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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 9, 1985

RADIO ADDRESS
BY THE PRESIDENT
OVER THE VOICE OF AMERICA

Voice of America Studios
Washington, D.C.

12:06 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: My fellow Americans, we're expanding the format of our radio broadcast today. During the next 10 minutes, I'll be speaking to the citizens of the Soviet Union over the Voice of America about the upcoming Geneva summit. My words will be directed to them, but I want you to hear what I say. My speech is also being broadcast to over 50 nations by the Worldnet Television Network.

So, good evening, this is Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, speaking to you from Washington about my upcoming meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev in Geneva and my hopes for a better relationship between our two governments.

Your leaders can freely appear on American radio and television, and be interviewed by our magazines and newspapers. So I was grateful for my recent and rare opportunity to speak with representatives of the Soviet press. While I appreciate that, only parts of the interview were published in Izvestia, and much of what was left out I think is important. So I wish to speak to you personally as a husband, father, and grandfather who shares your deepest hopes -- that all of our children can live and prosper in a world of peace.

I grew up in a small town in America's heartland, where values of faith in God, freedom, family, friends, and concern for one's neighbors were shared by all, values you also share. During my school years I worked during vacations, for a time on construction and then for several summers as a lifeguard at a river beach. After finishing my education I became a radio sports announcer, which led to acting in Hollywood where I was elected head of our actor's guild. I'm the only American President who was also president of a labor union.

Back then I had no intention of engaging in national politics. But America is a great country filled with opportunities. In the years that followed, including my years as Governor of California, and as President, I have not forgotten the values I learned as a boy. Nor have my fellow Americans.

Now, I know that much has been written in your press about America's hostile intentions toward you. Well, I reject these distortions. Americans are a peace-loving people; we do not threaten your nation and never will. The American people are tolerant, slow to anger, but staunch in defense of their liberties and, like you, their country.

More than once, our two countries have joined to oppose a common enemy. During our war of independence, Russia provided assistance to the distant American colonists. A century-and-a-half later, we joined together to defeat the common enemy of fascism. Before that, we were allies in World War I.

MORE

We believe that truth is found through debate and discussion. "Truth does not burn in the fire, or drown in the water." Our system is often uncomfortable for elected officials, because one of our proudest institutions is a free press. The press criticizes me, and sometimes it hurts, but that is their role -- to raise difficult questions and keep officials accountable to the people. But no one should mistake our freedoms for weakness.

We favor free and open dialogue not just for Americans, but for all peoples. We believe in freedom of the individual. Freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of the press are, as our Declaration of Independence says, unalienable rights of all men.

Ten years ago the United States and the Soviet Union, along with 33 other countries, signed the Helsinki Accords. We all pledged to respect human rights, permit our citizens freedom of speech and travel, and improve communication among the peoples of the signatory nations. America asks the world's leaders to abide by what they have committed themselves to do. As the world's two strongest nations, we owe it to the rest of humanity not only to keep our word, but to help find peaceful settlements to local and regional conflicts -- in Afghanistan, Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere.

We must also join forces against terrorism. There is no place in a civilized world for assassinations, terrorist bombings, and other mindless violence. I strongly urge you and your government to join us in combatting terrorism and ensuring that no country will offer succor or comfort to terrorists.

We have much to learn from each other. Americans have long been enriched by your cultural giants. The works of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Chekov, and Pasternak are taught in many American universities. Just as American authors from James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain and Jack London, to Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner are popular in your country.

I want expanded contacts between our two great societies, wherever there is mutual interest. I am particularly interested in increasing exchanges among our young people, for they are our future. We should open a dialogue between our nations, so leaders of each country would have the same chance to communicate to the people of the other on television. If more of your citizens visited us, you would understand that our people want peace as fervently as you do.

I hope my discussions with Mr. Gorbachev in Geneva will be fruitful and will lead to future meetings. We seek peace not only for ourselves, but for all those who inhabit this small planet.

We share borders with three countries -- Mexico, Canada, and the Soviet Union. We pride ourselves on our friendly relations and open borders with our two North American neighbors. And I hope the day will come when that narrow chain of islands stretching from Alaska to the eastern shore of Siberia will symbolize the ties between our two great people, not the distance between us.

Everything has a season. Let us hope as we near Christmas and the New Year that this will be the season for peace. Thank you for welcoming me into your homes. God bless you.

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