



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STATEMENT BY FRED RYAN,
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE
RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION AND INSTITUTE
ON THE DEATH OF FORMER GENERAL SECRETARY MIKHAIL GORBACHEV**

Simi Valley, California – The Reagan Foundation and Institute mourns the loss of former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, a man who once was a political adversary of Ronald Reagan’s who ended up becoming a friend.

President Reagan was a devoted anti-communist who was never afraid to say what needed to be said or do what needed to be done to bring freedom to people who were living under repressive regimes. It was General Secretary Gorbachev with whom President Reagan would finally have that long-sought opportunity to form a relationship which led to a lessening of tensions between Washington and Moscow, and eventually to meaningful arms reduction.

Following the historic signing of the INF Treaty in 1987 and the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, relations between the United States and Soviet Union would never be the same again. Against all odds, “Ron and Mikhail,” as they eventually came to call each other, had found a way to make the planet safer together. As President Reagan wrote in his handwritten personal diary about the two men’s initial correspondence, “[it] showed what was to become the foundation of not only a better relationship between our countries, but a friendship between two men.” When Secretary General Gorbachev attended President Reagan’s state funeral in Washington, D.C., Mrs. Reagan was extremely touched. It was yet one more confirmation that the two men had really formed a friendship and not just a business relationship.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Gorbachev family and the people of Russia during this difficult time.

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