

**THE RHETORIC OF PRESIDENTIAL SUMMIT DIPLOMACY: RONALD
REAGAN AND THE U.S.-SOVIET SUMMITS, 1985-1988**

A Dissertation

by

BUDDY WAYNE HOWELL

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2006

Major Subject: Communication

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ABSTRACT

The Rhetoric of Presidential Summit Diplomacy: Ronald Reagan and the U.S.-Soviet Summits, 1985-1988. (December 2006)

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President Ronald Reagan participated in more U.S.-Soviet summits than any previous U.S. president, as he met with his Soviet counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev, on four occasions between November 1985 and June 1988. Prior to, during, and following each meeting with Gorbachev, Reagan often engaged in the rhetoric of public diplomacy, including speeches, statements, and media interviews. The four Reagan-Gorbachev summits accompanied significant changes in U.S.-Soviet relations, in the Cold War, and also within the Soviet Union. Many scholars attribute improved U.S.-Soviet relations to a change in Reagan's Soviet rhetoric and policies, arguing that he abandoned the confrontation of his first term for conciliation during his second term. Other scholars argue that Reagan failed to abandon confrontation and, consequently, missed opportunities to support the liberalization of the Soviet system. Based upon close analysis of Reagan's summit rhetoric, this dissertation contends that he did not abandon his confrontational policy objectives, but he did modify his rhetoric about the Soviets. Reagan reformulated the conventional Cold War rhetoric of rapprochement that emphasized nuclear arms controls as the path to world peace by emphasizing increased

U.S.-Soviet trust as prerequisite to new arms treaties. Reagan's summit rhetoric emphasized the need for the Soviets to make changes in non-nuclear arms areas as a means of reducing international mistrust and increasing the likelihood of new U.S.-Soviet arms treaties. Reagan advocated that the Soviets participate in increased bilateral people-to-people exchanges, demonstrate respect for human rights, and disengage from various regional conflicts, especially Afghanistan. Reagan adopted a dualistic strategy that combined confrontation and conciliation as he sought to promote those changes in Soviet policies and practices. During his second term as president, Reagan made his confrontational rhetoric less strident and also used more conciliatory discourse. At the same time, he subsumed his anti-Soviet objectives within his conciliatory rhetoric. This rhetorical strategy allowed Reagan to continue to advocate anti-Soviet objectives while at the same time seeking to promote improved relations and world peace. The findings of this dissertation suggest that existing scholarly views of Reagan's summit rhetoric and his role in promoting the liberalization of the Soviet system should be reconsidered.

DEDICATION

For Army Major Arthur D. “Nick” Nicholson, Karen, and Jennifer

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CHAPTER I

**INTRODUCTION: THE RHETORIC OF RONALD REAGAN’S SUMMIT
DIPLOMACY**

Ronald Reagan began his presidency with harsh words about the government of the Soviet Union. In his first presidential press conference on January 29, 1981, he criticized détente as “a one-way street that the Soviet Union has used to pursue its own aims.” He condemned the Soviets’ “promotion of world revolution and a one-world Socialist or Communist state,” and criticized what he described as the Soviet government’s view of morality in pursuit of its international goals: “[T]hey reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat, in order to attain that [a one-world Communist state].”¹ Seven years later during a U.S.-Soviet summit in Moscow, Russia, Reagan addressed the students and faculty of Moscow State University and espoused what appeared to be a very different perspective about the Soviet Union. In his speech, Reagan quoted famous Russian scholars, scientists, and authors. He embraced elements of Russian and Uzbekistanian cultures, extolled the virtues of the Russian people, and even praised General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev’s program of *perestroika*.² The audience, which consisted primarily of students who were members of the Young Communist League,³ responded to Reagan’s remarks with a standing ovation.⁴ The ABC-TV network’s daily program *Good Morning America* covered Reagan’s Moscow State University address. Peter Jennings of ABC News voiced what

This dissertation uses the citation style of the journal *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*.

would become a common journalistic and scholarly view about the apparent contrast between Reagan's rhetorical posture during his first term and that of his second term. According to Jennings, Reagan had "changed . . . to an enormous degree." In that same news report, Harvard University professor Marshall Goldman concurred with Jennings's assessment.⁵

Journalists and scholars have offered interpretations of the ways Reagan changed, the ways his approach to the Soviets changed, and possible reasons for those changes. For example, journalist David Ignatius argues that Reagan's first-term Soviet rhetoric made him "appear . . . a warmonger," but by the end of his second term, changes in Reagan's rhetoric made him "a hypocrite."⁶ Journalist Robert Wright asserted that Reagan realized that in Gorbachev he had a Soviet leader with whom he could hold summit meetings, strike deals, and sign treaties, and thus, Reagan altered his rhetoric and policies to take advantage of the times in order to enhance his image.⁷ Academics such as political scientist Beth A. Fischer,⁸ public opinion scholar Lee Sigelman,⁹ diplomatic historian Coral Bell,¹⁰ rhetorical scholars W. Barnett Pearce, Deborah K. Johnson and Robert J. Branham,¹¹ among others¹² suggest that Reagan shifted from a confrontational approach to a conciliatory approach vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Conversely, other scholars such as Cori E. Dauber¹³ and Janice Lynn O'Donnell¹⁴ argue that Reagan did not change his policies nor did he alter his rhetorical approach to the Soviet Union.

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the scholarly discussion about Reagan's rhetorical approach to the Soviets during his second term by exploring his discourse surrounding the four U.S.-Soviet summits in which he

participated between 1985 and 1988. This dissertation offers an alternative interpretation of Reagan's rhetorical approach to the Soviets during his second term—one that suggests that previous scholarly interpretations on that subject should be reconsidered and revised. Close examination of the rhetorical-historical record encompassing Reagan's involvement in the U.S.-Soviet summits reveals a complex rhetorical strategy that combined both confrontational and conciliatory discourse. Conciliatory rhetoric reflects a *détente*-like discourse explicitly or implicitly advocates decreased tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, increased international trust, and bilateral cooperation toward world peace. Confrontational rhetoric promotes changes in Soviet policies and practices on issues toward which Soviet leaders had traditionally been hostile: opening the repressively closed and secretive Soviet system, respect for the human rights of Soviet citizens, and cessation of Soviet military involvement in regional conflicts. This dissertation suggests that Reagan employed a dualistic rhetorical strategy of conciliation and confrontation throughout his second term in support of anti-Soviet objectives that he established in policies and espoused in public speeches in his first term as president. While Reagan extended the use of confrontational rhetoric from his first term into his second, his second-term rhetoric was often less strident. However, he continued to focus his public discourse on Soviet policies and practices that he wanted to undermine and that he wanted the Soviets to change.

Reagan's employment of confrontational rhetoric, however, did not prevent him from also utilizing conciliatory discourse. While he often employed the language of

détente and rapprochement, Reagan's conciliatory rhetoric subsumed his anti-Soviet objectives in ways that made those objectives less obvious. This rhetorical approach allowed Reagan to continue to pursue his hard-line, anti-Marxist-Leninist rhetoric while at the same time it enabled him to advocate objectives that appeared to be diametrically opposite his ideology; namely, détente-like reductions in superpower tensions and international cooperation toward world peace. Thus, this dissertation argues that Reagan neither abandoned his confrontational approach in favor of a conciliatory one nor did he fail to modify his rhetorical approach to U.S.-Soviet relations.

REAGAN'S SUMMIT RHETORIC: THE LARGER CONTEXT

In the short span of two-and-a-half years (November 1985-May 1988), Ronald Reagan and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, met face-to-face in four historic summits. No prior American president had met with his Soviet counterpart on so many occasions during the Cold War. However, Reagan's first term gave little indication that his second term might include such historic events. Not since Eisenhower's first four years in office had a President served a full term without meeting at least once with his Soviet counterpart.¹⁵ Reagan's first-term Soviet policy rhetoric had not been well-received by many critics who charged that he was exacerbating rather than improving U.S.-Soviet relations.¹⁶ Reagan had called the Soviet Union an "evil empire," described it as "the focus of evil in the modern world,"¹⁷ accused the Soviet "regime" of being "barbaric,"¹⁸ and predicted that "the march of freedom and democracy" would "leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history."¹⁹

Reagan's first-term Soviet policies promoted a massive military buildup, deployment of Pershing II and Tomahawk cruise missiles in Europe, research and development of a U.S. missile defense system—the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)—and implementation of the Reagan Doctrine. The Reagan Doctrine advocated support for anti-Communist insurgents, especially in Third World countries, in order to contain and roll back the expansion of Soviet military and political involvement in the developing world.

In contrast to his first term, during Reagan's second term U.S.-Soviet affairs improved significantly. The most notable change was a marked increase in communication at the highest levels of the U.S. and Soviet governments at four U.S.-Soviet summits and the remarkable events that accompanied those meetings. Very early during the first Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Geneva, Switzerland in November 1985, the two leaders agreed to hold two more summits in the near future, one in Washington, D.C. and the other one in Moscow, Russia. However, during their second meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland in October 1986, Reagan abruptly ended the negotiations and returned to the United States with no plans for a future U.S.-Soviet summit. Yet, Reagan and Gorbachev met for a third time just over a year later in December 1987 in Washington, D.C. to sign the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, the first U.S.-Soviet agreement to eliminate nuclear weapons rather than merely limit their increase. As rhetorical scholars Robert L. Ivie and Kurt Ritter note, "One of the greatest ironies of Ronald Reagan's rhetorical legacy in American politics is that his characterization of the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire' will be remembered as the

catchphrase of the first President to succeed in engaging the Soviets in a genuine program of nuclear arms reduction.”²⁰ The fourth Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Moscow, Russia in May and June 1988, presented Reagan with what had previously seemed the most unlikely of opportunities. On May 31, 1988 Reagan addressed the students and faculty at Moscow State University in what was the pinnacle of his summit rhetoric.

EXPLORING PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC SURROUNDING U.S.-SOVIET SUMMITS: A RATIONALE AND APPROACH

This dissertation promotes the view that presidential communication related to U.S. foreign affairs merits examination because those communications can be significant expressions of U.S. public diplomacy in support of a president’s foreign policies and because those communications are enunciated at the highest level of the U.S. government. Diplomatic historian and former Foreign Service officer Elmer Plischke argues that, “Although it is not expressly stated in the Constitution of the United States, the President—together with being chief of state and head of government, as well as commander in chief and head of the national administration—serves as ‘diplomat in chief’.”²¹ As political scientist Joseph E. Kallenbach explains, the U.S. Supreme Court recognizes the President “as the ‘sole organ’ of official communication for the United States in its international dealings.”²² Undoubtedly, the President is also the primary, though not the only, organ of “unofficial” communication for the United States in foreign affairs. Members of the U.S. Congress, political parties, lobby groups, non-

governmental organizations, and so forth are also free to express their views about U.S. foreign affairs and to direct their messages at foreign audiences. Yet, as Plischke notes, it is the president who “is legally and politically responsible for the conduct of foreign relations.”²³

Kallenbach explains that “official” presidential diplomatic communications are often transmitted directly between the U.S. State Department and the ministries of foreign affairs of other governments, but he also recognizes that the president can choose “more indirect means” of communicating with foreign nations. Kallenbach suggests that public addresses and newspaper and television interviews are among those “indirect” means of presidential communication to foreign nations.²⁴ This dissertation focuses on Reagan’s “unofficial” communication—his speeches, Saturday radio addresses, informal remarks, media interviews, and written responses to media inquiries that surrounded each of his four meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev. This dissertation uses Reagan’s “official” communications, such as his correspondence with Gorbachev that was transmitted through the State Department, as supporting evidence for interpreting Reagan’s “unofficial” rhetoric of public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy is an elusive term. It is often associated with programs directed by the United States Information Agency (USIA) during the Cold War—educational and cultural exchanges, international broadcasts through Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and so forth. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, a useful definition is one provided by Sherry L. Mueller, President of the National Council for International Visitors, who defines “public diplomacy” as “the efforts of a

government to influence public opinion in other countries—to establish channels of communication with specific audiences or with the general public.”²⁵ However, as political scientist Siobhán McEvoy-Levy explains, public diplomacy is not only “[d]irected towards other states, [and] their publics” but also towards “the initiator’s own public.” McEvoy-Levy asserts that “the primary vehicles of governmental public diplomacy are speeches, statements, interviews, strategic symbolic appearances such as wreath-layings, document-signings, foreign visits, and wider cultural, educational, or commercial initiatives and exchanges.”²⁶ In addition to the descriptions provided by Mueller and McEvoy-Levy, this dissertation also relies on a definition of “public diplomacy” provided by the Reagan administration. On January 14, 1983, in a confidential directive, Reagan described “public diplomacy” broadly as “those actions of the U.S. Government designed to generate support for . . . [U.S.] national security objectives.”²⁷

Thus, this dissertation examines Reagan’s rhetorical attempts to influence foreign and domestic audiences in an effort to generate support for his policies and goals concerning the Soviet Union. These discursive acts occurred before, during, or after each of the four Reagan-Gorbachev summits. Similar to McEvoy-Levy, the author of this dissertation regards the concept and the practice of “public diplomacy” to be fundamentally rhetorical.²⁸ As used in this dissertation, Reagan’s “summit rhetoric” refers to the public discourse that he employed in his public diplomacy surrounding the four U.S.-Soviet summits in which he participated.

Although the literature on presidential Cold War foreign policy rhetoric is legion,²⁹ we know very little about the presidential rhetoric of public diplomacy in relation to U.S.-Soviet summits during the Cold War. This is unfortunate for several reasons. As diplomat Dr. Ben C. Limb has observed, the management by governments of affairs between nations began to be “conducted on an open stage” during the twentieth century.³⁰ Ambassador Limb’s comment relates to what R. Smith Simpson describes as the “democratization of international affairs”³¹ during that period. U.S.-Soviet summits were among the most important international diplomatic events during the Cold War. Political scientist Dorothy Buckton James claims that with the “institutionalization” of international summits, presidential participation in those meetings became “routinely expected.”³² Furthermore, Plischke asserts that “[p]ersonal presidential participation” in international summits is among “the most significant . . . developments in the contemporary conduct of American foreign relations.”³³ In view of scholarship on the “rise of the rhetorical presidency” during the twentieth century³⁴ scholarship about how presidents used those major international events as a “world stage”³⁵ for their rhetoric of public diplomacy is surprisingly limited.

How did U.S. Presidents—whom political scientist Mary E. Stuckey describes as the nation’s “interpreter-in-chief”³⁶—function rhetorically as they attempted to frame and define Cold War summits? How did presidents use their rhetoric surrounding U.S.-Soviet summits to interpret foreign affairs to Americans and U.S. policies to the leaders of foreign governments? If rhetorical scholar Robert T. Oliver was correct when he wrote during the mid-twentieth century that diplomacy was “no longer merely

government speaking to government,” but rather diplomats “speak[ing] over the heads of one another to the listening world,”³⁷ how did presidents use their rhetoric surrounding U.S.-Soviet summits to interpret America and its policies to the peoples of the world, especially those of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations? These questions merit more scholarly attention than they have received.

While a U.S. president is not constitutionally required to participate in international summits, presidents have found that those events can have strategic value. James observes that “no President until Eisenhower considered summit conferences as anything but an emergency measure connected with wartime”, but “[s]ince Eisenhower’s Presidency, ‘summitry’ and ceremonial visiting have been justified on the grounds that they provide an opportunity to focus world attention on an important problem, to deal with that problem, to become personally acquainted with other chiefs-of-state, and to win their respect.”³⁸ Presidents have discovered summit meetings can be used strategically as a means of advocating foreign policy objectives. Yet, scholars have not answered questions related to the ways presidents have attempted to strategically exploit summit meetings as a means of pursuing their objectives. This dissertation examines Reagan’s summit rhetoric in an attempt to begin to provide such answers.

A U.S. president enjoys great freedom in foreign affairs,³⁹ but a president also faces domestic and foreign constraints on the rhetorical promotion of his foreign policy objectives. Rhetorical and political scholars have noted that in domestic affairs, presidential “power and resources are limited by the Constitution”⁴⁰ as well as by the competing interpretations of domestic affairs from members of the U.S. Congress,⁴¹

opposing political parties, and so forth. The president’s power and resources are also limited in foreign affairs by the sovereignty of other nations, international law, world public opinion, and the opportunity for leaders of foreign nations—who have their own agendas, foreign policy objectives, and national security interests—to offer competing interpretations of international affairs and of U.S. foreign policies. Hence, presidents need more than the power and resources their office provides if they wish to influence world public opinion, foreign leaders, and the peoples of foreign nations.

Rhetorical scholar David Zarefsky argues that the presidential search for greater “power and resources” in domestic affairs has led chief executives to rely on rhetoric, and to attempt to transform “existing rhetorical practices” into “strategic resource[s]” or to develop new ones. According to Zarefsky, presidents have sought to develop new resources by claiming “significant new powers that are rhetorical in nature,” among which are claiming electoral “mandates,” “going public,” and seeking “to enhance their leadership through a rhetorical approach to foreign policy.” By pursuing “a rhetorical approach to foreign policy,” presidents can actively involve the United States “on the rhetorical plane” in international affairs as well as “in the affairs of other nations,” while concomitantly “avoiding the large commitments of men and money that military or diplomatic intervention would require.”⁴² Involvement in international summits may have been viewed by Cold War presidents as a “strategic resource”⁴³ for increasing the involvement of the United States in international affairs as well as in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. That involvement may have been part of a larger foreign policy

rhetoric aimed at turning world opinion in favor of U.S. policies and/or against the Soviet government's policies.

Reagan's second term provides particularly significant opportunities to explore presidential summit rhetoric. The fact that Reagan did not participate in any U.S.-Soviet summits during the first four years of his presidency, and then held four summits with his Soviet counterpart within a thirty-month period during after his re-election suggests that Reagan engaged in a more rhetorical foreign policy during his second term. He initiated the first summit by sending a written invitation to Gorbachev in March 1985 to participate in such a meeting (what became the Geneva Summit later that year). Reagan also initiated another summit by inviting Gorbachev early in their discussions at the Geneva Summit to come to Washington, D.C., which in 1987 became the third Reagan-Gorbachev summit.⁴⁴ There may be evidence in Reagan's summit rhetoric that he attempted to use those meetings as strategic resources in a larger rhetorical foreign policy. The four separate but similar U.S.-Soviet summits occurred in different historical contexts, had distinctly different "results," and were accompanied by radical changes not only in U.S.-Soviet relations and the Cold War but also within the Soviet Union.

By examining Reagan's summit rhetoric this dissertation seeks to contribute to the scholarly understanding of how Reagan functioned rhetorically in his role as diplomat-in-chief. How did Reagan rhetorically attempt to influence public opinion in foreign countries and in the United States? How did he rhetorically attempt to establish channels of communication with specific audiences, and who were those audiences? In

what ways did Reagan rhetorically attempt to gain understanding and support from various audiences for his Soviet policy objectives? How did Reagan rhetorically frame and define U.S.-Soviet affairs and the quest for world peace? How did he rhetorically attempt to influence the domestic and/or international behavior of the USSR? And, in what ways did Reagan rhetorically attempt to use U.S.-Soviet summits as a strategic resource in efforts to accomplish those rhetorical objectives?

A REVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH LITERATURE

The following section of the chapter addresses the scholarly literature on the speech of diplomacy as well as the scholarly literature related to Reagan's rhetorical approach to the Soviet government during his second term as president. The primary focus of the present project is to contribute to the scholarly discussion about Reagan's rhetorical approach to the Soviets during his second presidential term, but as a secondary contribution this dissertation also seeks to extend the scholarly exploration of the speech of diplomacy to include how national leaders such as presidents of the United States use rhetoric in their public diplomacy. The following review will inform the analyses of Reagan's summit rhetoric in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

The Speech of Diplomacy

In 1950, speech scholar Robert T. Oliver predicted, "On this shrinking globe, neither in peace nor in war will diplomatic speech falter in the accelerating pace of its increasingly vital significance to human survival."⁴⁵ Thus, Oliver urged rhetoricians to

conduct “research in diplomatic speech” in an effort to “determine how speech operates in international relations.”⁴⁶ “Diplomacy utilizes many means, but fundamental among them,” Oliver argues, “is *speech*.”⁴⁷ Diplomat Ben C. Limb concurred when he wrote to readers of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, “Diplomacy is above all a profession of words—written and spoken.”⁴⁸ More than half a century later, however, the rhetoric of diplomacy remains nearly as “undefined and unsurveyed” as it was when Oliver originally advocated that “the research task should be undertaken.”⁴⁹ Although Oliver penned his recommendations near the inception of the Cold War, the importance of speech in diplomacy has not ceased. Indeed, it can be argued that because the Cold War ended the way it did—without a nuclear conflagration—there is compelling justification to study the rhetoric of diplomacy from that period.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, communication journals in the United States reflected an increased interest in the speech of diplomacy.⁵⁰ Scholars who turned their attention to diplomatic rhetoric during that period, however, focused on speech at the ministerial and ambassadorial levels and the various levels of the U.S. Foreign Service.⁵¹ Scholars have not considered how the speech of diplomacy might be altered if the rhetor is a head of state rather than an agent of the head of state (e.g., the President of the United States, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Britain’s Prime Minister, and so forth as contrasted with the U.S. Secretary of State, the Soviet Foreign Minister, or the British Foreign Secretary, ambassadorial representatives, and so forth). Thus, scholars have not considered how the direct involvement of a head

of state might transform the character, nature, forms, or functions of diplomatic discourse.

Oliver's work focuses primarily on describing the characteristics of the speech of diplomacy, the nature of audiences to whom that speech is directed, and the contexts in which the speech of diplomacy is employed. Oliver's provides a summary list of what he describes as "certain special characteristics" of diplomatic speech:

(1) that it must be directed simultaneously at diverse audiences and seek different reactions from each; (2) that it must maintain a nice and shifting balance between incitement to war and predictions of peace; (3) that it must seek for stereotyped judgments of world affairs while yet being alert to the possibility that the public must be persuaded perhaps over-night to reverse these stereotyped responses; (4) that it must always contain a concealed but adequate loophole for escape from whatever policy is being proclaimed; (5) that it operates in a depersonalized plane or shadow world, far removed from the actual areas where the speeches are prepared or where the significant responses occur; (6) that it must be caustic as well as conciliatory, . . . and (7) that it abounds in rationalistic justification.⁵²

Elsewhere in the same article Oliver describes the fourth characteristic in different terms: diplomatic speech contains "ambiguity" while at the same time attempts to be "forthright."⁵³

The characteristics of the speech of diplomacy might also be referred to as rhetorical strategies. The works of Oliver and other scholars who have written about the speech of diplomacy, however, focus primarily on identifying those special characteristics, and when examples are offered they are rarely from presidential speeches of diplomacy. That is not to say that Oliver is unaware of the strategic nature of diplomatic discourse. He recognizes that "[t]he speech of diplomacy is subject to strategic considerations as rigorous and complex as those applied to armed forces." He

adds that “[k]nowing what to say and how and when to say it is of an importance parallel to knowing what kind of armed force to mobilize and how and when to employ it.”⁵⁴ In Cold War diplomatic discourse, as speech scholar Nanci Rebecca Wintrub Gerstman notes, “the *idea* becomes an important weapon,”⁵⁵ or as Oliver expresses it, “words are prime movers,” and “those who coin and use phrases are as truly warriors . . . as are those who manufacture and pilot airplanes.”⁵⁶ Such views of the Cold War, its discourse, and its rhetorical “warriors” stress the need to closely examine the discursive strategies and tactics employed in the speech of diplomacy. The existing research literature unfortunately lacks an examination of the rhetorical role of the president as diplomat-in-chief and, consequently, sheds little light on the president’s use of diplomatic speech surrounding Cold War summits.

Although Oliver divides international audiences into “home” or “domestic,” “enemy” or “hostile,” and “various ‘neutral’ audiences,”⁵⁷ and argues that these “three audiences [are] always ultimately addressed in diplomatic speaking,”⁵⁸ he notes that there can be “multiple differences”⁵⁹ within each of these audiences. With the rise of mass media, an international rhetor must account for what Gerstman describes as the “multiplication of audiences” created by that media.⁶⁰ Though needing to direct different messages to various audiences in a single address may be difficult for diplomats,⁶¹ according to Gerstman, diplomatic speakers have also found in mass communication and international organizations like the United Nations new opportunities to “reach the world” in efforts to “influence world opinion.” Because of the development of new opportunities to reach new audiences, Gerstman recognizes that

public opinion has “emerged as an important consideration in foreign policy decisions.” As proof of the value of world opinion to global superpowers during the Cold War, Gerstman suggests that, “One has but to note the jockeying for prestige between Soviet Russia and the United States in their bid for world approval.”⁶²

Oliver suggests that there are, broadly speaking, three contexts in which the speech of diplomacy is used: (1) public addresses to mass audiences, (2) group discussions in meetings at international conferences, and (3) person-to-person consultations.⁶³ This dissertation is primarily concerned with those contexts in which Reagan addressed “the public,” whether his communication was a radio broadcast to the people of Western Europe, a nationally televised address, remarks after a meeting with a group of political activists in the White House, an interview with a small group of media representatives, and so forth. Oliver asserts that in order to increase the likelihood of effectiveness in the speech of diplomacy, the diplomatic rhetor must create clear “objectives for every speech or conference”⁶⁴ and tailor each speech “to its particular context.”⁶⁵ Oliver suggests that the following should be considered as among the most important factors in a diplomatic communicative context: (1) the geographic location (e.g., speaking in one’s home country, in a foreign country, and so forth), (2) the physical setting (e.g., public forum, private meeting, etc.), (3) the audiences (e.g., home, friendly, neutral, hostile), and (4) the communication “techniques” (e.g., speech functions, strategies).⁶⁶ According to Oliver, diplomatic “speech is effective solely in terms of its total context.”⁶⁷ Hence, the critic of Cold War diplomatic rhetoric should consider the “particular context” in which a speech of diplomacy was delivered as well

as the “total,” or larger, context in which a specific speech act occurred in order to better analyze diplomatic discourse.⁶⁸

Reagan’s Reversal: From Confrontation to Conciliation?

The most popular interpretation of Reagan’s second-term Soviet policy rhetoric contends that Reagan began his presidency as a “hard-liner” but abandoned that approach in favor of conciliation that aimed at U.S.-Soviet rapprochement. Political scientist Beth A. Fischer argues that “the Reagan administration pursued a hard-line policy only during its first three years in office” and “jettisoned its hard-line policy in 1984.”⁶⁹ Fischer asserts that October 1983 marked “the end of Reagan’s hard-line period,” and she points to Reagan’s January 16, 1984 speech on U.S.-Soviet relations as “the turning point in . . . [the Reagan] administration’s approach to the Kremlin.” According to Fischer, in January 1984, “Reagan began seeking a rapprochement” with the Soviets. Hence, Fischer posits a “Reagan reversal,” a “wholesale reversal from the administration’s initial confrontational posture toward Moscow.” She argues that “Washington’s new conciliatory policy led directly to the Geneva Summit meeting in November 1985.” Fischer’s book, *The Reagan Reversal*, is intended to be an analysis of Reagan’s Soviet policy, rather than Reagan’s rhetoric, but she unavoidably enters into the analysis of Reagan’s rhetoric because of the evidence she uses. For example, Fischer states that the “book is primarily concerned with the Reagan administration’s *stated* policy toward the Soviet Union.” She reports that the book relies upon “policy

statements, as recorded in *The Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*” as evidence for its claims of Reagan’s reversal.⁷⁰

Similar to Fischer, public opinion scholar Lee Sigelman asserts that Reagan “proclaim[ed] a new spirit of cooperation and trust” between the superpowers after the 1985 Geneva Summit. However, he portrays Reagan’s pursuit of improved relations with the USSR as a “turnabout” in Reagan’s “longtime . . . [advocacy] of a hard-line American posture toward the Soviet Union.”⁷¹ Sigelman avers that Reagan’s participation in the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty was an “out-of-character” action for Reagan. According to Sigelman, Reagan’s action disarmed the opposition to the INF treaty “by altering the definition of a situation from one in which the president is seen as acting on the basis of long-standing predilections to one in which his abrupt departure from the well-trod path implies that he must have had unusually compelling reasons for acting as he did.”⁷² Sigelman’s study offers a valuable social scientific perspective and analyzes data from a national survey by Market Opinion Research (MOR). Unfortunately, Sigelman does not rely on any public statements made by Reagan as evidence of a “turnabout” in Reagan’s approach to the Soviet Union.

In her book, *The Reagan Paradox*, diplomatic historian Coral Bell asserts that “the Reagan policies in the whole area of arms and arms control may be seen as a particularly striking instance of a reversal of signals by the administration.” Bell argues that Reagan’s “initial signal was ‘more arms, less arms control (if any)’.” Bell suggests that by 1987-1988, Reagan was pursuing détente with the Soviets, an approach to U.S.-

Soviet relations that Reagan previously criticized.⁷³ Bell offers the following as a possible explanation for Reagan's reversal:

Part of the reason for the dramatic reversal of signals in this field was perhaps that a President with too short an attention-span to master his brief on so complex an issue as the long-range strategic implications of arms-control proposals, had not been able to match the adroitness and flexibility of Mr [sic] Gorbachev, who seemed able to make more radical changes in the Soviet position than any of his predecessors.⁷⁴

Similar to Bell's contention, communication scholars W. Barnett Pearce, Deborah K. Johnson and Robert J. Branham argue that Gorbachev simply outmaneuvered Reagan in summit negotiations, thus "opening a window into another discursive space in which negotiations . . . [could] take place" and through which Reagan had no choice but to follow. Pearce and his colleagues argue that Gorbachev "orchestrated" a successful effort through which Reagan was "rhetorically ambushed" at the Reykjavík Summit. That "ambush" allowed Gorbachev to maneuver Reagan "into publicly rejecting an elimination of all nuclear weapons." According to Pearce and his colleagues, Gorbachev's rhetorical maneuver allowed him to "delegitimize the confrontational rhetoric in which Reagan had argued" and to reverse "public opinion around the world," thereby positioning himself, rather than Reagan, as "the advocate of peace."⁷⁵

While this dissertation contends that Fischer's "reversal" thesis is mistaken, the dissertation accepts Fischer's argument that, whatever else Reagan may have delegated, he took charge of the U.S.'s Soviet policy. According to Fischer, Reagan pursued his own views on numerous foreign policy issues even when those views ran counter to his advisers' positions, to the views of his good friend British Prime Minister Margaret

Thatcher, to American public opinion, or to his campaign handlers' advice. Fischer claims that "When it came to matters of principle, or issues that especially interested him, President Reagan could be resolute. Relations with the Soviet Union became just such an issue." Fischer builds a strong case for Reagan's initiative in creating greater communication and contact at the highest levels of government in the United States and the Soviet Union.⁷⁶ This aspect of Fischer's work compliments the view in this dissertation that Reagan was actively involved in the formulation of his rhetoric of public diplomacy surrounding his personal meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev.

There are other scholarly works that, even though they are not primarily examinations of Reagan's rhetorical approach to the USSR during his second term, accept the perspective represented in the literature reviewed above. For example, historian Chester J. Pach Jr. explicitly accepts Fischer's view that "the Reagan administration revised its tough policies and instead pursued moderate efforts to engage the Soviets."⁷⁷ Alan P. Dobson, professor of politics and Director of the Institute of Transatlantic, European and American Studies at the University of Dundee, Scotland, promotes the perspective that in November 1983 "Reagan began to shift his stance and look for negotiation rather than confrontation."⁷⁸

A common thread in this scholarly literature is the view that Reagan changed his approach—his policy and/or his rhetorical approach—to the Soviets at some point during his two-term presidency. A second common thread is that the change Reagan implemented was a reversal from a confrontational approach to a conciliatory approach. Those claims appear to assume that the possibility of Reagan's pursuit of improved

relations with the Soviets was mutually exclusive to the concomitant maintenance of a hard-line posture toward the Soviet Union. In contrast, this dissertation argues that Reagan modified his original hard-line rhetorical posture when he decided that the best way to deal with the Soviet Union was to use a combination of conciliatory and confrontational rhetoric as a means of inducing changes in repressive Soviet policies and practices. This dissertation seeks to demonstrate that such a rhetorical modification was possible without Reagan needing to reverse his rhetorical approach or to reverse his long-held goal of ending Soviet Communism.

Reagan's Refusal: A Failure to Abandon Confrontation?

Although less popular, another significant scholarly perspective of Reagan's second-term rhetorical approach to the USSR claims that Reagan failed to revise his approach to the Soviet government. For example, rhetorical scholar Cori Dauber asserts that the Reagan administration maintained a "business as usual" approach in late 1987 and 1988. Dauber concludes that "rejecting the reality of change means the loss of historic opportunities." Like Bell, Dauber is primarily interested in the arms control debate surrounding the ratification of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty. Her article refers to "American rhetoric" and "the rhetorical strategies employed by the Reagan administration" to support the claim that "the [Reagan] administration sought to deny the existence of real change within the Soviet Union" in late 1987 and 1988. Dauber argues that this "rhetoric of denial" risked "the loss of a unique opportunity to support liberalization." Dauber's study does not consider Reagan's

rhetoric surrounding the December 1987 Washington Summit at which the ceremony for the signing of the INF treaty was the centerpiece of the events on that summit's first day. Dauber limits her examination of Reagan's rhetoric to his publication of the *National Security Strategy of the United States*. This limitation leaves open the possibility that Reagan's Washington Summit rhetoric was different from the communicative texts Dauber examined, which she describes as "the rhetoric of military spokespeople and their supporters in defense of ratification."⁷⁹

Rhetorical scholar Janice Lynn O'Donnell claims that "Reagan's rhetoric toward the Soviet Union did not change," and that, "Driven by and exploiting the resources of hostility toward the Soviet Union, Reagan could not anticipate or appreciate the implications of *glasnost* for the Soviet Union because the argumentative framework he used throughout the eight years of his administration cast the Soviet Union as an evil and unchanging enemy." Similar to Dauber, O'Donnell concludes that Reagan's rhetoric "limited his ability to respond to change in the Soviet Union" and this limitation resulted in Reagan "miss[ing] the chance to create opportunities of meaningful cooperation between the US and the USSR, or to capitalize on the opportunities that *glasnost* and *perestroika* afforded him."⁸⁰ The analysis of Reagan's summit rhetoric presented in this dissertation suggests that Dauber's and O'Donnell's conclusions may need to be re-examined and revised.

PROCEDURE

Having thus far established the focus and purpose of this dissertation, the remainder of this chapter addresses the procedure of analysis used in this study and provides an overview of the remaining chapters. This dissertation provides a rhetorical-historical analysis of four cases studies of Ronald Reagan's rhetoric of public diplomacy surrounding U.S.-Soviet summits: (1) the November 1985 Geneva Summit, (2) the October 1986 Reykjavik Summit, (3) the December 1987 Washington Summit, and (4) the May and June 1988 Moscow Summit. The time period under examination is limited from March 1985 to May 1988. March 1985 was the month when Gorbachev succeeded Konstantin Chernenko as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and when Reagan sent a letter to Gorbachev inviting him to a summit in Washington, D.C. May 31, 1988 was the day Reagan's summit rhetoric culminated in his address to the students and faculty of Moscow State University.

Analysis of the rhetorical situations and the rhetoric of Reagan's public diplomacy relies, when available, on primary sources including A) documents from the archives at the Ronald Reagan Library (speech drafts, speech "back-up" material, internal memoranda, and so forth), B) interviews with former Reagan staff primarily responsible for drafting speech texts, including a former chief of speechwriting and two of Reagan's former speechwriters, and C) published primary materials, especially texts of Reagan's statements from the *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, as well as national security documents, and memoirs of some individuals on both sides of

the U.S.-USSR summits. Primary research materials are supplemented with information from secondary materials (scholarly literature and journalistic accounts).

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Chapter II provides an analysis of the larger context for Reagan's summit rhetoric based on examination of (1) National Security Decision Directives issued during Reagan's first term, (2) Reagan's "four-part agenda" that developed out of his National Security Decision Directives during his first term and that provided a rhetorical framework for his summit rhetoric, (3) Soviet obstacles, historical and ideological, that Reagan faced in promoting his four-part agenda, and (4) internal dissonance created by competing views of the more ideologically hard-line and the more pragmatic cold warriors in Reagan's White House. The chapters on specific summits typically discuss the rhetorical situation of a summit, Reagan's significant pre-summit speeches, his speeches during a summit, and his significant post-summit speeches. Chapter III examines Reagan's Geneva Summit rhetoric; Chapter IV examines Reagan's Reykjavík Summit rhetoric; Chapter V examines Reagan's Washington Summit rhetoric; and Chapter VI examines Reagan's address at Moscow State University as the pinnacle of his summit rhetoric. Chapter VII provides a summary and comparison of Reagan's rhetoric surrounding each of the four summits. That chapter also discusses ways this dissertation contributes to the scholarly understanding of both Reagan's summit rhetoric during his second presidential term and the broader topic of presidential speech of diplomacy, and it closes with suggestions for future research based on the findings of this dissertation.

This dissertation contends (1) that Reagan maintained a confrontational rhetorical posture toward Moscow throughout his second term in office, (2) that he complimented this approach with a conciliatory rhetorical posture, and (3) that this dualistic rhetorical strategy functioned to promote the anti-Soviet objectives established during Reagan's first presidential term. Those objectives included containing and reversing Soviet expansionism, promoting change within the Soviet Union toward more pluralistic political and economic systems, and engaging the Soviet Union in negotiations in an attempt to reach international agreements that would protect and enhance U.S. interests.⁸¹ This dissertation contends that although Reagan publicly advocated improving relations with the Soviet Union, he did not abandon his hard-line rhetorical approach to the Soviet government. This dissertation argues that Reagan's rhetorical strategies for improving relations with the Soviets enabled him to maintain his hard-line posture toward Soviet Communism and to continue publicly criticizing specific Soviet policies and practices. A remarkable quality of Reagan's rhetorical strategies was that they also permitted him to present himself as genuinely seeking to improve U.S.-Soviet relations and to establish international cooperation for the cause of world peace.

This dissertation contends that Reagan had a broader agenda than Gorbachev for Soviet-U.S. relations. Often referred to as Reagan's "four-part agenda," this plan focused on the issues of (1) human rights, (2) regional conflicts, (3) bi-lateral relations, and (4) arms control. In order to advance his larger agenda, Reagan re-cast arms control issues as a matter of mistrust rather than missiles. In doing so, he attempted to reduce the larger superpower conflict to a question of trust and attempted to portray world peace

as dependent upon international trust rather than just upon nuclear disarmament. Reagan argued that by first reducing suspicion and mistrust, the superpowers would have sufficient confidence in each other to reduce their nuclear stockpiles. Reagan characterized each of the aspects of his four-part agenda as a central index of U.S. and Soviet willingness to build greater international trust and to pursue peace.

Reagan, like Gorbachev, focused his diplomatic rhetoric on the improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations and the achievement of world peace. However, this dissertation contends that unlike Gorbachev, Reagan subverted the prevailing idea that nuclear arms control agreements were the starting point for a peaceful conclusion to the Cold War. Reagan's discourse of peace operated on two rhetorical levels. On one level, Reagan's message aimed at what rhetorical scholar Martin J. Medhurst describes as "that amorphous animal called world opinion."⁸² Reagan's rhetoric functioned to demonstrate to various domestic and foreign audiences, including the people of the Soviet Union, that he was making a genuine conciliatory effort, as previously promised, "to seek an understanding" with the Soviets⁸³ and, thereby, to create a more peaceful world—one less likely to end in a nuclear holocaust. On a second level, Reagan's diplomatic rhetoric continued to challenge the ideological foundations and the political and military practices of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Reagan sought to counter Gorbachev's public diplomacy by casting doubt on Soviet claims to desire world peace and by challenging the Soviets to prove to the world at large that new Soviet leaders had changed, or were changing, the USSR's policies and not just its diplomatic style.

Before this dissertation takes up the in-depth analyses of Reagan's rhetoric surrounding each of the four summits, it is important to consider the larger rhetorical context in which those summits were held. That subject is the topic of the following chapter.

NOTES

¹ Ronald Reagan, "The President's News Conference, January 29, 1981," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1981* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1982), 57. This publication series is hereafter cited as *Public Papers* followed by the year and the page numbers.

² Ronald Reagan, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with the Students and Faculty at Moscow State University, May 31, 1988," *Public Papers, 1988*, 683-692.

³ Ronald Reagan, *Speaking My Mind: Selected Speeches* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 374.

⁴ For descriptions from eyewitnesses to the audience's response to Reagan's speech, see Jack Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), 302; Edmund Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan* (New York: Modern Library, 1999), 634, 636.

⁵ This quotation is taken from the Ronald Reagan Library's videotaped copy of President Reagan's Moscow State University address. The videotaped recording contains a

portion of the pre- and post-speech commentary provided by Peter Jennings, Charlie Gibson, and Marshall Goldman.

⁶ David Ignatius, “Reagan’s Foreign Policy and the Rejection of Diplomacy,” in *The Reagan Legacy*, ed. Sidney Blumenthal and Thomas Byrne Edsall (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 176.

⁷ T.R.B. [Robert Wright], “Legacy? What Legacy?” *New Republic*, 200 (January 9 and 16, 1989): 6.

⁸ Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1997); Beth A. Fischer, “Reagan and the Soviets: Winning the Cold War?” in *The Reagan Presidency: Pragmatic Conservatism and Its Legacies*, ed. W. Elliot Brownlee and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 113-132.

⁹ Lee Sigelman, “Disarming the Opposition: The President, the Public, and the INF Treaty,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 54 (1990): 37-47.

¹⁰ Coral Bell, *The Reagan Paradox: American Foreign Policy in the 1980s* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 73. Bell argues that Reagan shifted from despising détente to pursuing it with Moscow late in his second term.

¹¹ W. Barnett Pearce, Deborah K. Johnson, and Robert J. Branham, “A Rhetorical Ambush at Reykjavík: A Case Study of the Transformation of Discourse,” in *Reagan and Public Discourse in America*, ed. Michael Weiler and W. Barnett Pearce (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1992), 163-182.

¹² For example, see Chester J. Pach Jr., “Sticking to His Guns: Reagan and National Security,” in *The Reagan Presidency*, 85-112; Alan P. Dobson, “The Reagan Administration, Economic Warfare, and Starting to Close Down the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 29 (2005): 531-556; Gail W. Lapidus and Alexander Dallin, “The Pacification of Ronald Reagan,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 45 (January/February 1989): 14-17.

¹³ Cori E. Dauber, “Negotiating from Strength: Arms Control and the Rhetoric of Denial,” *Political Communication and Persuasion* 7 (1990): 97-114.

¹⁴ Janice Lynn O’Donnell, *Ronald Reagan’s Public Discourse on Change in the Soviet Union* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1992).

¹⁵ For an account of multi-national and bi-lateral U.S.-Soviet summits in which U.S. presidents participated between 1955 and 1985, see Gordon R. Weihmiller and Dusko Doder, *U.S.-Soviet Summits: An Account of East-West Diplomacy at the Top, 1955-1985* (Lanham, Maryland: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, University Press of America, 1986).

¹⁶ Strobe Talbott, *The Russians and Reagan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 10.

¹⁷ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida, March 8, 1983,” *Public Papers, 1983*, 364, 363. Hereafter cited as “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the NAE, March 8, 1983.”

¹⁸ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks to Reporters on the Soviet Attack on a Korean Civilian Airliner, September 2, 1983,” *Public Papers, 1983*, 1223-1224. Also, see Marilyn J.

Young and Michael K. Launer, "KAL 007 and the Superpowers: An International Argument," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74 (1988): 271-295.

¹⁹ Ronald Reagan, "Address to Members of the British Parliament, June 8, 1982," *Public Papers, 1982*, 747.

²⁰ Robert L. Ivie and Kurt Ritter, "Whither the Evil Empire: Reagan and the Presidential Candidates Debating Foreign Policy in the 1988 Campaign," *American Behavioral Scientist* 32 (1989): 436.

²¹ Elmer Plischke, *Summit Diplomacy: Personal Diplomacy of the President of the United States* (College Park, Maryland: Bureau of Governmental Research, College of Business and Public Administration, University of Maryland, 1958), 1.

²² Joseph E. Kallenbach, *The American Chief Executive: The Presidency and the Governorship* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 497-498.

²³ Elmer Plischke, *Diplomat in Chief: The President at the Summit* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 2.

²⁴ Kallenbach, *The American Chief Executive*, 497, 498.

²⁵ Sherry L. Mueller, "New Perspectives on Public Diplomacy," in *The Theory and Practice of International Relations*, 8th ed., ed. William Clinton Olson (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), 90. At the time she wrote this article, Dr. Mueller was Director of the International Visitor Programs Staff of the Institute of International Education (IIE) and an Adjunct Professor at the School of International Service of the American University where she taught courses on U.S. Public Diplomacy.

²⁶ Siobhán McEvoy-Levy, *American Exceptionalism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Public Diplomacy at the End of the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 3.

²⁷ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive Number 77: Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National Security, January 14, 1983,” in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 265.

²⁸ McEvoy-Levy, *American Exceptionalism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 2.

²⁹ Among the scholarly studies that deal in whole or in part with presidential foreign policy rhetoric during the Cold War are (in reverse chronological order): Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones, “Reagan at the Brandenburg Gate: Moral Clarity Tempered by Pragmatism,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9 (2006): 21-50; Thomas W. Benson, *Writing JFK: Presidential Rhetoric and the Press in the Bay of Pigs Crisis* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2004); Ira Chernus, *Eisenhower’s Atoms for Peace* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2002); Martin J. Medhurst and H. W. Brands, ed., *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2000); Denise M. Bostdorff, “The Evolution of a Diplomatic Surprise: Richard M. Nixon’s Rhetoric on China, 1952-July 15, 1971,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 5 (2002): 31-56; Robert J. McMahon, “Rationalizing Defeat: The Vietnam War in American Presidential Discourse, 1975-1995,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2 (1999): 529-549; Robert L. Ivie,

“Dwight D. Eisenhower’s ‘Chance for Peace’: Quest or Crusade?” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 1 (1998): 227-243; Martin J. Medhurst, Robert L. Ivie, Philip Wander, and Robert L. Scott, *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1997); Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Eisenhower’s War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1994); Enrico Pucci Jr., “Crisis as Pretext: John F. Kennedy and the Rhetorical Construction of the Berlin Crisis,” in *The Modern Presidency and Crisis Rhetoric*, ed. Amos Kiewe (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994), 47-71; Denise M. Bostdorff, *The Presidency and the Rhetoric of Foreign Crisis* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1994); Jeff D. Bass, “The Paranoid Style in Foreign Policy: Ronald Reagan’s Control of the Situation in Nicaragua,” in *Reagan and Public Discourse in America*, ed. Michael Weiler and W. Barnett Pearce (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1992), 183-202; Robert L. Ivie, “The Ideology of Freedom’s ‘Fragility’ in American Foreign Policy Argument,” *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 24 (1987): 27-36; G. Thomas Goodnight, “Ronald Reagan’s Re-formulation of the Rhetoric of War: Analysis of the ‘Zero Option,’ ‘Evil Empire,’ and ‘Star Wars’ Addresses,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 (1986): 390-414; Robert L. Ivie, “Speaking ‘Common Sense’ about the Soviet Threat: Reagan’s Rhetorical Stance,” *Western Journal of Communication* 48 (1984): 39-50.

³⁰ Ben C. Limb, "Speech: The Life of a Diplomat," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 43 (1957): 59.

³¹ R. Smith Simpson, "Speech and Diplomacy," *Today's Speech* 5 (1957): 14.

³² Dorothy Buckton James, *The Contemporary Presidency*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, Indiana: Pegasus, 1973), 127.

³³ Elmer Plischke, *Conduct of American Diplomacy*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand, 1961), 43. Plischke recognizes, "It is a misunderstanding of history to conclude that this [i.e., the direct involvement of heads of state in diplomatic affairs] is a new phenomenon; contemporary developments rather evidence the intensification of its use, the development of new forms, and popularization in the public consciousness" (43-44).

³⁴ For discussions of the "rhetorical presidency," see James W. Ceaser, Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey Tulis, and Joseph M. Bessette, "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 11 (1981): 158-171; Jeffrey K. Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987); Martin J. Medhurst, ed., *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1996).

³⁵ Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, "Summits and the Constitution of an International Public Sphere: The Reagan-Gorbachev Meetings as Televised Media Events," *Communication* 12 (1991): 252.

- ³⁶ Mary E. Stuckey, *The President as Interpreter-in-Chief* (Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, 1991), 1.
- ³⁷ Robert T. Oliver, "Speech in International Affairs," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38 (1952): 171.
- ³⁸ James, *The Contemporary Presidency*, 128, 129.
- ³⁹ James, *The Contemporary Presidency*, 127.
- ⁴⁰ David Zarefsky, "The Presidency Has Always Been a Place for Rhetorical Leadership," in *The Presidency and Rhetorical Leadership*, ed. Leroy G. Dorsey (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University, 2002), 23.
- ⁴¹ Mary E. Stuckey, *Slipping the Surly Bonds: Reagan's Challenger Address* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 6; Kallenbach, *The American Chief Executive*, 488-492.
- ⁴² Zarefsky, "The Presidency Has Always Been a Place for Rhetorical Leadership," 23, 24, 25, 28, 32, 33.
- ⁴³ Zarefsky, "The Presidency Has Always Been a Place for Rhetorical Leadership," 25.
- ⁴⁴ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 612, 637.
- ⁴⁵ Robert T. Oliver, "The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research," *Central States Speech Journal* 15 (1950): 24. Oliver was not only a pedagogue and a scholar of the speech of diplomacy but also a practitioner of such rhetoric. In addition to the numerous articles and books he wrote on the speech of diplomacy, Oliver was a speechwriter and publicist for Dr. Syngman Rhee, President of South Korea, and others in the Korean

government between 1942 and 1960. During the Korean War, and for several years thereafter, Oliver served as counselor to the Korean delegation to the United Nations. For a more thorough explanation of Oliver's involvement as a practical rhetorician in Korean affairs, see, Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee and American Involvement in Korea, 1942-1960: A Personal Narrative* (Seoul, South Korea: Panmun Books, 1978). Also, see Oliver's autobiography, Robert T. Oliver, "The Way It Was—All the Way: A Documentary Accounting," *Communication Quarterly* 45 (Spring 1997): 1-130. In addition to Oliver's articles on the role of speech in international relations, see Robert T. Oliver, *Culture and Communication: The Problem of Penetrating National and Cultural Boundaries* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1962); Robert T. Oliver, *Leadership in Asia: Persuasive Communication in the Making of Nations, 1850-1950* (Newark, New Jersey: University of Delaware Press, 1989).

⁴⁶ Oliver, "Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research," 24.

⁴⁷ Robert T. Oliver, "Role of Speech in Diplomacy," *Southern Speech Journal* 16 (1951): 213.

⁴⁸ Limb, "Speech: The Life of a Diplomat," 55-61.

⁴⁹ Oliver, "The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research," 24.

⁵⁰ There was a heightened interest in the speech of diplomacy in communication journals between 1950-1963, which decreased following the mid-1960s and has never really recovered. Between 1950-1963, twelve articles addressing topics related to the rhetoric or argumentation of diplomacy appeared in communication journals: Oliver, "The

Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 24-28; Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 207-213; Oliver, “Speech in International Affairs,” 171-176; Frank E. Walser, “Diplomacy, Discussion, and the Chairman,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 40 (1954): 43-48; Robert T. Oliver, “The Rhetoric of Power in Diplomatic Conferences,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 40 (1954): 288-292; R. Smith Simpson, “Reflections on Twentieth Century Diplomacy,” *Journal of Communication* 5 (1955): 131-135; Limb, “Speech: The Life of a Diplomat,” 55-61; Simpson, “Speech and Diplomacy,” 13-17; S. M. Vinocour, “Modern Diplomacy and Speech,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 21 (1957): 201-206; Robert T. Oliver, “The Varied Rhetorics of International Relations,” *Western Journal of Speech* 25 (1961): 213-221; Nanci Rebecca Wintrub Gerstman, “The People: An Added Dimension in Diplomatic Speaking,” *Today’s Speech* 10 (1962): 19-20, 33; Michael Prosser, “Communication Problems in the United Nations,” *Southern Speech Journal* 29 (1963): 125-132. In the forty-three years between 1964 and 2006, only a handful of articles have appeared in communication publications related to the rhetoric of diplomacy: Mary Ann Renz, “Argumentative Form and Negotiating Strategy in Three United Nations Security Council Debates,” *Central States Speech Journal* 38 (1987): 166-180; Paul Chilton, “Politeness, Politics and Diplomacy,” *Discourse & Society* 1 (1990): 201-224; Kimber Charles Pearce, “Narrative Reason and Cold War Economic Diplomacy in W. W. Rostow’s *Stages of Economic Growth*,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 2 (1999): 395-414.

⁵¹ For example, see Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 208; Oliver, “Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 25; Oliver’s scholarly discussion of diplomatic speech focused on those whom he describes as “broad categories of officials” whom “may be grouped loosely within the category of ‘diplomats’.”

⁵² Oliver, “The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 27.

⁵³ Oliver, “The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 26. For a further discussion of rhetorical ambiguity in the speech of diplomacy, see Limb, “Speech: The Life of a Diplomat,” 58.

⁵⁴ Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 207. For further discussion of the strategic nature of Cold War rhetorical discourse, see Martin J. Medhurst, Robert L. Ivie, Philip Wander, and Robert L. Scott, *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1997), 19-20.

⁵⁵ Gerstman, “The People: An Added Dimension in Diplomatic Speaking,” 33.

⁵⁶ Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 207.

⁵⁷ Oliver, “Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 25; Oliver, “Rhetoric of Power in Diplomatic Conferences,” 291; Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 208; Oliver, “Speech in International Affairs,” 171.

⁵⁸ Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 213.

⁵⁹ Oliver, “Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 25.

⁶⁰ Gerstman, “The People: An Added Dimension of Diplomatic Speaking,” 20.

⁶¹ Oliver, “Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 27. Also, see Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 209.

⁶² Gerstman, “The People: An Added Dimension in Diplomatic Speaking,” 33.

⁶³ Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 208. Also, see Oliver, “Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 25.

⁶⁴ Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 212, 213.

⁶⁵ Oliver, “Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 25.

⁶⁶ Oliver, “Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research,” 24-28; Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 207-213; Oliver, “Speech in International Affairs,” 171-176; Oliver, “Rhetoric of Power in Diplomatic Conferences,” 288-292.

⁶⁷ Oliver, “Role of Speech in Diplomacy,” 212.

⁶⁸ For a more detailed discussion of the importance of careful consideration of elements of a rhetorical context, especially when analyzing Cold War rhetoric, see Medhurst et al., *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology*, 19-22.

⁶⁹ Fischer, “Reagan and the Soviets,” 116, 117.

⁷⁰ Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 16, 3, 4, 49, 14.

⁷¹ Sigelman, “Disarming the Opposition,” 38.

⁷² Sigelman, “Disarming the Opposition,” 46.

⁷³ Bell, *The Reagan Paradox*, 73.

⁷⁴ Bell, *The Reagan Paradox*, 77.

⁷⁵ Pearce, Johnson, and Branham, “A Rhetorical Ambush at Reykjavik,” 163-164.

⁷⁶ Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 155-156, 138-140.

⁷⁷ Pach Jr., “Sticking to His Guns,” 107.

⁷⁸ Dobson, “The Reagan Administration, Economic Warfare, and Starting to Close Down the Cold War,” 553.

⁷⁹ Dauber, “Negotiating from Strength,” 108, 109, 97, 108, 97, 108, 112, 98.

⁸⁰ O’Donnell, “Ronald Reagan’s Public Discourse on Change in the Soviet Union,” 176, 11, iii, 180.

⁸¹ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive Number 75: U.S. Relations with the USSR, January 17, 1983,” in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 255.

⁸² Martin J. Medhurst, “Eisenhower’s ‘Atoms for Peace’ Speech: A Case Study in the Strategic Use of Language,” *Communication Monographs* 54 (1987): 205.

⁸³ Reagan, “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the NAE, March 8, 1983,” 362.

CHAPTER II

REAGAN'S SUMMIT RHETORIC IN CONTEXT: NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION DIRECTIVES AND A BINARY PUBLIC DIPLOMACY STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING CHANGE IN THE SOVIET UNION

This dissertation focuses on President Ronald Reagan's public rhetoric of summit diplomacy during his second term as it reveals the continuity between his first-term policies and his second-term rhetoric. To lay the groundwork for that analysis this chapter examines Reagan's National Security Decision Directives issued during his first term. To begin, this chapter examines three significant National Security Decision Directives that Reagan issued between May 1982 and January 1983. These Directives elucidate the objectives of Reagan's Soviet policy, of which he spoke in his June 1982 address to Members of the British Parliament, and reveal many of the actions Reagan wanted to take to affect change within the USSR. This chapter also discusses Reagan's "four-part agenda," an agenda that developed out of his National Security Decision Directives during Reagan's first term and that he publicly emphasized during the periods surrounding each of his summit meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev. Following is a brief discussion of Soviet obstacles, historical and ideological, that Reagan faced in promoting his four-part agenda surrounding the summit meetings. Finally, this chapter examines what has been portrayed as a domestic obstacle to Reagan's pursuit of his foreign policy objectives during his second term: disagreements within his administration. The internal dissonance created by competing views of the more ideologically hard-line and the more

pragmatic cold warriors in Reagan's White House is here considered as a positive influence on Reagan's rhetorical strategy of combining conciliation and confrontation in his second-term public diplomacy. The discussion of these historical, ideological, political, and diplomatic aspects of U.S. and Soviet affairs will provide a framework for better understanding Reagan's rhetoric surrounding the U.S.-Soviet summit meetings, 1985-1988.

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION DIRECTIVES AND REAGAN'S "FOUR-PART AGENDA"

Journalist and author Richard Reeves observes that Reagan's "real agenda" for U.S. Soviet policy "was in a series of secret National Security Decision Directives" including National Security Decision Directive Number 32 (Directive 32) and National Security Decision Directive Number 75 (Directive 75).¹ Reagan issued Directive 32 on May 5, 1982. It articulated presidential policy on U.S. national security strategy.² Former Secretary of the Air Force, Thomas C. Reed, who was a member of Reagan's National Security Council (NSC) from January 1982 to June 1983, claims that Directive 32 "tabulated Soviet strengths and inventoried their growing weaknesses, forecasting confrontations and the reliability of friends and allies." The "bottom line" for this accounting, according to Reed, was "to seek the dissolution of the Soviet empire." Reed recalls that Directive 32 "listed five integrated strategies to achieve this result."³ According to journalist Christopher Simpson, who specializes in national security topics, these five integrated strategies became the "five main pillars" on which the Reagan

administration based its strategies for national security: “military modernization; expanded military spending by U.S. allies; economic pressure on the USSR and its allies; political persuasion and propaganda at home and abroad; and covert operations intended to split satellite governments away from Moscow.” Regarding political persuasion, Simpson observes that Reagan and his NSC created a strategy for the United States to “fully enter what it called ‘the marketplace of ideas’.” Through Directive 32, Reagan authorized the NSC staff “to draw up a ‘detailed plan’ for the administration to present its strategic views at home and abroad.” As Simpson describes it, Directive 32 authorized a “public persuasion campaign.”⁴

Reed claims that Directive 32 was “designed to serve as ‘the starting point for all components of [the Reagan administration’s] future national security strategy’” and that one of the major speeches that resulted from this May 1982 directive was Reagan’s address to members of the British Parliament on June 8, 1982.⁵ In Reagan’s address, he advanced “a plan and a hope for the long term—the march of freedom and democracy which will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people.” Reagan called on the Western democracies to work together “to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities, which allows people to choose their own way to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means.”⁶

Seven months later, on January 17, 1983, Reagan issued National Security Decision Directive Number 75 (Directive 75) which expressed presidential policy on

“U.S. Relations with the USSR.”⁷ Reed asserts that this directive was “a confidential declaration of economic and political war” in which Reagan and the National Security Council laid out a “blueprint for the endgame” in the Cold War with the Soviet Union.⁸ The first sentence of Directive 75 stated: “U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union will consist of three elements: external resistance to Soviet imperialism; internal pressure on the USSR to weaken the sources of Soviet imperialism; and negotiations to eliminate, on the basis of strict reciprocity, outstanding disagreements.” Implementation of this policy, the directive asserted, required the U.S. to undertake the following tasks: “1. To contain and over time reverse Soviet expansionism . . . ; 2. To promote, within the narrow limits available to us, the process of change in the Soviet Union toward a more pluralistic political and economic system in which the power of the privileged ruling elite is gradually reduced . . . ; [and] 3. To engage the Soviet Union in negotiations to attempt to reach agreements that protect and enhance U.S. interests and which are consistent with the principle of strict reciprocity and mutual interest.” Following the November 1982 death of Leonid Brezhnev, President of the USSR and General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Reagan was particularly interested, as Directive 75 expressed, in seizing any opportunity while “the Soviet Union is in the midst of a process of political succession” that might allow “for external forces to affect the policies of Brezhnev’s successors.”⁹

Directive 75 reflected Reagan’s desire to affect changes in the Soviet system. As Reagan’s former National Security Adviser William Clark describes it, Directive 75 established “a new objective of U.S. policy,” to place “internal pressure on the USSR” in

order to encourage “antitotalitarian changes within the USSR.”¹⁰ Such a desire violated what diplomatic historian Coral Bell refers to as “that very old maxim of European diplomacy: *cuius regio, eius religio*: that is, the sovereign gets to write the rules within his own domain.” Bell explains that this maxim “was for centuries the basis for the ability of European states to live together: it conveys the acceptance as legitimate of governmental policies thoroughly repugnant to one’s own values. And that implied a tendency to shrug off as of ‘not our concern’ the behaviour in domestic matters . . . of the Soviet Union”¹¹ In contrast, President Reagan’s public rhetoric during his first term made it clear that he considered the Soviet system, Soviet policies, and the Marxist-Leninist doctrines on which he believed those policies were based to be America’s concern because they were repugnant to Western values, especially to American values.¹² Directive 75 made it official: as of January 1983 the Soviets’ domestic affairs were America’s concern.

Directive 75 emphasized ways the United States would “focus on shaping the environment in which Soviet decisions are made both in a variety of functional and geopolitical arenas and in the U.S.-Soviet bilateral relationship.”¹³ Regarding the U.S.-Soviet bilateral relationship, Directive 75 identified areas that were later coalesced into what became known as Reagan’s “four-part agenda,” four areas where Reagan wanted to see changes in Soviet policies and practices: bi-lateral relations, regional conflicts, human rights, and arms control.¹⁴ The third major section of Directive 75 entitled “Bilateral Relationships” had three sub-sections: “Arms Control,” “Official Dialogue,” and “U.S.-Soviet Cooperative Exchanges.” In the “Arms Control” sub-section, the

directive communicated Reagan's desire to engage in arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union, to continue "dialogue with the Soviets at [the] Foreign Minister level" and to participate in "a summit" with Reagan's "Soviet counterpart" if such a meeting might provide "beneficial results." However, Reagan also wanted to "make clear to the Allies as well as to the USSR that U.S. ability to reach satisfactory results in arms control negotiations will inevitably be influenced by the international situation, the overall state of U.S.-Soviet relations" ¹⁵

In the second sub-section, entitled "Official Dialogue," the Directive identified two more aspects of Reagan's four-part agenda: human rights and regional conflicts. The directive made it clear that "the U.S. should insist that Moscow address the full range of U.S. concerns about Soviet internal behavior and human rights violations, and should continue to resist Soviet efforts to return to a U.S.-Soviet agenda focused primarily on arms control." The directive also discussed Soviet international behavior. Reagan expressed his desire to use "U.S.-Soviet diplomatic contacts on regional issues . . . to keep pressure on Moscow for responsible behavior. Such contacts can also be useful in driving home to Moscow that the costs of irresponsibility are high, and that the U.S. is prepared to work for pragmatic solutions of regional problems if Moscow is willing seriously to address U.S. concerns." ¹⁶

In the final sub-section, entitled "U.S.-Soviet Cooperative Exchanges," the directive discussed the final area of Reagan's four-part agenda: bi-lateral exchanges. The directive stated: "The role of U.S.-Soviet cultural, educational, scientific, and other cooperative exchanges should be seen in light of the U.S. intention to maintain a strong

ideological component in relation with Moscow. The U.S. should not further dismantle the framework of exchanges; indeed those exchanges which could advance the U.S. objective of promoting positive evolutionary changes within the Soviet system should be expanded.”¹⁷

Hence, following Brezhnev’s death Reagan decided by late 1982 to attempt to shape “the environment in which Soviet decisions are made”¹⁸ in the areas of U.S.-Soviet bi-lateral relations, Soviet involvement in regional conflicts, Soviet human rights practices, and arms control negotiations. These areas, according to Directive 75, represented the “full range of U.S. concerns” as well as specific areas where the U.S. would focus its efforts in “containing and reversing Soviet expansion and promoting evolutionary change within the Soviet Union itself.”¹⁹ Indeed, Reed asserts that although there was disagreement among Reagan’s staff over “views of the Soviet Union and the best American policy for dealing with that apparent superpower,” Reagan’s goals for U.S.-Soviet relations were clear: “resistance to Soviet expansionism, [and] the pursuit of peaceful change in the Soviet Union.”²⁰ Thus, consistent with Reagan’s June 8, 1982 address to members of the British Parliament, Directive 75 called for “[b]uilding and maintaining a major ideological/political offensive which, together with other efforts, will be designed to bring about evolutionary change of the Soviet system.”²¹

Reagan also issued National Security Decision Directive Number 77 (Directive 77) in January 1983 in an effort to pursue the goals set forth in Directive 75. Directive 77 outlined plans “to strengthen the organization, planning and coordination of the various aspects of public diplomacy of the United States Government relative to national

security.”²² The directive defined “public diplomacy” as “those actions of the U.S. Government designed to generate support for our national security objectives.”²³ According to Simpson, Directive 77 “is in essence an unclassified annex to . . . [Directive] 75.”²⁴ The directive established a “Special Planning Group (SPG) under the National Security Council,” the membership of which included “the Assistant to the President for Communications,” at that time David Gergen,²⁵ who also co-chaired one of the four committees created by the directive, the “Public Affairs Committee.” Directive 77 charged this latter committee with responsibility for “coordinat[ing] public affairs efforts to explain and support major U.S. foreign policy initiatives.” The directive also created an “International Political Committee,” which was to “undertake to build up the U.S. Government[’s] capability to promote democracy, as enunciated in the President’s speech in London on June 8, 1982. Furthermore, this committee,” the directive stated, “will initiate plans, programs and strategies designed to counter totalitarian ideologies and aggressive political action moves undertaken by the Soviet Union or Soviet surrogates.”²⁶

These National Security Decision Directives are important to this analysis of Reagan’s diplomatic summit rhetoric for several reasons. First, Directives 32 and 77 suggest that Reagan understood the centrality of persuasion, of public rhetoric, to waging “cold war.” One of the central pillars of Reagan’s national security strategy was a campaign of public persuasion both at home and abroad. More specifically, these directives suggest that Reagan apparently understood the need to engage in public diplomacy in advancing his four-part agenda, both domestically and internationally.

Diplomatic historian Elmer Plischke notes that engaging in public diplomacy—the public enunciation of and attempts to consolidate support for U.S. foreign policies—is a central element of the president’s role as “diplomat in chief.”²⁷ Second, Directive 75 contains the objectives of Reagan’s Soviet policy during his first term, including reversing Soviet expansionism and undermining the Soviet political system, and the identification of four specific areas on which Reagan would focus in pursuing his objectives.

It is significant to note that Reagan operationalized these four areas—bilateral relations, human rights, regional conflicts, and arms control—into policy in January 1983. Consequently, he had Secretary of State George Shultz “set out . . . [the] four-part agenda” in testimony on U.S.-Soviet relations before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in June 1983.²⁸ Reagan later promoted the elements of the agenda in his speech on U.S.-Soviet relations on January 16, 1984.²⁹ Shultz recalls that in the summer of 1984 he counseled Reagan “that our objectives should remain to counter Soviet expansionism, to do whatever we could to encourage greater liberalization and pluralism within the Soviet Union, and to reach mutually beneficial agreements with the Soviets where we were able to do so.”³⁰ Shultz also recalls that he and Reagan offered “suggestions about all points on our four-part agenda” in a letter from Reagan to Soviet General Secretary Konstantin Chernenko on November 16, 1984.³¹ Following Chernenko’s death in March 1985, in Reagan’s first letter to the newly elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, he emphasized all four aspects of his four-part agenda as of greatest importance in U.S.-

Soviet relations.³² All of this suggests continuity in both Reagan's public rhetoric and private diplomatic correspondence concerning his Soviet policy agenda between May 1982 and March 1985.

RHETORICAL EXIGENCIES HINDERING PROGRESS ON REAGAN'S "FOUR-PART AGENDA"

Reagan faced significant obstacles in pursuit of his Soviet objectives, especially in attempting to persuade the Soviets to implement changes in their policies and practices related to Soviet-U.S. bilateral relations, Soviet human rights practices, and Soviet involvement in regional conflicts. The following section briefly examines the historical and ideological nature of the opposition Reagan faced as he pursued his four-part agenda.

With Reagan's authorization, Directive 75 emphasized the importance of maintaining "a strong ideological component in relation to Moscow" through cooperative exchanges.³³ In a March 1983 memorandum, Secretary of State George Shultz proposed, "Expanded exchange programs and access of Americans to Soviet society" as means of "increas[ing] our ideological impact inside the Soviet Union." Shultz reiterated to Reagan that "the exchanges idea" was a way "to penetrate the Soviet Union with our own ideology."³⁴ Such penetration was necessary if Reagan desired "to promote . . . the process of change in the Soviet Union toward a more pluralistic political and economic system,"³⁵ because as historian Eric Shiraev and political scientist Vladislav Zubok explain, the closed Soviet system virtually prevented "any information

that would systematically favor the United States and its policies” from reaching Soviet citizens. Even though Gorbachev had begun to speak more openly about Soviet policies and a new so-called “openness” within the Soviet Union by the time of the Geneva Summit in November 1985, Shiraev and Zubok point out that “the vast majority of Soviet citizens continued to live on a strict propagandist and informational diet: information about the outside world was carefully selected, distorted, and refined.”³⁶

As Marilyn Young and Michael Launer note, through government-controlled media the Soviets based their “rhetorical discourse in Soviet society” on “official public knowledge.”³⁷ Reagan needed to pluralize this official public knowledge. Pluralistic systems are preceded by pluralistic thinking; pluralistic thinking occurs best within a society that is ideologically pluralistic. Thus, Reagan needed to increase the amount of information the Soviet people received from non-official Soviet media which would allow the creation of what Young and Launer describe as a “pluralistic public consciousness”³⁸ among Soviet citizens, and a greater understanding of non-Marxist political and economic systems. Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty broadcasts provided some access for East Europeans and Soviet citizens to Western culture and ideology,³⁹ but Reagan needed greater access in order to significantly pierce the economic, political, and ideological monism of Soviet life.

If Reagan could rhetorically induce the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to reduce or remove their physical, legal, and technological barriers the West could more freely expose Soviets and peoples within the Warsaw Pact nations to aspects of different cultures and ideologies. These barriers included the Berlin Wall,

legal restrictions on Soviets' travel, jamming of Western radio broadcasts, and so forth. Stated simply, a more open Soviet system would allow for greater ideological penetration of the Soviet Union by the Western democracies. However, as *Newsweek* noted in 1985 a more open USSR "was a KGB man's nightmare." Opening up the USSR would risk "compromising the Soviet system."⁴⁰

In addition to bilateral relations, Directive 75 indicated, "The U.S. should insist that Moscow address the full range of U.S. concerns about Soviet internal behavior and human rights violations."⁴¹ However, the Soviets had long viewed their treatment of their own citizens as an internal affair—especially their handling of political dissidents, emigration *refuseniks*, and citizens of religious faith. Indeed, the Soviet concept of "peaceful coexistence" contained as one of its major tenets "noninterference in the internal affairs of another state,"⁴² and withheld from every non-socialist state (i.e., Western democracies) any right to question Soviet internal behavior. When Secretary of State Shultz met with Soviet U.S. Ambassador Andrei Gromyko and Soviet Foreign Minister Anatoly Dobrynin during the first term of the Reagan administration, the Soviets were consistent in their position. The USSR was a sovereign nation. Human rights practices were an internal matter, and sovereign nations do not have to open their internal affairs to international negotiation.⁴³

Soviet General Secretary Konstantin Chernenko wrote in a 1984 letter to Reagan: "I must point out that introduction into relations between states of questions concerning solely domestic affairs of our country or yours does not serve the task of improving these relations—if this is our goal. I wish questions of such a nature did not burden our

correspondence”⁴⁴ Prior to the Geneva Summit, Gorbachev gave no reason for Reagan to believe that his position would vary from his predecessors. In fact, according to Jack Matlock, recollections from Gorbachev’s assistants and information in declassified documents indicate that as Gorbachev approached his first meeting with Reagan, he “was determined to resist any American intrusion into Soviet domestic matters, such as the regime’s treatment of its citizens.”⁴⁵ Reagan would face significant difficulty persuading Gorbachev to alter Soviet human rights practices if he adopted a rhetorical approach that could easily be dismissed as U.S. interference in sovereign Soviet domestic affairs.

Finally, Directive 75 clearly iterated that Reagan wanted to contain and reverse Soviet expansionism especially in areas where the Soviet Union engaged in or supported regional conflicts. When Reagan wrote a pre-summit memorandum, he declared that the issue of “regional areas of conflict” was one of the “main events” of the Geneva Summit.⁴⁶ Indeed, Shultz had argued since March 1983 that “a litmus test of Soviet seriousness in response to [the Reagan administration’s] concerns would be whether they are moving seriously toward a real pullback” from involvement in Third World countries.⁴⁷ Reagan’s rhetoric would have to attempt to induce the Soviets to engage in such a pullback.

Inducing the Soviet Union to significantly alter or abandon its policies in Third World nations would be difficult. As political scientist and scholar of Russian and East European affairs Glenn Chafetz notes, “World revolution had been a useful tool for legitimating [the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’s] rule; it placed the Party on the

side of historical progress and validated Marxist-Leninist ideological predictions that Communism was universal in its appeal and eventually would be in scope as well.”⁴⁸ Consistent with Soviet tradition, Gorbachev publicly declared in his first pronouncement as general secretary in March 1985 that the Soviet Union would not change its foreign policy,⁴⁹ but would continue to support “the struggle of the peoples for liberation from colonial oppression.”⁵⁰ In early November 1985, just weeks before the Geneva Summit, Gorbachev privately reiterated to Shultz that the USSR would continue to support “national liberation movements.”⁵¹ For Gorbachev to do otherwise, as *Newsweek* noted, would have been to deny “the ideology that is the basis of his power” by rejecting the view that it was “the objective forces of history,”⁵² rather than the expansionistic hand of Moscow, at work in countries experiencing so-called “socialist revolutions.” A pullback by Soviet forces, especially from Afghanistan, carried significant risks to the credibility of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, including the recognition by Soviet citizens that the Soviet military was not omnipotent and communism’s appeal was not universal.⁵³ Such a loss of credibility was also a threat to the Communist Party’s legitimacy to rule the Soviet state apparatus.⁵⁴

Soviet military involvement in socialist countries rested on the so-called “Brezhnev Doctrine.” According to Matlock, the Brezhnev Doctrine maintained “that ‘socialist’ countries had the right and duty to intervene in other ‘socialist’ countries if ‘socialism’ should be threatened, as the USSR did in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Afghanistan in 1979.”⁵⁵ By 1985, especially in Afghanistan, the credibility of the “Brezhnev Doctrine” was at stake. Many of the Afghan people rejected the Soviet

puppet government in Kabul led by Babrak Karmal. If the Soviets failed to gain military and political victory in Afghanistan, the Brezhnev Doctrine could be shattered.

Shattering the doctrine in Afghanistan was apparently Reagan's goal and had been for some time. For example, throughout his first term, Reagan continued to approve steady increases in covert aid for the Afghan *mujahideen*, and in mid-1985 he signed National Security Decision Directive Number 166 (Directive 166) which shifted the goal of the United States from merely supporting the Afghan resistance to providing the assistance thought necessary for the *mujahideen* to actually defeat the Soviets.⁵⁶

For Reagan to increase the pressure on Gorbachev for a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, he needed to use his public rhetoric surrounding the Geneva Summit to support the military policy he had followed for several years: make continued involvement in Afghanistan costly for the Soviets, especially from the standpoint of the USSR's image in the international community. Reagan had clearly outlined such a goal in January 1983 in Directive 75: "The U.S. objective is to keep maximum pressure on Moscow for withdrawal and to ensure that the Soviets' political, military, and other costs remain high while the occupation continues."⁵⁷ The costlier Reagan could make the war for the Soviets in terms of political damage to the USSR's image, the more pressure Gorbachev might feel to withdraw Soviet forces. On November 13, 1985, only six days before Reagan and Gorbachev met in Geneva, the United Nations "overwhelmingly approved a resolution . . . calling for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan." Although that vote reflected "the widest margin in favor of such a resolution since the first vote [on that issue] in 1980,"⁵⁸ this was not the first time the

United Nations had passed such a resolution. The Soviets had not responded positively to any of the five previous U.N. resolutions calling for foreign forces to withdraw from Afghanistan. Thus, Reagan faced the prospect that under Gorbachev's leadership the USSR might continue to ignore international calls for a Soviet withdrawal.

HARD-LINERS V. PRAGMATISTS: THE FOUNDATION FOR REAGAN'S BINARY PUBLIC DIPLOMACY RATIONALE

Given the obstacles Reagan faced and the numerous contingencies involved in attempting to affect changes in Soviet policies and practices, it is not surprising that there were disagreements among Reagan's staff over how best to proceed with U.S. policy.⁵⁹ There were also disagreements over the most appropriate public rhetoric for Reagan to use to deal with the rhetorical exigencies he faced. This dissertation argues that Reagan employed a binary rhetorical strategy combining hard-line rhetoric to confront the Soviets concomitant with conciliatory rhetoric to appeal to the Soviets for cooperation in creating a better world. The remainder of this chapter examines the dissonance within Reagan's administration as a likely significant influence that encouraged Reagan's dualistic rhetorical strategy in his second-term public summit diplomacy.

In 1983 President Ronald Reagan described himself as a "hard-liner" vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, not a remarkable self-description given his record of anti-communist statements and public speeches since the 1940s.⁶⁰ What is remarkable about Reagan's ideological self-description is that he did not view his anti-Communist ideology as

preventing him from approaching the Soviets to discuss how East-West relations might be improved. Reagan recorded in his diary on April 6, 1983, “Some of the N.S.C. staff are too hard line and don’t think any approach should be made to the Soviets. I think I’m hard line and will never appease. But I do want to try to let them see there is a better world if they’ll show *by deed* they want to get along with the free world.”⁶¹

It is likely that Reagan’s dualistic approach was, at least in part, the result of him combining the dissenting views within his own administration. From his earliest days in the White House, Reagan placed individuals with very different views in the most powerful positions on his staff, and, as George Shultz explains, “No subject in American foreign policy generated such tension as the [U.S.-Soviet] superpower relationship.”⁶² Reed observes that the “differing views of the Soviet Union and the best American policy for dealing with that apparent superpower” were “the crux of the differences between” what became, primarily, two factions vying “for control of the White House.”⁶³ David Gergen, who served nearly three years during Reagan’s first term as White House communications director, explains that Reagan created the first-term “troika” of Baker-Meese-Deaver, “with [James] Baker representing the moderates, [Edwin] Meese the conservatives, and [Michael] Deaver the swing.”⁶⁴ Over time, according to Reed, the “Baker-Deaver axis” became known as “the Pragmatists.”⁶⁵ Shultz, who replaced Alexander Haig as secretary of state in the summer of 1982, also became known as one of the “pragmatists.” Joining Meese among the so-called “true believers”⁶⁶ (the conservative hard-liners) early in the first Reagan administration were Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, director of the Central Intelligence Agency

(CIA) William J. Casey, National Security Adviser (NSA) William Clark, and members of Reagan's speechwriting team headed by Bently T. Elliott. The disagreements between the pragmatists and the hard-liners over U.S. Soviet policy and the most appropriate rhetoric to convey it created dissonance that may have provided the foundation for Reagan's conciliation-confrontation approach to the Soviets.

Operating from a pragmatic philosophy early in 1983, Shultz "wanted to develop a strategy for a new start with the Soviet Union," a way "to turn the [U.S.-Soviet] relationship . . . away from confrontation and toward real problem solving." However, Shultz recognized that "the president's White House staff," especially Clark, Weinberger, and Casey, "would oppose such engagement." As Shultz recalls: "[T]here were voices in the administration warning the president that I, with my negotiating experience, and the State Department, with its bent to 'better relations,' posed a threat to the president's crusade against communism."⁶⁷ The polarity in Shultz's description is significant: those in the administration who favored negotiating with the Soviets and pursuing "better relations" with them versus those who wanted the president to continue his "crusade against communism." Reagan manifested views from both factions in his foreign policy rhetoric.

For example, on March 8, 1983, Reagan spoke to the National Association of Evangelicals and uttered arguably his harshest and certainly what came to be his most memorable characterization of the Soviet Union as "an evil empire."⁶⁸ Reagan encouraged his audience to:

pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that totalitarian darkness—pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until

they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.⁶⁹

There is a “hedging device”⁷⁰ within this statement. The phrase “while they preach” offsets Reagan’s characterization of the Soviet Union as “the focus of evil in the modern world.” By using this device, Reagan allowed for the possibility that one day the Soviet Union might cease to “preach the supremacy of the state . . . [to] declare its omnipotence over individual man.” In that case, Reagan might cease to perceive the Soviet Union as an evil force. Until that change occurred, however, Reagan wanted to make sure Americans viewed “totalitarian powers for what they are.” Reagan presented himself as one who viewed the Soviet Union realistically, for what it was in its essence, but he balanced that perspective with the qualification that, “This doesn’t mean we should isolate ourselves and refuse to seek an understanding with them.”⁷¹ Indeed, less than two months prior to the speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, in Directive 75 Reagan discussed the possibilities of meeting with his Soviet counterpart in a summit “to engage the Soviet Union in negotiations” that might “eliminate . . . outstanding disagreements.”⁷²

Reagan’s March 8, 1983 speech foreshadowed the rhetorical approach he would take with the Soviets in the future, especially during periods surrounding the U.S.-Soviet summit meetings during his second term in office. As Reagan’s chief speechwriter Tony Dolan explains it, Reagan did not see any contradiction in saying he was “going to morally confront the Soviet Union and at the same time diplomatically engage them.”⁷³ According to Dolan, Reagan believed “that far from hindering negotiations,” his moral

candor would assist them. According to Dolan, Reagan advocated “[t]ough rhetoric and at the same time an offer of diplomatic engagement—many offers of diplomatic engagement.”⁷⁴ By March 1983 Reagan’s view of the USSR as an “evil empire” did not prevent him from seeking an “understanding” with the Soviets. What did Reagan mean by “seeking an understanding” with the Soviets? He explained in his speech to the evangelicals, “I intend to do everything I can to persuade them of our peaceful intent.”⁷⁵ Two months after he issued Directive 75, Reagan spoke to evangelicals not only of the Soviet Union as “an evil empire” but also of seeking “an understanding” and pursuing “peace” with the Soviets. For Reagan, such conciliatory and confrontational rhetorical appeals were not incompatible. However, there were some among Reagan’s staff who believed such competing views were incompatible within the same administration.

In fact, following the November 1984 presidential election George Shultz suggested to Reagan that the President make a choice between Shultz and Weinberger since their deeply held views were often in conflict.⁷⁶ Robert C. “Bud” McFarlane, who replaced Clark as Reagan’s National Security Adviser in October 1983, was present during the Shultz-Reagan conversation. When McFarlane later followed-up with Reagan just before his second inauguration and pressed Reagan to choose between Shultz and Weinberger, Reagan told McFarlane he wanted both Shultz and Weinberger to remain in the administration. According to former *Washington Post* White House correspondent and Reagan biographer Lou Cannon, Reagan told McFarlane, “Make it work.”⁷⁷ If, as Cannon claims, “The first-term feuding and jockeying for power between

the pragmatist and conservative factions had been an irritant to Reagan,”⁷⁸ the irritation was not enough to cause Reagan to jettison either of the factions’ highest ranking representatives.⁷⁹ Indeed, in November 1985, Reagan chided representatives of the press’s wire services: “All of this talk that we unhappily read about feuds and so forth; again, this is a distortion or misrepresentation of my desire for what I’ve always called Cabinet-type government, where I want all views to be frankly expressed, because I can then make the decision better if I have all those viewpoints.”⁸⁰ Reagan later offered a similar explanation to a group of foreign broadcasters: “In our government here, I solicit and encourage varying opinions and ideas. I think it helps to make a decision when I hear all viewpoints.”⁸¹

Cannon claims Reagan failed to see that the first-term infighting had “been a blessing in disguise to Reagan” by “exposing him to conflicting options.” Perhaps Reagan recognized that blessing quite clearly. Cannon argues that early in Reagan’s second term his new chief of staff, Donald T. Regan, protected Reagan “from exposure to conflicting options that tended to bring out Reagan’s inclination to compromise.”⁸² In terms of Reagan’s Soviet foreign policy, however, there continued to be ample disagreement between the pragmatists and conservatives during Reagan’s second term, especially between Weinberger and Shultz. That dissonance exposed Reagan to alternative viewpoints from which he could draw for his binary summit rhetoric.⁸³ Such a binary rationale was consistent within Reagan’s political psyche, because, according to Cannon, Reagan was, “on nearly all issues . . . simultaneously an ideologue and a pragmatist.”⁸⁴

Reagan's response to a 1985 debate within the administration over whether the U.S. should continue to abide by the un-ratified Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) illustrates his tendency to accommodate conflicting positions. Although former President Jimmy Carter and Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev signed SALT II, Carter withdrew the treaty from Senate consideration following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the treaty was never ratified by the U.S. Senate.⁸⁵ The Reagan administration, however, had continued a policy of "interim restraint," abiding by the requirements of the treaty even though it had never been ratified. Unless the Reagan administration dismantled the Poseidon (one of the U.S.'s oldest nuclear submarines), deployment of the U.S.'s new Trident submarine in autumn 1985 would have pushed the U.S. beyond the SALT II limitations on launchers.⁸⁶ As a result, Reagan's administration debated whether it should continue to exercise "interim restraint." Shultz and the Joint Chiefs of Staff favored "interim restraint" by scrapping the Poseidon and remaining within the limitations of the SALT II Treaty. Weinberger, Ken Adelman (director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency), and other hard-liners wanted Reagan to reject the treaty and the policy of "interim restraint" based on the grounds that the Soviets continued to cheat on SALT II. Cannon argues that as Reagan was "tugged back and forth between Shultz and Weinberger . . . [he] typically tried to appease them both."⁸⁷

Reagan announced on June 10, 1985, in what was a conciliatory move, "that the United States will continue to refrain from undercutting existing strategic arms agreements."⁸⁸ The administration would continue its policy of "interim restraint."

However, Reagan also made a confrontational move. As Cannon describes it, Reagan “rapped the Soviets” in his announcement.⁸⁹ Reagan accused the Soviets of having “failed to comply with several provisions of SALT II, and,” he asserted, “we have serious concerns regarding their compliance with the provisions of other accords. The pattern of Soviet violations, if left uncorrected, undercuts the integrity and viability of arms control as an instrument to assist in ensuring a secure and stable future world.”⁹⁰ Cannon observes that Reagan’s decision “pleased Shultz, while the language encouraged the conservatives to continue their battle against SALT II.”⁹¹

Cannon notes that Reagan’s speechwriting team continued to be “the main bastion of conservatism within the White House.”⁹² This was true, in part, because Reagan and Regan had hired well-known conservative Pat Buchanan as White House communications director at the beginning of Reagan’s second term. Among Buchanan’s responsibilities was overseeing presidential speechwriting. Cannon points out that Buchanan, in his previous role as a columnist, “attacked . . . the White House pragmatists and everyone within the Reagan administration who favored ‘the grand illusion’ of détente with the Soviet Union.” Cannon adds that Buchanan “was convinced that Reagan had been deflected from the path of true conservatism by Nancy Reagan, Mike Deaver, James Baker and George Shultz, among others.”⁹³ David Gergen notes, “A half century earlier, FDR frequently pitted his aides against each other in drawing up policies and speeches. The tension between them set off sparks, making his White House more creative.” It may be relevant that the conservative Reagan was a great admirer of FDR’s leadership. Gergen is not sure “[w]hether Reagan was consciously

copying the Roosevelt model,” but Gergen claims that Reagan’s system “had much the same effect” as Franklin Roosevelt’s.⁹⁴

Reagan apparently benefited from this dissonance over whether he should seek “better relations” with the Soviet Union versus continuing his “crusade against communism” as he crafted a binary rhetorical strategy of seeking both a reduction in U.S.-Soviet tensions as well as the destabilization of the Soviet system. Reagan’s binary rhetorical strategy may have helped him address a personal dilemma. That dilemma was probably best described by *New York Times* diplomatic correspondent Flora Lewis: “The President’s dilemma lies deep in his gut. It is a conflict between his anti-Russian reflex, his conviction that there can be no compromise between the good he sees in America and the evil he sees in Russia, and his understanding that he must be seen to be seeking peace in the world, his promise to ‘go half-way’.”⁹⁵ Shultz claims that in 1983 Reagan “recognized how difficult it was for him [Reagan] to move forward in dealing with” the Soviets. Reagan “realized . . . that he was in a sense blocked . . . by his own past rhetoric.” If Shultz was correct, it would logically follow that Reagan would search for a modified rhetorical approach to U.S.-Soviet relations, one that would both allow him to remain true to his own views, values, and positions about which Shultz claimed Reagan was very “self-confident,”⁹⁶ and at the same time would also allow Reagan to move forward in dealing with the Soviets. A binary rhetorical strategy of simultaneously confronting the Soviets while conciliating them would allow Reagan to solve such a dilemma.

CONCLUSION

This review of three of Reagan's first-term National Security Decision Directives, the rhetorical, historical, and ideological obstacles he faced in advancing his four-part agenda, and the dissonance created within Reagan's administration by competing views over U.S. Soviet policy reveals several important aspects of the context of Reagan's public summit rhetoric. First, both in his public rhetoric and in his secret National Security Decision Directives during his first term, Reagan set forth his objectives of promoting change in the Soviet Union's political and economic systems and in the Soviet Union's foreign policies related to regional conflicts. Second, Reagan indicated in both his public rhetoric and in his National Security Decision Directives that he considered public diplomacy to be a significant means of advancing toward the achievement of U.S. national security objectives. Third, Reagan faced significant obstacles in the form of Soviet ideology and the USSR's historical practices. Fourth, it is clear that there were deeply different perspectives on U.S.-Soviet policy held by Reagan's closest staff. It is also clear, however, that Reagan was aware of these differences and that he appreciated the dissonance created by such disagreements.

Within this context, important questions remain unanswered. Did Reagan, in his second term, "reverse" his first-term decisions to roll back Soviet expansionism and to undermine the Soviet Communist system? If there was no "Reagan reversal," how did he rhetorically pursue his first-term objectives during his second term in office? Did he rely less on public diplomacy or did he engage in a more rhetorical foreign policy? How did he respond rhetorically to the historical, ideological, political, and diplomatic

obstacles he faced? Did Reagan shift from a more confrontational rhetorical posture in his first term to a more conciliatory one during his second term? Did he remain primarily confrontational? Or did he exercise an ideologically pragmatic rhetorical flexibility, combining both conciliatory and confrontational appeals in continued pursuit of his first-term objectives? It is these questions that the following chapters will seek to answer by closely examining Reagan's diplomatic summit rhetoric surrounding each of the four U.S.-Soviet summits, 1985-1988.

NOTES

¹ Richard Reeves, *President Reagan: The Triumph of Imagination* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 134.

² Thomas C. Reed, *At the Abyss: An Insider's History of the Cold War* (New York: Ballantine, 2004), 237; Christopher Simpson, "NSDD-32: U.S. National Security Strategy," in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 62-64. Hereafter cited as "NSDD-32." Simpson only provides commentary on this National Security Decision Directive, not an actual copy of the directive, because at the time of publication of his book Directive 32 was reported classified.

³ Reed, *At the Abyss*, 236-237. Also, see Simpson, "NSDD-32," 62, 981. Simpson recreates the contents of this classified directive based on statements made in previously published interviews by Thomas Reed, "the president's special assistant for national

security and the principal architect of the nuclear aspects of NSDD 32,” and public statements by then-National Security Advisor William P. Clark in his May 21, 1982 “National Security Strategy” speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University.

⁴ Simpson, “NSDD-32,” 62, 63-64.

⁵ Reed, *At the Abyss*, 237.

⁶ Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Members of the British Parliament, June 8, 1982,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1982*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983), 747, 746. This publication series is hereafter cited as *Public Papers*, followed by the year and the page numbers.

⁷ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive Number 75: U.S. Relations with the USSR, January 17, 1983,” in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 255-263. Hereafter cited as “NSDD-75.”

⁸ Reed, *At the Abyss*, 240.

⁹ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 255.

¹⁰ William P. Clark, “NSDD-75: A New Approach to the Soviet Union,” in *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: Reassessing the Causes and Consequences of the End of the Cold War*, ed. Peter Schweizer (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution, 2000), 71, 72.

¹¹ Coral Bell, *The Reagan Paradox: American Foreign Policy in the 1980s* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 15.

¹² See, for example, Ronald Reagan, “The President’s News Conference, January 29, 1981” *Public Papers, 1981*, 57; Ronald Reagan, “Excerpts From an Interview with Walter Cronkite of CBS News, March 3, 1981,” *Public Papers, 1981*, 193, 196; Ronald Reagan, “Address at Commencement Exercises at the University of Notre Dame, May 17, 1981,” *Public Papers, 1981*, 434; Ronald Reagan, “Statement on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Berlin Wall, August 13, 1981” *Public Papers, 1981*, 713; Ronald Reagan, “The President’s News Conference, December 17, 1981,” *Public Papers, 1981*, 1167.

¹³ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 256.

¹⁴ George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 162. Shultz points out that it was in a memorandum to President Reagan on January 19, 1983—two days after Reagan signed NSDD-75—that Shultz, “set out to [Reagan] for the first time what was to become our four-part agenda: human rights, arms control, regional issues, and bi-lateral relations.” In his memoirs, Secretary of State Shultz consistently uses the phrase “four-part agenda.” See Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 162, 266, 275, 491, 499, 525, 594, 605, 753, 886. Also, see Beth A. Fischer, “Reagan and the Soviets: Winning the Cold War?” in *The Reagan Presidency: Pragmatic Conservatism and Its Legacies*, ed. W. Elliot Brownlee and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 131. Fischer states, “Reagan officials sometimes refer to these initiatives as the ‘four pillars’ because the president called for progress in four areas.”

¹⁵ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 259-260.

¹⁶ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 259-260.

¹⁷ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 260.

¹⁸ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 256.

¹⁹ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 260.

²⁰ Reed, *At the Abyss*, 265.

²¹ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 262.

²² Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive Number 77: Management of Public Diplomacy Relative to National Security, January 14, 1983,” in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 265-267. Hereafter cited as “NSDD-77.”

²³ Reagan, “NSDD-77,” 265.

²⁴ Christopher Simpson, “NSDD-77. Public Diplomacy Strategy,” in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 229.

²⁵ David Gergen, *Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership: Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 179. Gergen left his post as communications director on December 31, 1983. His duties were split between Deputy Chief of Staff and Assistant to the President, Mike Deaver, and Assistant to the President and Deputy to the Chief of Staff, Dick Darman until February 1985. Pat Buchanan served as Reagan’s communications director for two years, from February 1985 to March 1987. Following

Buchanan, Thomas Griscom served as Assistant to the President for Communications and Planning from April 1985 to July 1988. Mari Maseng replaced Griscom in July 1988.

²⁶ Reagan, “NSDD-77,” 265, 266.

²⁷ Elmer Plischke, *Diplomat in Chief: The President at the Summit* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 14-15.

²⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 525, 276.

²⁹ Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation and Other Countries on United States-Soviet Relations, January 16, 1984,” *Public Papers, 1984*, 41, 42. In this speech, Reagan addressed his goals of reducing “the threat and use of force in solving international disputes” (regional conflicts), “reduc[ing] the vast stockpiles of armaments in the world” (arms control), “respecting the rights of individual citizens” (human rights), and “expanding contacts across borders and permitting a free exchange or interchange of information and ideas” (bi-lateral exchanges).

³⁰ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 479.

³¹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 499.

³² Ronald Reagan, “Letter to Mikhail Gorbachev, March 11, 1985,” folder “USSR: General Secretary Gorbachev (8590272-8590419),” box 39, Executive Secretariat, National Security Council, Head of State File, Ronald Reagan Library, Simi Valley, California. This institution is hereafter cited as Reagan Library.

³³ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 260.

³⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 266, 275-276.

³⁵ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 255.

³⁶ Eric Shiraev and Vladislov Zubok, *Anti-Americanism in Russia: From Stalin to Putin* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 23.

³⁷ Marilyn J. Young and Michael K. Launer, “KAL 007 and the Superpowers: An International Argument,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74 (1988): 273.

³⁸ Young and Launer, “KAL 007 and the Superpowers,” 291.

³⁹ Young and Launer, “KAL 007 and the Superpowers,” 285-286; Shiraev and Zubok, *Anti-Americanism in Russia*, 19-23; Peter Schweizer, *Reagan’s War: The Epic Story of His Forty-Year Struggle and Final Triumph Over Communism* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 191-199.

⁴⁰ Russell Watson, John Walcott, Thomas M. DeFrank, Fred Coleman and Joyce Barnathan, “Showdown in Geneva,” *Newsweek*, November 25, 1985, 35.

⁴¹ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 259.

⁴² Ronald R. Nelson and Peter Schweizer, *The Soviet Concepts of Peace, Peaceful Coexistence and Détente* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), xi-xii.

⁴³ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 122, 171, 469.

⁴⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 476.

⁴⁵ Jack F. Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), 155.

⁴⁶ Reagan quoted in Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 153. (Matlock quoted from Reagan’s pre-Geneva memorandum to “Bud” McFarlane.)

⁴⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 266.

- ⁴⁸ Glenn R. Chafetz, *Gorbachev, Reform, and the Brezhnev Doctrine: Soviet Policy Toward Eastern Europe* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 54.
- ⁴⁹ Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World* (New York: Columbia University, 2000), 179.
- ⁵⁰ Mikhail Gorbachev, *A Time for Peace* (New York: Richardson and Steirman, 1985), 19.
- ⁵¹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 594.
- ⁵² “A Message for Moscow,” *Newsweek*, November 4, 1985, 21.
- ⁵³ Schweizer, *Reagan’s War*, 234, 254-257; Chafetz, *Gorbachev, Reform, and the Brezhnev Doctrine*, 54-55.
- ⁵⁴ Chafetz, *Gorbachev, Reform, and the Brezhnev Doctrine*, 50-56.
- ⁵⁵ Jack F. Matlock Jr., *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador’s Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1995), 91.
- ⁵⁶ Christopher Simpson, “NSDD 166: Expanded U.S. Aid to Afghan Guerrillas,” in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 446-447; Schweizer, *Reagan’s War*, 256.
- ⁵⁷ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 258.
- ⁵⁸ Elaine Sciolino, “U.N., 122-19, Asks Troop Pullout in Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, November 14, 1985, A11.
- ⁵⁹ See Reed, *At the Abyss*, 265.

⁶⁰ For a thorough discussion of Reagan's anti-communism in his pre-political speeches and campaign oratory, see Kurt Ritter and David Henry, *Ronald Reagan: The Great Communicator* (New York: Greenwood, 1992), 12-20, 26-27, 37, 39, 43, 96, 98.

⁶¹ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 572.

⁶² Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 276.

⁶³ Reed, *At the Abyss*, 265.

⁶⁴ Gergen, *Eyewitness to Power*, 180.

⁶⁵ Reed, *At the Abyss*, 263; Samuel F. Wells Jr., "Reagan, Euromissiles, and Europe," in *The Reagan Presidency: Pragmatic Conservatism and its Legacies*, ed. W. Elliot Brownlee and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2003), 134.

⁶⁶ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 508. Shultz cited a December 27, 1985 *Washington Post* editorial by Philip Geyelin in which Geyelin quoted Ed Feulner, head of the Heritage Foundation, as describing those who opposed "the pragmatists" in the Reagan administration as "the true believers." Also, see Wells, "Reagan, Euromissiles, and Europe," 133-34.

⁶⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 159.

⁶⁸ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida, March 8, 1983," *Public Papers, 1983*, 364. Hereafter cited as "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the NAE, March 8, 1983."

⁶⁹ Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the NAE, March 8, 1983," 363.

⁷⁰ I borrow this phrase from a scholar of foreign policy rhetoric who was referring to Richard M. Nixon, but its application to Reagan is clear. See Denise M. Bostdorff, “The Evolution of a Diplomatic Surprise: Richard M. Nixon’s Rhetoric on China, 1952-July 15, 1971,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 5 (2002): 37.

⁷¹ Reagan, “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the NAE, March 8, 1983,” 362.

⁷² Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 255, 260.

⁷³ Martin J. Medhurst, “Writing Speeches for Ronald Reagan: An Interview with Tony Dolan,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 1 (1998): 246.

⁷⁴ Medhurst, “Writing Speeches for Ronald Reagan,” 247.

⁷⁵ Reagan, “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the NAE, March 8, 1983,” 362.

⁷⁶ Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 597.

⁷⁷ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 597-598. See also, Jane Mayer and Doyle McManus, *Landslide: The Unmaking of the President, 1984-1988* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1988), 52-56.

⁷⁸ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 561.

⁷⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the Shultz-Weinberger conflict, see Bob Schieffer and Gary Paul Gates, *Acting President: Ronald Reagan and the Supporting Players Who Helped Him Create the Illusion That Held America Spellbound* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989), 211-218; Frances Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 265-313.

For a discussion of possible reasons for dissonance within Reagan’s administration, see

Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., “‘Standing Tall’ as a Foreign Policy: Diplomacy and Security in Reagan’s Second Term,” in *Election 84: Landslide Without A Mandate?*, ed. Ellis Sandoz and Cecil V. Crabb, Jr. (New York: New American Library, 1985), 186-191.

⁸⁰ Ronald Reagan, “Interview With Representatives of the Wire Services, November 6, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1353.

⁸¹ Ronald Reagan, “Interview with Foreign Broadcasters on the Upcoming Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Geneva, November 12, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1370.

⁸² Cannon, *President Reagan*, 561.

⁸³ See, for example, Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, 265-313.

⁸⁴ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 185. According to Cannon, Reagan’s pragmatic side revealed itself when Reagan “complained to aides that true believers on the Republican right such as Senator Jesse Helms preferred to ‘go off a cliff with all flags flying’ rather than take half a loaf and come back for more.”

⁸⁵ Caspar Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon* (New York: Warner, 1990), 296-297.

⁸⁶ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 747; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 567.

⁸⁷ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 747.

⁸⁸ Ronald Reagan, “Statement on Soviet and United States Compliance with Arms Control Agreements, June 10, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 743.

⁸⁹ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 747.

⁹⁰ Reagan, “Statement on Soviet and United States Compliance with Arms Control Agreements, June 10, 1985,” 743.

⁹¹ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 747-748.

⁹² Cannon, *President Reagan*, 570. Also, see William K. Muir Jr., “Ronald Reagan’s Bully Pulpit: Creating a Rhetoric of Values,” in *Presidential Speechwriting: From the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and Beyond*, ed. Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Medhurst (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 2003), 203-204.

⁹³ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 570, 571.

⁹⁴ Gergen, *Eyewitness to Power*, 183.

⁹⁵ Flora Lewis, “Time for Decision,” *New York Times*, November 1, 1985, A35.

⁹⁶ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 164.

CHAPTER III

**CONFRONTING THE SOVIET UNION IN THE NAME OF PEACE: REAGAN'S
REFORMULATED RHETORIC OF RAPPROCHEMENT AND THE 1985
GENEVA SUMMIT**

On Friday, October 25, 1985 President Ronald Reagan issued National Security Decision Directive Number 194 (Directive 194) in an effort to counter what he viewed as Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev's attempts "to focus public attention almost exclusively on arms control" while "virtually ignoring a host of regional and bilateral issues that separate us." As the United States approached the summit meetings with Gorbachev in Geneva, Switzerland, Reagan explained the "key themes" he wanted "emphasized" by "all government officials who will be discussing the Geneva Summit in public forums." The "key themes" Reagan developed in Directive 194 corresponded to his "four-part agenda."¹ This agenda contained three areas, in addition to arms control, on which Reagan wanted to focus public attention: bilateral relations, human rights, and regional conflicts. Reagan needed to exploit the increased media attention and enhanced public interest created by the upcoming summit—the first U.S.-Soviet summit in over six years—in an effort to pressure Gorbachev to respond positively to all items on Reagan's four-part agenda. Thus, Reagan wanted to reach "as wide an audience as possible"² with his arguments for expanding the U.S.-Soviet agenda and for using the meetings at Geneva to discuss more than arms control issues. In the days just before Reagan issued Directive 194, he increased his own public diplomacy rhetoric by

granting an interview to *The Times of India*³ and delivering a major address to the United Nations General Assembly on the occasion of its 40th anniversary.⁴

Gorbachev, for his part, apparently recognized as no Soviet leader before him (with the possible exception of Nikita Khrushchev) the value of positive international public relations. In the seven months prior to the Geneva Summit, Gorbachev waged an international public diplomacy campaign that was unprecedented for Soviet leaders. Because of Gorbachev's style of diplomacy, he presented Reagan with a new rival for influence over the international public's interpretations of U.S.-Soviet relations—a rival with considerable skill in public relations.⁵ Gorbachev's efforts were not without significant effect even in the United States. For example, in mid-September 1985, just two months before the first Reagan-Gorbachev meeting, *Newsweek* hailed Gorbachev as "Moscow's Great Communicator" and opined that with his "fancy rhetorical footwork" and efforts "to shape perceptions of the [upcoming] November summit," Gorbachev was beating Reagan "at his own best game."⁶

Thus, Reagan had two significant exigencies to address in his public diplomacy rhetoric surrounding the Geneva Summit. First, he needed to respond to Gorbachev's public diplomacy. Reagan wrote in a pre-Geneva Summit memorandum that he perceived "Gorbachev's major goal would be 'weaning our European friends away from us' by 'making us look like a threat to peace.'"⁷ Given this view, Reagan needed to craft an effective counter-rhetoric that allowed him to credibly present himself as actively pursuing peace with the USSR. Second, Reagan wanted to publicly advance the non-arms aspects of his agenda. He had to do so, however, without appearing intransigent on

arms control, which would have legitimized Gorbachev's criticism of Reagan as an obstacle to peace. In response to these exigencies, Reagan reformulated the traditional Cold War rhetoric of rapprochement by shifting the prerequisite for peace from a reduction in nuclear missiles to a reduction in U.S.-Soviet mistrust that would increase the possibilities of new nuclear arms agreements.

In essence, Reagan's reformulated rhetoric of rapprochement attempted to create a dual international public opinion mandate: (1) for the United States and the Soviet Union to discuss more than arms control at the Geneva Summit; and (2) for the USSR to implement changes in the areas of U.S.-Soviet bilateral relations, Soviet human rights practices, and Soviet involvement in regional conflicts. In pursuit of these goals, Reagan adopted a dual rhetorical strategy that combined both conciliation and confrontation. Both rhetorical approaches employed the language of peace, but both approaches also aimed at pressuring the Soviets to implement significant unilateral changes in their domestic and foreign policies and practices—changes that could undermine the legitimacy of the Communist Party within the USSR. However, Reagan's confrontational rhetoric did not preclude U.S. cooperation with the Soviets in pursuing world peace. Indeed, Reagan emphasized the United States' desire to work with the Soviets to reduce mistrust as the best precursor to reductions in nuclear weapons. Neither did Reagan's conciliatory rhetoric preclude him from promoting his first-term, anti-Communist goals of pressuring Soviet leaders to alter significantly Soviet policies and practices. This chapter examines Reagan's public diplomacy discourse surrounding the Geneva Summit to reveal these two rhetorical functions.

Reagan and Gorbachev met in Geneva November 19-21, 1985. In the weeks prior to Reagan's departure for Geneva he delivered two prominent speeches, one an address to the General Assembly of the United Nations on October 24⁸ and the other a nationally televised prime time address to the United States on November 14.⁹ Additionally, Reagan used five consecutive Saturday radio addresses between October 12 and November 9 to speak to the nation about various aspects of U.S.-Soviet relations as well as about the upcoming summit.¹⁰ The November 9 speech was also carried on Voice of America radio and the Soviets only partially jammed the broadcast.¹¹ Between October 21 and November 14, Reagan also granted interviews to representatives of *The Times of India*,¹² the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC),¹³ Soviet news organizations,¹⁴ U.S. wire services,¹⁵ foreign broadcasters,¹⁶ and Japanese journalists.¹⁷ The U.S. and the Soviet Union agreed to a media "blackout" during the summit.¹⁸ When Reagan returned from the summit on November 21, he addressed a joint session of the Congress and the nation,¹⁹ and he followed-up this speech with a Saturday radio address on November 23 that focused again on issues related to the Geneva Summit.²⁰

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV: A NEW RHETORICAL STYLE IN SOVIET PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Pavel Palazchenko, an interpreter from 1985-1991 for Gorbachev and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, recalls, "When the United States proposed an early summit meeting, there was tremendous pressure on Gorbachev to try to use it as a lever to extract some arms control concession, and in fact to make 'progress on

disarmament' a condition for holding the summit."²¹ Thus, Gorbachev employed the conventional rhetoric of rapprochement, arguing that superpower tensions could be relaxed by reducing nuclear weapons stockpiles. He publicly made clear his intention to focus exclusively on arms control issues at the Geneva Summit.²² As Anthony R. DeLuca observes, "Gorbachev set out to promote the cause of world peace and avert another costly round in the arms race." DeLuca observes that Gorbachev launched a "peace and disarmament offensive," and explains that it was "an international peace offensive" that attempted to form alliances "with antiwar groups, intellectuals, and officials" in the West who shared Gorbachev's views on nuclear weapons.²³ Gorbachev used two primary tactics in his public diplomacy strategy: a series of arms-related proposals during the spring, summer, and early fall of 1985 and an emphasis on improving Soviet relations with Western European nations.

In April 1985, Gorbachev announced the USSR's unilateral moratorium on the deployment of additional SS-20 missiles. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had responded to initial deployments of those Soviet missiles by placing U.S. Pershing and cruise missiles throughout Western Europe.²⁴ In late July, Gorbachev announced that on the day marking the fortieth anniversary of the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima, August 6, 1985 the Soviet Union would begin a unilateral, five-month moratorium on its underground testing of its nuclear weapons, and he invited the United States to join the moratorium.²⁵ In DeLuca's opinion, "By invoking this horrific image of the past as a warning for the future, . . . [Gorbachev] was able to promote the cause of peace and disadvantage the United States in the eyes of world public opinion because it

refused to join in the moratorium.”²⁶ On September 27, 1985 Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze delivered a letter from Gorbachev to Reagan in which Gorbachev proposed “a truly radical reduction . . . by 50 percent, of . . . [our] corresponding nuclear arms.” Gorbachev also proposed “a ban on space attack weapons,”²⁷ Reagan’s “Star Wars” space-based missile defense system (which the Reagan administration called its “Strategic Defense Initiative” or SDI). American media described Gorbachev’s fifty percent proposal as “eye-catching.”²⁸

A second major tactic Gorbachev employed in his public diplomacy strategy was to focus on improving relations between the USSR and the NATO countries of Western Europe. In early October 1985, as journalist Frances Fitzgerald notes, Gorbachev made “a highly successful state visit to France.”²⁹ While there, Gorbachev engaged in what journalist Lou Cannon describes as “missile diplomacy”³⁰ by announcing reductions in the number of Soviet SS-20 missiles aimed at European targets.³¹ Gorbachev explains that he appealed for “all-round cooperation and genuinely peaceful, neighborly relations among all the European countries,” advancing his concept of “a common European home.”³² His focus on America’s European allies was viewed by some as a shrewd attempt to create a division within the Atlantic alliance.³³ Sovietologist Robbin Laird explains that Gorbachev’s “charm offensive” was an attempt “to drive a wedge between Western leaders and their publics or between different Western allies.”³⁴ As *Time* journalist George Church reported, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was worried about “Gorbachev’s potential for promoting disunity in the [Atlantic] alliance.” Thatcher had previously warned in July 1985 “of a ‘massive Soviet propaganda

offensive’ offering ‘the alluring prospect of large reductions in nuclear weapons . . . ’.”³⁵ Gorbachev’s public diplomacy seemed to validate Thatcher’s warning.

As part of Gorbachev’s efforts to project a peaceful Soviet image, he was trying to alter what he described as the Soviet Union’s “system of total secrecy.” He considered his media interviews, one with *Time* magazine and another with three French television correspondents, to be “breakthroughs towards openness.”³⁶ In addition, Gorbachev’s book, *A Time for Peace*, an edited collection in English of Gorbachev’s statements and speeches between March-October 1985, was published in the United States in early November, just weeks before the Geneva Summit.

FORMULATING REAGAN’S RHETORICAL RESPONSE TO GORBACHEV’S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

One objective of Gorbachev’s public diplomacy was probably to elicit greater pressure on Reagan from Americans, many of whom apparently wanted Reagan to engage Soviet leaders in arms control negotiations. A November 1984 *New York Times*/CBS News poll following the presidential election had indicated that many Americans expected Reagan “to make a real faith effort to negotiate an arms control treaty” with the USSR.³⁷ As political scientist Robert Tucker pointed out in a 1984 newspaper column, arms control had “become accepted as the critical indicator of the state of the relationship between the superpowers.”³⁸ This was true, in part at least, because each of Reagan’s three immediate predecessors—Nixon, Ford and Carter—had returned from U.S.-Soviet summits with arms control agreements.³⁹ Indeed, détente—a

relaxation of Cold War tensions—was nearly synonymous with U.S.-Soviet arms control agreements following the Nixon-Ford years. Conventional wisdom measured U.S.-Soviet relations (as well as Reagan’s image as a peacemaker) in terms of progress toward reaching new arms control accords. Reagan was aware of domestic desires for him to meet the Soviets half-way. As Reagan biographer Lou Cannon notes, public opinion surveys conducted by Reagan’s own pollster, Richard Wirthlin, showed “the public concern about Reagan, even after his landslide reelection, was that he was too inflexible in his dealings with the Soviet Union.”⁴⁰ Indeed, during the first week of November 1985 *Newsweek* opined that Reagan’s negative responses to all of Gorbachev’s initiatives “risks the uncomfortable image of Ronald Reagan playing naysayer to Gorbachev’s peacemaker when the two meet in Geneva.”⁴¹

Those who were responsible for assisting Reagan in crafting his summit rhetoric were concerned about the administration’s response to Gorbachev’s public diplomacy. For example, Reagan speechwriter Dana Rohrabacher sent a memorandum to White House communications director Pat Buchanan on October 7, 1985 in which he observed: “In the last few weeks the world has witnessed one of the most professional public relations efforts ever made by the Soviet Union. They have brought into play everything in their propaganda arsenal, from supposedly new arms proposals, to the stylish cut of Gorbachev’s suit.” Rohrabacher, however, was concerned about more than Gorbachev’s wardrobe:

If we don’t act to capture the communications momentum from the Soviets, the President will walk into his meeting in Geneva out maneuvered in the one arena in which he should be the strongest, communications. Gorbachev, who heads an anti-democratic hyper

militaristic regime, could well convince large numbers of well intentioned people in Western Europe and even the United States, that he should be trusted over the 'intransigent' Ronald Reagan. If we let the Soviets define the issues, which is happening right now, the President will arrive in Geneva playing catch up and discussing their agenda.⁴²

Two weeks later, Reagan launched what U.S. media described as his own domestic and international "public-relations offensive"⁴³ in the name of world peace.

As Reagan formulated his public rhetoric he faced competing interests. On the one hand, he was known for his anti-Soviet Communist ideology, and he was on record both in his public statements and secret National Security Decision Directives as committed to ending Communist rule in the USSR. On the other hand, Reagan claimed to desire a nuclear-free world, the achievement of which obviously required reaching new arms reduction agreements with the Soviets. Reagan, his speechwriters, and his advisers struggled to balance these competing interests as they drafted presidential speeches related to the Geneva Summit. For example, in drafting the important address Reagan was to deliver to the nation on November 14, 1985 (the eve of his departure for the Geneva Summit), there were disagreements over the focus of the speech as well as the specific wording.

On November 9, 1985 when Pat Buchanan felt a compromise had been reached over the content of the President's November 14 address to the nation, he wrote a cover memo to NSC staff member Judith Mandel stating that the latest draft "satisfied both your folks—i.e. the problem is Soviet 'behavior,'—and my folks—i.e. the problem is Communist ideology, out of which the behavior flows."⁴⁴ Two days later, however, Reagan's National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane sent a memorandum back to

Buchanan expressing his disapproval of the latest draft as “a polemic without purpose, expressing so bearish an outlook as to call into question the President’s good faith in pursuing anything other than a policy of cold war hostility.” Reagan, McFarlane argued, intended to “state soberly to the American people that . . . [U.S.-Soviet] competition is inevitable; but that we have a responsibility to try to make it peaceful; and that it is in that spirit that he goes to Geneva—realistic but determined.”⁴⁵ The struggle over the speech’s content continued and when Reagan’s chief of staff, Don Regan, sent a draft of the speech to Reagan on November 12 for his review and revision, Regan felt it necessary to attach an explanatory note: “Mr. Pres—This is a compromise version—that frankly neither side completely applauds. I think its [sic] good enough for you to put an RR spin on it, and have a good talk. Let me know if you can work on it, or whether you want us to go back to the drawing board.”⁴⁶

Reagan did “put an RR spin” on the speech, making handwritten changes to a draft that in its final form included much of the wording that both McFarlane and Buchanan suggested. Although there were conflicting views represented within the November 14 speech drafts, as Reagan’s former director of White House communications David Gergen points out, Reagan, “never seemed bothered by conflicting drafts: he generally knew long before what he wanted to say and how he wanted to say it.”⁴⁷

REAGAN’S REFORMULATED RHETORIC OF RAPPROCHEMENT: CONFRONTING THE USSR IN THE NAME OF PEACE

Since at least January 1983 when Reagan issued National Security Decision Directive Number 75 (Directive 75), one of his strategic public diplomacy goals had been to “[p]revent the Soviet propaganda machine from seizing the semantic high-ground in the battle of ideas through the appropriation of such terms as ‘peace’.”⁴⁸ As Reagan approached the Geneva Summit, he recognized the need to counter Gorbachev’s public attempts to make the United States “look like a threat to peace.”⁴⁹ Thus, in Reagan’s rhetoric surrounding the Geneva Summit he stressed the language of peace.⁵⁰ Reagan’s use of the term “peace,” “peaceful,” “peacefully,” “peace-loving” and so forth was ubiquitous. However, Reagan’s rhetoric of peace was not predicated upon the conventional view that new international arms treaties were the keys to reducing U.S.-Soviet tensions.

Reagan reformulated the traditional Cold War rhetoric of rapprochement by arguing that mistrust, rather than missiles, was the source of Cold War tensions. In Reagan’s rhetoric, mistrust was the cause and missiles were the effect. Thus, Reagan argued that the imperative need in U.S.-Soviet relations was the reduction of mistrust. If reasons for mistrust were reduced, Reagan argued, this would diminish the perception of the need to be armed. If the perception of the need to be armed was diminished, then arms could be reduced much more easily and world peace would become more probable. By shifting the focus from missiles to mistrust, Reagan created a rhetorical opportunity and imperative to discuss non-arms-related issues that contributed to distrust of the

USSR—specifically, issues related to other aspects of his four-part agenda: bilateral relations, human rights, and regional conflicts. Thus, Reagan’s public diplomatic rhetoric became a means of promoting changes in the Soviets’ domestic and foreign policies. While Reagan talked in conciliatory terms about pursuing world peace, he also used confrontational rhetoric as he predicated such peace on changes in Soviet policies and practices at home and abroad.⁵¹

Reagan’s rhetorical response to Gorbachev’s emphasis on peace through disarmament implied that such a peace would not be a “true peace.” Reagan told the nation in his October 19, 1985 Saturday radio address, “[T]rue peace must be based on more than just reducing the means of waging war. It must address the sources of tension that provoke men to take up arms.”⁵² On October 21, 1985 Reagan responded to questions submitted by *The Times of India* by urging the world to view arms control in a “broader context,” and explained, “I think it is important to remember that arms, whether nuclear or conventional, do not come to exist for no reason. They exist because nations have very real differences among themselves and suspicions about each other’s intentions.”⁵³ One week later, Reagan told Brian Widlake of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), “If we can reduce those suspicions between our two countries, the reduction of arms will easily follow because we will reduce the feeling that we need them.” Reagan admitted to Widlake, “I know everyone is looking toward and emphasizing a reduction in arms—this is vital and important, but, I see reduction in arms as a result, not a cause.”⁵⁴ Two days later, Reagan reiterated his case to American reporters, arguing that “arms control is a result; that first, you’ve got to eliminate the

suspicious and the paranoia between . . . [the United States and the Soviet Union] and so forth, and then, you find out that arms control can come easily. But to just simply dwell on arms control—if both of you are sitting there suspiciously saying how we can keep an advantage—each side saying the same thing to itself, well, then, it doesn't really matter how many missiles you've counted.”⁵⁵

Reagan continually explained his reasoning by restating, with minor lexical changes, a contrast which he phrased using a stylistic device known as a chiasmus: “Nations do not distrust each other because they are armed. They arm themselves because they distrust each other.”⁵⁶ For Reagan, then, the critical indicator of the state of the relationship between the United States and the USSR was not whether the superpowers were signing new nuclear arms agreements limiting their means of waging war. It was, more fundamentally, whether the superpowers were taking steps to reduce the tension and mistrust they felt for each other. Thus, when Reagan was asked in a pre-summit interview with representatives of the wire services whether he thought he could “get anywhere near a semblance of an arms agreement,” he replied:

I don't think the negotiation of facts and figures about which weapon and how many and numbers and so forth in weaponry should take place at the summit. I think that belongs where we have already put it and that is with the arms control negotiators that are already in Geneva. That's their kind of figuring that should go on. We shouldn't be doing that with all of the things we have to discuss at the summit meeting. At that meeting there are a number of things—some of which I hinted at in the speech in the U.N.—regional situation. In other words, try to, as I say, eliminate the distrust that exists between us.⁵⁷

For Reagan, the Geneva Summit meetings would neither consist of the negotiation of the numerical specifics of a possible arms agreement nor consist of a ceremonial occasion

for signing a new arms control treaty.⁵⁸ Rather, Reagan strategically used the summit meeting as an opportunity to discuss publicly the ideological and practical differences between the U.S. and the USSR and ways some of those differences might be diminished.

Reagan maintained that the main reason for U.S. distrust of the Soviet Union was what he characterized as a disparity between the Soviets' words versus their deeds. Reagan argued, "Events of the past 10 to 15 years have greatly increased mistrust between our countries. If we are to solve the key problems in our relationship, we have to do something to restore confidence in dealing with each other."⁵⁹ For Reagan, it was previous Soviet deeds that had created international mistrust; therefore, Soviet deeds were needed to reduce the West's mistrust and create greater international confidence.⁶⁰ Reagan repeatedly focused on bilateral relations, human rights, and regional conflicts as areas in which the Soviets could change their policies and practices to reduce levels of international mistrust. Reagan told *The Times of India* in late October 1985, "[A]ll of these issues are as important to us as the question of nuclear arms."⁶¹ In a pre-summit Saturday radio address on November 2 Reagan asserted that if the USSR hoped "to bring about a fresh start in the U.S.-Soviet relationship, progress will be needed in all these areas."⁶² In his public diplomacy before, during, and after the Geneva Summit, Reagan continually focused on issues related to U.S.-Soviet bilateral relations, Soviet human rights practices, and Soviet involvement in regional conflicts, especially in Afghanistan.

Rhetorically Confronting the Closed Soviet System

Newsweek reported early in November 1985 that the Reagan administration was frustrated with Soviet refusal “to agree on a host of bilateral issues—what diplomats call ‘confetti agreements’.”⁶³ Amid the so-called “confetti” was a proposal for the expansion of people-to-people exchanges.⁶⁴ Some considered such agreements to be “peripheral.”⁶⁵ In Reagan’s diplomatic discourse surrounding the Geneva Summit, however, he characterized such issues as central to U.S.-Soviet relations. In both conciliatory and confrontational language, Reagan promoted ever-increasing people-to-people contacts, a freer flow of communication, and improved understanding between the peoples of the United States and the Soviet Union. Using conciliatory language, Reagan characterized increased contacts and improved communication as the means to a more stable U.S.-Soviet relationship and, thus, to world peace. Within Reagan’s conciliatory rhetoric, however, there was an implicit challenge to leaders of the Soviet Communist Party to open their system and society. Reagan’s conciliatory appeals had a subversive objective: to erode the traditionally isolationist and secretive practices of the Soviet Communist state. Reagan also used explicitly confrontational language to directly criticize the closed nature of the Soviet system, contrasting it with open political systems and societies in the world.

On November 14, 1985, the eve of his departure for Geneva, Reagan used conciliatory language to express his concern that U.S. and Soviet leaders discuss ways “not just to avoid war, but to strengthen peace, prevent confrontation, and remove the sources of tension.” Building upon the conventional belief that dialogue between

governmental leaders held the potential for improving relations, Reagan argued that increased dialogue between non-governmental representatives, especially ordinary Soviet and American citizens, might also have positive results. One such result, Reagan argued, could be the creation within each society of “thousands of coalitions for cooperation and peace.”⁶⁶

Reagan’s primary focus for people-to-people exchanges was American and Soviet youth. Two weeks before Reagan’s November 14 address to the nation, he had argued to representatives of Soviet news organizations, “Ordinary people in both countries should have more contact, particularly our young people. The future, after all, belongs to them.” Reagan told Soviet media representatives, “I’d like to see us sending thousands of students to each other’s country every year, to get to know each other, to learn from each other”⁶⁷ On November 14, Reagan reiterated to Americans, “It is not an impossible dream that our children and grandchildren can someday travel freely back and forth between America and the Soviet Union; visit each other’s homes; work and study together; enjoy and discuss plays, music, television, and root for teams when they compete.”⁶⁸

Reagan had good reasons to focus on youth exchanges. First, as diplomat George Kennan later pointed out, by the middle of the twentieth century there was a severe “generational gap” creating greater disaffection between Communist Party leaders and younger Soviets.⁶⁹ Gorbachev biographer Zhores Medvedev argues that under Leonid Brezhnev, for various reasons, “The gap between the bureaucracy and the people widened.”⁷⁰ In addition, historian Eric Shiraev and political scientist Vladislav

Zubok claim that by the mid-1980s “most of . . . [their Soviet] colleagues, especially the younger ones, were fascinated with the United States and did not accept the official mantra of Soviet propaganda about the ‘aggressive nature’ of American imperialism.” According to Shiraev and Zubok, it was the “technocratic-minded intellectuals and the rebellious counter-cultural youth [who] constituted the bulk of the grass roots of the dissent movement” within the Soviet Union.⁷¹

The establishment of greater ties, as Reagan pointed out in his November 14 address, required that the U.S. and USSR “let people get together to share, enjoy, help, listen, and learn from each other, especially young people.”⁷² Implicit in Reagan’s hopeful rhetoric was criticism of the closed nature of the Soviet system. It was the Soviet Communist Party that was preventing Americans and Soviets from making contacts and creating ties, not the United States. However, this criticism was couched in rhetoric that, in Pat Buchanan’s words, avoided “all sense of foreboding” and “soar[ed] with the themes . . . [of] hope and confidence,”⁷³ a rhetorical style very different from Reagan’s foreign policy rhetoric during his first three years as president.

Better international communication, Reagan argued, could result in the reduction of “misunderstandings [that] make the world more dangerous.”⁷⁴ He expressed confidence that Americans and Soviets could overcome their misunderstandings because they shared “much in common.”⁷⁵ Once they realized how much they had in common, especially a fervent desire for peace,⁷⁶ these peoples could “find, as yet undiscovered, avenues where American and Soviet citizens can cooperate fruitfully for the benefit of mankind.” Because Reagan believed that average Soviet and American citizens could

engage in cooperative efforts “for the greater good of all,” he felt it was time for the U.S. and the USSR “to take bold new steps to open the way for our peoples to participate in an unprecedented way in the building of peace.”⁷⁷

As part of Reagan’s conciliatory rhetoric, he sought to make sure the Soviet people understood the United States’ peaceful intentions toward them. He assured Soviet citizens listening to his Voice of America speech on November 9 that official Soviet media portrayals of America’s intentions were “distortions” and that “Americans are a peace-loving people; we do not threaten your nation and never will.”⁷⁸ In previous attempts to counter anti-American propaganda disseminated inside the Soviet Union, Reagan had asserted that the United States was not out to change the Soviet system.⁷⁹ Based on revisions Reagan penciled on an early draft of his November 14 address to the nation, he initially planned to repeat a similar statement. However, in finalizing the speech Reagan adopted a suggested modification to his original word choice. Reagan’s original wording was, “We don’t like each other’s governmental systems, but we are not out to change theirs [the Soviets’], and we will not permit them to change ours.” The suggested re-wording read, “We do not threaten the Soviet people and never will.”⁸⁰ Reagan apparently agreed with the argument made by his deputy assistant and director of speechwriting, Bently Elliott, who suggested this alternative wording. Elliott noted in a memorandum to Reagan that “the modified sentence fully conveys the spirit and substance of peaceful reassurance that you intend to communicate” but “stops short of seeming to condone the domestic repression and foreign aggression that the Soviets insist their system justifies.”⁸¹ This information on the creation of Reagan’s November

14, 1985 address to the nation reveals that Reagan meant to reassure the Soviet people that the United States did not pose a military threat to them. He did not mean to convey any moral or political acceptance of the legitimacy of Soviet Communism. Reagan's rhetoric left open the option that he would attack the Soviet Communist Party's practice of Marxist-Leninism. Thus, in keeping with a distinction often made in diplomatic discourse⁸²—distinguishing between the people governed by a political system and the political system by which they are governed—Reagan modified the sentence to shift its focus from the Soviet system to the Soviet people as the object of Reagan's "peaceful reassurance." To whatever extent Reagan could induce Soviet citizens to identify with his descriptions of American citizens he could more easily create a division between the Soviet people and the Communist Party which imposed the political and economic systems under which Soviets lived.

It is clear that creating these senses of identification and division was among Reagan's rhetorical goals, because he argued that one of the best ways for Soviets to understand the veracity of his claims (and by implication to prove the falsehood of contrary claims made by official Soviet media) was for Soviets to have increased direct contact with American citizens. For example, Reagan argued:

If Soviet youth could attend American schools and universities, they could learn firsthand what spirit of freedom rules our land and that we do not wish the Soviet people any harm. If American youth could do likewise, they could talk about their interests and values and hopes for the future with their Soviet friends. They would get firsthand knowledge of life in the U.S.S.R., but most important, they would learn that we're all God's children with much in common.⁸³

In this statement, Reagan again distinguished between the Soviet people and the Soviet system. In so doing, he created unity where there was division, grouping the people of the Soviet Union and the American people together as “God’s children.” This rhetorical construction was not inconsistent with Reagan’s 1983 condemnation of the Soviet Union as an “evil empire”: it was the Soviet system and the ideology on which it was based (not the people living under that system) that Reagan had described as an “evil empire.” Reagan expressed his confidence to his Soviet listeners that “if more of your citizens visited us, you would understand that our people want peace as fervently as you do.”⁸⁴

Although Reagan’s November 14, 1985 address did not use the “evil empire” rhetoric the world had heard from him during his first term, this rhetoric did not represent a policy reversal on Reagan’s part. It was a tactical shift in language that continued to serve Reagan’s long-term political strategy of undercutting the legitimacy of the Soviet system. Jack F. Matlock Jr., who was Reagan’s senior director for European and Soviet affairs on the National Security Council at the time of the Geneva Summit, claims that Reagan’s larger goal was to use cultural, educational, and athletic exchanges “to erode the Iron curtain.”⁸⁵ In other words, while Reagan’s conciliatory rhetoric promoted increased people-to-people exchanges it simultaneously functioned as a means of advancing Reagan’s first-term goal of promoting change within the Soviet Union. Thus, Reagan’s rhetoric, though conciliatory in style, was also confrontational in purpose, challenging Gorbachev and the ruling elite within the Soviet Communist Party to change traditional Soviet isolationist and secretive practices. Matlock explains the reason that Reagan, and others within the administration, placed so much emphasis on

greatly expanding people-to-people exchanges: “These exchanges were important for the long-term influence they could exert in the Soviet Union.”⁸⁶ Matlock explains elsewhere, “If these contacts helped open the closed Soviet system, they would facilitate changes in Soviet behavior.”⁸⁷ Reagan’s diplomatic rhetoric indicates that he shared Matlock’s views.

In addition to the confrontational implications within Reagan’s conciliatory rhetoric, Reagan also employed explicitly confrontational language to criticize the closed nature of the Soviet Communist state. In particular, he sought to focus world attention on the repressive aspects of the Soviet system. Reagan used a major international forum, his address to the United Nations General Assembly on October 24, 1985 to voice some of his criticisms. He framed his complaints in the form of a contrast between the open and closed political and social systems of the West and East. There was the closed world: the Soviet Union and those countries within its sphere of influence, where “every facet of people’s lives—the expression of their beliefs, their movements, and their contacts with the outside world” were restricted, controlled, and commanded by government, and where Soviets and East Europeans were closed off from West Europeans and peoples of other nations, closed off from the “outside world” by “walls of partition and distrust.” In contrast, there was the open world: the United States and “what is called the West . . . a voluntary association of free nations,” with all their proof and promise that “freedom works,” where “the people rule” with “no walls to keep them in” and no “system of police to keep them mute.”⁸⁸

In September 1985, in a memorandum to Pat Buchanan, Ben Elliott had advanced the concept of “a well-reasoned speech at the U.N. which would be televised to the world and present the President’s vision and proposals for an OPEN WORLD.” Elliot believed that in the days leading up to the Geneva Summit such a speech would help the White House “regain the offensive and put the Soviets on the defensive.” Elliot argued that a speech advocating an “open world” would allow Reagan “to go forward with a positive idea, which reflects the dream of bringing people together that . . . [Reagan] has always harbored, while at the same time hitting the Soviets where they are most vulnerable, uncomfortable, and defensive.”⁸⁹ While Gorbachev was touting a new openness in his public diplomacy outside the Soviet Union, in contrast, Reagan was calling for greater openness for people within the Soviet Union.

Reagan linked the Soviets’ removal of barriers preventing open communication to their genuine pursuit of world peace. He argued in his speech at the United Nations, “Peace based on partition cannot be true peace. Put simply: Nothing can justify the continuing and permanent division of the European Continent. Walls of partition and distrust must give way to greater communication for an open world.”⁹⁰ Thus, in 1985 Reagan confronted Gorbachev publicly about the Berlin Wall and challenged the general secretary to open the Soviet system long before Reagan invited “Mr. Gorbachev” to “tear down this wall” in June 1987.⁹¹

Two weeks after his U.N. address, and one week before his departure to meet with Gorbachev in Geneva, Reagan repeated his criticism of the closed Soviet system in his Voice of America address to the world in general, and to the Soviet public in

particular. Again, Reagan countered Gorbachev's claims of a new "openness" in the Soviet Union by pointing out a double standard exercised by the Soviet government. "Your leaders," Reagan told his Soviet audience, "can freely appear on American radio and television and be interviewed by our magazines and newspapers." Westerners did not have the same access to the Soviet people. Soviet officials could freely make their cases to the Western world by utilizing its free press, as Gorbachev had in his interviews with American and French journalists, as well as in publishing his book, *A Time for Peace*, in the West. No such freedom existed within the Soviet Union. Thus, Reagan proposed to his Soviet listeners the opening of "a dialog between our nations, so leaders of each country would have the same chance to communicate to the people of the other on television."⁹² Reagan reiterated in his November 14 speech, "In communications, we'd like to see more appearances in the other's mass media by representatives of both our countries. If Soviet spokesmen are free to appear on American television, to be published and read in the American press, shouldn't the Soviet people have the same right to see, hear, and read what we Americans have to say?"⁹³

"Governments can only do so much," Reagan argued before departing for Geneva. Governments should "get the ball rolling" in opening the way for their peoples to get to know one another, and, once they have, "they should step out of the way and let people get together" Reagan explained that he was "proposing the broadest people-to-people exchanges in the history of American-Soviet relations."⁹⁴ This was the heart of the confrontational aspect of Reagan's rhetoric surrounding the Geneva Summit: publicly pressing the Soviet Communist government to remove the restrictions it

imposed on its people that prevented free and open communication with the peoples of what Reagan's director of speechwriting called the "open world."⁹⁵ Reagan attempted to exploit rhetorically what he saw as a Soviet vulnerability—what Gorbachev later stated in his *Memoirs* that the ideologues in the Soviet Union feared, that "truth would undermine faith in . . . [the Soviet] system."⁹⁶

Rhetorically Confronting Soviet Human Rights Practices

A second aspect of the four-part agenda that Reagan emphasized in his Geneva Summit rhetoric was human rights. In conciliatory terms, Reagan claimed publicly that he hesitated to make Soviet human rights practices "a kind of public discussion"⁹⁷ about which he would "negotiate on the front page."⁹⁸ Despite such disclaimers, however, Reagan repeatedly raised the subject of human rights in his speeches and interviews.⁹⁹ He made human rights a central issue of U.S.-Soviet relations, arguing on the eve of his departure for Geneva that "The rights of the individual and the rule of law are as fundamental to peace as arms control."¹⁰⁰ However, rather than criticizing specific Soviet practices, Reagan contextualized his argument in international affairs and the USSR's participation in a multi-national treaty—the 1975 Helsinki Final Act—that established international standards for human rights practices. Reagan had criticized former President Gerald Ford for signing the Helsinki Agreements.¹⁰¹ A decade later, however, Reagan realized the strategic value of discussing Soviet human rights practices within the larger context of international agreements: he could focus international attention on the Soviets' mistreatment of their own people and at the same time elicit

doubts about the appropriateness of entering into new treaties with a country that had failed to comply with an existing treaty.

Reagan's rhetorical efforts to hold the Soviet government accountable to its obligations under the Helsinki Act performed two significant functions, both of which were inimical to the Soviets' position of non-interference. First, Reagan's argument legitimized international public discussion of Soviet human rights practices. Second, the argument functioned to publicly encourage domestic opposition within the USSR to the policies and practices of the Communist Party. Reagan also used the Soviet Union's failure to live up to its treaty obligations as grounds for publicly doubting the USSR's reliability in pursuing international peace via arms agreements. In more confrontational language, Reagan also suggested that the Soviet government's lack of respect for its citizens' human rights made the USSR a threat to other nations.

Although Reagan did not defer to the Soviet position of non-interference, he acknowledged, in conciliatory fashion, that he did not think "the human rights thing should be a kind of public discussion" with Americans' and Soviets' "accusing fingers being pointed at each other."¹⁰² Reagan apparently had pragmatic reasons for avoiding such an outcome. He told representatives of the news wire services on November 6, 1985, "there are some subjects that should remain in confidence between the leaders discussing them." The "greatest success" had come, Reagan argued, when previous presidents discussed human rights issues "privately and quietly." Reagan appeared to want to give Gorbachev room to maneuver so he could avoid incurring negative political repercussions within the USSR in the event the General Secretary did change Soviet

human rights practices. Reagan explained to representatives of the wire services: “In this world of public life and politics, if you try to negotiate on the front page—some items—you have almost put the other fellow in a corner where he can’t give in because he would appear in the eyes of his own people as if he’s taking orders from an outside government.”¹⁰³ Consistent with this conciliatory posture, Reagan did not publicly denounce the Soviet Union as an “evil empire” because “they preach the supremacy of the state . . . over individual man,” as he had on March 8, 1983.¹⁰⁴ Neither did he cite specific examples of Soviet human rights violations as he had on previous occasions.¹⁰⁵

Discussing the subject of human rights within the context of the USSR’s participation in the Helsinki Act allowed Reagan to confront the Soviet government in terms of its compliance with global standards ensconced in a decade-old international treaty, rather than just in terms of Soviet domestic practices of which the United States disapproved. Journalist and diplomatic correspondent Robert Cullen notes, “In the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, [Leonid Brezhnev] committed his government to look favorably upon requests for emigration to reunite families, and, by reference, he accepted the provision of the U.N.’s Universal Declaration on Human Rights which stipulates that every person has a right to enter and leave his own country.” Because the Soviets had been “arbitrary and capricious” in their emigration practices, Cullen argues, “this left the entirely reasonable impression . . . that Moscow did not live up to its international obligations.”¹⁰⁶

Reagan posited that by signing an international treaty, the Soviet Union had imposed an obligation upon itself to the other signatory nations. As Cold War historian

John Lewis Gaddis notes, the Helsinki treaty allowed the United States and its allies to legitimately question Soviet human rights practices in terms of “a standard, based on universal principles of justice, rooted in international law, independent of Marxist-Leninist ideology” to which the Soviet Union had willingly submitted.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, Reagan argued in late October 1985 to representatives of Soviet news organizations that the United States was not interfering in Soviet internal matters, but simply asking Soviet leaders to live up “to certain standards of conduct” to which the USSR had committed itself.¹⁰⁸ Reagan explained to Soviets who listened to his November 9, 1985 Voice of America broadcast, “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 peoples of the signatory nations. America asks the world’s leaders to abide by what they have committed themselves to do.”¹⁰⁹ Reagan asserted in his November 14 speech to the nation that the United States was “not trying to impose our beliefs on others. We have a right to expect, however, that great states will live up to their international obligations.”¹¹⁰ Thus, in Reagan’s characterization, his questioning of Soviet human rights practices was not a matter of a foreign leader meddling in Soviet domestic affairs; it was a matter of whether or not “the world’s two strongest nations . . . keep our word.”¹¹¹ This was a conciliatory approach, especially in contrast to Reagan’s previous denunciations of the Soviet Union as an “evil empire”; nonetheless, it enabled Reagan to confront the Soviet government about its human rights practices.

Reagan's rhetoric promoted domestic dissent within the USSR. Gaddis observes that once Brezhnev signed the Helsinki accords, people living under Communist systems "could claim official permission to say what they thought" about their government's human rights practices. Gaddis notes that after the conclusion of the Helsinki Final Act, "thousands of individuals who lacked the prominence of [Alexander] Solzhenitsyn and [Andrei] Sakharov began to stand up with them in holding the U.S.S.R. and its satellites accountable for human rights abuses." Numerous "Helsinki Groups" sprang up throughout Eastern Europe and within the Soviet Union to monitor human rights practices.¹¹² Indeed, the USSR's long-time ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin, explains that the Helsinki agreements "became a manifesto of the dissident and liberal movement" within the USSR.¹¹³ Thus, Gaddis concludes that "the Helsinki process became . . . the basis for legitimizing *opposition* to Soviet rule."¹¹⁴ Reagan's public rhetorical efforts to hold the Soviet government accountable to their obligations under the international agreement endorsed and attempted to encourage such domestic opposition to Soviet Communist Party practices.

The rhetorical trajectory of Reagan's argument also allowed him to move easily from charging the Soviets with failing to comply with an international human rights treaty to expressing doubt about the Soviets' trustworthiness as a partner in future U.S.-Soviet treaties related to arms control. Reagan declared his doubts about Soviet reliability in international affairs before he departed for Geneva: "A government which does not respect its citizens' rights and its international commitments to protect those rights is not likely to respect its other international undertakings."¹¹⁵ Apparently, this

reasoning supported Reagan's earlier linking of the possibility of "negotiating new [U.S.-Soviet] agreements" to the Soviets' record of "abiding by past agreements."¹¹⁶ In this way, Reagan implied a willingness to engage in new arms treaties with the Soviet Union while, at the same time, he undermined Gorbachev's argument that "the only reasonable way out of the existing situation is the reaching of an agreement by the opposing [U.S. and Soviet] forces on the immediate termination of the arms race."¹¹⁷ Countering Gorbachev's argument, Reagan asserted that compliance with the Helsinki Accords would be a significant contribution by the Soviet Union to the creation of greater international confidence, and such improvements could make new international arms treaties more likely.

For Reagan, a discussion of Soviet integrity in complying with an international human rights treaty was consistent with his promotion of world peace. In his view, the Soviet government's lack of compliance with the Helsinki Accords not only revealed something significant about the USSR's character as a treaty partner but also about the nature of the Soviet system and the claims by Soviet leaders that they desired world peace. Reagan reminded Americans in his Saturday radio address on October 19, 1985 that "countries which respect human rights are unlikely to unleash war or to impose their will on others."¹¹⁸ In his speech to the joint session of the Congress and the American people upon his return from Geneva, Reagan reiterated his position: "Those countries which respect the rights of their own people tend, inevitably, to respect the rights of their neighbors."¹¹⁹ Thus, for Reagan, the Soviet government's failure to respect the rights of its own citizens made the prospects of Soviet leaders respecting the rights of people in

other countries dubious. For Reagan, until the Soviet Union's leaders changed their human rights practices the USSR should be viewed as tending toward war and likely to use force to impose its will on others.

Rhetorically Confronting Soviet Expansionism

As in his discussions of people-to-people exchanges and human rights, Reagan also employed both conciliatory and confrontational rhetoric to promote changes in the Soviets' involvement in various regional conflicts. Both the conciliatory and the confrontational aspects of Reagan's public diplomacy rhetoric were consistent with his Soviet policy goals outlined in Directive 75. In January 1983, Reagan had directed his administration to "create incentives (positive and negative) for the new [Soviet] leadership to adopt policies less detrimental to U.S. interests" as part of his goals of "containing and reversing Soviet expansion," especially in Afghanistan.¹²⁰ In October 1985, in a conciliatory rhetorical gesture, Reagan publicly proposed a joint U.S.-Soviet effort to bring peace to troubled regions around the globe, a diplomatic move that offered positive incentives to the Soviets. In more explicitly confrontational terms, Reagan emphasized negative incentives for the Soviets to alter their foreign policies. These incentives consisted of political, diplomatic, and military risks the Soviets faced if they did not withdraw from Afghanistan and cease their support for certain factions involved in conflicts in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua. In all, Reagan's rhetoric sought both to elevate the issue of regional conflicts to a level equal in

importance to arms control and to elicit doubts about whether Gorbachev and the Soviets really wanted world peace or just a less expensive arms race.

The most significant conciliatory aspect of Reagan's rhetoric of public diplomacy was the proposal of a U.S.-Soviet partnership in a "regional peace process" that Reagan presented to the United Nations General Assembly on October 24, 1985. As with other aspects of his agenda, Reagan's advocacy for this peace plan resounded with the promise of U.S.-Soviet cooperation: "With hard work and imagination, there is no limit to what, working together, our nations can achieve. Gaining a peaceful resolution of these [regional] conflicts will open whole new vistas of peace and progress."¹²¹ The nature of Reagan's proposal allowed him to adopt a peace-seeking posture, projecting a desire to partner with the West's Cold War arch-rival for the larger purpose of achieving world peace. However, as director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Ken Adelman points out, Reagan's proposal also aimed at moving the "public focus from where the Soviets wanted it, riveted on arms control."¹²² In promoting his peace plan, Reagan reduced the whole to its parts and asserted that if the Soviets wanted world peace Gorbachev should begin by working with the United States toward achieving regional peace. In his October 26 radio address, for example, Reagan asked, "How can we discuss the goal of a more peaceful and civilized world without discussing those places where peace is being violated and innocent people are being killed?"¹²³ Thus, Reagan's conciliatory peace rhetoric was also a means of confronting Gorbachev about the Soviets Union's involvement in various regional conflicts, including Afghanistan.

Following Reagan's presentation to the United Nations of his proposal for pursuing regional peace, he continued to emphasize in his public rhetoric that the United States and the USSR, "[a]s the world's two strongest nations," had an obligation "to the rest of humanity . . . to help find peaceful settlements to local and regional conflicts."¹²⁴ Reagan emphasized the importance of the United States and the Soviet Union working "together, these two great powers together," to "withdraw foreign forces," to assist in getting "international custodial forces" temporarily deployed to regions of conflict, and to encourage warring parties to engage in peace talks.¹²⁵ Reagan proposed that once peace talks began Americans and Soviets should "sit down together and ask how we can best support the ongoing talks among warring parties."¹²⁶

Reagan's proposal provided the Soviets some positive incentives. *Newsweek* reported that an unnamed "official" within the Reagan administration described the United States as "titillating" the Soviet government "with a promise of legitimacy." According to *Newsweek*, "By offering the Soviets a role in settling conflicts in Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia, the United States would certify Moscow's position as a global power with legitimate interests far beyond its borders."¹²⁷ Additionally, Reagan linked changes in Soviet involvement in regional conflicts to improved U.S.-Soviet relations, characterizing the "extraordinary opportunity for the Soviet side to make a contribution to regional peace" as a larger opportunity to "promote future dialog and negotiations [between the United States and USSR] on other critical issues."¹²⁸ According to Reagan, by joining with the United States to help bring an end to regional conflicts Gorbachev could enhance the Soviet Union's credibility on the world's stage as

a peaceful global power and improve U.S.-Soviet relations and, thereby, increase the overall prospects for world peace.

In much more confrontational language, Reagan also offered negative incentives for the Soviets to abandon their direct involvement in and indirect support for what the USSR traditionally described as wars of national liberation. One negative incentive was primarily rhetorical in nature—the threat of Reagan continuing to emphasize publicly Soviet involvement in regional conflicts and to describe Soviet military activities in such conflicts in terms most detrimental to the Soviet Union’s international image. Reagan rhetorically exploited international interest in the Geneva Summit to focus on Afghanistan and other military conflicts in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America in which the Soviets were involved. He variously characterized Soviet actions in regional conflicts as: (1) a primary cause of regional tensions and, therefore, a significant source of superpower suspicion and tension; (2) a threat to world peace; (3) a primary cause of ever-increasing human suffering; and, (4) an impediment to the resolution of significant problems indigenous to certain developing countries. Reagan’s public enunciation of these views probably aimed at pressuring Gorbachev to respond publicly or to concede in silence Reagan’s interpretation of Soviet foreign activities. Whatever option Gorbachev chose, Reagan made sure that the subject of Soviet involvement in regional conflicts remained salient in the international dialogue.

Reagan decried Soviet support for the imposition of “repressive dictatorships subordinated to Soviet objectives” as “a fundamental source of tension in many regions of the world”¹²⁹ and, more specifically, as a “growing source of instability and war in the

developing world.”¹³⁰ He argued that although the conflicts in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua “originate in local disputes . . . they share a common characteristic: They are the consequence of an ideology imposed from without, dividing nations and creating regimes that are, almost from the day they take power, at war with their own people.”¹³¹ In his address to the United Nations, Reagan chided the Soviets’ “expressions of peaceful intent” and asked that the world “weigh the record”:

In Afghanistan, there are 118,000 Soviet troops prosecuting war against the Afghan people. In Cambodia, 140,000 Soviet-backed Vietnamese soldiers wage a war of occupation. In Ethiopia, 1,700 Soviet advisers are involved in military planning and support operations along with 2,500 Cuban troops. In Angola, 1,200 Soviet military advisers involved in planning and supervising combat operations along with 35,000 Cuban troops. In Nicaragua, some 8,000 Soviet-bloc and Cuban personnel, including about 3,500 military and secret police personnel.¹³²

Reagan explained, “During the past decade, these [regional] wars played a large role in building suspicions and tensions in my country over the purpose of Soviet policy.”¹³³

Speaking to representatives of Soviet news organizations on October 31, Reagan accused the Soviets of attempting “to settle problems around the world by using military force,”¹³⁴ and in his interview with foreign broadcasters twelve days later, Reagan accused the Soviets of seeking to spread totalitarianism beyond their own borders.¹³⁵

Not only was the Soviet Union supporting violations of the right of self-determination, Reagan asserted, but also creating “untold suffering”¹³⁶ that was “exacting a staggering human toll,”¹³⁷ contributing “nothing to the prospects for peace or the resolution of indigenous problems,”¹³⁸ and costing “hundreds of thousands of lives.”¹³⁹

Reagan’s rhetoric offered a second incentive that was military in nature—the threat of direct involvement by the United States in regional conflicts where the Soviets

were involved. Reagan characterized Soviet activities in Third World conflicts as provocations to the West and, thus, threats to world peace. He warned the United Nations that regional conflicts “threaten to spill across national boundaries and trigger dangerous confrontations.”¹⁴⁰ On November 12, 1985 in more specific and confrontational terms, he told foreign broadcasters, “[R]egional conflicts run the risk of spreading and leading to confrontation between major powers.”¹⁴¹ For Reagan, the solution was clear: “True peace must rest on the right of all people to choose their destiny, to grow and develop free from coercion and fear.”¹⁴² Upon Reagan’s return from the Geneva Summit, he declared that “America embraces all those who resist tyranny and struggle for freedom,” and he warned that the United States would not allow the USSR to think “that aggression carries no risk.”¹⁴³

CONCLUSION

In the weeks following the Geneva Summit, many in the United States and in the Soviet Union considered the summit a success for Reagan¹⁴⁴ and a failure for Gorbachev:¹⁴⁵ Reagan had worked through every aspect of his four-part agenda with Gorbachev while Gorbachev had been unable to persuade Reagan to compromise on SDI or to agree to an arms control accord. The joint U.S.-Soviet statement capping the summit reflected Reagan’s progress in advancing international discussions of issues other than arms control despite Gorbachev’s public pre-summit resistance to focusing on anything other than arms control.¹⁴⁶ Post-summit opinion polls indicated that Reagan received widespread approval, especially among Americans, for his overall job

performance, his handling of U.S.-Soviet relations, and his summitry in Geneva. For example, according to journalists Jane Mayer and Doyle McManus, “Most polls showed that the president had regained the peak of popularity he’d enjoyed immediately after the 1981 assassination attempt.”¹⁴⁷ Journalist Frances Fitzgerald reports that following the summit, “the approval rating for Reagan’s handling of relations with the Soviet Union” jumped in Gallup polls to 65 percent from a pre-summit rating of 52 percent.¹⁴⁸ Finally, a national study conducted by Reagan’s pollster Dick Wirthlin the day after Reagan’s November 21, 1985 televised address to a joint session of the Congress indicated “that 77 percent of all Americans approved of the way [Reagan] was handling his job as president, 76 percent approved of the way he was handling relations with the Soviet Union, and an amazing 81 percent approved of the way he handled the Geneva summit.”¹⁴⁹

Many of Reagan’s critics, however, have limited Reagan’s success at the summit to the areas of image building¹⁵⁰ and public relations.¹⁵¹ Fitzgerald argues that the “enthusiasm for Reagan’s performance was mysterious” because “nothing much happened at the summit, and certainly nothing in regard to disarmament,” and what had happened was “not very substantial.”¹⁵² Mayer and McManus contend, “The summit had been largely an exercise in public relations because the president had refused to make a choice between apparently contradictory goals” represented by the pragmatists’ and the hard-liners’ positions within his administration.¹⁵³ Similarly, journalists Bob Schieffer and Gary Paul Gates argue that Reagan only excelled “where he had so often excelled: image building.” They also assert that because of “Reagan’s chronic resistance

to details,” there was a “lack of substantive progress in Geneva,” only “window dressing.”¹⁵⁴

These criticisms ignore both Reagan’s stated goals for the summit as well as the nature of Cold War discourse as symbolic action. During the months preceding the meetings in Geneva, Gorbachev sought to focus public attention almost exclusively on nuclear weapons-related issues. In contrast, Reagan emphasized the need to reduce international mistrust, the reduction of which could make negotiations over arms eliminations easier. Reagan announced before the summit that he did not intend to use the meetings for “the negotiation of facts and figures about which weapon and how many and numbers and so forth in weaponry.”¹⁵⁵ Thus, to measure Reagan’s performance at Geneva by the absence of an arms control agreement is to ignore the emphasis Reagan placed on his symbolic action and the objectives at which his rhetorical behavior aimed.¹⁵⁶ As rhetorical scholar Martin J. Medhurst indicates, “Cold War is a matter of symbolic action, action intended to forward the accomplishment of strategic goals—social, political, economic, military, or diplomatic.”¹⁵⁷ Reagan’s goal for his first U.S.-Soviet summit was not the conclusion of new nuclear arms treaties. As this chapter demonstrates, his goals were more political and diplomatic in nature.

Three significant conclusions may be drawn about the symbolic action of Reagan’s public diplomacy surrounding the Geneva Summit. The first conclusion is that Reagan’s rhetoric was consistent with the political and diplomatic objectives he established at least two years prior to the Geneva Summit. His summit rhetoric did not signal a “reversal” in foreign policy as claimed by political scientist Beth Fischer.¹⁵⁸ In

February 1981, Reagan argued that if the Americans and Soviets met at the negotiating table, the two countries could not “deal with just one facet of the international relationship” but would have “to deal with all the problems that are dividing us.”¹⁵⁹ In January 1983, in Directive 75, Reagan emphasized that “the U.S. . . . should continue to resist Soviet efforts to return to a U.S.-Soviet agenda focused primarily on arms control.”¹⁶⁰ In October 1985, in Directive 194, Reagan directed members of his administration to counter Soviet attempts to focus public interest in the Geneva Summit on arms control by promoting the need to establish greater trust through Soviet changes in bilateral relations, human rights, and regional conflicts.¹⁶¹

Reagan’s Geneva Summit rhetoric presented these non-arms treaty areas as key indicators of the USSR’s willingness to improve international confidence in its commitment to world peace. Reagan’s rhetoric focused especially on the Soviets’ willingness to expand bilateral exchanges, to change significantly its human rights practices, and to withdraw from regional conflicts around the globe, especially from Afghanistan. These demands constituted a continuation of Reagan’s first-term Soviet policies, not a “reversal.” Rather than reversing his Soviet policy, Reagan reformulated the conventional Cold War rhetoric of rapprochement. He confronted the Soviet Union. He did so not with blunt ideologically-based demands but with appeals for “peace.” He strategically called for improved relations in areas that involved both the United States and the Soviet Union, but that required unilateral changes by the Soviets. Like President Dwight D. Eisenhower, whom Medhurst argues “clothed” his December 1953 “Atoms for Peace” speech at the United Nations “in the language of disarmament,”¹⁶²

Reagan borrowed from the language of détente, but added to it his own hard-line confrontational rhetoric. Reagan's emphasis on his four-part agenda established a framework for U.S.-Soviet discourse on nuclear disarmament, but it also sought to promote significant ideological and practical changes within the Soviet Union. The Geneva Summit was a major international event that Reagan rhetorically exploited to advance an agenda that he hoped could, in the long-term, contain and reverse Soviet expansionism and undermine the Soviet system.

The second conclusion is that Reagan's summit rhetoric demonstrated the primacy among his diplomatic objectives of promoting change within the Soviet Union. He acknowledged the importance of focusing on the nuclear aspect of the superpower relationship. However, Reagan also asserted that there were three other issue areas that were central to the U.S.-Soviet relationship. This chapter demonstrates that Reagan's public rhetoric placed an equal and at times a higher priority on promoting changes within the Soviet Union than on reaching new international arms agreements. In effect, Reagan used the Soviet desire for arms limitations as an opportunity to argue for changes in the Soviet system.

The third conclusion is that by reformulating the rhetoric of rapprochement Reagan avoided sounding intransigent on the subject of the arms race while continuing his pursuit of anti-Soviet objectives. He argued that improvements in other areas of the Soviet-American relationship could create an international environment of increased confidence which could, in turn, enhance the process of concluding new arms control agreements. In this way, Reagan's discourse extended the function of diplomatic

rhetoric which rhetorical scholar Robert Oliver T. Oliver described as “maintain[ing] a nice and shifting balance between incitement to war and predictions of peace.”¹⁶³ By adopting a dual confrontation-conciliation rhetorical posture, Reagan maintained a balance between his pursuit of objectives toward which world opinion was sympathetic, and his pursuit of objectives toward which the Soviet Union was hostile.

NOTES

¹ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive Number 194: Meeting with Soviet Leader in Geneva: Themes and Perceptions, October 25, 1985,” in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 598, 599. Hereafter cited as “NSDD-194.”

² Reagan, “NSDD-194,” 598.

³ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with J. N. Parimoo of the *Times of India*, Together with Written Responses to Questions, October 21, 1985,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1985* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), 1273-1279. This publication series is hereafter cited as *Public Papers* followed by the year and the page numbers. This speech is hereafter cited as “Remarks in an Interview with J. N. Parimoo of the *Times of India*, October 21, 1985.”

⁴ Ronald Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York, October 24, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1285-1290. Hereafter cited as “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985.”

⁵ Mark Hertsgaard, *On Bended Knee: The Press and the Reagan Presidency* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), 288.

⁶ David M. Alpern, John Walcott, John Barry, Margaret Garrard Warner and Joyce Barnathan, "Psy-War Games," *Newsweek*, September 16, 1985, 34.

⁷ Quoted from Reagan's memorandum to Bud McFarlane in Jack F. Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), 151.

Also, see Gary Lee, "Soviet Plan for Summit Preparation," *Washington Post*, September 26, 1985, A20; Angus Deming, Fred Coleman and Scott Sullivan, "Gorbachev's European Card," *Newsweek*, October 7, 1985, 27, 29.

⁸ Reagan, "Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1986," 1285-1290.

⁹ Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on the Upcoming Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Geneva, November 14, 1985," *Public Papers, 1985*, 1388-1391. Hereafter cited as "Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985."

¹⁰ Ronald Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation on Soviet Strategic Defense Programs, October 12, 1985," *Public Papers, 1985*, 1240-1241 (hereafter cited as "Radio Address to the Nation, October 12, 1985"); Ronald Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation on the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly, October 19, 1985," *Public Papers, 1985*, 1267-1268 (hereafter cited as "Radio Address to the Nation, October 19, 1985"); Ronald Reagan, "Radio Address on International Stability, October 26, 1985," *Public Papers, 1985*, 1294-1295; Ronald Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation on the Soviet-United States Nuclear and Space Arms Negotiations, November, 2, 1985," *Public Papers, 1985*, 1330-1331 (hereafter cited as "Radio Address to the Nation, November 2,

1985”); Ronald Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World on the Upcoming Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Geneva, November 9, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1362-1364 (hereafter cited as “Radio Address to the Nation and the World, November 9, 1985”).

¹¹ Ronald Reagan, “Statement by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Speakes on Soviet Jamming of the President’s Radio Address on the Upcoming Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Geneva, November 9, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1362.

¹² Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with J. N. Parimoo of the *Times of India*, October 21, 1985,” 1273-1279.

¹³ Ronald Reagan, “Interview with Brian Widlake of the British Broadcasting Corporation, October 29, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1310-1316.

¹⁴ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, Together With Written Responses to Questions, October 31, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1331-1342. Hereafter cited as “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, October 31, 1985.” Also, see Larry Speakes, *Speaking Out: The Reagan Presidency from Inside the White House* (New York: Avon Books, 1987), 126. Speakes argues, “Although the Russians had promised to publish Reagan’s remarks in full, they deleted some of his tougher statements on Afghanistan and the Soviet threat in Europe when they printed a transcript of the interview in *Izvestia* four days later.” Speakes adds, “Still, it was an historic interview, the first one by the Russians with an American President since Aleksey Adzhubei, chief editor of *Izvestia* and son-in-law of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, had interviewed

President Kennedy in 1961.” Reagan, dissatisfied with the “coverage” he had received in *Izvestia*, used his Saturday, November 9 radio address to speak to the citizens of the USSR via Voice of America radio as well as to the peoples of over fifty other countries via the Worldnet Television Network.

¹⁵ Reagan, “Interview with Representatives of the Wire Services, November 6, 1985,” 1349-1355.

¹⁶ Reagan, “Interview with Foreign Broadcasters, November 12, 1985,” 1369-1375.

¹⁷ Ronald Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by Japanese Journalists on the Upcoming Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Geneva, November 14, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1392-1395. Hereafter cited as “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by Japanese Journalists, November 14, 1985.”

¹⁸ George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), 599, 606.

¹⁹ Ronald Reagan, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress Following the Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Geneva, November 21, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1411-1415. Hereafter cited as “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, November 21, 1985.”

²⁰ Ronald Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation on the Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Geneva, November 23, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1417-1418. Hereafter cited as “Radio Address to the Nation, November 23, 1985.”

²¹ Pavel Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University, 1997), 41.

²² Serge Schmemmann, “For Gorbachev, ‘Star Wars’ Is to Be Summit Focus,” *New York Times*, November 14, 1985, A13.

²³ Anthony R. DeLuca, *Politics, Diplomacy, and the Media: Gorbachev’s Legacy in the West* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 89, 106.

²⁴ Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World* (New York: Columbia University, 2000), 185; Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 749.

²⁵ Jack F. Matlock Jr., *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador’s Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1995), 746; Frances Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 302; Russell Watson, John Walcott and Joyce Barnathan, “The Hustle in Helsinki,” *Newsweek*, November 12, 1985, 33.

²⁶ DeLuca, *Politics, Diplomacy, and the Media*, 106

²⁷ Mikhail Gorbachev, “Letter to President Ronald Reagan, September 12, 1985,” Executive Secretariat, National Security Council: Head of State File, Box 40, U.S.S.R.: General Secretary Gorbachev, 8591009, Ronald Reagan Library, Simi Valley, California. This institution is hereafter cited as Reagan Library. Also, see Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, 185.

²⁸ Russell Watson, John Walcott, Kim Willenson, John Barry and Joyce Barnathan, “A Wish List from Moscow,” *Newsweek*, October 7, 1985, 24.

²⁹ Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, 302. Also, see DeLuca, *Politics, Diplomacy, and the Media*, 89-90.

³⁰ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 749.

³¹ Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, 185.

³² Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, 185. Also, see Cannon, *President Reagan*, 749; DeLuca, *Politics, Diplomacy, and the Media*, 90; Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, trans. by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick (New York: Free Press, 1991), 113.

³³ For example, see DeLuca, *Politics, Diplomacy, and the Media*, 90-91; Michael Dobbs, "Gorbachev's 'Charm Offensive,'" *Washington Post*, October 1, 1985, A12; Harry Anderson, Fred Coleman, Joyce Barnathan, John Barry, John Walcott and Kim Willenson, "Disarming Charm," *Newsweek*, October 14, 1985, 30-32.

³⁴ Robbin F. Laird, "Introduction: The Changing Soviet Environment," in *Gorbachev's Agenda: Changes in Soviet Domestic and Foreign Policy*, ed. Susan L. Clark (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 1.

³⁵ George J. Church, "Moscow's Vigorous Leader," *Time*, September 9, 1985, 21.

³⁶ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 202.

³⁷ Adam Clymer, "Americans in Poll View Government More Confidently," *New York Times*, November 19, 1984, A1.

³⁸ Robert W. Tucker, "Toward a New Détente," *New York Times Magazine*, December 9, 1984, 99.

³⁹ Ian Brzezinski, "Presidential Reflections upon U.S.-Soviet Summitry," *Significant Issues Series: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University* 7 (1985): 1-4. Between 1972 and 1979, three U.S. presidents met with their counterpart

from the Soviet Union on six occasions. On three of these occasions, international nuclear arms agreements had been reached and two major treaties were signed.

President Richard Nixon signed the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) that included the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty at a Moscow summit in May 1972.

President Gerald Ford reached a minor arms agreement at the November 1974

Vladivostok summit that limited the number of offensive strategic nuclear delivery vehicles and made some progress toward a second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty

(SALT II). President Jimmy Carter signed the SALT II Treaty in Vienna in June 1979.

⁴⁰ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 740.

⁴¹ “A Message for Moscow,” *Newsweek*, November 4, 1985, 19.

⁴² Dana Rohrabacher, “Memorandum to Patrick J. Buchanan, October 7, 1985,” ID #357205, FO006-09, WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library.

⁴³ “A Message for Moscow,” 22.

⁴⁴ Pat Buchanan, “Memorandum to Judith Mandel, November 9, 1985,” folder SP1010, 351529, 4 of 21, WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library.

⁴⁵ Robert C. McFarlane, “Memorandum to Patrick J. Buchanan, November 11, 1985,” folder SP1010, 351529, 10 of 21, WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library.

⁴⁶ Donald T. Regan, “Note to President Reagan, November 12, 1985,” folder SP1010, 351529, 19 of 21, WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library.

⁴⁷ David Gergen, *Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership: Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 236.

⁴⁸ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive Number 75: U.S. Relations with the USSR, January 17, 1983,” in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 257. Hereafter cited as “NSDD-75.”

⁴⁹ Reagan quoted in Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 151.

⁵⁰ For example, see Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1285-1290; Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World November 9, 1985,” 1362-1364; Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1388-1391; Reagan, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, November 21, 1985,” 1411-1415.

⁵¹ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, October 19, 1985,” 1268; Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1287; Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1388, 1391.

⁵² Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, October 19, 1985,” 1268.

⁵³ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview With J. N. Parimoo of the *Times of India*, October 21, 1985,” 1275.

⁵⁴ Reagan, “Interview with Brian Widlake of the British Broadcasting Corporation, October 29, 1985,” 1310.

⁵⁵ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks Announcing the Presentation of a New United States Proposal at the Nuclear and Space Arms Negotiations With the Soviet Union, October 31, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1327.

⁵⁶ Reagan, “Interview with Brian Widlake of the British Broadcasting Corporation, October 29, 1985,” 1314; Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, October 31, 1985,” 1336; Reagan, “Interview with Representatives of the Wire Services, November 6, 1985,” 1349; Reagan, “Interview with Foreign Broadcasters, November 12, 1985,” 1373; Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1389; Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by Japanese Journalists, November 14, 1985,” 1392.

⁵⁷ Reagan, “Interview with Representatives of the Wire Services, November 6, 1985,” 1349.

⁵⁸ Michael R. Gordon, “Past Summit Meetings, Unlike Reagan’s, were for Signing of Key Accords,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1985, A12.

⁵⁹ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, October 31, 1985,” 1337.

⁶⁰ Reagan, “Interview with Foreign Broadcasters, November 12, 1985,” 1371; Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on Issuing the Joint Soviet-United States Statement on the Summit Meeting in Geneva, November 21, 1985,” *Public Papers, 1985*, 1411; Reagan, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, November 21, 1985,” 1414.

⁶¹ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview With J. N. Parimoo of the *Times of India*, October 21, 1985,” 1275.

⁶² Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, November, 2, 1985,” 1331.

⁶³ “A Message for Moscow,” 19.

- ⁶⁴ Mark Whitaker, John Walcott, Joyce Barnathan, Fred Coleman, John Barry and Thomas M. DeFrank, “Gorbachev’s Cold Shower,” *Newsweek* November 18, 1985, 48.
- ⁶⁵ Whitaker, et al., “Gorbachev’s Cold Shower,” 48.
- ⁶⁶ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1388, 1391, 1390.
- ⁶⁷ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, October 31, 1985,” 1339.
- ⁶⁸ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1391.
- ⁶⁹ George F. Kennan, “The GOP Won the Cold War? Ridiculous,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1992, A21. Kennan argued that “a growing generational gap in the regime” was apparent “as early as the late 1940’s.”
- ⁷⁰ Zhores A. Medvedev, *Gorbachev* (New York: Norton, 1986), 120.
- ⁷¹ Eric Shiraev and Vladislov Zubok, *Anti-Americanism in Russia: From Stalin to Putin* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 8, 22.
- ⁷² Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1391.
- ⁷³ Patrick J. Buchanan, “Memorandum to John Poindexter, November 12, 1985,” folder SP1010, 8 of 21, WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library.
- ⁷⁴ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, October 19, 1985,” 1268.
- ⁷⁵ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1390.
- ⁷⁶ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World, November 9, 1985,” 1364.
- ⁷⁷ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1390, 1388, 1390.
- ⁷⁸ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World, November 9, 1985,” 1362.

⁷⁹ For example, see “Reagan: Realism with the Soviets,” *U.S. News and World Report*, October 22, 1984, 29; Reagan, “Interview with Brian Widlake of the British Broadcasting Corporation, October 29, 1985,” 1310; Reagan, “Interview with Foreign Broadcasters, November 12, 1985,” 1370.

⁸⁰ “Presidential Address to the Nation on the Geneva Summit, Thursday, November 14, 1985,” NSC Redraft, November 13, 1985, 6:00 p.m., SP1010, folder SP1010, 19 of 21, WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library. Reagan’s hand-written changes are on page eight of this manuscript.

⁸¹ Ben Elliott, “Memorandum for the President, November 13, 1985,” folder “Address to the Nation—Geneva Summit, 1 of 5, Speechwriting, WHO of: Speechwriting, November 14, 1985, Reagan Library.

⁸² Theodore Windt, “Seeking Détente with Superpowers: John F. Kennedy at American University,” in *Essays in Presidential Rhetoric*, ed. Theodore Windt and Beth Ingold (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1983), 75-76.

⁸³ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1390.

⁸⁴ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World, November 9, 1985,” 1364.

⁸⁵ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 166.

⁸⁶ Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire*, 93.

⁸⁷ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 150.

⁸⁸ Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1289, 1286, 1287, 1289, 1286.

- ⁸⁹ Ben Elliott, “Memorandum to Pat Buchanan, September 9, 1985,” ID #338112, FO006-09, WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library.
- ⁹⁰ Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1287.
- ⁹¹ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on East-West Relations at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin, June 12, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 635.
- ⁹² Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World, November 9, 1985,” 1362, 1364.
- ⁹³ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1390.
- ⁹⁴ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1391, 1390-1391.
- ⁹⁵ Elliott, “Memorandum to Patrick J. Buchanan, September 9, 1985.”
- ⁹⁶ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 204-205.
- ⁹⁷ Reagan, “Interview with Brian Widlake of the British Broadcasting Corporation, October 29, 1985,” 1313.
- ⁹⁸ Reagan, “Interview with Representatives of the Wire Services, November 6, 1985,” 1352.
- ⁹⁹ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, October 19, 1985,” 1268; Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1288-1289; Reagan, “Interview with Brian Widlake of the British Broadcasting Corporation, October 29, 1985,” 1313-1314; Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, October 31, 1985,” 1338, 1340; Reagan, “Interview with Representatives of the Wire Services, November 6, 1985,” 1352; Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World, November 9, 1985,” 1363; Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14,

1985,” 1389; Reagan, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, November 21, 1985,” 1413.

¹⁰⁰ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1389.

¹⁰¹ Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow’s Ambassador to America’s Six Cold War Presidents (1962-1986)* (New York: Random House, 1995), 347.

¹⁰² Reagan, “Interview with Brian Widlake of the British Broadcasting Corporation, October 29, 1985,” 1313-1314.

¹⁰³ Reagan, “Interview with Representatives of the Wire Services, November 6, 1985,” 1352.

¹⁰⁴ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida, March 8, 1983,” *Public Papers, 1983*, 363.

¹⁰⁵ For examples of Reagan’s previous specificity in discussing Soviet human rights abuses, see Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Meeting With Jewish Leaders, February 2, 1983,” *Public Papers, 1983*, 174; Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the Conservative Political Action Conference Dinner, February 18, 1983,” *Public Papers, 1983*, 255; Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on Signing a Resolution and a Proclamation Declaring National Andrei Sakharov Day, May 18, 1983,” *Public Papers, 1983*, 731.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Cullen, “Human Rights: A Thaw Imperiled,” in *Gorbachev’s Russia and American Foreign Policy*, ed. Seweryn Bialer and Michael Mandelbaum (Boulder, CO, Westview, 1988), 138, 139.

¹⁰⁷ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 190.

- ¹⁰⁸ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, October 31, 1985,” 1338.
- ¹⁰⁹ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World, November 9, 1985,” 1363.
- ¹¹⁰ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1389.
- ¹¹¹ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World, November 9, 1985,” 1363.
- ¹¹² Gaddis, *The Cold War*, 190, 191.
- ¹¹³ Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 346.
- ¹¹⁴ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, 191.
- ¹¹⁵ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1389.
- ¹¹⁶ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, October 31, 1985,” 1338.
- ¹¹⁷ Mikhail S. Gorbachev, *A Time for Peace* (New York: Richardson and Steirman, 1985), 19.
- ¹¹⁸ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, October 19, 1985,” 1268.
- ¹¹⁹ Reagan, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, November 21, 1985,” 1413.
- ¹²⁰ Reagan, “NSDD-75,” 260-261.
- ¹²¹ Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1288-1289.
- ¹²² Kenneth L. Adelman, *The Great Universal Embrace: Arms Summitry—A Skeptic’s Account* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 131.
- ¹²³ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation on International Stability, October 26, 1985,” 1294.
- ¹²⁴ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation and the World, November 9, 1985,” 1363.

- ¹²⁵ Reagan, “Interview with Foreign Broadcasters, November 12, 1985,” 1371.
- ¹²⁶ Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by Japanese Journalists, November 14, 1985,” 1394.
- ¹²⁷ “A Message for Moscow,” 21.
- ¹²⁸ Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1288.
- ¹²⁹ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation on International Stability, October 26, 1985,” 1294.
- ¹³⁰ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview With J. N. Parimoo of the *Times of India*, October 21, 1985,” 1276.
- ¹³¹ Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1288.
- ¹³² Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1287-1288.
- ¹³³ Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1288.
- ¹³⁴ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, October 31, 1985,” 1337.
- ¹³⁵ Reagan, “Interview with Foreign Broadcasters, November 12, 1985,” 1371.
- ¹³⁶ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview With J. N. Parimoo of the *Times of India*, October 21, 1985,” 1276, 1279.
- ¹³⁷ Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1288.
- ¹³⁸ Reagan, “Remarks in an Interview with Representatives of Soviet News Organizations, October 31, 1985,” 1337.
- ¹³⁹ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, November 14, 1985,” 1389.
- ¹⁴⁰ Reagan, “Address to the 40th Session of the UNGA, October 24, 1985,” 1288.

¹⁴¹ Reagan, “Interview with Foreign Broadcasters, November 12, 1985,” 1372.

¹⁴² Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation on International Stability, October 26, 1985,” 1294.

¹⁴³ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, November 23, 1985,” 1418.

¹⁴⁴ Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, 307-308.

¹⁴⁵ Philip Taubman, “Summit Aftermath: Russians Seem to Sense Victory,” *New York Times*, October 14, 1986, A12. Taubman’s article was written after the Reykjavik Summit, but it reports that the Soviets were more positive about the meeting in Reykjavik because they had considered the previous year’s summit in Geneva, Switzerland to have been a defeat for Gorbachev and the USSR.

¹⁴⁶ For additional journalistic assessments of the Geneva Summit, see Lucy Howard, “A New U.S.-Soviet Arms-Control Scenario,” *Newsweek*, July 29, 1985: 11; “The Hustle in Helsinki,” 33-34; “Psy-War Games,” 34-35; “Soviet Plan for Summit Preparation,” A20; Gary Lee, “France Rebuffs Soviet Union Over Denunciation of SDI,” *Washington Post*, September 30, 1985, A1; “Gorbachev’s ‘Charm Offensive’,” A12; “Gorbachev Begins ‘Operation Seduction,’” *Toronto Star*, October 2, 1985, A3; “A Wish List From Moscow,” 24; Lucy Howard, “Soviet Union: A New Star Wars Proposal,” *Newsweek*, October 28, 1985: 23; “For Gorbachev, ‘Star Wars’ Is to Be Summit Focus,” A13.

¹⁴⁷ Jane Mayer and Doyle McManus, *Landslide: The Unmaking of the President, 1984-1988* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), 160.

¹⁴⁸ Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, 534.

¹⁴⁹ Dick Wirthlin with Wynton C. Hall, *The Greatest Communicator: What Ronald Reagan Taught Me About Politics, Leadership, and Life* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2004), 176.

¹⁵⁰ Bob Schieffer and Gary Paul Gates, *The Acting President* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989), 236.

¹⁵¹ Mayer and McManus, *Landslide*, 160.

¹⁵² Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, 308, 306.

¹⁵³ Mayer and McManus, *Landslide*, 160.

¹⁵⁴ Schieffer and Gates, *The Acting President*, 236, 235.

¹⁵⁵ Reagan, "Interview with Representatives of the Wire Services, November 6, 1985," 1349.

¹⁵⁶ See Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive Number 183: Meeting with Soviet Leader in Geneva, August 8, 1985," in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 579. This directive communicated to "personnel of all agencies active in the sphere of U.S.-Soviet relations" that "the [Geneva] meeting will not be a substitute for negotiations in normal channels, nor is its aim the signing of formal agreements."

¹⁵⁷ Martin J. Medhurst, Robert L. Ivie, Philip Wander, and Robert L. Scott, *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology*, (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, 1997), 19-20.

¹⁵⁸ Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1997), 32-50.

¹⁵⁹ Ronald Reagan "Remarks During a White House Briefing, February 24, 1981," *Public Papers, 1981*, 153.

¹⁶⁰ Reagan, "NSDD-75," 259.

¹⁶¹ Reagan, "NSDD-194," 598.

¹⁶² Martin J. Medhurst, "Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' Speech: A Case Study in the Strategic Use of Language," *Communication Monographs* 54 (1987): 218.

¹⁶³ Robert T. Oliver, "The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research," *Central States Speech Journal* 15 (1950): 27.

CHAPTER IV

REAGAN, REYKJAVÍK, AND HUMAN RIGHTS: THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE AS A TOOL OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

On Sunday October 12, 1986, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev emerged from their meetings at the Hofdi House in Reykjavík, Iceland visibly frustrated. The Reykjavík Summit had ended in what appeared to be a bitter stalemate with no agreement on a date for another meeting. News media characterized the Icelandic summit as a colossal failure: Reagan, unwilling to compromise on his dream of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), had stubbornly walked away from Gorbachev's breathtaking arms reduction proposals and possibly historic nuclear arms accords.¹ The CBS news anchor, Dan Rather, for example, characterized Gorbachev's proposals as "absolutely unprecedented cutbacks in nuclear weapons" and opined that "the whole package in the end came apart when President Reagan refused to scale back his 'Star Wars' program."² The following year, Gorbachev explained in his book, *Perestroika*, that his intention at the time of the Reykjavík Summit had been "to pinpoint SDI so that the whole world could see that it . . . [was] the chief obstacle in the way of nuclear disarmament."³ Gorbachev sought to use Reykjavík to generate enough public pressure to induce Reagan to compromise on SDI.

Rhetorical scholars W. Barnett Pearce, Deborah K. Johnson, and Robert J. Branham argue that Gorbachev successfully affected "a rhetorical ambush" of Reagan at Reykjavík. According to these scholars, Gorbachev "maneuvered . . . [Reagan] into

publicly rejecting an elimination of all nuclear weapons” which resulted in the reversal of “public opinion around the world as to who was in fact the advocate of peace”⁴

This claim has two problems. First, it is not supported by evidence of a direct causal relationship between Gorbachev’s efforts at the Reykjavík Summit and developments in public opinion around the world. Second, the conclusion reached by Pearce and his colleagues neglects support given to Reagan by the leaders of member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as the public opinion support for Reagan in the United States.

NATO foreign ministers communicated their approval of the results of the Reykjavík Summit to Secretary of State George Shultz in Brussels, Belgium immediately following the summit meeting in Iceland. Likewise, NATO defense ministers communicated their approval to Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger in Scotland. Both Shultz and Weinberger reported very positive meetings. Shultz recalls, “At NATO [headquarters], the foreign ministers felt Reykjavík was an astounding achievement.”⁵ Weinberger reported to Reagan: “The NATO Defense Ministers, at our NPG meeting in Scotland, were strongly supportive of your efforts in Iceland, and I believe the meeting, which included the most senior Allied military leaders, will lay to rest stories of disagreements on the issues posed by the Reykjavík meeting.”⁶ Gorbachev apparently did not expect such a response from Western Europe’s leaders and he complained bitterly about it in an address televised in the Soviet Union on October 22, 1986.⁷

Americans registered overwhelming support for Reagan following Reykjavík. Reagan biographer Lou Cannon attributes Reagan's public opinion support to "Reagan's own performance" in a post-summit televised speech to the nation on October 13, 1986.⁸ Dick Wirthlin, Reagan's chief strategist and pollster, had argued prior to Reagan's departure for Iceland that Reagan's "public pronouncements before and after Reykjavík would crystallize public perceptions."⁹ Before Reagan left for Reykjavík, he made plans to address the nation upon his return,¹⁰ and during the subsequent drafting process for the October 13 speech, he contributed five full, letter-size, hand-written pages of text that were eventually inserted, almost verbatim, into what became the address he delivered to the nation from the Oval Office.¹¹ The White House received over twelve hundred telephone calls in the first thirty minutes following the address with 82% of the calls classified as "positive" responses.¹² Within thirty-six hours of Reagan's speech, the White House registered the third highest volume of telephone calls following a Reagan speech to that date: 6,673 calls were received of which 5,273 (79%) were considered "positive."¹³ Wirthlin had been tracking American public opinion before, during, and after the Reykjavík Summit. According to Wirthlin, before Reagan met with Gorbachev, "Reagan's approval rating stood at 64 percent. Following his [October 13] speech, that number rose to 70 percent."¹⁴ Cannon also notes, "A *New York Times*-CBS poll taken the week after Reykjavík showed an 11-point jump (to 72 percent) in the percentage of Americans who thought that Reagan was successfully handling relations with the Soviet Union." Astonishingly, as Cannon points out, "[F]or the first time, a

majority of Americans believed that the meetings between Reagan and Gorbachev would lead to nuclear arms control agreements.”¹⁵

REAGAN’S REYKJAVÍK RHETORIC: A REVERSAL?

Similar to political scientist Beth Fischer, who argues that Reagan reversed his approach to the Soviet Union in January 1984,¹⁶ Pearce, Johnson, and Branham claim that Reagan reversed his rhetorical approach to the Soviets following the Reykjavík Summit. Pearce and his colleagues assert that prior to Reykjavík, “Reagan’s foreign policy discourse had been fashioned primarily in the context of domestic politics,” but following Reykjavík and a rhetorical reversal, Reagan “found himself talking in a new manner, which meshed with that of his Soviet counterpart.”¹⁷ This chapter argues the reverse: Reagan’s Soviet policy rhetoric was fashioned in the context of international politics, and his public diplomatic rhetoric prior to and following Reykjavík was consistent in both its emphasis and aim. Reagan continued to emphasize the political context of the nuclear arms race more than the arms themselves, the same rhetorical strategy he had employed the previous year in his Geneva Summit rhetoric. Reagan argued that changes in the political context were necessary if the Soviets were to create the kind of confidence with the Western democracies that was necessary for new international arms agreements. Specifically, Reagan used the USSR’s human rights practices as justification for deep distrust of Soviet leaders, and, consequently, for pursuing a strategic defense that could protect the United States against Soviet violations of international arms treaties. In response to Gorbachev’s efforts to pressure the United

States to halt its development of the Strategic Defense Initiative, Reagan used SDI as a diplomatic tool to publicly pressure Gorbachev to implement reforms within the Soviet Union, especially human rights reforms. This chapter supports these claims by examining Reagan's public rhetoric surrounding the Reykjavík Summit.

Former United States ambassador to the Soviet Union, Jack F. Matlock Jr., concludes that "the main impact of the 'failure' at Reykjavík . . . was to persuade Gorbachev that he had to begin reforms at home if he was going to end the arms race with the United States."¹⁸ This chapter supports Matlock's view, but it asks two related questions that remain unanswered: (1) Did Reagan use his public rhetoric surrounding the Reykjavík meeting to attempt to persuade Gorbachev to reach such a conclusion? And, (2) if so, how? The existing literature examining Reagan's strategic defense rhetoric fails to answer these questions. Instead, scholars most often consider SDI within the specific context of the Cold War nuclear arms race.¹⁹ Consequently, many scholars, like historian Anthony R. DeLuca, consider Reykjavík "the SDI summit."²⁰ Those scholars have not carefully considered the relationship of the Strategic Defense Initiative to Reagan's overall diplomatic objective to alter the fundamental nature of the Soviet system. This chapter argues that in Reagan's Reykjavík Summit rhetoric SDI became both a symbol of the West's mistrust of the Soviet Union and a lever to pressure the Soviet Union to change its human rights policies and practices.

Reagan's advocacy of "peace and freedom"²¹ clashed with Gorbachev's promotion of "peace and disarmament."²² Gorbachev argued that "the main questions of world politics" were "ending the arms race and nuclear disarmament."²³ According to

Anatoly Chernyaev, Gorbachev's top foreign policy advisor from 1986-1991, at the time of the Reykjavík meetings "Gorbachev . . . believed we could end the Cold War mostly or exclusively through a process of disarmament, while putting aside all those other questions, such as human rights, etcetera."²⁴ Reagan's task in his public diplomacy rhetoric surrounding Reykjavík was to rhetorically construct a link between his "twin goals"²⁵ of peace and freedom. By creating this link, Reagan could maintain the focus on freedom as much as peace and, thereby, continue to call for the Soviets to implement changes that would increase the USSR's compliance with a previously signed international agreement that promoted freedom within the USSR.

Reagan's rhetoric surrounding the meetings in Iceland made Reykjavík as much "the human rights summit" as the SDI summit. In fact, former Secretary of State George Shultz argues that Reykjavík "was not solely an arms control summit."²⁶ Following the Icelandic meetings, Reagan told the nation that he included among the "major gains" made at Reykjavík the Soviets' acceptance of "the principle that human rights issues must be a permanent part of . . . [the U.S.-Soviet] dialog."²⁷ For Shultz, this Soviet reversal was "a huge breakthrough."²⁸ Likewise, Rozanne Ridgway, then the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, maintains that "Reykjavik was the turning point on human rights."²⁹ Remarkably, during the weeks and months that followed the Reykjavík Summit, the Soviets offered to host a human rights conference in Moscow, resolved numerous human rights cases, and initiated human rights reforms that culminated in what one diplomatic correspondent described as "the human rights thaw of 1987."³⁰

In arguing that Reagan effectively pressured Gorbachev to make human rights reforms, this chapter is not asserting that Reagan's call for reform was the exclusive cause of Gorbachev's reformation efforts. It is possible that Gorbachev may not have made reforms in direct response to Reagan or even in an attempt to improve Soviet-American relations. However, evidence suggests, as diplomatic correspondent Robert Cullen notes, that Gorbachev was concerned, generally, about "the overall Soviet image."³¹ Gorbachev notes in his memoirs that he was concerned about how Reykjavík could be used to "improve . . . [the Soviet] image in the world."³² Gorbachev's concern suggests that following Reykjavík he implemented reforms in Soviet human rights practices, at least in part, in an effort to counter the negative image of the Soviet Union propagated by Reagan in his public rhetoric surrounding the Icelandic meeting.³³

This chapter examines four aspects of Reagan's Reykjavík rhetoric that promoted to the world a negative image of the Soviet Union. First, Reagan focused on Soviet violations of an existing international treaty. Second, he argued that in line with their Marxist-Leninist ideology the Soviets had a history of continually violating human rights. Third, Reagan made human rights central to international peace, arguing that as long as the Soviets lacked respect for human rights, especially those enumerated in the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, they could not be trusted as reliable international partners in pursuit of world peace. Fourth, Reagan argued that because the Soviet government respected neither its own citizens' rights nor its obligations under treaties signed with foreign powers, the United States needed to pursue SDI in order to protect the West's security interests against Soviet perfidy. Reagan's

rhetorical strategy placed the onus on Gorbachev to counter this negative image, especially if Gorbachev desired to prove that Reagan's SDI was unnecessary.

REAGAN'S REYKJAVÍK SUMMIT RHETORIC: AN OVERVIEW

Unlike the previous year's summit in Geneva, there was very little time for public diplomacy between the announcement of a planned Reagan-Gorbachev meeting in Reykjavík, Iceland and the meeting itself. The Reagan administration announced its plans on September 30, 1986³⁴ and Reagan and Gorbachev met in Reykjavík a week-and-a-half later on October 11 and 12, 1986. Because Reagan actually agreed to meet with Gorbachev during a conversation with Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze on September 19, 1986, this chapter considers Reagan's address to the United Nations General Assembly on September 22, 1986 to be the first Reykjavík Summit-related speech prior to the actual summit.³⁵ During the next seventeen days, Reagan addressed the nation once, in a Saturday radio address on October 4, 1986.³⁶ However, he did speak to two smaller groups—the President's Commission on Executive Exchange on October 6, 1986³⁷ and human rights advocates on October 7, 1986³⁸—before he departed for Iceland on October 9, 1986.³⁹ The bulk of Reagan's public diplomacy followed the Reykjavík Summit. This is likely due to the fact that the meeting was originally proposed as preparation for a full summit and because of the results of the meeting. Similar to the Geneva Summit, there was a media "blackout" during the meetings at Reykjavik. No statements were made by Reagan (or anyone else in the U.S. delegation) until the meetings concluded.⁴⁰

Following Reagan's return from Reykjavík, he addressed the nation from the Oval Office on October 13, 1986.⁴¹ Over the next month, he made numerous public statements in which the Reykjavík Summit was either the central topic or received significant comments. It is important to note, however, that in early November 1986 the Reagan administration was embroiled in the Iran-Contra affair which diverted much of the media attention, as well as the administration's communicative efforts, off of the Reykjavík Summit and onto other matters.⁴² During the period October 14-November 18, 1986 Reagan's most important public remarks were, in chronological order: (1) remarks and a question-and-answer session with broadcast journalists,⁴³ (2) remarks at a meeting with State Department officials and employees of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) both on October 14,⁴⁴ (3) a speech to students in Baltimore, Maryland on October 15,⁴⁵ (4) remarks during the welcoming ceremony for the Federal Republic of Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl on October 21,⁴⁶ (5) a Saturday radio address to the nation on November 1,⁴⁷ and, (6) an address at an anniversary dinner for the Ethics and Public Policy Center on November 18.⁴⁸

THE CONTEXT OF REAGAN'S REYKJAVÍK SUMMIT RHETORIC:

INCREASING MISTRUST OF SOVIET LEADERSHIP

The United States and the Soviet Union had to overcome several international incidents during the first nine months of 1986 in order to agree to a meeting in Iceland. The superpower relationship had cooled considerably since the apparent thawing in Geneva in November 1985 and progress on arms control talks had stalled. Matlock

notes that as 1986 wore on and “Gorbachev continued to insist on ideas Reagan had rejected, Reagan’s perplexity gave way to annoyance and annoyance to heightened suspicion.”⁴⁹ Between January and September 1986 four events occurred that increased suspicion within the Reagan administration about Gorbachev’s motivations and true intentions: (1) Gorbachev’s continued efforts to restrict the scope of Soviet-American dialogue to arms control and SDI, especially during January 1986; (2) Gorbachev’s response to the United States’ bombing of Libya in mid-April; (3) the Soviets’ handling of its nuclear disaster at Chernobyl, Ukraine in late-April; and, (4) Gorbachev’s response to the United States’ arrest of Soviet spy Gennady Zakharov in August. These events likely contributed significantly to Reagan’s emphasis on the West’s mistrust of the USSR in his Reykjavík Summit rhetoric.

Gorbachev’s Nuclear Arms Proposal

On January 15, 1986, two months after the Geneva Summit, Gorbachev made public his proposal for the United States and the USSR to eliminate their entire nuclear arsenals by the year 2000.⁵⁰ The proposal moved away from a long-held Soviet position that any such agreement must include British and French missiles in East-West weapons counts. However, the caveats accompanying Gorbachev’s proposal were: (1) that the United States cease its transfers of nuclear technology to Western Europe; and (2) that the United States halt its development, testing, and deployment of its strategic defense system.⁵¹

The West received Gorbachev's proposal with great skepticism.⁵² Gorbachev later claimed that he did not intend to use the proposal "as a means of propaganda as had been done in the past."⁵³ Nevertheless, the proposal, as Gorbachev explains, "was met with mistrust . . . as just another propaganda trick from the traditional Soviet 'struggle for peace' act."⁵⁴ In Western Europe, some governmental leaders suspected that Gorbachev's proposal was an attempt to divide NATO.⁵⁵ In the United States, as Matlock recalls, "Gorbachev's action in announcing his proposal to the world even before we had a chance to read it carefully raised the suspicion that he had nothing more than propaganda in mind."⁵⁶ Reagan shared this view, describing the proposal in his diary as "a h—l of a propaganda move."⁵⁷ Gorbachev garnered some positive publicity with his January proposal to abolish nuclear weapons, but his responses to two subsequent events compromised his position.

U.S. Bombing of Libya

On April 15, the U.S. military bombed the Libyan capital of Tripoli and one of its sister coastal cities, Benghazi. The action was in response to what the United States considered a Libyan-sponsored terrorist bombing on April 5, 1986 of the La Belle discotheque in West Berlin, Germany, which killed an American serviceman. The Kremlin expressed outrage at the attack on Libya.⁵⁸ According to Matlock, Reagan "resented" this response.⁵⁹ The Soviets had failed to condemn the West Berlin bombing, and they responded to the United States' military retaliation by canceling a previously scheduled trip for Soviet foreign minister Shevardnadze to visit the United States for a

meeting with secretary of state Shultz. From Reagan's perspective, the Soviets incorrectly described Libyan leader Muammar "Qaddafi as a heroic and innocent victim of . . . [America's] supposed aggression"⁶⁰ and, as Matlock notes, Gorbachev assured "Qaddafi that the Soviet Union would 'fulfill its commitments in terms of further strengthening Libya's defense capability'."⁶¹ In Reagan's view, the Soviets were supporting terrorism.⁶² While this badly damaged Gorbachev's credibility with the United States, the following event harmed Gorbachev's reputation in the larger international community, especially in Europe.

Chernobyl

The nuclear tragedy in Chernobyl, Ukraine and the Soviet government's inept and secretive response to that tragedy badly damaged Gorbachev's credibility as a leader and the advocate of *glasnost*.⁶³ Five and a half months before the Reykjavík Summit, on April 26, 1986 an explosion ripped open Reactor No. 4 at the nuclear power plant in Chernobyl. Soviet leaders were immediately informed. The USSR's neighbors to the West (Scandinavia, Sweden, and Finland among others) began detecting dangerously high levels of radiation just hours after the explosion—radiation levels that continued for two days. However, the Soviet government did not issue any official statements to the Soviet people for eight days following the explosion. Initially, Soviet leaders also withheld information from the international community. When they finally began to alert other nations of the incident, it appeared they were giving as little information as possible.⁶⁴ Cannon notes that "Europeans were scathing in their criticism of Soviet

unconcern for how they had treated their neighbors in their supposed ‘common home’.”⁶⁵ Finally, on May 14, Gorbachev appeared on Soviet television to discuss the tragedy, but his address combined an explanation of the disaster with a condemnation of the West for seeking to propagandize the event for political purposes. Much of what Gorbachev described as “an ‘unrestrained anti-Soviet propaganda campaign’”⁶⁶ was global criticism of the Soviet government’s silence and secrecy following the explosion. Perhaps Gorbachev was incensed by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts into the USSR that provided the Soviet people information on the accident that the Soviet government was withholding. No doubt the BBC and VOA broadcasts damaged the confidence of Soviet citizens in their own leaders.⁶⁷ In Washington, D.C., doubts increased about Gorbachev. His responses to Chernobyl—stonewalling and attacking the West—were reminiscent of previous Soviet leaders.⁶⁸ His behavior raised questions about how different his leadership would actually be from previous general secretaries of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—whether his policy of *glasnost* was a meaningful change in the Soviet system.⁶⁹

Zakharov-Daniloff Affair

By mid-August it appeared that, despite the obstacles stemming from the Libyan incident and the Chernobyl accident, U.S.-Soviet negotiations were back on track.⁷⁰ Shevardnadze’s trip to the United States, which was cancelled following the U.S. strike on Libya, had been re-scheduled for September 1986. During Shevardnadze’s visit to Washington in mid-September, he met with Reagan and presented the president a letter

from Gorbachev inviting Reagan to a meeting in either London or Iceland. Although Reagan agreed to a meeting in Iceland, there was another issue that the United States and the Soviet Union would have to address before Shevardnadze and George Shultz could move forward on summit negotiations and before Reagan would agree to a public announcement of a second Reagan-Gorbachev meeting.

On August 23, 1986 the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had arrested Gennady Zakharov, a Soviet physicist and employee of the United Nations Secretariat.⁷¹ As the FBI had shadowed Zakharov for three years, the bureau's concerns increased about apparent Soviet use of the U.N. Secretariat as a cover for Soviet spies. Zakharov lacked diplomatic immunity because he was not employed by the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C. or the Soviet Mission to the United States. Ultimately, the FBI arrested Zakharov in a New York City subway as he paid a large sum of money to purchase classified documents from an FBI double agent.⁷²

One week later, in retaliation for Zakharov's arrest, the Soviet KGB arrested journalist Nicholas Daniloff, an American correspondent working in Moscow for *U.S. News & World Report*, also on charges of espionage. "It was," as Cannon reports, "a classic Cold War gambit that in Washington raised new doubts about whether Gorbachev was really different from his predecessors."⁷³ Although Gorbachev publicly claimed that Daniloff was an American "spy who was caught in the act,"⁷⁴ Reagan confirmed with American officials and, subsequently, gave his personal assurance to Gorbachev that Daniloff was not an intelligence agent of the United States government. However, in a complicated series of incidents involving Daniloff and what Matlock

describes as “a serious operational mistake” by the CIA,⁷⁵ the Soviet secret police had enough evidence not only to arrest Daniloff but also to convict him in a Soviet court.⁷⁶

Reagan refused a Soviet request for a Zakharov-Daniloff exchange and refused to allow Zakharov to return to the USSR unless the Soviets “release some dissidents like [Andrei] Sakharov.”⁷⁷ An agreement was finally reached. The Soviets released Daniloff without an appearance in a Soviet court, allowed Soviet dissident Yuri Orlov and his wife, Irina Valitova, to emigrate to the United States, and agreed to look into measures for the release of other prominent dissidents whose names Shultz provided to Shevardnadze.⁷⁸ In return, the United States required Zakharov to appear in a federal court to enter a plea of “no contest” to charges of espionage before being allowed to depart for the Soviet Union.⁷⁹ With this international standoff resolved, the Reagan administration held a press conference and announced the upcoming Reagan-Gorbachev meeting October 11-12, 1986 in Reykjavík, Iceland.⁸⁰

REAGAN’S REYKJAVÍK SUMMIT RHETORIC

In preparation for the Reykjavík meeting, Reagan planned to discuss all areas of his “four-part agenda” (bilateral relations, human rights, regional conflicts, and arms control). As Matlock explains, Reagan “felt that agreements on arms reduction could not stand alone; they should be accompanied by substantial progress in other areas of the agenda he had set forth.”⁸¹ Gorbachev’s main goals were either to achieve a major arms agreement that could be signed at a subsequent summit in Washington or to demonstrate to the world that Reagan’s SDI was the only obstacle to such an agreement.⁸² In the end,

SDI did stand in the way. However, as Matlock points out, SDI was not the only issue that prevented historic arms control agreements from being reached at Reykjavík.⁸³

What has been overlooked in previous scholarship on the Reykjavík Summit is that Reagan's rhetoric emphasized the West's mistrust of Soviet leaders because of their human rights practices. Reagan rhetorically constructed a link between respect for human rights and international peace. The following sections of this chapter show how Reagan's Reykjavík Summit rhetoric: (1) placed Soviet human rights practices at the heart of the disarmament dialogue; (2) characterized current Soviet human rights abuses as the continuation of historical Soviet practices; (3) linked the issues of human rights and international peace; and, (4) used SDI to encourage the Soviet Union to take action on human rights.

Soviet Human Rights Practices: Violating an International Treaty and International Trust

Based on evidence from Reagan's public statements both before and after the Icelandic meeting, it is clear that he attempted to focus international attention on current Soviet human rights abuses. Reagan posited that current Soviet human rights practices menaced the Soviet people and violated international trust by failing to comply with international obligations under the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. The prominence Reagan gave to the issue of human rights in three of his most significant public statements indicates the priority he assigned to human rights over other issues in U.S.-Soviet dialogue. First, Reagan discussed Nicholas Daniloff's arrest early in his September 22,

1986 United Nations speech prior to addressing what Reagan viewed as other key aspects of U.S.-Soviet relations.⁸⁴ Second, eight days after the United Nations speech, on September 30, 1986 Reagan had Secretary of State George Shultz open the administration's press conference by announcing the United States' procurement of the release of Soviet dissident Yuri Orlov and his wife. Only after Shultz made this announcement did Reagan arrive to announce the upcoming meeting in Reykjavík.⁸⁵ Finally, in a televised address to the nation upon his return from Reykjavík on October 13, Reagan prefaced his explanation of the events that took place during the summit by reiterating that the Soviets continued to violate the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Act.

Not only was Reagan strategic with *where* in his speeches he discussed Soviet human rights practices but also with *how* he discussed them. On September 22, 1986 in Reagan's address to the United Nations General Assembly he singled out for particularly vitriolic denunciation recent Soviet behavior surrounding the Zakharov-Daniloff affair. Rather than describing the Daniloff affair as an espionage-related issue or, as Gorbachev described it, "a common event" in international relations,⁸⁶ Reagan characterized the event as a flagrant Soviet violation of Daniloff's human rights. In Gorbachev's letter, delivered to Reagan by Shevardnadze the Friday before Reagan's United Nations speech, Gorbachev complained that the United States had already "unduly dramatized the [Daniloff] incident." Gorbachev protested, "A massive hostile campaign has been launched against our country, which has been taken up at the higher levels of the United States administration and Congress."⁸⁷ In a speech in Krasnodar, Russia that same day,

Gorbachev complained that the United States had “turned . . . [the Daniloff incident] around in such a way as to again damage and sow doubt in the Soviet Union’s policy, to damage its image.”⁸⁸ Gorbachev was correct, but Reagan was undeterred by Gorbachev’s protestations.

At the United Nations, Reagan described Soviet actions as “a particularly disturbing example of Soviet transgressions against human rights,” and he accused the Soviets of acting “in a callous disregard for due process and numerous human rights conventions.”⁸⁹ More forcefully, Reagan employed what rhetorical scholar Robert L. Ivie describes as a “decivilizing vehicle,”⁹⁰ equating Soviet behavior with that of criminals and terrorists. Reagan accused the Soviets of taking Daniloff “as a hostage,” and declared, “Nicholas Daniloff is an innocent hostage who should be released.”⁹¹ Later, in remarks made on October 6, 1986 after Daniloff’s release and less than a week before Reagan departed for Reykjavík, he continued to accuse the Soviets of having “held hostage . . . an innocent American journalist.”⁹²

Reagan characterized Soviet actions in the Daniloff incident as indicative of two larger problems: (1) an unwillingness by the USSR to fulfill its international obligations enumerated in the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Act; and (2) an ideology that sanctioned Soviet human rights abuses. In his address at the United Nations, Reagan argued that the Daniloff incident highlighted the Soviet failure to comply with a provision that called for “improvement of working conditions of journalists.” Reagan reminded the General Assembly, “Commitments were made 10 years ago in Helsinki,” at the thirty-five nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, “concerning

[human] rights and their recognition.” However, Reagan argued, “We need only look to the East today to see how sadly unfulfilled those commitments are.” In Reagan’s characterization, the Soviet Union’s status as a signatory of the Helsinki Accords had not deterred its leaders from continuing to violate its citizens’ rights: “The persecution of scientists, religious leaders, peace activists, political dissidents, and other prisoners of conscience continues unabated behind the Iron Curtain.”⁹³ Two weeks later, Reagan argued that the reason “human rights violations in the Soviet bloc remain unceasing, [is] because they’re institutionalized and sanctioned by the state ideology.”⁹⁴ According to Reagan, the Soviets’ treatment of Daniloff was just one of the more recent and more internationally publicized examples of much larger problems with the Soviet system.

Similarly, Reagan used Yuri Orlov’s release to explain to the international community that the Soviets were violating the Helsinki Act and to extend his criticism beyond Soviet practices to Soviet ideology as well. Orlov was a co-founder of the Moscow Helsinki Monitoring Group, a group of Soviet citizens who monitored and reported to Western contacts the Soviet government’s level of compliance with the Helsinki provisions on human rights. Four days before the Reykjavík Summit, Reagan asserted that it was “the Soviet State’s ideology” that made “it a crime” for Soviet citizens like Orlov “to advocate living up to international commitments.” Reagan argued that “the rest of the world” should “take notice” of this.⁹⁵ The following day, Reagan publicly praised Orlov as someone who had “done more to inform the world of current Soviet human rights violations than any man on earth.”⁹⁶ In his post-summit address to the nation on October 13, Reagan continued to remind the world that Orlov “was

imprisoned for pointing out to his government its violations [of the Helsinki Final Act].”⁹⁷ Reagan continued to use Orlov, as well as Daniloff, in his Reykjavík Summit rhetoric as proof of the USSR’s failure to fulfill its international obligations under the Helsinki Final Act.⁹⁸

Contrary to Fischer’s claim that Reagan reversed course in January 1984 and began playing down the ideological rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union,⁹⁹ in 1986 Reagan clearly criticized Marxist-Leninism as the source of Soviet human rights violations. He identified Soviet human rights practices as violations of an international treaty and, thus, a source of mistrust and tension in U.S.-Soviet relations. Reagan publicly declared that “an improvement of the human condition within the Soviet Union . . . [was] indispensable for an improvement in bilateral relations with the United States.”¹⁰⁰

Historical Continuity in Soviet Human Rights Abuses

In addition to identifying current Soviet human rights abuses as violations of an existing international treaty, Reagan employed a second rhetorical tactic in his strategy to project a negative image of the Soviet Union. Reagan argued that “all through history” forms of government that have not derived their power and legitimacy from the consent of the governed—specifically, “dictatorships and the tyrannies”—have been the first to resort to the use of force, to employ “the cult of militarism and the pursuit of war,”¹⁰¹ in order to impose their rule on their own and other people. Reagan claimed

that the Soviet Union had a clear and ongoing “record of seeking to impose its ideology and rule” on unwilling subjects.¹⁰²

Illustrating the Soviet record with historical examples, Reagan issued a statement on October 23, 1986 recognizing the 30th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Most significantly, Reagan referred to “the revolt [in Hungary], the workers [sic] uprising in East Germany in 1953, the Prague spring of 1968, and Poland’s Solidarity trade union movement.”¹⁰³ Reagan had employed this litany before—in his controversial June 1982 speech at Westminster Palace in England to members of the British Parliament—referring to “the grim reminders of how brutally the police state attempts to snuff out this quest for self-rule—1953 in East Germany, 1956 in Hungary, 1968 in Czechoslovakia, 1981 in Poland.”¹⁰⁴ Each of these events, Reagan stressed, represented a reaction by people against repressive communist regimes as the people sought greater freedom. Additionally, each uprising was met either by crushing force from the Soviet military (in East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia) or by greater repression of civil and human rights (in Poland).

With his brief chronology of aggression and repression in his October 23, 1986 statement, Reagan implied a historical continuity in Soviet and Soviet-directed human rights violations from at least 1953 to 1981. In a speech on November 18, 1986 Reagan more explicitly equated then present-day Soviet activities in Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua with past Soviet behavior in Hungary during 1956. Reagan noted: “Thirty years ago this month, Soviet troops swept into Budapest to snuff out the light of freedom in Hungary.” Reagan asked: “[C]an anyone truly say it was in fact in our interest to

stand by, hands folded, at the dying of the light in Hungary? And would it be today in our interest to stand by and watch the dying of the light in Afghanistan, the dying of the light in Angola, the dying of the light in Nicaragua? I say no. Not then. Not now. Not ever.”¹⁰⁵

For Reagan, this historical continuity constituted a “form” of Soviet behavior, a long, unchanged pattern of Soviet use of force or threat of force to impose its will upon the peoples of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and other nations. Reagan acknowledged that there had been episodes in the past when the Soviets appeared to be changing—during the periods of apparent liberalization preceding the crackdowns in East Germany and Czechoslovakia and periods of apparent thawing of Cold War tensions as during the period of *détente* in the 1970s. The United States and Soviet Union even reached agreements that resulted in talk about a “great thaw in Soviet-American relations and even predictions about the end of the Cold War.” But, Reagan charged, the Soviets always “reverted to form, such as in the invasion of Afghanistan.”¹⁰⁶ Implicit in Reagan’s argument was an attitude of skepticism toward Gorbachev’s declarations of a new “openness” within the USSR as well as Gorbachev’s references to “new thinking” about foreign policy within the Soviet *nomenklatura*.¹⁰⁷

Reagan recognized that it would be difficult for Gorbachev to alter traditional Soviet practices that were based on Marxist-Leninism.¹⁰⁸ Why, then, would he criticize ongoing human rights violations as so deeply rooted in Soviet history? For Reagan, the issue seems not just to have been one of reformation but also separation: how far would Gorbachev go in separating his so-called “new” approach from the old Soviet policies

and practices? Reagan may have believed that the further he could induce the Soviets to move away from what he characterized as a historical pattern of human rights abuses, the less likely the Soviets would be to revert to “form” in the future. Reagan’s arguments challenged Gorbachev to make more reforms and more drastic reforms than previous leaders had implemented in Soviet history. Reagan’s challenge was direct, identifying specific human rights practices he wanted to see the Soviets end: “religious persecution, long divided families, suppression of immigration [sic], and harassment of ethnic and cultural activists.”¹⁰⁹

Linking Human Rights and International Peace

A third key aspect of Reagan’s Reykjavík strategy was his conflation of human rights and international peace. Reagan argued that as long as the Soviet government lacked respect for human rights it could not be trusted as a reliable international partner in pursuit of world peace. At the core of Reagan’s argument was his claim that Soviet leaders were violating legal commitments to their own people, commitments stipulated in the Soviet Constitution, the Helsinki Final Act, and the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Three days after his return from Reykjavík, Reagan explained to a group of high school students the similarities and differences between the United States and Soviet Constitutions and their respective legal and political practices. He pointed out, “[I]f you look at . . . [the Soviet Union’s Constitution], you will see many things in there that are in ours—the freedom to speak and the freedom to assemble and so forth.” Reagan added, “Of course, if anybody in Russia tries to do that, they get

arrested. But it's in their Constitution.”¹¹⁰ Reagan argued that the disconnect between Soviet words and deeds was apparent elsewhere in Soviet life. For Reagan, Soviet failure to comply with the Helsinki agreement was not only a violation of international law but also an indication of Soviet leaders' lack of “respect for the individual, for the dignity of the human person,” and, thus, for “those rights outlined in the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” Reagan asserted to the international community that the Soviet government was violating its primary obligation to protect its citizens' basic rights,¹¹¹ and he warned his domestic audience that “a government that will break faith with its own people cannot be trusted to keep faith with foreign powers.”¹¹²

Reagan's arguments were consistent with the views he expressed the previous year in his Geneva Summit rhetoric: “A government which does not respect its citizens' rights and its international commitments to protect those rights is not likely to respect its other international undertakings.”¹¹³ Reagan had also argued in November 1985 that “[t]hose countries which respect the rights of their own people tend, inevitably, to respect the rights of their neighbors.”¹¹⁴ According to Reagan's reasoning, those “countries which respect human rights” are also “unlikely to unleash war or to impose their will on others.”¹¹⁵ Reagan implied that the reverse was also true: governments that impose their will on their own citizens are more likely to seek to impose it on others. As Reagan told the United Nations on September 22, 1986, respect for human rights was “the foundation stone in any structure of world peace.” In advancing his twin goals of peace and freedom, Reagan also noted, “Peace is more than just an absence of war,” and

he conflated the two, arguing that “true peace is freedom.”¹¹⁶ From Reagan’s rhetorical perspective, “True peace requires respect for human rights and freedom as well as arms control.”¹¹⁷

Reagan agreed that by reversing the arms race and engaging in disarmament the United States and the Soviet Union could cooperate to create a safer, more peaceful world. Reagan also emphasized, however, that for the United States and the USSR to create “a lasting peace” there must be a common and continuing commitment to improving international relations in areas other than arms control. Thus, in his comments welcoming West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to the United States a week after Reagan returned from Reykjavík, Reagan issued a public challenge to Gorbachev: “A lasting peace cannot be based simply on an arms agreement. Better relations must include . . . respect for human rights.”¹¹⁸ Reagan’s rhetoric presented a challenge to Gorbachev: if Gorbachev wanted new arms reduction accords with the United States, he would have to begin to alter significantly the Soviet Union’s human rights practices.¹¹⁹ Reagan continued to argue that “arms reduction and human rights must be talked about together.”¹²⁰

In linking international peace and human rights, Reagan explained to his domestic audience that his view was not merely a personal or partisan perspective. In his post-Reykjavík televised address to the nation, Reagan quoted from former President John F. Kennedy’s June 10, 1963 commencement address at American University in an attempt to bolster his own position: “And is not peace, in the last analysis, basically a matter of human rights?”¹²¹ This was not the first time Reagan borrowed from

Kennedy's American University address to link human rights and international peace. A year earlier, in Reagan's address to a Joint Session of the Congress following his return from the Geneva Summit, he echoed Kennedy's words when he argued, "Human rights . . . is not an abstract moral issue; it is a peace issue."¹²² Reagan's use of Kennedy's rhetoric implied that Reagan's view was not a new one and that there was bi-partisan agreement that respect for human rights was central to world peace.

Kennedy was not the only historical figure from whom Reagan borrowed in linking human rights with peaceful international relations. Reagan conflated the issues of human rights and international peace in a manner consistent with arguments previously advanced by a man who was arguably the best known of Soviet dissidents, 1975 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Andrei Sakharov. In using arguments similar to Sakharov's, Reagan established for his international audience that his view of the indissoluble link between respect for human rights and the possibilities of international peace was not just that of a Western politician. In his summit rhetoric, Reagan made repeated references and allusions to Sakharov due to Sakharov's dual status within the USSR as "the father of the Soviet H-bomb"¹²³ and "the icon of the dissidents and liberals."¹²⁴ Sakharov's reputation made him a prominent international figure. As journalist Robert Kaiser explains, the problem for the Soviet government was, "Party officials could dismiss many of the dissidents as kooks and misfits, but the father of the hydrogen bomb did not fit those categories."¹²⁵ As former Soviet dissident and political prisoner Anatoly Sharansky indicates, two of the most prominent precepts Sakharov advanced were: (1) "A country that does not respect the rights of its own people will not

respect the rights of its neighbors”; and (2) “the international community should never trust a state more than that state trusts its own people.”¹²⁶ Reagan’s Reykjavík Summit rhetoric clearly echoed both of these arguments back to Soviet leaders.

Reagan’s rhetoric suggests that it did not matter to him that Gorbachev offered numerous attractive arms agreements. Reagan’s rhetoric urged the international community to view the Soviet Union as a menace to its own people, an untrustworthy international treaty partner, and, therefore, a threat to world peace until the USSR began establishing a record of abiding by the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Reagan insisted that something more than new Soviet assurances and new international agreements were necessary to protect the United States and its allies from Soviet perfidy and possible aggression.¹²⁷ His solution was the Strategic Defense Initiative.

The Strategic Defense Initiative: Reagan’s Tool of Public Diplomacy

Pearce, Johnson, and Branham argue that “[t]he rationale for SDI depends on the existence of an enemy equipped with nuclear weapons and poised for a ‘first strike.’ [At Reykjavík] Gorbachev proposed a world in which he, at least, was no such enemy, thereby rendering unconvincing the rhetoric in which Reagan had justified SDI.” The apparent and incorrect implication of this argument is that Reagan offered only one rationale for SDI, a nuclear rationale. However, Reagan offered another rationale based on human rights that depended on the existence of a foe who repeatedly violated its own and other people’s human rights and demonstrated a lack of respect for its obligations

under international treaties. Apparently Gorbachev focused on the nuclear rationale as described by Pearce and his colleagues, because he wanted to counter Reagan's image of the Soviet Union as a threat to world peace by proposing at Reykjavík the abolition of all nuclear weapons. What Gorbachev failed to recognize—at least prior to October 1986—was that Reagan's emphasis on mistrust fueling the arms race rather than the arms race itself meant that new Soviet proposals to control or reverse the arms race could not completely address the threatening image of the USSR that Reagan projected. The international threat posed by the Soviet Union, as characterized by Reagan, was based on more than Soviet stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Reagan rooted the threat in the nature and practices of the Soviet system itself, in its ideology and in its history. Without addressing these issues, Gorbachev could not do what Pearce and his colleagues incorrectly claim he did—render “unconvincing the rhetoric in which Reagan had justified SDI.”¹²⁸

Although confrontational rhetoric characterized Reagan's Reykjavík discourse, he occasionally returned to the dualistic conciliation-confrontation rhetorical approach that he had used in his rhetoric surrounding the Geneva Summit. For example, in his September 22, 1986 address at the United Nations, Reagan expressed a willingness to reach new arms accords with the Soviets and he assured the world of his confidence that the United States and the Soviet Union could work together to rid the world of nuclear weapons.¹²⁹ Following Reykjavík, in Reagan's November 1, 1986 Saturday radio address, for example, he expressed his confidence in the achievement of “eventual agreements” between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹³⁰

However, based on the Soviets' past, Reagan advised caution. Even when future arms accords came into existence, the West would continue to face significant risks. Reagan warned that the "Soviets may change their mind" after signing new agreements.¹³¹ Soviet leaders, "as they have done too often in the past," may decide not "to comply with their solemn commitments"¹³² and refuse to "live up to arms reduction agreements."¹³³ The Soviets, Reagan cautioned, may decide to cheat¹³⁴ and replace destroyed missiles with new ones.¹³⁵ Reagan observed that no international arms accord could eliminate the risk of the unthinkable—"an attack by the Soviet Union."¹³⁶ This did not, as Pearce, Johnson, and Branham claim, constitute "a new manner" of speaking for Reagan about the Soviets in the post- Reykjavík world.¹³⁷ It reflects that Reagan continued to talk about the Soviets as he had since his earliest days in the White House.¹³⁸ Within the context of ongoing Soviet violations of the international Helsinki Final Act and the controversies over Orlov, Daniloff and others, Reagan continued his confrontational warnings about the Soviets' untrustworthiness and about the continuing risk of their duplicity in or outright abrogation of future international agreements.

Against such risks, Reagan repeatedly advocated SDI as an "insurance policy."¹³⁹ Having castigated the Soviets for their human rights practices and a lack of integrity in international treaty affairs, on November 1, 1986 Reagan offered his domestic audience two options: "We can either have American technology as insurance for keeping us safe, or we can rely on Soviet promises alone. Our technology and their promises each have their own track record. And I'll take our technology any day."¹⁴⁰ Reagan did not provide lengthy or detailed explanations of how SDI would act as an "insurance policy"

against the risks he described. He called upon Americans to put their faith in their ingenuity and in the ability of their technological progress to meet their national security needs.¹⁴¹

However, given media reports and Gorbachev's complaints following the Reykjavík meetings, it was imperative that Reagan provide a convincing justification of his decision not to compromise on SDI in return for a new U.S.-Soviet arms reduction agreement(s). Reagan justified his uncompromising position by arguing that the Soviets lacked the trustworthiness requisite for the United States to enter into any new international arms treaties without something more than new Soviet pledges to honor their commitments. That is to say, Reagan argued that it was not new arms treaties that were needed but new policies and practices within the Soviet system that were most necessary in order to reduce international mistrust of the Soviets. Given the Soviets' record, "No responsible President," Reagan charged, "should rely solely on a piece of paper for our country's safety."¹⁴²

Reagan's rhetoric functioned to raise serious questions for his domestic and foreign audiences. If the Soviet government did not respect the basic rights of its own citizens, what reasons did the international community have to expect that the USSR would respect the basic rights of other nations' citizens? If the Communist Party of the Soviet Union used force to impose its will upon its own people and upon its neighbors, using conventional military weapons rather than nuclear weapons, what reasons did the international community have to think that the USSR would not use force or the threat of force to impose its will on other nations even if Gorbachev eliminated the entire Soviet

nuclear arsenal? If the Soviet Union continued to violate an existing international treaty even in the treatment of its own people, what reasons did the international community have to believe that the USSR would abide by new international treaties involving the safety and security of other people? The central issue, according to Reagan's argument, was not SDI itself, but whether America's and its allies' mistrust of the Soviet Union was deep enough to justify the United States' development of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Gorbachev could not erase the human rights policies and practices of previous Soviet leaders, so Reagan focused on the Soviet past in order to interpret the political context of present Soviet actions and proposals. Reagan's rhetoric attempted to persuade Gorbachev of the need to change present Soviet human rights practices in order to build a Soviet-U.S. relationship that could be conducive to nuclear disarmament. While Gorbachev offered concessions in nuclear arms negotiations, Reagan sought political changes within the Soviet system. To promote such changes, Reagan refused to compromise on SDI. Until Gorbachev began to significantly reform Soviet human rights practices, to extend freedom to Soviet citizens, and to develop a new Soviet record of respect for human rights, Reagan would continue to focus on Soviet history and ideology as justification for skepticism about Soviet integrity in complying with international treaties. That skepticism would not only lessen the likelihood of new nuclear arms agreements but also serve as justification for SDI. Until the Soviet Union began to change internally, Reagan argued, Gorbachev would face the difficult task of countering the negative international image of the USSR that Reagan promoted, regardless of how

many concessions he offered in nuclear arms negotiations. Perhaps this is one reason why following the Reykjavík Summit, as Gorbachev biographers Dusko Doder and Louise Branson record, Gorbachev “felt outmaneuvered by the Americans.”¹⁴³

CONCLUSION

Within a month after the Reykjavík Summit, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held its Third Review Meeting in Vienna, Austria, where the Soviet Union and several of its Warsaw Pact allies experienced an “overwhelming assault on their human rights record”—not only by Western nations but also by neutral and non-aligned nations.¹⁴⁴ The U.S. delegation reported that in response, the Soviets “largely abandoned the traditional Eastern tactic of declaring Western human rights criticism to be interference in their internal affairs.” In a significant reversal from previous years, the Soviets opened a dialogue with the international community about a number of human rights initiatives. On November 5, 1986 in one of the opening speeches at that conference, Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze announced a proposal for the USSR to host an international conference on human rights in Moscow. On November 6, 1986 two days after the Conference convened, Soviet officials also announced the publication, for the first time, of new emigration rules for Soviet citizens. On December 10, 1986—International Human Rights Day—Soviet Vice Minister Anatoli Kovalev attended the Conference and formally introduced the Soviet proposal previously announced by Shevardnadze.¹⁴⁵

Between late September and the end of 1986 the Soviets resolved six high-profile prisoner of conscience cases as well as six high-profile emigration cases.¹⁴⁶ Yuri Orlov was released from internal exile; he and his wife were allowed to leave the USSR in early October. Poet Irina Ratushinskaya was released from a labor camp; she and her husband were allowed to leave the USSR in early December. In mid-December, Gorbachev ended Andrei Sakharov's internal exile and allowed him and his wife, Elena Bonner, to return to Moscow. In late December, the Soviets ended Nina Kovalenko's imprisonment in a psychiatric hospital and she was allowed to leave the Soviet Union. On December 25, the last of these high-profile cases was resolved when peace activist Larisa Chukaeva was released from a labor camp. In addition, others seeking to leave the USSR were allowed to depart. Among the émigrés were a married couple, a 3-year old child reunited with parents in Sweden, two cancer patients who sought treatment outside the USSR, and two divided spouses.

Reagan used media interest in the Geneva and Reykjavík Summits to direct international attention to ongoing Soviet violations of the Helsinki Final Act and other human, political, and religious rights violations. By deciding to engage in an international dialogue about human rights at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe following the Reykjavík Summit, and by resolving the cases of high-profile dissidents, the Soviets were in a position to improve their government's image in the international community. These actions were likely a response to Reagan's Reykjavík Summit rhetoric. It is unlikely that those actions followed Reykjavík merely as a coincidence, or merely due to domestic Soviet politics.¹⁴⁷ The repression of those

individuals' rights had received international attention. Their release from labor camps, a psychiatric hospital, and internal exile as well as the approval of emigration requests for other individuals generated international media attention that reflected positively on Gorbachev's leadership and the changes taking place inside the USSR.

The termination of Andrei Sakharov's exile attracted the most international media attention¹⁴⁸ and helped to elevate Gorbachev's stature. Western media outlets reported that Sakharov was openly critical of Reagan's plans for SDI as well as the Soviet government's response to Reagan's initiative.¹⁴⁹ Sakharov was, as the London *Guardian* reported, "the last Soviet dissident with an international reputation."¹⁵⁰ With Sakharov free, the *Guardian* noted, "The household names of the human rights movement [were] now dead, in exile in the West, or free to live and work in the Soviet Union."¹⁵¹ Once so many high profile cases were resolved, Reagan could no longer direct the world's attention to them. Conversely, Gorbachev could direct the world's attention to his reforms in the Soviet system with the hope that such reforms might help re-cast the USSR in a positive light.

Yet, Gorbachev's actions also drew news media attention to the need for much greater changes to be made within the Soviet system.¹⁵² As Sharansky argues, "To the Soviets, Gorbachev was not seen as graciously expanding their liberties. Rather, he was making them understand how little freedom they had, and how much more they wanted."¹⁵³ Additionally, by allowing Sakharov to have unfettered access in Moscow to the free press of the Western world, Gorbachev created an opportunity for Sakharov to

continue his criticism of Soviet human rights practices and the Soviet presence in Afghanistan,¹⁵⁴ two issues central to Reagan's "four-part agenda."

Soviet human rights reforms continued through late 1986 into 1987. Gorbachev began the new year by releasing 140 political prisoners during the first weeks of January.¹⁵⁵ The numbers of political prisoners released from prison by April 1987 did not represent an unconditional amnesty, for which Sakharov had appealed, but even Sakharov admitted, "By comparison with earlier experience and with our most optimistic expectations, it was a lot—an extraordinarily great number."¹⁵⁶ Although Gorbachev had publicly defended Soviet human rights policies, he privately doubted them. For example, Gorbachev later admitted that even though he "spent time trying to fend off accusations of human rights abuses" in his first meeting with Reagan in Geneva, Switzerland, he "was not always convinced that . . . [Reagan's accusations] were not justified."¹⁵⁷ In diplomatic correspondent Robert Cullen's view, Gorbachev finally realized "that the real human rights leverage of the Western democracies is the power of public opinion."¹⁵⁸ Indeed, Anatoly Chernyaev observed, "Our policy did not change until Gorbachev understood that there would be no improvement and no serious arms control until we admitted and accepted human rights, free emigration, until glasnost became freedom of speech, until our society and the process of perestroika changed deeply."¹⁵⁹

In examining Reagan's Reykjavík Summit rhetoric, there is evidence that Jack Matlock's conclusion, discussed in the introduction of this chapter, is correct. Reagan used his public diplomacy strategically in an effort to persuade Gorbachev that until

there were significant changes in Soviet human rights practices, there would be no progress toward an end to the arms race. The Reykjavík Summit was more than the SDI summit. It was a significant rhetorical event that Reagan exploited in order to prod Gorbachev toward deeper liberalization and democratization of the Soviet Union.

NOTES

¹ See Lou Cannon, “Reagan-Gorbachev Summit Talks Collapse as Deadlock on SDI Wipes Out Other Gains,” *Washington Post*, October 13, 1986, A1; Richard Gwyn, “Ghost from Past Wrecks Reagan’s Role for Peace,” *Toronto Star*, October 13, 1986, A1; “Derailment at Reykjavik,” *New York Times*, October 13, 1986, A18; “Sunk by Star Wars,” *Time*, October 20, 1986, <http://www.time.com/time/archive/preview/0,10987,1075196,00.html>; David Lowry, “The American Fantasy of Salvation,” *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, October 26, 1986, 2; Joseph C. Harsh, “The Flawed Innocence of SDI,” *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston, MA), October 28, 1986, 14; John B. Oakes, “Out of Star Wars and Back to Earth,” *New York Times*, October 29, 1986, A27.

² Larry Speakes, “Memorandum to the President, October 13, 1986,” folder SP1107, WHORM: Subject File, Ronald Reagan Library, Simi Valley, California. This institution is hereafter cited as Reagan Library. Accompanying Speakes’s memo are transcripts from major television news network coverage—ABC, CBS, NBC—following Reagan’s October 13, 1986 address to the nation.

³ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 244.

⁴ W. Barnett Pearce, Deborah K. Johnson, and Robert J. Branham, “A Rhetorical Ambush at Reykjavík: A Case Study of the Transformation of Discourse,” in *Reagan and Public Discourse in America*, ed. Michael Weiler and W. Barnett Pearce (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1992), 163.

⁵ George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), 775.

⁶ Casper Weinberger, “Memorandum to the President, October 22, 1986,” folder “National Security Planning Group (NSPG 139), October 27, 1986,” box 91308, Subject File, Executive Secretariat, National Security Council: National Security Planning Group, Arms Control, Reagan Library.

⁷ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Toward a Better World* (New York: Richardson and Steirman, 1987), 68. For the full text of the published English translation of Gorbachev’s October 22, 1986 televised address to Soviet peoples, in which he voiced the complaint noted here, see Gorbachev, *Toward a Better World*, 63-79.

⁸ Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 770.

⁹ Dick Wirthlin with Wynton C. Hall, *The Greatest Communicator: What Ronald Reagan Taught Me About Politics, Leadership, and Life* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2004), 184.

¹⁰ Wirthlin with Hall, *The Greatest Communicator*, 185.

¹¹ Ronald Reagan, “Speech Draft, October 13, 1986,” ID #439177, SP1107, WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library.

¹² Larry Speakes, "Memorandum to the President, October 13, 1986," SP1107,

WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library.

¹³ Jonathan S. Miller, "Memorandum to Donald T. Regan, October 15, 1986," SP1107,

WHORM: Subject File, Reagan Library. According to Miller's memo, only Reagan's speeches on the U.S. military rescue mission in Grenada (11,078) and the recent bombing of Libya (15,562) generated more calls (but Miller also pointed out that the tally periods for the calls following the Grenada and Libyan speeches were over a longer period of time than the 36-hour measurement given to Reagan for the Reykjavík speech).

¹⁴ Wirthlin with Hall, *The Greatest Communicator*, 186-87.

¹⁵ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 770.

¹⁶ Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1997); Beth A. Fischer, "Reagan and the Soviets: Winning the Cold War?" in *The Reagan Presidency: Pragmatic Conservatism and Its Legacies*, ed. W. Elliot Brownlee and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 116.

¹⁷ Pearce, Barnett, and Branham, "A Rhetorical Ambush at Reykjavík," 163.

¹⁸ Jack F. Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), 249.

¹⁹ James R. Schlesinger, "Rhetoric and Realities in the Star Wars Debate," *International Security* 10 (1985): 3-12; Janice Hocker Rushing, "Ronald Reagan's 'Star Wars' Address: Mythic Containment of Technical Reasoning," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 (1986): 415-433; G. Thomas Goodnight, "Ronald Reagan's Re-formulation of the

Rhetoric of War: Analysis of the ‘Zero Option,’ ‘Evil Empire,’ and ‘Star Wars’ Addresses,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 (1986): 390-414; *The Technology, Strategy and Politics of SDI*, ed. Stephen J. Cimbala (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1987); Kenneth S. Zagacki and Andrew King, “Reagan, Romance, and Technology: A Critique of ‘Star Wars,’” *Communication Studies* 40 (1989):1-12; Hugh Mehan, Charles E. Nathanson, and James M. Skelly, “Nuclear Discourse in the 1980s: The Unravelling [sic] Conventions of the Cold War,” *Discourse and Society* 1 (1990): 133-165; Rebecca S. Bjork, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Symbolic Containment of the Nuclear Threat* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1992); Rachel L. Holloway, “The Strategic Defense Initiative and the Technological Sublime: Fear, Science, and the Cold War,” in *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst and H. W. Brands (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 209-232; Samuel F. Wells, “Reagan, Euromissiles, and Europe,” in *The Reagan Presidency: Pragmatic Conservatism and Its Legacies*, ed. W. Elliot Brownlee and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 133-152; Paul Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Random House, 2004).

²⁰ Anthony R. DeLuca, *Politics, Diplomacy, and the Media: Gorbachev’s Legacy in the West* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 99.

²¹ Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation on the Meetings with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev in Iceland, October 13, 1986,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1986* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing

Office, 1989), 1370. This publication series is hereafter cited as *Public Papers* followed by the year and the page numbers. This speech is hereafter cited as “Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986.”

²² Gorbachev, *Toward a Better World*, 60, 62. For the full text of the published English translation of Gorbachev’s October 14, 1986 televised address to Soviet peoples, in which he used the phrase indicated here, see Gorbachev, *Toward a Better World*, 45-64.

²³ Gorbachev, *Toward a Better World*, 47.

²⁴ Anatoly Chernyaev, quoted in *Witnesses to the End of the Cold War*, ed. William C. Wohlforth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 166.

²⁵ Ronald Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation on the meeting with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev in Reykjavík, Iceland, October 4, 1986,” *Public Papers, 1986*, 1323 (hereafter cited as “Radio Address to the Nation, October 4, 1986”); Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing on Soviet-United States Relations for the President’s Commission on Executive Exchange, October 6, 1986,” *Public Papers, 1986*, 1332. Hereafter cited as “Remarks at a White House Briefing on Soviet-United States Relations, October 6, 1986.”

²⁶ George Shultz, quoted in *Witnesses to the End of the Cold War*, ed. William C. Wohlforth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 174.

²⁷ Ronald Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation on Soviet-United States Relations, November 1, 1986,” *Public Papers, 1986*, 1498. Hereafter cited as “Radio Address to the Nation, November 1, 1986.”

- ²⁸ George Shultz, quoted in *Witnesses to the End of the Cold War*, ed. William C. Wohlforth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 175.
- ²⁹ Rozanne Ridgway quoted in Deborah Hart Strober and Gerald S. Strober, ed., *Reagan: The Man and His Presidency* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 348.
- ³⁰ Robert B. Cullen, "Human Rights: A Thaw Imperiled," in *Gorbachev's Russia and American Foreign Policy*, ed. Seweryn Bialer and Michael Mandelbaum (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988), 143.
- ³¹ Cullen, "Human Rights," 145.
- ³² Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 415.
- ³³ "Gorbachev and Human Rights," *Financial Times* (London), December 23, 1986, 10.
- ³⁴ Ronald Reagan, "Statement by Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Remarks by the President on Soviet-United States Relations, September 30, 1986," *Public Papers, 1986*, 1292-1299. Hereafter cited as "Statement by Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Remarks by the President, September 30, 1986."
- ³⁵ Ronald Reagan, "Address to the 41st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, September 22, 1986," *Public Papers, 1986*, 1227-1233. Hereafter cited as "Address to the 41st Session of the United Nations, September 22, 1986."
- ³⁶ Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation, October 4, 1986," 1323-1325.
- ³⁷ Reagan, "Remarks at a White House Briefing on Soviet-United States Relations, October 6, 1986," 1331-1334.
- ³⁸ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at a White House Meeting with Human Rights Advocates, October 7, 1986," *Public Papers, 1986*, 1338-1339.

³⁹ Reagan did make some brief remarks on the day of his departure, but they are not considered pertinent to the arguments contained in this chapter.

⁴⁰ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 752, 756.

⁴¹ Reagan, "Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986," 1367-1371.

⁴² The "Iran-*Contra* affair" involved members of the Reagan administration assisting the illegal sale of arms to Iran and using the funds from the arms sales to illegally fund the *Contras*, right-wing insurgents who were fighting to overthrow the Sandinista communist government of Nicaragua.

⁴³ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Broadcast Journalists on the Meetings in Iceland with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev, October 14, 1986," *Public Papers, 1986*, 1376-1379. Hereafter cited as "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Broadcast Journalists, October 14, 1986."

⁴⁴ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at a Meeting with Officials of the State Department and the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency on the Meetings in Iceland with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev, October 14, 1986," *Public Papers, 1986*, 1379-1381. Hereafter cited as "Remarks at a Meeting with Officials of the State Department and the U.S. ACDA, October 14, 1986."

⁴⁵ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks to Students from Southern Regional High School of Manahawkin, New Jersey, in Baltimore, Maryland, October 15, 1986," *Public Papers, 1986*, 1383-1385. Hereafter cited as "Remarks to Students from Southern Regional High School of Manahawkin, New Jersey, October 15, 1986."

⁴⁶ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for Chancellor Helmut Kohl of the Federal Republic of Germany, October 21, 1986,” *Public Papers, 1986*, 1407-1410. Hereafter cited as “Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for Chancellor Helmut Kohl, October 21, 1986.”

⁴⁷ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, November 1, 1986,” 1498-1499.

⁴⁸ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the Ethics and Public Policy Center Anniversary Dinner, November 18, 1986,” *Public Papers, 1986*, 1563-1567. Hereafter cited as “Remarks at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, November 18, 1986.”

⁴⁹ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 190.

⁵⁰ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 403.

⁵¹ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 650; Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-1991* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 157.

⁵² Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 177-178.

⁵³ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 411.

⁵⁴ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 403.

⁵⁵ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 755.

⁵⁶ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 177.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Reagan, *An American Life*, 651.

⁵⁸ Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 167.

⁵⁹ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 183.

⁶⁰ Reagan, *An American Life*, 664.

- ⁶¹ Mikhail Gorbachev quoted in Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 183.
- ⁶² Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 183.
- ⁶³ Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 167-168; Cannon, *President Reagan*, 756-758.
- ⁶⁴ John Greenwald, "Deadly Meltdown," *Time*, May 12, 1986, 38-52; Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 167-168; Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 189.
- ⁶⁵ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 756.
- ⁶⁶ Gorbachev quoted in Cannon, *President Reagan*, 756 and Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 188.
- ⁶⁷ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 189; Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 168; Cannon, *President Reagan*, 756.
- ⁶⁸ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 189.
- ⁶⁹ Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 167-168; Cannon, *President Reagan*, 756.
- ⁷⁰ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 726-728.
- ⁷¹ Reagan, *An American Life*, 666-674; Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 197-202; Cannon, *President Reagan*, 762-763; Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 174-182.
- ⁷² Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 175.
- ⁷³ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 762.
- ⁷⁴ Mikhail Gorbachev quoted in Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 179.
- ⁷⁵ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 200.

⁷⁶ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 197-202; Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 174-182.

⁷⁷ Reagan, *An American Life*, 667.

⁷⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 743, 745, 747.

⁷⁹ Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era*, 181.

⁸⁰ Ronald Reagan, “Statement by Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Remarks by the President, September 30, 1986,” 1292.

⁸¹ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 175-176.

⁸² Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 211-212; Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, 244.

⁸³ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 238-239.

⁸⁴ Reagan, “Address to the 41st Session of the United Nations, September 22, 1986,” 1227-1233.

⁸⁵ Reagan, “Statement by Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Remarks by the President, September 30, 1986,” 1292-1294.

⁸⁶ Mikhail Gorbachev quoted in Robert G. Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened: His Triumphs and His Failure* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 138. The quotation is from Gorbachev’s speech in Krasnodar on September 19, 1986.

⁸⁷ Mikhail Gorbachev quoted in Reagan, *An American Life*, 669.

⁸⁸ Mikhail Gorbachev quoted in Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened*, 138.

⁸⁹ Reagan, “Address to the 41st Session of the United Nations, September 22, 1986,” 1232, 1228.

- ⁹⁰ Robert L. Ivie, “Speaking ‘Common Sense’ about the Soviet Threat: Reagan’s Rhetorical Stance,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 48 (1984): 42.
- ⁹¹ Reagan, “Address to the 41st Session of the United Nations, September 22, 1986,” 1228.
- ⁹² Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing on Soviet-United States Relations, October 6, 1986,” 1332.
- ⁹³ Reagan, “Address to the 41st Session of the United Nations, September 22, 1986,” 1232.
- ⁹⁴ Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing on Soviet-United States Relations, October 6, 1986,” 1333.
- ⁹⁵ Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing on Soviet-United States Relations, October 6, 1986,” 1333.
- ⁹⁶ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Meeting with Human Rights Advocates, October 7, 1986,” 1338.
- ⁹⁷ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986,” 1368.
- ⁹⁸ Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing on Soviet-United States Relations, October 6, 1986,” 1332-1333; Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Meeting with Human Rights Advocates, October 7, 1986,” 1338-1339; Reagan, “Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986,” 1368; Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on Signing the Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week Proclamation, December 10, 1986,” *Public Papers, 1986*, 1616-1617.
- ⁹⁹ Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 3, 32.

¹⁰⁰ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986,” 1369.

¹⁰¹ Reagan, “Address to the 41st Session of the United Nations, September 22, 1986,” 1232.

¹⁰² Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, October 4, 1986,” 1323.

¹⁰³ Ronald Reagan, “Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution, October 23, 1986,” *Public Papers, 1986*, 1420.

¹⁰⁴ Reagan, “Address to Members of the British Parliament, June 8, 1982,” *Public Papers, 1982*, 745.

¹⁰⁵ Reagan, “Remarks at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, November 18, 1986,” 1565.

¹⁰⁶ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, October 4, 1986,” 1324.

¹⁰⁷ For example, see Gorbachev’s discussion of these aspects of changes he had attempted to implement within the Soviet Union beginning in March 1985 in Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 201-214, 401-426.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, Reagan, *An American Life*, 614-615. Reagan quotes from his diary regarding his view of Gorbachev as “a confirmed ideologue” which would likely preclude Gorbachev from rejecting Marxist-Leninism.

¹⁰⁹ Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Meeting with Human Rights Advocates, October 7, 1986,” 1338.

¹¹⁰ Reagan, “Remarks to Students from Southern Regional High School of Manahawkin, New Jersey, October 15, 1986,” 1384. For more on the Soviet Constitution, see, for

example, Robert S. Sharlet, *The New Soviet Constitution of 1977: Analysis and Text* (Brunswick, Ohio: King's Court Communications, 1978).

¹¹¹ Reagan, "Address to the 41st Session of the United Nations, September 22, 1986," 1232.

¹¹² Reagan, "Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986," 1369.

¹¹³ Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on the Upcoming Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Geneva, November 14, 1985," *Public Papers, 1985*, 1389.

¹¹⁴ Reagan, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, November 21, 1985," *Public Papers, 1985*, 1413.

¹¹⁵ Ronald Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation on the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly, October 19, 1985" *Public Papers, 1985*, 1268.

¹¹⁶ Reagan, "Address to the 41st Session of the United Nations, September 22, 1986," 1232.

¹¹⁷ Reagan, "Remarks at a White House Meeting with Human Rights Advocates, October 7, 1986," 1338.

¹¹⁸ Reagan, "Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for Chancellor Helmut Kohl, October 21, 1986," 1408.

¹¹⁹ Reagan advanced this theme in numerous speeches. See, Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation, October 4, 1986," 1323; Reagan, "Remarks at a White House Briefing on Soviet-United States Relations, October 6, 1986," 1332; Reagan, "Remarks at a White House Meeting with Human Rights Advocates, October 7, 1986," 1338; Reagan, "Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986," 1370; Reagan, "Remarks to Students from

Southern Regional High School of Manahawkin, New Jersey, October 15, 1986,” 1384;

Reagan, “Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for Chancellor Helmut Kohl, October 21, 1986,” 1408.

¹²⁰ Reagan, “Remarks at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, November 18, 1986,” 1567.

¹²¹ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986,” 1369.

¹²² Reagan, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, November 21, 1985,” 1413.

¹²³ For a brief biographical sketch of Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov, see Thomas Parrish, *The Cold War Encyclopedia* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996), 278-279. Sakharov gained global acclaim as a human rights advocate, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975.

¹²⁴ Eric Shiraev and Vladislav Zubok, *Anti-Americanism in Russia: From Stalin to Putin* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 19.

¹²⁵ Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened*, 90.

¹²⁶ Anatoly Sharansky, *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 3, 113.

¹²⁷ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986,” 1368.

¹²⁸ Pearce, Johnson, and Branham, “A Rhetorical Ambush at Reykjavík,” 179.

¹²⁹ Reagan, “Address to the 41st Session of the UNGA, September 22, 1986,” 1230.

¹³⁰ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, November 1, 1986,” 1498.

¹³¹ Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Broadcast Journalists, October 14, 1986,” 1376; Reagan, “Remarks at a Meeting with Officials of the State Department and the U.S. ACDA, October 14, 1986,” 1381.

¹³² Reagan, “Address to the Nation, October 13, 1986,” 1370.

¹³³ Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Broadcast Journalists, October 14, 1986,” 1376.

¹³⁴ For such sentiments, see Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Broadcast Journalists, October 14, 1986,” 1378; Reagan, “Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for Chancellor Helmut Kohl, October 21, 1986,” 1408; Ronald Reagan, “Statement on the Soviet-United States Nuclear and Space Arms Negotiations, November 12, 1986,” *Public Papers, 1986*, 1543.

¹³⁵ Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Broadcast Journalists, October 14, 1986,” 1378.

¹³⁶ Reagan, “Remarks to Students from Southern Regional High School of Manahawkin, New Jersey, October 15, 1986,” 1384.

¹³⁷ Pearce, Johnson, and Branham, “A Rhetorical Ambush at Reykjavík,” 163.

¹³⁸ For example, see Ronald Reagan, “The President’s News Conference, January 29, 1981,” *Public Papers, 1981*, 57. Reagan expressed his willingness to talk with the Soviets, but he encouraged the world to keep in mind that the Soviets “reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat” in order to advance Soviet goals.

¹³⁹ For Reagan's use of this phrase, see Reagan, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Broadcast Journalists, October 14, 1986," 1376; Reagan, "Remarks to Students from Southern Regional High School of Manahawkin, New Jersey, October 15, 1986," 1384; Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation, November 1, 1986," 1498. Also, see Reagan, "Remarks at a Meeting with Officials of the State Department and the U.S. ACDA, October 14, 1986," 1380; Reagan, "Statement on the Soviet-United States Nuclear and Space Arms Negotiations, November 12, 1986," 1543.

¹⁴⁰ Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation, November 1, 1986," 1498.

¹⁴¹ For example, see Kenneth S. Zagacki and Andrew King, "Reagan, Romance and Technology: A Critique of 'Star Wars'," *Communication Studies* 40 (1989): 1-12.

¹⁴² Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation, November 1, 1986," 1498.

¹⁴³ Dusko Doder and Louise Branson, *Gorbachev: Heretic in the Kremlin* (New York: Viking, 1990), 165.

¹⁴⁴ U.S. Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). *Phase I of the Vienna Review Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, November 4-December 20, 1986* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), 1. Hereafter cited as *Vienna Review Meeting of the CSCE*.

¹⁴⁵ *Vienna Review Meeting of the CSCE*, 1-3, 25, 9, 25; Cullen, "Human Rights," 140, 141. The new Soviet emigration law went into effect January 1, 1987.

¹⁴⁶ *Vienna Review Meeting of the CSCE*, 7-9.

¹⁴⁷ Frances Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 409.

¹⁴⁸ For press coverage on Sakharov's release, see Gary Lee, "Sakharov Released from Exile," *Washington Post*, December 20, 1986, A1; Philip Taubman, "Soviet Lifts Sakharov Banishment and Grants a Pardon to Bonner," *New York Times*, December 20, 1986, 1; Martin Walker, "Sakharov is Called Home from Exile," *Guardian* (London), December 20, 1986, 1; Patrick Cockburn and Lionel Barber, "Gorbachev Emphasizes Change of Style by Ending Sakharov Exile," *Financial Times* (London), December 20, 1986, 1; Martin Walker, "Sakharov Returns to Tumult of the Media," *Guardian* (London), December 24, 1986, 1.

¹⁴⁹ Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, 409-411.

¹⁵⁰ Martin Walker, "Gorbachev's Big Gamble with the Man from Gorky," *Guardian* (London), December 24, 1986, 1.

¹⁵¹ Walker, "Sakharov is Called Home from Exile," 1.

¹⁵² "The Soviets and Freedom," *Toronto Star*, December 21, 1986, H2; Philip Taubman, "The Release of Sakharov," *New York Times*, December 21, 1986, 14.

¹⁵³ Sharansky, *The Case for Democracy*, 143. Sharansky, a former Soviet dissident, and a political prisoner from 1977-1986, was the first political prisoner to be released by Gorbachev. Sharansky and his wife, Avital, were expelled from the Soviet Union in February 1986.

¹⁵⁴ For news media coverage of Sakharov and his agitation for Soviet reforms, see Bill Keller, "Sakharov Says He Intends to Renew Civil Rights Advocacy in Moscow," *New York Times*, December 21, 1986, 1; Gary Lee, "Sakharov Returns, Calls for Release of Prisoners," *Washington Post*, December 24, 1986, A1; Dusko Doder, "Soviets Allow TV

Interviews of Sakharov,” *Washington Post*, December 27, 1986, A1; Richard L. Berke, “Two U.S. Networks Talk to Sakharov,” *New York Times*, December 27, 1986, 46; *Vienna Review Meeting*, 8.

¹⁵⁵ Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, 409.

¹⁵⁶ Sakharov, *Moscow and Beyond*, 6.

¹⁵⁷ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 406.

¹⁵⁸ Cullen, “Human Rights,” 146.

¹⁵⁹ Anatoly Chernyaev quoted in Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 251. Matlock quotes Chernyaev from comments Chernyaev made at a conference at Brown University, May 7-10, 1998.

CHAPTER V

**THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT, DECEMBER 1987: ROLLING BACK SOVIET
MILITARY AND POLITICAL POWER**

In January 1988, *New York Times* journalist Hedrick Smith claimed that “in suddenly casting himself as a détentenik” President Ronald Reagan had “radically changed American relations with Moscow.”¹ Although Reagan sought to radically change U.S. relations with the Soviet Union in 1987, a close examination of his diplomatic rhetoric surrounding the December 1987 Washington Summit reveals that he did not do so by “suddenly casting himself as a détentenik.” Many scholars, however, continue to adopt a view similar to Smith’s, arguing that Reagan shifted from a hard-line to a conciliatory posture during the course of his presidency. For example, political scientist Beth Fischer asserts a “Reagan reversal” in January 1984, following which was a “wholesale reversal” of Reagan’s Soviet “policy goals and strategies.”² Likewise, public opinion scholar Lee Sigelman asserts that Reagan engaged in a “turnabout” in his advocacy “of a hard-line American posture toward the Soviet Union.”³

Other scholars argue the opposite of Fischer and Sigelman. For example, rhetorical scholar Cori Dauber asserts that the Reagan administration maintained a hard-line, “business as usual” approach in late 1987, “deny[ing] the existence of real change within the Soviet Union.” Dauber concludes that “rejecting the reality of change” resulted in “the loss of historic opportunities.”⁴ Like Dauber, rhetorical scholar Janice O’Donnell claims, “Driven by and exploiting the resources of hostility toward the Soviet

Union, Reagan could not anticipate or appreciate the implications of *glasnost* for the Soviet Union because the argumentative framework he used throughout the eight years of his administration cast the Soviet Union as an evil and unchanging enemy.”

O’Donnell concludes that “Reagan’s rhetoric limited his ability to account for reform” and “limited his ability to respond to change in the Soviet Union.”⁵

These and other scholars treat Reagan’s rhetorical approaches to the USSR with a mutual exclusivity that the rhetorical-historical record does not support. This chapter demonstrates that Reagan combined confrontational and conciliatory rhetoric in his public diplomacy surrounding the Washington Summit and that in doing so he neither reversed his rhetorically hard-line course nor denied that real change was occurring under Gorbachev’s leadership. On the contrary, Reagan’s rhetoric reveals that he sought to rhetorically exploit what he and George Shultz perceived to be a unique opportunity to increase public pressure on Gorbachev for radically liberalizing and democratizing reforms of the Soviet system.

In Reagan’s rhetoric of public diplomacy surrounding the two previous U.S.-Soviet summits, he argued that the superpowers’ mistrust of each other, more than their nuclear stockpiles, was the primary source of Cold War tensions. Reagan had called for changes—unilateral Soviet changes—which he claimed could decrease international tensions and reduce mistrust. By late 1987, Reagan was apparently pleased with the changes occurring inside the Soviet Union.⁶ To the dismay of many of his conservative supporters, Reagan publicly argued that Mikhail Gorbachev appeared to be a different kind of Soviet leader. Gorbachev was, Reagan said, more “willing to address the

problems that have divided East and West so long and to seek agreements based on mutual benefit.”⁷ By the time of the Washington Summit of December 8-10, 1987, Secretary of State George Shultz believed the economic and political pressures Gorbachev faced within the Soviet Union provided Reagan with an opportunity to be more influential with regard to the choices Gorbachev made about Soviet responses to East-West problems. Gaining such an influential position had been one of Reagan’s chief Soviet policy objectives at least since January 1983.⁸

Although circumstances within the Soviet Union seemed to change throughout 1987, Reagan essentially maintained the same rhetorical strategy for his Washington Summit meeting as he had for the meetings in Geneva in 1985 and Reykjavík in 1986, combining confrontation and conciliation. It is likely that Reagan maintained this approach because the primary challenge he faced in the fall of 1987 was very similar to what he had encountered in the weeks surrounding the two previous summits. Arms control issues threatened to overshadow the other three areas of Reagan’s four-part agenda: regional conflicts, human rights, and bilateral issues. The obvious difference between the two previous summits and the Washington Summit was the U.S.-Soviet agreement on a new nuclear arms accord, the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, the first U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms accord in eight years.

Although, for many people, the INF treaty represented a step toward reversing the nuclear arms race by eliminating existing weapons rather than simply curtailing their growth, the accord was not universally acclaimed, especially in the United States. Many conservative politicians, most of whom had previously been ardent Reagan supporters,

not only opposed the INF treaty but also questioned whether Reagan had abandoned his anti-Communist ideology and reversed his Soviet policy. For these critics, the INF treaty raised concerns about the future of the U.S.'s long-standing commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) nuclear response capability and Western Europe's security.⁹ Conversely, Reagan received support for the INF treaty from many of his staunchest opponents. Yet those congressional opponents were at the same time attempting to significantly reduce funding for Reagan's large defense budget, which had long been a foundation of his foreign policy. Thus, in the fall of 1987 Reagan faced the greatest domestic opposition to his overall Soviet policy to date during his second term.

Ironically, by the fall of 1987 political developments within the Soviet Union signaled unusual opportunities for Reagan to use his rhetoric to pressure Gorbachev to liberalize and democratize the Soviet system. There were positive signs from within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as well as from the Soviet people that the types of changes Reagan desired and the types of reforms Gorbachev was implementing were widely supported.¹⁰ Significant changes appeared to be taking place in political opinions within the Soviet Communist Party. One manifestation was the "Yeltsin affair," a confrontation between Boris Yeltsin (the liberal First Secretary of the Moscow Party committee) and conservative senior Politburo members late in October 1987.¹¹ According to Sovietologist Seweryn Bialer, the "Yeltsin affair" marked "the first major domestic political crisis of Gorbachev's administration."¹² Given Reagan's desire to promote change within the Soviet system,¹³ he must have welcomed this political dissonance, especially its public nature.

The confluence of these domestic and foreign affairs presented Reagan with a difficult complex of constraints on his objectives for the Washington Summit. His support of the INF treaty was fraught with questions whose answers could impact not only public support for his larger Soviet agenda but also U.S.-Soviet relations. Had the Soviets made significant enough changes in their policies and practices for Reagan to begin to trust the USSR as a treaty partner? If so, how could Reagan maintain a confrontational rhetorical posture and continue to press the Soviets to make changes in their foreign and domestic policies on the premise that they still needed to convince the world that the USSR was worthy of international trust? Conversely, if the Soviets had not yet made changes sufficient to warrant international trust, how could Reagan justify signing a new treaty with the USSR? Had Reagan changed his views of the Soviet system? National Security Decision Directive Number 288 (Directive 288) indicates that Reagan recognized these complexities within the situation and understood the necessity of addressing these issues in his Washington Summit rhetoric. While Reagan wanted to reach further agreements with the Soviets on arms reductions, he also wanted to avoid fostering what Directive 288 described as “false illusions about the state of U.S.-Soviet relations.” Hence, that directive charged members of Reagan’s administration to take “diplomatic and public affairs actions” that would promote all aspects of Reagan’s four-part agenda and “create political pressure for the Soviets to take positive steps on our human rights, regional, and bilateral concerns.”¹⁴

In his rhetoric surrounding the Washington Summit, Reagan’s combined confrontation-conciliation strategy sought to roll back Soviet military and political

power outside the Soviet Union as well as push forward the process of liberalization and democratization within the USSR. Using the rationale of creating a safer world, Reagan cast the INF treaty not as an international agreement achieved by mutual U.S.-Soviet compromise, but rather as a Cold War victory in which the West succeeded in rolling back Soviet nuclear military and diplomatic power. By advancing this adversarial view of the U.S.-Soviet relationship, Reagan not only disputed his domestic critics' claims that the INF treaty was the result of a reversal on his part but also maintained a confrontational negotiation posture vis-à-vis Gorbachev. From this rhetorical position, Reagan publicly pressured Gorbachev to implement greater changes in Soviet foreign and domestic policies. In contrast, Reagan also made conciliatory statements that rhetorically embraced Gorbachev as a Soviet reformer and praised his reforms. These conciliatory statements, however, aimed at the same ends as Reagan's confrontational discourse: promoting greater changes in Soviet policies as proof that *glasnost* was making the Soviet system qualitatively different according to Western standards.

SHIFTING POLITICAL ATTITUDES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

The Reagan administration's support for an Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty in 1987 sparked a political controversy in the United States. In the Senate, Republicans joined conservative Democrats in expressing deep reservations about an INF treaty.¹⁵ Additionally, former President Richard Nixon, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and former National Security Council Adviser Brent Scowcroft (all considered to be pragmatic on arms control) publicly voiced their disquietude about the

possible consequences of an INF treaty.¹⁶ Furthermore, all of the Republican presidential candidates, with the exceptions of Vice President George Bush and Senator Robert Dole, opposed the treaty.¹⁷ Reagan's conservative critics had two concerns: (1) that removal of INFs from Europe would leave NATO members vulnerable to superior Soviet conventional forces;¹⁸ and (2) that removal of U.S. missiles would de-couple America from Europe, leaving NATO (in the words of North Carolina's Republican Senator Jesse Helms) an alliance "in name only."¹⁹ There were even some doubts among Reagan's own speechwriters in the fall of 1987 as to whether Reagan's rhetoric about Gorbachev and the INF treaty indicated that Reagan had "been beguiled by Gorbachev," as former Reagan speechwriter Joshua Gilder recalled. According to Gilder, "there was real concern."²⁰ Another former Reagan speechwriter, Peter Robinson, concurred with Gilder's observation. Robinson recalled his own anxiety in 1987 that Reagan had "gone soft on communism."²¹

Many leaders of conservative political organizations, shocked by Reagan's support for a new nuclear arms accord, criticized him openly and severely. For example, Howard Phillips, chairman of the Conservative Caucus, was indignant and planned to derail U.S. Senate ratification of any Reagan-Gorbachev treaty signed at the Washington Summit.²² During a December 3, 1987 televised interview with television network broadcasters, one media representative pointed out to Reagan, "The conservatives, the right wing of your party, are after your scalp." During that interview, Reagan further angered those conservatives when he described his critics as "ignorant" of the substance of the INF treaty, especially its verification procedures, and he accused them of

believing, “basically, down in their deepest thoughts . . . that war is inevitable and that there must come to be a war between the two superpowers.”²³ U.S. Senator Malcolm Wallop (R-WY) complained that Reagan’s labeling of his conservative supporters as “warmongers” was “offensive,” and U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) reportedly told Reagan in a White House meeting that he resented Reagan’s remark.²⁴ Phillips described Reagan as “a useful idiot for Soviet propaganda,” and conservative Republican political strategist and fund-raiser Richard Viguerie accused Reagan of having become an “apologist for Gorbachev.”²⁵ Some conservative critics formed the Anti-Appeasement Alliance in an effort to convince enough U.S. Senators to defeat the INF treaty.²⁶

Given this withdrawal of support by staunch conservative political advocates, Reagan had to consider how to use his diplomatic rhetoric surrounding the Washington Summit to induce support for the INF treaty and, more importantly, to induce support for his policy toward the USSR. Reagan needed to refute his critics’ claims about INF if he was to help ensure Senate ratification of the treaty. He needed to explain how INF did not reduce the strength or security of NATO members. And Reagan needed to assure anti-Communist hard-liners that he had not reversed course in his Soviet policy. However, because of political changes occurring within the Soviet Union, Reagan had to be circumspect in his rhetoric of public diplomacy in order to avoid inciting Soviet hard-liners against the INF treaty, against Gorbachev’s reforms, or, worse, against Gorbachev.

SHIFTING POLITICAL LANDSCAPES WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION

In the fourteen months between the summits in Reykjavík and Washington, the Soviet political landscape changed in remarkable ways. In addition to some high-profile dissidents who re-emerged in Soviet society after years of internal exile or imprisonment, between 150 and 200 other political prisoners were granted amnesty in February 1987. Many of the approximately 11,000 long-term *refuseniks*—Soviet citizens whose requests to emigrate had been denied—began to receive permission to leave the USSR. They did so at an average rate of about 800 per month by mid-1987. The Soviet government also allowed some citizens greater freedom for their religious practices. Diplomatic correspondent Robert Cullen notes that during 1987 “Lenin’s dictum that ‘the eradication of religion is our government task’ seemed to have been put aside, at least for awhile.” Among what can be considered the most significant changes within the USSR in 1987 was what Cullen describes as “the sudden appearance of thousands of quasi-political ‘clubs’ in Moscow, Leningrad and other cities.” These clubs, one Soviet official told Cullen in October 1987, “signaled a fundamental change in the attitude of at least some of the party’s top echelon: the club’s activities were presumed to be innocent and constructive until shown otherwise.”²⁷

There were other significant changes, many of which Reagan must have perceived as positive. In January 1987, Gorbachev introduced his concepts of secret ballot and multi-candidate (albeit still single party) elections. He also approved the release of the anti-Stalin film *Repentance*. At the same time, the Soviets stopped jamming the British Broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) Russian-language programs.²⁸

During a visit to the USSR in late March, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher appeared on Soviet television in an interview with Soviet journalists.²⁹ In April, Secretary of State George Shultz also appeared on Soviet television. Shultz's interview was aired in its entirety; however, his comments on the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (his last two sentences) were televised without translation.³⁰ In May, the Soviets ceased jamming Voice of America (VOA) Russian-language broadcasts.³¹ Reagan believed that U.S. public diplomacy must be used to speak "not just to foreign governments but to their people."³² Surely he perceived in these changes the possibilities for greater contact with the Soviet people through his own public discourse.

Political views held by members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were also changing, with the most public manifestation of internal Party dissonance being the so-called "Yeltsin affair" in October and November 1987. On October 21, 1987 a plenum of the Central Committee convened for Gorbachev to present remarks he planned to deliver on the upcoming seventieth anniversary of the October 1917 Revolution. At the conclusion of the plenary session, Boris Yeltsin unexpectedly requested permission to address the assembly. Yeltsin spoke in an unprecedented manner that was, according to Sovietologist Seweryn Bialer, "a major breach of Party etiquette and confidence not simply because of what he said but because he said it at this particular occasion." Yeltsin complained that *perestroika* was being implemented too slowly. He implied that Gorbachev and other top officials were not taking the steps necessary to overcome resistance to reform policies. Yeltsin warned that the Soviet people were losing faith in *perestroika* and accused senior Politburo member Yegor

Ligachev of obstructing reform processes. Bialer reports that Gorbachev and other members of the Central Committee, including Ligachev, KGB chief Viktor Chebrikov, and other conservative Party leaders roundly criticized Yeltsin. In early November, Gorbachev attended a meeting of the Moscow *gorkom*, the City Party Committee, where he publicly disgraced Yeltsin and led the adoption of a resolution firing Yeltsin from the office of First Secretary of the Moscow City Party Committee.³³

Secretary of State Shultz had been in Moscow and met with Gorbachev on Friday, October 23, 1987 just two days after the Central Committee incident. Shultz noticed “something distinctly different in Gorbachev during . . . [their] meeting,” something Shultz felt at the time was related to “Kremlin politics,” although he did not learn of the Yeltsin incident until October 30, 1987. In hindsight, Shultz believes what he recognized during his meeting with Gorbachev was a “new vulnerability,” the result of “Gorbachev’s leadership . . . being challenged doubly within the Communist party. Ligachev, on his right, was telling him to slow down, and Yeltsin, on his left, was telling him to speed up or he would lose the momentum of his program.”³⁴ According to journalist Robert Kaiser, “The Yeltsin affair cast the general secretary as a bully whose sincerity about *glasnost* was now suspect.”³⁵ Bialer concurs: “The events surrounding the dismissal [of Yeltsin] . . . caused wide anxiety and doubt about the leadership’s commitment to change.”³⁶ Indeed, Gorbachev later admitted that Soviet citizens, especially younger Soviets, viewed the incident “as a blow to *perestroika*.”³⁷

Reagan must have been encouraged by what was happening inside the Soviet Union. Gorbachev was apparently being pulled in one direction by the Soviet people

and in another by the Communist Party. Indeed, Gorbachev faced what he describes in his memoirs as “rising tension in society” as a result of “the people’s worries about perestroika.” And yet, as Gorbachev explains, throughout 1987 the elite and privileged bureaucratic class within the Soviet Communist Party “put up ingenious resistance” to his reform programs.³⁸ Observing this, Shultz concluded that the Reagan administration should “work with Gorbachev in order to pull him in the right direction—and as fast as possible.” As Shultz told Reagan on December 1, 1987, “The Yeltsin affair . . . revealed fault lines in the Soviet leadership” Thus, Shultz surmised that Gorbachev’s freedom to change the Soviet system in the future might become limited. To Shultz, this meant that Gorbachev was “probably prepared to go even further than he has so far to achieve a predictability in U.S.-Soviet relations which will enable him to focus on getting his own house in order.”³⁹ In Gorbachev’s *Perestroika*, published in the United States just before the Washington Summit, the general secretary acknowledges that the Soviet Union “need[ed] normal international conditions for . . . [its] internal progress.”⁴⁰ Thus, Shultz encouraged Reagan, “If sustained, the steps we are asking for as the price for that predictability could bring about real change in Moscow’s approach to the world and its own citizens.”⁴¹

Reagan apparently believed Gorbachev would respond to increased public pressure by the United States for the Soviet Union to implement greater changes in its foreign and domestic policies. Directive 288, issued November 10, 1987, one month before Gorbachev arrived in the United States, issued the following directions to members of the Reagan administration: “Prior to and at the Summit, we should create

political pressure for the Soviets to take positive steps on our human rights, regional, and bilateral concerns.” The highlight of the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting would be the historic signing of the INF treaty. Directive 288 emphasized that public diplomacy efforts be made to ensure that the public did not view the meeting exclusively as an arms control summit. Thus, summit objectives included “taking diplomatic and public affairs actions which at a minimum assure that the Summit is seen as an event addressing thoroughly our whole agenda.”⁴²

In the area of human rights, Directive 288 recognized “some progress” in the Soviet Union, but characterized it as “marked by tokenism.” Because Soviet human rights reforms had “not been institutionalized nor made irreversible,” Reagan considered them “far from adequate,” and he intended to press for “Soviet adherence to all human rights conventions signed by the U.S.S.R., and vast improvement in emigration, repatriation, and resolving divided family cases.” On the topic of regional conflicts, Reagan explained, “We should make clear that the absence of any progress on regional issues is a fundamental impediment to a general improvement of our relations.” Reagan wanted to hasten the Soviets’ withdrawal from Afghanistan. Hence, the directive instructed, “We should be firm on the need for a prompt withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, urge agreement right away to a transitional regime free from Communist domination, and repeat our willingness to facilitate their withdrawal and to guarantee a genuinely independent, non-aligned and neutral Afghanistan.”⁴³

In framing his public diplomacy in November and December 1987 Reagan faced significant challenges. Domestic conservative critics complained that his rhetoric

sounded too much like détente. On the other hand, Gorbachev and the Soviet newspaper *Izvestiya* considered Reagan's rhetoric too demanding.⁴⁴ A close analysis of Reagan's Washington Summit rhetoric, however, reveals that Reagan was both more confrontational and more conciliatory than he had been in the months surrounding the two previous summits. His confrontational rhetoric most closely resembled in content and tone the "evil empire" discourse of his first term. At the same time, Reagan's rhetoric was also so conciliatory in content and tone that many political conservatives accused him of abandoning their ideological cause.

REAGAN'S WASHINGTON SUMMIT RHETORIC: ADVANCING PEACE AND FREEDOM

During Reagan's televised address to the nation on the evening of December 10, 1987 following the conclusion of the Washington Summit, he sought to explain "not only the direction of Soviet-American relations but the larger framework of American foreign policy." According to Reagan, his four-part agenda constituted the broader framework of his Soviet policy. He claimed his pursuit of this larger agenda had changed the direction of Soviet-American relations and moved them beyond nuclear arms issues to "fundamental problems such as Soviet expansionism, [and] human rights violations, as well as . . . [the United States'] own moral opposition to the ideology that justifies such practices." Regarding nuclear weapons, Reagan argued that his policies aimed at reductions, not merely controls. As such, Reagan claimed the United States was creating "a safer peace." Reagan explained that "by pursuing SDI [the Strategic

Defense Initiative], which is a defense against offensive missiles, and by going for arms reduction rather than just arms control, we're moving away from the so-called policy of mutual assured destruction, by which nations hold each other hostage to nuclear terror and destruction."⁴⁵

Reagan also asserted that the United States was moving beyond the decades-old Cold War policy of containment. He explained in his post-summit televised address that "we are saying that the postwar policy of containment is no longer enough, that the goal of American foreign policy is both world peace and world freedom" According to Reagan, by focusing on issues which were non-arms related (regional conflicts, human rights, bilateral relations) but were fundamental to U.S.-Soviet relations, he continued to advance the U.S.'s "goal of a world open to the expansion of human freedom and the growth of democratic government." Thus, Reagan assured the nation that the objectives of his Soviet policies had not changed since he had enunciated them five-and-a-half years earlier, on June 8, 1982, to members of the British Parliament: "[W]e seek to rid the world of the two great nightmares of the postwar era: the threat of nuclear war and the threat of totalitarianism."⁴⁶

Advancing Peace: Justifications for the INF Treaty

In the weeks surrounding the Washington Summit, Reagan repeated a brief narrative which, ostensibly, explained the background of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty. He constructed his narrative around three events. The first was Soviet deployments of INF's in Eastern Europe that began in 1977. For example, just

over a month before the summit, on November 4, 1987 in an address to the people of Western Europe, Reagan said:

We've done what was necessary to keep our countries free and to preserve the peace. That certainly was true of the alliance's response to the vast expansion of Soviet military power in the late 1970's, especially their introduction of the new SS-20 intermediate-range missiles. It was in 1977 when the Soviet Union deployed its first SS-20's. This triple-warhead weapon could hit anywhere in Western Europe and much of Asia. Though NATO had no comparable missile to counter this new threat, by August of 1982 the number of Soviet INF missiles had climbed to over 300, with more than 900 warheads.⁴⁷

The second event Reagan typically included in his narrative was NATO's decision in 1979 to pursue a "two-track" response to the Soviets' nuclear deployments. This "dual track" response involved: (1) deployment of U.S. Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles to counter the Soviet SS-20's and SS-4's and (2) negotiations aimed at persuading the Soviets to withdraw their missiles.⁴⁸ The third main event Reagan included in the narrative was his 1981 proposal of the "zero option" that advocated both the United States and the Soviet Union should have "zero" intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe and Asia.⁴⁹ Reagan repeatedly claimed that the 1987 INF treaty was the result of his initial 1981 proposal.⁵⁰

Reagan's rhetorical construction of this narrative refuted his critics in four ways. First, the narrative explained that the INF treaty was the result of consistency, not a reversal, on Reagan's part. Second, Reagan's narrative posited that the INF treaty reflected continuity, not divergence, between U.S. and NATO security interests and policies. Third, Reagan's narrative reconstruction of events that culminated in the INF treaty cast the arms accord as a significant Cold War victory for the Western

democracies. Fourth, Reagan's narrative rhetorically linked the international behavior of the Soviet Union in 1987 with its previous behavior during the 1970s.

Reagan's narrative emphasized the continuity of his position on intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe and Asia, countering the claim that the INF treaty was the result of a reversal on his part. For example, speaking to a group of area high school seniors in Jacksonville, Florida on December 1, 1987 Reagan pointed out that in 1981 he had proposed "zero on both sides." Soviet representatives had suspended formal nuclear weapons negotiations with the United States in December 1983. Reagan asserted, however, that when the Soviets resumed formal talks, the negotiations focused on his original zero option proposal.⁵¹ On November 18, 1981 Reagan had spoken to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. and announced what came to be known as his "zero option": "The United States is prepared to cancel its deployment of Pershing II and ground-launch cruise missiles if the Soviets will dismantle their SS-20, SS-4, and SS-5 missiles."⁵² At the time, Reagan's proposal was met with acclaim by many members of the U.S. Congress.⁵³ While Reagan maintained his personal interest in an INF-free Europe and Asia throughout the ensuing six years, the U.S.'s formal negotiating position shifted over time.⁵⁴ Four months after the Reykjavík Summit, in late February 1987, Gorbachev proposed separating negotiations on a possible INF treaty from negotiations on SDI.⁵⁵ Between February and December in 1987 negotiations intensified, and on November 24, 1987 Reagan announced "that all of the remaining issues on reaching an INF agreement have been resolved."⁵⁶ In Reagan's televised address to the nation following the conclusion of the Washington Summit he reminded his audience that he

had “put forward” the zero option “in 1981,” and he claimed, “The result is our INF treaty.”⁵⁷ Reagan biographer Lou Cannon notes that in accusing Reagan of a reversal, his conservative critics ignored “the fact that Reagan had favored a ‘zero option’ INF treaty since 1981.”⁵⁸

Reagan’s narrative history of the INF treaty not only argued for the consistency of his position but also posited the INF treaty as the result of cohesiveness between the U.S.’s and NATO’s security policies. Reagan, thus, used his narrative to counter the criticism that the INF treaty marked a divergence in the security interests of the United States and Western Europe. According to Reagan, his “zero option” proposal was the outgrowth of a decision made by leaders of NATO. “In December of 1979,” Reagan reminded his American and West European audiences on November 4, 1987, “Western leaders made the decision to move forward on a two-track approach.” Both “tracks,” according to Reagan, were aimed at the same goal: removing the threat to Europe posed by Soviet INF’s. “What the alliance sought,” Reagan recalled, “were fewer missiles, not more.” Reagan explained that deployments of American missiles were designed not only to promote U.S.-Soviet negotiations but also to enhance the West’s position in those talks. Thus, Reagan claimed, as part of the U.S.’s negotiation efforts, and “in full consultation with allied leaders,” he “put forward in 1981” the “zero option” proposal.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Reagan asserted that both the deployments of U.S. missiles and America’s position in negotiations with the USSR had remained consistent with the desires of NATO leaders:

This was not only an American effort but truly a Western effort. NATO had said from the first that we should be prepared to halt, modify, or

reverse NATO deployments if the Soviets would eliminate the SS-20 threat. At all NATO ministerial meetings since 1980, foreign and defense ministers have endorsed American efforts toward reaching a treaty, including our putting forward the zero option proposal. And at a number of points during this process, our allies have asked that we alter or reshape our negotiating stance. And we did so. Our allies have been with us throughout, and we've been with them.”⁶⁰

Thus, Reagan argued in remarks to the Board of Trustees of the Center for Strategic and International Studies four days after the Washington Summit, “No one thought before that first deployment that NATO had been ‘denuclearized.’ No one then believed that the United States and Western Europe had been in any way been [sic] ‘decoupled.’ Neither, then, can these charges be leveled against this treaty.”⁶¹

Reagan’s characterization of the events that culminated in the INF treaty also implied that the international accord was a significant Cold War victory for the West. He repeatedly began his chronological narrative of events with references to Soviet deployments of their SS-20 triple-warhead missile.⁶² In doing so, Reagan suggested that the actions taken by the West after Soviet nuclear deployments in Eastern Europe were taken because of the threatening nature of Soviet actions. In this way, Reagan implicitly blamed the USSR for the overall build-up of superpower INF’s in Europe and the concomitant increased risk of nuclear war. Additionally, on November 4, 1987 Reagan provided his interpretation of the meaning of previous Soviet deployments: “What we were witnessing was an attempt to tip the military balance of power in Europe and erode the security bond between Europe and the United States.”⁶³ Hence, Reagan portrayed the INF treaty as a significant victory for NATO, the rolling back of Soviet nuclear military power.

Additionally, Reagan's characterization of the Soviet deployments as an effort to "erode the security bond between Europe and the United States" implied that the INF treaty represented a second significant victory for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization: thwarting Soviet efforts to fracture NATO's solidarity. From Reagan's rhetorical perspective, the new arms reduction treaty was "a resounding vindication of the unity, strength, and determination of the alliance."⁶⁴ According to Reagan, the turning point in U.S.-Soviet INF negotiations occurred not when Gorbachev implemented "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy,⁶⁵ but rather when the Soviets realized the futility of their old thinking. Reagan claimed, "When at long last it was realized that we in the alliance had the courage to protect our own longrun interests, progress toward a mutually beneficial treaty ensued."⁶⁶ Four days after the conclusion of the Washington Summit, Reagan reiterated that there was "no doubt" that "the Soviets intended to test NATO's resolve" with its 1977 deployments of SS-20 missiles. According to Reagan, "It was when we showed strength, when it became clear that we would not be intimidated—only after this had taken place did the Soviets finally begin to negotiate in earnest."⁶⁷ As presented in Reagan's rhetoric, the INF treaty represented progress toward a "safer peace" not only because the United States and the USSR were eliminating portions of their nuclear stockpiles but also because NATO had remained unified and achieved its strategic objectives while the Soviet Union had failed.

Finally, Reagan's narrative of events leading to the INF agreement strategically contrasted the Soviet Union's pacifistic behavior toward the West in late 1987 with what Reagan viewed as the USSR's previous antagonism of the West late in the 1970s.

Reagan compared the Soviet Union's participation in the INF treaty with what he considered its previous militarily expansionistic behavior in the deployments of its INF missiles. The Soviets also undertook a different kind of major military action late in 1979, one which the Western democracies, as well as the United Nations, continued to condemn in the fall of 1987.⁶⁸ The Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, and its occupation of that country continued at the time of the Washington Summit. Thus, by referring to a "vast expansion of Soviet military power in the late 1970's," and by characterizing Soviet deployments of INF's as only a special part of that "vast expansion,"⁶⁹ Reagan implied that there was at least one other part of the Soviet Union's military expansionism during the late 1970s. This implication functioned to remind Reagan's audience of the Soviets' invasion of Afghanistan, and his contrast of the Soviet Union's actions in 1987 with its international behavior 1977-1980 gave him the opportunity to imply a controversial argument. Reagan's implicit argument is that because the original deployments of SS-20's were part of a vast expansion of Soviet military power in the late 1970s, of which another significant part was the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan, the world should not view Gorbachev's signature on the INF treaty as an indication that the Soviet Union has renounced its expansionistic foreign policy as long as the Soviets continue to occupy Afghanistan. Reagan reinforced this implicit argument, as will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, with explicit statements on the subject of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan.

Reagan's INF treaty narrative also supported three of his larger public diplomacy objectives. First, Reagan used his narrative to dispute claims made by his domestic

conservative critics as well as to justify public support for his Soviet policies, including the INF treaty. Based on Reagan's narrative, those who opposed the Senate's ratification of the new treaty not only obstructed the achievement of NATO's security-enhancing goal (the removal of the Soviet INF threat which the West had pursued over the previous eight years) but also undermined a significant Cold War victory by the West. Although, to be sure, there were other significant factors involved, this characterization by Reagan of critics of the INF treaty gave conservative members of the Senate a rationale for ratifying the treaty, which passed by a vote of 93-5 on May 27, 1988.⁷⁰

Second, by portraying the INF treaty as a Cold War victory for the West and a defeat for the East, Reagan publicly maintained his confrontational diplomatic posture as well as an adversarial view of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. He also reinforced this rhetorical posture and his ideological views with other public remarks made during the weeks preceding the Washington Summit. For example, approximately two weeks prior to the summit Reagan claimed that he had not developed "any illusions about the Soviet system."⁷¹ He repeatedly identified the United States and the Soviet Union as "adversaries."⁷² In his Saturday radio address on November 28, 1987 Reagan cautioned the nation, "Make no mistake, the Soviets are and will continue to be our adversaries, the adversaries, indeed, of all who believe in human liberty."⁷³ During Reagan's interview on December 3, 1987 with television network broadcasters, he was asked: "What assurances can you give—how can you convince Americans that you have the command of the kind of complex information that's necessary here?—not to have this young,

energetic, intelligent, tough Marxist-Leninist eat you and us up?” In response, Reagan declared, “I haven’t changed from the time when I made a speech about an evil empire.”⁷⁴ For Reagan, his continuing view of the Soviet Union as an “evil empire,” and his opposition to the nature and practices of the USSR, served as a safeguard against him making too many concessions to Gorbachev, but it did not prevent him from meeting and negotiating with Gorbachev. This was consistent with (not a reversal of) Reagan’s rhetoric four-and-a-half years earlier in what became known as his “Evil Empire” speech on March 8, 1983 at the meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals. Reagan had been emphatic about his view of the USSR as “the focus of evil in the modern world.” Although he wanted Americans to view “totalitarian powers for what they are,” Reagan nevertheless had argued, “This doesn’t mean we should isolate ourselves and refuse to seek an understanding with them.”⁷⁵

Third, by discussing the Soviets’ pacifistic international behavior in 1987 in view of what Reagan characterized as their previous aggressive behavior, he elicited public doubts about Soviet policies. Speaking to a group of high school students on December 1, 1987 Reagan complained, “More than a decade ago, there was a warming in U.S.-Soviet affairs that we called détente. But while talking friendship, the Soviets worked even faster on the largest military buildup in world history. They stepped up their aggression around the world. They became more repressive at home.”⁷⁶ As Reagan had in his previous summit diplomacy rhetoric, he directed public attention to the Soviets’ “poor record of compliance with past arms control agreements,”⁷⁷ including the USSR’s ongoing pursuit “of its own antiballistic missile defense.”⁷⁸ In Gorbachev’s interview

with Tom Brokaw, televised on November 30, 1987 Gorbachev asserted, “Practically, the Soviet Union is doing all that the United States is doing” in terms of research for a strategic defense program.⁷⁹ Reagan used Gorbachev’s admission to educe doubts about Soviet motives and further justify criticism of what he considered Soviet deception and a double standard on the issue of strategic missile defense.⁸⁰

Thus, Reagan assured the public during the weeks surrounding the Washington Summit that his support for the INF treaty was not based on trusting the Soviets,⁸¹ but on “a verifiable trust.”⁸² He continually touted the verification provisions in the INF treaty, describing them, for example, as “the most stringent verification regime in the history of arms control negotiations”⁸³ and unprecedented in scope.⁸⁴ Arguing in favor of a new treaty with a nation whose ruling elite Reagan did not trust appears illogical. Yet, Reagan borrowed from Russian culture to justify his position. On numerous occasions before, during, and after the summit, Reagan publicly recited the Russian maxim, “*Dovorey no provorey*,” which, when translated, means “trust, but verify.”⁸⁵

In contrast to this confrontational posture, however, Reagan was also publicly conciliatory toward Gorbachev, more so than he had been in the previous two-and-one-half years. Eight days before Gorbachev arrived in the United States, Reagan expressed his confidence that Gorbachev was a different kind of Soviet general secretary, “quite different” from previous Soviet leaders. He noted that Gorbachev had “never reiterated before the great national Communist congress that the Soviets are pledged to a world expansion—a one-world Communist state. That has been the stated goal of previous leaders. He has said no such thing.”⁸⁶ On December 3, 1987 in a nationally-televised

interview with television network broadcasters, Reagan praised Gorbachev for being “the first . . . Soviet leader . . . that has ever expressed a willingness to eliminate weapons they already have.” Additionally, Reagan praised Gorbachev for being “willing to say that he’s prepared to live with other philosophies in other countries.” In that same interview, Reagan criticized some of his fellow ideological hard-liners not only for their rejection of the INF treaty but also for what Reagan characterized as their view of the inevitability of war between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁸⁷

By arguing that the INF treaty did not represent any change in Reagan’s views of the Soviet system or of the nature of the U.S.-Soviet relationship, he maintained a rhetorical position from which to continue to press Gorbachev to change the USSR’s policies and practices related to regional conflicts and human rights. From Reagan’s rhetorical perspective, the USSR would have to implement changes in these areas in order to prove itself worthy of international trust and improve relations with the Western democracies. In calling for these changes, Reagan continued to adopt a combined rhetorical approach of confrontation-conciliation. In fact, in significant ways he was both more confrontational and more conciliatory than he had been in his rhetoric surrounding the two previous U.S.-Soviet summits.

Advancing Freedom: Increasing the Rhetorical Pressure for Soviet Changes in Regional Conflicts and Human Rights

Although Reagan was pleased with the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty and wanted to make progress with the Soviets toward greater arms reductions

during the Washington Summit,⁸⁸ just prior to the summit he assured a group of human rights supporters that “[t]he goal of this visit and any subsequent visits is not simply arms reduction. Certainly, that’s one priority, yet it remains on a par with solving certain bilateral issues: ending regional conflicts and of course improving human rights.”⁸⁹ Reagan wanted Gorbachev to pull the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan, militarily and politically, and to liberalize and democratize the Soviet system. Hence, Reagan asserted in his address to the nation on December 10, 1987 that his policies went beyond the goal of containing Soviet military and political power. He sought to advance world freedom and create “a world where the people of every land can decide for themselves their form of government and way of life.” Reagan reminded the nation, “Since my first days in office, I have argued that the future belongs not to repressive or totalitarian ways of life but to the cause of freedom.” Reagan acknowledged that at Reykjavik in 1986 Gorbachev complained “that this sort of talk is sometimes viewed in the Soviet Union as a threat.”⁹⁰ Yet, Reagan did not avoid such confrontational rhetoric. Instead, in his Washington Summit rhetoric, Reagan combined such confrontational discourse with conciliatory rhetoric that embraced Gorbachev as a Soviet leader. Close analysis of Reagan’s rhetoric reveals that he embraced Gorbachev as a reformer of the Soviet system, not as a Soviet Communist. Thus, even Reagan’s positive rhetorical embrace of Gorbachev functioned to support Reagan’s rhetorical subversion of the legitimacy and viability of the Soviet system.

The Rhetoric of Military Rollback

If in late 1987 Gorbachev was willing to take greater steps than he had thus far in order to stabilize U.S.-Soviet relations,⁹¹ then it was rhetorically strategic for Reagan to reinforce one of his requirements for such a normalization of relations. Specifically, Reagan called for the immediate, rapid, and complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and non-interference by the Soviets as the people of Afghanistan exercised self-determination. In an effort to exert pressure on Gorbachev toward these ends, Reagan continually focused his rhetoric on Afghanistan and characterized the situation there as evidence that the Soviet government was continuing its aggressive expansionism, even in the face of military and political failure. Additionally, Reagan's characterization of the situation in Afghanistan cast the Soviet government and its military as (1) indifferent to human suffering, (2) resistant to human aspirations for freedom and independence, and (3) intransigent on the creation of regional and, thus, world peace. Reagan's diplomatic rhetoric sought to encourage increased discontent among Soviets (many of whom, by mid-1987, apparently felt negatively about the war in Afghanistan⁹²), and, thus, to force the Soviet government to face both external and internal pressure to discontinue its war in Afghanistan.

Reagan described the conflict in Afghanistan as a futile military adventure from which the USSR stubbornly refused to withdraw, regardless of the cost. In his address to Western Europe in early November 1987 Reagan characterized the situation in Afghanistan as "a dreadful quagmire" and a "no-win situation" for the Soviets.⁹³ The fighting had dragged on almost eight years and Reagan argued that the Soviets' failure to

defeat the Mujahidin had become an economic burden and a military embarrassment.

On November 30, 1987 Reagan noted, “It’s estimated that the Soviet war in Afghanistan costs them between \$5 billion and \$6 billion a year.” What was worse for the Soviets, Reagan asserted, “In the past 15 months, they [the Mujahidin] have inflicted a string of serious defeats on Soviet elite combat units as well as the puppet Afghan army.”⁹⁴

Speaking in a televised interview on December 3, 1987 Reagan surmised that the failure of the Soviet military—“that great military power”—to “overpower the freedom fighters” in Afghanistan had to “be quite an embarrassment” for Gorbachev.⁹⁵

According to Reagan, the Soviet-backed government in Kabul, Afghanistan was no less an embarrassment. He described this government as ineffective⁹⁶ and inept.⁹⁷ In his remarks at Gorbachev’s departure ceremony following the Washington Summit, Reagan blamed Soviet involvement in regional conflicts for “a heavy toll in lives.”⁹⁸ Reagan cast the Soviet government as unwilling to end the fighting and human suffering even in the face of military and political failure in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Reagan represented the continued Soviet presence in Afghanistan as evidence that the Soviet government refused to cease its exportation of tyranny, despite the fact that such actions continued to be rejected by the Afghan people and had repeatedly been denounced by the United Nations. Reagan repeatedly used such phrases as “the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan,”⁹⁹ “invasion and occupation” and “aggression,”¹⁰⁰ “Communist oppression,”¹⁰¹ “Soviet expansionism,”¹⁰² and “the continuing occupation”¹⁰³ to characterize Soviet actions in Afghanistan. Additionally, he repeatedly used such phrases as “their struggle for independence,”¹⁰⁴ “the just

struggle against foreign tyranny,”¹⁰⁵ and “the freedom fighters”¹⁰⁶ to characterize the Afghan people who resisted the Soviets. On November 12, less than a month before the summit, Reagan argued that the Afghan resistance was sending “a message loud and clear to the Red Army: Ivan Go Home!” Reagan also claimed that “[i]nternational support for the brave Afghan freedom fighters is more solid than ever,” and as proof he pointed to the United Nations General Assembly which two days earlier “with a record vote, called overwhelmingly for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan.”¹⁰⁷ This was the eighth consecutive year, Reagan noted, that the United Nations had called for foreign troops to withdraw from Afghanistan.¹⁰⁸ This characterization of the situation not only reinforced the view that the Soviets were indifferent to human suffering but also portrayed the Soviets as oppressing human freedom.

Reagan accused the Soviet government of being intransigent on peace in Afghanistan and demanded that the Soviets withdraw from Afghanistan rapidly and completely. In his remarks following a meeting with Afghan resistance leaders on November 12, Reagan criticized the Soviets for ignoring calls for withdrawal: “Unfortunately, the Soviet answer on a date for rapid withdrawal has been silence.”¹⁰⁹ Eighteen days later, speaking at a luncheon hosted by the Heritage Foundation, Reagan complained, “The Soviets have talked of setting a timetable for withdrawal from Afghanistan, but that timetable is too long and too conditional.” He demanded: “It’s time for them to pack up, pull out, and go home. It’s time they set a date certain for the complete withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Afghanistan.”¹¹⁰ In the days leading up to

Gorbachev's arrival in the United States, Reagan continued to call for the Soviets to "set a date certain for their withdrawal."¹¹¹ Following the summit, he continued to reiterate that resolutions of "regional conflicts on terms that promote peace and freedom" were "essential to a lasting improvement" in U.S.-Soviet relations.¹¹²

Reagan vowed to increase support to the Afghan Mujahidin and to continue such support even after a possible Soviet troop withdrawal in order to ensure that the people of Afghanistan could select their own government. On November 12, 1987 Reagan made a very public show of support for the Afghan resistance when he met in the White House with Chairman Yunis Khalis of the Islamic Union of Mujahidin of Afghanistan and others in Khalis's delegation. Following the meeting, Reagan said, "The support that the United States has been providing the resistance will be strengthened, rather than diminished, so that it can continue to fight effectively for freedom."¹¹³ Later in November 1987 Reagan reiterated that until "the Soviet Union shows convincingly that it is prepared to withdraw promptly," the United States would ensure that "the struggle against tyranny will continue."¹¹⁴ Reagan cautioned the Soviets against thinking they could pull out of Afghanistan militarily while maintaining power there politically, leaving "a government similar to the Eastern-bloc nations in Afghanistan, not necessarily a government that was chosen by the people of Afghanistan."¹¹⁵ He warned that until all Soviet troops exited Afghanistan and the Soviets allowed the people of Afghanistan to "choose the type of government they wish,"¹¹⁶ the United States would continue to provide "support, both political and material," to those who were resisting the Soviets.¹¹⁷

To the extent that there was a growing number of Soviet citizens who disapproved of the war in Afghanistan, Reagan's characterizations functioned to reinforce a sense of the futility of the war and the imperative need for a Soviet withdrawal. In November 1987, journalist William J. Eaton reported that the Soviet press had increased its reporting of "the savagery of the fighting and its brutalizing effects on young men, as well as the skill and weaponry of the mujahidin and the callous indifference Soviet officials and the public often show toward the war's veterans." Eaton cited "Soviet sources" as referring to "an official but unpublished opinion survey taken in June [1987] among about 1,000 Moscow residents" that revealed "that negative attitudes toward the war are fairly strong."¹¹⁸ If Reagan could symbolically induce greater discontent from Soviet citizens, he might also induce more vocal criticism of Soviet policy within the Soviet Union.

Although Reagan's rhetoric surrounding the Washington Summit was confrontational more often than it was conciliatory, his conciliatory statements were significant enough to his conservative critics that they accused him of excusing the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.¹¹⁹ Such accusations were probably based on statements like the ones Reagan made in his address to the people of Western Europe in which he claimed that a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan "would not be viewed as a retreat but as a courageous and positive step."¹²⁰ Additionally, when Reagan was asked about Afghanistan during a televised interview one week before the Washington Summit, he seemed to provide an excuse for Gorbachev's delay of troop withdrawals, implying that Gorbachev may not have fully understood the reasons

previous Soviet leaders originally invaded Afghanistan.¹²¹ Furthermore, Reagan offered assurances that once the Soviets withdrew, the United States would keep its commitment to the establishment of “a genuinely independent, non-aligned, neutral Afghanistan free from external interference”—even interference by the United States.¹²²

With such conciliatory rhetoric, Reagan presented Gorbachev with a rationale that Gorbachev might use with his domestic audiences to justify a rapid withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Writing during the early years of the Cold War, rhetorical scholar Robert T. Oliver noted that diplomats often use language “that will give one’s side what it wants while clothing the grant in language which the other side can represent to its home audience as a virtual victory.”¹²³ As political scientist William C. Wohlforth notes, “For decades, Sovietologists skeptical of American policy in the Cold War had argued that hard-line policies only helped Soviet conservatives.”¹²⁴ If those scholars were correct in their criticism of the hard-line rhetoric used by U.S. presidents, Reagan’s conciliatory discourse may have functioned to encourage liberal, reform-minded Soviet Communists (i.e., Yeltsin and others like him) to openly support Gorbachev in withdrawing from Afghanistan. If Gorbachev chose to withdraw Soviet troops, he could argue that the withdrawal was not a retreat and would not be seen by other nations as a retreat but as a courageous step that placed the USSR in the forefront of efforts toward stabilizing the international situation and establishing world peace. Indeed, former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Jack Matlock Jr., relying on Anatoly Chernyaev’s notes from a Politburo meeting, reports that Gorbachev had argued to leaders of the Communist Party on May 8, 1987 that the West feared the Soviet Union

because of the USSR's previous invasions of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan. According to Chernyaev's notes, Gorbachev asserted, "We should strengthen our policy for the humanization of international relations with our actions. We should let them [i.e., the West] know that we are not just sitting or lying on our military [Brezhnev] doctrine, but that we are trying to find a way to make the world more stable."¹²⁵

The Rhetoric of Human Rights Reform

Gorbachev claimed that in its new political atmosphere the Soviet Union was experiencing "deep-going changes" and planned to "move forward the process of democratization and glasnost." As Gorbachev told news anchor Tom Brokaw in an NBC interview televised just over a week before Gorbachev arrived in Washington, D.C., these changes encompassed the Soviet "economy, politics, the sphere of democracy, the spiritual sphere, [and] the social sphere."¹²⁶ Reagan, however, publicly adopted a skeptical attitude toward *glasnost* as Gorbachev described it. Although Reagan praised the changes taking place within the Soviet Union, he rhetorically situated them within a larger framework of Soviet history, and he used this framework as the basis for temporizing about the ultimate meaning of Gorbachev's reforms. Rather than accept Gorbachev's standards for what constituted "deep-going changes" within the USSR, Reagan promoted Western standards and applied them to Soviet human rights practices. By framing positive descriptions of *glasnost* within the larger context of the USSR's human rights record, Reagan rhetorically attempted to burden Gorbachev with

the requirement of implementing and institutionalizing radical reforms that could convince the world that Soviet human rights practices were becoming something qualitatively and permanently different. Reagan delineated the changes he wanted Gorbachev to implement and argued that anything less would fail the West's standards for openness, democratization, and liberalization. By requiring of Gorbachev greater changes than he had already implemented, Reagan challenged the immediate legitimacy Gorbachev sought for *glasnost*, especially as a Soviet image-altering concept. Reagan simultaneously employed conciliatory appeals, praising Gorbachev and his reforms and emphasizing the potential for improved United States-Soviet relations as a consequence of continued Soviet human rights reforms.

Reagan's rhetoric did not support Gorbachev's quest to invigorate the Soviet economy or to legitimize the Soviet Communist Party's rule. On the contrary, Reagan's human rights rhetoric surrounding the Washington Summit revealed his attempts to press Gorbachev to implement reforms that might politically weaken the legitimacy and, thus, the authority, of the Communist Party by allowing greater freedom for the Soviet people to challenge the Party and even reject it. Thus, contrary to rhetorical scholar Cori Dauber's assertion, Reagan's rhetorical strategy in late 1987 did not risk "the loss of a unique opportunity to support liberalization."¹²⁷ In fact, Reagan's rhetoric sought to exploit as much as possible the potential for liberalization under Gorbachev's leadership.

Reagan argued that previous and ongoing Soviet human rights violations required not only that Gorbachev implement greater changes but also that the international community temporize in reaching an ultimate conclusion as to what

Gorbachev's reforms meant about the fundamental nature of the Soviet system.

Speaking to Western Europeans during the first week of November 1987 Reagan said:

Much has been heard as of late about reforms being instituted within the Soviet Union. *Glasnost*, we are told, is ushering in a new era. Well, who cannot but hope these reports are true, that the optimism is justified? Good sense, however, dictates that we look for tangible changes in behavior—for action, not words—in deciding what is real or what is illusionary.¹²⁸

Later in November, Reagan speculated about whether or not *glasnost* might be “merely an effort to make the [Soviet] economy more productive.” He based his present skepticism, in part, on the past: “Those of us who have lived through the last 70 years remember earlier moments of promise in Soviet history—temporary thaws soon frozen over by the cold winds of oppression.”¹²⁹

For Reagan, the most significant proof of the nature of *glasnost* would be found in Soviet human rights reforms. He rhetorically placed the onus on Gorbachev to implement greater reforms in order to convince the world that the present period of *glasnost* was different from other temporary periods of liberalization in Soviet history. Reagan told his European audience that in judging *glasnost*, the West should “closely watch the condition of human rights within the Soviet Union,” because, “It is difficult to imagine that a government that continues to repress freedom in its own country, breaking faith with its own people, can be trusted to keep agreements with others.” Reagan called for specific changes in Soviet practices: “A recognition of freedom of speech, religion, and press; a release of all prisoners of conscience; an ending of the practice of sending perfectly sane political dissidents to psychiatric hospitals; tolerance of real opposition; and freedom of political choice—these things . . . would signal that a

true turning point has been reached.”¹³⁰ Reagan remarked during a Heritage Foundation luncheon in late November 1987, “Few moves on the part of the Soviet Government could do more to convince the world of its sincerity for reform than the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.” Reagan added, “One of the truest measures of *glasnost* will be the degree of religious freedom the Soviet rulers allow their people.”¹³¹

Following Reagan’s meeting with human rights advocates on December 3, 1987, he declared, “We see the violation of anyone’s human rights, acts of repression or brutality, as attacks on civilization itself.” He decried that dissidents were “inhumanely committed to mental institutions, often subdued with mind-altering drugs,” that “Soviet Jews, Armenians, Germans, and others who have applied to emigrate . . . have endured incredible hardships as a result,” and that “divided families and spouses” had been “cruelly separated from their loved ones.”¹³² These descriptions of Soviet human rights violations demonstrate that Reagan’s criticisms of Soviet human rights practices had become much more specific and they clashed all the more with Gorbachev’s declarations of a new openness within the USSR. Thus, two days after the summit, Reagan publicly reiterated that “nothing would convince us of the sincerity of *glasnost* so much as seeing progress in emigration, release of political prisoners, and allowing his [Gorbachev’s] people their most basic right to worship their Maker in peace, free of fear.”¹³³

Reagan not only pressed Gorbachev to end specific Soviet human rights violations but also, more fundamentally, to reform the laws and institutions of the Soviet system. Reagan claimed that the Soviets’ primary problem was systemic. For example, he argued, “Denial of the right to emigrate is only a part of the problem of the repressive

Soviet system.”¹³⁴ Although Reagan complained that “all prisoners of faith have not been released,” for him the most important issue was whether “the instruments of repression are dismantled and repressive laws and practices are abolished.” Reagan warned that the reform of certain Soviet practices could not conceal what he viewed as the more intrinsic problem, “the fact that the apparatus of the state repression remains intact in the Soviet Union.”¹³⁵ In these statements, prior to the Washington Summit, Reagan declared that unless Gorbachev’s reforms reached to the foundations of the Soviet system, they could not merit complete Western approval.

Immediately after the Washington Summit, Reagan declared that the United States should observe “December 10, 1987, as Human Rights Day and December 15, 1987, as Bill of Rights Day” and “call[ed] upon all Americans to observe the week beginning December 10, 1987, as Human Rights Week.”¹³⁶ Although Reagan did not specifically mention the USSR in the proclamation, his description of the practices of “governments in many lands” provided a clear indication that the USSR was one of his primary targets of criticism. Reagan asserted in the proclamation that the “absence of structural safeguards against the abuse of power means that freedoms may be taken away as easily as they are allowed.” Moreover, Reagan denounced states that lacked such safeguards as “the greatest threat to liberty, not only because under them people are denied the exercise of the most fundamental freedoms, but because they pose external as well as internal dangers.” Reagan warned that “[u]nlimited power, exercised in the name of universalist ideologies” was a threat to “human rights and self-determination.”¹³⁷ Apparently, TASS, the official Soviet news agency, perceived

Reagan's condemnation as directed at the Soviet Union, because it responded with harsh criticism of Reagan.¹³⁸ Reagan's proclamation supported the United Nations' more widely recognized annual Human Rights Day, December 10, 1987. Thus, Reagan continued his emphasis on the need for radical human rights reforms in the Soviet system beyond the formal summit meetings in Washington, D.C.

In contrast to his confrontational criticisms, Reagan praised the changes taking place in the Soviet Union and speculated about the possibilities for improved U.S.-Soviet relations if greater positive changes in Soviet human rights practices continued. Reagan described the Soviets' release in 1987 of "some people, including a few very prominent individuals" as "better than the record of recent Soviet years."¹³⁹ In his Saturday radio address on November 28, 1987, Reagan acknowledged "a certain amount of progress" in Soviet human rights practices.¹⁴⁰ Reagan praised the effect *glasnost* had on the Soviet people, inspiring some to speak out about human, national, and religious rights.¹⁴¹ On December 1, 1987, Reagan noted that Soviet leaders "appear to have eased censorship somewhat in the arts and media"¹⁴² and two days later referred to "a loosening of the grip" and "a relaxing of some of the controls on freedom of expression."¹⁴³ Additionally, Reagan commended the "modest progress" Soviet officials made by their new-found willingness to discuss the issue of human rights. In remarks made following Reagan's meeting with a group of human rights supporters, he said:

Soviet officials not that long ago refused to discuss human rights, claiming it was their internal affair. General Secretary Gorbachev even told a French newsman shortly after the Geneva summit that there were no political prisoners in the Soviet Union. Well, today our discussions on this issue are wide-ranging, and human rights is accepted as an integral component of our bilateral discussions.¹⁴⁴

Reagan also praised the Soviet leadership for allowing “demonstrations in the Baltic nations” earlier in 1987. He said, “The fact that these protests were permitted at all was heartening.”¹⁴⁵

Finally, Reagan discussed in conciliatory terms the increased likelihood of improved U.S.-Soviet relations if Gorbachev granted greater freedom to his people. In his address to the people of Western Europe, Reagan said, “The further the Soviet leadership opens their system and frees their people, the more likely it will be that tensions between East and West will lessen.”¹⁴⁶ In written responses to questions submitted by *Izvestiya*, Reagan acknowledged “the efforts at reform” inside the USSR. He wished “the people of the Soviet Union well in all efforts to improve the quality of their lives and to liberalize the Soviet system.” He assured Soviet leaders that the liberalization of their system “could contribute to an improved international climate and a relaxation of tensions.”¹⁴⁷ In this way, Reagan signaled to liberal, reform-minded Soviets who desired such a change in the international climate that the means to such an end was support for liberalizing reforms. This supported Reagan’s embrace of Gorbachev as a Soviet reformer and his embrace of those aspects of Gorbachev’s policies that aimed at liberalizing and democratizing the Soviet system.

Reagan’s conciliatory rhetoric may have helped Gorbachev defend his reform policies and his trip to Washington. Matlock notes that Gorbachev defended himself to hard-line Soviet officials “by saying that his policy of ‘new thinking’ had the anti-Soviet forces in the West on the run.”¹⁴⁸ According to the *Financial Times* of London, following the Washington Summit Gorbachev told Warsaw Pact leaders that

“‘democratisation and greater openness’ of the alliance members had changed the face of socialism and overcome propaganda clichés in the West.”¹⁴⁹

While seemingly embracing Gorbachev’s concept of *glasnost*, Reagan actually redefined it. He embraced the concept of “openness” as well as the changes Gorbachev had implemented, but he re-framed those reforms within a broader context, namely, the larger Soviet history of repression and abuse of human rights. And yet, Reagan indicated that in terms of improving international relations, Gorbachev’s *glasnost* was the direction in which the United States desired the Soviet Union to move. Thus, Reagan temporized about what *glasnost* might mean in terms of more fundamental changes in the nature of the Soviet system. He offered a more Westernized conception of *glasnost* which described it not as revealing how much the Soviet Union had opened up but how much more it still needed to be opened. Reagan spoke of *glasnost* as “a promise as yet unfulfilled” and as “this first breath of openness.”¹⁵⁰ In terms of *glasnost*’s effect on the freedom of Soviets’ to emigrate, Reagan said, “The free people of the West are watching to see if the emigration doors, now cracked, will continue to open.” Because “all prisoners of faith [had] not been released,” Reagan argued that *glasnost* had not yet produced religious liberty—“religious freedom is still an aspiration yet to be achieved.”¹⁵¹ Hence, following the conclusion of the Washington Summit, Reagan reiterated the U.S.’s “insistence that [Gorbachev’s] policy of *glasnost* become more than a slogan.”¹⁵²

CONCLUSION

Reagan's rhetoric in late 1987 resembled even more closely the content and tone of his first-term anti-Communist rhetoric than did his discourse during the months surrounding the two previous U.S.-Soviet summits in Geneva and Reykjavik. Reagan's Washington Summit rhetoric emphasized the adversarial nature of the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. He characterized the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty in zero-sum terms: what was a significant victory for the West—the rolling back of Soviet nuclear military power—was a loss for the East. Using confrontational language, Reagan claimed his policies promoted changes in the Soviet system which might help rid the world of its totalitarianism.

One can argue that Reagan's confrontational rhetoric surrounding the Washington Summit was merely an attempt to shore up a politically conservative base that was disgruntled over the INF treaty. Such a claim does not explain, however, why Reagan distanced himself from ideological conservatives so publicly with statements critical of their views and statements conciliatory of Gorbachev, especially on the eve of the summit. If Reagan had intended his confrontational rhetoric exclusively for his domestic audience, he risked angering and alienating Gorbachev, and possibly hindering progress in U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms negotiations and promotion of change within the USSR. Taking such a risk would have been contrary to Reagan's own summit objectives.¹⁵³ Conversely, to conclude that Reagan's conciliatory statements constituted a rhetorical reversal, a type of public signaling during November and December 1987 that Reagan had abandoned his hard-line anti-Marxist-Leninist views, ignores the more

ubiquitous confrontational aspects of Reagan's rhetoric surrounding the Washington Summit.

Reagan's anti-communist *ethos*, created and maintained by forty years of staunchly confrontational anti-Soviet rhetoric, made Reagan's conciliatory statements in 1987 remarkable, especially as he directed those statements at liberal-minded Soviet reformers like Gorbachev—and Yeltsin. Indeed, Reagan's anti-Communist reputation may have increased the perception that his conciliatory rhetoric revealed a significant change in his personal ideological views and, consequently, in the foreign policy of the United States. However, Reagan rhetorically embraced Gorbachev only in as much as Gorbachev represented change in the Soviet status quo and the potential for greater change of Soviet policies and practices that Reagan disliked.

There was greater strategic value to Reagan in embracing Gorbachev and his reforms rather than in simply denying the existence of change in the Soviet Union. First, Reagan recognized that *glasnost* inspired some of the oppressed within the Soviet Union to speak out publicly against the continued repression of their religious and other human rights.¹⁵⁴ Reagan needed to adopt a rhetorical approach that not only encouraged the continuation of such action by dissident Ukrainians and other Soviets, but that also encouraged the ruling elite to listen and respond positively to these voices. Second, it was possible that by speaking in conciliatory terms Reagan might encourage Yeltsin and others to support Gorbachev in making greater changes in the Soviet system. Such support might in turn prevent Gorbachev from becoming reticent in the face of criticism and opposition from Communist conservatives. If Reagan wanted to induce Gorbachev

to make greater changes, he needed to do all he could rhetorically to ensure that there was no reversal (nor even a pause) in the implementation of Gorbachev's reform agenda. Reagan needed to enhance support for Gorbachev among Soviet liberals. It is also important to note the strategic benefit to Reagan in publicly distancing himself from anti-Communist hard-liners in the United States, especially those in his own party. Such a move countered the negative image of Reagan accepted and promoted by traditional Soviet leaders in Soviet media—the image of Reagan as an imperialist aggressor and a puppet of “the powerful American military-industrial complex.”¹⁵⁵

Reagan apparently hoped that promoting the process of reform within the Soviet Union would have an efferent effect on Soviet peoples. On November 30, 1987 Reagan publicly asked, “[W]ill this first breath of openness inspire peoples in the Soviet Union to demand real freedoms?”¹⁵⁶ Reagan might have hoped that the Soviet people would not respond with gratitude to Gorbachev and the Communist Party for granting limited new freedoms, but would instead reject the Party's rule altogether and demand greater freedoms than Gorbachev offered. Gorbachev later wrote that he sensed in 1987 “that society in its impatient expectation of change, had left the Party behind, that there was a serious threat that the Party would ‘miss the boat’.”¹⁵⁷ Since at least January 1983, this had been Reagan's goal—that the Soviet people would reject the Communist Party. This chapter demonstrates how Reagan's rhetoric surrounding the Washington Summit sought to achieve that goal.

The final chapter of this dissertation examines the rhetorical strategies Reagan employed during the May 1988 Moscow Summit to continue to press for political and economic changes within the USSR and for the institutionalization of such changes.

NOTES

¹ Hedrick Smith, "The Right against Reagan," *New York Times*, January 17, 1988, 36.

² Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 14. Also, see Beth A.

Fischer, "Reagan and the Soviets: Winning the Cold War?" in *The Reagan Presidency: Pragmatic Conservatism and Its Legacies*, ed. W. Elliot Brownlee and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 113-132.

³ Lee Sigelman, "Disarming the Opposition: The President, the Public, and the INF Treaty," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 38 (1990): 37-47.

⁴ Cori E. Dauber, "Negotiating from Strength: Arms Control and the Rhetoric of Denial," *Political Communication and Persuasion* 7 (1990): 108, 97, 109.

⁵ Janice L. O'Donnell, "Ronald Reagan's Public Discourse on Change in the Soviet Union" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1992), 11, iii, 11.

⁶ For example, see Ronald Reagan, "Address to the People of Western Europe on Soviet-United States Relations, November 4, 1987," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1987* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1989), 1271 (hereafter cited as "Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987"); Ronald Reagan, "Written Responses to Questions

Submitted by the Soviet Newspaper Izvestiya, December 3, 1987,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1987* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1989), 1437-1438. The publication series is hereafter cited as *Public Papers* followed by the year and the page numbers.

⁷ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on Soviet-United States Relations at the Town Hall of California Meeting in Los Angeles, August 26, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 981. Also, see Ronald Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Area High School Seniors in Jacksonville, Florida, December 1, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1404. Hereafter cited as “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987.”

⁸ Ronald Reagan, “National Security Decision Directive Number 75: U.S. Relations with the USSR, January 17, 1983,” in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 259. Hereafter cited as “NSDD-75, January 17, 1983.”

⁹ George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 898.

¹⁰ For example, see Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1392.

¹¹ For accounts of the Yeltsin affair, see Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 242; Robert Cullen, “Human Rights: A Thaw Imperiled,” in *Gorbachev’s Russia and American Foreign Policy*, ed. Seweryn Bialer and Michael Mandelbaum (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988), 144; Seweryn Bialer, “The Yeltsin Affair:

The Dilemma of the Left in Gorbachev's Revolution," in *Politics, Society, and Nationality Inside Gorbachev's Russia*, ed. Seweryn Bialer (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989), 94; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1002.

¹² Bialer, "The Yeltsin Affair," 111.

¹³ One of Reagan's major goals was to promote "the process of change in the Soviet Union . . . in which the power of the privileged ruling elite is gradually reduced." See Reagan, "NSDD-75, January 17, 1983," 259.

¹⁴ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive Number 288: My Objectives at the Summit, November 10, 1987," in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 834-835.

Hereafter cited as "NSDD-288, November 10, 1987."

¹⁵ Smith, "The Right against Reagan," 36.

¹⁶ Smith, "The Right against Reagan," 36; Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 778-779.

¹⁷ For example, see Ronald Reagan, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with Reporters on the Soviet-United States Summit Meeting, October 30, 1987," *Public Papers, 1987*, 1258 (hereafter cited as "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, October 30, 1987"). During Reagan's question-and-answer session, a representative of the media pointed out: "This week during the Republican debate, the majority of the candidates from your own party were against the INF treaty." Also, see Ronald Reagan, "Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987," *Public Papers*,

1987, 1425. During Reagan's interview, a representative of the media opined: "Mr. President, on this treaty, you've not even signed on the dotted line, and yet five of the Republican Presidential candidates have deserted you. The conservatives, the right wing of your party, are after your scalp." Additionally, see Geoffrey Barker, "Arms Pact Plan Splits Reagan's Right-Wing Base," *The Advertiser* (Australia), December 7, 1987, 1.

¹⁸ Barker, "Arms Pact Plan Splits Reagan's Right-Wing Base," 1; Reagan, "Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987," 1425. During Reagan's interview, a representative of the media noted, "... a lot of people say that ... [the INF treaty] will leave the Soviets in a superior position in Europe, because they have more men, more tanks, more helicopters."

¹⁹ Jesse Helms quoted in Smith, "The Right Against Reagan," 36.

²⁰ Joshua Gilder, telephone interview with author, June 15, 2001.

²¹ Peter Robinson, telephone interview with author, August 23, 2005.

²² Barker, "Arms Pact Plan Splits Reagan's Right-Wing Base," 1; Smith, "The Right against Reagan," 36.

²³ Reagan, "Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987," 1425, 1426. Also, see Smith, "The Right against Reagan," 36; Barker, "Arms Pact Plan Splits Reagan's Right-Wing Base," 1.

²⁴ Smith, "The Right against Reagan," 36; David Hoffman and Helen Dewar, "Dole Leads Angry Reaction to Reagan Remark on Pact's Foes," *Washington Post*, December 5, 1987, A1.

²⁵ Both Phillips and Viguerie quoted in Hoffman and Dewar, “Dole Leads Angry Reaction to Reagan Remark,” A1.

²⁶ Bob Hepburn, “U.S. Conservatives Turn on Reagan Over Arms Treaty,” *Toronto Star*, December 5, 1987, A4; Smith, “The Right against Reagan,” 36.

²⁷ Cullen, “Human Rights,” 140-141.

²⁸ Robert G. Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened: His Triumphs and His Failure* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 431.

²⁹ Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 483.

³⁰ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 897.

³¹ Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened*, 432.

³² Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the 40th Anniversary Conference of the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, September 16, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1036.

³³ Bialer, “The Yeltsin Affair,” 94-106; Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened*, 179-180, 181-184, 188-190.

³⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1002.

³⁵ Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened*, 193.

³⁶ Bialer, “The Yeltsin Affair,” 111. Also, see Jack F. Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), 267.

³⁷ Gorbachev quoted in Bialer, “The Yeltsin Affair,” 111. Also, see Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened*, 193.

- ³⁸ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 240, 244.
- ³⁹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1003, 1004.
- ⁴⁰ Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, 11.
- ⁴¹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1004.
- ⁴² Reagan, “NSDD-288, November 10, 1987,” 834-835.
- ⁴³ Reagan, “NSDD-288, November 10, 1987,” 834, 835.
- ⁴⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 894. For Soviet media representatives’ perceptions of Reagan’s rhetoric, see *Izvestiya*’s questions to him in Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by the Soviet Newspaper *Izvestiya*, December 3, 1987,” 1441.
- ⁴⁵ Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation on the Soviet-United States Summit Meeting, December 10, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1503, 1504, 1502, 1503-1504. Hereafter cited as “Address to the Nation, December 10, 1987.”
- ⁴⁶ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, December 10, 1987,” 1504, 1501, 1503.
- ⁴⁷ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1270.
- ⁴⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 346-347. Also, see Janne E. Nolan, “The INF Treaty,” in *The Politics of Arms Control Treaty Ratification*, ed. Michael Krepon and Dan Caldwell (New York: St. Martin’s, 1991), 355-356.
- ⁴⁹ See Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1270-1271; Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on the Strategic Defense Initiative to Martin Marietta Denver Astronautics Employees in Waterton, Colorado, November 24, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1381 (hereafter cited as “Remarks on the Strategic Defense Initiative, November 24, 1987”); Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage

Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1391; Reagan, “Address to the Nation, December 10, 1987,” 1503; Ronald Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation Following the Soviet-United States Summit Meeting, December 12, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1515 (hereafter cited as “Radio Address to the Nation, December 12, 1987”); and Ronald Reagan, “Remarks to the Board of Trustees of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 14, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1517-1518. Hereafter cited as “Remarks to the Board of Trustees, December 14, 1987.”

⁵⁰ See Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987,” 1402; Reagan, “Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987,” 1425, 1426; Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by the Soviet Newspaper Izvestiya, December 3, 1987,” 1438; and Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on Signing the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, December 8, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1455. Hereafter cited as “Remarks on Signing, December 8, 1987.”

⁵¹ Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987,” 1402.

⁵² Ronald Reagan, “Remarks to Members of the National Press Club on Arms Reduction and Nuclear Weapons, November 18, 1981,” *Public Papers, 1981*, 1065.

⁵³ Nolan, “The INF Treaty,” 367.

⁵⁴ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 764; Nolan, “The INF Treaty,” 356-357, 372-373.

⁵⁵ Nolan, “The INF Treaty,” 357; Cannon, *President Reagan*, 771.

⁵⁶ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on Arms Control and an Informal Exchange with Reporters in Denver, Colorado, November 24, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1379.

⁵⁷ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, December 10, 1987,” 1503.

⁵⁸ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 778.

⁵⁹ Reagan, "Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987," 1270, 1271.

⁶⁰ Reagan, "Remarks to the Board of Trustees, December 14, 1987," 1518.

⁶¹ Reagan, "Remarks to the Board of Trustees, December 14, 1987," 1517-1518.

⁶² For example, see Reagan, "Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987," 1270-1271; Reagan, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987," 1402; Reagan, "Address to the Nation, December 10, 1987," 1502-1503; Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation, December 12, 1987," 1515; and Reagan, "Remarks to the Board of Trustees, December 14, 1987," 1517-1518.

⁶³ Reagan, "Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987," 1270.

⁶⁴ Reagan, "Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987," 1273.

⁶⁵ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 135-252. Gorbachev also discussed at some length the concept of "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policies in his interview on November 30, 1987 with NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw, subsequently televised in the United States. Also, see Mikhail Gorbachev, *At the Summit: How the Superpowers Set the World on a Course for Peace* (New York: Richardson, Steirman and Black, 1988), 83-90.

⁶⁶ Reagan, "Remarks on the Strategic Defense Initiative, November 24, 1987," 1381.

⁶⁷ Reagan, "Remarks to the Board of Trustees, December 14, 1987," 1518.

⁶⁸ Reagan, "Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987," 1392.

⁶⁹ Reagan, "Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987," 1270.

⁷⁰ “The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, together with the Memorandum of Understanding and Two Protocols, signed at Washington on December 8, 1987,” Treaties and Other International Acts series number 12101, *Library of Congress*, <http://thomas.loc.gov/>. For a list of those Senators who voted against ratifying the INF treaty, see Nolan, “The INF Treaty,” 389.

⁷¹ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks to Administration Supporters at a White House Briefing on Arms Control, Central America, and the Supreme Court, November 23, 1987,” *Public Papers*, 1987, 1374. Hereafter cited as “Remarks to Administration Supporters at a White House Briefing on Arms Control, November 23, 1987.”

⁷² See Ronald Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation on Soviet-United States Relations, November 28, 1987,” *Public Papers*, 1987, 1386 (hereafter cited as “Radio Address to the Nation, November 28, 1987”); Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, December 8, 1987,” *Public Papers*, 1987, 1452; and, Ronald Reagan, “Remarks on the Departure of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, December 10, 1987,” *Public Papers*, 1987, 1498 (hereafter cited as “Remarks on the Departure of General Secretary Gorbachev, December 10, 1987”).

⁷³ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, November 28, 1987,” 1386.

⁷⁴ Reagan, “Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987,” 1426.

⁷⁵ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida, March 8, 1983,” *Public Papers*, 1983, 364, 362.

⁷⁶ Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987,” 1400.

⁷⁷ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1270. Also, see Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, November 28, 1987,” 1455; and Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by the Soviet Newspaper *Izvestiya*, December 3, 1987,” 1439.

⁷⁸ Reagan, “Remarks on the Strategic Defense Initiative, November 24, 1987,” 1381. For other examples of Reagan’s criticisms of what the United States called the Soviets’ “Red Shield” program, see Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1271; Reagan, “Remarks to Administration Supporters, November 23, 1987,” 1375; and Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1391-1392.

⁷⁹ “Gorbachev Interviewed for U.S. Television; Admits Soviet SDI Research,” *Facts on File World News Digest*, December 4, 1987, 890; Gorbachev, *At the Summit*, 83.

⁸⁰ Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by the Soviet Newspaper *Izvestiya*, December 3, 1987,” 1439.

⁸¹ Reagan, “Remarks on the Strategic Defense Initiative, November 24, 1987,” 1382.

⁸² Ronald Reagan, “Remarks Announcing Senate Minority Leader Dole’s Endorsement of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, December 17, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1533. Hereafter cited as “Remarks Announcing Senate Minority Leader Dole’s Endorsement, December 17, 1987.”

⁸³ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1391. For other examples of Reagan’s emphasis on the stringent nature of the

INF treaty, see Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1271; Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, November 28, 1987,” 1386; Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987,” 1404-1405; Reagan, “Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987,” 1425; Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by the Soviet Newspaper Izvestiya, December 3, 1987,” 1439; and Reagan, “Remarks on Signing, December 8, 1987,” 1455.

⁸⁴ Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by the Soviet Newspaper Izvestiya, December 3, 1987,” 1439.

⁸⁵ See Reagan, “Remarks to Administration Supporters, November 23, 1987,” 1374; Reagan, “Remarks on the Strategic Defense Initiative, November 24, 1987,” 1382; Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987,” 1405; Reagan, “Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987,” 1426; and Reagan, “Remarks on Signing, December 8, 1987,” 1455; Ronald Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with News Editors and Broadcasters, December 11, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1508 (hereafter cited as “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 11, 1987”).

⁸⁶ Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987,” 1404.

⁸⁷ Reagan, “Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987,” 1425-1426.

⁸⁸ Reagan, “NSDD-288,” 834.

⁸⁹ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing for Human Rights Supporters, December 3, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1421.

- ⁹⁰ Reagan, “Address to the Nation, December 10, 1987,” 1501, 1504.
- ⁹¹ Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, 1004.
- ⁹² William J. Eaton, “Soviets Show Signs of Distress Over Afghan War,” *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), November 6, 1987, 1.
- ⁹³ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1272.
- ⁹⁴ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1392.
- ⁹⁵ Reagan, “Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987,” 1429.
- ⁹⁶ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders and Members of Congress, November 12, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1324. Hereafter cited as “Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders, November 12, 1987.”
- ⁹⁷ Reagan, “Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987,” 1428.
- ⁹⁸ Reagan, “Remarks on the Departure of General Secretary Gorbachev, December 10, 1987,” 1498.
- ⁹⁹ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1271-1272.
- ¹⁰⁰ Reagan, “Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders, November 12, 1987,” 1324, 1325.
- ¹⁰¹ Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987,” 1401.
- ¹⁰² Reagan, “Address to the Nation, December 10, 1987,” 1501.
- ¹⁰³ Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 11, 1987,” 1505.
- ¹⁰⁴ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1272.

¹⁰⁵ Reagan, “Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders, November 12, 1987,” 1325.

¹⁰⁶ Reagan, “Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987,” 1429.

¹⁰⁷ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1392.

¹⁰⁸ Reagan, “Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders, November 12, 1987,” 1325.

¹⁰⁹ Reagan, “Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders, November 12, 1987,” 1325.

¹¹⁰ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1392-1393.

¹¹¹ Ronald Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation on Deficit Reduction and Soviet-United States Relations, December 5, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1442.

¹¹² Reagan, “Address to the Nation, December 10, 1987,” 1502. Also, see Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 11, 1987,” 1505.

¹¹³ Reagan, “Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders, November 12, 1987,” 1325.

¹¹⁴ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1272. Also, see Reagan, “Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders, November 12, 1987,” 1325; and Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1393.

¹¹⁵ Reagan, "Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987," 1429.

¹¹⁶ Reagan, "Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders, November 12, 1987," 1325. Also, see Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation, November 28, 1987," 1385; Reagan, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987," 1401; Reagan, "Interview with Television Broadcasters, December 3, 1987," 1428.

¹¹⁷ Reagan, "Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987," 1393.

¹¹⁸ Eaton, "Soviets Show Signs of Distress Over Afghan War," 7.

¹¹⁹ Hoffman and Dewar, "Dole Leads Angry Reaction to Reagan Remark on Pact's Foes," A1.

¹²⁰ Reagan, "Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987," 1272.

¹²¹ Reagan, "Interview with Television Network Broadcasters, December 3, 1987," 1428.

¹²² Reagan, "Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987," 1393. Also, see Reagan, "Remarks Following a Meeting with Afghan Resistance Leaders, November 12, 1987," 1325.

¹²³ Robert T. Oliver, "Speech in International Affairs," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38 (1952): 174.

¹²⁴ William C. Wohlforth, "The Search for Causes to the End of the Cold War," in *Witnesses to the End of the Cold War*, ed. William C. Wohlforth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1996), 193-194.

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- ¹²⁶ Gorbachev, *At the Summit*, 92.
- ¹²⁷ Dauber, “Negotiating from Strength,” 108.
- ¹²⁸ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1271.
- ¹²⁹ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1392.
- ¹³⁰ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1271.
- ¹³¹ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1392.
- ¹³² Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing for Human Rights Supporters, December 3, 1987,” 1421.
- ¹³³ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, December 12, 1987,” 1516.
- ¹³⁴ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1271.
- ¹³⁵ Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing for Human Rights Supporters, December 3, 1987,” 1421.
- ¹³⁶ Ronald Reagan, “Proclamation 5752—Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day, and Human Rights Week, 1987, December 10, 1987,” *Public Papers, 1987*, 1500-1501. Hereafter cited as “Proclamation 5752.”
- ¹³⁷ Reagan, “Proclamation 5752,” 1500.
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2, December 12, 1987.

¹³⁹ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1271.

¹⁴⁰ Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, November 28, 1987,” 1385.

¹⁴¹ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1392.

¹⁴² Reagan, “Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session, December 1, 1987,” 1400.

¹⁴³ Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing for Human Rights Supporters, December 3, 1987,” 1421.

¹⁴⁴ Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing for Human Rights Supporters, December 3, 1987,” 1421.

¹⁴⁵ Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing for Human Rights Supporters, December 3, 1987,” 1421.

¹⁴⁶ Reagan, “Address to the People of Western Europe, November 4, 1987,” 1271.

¹⁴⁷ Reagan, “Written Responses to Questions Submitted by the Soviet Newspaper Izvestiya, December 3, 1987,” 1437.

¹⁴⁸ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 272.

¹⁴⁹ Leslie Colitt, “After the Summit,” *Financial Times* (London, England), December 12, 1987, 2.

¹⁵⁰ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1392.

¹⁵¹ Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Briefing for Human Rights Supporters, December 3, 1987,” 1421.

¹⁵² Reagan, “Radio Address to the Nation, December 12, 1987,” 1516.

¹⁵³ Reagan, “NSDD-288,” 834-835.

¹⁵⁴ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1392.

¹⁵⁵ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 413. Also, see Kevin J. McKenna, *All the Views Fit to Print: Changing Images of the U.S. in Pravda Political Cartoons, 1917-1991* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 145-159, 195-196.

¹⁵⁶ Reagan, “Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by the Heritage Foundation, November 30, 1987,” 1392.

¹⁵⁷ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 241.

CHAPTER VI

**THE ZENITH OF REAGAN’S SUMMIT RHETORIC: CONCILIATION AND
SUBVERSION AT THE 1988 MOSCOW SUMMIT***

On May 31, 1988 President Ronald Reagan addressed the students and faculty at Moscow State University in what was the zenith of his summit rhetoric. Although previous presidents desired such an opportunity, no other U.S. president except Richard Nixon had stood east of the Berlin Wall and spoken directly to the citizens of the Soviet Union.¹ This was Reagan’s first time in Moscow, but it was his fourth summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev in two-and-a-half years. That Reagan would have received an opportunity to speak inside Moscow—much less to speak uncensored—seemed highly improbable during the first five years of his presidency. Reagan had appeared to be an implacable foe of the Soviet Union, calling it an “evil empire,” describing it as “the focus of evil in the modern world,”² and accusing the Soviet “regime” of being “barbaric.”³ The Soviets, for their part, had previously characterized Reagan and his administration as “warmongers,”⁴ and the Soviet Union had utilized its official propaganda machine to attack Reagan in both word and caricature in *Pravda*. Soviet newspaper editors accused Reagan of leading “a ‘psychological war’ and an anti-Soviet ‘crusade’.” Reagan was caricatured in *Pravda* more than any other U.S. president. In fact, only Adolf Hitler had appeared more often in that newspaper’s editorial cartoons.⁵

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However, following three summit meetings and the signing of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, East-West relations experienced what Sovietologist Archie Brown describes as a “qualitative change for the better.”⁶

Reagan had openly sought an opportunity to speak freely to Soviet citizens since 1982.⁷ He had made strong appeals in his 1985 Geneva Summit rhetoric for greater opportunities for the people in both the United States and the Soviet Union to hear ideas from leaders in the other’s country. Having received this opportunity to speak directly to the Soviet people, Reagan would have to continue to find a middle ground between his own anti-Communism and the need to avoid alienating his Soviet audience. To be sure, Reagan desired the radical reform or collapse of the Soviet system. He regarded the Soviet “experiment” as “a monstrous aberration,”⁸ and he viewed the Cold War struggle between the West and the East as a battle between “right and wrong and good and evil.”⁹ Early in his presidency, Reagan predicted to the world that “the march of freedom and democracy . . . [will] leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people.”¹⁰ Joshua Gilder, a speechwriter for Reagan, claimed that this was Reagan’s vision throughout his administration.¹¹ The examination of Reagan’s summit rhetoric in the preceding chapters demonstrates that he pursued objectives during his second term that were consistent with the anti-Soviet Communist statements made during his first term.

Reagan’s speech at Moscow State University during the Moscow Summit merits examination for several reasons. First, of the twenty sets of remarks Reagan delivered between May 25, 1988 (the day he departed for Moscow) and June 3, 1988 (the day he

returned to the United States) the White House considered the Moscow State University speech to be one of Reagan's three most important speeches and the most important speech he would deliver while in Moscow.¹² According to then-U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, Jack Matlock, Reagan's appearance before the students at Moscow State University "was the centerpiece of his trip."¹³ Second, Reagan's speech merits examination because of the rhetorical complexities posed by such a momentous opportunity. In delivering his other speeches in Moscow—very short sets of remarks to religious leaders at the Russian Orthodox Danilov Monastery,¹⁴ to Soviet dissidents at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Moscow,¹⁵ and to a group of artists and cultural leaders at the Central House of Men of Letters¹⁶—Reagan spoke to primarily sympathetic audiences. The students and faculty at Moscow State University were not a primarily sympathetic audience. How would the U.S. President who had dubbed the Soviet Union an "evil empire" in March 1983 and reiterated this view of the Soviet Union in December 1987¹⁷ address these students and faculty? Third, the disparate objectives Reagan sought to achieve in his speech at Moscow State University required rhetorical sophistication that merits careful analysis.

In his Moscow State University speech on May 31, 1988, Reagan pursued seemingly disparate rhetorical objectives—conciliation and subversion. First, Reagan depicted himself and the United States as friends of the Soviet people and supporters of Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev. Second, he continued to advance his ideological hostility toward Soviet Communism. With the rhetorical strategies he employed, Reagan attempted to reduce international tensions and intercultural misunderstandings

and, at the same time, to increase pressure for greater changes in the political and economic systems of the Soviet Union. Reagan's speech is best understood as the ultimate fulfillment of a plan that at its apex condemned the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," but in its fulfillment both eschewed Reagan's label of the regime while maintaining support for its collapse.

In his address at Moscow State University, Reagan's diplomatic rhetoric resembled his domestic rhetoric: He positioned himself as a friend of the people and a foe of government. The difference between Reagan's domestic and diplomatic rhetoric was that in the United States, Reagan considered big government to be "the problem" oppressing the people.¹⁸ In the Soviet Union, he considered communism with its imposition of Marxist-Leninist doctrines to be morally bad government and, thus, the oppressor of the people. However, Reagan's rhetoric was not designed to subvert Gorbachev's reforms. To the contrary, as rhetorical scholar G. Thomas Goodnight recognizes, Reagan "muted his hostility toward the Soviet Union with an avowed concern for its people, its culture, [and] its future,"¹⁹ because he wanted to encourage the institutionalization of Gorbachev's reforms. Reagan designed a rhetorical subterfuge against that which Gorbachev was attempting to reform: the Soviet Union's practice of communism and socialism. Thus, Reagan rhetorically positioned himself in a "truth-seeking" posture,²⁰ adopting the *language* of Marxism-Leninism in order to de-legitimize the *credibility* of Marxism-Leninism as well as to legitimize alternative political and economic philosophies. He spoke from a "consensus-seeking rationale."²¹

PREPARING FOR MOSCOW

The primary opportunity Reagan faced on his trip to Moscow was to take full advantage of *glasnost*, the new openness in the Soviet Union. In the five months between the Washington and Moscow Summits, significant changes continued to occur in Soviet domestic and foreign policies, changes that were strikingly consistent with those Reagan had called for in his summit rhetoric. Between January and June 1988 previously banned literature by Boris Pasternak and George Orwell began to be published,²² and Gorbachev allowed more public criticism of Soviet history, especially criticism of Joseph Stalin.²³ In March and April, public debate between liberal reformers and conservatives occurred through open letters and editorial responses published in the major Soviet press organs *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and *Pravda*. In April, Soviet citizens viewed the first-ever televised broadcast of Easter religious services.²⁴

May 1988 was a particularly significant month for change in the USSR. On May 15, Soviet troops began their withdrawal from Afghanistan. On May 23, the Central Committee plenum approved a set of “theses” that Gorbachev planned to propose at the upcoming 19th Communist Party Conference scheduled to convene in Moscow the following month. As journalist Robert Kaiser reports, Gorbachev’s theses included “recommendations that would radically weaken the Party’s administrative powers, stimulate new, democratically elected councils, and promote new legal institutions and protections for citizens’ rights.”²⁵ Then U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Jack Matlock, considered Gorbachev’s plans as “evidence that Gorbachev was finally

prepared to cross the Rubicon and discard the Marxist ideology that had defined and justified the Communist Party dictatorship in the Soviet Union.” But Gorbachev still needed to convince the Communist Party Conference to adopt and implement his recommendations.²⁶ While in Moscow, Reagan wanted to encourage the continuation of changes occurring in the Soviet Union. Those changes were consistent with his 1983 National Security Decision Directive Number 75 (Directive 75) which held that the goal of the United States was: “To promote . . . the process of change in the Soviet Union toward a more pluralistic political and economic system in which the power of the privileged ruling elite is gradually reduced” and to promote “the superiority of U.S. and Western values of individual dignity and freedom, a free press, free trade unions, free enterprise, and political democracy over the repressive features of Soviet Communism.”²⁷

In preparation for the Moscow summit Reagan issued National Security Decision Directive Number 305 (Directive 305) in which he stressed the need for progress on all aspects of his four-part agenda. That directive specified: “My specific objectives in the Soviet portion of my trip include: to stress the importance of progress in Soviet human rights performance . . . to make maximum practical progress toward an agreement for a fifty-percent reduction in U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear forces . . . to follow through on progress made on the regional agenda . . . to consolidate progress and move forward on bilateral issues . . . to press for progress on all other matters of interest on our four-part agenda.”²⁸ Joshua Gilder, the primary speechwriter of the Moscow State University address, reported that Reagan was committed to pressing for greater progress because it

was clear that Gorbachev was “collapsing on one front after another.” Reagan wanted to use the opportunities of the Moscow summit, Gilder said, “to talk about freedom in as compelling a way as possible, and push them [the Soviet leadership] just farther along . . . to the point where they [could not] turn back.”²⁹ For example, although Gorbachev began withdrawing Soviet troops from Afghanistan two weeks prior to Reagan’s arrival in Moscow, Reagan used his speech at Moscow State University to continue his criticism of what he viewed as the Soviet government’s failure to renounce its expansionistic foreign policy and to call for similar changes in other regions of the world where the Soviets continued their indirect involvement.

While in Moscow, Reagan needed to seize the opportunity to promote his agenda for greater freedoms directly to the Soviet people. He desired a better life for the Soviet people, but this was not the image of Reagan the Soviet press projected to its citizens. Therefore, while Reagan was in the Soviet Union, he needed to present a different, more positive image of himself and the United States if the Soviet people were to accept that the U.S. truly desired peace and friendship with the USSR and an improved Soviet economy.

Targeting Soviet Youth

In Moscow, Reagan faced what rhetorical scholar Robert Oliver describes as the multiple audiences often addressed in diplomatic speaking: an “enemy” audience, a “neutral” audience,³⁰ and a “friendly” audience.³¹ Based on Reagan’s previous characterizations of the Soviet Union and given the image of the U.S. President

portrayed in Soviet media within the USSR, Reagan anticipated a hostile audience. However, if there were those who were skeptical of *Pravda* and official Soviet media characterizations of Reagan,³² those Soviet citizens would have comprised a potentially friendly audience (such as Russian Orthodox priests, political dissidents, and emigration *refuseniks*) or a neutral audience (such as liberals within the Communist Party like Boris Yeltsin, individuals who were not as involved in the Party and were frustrated with economic conditions in the USSR). Gilder noted that although these multiple audiences were taken into consideration in constructing the Moscow State University address, Reagan's primary audience was the students.³³ According to Joseph Whelan, Reagan needed to:

Appeal to the young and creative minds of Soviet students, the future leaders of Soviet society; to inspire them by a positive appraisal of changes now underway and by portraying a larger and more creative vision of freedom; and to influence them as a hedge against any possible reversal of course in the future.³⁴

Reagan was highly motivated by this opportunity. According to some of his aides, Reagan considered "himself as a missionary, spreading the gospel of Western-style democracy."³⁵ However, if Reagan was to effectively take advantage of this historic occasion, he needed to rhetorically temper his missionary zeal.

As the Moscow summit approached, little progress had been made in the ongoing strategic nuclear weapons discussions in Geneva, Switzerland.³⁶ Though arms control agreements would be a major topic of discussion at the Moscow summit, new accords were not expected.³⁷ This was in many ways an ideal situation for Reagan in terms of his rhetoric of public diplomacy during the summit. According to Matlock, as Reagan

prepared for Moscow he “was mainly interested in what was happening within the Soviet Union” and not in receiving more briefings for his negotiations with Gorbachev.³⁸ With no new arms treaties expected at Moscow, Reagan could devote much more public attention to promoting changes in the Soviet system that would create greater freedom for Soviet citizens. Whelan argues that, “Since differences in arms control . . . were not likely to be narrowed, [Reagan’s] priority interest was placed on advancing the idea of human rights and expanding human contacts as a necessary corollary.”³⁹ Reagan instructed in Directive 305, “My visit to the Soviet Union should not be seen as a dialogue only with the Soviet government, but also as a way of communicating with the Soviet people.”⁴⁰ The White House advisers made it clear to journalists that they placed high priority on Reagan’s public appearances and public statements and attempted to situate Reagan in positions to dialogue directly with the Soviet populace.⁴¹

The Summit Preparation Group in the White House placed special emphasis on the speeches Reagan would deliver before, during, and after his visit to Moscow. According to journalists Lou Cannon and Don Oberdorfer, “From the White House point of view, the major emphasis was on three speeches . . . a May 27 address in Helsinki emphasizing human rights, a May 31 speech at Moscow State University extolling the virtues of freedom and a June 3 speech at Guildhall in London where Reagan summed up developments in U.S.-Soviet relations.”⁴² Mark Ramee, a political counselor at the U.S. embassy in Moscow, in a memo to the White House adviser in charge of the logistics of the Moscow trip, James Hooley, suggested that the event at Moscow State University should “provide the President with a forum from which to make a major

address” and “put the President before and . . . enable him to interact with a generation of young people and potential future leaders.”⁴³ Gilder understood that President Reagan wanted to talk to Moscow State University students “about the importance of freedom and what it means,” so Gilder turned to standup comedian Yakov Smirnov to help him “make the theme [of the speech] concrete in terms of Soviets’ own experience.”⁴⁴ Gilder made sure that Reagan’s address included names and quotations of literary and cultural figures with whom the students could identify not so much to make Reagan appear to be familiar with all of the individuals named, but as a way of politically embracing the sentiments expressed by those individuals.⁴⁵

Reagan’s staff saw an additional means by which he could create an image of goodwill: encourage student exchange programs. National Security Adviser Lieutenant General Colin Powell wrote White House communications director Tom Griscom advocating that Reagan initiate reciprocal “exchanges between U.S. and Soviet youth.” Powell viewed this as beneficial to Reagan’s image: “The President’s call should be dramatic, capitalizing on his record of promoting young people as goodwill ambassadors and the custodians of mankind’s future, as well as his personal initiative to expand U.S.-Soviet people-to-people exchanges.”⁴⁶ Powell urged Reagan to agree to the proposal, and suggested that he “announce it in . . . [his] speech to Soviet youth at Moscow University, May 31.” In a memo from Powell to the Reagan on May 23, 1988, Powell urged the President to agree to the proposal and to “announce it in . . . [his] speech to Soviet youth at Moscow University, May 31.”⁴⁷

Encouraging Reform: Balancing Conciliation and Subversion

Reagan had a delicate balance to strike. As the previous chapter noted, Gorbachev needed Reagan's support in light of anti-reformists who feared the "subversive implications" and destabilizing potential of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. And yet, Reagan needed to exploit the opportunities presented by *glasnost* and *perestroika* because of their subversive implications. As historian Martin Walker has noted, if Reagan commended Gorbachev's reforms, Gorbachev could respond to Communist Party conservatives by citing his own "unique and indispensable role in easing international tensions."⁴⁸ However, it was also equally important that Reagan continue to confront Gorbachev with criticisms of as yet unreformed Soviet policies in order to continue to apply international pressure.⁴⁹ In a speech on April 21, 1988 Reagan had sounded a particularly hard-line tone. For example, in discussing the conflict in Ethiopia, he accused the Soviets of pursuing a policy that could result in "another holocaust."⁵⁰ Matlock notes that in the speech Reagan "took credit for the Soviet decision to leave Afghanistan and stressed that the United States would continue to supply the opposition in Afghanistan."⁵¹ In Matlock's opinion, although Reagan addressed "legitimate issues" he could have been more "balanced with some attention to what had already been accomplished in broadening U.S.-Soviet cooperation and the steps Gorbachev was taking to open up Soviet society." Indeed, Gorbachev was angered by the speech and complained to George Shultz.⁵²

Reagan needed to praise Gorbachev's reforms in order to calm the fears of those who were concerned about the consequences of political change and who might reject further changes by Gorbachev. Yet Reagan staffers expressed concern regarding excessive praise of Gorbachev. Peter Rodman, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, objected to an initial draft of the Moscow State University speech because he said there were "two paragraphs that gush much too much about Gorbachev's reforms and even criticize his internal opponents. That goes much too far; both should come out."⁵³ Others argued that the speech should combine Reagan's praise for reforms with reassurances that change would not be detrimental to Soviet life. In a memo to Rhett Dawson, Assistant to the President for Operations, Paul Schott Stevens, Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, indicated:

There is considerable anxiety now within Soviet society because of the changes initiated by Gorbachev and the uncertainty regarding their direction and degree. This is not a society accustomed to change. The President was advised to address this anxiety through both empathy and reassurance that we in the West are accustomed to change, that change should be viewed as an opportunity and not a threat, and that change is inherent and essential to modern society.⁵⁴

This recommendation would not be difficult to follow as it would serve both Gorbachev's and Reagan's needs.

Conversely, Reagan had a significant interest in criticizing conditions in the Soviet Union. Criticism, strategically voiced, could prod Gorbachev to seek additional reforms. Gorbachev was, after all, a reformist intent on restoring the Soviet Union to economic health. Gorbachev's book, *Perestroika*, for example, relied on Lenin's writings to illustrate that socialism was dynamic and would pass through several

revolutionary stages before achieving “a qualitatively new state.”⁵⁵ Indeed, for Gorbachev, *perestroika* was “a revolution.”⁵⁶ In Goodnight’s analysis of Reagan’s Moscow Summit rhetoric, he recognizes “a daring mix of affiliation and criticism.”⁵⁷ This was especially true of the Moscow State University address. Reagan commended Gorbachev’s revolutionary changes and attempted to motivate the people of the Soviet Union to desire even greater reforms. He did so by criticizing existing policies restricting individuals’ freedoms, criticizing the lack of institutionalized reform, and by offering Soviet citizens an alternative means of achieving a higher standard of living.⁵⁸

CONCILIATING THE SOVIET PEOPLE AND SUBVERTING THE SOVIET SYSTEM AT MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY

Speaking at Moscow State University on May 31, 1988 Reagan employed four interrelated rhetorical strategies in an effort to achieve his desired public diplomacy effect. First, he cast doubt on the historic inevitability of Communism and socialist economic theories. Second, he offered an alternative to Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Third, he presented a positive image of himself and of the United States. Fourth, Reagan engaged the people of the Soviet Union directly and encouraged them to more directly engage their government in a dialogue for change.

De-Legitimizing Marxist-Leninism

Reagan may have considered Communism evil and destined for the ash heap of history, but stating such opinions explicitly to his audience at Moscow State University

on May 31, 1988 would have been counterproductive. Instead, Reagan strategically cast his message as a discussion of the technological progress occurring outside the Soviet Union: “Standing here before a mural of your revolution, I want to talk about a very different revolution that is taking place right now, quietly sweeping the globe without bloodshed or conflict”—a “technological revolution.”⁵⁹

Use of the terms “technological revolution” had strategic significance. According to an academic textbook of Soviet philosophy (written for use in Soviet schools to explain Marxist-Leninist principles), it is the “scientific and technological revolution” that will lead to the achievement of Marx’s vision and the ultimate goal of the Bolshevik revolution--a communist society.⁶⁰ Moreover, for many Soviets, technological progress was meaningful in more areas than science, engineering, or the economy. As Sovietologist Seweryn Bialer explains, technological progress had cultural and political implications as well:

The Soviet population, particularly outside the major metropolitan areas, measures Soviet economic progress by comparing their present conditions to those of the past. For the Soviet leadership and political elite as well as larger professional groups, however, the key measure of progress was and continues to be that of the industrially advanced capitalist countries. This is a Soviet tradition. Beginning with Lenin and intensifying under Stalin and afterward, the slogan of “catching up and surpassing” the principal capitalist countries was at the center of attention.⁶¹

Marxist-Leninist philosophy proclaims socialism’s economic and technological superiority over capitalism. In 1979, some Soviets believed they were “at the beginning of this process,” at the beginning of a scientific and technological revolution “rais[ing] the productive forces to a qualitatively new level.”⁶² However, as historian Walter

LaFeber notes, when Gorbachev became general secretary in 1985, he “understood how far the country was falling behind the West in technology” and the associated contributions to Soviet economic stagnation.⁶³

Since his election as general secretary at the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee, Gorbachev emphasized *perestroika* and its basic principles, including technological advancements, as an integral part of his plan for reviving the Soviet economy and industrial base. However, by May 1988, when Reagan spoke in Moscow, the Soviet economy was still faltering. Thus, Reagan compared the world outside the Soviet Union to a “chrysalis, emerging from the economy of the Industrial Revolution—an economy confined to and limited by the Earth’s physical resources” that was “breaking through the material conditions of existence to a world where man creates his own destiny.”⁶⁴ Here Reagan attempted to create in his audience a sense of being surpassed by the rest of the world, a sense of the inability, rather than the inevitability, of the current Soviet political and economic systems to lead to what Marxism-Leninism promised: “the development of the working masses, their material and spiritual advance.”⁶⁵

The explicit message in Reagan’s discussion of the “technological revolution” was merely an explanation of the revolution’s occurrence and its effects. However, Reagan’s implicit message was a comparison between two economic systems--socialism and capitalism--and their consequences for humanity’s material existence. Clearly, Reagan intimated that the world outside the Soviet Union was experiencing an exceedingly better material existence. In this way, Reagan attempted to erode

confidence among the Soviet people, as well as among the *nomenklatura*—“the conservative middle-ranks of party officialdom”⁶⁶—in the historic inevitability of a command economy controlled by a communist government.

Rhetorical scholars Kenneth Zagacki and Andrew King examine Reagan’s romanticizing of technology and conclude that Reagan created a “techno-romantic synthesis, wherein the goals of technological innovation are made consistent with traditional romantic aspirations and images of American culture.”⁶⁷ In his remarks at Moscow State University, however, Reagan essentially romanticized the consequences rather than the goals of technological advances and made them consistent with human progress. Zagacki and King also note that among other individuals in history Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin perceived “techno-science [as] a tool for human liberation via moral and material enrichment.”⁶⁸ However, for Reagan, revolutionary liberation had to precede technological progress. Thus, Reagan equated freedom with progress. Specifically, his thesis argued: human rights equal individual freedom; freedom equals individual creativity; individual creativity equals technological progress. The essence of the argument in Reagan’s Moscow State University address can be paraphrased as follows: There is a revolution taking place. It is spreading around the globe. This revolution is in the field of technology/information. The revolution reflects a breakthrough of the human spirit and will affect significant material transformations in mankind’s existence. The catalyst of the revolution is freedom: freedom of the individual, freedom of individual imagination, freedom for individual creativity. This revolution is also being accompanied by increased economic and political freedoms.

Democracy serves as the guardian against the only impediment to the revolution: infringement of individual freedom. Reagan read Gorbachev's book,⁶⁹ *Perestroika*, and understood that Gorbachev needed an "acceleration of scientific and technological progress" in order to revive the ailing Soviet economy.⁷⁰ Reagan wanted expanded freedoms for individuals living in the USSR. Thus, Reagan relied upon identification to link his *cause* with Gorbachev's *interests*.⁷¹ Reagan strategically equated freedom with progress and progress with freedom. If Gorbachev would attempt to encourage individual creativity in pursuit of technological innovation by expanding personal freedoms, Reagan could achieve his objective of greater individual liberties for Soviet citizens.

Legitimizing Alternatives to Marxist-Leninism

Although technological progress by the Soviets was possible, Reagan warned that, contrary to Marxist-Leninist economic doctrines, it was not inevitable: "Progress is not foreordained. The key is freedom—freedom of thought, freedom of information, freedom of communication."⁷² Reagan offered his alternatives to a command economy controlled by a communist government: capitalism and freedom for the entrepreneurial spirit under a democratic form of government. F. V. Konstantinov and his colleagues argue that "capitalism stands in the way of the application of science and technology for the benefit of the working people [sic], in the interest of man's all-around development."⁷³ To the contrary, Reagan argued that the world outside the Soviet Union was in a new economy "in which there are no bounds on human imagination and the

freedom to create is the most precious natural resource.” As an example, Reagan pointed to entrepreneurs as “the prime movers of the technological revolution.” He cited the success of “one of the largest personal computer firms in the United States,” a company that was started by “two college students, no older than you, in the garage behind their home.” Reagan admitted that “many” such entrepreneurs fail, even “the successful ones.” However, Reagan also pointed out, “If you ask them the secret of their success, they’ll tell you it’s all that they learned in their struggles along the way.” It was the entrepreneurs, Reagan argued, who were “responsible for almost all the economic growth in the United States.”⁷⁴

The “power of economic freedom” also explained why “places such as the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan have vaulted into the technological era, barely pausing in the industrial age along the way.”⁷⁵ Konstantinov and other Marxist-Leninists argue, “[I]n the capitalist society the development of the productive forces cannot be attributed to the need of the working people for improvement of their material position.”⁷⁶ Reagan countered that a free market and free enterprise allowed individuals to fulfill their vocational and material dreams: “And that’s why it’s so hard for government planners, no matter how sophisticated, to ever substitute for millions of individuals working night and day to make their dreams come true.” The technological revolution, led by entrepreneurs, resulted in the development of “the tiny silicon chip, no bigger than a fingerprint.” According to Reagan, this silicon chip was improving not only the material existence of its inventors, but also the material conditions of everyone who was benefiting from computers and computerized technology.⁷⁷

Rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke notes, “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language.”⁷⁸ Reagan adopted Marxist-Leninist language and “orthodox” Marxist-Leninist arguments to state his own case. Marx and Lenin contended that social change occurs when the way work is organized (“relations of production”) prevent new technologies (“forces of production”) from reaching their full potential.⁷⁹ Reagan argued that within the Soviet Union it was the relations of production (as imposed by the government) that were restraining the forces of production (the development of technology). This was not a new argument for Reagan, but a new rhetorical strategy to make an old argument. In June 1982, Reagan told members of the British Parliament, “What we see here [in the USSR] is a political structure that no longer corresponds to its political base, a society where productive forces are hampered by political ones.”⁸⁰ Speaking to Marxist-Leninist students and faculty in May 1988 Reagan argued that governmental planning of the relations of production was impeding the development of the forces of production that Marxism-Leninism claimed would result in the increased well-being of the working masses. Reagan used Marxist-Leninist language to encourage his audience who lived in a collectivized society and labored in a centrally planned economy to compare their standard of living to those of individuals around the globe who labored in “economic freedom.”⁸¹ He enticed his audience with a larger vision of what labor could produce not only for national but also for individual economic progress.

To further support his claim for “the power of economic freedom” to generate technological innovations, Reagan quoted Mikhail Lomonosov, “the renowned scientist,

scholar, and founding father” of Moscow State University, whom, Reagan said, understood this “power” as well: “‘It is common knowledge,’ he [Lomonosov] said, ‘that the achievements of science are considerable and rapid, particularly once the yoke of slavery is cast off and replaced by the freedom of philosophy’.”⁸² By employing the words of famous Soviets, as Reagan would throughout the speech, he demonstrated that freedom was not just a Western concept, but that it was a concept some Russians understood—and valued—as well. As an example, Reagan cited Boris Pasternak, author of *Dr. Zhivago*, and quoted what he told his audience was “the most eloquent passage on human freedom.” Before he revealed the source of the quotation, however, Reagan noted, “It comes, not from the literature of America, but from this country, from one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century”:

I think that if the beast who sleeps in man could be held down by threats—any kind of threat, whether of jail or of retribution after death—then the highest emblem of humanity would be the lion tamer in the circus with his whip, not the prophet who sacrificed himself. But this is just the point—what has for centuries raised man above the beast is not the cudgel, but an inward music—the irresistible power of unarmed truth.⁸³

Only recently, under Gorbachev’s reforms, had a ban on Pasternak’s book been lifted. Now that this book and others like it were again available to readers in the Soviet Union, Reagan used it both to promote his belief in freedom and also to encourage his audience to read *Dr. Zhivago* and other previously banned works that discussed such subversive concepts as truth and freedom.

In discussing the concept of freedom, Reagan provided a civics lesson, a brief discussion of the freedoms experienced by citizens in the United States, affirming the

belief that all people “are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights—among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—that no government can justly deny.” He praised democratic government: “Democracy is less a system of government than it is a system to keep government limited, unintrusive; a system of constraints on power to keep politics and government secondary to the important things in life, the true sources of value found only in family and faith.”⁸⁴

Reagan’s description of life in the United States might have been too glowing for his Soviet audience had he not also admitted that the freedom experienced in the United States allowed its citizens to “recognize our shortcomings and seek solutions.” Ultimately, Reagan said, “Freedom is the recognition that no single person, no single authority or government has a monopoly on the truth.” By making his argument in this way, Reagan commended “perestroika and what its goals are,”⁸⁵ thereby establishing an *ethos* of goodwill with his audience. At the same time, he exposed his audience to his views and values—the belief that greater limits on government and less limits on personal and economic freedoms were in the best interest of Soviet citizens.

Creating Positive Images of a New Friendship

Reagan’s discussion of democratic ideals usually identified with Western culture expressed his belief in the superiority of such concepts. However, he strategically incorporated examples from Russian and Uzbekistani cultures in order to demonstrate that these ideals were held by all who desired the best for humanity. Reagan assured his audience:

I go on about these things not simply to extol the virtues of my own country but to speak to the true greatness of the heart and soul of your land. Who, after all, needs to tell the land of Dostoevski about the quest for truth, the home of Kandinski and Scriabin about imagination, the rich and noble culture of the Uzbek man of letters Alisher Novoi about beauty and heart? The great culture of your diverse land speaks with a glowing passion to all humanity.⁸⁶

Reagan identified with Russia's history and culture and embraced them while avoiding an embrace of the current governmental and political systems.⁸⁷ His identification was with the Soviet people and culture, not the Soviet system, a distinction which Reagan had been careful to make in his summit rhetoric, and a distinction often made in diplomatic discourse.⁸⁸

Reagan exploited the opportunity he had long sought to speak directly and freely to the Soviet people to counter the image of the aggressive, imperialistic capitalist portrayed in Communist propaganda and to encourage those in his audience who were hopeful for peaceful international relations. Reagan established three areas of identification between Americans and Soviets: (1) ethnic ties, (2) a desire to increase contact between the peoples of both nations, and (3) a common abhorrence of war. Reagan assured the Soviets, "Americans seek always to make friends of old antagonists." The conciliatory attitude of the United States toward the Soviet Union was based, in part, on the common nationalities that populated each nation. "America," Reagan said, "is a nation made up of hundreds of nationalities. Our ties to you are more than ones of good feeling; they are ties of kinship." He described the trade disputes between the two nations as "the frictions of all families," and opined that "the family of free nations is a big and vital and sometimes boisterous one."⁸⁹

A positive step in the process of creating new understandings between Americans and Soviets was to create new and greater opportunities for contact between the two peoples. Therefore, Reagan announced his proposal for increases in student exchange programs. As previous chapters indicate, increased people-to-people contact was a strategic part of Reagan's goal of penetrating Soviet society with non-Soviet ideas. Reagan expressed agreement with Gorbachev's statement—"Better to see something once than to hear about it a hundred times"⁹⁰—and used Gorbachev's words to support a subversive program. By increasing the number of Soviets who experienced the world outside the USSR through student exchange programs, Reagan hoped to increase the number of Soviets who desired to change their living conditions inside the Soviet Union.

Finally, and most importantly, Reagan emphasized a common abhorrence of war between the two nuclear superpowers and former allies:

I've been told that there is a popular song in your country—perhaps you know it—whose evocative refrain asks the question, "Do the Russians want a war?" In answer it says: "Go ask that silence lingering in the air, above the birch and poplar there; beneath those trees the soldiers lie. Go ask my mother, ask my wife; then you will have to ask no more, 'Do the Russians want a war'?" But what of your onetime allies? What of those who embraced you on the Elbe? What if we were to ask the watery graves of the Pacific or the European battlefields where America's fallen were buried far from home? What if we were to ask their mothers, sisters, and sons, do Americans want a war? Ask us, too, and you'll find the same answer, the same longing in every heart.⁹¹

Reagan continued, as he had since his Geneva Summit rhetoric, to attempt to assuage any fears that the Soviet people had that the United States and its allies meant to do them harm: "People do not make wars; governments do. And no mother would ever willingly sacrifice her sons for territorial gain, for economic advantage, for ideology. A people

free to choose will always choose peace.”⁹² Drawing from elements of Russian culture and extolling the virtues of the Soviet people, Reagan established significant areas of intercultural identification between Soviets and Americans. In so doing, he undermined the credibility of the propagandized portrait of the United States’ hatred for the Soviets and American desires to perpetuate the Cold War.

Rhetorically Democratizing Diplomacy

Many of Reagan’s criticisms in the Moscow State University address were veiled. Reagan’s goal was to motivate, not alienate, his audience. Like other speeches throughout Reagan’s summit rhetoric during the previous two-and-one-half-years, Reagan’s Moscow State University address was, as Goodnight notes, an attempt to “spread subversive good will.”⁹³ While Reagan acted as an exogenous agent, diplomatically pressing for greater liberalization from outside the Soviet system, he sought to motivate Soviet citizens to act as endogenous agents, catalysts for change within the system. Although changing the USSR was not Reagan’s overt message, it was his covert goal. Thus, Reagan was careful to strategically balance praise and criticism, and he did so by employing confrontation-conciliation clusters. When his criticism was more direct, it was usually coupled with a statement of praise for Soviet reforms or a diplomatic expression of goodwill. For example, following his criticism of the Soviets’ failure to institutionalize Gorbachev’s reforms and the need to remove “the barriers that keep people apart” (especially the Berlin Wall), Reagan announced his proposal for increased people-to-people exchanges. After voicing his approval for

progress on the INF Treaty and for the Soviet commencement of withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan, Reagan confronted his audience with the need to cease the “continuing destruction and conflicts in many regions of the globe,” specifically, “southern Africa, Ethiopia, Cambodia, the Persian Gulf, and Central America.” Following his statement that the only way for “this globe to live in peace and prosper” is that “nations must renounce, once and for all, the right to an expansionistic foreign policy,” Reagan asserted that Americans abhorred war just as much as did Soviets, and he assured his audience that the United States wanted to overcome old antagonisms and to create new, friendly international relationships.⁹⁴

As Robert Oliver noted in the mid-twentieth century, “Diplomacy is no longer merely government speaking to government; it is government appealing directly to peoples.”⁹⁵ Reagan, in the age of the “rhetorical presidency,”⁹⁶ used the power of rhetorical leadership, with direct appeals for popular pressure on the international stage. As Reagan explained in 1987, he believed, “The United States must speak not just to foreign governments but to their people, engaging in public diplomacy with all the skill and resources that we can muster.”⁹⁷ He used the opportunity at Moscow State University to speak over the heads of Communist Party officials and Soviet media censors directly to the Soviet people.⁹⁸ He discussed “the important issues of the day” with the Soviet people similar to the way he “would to any group of university students in the United States.”⁹⁹ Reagan used his rhetoric of public diplomacy in an attempt to “democratize” the diplomatic process, to open up the issues of international affairs directly to the Soviet people for their deliberation and decision in a manner that Soviet

leadership adamantly avoided. Hence, Reagan followed his address with a twenty-minute question-and-answer session with the students, affording them the opportunity to challenge him through direct questioning from open microphones. Consistent with Mark Ramee's advice on conducting this question-and-answer session, this took place to avoid what Ramee called the usual "Soviet habit" of "send[ing] written questions to the stage, where a host selects and passes presumably representative questions to the speaker."¹⁰⁰

Reagan expressed his hope that "the accumulated spiritual energies of a long silence" would soon "break free" and "that the marvelous sound of a new openness will keep rising through, ringing through, leading to a new world of reconciliation, friendship, and peace." Speaking directly to an audience he characterized as yearning to "break free," involving them in the diplomatic dialogue as their own leaders did not, Reagan positioned himself, and the United States, as a friend of the Soviet people encouraging them to trust his motives and intentions toward their nation. From this rhetorical posture, Reagan allied himself with the Soviet people as agents for institutionalizing change: "We should remember that reform that is not institutionalized will always be insecure. Such freedom will always be looking over its shoulder. A bird on a tether, no matter how long the rope, can always be pulled back."¹⁰¹

CONCLUSION

Journalist David Ignatius argues that "the military posturing and rhetorical excesses of the Reagan era" resulted in "a loss of flexibility and subtlety in foreign policy."¹⁰² However, as the Moscow State University address illustrates, Reagan's

Moscow Summit rhetoric, exhibited both flexibility and subtlety. Once inside the USSR, Reagan attempted to construct a positive image of himself and to establish significant intercultural links between citizens of the U.S. and USSR. In doing so, he tried to remove the external antagonist of which the Soviets were wary. By moderating the international threat, Reagan attempted to assure his audience that Soviets did not need to be as concerned with international affairs as with their intra-national circumstances. That Reagan would use his opportunity at Moscow State University to discuss Soviet domestic affairs is not surprising. As the preceding chapters in this dissertation indicate, Reagan established his interest in Soviet internal affairs as a significant aspect of his diplomatic agenda, especially his interest in human rights and bilateral exchanges, long before his trip to Moscow. Having rhetorically presented himself as a friend of the Soviet people, Reagan sought to engage them in deliberation about their standard of living versus that of other peoples who were experiencing greater political and economic freedoms.

At the time of the Moscow Summit, there was a heated debate going on within the Communist Party over whether to enact reforms and what the best methods for reform might be. Rather than making accusatory statements about the evils of Communism and a socialist economic system, Reagan adopted what scholars Marilyn Young and Michael Launer describe as a “truth-seeking tone.”¹⁰³ He tried to open up the discussion to the Soviet people for their deliberation. As the *Washington Post* observed in an editorial, during the question and answer session following the speech, Reagan provided an opportunity for “direct, unprotected popular challenge and scrutiny

[that] define[s] the American model of accountability.”¹⁰⁴ Rhetorical scholar Jeff Bass notes that when Reagan delivered his foreign policy speeches in the United States, he operated under a “consensus-gaining rationale.”¹⁰⁵ In Reagan’s address at Moscow State University, he adopted this same rationale, seeking to garner support for more progressive reforms in the Soviet Union. In his 1981 Inaugural Address, Reagan told his audience that government was not the solution to problems; “government is the problem.” Self-rule was imperative, Reagan argued, because government by elites was not superior “to government for, by, and of the people.”¹⁰⁶ This sentiment echoed in Reagan’s Moscow State University address. As Goodnight recognizes, Reagan sought to engage his audience in “critical self-questioning.”¹⁰⁷ He encouraged the Soviet people to deliberate and decide whether they merely needed Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and *perestroika* or whether they wanted more fundamental changes that would give them a greater voice in their government and greater self-rule.

Reagan’s rhetoric of subversion was subtle—as subversion usually is. His rhetoric was designed to encourage and exploit a social and political undercurrent of discontent with the Soviet status quo that might eventually result in the rejection of Marxism-Leninism. Thus, Reagan used the language of Marxism-Leninism to delegitimize its prominence in Soviet thinking and to legitimize alternatives for consideration. In this way, Reagan’s rhetoric was as much, or more, about subverting the entrenched ideology of a foreign public as it was about “courtship” and “seducing” a foreign public, a significant quality of the Moscow State University address that Goodnight’s analysis fails to recognize.¹⁰⁸ Reagan’s argument was sophisticated

because it functioned to subvert the Soviet governing system while simultaneously maintaining a harmonious relationship with that declining nuclear superpower. Reagan's rhetorical strategies allowed him to pursue both rhetorical creativity and diplomatic subtlety in an effort to conciliate the Soviet people and their reform-minded leaders while maintaining his subversive rhetorical posture as a foe of Marxism-Leninism.

NOTES

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¹⁶ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Artists and Cultural Leaders in Moscow, May 31, 1988," *Public Papers, 1988*, 681-682.

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- ²³ Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, 295.
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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This dissertation began by outlining the two primary competing interpretations of President Ronald Reagan's second-term rhetoric vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. The more widely-accepted interpretation contends that Reagan reversed his approach to the Soviets. According to this view, Reagan abandoned a hard-line confrontational posture and adopted a conciliatory one, a change that resulted in significant reductions in international tensions, the Geneva Summit meetings, and the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty. The other interpretation conversely claims that Reagan failed to modify his hard-line posture toward the Soviet Union during his presidency. According to this perspective, Reagan's unchanged approach resulted in failure to recognize true change in the USSR and, consequently, the loss of opportunities to promote the liberalization and democratization of the Soviet system.

Although this dissertation has been written within several limitations, it provides compelling evidence to conclude that previously published interpretations of Reagan's second-term rhetorical approach to the Soviet Union should be reconsidered. Although the author of this dissertation has relied on primary documents available in the archives of the Ronald Reagan Library, many of the primary documents related to the Reagan-Gorbachev summits in general and Reagan's summit rhetoric in particular have not yet been made available to the public. Additionally, while three of Reagan's former speechwriters granted interviews for this project, other members of his Cabinet, staff,

and speechwriting department declined interviews.¹ Finally, there are considerable documents available in foreign archives, particularly in the research and information unit of the Public Affairs Center at the Gorbachev Foundation and the archive of the Russian Federation (both of which are housed in Moscow, Russia) that the author of this dissertation was not able to consult. The author has not yet developed a reading knowledge of the Russian language that would make examination of documents in those institutes possible. Therefore, secondary sources have been relied upon to provide interpretation and explanation of important Soviet documents.

Within those limitations, this dissertation provides a close examination of Reagan's rhetoric of public diplomacy surrounding the four U.S.-Soviet summits, 1985-1988, and concludes that Reagan neither reversed his rhetorical approach to the Soviet Union nor failed to alter his Soviet policy rhetoric. Rather, Reagan strategically modified his rhetorical approach by combining confrontational and conciliatory discourse that functioned in tandem to promote anti-Communist objectives that he had established as his Soviet policy as early as March 1983. While Reagan extended the use of confrontational rhetoric from his first term into his second, that rhetoric was often less strident (e.g., avoiding the use of first-term phrases like "evil empire"). However, Reagan continued to focus his public discourse on Soviet policies and practices that he wanted the Soviet government to change. In his summit rhetoric: (1) Reagan selected facts about historical and contemporary Soviet policies (e.g., severe restrictions on the freedoms of Soviet people, Soviet invasions of Eastern European nations and Afghanistan, and so forth). (2) He ascribed meaning to them (usually describing Soviet

policies and practices as obstacles to world peace and to improvements in U.S.-Soviet relations). And (3) he thereby linguistically constructed a political “reality” that was hostile toward the Soviet government. Reagan’s hostility toward the Soviet system, however, did not prevent him from employing conciliatory rhetoric. He did so in pursuit of anti-Soviet objectives. That is, while he often employed the language of détente and rapprochement, Reagan’s conciliatory discourse subsumed his anti-Soviet objectives in ways that made those objectives less obvious. According to political scientists William D. Anderson and Sterling J. Kerneck, during Reagan’s first term he viewed “the reform or collapse of the communist system within the Soviet Union and its satellites” as “the only real long-term solution to [the United States’] key security problem.”² What changed in Reagan’s second term was not his pursuit of those first-term policy objectives, but rather the rhetorical means he employed to promote those ends.

REAGAN’S SUMMIT RHETORIC: A SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

Reflecting on Reagan’s legacy in U.S.-Soviet relations, political scientist and the Secretary of State in President George W. Bush’s second administration, Condoleezza Rice, observes: “In many ways he re-defined the terms of the debate and set new points of departure for negotiation in the four agenda areas that he defined: human rights; regional conflicts; arms control; and cultural and scientific exchange.”³ Rice makes an important and easily overlooked point, which the rhetorical analysis in this dissertation emphasizes and elucidates. Reagan’s four-part agenda was more than what Rice notes were “new points of departure for negotiation” in private summit meetings with

Gorbachev. In promoting his four-part agenda, Reagan was also engaged in more than what rhetorical scholar Robert Oliver describes as “jockeying for advantage in wording the agenda” for an international summit.⁴ In re-defining the “terms” of the debate with his four-part agenda, Reagan symbolically constructed a new situation, a new context, within which he wanted U.S.-Soviet dialogue to take place. As rhetorical scholar Richard Vatz explains, “A prominent or high-ethos rhetor may create his own salient situations by virtue of speaking out on them. To say the President is speaking out on a pressing issue is redundant.”⁵ In linguistically constructing a different context for international dialogue, Reagan’s summit rhetoric also promoted a new framework within which the international community might understand U.S.-Soviet affairs.

From this perspective, what President Reagan chose to discuss in his summit rhetoric was as significant as how he discussed it. Reagan could have chosen issues other than bilateral relations, human rights, and regional conflicts to broaden the U.S.-Soviet dialogue beyond issues related to nuclear weapons. Reagan could have chosen not to mention any of those issues publicly and could have pursued them only in private talks with Gorbachev. He could have chosen, as Gorbachev attempted to persuade Reagan, not to focus on any issue—publicly or privately—other than nuclear arms. If Reagan had chosen any of these or other possible options, the context and the content of his public discourse would have been different. It is important, therefore, to re-visit the nature of the context Reagan linguistically constructed, the objectives he pursued within this context, and the rhetorical strategies and tactics he employed.

Reagan promoted a context for U.S.-Soviet dialogue that was fundamentally hostile toward Gorbachev and the Soviet Communist Party. By repeatedly emphasizing the issues of people-to-people exchanges, human rights, and regional conflicts, Reagan intentionally made salient those issues on which the Soviets historically were vulnerable and defensive. As Chapter II indicates, Gorbachev's earliest statements as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union revealed his opposition to Reagan's perspective on human rights and regional conflicts. While Gorbachev may have initially opposed Reagan's emphasis on those issues because of Marxist-Leninist doctrines, traditional Soviet policies, and/or historical Soviet practices, there is likely another reason for Gorbachev's opposition. The broader context Reagan advanced for U.S.-Soviet dialogue was not conducive to Gorbachev's portrayal of a positive image of the USSR. Stated differently, the non-arms issues that Reagan publicly challenged Gorbachev to address complicated Gorbachev's efforts to portray a positive, peaceful image of the Soviet Union through his new style of Soviet public diplomacy and his numerous arms reduction proposals.

Reagan used this rhetorical context to pursue proposals that were hostile to Soviet Communism. He claimed that he promoted a broader framework for U.S.-Soviet discussions in order to advance "peace and freedom." By offering this alternative perspective of the ends that he believed the U.S. and the Soviet Union should be pursuing, Reagan directed some attention away from Gorbachev's promotion of "peace and disarmament." In this sense, Reagan at least partially obstructed Gorbachev's rhetorical efforts to restrict U.S.-Soviet dialogue exclusively to nuclear arms issues.

Reagan rhetorically sought to induce the Soviet government: (1) to open its closed political system and its society, (2) to demonstrate respect for the human rights of its citizens, and (3) to end the war in Afghanistan and cease its involvement in conflicts in Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua. These goals were subsumed under two larger anti-Soviet policy objectives established in National Security Decision Directive Number 75 (Directive 75) in March 1983: (1) to roll back what Reagan maintained was Soviet expansionism, and (2) to promote the liberalization and democratization of the Soviet system according to Western standards.⁶

In pursuit of these objectives, Reagan exercised rhetorical flexibility in both the amount of emphasis that he placed on each aspect of his agenda as well as in the language and arguments he employed to advance his perspective on specific issues. Reagan's chief speechwriter, Tony Dolan, claims that "Reagan's speeches did not get less anti-Communist as the Reagan era progressed, they got more anti-Communist. And more systematically anti-Communist." Dolan argues that even though Reagan did not "repeat the 'Evil Empire' speech every third week," his rhetoric became "systematically and more frequently critical of the Soviets"⁷ While this dissertation provides evidence that supports Dolan's claims, it also presents evidence that Reagan's summit rhetoric became more conciliatory over time. However, as this dissertation also demonstrates, Reagan's conciliatory rhetoric functioned as an additional rather than an alternative means for him to promote changes in Soviet policies and practices. The following sections both summarize the findings of this dissertation concerning Reagan's rhetoric about his four summit meetings with the Soviets and compare his rhetoric from

summit to summit. The objective of this discussion is to provide a comparative perspective on how Reagan's rhetoric progressively became both more confrontational and more conciliatory in response to each summit, especially on the issues of human rights and regional conflicts.

Geneva Summit Rhetoric

In his rhetoric surrounding the November 1985 Geneva Summit, Reagan employed a binary rhetorical strategy of conciliation and confrontation that: (1) countered Gorbachev's public arguments promoting "peace and disarmament," (2) allowed Reagan to advance his own goals of "peace and freedom," and (3) avoided legitimizing Gorbachev's claims that Reagan was intransigent on issues related to nuclear disarmament. According to Reagan, he was willing to reach new arms agreements with the Soviet Union, but he argued that arms reductions were not the primary means of reducing international tensions and achieving world peace. In a claim that he repeated often, Reagan asserted that nations do not distrust each other because they are armed, but they arm themselves because they distrust each other. Reagan focused on mistrust and the actions he claimed were necessary in order to reduce that mistrust as a preliminary to formal agreements reducing each state's nuclear weapons.

Although Reagan employed *détente*-like language to promote a relaxation of U.S.-Soviet tensions and improved relations, he reformulated the conventional Cold War rhetoric of rapprochement by subsuming within that conventional rhetoric the advocacy of objectives that were hostile to the legitimacy and viability of the Soviet Communist

Party and the Soviet system. For example, Reagan's promotion of direct people-to-people exchanges as a means of improving U.S.-Soviet relations functioned on two levels, promoting world peace as well as a hostile perspective of Soviet policies and practices. From one perspective, this was a conciliatory appeal for U.S.-Soviet cooperation to build trust between citizens in the United States and the Soviet Union that could serve as a foundation upon which to build international peace. From another perspective, however, Reagan's arguments countered Gorbachev's claims of a new openness in Soviet society by confronting the Soviet government about its repressive grip on the lives of Soviet citizens. Reagan's conciliatory appeals allowed him to posture himself (as the representative of the people of the United States) as seeking to prove America's peaceful intentions toward the people of the Soviet Union through increased direct contact. While Reagan's confrontational summit rhetoric was not as dramatic as it would be in his June 1987 "Tear Down this Wall" speech at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin, nonetheless, in his summit rhetoric he publicly challenged Gorbachev to remove the physical and legal barriers on ordinary Soviet citizens' lives that prevented their contact with the world outside the USSR. Reagan's rhetoric suggested that failure by Soviet leaders to allow such increased contact would indicate their unwillingness to improve U.S.-Soviet relations and, thus, their unwillingness to work toward establishing world peace.

In discussing the controversial issue of human rights, Reagan's modulated rhetoric appeared to be a concession to the Soviet government's desire not to engage in public dialogue about what it regarded as its internal affairs. Rather than avoid the issue,

Reagan strategically discussed Soviet human rights practices as an external international affair related to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. He argued that the Soviets were not fulfilling their obligations to the international community under the Helsinki Act. This approach allowed Reagan to perform several rhetorical functions. First, it legitimized international public discussion of Soviet domestic practices. Second, it encouraged continued opposition by Soviet citizens to the Communist Party's human rights practices. Third, it de-legitimized Soviet criticism that Reagan's discussions of human rights constituted interference in Soviet internal affairs. Fourth, it countered Gorbachev's public emphasis on the need for new international nuclear arms treaties by accusing the Soviets of non-compliance with an existing treaty. Within this rhetorical context, Reagan encouraged his domestic and foreign audiences to view the Soviet government as an untrustworthy treaty partner and a threat to world peace.

On the topic of regional conflicts, Reagan's dualistic rhetorical approach created positive and negative incentives for the Soviets to cease their direct and indirect involvement in Third World conflicts, especially Afghanistan. Reagan advocated a regional peace plan that he characterized as a possible joint U.S.-Soviet partnership to help end conflicts raging in several regions around the globe. This approach allowed Reagan to maintain a conciliatory, peace-seeking posture while he rhetorically challenged the Soviets' traditional Marxist-Leninist-based rationale for so-called wars of national liberation. Reagan's confrontational language in his characterizations of the Soviets' actions in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, and other troubled regions cast the

Soviets as increasing human suffering, perpetuating superpower suspicion and tension, and impeding world peace.

Reykjavík Summit Rhetoric

In contrast to his Geneva Summit rhetoric, Reagan made fewer public statements surrounding the October 1986 Reykjavík Summit and his discourse was more confrontational than conciliatory. Reagan became more suspicious of his Soviet counterpart during the eleven months between their first and second meetings, and this suspicion likely contributed to the increased confrontational tone in Reagan's Reykjavík Summit rhetoric. Reagan publicly repeated claims he had made in his Geneva Summit discourse that the USSR was violating international trust by failing to comply with the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. In making this argument, Reagan exploited the Zakharov-Daniloff-Orlov affair. From Reagan's rhetorical perspective, the events surrounding these individuals pointed to larger problems in the Soviet Union: a lack of respect for the basic rights of the individual and duplicity in international affairs.

Reagan characterized current Soviet human rights abuses as the continuation of a historical pattern that resulted from the Communist Party's reliance on Marxist-Leninist ideology as the basis for the Soviet system. He discussed the Soviet presence in Afghanistan as an example of Soviet human rights abuses, and he compared the Soviet invasion of that country to previous Soviet invasions of East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. By accusing the Soviet government of an ideologically based historical pattern of human rights abuses, Reagan suggested that it was doubtful that Soviet

practices could genuinely and significantly change if Soviet ideology remained unchanged. He attempted rhetorically to burden Gorbachev with the need to deny Soviet human rights violations and defend Soviet human rights practices within the context of the USSR's involvement in the Helsinki Final Act. But, Reagan's rhetorical strategy also encouraged Gorbachev to choose an alternative option: to make significant changes in Soviet human rights practices that could demonstrate to the international community that the USSR was a trustworthy treaty partner.

By strategically linking respect for human rights and world peace, Reagan argued in essence that it did not matter to him how many new arms proposals Gorbachev offered. According to Reagan, new treaties would only be possible if they were based on mutual international trust. World peace could only be achieved when the Soviets demonstrated respect both for individual rights and international treaties. Reagan's rhetoric cast doubt on Soviet integrity in international affairs even as Gorbachev emphasized the need for new international agreements as the only path to world peace. Reagan justified his uncompromising position on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) within this broader context of U.S.-Soviet relations, not merely within the context of nuclear arms negotiations.

From Reagan's rhetorical perspective, SDI was a technological indemnity against risks the United States faced from a Soviet government that abused human rights and was duplicitous in its international affairs. In that rhetorical situation, SDI was not Gorbachev's most pressing issue. The mistrust Reagan encouraged within the Western world was Gorbachev's greatest obstacle to new arms agreements. Unless Gorbachev

effectively addressed the reasons Reagan claimed for Western mistrust of the USSR, Reagan could continue to publicly promulgate a negative image of the Soviet Union as justification for both hesitancy in establishing new nuclear disarmament agreements and urgency in developing SDI. Whatever Reagan's long-term commitment was to the Strategic Defense Initiative as an actual defense weapon, he also used SDI rhetorically as a tool to promote human rights reforms within the Soviet Union.

In his rhetoric surrounding both the Geneva and Reykjavík Summits, Reagan discussed Soviet human rights practices vis-à-vis the Helsinki Final Act. In contrast to his Geneva Summit discourse, however, in Reagan's Reykjavík rhetoric he did not publicly express any hesitation about making Soviet human rights practices a central issue in U.S.-Soviet affairs. Indeed, Reagan made the issue of human rights prominent in his speeches that were most likely to receive the greatest domestic and international attention, and he extended his criticism beyond Soviet non-compliance with the Helsinki Act. He included Soviet actions in Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua in what he described as a historical pattern of Soviet human rights violations similar to the Soviets' treatment of East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia earlier in the twentieth century. Where Reagan had spoken in general terms in his Geneva Summit rhetoric, in his Reykjavik Summit discourse he criticized specific Soviet human rights violations as well as the Soviet Communist Party's Marxist-Leninist ideology that Reagan claimed sanctioned those violations.

Washington Summit Rhetoric

Fourteen months after Reykjavík, Reagan and Gorbachev met for a third summit in December 1987 in Washington, D.C. to sign the first U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms accord in eight years and the first arms reduction treaty in Cold War history, the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty. Reagan maintained the dual confrontation-conciliation rhetorical strategy he had employed in his previous summit discourse. His rhetoric was both more confrontational and more conciliatory than it had been surrounding either of the two previous summits. Reagan characterized INF as a victory for NATO (rather than a cooperative achievement based on mutual U.S.-Soviet concessions). In doing so, he perpetuated his adversarial view of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. This allowed him to sustain a confrontational negotiation posture from which he continued to press Gorbachev to address non-nuclear arms aspects of the four-part agenda, particularly regional conflicts and human rights.

Reagan complemented this confrontational approach by rhetorically embracing Gorbachev's leadership of the USSR. Ironically, Reagan's conciliatory rhetorical embrace of Gorbachev functioned to promote his hard-line criticism of Soviet affairs. Reagan encouraged the continuation of reforms inside the Soviet Union. He attempted to promote greater active support for Gorbachev from Soviet liberals while he attempted to avoid inciting increased opposition to Gorbachev from Soviet Communist hard-liners. Reagan rhetorically embraced Gorbachev as a Soviet reformer, praised his reforms, and suggested that changes in the USSR could have positive international implications. At the same time, he also increased his public rhetorical pressure on Gorbachev to withdraw

from Afghanistan and to increase the implementation and legal institutionalization of greater human rights reforms in the Soviet system.

Reagan promoted a rapid withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. He described the situation there as evidence that the Soviet government continued to be aggressively expansionistic even in the face of military and political failure. This characterization cast Soviet leadership as: (1) indifferent to human suffering, (2) resistant to human aspirations for freedom and independence, and (3) intransigent on the creation of regional and, thus, world peace. By employing this rhetorical strategy, Reagan likely hoped to exacerbate the discontent among Soviet citizens who had begun to view the war in Afghanistan negatively. Reagan's rhetoric sought to promote both increased international and Soviet domestic disapproval of the continuation of the Soviet war in Afghanistan and pressure for a Soviet withdrawal.

Reagan's rhetoric about Afghanistan surrounding the Washington Summit was both more confrontational and more conciliatory than it had been surrounding previous summits. For example, in his Geneva Summit rhetoric in late 1985 Reagan had emphasized a joint U.S.-Soviet effort to pursue a regional peace plan that included Afghanistan along with Cambodia, Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua. In his 1986 Reykjavik Summit rhetoric, Reagan's discourse was more confrontational as he described Soviet actions in Afghanistan as human rights violations and suggested that Soviet actions in that country as well as in Angola and Nicaragua were the continuation of an ideologically based historical pattern of international human rights violations. By December 1987 Reagan no longer emphasized his 1985 peace initiative. In what

appeared to be a progression from the accusations in his Reykjavík Summit rhetoric that the Soviets were violently abusing the human rights of the people of Afghanistan, in his Washington Summit rhetoric Reagan publicly insisted that the Soviets immediately announce a withdrawal date and begin their complete military and political withdrawal from Afghanistan. This insistence on an immediate Soviet withdrawal constituted an ultimatum, a rhetorical approach that Oliver claims diplomatic speech usually avoids.⁸

Writing at a much earlier point in the Cold War, Oliver asserts that, “Diplomacy seeks a formula that will give one’s own side what it wants while clothing the grant in language which the other side can represent to its home audience as a virtual victory.”⁹ Perhaps that is one reason Reagan modulated his increased confrontational tone surrounding the Washington Summit. As Chapter V observes, in November 1987 Reagan rhetorically signaled to Soviet leaders that the West would not gloat over a Soviet “retreat” if Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan. Although such conciliatory rhetoric significantly angered many of Reagan’s most conservative political supporters in the United States, it also offered Gorbachev a rationale, a rhetorical “clothing,” that he might use with his domestic audiences to justify a Soviet pullout from Afghanistan.

In addressing human rights in his Washington Summit rhetoric, Reagan re-framed Gorbachev’s conception of *glasnost* and current reforms in the USSR within a broader view of Soviet history. Discussing *glasnost* within this broader context allowed Reagan to promote several important aspects of his diplomatic rhetoric. First, this approach offered justification for Reagan’s argument that the West should not judge the nature and motives of Soviet leaders based only on current events in Soviet society.

Second, this approach allowed Reagan to praise the changes Gorbachev had implemented while concomitantly questioning whether Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* would eventually prove to be anything more than another temporary period of modest reforms that the Soviets would once again subsequently reverse. Third, it allowed Reagan to emphasize to Gorbachev the West's view of the need for him to implement greater reforms and to institutionalize those changes in order to prevent their easy reversal. In the months surrounding the U.S.-Soviet summits in 1985 and 1986, Reagan had addressed Soviet human rights issues as a matter related to an international treaty and international trust. By 1987, he called much more specifically and emphatically for greater Soviet human rights reforms and the institutionalization into law of those reforms. As Chapter V observes, Reagan rhetorically signaled to Soviet liberals that continued reforms had the potential to result in a relaxation of international tensions. As with his comments about the situation in Afghanistan, Reagan's conciliatory rhetoric on human rights provided Gorbachev with a defense he might use to justify his reforms to his Soviet audiences.

Moscow Summit Rhetoric

In the five months between the Washington and Moscow Summits, significant changes continued to take place in Soviet domestic and foreign policies. While at the Moscow Summit, Reagan directed his public rhetoric toward encouraging the continued liberalization and democratization of the USSR. However, Reagan's rhetoric was less explicitly confrontational and, instead, more subtly subversive as he continued to employ

his dualistic rhetorical strategy. Reagan's address at Moscow State University was the zenith of his summit rhetoric. On May 31, 1988 Reagan finally received the opportunity he had sought for nearly six years: the chance to speak within the Soviet Union directly to the Soviet people. This opportunity to promote freedom, democracy, and capitalism within the USSR, which seemed highly unlikely prior to December 1987, presented Reagan with significant challenges. He had to effectively craft a discourse that would allow him to promote his own anti-Communist objectives without alienating his Marxist-Leninist audience members. He needed to effectively balance his praise of Gorbachev's previous reforms with criticism that might encourage greater reforms. Reagan needed to encourage the institutionalization of those changes without stimulating a Soviet backlash that might result in a pause or cessation in the implementation of new reforms.

Reagan continued to use a dual confrontation-conciliation rhetorical strategy that depicted him and the people of the United States as friends of the Soviet people as well as supporters of Gorbachev's leadership. At the same time, Reagan continued to advance his ideological hostility toward Soviet Communism. He utilized four rhetorical strategies as he sought to accomplish those conflicting goals: (1) he justified the Soviet people's possible rejection of Marxist-Leninist philosophies; (2) he offered alternatives to communism and socialism; (3) he projected a positive image of the U.S.'s motives toward the Soviets; and, (4) he democratized the diplomatic process by engaging Soviets directly and encouraging them to engage their government more directly in a dialogue about Soviet policies and practices.

While Reagan considered Communism evil and destined for “the ash heap of history,”¹⁰ stating that belief explicitly to his audience at Moscow State University would not have been a very prudent rhetorical strategy. Instead, Reagan subtly encouraged his audience to reject Marxist-Leninism by leading his listeners in comparing the political and economic conditions outside the USSR with those inside the Soviet Union. Reagan’s rhetoric attempted to create a rhetorical sense of the inability, rather than the inevitability, of the current Soviet political and economic systems to lead to the quality of life that Marxist-Leninism promised.

In contrast, Reagan promoted capitalism and freedom. He offered an entrepreneurial spirit and a genuine commitment to individual rights as the alternatives to a command economy controlled by Soviet Communists. He strategically equated freedom with progress. Reagan’s Soviet audience lived in a collectivized society and labored in a centrally planned economy. Adapting to that audience, Reagan used Marxist-Leninist language to encourage those who heard him to compare their standard of living to others around the globe, particularly people who lived in what the West called freedom and who were experiencing economic and material progress. Reagan’s arguments subtly and subversively predicated the achievement of progress within the USSR on a rejection of Marxist-Leninist teachings.

In order to encourage Soviets to focus on their domestic circumstances and their need for economic improvements, and in order to focus less on the international Cold War conflict, Reagan attempted to diminish the idea that the United States was a threat to the Soviet people. He focused on creating identification between Soviets and

Americans by emphasizing their common ethnic ties, promoting increased contact between the peoples of both nations, and asserting a common abhorrence of war. That rhetorical approach aimed at de-legitimizing the portrayal within the USSR of the United States as an imperialist aggressor that intended to perpetuate the Cold War.

Finally, by speaking directly to the Soviet people in a deliberative manner about the values and benefits of competing political and economic systems, Reagan sought to democratize the diplomacy process. Reagan's speech at Moscow State University embodied what he had called for in his previous summit rhetoric: direct contact between Soviet and American citizens in order for Americans and Soviets to learn directly from each other about the others' beliefs, political systems, and quality of life. In his Moscow State University address, Reagan appealed over the heads of Communist Party officials and media censors and spoke directly to the Soviet people not only as President of the United States but also as an American citizen. The issues Reagan addressed in his speech, the arguments he employed, and especially his direct dialogue with his auditors in the question-and-answer session following his speech opened up the issues of international affairs directly to the Soviet people for their deliberation in a manner that Soviet leadership had steadfastly avoided. Thus, Reagan engaged in a "people-to-people exchange" of information in a way similar to what he had proposed for much larger numbers of ordinary Soviet and American citizens. Rhetorically, Reagan allied himself and the Soviet people as agents for advancing and institutionalizing changes within the Soviet Union, changes that Reagan hoped would eventually lead to the collapse of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions can be drawn about Reagan's rhetorical approach to the Soviets during his second presidential administration (1985-1989). The first is that Fischer is correct in recognizing the détente-like language of rapprochement that Reagan utilized early during that period. However, she is incorrect when she argues that Reagan's use of conciliatory language reflected "a wholesale reversal from the administration's initial confrontational posture toward Moscow."¹¹ Reagan's use of détente-like language in his summit rhetoric constituted a modification of the means he employed in continued pursuit of anti-Soviet policy objectives established during his first term in office. As this dissertation demonstrates, Reagan advanced a rhetorical framework for U.S.-Soviet dialogue that was hostile to Gorbachev and Soviet policies and practices. Reagan's summit rhetoric promoted objectives that were inimical to the legitimacy and viability of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet system, and he often did so with explicitly confrontational language and arguments. If Reagan had "abandoned" his "hard-line approach to Moscow," as Fischer claims,¹² or made a "turnabout" in his Soviet policy, as Sigelman asserts,¹³ or shifted from despising détente to embracing that approach to the Soviets, as Bell suggests,¹⁴ it would have been counterproductive for him to have employed the rhetorical approach that this dissertation demonstrates he used.

Also erroneous is the view advanced by Dauber and O'Donnell that Reagan failed to modify his rhetorical approach to Moscow. While much of Reagan's summit rhetoric was hostile to Soviet Communism, he combined his confrontational rhetoric

with conciliatory discourse. Dauber and O'Donnell overlook the conciliatory aspects of Reagan's public discourse and, consequently, fail to recognize the modification in Reagan's rhetoric and the functions those changes served. The reformulation of Reagan's rhetoric was not the result of a failure to recognize the opportunities for change within the Soviet Union, but rather an effort to promote those changes while subsuming Reagan's anti-Communist objectives within his conciliatory rhetoric. Reagan recognized, publicly acknowledged, rhetorically embraced, and encouraged greater support for Gorbachev's reforms. As the chapters of this dissertation on the Washington Summit and Moscow Summit indicate, Reagan had significant strategic reasons to support Gorbachev's reform efforts. Many of Gorbachev's reforms were consistent with changes Reagan had called for in his rhetoric surrounding previous summits. Reagan's Washington and Moscow Summit rhetoric suggests that he and his speechwriters recognized the necessity of modifying his rhetorical approach in order to take advantage of new and significant opportunities to promote the liberalization and democratization of the Soviet system.

SPEECH IN PRESIDENTIAL SUMMITRY: REAGAN'S RHETORICAL ROLE AS DIPLOMAT-IN-CHIEF

This dissertation has explored Ronald Reagan's summit rhetoric. The four case studies in the preceding chapters demonstrate how Reagan integrated seemingly incompatible rhetorical approaches—confrontation and conciliation—in pursuit of seemingly incompatible foreign policy goals—seeking to undermine the Soviet system

while attempting to maintain a harmonious relationship with its leaders and the peoples of the USSR. The close examination of that rhetorical process seeks to contribute not only to the understanding of Reagan's summit rhetoric but also to academic research on the role of speech in diplomacy and the rhetorical role of the president as diplomat-in-chief of the United States. As part of the tradition of speech in diplomacy, Reagan's summit rhetoric shares the characteristics that Robert T. Oliver,¹⁵ Ben C. Limb,¹⁶ R. Smith Simpson,¹⁷ and Nanci Rebecca Wintrub Gerstman¹⁸ have identified in the discourse of diplomats at the ministerial and ambassadorial levels as well as at lower-levels of government. However, Reagan's rhetoric in his role as diplomat-in-chief also possesses characteristics dissimilar from those identified in previous scholarship on the speech of diplomacy.

Confrontational and Conciliatory Rhetoric

Oliver suggests that the diplomat's rhetoric must be caustic at times and conciliatory at others, depending on the needs of the situation and the nature of the policy being discussed.¹⁹ Reagan's summit rhetoric is consistent with Oliver's observation. For example, Reagan's rhetoric surrounding the Reykjavík Summit was primarily confrontational in nature with less emphasis on conciliatory appeals. However, there were also times when Reagan's rhetoric was simultaneously confrontational and conciliatory. For example, when he called for U.S.-Soviet cooperation to reduce international tensions by creating greater opportunities for increased direct contact between American and Soviet citizens, statements that appeared

conciliatory in nature were also decidedly confrontational. Reagan's particular locutions promoted U.S.-Soviet rapprochement, but the means suggested for achieving that rapprochement represented an attack on the traditional Soviet practices of isolationism and secrecy. Thus, the diplomat-in-chief's rhetoric can be both conciliatory and confrontational on the same occasion, in the same speech, about the same issue, and within a single locution.

Rhetorical scholar Martin J. Medhurst's analysis of President Dwight Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech delivered to the United Nations General Assembly in 1953—unquestionably a diplomatic speech in a diplomatic setting—demonstrates how a president's employment of "both implicit and explicit argumentative techniques" can function as "linguistic deception and strategic posturing at the highest levels of government."²⁰ Although Reagan's summit rhetoric often pursued similar goals, his rhetoric utilized a different approach—combining caustic, or confrontational, and conciliatory argumentative appeals. Thus, Reagan's discourse demonstrates the possibility of combining appeals that are dissimilar in nature (i.e., confrontation and conciliation) without inconsistency or contradiction. Thus, the rhetorically-skilled diplomat-in-chief is not restricted to choosing between either one or the other rhetorical extremes, nor does a president need to shift back and forth between the two. Rhetorical appeals dissimilar in nature can be employed harmoniously in pursuit of the same end(s), and if they are utilized effectively, the rhetor can strategically broaden the possibilities for types of arguments, a skill that is necessary for addressing and adapting to the ever-changing contingencies in political and diplomatic affairs.

In addition to broadening the available argumentative possibilities, the skillful employment of a dualistic rhetorical approach that combines confrontation and conciliation can also expand the appeal of a president's message. As Oliver explains, diplomats seek "the widest possible acceptance for proposed programs."²¹ The introduction to this dissertation noted that Reagan's hard-line rhetoric during his first term resulted in the criticism that he was exacerbating U.S.-Soviet relations. Reagan made his confrontational rhetoric in his second term less strident, and he subsumed his anti-Communist objectives within conciliatory discourse. Such rhetorical modifications likely appealed to a wider audience, including political liberals in the United States and Western Europe.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The evidence and analysis in this dissertation suggest that the conclusions reached are significant, especially given the paucity of scholarship on presidential summit rhetoric, but the present study also creates possibilities for future research. While this dissertation provides a window into presidential summit rhetoric during the Cold War, the frame of view only encompasses three-and-a-half years near the end of that international conflict. In the future, scholars may want to examine presidential rhetoric surrounding the other U.S.-Soviet summits, 1961-1979 and 1989-1990, or broaden the scope to include the multi-lateral conferences of the 1950s. Studies similar to this dissertation could enlarge scholarly understanding of presidential summit rhetoric by examining individual presidents or conducting comparative studies to provide a better

understanding of the similarities and differences between Reagan's summit rhetoric and, for example, Richard Nixon's or George H. W. Bush's summit rhetoric. Given that President George H. W. Bush served as Vice President during both terms of the Reagan presidency, a comparison of their summit rhetorics might reveal continuities and discontinuities and improve our understanding of how U.S. presidents used summit rhetoric at the end of the Cold War. Such future research will be aided by archival materials on the Cold War that are becoming available to scholars.²²

Additionally, students of presidential Cold War rhetoric may want to examine Reagan's first-term Soviet policy discourse to explore his possible use of a dualistic confrontation-conciliation rhetorical approach 1981-1984. Did Reagan only utilize that approach during his second term or is there evidence that he also employed it during his first term? If Reagan did not always employ a binary rhetorical strategy, when did he begin using that approach to the USSR and what were the circumstances that may have influenced the shift from primarily confrontational discourse to the combination of confrontation and conciliation?

Finally, there are possibilities for international collaborations on scholarship examining the summit rhetoric of both U.S. Presidents and General Secretaries of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union surrounding a single summit or group of summits. For example, a study of John F. Kennedy's rhetoric and Nikita Khrushchev's rhetoric surrounding the 1961 U.S.-Soviet summit in Vienna, Austria could provide a more complete understanding of the international discourse surrounding that summit.

Apart from the possibilities of future research, this dissertation on Ronald Reagan's summit rhetoric suggests that a president can wield power through rhetoric. Rhetoric helps a diplomat-in-chief to manage relations between the United States and other nations by describing U.S. policies, characterizing the objectives of those policies, and giving accounts of the motives for those policies. Rhetoric may also provide a president with the ability to adapt to changes in international affairs without necessarily having to change U.S. foreign policies. This dissertation suggests that because of his use of rhetoric, Reagan did not have to abandon his policy efforts to undermine Soviet Communism and to reverse its expansion despite significant changes in the Soviet Union between 1985 and 1988. The findings of this dissertation also suggest that scholars may want to reconsider Reagan's larger rhetorical and diplomatic legacy in bringing the Cold War to an end.

NOTES

¹ Among those who worked with Reagan that declined interviews were Secretary of State George P. Shultz, director of White House communications Patrick J. Buchanan, chief speechwriter Anthony "Tony" Dolan, and speechwriter Clark Judge.

² William D. Anderson and Sterling J. Kerneck, "How 'Realistic' is Reagan's Diplomacy?" *Political Science Quarterly* 100 (1985): 405.

³ Condoleezza Rice, "U.S.-Soviet Relations," in *Looking Back on the Reagan Presidency*, ed. Larry Berman (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1990), 71.

- ⁴ Robert T. Oliver, "Speech in International Affairs," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38 (1952): 175.
- ⁵ Richard E. Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 6 (1973): 160-161.
- ⁶ Ronald Reagan, "National Security Decision Directive Number 75: U.S. Relations with the USSR, January 17, 1983," in *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, ed. Christopher Simpson (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 255.
- ⁷ Martin J. Medhurst, "Writing Speeches for Ronald Reagan: An Interview with Tony Dolan," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 1 (1998): 251.
- ⁸ Oliver, "Speech in International Affairs," 174.
- ⁹ Oliver, "Speech in International Affairs," 174.
- ¹⁰ Ronald Reagan, "Address to Members of the British Parliament, June 8, 1982," *Public Papers, 1982*, 747.
- ¹¹ Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 3, 13, 14-15, 32-50, 14, 49.
- ¹² Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 14.
- ¹³ Sigelman, "Disarming the Opposition," 38.
- ¹⁴ Coral Bell, *The Reagan Paradox: American Foreign Policy in the 1980s* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 73.
- ¹⁵ Robert T. Oliver, "The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research," *Central States Speech Journal* 15 (1950): 24-28; Robert T. Oliver, "Role of Speech in Diplomacy," *Southern Speech Journal* 16 (1951): 207-213; Oliver, "Speech in International Affairs,"

171-176; Robert T. Oliver, "The Rhetoric of Power in Diplomatic Conferences," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 40 (1954): 288-292; Robert T. Oliver, "The Various Rhetorics of International Relations," *Western Journal of Speech* 25 (1961): 213-221.

¹⁶ Ben C. Limb, "Speech: The Life of a Diplomat," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 43 (1957): 55-61.

¹⁷ R. Smith Simpson, "Reflections on Twentieth Century Diplomacy," *Journal of Communication* 5 (1955): 131-135; R. Smith Simpson, "Speech and Diplomacy," *Today's Speech* 5 (1957): 13-17.

¹⁸ Nanci Rebecca Wintrub Gerstman, "The People: An Added Dimension in Diplomatic Speaking," *Today's Speech* 19 (1962): 19-20, 33.

¹⁹ Oliver, "The Speech of Diplomacy as a Field of Research," 26, 27.

²⁰ Martin J. Medhurst, "Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' Speech: A Case Study in the Strategic use of Language," *Communication Monographs* 54 (1987): 219.

²¹ Oliver, "Rhetoric of Power in Diplomatic Conferences," 289.

²² For example, in 2006 the National Security Archive, an independent, non-governmental research institute housed in the library of George Washington University in Washington, D.C., announced that it had acquired Soviet documents related to the USSR's views of the Moscow Helsinki Group (a human rights organization founded by Yuri Orlov and other Russians in 1976) and the KGB's efforts to shut down the group, as well as the first installment of an English translation of the diary of Anatoly Chernyaev. Chernyaev was one of Mikhail Gorbachev's top policy advisers during the last years before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The National Security Archive's

installment of Chernyaev's diary only covers the year 1985, but in the future additional material from Chernyaev's private notes are likely to become available. In its entirety, Chernyaev's diary reportedly spans the years 1972-1991.

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