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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Geneva, Switzerland)

For Immediate Release

November 17, 1985

BRIEFING BY
NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR
ROBERT MCFARLANE

Centre International de Conférences de Geneve

MR. MCFARLANE: Thank you, Larry. On behalf of the President and the American delegation, I'd like to express our pleasure on being in Geneva for the meeting between the General Secretary of the communist party of the Soviet Union and the President.

The President views this occasion as presenting an opportunity for establishing a foundation for a more stable relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The meetings here provide an opportunity for an exchange on the full spectrum of differences between our two countries. The agenda is a very broad one. It encompasses deeply seated differences over regional issues, security issues, and importantly, how to make more stable the military balance by accomplishing deep reductions, equitably and verifiably, of nuclear weapons.

With regard to bilateral contacts, the exchanges will enable the President to express his strong views on the value of expanded bilateral contacts between these two countries in every domain, literally dozens of new ideas the President has brought to this meeting, and to which he hopes to receive a positive reply, believing that these people-to-people programs can indeed establish constituencies for peace to broaden understanding, to help resolve differences.

The President will also make clear his continued concern with human rights issues for adherence to the agreements and pledges made in Helsinki. It is, in sum, a very welcome opportunity. The President looks forward to it, hopeful, optimistic, determined.

The United States has put forward new positions that deal with each of the 4 principal areas on our agenda. The United States had made productions or proposals for deep reductions in nuclear weapons going back 3 years now although there has not been until recently a thoughtful Soviet response, and the Soviet Union had seen fit to leave the arms control talks. They have now been renewed and recently the Soviet Union has come forward with a counterproposal to our own; the President has examined it. While there are serious problems with it, there are constructive elements.

He directed his own administration to examine these and to see whether those elements could be applied in a way that provided for a stable, equitable, verifiable balance at much lower levels.

In a summary comment on the nature of this issue now, it's useful to note the problems that we have with the Soviet proposal, specifically in calling for reductions the Soviets categorized the outcome as requiring, basically, a choice by the United States between defending our friends and allies, or of maintaining a central balance in strategic systems between ourselves and the Soviet Union, and this is not a reasonable choice.

The United States will fulfill its obligations to its friends and allies throughout the world. That said, we believe that

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there is a basis for negotiation in some elements of their proposal. We do find fault not only with the categorization, but with the foreclosure of modernization on the American side while that remains entirely open for the Soviet Union.

We also find fault with the exclusion of many Soviet systems while those corresponding systems are included in their concept of what ought to be limited on our side.

The American proposal, put forward October 31 and in Geneva in ensuing sessions, adopts the concept of 50 percent reductions in appropriate measures. Most importantly, it deals with the most destabilizing systems, ballistic missile warheads, and calls for a 50 percent reduction from existing levels to an equal level on both sides of 4500 warheads.

It also proposes an American reduction by 50 percent in air-launched cruise missiles to a level of 1500. These two, the 4500 plus 1500, would provide for an outcome

of 6,000 weapons. Further, it calls for a 50 percent reduction approximately and a sub-ceiling of 3,000 ICB warheads -- roughly 50 percent of current Soviet levels. In addition, with regard to intermediate-range forces, the American proposal calls for approximately a 50 percent cut to a level of 140 launchers, with the mix of systems being negotiable but oriented toward an equal global outcome and a level of those systems oriented toward Europe of between 420 and 450 warheads -- equal on both sides -- the corresponding global equal entitlement, and a proportional reduction of Soviet systems in Asia.

Finally, in a comprehensive proposal, it treats START, INF, as well as defense and space issues. It seeks to engage promptly the Soviet Union on a discussion of the relationship between offense and defense and upon how, over time, a transition can be carried out in which the two sides place less reliance upon offensive systems and more upon defensive, nonnuclear systems.

Thus, we hope that this proposal will lead to a serious engagement and to prompt agreement for deep reductions in nuclear systems and an equal, verifiable, stable limit, ever decreasing over time to the ultimate elimination of these weapons.

Be glad to take your questions now.

Q Mr. McFarlane --

MR. MCFARLANE: Yes?

Q -- could -- Peter Ott (phonetic), BBC, London. For those of us who may have been puzzled over recent months about the American approach to the summit, could I ask for your observations on Defense Secretary Weinberger's letter, which has been published extensively overnight?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, let me take the first part of your question first. The President's approach to the summit is one that is premised upon an absorption of lessons from 40 years of U.S. relations with the Soviet Union to a recognition that the United States has alternatively pursued efforts at dialogue and the resolution of disputes, but based upon the hope that there would be a fundamental change in Soviet purposes internationally -- hopes which have proven ill-founded as measured in the expanded scale of the Soviet expansion beyond its borders in the late 1970's.

Alternatively, we have been engaged in hostile Cold War confrontation in the period of the '50's. And at a time of high levels of nuclear power on both sides, this is a unsatisfactory basis for East-West dialogue.

The President has adopted instead a policy that is based upon strength, realism, and dialogue; realism as expressed in open acknowledgement that the Soviet system is quite different from ours, that we disagree fundamentally on their basic concept of the state and its authority, on its power vis-a-vis its own people, and its entitlement to expand beyond its borders, all of which we disagree with.

And, yet, we acknowledge it will not change. We cannot change it. They are a power of enormous strength, and we have to live with them. We seek to do so peacefully in what will be inevitably a competitive enterprise over time. For it to be peaceful, we have to engage across-the-board in an exchange on what our interests are in the West -- regionally, on human rights, bilaterally, and on arms control issues. We seek to do that.

With regard to this meeting, its importance is that this exchange of views with the Soviet leader can provide that foundation -- understanding by them of how President views United States' interests, how he views the Soviet Union, how he believes we ought to

do business with each other. The measure of the value of this meeting will be expressed in whether or not the Soviet Union absorbs those points -- as will we in listening to them -- and in the months and years which follow this meeting, the climate of the relationship and peace basically becomes more stable.

Now, that, more than current events or matters which appear in yesterday's headlines, are a more telling measure of the attitude of the President coming in and his expectations for how success will be measured.

Regarding the letter, the letter is a response to a tasking the President made in June, when he reaffirmed United States' intentions to pursue a policy of not undercutting the SALT II agreement for as long as the Soviet Union pursued a corresponding course. He tasked this study, part of which has been completed, and said that he would absorb its findings, together with the record of the Geneva talks, also look seriously at Soviet building programs and whether they expanded or contracted, and make judgments after this meeting. The second part of the report won't be received until after he returns to Washington.

So, he will take the findings, which is what is in this week's first part, the recommendations which are still to come, these other factors of compliance, Geneva, these talks, and the Soviet building program, and reach decisions later in the year.

Q Bud --

MR. MCFARLANE: Yes?

Q Bud, are you ruling out -- I just want to be clear -- are you ruling out --

Q -- microphone!

Q Are you ruling out any formal extension of the SALT II Treaty, either emanating from this summit meeting or when the President makes his decision in December, going beyond the no-undercut policy?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, John, it's really premature to speculate on what the judgments may be. There are four different factors that will be part of the President's thinking, and each will be considered. He'll make judgments, but it's not feasible now to predict what his decisions may be.

MR. SPEAKES: Let's get Sam out of the way.

Q I'll wait until Mr. McFarlane calls on me.

MR. SPEAKES: No, I'm doing the calling on, so that's all right.

Q Mr. McFarlane? Already, the Soviets are saying that Weinberger letter was an attempt to torpedo this summit. Do you see it as an attempt -- that is, the leaking of the letter -- to sabotage this summit? What effect do you think, beyond your opening statement about it, it will have on this summit?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, Sam, it seems to me that the Secretary has responded to tasking from the President in part that he will follow next week with recommendations, presumably founded upon the findings of this week's report.

Q It's the leak I'm asking about.

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I don't think it's really helpful to comment on leaks. The substance of the issue is what the reports says, and that's an important factor in the President's thinking. It

will be added to by recommendations which he doesn't yet have and haven't been forwarded. The leak itself is unfortunate. The Secretary has stated that he views it as unfortunate and, I believe, is taking steps to find out how it occurred.

Q Well, may I follow up on that? You say it's an unfortunate event. Another U.S. official on the record, Mr. Speakes, this morning suggested that the Secretary was either stating U.S. policy that the President has already adopted or was presenting his views that are already well known to the Soviets. Therefore, why, if that is the case, would it have an effect and why would it be unfortunate?

MR. MCFARLANE: I say -- the question is, why is unfortunate?

I say that as a matter of just discipline decision process, that it's always unfortunate when you pre-empt that process with a leak. It is quite true that the Secretary's judgments are judgments that have been made before and, therefore, I don't think that it need have an affect one way or the other. These are decisions that the President, himself, has reported to the Congress concerning violations of past agreements. They are well-known, and they are an important issue on our agenda here in Geneva.

MR. SPEAKES: Let me go to Gerry.

Q It's clear from what you and Larry have said that the President could not agree to a formalized one-year extension of the "no undercut" policy on SALT II. Is it also clear that he could not agree to any formalized recommitment to limits on SDI research at this meeting?

MR. MCFARLANE: The possibilities for what will or will not be agreed at this meeting are really purely speculative right now. The President's concept behind SDI and how it can foster reductions of existing nuclear power are very well-known, that he seeks a research program which can answer the question, is it feasible to develop a system which would prevent ballistic missiles from reaching their targets.-- ballistic missile warheads.

The Soviet Union, for more than 15 years, has been pursuing an analogous program. The talks here will enable the President to present a very comprehensive view on deterrence. His view of the fact that the concept we have relied upon for the past 15 years -- that is, offensive deterrence -- was premised on two assumptions which are no longer valid. Those assumptions were that for the concept of offensive deterrence to work you must have offensive balance, and we don't have that as a consequence of Soviet building programs, which have provided for them a very dramatic advantage in the key areas, particularly of prompt, hard-target kill capability -- that because of that imbalance, the concept of offensive deterrence is ever less stable and that we have to deal with that either by reducing Soviet systems, which we shall try to do, and have, or by increasing U.S. systems, which we would like to avoid, or by compensating for this offense with defense.

In short, the Soviet building program has driven the United States to SDI. There is no alternative. But more importantly, it is the Soviet program, itself, long in existence, which the United States could no longer afford to stand by idly and watch. It is unreasonable for the Soviet Union to expect that pursuing a program of the scale that they have, which has exceeded in expenditure what they have put into offensive power, could be ignored. But most importantly, is it not reasonable for us to ask whether you cannot move away from a concept which relies upon offensive threats and upon nuclear weapons toward a strategy which relies on being unable to threaten by virtue of having only non-nuclear defensive systems.

All of that will be explored in this meeting, and we hope a measure of agreement to begin to talk seriously about the mix between offense and defense and a transition away from offense.

Q You just said, Mr. McFarlane, that you could not -- sorry? Good, I am happy for you. So you need to translate -- to repeat my question or not? Okay. In English? All right, I'll do it in English.

Mr. McFarlane, you just called -- you just said that the United States cannot change the Soviet Union's policy, which you have termed aggressive. So maybe it's your possibility to change aggressive policy of the United States. I have the whole complex of aggression beginning with Vietnam, going through Chile, going through Grenada and coming to aggressive war you are leading in Nicaragua, in Salvador and other regions of the world. Thank you.

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MR. MCFARLANE: I'm glad you asked. (Laughter.)

The President seeks, as he said in his United Nations speech, to achieve agreement that forecloses the expansion of any country's power through the use of force and subversion. The United States does not and has not done that.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union, by virtue of its presence in occupying the country of Afghanistan with over 100,000 troops, is foreclosing the ability of that country to exercise self-determination.

The President believes that there is a means to move away from that expansion of power by force and subversion through internal dialogue, later followed by discourse between our two countries to perhaps guarantee solutions reached by the natives of each country in question.

With regard to who is and who is not pursuing an aggressive policy, the United States has no military personnel in Nicaragua. In the Western Hemisphere, the Soviet Union has some-40 times the number of American advisors. The United States has no military presence in any country in its hemisphere.

Concerning Grenada, there is a dramatic difference between invited in by the country and its friends to help it restore order in its own country and promptly leaving, as between a six-year occupation by more than 100,000 people.

The United States seeks no territorial advantage beyond its borders whatsoever and would like here to engage in a dialogue on how, together, we can compete peacefully, but without the use of military power or subversion. We would welcome Soviet economic assistance programs to foster development in the Third World. Thus far, that has been not forthcoming.

Q It has been rumored here in Geneva today that if there is some accord between Mr. Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev over the next few days, that a certain section of the two groups accompanying the world leaders will stay on here in Geneva and continue some of these talks. Can you confirm or deny this rumor?

MR. MCFARLANE: I've seen reports that the Soviet Union may leave a contingent here, although I had heard that it was more for public affairs purposes and not for diplomacy.

The President hopes that from this meeting there will be a sustained dialogue between us. There are established fora for that to take place in. The Geneva talks here on arms control as soon as possible should get back at it.

The exchange of ministerial-level meetings, perhaps of defense experts between our two countries would be a positive development. Other ministers of our governments should expand the habit of contact between them. In addition, we have already going, periodic contacts on regional issues by regional experts. We welcome that and would like to expand that. And so we're entirely open to prompt, serious exchanges across the board.

Q Do you --

There will be Americans leaving this meeting to debrief our friends and allies and we'll do that promptly.

Q -- question, Mr. McFarlane -- how do you consider -- state venture that could -- would you have rescinded -- subtracted from general armaments -- adjust the figures and statements made by your own Minister of Defense deny this -- balanced, in fact, in this area? Could you reply to that please, sir?

MR. MCFARLANE: First of all, with regard to the trend on both sides in military power, the United States' investment in military power declined steadily after World War II. On balance in the 1950's, it was at about 10 percent of our GNP, declined into the 60's starting at about 9 1/2 percent and getting down to about 8 by the end of the decade. In the 1970's, it further declined -- down to about 5 percent of our GNP.

At the same time, during that period of sustained continuous decline in U.S. expenditures, there was a steady increase at all times, and through this day, on the part of the Soviet Union averaging between 12 percent and 14 percent of its GNP, growing at an annual rate of between 2 and 4 percent.

At the same time, the United States has always sought to reduce the level of nuclear weapons and their power unilaterally. And today you find that we have fewer warheads than we have had before, going steadily downward from the 60's, the 70's in both numbers and warhead power. This contrasts sharply with the Soviet tendency to expand ever -- to ever greater levels in both numbers and explosive power.

In short, the contrast is very clear between the trend of diminishing U.S. investments and diminishing U.S. numbers of nuclear weapons and power versus just the opposite on the Soviet side. Today, in specific measures of what constitutes stability in the strategic nuclear balance, the Soviet Union enjoys an advantage in prompt hard target kill capability of about 3 to 1 and of about the same thing with regard to throw-weight. Thus, there is a need to reduce this level of power to an equal condition under a verifiable basis and we would welcome any Soviet efforts in that direction.

Q Mr. McFarlane, can we go a bit further on INF. Are you talking about 140 mix of systems -- if we take the minimum figure you gave -- 420 warheads -- and work back from there, 108 presumably being the Pershing deployment we're left with, perhaps --

MR. WEINBERG: Sorry. Press pool 2 should assemble in the back of the briefing room at this time. Thank you.

Q -- political reasons, have you had any negotiations with the people that have accepted the idea of ground launched cruise in Europe -- is it possible that any of those countries will not be getting ground launched cruise should this proposal ever be accepted?

MR. SPEAKES: Let me ask your cooperation. I'd like to call on you if you'll raise your hand during the previous question -- this is the second time I've called on this individual. Let's answer this question and then I'll take him right there. Go ahead, please.

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MR. MCFARLANE: The United States has always coordinated its positions with its allies very closely. With regard to the implementation of the 1979 decision, that has been a matter of the closest coordination and will remain so. The current U.S. proposal for 140 launchers and between 420 and 450 warheads -- excuse me -- is one in which we are open to discussion on the basis that the continued practice in the West of shared responsibility, shared risk, will be sustained; that is, the deployment countries will remain deployment countries and what we seek is Soviet agreement to equality at lower levels, proportional reductions in Asia, and an equal global entitlement, and we will, throughout this negotiation, be in constant touch, however, with all the deployment countries -- indeed, all of the NATO countries -- as we try to engage the Soviets on it.

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Q Mr. McFarlane, could I ask you this question? One of the most promising products may come out of this meeting is, on the bilateral side, an exchange that the President talked about -- people-to-people exchanges. Could I ask you whether, in negotiating people-to-people exchanges, you will give any assurances to the Soviet Union that Soviet citizens who come to the United States will return?

MR. MCFARLANE: The motive of the United States is to foster the broadest possible exchange and, through it, better understanding. We don't seek to entrap or to lure or otherwise artificially entice Soviet people to come who don't want to come. And we don't seek in any fashion to influence their behavior one way or the other. And that's very clear going into this negotiation. So, there should be a very easy basis for agreement.

Q I don't know if I'm -- the question is, I understand the Soviets would like to have assurances that those Soviet citizens who come under the exchange agreements will return. Are you prepared to give them those assurances?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, we're certainly prepared to assure that anyone who comes to our country is free to do whatever he or she may wish to do. We cannot guarantee, to the Soviet Union, how its own citizens will behave. We will not artificially influence them or otherwise alter their freedom of action in the United States.

Q Bud, during your meetings and Secretary Shultz' meetings in Moscow, General Secretary Gorbachev expressed concerns about a military industrial complex and about the influence from that part of our political structure on the President's thinking. Won't the Weinberger letter only reinforce those anxieties and how do you suggest that the President can, if he wants to, allay those fears?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I think there are two parts to the question, really. First, to the point that there is in the United States an undue influence of the so-called military industrial complex; that assertion made in the context of its importance to our economy -- it simply is unfounded. The total effect of defense production as an economic factor in our country is very, very small -- on the order of 4 percent of our GNP.

The separate part in your question is, do judgments made by the President's Cabinet about Soviet compliance in some way affect the atmosphere of these talks or the broader relationship. I think that the President expects his Cabinet to report honestly on the threat and how it is evolving over time and that's exactly what the Secretary has done in this report. It is consistent with his past reports. Realism, which is the underlying principle of the new relationship, is just that. You have to acknowledge problems when they exist; you can't gloss over them.

Q But --

MR. MCFARLANE: As you identify them, you can say how you think they can be solved and that's what we intend to do here.

Q But what about the fact that the leak -- the timing and the leak -- won't that affect the climate and the likely Soviet response and do you -- secondly, do you, personally, believe that the leak came from the Pentagon?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I think, again, that being in Geneva at a session with the Soviet Union is of such importance and deals with such larger issues that transcend stories of yesterday and the day before that it won't be a matter of consequence in these talks. The internal processes of the U.S. government are far less important than the fundamental strategic factors which shape peace, stability, and so forth. So, I don't believe that our own internal

processes are of much importance to the outcome here in Geneva. With regard to where the leak came from, I think the Secretary has acknowledged that he's looking into that now and we'll just have to await the findings of that.

Q Do you think that it should also be investigated at the White House and the State Department, for instance, or do you think that the only place to look is the Pentagon for the source of that leak?

MR. MCFARLANE: I think it's reasonable to look wherever it is possible that it may have come from and that could include the White House and anyone else who got a copy of it. My own copy, I think, is still sealed and the copy that went to the President has remained in his possession. I don't think the President was the source of it. The -- other copies, I'm not familiar with where they went.

Q Mr. McFarlane, without characterizing necessarily the specifics of the differences remaining between the two countries, could you characterize the talks that are going on between the two countries over the weekend to narrow the differences in advance of the meeting between the summit heads -- at what level are they taking place, have they narrowed some differences in the past day or so?

MR. MCFARLANE: The talks have gone on between experts from both sides through embassies in both capitols and there have been differences narrowed in the last few days and there is basis for expecting that, on several of the bilateral issues in particular, we will reach agreement in the next day or so, but we haven't yet; we are just optimistic and we'll have to wait and see.

Q Mr. McFarlane, what will be the impact on these proceedings of the recent visits to the United States by

Seaman Medvid and Comrade Yurchenko?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I think those two events add to our own judgments about sentiments of individual Soviet citizens who apparently are dissatisfied with their circumstance. The reality of periodic defections is not new. How we deal with them is not always very uplifting, but I don't think that it is a strategic factor in these talks.

Q Mr. McFarlane, can you say if any -- you say differences have narrowed on bilateral. Have any differences narrowed in the last few days on anything other than bilateral issues?

MR. MCFARLANE: No.

Q Mr. McFarlane, there was some schizophrenia here in the Soviet responses just before you came in. General Shervov said that the Soviet proposal would ban all research on space weapons and that academician Milikov said that it would not. Could you clarify this from the American standpoint?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I think they are going to have to duke it out and figure out which one is their position. But the United States bases its position upon the authorities of the ABM Treaty, on the realities of the very substantial Soviet program, and our view of what helps create stability. And we are very, very open to a discussion with the Russians about that.

Q I want to go back to the SALT II accords. Does the President's decision, which you and Larry announced earlier, has been put off until December on the question of whether we would agree on a year extension or a times extension. Does that rule out any possibility that it could happen here, that the President might change his mind, that he might actually make an agreement to extend SALT II or not to undercut SALT II while he is here?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, Lou, it is in all things really premature to judge what may come out of this meeting, but I would have to say that the decision on that issue is one that ought to benefit from the President's absorption of what does happen here, and to reflect on it together with reports not yet received from the Pentagon on recommendations for coping with past non-compliance, absorption of what has happened in Geneva at the arms talks, absorption of the Soviet building program -- its pace and quality since this past June -- and of their compliance record since then. So all of those things ought to be digested -- and importantly, what happens in the two days next week.

So I think that until all of those things have been pondered by the President it's unlikely he would make a decision on that issue.

Q Bud, can you tell us where the talks stand with the Soviets on cooperative efforts to prevent the spread of chemical weapons -- also nuclear proliferation -- and whether or not there has been any headway made on the whole issue of verification in any of our recent talks with them?

MR. MCFARLANE: On the chemical issue, the discussions have been lengthy. I couldn't say they have reached -- or brought us to agreement on what we seek, which is a global ban on chemical weapons. We are going to have to pursue that further here.

On non-proliferation the talks have gone better and there really is now substantial agreement between us, but its precise terms will be finalized here. But we are optimistic that agreement can be reached in setting common purposes on non-proliferation.

Finally, on verification, I am not sure you intended that

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for chemical or more broadly, but there haven't been any new proposals from their side, and I couldn't say any advance on verification of really central problems such as how do we cope with mobil. And we'll still have to work on that.

Q To follow that up, on the chemical, if you are unable to reach a global ban, is there any prospect of reaching some kind of cooperative agreement to stop the spread of chemical weapons?

MR. MCFARLANE: We are interested in that and would be open to talks oriented toward that and then there are one or two areas where there is specific urgent need to talk about it in some regional conflicts. So, yes, we are very interested in doing that.

Q Mr. McFarlane. My name is Snow, BBC. Could I ask you

why it is that the United States is apparently asking for a ban on new mobile missiles when we were given to understand, weren't we, by the Scowcroft Commission that they were the ones most likely to contribute to the stability of a nuclear balance?

MR. MCFARLANE: I'm glad you asked. The United States has maintained for some time that stability is served by improving the survivability of land-based systems, indeed, all systems. It is important to examine how differing concepts of mobility help or hurt that goal of survivability and verification.

Specifically, the United States has historically oriented mobility toward mobility within a confined area that bounds the problem and enables the Soviet Union to see that there is a finite threat, such as in the late '70s, within an MPS area of 4,600 shelters, which, while achieving survivability, does so under circumstances the Soviet Union can cope with at a price that it has to reckon.

That's not the case on the part of the Soviet Union. Their concept on mobility provides for putting weapons at large in an area that is simply -- we are unable to bound. We cannot cope with a mobility concept that encompasses the entire Soviet Union. So we need a very, very serious discourse on verification in this area. Right now, the Soviet Union has given no plausible construct of their programs, which really could give you greater stability.

Four, at the end of the day, if you cannot count the number -- and we can't, under the circumstances the Soviets intend -- then, you are unable to know that there is or is not a balance and led, at times of crisis, to the expectation that there may be quite an imbalance that you may be entirely unaware of, and that's unsatisfactory.

The U.S. Congress tells the Soviets how many we have and they can build a corresponding number. There is no corresponding voice in the Soviet Union that tells us, in a way which we have confidence, how many they have.

Q Yes, Soviet General --

Q Mr. McFarlane, we had a --

Q Soviet General Chervov said up there before that the United States was content with the actual procedures that the Soviet Union uses to physically dispose of nuclear material, nuclear warheads. A few days ago in New York, a senior Soviet official said privately that -- he had agreed with this. And he also suggested quite strongly that there was a current active commission of Soviet and American officials who are now involved in monitoring the proliferation of nuclear weapons to terroristic organizations. This -- he said that this was working outside of current treaty structures. I was wondering if you are happy with the way in which the Soviet Union actually physically disposes of nuclear weaponry and if there is such an active commission of Soviet and American officials on this question of the proliferation of nuclear material -- nuclear warheads within terrorist organizations around the world?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I don't know precisely what the Soviet spokesman said. I think whatever may be their approach to the destruction of nuclear weapons, the bottom line is they keep getting more of them. And, so, it really misses the point that we need agreement to really reduce and go to lower levels of nuclear weapons and the Soviet Union simply hasn't been willing to do that yet. There won't be a problem in the technical matter of disposing of the nuclear materials themselves -- we can find a way to do that.

On the second part of the question, the requirement to foreclose proliferation of nuclear weapons generally, and certainly to terrorists, is something that there is a measure of agreement in

principle between us. I wouldn't pretend, however, that right now there are the oversight arrangements in place to give us much confidence that we can do that. So, we've got a lot of work to do on that and I couldn't say that I'm satisfied; I doubt that the Soviet Union's satisfied, really, with our ability to be confident that terrorists aren't going to get a hold of weapons.

MR. SPEAKES: In the rear for the last question.

Q Mr. McFarlane, we heard a Soviet spokesman in this building yesterday saying that they weren't very happy at having their troops still in Afghanistan and that they made getting their troops out of Afghanistan a high foreign policy priority. Have you heard anything new from the Soviets that suggests that they're actually trying to act on that, or is this just meant to entertain us while we waited for your arrival?

MR. MCFARLANE: The short answer is no, we haven't heard anything on that. Clearly, we would welcome any proposal that provides for withdrawal of Soviet forces, the return of refugees to Afghanistan, the exercise of self-determination, and the restoration, through political means, of non-alignment in Afghanistan. But, that's still on the agenda and we'll be talking about it.

Thanks very much.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

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1:08 P.M. (L)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Geneva, Switzerland)

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BRIEFING BY
NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR
ROBERT MCFARLANE

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The meetings here provide an opportunity for an exchange on the full spectrum of differences between our two countries. The agenda is a very broad one. It encompasses deeply seated differences over regional issues, security issues, and importantly, how to make more stable the military balance by accomplishing deep reductions, equitably and verifiably, of nuclear weapons.

With regard to bilateral contacts, the exchanges will enable the President to express his strong views on the value of expanded bilateral contacts between these two countries in every domain, literally dozens of new ideas the President has brought to this meeting, and to which he hopes to receive a positive reply, believing that these people-to-people programs can indeed establish constituencies for peace to broaden understanding, to help resolve differences.

The President will also make clear his continued concern with human rights issues for adherence to the agreements and pledges made in Helsinki. It is, in sum, a very welcome opportunity. The President looks forward to it, hopeful, optimistic, determined.

The United States has put forward new positions that deal with each of the 4 principal areas on our agenda. The United States had made productions or proposals for deep reductions in nuclear weapons going back 3 years now although there has not been until recently a thoughtful Soviet response, and the Soviet Union had seen fit to leave the arms control talks. They have now been renewed and recently the Soviet Union has come forward with a counterproposal to our own; the President has examined it. While there are serious problems with it, there are constructive elements.

He directed his own administration to examine these and to see whether those elements could be applied in a way that provided for a stable, equitable, verifiable balance at much lower levels.

In a summary comment on the nature of this issue now, it's useful to note the problems that we have with the Soviet proposal, specifically in calling for reductions the Soviets categorized the outcome as requiring, basically, a choice by the United States between defending our friends and allies, or of maintaining a central balance in strategic systems between ourselves and the Soviet Union, and this is not a reasonable choice.

The United States will fulfill its obligations to its friends and allies throughout the world. That said, we believe that

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there is a basis for negotiation in some elements of their proposal. We do find fault not only with the categorization, but with the foreclosure of modernization on the American side while that remains entirely open for the Soviet Union.

We also find fault with the exclusion of many Soviet systems while those corresponding systems are included in their concept of what ought to be limited on our side.

The American proposal, put forward October 31 and in Geneva in ensuing sessions, adopts the concept of 50 percent reductions in appropriate measures. Most importantly, it deals with the most destabilizing systems, ballistic missile warheads, and calls for a 50 percent reduction from existing levels to an equal level on both sides of 4500 warheads.

It also proposes an American reduction by 50 percent in air-launched cruise missiles to a level of 1500. These two, the 4500 plus 1500, would provide for an outcome

of 6,000 weapons. Further, it calls for a 50 percent reduction approximately and a sub-ceiling of 3,000 ICB warheads -- roughly 50 percent of current Soviet levels. In addition, with regard to intermediate-range forces, the American proposal calls for approximately a 50 percent cut to a level of 140 launchers, with the mix of systems being negotiable but oriented toward an equal global outcome and a level of those systems oriented toward Europe of between 420 and 450 warheads -- equal on both sides -- the corresponding global equal entitlement, and a proportional reduction of Soviet systems in Asia.

Finally, in a comprehensive proposal, it treats START, INF, as well as defense and space issues. It seeks to engage promptly the Soviet Union on a discussion of the relationship between offense and defense and upon how, over time, a transition can be carried out in which the two sides place less reliance upon offensive systems and more upon defensive, nonnuclear systems.

Thus, we hope that this proposal will lead to a serious engagement and to prompt agreement for deep reductions in nuclear systems and an equal, verifiable, stable limit, ever decreasing over time to the ultimate elimination of these weapons.

Be glad to take your questions now.

Q Mr. McFarlane --

MR. MCFARLANE: Yes?

Q -- could -- Peter Ott (phonetic), BBC, London. For those of us who may have been puzzled over recent months about the American approach to the summit, could I ask for your observations on Defense Secretary Weinberger's letter, which has been published extensively overnight?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, let me take the first part of your question first. The President's approach to the summit is one that is premised upon an absorption of lessons from 40 years of U.S. relations with the Soviet Union to a recognition that the United States has alternatively pursued efforts at dialogue and the resolution of disputes, but based upon the hope that there would fundamental change in Soviet purposes internationally -- hopes which have proven ill-founded as measured in the expanded scale of the Soviet expansion beyond its borders in the late 1970's.

Alternatively, we have been engaged in hostile Cold War confrontation in the period of the '50's. And at a time of high levels of nuclear power on both sides, this is a unsatisfactory basis for East-West dialogue.

The President has adopted instead a policy that is based upon strength, realism, and dialogue; realism as expressed in open acknowledgement that the Soviet system is quite different from ours, that we disagree fundamentally on their basic concept of the state and its authority, on its power vis-a-vis its own people, and its entitlement to expand beyond its borders, all of which we disagree with.

And, yet, we acknowledge it will not change. We cannot change it. They are a power of enormous strength, and we have to live with them. We seek to do so peacefully in what will be inevitably a competitive enterprise over time. For it to be peaceful, we have to engage across-the-board in an exchange on what our interests are in the West -- regionally, on human rights, bilaterally, and on arms control issues. We seek to do that.

With regard to this meeting, its importance is that this exchange of views with the Soviet leader can provide that foundation -- understanding by them of how President views United States' interests, how he views the Soviet Union, how he believes we ought to

do business with each other. The measure of the value of this meeting will be expressed in whether or not the Soviet Union absorbs those points -- as will we in listening to them -- and in the months and years which follow this meeting, the climate of the relationship and peace basically becomes more stable.

Now, that, more than current events or matters which appear in yesterday's headlines, are a more telling measure of the attitude of the President coming in and his expectations for how success will be measured.

Regarding the letter, the letter is a response to a tasking the President made in June, when he reaffirmed United States' intentions to pursue a policy of not undercutting the SALT II agreement for as long as the Soviet Union pursued a corresponding course. He tasked this study, part of which has been completed, and said that he would absorb its findings, together with the record of the Geneva talks, also look seriously at Soviet building programs and whether they expanded or contracted, and make judgments after this meeting. The second part of the report won't be received until after he returns to Washington.

So, he will take the findings, which is what is in this week's first part, the recommendations which are still to come, these other factors of compliance, Geneva, these talks, and the Soviet building program, and reach decisions later in the year.

Q Bud --

MR. MCFARLANE: Yes?

Q Bud, are you ruling out -- I just want to be clear -- are you ruling out --

Q -- microphone!

Q Are you ruling out any formal extension of the SALT II Treaty, either emanating from this summit meeting or when the President makes his decision in December, going beyond the no-undercut policy?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, John, it's really premature to speculate on what the judgments may be. There are four different factors that will be part of the President's thinking, and each will be considered. He'll make judgments, but it's not feasible now to predict what his decisions may be.

MR. SPEAKES: Let's get Sam out of the way.

Q I'll wait until Mr. McFarlane calls on me.

MR. SPEAKES: No, I'm doing the calling on, so that's all right.

Q Mr. McFarlane? Already, the Soviets are saying that Weinberger letter was an attempt to torpedo this summit. Do you see it as an attempt -- that is, the leaking of the letter -- to sabotage this summit? What effect do you think, beyond your opening statement about it, it will have on this summit?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, Sam, it seems to me that the Secretary has responded to tasking from the President in part that he will follow next week with recommendations, presumably founded upon the findings of this week's report.

Q It's the leak I'm asking about.

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I don't think it's really helpful to comment on leaks. The substance of the issue is what the reports say, and that's an important factor in the President's thinking. It

will be added to by recommendations which he doesn't yet have and haven't been forwarded. The leak itself is unfortunate. The Secretary has stated that he views it as unfortunate and, I believe, is taking steps to find out how it occurred.

Q Well, may I follow up on that? You say it's an unfortunate event. Another U.S. official on the record, Mr. Speakes, this morning suggested that the Secretary was either stating U.S. policy that the President has already adopted or was presenting his views that are already well known to the Soviets. Therefore, why, if that is the case, would it have an effect and why would it be unfortunate?

MR. MCFARLANE: I say -- the question is, why is unfortunate?

I say that as a matter of just discipline decision process, that it's always unfortunate when you pre-empt that process with a leak. It is quite true that the Secretary's judgments are judgments that have been made before and, therefore, I don't think that it need have an affect one way or the other. These are decisions that the President, himself, has reported to the Congress concerning violations of past agreements. They are well-known, and they are an important issue on our agenda here in Geneva.

MR. SPEAKES: Let me go to Gerry.

Q It's clear from what you and Larry have said that the President could not agree to a formalized one-year extension of the "no undercut" policy on SALT II. Is it also clear that he could not agree to any formalized recommitment to limits on SDI research at this meeting?

MR. MCFARLANE: The possibilities for what will or will not be agreed at this meeting are really purely speculative right now. The President's concept behind SDI and how it can foster reductions of existing nuclear power are very well-known, that he seeks a research program which can answer the question, is it feasible to develop a system which would prevent ballistic missiles from reaching their targets -- ballistic missile warheads.

The Soviet Union, for more than 15 years, has been pursuing an analogous program. The talks here will enable the President to present a very comprehensive view on deterrence. His view of the fact that the concept we have relied upon for the past 15 years -- that is, offensive deterrence -- was premised on two assumptions which are no longer valid. Those assumptions were that for the concept of offensive deterrence to work you must have offensive balance, and we don't have that as a consequence of Soviet building programs, which have provided for them a very dramatic advantage in the key areas, particularly of prompt, hard-target kill capability -- that because of that imbalance, the concept of offensive deterrence is ever less stable and that we have to deal with that either by reducing Soviet systems, which we shall try to do, and have, or by increasing U.S. systems, which we would like to avoid, or by compensating for this offense with defense.

In short, the Soviet building program has driven the United States to SDI. There is no alternative. But more importantly, it is the Soviet program, itself, long in existence, which the United States could no longer afford to stand by idly and watch. It is unreasonable for the Soviet Union to expect that pursuing a program of the scale that they have, which has exceeded in expenditure what they have put into offensive power, could be ignored. But most importantly, is it not reasonable for us to ask whether you cannot move away from a concept which relies upon offensive threats and upon nuclear weapons toward a strategy which relies on being unable to threaten by virtue of having only non-nuclear defensive systems.

All of that will be explored in this meeting, and we hope a measure of agreement to begin to talk seriously about the mix between offense and defense and a transition away from offense.

Q You just said, Mr. McFarlane, that you could not -- sorry? Good, I am happy for you. So you need to translate -- to repeat my question or not? Okay. In English? All right, I'll do it in English.

Mr. McFarlane, you just called -- you just said that the United States cannot change the Soviet Union's policy, which you have termed aggressive. So maybe it's your possibility to change aggressive policy of the United States. I have the whole complex of aggression beginning with Vietnam, going through Chile, going through Grenada and coming to aggressive war you are leading in Nicaragua, in Salvador and other regions of the world. Thank you.

MR. MCFARLANE: I'm glad you asked. (Laughter.)

The President seeks, as he said in his United Nations speech, to achieve agreement that forecloses the expansion of any country's power through the use of force and subversion. The United States does not and has not done that.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union, by virtue of its presence in occupying the country of Afghanistan with over 100,000 troops, is foreclosing the ability of that country to exercise self-determination.

The President believes that there is a means to move away from that expansion of power by force and subversion through internal dialogue, later followed by discourse between our two countries to perhaps guarantee solutions reached by the natives of each country in question.

With regard to who is and who is not pursuing an aggressive policy, the United States has no military personnel in Nicaragua. In the Western Hemisphere, the Soviet Union has some-40 times the number of American advisors. The United States has no military presence in any country in its hemisphere.

Concerning Grenada, there is a dramatic difference between invited in by the country and its friends to help it restore order in its own country and promptly leaving, as between a six-year occupation by more than 100,000 people.

The United States seeks no territorial advantage beyond its borders whatsoever and would like here to engage in a dialogue on how, together, we can compete peacefully, but without the use of military power or subversion. We would welcome Soviet economic assistance programs to foster development in the Third World. Thus far, that has been not forthcoming.

Q It has been rumored here in Geneva today that if there is some accord between Mr. Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev over the next few days, that a certain section of the two groups accompanying the world leaders will stay on here in Geneva and continue some of these talks. Can you confirm or deny this rumor?

MR. MCFARLANE: I've seen reports that the Soviet Union may leave a contingent here, although I had heard that it was more for public affairs purposes and not for diplomacy.

The President hopes that from this meeting there will be a sustained dialogue between us. There are established fora for that to take place in. The Geneva talks here on arms control as soon as possible should get back at it.

The exchange of ministerial-level meetings, perhaps of defense experts between our two countries would be a positive development. Other ministers of our governments should expand the habit of contact between them. In addition, we have already going, periodic contacts on regional issues by regional experts. We welcome that and would like to expand that. And so we're entirely open to prompt, serious exchanges across the board.

Q Do you --

There will be Americans leaving this meeting to debrief our friends and allies and we'll do that promptly.

Q -- question, Mr. McFarlane -- how do you consider -- state venture that could -- would you have rescinded -- subtracted from general armaments -- adjust the figures and statements made by your own Minister of Defense deny this -- balanced, in fact, in this area? Could you reply to that please, sir?

MR. MCFARLANE: First of all, with regard to the trend on both sides in military power, the United States' investment in military power declined steadily after World War II. On balance in the 1950's, it was at about 10 percent of our GNP, declined into the 60's starting at about 9 1/2 percent and getting down to about 8 by the end of the decade. In the 1970's, it further declined -- down to about 5 percent of our GNP.

At the same time, during that period of sustained continuous decline in U.S. expenditures, there was a steady increase at all times, and through this day, on the part of the Soviet Union averaging between 12 percent and 14 percent of its GNP, growing at an annual rate of between 2 and 4 percent.

At the same time, the United States has always sought to reduce the level of nuclear weapons and their power unilaterally. And today you find that we have fewer warheads than we have had before, going steadily downward from the 60's, the 70's in both numbers and warhead power. This contrasts sharply with the Soviet tendency to expand ever -- to ever greater levels in both numbers and explosive power.

In short, the contrast is very clear between the trend of diminishing U.S. investments and diminishing U.S. numbers of nuclear weapons and power versus just the opposite on the Soviet side. Today, in specific measures of what constitutes stability in the strategic nuclear balance, the Soviet Union enjoys an advantage in prompt hard target kill capability of about 3 to 1 and of about the same thing with regard to throw-weight. Thus, there is a need to reduce this level of power to an equal condition under a verifiable basis and we would welcome any Soviet efforts in that direction.

Q Mr. McFarlane, can we go a bit further on INF. Are you talking about 140 mix of systems -- if we take the minimum figure you gave -- 420 warheads -- and work back from there, 108 presumably being the Pershing deployment we're left with, perhaps --

MR. WEINBERG: Sorry. Press pool 2 should assemble in the back of the briefing room at this time. Thank you.

Q -- political reasons, have you had any negotiations with the people that have accepted the idea of ground launched cruise in Europe -- is it possible that any of those countries will not be getting ground launched cruise should this proposal ever be accepted?

MR. SPEAKES: Let me ask your cooperation. I'd like to call on you if you'll raise your hand during the previous question -- this is the second time I've called on this individual. Let's answer this question and then I'll take him right there. Go ahead, please.

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MR. MCFARLANE: The United States has always coordinated its positions with its allies very closely. With regard to the implementation of the 1979 decision, that has been a matter of the closest coordination and will remain so. The current U.S. proposal for 140 launchers and between 420 and 450 warheads -- excuse me -- is one in which we are open to discussion on the basis that the continued practice in the West of shared responsibility, shared risk, will be sustained; that is, the deployment countries will remain deployment countries and what we seek is Soviet agreement to equality at lower levels, proportional reductions in Asia, and an equal global entitlement, and we will, throughout this negotiation, be in constant touch, however, with all the deployment countries -- indeed, all of the NATO countries -- as we try to engage the Soviets on it.

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Q Mr. McFarlane, could I ask you this question? One of the most promising products may come out of this meeting is, on the bilateral side, an exchange that the President talked about -- people-to-people exchanges. Could I ask you whether, in negotiating people-to-people exchanges, you will give any assurances to the Soviet Union that Soviet citizens who come to the United States will return?

MR. MCFARLANE: The motive of the United States is to foster the broadest possible exchange and, through it, better understanding. We don't seek to entrap or to lure or otherwise artificially induce Soviet people to come who don't want to come. And we don't seek in any fashion to influence their behavior one way or the other. And that's very clear going into this negotiation. So, there should be a very easy basis for agreement.

Q I don't know if I'm -- the question is, I understand the Soviets would like to have assurances that those Soviet citizens who come under the exchange agreements will return. Are you prepared go give them those assurances?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, we're certainly prepared to assure that anyone who comes to our country is free to do whatever he or she may wish to do. We cannot guarantee, to the Soviet Union, how its own citizens will behave. We will not artificially influence them or otherwise alter their freedom of action in the United States.

Q Bud, during your meetings and Secretary Shultz' meetings in Moscow, General Secretary Gorbachev expressed concerns about a military industrial complex and about the influence from that part of our political structure on the President's thinking. Won't the Weinberger letter only reinforce those anxieties and how do you suggest that the President can, if he wants to, allay those fears?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I think there are two parts to the question, really. First, to the point tht there is in the United States an undue influence of the so-called military industrial complex; that assertion made in the context of its importance to our economy -- it simply is unfounded. The total effect of defense production as an economic factor in our country is very, very small -- on the order of 4 percent of our GNP.

The separate part in your question is, do judgments made by the President's Cabinet about Soviet compliance in some way affect the atmosphere of these talks or the broader relationship. I think that the President expects his Cabinet to report honestly on the threat and how it is evolving over time and that's exactly what the Secretary has done in this report. It is consistent with his past reports. Realism, which is the underlying principle of the new relationship, is just that. You have to acknowledge problems when they exist; you can't gloss over them.

Q But --

MR. MCFARLANE: As you identify them, you can say how you think they can be solved and that's what we intend to do here.

Q But what about the fact that the leak -- the timing and the leak -- won't that affect the climate and the likely Soviet response and do you -- secondly, do you, personally, believe that the leak came from the Pentagon?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I think, again, that being in Geneva at a session with the Soviet Union is of such importance and deals with such larger issues that transcend stories of yesterday and the day before that it won't be a matter of consequence in these talks. The internal processes of the U.S. government are far less important than the fundamental strategic factors which shape peace, stability, and so forth. So, I don't believe that our own internal

processes are of much importance to the outcome here in Geneva. With regard to where the leak came from, I think the Secretary has acknowledged that he's looking into that now and we'll just have to await the findings of that.

Q Do you think that it should also be investigated at the White House and the State Department, for instance, or do you think that the only place to look is the Pentagon for the source of that leak?

MR. MCFARLANE: I think it's reasonable to look wherever it is possible that it may have come from and that could include the White House and anyone else who got a copy of it. My own copy, I think, is still sealed and the copy that went to the President has remained in his possession. I don't think the President was the source of it. The -- other copies, I'm not familiar with where they went.

Q Mr. McFarlane, without characterizing necessarily the specifics of the differences remaining between the two countries, could you characterize the talks that are going on between the two countries over the weekend to narrow the differences in advance of the meeting between the summit heads -- at what level are they taking place, have they narrowed some differences in the past day or so?

MR. MCFARLANE: The talks have gone on between experts from both sides through embassies in both capitols and there have been differences narrowed in the last few days and there is basis for expecting that, on several of the bilateral issues in particular, we will reach agreement in the next day or so, but we haven't yet; we are just optimistic and we'll have to wait and see.

Q Mr. McFarlane, what will be the impact on these proceedings of the recent visits to the United States by

Seaman Medvid and Comrade Yurchenko?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I think those two events add to our own judgments about sentiments of individual Soviet citizens who apparently are dissatisfied with their circumstance. The reality of periodic defections is not new. How we deal with them is not always very uplifting, but I don't think that it is a strategic factor in these talks.

Q Mr. McFarlane, can you say if any -- you say differences have narrowed on bilateral. Have any differences narrowed in the last few days on anything other than bilateral issues?

MR. MCFARLANE: No.

Q Mr. McFarlane, there was some schizophrenia here in the Soviet responses just before you came in. General Shervov said that the Soviet proposal would ban all research on space weapons and that academician Milikov said that it would not. Could you clarify this from the American standpoint?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I think they are going to have to duke it out and figure out which one is their position. But the United States bases its position upon the authorities of the ABM Treaty, on the realities of the very substantial Soviet program, and our view of what helps create stability. And we are very, very open to a discussion with the Russians about that.

Q I want to go back to the SALT II accords. Does the President's decision, which you and Larry announced earlier, has been put off until December on the question of whether we would agree on a year extension or a times extension. Does that rule out any possibility that it could happen here, that the President might change his mind, that he might actually make an agreement to extend SALT II or not to undercut SALT II while he is here?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, Lou, it is in all things really premature to judge what may come out of this meeting, but I would have to say that the decision on that issue is one that ought to benefit from the President's absorption of what does happen here, and to reflect on it together with reports not yet received from the Pentagon on recommendations for coping with past non-compliance, absorption of what has happened in Geneva at the arms talks, absorption of the Soviet building program -- its pace and quality since this past June -- and of their compliance record since then. So all of those things ought to be digested -- and importantly, what happens in the two days next week.

So I think that until all of those things have been pondered by the President it's unlikely he would make a decision on that issue.

Q Bud, can you tell us where the talks stand with the Soviets on cooperative efforts to prevent the spread of chemical weapons -- also nuclear proliferation -- and whether or not there has been any headway made on the whole issue of verification in any of our recent talks with them?

MR. MCFARLANE: On the chemical issue, the discussions have been lengthy. I couldn't say they have reached -- or brought us to agreement on what we seek, which is a global ban on chemical weapons. We are going to have to pursue that further here.

On non-proliferation the talks have gone better and there really is now substantial agreement between us, but its precise terms will be finalized here. But we are optimistic that agreement can be reached in setting common purposes on non-proliferation.

Finally, on verification, I am not sure you intended that

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for chemical or more broadly, but there haven't been any new proposals from their side, and I couldn't say any advance on verification of really central problems such as how do we cope with mobil. And we'll still have to work on that.

Q To follow that up, on the chemical, if you are unable to reach a global ban, is there any prospect of reaching some kind of cooperative agreement to stop the spread of chemical weapons?

MR. MCFARLANE: We are interested in that and would be open to talks oriented toward that and then there are one or two areas where there is specific urgent need to talk about it in some regional conflicts. So, yes, we are very interested in doing that.

Q Mr. McFarlane. My name is Snow, BBC. Could I ask you

why it is that the United States is apparently asking for a ban on new mobile missiles when we were given to understand, weren't we, by the Scowcroft Commission that they were the ones most likely to contribute to the stability of a nuclear balance?

MR. MCFARLANE: I'm glad you asked. The United States has maintained for some time that stability is served by improving the survivability of land-based systems, indeed, all systems. It is important to examine how differing concepts of mobility help or hurt that goal of survivability and verification.

Specifically, the United States has historically oriented mobility toward mobility within a confined area that bounds the problem and enables the Soviet Union to see that there is a finite threat, such as in the late '70s, within an MPS area of 4,600 shelters, which, while achieving survivability, does so under circumstances the Soviet Union can cope with at a price that it has to reckon.

That's not the case on the part of the Soviet Union. Their concept on mobility provides for putting weapons at large in an area that is simply -- we are unable to bound. We cannot cope with a mobility concept that encompasses the entire Soviet Union. So we need a very, very serious discourse on verification in this area. Right now, the Soviet Union has given no plausible construct of their programs, which really could give you greater stability.

Four, at the end of the day, if you cannot count the number -- and we can't, under the circumstances the Soviets intend -- then, you are unable to know that there is or is not a balance and led, at times of crisis, to the expectation that there may be quite an imbalance that you may be entirely unaware of, and that's unsatisfactory.

The U.S. Congress tells the Soviets how many we have and they can build a corresponding number. There is no corresponding voice in the Soviet Union that tells us, in a way which we have confidence, how many they have.

Q Yes, Soviet General --

Q Mr. McFarlane, we had a --

Q Soviet General Chervov said up there before that the United States was content with the actual procedures that the Soviet Union uses to physically dispose of nuclear material, nuclear warheads. A few days ago in New York, a senior Soviet official said privately that -- he had agreed with this. And he also suggested quite strongly that there was a current active commission of Soviet and American officials who are now involved in monitoring the proliferation of nuclear weapons to terroristic organizations. This -- he said that this was working outside of current treaty structures. I was wondering if you are happy with the way in which the Soviet Union actually physically disposes of nuclear weaponry and if there is such an active commission of Soviet and American officials on this question of the proliferation of nuclear material -- nuclear warheads within terrorist organizations around the world?

MR. MCFARLANE: Well, I don't know precisely what the Soviet spokesman said. I think whatever may be their approach to the destruction of nuclear weapons, the bottom line is they keep getting more of them. And, so, it really misses the point that we need agreement to really reduce and go to lower levels of nuclear weapons and the Soviet Union simply hasn't been willing to do that yet. There won't be a problem in the technical matter of disposing of the nuclear materials themselves -- we can find a way to do that.

On the second part of the question, the requirement to foreclose proliferation of nuclear weapons generally, and certainly to terrorists, is something that there is a measure of agreement in

principle between us. I wouldn't pretend, however, that right now there are the oversight arrangements in place to give us much confidence that we can do that. So, we've got a lot of work to do on that and I couldn't say that I'm satisfied; I doubt that the Soviet Union's satisfied, really, with our ability to be confident that terrorists aren't going to get a hold of weapons.

MR. SPEAKES: In the rear for the last question.

Q Mr. McFarlane, we heard a Soviet spokesman in this building yesterday saying that they weren't very happy at having their troops still in Afghanistan and that they made getting their troops out of Afghanistan a high foreign policy priority. Have you heard anything new from the Soviets that suggests that they're actually trying to act on that, or is this just meant to entertain us while we waited for your arrival?

MR. MCFARLANE: The short answer is no, we haven't heard anything on that. Clearly, we would welcome any proposal that provides for withdrawal of Soviet forces, the return of refugees to Afghanistan, the exercise of self-determination, and the restoration, through political means, of non-alignment in Afghanistan. But, that's still on the agenda and we'll be talking about it.

Thanks very much.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

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1:08 P.M. (L)