



PRIME MINISTER

New Delhi  
December 24, 1987

*Dear Ronald,*

Your letter was handed over to me yesterday by Ambassador Dean.

I thank you for taking me into confidence about your recent discussions with Mr. Gorbachev, particularly on the nuclear disarmament issue and the Afghanistan problem.

The agreement you signed with Mr. Gorbachev on the elimination of short and medium-range nuclear weapons is truly historical. Bold and courageous leadership has made this possible. On the eve of the New Year, the world can look forward, with a new sense of optimism, to you continuing the work of freeing it from the threat of atomic extinction. We hope the coming year will witness yet another agreement on halving strategic weapons. We wish you success in finalising this agreement as all of us have a vital stake in it.

Nuclear weapons have a global reach transcending regions. Nuclear powers, present and potential, should be involved in a common endeavour to eliminate the nuclear menace and prevent the emergence of new destabilising weapon systems. After four decades of nuclear weapons the INF treaty gives us the first glimpse of a non-nuclear world. This is the time to expand our thinking to how such a world will maintain peaceful co-existence, not by the threat of annihilation

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but with a positive commitment to friendship and the oneness of humanity. We will be giving further thought to this at the forthcoming summit meeting in Stockholm next month of the Six-Nation Five-Continent peace initiative.

I had a meeting in Delhi today with Mr. Najibullah, who made a transit halt on his way to Vietnam. He appeared appreciative of the results of the Washington summit in regard to Afghanistan. He explained that the commitment made by the Soviet Union on the withdrawal of their troops had created conditions for a peaceful settlement of the problem. In his view, processes should now be set in motion for ensuring that the forthcoming proximity talks in Geneva result in a settlement that can ensure a non-aligned and an independent Afghanistan.

I gave him our assessment of the overall situation in Afghanistan and the region, indicating that a broad-based government embracing all sections of opinion was needed for stability and orderly political evolution. Mr. Najibullah and the PDPA are showing greater flexibility in approaching the political issues involved. In cooperation with all groups and individuals concerned, we are trying to do our best to facilitate the emergence of a stable and representative political order which meets with the aspirations of all sections of the people of Afghanistan.

We have contacted King Zahir Shah in Rome and proposed continued discussions with him. We have also initiated contacts with other groups within and outside Afghanistan. We hope Pakistan and

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Iran will also adopt a constructive approach to help resolve the many critical and sensitive aspects of the Afghanistan problem that will arise in the coming months. We look forward to continued close consultation and interaction with the United States in this process.

I deeply appreciate your intervention in correcting the distorted perspective of the proposal which had been put forward by the Senate Appropriations Committee in seeking to link the nuclear programmes of India and Pakistan. I am glad that you were able to ensure a return to the direction that had been set on October 20 in Washington DC. We can look forward to further Indo-US co-operation along these lines in 1988.

We have made good progress in strengthening our bilateral cooperation to the mutual benefit of our two countries. It is a process to which I am firmly committed. It is a process to which your personal contribution has been historic. I would like to thank you for your understanding and assistance.

*We will keep in touch on these issues and other matters. As sister democracies, friendship between us is a key factor in enlarging the area of liberty and completely unadorned human endeavour.*

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Sonic joins me in wishing you  
and Nancy a Merry Christmas and  
a Happy New Year.

With warm good wishes from  
both of us for even higher successes  
in the coming 12 months.

Yours sincerely,



The Hon'ble Ronald Reagan  
President of the United States of America  
Washington D.C.

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