

Letter to the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives on Strategic Arms Reduction

July 23, 1982

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Less than a month ago, we embarked on a major effort with the Soviet Union to negotiate a reduction in the strategic arsenals of both sides and thus to reduce the risk of nuclear war. I view this initiative as one of the most important and challenging of my Presidency, and I am determined that the United States will do everything in its power to achieve an effective, equitable, and verifiable agreement. The American people will not be satisfied with anything less.

As we engage in the sensitive and complex START negotiations with the Soviet Union, we need to demonstrate that the American people and Congress are behind the proposals carried by Ambassador Rowny to Geneva. The bipartisan resolution recently introduced by Congressmen Broomfield, Carney, and Stratton will make clear to the Soviets that the American people are united in seeking substantial reductions to equal and verifiable levels in the arsenals of both

sides, and reducing the risk of war by accident or miscalculation. I strongly support the resolution.

We must not allow this opportunity to reach an agreement on substantial nuclear force reductions to be lost. I am concerned that the resolution reported earlier by the House Foreign Affairs Committee will signal to the Soviet Union that we are willing to accept something less than these reductions; that is, a freeze that leaves dangerous asymmetries in the nuclear balance and a return to the flawed SALT II agreement. Both these provisions would seriously undercut our negotiating position and reduce the chances for achievement of our START objectives.

With your support, we can achieve the goals we have set and enhance the prospects for peace and stability. I urge you and your colleagues to support the substitute resolution sponsored by Congressmen Broomfield, Carney, and Stratton. Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN