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JIMMY CARTER, SOVIET JEWRY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Despite Jimmy Carter's expressed commitment to making human rights a cornerstone of his foreign policy, we have lost the ability to influence the very nations that are the world's principal offenders of basic human rights -- our adversaries. This is a direct result of our decline in prestige, influence, and the lack of leadership.

One area that cries out for our attention, yet has been largely ignored and swept aside by Jimmy Carter, is the plight of Soviet Jewry.

Many people suffer under the Kremlin's despotic rule, and restrictions have been imposed on all religions in the Soviet Union. But Soviet Jewry has been singled out for unrelenting abuse: it is denied a central coordinating organization and hence an official channel to the government; it does not have the opportunity to publish periodicals and books, or manufacture articles used in religious ceremonies; it is severely curtailed in maintaining its few remaining synagogues which must serve the spiritual needs of at least two million people and in training a new generation of religious leadership. Jews in the Soviet Union are increasingly denied entrance to institutes of higher education, are frequently imprisoned on trumped-up charges, and are the victims of various government campaigns that condone anti-Semitism.

Soviet Jews, under the Soviet Union's repressive system, do not have the means to teach their children the history, traditions and language of their people. They are denied their heritage as a people as well as their freedom of religion.

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We must realize that emigration from the Soviet Union is not the answer to the totality of the problem of Soviet Jewry, but rather the indicator of the magnitude of the problem.

Jimmy Carter, after proclaiming himself the world's champion of human rights, has ignored Soviet human rights violations time and time again. After a few protestations about Soviet human rights violations and Soviet dissidents during the first days of his presidency, Jimmy Carter acted as if he never heard of Soviet violations of these rights which are protected by international agreements.

A Reagan Administration will embrace a clear, unequivocal position so as to foster Soviet compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act, to which the Soviet Union is a signatory. These agreements assure an individual's right to unharrassed freedom of religion, culture and emigration.

At the Madrid Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and other review meetings that may follow, the United States must take a firm stand for human rights in the Soviet Union. A Reagan Administration will identify and publicize specific examples of Soviet violations of human rights.

We will not rest until the number of visas for those who wish to emigrate correspond to the number of applications. Recent months have marked a tremendous decrease in the numbers of Jews granted emigration visas. Further, when the Soviet Union has permitted emigration for Soviet Jewry, the way in which the emigration was carried out constitutes a violation of important provisions of the Helsinki Accords.

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We will seek a broader interpretation of family reunification than the one now being applied to would-be Soviet emigrants and we will oppose any attempt to create arbitrary time limits for reviewing compliance with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords. If the Soviets do not move to adhere to the Helsinki Accords, the United States will reevaluate our participation in the Helsinki process.

Proceeding from the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, a Reagan Administration will make it clear to the Soviets that their compliance with the various human rights agreements which they have signed will have a bearing on future bilateral trade and the exchange of technical and scientific information, which is of great importance and benefit to them.

A Reagan Administration will insist that the Soviet Union end its harassment and imprisonment of those who peacefully express their views in opposition to official policy, who seek to worship according to their religious beliefs, or who represent diverse ethnic minorities and nationalities.

The American Jewish community -- through the exceptional work of its congregations, councils, and organizations -- has shown the world the plight of Soviet Jewry and the dismal state of human rights for all peoples in the Soviet Union. A Reagan Administration will not allow this work to be in vain.

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