

**Thornburgh's remarks: historic first visit of the attorney general of the United States to the Soviet Union, Moscow, Russia, October 14, 1989 (06:25)**

>> Thornburgh: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The visit of an Attorney General of the United States to the Soviet Union is a historic first in our experience, and we recognize that it comes at a historic time in developments within the Soviet Union. The process of perestroika, we recognize, will have long-term effects in the political, economic, and social life of citizens of the Soviet Union, and we have learned much from our hosts of the hopes and aspirations of the Soviet government in this regard. The desire to accomplish a law-based state with a strong component of recognition of human rights is welcome news indeed, to those of us visiting from the United States. We have shared with our Soviet hosts in the Ministry of Justice and Internal Affairs and the Committee for State Security and the Prosecutor General's office our experiences in the 200-year history of a society founded on the rule of law and have offered our insights in the hope that they may provide some assistance to the Soviet government as it proceeds in its restructuring process.

We shared, in particular, the concepts embodied in our Bill of Rights, which reflects the value that we place upon freedom of religion, freedom of the press, the freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and the concepts of due process of law which are available to our citizens. We discussed the concepts of separation of power as it applies to a similar aspiration expressed by the Ministry of Justice and by other leaders with whom we discussed the process now going forward in the Soviet Union.

In particular, we shared our experience with a truly independent judiciary, which we understand the Soviet Union desires, as well. We also discussed the structure of federalism within the United States -- that is, dealing with the relationship between the central government and the state government -- to offer some benefit from our experience as the Soviet -- the Supreme Soviet deals with the relationship between the central authority and the governments in the republics and autonomous regions.

All of these, of course, discussions take into account the fact that we have very different systems -- political systems, economic systems, and social systems. Nonetheless, we regard the interchange of ideas and experiences and the recognition that much importance must be attached to not only the wording of the laws that are to be passed in the perestroika process, but the creation of ongoing structures and processes to implement those laws to

have been very worthwhile. The Minister of Justice mentioned the working groups that had been established. This was designed to ensure that our discussions reflect not only platitudes and concepts, but dealt with very real operating problems in our governmental systems. In particular, several of the working groups look to create better cooperation in those transnational issues that weren't a part of the agenda agreed upon by our governmental leaders, areas such as dealing with narcotics trafficking, environmental concerns, and international terrorism. We hope that the working groups constitute a beginning of an ongoing dialogue in these areas of concern as reflected in the protocols that we've signed this morning.

On the whole, I think my colleagues and I feel that you have been an important beginning in relationships between the United States Department of Justice and its counterpart agencies within the Soviet Union, and we're grateful for the candor and cooperation that has been forthcoming from our counterparts during this historic visit. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for the aid and assistance that has been forthcoming to us. You have been a good host.