatic increases in people-to-people exchanges, programs to share information, and enhanced cooperation in meeting human needs.

- The meeting in Geneva marks a new phase in this process. Our efforts to reach these ambitious goals will continue.

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PERCEPTIONS OF THE GENEVA MEETINGWorking for a Safer Future

The President seeks to build the foundation for peaceful and constructive relations with the Soviet Union. This will require a long-term, sustained effort. It must be based on the principles of fairness, reciprocity and honest fulfillment of all agreements.

Soviet Behavior: The Roots of Tension

The use or threat of force by the Soviet Union and its proxies is an underlying cause of Soviet-American and world tension. The President is determined to defend the United States and its Allies. The USSR must cease using arms and force to expand its influence if tensions are to diminish.

Leading from Strength

The President's hand is strong: he has reversed the decline in American strength and has a robust economy, a united public and strong alliances behind him. He is able to defend us whatever the Soviets do. But he wants more: he wants to lower arms levels, reduce tensions and create a more cooperative relationship with the USSR.

Promoting Democratic Ideals

The President will speak out for democracy, freedom, justice and decency everywhere since these values are the surest foundation of a just and peaceful world in the future. He does not attempt to impose our political or economic system on others, but will insist that the Soviet Union also refrain from attempts to dominate others.

Probing Soviet Intentions

We can have a more cooperative relationship with the Soviet Union only if the Soviet leaders also want it. The Geneva meeting will determine whether there has been a change in Soviet policy or only in Soviet style.

Realistic but Determined Effort

The President is preparing seriously for the meeting in Geneva. He has no illusions about the profound differences in our philosophies and societies but will go the extra mile for enduring peace and a safer world. He will bring creative and ambitious ideas to the meeting. His efforts will not end when the Geneva meeting is over. He is in this for the long haul.