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Dear Condi and Philip:

In addition to my marginal comments on Chapter I, here are a few thoughts that I felt were not adequately expressed in the narrow context of my written comments:

Page 7 - My general feeling is that you take Gorbachev and his rhetoric too literally as what he was trying to do. I believe that you can make a case that he was trying to disband the Western coalition by smothering us with kindness, talking about the "common home," etc. At least that is what I believed. I think he became trapped by his own tactical moves into dismantling his system but that was not his intent. This at least was my view and I would hate to have your introductory chapter convey the implications that all Bush people signed on to your description.

Page 8 - I do not believe that Gorbachev saw the failure of the Soviet economy as being due to its isolation from the world economically. When he came in, he focussed on improving productivity and other kinds of tinkering. I really think his goal was to reform and make more efficient the system he inherited and not change it in a fundamental sense.

Page 22-23 - I, at least, took Gorbachev's UN speech as an attempt to lure the West into disarmament by taking measures which looked impressive but made negligible difference in the capability of Soviet forces with respect to Eastern Europe. I do not believe he was being altruistic. I think he sought to encourage reform in Eastern Europe to obtain allies there against his own conservatives in Moscow.

Bottom of Page 27 - I hope you do not sign the Bush Administration on to this description of results. Again, speaking for myself, the INF Treaty was a defeat for us in that we got rid of a useful weapon system while the Soviets got rid of one they wouldn't need in any event. The Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan like we did from Vietnam. It had nothing to do with reaching out to the West. Negotiated settlements in southern Africa resulted from Soviet overextension.

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Page 30 - It's true that the Administration started slowly but partly it was because we had a very different orientation. We didn't think the Cold War was over and one of our -- my -- principal goals was to start to get Soviet troops out of Eastern Europe. As you point out in earlier pages, the Reagan people pretty much ignored that region. The other thing we tried to do, with some division in our own ranks, was to change the focus of strategic arms control to emphasize stability rather than simple reducing numbers. I think these were "big" ideas.

Page 40 - I may have looked like I was "groping for a major step," but I did not look at it that way. You say in the same paragraph I proposed a scheme to get all Soviet troops out of Eastern Europe. I would not describe that as groping for a major step. I had had that idea for at least a year. Likewise the shift in emphasis in arms control, though that is not a principal concern in the book. This is off the point but the sentence about Blackwill dissuading me from my troop withdrawal idea is wrong. Our principal fear in Europe was of surprise attack. Without Soviet troops in forward position surprise attack was not possible. I was dissuaded by the notion that the move however well-intended would demoralize Europe.

Page 43, last paragraph - as noted above, we were concerned not simply with the conventional military balance but how we might be able to reduce if not eliminate Soviet troops in the satellites.

Page 44, third paragraph - This is simply wrong. Baker at this point joined me in support of a position I had been arguing since December 1988.

Brent

