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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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BACKGROUND BRIEFING  
BY SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL  
ON THE UPCOMING SUMMIT IN GENEVA

November 13, 1985

The Briefing Room

4:07 P.M. EST

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Hello. Last evening I was going back over some history books and I think surely you all were doing the same thing and I came across the forecast by a noted French historian of the inevitability of confrontation and conflict between the two great powers -- Russia and the United States -- with apparent prescience given the conditions extant today in which the two superpowers are in seeming confrontation, one espousing an activist policy internationally -- the United States -- although not imperial. The other ideologically committed to expanding its influence internationally and for the first time in its history able -- economically and militarily -- to do so.

And in going to this meeting the President has thought quite a lot about that set of apparently inexorable forces which have created this competitive situation, and looked in particular at the post-war period and the antecedents to this meeting next week. In his judgment today -- and really only today -- as this competitive situation casts for all of us the decision of preventing violence in a very, very real sense and required of each side to test itself in shaping a policy that will assure this competition remains peaceful. For most of the post-war period the United States held clearly an edge in power -- pure military power as well as economic power. But whenever the Soviet Union considered expanding its influence beyond its borders it had to stop and think whether or not it would bring it into confrontation with the United States. And if it did, on the whole they didn't do it. Whether one considers Iran after the war or Greece, Turkey -- wherever else -- superior power was able to deter.

However by the mid-70s that condition of U.S. superiority was eroded to a condition of rough parity. And for the past ten years we have seen the Soviet Union far more willing to take risks, at first indirectly through surrogates

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in Angola, Ethiopia, Indochina. But ultimately, with its own power in Afghanistan. This came at a time of U.S. decline, both politically, economically, militarily, when the United States was unable to counter, to deter, to contest.

Today, however, the United States, after some period of renewal, is restoring its ability to deter on the strength of its economy. It is also on a condition of greater reliance upon overseas markets, overseas resources.

The Soviet Union, as well, has continued its buildup of military power, its economy in satisfactory condition. In short, the ability of each power to do great damage is quite high. The certain prospect of competition very clear, and the question, very pressing, of how the two can compete peacefully at center stage in this meeting next week.

In reviewing the strategy for discussions with the General Secretary, the President has examined the record of the past 40 years and has concluded that our own oscillations between extreme policies of Cold War hostility and of the naive notion that the Soviet Union has or can change have not served our interests well, and believes that we have to chart a fundamentally different course based neither on the naive notion of change nor of the hopelessness of dialogue, but instead to chart a course based on realism, explaining to the American people the certain continuation of disagreement, ideologically, politically -- disagreements over the role of the state, its authority to expand, its attitude towards its own people -- and that these are fundamentally incompatible doctrines, but that we must find a way to assure that they don't lead to violence.

The President believes strongly that we are prepared for that competition, that we should no longer have illusions that we can impose our own system, nor should we try, on other countries; but that by example, we are in a very good position to expect other countries to be persuaded that our own system offers the best hope of ever improving welfare for their own people. And he intends to say that to the General Secretary. That for our conditions or

our relations to remain peaceful. They must involve peaceful resolution of disagreements across the board, disagreements over regional issues, over human rights, over the growth of military power and the use of that power and of subversion. And he intends to cover each of these areas in his dialogue with the General Secretary.

He believes that a stable military balance can be established at much lower levels of nuclear power and that, over time, together we can explore the feasibility of shifting our strategy away from reliance on threats, away from reliance on nuclear power and toward systems which are non-nuclear and do not threaten.

Regionally, he believes we can establish a framework for the peaceful resolution of disputes. Bilaterally, he believes we can open a considerably expanded cooperative effort in trade, in East-West travel, in cultural and other human exchanges. And that he intends to pursue in Geneva.

Tomorrow evening, he'll deliver a speech in which he will present a comprehensive view of how the United States should conduct its affairs with the Soviet Union. He will cover his view of history, but, more importantly, his vision of the future and focus on each of these four areas of East-West discourse: The security dialogue, human rights, bilateral issues and regional disagreements.

Because he has focused in his New York speech on the regional issues and his concept for dealing with them, there will be less emphasis on that tomorrow, and yet that and arms control and human rights will be wrapped into a comprehensive package in which the foremost emphasis will be on human exchanges, bilateral issues, ways in which we can reduce tensions by human contacts.

That said, let me take your questions. Jerry.

Q How important an impediment to serious arms control agreements is the problem of the sea-launched cruise missile? Could you elaborate on that, give us your view on that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The sea-launched cruise missile needn't be an impediment to arms control agreements. There are several different kinds of systems that pose different levels of risk, obviously. The most dangerous, ballistic missiles of short times of flight. Less so, but still very, very destabilizing, cruise missiles. Finally, shorter-range systems, battlefield systems. But none of these pose impossible problems. There is a unique verification problem associated with cruise missiles. But I think each power understands we have to find a way to deal with that and probably has a similar notion of priority. But cruise missiles would be right up there near the top, right after ballistic missiles. I don't think that it's an impossible problem. We have some ideas, and so do they, on --

Q But we did not address it in our counter-proposal, is that right?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We haven't solved the verification problem. We did deal with it in proposing that our side cut by 50 percent its intended ALCM deployment, yes.

Q Assuming that a strategic defense works against ballistic missiles --

Q -- SLCMs.

Q Yes, you answered ALCMs. He asked about SLCMs.

Q He asked SLCMs.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The last part of it was cruise missiles generically, I thought. But we have not treated

SLCMs in our proposal.

Q Assuming that strategic defense would work for ballistic missiles, how would it apply to cruise, in particular SLCMs?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: People, thus far, have considered SDI as oriented exclusively toward ballistic missiles. And it is true that it is foremostly oriented toward ICBMs, SLBMs.

There are other systems which are being explored now, look-down, shoot-down systems which are oriented toward slow flyers, bombers, cruise missiles and so forth. And I don't pretend that we're at the point of being able to deter or prevail against that kind of threat. But there are programs that are trying.

Yes, Lou.

Q Applying your test of realism to this summit, how far could we expect the President and Mr. Gorbachev to get in being able to issue guidelines to negotiators that would go beyond platitudes, that would make the round of talks, beginning in Geneva in January -- 16th more productive than any of the others that have --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't think any of us can prejudge that right now, Lou. I think the President very much wants to get at -- or to establish a basic understanding in the mind of the General Secretary of what our concerns are: Why do we worry about the Soviet program? Which of their systems pose the toughest problems? Our concept of deterrence and how it can be made more stable? Why SDI is necessary, why it is clearly not a visionary whim or a political stunt, but responsive to something they have driven us to.

Q If I could follow --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And I would say that that basic understanding, he hopes, will lead to an acknowledgment of the legitimacy of our problems --

we'll listen to his -- but that there will be at the end of the day a joint commitment to accelerate progress in Geneva. But --

Q Other -- if I could just follow -- other --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- how precise, it's hard to say at this time.

Q Other officials have talked about the guidelines. Does the President want to see more than this understanding? Does he want to see some kind of document come out that both sides could agree to that would -- could be used as a set of guidelines?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The President believes that results in arms control will only be expressed in the months that follow in the behavior of the negotiators and he believes that there is a chance to influence that behavior and accelerate the effort at this meeting in Geneva; but that marking it with a statement is less important than getting the results at the table. And consequently, it's achieving this basic understanding that he really wants to do. If you have it, that is far more important than a piece of paper you may agree upon because that, indeed, is what will change the pace and quality of the negotiation in Geneva.

Yes?

Q Are you telling us that at the end of the meetings in Geneva all you will be able to say is that we'll have to wait several months to see if this has been a success or not?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's exactly what I'm saying. The notion that the -- a meeting, particularly given the antecedents on the Soviet side to this meeting, would fundamentally alter the situation is a very superficial notion. Only now is the Soviet Union turning to foreign accounts. Only now is it in a position to consider what its policies overseas will be. And to think that now -- at the beginning of that process on their side they would have the definitive answer in numbers and dispositions of missiles is very unrealistic.

We are ready. We could reach that kind of agreement. But it isn't reasonable to expect that they could.

Frank?

Q Is there a Soviet delegation in Washington, a special Soviet delegation in Washington now, holding discussions, special discussions on any particular issue or another?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, with one modification. The periodic meetings of the Incidents at Sea Delegations are here, and that isn't associated with Geneva, per se. It's just something that happens every now and then, and it's happening right now.

Q No Geneva-associated discussions?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. We are in active discourse through our embassies here and there on dozens of issues.

Andrea.

Q What is the process that you would anticipate on periodic review of SALT II? And do you hold any magic to the December 31st date; do you anticipate in Geneva some kind of restatement of commitment to SALT II and ABM?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The President's announcement in June of this year set forth the criteria that would remain under continuous review, really, and which would determine his attitude toward pursuing a no-undercut policy. And they were an analogous position by the Soviet Union. Secondly, the pace and quality of negotiations in Geneva -- the good faith on the other side -- and the scale of the Soviet building program -- each of these could affect our security interests and affect adherence to the no-undercut policy. But that is going to be a continuing review. I am sure that our concerns about compliance will be on the agenda in Geneva. And the President is surely going to consider these criteria and his impressions from Geneva in reaching decisions. Those wouldn't necessarily come on the end of next week or in December or in January. It could come at any of those times, or as milestones are reached. As I think you will recall, we have another submarine supposed to go to sea next June and there is another milestone on bombers in the fall in August, I think.

So there are going to be times when you've got to make decisions, but we don't attach any magic to any dates right now.

Q So are there circumstances in Geneva that could lead him to some sort of recommitment -- a more permanent commitment?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I wouldn't speculate on that. I -- you know, that's theoretically possible, but I wouldn't foresee that right now.

Q All right, but to follow that up, implicit in his June decision was that the Soviet record that you consider somewhat spotty was good enough in June for him to go along with SALT II -- to extend SALT II. Can you tell us where things stand now? What is the current assessment? Have they been more misbehaving or at about the same level, or has their record improved? In other words, how about an interim report as you go into the summit. Are they still good enough to extend the SALT Treaty?

Q Have you seen an interim report?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, the President did task --

Q Without recalling -- The reports going to be late, but, I mean, what is your offhand assessment?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I know that. I --

Q Yes, December 1 has been slipped. (Laughter.)

Q That's the good news. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The report's coming in two phases, isn't it? (Laughter.)

Q But the summit is coming first. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Because the first tranche has only come today, we haven't evaluated that. The second will come -- when is it -- next week.

To answer your question, certain things have happened that you can -- you all are aware of. The 25, the 24 have advanced in the testing program and they are near deployment. Well, that's a big factor. That's one of the criteria -- the Soviet building program does not seem to have slowed. If anything it

has moved a little faster. The pace of things at Geneva, for the first two rounds, was very disappointing. More recently, it has gotten far more serious. That's good. On the compliance record, I wouldn't comment right now in terms of changes since June. We'd have to absorb the report and, most importantly, digest what the President hears in Geneva. So right now, it is premature to make judgments about policy beyond Geneva.

Yes.

Q Given the continuing buildup on both sides, why is there any reason to believe that the pace of technology or technological development isn't going to continue to outstrip the pace of diplomacy, just as it has in the past, so that no matter what kind of an agreement you get, you're really only going to institutionalize limits on certain parts of the arms race while you accelerate other parts?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, if human beings have some uplifting, moral purpose, you might be able to use technology to channel that competition in less dangerous ways. If, for example, 40 years ago, we had had a kind of a doomsday idea, we would not have been able to foreclose the use of nuclear weapons, which while not total, partially, we did. Today, maybe technology will let us move away from nuclear weapons. We hope so.

Technology can be a very good thing, in short. And that's what we're trying to achieve -- to turn the arms race away from violent, explosive systems and toward those that are less threatening.

Larry.

Q Since the Ottawa meeting in May, I think it was, the Soviets have more and more tried to tell the administration, you're another -- concerning human rights, that your human rights record is nothing to brag about. How do you think that is going to play out? Do you now anticipate, in effect, a counter-attack on human rights? And if so, is that a kind of debate that the administration welcomes?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: For those of you who didn't hear, the question is the counter being put forward by the Soviet Union in criticism of our human rights record seems likely in Geneva, and do we worry about that? We've heard that it's likely and we're not worried about it, really. Everybody here can judge this country's approach to the enhancement of human rights and they can judge the other side's, and we'll let those judgments rest.

Q Can you tell us a little something about how the President is spending the last few days before the summit? Is he done with the video tapes and position papers? Is he still watching Gorbachev in action? Give us a little sense of what he's doing on the run up to Geneva.

Q A little color -- (laughter.)

Q A magazine question.

Q Is Matlock really dressing up as Gorbachev?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: You really asked the wrong person for color. (Laughter.) In the daily sessions, the President's been in a reflective mood; I think has obviously focused more recently on histories of past meetings -- President Eisenhower's and successors -- looking for what were the objective conditions in terms of the strategic forces that shaped the outcomes at those times and how they are different now, as well as the role of chemistry or personality in finally looking at kind of the apparent strategy that has been a consistent theme in Soviet negotiation over time. And he's been listening, too, to ideas and views that have come in, quite



a lot of them, actually, from people outside -- Congress, the sessions he's had here, as well as scholars and journalists whose material he's respected and called for again to read over once more -- but very much looking forward to the meeting and calm and, yet, excited, in great anticipation of the opportunities before him.

David.

Q Could you tell us -- the counter-proposal that we most recently made apparently includes a ban on mobiles, mobile missiles. Could you tell us -- that cause some consternation among supporters of the MX and of the Scowcroft Commission on the Hill. How would you respond to their suggestion that their position was kind of undercut and that the President's seems to be going against a commitment that he made on that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The arms control talks seem to have reached a point of really serious negotiation when we can deal seriously with problems. One of the big problems is going to be verification. Each of us, for a long time, has asserted the proposition that invulnerability, survivability is a good thing. We still feel that way.

Each of us has said that mobility in some form is a good idea and we still feel that way. We do think that it's essential to talk about what kind of mobility.

Historically, the United States' approach has been to deploy missile forces in a given area and to make them mobile. And while that gives you survivability, it tells the other side, you can deal with this problem if you're willing to pay the price in terms of how many warheads you've got to use. But you can bound the problem.

There's a quite different concept on the part of the Soviet Union where their notion of deployment has been one of putting systems on rails or, ultimately, on trucks and driving it around the entire Soviet Union. And so the requirement -- I mean -- for us is to try to bound that problem, and you really can't. You can't say that the Soviet Union, in its entirety, being the deployment area, is something you can really bound. You cannot target all of that area. You wouldn't want to if you could.

So we have to engage on that problem, and right now, we're saying we don't see coming from the Soviet Union and solution that would truly make this concept, as they espouse it, stable.

The issue, to eliminate all the rhetoric finally, is that it's not only that you can't bound the problem, but in specifics, you don't know how many they have and where they are.

You don't worry so much about where they are if you knew how many there are. Because if you knew how many, you could at least build a corresponding number. But that's the problem, that we don't want a condition where we don't know how many they have.

Sam.

Q Follow up on that?

Q What do you -- Go ahead and follow, if it's a follow.

Q Do you mean to imply that if the Soviets deploy their mobile missiles in such a fashion that we could verify the number that they had deployed, that this then would become acceptable to the United States?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, I wouldn't say that right now. And I'm glad you asked because I don't want to give the impression that we are promoting the proliferation of any kind of weapon. We'd really like to figure out if a ban isn't a sensible thing to do. And right now, under conditions as they are, we think a ban serves both sides' interest.

Sam.

Q What do you think Gorbachev wants to accomplish at this summit? You know what you want to accomplish, so you must have thought hard about what his bottom line is. What is it?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I expect that it is to judge the leadership of the United States first, to determine the qualities of leadership that he faces as he embarks upon this competitive enterprise I talked about.

In addition, I think that he must surely want to have an understanding of what our motives are and what our apparent priorities are, in terms of our overseas interests.

I think in terms of his own self-interest, he would like to be able to leave Geneva with whatever constitutes good in the view of the Politbureau. I say "whatever" because one can argue that goodness as a Soviet leader is espousing the doctrine, Leninism, the historical attitudes of the global revolution, the legitimacy of wars of liberation, that kind of thing.

One can also make an argument that those same people who look at domestic priorities would like to see him come home able to divert resources into those areas.

Q Well, do you think he does not want to leave with a specific concession from us of any sort?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think on those terms, he has said what he would like and doesn't need my interpretation. He would like the termination of strategic defense efforts on our side. He would like us to pull all of the INF systems out of Europe and other things that are well known. I didn't think that's what you meant. I mean, he has said what he would like.

Q But you are implying, in not mentioning it, that he need not apply for any of that. And you're talking simply in terms of the atmospherics of getting to know our leadership and our priorities.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I'm talking also about our purposes, which are to establish a framework --

Q -- know what you think of his purpose. What is his purpose?

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SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I think his purposes are to be able to evaluate our system and our leadership so as to be better able to promote the overseas interests of the Soviet Union when he leaves.

Now, that ability to promote Soviet interests overseas could be enhanced by a number of things we might do. But I don't think that there's anything -- I think that he would benefit by a number of the things that we are willing to do in Geneva. And he would personally call those significant victories. But -- Well, that's all I'll say right now.

Q -- would you say -- you said he would benefit by a number of things that we are willing to do in Geneva. You said Gorbachev would benefit by a number of things that we are willing to do in Geneva. What things are we willing to do that meet that criteria?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: In each of these four areas, proposals that we intend to make, I think we'll be appealing to the Soviet Union. There are literally a dozen in the bilateral area. There are processes and ideas on the regional side of things for the resolution of existing disagreements from Afghanistan to Central America that I think they should find appealing. Not all of them, but some.

And in the arms control area, I think it would be perhaps the most useful part of the conversation because there does appear to be quite a lack of knowledge of our motives and of our reasons. So I think -- Gosh, everything we're going to say is going to be of value to them, I think.

Owen.

Q On that issue about motives and on arms control, what can the President give to Gorbachev in terms of his intentions on SDI, other than his own word that he intends, after developing the system to share it at cost, as he said yesterday, with the Soviet Union? Can he offer anything else more tangible that might help reduce some of the suspicion or mistrust on the Soviet side that perhaps the United States has other intentions with SDI?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: You'll have to indulge me for a minute. The idea that the United States, three days before leaving, is in the dock on SDI, when the Soviet Union's been doing this for 15 years -- I mean, I -- it is a far more legitimate question to say, "Why is it that the other side isn't making propositions on SDI?"

To answer your question, the ability to -- the willingness to say -- as we have already, really -- "Let's you and we talk about, number one, why we have this program at all. What is it about yours that worries us? And, therefore, what can you do to help with the resolution of this." Then talk about the kinds of things that we think are sensible to do; why they are authorized by existing treaties; how, over time, you could avoid the impression of going for a first strike; how, together, you could consider a transition arrangement involving a decrease in offense and expanded use of defense in a stable way that wouldn't threaten either side. These are very

foundation, kinds of elements. And we are ready and have been for a long time to talk about those.

Q If I could follow on that, as you mention that the Soviets are also pursuing their own SDI program, would it be feasible to consider a joint research program -- share technology development together as a way of maintaining both stability and also reducing mistrust on both sides?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It's not out of the question, and the President has adverted on many occasions to this interest in wanting to assure that the Soviet Union does not mistake our intention as going for a first strike.

It is quite frankly less feasible, really, to engage in joint research than it is to consider the notion of sharing the benefits of this kind of thing, in terms of end items. But there is a value in talking about concepts and what kinds of research you're doing so that there's no apparently hidden motive involved here.

Q When you say it's not out of the question, do you mean that the President might suggest in their discussion on this there will perhaps -- a possible solution to this impasse is joint research?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I wouldn't lead you in that direction, no.

Q May I follow up? Will the proposal that you all will make regarding Afghanistan be along the lines as President Reagan mentioned in his UN speech?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, he will treat his UN proposal with specific application to each of the areas, and it varies from place to place, so the answer is yes. And then in addition he'll have some other ideas, too.

Q Bud --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Chris.

Q Going back to this earlier question about Presidential preparations, you've raised a number of interesting topics he's considering. Can you give us any sense of his conclusions on the question of personal chemistry, the role that plays and the question of Soviet negotiating style, and also any cautionary lessons that he's learned about U.S.-Soviet summits from the past, because they often haven't turned out quite the way that the U.S. Presidents have wanted them to turn out.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Two points: first, the President has stated, I suppose several times, his sense that there is a Soviet attitude of mistrust of us, and as he reads their history, some understandable basis for fear of aggression from outside -- a separate but real belief that this administration and its supporters are ideologically -- that there is an animus toward the very idea of doing business with the Soviet Union.

Separately, an idea that came up in the talks in Moscow last week that there is an economic motive in continuing the notion of there being a foreign threat to the United States and that that inspires our policy.

Finally, that Ronald Reagan personally finds it unimaginable that there could be a reduction of tensions and solution to problems with the Soviet Union.

Each of those things he believes he can influence in a constructive way by personal dialogue by his presentation of how he views our interests internationally, how he views their system, how

he thinks we should get along, and over the course of 10 or 12 hours, to relieve whatever concerns were based upon the other side's worry of his fundamental convictions about East-West relations.

Q How much --

Q Can I follow-up?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

Q I mean, specifically on that, you're saying that he thinks that he really can make that major a change in Gorbachev's view of he and the U.S. in the course of 10 or 12 hours? And then secondly, if you could answer the other question about any cautionary lessons he's learned about U.S.-Soviet summits from the past history.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, he does believe that while you could -- surely couldn't dispel all of their misgivings, that this meeting can be terribly important in dispelling most of them. They simply aren't founded on fact or accurate reading of his attitudes -- and yes, he thinks they can help.

In looking at past meetings, he believes that the central lesson is that what happened at the meetings was far less important than the underlying strategic forces which shape the inevitable.

Now, there is an important contribution that each leader makes in each of those meetings.

Q -- I understood it.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He has to properly express a sense of purpose and of priorities, of strength of will and of -- and not mislead. But at the end of the day, in past meetings, there have been failures on one side or both to accurately state sensible priorities and there -- and has led to miscalculation by the other side.

Now, as a separate and entirely unrelated point, the meeting's value is measured in behavior afterward, not objective outcomes on the day of the meeting. It is in how each leader goes away and the behavior of his country affects stability in the world. And you cannot measure that on November 21st.

resolving both bilateral and other trouble spots? And then I have a second question, which is how important a benchmark the success of this summit is a followup summit meeting next year?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: On the first question, I just wouldn't comment, John. We are not going to advertise some of the good stuff we're holding back. I mean -- (Laughter.)

Secondly --

Q You've done a good job. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- the President believes that there is value in periodic meetings. He hasn't concluded that that notion of periodic meetings ought to be geared to the calendar so much as it is to the need and when there is an obvious value. And so you couldn't say that next summer or the following fall is his goal. It isn't. His is to start here, then go away and let what has happened here affect policy and see how it works, and then you can tell that at a certain moment it is going to be good to get together again and either celebrate or complain. But when that will come is hard to say right now.

MR. DJEREJIAN: He'll take two more questions.

Q In your opening remark you said that the U.S. was not going to be governed by the naive notion that they could change the Soviets. Now you are going on to say that the President believes he can dispel most of the misgivings and along the way -- you said that tomorrow in his speech he is going to propose more human contacts and exchanges. Why shouldn't we look in some measure upon that as being slightly naive in and of itself?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There is a big difference between saying that you can change the ideology of the Soviet Union and saying that you can alter their attitudes about us. They're two very different things.

The President doesn't have any illusions that this leadership will, in the short term, change the ideological underpinnings of the state. He believes that there is a -- and so we ought to base our policies on realism and the certain expectation of competition internationally. That said, to the extent that they might miscalculate as to how they could challenge or weaken the United States can be altered by changing their view of us -- that may be possible if there is simply greater contact. But he has no illusions that if you have all of the students in the world and professors and teachers and journalists going back and forth, that that will in the short term change ideology. It may affect attitudes and avoid miscalculation.

Q So then would he try and propose more exchanges along those lines -- journalists, students?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Tune in tomorrow.

Q What is the -- in the interview the President did yesterday, why did the President, on his own side, raise the idea of the nuclear-free zone? And what did he have in mind when he said it was something he wanted to engage the Soviets on?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think there has been a little interpretation there

that's not quite warranted. The fact that the President acknowledged that they have raised that concept and that we were, in a separate sense, going to engage with them on getting rid of nuclear weapons is very compatible.

Q That's not what he said. He said -- he used the term, "nuclear-free zone," which wasn't mentioned in the question.

Q You've been reading Rapotsky.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Rapotsky's right.

Q I never could speak Polish.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The President's original proposal for zero outcome, the going away with -- of an entire class of systems was what he was expressing yesterday, and that was that to get rid of an entire category on our side seemed a sensible approach. It is quite different from, but generically of a piece with their approach, which is this nuclear-free zone concept. But you can come to the table, them with theirs and we with ours, and make some headway.

Q Very good.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

4:55 P.M. EST