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RELEASE: MAY 4, 1982

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S BLUNT WARNING

Most of the press comment on President Reagan's recent primetime news conference concentrated on his statement that "I don't think there could be any winners -- everybody would be a loser if there's a nuclear war." Of course, he is correct; in war, both sides are losers because of the terrible human, family, property, and economic costs. To the soldier or civilian who is killed, any war is a "loser."

But all nations are not equally bad off even if they are losers. A nation that loses 25 million people in a nuclear exchange would, indeed, be a "loser." But it surely wouldn't be as bad off as another "loser" nation which loses 150 million people. World War II was a "loser" for the 12 million Soviet nationals who died but, as a nation, the U.S.S.R. came out much stronger than when the war started.

Far more important at that news conference was President Reagan's blunt warning to the American people about the military threat we face. This is the first time an American President has uttered the frightening facts that the Soviets are definitely superior to the United States in nuclear weapons. Here are Ronald Reagan's words:

"The truth of the matter is that, on balance, the Soviet Union does have a definite margin of superiority. A [nuclear weapons] freeze would not only be disadvantageous -- in fact even dangerous — to us with them in that position."

Then, the President made an equally sensational follow-up statement. He said: "The Soviets' great edge is one in which they could absorb our retaliatory blow and hit us again."

This warning goes to the very heart of our survival as a free nation. It is a real shocker to learn from the mouth of our President that the Soviets can hit us twice with nuclear weapons, and that we can't stop them even if we hit them with every weapon we've got. Yet, that ominous statement was omitted from the news accounts of Reagan's press conference in both the New York Times and the Washington Post.

How America got in this predicament of peril should be the greatest news story of the 20th century. How was our country, which had unrivalled 8-to-1 military superiority at

the time of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, reduced to a position of such inferiority today that, even if we launch everything we have at the Soviet Union, we can't stop them from clobbering us a second time?

One of the major reasons why we got into our present danger is that we have had a succession of Presidents who thought they could charm the Soviets into cooperation. Franklin D. Roosevelt tried cooperating with the Soviets at Teheran and Yalta and failed; Harry S. Truman tried it at Potsdam and failed; Dwight Eisenhower tried it at Camp David and at Paris and failed; John F. Kennedy tried it at Vienna and produced the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962; Richard Nixon tried it at Moscow and at Washington and reaped a disastrous detente and a sellout in SALT I; Gerald Ford tried it at the Vladivostok Summit and was rewarded with a hypocritical bearhug; and Jimmy Carter tried it at Moscow and came home with the sellout of SALT II and the invasion of Afghanistan.

We are so fortunate that now we have a President who is realistic instead of one who looks at Communist countries through rose-colored glasses.

At the same recent evening news conference, a reporter asked him this question, "Mr. President, in your first press conference, you referred to the Soviet Union as having shown a pattern of, I believe you used the words, lying and cheating over the years. Have you in your 15 months in office formed any different opinion than you came into office with about the Soviet Union? Are they more conciliatory than you thought they were?" President Reagan replied: "No, I don't think they've changed their habits."

Defending our nation from the Soviet threat is the number-one duty of the Federal Government. President Reagan should be supported in his plan to build every weapon we could possibly need to protect our lives and freedom.

Weapons may be complicated -- and in the nuclear age they certainly are; but the principles of war and peace remain the same. Weakness invites attack from greedy aggressors. Military strength is our basic guarantee of continued freedom and independence.

Fortunately, America has all the material and technological resources we need to win any race we decide to run against the Soviets. Because our GNP is twice that of the U.S.S.R., anything they can do, we can do twice as much of, and probably twice as fast.