

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-1601

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: WALT RIKER,
DALE TATE 202/224-3135

STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE THE POST-REYKJAVIK SITUATION

LAST NIGHT THE PRESIDENT OUTLINED IN DETAIL -- AND IN CONTEXT -- WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN REYKJAVIK. TWO THINGS EMERGE MOST CLEARLY FROM THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.

FIRST, IT WAS GORBACHEV AND GORBACHEV ALONE WHO BEARS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCUTTLING THE MOST PROMISING ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS IN HISTORY. NEARLY A YEAR AGO, AT THE GENEVA SUMMIT, THE SOVIET LEADER HAD AGREED THAT PROGRESS ON INF AND LONG-RANGE MISSILES WAS POSSIBLE INDEPENDENT OF NEGOTIATIONS OVER STAR WARS. THAT APPEARED TO BE THE MESSAGE OF THE INITIAL, HOPEFUL TALKS IN REYKJAVIK, TOO.

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, THE PRESIDENT AND GORBACHEV HAD ACHIEVED NEAR-FINAL AND UNCONDITIONAL AGREEMENT ON THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES IN EUROPE AND A FIVE YEAR-50% REDUCTION IN LONG-RANGE MISSILES -- AN ASTOUNDING ARMS REDUCTION ACCOMPLISHMENT. YET, AT THE LAST MINUTE, GORBACHEV SUNK THAT APPARENT ACCORD UNDER THE WEIGHT OF A NEW, UNACCEPTABLE AND IRRATIONAL DEMAND -- THAT THE PRESIDENT ESSENTIALLY GIVE UP ANY REALISTIC POSSIBILITY OF DETERMINING THE FEASIBILITY AND FUNCTIONS OF A STRATEGIC DEFENSE SYSTEM. IN EFFECT, GORBACHEV ISSUED AN ULTIMATUM -- GIVE US WHAT WE WANT ON STAR WARS OR THERE IS NO DEAL, PERIOD.

THERE IS NO WAY THIS PRESIDENT IS GOING TO GIVE IN TO THAT KIND OF BLACKMAIL. AND NO REASON THAT HE SHOULD. INSTEAD, THE PRESIDENT OFFERED A COUNTERPROPOSAL, ADDRESSING GORBACHEV'S OBVIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT SDI. THE PRESIDENT WENT THE EXTRA MILE, TO DETERMINE IF GORBACHEV REALLY WAS INTERESTED IN THE KIND OF COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT THAT SEEMED POSSIBLE EARLIER IN THE TALKS. BUT GORBACHEV GAVE HIS ANSWER TO THAT PROPOSAL, TOO -- A RESOUNDING "NYET."

(MORE)

YET, DESPITE ALL THAT, THE PRESIDENT SENT A SECOND, CLEAR MESSAGE LAST NIGHT -- THAT HE REMAINS AS DETERMINED AS EVER TO ACHIEVE THE KIND OF REAL NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTIONS THAT FOR A TIME APPEARED IN PROSPECT IN REYKJAVIK. THE PRESIDENT REITERATED THAT THE INVITATION TO A U.S. SUMMIT IS STILL OPEN, IF GORBACHEV WILL ONLY ACCEPT IT; THAT OUR PROPOSALS ARE STILL ON THE TABLE, IF GORBACHEV WILL ONLY GIVE THEM SERIOUS CONSIDERATION; THAT PROGRESS ON ARMS CONTROL AND THE OTHER ISSUES ON THE TABLE IN GENEVA IS STILL THERE TO BE MADE, IF GORBACHEV WILL ONLY SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY.

THE PRESIDENT HAS DONE HIS PART. I HOPE THE CONGRESS WILL DO ITS PART, TOO -- BY STANDING WITH THE PRESIDENT; BY SUPPORTING THE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS WHICH HAVE BROUGHT US SO FAR, AND SO CLOSE TO REAL NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTIONS; AND BY DENYING TO GORBACHEV THROUGH OUR ACTIONS THE PRIZE HE GAMBLERD ON, AND LOST, THROUGH HIS GRANDSTAND PLAY IN REYKJAVIK.

IF WE DO WHAT WE SHOULD, THEN REYKJAVIK, IN RETROSPECT, CAN BE A DECISIVE TURN ON THE ROAD TOWARD GREATER SECURITY FOR OUR COUNTRY AND PEACE FOR THE WORLD.

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