

Unofficial translation

His Excellency
Ronald W. REAGAN
The President of the United States of America
Washington, D.C.

January 11, 1986

Dear Mr. President,

Your letter of December 7, transmitted through Secretary Baldridge, addressed the questions on which we had a rather thorough discussion in Geneva. At that time I outlined in detail our approach to these questions, and, it seemed to me, you took in what was said with certain understanding.

It is hardly necessary to repeat, that the questions involved pertain to the internal competence of our state and that they are resolved in strict conformity with the laws. I would like only to point out, that the Soviet laws do not create impediments when decisions are taken on the questions regarding departure from the USSR by Soviet citizens who have legal grounds for that. This is attested to also by the fact that as a practical matter the overwhelming majority of such questions is resolved positively.

The existing laws are obligatory to everybody - both to those who apply to leave and those who consider exit applications. Such is the essence of our law and order and nobody is entitled to violate it - whether under any pressure or without it. I would think this should be understood in the the U.S.

We, of course, take into account, that due to various circumstances, divided families appear, which live partially in the USSR and partially - in the USA. Only in the past 5 years there have been over 400 marriages between Soviet and American citizens. And the overwhelming majority of those marriages - to be precise, more than 95 percent - encountered no problems with regard to the reunification of the spouses and to living together. Yes, there are exceptions, and we have frankly and repeatedly told you what they are about. But generally, and I want to stress it once again, questions

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of this kind are resolved by us on the basis of humanism and taking into account the interests of the people concerned.

I share your desire to channel the relationship between our countries to a more constructive course. And the breaks are being put on this process in no way due to the existence of the cases of such sort - though I do not tend to belittle their importance from the point of view of the lives of individual persons - but because of the attempts to blow them out of proportion in the general balance of Soviet-American relations. The key issues in this area are awaiting their resolution.

I would like to note in passing: as it can be seen, the continued attempts by the American side to tie up trade and economic relations with questions of a different nature will bring no benefit. It is high time to take a realistic look at this whole issue from the position of today, rather than yesterday.

It would seem that much will now depend on how accurately we are going to follow jointly the real priorities in our relations, if we wish to bring about their tangible normalization already in the near future. I think, the chances are not bad here.

Sincerely,

M. GORBACHEV



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

January 27, 1986

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MEMORANDUM FOR VADM JOHN M. POINDEXTER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Gorbachev's Letter of January 11, 1986

The signed Russian-language original of General Secretary Gorbachev's letter to President Reagan dated January 11, 1986, concerning human rights issues and an unofficial English translation provided by the Soviet Embassy are forwarded with this memo.

Nicholas Platt
for Nicholas Platt
Executive Secretary

Attachment: As stated. |

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OF CLASSIFICATION [unclear]*

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