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Public Papers

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Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on Assistance to the Soviet Union and the Republics

1991-12-12

We are witnessing dramatic and historic events in the Soviet Union and the Republics. The collapse of communism there is of global importance and gives the Republics the opportunity to move rapidly toward democracy and market economies. These developments pave the way for the integration of the Soviet Union and the Republics into the community of democratic nations and the strengthening of a more peaceful and stable international order.

The world has a vital interest in the success of this transition. The United States is especially well-positioned because of its heritage and traditions to make a substantial contribution by building on its existing technical cooperation efforts as well as medical and food assistance programs. The United States strongly supports reform at all levels of government and will focus its assistance efforts on those who stand for fundamental political and economic reform, including the establishment of democratic systems based on principles of the rule of law and individual freedoms, respect for internationally recognized human rights, economic reform based on market principles, respect for international law and obligations, and adherence to responsible security policies.

To be effective, programs of all U.S. Government agencies must be carefully coordinated internally, and with the programs of other countries and international institutions. It is also critically important to ensure that the energy and resources of individual Americans, private voluntary organizations, and businesses be fully integrated into our efforts, wherever possible.

Accordingly, the President has appointed Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger to be the Coordinator of United States assistance to the Soviet Union and the Republics. In that position, Secretary Eagleburger will be responsible for overseeing and coordinating all assistance programs and activities which pertain to the Soviet Union and the Republics.

The President has also named Michael J. Boskin, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, Donald Atwood, Deputy Secretary of Defense, John E. Robson, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, Ann M. Veneman, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Ronald W. Roskens, Administrator of the Agency for International Development, as Deputy Coordinators.

The United States will focus its assistance to the Soviet Union and the Republics on several priority areas: food distribution and marketing, energy and environment, financial and economic institution building, democratic institution building, and defense conversion. U.S. assistance also will be aimed at promoting increased trade and investment through programs designed to encourage the involvement of U.S. businesses in the emerging private sector of the Soviet Union and the Republics.