At the start of 1986, we were getting more and more evidence that the Soviet economy was in dire shape. It made me believe that, if nothing else, the Soviet economic tailspin would force Mikhail Gorbachev to come around on an arms reduction agreement we both could live with. If we didn't deviate from our policies, I was convinced it would happen.

Gorbachev was trying to turn things around but not having an easy time of it. Looking at the situation from his viewpoint, I knew he had to be giving high priority to reducing the vast amounts of rubles the Soviets were spending on weapons. He had to be losing some sleep over the vitality of our economy, which was booming after pulling out of the recession, and he must have realized more than ever that we could outspend him as long as the Soviets insisted on prolonging the arms race.

That spring and summer, I had to make three important decisions that affected our relations with the Soviets:

In March, Tip O'Neill and some of his loyalists in Congress, responding to suggestions by Gorbachev that we join the Soviets in a moratorium on nuclear testing, mustered an effort to persuade the American people to pressure me to halt underground testing of nuclear weapons.

Because of security requirements, I couldn't at the time explain the real purpose of these tests: Although Tip and the others claimed their purpose was to create bigger and better weapons of mass destruction, the real purpose was to test the reliability of our existing weapons and the extent to which they could be trusted to survive the burst of radiation that would be unleashed in an enemy nuclear attack.

I gave the order to continue the tests.

The second decision I faced was whether to continue abiding by terms of the SALT II treaty despite repeated Soviet cheating on its restrictions. We knew of dozens of violations of the SALT and ABM treaties, including the Krasnoyarsk radar, which we knew incontrovertibly was intended for use in an antimissile defense. On the question of whether to continue abiding by SALT, Cap Weinberger and George Shultz were divided once again: George favored restraint and abiding by the agreement, believing there was little to gain by not doing so at a time when we were trying to improve relations with the Soviets. “Others, including Cap,” I wrote in my diary after a meeting of the National Security Planning Group in March, “want to give it up. I’m inclined to vote for replacing that informal agreement with our arms reduction proposal now in Geneva: Tell the Soviets we can have a real reduction in weapons or an arms race, but we’re not going to sit by and watch them keep on fudging.”

To many liberals in Congress, the SALT II treaty, even though it was unratified, had a symbolic importance. It represented one of the few times the superpowers had reached agreement to limit nuclear arms. I understood this symbolic significance. But the treaty was full of holes the Russians were exploiting, and after a while I began saying publicly that because of the Soviet cheating we might end our policy of voluntary restraint—unless there was more evidence the Soviets were applying restraint, too.

In early April, Anatoly Dobrynin, after being appointed secretary of the Politburo and head of foreign affairs for the Communist Party’s Central Committee in Moscow, and thus becoming a key adviser to Gorbachev, came to see me. He said Gorbachev was unhappy with my decision to continue nuclear testing and with reports that we might end our restraint in observing the SALT II treaty, and as a result he did not think the time was right yet to set a date for our summit in Washington. I considered this Soviet game-
playing. After the meeting I wrote in my diary: "My feeling is the summit will take place, if not in June or July, sometime after the election."

Here are portions of a letter Dobrynin brought to me from Gorbachev:

I would like to share with you some of my general observations that I have, and surely, you must have your own, regarding the state and prospects of the relationship between our two countries. I believe, in doing so, one has to use as a point of departure our meeting in Geneva where we both assumed certain obligations.

I think our assessments of that meeting coincide: it was necessary and useful, it introduced a certain stabilizing element to the relations between the USSR and the USA and to the world situation in general. It was only natural that it also generated no small hopes for the future.

More than four months have passed since the Geneva meeting. We ask ourselves: what is the reason for things not going the way they, it would seem, should have gone? Where is the real turn for the better? We, within the Soviet leadership, regarded the Geneva meeting as a call for translating understandings of principle reached there into specific actions with a view to giving an impetus to our relations and to building up their positive dynamics. And we have been doing just that after Geneva.

With this in mind, we have put forward a wide-ranging and concrete program of measures concerning the limitation and reduction of arms and disarmament. It is from the standpoint of new approaches to seeking mutually acceptable solutions that the Soviet delegations have acted in Geneva, Vienna and Stockholm.

What were the actions of the USA? One has to state, unfortunately, that so far the positions have not been brought closer together so that it would open up a real prospect for reaching agreements. I will not go into details or make judgments of the U.S. positions here. But there is one point I would like to make. One gathers the impressions that all too frequently attempts are being made to portray our initiatives as propaganda, as a desire to score high points in public opinion or as a wish to put the other side into an awkward position. We did not and do not harbor such designs. After all, our initiatives can be easily tested for their practicality. Our goal is to reach agreement, to find solutions to problems which concern the USSR, the USA and actually all other countries. I have especially focused on this matter so as to ensure a correct, unbiased and businesslike treatment of our proposals. I'm sure that it will make it easier to reach agreement.

Now what has been taking place in the meantime outside the negotiations? Of course, each of us has his own view of the policies of the other side. But here again, has the Soviet Union done anything in foreign affairs or bilateral relations that would contribute to mounting tensions or be detrimental to the legitimate interests of the USA? I can say clearly: No, there has been nothing of that sort. On the other hand, we hear increasingly vehement philippics addressed to the USSR and are also witnessing quite a few actions directly aimed against our interest, and to put it frankly, against our relations becoming more stable and constructive. All this builds suspicion as regards to the U.S. policy and surely, creates no favorable backdrop for the summit meeting. I am saying it with no ambiguity in order to avoid in this regard any uncertainties or misunderstandings that only one side should exercise restraint and display a positive attitude. Our relations take shape not in a vacuum... The calmer the atmosphere, the easier it is to solve issues which are of equal concern to both sides.

The issues have to be solved—there is no doubt about it. And above all, this bears on the area of security. You are familiar with our proposals, they cover all the most important aspects. At the same time I would like specifically to draw your attention to the fact that we do not say: All or nothing at all. We are in favor of moving forward step by step and we outline certain possibilities in this regard, particularly, at the negotiations on nuclear and space arms.

We maintained a serious and balanced approach to the problem of ending nuclear tests. One would not want to lose hope that we shall succeed in finding a practical solution to this issue in the way the world expects us to do. It is hardly necessary to point out the importance of this matter as it is. The solution thereof carries with it also a great positive political potential...

It was a desire that we work together in the cessation of nuclear tests and set a good example to all nuclear powers that motivated my recent proposal for both of us to meet specifically on this issue at one of the European capitals. Have another look at this proposal, Mr. President, in a broad political context. I repeat, what is meant here is a specific, single purpose meeting. Such a meeting, of course, would not be a substitute for the new major meeting that we agreed upon in Geneva.

I do very serious thinking with regard to the latter, first of all with a view to make that meeting truly meaningful and substantial, so that it should enable us to move closer to putting into practice the funda-
mental understandings reached in Geneva. As you know, I have mentioned some of the questions pertaining to the area of security which are worthwhile working on in preparing for our meeting. I reaffirm that we are ready to seek here solutions in a most serious way, which would be mutually acceptable and not detrimental to the security of either side. Given the mutual will it would also be possible to ascertain other possibilities for agreement in the context of the forthcoming meeting both in the area of space and nuclear arms and on the issues described in other fora. To be sure, we also have things to discuss as far as regional matters are concerned.

I assume that you are also working on all these questions and in subsequent correspondence we will be able in a more specific and substantive way to compare our mutual preliminary ideas for the purpose of bringing the positions closer together. Obviously, this joint work, including the preparations for our meeting, will benefit from the exchanges of views at other levels and particularly from forthcoming contacts between our Foreign Minister and your Secretary of State. I will be looking forward with interest to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

M. Gorbachev
April 2, 1986

After our air strikes on Libya two weeks later, a Soviet spokesman described Qaddafi as a heroic and innocent victim of our supposed aggression, and Eduard Shevardnadze canceled a meeting with George Shultz at which they were to choose a date for the summit.

The tragic accident at the Soviet nuclear reactor at Chernobyl occurred later that month. I sent Gorbachev a letter conveying our sympathies along with my disappointment over cancellation of the Shultz-Shevardnadze meeting. Excerpts from my letter:

We have made a good faith effort to set in motion the serious, high-level discussions necessary to prepare for a meeting between us. I regret that it has not been possible to begin them. While there have been positive steps in some areas, we have lost a full six months in dealing with the issues which most merit our personal attention. I hope you will agree that it is time to concentrate on the agenda set forth in Geneva last November. I am prepared to do my part. As I have said, I am eager to achieve tangible practical results at our next meeting. I agree with you that an atmosphere conducive to progress is important. The suggestions I have made, which took careful account of your comments to me on the issues, sought to find a mutually acceptable approach to some of the key issues.

The atmosphere of our relationship is also affected, of course, by what the two of us say privately. The approach I intend to take in my public statements is to reaffirm my strong personal commitment to achieving concrete progress in all the areas of our relationship during the remaining years of my Administration.

Mr. General Secretary, our recent history provides ample evidence that if you wait for an ideal moment to try to resolve our differences, we are unlikely to resolve anything. We should take advantage of it since it is a time of historic and possibly unique potential. Let us not lose it for lack of effort.

A few days later, I announced that as long as the Soviets continued cheating on the SALT II treaty, the United States no longer felt bound by it. Frankly, I was just tired of living by the rules and having the other side violate them. At the same time, I continued a policy of moderation in my public statements about the Soviets and I said I believed Gorbachev was sincere in wanting to end the threat of nuclear war.

Then I made my third important decision: In late July, I sent a sweeping new arms reduction proposal to Gorbachev based on ideas that had been developed during weeks of debate within the administration.

It called for both sides to scrap all ballistic missiles while continuing research on missile defensive systems, and it said that if these systems proved feasible they would be shared with all nations once all nuclear missiles had been scrapped. "If and when such research should indicate such a defense weapon is possible," I wrote in my diary, "both of us would observe tests [of the new system] and we would agree jointly that deployment must follow elimination of all ICBM's and then the defense be made available to all."

During the discussions in which the proposal was hammered out, some of our arms control and State Department experts wanted me to hint to the Soviets that we might be willing to trade the SDI for greater Soviet concessions on offensive weapons.

Cap Weinberger, the chief evangelist, after me, of the Strategic
Defense Initiative, said that if the Soviets heard about this split in the administration and decided I was wavering on the SDI, it would send the wrong signals to Moscow and weaken our bargaining position. I think he was also worried that I might be persuaded by those advocating possible concessions on the SDI, but he needn't have worried. I was committed to the search for an alternative to the MAD policy and said it as emphatically and as often as I could, privately and publicly: The SDI is not a bargaining chip.

George Shultz said it was questionable that development and testing of the SDI was permissible under the 1972 ABM treaty with the Soviets that the Senate had ratified and therefore was the law of the land. Cap argued for a broader interpretation of the treaty that, according to his experts, allowed us to develop and test certain elements of the system.

As these portions of my diary indicate, I sided with Cap:

**July 17**
... a big N.S.C. meeting on my letter to Gorbachev. Cap and George Shultz differ on some elements, such as what to say about the ABM treaty. On this I'm closer to Cap. I want to propose a new treaty for what we do if and when SDI research looks like we have a practical system.

**July 18**
Well, we finally came up with a letter to Gorbachev that I can sign. In fact, it's a good one and should open the door to some real arms negotiations if he is really interested.

While I was waiting for Gorbachev to respond to my new arms reduction initiative, KGB agents seized and imprisoned a Moscow correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report*, Nicholas Daniloff, and accused him of spying for the United States—shortly after we had arrested a Soviet spy in the United States.

The accusation was ridiculous. The circumstances of his arrest were virtually identical to those under which four other Americans had been seized in Moscow in the past after we'd arrested KGB agents in the United States—innocent Americans were arrested, then offered in exchange for the Soviet agents.

The following comments in my diary reflect my feelings on the incident:

**Sept. 4**
I called George Shultz re our man Daniloff in the Soviet Union. I asked his opinion of my thought that perhaps I should communicate directly with Gorbachev and tell him Daniloff was not working for our govt. At about 5 p.m. I signed such a message.

**Sept. 7**
... word came the Soviets were going to officially charge Daniloff with espionage. Gorbachev's response to my letter was arrogant and rejected my statement that Daniloff was no spy. I'm mad as hell. Had a conference call with George Shultz, John Poindexter, Don Regan. Decision was to wait until Tuesday in Washington where we could explain our course of action. This whole thing follows the pattern: We catch a spy as we have this time and the Soviets grab an American—any American and frame him so they can demand a trade of prisoners.

**Sept. 9**
Meeting, George S., John P., Don R. and myself re the Daniloff case. We are going to try to get him released to our Ambassador pending trial. We'll offer the same here with their spy. If it's possible we'll do something of an exchange but only if they'll release some dissidents like Sakharov. Once we have him back, I propose we kick a half hundred of their UN KGB agents out of the country. There can't be a repeat of this hostage taking.

**Sept. 10**
George Shultz gave me word that Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin brought an offer to turn Daniloff over to our ambassador if we'd do the same with their spy. I told him to do it. I think it's very important to get our guy out of their jail and away from that four hours a day interrogation.

**Sept. 11**
It was a short night and a long day. The usual meeting with Don R. and the v.p. and then the N.S.C. briefing. John P. was hesitant about the Daniloff deal with us holding out for more. Since it's only a move pending the trials I reiterated my stand on getting him out of jail.

**Sept. 12**
... an NSPG meeting re Daniloff. We have agreed to turn [Gennadi] Zakharov [the Soviet spy] over to the Soviet ambassador pend-
ing trial and they will deliver Daniloff to our ambassador. This does not mean a trade. This we will not do. Their man is a spy caught red handed and Daniloff is a hostage.

Sept. 15
A hastily called meeting with John P. and Don R. to agree on our approach to Gorbachev if Daniloff is not turned over to me at once. We are going to tell him 25 KGB members on their UN staff to get out of the country.

Sept. 17
The press is obsessed with the Daniloff affair and determined to paint all of us as caving in to the Soviets which they of course say is the worst way to deal with them. The simple truth is we’ve offered no deal and are playing hard ball all the way. [In the afternoon] an N.S.C. meeting getting ready for the Soviet foreign minister’s visit and how we treat the Daniloff problem with him. We’ve notified the Soviet U. we’re sending 25 of their UN staff home. All are KGB agents.

Sept. 18
... During the day we were receiving bulletins about the Daniloff case. Gorbachev has gone on TV to declare our man is definitely a spy. I have told him in writing twice he is not. Shevardnadze has arrived to meet with George Shultz. Whether I see him or not is up in the air. Gen. Sec. of UN has stated our action in ordering 25 of UN Soviet staff out of the country is against UN charter. He’d better be careful, if we cut off UN allowance they might be out of business. Back to the W.H. and so to bed.

Last night Sen. confirmed my two Supreme Court nominees, Rehnquist and Scalia.

The next day, George Shultz brought Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to the White House to deliver a reply from Gorbachev to my letter. When Shevardnadze arrived in the Oval Office, he discovered he didn’t have the letter and had left it by mistake at the Soviet embassy. Several KGB agents who were traveling with him left and when they returned half an hour later with the letter they started to enter the Oval Office. Our Secret Service agents said, “Well, no, you can’t do that, we don’t allow KGB agents to walk into the Oval Office,” and they let out a protest.

Finally, after considerable commotion (I learned later), there was a compromise: The Soviet interpreter was called over to the door of the Oval Office and a KGB agent handed him the letter, and the interpreter handed it to Shevardnadze, who handed it to me.

During the delay, Shevardnadze had explained to me the essence of Gorbachev’s message: He wanted to meet me in London or Iceland the following month to see if the two of us could accelerate the arms control process before our meeting in Washington. Afterward, I wrote in my diary:

I opted for Iceland. This would be preparatory to a Summit. I’m agreeable to that but made it plain we wanted Daniloff returned to us before anything took place. I let the F.M. know I was angry and that I resented their charges that Daniloff was a spy after I had personally given my word that he wasn’t. I gave him a little run down on the difference between our two systems and told him they couldn’t understand the importance we place on the individual because they don’t have any such feeling.

I enjoyed being angry.

Besides inviting me to an impromptu summit, Gorbachev’s letter indicated he had little interest in the arms control initiative to which we had devoted so much effort in July. This is a portion of the letter:

After we received your letter of July 25, 1986, which has been given careful consideration, certain developments and incidents of a negative nature have taken place. This is yet another indication of how sensitive relations between the USSR and the United States are and how important it is for the top leaders of the two countries to keep them constantly within view and exert a stabilizing influence whenever the amplitude of their fluctuations becomes threatening.

Among such incidents—of the kind that have happened before and that, presumably, no one can be guaranteed against in the future—is the case of Zakharov and Daniloff. It requires a calm examination, investigation and a search for mutually acceptable solutions. However, the U.S. side has unduly dramatized that incident. A massive hostile campaign has been launched against our country, which has been taken up at the higher levels of the United States administration and Congress. It is as if a pretext was deliberately sought to aggravate Soviet-American relations to increase tension.
RONALD REAGAN

A question then arises: what about the atmosphere so needed for the normal course of negotiations and certainly for preparing and holding the summit meeting?

Since the Geneva meeting, the Soviet Union has been doing a great deal to ensure that the atmosphere is favorable and that negotiations make possible practical preparations for our new meeting.

On the major issue of limiting and reducing arms—nuclear, chemical and conventional—we have undertaken intensive efforts in a search for concrete solutions aimed at radically reducing the level of military confrontation in a context of equivalent security.

However, Mr. President, in the spirit of candidness which is coming to characterize our dialogue, I have to tell you that the overall character of U.S. actions in international affairs, the position on which its representatives insist at negotiations and consultations, and the content of your letter all give rise to grave and disturbing thoughts. One has to conclude that, in effect, no start has been made in implementing the agreements which we reached in Geneva on improving Soviet-American relations, accelerating the negotiations on nuclear and space arms and renouncing attempts to secure military superiority.

Both in letters and publicly we have made known our views as to the causes of such developments, and for my part, I do not want to repeat here our assessment of the situation.

First of all, a conclusion comes to mind:

Is the U.S. leadership at all prepared and really willing to seek agreements which would lead to the termination of the arms race and to genuine disarmament? It is a fact, after all, that despite vigorous efforts by the Soviet side we have still not moved an inch closer to an agreement on arms reduction.

Having studied your letter and proposals contained therein, I began to think where they would lead in terms of seeking solutions.

First. You are proposing that we should agree that the ABM treaty continue existing for another five to seven years, while activities to destroy it would go ahead. Thus, instead of making headway, there would be something that complicates even what has been achieved.

We have proposed that any work on anti-missile systems be confined to laboratories. In response, we witness attempts to justify the development of space weapons and their testing at test sites, and declarations made in advance, of the intention to start in five to seven years deploying large scale ABM systems and thus to nullify the treaty. It is of course fully understood that we will not agree to that. We see here a bypass route to securing military superiority.

I trust, Mr. President, you will recall our discussions of this subject in Geneva. At that time, I said that should the United States rush with weapons in space, we would not help it. We would do our utmost to devalue such efforts and make them futile. You may rest assured that we have every means to achieve this and should the need arise, we shall use these means. We favor the strengthening of the ABM treaty regime. This is precisely the reason for our position that work should be confined to laboratories and that the treaty should be strictly observed for a period of up to fifteen years. Should this be the case, it would be possible—and this is our proposal—to agree on significant reductions in strategic offensive arms. We are prepared to do this without delay and it would thereby be demonstrated in practice that neither side seeks military superiority.

Second. As far as medium range missiles are concerned, the Soviet Union has proposed an optimum solution—complete elimination of U.S. and Soviet missiles in Europe. We have also agreed to an interim option—and that, without taking into account the modernization of British and French nuclear systems.

Following our well known steps towards accommodation, the issue of verification would seem no longer to be an obstacle. Yet, the U.S. side has now “discovered” another obstacle, namely Soviet medium range missiles in Asia. Nevertheless, I believe that here, as well, a mutually acceptable formula can be found and I am ready to propose one.

Third. The attitude of the United States to the moratorium on nuclear testing is a matter of deep disappointment—and not only in the Soviet Union. The United States administration is making every effort to [delay consideration of] this key problem, to subsume it in talk of other issues. You are aware of my views in this regard: the attitude of a country to the cessation of nuclear testing is the touchstone of its policy in the field of disarmament and international security—and indeed in safeguarding peace in general.

Arguments to the effect that nuclear testing is needed to insure reliability of nuclear arsenals are untenable. Today there are other methods to insure this, without nuclear explosions. After all, the United States does not test devices with yields in excess of 150 to 200 kilotons, although 70 per cent of the U.S. nuclear arsenal—in our case the percentage is not smaller—consist of weapons with yields exceeding that threshold. Modern science combined with a political
willingness to agree to any adequate verification measures, including on-site inspections, ensure effective verification of the absence of nuclear explosions. So here, too, there is room for mutually acceptable solutions.

I have addressed specifically three questions, which, in my opinion, are of greatest importance. They are the ones to which positive solutions are expected from the USSR and the USA. They are a matter of concern to the whole world, they are being discussed everywhere. Naturally, we are in favor of productive discussions of other major issues as well, such as reductions of armed forces and conventional armaments, a chemical weapons ban, regional problems and humanitarian questions. Here, too, common approaches and cooperation should be sought. Yet, the three questions mentioned above remain the key ones.

But in almost a year since Geneva, there has been no movement on these issues. Upon reflection and after having given thought to your last letter, I have come to the conclusion that the negotiations need a major impulse; otherwise, they would continue to mark time while creating only the appearance of preparations for our meeting on American soil.

They will lead nowhere unless you and I intervene personally. I am convinced that we shall be able to find solutions, and I am prepared to discuss with you in a substantive way all possible approaches to them and identify such steps as would make it possible—after prompt follow up by appropriate government agencies—to make my visit to the United States a really productive and fruitful one. This is exactly what the entire world is expecting from a second meeting between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States. I look forward to an early reply.

Respectfully,
M. Gorbachev
Sept. 15, 1986

I told Shevardnadze I wouldn't respond to Gorbachev's proposal until Daniloff was free, and in a speech to the UN General Assembly the following week, I said some strong things about his arrest as well as Soviet activities in Afghanistan and elsewhere. I half expected the Communist delegations to walk out, but none did. Meanwhile, the tug-of-war over Daniloff continued, as I recorded in these excerpts from the diary:

Sept. 24
George Shultz and Shevardnadze at the UN still dickering about Daniloff. It's getting more apparent that it's the Soviets who are blinking. We're getting closer. The Soviets don't call him a spy anymore. They refer to him as an "American citizen."

Sept. 25
... George Shultz [called from New York] about Daniloff and meetings with Shevardnadze; a deal cooking would have Daniloff free—and Zakharov free in exchange for [Yuri] Orlov and others if possible. I think we'll have to settle for Orlov but I recommend only if Orlov comes home as Z. leaves. The Soviets want Z. first and then Orlov about 15 days later. Of course we hold fast that the 25 KGB agents leave the UN and go home....

Sept. 26
High spot was swearing in of Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justice Scalia in the East Room. After lunch meeting with George S., Cap W. and Bill Casey plus our White House people, Don R., John P., etc. It was a sum up of where we stand in the negotiations between George and Shevardnadze. The difference between us is their desire to make it look like a trade for Daniloff and their spy Zakharov. We'll trade Zakharov but for Soviet dissidents. We settled on our bottom line points beyond which we won't budge. Then we picked up Nancy and helicoptered to Ft. Meade for the opening of the new National Security Agency complex. I spoke to the NSA employees. Then we helicoptered to Camp David and topped the day with a swim.

Sept. 29
Didn't sleep at all well last night. I need my roommate. (Nancy is gone.) Into the office for a brief meeting before taking off for some politicking. George Shultz has won the day. Mr. and Mrs. Daniloff will be on their way home before the morning is over. That will be announced. Then tomorrow George will announce that Zakharov will be found guilty and sent to Russia on probation so long as he never returns to the U.S. and Orlov and his wife will be freed to leave the Soviet Union in one week.

Then I'll announce a meeting with Gorbachev in Iceland Oct. 10, 11, 12.

Sept. 30
A hectic day. Arrived at the office about 10:05 and was rushed into the press room to announce the Iceland meeting Oct. 11 and 12.
George Shultz had just done the announcement about Zakharov and Orlov. Already it's plain the press is going to believe I gave in and the trade was Daniloff for Zakharov. By the end of the day the network anchors were laying into me for having given up.... Daniloff has arrived in Washington. I'll see him tomorrow afternoon. Zakharov is on his way home to Russia.

In the final analysis, we stood our ground and the Soviets blinked, but (and this brought more complaints from my conservative supporters) we also applied restraint in order not to torpedo prospects for the summit.

I don't believe the crisis over Daniloff's seizure ever brought either of us close to canceling the summit in Reykjavik. I think both Gorbachev and I felt the stakes were too high and acted cautiously to avoid torpedoing in advance whatever prospects we had of success in Iceland.

At Reykjavik, my hopes for a nuclear-free world soared briefly, then fell during one of the longest, most disappointing—and ultimately angriest—days of my presidency. Our meeting spot in Iceland was a waterfront home overlooking the Atlantic. Gorbachev and I first met alone briefly with our interpreters, then he said he wanted to bring in George Shultz and Shevardnadze and that's the way it went for the rest of the two days—through ten hours of negotiations among the four of us.

Gorbachev tried to limit our discussion to arms control. But I led off by raising again the Soviet Union's refusal to let its citizens emigrate because of their religion or to allow the reunification of divided families. I brought up Afghanistan and the continuing Soviet subversion of Third World countries, to which he listened but did not respond. I had brought along a list of twelve hundred Jews who wanted out of Russia and handed it to him and said once again that Soviet human rights policies were impeding the improvement of our relationship. I also asked him why the Soviets had reneged on a commitment to buy six million tons of U.S. grain; he said they couldn't afford it because of falling oil prices, which meant fewer Soviet dollars for wheat.

Then, for a day and a half, Gorbachev and I made progress on arms reduction that even now seems breathtaking.

On the first day he accepted in principle our zero-zero proposal for the elimination of nuclear missiles in Europe and my proposal,