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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Geneva, Switzerland)

For Immediate Release

November 18, 1985

INTERVIEW OF
WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF
DONALD REGAN
ON ABC'S "GOOD MORNING, AMERICA"

Hotel Intercontinental
Geneva, Switzerland

8:39 A.M. (L)

Q Mr. Regan, we keep seeing a good Gorbachev and a bad Gorbachev, one who is angry and then one who is potentially accommodating. What are you looking forward to here as the summit is upon us -- the good or the bad Gorbachev? The tough guy or the accommodator? (***) Taped question edited for broadcast)

MR. REGAN: Well, we really don't know until actually he comes into the meeting on -- tomorrow morning and we follow what he has to say for the next 48 hours. We're prepared to go either way. We hope that this is going to be a productive summit, and a productive summit would be a reasonable man discussing his point of view with Ronald Reagan discussing his point of view.

Q But the Soviets made available to the U.S. have been going out of their way, it seems, to put Mr. Reagan down, to suggest the old man who just doesn't quite have things right. Do you see something in this?

MR. REGAN: Well, you know, I really am quite perplexed by this. We didn't come here downing their man and calling him names or inferring that he doesn't understand what's going on or that he's too new to understand the United States -- he's never been to the United States -- we haven't been knocking them that way. We don't understand their game. What are they trying to do in knocking President Reagan? Are they afraid of him? Are they trying to knock him down? I think that's probably what's behind their propaganda.

Q So what does that do to your perception of any optimism that something positive might be accomplished here?

MR. REGAN: Well, this may be a ploy in order to try to soften him up in order to get him to agree to something. We don't know.

Q Mr. Regan, the President's speech at the UN talked about the necessity for the United States to talk with the Soviet Union about a number of trouble spots around the world -- I won't name them, but 5 particular hot spot areas around the world. Mr. Arbatov just suggested that if there were concessions on SDI, Star Wars, that the Soviet Union would be willing to discuss a whole range of issues, including possibly even those areas. How surprised are you by that?

MR. REGAN: Not surprised at all. They don't want us to proceed with our research into defense against their offensive weapons. But they want to proceed with their research and/or defense against our offensive weapons. They'd like to have it both ways, and that's why they're trying to con us into that, "You give up your side and we may talk to you." We don't fall for that.

Q So, are you saying that SDI is on the table and that if we'll -- if -- you know, that we can put that up in order to get

MORE

them to talk about those 5 trouble spots.

MR. REGAN: No. What we're saying is, is that we're going to proceed with our research and SDI regardless of what happens. But what we're going to tell them is, is that if they want to discuss reduction in arms, which they presumably want to do, the right way to go about it is to show us in their attitude that they are not belligerent.

The fact that they have troops, over 100,000 in Afghanistan, in Angola, other places around the world fomenting trouble, is not a good indication that they want peace. If they're peace-loving, they should show that by example of cutting back on some of the belligerency that they've shown throughout this world.

Q Mr. Regan, as Chief of Staff, your responsibility is to coordinate the policy as it comes to the President to see to it that the voice that speaks for the President is the correct one, and yet, we have this Weinberger letter that seems to run counter to the entire spirit of summitry. How does this happen?

MR. REGAN: Well Steve, I think it happens because the President has surrounded himself with strong advisors with very strong opinions. And I think he's well-served by that. If you think about it for a while, if he had only yes men around or only people with one opinion, he wouldn't be well-served. But with the multiplicity of opinion that's around him --

Q But it's one thing to have differing opinions, it's another thing to have people who are purposely leaking material that is counterproductive to what the President's trying to do.

MR. REGAN: Well, you used a word there that I don't agree with as yet, and that's "purposely" leaking. I don't know what the motive behind the leak was, or indeed who leaked it. Cap came into my office before we left Washington, he told me he was astonished at the leak, that he was perplexed by it, and they would have an investigation and have something ready for us when we get back. So I'm waiting until I hear from him as to where he thinks the leak might have occurred.

Q Mr. Regan, thank you.

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