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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 8, 1985

*National Security Decision
Directive Number 183*

MEETING WITH SOVIET LEADER IN GENEVA (U)

As we prepare for my meeting with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev in Geneva November 19-20, it will be important for personnel of all agencies active in the sphere of U.S.-Soviet relations to understand clearly the context of the meeting and United States objectives. ~~(X)~~

I invited the Soviet leader to a meeting as soon as he assumed his position, because I consider it important for the leaders of the two most powerful nations to know each other and to establish a dialogue which can assist us in managing a relationship which is inevitably adversarial but which must be conducted in a manner which improves stability in the world. ~~(X)~~

Accordingly, the primary purpose of the meeting will be to establish personal contact and, if possible, to develop an agenda for negotiations to be undertaken in the future. The meeting will not be a substitute for negotiations in normal channels, nor is its aim the signing of formal agreements. It should rather be viewed as part of an ongoing process of dialogue with the Soviet leadership, which can give direction and momentum to our negotiating efforts. ~~(X)~~

Negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union in various areas should continue to be conducted on their merits, and should neither be hastened nor delayed because of my upcoming meeting. While I do not preclude the possibility of signing or announcing possible agreements which may be reached during the intervening period in the normal course of negotiation, this is not the purpose of the meeting, and the planned meeting should under no circumstances be allowed to influence the United States negotiating position. ~~(X)~~

Since historically public expectations for meetings between American and Soviet leaders have been inflated and have led to a damaging cycle of euphoria and then disillusionment, it will be important to convey to the public a realistic picture of the context in which my meeting will take place. In particular, nothing should be said to encourage the expectation that the meeting will result in a fundamental change in the nature of the

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U.S.-Soviet relationship, or in major agreements. This must be done, however, without denigrating the importance of the meeting or of kindling suspicions that the United States is not serious in its efforts to resolve problems in the U.S.-Soviet relationship. ~~(S)~~

Given the importance of maintaining a clear and consistent treatment of U.S.-Soviet relations in our public statements and public diplomacy, it is imperative for all U.S. Government officials to adhere totally to the press guidance established by my own statements and those approved by the State Department and the White House. No official is authorized to originate public statements regarding the Geneva meeting, or to provide comments in background briefings that go beyond statements made publicly by the White House or Department of State. All written remarks concerning U.S.-Soviet relations must be approved in advance by the White House or the Department of State. Should public statements or background briefings by other U.S. Government officials on particular aspects of U.S.-Soviet relations seem desirable, they may be undertaken only following the specific approval of the White House Coordinating Group for the Geneva Meeting. ~~(S)~~

In this connection, I am compelled to note that our negotiating position continues to be undermined by unauthorized, and often inaccurate or distorted information provided to the public media by anonymous government officials. It will be particularly important in the months ahead to put a stop to this damaging practice, and I would remind every agency head that it is part of his executive responsibility to control access to sensitive information in a manner which insures its integrity from unauthorized disclosure. ~~(S)~~

Issues under negotiation with the Soviet Union will continue to be staffed in the normal interagency process, culminating in the National Security Council or National Security Planning Group. Overall arrangements for the Geneva meeting, including its public diplomacy aspects, will be coordinated by my Chief of Staff and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. ~~(S)~~

To insure that the various strands of U.S.-Soviet relations are properly coordinated for presentation to these cabinet-level bodies, I hereby establish a White House Coordinating Group for the Geneva Meeting, with the following mandate:

1. To monitor and ensure consistency of substantive preparations for the meeting in Geneva, except for those which come under the aegis of the Senior Arms Control Group. ~~(S)~~

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2. To coordinate policy guidance for public handling of issues related to the meeting in Geneva. ~~DA~~

3. To provide guidance to the White House Advance Office and other units responsible for arrangements and logistics in respect to substantive implications of arrangements for the meeting. ~~(X)~~

The White House Coordinating Group for the Geneva Meeting will operate under the Chairmanship of Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Jack F. Matlock, and will include representatives designated by the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence, along with such other officials as my Chief of Staff and the Assistant to the President for National Security shall deem necessary. ~~(X)~~

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