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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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INFORMATION

November 15, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

FROM: JACK F. MATLOCK *JFM*

SUBJECT: President's October 24 Meeting with Shevardnadze

Attached at Tab I is the memorandum of conversation from the President's October 24 meeting with Shevardnadze in New York.

attachment:

Tab I Memorandum of conversation: the President and Shevardnadze

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Declassify on: OADR

DECLASSIFIED

White House Guidelines, August 28, 1997

By *CRS* NARA, Date *7/2/02*

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: The President's Meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze

TIME: October 24, 1985 4:00 - 4:45 p.m.

PLACE: Waldorf Astoria

PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.

Soviet Side

President Reagan  
Secretary Shultz  
Chief of Staff Regan  
Assistant to the  
President McFarlane  
Assistant Secretary Ridgway  
Ambassador Matlock  
DAS Palmer  
Interpreter Zarechnak

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze  
Ambassador Dobrynin  
Deputy Foreign Minister Kompleklov  
Assistant to the FM Chernishev  
Assistant to the FM Tarasenko  
Interpreter N. Uspenskiy  
Interpreter P. Palaschenko

The President welcomed Shevardnadze and they chatted together informally while two waves of press took pictures and tried to get them to answer questions.

The President then opened the meeting proper by stating that we had limited time today. We have been discussing a variety of issues in advance, and hoped that we could reach agreement on at least some of the lesser issues. We need to go on to the more vital questions, but he regretted that we had been unable so far to settle any of the lesser issues.

Shevardnadze said he would like first of all to thank the President for this meeting. He knew how tight the President's schedule was. They considered this meeting to be another demonstration of the President's personal attitude toward the meeting next month. There is little time left. In terms of practical preparations, finalizing an agenda and final positions, we need to work more intensively in the coming weeks. There really is very little time left. He would be

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speaking in purely practical terms the next day with Secretary Shultz and other representatives of the United States. They would review what has been done already on preparations including the main documents and main positions. Also they need to cover what General Secretary Gorbachev put forward in his message to the President.

The President said yes, that he had received Gorbachev's letter. We appreciate the arms control proposals which they have made. We are giving them careful study in Geneva and here; we are doing this with great care and we will be prepared to respond to them. Some things in their proposals present difficulties.

The President continued that we need to get at the overall things which affect our relationship. We need to get on to overall matter of peace. We need some understandings. Then arms control will be a simple matter.

Shevardnadze said that he agreed with the President that probably this was the main problem; this is the issue of security or in a different form arms control. This needs to play a decisive role in the Summit meeting and the Soviet side is prepared in this regard. These are complex questions. Problems have accumulated over many years. It is difficult at one meeting to resolve all of them. But the Soviets do not exclude the possibility of progress as far as fundamental questions are concerned. They have some general ideas which they would be prepared to discuss with the Secretary the next day. This would include language with regard to security problems and arms control.

Shevardnadze continued that the President knew the Soviet proposals. They had been outlined in the Gorbachev message and all of them were on the table in Geneva. They tried not only to put forward proposals, but had also already taken practical steps, unilateral steps. These included their moratorium on nuclear explosions affective until January first; also the cessation of the deployment of medium range weapons in Europe and their statement that they would not be the first to use nuclear weapons. It was not a simple thing for them to take these steps.

Shevardnadze said that both sides have an interest in making progress on the major arms control questions. This included banning of space strike weapons. They also had a proposal for reductions of strategic nuclear weapons. The third group was medium range weapons -- here they have several

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compromise proposals. Speaking frankly they had difficulty in understanding steps the United States had taken in response. The U.S. position was not clear. He would repeat that they understand these matters require careful study but with little time left both sides should accelerate their efforts so that the Summit can have a positive effect.

Shevardnadze continued that we also have bilateral, regional, and Stockholm confidence matters to consider. In this group of questions a certain convergence of views is emerging. At the same time they had noted that some members of the administration had been toughening their positions, for example in Stockholm and in the cultural exchanges talks. He mentioned this as there is very little time left and we need to use it in the most effective way.

Shevardnadze noted that last time he had seen the President he had said that all peoples and governments are looking forward to this meeting in Geneva with Gorbachev. They have no right to disappoint the world. Given mutual desires he believes we can develop positive things for the Summit which would make world public opinion more comfortable. However, he could not avoid saying that they fail to understand some of the statements of some in the administration with regard to a so-called Soviet threat and statements that there is a need for a new interpretation of past agreements which are the basis for the present strategic stability. It appears to the Soviet side that such actions are not conducive to preparations for a successful Summit.

The President said that some of the things we have suggested we would like to do even before Geneva. As a result of his earlier meeting with Shevardnadze, Ambassador Hartman had given Shevardnadze a list of things we could do. The main thing the President wanted to say is that he stands fully behind them. But the Soviet side seems to be dragging its feet. If we could move on this thing it would be an indication that both sides are serious about making settlements.

Shevardnadze responded that he had met Ambassador Hartman just a few days earlier. With regard to all of the matters which Hartman had raised with him, the leadership of the Soviet Union had same day been given instructions to do preparations. These were important matters, though they were not the most important. The next day he would have an opportunity to review things with the Secretary. Maybe there would also be a need for a second stage before the Summit. It would be good if Secretary Shultz could come to Moscow. The Soviet side would

be pleased to welcome him before the Summit to review both organizational and substantive problems. We could also have final discussions on language.

The President said that we were planning on the Secretary making this trip.

The Secretary noted that he had told Dobrynin that we were ready to go ahead.

The President said that with regard to dates, he understood it would be early November.

Shevardnadze said yes, the first ten days of November.

The Secretary noted that Dobrynin had mentioned that November 4 and 5 would be convenient.

Dobrynin noted that another possibility would be November 11-12.

The Secretary said that the 4th and 5th would be better given everything that is underway here. The next day they had a couple of hours to identify what needs to be done so that in Moscow they can move things along as the President had said we wanted to. We would be prepared to be responsive.

Shevardnadze said that we need initial impulses for the various delegations. So far as the Soviets are concerned, they will do this.

The Secretary said that the President already had been giving impulses to him, Bud, Roz, Jack and others. They all felt thoroughly prodded.

Shevardnadze said that they also were being given impulses.

The Secretary said there was one minor matter but it could cause great consternation if not handled well. Their invitation is a news item. So they needed to agree on how and when to make this known publicly. He had suggested to Dobrynin that they might do this the next day following his meeting with Shevardnadze, but there might be other ways.

Shevardnadze said that this depended on all of us, and that it was fine with him to do it the next day. He said in conclusion that Gorbachev and the Soviet leadership had asked him to give the President best greetings on behalf of the

Soviet government.

The President stated that he appreciated these greetings and looked forward to his meeting with Gorbachev in Geneva.

The President then asked Shevardnadze to remain behind alone for a few minutes. The rest of both sides delegations left the room.

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The tete-a-tete began at 4:30 and continued until 4:45.

D. Zarechnak was the interpreter on the U.S. side.  
N. Uspenskiy was the interpreter for the Soviet side.  
The mode of interpreting was consecutive.

The President indicated that he realized that the subject of human rights was considered to be an internal affair by the Soviet side, but he wished to point out that in the U.S. system of government, anything that the two sides would agree to would need to be ratified by the Congress, which in turn would need to see if it had public support. This is an important part of the structure of the U.S. Government.

The President continued that the U.S. side was not attempting to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, but it would be easier for the Congress to ratify some matters if it saw that there was movement on some humanitarian issues. The President said that he was referring to those rights of human beings which were agreed to in Helsinki, such as family reunification. He indicated that he knew of one woman in the U.S. whose husband was in the Soviet Union, and they had not seen each other for four years.

The President indicated that the U.S. is unique in that Americans come from every corner of the world - either they themselves have come from other countries, or their parents or grandparents have. Americans are of many different backgrounds - Irish, Italian, Russian, etc. They have strong feelings for the lands of their heritage and about the denial of rights which they feel occurs for some people in those lands.

The President said that now, before the Summit, something ought to be done in the area of humanitarian deeds. He stressed that deeds were necessary, not just words. There were some people who were not permitted to emigrate. Their names were both

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nationally and internationally recognized.

The President indicated that his son is a free-lance journalist and he had visited Moscow for the May Day celebration and had met two Soviet men who were denied permission to emigrate. One of them was the husband of the woman whom he had just mentioned.

The President said that if some action was taken on these issues, in connection with names that had been transmitted by Ambassador Hartman and perhaps would be mentioned tomorrow morning, it would be easier to reach agreement on other issues.

Shevardnadze replied that the President had mentioned this issue at their last meeting. He wished to assure the President that everything which had been mentioned by the Secretary of State, by the President and by Ambassador Hartman was being given very serious study. Such issues were always seriously studied, even without special request. The Soviet Government places no barriers to such requests if they do not involve security matters. That is the main thing. So the Soviet side would see if the emigration of these individuals was legal, and if it was, they would be permitted to leave. If it was not, the Soviet side would explain why such permission was not possible.

Shevardnadze said that he had explained to Ambassador Hartman that the U.S. side should not think that people in the Soviet Government had hearts of stone. All requests for emigration were taken to heart.

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