

Remarks at the Opening Ceremony of the Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Moscow (Excerpts)

May 29, 1988

Mr. General Secretary, Mrs. Gorbachev: Mr. General Secretary, thank you for those kind words of welcome. We've traveled a long road together to reach this moment—from our first meeting in Geneva in November, 1985, when I invited you to visit me in Washington and you invited me to Moscow. It was cold that day in Geneva, and even colder in Reykjavik when we met the following year to work on the preparations for our exchange of visits. We've faced great obstacles; but by the time of your visit to Washington last December, although we still had to grapple with difficult issues, we had achieved impressive progress in all the areas of our common agenda—human rights, regional issues, arms reduction, and our bilateral relations.

We signed a treaty that will reduce the level of nuclear arms for the first time in history by eliminating an entire class of U.S. and Soviet independent [intermediate-] range missiles. We agreed on the main points of a treaty that will cut in half our arsenals of strategic offensive nuclear arms. We agreed to conduct a joint experiment that would allow us to develop effective ways to verify limits on nuclear testing. We held full and frank discussions that planted the seeds for future progress.

It is almost summer; and some of those seeds are beginning to bear fruit, thanks to the hard work we have both done since our last meeting, including monthly meetings by our Foreign Ministers and the first meeting of our Defense Ministers. We have signed the Geneva accords, providing for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Afghanistan, and the first withdrawals have begun. We and our allies have completed technical arrangements necessary to begin implementing the INF treaty as soon as it enters into force. For the next major step in arms control, reductions in U.S. and Soviet strategic offensive arsenals, our negotiators in Geneva have produced hundreds of pages of

joint, draft treaty text recording our areas of agreement, as well as those issues yet to be resolved. Our new nuclear risk reduction centers have begun their transmissions of routine notifications to reduce the risk of conflict. Our scientists are installing the equipment for our joint experiment to verify limits on nuclear testing. Our experts have held broad-ranging discussions on human rights, and important steps have been taken in that area. We have greatly expanded our bilateral exchanges since we signed our agreement in 1985. I hope you'll agree with me that more of our young people need to participate in these exchanges, which can do so much to lay the basis for greater mutual understanding in the next generation.

I could go on; the list of accomplishments goes far beyond what many anticipated. But I think the message is clear: Despite clear and fundamental differences, and despite the inevitable frustrations that we have encountered, our work has begun to produce results. In the past, Mr. General Secretary, you've taken note of my liking for Russian proverbs. And in order not to disappoint anyone on this visit, I thought I would mention a literary saying from your past, another example of your people's succinct wisdom: *Rodilsiya ne toropilsiya*—It was born, it wasn't rushed.

Mr. General Secretary, we did not rush. We have taken our work step by step. And I have come here to continue that work. We both know it will not be easy. We both know that there are tremendous hurdles yet to be overcome. But we also know that it can be done because we share a common goal: strengthening the framework we have already begun to build for a relationship that we can sustain over the long term, a relationship that will bring genuine benefits to our own peoples and to the world.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Note: The General Secretary spoke at 2:55 p.m. in St. George's Hall at the Grand Kremlin Palace. The President spoke in English, and the General Secretary spoke in Russian. Their remarks were translated by interpreters.