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SIGNED BY ANNE V. HIGGINS

Folder Title: YA-65 – Children’s Concern for
Peace in the Wake of Downing of KAL007

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YA-65

RE: Children's Concern for Peace in the Wake of Downing of KAL 007

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 30, 1983

1/13/84

Dear VnameV:

Thank you for your message to President Reagan expressing concern about the prospects for peace following the brutal Soviet attack on a Korean Air Lines jet. In his radio address on September 24, the President spoke to people throughout the world about the yearning of Americans for peace, security and freedom.

This message was broadcast over the Voice of America and was intended to reach the people of the Soviet Union as well. This address talks about the concerns you raise, so I am sending you a complete transcript of the President's remarks.

Again, thank you for writing. The President sends you and your family his best wishes.

Sincerely,

Anne Higgins
Special Assistant to the President
and Director of Correspondence

(9/27/83)

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Enclosure: 9/24/83 Radio Address

AVH/CAD/RDC/CAD

4A-
YA-65 9/27/83
Children's Concern for Peace in Wake of Downing of
KAL 007

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Again, thank you for writing. The President sends you and your family his best wishes.

Encl. September 24, 1983 Radio Address

AVH:CAD:RDC

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 24, 1983

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

Broadcast Studios
of the
Voice of America
in
Washington, D. C.

12:06 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: My fellow Americans and fellow citizens of the world, this is Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, speaking to you live from the Broadcast Studios of the Voice of America in Washington, D. C.

In two days, I will be going to the United Nations General Assembly to speak for a cause that people everywhere carry close to their hearts: the cause of peace. This subject is so important I wanted to share our message with a larger audience than I usually address each Saturday afternoon in the United States. So today I am speaking directly to people everywhere, from Los Angeles to New Delhi, Cairo, and Bangkok, and I'm attempting to speak directly to the people of the Soviet Union. I'd like to talk about ideas and feelings all of us share which I intend to communicate to the United Nations on Monday.

Let me begin by bringing you greetings from the American people and our heartfelt wishes for peace. In these times of stress, I believe that the people of the world must know and understand how each other feel, their fears as well as their dreams. We Americans are a peace-loving people. We seek friendship not only with our traditional allies but with our adversaries, too. We've had serious differences with the Soviet government, but we should remember that our sons and daughters have never fought each other in war, and if we Americans have our way, we never will. People don't make wars, governments do. And too many Soviet and American citizens have already shed too much blood because of violence by governments. The American people want less confrontation and more communication and cooperation, more opportunity to correspond, to speak freely with all people over our respective radio and television programs, and most important to visit each other in our homes so we could better understand your countries and you could know the truth about America.

The treasure we Americans cherish most is our freedom: freedom to lead our lives the way we choose, freedom to worship God, to think for ourselves, and freedom to speak our minds even to the point of criticizing our own government. We do not believe in censorship. When another government criticizes us, we know about it, and if they ever say something good, you can bet we'll know that, too. The trouble is, we don't always have that same freedom to speak to others, especially those who live in the Soviet Union, and one-way communication prevents us from better understanding each other. For example, the Soviet government has taken extraordinary steps to justify its firing on a Korean civilian airliner killing 269 helpless people from 14 countries. But I ask those who have been told the United States is responsible: If you're hearing the truth, why has the outcry been so intense from Members of the United Nations, the International Civil Aviation Organization, and why are pilots all over the world boycotting flights to Moscow? We have no quarrel with you, the Soviet people. But please understand, the world believes no government has a right to shoot civilian airliners out of the sky. Your airline, Aeroflot, has violated sensitive U. S. airspace scores of times, yet we would never fire on your planes and risk killing one of your friends or your loved ones.

MORE

Now, I guess the picture painted of me by the officials in some countries is pretty grim. May I just say, and I speak not only as the President of the United States but also as a husband, a father, a grandfather, and as a person who loves God and whose heart yearns deeply for a better future. My dream is for our peoples to come together in a spirit of faith and friendship, to help build and leave behind a far safer world. But dreams for the future cannot be realized by words alone. Words must be matched by deeds, by an honest, tireless effort to reduce the risks of war and the loss of life. In this era of nuclear weapons, no achievement could be more meaningful than a verifiable agreement that would dramatically reduce the level of nuclear armaments.

American negotiators in Geneva are offering fair-minded, equitable proposals in the interests of both our countries. In the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, we propose deep cuts in both the number of warheads carried by intercontinental ballistic missiles and in the number of missiles themselves. This proposal offered cuts too far below current United States levels. The Soviet government declined to consider them. We tried again. Last June, we proposed a more flexible approach. Then during the last round of talks in Geneva we presented a draft treaty responding to concerns expressed by the Soviet government.

Also, from the outset of the intermediate-range nuclear force talks two years ago, I made clear that the United States was ready to join with the Soviet Union in the total elimination of an entire class of intermediate-range, land-based nuclear missiles. That offer still stands. I regret that the Soviet government continues to reject this proposal. What could possibly be better than to rid the world of an entire class of nuclear weapons?

But in the effort to move the negotiations forward, we proposed an interim solution: Some number on both sides below current levels. Again, the Soviet government refused. I'm deeply aware of people's feelings and frustrations. I share them. And I intend to keep trying. On Monday I will go to the United Nations to propose another package of steps designed to advance the negotiations. All we seek are agreements to reduce substantially the number and destructive power of nuclear forces.

Yes, we insist on balanced agreements that protect our security, that provide greater stability and that are truly verifiable, but these requirements are the essence of fairness. They would provide greater security for all nations.

We, the American people, deeply yearn for peace. If our dreams and hopes are to mean anything, we must sit down together and in good faith let honest negotiations bring us a safer world. But I must speak plainly. Just as government censorship is a barrier to understanding, the inflexibility of the Soviet government on arms control is holding back successful negotiations. I have said to my own people, you have the right to expect a better world and to demand that your government work for it. This Monday I will have the honor to carry that message to the 38th General Session of the United Nations. It will be a commitment from the heart and one that I know all people share. For the sake of our children and our children's children, I pray that the Soviet government will not censor my words but will let their people listen to them, and then negotiate with us in good faith.

Thank you for listening, and God bless you all.

END

(12:14 P.M. EDT)