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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 MCNEIL/LEHRER

Hotel Intercontinental
Geneva, Switzerland

4:20 P.M. (L)

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SECRETARY SHULTZ: I think so.

Q Why?

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Q You mean Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Reagan will leave here knowing more about what the other one thinks than he came here knowing?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: And they'll have a little feel for each other. They'll have a sense of the strength of views and I think also they're going to be some things which they'll agree on. And, after all, we didn't come here to make debating points with the Soviet Union, we came here to see if there are things that can be done to give the world a little more stability or less tension with a more constructive outlook.

Q The suggestion has been that -- what will -- in terms of substance, there will be some agreements on cultural matters and there will be an additional agreement to meet again. Is that essentially going to be it?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: It remains to be seen what will emerge. There are a lot of things under negotiation that are connected with or this meeting is being used as kind of a deadline which may or may not get completed, but I think there's a reasonable probability some of them will be.

Q What kinds --

SECRETARY SHULTZ: But that's not really the main point. The main point is tied up in the tensions over issues in various regions of the world. But we're of very different views of how human beings should be treated and in the field of armaments and arms control.

Q Are you --

SECRETARY SHULTZ: And there may be some things worth talking about in all of those areas --

Q Talking about, not necessarily signing pieces of paper or shaking hands with an agreement of that, correct?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: It all depends on what you want to call an agreement. I'll give an example. In September of 1982, the

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first meeting that I had with Mr. Gromyko as Secretary of State -- I'd known him earlier when I was in the government before -- we took a little time to say let's see if we can find an area or two where discussion might be fruitful, where we might find some agreement. And one of those we picked was nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, and as you know, there's a big international effort on this that's been, as these things go, quite outstandingly successful. At any rate, we picked that out and there have five or six formal sessions that -- between ranking people on each side. They've been quite fruitful.

The attitude that has emerged from them has been felt, I think, in the international fora where these matters are discussed. And, by this time it's possible for us to express a parallel view about this subject. Now, I don't know whether you call that an agreement or what. But, at any rate, it is an area where our views and their views are quite similar and we're not hesitant to say so.

Now, nuclear nonproliferation is not a subject that is very high on people's television screens. But, to the extent that people are concerned about nuclear weapons and stockpiles of nuclear weapons and getting them down and, as the President has said, his dream is to eliminate them. Well, surely if that's the direction you want to go in, you certainly do want to prevent proliferation of these weapons -- you want to prevent it anyway. So, it's an important topic.

Q From your point of view -- you've devoted an awful lot of energy -- psychic as well as physical energy -- to this summit and getting here -- getting these two men here. Are you braced for people to say, "Oh, my goodness, all they came up with is an agreement to exchange ballet companies and hold another meeting and the whole thing isn't -- I mean are you -- what are you braced for?"

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I'm not braced for anything. It's inevitable that people will say things like that and other people will say it was a mistake to have these exchanges in ballets or whatever they turn out to be because that only deceives people, and it'll be thought to be big and bad by some, big and important by others, and little and unimportant by others, and, so, there'll be a wide range of interpretation. But, getting some of these things back on the track and seeing if some progress can be made -- as the President said, a start -- is an important thing to try to do and that's -- if we achieve things, it will be a start, it will not be an end by any means.

Q What about the -- some of the Soviets say that this is not going to be a successful get together unless there is some kind of agreement in principle or something of significance and substance concerning arms control.

SECRETARY SHULTZ: Well, arms control is a big subject. Some people think preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons is arms control. But I'm not here to set preconditions. If they want to say that it's not a success unless this, that, and the other, they're entitled to say that. That's fine, that's their view. I think that a lot of the sense of success or not will be found in the attitude -- what these two men that are going to meet here believe. I don't mean that this in an exercise in personalities, but rather, that these are two leaders -- they are both acknowledged leaders in their countries. And, what they take away -- certain convictions they have and the sense of direction that they have will make an impact in the respective countries one way or another. So, I'm focusing on that.

Q What have you -- or what have you told President Reagan or what have you perceived from talking to President Reagan about what he wants to hear and see from Gorbachev -- I mean, in his eyes, in his tone, in his words. I mean, what does he want to come away from this with?

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Q And it is your feeling that Gorbachev is coming and going to say the same things to President Reagan that he said to you about the military industrial complex?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: I don't know. Maybe he was trying me on for size and laying that in there. I don't know how he's going to approach it.

Q The President's ready to take him on on that kind of thing?

SECRETARY SHULTZ: The President is a very good debater. If you have watched -- I remember him watching -- watching him debate Bill Buckley on the Panama Canal. Bill Buckley is a pretty good debater, but in my judgment, the President won the debate heads -- hands down. But he didn't come here to debate. We -- we don't have to have all of this to have a debate. He came here to see if there is some way with a fresh start to improve this relationship and put it on a more stable, constructive course.

So he came here to achieve positive things, not to engage in negative debates, although I'm sure there will be some sharp exchanges; it's inevitable and desirable.

Q Speaking of things negative, the famous Weinberger letter -- A Geneva paper today had a headline that's saying that is the banana peel under President Reagan put there by his Secretary of Defense.

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