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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 2, 1985

RADIO ADDRESS
OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATION

Camp David

12:06 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: My fellow Americans, yesterday in Geneva American negotiators presented to their Soviet counterparts new proposals designed to achieve real reductions in the nuclear arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union.

My instructions to our negotiators also asked that this round of the negotiations be extended into this coming week so that our team can make a full presentation of our new proposals and so that the Soviets have the opportunity to ask questions about them.

I am very pleased that the Soviet Union has agreed to this extension of the talks. I know you join me in hoping that this will be a productive week in Geneva. Our new proposals address all three areas of these negotiations -- strategic nuclear arms, intermediate-range nuclear forces, and defense and space systems. They build upon the concrete reduction proposals American negotiators have had on the table since early in the talks, and they take into account expressed Soviet concerns.

Our objective since the start of the administration in 1981 has been to achieve real progress in reducing not only nuclear arms, but conventional forces and chemical weapons as well. We have been firm and consistent in our arms control approach. Just as important, we have placed great value on maintaining the strength and unity of our alliances and ensuring that the security interests of our allies are enhanced in these negotiations. And we have demonstrated flexibility in taking legitimate Soviet interests into account.

I am pleased to report to you that our strategy has been working. I believe we have laid the groundwork for productive negotiations in Geneva. The first sign of this was when Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze presented to me at our White House meeting in September a Soviet counter-offer to our own earlier proposals. The Soviet negotiators then presented this in detail in Geneva and our negotiators and our experts here at home have had a chance to analyze it carefully.

Based on this analysis I decided upon the new U.S. proposals and instructed our negotiating team to present them in Geneva. Judged against our very careful criteria for reaching sound arms control agreements, we found that the Soviet counterproposal had some flaws and in some ways was one-sided. But, as I made clear in my speech to the United Nations, the Soviet move also had certain positive seeds which we wish to nurture.

Our new proposals build upon these positive elements. One of them is the Soviet call for 50 percent reductions in certain types of nuclear arms. For more than three years we have been proposing a reduction of about half in the strategic ballistic missiles of both sides. We therefore have accepted the 50 percent reduction proposed by the Soviets.

At the same time we are making it clear that we have a

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safer and more stable world -- and if we're to have that, reductions must be applied to systems which are comparable. And especially to those which would give either side a destabilizing first-strike advantage.

We not only want to bring nuclear arms way down to equal levels in a stable way, we also want to decrease our mutual reliance for security on these extremely destructive offensive arsenals.

Thus, we are seeking to discuss at the same time with the Soviets in Geneva how together we can try to help make the world a safer place by relying more on defenses which threaten no one, rather than on these offensive arsenals. Each of us is pursuing research on such defenses and we need to be talking to each other about it.

I have written to both allied leaders and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev about our new proposals. And I have informed Mr. Gorbachev how much I am looking forward to our meeting later this month in Geneva. He and I will have a broad agenda at our meeting -- one that includes human rights, regional issues and contacts between our peoples as well as the Geneva and other arms control negotiations.

If we hope to succeed in our efforts to create a safer world and to bring about a fresh start in the U.S.-Soviet relationship, progress will be needed in all of these areas. And this can only be accomplished if the Soviet leaders share our determination. We're encouraged because after a long wait, legitimate negotiations are under way.

Now, we've had a proposal on the table in Geneva for quite a while. Now, the Soviet Union has offered a counterproposal, and we, in turn, have a new proposal now reflecting some of the elements of both of the others. And this is what negotiation is all about.

I can't give you any more details about our new arms control proposals because we have to let the negotiators work this out behind closed doors in Geneva. But I want to leave you with the four key objectives our American negotiators are seeking: deep cuts, no first-strike advantages, defensive research -- because defense is much safer than offense -- and no cheating.

Until next week, thanks for listening, God bless you.

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