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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 30, 1983

File VFW

Dear Phelps:

I was sorry to learn you were at Walter Reed and meant to drop you a note before now. I know you understand how very busy people can sometimes neglect the most important things--such as writing to thank someone for all their efforts.

Phelps, the article on Central America in the recent issue of the VFW Magazine is excellent. It is precisely the type of information we need to get out and thereby gain the support we are hoping to generate by our outreach efforts. I would be interested in hearing from you as to your membership's reaction to the article.

I know you may not be up to the effort right now, but when you feel better, I would be grateful for your advice as to what you think we should be doing in regard to the Central American question and our outreach efforts. From our vantage point, it is often difficult to assess how we are perceived on the outside. I would like very much to have your input regarding what you think we are doing that is on track, and what we are doing that you believe could be more effective if done in a different way.

Phelps, I want you to know how much President Reagan--and all of us who have the privilege of serving in the White House--appreciate all that you have done. People such as yourself do make a difference! Take care of yourself, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Kind regards.

Sincerely,



Faith Ryan Whittlesey
Assistant to the President for
Public Liaison

Colonel Frank Phelps Jones, USAF (Ret.)
2347 SW Rolfe Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

MAY 18 1983

143547

TO: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FROM: JAMES R. CURRIO, NATIONAL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

DATE: 17 MAY 1983

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE M-X PEACEKEEPER

I strongly urge your support for the M-X Peacekeeper in the vote scheduled for today in the Committee on Appropriations.

Needed modernization of the land-based ICBM is now clearly linked to both strategic stability and practical arms reduction prospects.

This vote on the M-X will make a statement, one way or the other, about American will, constancy and leadership that cannot be explained or rationalized away in terms of domestic politics.

On behalf of nearly two million of your fellow Americans in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I again urge you to stand with the President and vote to support the M-X.

Please advise.

Most cordially,

JAMES R. CURRIO
National Commander-in-Chief

file

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

FOUNDED 1899



Jose Marti Post No. 10212

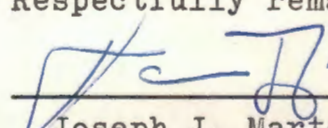
Miami, Florida, 1 November 1983

TO: All Concerned
FROM: Commander, V.F.W. Post 10212
RE: Certification of Credentials

To all concerned, please let it be known that the bearer of this letter, OFFICER FELIX I. RODRIGUEZ, an honorable war veteran and member of our V.F.W. "Jose Marti" Post 10212 in Miami, Florida, is hereby authorized to act and fully represent our Post in our best interest in whatever capacity and/or business that may come before him.

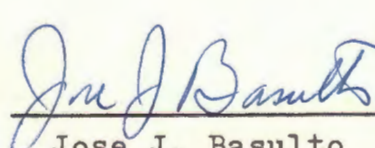
For and on behalf of the Officers and members of Post 10212,

Respectfully remains,



Joseph J. Martory
Commander
V.F.W. Post 10212

Attested by:



Jose J. Basulto
Chairman, Humanitarian/
Truth Fund for Nicaraguan
"Freedom Fighters" Committee
V.F.W. Post 10212

cc. Roberto M. Molleda, P.P.Cmdr.
Adjutant, V.F.W. Post 10212
Post File

Mailing address: V.F.W. Post 10212, P.O. Box 558125, Miami, FL., 33155



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

September 28, 1983

Joseph J. Martory, Commander
VFW Post 10212
3521 S.W. 88th Court
Miami, Florida 33165

Dear Commander Martory:

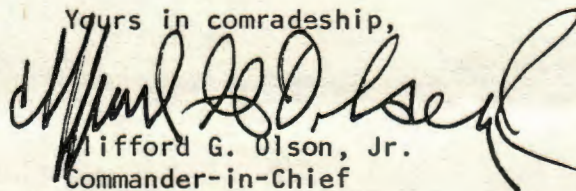
Thank you for your letter of September 16 concerning your support of the Nicaraguan "Freedom Fighters."

I appreciate your offer to act as the conduit for the fund raising effort, however, in consonance with the language in Resolution 464 and prior agreement, all voluntary donations will have to be sent to the American Security Council Foundation. The A.S.C.F. organization will administer and disburse the humanitarian aid as spelled out in the resolution.

I also deeply appreciate the parallel efforts your Post has taken in providing medical assistance to the Freedom Fighters. The actions certainly support the spirit of 60th Resolutions 464 and 425.

My best wishes to all in Post 10212.

Yours in comradeship,


Clifford G. Olson, Jr.
Commander-in-Chief

CGO:WL:mc

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

FOUNDED 1899



Jose Marti Post No. 10212

Miami, Florida, 14 October 1983

COMMUNIQUE NO. 1

- I. On 22 Sept 1983, Officers Jose J. Basulto and Henry Gonzalez, Chairman and member of our Post 10212 Humanitarian/Truth Fund for Nicaraguan "Freedom Fighters" Committee, flew to a location in Central America to deliver to the Nicaraguan "Freedom Fighters" medical supplies and other equipments as an act of HUMANITARIAN AID. A shipment worth approximate \$100,000.00 which included supplies such as medicines, medical equipment, liquid foods (mainly for infants), etc. was turned over to the medical section of the National Democratic Front (F.D.N.). These medical supplies and equipment are now being used in the field hospital that serves the "Freedom Fighters".
- II. Contacts are now well established and the proper channels set up for all future urgent deliveries of much needed medical supplies. The increased activity of combat missions has resulted in a high number of casualties who are in dire need of medical attention. The leaders of the "Freedom Fighters" forces have informed us that the battle will be won in the rear, where the hospitals and the refugee camps are located. The high morale of these forces will remain high as long as they know their families and their wounded are taken care of.
- III. Copies of Resolution No. 464 were hand given (both in English and the translation to Spanish) to the leaders of the "Freedom Fighters" forces and they have expressed their gratitude to the two million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States for this most important help. They will communicate to each front line soldier this most welcomed news looking now forward for future shipments.

/...

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

FOUNDED 1899



Jose Marti Post No. 10212

(2)

These leaders are well aware of their responsibilities and want to further inform the American Veterans that they are ready to die for the cause of freedom and human dignity the same as millions of Americans have given their lives in both World Wars, Korea, VietNam, etc.

- IV. Officers Basulto and Gonzalez report that the first mission of HUMANITARIAN AID was carried on successfully, setting up the stage for future missions.

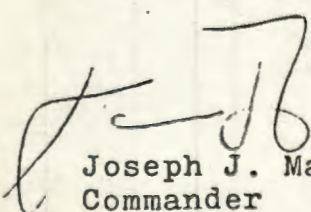
We are now awaiting official written request from the "Freedom Fighters" forces of their most urgent needs of supplies.

Video tapes were taken and brought back and are now available to all concerned, especially members of the V.F.W.

- V. Officers Basulto and Gonzalez further report that the immediate delivery of more HUMANITARIAN AID is necessary if the cause of Freedom is to win the battle against communism in Central America. The future of the world, especially our hemisphere, depends on our actions today. The membership of Post 10212 urges the high ranking leadership of our National organization to please assist us with this mission, the mission of all of us in the V.F.W.

- VI. Presently we are engaged in preparing another shipment and will contact you for assistances on transportation.

For and on behalf of V.F.W. "Jose Marti" Post 10212, Miami,


Joseph J. Martory
Commander

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

FOUNDED 1899



Jose Marti Post No. 10212

October 30, 1983

Mr. John M. Fisher, President
American Security Council Foundation,
Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters Truth Fund
499 South Capitol Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Mr. Fisher:

Our Post, composed mostly of Cuban American war veterans of the Viet Nam era, has participated in an effort to help the Freedom Fighters in Nicaragua since the V.F.W.'s Resolution 464 passed in August, 1983.

Our actions are better described in a copy of our Communique No. 1, here attached, and a video tape made by local television station WPIG, Channel 10, also enclosed.

It is our understanding, from correspondence received from our Commander in Chief, Clifford G. Olson, Jr., copy attached, that "the American Security Council Foundation will administer and disburse the humanitarian aid as spelled out in the resolution".

We received a new request for help on October 28, 1983 from "Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense", one of the organizations that we have helped in the past. (Copy enclosed).

Mr. John M. Fisher, President
American Security Council Foundation,
Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters Truth Fund
October 30, 1983
Page # 2

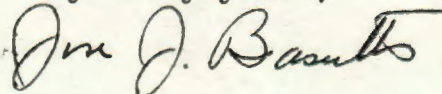
F.D.N. has suffered probably more casualties than any other group of fighters on account of their size, (over 5,000 men on arms) and on account of the very long distances they have to move their wounded before they can receive medical help. F.D.N. has a group of very capable doctors doing a fantastic job and this has been augmented recently, by teams of Cuban-American doctors from Miami, who have donated their time, traveled at their own expense, and performed complex surgical work under the worst conditions.

Delegates of Post 10212 Jose Marti, have traveled to Central America to witness first hand the needs of the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters. We can attest to their needs, as much as to their noble human value. These men are engaged in a struggle that deserves all the help we can provide. To you, we pass on their plea.

Our services and contacts are at your disposal. Please respond to us on this request as soon as possible, so that we can take further action on their behalf if necessary.

I must insist that time is of the essence.

Very truly yours,



Jose J. Basulto, Jr.
Chairman, Humanitarian/Truth
Fund for Nicaraguan Freedom
Fighters Committee, Post 10212

cc. Mr. Ronald Reagan
President of the United States of America

Mr. Clifford G. Olson, Jr.
Commander in Chief Veterans of Foreign Wars

Mr. James R. Currieo
Past Commander in Chief

Mr. Joseph J. Martory
Commander VFW Post 10212

Cols. Phelps Jones/Tip Marlow, U.S.A. (r), VFW Wash., D.C.

Encls.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 30, 1983

Jay

*file
VFW*

Dear Phelps:

I was sorry to learn you were at Walter Reed and meant to drop you a note before now. I know you understand how very busy people can sometimes neglect the most important things--such as writing to thank someone for all their efforts.

Phelps, the article on Central America in the recent issue of the VFW Magazine is excellent. It is precisely the type of information we need to get out and thereby gain the support we are hoping to generate by our outreach efforts. I would be interested in hearing from you as to your membership's reaction to the article.

I know you may not be up to the effort right now, but when you feel better, I would be grateful for your advice as to what you think we should be doing in regard to the Central American question and our outreach efforts. From our vantage point, it is often difficult to assess how we are perceived on the outside. I would like very much to have your input regarding what you think we are doing that is on track, and what we are doing that you believe could be more effective if done in a different way.

Phelps, I want you to know how much President Reagan--and all of us who have the privilege of serving in the White House--appreciate all that you have done. People such as yourself do make a difference! Take care of yourself, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Kind regards.

Sincerely,

Faith

Faith Ryan Whittlesey
Assistant to the President for
Public Liaison

Colonel Frank Phelps Jones, USAF (Ret.)
2347 SW Rolfe Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 28, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: FAITH RYAN WHITTLESEY
THROUGH: Jonathan Vipond, III
FROM: Joyce Thomann
SUBJECT: Colonel Frank Phelps Jones, USAF (Ret.)

m-
OK to
sp w/
bc to
Joyce T.

✓ Phelps Jones has been the National Security/Defense Director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars for as long as I have know him (which is over 10 years now). Phelps is dying of lung cancer. He is, at the moment, in Walter Reed Army Hospital and according to Cooper Holt may be released from the hospital on Thursday -- IF all the oxygen equipment he will require can be installed in his home in time.

Phelps knows he is dying. He has know it for sometime now, however, it appears that the end of his struggle against lung cancer is now very close.

I know Phelps would enjoy receiving a letter from you, Faith. Phelps has been a longtime warrior in the trenches to maintain the defensive strength of this great nation. He has served his country well and remains its dedicated servant even now. In talking with Cooper Holt this morning, I learned that Phelps is "chomping at the bit" to get back to the office to work on the Central American problem.

Yesterday I sent over our copy of the VFW magazine which ran the big article on Central America - Phelps was responsible for that article.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Mont Blackwell

Attached is an article to be published this month by VFW Magazine. It is written by our friend, Steadman. I spoke about him before with you. Now that Phelps Jones has passed away, Ken will assume the Directorship.

Dad

P.S. He was kind enough to allow us to review first.

File: VFW

NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

BY

KENNETH A. STEADMAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

WAGING PEACE

Recently, the bombing of the Marine compound in Beirut, the U. S. rescue of American students in Grenada and the Soviet's suspension of the Intermediate Nuclear Force negotiations in Geneva captured attention and whipsawed emotions. The tragic Beirut bombing left behind grief and sorrow. The next day emotions turned jubilant when the students of Grenada were pronounced safe. And, in the aftermath of the much publicized TV movie, "The Day After," the Russian walkout produced a sense of apprehension and dread.

These events impacted so close together there was little time for the mind to break free from the emotional images of death and devastation. The images reaffirmed what veterans already know -- that war always has been and always will be an expensive endeavor. As the images blur and emotions soften, our minds begin to sift and sort for the rational explanation to these events.

BEIRUT: The lives of the 240 Marines lost in Beirut must be worth something; something significant enough to dignify their death. Their significance must be measured against what is at stake in Lebanon. In all probability, if it were not for the presence of the Marines, Lebanon would have ceased to exist months ago. The Marines are only the latest, and the most visible, of U. S. efforts to bring peace to this troubled but vital region of the world.

The United States has vital interests in the Middle East-Persian Gulf Region that have been menaced by the Soviets and their surrogates. The region is both the cradle of civilization and a crossroads of commerce. From this intersection of Europe, Asia and Africa flows one-third of the Free World's oil supply. If this supply was cut off by internal disorder or external aggression, the Soviet Union would not suffer. However, the industrial West and the underdeveloped countries of the Third World would face energy and economic starvation.

It's more than coincidence that for nearly two decades the Soviets have been pouring arms and money into the region in hopes of exploiting this Western vulnerability. Since the 1960's, Arab countries have been the largest purchasers of Soviet military equipment. (Some of the equipment has been funnelled to the Palestine Liberation Organization and other radical groups.) The Soviet's chief surrogates, Syria and Libya, have been especially well supplied with arms and advisors. Soviet military personnel have accompanied the arms shipments as instructors, advisors and maintenance technicians. Once their military has been established in another country, the Soviets use their influence to gain access to military bases and facilities. In July 1981, Libya, one of the Soviet Union's major arms clients in North Africa, reopened its ports to Soviet warships for the first time since 1970. Soviet naval forces have continued to visit these ports on a regular basis.

Using these tactics, the Russians have established bases in Ethiopia, on the Horn of Africa and in South Yeman,

at the entrance to the Red Sea and Suez Canal, to encircle the oil rich Arabian Peninsula. The Soviet Union has used its surrogates, Syria and Libya, to extend its influence further into the region. A Syrian controlled Lebanon would be a Soviet dominated Lebanon with geographical access to the Eastern Mediterranean.

Such a Soviet gain would enlarge the encirclement of the oil producers while increasing Soviet leverage over friendly Middle Eastern states. Also, the Soviets would gain a position to outflank Israel, and to threaten both the Mediterranean Sea lines of communication, and our NATO ally, Turkey. NATO's southern flank, already politically weak, would be further exposed to Soviet pressure from the South as well as the East.

Policy makers since President Harry Truman have recognized the implications of Soviet dominance in the region and realized that regional conflicts offered the Soviets lucrative opportunities to extend their influence.

U. S. policy has aimed at trying to keep the peace in the region by

preventing the outbreak or recurrence of local conflicts. In 1948, President Truman committed United States military officers to participate in the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization. This organization, still in effect today, has tried -- and largely failed -- to maintain a truce along the Israeli-Lebanon border. President Reagan, in upholding the U. S. commitment to enduring peace between Egypt and Israel, has stationed U. S. troops with the Sinai Multinational Force and Observers since April 1982, along the Egyptian-Israeli demarcation line.

The Marines in Beirut were fulfilling the same role -- peacekeepers -- attempting to prevent recurrence of civil war and of Syrian occupation when the terrorists struck last October 23rd. Those terrorists, it was reported, were trained, supplied and possibly directed by others who see the U. S. long term effort in the Middle East as an obstacle in their path. The terrorist bombing was designed to be an outrage because only an outrageous act could radically change the U. S. long term commitment

to the region. So far they have not succeeded, but they won't stop trying. Nor can the United States stop trying to bring about peace to that troubled region. To do otherwise would cheapen the price our Marines have paid for peace.

GRENADA : By itself, the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada poses no threat to the United States. But the arrival of a Cuban ship carrying Soviet arms and equipment three days after a Marxist coup in March 1979 signaled a change. Soviet and Cuban assistance poured into the island. By January 1980, several hundred Cubans began constructing a 9,800 foot airfield at Point Salines while others began preparations to enlarge a small port on the island's southeast coast. The rapid construction of these facilities and the rapid buildup of Grenada's military potential were unrelated to any potential threat from its Caribbean neighbors. In January, 1983, the Defense Department concluded that "Soviet/Cuban militarization of Grenada... can only be seen as (Soviet) power projection into the region."

Grenada's location, close to sea lanes and a convenient distance to Central and South America, when coupled with the island's militarization was cause for increased concern. President Reagan indicated his deepening suspicion last March when on national television he displayed photographs of Soviet and Cuban construction on the island. Still, construction and suspicion did not establish proof of a Soviet or Cuban inspired threat to our interests in the Caribbean.

The threat materialized, however, within hours of the Beirut bombing when it was reported that another coup by hardline Marxists had taken control of Grenada. By their action, the Marxists placed the lives of nearly 500 American medical students at risk. With reports of Marine losses in Beirut trickling in, President Reagan recognized the United States Government had to act decisively to reduce the risk to the unarmed students.

Within hours of his decision, Marines and Army Rangers were pouring ashore in an operation designed to

actual coup was on Oct. 13. Bishop was killed late on 18th or early on 19th, Beirut bombing was on 23d.

quickly overwhelm resistance and minimize casualties among the students and the populous. What they found when the Cuban resistance melted away was more than enough evidence to confirm President Reagan's public suspicions:

- six warehouses filled with Soviet made small arms and munitions;
- Soviet made anti-aircraft guns and armored personnel carriers;
- a command center for clandestine operations equipped with radios, counterintelligence gear and cryptograptic equipment;
- documents detailing Soviet, Cuban, North Korean and Bulgarian support for Grenada's Marxists.

The evidence pointed towards the increased involvement of the Soviet Union and its Cuban surrogate in Central and South America. The weapons captured on Grenada were far in excess of Grenada's defense requirements. There remained only the possibility that they were to be transhipped to another location in the Caribbean basin. Once construction at the Point Salines air-field and port facility were completed, enormous amounts of weapons and

or for further destabilization and radicalization in the area.

ammunition could have been transhipped to destinations in Central and South America.

The evidence tells us what the Soviets and Cubans were doing in Grenada, but it won't answer why they were there. Russia has no vital interests in an island best known for its nutmeg crop. Nor was Grenada important to the defense of the Soviet Union, some 7,000 miles away, or to Cuba its nearest communist neighbor. So why were the Russians there? The question goes unanswered. We are left to draw the conclusion that the Soviets saw an opportunity to use Grenada as a base to increase their subversive activities in the region.

The subversion was aimed at encouraging, directing and exploiting leftist groups in countries where Moscow sees a potential for bringing revolutionary regimes to power. As revolutionary regimes come to power, Moscow would be achieving its overriding national goal: the extension of Soviet influence and domination at the expense of the United States. If Soviet inspired subversion, supplied from their base in Grenada, had gone unchecked some

future President might have found the U. S. encircled to the South by a ring of hostile neighbors and by bases for Soviet forces.

Such Soviet communist expansion could lead to an extensive and permanent Soviet pressure and an increased Soviet strategic capability in the Caribbean area. This could create significant military consequences for the United States.

-- It could place hostile forces and weapons systems within striking distance of targets in the U. S.

-- It could place bases for use in covert operations against the U. S. and our neighbors.

-- It could provide for pre-positioning of Soviet equipment and supplies in our hemisphere.

-- It could allow the Soviet Pacific and Atlantic fleets to operate near our shores without having to go to the Soviet Union for maintenance.

-- It could threaten our Caribbean sea lines of communication through which a large volume of our goods -- including Middle East oil -- pass; thus endangering U. S. economic well being.

-- It could cause the U. S. to divert resources in manpower and material from other areas of the World to protect an area previously considered militarily secure.

The future threat has diminished thanks to the decisive action. But there remains the present danger of Soviet supported, Cuban inspired subversion. Cuban subversion already has ensnared Nicaragua and threatened El Salvador and Honduras. Unless this Soviet and Cuban threat can be controlled, there may be more Grenadas and Nicaraguas in the future.

In the future, the United States may have to take decisive action again in defense of our citizens, our interests, and allies. Operation Urgent Fury, the rescue of the 500 American students, inspired renewed confidence in the capability of our Armed Forces for decisive action. The rescue operation, which included Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force forces, was conducted with less than 48 hours notice. Bringing these different forces together and then executing a difficult mission without

any special training indicates the high level of talent and the high state of training in the Armed Forces.

In a message to the men and women of the Armed Forces, General John W. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, focused his praise on the readiness of our forces:

"On behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I want to congratulate each of you on a superb performance of duty in rescuing over 500 American citizens and in assisting the small island nation of Grenada regain its freedom.

"In less than 48 hours, you planned and executed a very complex joint operation which included land, sea and air forces. In a word, you were magnificent. You accomplished every mission and secured all objectives. And you did it with professionalism, pride, courage and with extraordinary care and compassion for the civilian population. Your actions demonstrated to the world that American military forces are well trained, ready and can react quickly and decisively.

"As you now depart for other missions in Lebanon, or return to home stations, or remain in Grenada to finish the job, know that your actions were in the highest traditions of the United States armed forces. The citizens of Grenada appreciate what you have done. The American students you rescued are grateful for your sacrifice and your country is proud of you. Well done."

Grenada was a demonstration of our ability to act decisively and quickly and successfully. It should help make potential adversaries think twice before committing themselves to a collision course with the United States, using Operation Urgent Fury as an example of how quickly U. S. forces can react to a crisis with overwhelming power. If the calculations indicate to the adversary that he cannot achieve his objective before the United States responds then he may cancel his plans. The ability to successfully deter crisis or conflict depends upon many ingredients, but none is more important than maintaining the high state of readiness

in our Armed Forces. Readiness is an essential ingredient for dealing with the dangers of today and tomorrow.

GENEVA: In Beirut, vital Western economic interests were at stake. In Grenada, it was the lives of American students; and in Geneva, the balance of power in Western Europe was at stake. Geneva was the scene of the latest struggle between East and West. Recently the struggle to reach agreement over the number of intermediate-range nuclear missiles to be based in Europe seemed to collapse when the Soviets walked away from the INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force) negotiations. On the face of it, the Russian walkout appeared to be a legitimate reaction to the news that the latest generation of U. S. missiles had just arrived in Europe. The Russian reaction, however, masked what is really at stake in the negotiations and reveals that the struggle for power has several perspectives.

Recent history provides one of the most important perspectives. Since 1977, the Soviet Union has more than

doubled the nuclear striking power of their intermediate-range missiles even though the total number of launchers has decreased. This marked increase in nuclear force capability was due to the deployment of the Soviet SS-20 (with three warheads on each missile) to bases within range of Western Europe.

The SS-20 missile has improved accuracy and reaction time, a high degree of mobility which increases its survivability and the firing launchers can be easily reloaded. With their modern SS-20 and the older SS-4 and SS-5 capability, the Soviets can launch an initial salvo of nearly 1200 nuclear warheads.

During the time that the Soviets were replacing their missiles, U. S. and Western Europe missile forces remained essentially unchanged. Only now, six years after the initial Soviet SS-20 deployments, has the Western Alliance moved to catch up to Russian progress. Russian progress allows them a major advantage over the Western

Alliance which must be reduced because it increases the likelihood of conflict and of escalation to nuclear war.

Recognizing that the West's aging, slow reacting, missile force could not threaten modern, fast reacting Soviet missiles could tempt the Soviets into launching a conventional ground and air attack on Western Europe. The Soviets would feel reasonably certain that the West would not react in time with its obsolete missiles. If the West did react, the Soviets could still unleash or threaten to unleash a nuclear war with their missile force to which the West could not respond.

The Western Alliance quickly recognized that the Soviet missile advantage weakened its deterrent and increased the likelihood of conflict. In response, the West pledged a dual tracked policy of eliminating the Soviet advantage and of negotiating a stable missile balance in Europe. When the U. S. announced several years ago plans to upgrade its existing Pershing missile force and deploy the new cruise missiles, Soviet reaction was swift.

The Soviets countered the West's dual tracked policy by announcing they would freeze deployment of their SS-20 missiles and appealed directly to the people of Western Europe to halt the announced U. S. deployments. In what has become the longest -- six years -- single psychological campaign ever mounted, the Soviets fed the fears of Europeans that new deployments would accelerate to Armageddon. The Soviets skillfully played, over the heads of the European governments, directly to the citizenry because they knew only massive domestic pressure could force a change in NATO's deployment policy. Meanwhile, the Soviets sidetracked and stalled the intermediate-range missile negotiations while waiting for the psychological pressure to build.

The Soviets lost this first round when U. S. Pershing and ground launched cruise missiles began to arrive at West European bases. Their response was to walk out of the Geneva negotiations in hopes the increased psychological pressure would halt the U. S. deployments. Obviously, the Soviets are looking to preserve their missile advantage later

in the negotiating rounds by steadily inducing psychological hysteria about nuclear war.

There is danger that the West can become so hypnotized of the threat of nuclear war that it loses sight of the threat posed by the Soviet Union. To do so is to forget that the Soviet Union is a very skilled opponent. The historical perspective of the Geneva negotiations reveals just how skillfully they approach their objectives and begins to shed light on the Soviet challenge to the U. S. and the Free World.

Geographically, the recent events in Beirut, Grenada and Geneva portray the global nature of the Soviet threat. It also reveals the multidimensional challenge the United States and its allies must face in the days ahead.

In the Middle East, the Soviet Union has been challenging U. S. vital interests through its surrogates. In the Caribbean Basin where there are no significant Russian interests at stake, they have challenged the U. S. in order to increase their influence at our expense. And in Europe, the

Soviet challenge covers the entire spectrum of conflict from nuclear war to psychological pressure.

When our minds have reached a rational explanation for Beirut, Grenada and Geneva we can begin to understand the global multidimensional nature of the Soviet challenge. It is a challenge that the Free World must meet. The price of peace is high but the cost of war is beyond rational calculation.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

August 23, 1983

37
MB
John Holt

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

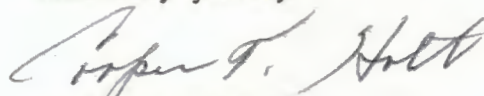
Dear Mr. President:

I certainly want to express my deep appreciation to you for taking time from your busy schedule to be with us during our 84th National Convention in New Orleans for the purpose of addressing our delegates. As usual, your remarks were well received by those in attendance.

This was certainly one of the best attended Conventions we have had in several years, and I hasten to add that it was participation such as yours which made it one of the best Conventions we have experienced in quite some time.

I know our National Officers join me in thanking you for your outstanding contribution to the success of our 84th National Convention.

Sincerely yours,



COOPER T. HOLT
Executive Director

CTH:nlp

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(New Orleans, Louisiana)

For Immediate Release

August 15, 1983

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO
84TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION OF
THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

file

Rivergate Exhibition and Convention Center
New Orleans, Louisiana

9:55 a.m. CDT

10:55 a.m. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all. (Applause) Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

Thank you for that warm greeting and that applause and since that applause is coming from veterans I have to ask, is it for how I am doing my job, or how I am doing on the Late Late Show in Hell Cats of the Navy. (Laughter)

Whenever I meet with the members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, I remember what the poet Yeats said: "Think where man's glory most begins and ends and say my glory was I had such friends." It's great to be among you once again. (Applause) As you know, someone in my shop originally turned down this invitation without my knowledge. Now it seems there were some logistic problems about flying from the tip of Baja, Mexico, to Louisiana, and then back to California this afternoon. Well, let me say, and I want them to keep their ears open and hear this, I would fly halfway around the world for the honor of meeting with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. (Applause)

I haven't forgotten your support in 1980, and all you have done since. And as a demonstration of our common goals, after my remarks today I am going to sit down here in front of this audience and sign the Emergency Veterans Job Training Act of 1983. (Applause)

Three years ago this week I stood before your convention and said nothing would mean more to me as President than to live up to your trust. I have tried to maintain the faith that our men and women in uniform must have in their commander-in-chief. The greatest privilege of this office has been to lead those who wear America's uniform. (Applause)

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And while Ann Griffiths is sitting here, let me just say: We are determined to account for every serviceman who wore America's uniform in Southeast Asia. This Administration will not forget their sacrifice, and we will not rest until their families can rest. (Applause)

Three years ago when I spoke to you, I pledged that peace -- a peace in which freedom could flourish and justice could prevail -- would be our highest priority. I also spoke of the need to provide a stronger defense for the American people. At the time, those were words of hope. Today, those words are the national security policy of this country.

I would like to report to you on the progress we have made in these areas, because there is no more appropriate forum for such a report. No organization has devoted more energy to America's well-being and security than the VFW. Your uniforms may be in mothballs, but your readiness to assist your country is spit and polished.

In 1980, the people made it clear they wanted a new direction in foreign affairs. Yet, changing America's foreign policy is a little like towing an iceberg. You can only pick up speed as the frozen attitudes and mistakes of the past melt away.

We began by letting the world know what we stood for once again. Winston Churchill said of his service in World War II, the nation "had the lion's heart. I had the luck to give the roar." Well, America is the lion's heart of democracy. We have an obligation to give that democracy a voice, even an occasional roar.

For too long our Nation had been moot to the injustice of totalitarianism. So we began speaking out against chemical warfare inflicted on the people of Afghanistan and Southeast Asia, against broken treaties, against the denial of human liberties. We began speaking out for freedom and democracy and the values that all of us share in our hearts.

Some critics said that this was a return to the rhetoric of the past. Well, if that is the case, then Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn and all of those who have suffered to speak the truth are my compatriots and I am honored to be counted among them. This Nation cannot simply ignore the suffering of oppressed peoples and remain true to our basic strengths and principles. We cannot follow a foreign policy based in the self-delusion that problems would not exist if we did not mention them.

We cannot abdicate our obligation to speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves.

And you know it is amazing. In my meetings with foreign leaders and their ministers, they have told me how good it is to know what the United States stands for once again. (Applause) They may not always agree with us but they respect us. And there is a growing recognition abroad that America once again will stand up for her democratic ideals. Our country is the leader of the free world, and today it is providing that leadership.

But our responsibilities are not only moral, they are practical. One of our most crucial national security objectives was to turn American's economic decline

around. Yes, that is a national security objective and it remains a key one. A country that is weak internally cannot meet its obligations externally.

I am pleased to report that we are economically stronger today than we were at your last convention. We have a growth strategy for America: We called it economic recovery. Some who didn't think it would work dubbed it Reaganomics. Well, inflation is down from double digits to 2.6 percent -- for the last twelve months, the lowest rate in sixteen years. The prime interest rate was 21-1/2 percent when we took office, it's about half of that now.

Taxes have been reduced and with our indexing reform, inflation will never again push families into higher and higher tax brackets. We don't need tax increases. We need spending restraint. And as I have said a few times lately, I know our program is working, because they are not calling it Reaganomics any more. (Laughter and applause)

Basic industries like housing, construction, and autos are getting back to business. In fact, Lee Iacocca has even paid back that billion dollar loan seven years early.

Unemployment is still too high but it is heading down. Last month's drop was the biggest in 23 years. More Americans are on the job than at any time in the U.S. history. Economists can argue about the semantics -- strong recovery, steady recovery, robust recovery. But what matters most is that Americans have regained confidence in the economy and we are going to make sure they keep that confidence.

Another of our objectives has been to restore America's defense strength. I don't need to educate this audience on how strength keeps peace, but it can be explained in one word -- deterrence. When I spoke to you last, the United States had planes that couldn't fly, ships that couldn't leave port, and military personnel who couldn't wait to get into civilian clothes.

Well, today, American's military is back on its feet and prouder than ever. We are acquiring and keeping very good people. Today, more of our new recruits are high school graduates than ever before in the history of our military. Retention is also way up. So far this year, 70 percent of those we hoped to retain have reenlisted. In 1980, the figure was only 55 percent.

Yes, the hard-hit economy accounted for a portion of these increases but the economy didn't raise the dignity and morale of our service men and women, or restore their pride in military service. I have heard it from generals and I have heard it from privates. That morale, discipline and unit cohesion have all improved dramatically. Once again, it's an honor to wear the uniform, and our service men and women know it. And I hope that makes you as proud as it does me. (Applause)

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New equipment is now entering the inventory; training is way up, maintenance backlogs are being reduced and combat readiness rates have surged.

We have made real progress. And I am delighted to report it is across the board. America is safer and more secure today than three years ago.

There is something I want to get off my chest and it deals with the headlines about the Pentagon paying \$100 for a 4 cent diode or \$900 for a plastic cap. Now what is missing, or buried in all of these stories about waste is that this Administration is the one that found these abuses, the abuses that have been going on for years.

It was Cap Weinberger's people -- Defense Department auditors and inspectors -- who ordered the audits in the first place and conducted the investigations. We are the ones who formed a special unit to prosecute Department of Defense fraud cases. And in just an 18-month period, the Department has obtained 50 convictions. And this doesn't count the number of settlements that have been made. (Applause)

Our task is to sustain our defense effort. Some would have us slow down just when we are about to achieve what our security requires. Remember the 1970s when there were those who argued that we should forego a wide range of modern weapons systems -- airplanes, missiles, a variety of equipment -- because there was something better on the drawing board for the future? Well, look where that got us. It got us where we were three years ago. You can't protect America and her people with drawing boards.

But look out, some people are still talking about drawing boards. They would have us forget the MX missile and wait for a small, mobile missile which wouldn't be operational until the 1990s. That small missile will provide better long-term stability and deterrence. I am for it and we need it. But drawing boards for tomorrow won't give the Soviets incentives to negotiate reductions in nuclear arms today. (Applause)

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So I am asking you, give us your strong support as we approach the next round of the MX this autumn. and together we will help keep America secure and free.

Another of our goals has been to strengthen our western alliances economically and militarily. We have significantly improved our economic relations with the industrial democracies. And I am certain the recent Williamsburg Summit will become known as the recovery summit. At Williamsburg we established a unified strategy for pursuing our common economic interests -- protectionism, to fighting inflation, and we agreed on security concerns as well. We agreed to cut the flow of military relevant technology to those who would use it against us and reduce dependence on any one energy source. We agreed to end the practice of giving subsidized interest rates to the Soviet Union. The minimum loan rate is now set four full percentage points higher than it was before.

And at home we are working to bring interest rates down. But we have pushed them up for the Soviets.

By the way, did you hear that the Communists now have a million dollar lottery for their people? The winners get a dollar a year for a million years. (Laughter) (Applause)

You know there is a story I would like to tell you. I have become a collector of stories that the Russians are telling among themselves which reveal a great cynicism about their system. And this one has to do with a commissar, they are telling, who went out to a collective farm, grabbed the first worker there that he saw. And he asked him about life on the farm and all. The fellow said, "It is wonderful, Commissar." He said, "Any complaints?" "No, no complaint at all." "What about the crops?" "Oh, the crops? Never been better." "The potatoes?" "Commissar, comrade, if we piled all the potatoes up in one pile they would reach the foot of God." The commissar said, "Just a minute. This is the Soviet Union. There is no God." He says, "That is alright. There are no potatoes." (Laughter)

Our western military alliances are stronger than they have been in years. In Europe, despite pressure and propaganda, NATO has stood firm in pursuing the dual objectives of arms reduction and defense. NATO today is more confident in its ability to preserve its strength and promote the peace. We in the industrial democracies have forged a clear sense of purpose for our economic and military safety.

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We still have disagreements, but for the first time in a long time we have unity on where we are going and I call that real progress. Of course, another of our objectives is arms control. We have launched the most sweeping proposals for arms control since nuclear weapons become a threat.

In our search for peace, we have more negotiations currently under way with the Soviets than any Administration in history. At the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks in Geneva, we have proposed deep cuts as well as extensive confidence building measures to reduce the possibility of any accidental misunderstandings. In contrast to previous agreements which simply dealt in ceilings, the Soviet Union now, for the first time, is willing to talk about actual reductions.

The same hard work is proceeding on intermediate range nuclear forces in Geneva. And in Vienna, the Soviets have shown some movement on the verification needed to reduce conventional forces. However, we must recognize that the search for real arms reductions involve complex, time-consuming negotiations. This is the occupational hazard of diplomats and especially those who deal with the Soviet Union. But if I can assure you we will keep chipping away and inching along. We are deeply committed to arms reductions. As we remain firm in our objectives, we will be flexible in our approach. And with the support of the VFW and the support of the Congress, we will achieve what we all want -- a reduction in nuclear weapons.

Our next objective concerns the United States responsibility as peacemaker. This commitment currently is most visible in Central America. In spite of the discouraging hype and hoopla that you often hear, quiet, solid progress is being made in Central America. Bob Curcio, recently returned from a trip there, and I believe he has reported to you on that trip. I know he has referred to news accounts, saying he thinks we are all getting a distorted view of what is actually taking place.

Well, Bob is absolutely right. You wouldn't know from some of the coverage that the greatest portion of our aid to Central America is humanitarian and economic. You wouldn't know that democracy is taking root there, and I don't blame the media alone because in many cases they are just reporting the disinformation and demagoguery that they hear coming from people who put politics ahead of national interests.

The countries of Central America are working hard to develop and defend their democracies. I am sure you recall the March '83 Constituent Assembly elections in El Salvador. Eighty percent of those eligible to vote took part in the elections despite incredible intimidation and threats from the guerrillas. In neighboring Honduras, an elected government took office last year. Costa Rica, of course, already is the democratic jewel of Central America.

We support democracy, reform, and human freedom.

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We support economic development. We support negotiations.

We support any avenue that will give the people of that region a more free and prosperous future.

"The problem in Central America is not the United States or United States policy." You see, there I go again borrowing from your National Commander because that is what Bob said. We are doing everything we can to build peace and prosperity. Our Caribbean Basin Initiative is designed to help the nations there help themselves through trade and private investment. The Soviet and Cuban Caribbean Basin initiative, on the other hand, is to brutally impose communist rule and deny individual freedom. Do you have any doubt which initiative the people in Central America would choose?

Because of this aggression, we also support a security shield for the area. The security shield is very much like a program that is springing up all over the United States -- the Neighborhood Watch. The Neighborhood Watch is where neighbors keep an eye on each other's homes so outside trouble makers and bullies will think twice. But our policy in Central America is like a neighborhood watch. But this watch does not protect someone's silverware. It protects something more valuable -- freedom.

Our policy is to help people toward a better life -- to help them toward liberty, to help them reverse centuries of inequities, to help them toward peace. And let me say, with all the conviction I can muster, America would not be America if we abandoned the struggling neighbors here in our own hemisphere. (Applause)

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Elsewhere in the world, we also search for peace. The tragic conflict in the Middle East has one bright spot -- peace between Israel and Egypt was finally concluded in April of 1982, thanks to the American diplomacy that went to work in the Camp David talks. Today our peace-keeping forces in the Sinai along with those of our allies are rarely mentioned because they are doing their job in keeping this once volatile area quiet. Unfortunately, the same is not yet so for Lebanon. But whatever progress towards peace we have made in that country is largely due to our Marines who along with peace-keeping troops from France and Italy are striving to give Lebanon a chance to pull itself together. Our diplomats continue to search for agreement among bitterly divided opponents.

Yes, America has an active national security program and it is working.

May I just interject here that there have been some charges made that we are building weapons and spending money on defense but we don't have any plan. So we are not just building weapons like you would go in and shop for something off the counter and say, "Let's buy that or buy that." That isn't true. We have carefully worked out a strategy that is based on what we think are all the possible contingencies that could affect our national security. And then our military planning and our weapons purchases are based on that strategy.

But to secure the peace and prosperity we all seek, we cannot sit back and hope that somehow it will just happen. We can't be apologetic when we are acting in our own and the free world's interests. We must pursue our goals with strong leadership and a clear sense of direction.

Let me explain by way of a true story what guides this Administration in its conduct of foreign affairs. Most of you fought in the Second World War or Korea or Vietnam. You fought in places like Anzio, and Pork Chop Hill, and Danang. A thousand painful stories emerge from war -- one tale of British POW's who built a Japanese railway in Thailand was made famous as the Bridge on the River Kwai.

Well, there really is a River Kwai. Near its banks is a cemetery, the final resting place for those who died building that bridge and that railway. Many of the graves markers are inscribed with nothing more than a name and a service number. Yet, now and then there is a small monument, built by a mother or father, or a widow, who trekked half way around the world searching for a marker with a very special service number. On one of these monuments erected by a woman named Irene are the following words: "To the world, you were only one; but to me you were the world."

My fellow citizens, my friends, let us always remember when we speak of America's security, we speak of individuals; when we speak of freedom, we speak of the freedom of individuals. I feel a sacred trust to America's soldiers and citizens alike. I feel a sacred trust to protect their lives and their liberty.

Our Nation also has a sacred trust -- to defend and develop democracy. And as long as this Administration is

responsible for the Nation's foreign policy, we will protect the freedom of our own citizens and we will pursue liberty for all people. (Applause)

Now, before I thank you for inviting me here I am going over and I am going to sit down at this table that you have probably wondered about . And I am going to hope (Applause) -- I am going to hope this microphone is turned on.

This bill which I am about to sign, the Emergency Veterans Job Training Act of 1982, will provide targeted job training for unemployed veterans of the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. The legislation is above and beyond the partisan jobs bill that I signed earlier this year and other Administration programs to promote opportunities for our veterans. This bill provides incentives to employers to train veterans by defraying part of the costs of training. But this is not just a training program. The employer who participates must employ the veteran on a permanent basis after the training is completed.

As I said earlier the Nation has a special commitment to those who have served in the military. And that commitment includes not only our continuing respect but practical assistance as well. This program will aid veterans at the same time it aids the many small businesses that will participate.

You have already heard one speech by me. So I won't give you another. But a couple of days ago I was at Fort Bliss in El Paso. As I drove through the base on the way into town the road was lined with servicemen and women and their families. I felt a great pride in them and what they are sacrificing for America. And I feel the same way about the veterans that we are about to help today. They did their best for us, now we must do our best for them. Now you can see that they are guaranteeing that I am going to sign this. (Laughter and Applause) And God bless all of you.

Thank you very much for letting me be here and God bless America.

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10:20 A.M. CDT
11:20 A.M. EDT