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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Geneva, Switzerland)

For Immediate Release

November 21, 1985

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV
IN JOINT STATEMENT

International Press Center
Geneva, Switzerland

10:10 A.M. (L)

GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV: You've already been handed the joint statement. The President and I have done a huge amount of work. We've gone into great detail; we've really done it in depth. And we've done it totally openly and frankly. We've discussed several most important issues. The relations between our two countries and the situation in the world in general today -- these are issues and problems the solving of which in the most concrete way is of concern both to our countries and to the peoples of other countries in the world.

We discussed these issues basing our discussions on both sides' determination to improve relations between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. We decided that we must help to decrease the threat of nuclear war. We must not allow the arms race to move off into space, and we must cut it down on earth.

It goes without saying that discussions of these sort we consider to be very useful, and in its results you find a clear reflection of what the two sides have agreed together. We have to be realistic and straightforward, and therefore the solving of the most important problems concerning the arms race and increasing hopes of peace we didn't succeed in reaching at this meeting.

So of course there are important disagreements on matters of principle that remain between us. However the President and I have agreed that this work of seeking mutually acceptable decisions for these questions will be continued here in Geneva by our representatives.

We're also going to seek new kinds of developing bilateral Soviet-American relations. And also we're going to have further consultations on several important questions where, for the most part, our positions again are completely different. All this, we consider these forthcoming talks to be very, very useful.

But the significance of everything which we have agreed with the President can only, of course, be reflected if we carry it on into concrete measures. If we really want to succeed in something, then both sides are going to have to do an awful lot of work in the spirit of the joint commission -- of the joint statement which we have put out. And in this connection, I would like to announce that the Soviet Union, for its part, will do all it can in this cooperation with the United States of America in order to achieve practical results to cut down the arms race, to cut down the arsenals which we've piled up and give -- produce the conditions which will be necessary for peace on earth and in space.

We make this announcement perfectly aware of our responsibility both to our own people and to the other peoples of the earth. And we would very much hope that we can have the same approach from the administration of the United States of America. If that can be so, then the work that has been done in these days in Geneva will not have been done in vain.

I would like to finish by thanking most profoundly the government of Switzerland for the conditions which they've created for us to be able to work.

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Thank you for your attention. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: President Furgler, General Secretary Gorbachev, May I express Nancy's and my deep personal appreciation and that of all Americans to the people of Switzerland for welcoming us so warmly and preparing the foundations for productive discussions. Yours is a long and honorable tradition of promoting international peace and understanding. You should take pride in being the capitol for international discussions. So, again, to the government of Switzerland and to the citizens of Geneva, many, many thanks.

We've packed a lot into the last two days. I came to Geneva to seek a fresh start in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and we have done this. General Secretary Gorbachev and I have held comprehensive discussions covering all elements of our relationship. I'm convinced that we are heading in the right direction. We've reached some useful interim results which are described in the joint statement that is being issued this morning.

In agreeing to accelerate the work of our nuclear arms negotiators, Mr. Gorbachev and I have addressed our common responsibility to strengthen peace. I believe that we have established a process for more intensive contacts between the United States and the Soviet Union. These two days of talks should inject a certain momentum into our work on the issues between us -- a momentum we can continue at the meeting that we have agreed on for next year.

Before coming to Geneva, I spoke often of the need to build confidence in our dealings with each other. Frank and forthright conversation at the summit are part of this process. But I'm certain General Secretary Gorbachev would agree that real confidence in each other must be built on deeds, not simply words. This is the thought that ties together all the proposals that the United States has put on the table in the past and this is the criteria by which our meetings will be judged in the future.

The real report card on Geneva will not come in for months or even years. But we know the questions that must be answered. Will we join together in sharply reducing offensive nuclear arms and moving to non-nuclear defensive strengths for systems to make our -- make this a safer world? Will we join together to help bring about a peaceful resolution of conflicts in Asia, Africa, and Central America so that the peoples there can freely determine their own destiny without outside interference? Will the cause of liberty be advanced and will the treaties and agreements signed -- past and future -- be fulfilled? The people of America, the Soviet Union, and throughout the world are ready to answer yes.

I leave Geneva today and our fireside summit determined to pursue every opportunity to build a safer world of peace and freedom. There's hard work ahead, but we're ready for it. General Secretary Gorbachev, we ask you to join us in getting the job done, as I'm sure you will.

Thank you. (Applause.)

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