

# Toasts of the President and General Secretary Gorbachev of the Soviet Union at the State Dinner in Moscow

## May 30, 1988

The General Secretary. Esteemed Mr. President, esteemed Mrs. Reagan, ladies and gentlemen, comrades, I welcome you in the Moscow Kremlin. For five centuries, it has been the site of events that constituted milestones in the life of our state. Decisions crucial to the fate of our nation were made here. The very environment around us is a call for responsibility to our times and contemporaries, to the present and to the future.

It is here that we wish to emphasize the importance of the newly discovered truth that it is no longer possible to settle international disputes by force of arms. Our awareness of the realities of the present-day world has led us to that conclusion. I like the notion of realism, and I also like the fact that you, Mr. President, have lately been uttering it more and more often.

Normal and, indeed, durable Soviet-American relations, which so powerfully affect the world's political climate, are only conceivable within the framework of realism. Thanks to realism, for all our differences, we have succeeded in arriving at a joint conclusion which, though very simple, is of historic importance: A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Other conclusions follow with inexorable logic. One of them is whether there is any need for weaponry which cannot be used without destroying ourselves and, indeed, all of mankind. I believe the realization of this became Reykjavik's pivotal idea.

Our Warsaw treaty allies firmly adhere to this position. This is our powerful support in all matters related to nuclear disarmament. They have given the Soviet leadership a clear mandate to negotiate radical nuclear arms limitations and reductions with the United States. My talks with leaders of Socialist countries and with authoritative representatives of other nations make it clear to me that there is a common desire to overcome military confrontation and to end the race in both nuclear and conventional arms.

To this, it should be added that a realistic approach is making a way for itself in all directions and on all continents. And the idea of resolving today's problems solely by political means is gaining increasing authority. There is an ever-broadening desire of the most diverse political and social forces for dialog, for exchanges, for better knowledge of each other, and for mutual understanding. If this is indeed so, if this is the will of the peoples, an effort is needed to ensure that the stocks of the ferment of realistic policies keep growing and never run out. For that, it is essential to understand each other better, to take into account the specific features of life in various countries, the historical conditions that shape them, and the choice made by their peoples.

I recall the words you once spoke, Mr. President, and I quote: "The only way to resolve differences is to understand them." How very true. Let me just add that seeking to resolve differences should not mean an end to being different. The diversity of the world is a powerful wellspring of mutual enrichment, both spiritual and material.

Ladies and gentlemen, comrades, the word perestroika does not sound anachronistic, even within these ancient walls, for renewal of society, humanization of life, and elevated ideals are -- at all times and everywhere -- in the interests of the people and of each individual. And when this happens, especially in a great country, it is important to understand the meaning of what it is going through. It is this desire to

understand the Soviet Union that we are now seeing abroad. And we regard this as a good sign because we do want to be understood correctly. This is also important for civilized international relations. Everyone who wants to do business with us will find it useful to know how Soviet people see themselves.

We see ourselves even more convinced that our Socialist choice was correct, and we cannot conceive of our country developing without socialism -- based on any other fundamental values. Our program is more democracy, more glasnost, more social justice with full prosperity and high moral standards. Our goal is maximum freedom for man, for the individual, and for society. Internationally, we see ourselves as part of an integral civilization, where each has the right to a social and political choice, to a worthy and equal place within the community of nations.

On issues of peace and progress, we believe in the primacy of universal human values and regard the preservation of peace as the top priority. And that is why we advocate the establishment of a comprehensive system of international security as a condition for the survival of mankind. Linked with this is also our desire to revive and enhance the role of the United Nations on the basis of the original goals, which the Soviet Union and the United States, together with their allies, enshrined in the charter of that organization. Its very name is symbolic: the United Nations -- united in their determination to prevent new tragedies of war, to banish war from international relations, and to affirm just principles securing a worthy life for any nation, whether large or small, strong or weak, rich or poor.

We want to build contacts among people in all forums, to expand and improve the quality of information, and to develop ties in the spheres of science, culture, education, sports, and any other human endeavor. But this should be done without interfering in domestic affairs, without sermonizing or imposing one's views and ways, without turning family or personal problems into a pretext for confrontation between states. In short, our time offers great scope for action in the humanitarian field. Nations should understand each other better, know the truth about each other, and free themselves from bias and prejudice.

As far as we know, most Americans, just like us, want to get rid of the demon of nuclear war; but they, just like us, just like all people on Earth, are becoming increasingly concerned over the risk of environmental disaster. Such a risk can only be averted if we act together. Increasingly urgent is the truly global problem of the economic state of the world -- in the North and South, in the West and East of this planet. The economic foundation of civilization will be destroyed unless a way is found to put an end to the squandering of funds and resources for war and destruction, unless the problem of debt is settled and world finances are stabilized, unless the world market becomes truly worldwide by incorporating all states and nations on an equal footing.

It is across this spectrum of issues that we approach international affairs and, of course, our relations with the United States of America. We are motivated by an awareness of the realities and imperatives of the nuclear and space age, the age of sweeping technological revolution when the human race has turned out to be both omnipotent and mortal. It was this awareness that engendered the new thinking, which has made possible a conceptual and practical breakthrough in relations between us as well.

Mr. President, this meeting, while taking stock of a fundamentally important period in Soviet-American relations, has to consolidate our achievements and give new impetus for the future. Never before have nuclear missiles been destroyed. Now we have an unprecedented treaty, and our two countries will be performing for the first time ever this overture of nuclear disarmament. The performance has to be flawless.

The Soviet Union and the United States are acting as guarantors of the Afghan political settlement. This,

too, is a precedent of tremendous importance. As guarantors, our two countries face a very responsible period, and we hope they both will go through it in a befitting manner. The whole world is watching to see how we are going to act in this situation.

Our main task continues to be the working out of an agreement on 50-percent reductions in strategic offensive arms while observing the ABM treaty. In our talks today, you and I devoted a lot of attention, and with good cause, to discussing the entire range of these problems. Mr. President, we are expected to ensure that the Moscow summit open up new horizons in the Soviet-American dialog, in relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., for the benefit of our two nations and the entire world. This is worth any effort and any amount of good will.

To cooperation between the Soviet Union and the United States of America, to their better mutual knowledge and mutual understanding. I wish good health and happiness to you, Mr. President, to Mrs. Nancy Reagan, and to all our distinguished guests.

The President. Mr. General Secretary, I want to thank you again for the hospitality that we've encountered this evening and at every turn since our arrival in Moscow. We appreciate deeply the personal effort that you, Mrs. Gorbachev, and all of your associates have expended on our behalf.

Today has been a busy day. I want to thank you for the opportunity to meet with so many divergent members of Soviet society. As you know, I traveled to Danilov and met there with the clergy at that ancient monastery, and later in the day had most interesting exchanges with other members of Soviet society at Spaso House. These meetings only confirmed, Mr. General Secretary, the feelings of admiration and warmth that Americans harbor toward the peoples of the Soviet Union. As wartime allies, we came to know you in a special way. But in a broader sense, the American people, like the rest of the world, admire the saga of the peoples of the Soviet Union. The clearing of the forest, the struggle to build a society, the evolution into a modern state, and the struggle against Hitler's armies. There are other ways, too, that we know you: "Happy or sad, my beloved, you are beautiful," says one of your folk songs, "as beautiful as a Russian song, as beautiful as a Russian soul."

As expressed in the great music, architecture, art -- we need only look about us this evening -- and literature that over many centuries you've given the world, we have beheld the beauty and majesty of your peoples' national experience. And without belittling the serious business before us, all of the fundamental issues that separate our governments, I hope you'll permit me tonight to say that in the eyes of the American people, your people truly are, as the folk song suggests, a people of heart and mind, a people -- to use our vernacular -- with soul. And that's why we believe there's common ground between our two peoples and why it is our duty to find common ground for our two governments.

Over the next 3 days, General Secretary Gorbachev and I will review what has been accomplished over the past 3 years and what our two nations might accomplish together in the months to come. We have a great deal to discuss on both accounts. What we have achieved is a good beginning. We have taken the first step toward deep reductions of our nuclear arsenals. We have taken the first step toward dealing with the reality that much of the tension and mistrust between our two countries arises from very different concepts of the fundamental rights and role of the individual in society. We have taken the first step to build that network of personal relationships and understanding between societies, between people, that are crucial to dispelling dangerous misconceptions and stereotypes.

These are good first steps, Mr. General Secretary, and we can both take pride in them, but as I said, they are just a start. Nuclear arsenals remain too large. The fighting continues needlessly, tragically, in too many regions of the globe. The vision of freedom and cooperation enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act

remains unrealized. The American and Soviet peoples are getting to know each other better, but not well enough. Mr. General Secretary, you and I are meeting now for the fourth time in 3 years -- a good deal more often than our predecessors. And this has allowed our relationship to differ from theirs in more than a quantitative state or sense.

We have established the kind of working relationship I think we both had in mind when we first met in Geneva. We've been candid about our differences, but sincere in sharing a common objective and working hard together to draw closer to it. It's easy to disagree and much harder to find areas where we can agree. We and our two governments have both gotten into the habit of looking for those areas. We found more than we expected. I intend to pursue the search for common ground during the months left to me as President. When I pass the job on to my successor, I intend to tell him it is a search that must be continued. Based on the achievements of the last few years, I will also tell him it is a search that can succeed.

Once again, Mr. General Secretary, I want to extend my thanks for your hospitality. I also hope you'll permit me to mention that, as you have been a gracious host, we've tried to be gracious guests by bringing along some small expressions of our gratitude. There's one gift in particular that I wanted to mention not only in view of my own former profession but because it has, I think, something important to say to us about what is underway this week in Moscow. It is a film, not as well-known as some but an American classic. It is a powerfully acted and directed story of family and romantic love, of devotion to the land and dedication to higher principle. It is also fun, it has humor. There's a renegade goose, a mischievous young boy, a noisy neighbor, a love-struck teenager in love with a gallant soldier, an adolescent struggling for manhood, a loving, highly principled wife, and a gentle but strong father. It's about the good and sometimes difficult things that happen between man and wife, and parent and child. The film also has sweep and majesty and power and pathos. For you see, it takes place against the backdrop of our American epic, the Civil War. And because the family is of the Quaker religion and renounces violence, each of its characters must, in his or her own way, face this war and the moral dilemma it poses. The film shows not just the tragedy of war, but the problems of pacifism, the nobility of patriotism, as well as the love of peace.

I promise not to spoil its outcome for you, but I hope you'll permit me to describe one scene. Just as the invading armies come into southern Indiana, one of our States, the Quaker farmer is approached by two of his neighbors. One is also a Quaker who earlier in the story, when times are peaceful, denounces violence and vows never to lift his hand in anger. But now that the enemy has burned his barn, he's on his way to battle and criticizes his fellow Quaker for not joining him in renouncing his religious beliefs. The other visitor, also on his way to battle, is the intruding but friendly neighbor. Yet it is this neighbor, although a nonbeliever, who says he's proud of the Quaker farmer's decision not to fight. In the face of the tragedy of war, he's grateful, as he says, that somebody's holding out for a better way of settling things.

It seems to me, Mr. General Secretary, that in pursuing these summit meetings we, too, have been holding out for a better way of settling things. And by the way, the film's title is more than a little appropriate. It's called "Friendly Persuasion." So, Mr. General Secretary, allow me to raise a glass to the work that has been done, to the work that remains to be done, and let us also toast the art of friendly persuasion, the hope of peace with freedom, the hope of holding out for a better way of settling things. Thank you, and God bless you.

*Note: The General Secretary spoke at 7:37 p.m. in St. Vladimir'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.*

