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Statement by U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, Senate Democratic Leader, at a meeting with General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev on Tuesday, September 3, 1985, in Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Mr. General Secretary, on behalf of the Senate of the United States, the people of the United States, and the President of the United States, I bring you greetings and warm wishes for improvement in the relations between our two great nations.

I thank you for your country's hospitality to us and our wives during our visit to Kiev and Moscow. My wife and I have visited the Soviet Union on two previous occasions. My last visit was in July, 1979, to meet with Mr. Brezhnev on the SALT II treaties. Several of the Senators with me have previously visited the Soviet Union. Two years ago, I arranged a visit with the late Mr. Andropov for a Senate delegation headed by Senator Pell.

My delegation and I welcome this opportunity to discuss matters which will be conducive to peace at this crucial time.

Our delegation has had fruitful meetings during our visit. And we have looked forward to our discussion with you today, particularly on the subject of arms control. I was pleased to note your comments on this important issue in your interview with TIME magazine of September 1, 1985. You stated:

"I have been reckoning on having an honest and unbiased conversation imbued with a desire to find a way leading back from the edge of the nuclear precipice. To discuss not myths and stereotypes of which we have had enough, but the real problems, the real interests of our countries, our future and the future of the entire world community."

Our mission here today is to help facilitate that dialogue and advance the search for realistic solutions to the common problems confronting both of our nations.

The past few years have been disappointing for all of us in terms of the Soviet-American dialogue. Those years have been marked by an increase in tensions, a high level of propaganda and rhetoric, and -- worst of all -- an increasingly dangerous environment of misunderstanding. I will not review the painful episodes here because we are all too familiar with them. We believe steps can and should be taken on both sides to improve this climate.

The goal of all Americans is to live at peace in a world in which the legitimate interests of all nations are respected. And this is the same goal to which you alluded in your TIME interview. We also share the conviction that although we may compete philosophically and politically, we should do so with ideas -- not arms.

In a world in which both sides possess powerful conventional forces and awesome nuclear weapons, Americans know that aggressive military actions by either side can only threaten the existence of both sides.

Our two nations are in a position of historic opportunity. The arms control talks underway in Geneva and the summit scheduled for November between you and President Reagan give us a framework for progress. Now is the time to seize the opportunities that history has presented us. It is to the mutual benefit of both nations to cooperate, to coexist, and to deal fairly with each other. The weapons of destruction that are in place remind us of this fact daily. It is entirely within our means to deal with each other in a constructive way, to give our peoples the means to enrich their lives, to realize their potentialities and live at peace.

We come here as a bipartisan group of Senators. As Leader of the opposition party in the Senate, I have made no secret of my displeasure with certain Soviet actions. Likewise, I have not avoided criticism of President Reagan or his predecessor on occasions when I felt that their actions and words did not contribute to progress in the U.S.-Soviet relationship.

I suggested to the President and the Republican leadership of the Senate earlier this year that we form a Special Observer Group composed of 12 Senators to permanently monitor the negotiations in Geneva. There are several Senators here with me who are members of the Observer Group. This group of Senate observers has no historical counterpart. Its purpose is to monitor and assess the negotiations and report regularly to the full Senate.

In the event that agreements are reached, the group intends to be fully informed to advise the Senate as to whether the agreements are in our national interest.

The American people, the Congress, and the President all agree that our nation should pursue mutual, verifiable, and equitable arms control agreements with the Soviet Union -- which both countries will respect and with which both will comply.

We believe that adherence to such agreements can contribute to the security of both the United States and the Soviet Union, and, thus, to the rest of the world.

But to begin this process of reducing offensive forces and restraining defensive forces, which would be in our common interests, both sides must begin bargaining about specific proposals at the table in Geneva.

The U.S. has made such a proposal. Our negotiators have proposed specific limits on the total number of ballistic missile warheads.

Senior officials of your government have informally indicated that the Soviet Union is willing to consider a 25 percent reduction in strategic forces -- both in delivery vehicles and in warheads -- but these suggestions have not been followed up in Geneva with a detailed proposal that precisely defines key terms and specifically indicates how many delivery vehicles and warheads would be permitted each side if the proposal were accepted.

This ambiguity needs to be resolved if progress is to be made. Both nations have talented, able negotiators in Geneva. We should put them to work trying to explore whether there are common areas of interest of reciprocal benefit to both sides. This exploration cannot begin until we have specific counter-proposals at the Geneva table and until Soviet negotiators are authorized to discuss those counter-offers in detail.

Reciprocity is a key to progress in Geneva. But there is another area in which reciprocity needs to be addressed -- verification. You understand the importance of public opinion in our country. The Administration's emphasis on effective verification and on compliance with existing treaties reflects the feelings of the American people, and their opinions are vital if we are to have meaningful arms control. These deeply held American principals form the basis for our position on the SALT and ABM accords and on the verifiability of the unratified Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the Peaceful Nuclear Treaty.

The Senate, any time it considers arms control matters, will focus its attention on verification questions. We are aware that the development of new technologies emphasizing mobility and dispersal of systems poses increasingly difficult verification questions. But without adequate verification procedures, which today cannot be fulfilled exclusively by satellites, Senate approval of agreements becomes more difficult. On-scene techniques are essential. Again, referring to public pressures on our Senate, verification is perhaps the most critical single ingredient in our deliberations on arms control measures.

Negative perceptions and beliefs put tremendous pressures on the way Senators approach agreements with other nations. A striking example, from my own personal experience, was the problem of the SALT II agreement. After the agreement was signed, I evaluated it carefully, and I finally judged that it was in our national interests to ratify it. As the Senate Majority Leader, during 1979, I was working to generate the two-thirds majority of Senators necessary to consent to the ratification of the SALT II treaty. We were short of the two-thirds majority needed, but I believed that there was a good chance of getting the needed votes. In July, 1979, I visited with Mr. Brezhnev and Mr. Gromyko in the Soviet Union and urged that we all lower our voices. You mentioned earlier today that you would not be intimidated. This was precisely the same message I brought to them -- that the United States Senate would not be intimidated by threats from Soviet leaders. They both agreed to cool the rhetoric. My message to Mr. Brezhnev and Mr. Gromyko produced the desired result. But when Soviet military forces moved into Afghanistan in December of 1979, severe public opinion pressures

developed on all Senators to link Afghanistan and SALT II. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had a very negative effect on public opinion. When this happened, my judgment was that the necessary two-thirds vote could not be obtained, in the light of the Soviet Union's sending troops into Afghanistan, and at the end of December, I visited privately with President Carter to inform him that the Senate would not consent to the treaty. Because of lack of public support brought on by that event, I advised him that the treaty should not be called up for Senate consideration, despite the fact that I personally believed that ratifying it would be beneficial from the standpoint of our national security. Shortly thereafter, President Carter publicly asked that the Senate not take up the treaty.

President Reagan recently decided -- after the Senate encouraged him to support an extension of the "no undercut" policy relating to the SALT II Treaty -- that the U.S. would continue to abide by it so long as the Soviet Union did.

Americans attach great importance to full application of the law. The perception that one side or another is taking advantage of the interpretation of the terms of an operative treaty to gain advantage, even though the long-term effect of that gain may be inconsequential, has a dramatic impact on our Senate. I would like to refer to the text of basic principles of relations between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., signed by President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev on May 29, 1972. One provision states that "both sides recognize that efforts to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other, directly or indirectly, are inconsistent with "the objectives of improving our mutually advantageous development across the board."

Any President knows that the American people, and their elected representatives in the Senate, will not support and will not consent to the ratification of any arms control agreement about which there are reasonable doubts on verification. Even the possibilities for signing arms control agreements in the future are lessened in the current environment of doubts about compliance with existing agreements.

For example, a great deal has been said about questions of violations of the terms of the ABM treaty, particularly the radar at Krasnoyarsk. This is an obstacle to our movement in arms control and must be overcome.

The way to begin this process is to encourage serious negotiations at the table in Geneva. This Senate delegation is not here to negotiate these issues.

Our nation hopes that the Soviet Union will take the initiative and lay on the table detailed proposals and numbers on offensive force reductions. The question of SDI will play a role. We should talk seriously about it. We are both doing vigorous research in this field -- this is acceptable under the ABM treaty.

Both sides must negotiate specific proposals for reducing significantly their offensive nuclear forces. Offensive forces and defensive forces must be discussed together.

Let me emphasize that the Senate is serious about treaty commitments. We would view poorly any unilateral attempt by either side to violate the limits of the ABM treaty without a renegotiation of that treaty.

You have recently offered proposals for moratoria on further deployments of nuclear missiles in the European theatre and on nuclear weapons testing. Our long-term goals should certainly include a comprehensive test ban treaty and a stable balance of forces in Europe. Naturally, neither side can accept any proposal which would put it in a permanent position of disadvantage in the European theatre. Your proposal for a moratorium comes at a time when you have already deployed a large number of SS-20 missiles, which has thrown the European situation out of balance. I believe actions must be taken to redress that balance, and that, of course, is the reason for the NATO deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles. Serious proposals in this regard would be extremely helpful at the appropriate negotiating table in Geneva.

Likewise, your proposed mutual moratorium on nuclear testing came immediately after the Soviet Union completed a series of tests. If the United States were to agree not to do the testing we regard as necessary in the near future, we would be agreeing to a unilateral disadvantage. Therefore, it certainly would not be in our interest to put ourselves in that position. The testing question, again, should be the subject of serious negotiations, with particular attention to the long-term goal of a test ban which is fair and leaves neither power at a disadvantage.

Nothing would be gained by the Soviet Union's wasting time, waiting for the next American Administration in the expectation of striking a better bargain. As you so clearly pointed out in your interview with TIME magazine, the advance of technology is rapid, and our problem will be easier to resolve if we begin now.

Timing is crucial. We should begin talking now -- before we have the technology in hand -- so that we can plan to use it wisely. The President has said these discussions should begin today.

Confidence building measures are another important matter. The Senate, led by Senators Nunn and Warner, has initiated various proposals for our two nations to help avoid accidental nuclear war, or the initiation of nuclear conflicts by third parties or third nations. These take the form of better information exchange and better procedures for mutual action to mitigate potentially disastrous misunderstandings or accidental events. The development of such mutual exchanges and actions, we believe, would not only be in the interest of peace, but would also be a step to further confidence building measures between our nations. The upgrading of the "hot line" is a good example of this kind of action.

We also have a common interest to reduce the possibilities that conventional conflict will occur between us. The practical measures to achieve this would be for progress to be made in the talks on confidence building measures in Stockholm, on chemical weapons in Geneva, and on mutual and balanced force reductions in Vienna.

Your public statements give every indication that you seek these same ends. We all understand that security is not measured in deterrence of force projection alone. It is not solely an issue of military power. The security of any nation also depends upon its economic vitality. No country can call itself secure if it fails to meet the needs of its people on housing, education, health, and welfare. Both our nations are aware of that fact. Both our nations have made economic security a priority. You have demonstrated your strong desire to assure the Soviet people of that hope, and to allow your country to achieve even greater economic potential.

We all recognize the serious penalty that the spiraling arms race exacts on our economies. The Soviet Union and the United States enjoy a wealth of domestic resources. But a continued head-long arms race propelled by mutual suspicion will waste those great resources.

On the question of the third world, it is clear that we each have our own interests. We will each pursue them, but that should not get in the way of reaching accommodations on the critical matters that face us directly. When, however, actions in the third world present serious roadblocks for our mutual relationships, we must pay attention. We are seriously concerned about the integrity of Pakistan, and encourage an accommodation related to Afghanistan involving the removal of Soviet troops. I have already described the impact that Soviet actions in Afghanistan had on SALT II. And so we hope that you will be able to reach a resolution of the Afghanistan situation and that a mutually acceptable resolution can be reached with an early end to the fighting.

Human rights is a matter of critical concern to the people of the United States. Regardless of the fact that you view this as an internal matter, there is the question of fulfilling political commitments made in the international arena, such as the 1975 Helsinki accords. This is something that goes beyond the specific question of human rights and relates to the broader question of abiding by solemn commitments made by Soviet leaders.

As a nation, the Soviet Union has stated time and time again its support for family reunification. Certainly the failure to issue visas because of arbitrary reasons does not take into consideration the individuals and their specific circumstances. We are leaving lists of some cases with you. These are examples; there are many others. We urge you to personally be involved in reviewing the policies and these cases.

It is important that special consideration be given those citizens, both American and Soviet, whose family reunification rights have been denied.

It is important to understand that issues like these are serious obstacles to good U.S.-Soviet relations, because the American people know about and care about Soviet actions.

Cultural, environmental, and scientific cooperative projects and exchanges for the mutual benefit of our two societies, such as will be elaborated on by Senator Pell, are always welcome developments.

I would reflect for a moment on some things that unite us. More than 150 years ago, a famous Frenchman, Alexis DeTocqueville, made an extensive visit to the United States. His book, called Democracy in America, written in 1833, was a brilliant insight into American character. He said:

"There are at the present time two great nations in the world... I allude to the Russians and the Americans. Both of them have grown up unnoticed; and whilst the attention of mankind was directed elsewhere, they have suddenly placed themselves in the front rank among nations... Their starting point is different and their courses are not the same, yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe."

DeTocqueville's comments are still relevant. Our great mutual interest is in peace and the enlightened use of all of our resources for our two peoples. In the long run, both of us can win. Neither of us need lose. It all depends on our attitudes, energies, and wisdom.

You are in a position of historic opportunity. The challenges you face, in leading your great nation, must be invigorating for you. The challenges we both face, in forming mutually beneficial arrangements between our two great nations are formidable -- but now is the time to seize the opportunities that history has presented.

1. Try to perceive whether there will be any change in past Soviet policies. What impact will the change in leadership have on past policies?
2. Stability between our two nations is desirable. With the new team in charge, what are the chances.
3. Sovs. have a paranoia of the U.S. and our desire to change their system. We must try to convince that we are not interested in doing that.
4. Explain our fear that they desire to expand beyond their borders. We want to strive for normal human and social discourse. How can we allay each other's fears.

Agenda

1. Regional Disagreements

- a. Africa
- b. Central America
- c. Middle East

2. Bi-lateral Relations

- a. air navigation
- b. trade
- c. expanded consulates
- d. rules of engagement / East Germany
- e. boundary disagreements (Siberia and Alaska)

3. Human Rights

If the Soviets would allow some emmigration of Jews and others it would give them greater credibility with the American people.

If some emmigration were allowed, the Pres. would not crow, he would praise.

4. Arms Reduction

Gorbachov is busy with the economy. We should hope to convince him to turn some attention towards arms control.

Our invitation to the Sovs. to monitor our testing and calibrate their instruments was sincere. Reiterate.

They are very fearful of our motives re: SDI



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They believe that we are trying to bleed them dry in Afghanistan.

They have 6,000 ICBM warheads. We have 2,000. Either we can push our number up or they can push theirs down. If there is no movement, we have to go to something like SDI. If they would talk seriously about reductions in the 6,000 SDI is on the table.

Areas for Progress

1. Chemical Weapons. Verification Problems. Observers are needed. (TrialBV)
2. They invitation to monitor testing was not propaganda. The President is completely serious about having them come, bring their instruments, and monitor our test. (Is this a reciprocal offer?BV) Apparently small nuclear tests cannot be detected. If we could achieve on-scene verification, we could sign a test-ban treaty.
3. Lowering troop levels. We have 770K troops, and they have 950. Could there be agreement at 700k each? Verification problems with cutting numbers of troops. Are they willing to count combat units only? The number would probably fall to 300k.
- 4: Confidence Building Measures. Advance notice on weapons firing, troop movements and missile shots might be important.
6. Explain that we have worries too, as in Pakistan