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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Geneva, Switzerland)

For Immediate Release

November 18, 1985

INTERVIEW OF AMBASSADOR ARTHUR HARTMAN
BY INDEPENDENT NETWORK NEWS

Hotel Intercontinental
Geneva, Switzerland

10:02 A.M. (L)

Q Mr. Ambassador, by the time we're on the air with this, it'll be less than 24 hours before the summit -- first summit session. Do you have anything nailed down yet -- any hard-and-fast agreements that you know you can take away from the summit?

AMBASSADOR HARTMAN: Well, I think one of the difficulties here is that people tend to feel that a meeting like this is entirely precooked, and what that neglects is the personalities of the leaders. Our President, and I'm sure it's exactly the same thing on the Soviet side, like to have some decisions to make themselves. And they like to feel that they are conducting a conversation that may, in fact, form what comes out of this meeting.

So, while we have some things that we've been negotiating on -- particularly in the bilateral field -- there's no decision yet what to do with them. And that's going to be left for the leaders to discuss.

Q We're told that you expect to take away an agreement on cultural exchange, an agreement on air safety, and on the councillor --

AMBASSADOR HARTMAN: Well, these are the things that are practically finished. And, so, if the leaders decided that they wanted to see that they were finished at this meeting, they could do it. I don't think any of us believe that those would be significant breakthroughs. We've come along with those agreements to this point, and they could be finished without a summit, frankly. But if people choose to finish them at this time, fine with us.

Q The Soviets have worn two faces in this pre-summit buildup. They've been friendly and outgoing at public briefings, courting the American and world press. They've also blustered somewhat, accusing the U.S. of trying to torpedo the summit in the leak of the Weinberger letter and so forth. Do you expect them to be any different in their private conversations inside those meeting rooms than they are publicly?

AMBASSADOR HARTMAN: Yes, absolutely. What you're seeing publicly, no matter how august the titles are that these guys run under -- general or academician or whatever they're called -- they are propagandists. And one of the things that you can notice as they talk about these issues is that they're always talking about the debates in our country or in our countries in the West generally. You never find them talking about any debates in the Soviet Union. You never find them talking about any differences of opinion about policy in the Soviet Union. In fact, they never talk about anything in the Soviet Union. And, indeed, their briefings never go to the Soviet Union.

So, I think one has to take with a grain of salt this whole operation that's going on. I welcome it actually. I think it's a nice idea to get them out so the Western public can really see

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Q Well, give us some kind of measure -- some -- by contrast how you would expect the conversations inside, behind the closed doors, to go?

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