

**"Human Rights in an Era of  
Democratic Change"**

Department of State  
Loy Henderson Conference Room  
Thursday, December 7, 1989  
1:30-5:30 p.m.

- 1:30 p.m.                   **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**
- Richard Schifter  
Assistant Secretary for Human Rights  
and Humanitarian Affairs
- 1:40 p.m.                   **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**
- John Bolton  
Assistant Secretary for  
International Organizations Affairs
- 1:50 p.m.                   **THE ESSENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS**
- Ambassador Michael Novak  
American Enterprise Institute
- 2:00 p.m.                   **RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING, MORAL NORMS, AND  
HUMAN RIGHTS**
- George Weigel  
Ethics and Public Policy Center
- 2:10 p.m.                   **HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES**
- Carl Gershman  
National Endowment for Democracy
- 2:20 p.m.                   **HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS:  
A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT**
- Dr. Charles Fairbanks  
Foreign Policy Institute  
Johns Hopkins University
- 2:30 p.m.                   Morton Kondracke  
The New Republic
- 2:40 p.m.                   **DISCUSSION**
- 3:30 p.m.                   **BREAK**

3:45 p.m.                   **THE QUESTION OF LINKAGE**  
  
                                  **HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL  
                                  SECURITY**  
  
                                  Brad Roberts  
                                  Center for Strategic International  
                                  Studies

3:55 p.m.                   **THE ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE**  
  
                                  Amy Young  
                                  International Human Rights Law Group

4:05 p.m.                   **DREAMS AND DEFIANCE**  
  
                                  Paula Dobriansky  
                                  Deputy Assistant Secretary  
                                  Bureau of Human Rights

4:15 p.m.                   James O'Dea  
                                  Amnesty International

4:25 p.m.                   Sichan Siv  
                                  Office of Public Liaison  
                                  The White House

4:35 p.m.                   **DISCUSSION**

5:30 p.m.                   **PROGRAM CONCLUDES**

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1989 - EST 1:30 P.M.

ADDRESS BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS RICHARD SCHIFTER  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
IN CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY - 1989

Ten Days that Shook the World was the title which John Reed gave to his account of the Bolshevik Revolution. There were those who thought the title was overblown, that the events described did not have the significance which John Reed attributed to them. From the vantage point of 1989, we can say that Reed was right. The events in Petrograd in the fall of 1917 were destined, in due time, to have a profound impact on world developments for most of the Twentieth Century.

And now, on Human Rights Day of 1989, we can surely say that the world has once again been shaken and we can then argue the length of this most recent seismic disturbance. I would argue that it has been roughly 1,000 days, that these truly earthshaking events started rather inconspicuously about three years ago, in December 1986, with a knock on the door of an apartment in the city of Gorky. When the residents opened up, before them stood some workmen who explained their instructions for the installation of a telephone. A few days later came the

famous phone call from Mikhail Gorbachev, inviting Andrei Sakharov to move back to Moscow.

Shortly thereafter followed the return of gaunt, yet spirited prisoners of conscience from the GULAG and the gradual, initially almost imperceptible, relaxation of repressive controls in the Soviet Union. As time passed, we saw the momentum of the forces of change accelerate to the point, in recent months, of leaving us almost breathless. With Romania and Albania the only old-line dictatorships left in Eastern Europe, it is fair to say that never in the history of nation-states has the European continent been so close to the brink of true freedom.

The question has been posed as to precisely what our response should be to the drama which is now playing out before our own eyes. Let me suggest that it be, in the first instance, awe and humility. It is either the accident of birth or the good fortune of having been able to immigrate that has enabled us to live in this blessed country, a country which has given each of us the opportunity to frame our own individual destiny rather than be tossed by the waves of history. It is to the founders of this country, to the framers of our Constitution that we need to give thanks for the creation of a system of government and a social order which has served us so well.

Thus, rather than declaring our ideological triumph, let us reach out to those in Eastern Europe who themselves have discovered the validity of the propositions on which this country was founded and which were handed down to us. Let us recognize that we now have a truly unprecedented opportunity to advance the cause of democracy and human rights internationally and thereby, as this tortured century reaches its end, offer the world a chance for peace and tranquility.

There is only a chance of that, by no means a certainty. In recent times there have been so many events, totally without expectation, that can indeed engender euphoria that there is indeed a danger for us to assess the future too optimistically. It would be, at the same time, a serious mistake for us not to recognize that there are opportunities for us now to advance the cause of human rights which were simply not there three years ago.

We have all been deeply moved this year by events in Budapest and Warsaw, in Berlin, in Sofia, and finally by the return, after 21 years of eclipse, of the Prague Spring. But we need to recognize that the popular sentiments that have been expressed in these five capitals have been there all along. The reason why these sentiments could now affect the nature of

government and society lies in changes which have taken place in Moscow. The developments in Moscow will continue to play the most critical role in the period immediately ahead.

My good friend and colleague, Ambassador Lehman, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, has on a number of occasions made the point that it is progress in the field of human rights in the Soviet Union that will do far more to assure our security than any arms control and inspection measure. There is good reason to agree with this observation. Our conflict with the Soviet Union since 1945 was not driven by such traditional reasons for international disputes as competition for markets and spheres of influence. It was driven by an ideology, an ideology which claimed to have all the answers to humanity's social and economic problems and whose adherents used all possible means, including force and subversion, to bring their millennial program to those who had not seen the light. That is the force and the ideology behind the force which we resisted.

The rationale for the use of force on the international level was also the reason for the use of force domestically. Those who believed they had found the road to that better world engaged in a struggle against all who stood in the way -- whether at home or abroad. At home this struggle was reflected

in the brutal repression of human rights. Abroad it was reflected in a massive build-up of arms and in bullying, expansionism and subversion.

It is indeed the issue of human rights which provides the litmus test for all aspects of the political and social development of any country and its behavior on the international scene. An assessment of human rights trends in the Soviet Union, consequently, has high relevance to our assessment of the international scene.

For more than a quarter of a century, we have been aware of the existence of a human rights movement in the Soviet Union. We knew the names of the courageous men and women who sacrificed their careers, their standing in society, and often their freedom to assert their beliefs in the democratic way of life. What we did not know and what came as a great surprise to a good many of us was that the beliefs of these dissidents were shared by many Soviet citizens who did not dare to speak out. What was even more surprising was that among those who sought a more democratic system were people who occupied positions of leadership and responsibility within the system itself. As President Gorbachev began to lift the lid of oppression that had rested on the Soviet population for so long, these clandestine democrats in the establishment also

came to the fore.

So, in place of the political monolith of yesteryear, we see today in the Soviet Union a wide spectrum of opinion, ranging from the most radical advocates of reform to supporters of gradual reform and, at the extreme, extending to those who long for a return to autocracy. In the latter group, we may see a strange fusion of Stalinists with those who are spiritually still monarchists. And then there is also the large group of Soviet citizens whose preoccupation is, quite understandably, with their daily life, their personal standard of living, rather than with the country's political structure.

It is clear today that it is not only in the interest of the people of the Soviet Union, not only in the interest of the nations of Eastern Europe, but in the world's interest that the reformers succeed. Ultimately, their success will depend on their own actions and the reactions of their people and not anyone else's. However, to the extent to which cooperation between us and them will enhance their chances of success, we certainly must give it a try. There is so much at stake. That is the message which our President has so strongly underlined.

Eastern Europe is not the only place where progress in human rights has been registered during the past year. Another

country moving inexorably toward democracy is Chile. And free elections have been held in Namibia. There is, in fact, even reason for hope for progress toward greater respect for human rights in South Africa.

A totally upbeat characterization of the events of the last year does not, sad to say, tell the whole story. While Leninism is being discarded in Eastern Europe, its lease on life has been extended in Latin America and Asia. Kim Il Soong and Fidel Castro, the world's longest-termed tyrants, still hold their respective countries in their totalitarian grip. And human rights violations not necessarily motivated by totalitarian ideology are reported daily from all parts of the world -- it is clear that the time has not as yet arrived for those of us who are concerned with the cause of human rights to turn our attention to other issues.

In China, we have witnessed not only the tragic events of June 4 and the repression that followed. We have also noted in theoretical journals and other publications the reformulation, in attacks on our country, of the assertion that we in the United States are seeking to impose our human rights standards on China and are thus interfering in the domestic affairs of that country. What are characterized as United States standards are then dismissed in traditional Communist jargon,

as bourgeois notions -- out of touch with the present state of evolution of China's society.

Let me use this opportunity to restate the obvious. The standards by which China is now being judged and by which we judge all others are not American standards. They are universal standards. They are recognized as such throughout the world. And comment on a government's failure to live up to these standards is no longer viewed in the international community as interference. It is viewed as an appropriate response to those cases in which a government ignores the standards set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. China's votes on United Nations resolutions involving South Africa suggest that in some instances the Government of the PRC, too, does believe that comment on human rights violations in foreign countries is appropriate and, therefore, does not constitute undue interference in the domestic affairs of that country.

To return to the positive theme with which I started, permit me to quote from the conclusion of a speech which I delivered on January 28, 1987, in Vienna, Austria.

"We in the United States," I said then, "rely on the fundamental principle that governments are instituted among

men to secure the rights of the individual and that these governments must derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. These words reflect, I am sure, not only the point of view of the United States but of all the democratic participants in the CSCE process. They also reflect, I am certain, the point of view of great numbers, perhaps even great majorities, of the citizens of countries whose governments have not lived up to these principles. It is to these people above all -- to the Helsinki monitors, to the members of Charter '77, to the Solidarity movement, to all those who espouse the cause of freedom -- that we must send the message not to despair, to ask them to remember the last stanza of a song of the 1930s, the song of the Peatbog Soldiers: But for us there's no complaining, Winter will in time be past, One day we shall cry, rejoicing: "Homeland, dear, you're mine at last."

Few of us would have thought then that the end of Eastern Europe's winter was so near. Let us hope that those in Eastern Europe who are committed to democracy and human rights will in the months immediately ahead be able to consolidate their gains. If they do, there is every reason to believe that the trend which we have witnessed in recent years will continue worldwide and that respect for the Universal Declaration will become truly universal. It is to that goal that we must bend every effort.

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U.S. COMMEMORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

REMARKS BY JOHN R. BOLTON

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS

December 7, 1989

I am pleased to join with Dick Schifter today in commemorating the human rights values which have nurtured us as a nation and which have served as a standard and as a goal for the international community. Forty-one years after the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we meet here today amazed at the real impact the hopes embodied in the Universal Declaration have had upon the people of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We have also watched with sadness while people in other parts of the world struggle against great odds to realize their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. We meet here today knowing that while much has been accomplished, the challenges remain formidable.

In the words of the Declaration, it is still true that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts." In Nicaragua, Burma, Cuba, Afghanistan, Iran, Romania, and South Africa, among others, men and women continue to suffer unspeakable outrage. That we all recognize the incompleteness of this list testifies to the scope of the problem.

How can we in the United Nations change the ugly face of human rights abuses? Today in Central America we are witnessing a process in which the linkage between human rights, genuine self-determination, and peace and stability has been made explicit. The Tela Accords signed by the governments of

Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua expressly connect cessation of external support for insurrectionist groups; voluntary demobilization, repatriation, or regional relocation of the Nicaraguan resistance; and the creation of an environment in Nicaragua, whereby the Resistance can return without fear of further abuses of human rights, and whereby all groups can participate in free and fair elections.

We in this country, with a two hundred year history of peaceful change of government through the electoral process, do not have to think about what free and fair elections require. We are fortunate that the institutions provided for in our Constitution or which have evolved over the years automatically guarantee that our elections are genuine. The people of Nicaragua, sadly, are not so fortunate. And what is occurring now in Nicaragua sends a resounding message that an electoral process without the guarantees of human rights provided, for example, in our own Constitution cannot be taken for granted.

Since coming to power, the Sandinistas have made it quite clear that the one thing they fear most is the possibility that the Nicaraguan people could vote their conscience in an unfettered election. They have done their utmost over the years to avoid such a possibility. However, thanks to the diplomacy of the other Central American governments, and to the Sandinistas' own abundant cynicism and duplicity which have led to many blunders on their part, the Nicaraguan government has

signed on to an agreement which requires it to permit the holding of an open, free and fair election next February.

It is not surprising that the Sandinistas are violating the spirit of the process which they have formally undertaken to support. Polls indicate that the Nicaraguan opposition, at first fragmented and disorganized, has now evolved into a political force enjoying widespread support among the people of Nicaragua. As the opposition has coalesced the Sandinistas have stepped up tactics designed to discredit, confuse and intimidate the opposition and its supporters. Press reports detail incidents of open harassment, beating, threats, firebombings, smears and even attempted murder directed against the opposition.

For instance, in the town of Pantasma on November 26, the opposition's vice presidential candidate Virgilio Godoy along with a group of supporters were stopped by soldiers. Godoy took the opportunity to complain to the soldiers that two of his supporters had been beaten and detained by the army. The soldiers responded that the opposition had been throwing rocks and their commander then threatened to open fire on Godoy and his party.

An opposition activist, Encarnacio Porras, was beaten by a Sandinista soldier following a rally in San Dionisio. The mobs of young toughs known as "Turbas" that have been employed by the Sandinistas to cow the Nicaraguan populace throughout their

rule are now actively involved in the election campaign. Our Embassy reports that at virtually every opposition rally Turba gangs roam about throwing rocks, shouting down speakers and roughing up supporters. Several opposition activists have been attacked by Turbas who have inflicted severe injuries. Sandinista officials have not even attempted to thinly veil threats intended to prevent the opposition from campaigning. For instance the Sandinista mayor of Nandaime warned prior to a rally scheduled for November 19 that if the event occurred "there will be blood, there will be death."

These and other incidents too numerous to mention now present a clear pattern of abuses designed to interfere with the open, free and fair electoral process that the Sandinistas are pledged to uphold. Meanwhile they step up international pressure to force the Contras to accept their vague assurances that there will be no recriminations, no further human rights abuses of the Contras and their families should the resistance lay down their arms and return to Nicaragua as refugees.

The United Nations Security Council has given a clear mandate to the UN election monitors for Nicaragua. This mandate includes the obligation to raise all incidents that violate or interfere with the principle of free and fair elections. We are working closely with Ambassador Elliot Richardson who heads the UN monitors to ensure that the types of violations I have described are noted and raised with the Sandinistas. Ambassador Richardson will be required in

February to certify that the elections and electoral process conform to the letter and spirit of the Tela agreement. Given the current situation he will need to work very hard in the next few weeks to be in a position to do this.

The relationship between the enjoyment of those human rights described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, democratic process and regional peace and stability in Central America is inescapable, for us, for the United Nations, for the governments of Central America. The Central American peace process depends on the ability of the people of the region to express their wills through free and fair elections which in turn require such fundamental human rights as a free press, freedom of speech, of assembly, of worship. The United Nations has the opportunity to make a lasting contribution to the welfare of all the people of Central America. It will require forthrightness and toughness to ensure that this opportunity does not fall by the wayside.

Cuba is in many respects the source of Central America's problems. It is Fidel Castro's Cuba, of course, that the Sandinistas have modeled themselves upon politically and militarily. As communist regimes throughout the world are being repudiated by their own citizenry, it is highly ironic that Castro remains dinosaur-like -- able to resist in his own domain the changes sweeping the rest of the world, but already doomed by those changes.

Three years ago the United States launched a campaign to call the world's attention to the nature of the gross and systematic human rights violations that form the underpinnings of Castro's power over the Cuban people. We still believe that the spotlight afforded by a UN human rights investigation affords one of the best ways to affect Castro's behavior. The United Nations Secretary General has received a mandate from the UN Commission for Human Rights to raise cases of human rights violations with the Cuban government. We are working closely with the UN Center for Human Rights to ensure that the Secretary General has the details of human rights abuses in Cuba, and we look to the Secretary General to forcefully pursue his mandate.

Our approach to human rights in the United Nations is a major facet of what I call the Unitary UN. As I have described we need to be mindful of the interrelationships between human rights, democracy and international peace and stability. In the United Nations we are constantly on the lookout for ways to hammer home these interrelationships. We make human rights concerns an aspect of what we seek to do throughout the UN system whether it is in economic, development, drug abuse or disarmament fora.