

**President Ronald Reagan Letter to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev  
April 4, 1985**

WASHINGTON

April 4, 1985

Dear Mr General Secretary:

The visit to Moscow of a congressional delegation headed by the distinguished Speaker of our House of Representatives provides an important, new opportunity for a high-level exchange of views between our two countries. I hope your meeting with the Speaker and his colleagues will result in a serious and useful discussion.

I believe meetings at the political level are vitally important if we are to build a more constructive relationship between our two countries. I believe my meetings in Washington with First Deputy Premier Gromyko Shcherbitsky and your discussion in Moscow with Vice President Bush and Secretary Shultz both served this purpose. As you know, I look forward to meeting with you personally at a mutually convenient time. Together, I am confident that we can provide the important political impetus you mentioned in your last letter for moving toward a more constructive and stable relationship between our two countries. I believe that new opportunities are now opening up in U.S.-Soviet relations. We must take advantage of them. You know my view that there are such opportunities in every area of our relations, including humanitarian, regional, bilateral and arms control issues. In improving stability there is no more important issue than the arms control talks we have jointly undertaken in Geneva. Our negotiators have very flexible instructions to work with your negotiators in drafting agreements which can lead to radical reductions, and toward our common goal, the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In seizing new opportunities, we must also take care to avoid situations which can seriously damage our relations. I and all Americans were appalled recently at the senseless killing of Major Nicholson in East Germany. In addition to the personal tragedy of this brave officer, this act seemed to many in our country to be only the latest example of a Soviet military action which threatens to undo our best efforts to fashion a sustainable, more constructive relationship for the long term. I want you to know it is also a matter of personal importance to me that we take steps to prevent the reoccurrence of this tragedy and I hope you will do all in your power to prevent such actions in the future.

Let me close by reaffirming the value I place in our correspondence. I will be replying in greater detail to your last letter. I hope we can continue to speak frankly in future letters, as we attempt to build stronger relations between ourselves and between our two countries.

Sincerely,  
Ronald Reagan

His Excellency  
Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev  
General Secretary, Central Committee,

Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
Moscow, U.S.S.R.

[Source: Margaret Thatcher Foundation]