



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: After dinner conversation between President
Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev
Date: November 20, 1985

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

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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 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 PM

Drafted by: W. Hopkins and E. Arensburger, Department of State Interpreters