

SIGNING CEREMONY FOR I.N.F. AGREEMENT

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1987

THANK YOU. THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH
AND WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

THIS CEREMONY AND THE TREATY WE ARE
SIGNING TODAY ARE BOTH EXCELLENT EXAMPLES
OF THE REWARDS OF PATIENCE. IT WAS OVER
6 YEARS AGO, NOVEMBER 18, 1981, THAT I FIRST
PROPOSED WHAT WOULD COME TO BE CALLED THE
"ZERO OPTION." IT WAS A SIMPLE PROPOSAL --
ONE MIGHT SAY, DISARMINGLY SIMPLE. UNLIKE
TREATIES IN THE PAST, IT DIDN'T SIMPLY
CODIFY THE STATUS QUO, OR A NEW ARMS
BUILD-UP; IT DIDN'T SIMPLY TALK OF
"CONTROLLING" AN ARMS RACE. FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN HISTORY, THE LANGUAGE OF "ARMS
CONTROL" WAS REPLACED BY ARMS REDUCTION --
IN THIS CASE, THE COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF AN
ENTIRE CLASS OF U.S. AND SOVIET NUCLEAR
MISSILES.

OF COURSE, THIS REQUIRED A DRAMATIC SHIFT IN THINKING, AND IT TOOK CONVENTIONAL WISDOM SOME TIME TO CATCH UP. REACTION, TO SAY THE LEAST, WAS MIXED. TO SOME, THE "ZERO OPTION" WAS IMPOSSIBLY VISIONARY AND UNREALISTIC; TO OTHERS, MERELY A PROPAGANDA PLOY. WELL, WITH PATIENCE, DETERMINATION, AND COMMITMENT, WE'VE MADE THIS IMPOSSIBLE VISION A REALITY.

GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV, I'M SURE YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH IVAN (KRIH-LOFF'S) FAMOUS TALE ABOUT THE SWAN, THE CRAWFISH, AND THE PIKE. IT SEEMS THAT ONCE UPON A TIME THESE THREE WERE TRYING TO MOVE A WAGONLOAD TOGETHER. THEY HITCHED AND HARNESSSED THEMSELVES TO THE WAGON. IT WASN'T VERY HEAVY, BUT NO MATTER HOW HARD THEY WORKED THE WAGON JUST WOULDN'T MOVE.

YOU SEE, THE SWAN WAS FLYING UPWARD, THE CRAWFISH KEPT CRAWLING BACKWARD, THE PIKE KEPT MAKING FOR THE WATER. THE END RESULT WAS THAT THEY GOT NOWHERE, AND THE WAGON IS STILL THERE TO THIS DAY.

WELL, STRONG AND FUNDAMENTAL MORAL DIFFERENCES CONTINUE TO EXIST BETWEEN OUR NATIONS, BUT TODAY, ON THIS VITAL ISSUE, AT LEAST, WE HAVE SEEN WHAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WHEN WE PULL TOGETHER.

THE NUMBERS ALONE DEMONSTRATE THE VALUE OF THIS AGREEMENT. ON THE SOVIET SIDE, OVER 1,500 DEPLOYED WARHEADS WILL BE REMOVED, AND ALL GROUND-LAUNCHED INTERMEDIATE-RANGE MISSILES, INCLUDING THE SS-20's, WILL BE DESTROYED. ON OUR SIDE, OUR ENTIRE COMPLEMENT OF PERSHING II AND GROUND-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES, WITH SOME 400 DEPLOYED WARHEADS, WILL ALL BE DESTROYED.

ADDITIONAL BACKUP MISSILES ON BOTH SIDES
WILL ALSO BE DESTROYED.

BUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TREATY
TRANSCENDS NUMBERS. WE HAVE LISTENED TO
THE WISDOM IN AN OLD RUSSIAN MAXIM.
I'M SURE YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH IT,
MR. GENERAL SECRETARY, THOUGH MY
PRONUNCIATION MAY GIVE YOU DIFFICULTY.
THE MAXIM IS: DOVERYAI, NO PROVERYAI --
TRUST, BUT VERIFY. THIS AGREEMENT CONTAINS
THE MOST STRINGENT VERIFICATION REGIME IN
HISTORY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR INSPECTION
TEAMS ACTUALLY RESIDING IN EACH OTHER'S
TERRITORY AND SEVERAL OTHER FORMS OF ON-SITE
INSPECTION AS WELL. THIS TREATY PROTECTS
THE INTERESTS OF AMERICA'S FRIENDS AND
ALLIES. IT ALSO EMBODIES ANOTHER IMPORTANT
PRINCIPLE: THE NEED FOR "GLASNOST" --
A GREATER OPENNESS -- IN MILITARY PROGRAMS
AND FORCES.

WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THIS HISTORY-MAKING AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE AN END IN ITSELF, BUT THE BEGINNING OF A WORKING RELATIONSHIP THAT WILL ENABLE US TO TACKLE THE OTHER URGENT ISSUES BEFORE US: STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS; THE BALANCE OF CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EUROPE; THE DESTRUCTIVE AND TRAGIC REGIONAL CONFLICTS THAT BESET SO MANY PARTS OF OUR GLOBE; AND RESPECT FOR THE HUMAN AND NATURAL RIGHTS GOD HAS GRANTED TO ALL MEN.

TO ALL HERE WHO HAVE WORKED SO HARD TO MAKE THIS VISION A REALITY, THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS, ABOVE ALL TO AMBASSADORS GLITMAN AND OBUKHOV. TO QUOTE ANOTHER RUSSIAN PROVERB -- AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M BECOMING QUITE AN EXPERT IN RUSSIAN PROVERBS -- "THE HARVEST COMES MORE FROM SWEAT THAN FROM THE DEW."

SO I'M GOING TO PROPOSE TO GENERAL SECRETARY
GORBACHEV THAT WE ISSUE ONE LAST INSTRUCTION
TO YOU: GET SOME WELL DESERVED REST.

NOW, MR. GENERAL SECRETARY, WOULD YOU
LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS BEFORE WE SIGN THE
TREATY?

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