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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

February 14, 1986

Dear Mr. President,

The leaders of Japan, PRC, Korea and Australia all expressed their gratitude that you sent me to expand upon your proposed response to Gorbachev's January 15 "plan."

They were unanimous in their praise of your initial reaction. While they consider Gorbachev's "plan" to be largely propaganda, they said you were correct in adopting a positive attitude and "welcoming" the common ground while expressing disagreement with many of the details of his "plan."

All believe you are on the right track in broadening the US/USSR issues beyond arms control to include regional issues, human rights, and bilateral issues. They all bore down hard on the importance of effective verification and expressed skepticism that the Soviets would go beyond their rhetoric and permit on-site inspection.

In Japan, I was, unfortunately, preceded by a New York Times story which had been reprinted in the Japanese press. It characterized the proposed INF reductions as 100% in Europe, but only 50% in Asia. I pointed out that a 100% reduction of INF missiles, on a global basis, was our preferred position and still on the table. Moreover, while we agreed with the Soviets that there should be a 50% reduction in strategic systems in an appropriate manner in the first phase, we also agreed that during the same phase our plan would, in fact, amount to about an 80% reduction of INF warheads on a global basis. Further, we would retain the right to match their remaining LRINF missiles until they reduced to zero.

Nevertheless, I accept the Japanese argument that they may have domestic political problems with the way we had intended to characterize our INF response to Gorbachev. Accordingly, the way we package our proposal will be very important. Prime Minister Nakasone's idea that we call for an 80% global reduction in Soviet

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LRINF missiles, permitting the Soviets to keep their remaining SS-20s (about 85) in Novosibirsk, Barnaul and Kansk, represents one possible solution. These Soviet missiles would be labeled neither European nor Asian.

The Japanese also stressed the necessity for simultaneous progress on confidence building measures and reductions in conventional and chemical weapons. They expressed strong support for a moratorium on nuclear testing. I explained why the safety and reliability of our nuclear stockpile depended on continued testing which would make a moratorium unacceptable. Mike Mansfield was supportive throughout.

The Chinese reaction was similar but much more muted. At one point, Vice Minister Qian Qichen asked if the US INF position concerning Asia was not "a unilateral concession" by the United States. I emphasized our steadfast commitment to global elimination of LRINF missiles. I explained that although the Soviets still refused to include Asian LRINF systems in their initial proposal, they had agreed, for the first time, to eliminate LRINF missiles in Europe. The US, in response, proposes to accept the Soviet position in Europe but calls for reductions in Soviet Asian LRINF missiles as well. This US proposal would result in 80% reductions on a global basis during the first phase. The Chinese were friendly throughout the meeting and during Win Lord's luncheon. Win has quickly gained the respect of the Chinese.

In Korea, Dixie Walker, a college classmate and old friend, was particularly helpful. I had more than an hour with President Chun, whose approach was supportive of our proposal. He expressed confidence that we will do whatever is best, not only for US-Korean relations, but for our allies in the region. President Chun bore down particularly hard on the chemical buildup in North Korea. He also went out of his way to express enthusiastic support for SDI. He characterized the US-Korean relationship as being very strong. Other Koreans I spoke with expressed a desire to improve economic relations.

The Australian reaction produced no surprises. A session with Prime Minister Hawke and Defense Minister Hayden, originally scheduled for twenty minutes, went well over an hour. We covered the gamut from INF to SDI to nuclear testing. The Prime Minister, although expressing concern that our plan would amount to only an initial 50 percent cut in Asian LRINF, understands our commitment to zero INF globally. The Australians showed great interest in the nuclear testing issue. Here again, I stressed the continued need for nuclear testing to ensure the safety and reliability of our nuclear stockpile. On SDI, the Australians support SDI research but don't understand how we can pull off the transition to offense/defense while maintaining stability every step of the way. Bill Lane is new but a quick learner.

In summary, the reaction from our Asian friends and allies was as expected, especially on INF. The negative reaction concerning the INF portion of our proposal can be dealt with by how we characterize that proposal.

I recommend that we modify our proposal slightly. First, we should restate our commitment to a global zero-zero LRINF missile solution. Second, we should propose an interim step on the road to this goal with the USSR reducing its LRINF warheads by 80% and the US matching the Soviet global warhead level. The remaining systems could be deployed by the US and the USSR without geographical constraints of any kind.

I am convinced this approach will be significantly more palatable to our allies in Asia and would be met with a positive reaction in Europe as well.

Yours respectfully,

*Ed Rowny*  
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