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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

REAGAN-GORBACHEV MEETINGS IN GENEVA
November, 1985

Dinner Hosted by President and Mrs. Reagan

DATE: November 20, 1985
TIME: 8:00 P.M. - 10:30 P.M.
PLACE: Maison de Saussure,
Geneva, Switzerland

PARTICIPANTS:

United States

President Reagan
Mrs. Reagan
Secretary of State George Shultz
Chief of Staff Donald Regan
Robert C. McFarlane, Assistant to the President for National
Security
Ambassador Arthur Hartman
Mrs. E. Arensburger, Interpreter
William Hopkins, Interpreter

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

General Secretary Gorbachev
Mrs. Gorbacheva
Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze
First Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Korniyenko
Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin
Ambassador Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov
Mr. P. Palashchenko, Interpreter

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The conversation began by continuing a topic touched upon at last night's dinner about the fact that people are marrying and having children younger now in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev said that, on the other hand, youth is becoming less responsible,

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which is illustrated by a saying which the older generation now has; we must see our grandchildren through until they reach pension age.

Gorbachev again lovingly talked about his granddaughter. President Reagan told of a letter he received from a little girl who told him exactly what she wanted him to do and at the end said "Now go into the Oval Office and get to work."

Mrs. Gorbachev then told of a letter Gorbachev received which wished him success, expressed full agreement with his anti-alcohol campaign and said that the author kept Gorbachev's picture next to her icon. The author said she was 83 years old, prayed every day, and gave her telephone number. She then said to call only early in the morning; she was busy all other times. She lived in Kostroma. President Reagan asked whether Gorbachev called. The other replied that he would report as soon as he got back from Geneva.

Secretary Shultz asked about a revival of religion in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev replied that this question should be addressed to Mrs. Gorbachev, who taught a course on the topic; however, her course was on atheism rather than theology. Gorbachev said that many find the ritual, ceremonial part of religion attractive. However, true believers are dying out with the older generation. Still, one third of the population marry and baptize their children in the church. The Islamic religion, however, seems to have deeper roots. Shevardnadze confirmed that traditions survive in the Islamic religion. Gorbachev said that he was speaking of the Russian orthodox Church, which is preparing to celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of the Christianization of Russia. The church has even petitioned the government to return to a monastery for church use. Mrs. Gorbachev said there were also many sects in Russia, including the Baptists, Pentecostalists and "Tresuny."

Secretary Shultz asked whether Khomeini had had an influence on the Islamic population of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev answered, "No." He also said that right after the revolution there were many slogans for renouncing all of the past, as if doing away with everything which took place before the revolution. This was wrong, he said. But such were the times. He remembered that at that time even wearing a tie would brand one as a member of the bourgeoisie.

As for Khomeini, President Reagan said, he felt that both countries -- the U.S. and the USSR -- born of revolution, ought to keep an eye on another revolution: an attempt to bring about a fundamentalist Islamic revolution, where the revolution would become the government, and which teaches that the way to heaven is to kill a non-believer.

Gorbachev said that as we end this summit, he felt that he and President Reagan had truly made a start. It would have been unrealistic to expect great progress right away. But the whole world was very concerned, and it was a good thing that they had made this start. Donald Regan said that the President had said the same thing to him.

At this point President Reagan said that in one of the U.S.'s oldest towns, Philadelphia, a toast to the living is always given sitting down. Only a toast for the dead is given standing up. So he wanted to continue in this tradition because what the two sides were dealing with here definitely concerned the living. This is a beginning, he said. No matter what it was we failed to agree on, the important thing was that the two of them would continue to meet. Each of them had accepted an invitation to come to the other's country and continue these meetings. Even though the two of them had not agreed on many things, they had not closed the door. They would continue to meet.

One of the early leaders of the American Revolution, Thomas Payne, in those dark days when they did not know whether the revolution would succeed, said, "We have it in our power to start the world over again." Something of that is present in what we are doing today, because the problems we are trying to solve have plagued mankind for a long time.

We have started something, President Reagan said, and he felt that these meetings expressed the will and desire of both sides to find answers that would benefit not only all the people of the world now living, but also the yet unborn. His toast, therefore, and his devout prayer was that we could deliver something better than in the past. We will continue meeting, he said, and continue to work for those clauses which had brought the sides together here in Geneva.

Gorbachev answered, saying that he was confident tonight that the two of them had started something. After a very long interval between summit meetings, he shared the President's view that it would be wrong to give a false signal from Geneva. He said that Soviet side would very carefully assess the results of this meeting, fully cognizant of a mutual sense of responsibility. Every beginning is difficult. If now we have laid the first few bricks, he said, we have made a new start, a new phase has begun. This in itself is very important. The major differences are ahead, he said, but he wanted to invite the U.S. side to move ahead on the appointed road together with the Soviet side, with mutual understanding and a sense of responsibility. We will do our part on that road, he said. We will not change our positions, our values, or our thinking, but we expect that with patience and wisdom we will find ways toward solutions. We have had the opportunity to speak privately, he said, and he

attributed great importance to those talks. Without them it would have been difficult to arrive at this result. Let us then move toward each other with an understanding of our responsibility before all the countries of the world. Gorbachev's toast was for better dialogue and cooperation, for which the Soviet Union was prepared and hoped for reciprocity from the United States.

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AFTER-DINNER CONVERSATION

Having moved into the study after dinner, Secretary Shultz said he wanted to make a suggestion to both of the leaders about each of them making individual statements at the ceremony there would be tomorrow. He said in his personal opinion, he thought the people of the U.S. and USSR and the people of all the world really wanted to feel the presence of both of the world leaders at such a ceremony. If these leaders were simply present and went through the business of signing documents, it would not be the same thing as having them actually speak.

Gorbachev responded that in the first place he thought a joint statement or communique would represent the embodiment of the significance of such a document. Therefore, he said, he thought that a communique was of primary significance. Its presence would show that the current meetings had led to common judgments, common results and common motives in matters of principal importance. The Soviet side feels that such a document would demonstrate to the U.S. and Soviet peoples and to the world that the leaders of the two most powerful countries, despite their deep differences, are exercising their responsibility, and the document would show and convince the people of the world that the leaders were demonstrating their commitment to their principles. A joint document then would be a basis for further statements on the problems involved, both to each of the countries' allies and in the legislative bodies of both countries.

However, said Gorbachev, he thought if the leaders started to give commentaries, most especially short ones, on any document that they signed, it could very well detract from the significance of the document, because there might even be an unfortunate phrase which would detract from the weight and significance of the document. He said he hoped to save any possible document from that fate.

President Reagan responded that he begged to disagree with the General Secretary. He said that a full statement would be an honest, frank and open document about what had and had not

been achieved, and about the fact that these meetings between them would be continuing. He suggested that what Secretary Shultz had been speaking about concerned the world press and the European press. He said that if he and General Secretary Gorbachev were there at a ceremony, they would not have to comment on the specifics of any document. However, hope in the world had grown as a result of this summit meeting, and people should not be disappointed in this respect.

General Secretary Gorbachev agreed to a statement of one to three minutes' duration by each of the leaders. President Reagan concurred and added that it had been his idea not to go into detail.

Gorbachev noted that one other thing bothered him, namely, that having produced a document, the sides do not believe in themselves; commenting on it, even briefly and generally, would only serve to strengthen and reaffirm the content of that document. The President responded that instead of being silent, it would be better for the people who have placed so much hope in the outcome of these meetings to hear that he and Gorbachev are going to continue to meet despite the fact that they have not solved all of the problems connected with the communique. He said that the tone and the need here were simply not to leave this meeting and have people disappointed that there had been no progress, and thus have the hopes of so many people dashed.

Gorbachev responded that both leaders' statements ought to be in support of the document, and the statement would not last longer than two to three minutes. Moreover, the statements should not concentrate on differences, but on areas where there was agreement. He said there was no need for rose-colored glasses. Both leaders could be frank about the result reflected in the document: meanwhile, the process of their meeting would be continuing.

President Reagan said it would be necessary to decide when and where the leaders would make their statements.

When some of those present suggested it might be a good idea to have the leaders' statements at 10:30 or 11:00 AM, President Reagan explained that he preferred 10 AM, because precisely 17 hours later he would be appearing on U.S. television and giving his report about this meeting to the U.S. Congress and the American people, so the upcoming day would certainly be one of the longest working days.

Secretary Shultz said he wanted to add one thing. He had just received information about the joint understanding, and apparently the work on it was going backward. He noted that

U.S. aides had been instructed to stay up all night and work to get a document out, and he expressed the hope that the Soviet leader would give his people similar instructions. Shultz said the statements would be made in the Geneva International Conference Center at 10 AM.

Korniyenko asked, "Is there anything to announce?" Shultz responded there could be -- agreement had been reached about certain things; however, the Soviets were now beginning to go backward on some of what had been agreed.

Shevardnadze interjected that he had a question of principle. He said that it should be agreed not to detail differences but just make the statements in a general form.

Gorbachev said that he thought that the people involved were clever enough not to have the tail wag the fox, however, there are two foxes and two tails involved here. He said the sides ought not to come out with an empty document. Indeed, it would be better to have no document than an anemic one.

Secretary Shultz pointed out that the Soviet side was now beginning to link civil aviation and the cultural agreement. Korniyenko responded that it was Shultz who had always wanted to make those two things a package.

Shultz said that if it came to that, everything could be linked -- bilateral issues and regional issues. But it would be a mistake to make everything into such a package and link everything. Korniyenko said that it would be possible to say that the sides have completed working out details on exchanges but this should not be linked to other documents.

Gorbachev said that in conclusion it can be said that the Soviet side will give its people instructions to wind up and the U.S. side can give its people instructions to wind up, and they will, even if they have to be there all night.

Shultz said yes, all night, even if they have to be there without food. He said the U.S. was glad to a civil aviation agreement with the USSR, but there had to be in it commercial terms to make the route financially attractive to PanAm, otherwise the company would simply not fly the route and there was no reason for Aeroflot to have a monopoly on that market.

Korniyenko said that yesterday the Soviet side had compromised on that issue and then the U.S. had advanced 30 points which had knocked everything out of kilter.

To Gorbachev's suggestion that everyone continue working, Shultz said that it was good and the U.S. side would work all

night and that would be great if agreement could be achieved and if that were not possible, then there just would not be agreement.

Gorbachev said he thought he did not completely understand all the differences with all of the documents, but in any event he spoke to his people to the effect that he wanted everyone to get his act together and somehow iron out these last minute difficulties in regard to these issues.

President Reagan said that he and Gorbachev were meeting for the first time at this level. They had little practice, since they had never done it before. Nevertheless, having read the history of previous summit meetings he had concluded that those earlier leaders had not done very much. Therefore, he suggested that he and Gorbachev say, "To hell with the past," we'll do it our way and get something done.

Gorbachev concurred. The conversation broke up at 10:30 P.M.

Prepared by:

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