

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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January 14, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: George P. Shultz ^{JPS}
SUBJECT: Gorbachev Response to Your Human Rights Letter

Dobrynin came by Monday evening to deliver Gorbachev's response to the letter on human rights which Mac Baldrige delivered when he was in Moscow. It smacked of having been drafted by bureaucrats.

The letter is non-polemical in tone, and reiterates the assurance Gorbachev gave you directly that individual cases of divided spouses can be resolved "on the basis of humanism and taking into account the interests of the people concerned." But it holds out little hope of broad-based progress on human rights issues.

As in Geneva, Gorbachev affirms that Soviet law is not a barrier to the emigration of Soviet citizens who meet its criteria, and rejects bending the rules to resolve specific cases. He reiterates that Moscow will not be swayed in this respect by U.S. pressure, and suggests that human rights cases continue to be "blown out of proportion" in the U.S. - Soviet relationship. Finally, he warns "in passing" against attempts to link trade and economic issues to "questions of a different nature."

The letter did not address the three specific cases raised in your letter (Sakharov, Shcharanskiy and Orlov) or those I mentioned in my earlier letter to Shevardnadze. Dobrynin indicated, however, that we could take up specific cases tomorrow with the Soviet Embassy here. We will, of course, do so.

It is not surprising that Gorbachev has formally stayed with the party line on an issue as touchy as this one is for the Soviets. As we have understood from the beginning, the important thing is not what they say, but what they do. The resolution late last week of the case of Irina McClellan's daughter is a sign that the positive steps which began before the Geneva meeting are continuing for the moment. So is the fact that Gorbachev is prepared to continue the dialogue. Disappointing as the substance of Gorbachev's response is, it only underscores the need to consider how we can best encourage and broaden the fragile process underway.

I've attached the Soviets' unofficial translation of Gorbachev's letter.

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