

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Press Secretary, White House Office
of: Press Releases and Press Briefings
Folder Title: Press Releases: 9352 11/18/1985
Box: 118

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digital-library>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection>

Contact a reference archivist at: reagan.library@nara.gov

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/citing>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

5000

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
(Geneva, Switzerland)

For Immediate Release

November 18, 1985

INTERVIEW OF
SECRETARY OF STATE GEORGE P. SHULTZ
BY
CABLE NEWS NETWORK

Intercontinental Hotel
Geneva, Switzerland

4:37 P.M. (L)

Q I'm here with Secretary of State George Shultz in Geneva on the eve of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit.

Mr. Secretary, you saw the General Secretary of the Soviet Union arrive today. You heard his arrival statement. It seems to me he didn't mention SDI once. Do you read anything into the Secretary's arrival statement?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: No.

Q How do you view the way he came into Geneva and his statement about both sides seeking to improve relations and so on? Do you see anything in the tone of it?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I think that's good. That's certainly the President's view. He's come here for positive reasons and wants to see if something can't be accomplished.

Q You indicated earlier today that you thought there might have been some shifting in Soviet positions on major issues -- shifting of ground, I think was the way you put it. Is there anything that leads you to believe that the Soviets are prepared to make some new decisions on nuclear arms matters, for example, that could affect the outcome of the summit?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: If I indicated shifting of ground on their part, I miss-spoke. I don't know of any shifting of ground.

Q Okay. The Soviets come here, now you're -- both sides are here --

SECRETARY SHULTZ: There is -- there are negotiations going on on various subjects, such as the Northern Pacific air safety problem, civil aviation issues -- a variety of things like that. And both sides are involved in negotiation. But that's what I had in mind if I made any such comment as that.

Q Nothing on the subject of nuclear arms control?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: No.

Q Are those other agreements pretty well wrapped up at this point and likely to be announced at the summit?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: Nothing is wrapped up until it's wrapped up. That is, there's always something in any agreement that can go wrong until you've finalized it, and they aren't final yet.

Q You, and other members of the administration have repeatedly said, don't judge the summit by the number of pieces of

MORE

paper that are signed on each side. Don't count the papers, don't look at the documents as a major outcome of the summit. Anyone who looks at the outcome of the summit is going to look at those documents and they're going to say, did the President of the United States and the General Secretary of the Soviet Union really have to get together in Geneva in order to sign an agreement renewing the rights of Aeroflot to fly into the United States and PanAm to fly back to Moscow? Isn't there some feeling that if you don't have at least some movement on a major issue, perhaps nuclear arms control, that the summit will not have accomplished what it ought to have accomplished?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: Well, we don't have that feeling. That is, if things can be pushed forward on some of these major issues, obviously, that's good. If an atmosphere or an exchange of views, substantive exchange, can help those who will come and negotiate in Geneva in the arms control talks, get a little further along, that's good.

The possible agreements on exchanges of students and cultural events and exhibits and so on are not going to shake the world, but they're not inconsequential either. That's the way you do tend to find out more about one country or another.

So I'm sure people are going to write different things about what the outcome is, and some will describe these things as big and bad, and some will describe them as little and inconsequential. Some will say they're interesting things and hope they lead to something.

Q If there's a joint statement on non-proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, would that be the place that there might be some mention of deep reductions in offensive nuclear weapons, perhaps the only broad generalization that the two superpowers can make -- an agreement on nuclear weapons?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: These are distinctive subjects. Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has got a lot of attention and we have had a -- quite a period of constructive discussions with the Soviet Union on that that have done some good.

Non-proliferation of chemical weapons is a completely separate subject and a very important one. And we haven't had a history of long discussions with them. In fact, we're very upset because it's quite clear that the Soviet Union has used chemical weapons on occasion in recent years. And we've said so publicly.

Nevertheless, the problem of proliferation to many countries worries us and I'm sure it worries them. That's a separate subject. Deep reductions in offensive arms is another separate subject, and certainly one of overriding importance.

Q Is that something that --

SECRETARY SHULTZ: And I think the things to have in mind here are that by this time -- we reached an agreement here in Geneva last January that there should be radical reductions. We have had a position for radical reductions on the table in Geneva since last spring. The Soviets put a counter-proposal on the table in October which called for deep reductions, although in a pattern that was very one-sided. And we have put a counter to that counter-proposal, also deep reductions. So one thing you can say is that we're talking about the right subject, mainly get these arsenals of weapons down.

Now, that's some progress and maybe we can capitalize on that.

Q Maybe you can capitalize on that here at the summit, or at the arms control talks --

SECRETARY SHULTZ: Certainly, the subject will be discussed here by the two leaders. And if their discussion can give a positive impulse to those who will be negotiating, well, that will be a good thing.

Q Would it be more than a discussion that would give that impulse? Perhaps some sort of a statement to give an impulse to both sides?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: If a statement can be worked out, well, that will be fine. But I don't know whether one can be worked out or not.

Q You didn't think the chances were very good about a few days ago. Any change?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I said it was possible but not probable. Now, important things that are possible but not probable are worth working on. And sometimes they happen.

Q Let me ask you for a minute about that brief period of time that the President and the General Secretary will have together before the larger group gets together for the talks. It seems to me the President must think it's pretty important to have that private moment at the beginning to get to know Gorbachev. The White House let it be known today that those few moments could be expanded as long as the President and the General Secretary feel comfortable doing that. Do you think that's a very important part of the talks or are you looking forward to getting down in there with all of the advisers present to what could turn out to be some sort of negotiation?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: These are the two heads of these governments. And they both are leaders. And just because a schedule says that they're to spend ten minutes or fifteen minutes doesn't mean that they're going to be a slave to the schedule and nobody is going to come into the room and say there's some people waiting out here to take your picture, you've got to break this up. It may or may not take that amount of time. It depends entirely on them.

And I think the point we all have to remember is that there's been a tremendous amount of preparatory effort made, and I think it's been a good effort on both sides and together. But now that is disappearing into the past and this is now a meeting between these two people.

Q Let me ask you about another subject. You mentioned nuclear non-proliferation as an area where the two sides have cooperated. One other area where there seems to be a certain amount of agreement is how to deal with international terrorism. Do you think at this point there will be a chance for some sort of agreement on that subject that could lead to a lessening of that international terrorist threat around the world?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I don't know that we agree on how to handle it. I think there is emerging all over the world a growing recognition of the threat of international terrorism and the need to deal with it unequivocally. And this is a subject that I hope will be discussed.

Q In connection with that, I have to ask you -- the State Department or U.S. government in general was supposed to have a meeting today with the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative to Lebanon on return from a mission. I know that you were eager to hear from him. Have you heard anything from him? Is there anything you can tell us about it?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I don't have any information currently for you on that. I've been busy with a bunch of things,

and there may have been something in the last hour or so that I'm not aware of. But if there is worthwhile information that can be reported, it will be.

Sometimes in these matters, it's better not to report everything if you're trying to work to get these people free. I did ask Ambassador Barthlomew, our Ambassador to Lebanon, to come here. And he came and I spent some time with him yesterday just to get his own feel for the situation. He's gone on back to Beirut now.

Q Do you have any feeling of optimism or hope from his conversation with you as a result of this mission?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: He reports that the sense of pressure to get something to happen seems to have risen some. And, of course, we've been wanting that to happen. But as far as anything explicit is concerned, I don't have anything to report. I hope that Mr. Waite is successful in his mission.

Q The United States has often said it would like to talk directly to the holders of the American hostages. While it has not done so in this case, it made a point of saying it wasn't -- the U.S. is not related to Terry Waite's mission -- is there some sense that he did, in fact, talk with the people that count on this subject and that that may be a first?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: He said he did. That's what I know about it.

Q All right. Thank you very much, Secretary of State George Shultz for joining us here in Geneva on the eve of the summit between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan. We'll all be waiting to see what comes out of the meetings tomorrow and on Wednesday, at the end of the summit. We hope you'll join us again at the end of the summit for another conversation on how it came out.

Thank you.

END

4:48 P.M. (L)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Geneva, Switzerland)

For Immediate Release

November 18, 1985

INTERVIEW OF
SECRETARY OF STATE GEORGE P. SHULTZ
BY
CABLE NEWS NETWORK

Intercontinental Hotel
Geneva, Switzerland

4:37 P.M. (L)

Q I'm here with Secretary of State George Shultz in Geneva on the eve of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit.

Mr. Secretary, you saw the General Secretary of the Soviet Union arrive today. You heard his arrival statement. It seems to me he didn't mention SDI once. Do you read anything into the Secretary's arrival statement?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: No.

Q How do you view the way he came into Geneva and his statement about both sides seeking to improve relations and so on? Do you see anything in the tone of it?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I think that's good. That's certainly the President's view. He's come here for positive reasons and wants to see if something can't be accomplished.

Q You indicated earlier today that you thought there might have been some shifting in Soviet positions on major issues -- shifting of ground, I think was the way you put it. Is there anything that leads you to believe that the Soviets are prepared to make some new decisions on nuclear arms matters, for example, that could affect the outcome of the summit?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: If I indicated shifting of ground on their part, I miss-spoke. I don't know of any shifting of ground.

Q Okay. The Soviets come here, now you're -- both sides are here --

SECRETARY SHULTZ: There is -- there are negotiations going on on various subjects, such as the Northern Pacific air safety problem, civil aviation issues -- a variety of things like that. And both sides are involved in negotiation. But that's what I had in mind if I made any such comment as that.

Q Nothing on the subject of nuclear arms control?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: No.

Q Are those other agreements pretty well wrapped up at this point and likely to be announced at the summit?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: Nothing is wrapped up until it's wrapped up. That is, there's always something in any agreement that can go wrong until you've finalized it, and they aren't final yet.

Q You, and other members of the administration have repeatedly said, don't judge the summit by the number of pieces of

MORE

paper that are signed on each side. Don't count the papers, don't look at the documents as a major outcome of the summit. Anyone who looks at the outcome of the summit is going to look at those documents and they're going to say, did the President of the United States and the General Secretary of the Soviet Union really have to get together in Geneva in order to sign an agreement renewing the rights of Aeroflot to fly into the United States and PanAm to fly back to Moscow? Isn't there some feeling that if you don't have at least some movement on a major issue, perhaps nuclear arms control, that the summit will not have accomplished what it ought to have accomplished?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: Well, we don't have that feeling. That is, if things can be pushed forward on some of these major issues, obviously, that's good. If an atmosphere or an exchange of views, substantive exchange, can help those who will come and negotiate in Geneva in the arms control talks, get a little further along, that's good.

The possible agreements on exchanges of students and cultural events and exhibits and so on are not going to shake the world, but they're not inconsequential either. That's the way you do tend to find out more about one country or another.

So I'm sure people are going to write different things about what the outcome is, and some will describe these things as big and bad, and some will describe them as little and inconsequential. Some will say they're interesting things and hope they lead to something.

Q If there's a joint statement on non-proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, would that be the place that there might be some mention of deep reductions in offensive nuclear weapons, perhaps the only broad generalization that the two superpowers can make -- an agreement on nuclear weapons?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: These are distinctive subjects. Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has got a lot of attention and we have had a -- quite a period of constructive discussions with the Soviet Union on that that have done some good.

Non-proliferation of chemical weapons is a completely separate subject and a very important one. And we haven't had a history of long discussions with them. In fact, we're very upset because it's quite clear that the Soviet Union has used chemical weapons on occasion in recent years. And we've said so publicly.

Nevertheless, the problem of proliferation to many countries worries us and I'm sure it worries them. That's a separate subject. Deep reductions in offensive arms is another separate subject, and certainly one of overriding importance.

Q Is that something that --

SECRETARY SHULTZ: And I think the things to have in mind here are that by this time -- we reached an agreement here in Geneva last January that there should be radical reductions. We have had a position for radical reductions on the table in Geneva since last spring. The Soviets put a counter-proposal on the table in October which called for deep reductions, although in a pattern that was very one-sided. And we have put a counter to that counter-proposal, also deep reductions. So one thing you can say is that we're talking about the right subject, mainly get these arsenals of weapons down.

Now, that's some progress and maybe we can capitalize on that.

Q Maybe you can capitalize on that here at the summit, or at the arms control talks --

MORE

SECRETARY SHULTZ: Certainly, the subject will be discussed here by the two leaders. And if their discussion can give a positive impulse to those who will be negotiating, well, that will be a good thing.

Q Would it be more than a discussion that would give that impulse? Perhaps some sort of a statement to give an impulse to both sides?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: If a statement can be worked out, well, that will be fine. But I don't know whether one can be worked out or not.

Q You didn't think the chances were very good about a few days ago. Any change?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I said it was possible but not probable. Now, important things that are possible but not probable are worth working on. And sometimes they happen.

Q Let me ask you for a minute about that brief period of time that the President and the General Secretary will have together before the larger group gets together for the talks. It seems to me the President must think it's pretty important to have that private moment at the beginning to get to know Gorbachev. The White House let it be known today that those few moments could be expanded as long as the President and the General Secretary feel comfortable doing that. Do you think that's a very important part of the talks or are you looking forward to getting down in there with all of the advisers present to what could turn out to be some sort of negotiation?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: These are the two heads of these governments. And they both are leaders. And just because a schedule says that they're to spend ten minutes or fifteen minutes doesn't mean that they're going to be a slave to the schedule and nobody is going to come into the room and say there's some people waiting out here to take your picture, you've got to break this up. It may or may not take that amount of time. It depends entirely on them.

And I think the point we all have to remember is that there's been a tremendous amount of preparatory effort made, and I think it's been a good effort on both sides and together. But now that is disappearing into the past and this is now a meeting between these two people.

Q Let me ask you about another subject. You mentioned nuclear non-proliferation as an area where the two sides have cooperated. One other area where there seems to be a certain amount of agreement is how to deal with international terrorism. Do you think at this point there will be a chance for some sort of agreement on that subject that could lead to a lessening of that international terrorist threat around the world?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I don't know that we agree on how to handle it. I think there is emerging all over the world a growing recognition of the threat of international terrorism and the need to deal with it unequivocally. And this is a subject that I hope will be discussed.

Q In connection with that, I have to ask you -- the State Department or U.S. government in general was supposed to have a meeting today with the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative to Lebanon on return from a mission. I know that you were eager to hear from him. Have you heard anything from him? Is there anything you can tell us about it?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I don't have any information currently for you on that. I've been busy with a bunch of things,

and there may have been something in the last hour or so that I'm not aware of. But if there is worthwhile information that can be reported, it will be.

Sometimes in these matters, it's better not to report everything if you're trying to work to get these people free. I did ask Ambassador Barthlomew, our Ambassador to Lebanon, to come here. And he came and I spent some time with him yesterday just to get his own feel for the situation. He's gone on back to Beirut now.

Q Do you have any feeling of optimism or hope from his conversation with you as a result of this mission?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: He reports that the sense of pressure to get something to happen seems to have risen some. And, of course, we've been wanting that to happen. But as far as anything explicit is concerned, I don't have anything to report. I hope that Mr. Waite is successful in his mission.

Q The United States has often said it would like to talk directly to the holders of the American hostages. While it has not done so in this case, it made a point of saying it wasn't -- the U.S. is not related to Terry Waite's mission -- is there some sense that he did, in fact, talk with the people that count on this subject and that that may be a first?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: He said he did. That's what I know about it.

Q All right. Thank you very much, Secretary of State George Shultz for joining us here in Geneva on the eve of the summit between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan. We'll all be waiting to see what comes out of the meetings tomorrow and on Wednesday, at the end of the summit. We hope you'll join us again at the end of the summit for another conversation on how it came out.

Thank you.

END

4:48 P.M. (L)