PS1 for 12/24/87#WHO HAS THE MORAL RIGHT TO PREACH?

Among the several times that Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev showed their bad manners while in Washington for the recent Summit, the most outrageous was when Gorby declaimed, ""What moral right does the United States have to preach to us, to the rest of human society?''

This petulant arrogance apparently snowed some of the media. (BF)Newsweek(end BF) led off its cover story about the Summit with a sympathetic report that the ""intelligent and charming'' Gorbachev is convinced that ""the Soviet system is materially and morally superior to capitalism.''

Americans should rise up in indignation at this insult. Yes, indeed, America does have the moral right to assume the role of a teacher, and we'll tell you why.

In all recorded history, there never was a great nation that achieved so much individual freedom plus so much material abundance for more people as America has done. America is light years ahead of whatever nation can claim second place.

That's why people from the far corners of the globe want so desperately to come here that they are willing to risk death for the chance to make it to America. They climb over barbed-wire fences, run across mined fields, dodge machine-gunfire, swim through shark-infested waters, spend hungry days in an open, crowded, leaky boat, or endure the underground life of an illegal alien -- just for a chance to live in America.

Nobody is trying to get into the Soviet Union, but millions are trying to get out! The Soviets have erected military barricades all along their long border to keep people locked in who are eager to escape, even though they can take with them only the clothes on their backs.

To the question of who has the moral right to preach about human

rights, the whole world has voted with its feet. The answer is America!

Americans live in such a free society that it's hard to contemplate what it is like elsewhere. By American standards, even most Western democracies have an oppressively regulated society.

The freedom to practice one's religion, the preeminent individual right, is practically total in America. In the Soviet Union religion is prohibited, proscribed, harassed, and discriminated against in a thousand ways.

The results of individual political, religious, and economic freedom have given Americans a material abundance that has made us the *envy of the world. Prosperity is a by-product of freedom.*

The monthly wage of the average American worker is $1,486. That's four and a half times as much as the monthly wage of the average Soviet worker, who earns rubles the equivalent of $320.

The difference is even more striking when we compare what this wage will buy. The average U.S. worker has to work 4.4 months to buy the least expensive U.S.-made automobile, the Ford Escort, which costs $6,586. The average Soviet worker has to work two years and 4.2 months to buy the least expensive Soviet automobile, the Zaporozhets.

For the two and a half decades from 1945 to 1970, the United States enjoyed such massive military superiority over the entire rest of the world combined that we literally could have achieved that elusive goal of world conquest which evil dictators have always sought. We not only could have successfully imposed our military and political objectives on the entire rest of the world, but we could have done so with practically no risk to ourselves.

Yet, we didn't resort to aggression. History affords no other example of a great nation exercising such self-restraint.

But that's only half of the remarkable post-World War II history.

We taxed our people to send generous foreign aid to more than a hundred other countries around the globe.

Billions of American taxpayer dollars were doled out, even to people who hate us, and often in ways that were more preferential than we treat the needy in our own country. More remarkable still, we even built up our enemies, Germany and Japan, whose armies had killed or maimed a million of our finest young men.

While we were sending all those billions in an unprecedented outpouring of generosity to other lands, the Soviet Union was using its power and resources to capture and consolidate its control over every small country along its border.

Yes, indeed, Gorbachev, the America, that treated the rest of the world with Marshall Plan generosity, is indeed morally superior to the U.S.S.R. that has demonstrated an unbroken record of invasions of small countries from the Baltic States and the Captive Nations in the 1940s to Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Yes, Gorbachev, America is morally superior to the Soviet Union. America has not only the moral right but the duty to preach our message of freedom to the world.