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Gorbachev – Reagan Geneva Summit, November 1985

Documentary Study[1]

This article is a review of the negotiations between the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, and the General Secretary of the CPSU, Mikhail Gorbachev, during their summit meeting on 19-21 November 1985 in Geneva. The text is based on the thesis about the importance of direct contacts between the leaders of superpowers for developing fundamental changes in their security policy. It answers the research question about how negotiation tactics lead to defining differences and areas of understanding that significantly influenced the entire policies of the U.S. and the USSR. The available materials from the American perspective provide insight into the formation of the United States' position and its efforts to understand Soviet policy. During the Geneva summit, the discussions lasted for hours. These negotiations confirmed the willingness of both sides to increase nuclear security but also highlighted irreconcilable differences of opinion. The most significant difference concerned the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and its place in the security system. Although this issue could not be resolved, progress was made on several matters related to the direction of START and INF talks. The results of this summit provided a solid foundation for further discussions and mutual visits, leading to meetings in Reykjavik, Washington, and Moscow.

Keywords: summit, SDI, arms race, disarmament, ABM

[1] This text expresses my respect and gratitude to The Kosciuszko Foundation. I was a recipient of its scholarship between 1989 and 1990 when I was conducting research at Columbia University. I had the pleasure of delivering a lecture at the foundation's headquarters on 1 February 1990, titled *Eastern Europe in the Soviet Foreign Policy of the Gorbachev Era*. Today's article is a part of my ongoing research on U.S. foreign policy and naturally connects both fields of research activity.

Preparation for the Summit Meeting

It was difficult to imagine that a President with such a strong anti-communist stance as Ronald Reagan could lead meetings with Soviet leaders and contribute to the process of ending the Cold War. Reagan aimed to build a strong United States and pursue a firm policy toward the USSR, which he famously referred to as the "evil empire" (Powaski 231-262; Collins Chapters 8 and 9; Matlock, "*Ronald Reagan…*" 57-78). The president relied on competent advisors during this period, with George Pratt Shultz serving as Secretary of State (S. Brown 372; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph…*), and C. Bud McFarlane as the National Security Advisor (17 October 1983 to 4 December 1985). Although Reagan lacked international experience and relied more on conviction and prejudice than knowledge, he and his team (National Security Council and its staff, Department of State, Department of Defense and intelligence community) closely observed international events, including Soviet aggressions in Africa, Latin America, and, eventually, Afghanistan, as well as rapid changes in key positions within the USSR. All these factors led to changes in U.S. foreign policy.[2] Security and arms control issues, particularly the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, were of special importance (Isaacs and Downing 390-403; Nycz 235; Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation…* 34; Head 81-99; Powaski 244-249). The situation became more complicated when, on 23 March 1983, President Reagan announced to the surprise of many (even Shultz learned about it two days before the official announcement) his intention to pursue the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), often referred to by its critics as "Star Wars" (Shultz *Turmoil and Triumph* 249; Lansford 464; Nycz 238-240; Westad 523-524; Kissinger 855-860; Fitzgerald 197-207; Service 191-196; H. Brown 435-454). Reagan's announcement created an unfavorable situation for the Soviets, as it gave the Americans a crucial bargaining chip. The SDI program became the primary source of dispute between the two countries during this period and was also contested among U.S. allies and within parts of the administration (Schlesinger 937-961; Weinberger, *U.S. Defense Strategy* 679-682; Powell 295). It is worth noting that due to technical problems and immense costs, approximately $30 billion, the program was terminated by President Bill Clinton in 1993.

After President Reagan's re-election in November 1984, he decided to accelerate efforts to reduce nuclear weapons, mainly in relations with the USSR (Rosenfeld 698-715). In January 1985, talks between the foreign ministers of both superpowers, George P. Shultz and Andrei Gromyko, began in Geneva at the Soviet mission's headquarters. After 14 hours of negotiations, they issued an important joint statement (Joint U.S.-Soviet Agreement of 8 January 1985), announcing the start of comprehensive disarmament talks (Oberdorfer 9 January 1985; Horelick 511-537; Shultz

[2] A comprehensive analysis of U.S. policy can be found in Mania's work, *Department of State i Foreign Service w polityce zagranicznej USA lat gorącej i zimnej wojny, 1939-1989*, which was published by Jagiellonian University Press in Krakow in 2019. This work is also closely connected with The Kosciuszko Foundation, as it was recognized as the "Winner of the KF Competition for the Best Academic Publication on American Affairs published in 2019" (Osgood 473-474).

Turmoil and Triumph 265-284, 463-486; Inboden 313-315). They agreed to begin parallel but separate talks on INF and START, as well as talks on defensive systems and space-related issues, known as the Nuclear and Space Talks (NST). Formal negotiations for these began in March 1985 in Geneva. Shultz stated that the U.S. did not agree to any preconditions, such as stopping anti-satellite tests and other space--related programs. The talks also covered intermediate-range nuclear forces, and the USSR agreed to find a formula in which Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") proposal could at least be discussed. The goal of both superpowers, as stated in the document, was the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

New circumstances in U.S.-USSR relations emerged following the death of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Konstantin Chernenko, on 11 March 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev was elected to this position (Zubok 278-279; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph…* 520-538; Westad 534-538; Kissinger 864-871; A. Brown 1048-1068; Service Chapter 12). He took steps aimed at transforming and modernizing the communist state, creating opportunities for changes in economic, internal, and "glasnost" policies (Dawisha Chapter 7; Bialer and Mandelbaum 231--299; Kissinger 864-883; Gorbachev 401-426; Bialer and Afferica 605-644; Jackson 618; Shevardnadze 47-51; Dobrynin 56-58).

In the coming months, an encouraging exchange of letters between both leaders took place, along with high-level meetings, which ultimately led to the Reagan--Gorbachev summit in November 1985. It is worth noting that many administration members were opposed to engaging with the Russians, including CIA Director William Casey and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. However, Secretary of State George Shultz advocated for a more flexible approach towards the USSR, effectively arguing in favor of such a policy with the President (Powaski 249-251; Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace…*; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph* 477-486; Shultz, "New Realities…" 705-721; Garthoff, *The Great Transition…* 139; Liska 3-23; Wilson 456-475). The most significant documentation of this process can be found in the pages concerning the formation of the new U.S. policy and the summit meeting in Geneva in November 1985.[3] The correspondence between Moscow and Washington in the months leading up to the summit exemplifies actions aimed at achieving *summit diplomacy*, based on the belief that the personal contact between leaders can lead to improved relations between superpowers (Nixon 1-11). Each letter sent by a leader is preceded by a series of in-depth analyses, mainly prepared by analysts from the Department of State and the National Security Council (NSC), as well as intelligence reports. As a result, the letter represents a culmination of their thoughts and reflects the position of the chief decision-maker. To delve into this process and analyze the leaders' letters, refer to my article dedicated to these processes from March to November 1985 (Mania, "*Wymiana listów…*" 331-357). The first letter in this correspondence was President Reagan's letter dated 11 March 1985 (FRUS SU, 1981-1986, vol. V,

[3] Kathleen B. Rasmussen, ed. "September 1985–November 1985: Personal Diplomacy: Reagan, Gorbachev, and the Geneva Summit (Documents 80-159)." *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1981-1988*, Volume V, *Soviet Union, March 1985–October 1986*. Washington: United States Government Publishing Office, 2020, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1981-88v05/ch3 (further quoted as: FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, with the number of the document).

doc. 1; Hayward 14; Inboden 312-343). The response was a letter from Secretary Gorbachev to President Reagan dated March 24, 1985 (FRUS SU, 1981-1986, vol. V, doc. 10; Service Chapter 13; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph* 561-585). Further information about subsequent letters can be found in my aforementioned article. Here, I will only mention findings from that research in fragments where they can contribute to a better understanding of both sides' positions and the dynamics of the discussions in Geneva from 19 to 21 November 1985 (Dobrynin 385-386). These several months of consultations confirmed that the primary discussion issues would revolve around compliance with the ABM Treaty and the threats posed by intermediate-range missiles (INF), especially the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

According to a partially declassified CIA report dated 6 September 1985, in the months leading up to the summit, the Russians engaged in an intensive campaign abroad to portray the Reagan administration as hostile to progress in arms control and improving U.S.-Soviet relations (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 80). These Russian efforts included propagandistic appeals supported by accusations related to arms in Europe and demands for limitations on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). These Soviet actions appealed to Western European public opinion, which was at the time critical of U.S. policy and hopeful for a reduction in tensions between Moscow and Washington.

President Reagan's closest advisors, including Secretary of State Shultz, Ambassador Paul Nitze, National Security Advisor McFarlane, and Jack Matlock, who was responsible for Russian affairs at the NSC from 1983 to 1987, helped him clarify his position, expecting his firm stance on disarmament issues (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 82). Other documents confirm that the President announced he would not trade America's right to conduct SDI research for Soviet promises of nuclear arms reduction.

As the Reagan-Gorbachev summit approached, along with the earlier planned meeting between Shultz and Shevardnadze in New York, it became necessary to coordinate many protocol details, including the locations of the talks and private meetings, among others (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 83). Of particular significance for the upcoming summit was a letter from Secretary Gorbachev to President Reagan on 12 September 1985 (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 84). Gorbachev addressed issues crucial to the Geneva summit and importantly added, "If things ever come to a military confrontation, it would be catastrophic for our countries, and for the world as a whole. Judging by what you have said Mr. President, you also regard a military conflict between the USSR and the USA as inadmissible." He reiterated his well-known critical stance on SDI, proposed a moratorium on nuclear testing, and discussed intermediate-range nuclear weapons and talks on confidence-building measures and troop reductions in Central Europe (Vienna talks). This was classic agenda-setting for the planned meeting.

The United States' preparation for the Geneva meeting was conducted intensively, part of which involved assessing the Soviet position and intentions. Jack Matlock from the NSC staff was highly active in this regard. His memorandum of 13 September (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 85) is particularly rich in content. He recommended intensifying public pressure on the USSR in their interactions and on the international stage. Additionally, he suggested that American actions should aim to obtain confirmation from both sides not to use military force and to

refrain from intervention beyond their borders, which was challenging for the Soviets given their intervention in Afghanistan. He expected a firm stance from U.S. negotiators on reducing strategic weapons, for example, proposing a 50% reduction in warheads over a period of seven years. Regarding defense and space, it should be clarified that SDI was not a threat to the idea of arms control. The United States should work towards breaking down barriers between the two societies. This could be achieved through the exchange of 5,000 students and professors, news exchanges in the media, television discussions, annual televised addresses by leaders, and sister city relationships. Both countries should work towards the peaceful use of space, environmental protection, and promoting peaceful trade. It should be noted that on 24 October, the President presented an outline of the American position and the most important proposals before the UN General Assembly, partly adopting Matlock's arguments (FRUS 1981-1988, vol. I, doc. 253).

The CIA's opinions were also important in the preparation process the visit and talks in Geneva. Robert M. Gates, Deputy Director for Intelligence, presented a report on Gorbachev's position and his associates, seeking to identify weaknesses in the USSR's upcoming negotiations (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 87). Characterizing the Soviet leadership, he wrote that Gorbachev and his people, who had taken extensive actions in the economic sphere while simultaneously softening their approach to relations with the West in favor of cooperation reminiscent of the detente of the 1970s, were aware that they could not aggressively compete with the USA for at least several years. They needed Western assistance in the economic sphere and the lifting of restrictions on trade with COCOM countries. He added, "The Soviets fear SDI and other strategic weapons programs are favored by the Administration not only because of the new military dangers and uncertainties they pose, but also because these programs threaten to force the diversion of significant incremental resources – financial, technological, and manpower – that the Soviet Union can ill afford… The Soviet economy also can no longer afford to undertake new large-scale economic programs to the Third World."

In this situation, Gorbachev's strategy aimed to limit the work on SDI in the hope of keeping it at the laboratory level in exchange for a readiness to make actual concessions in the area of strategic arms reduction on their part. The Soviets anticipated that international and domestic pressure in the USA would force them to agree to such an agreement. To gain international support, the USSR was planning to be active on the international stage and, through the actions of Foreign Minister Shevardnadze at the UN, as well as Gorbachev's talks with President Mitterand in Paris, they hoped to achieve this. They would also make many diplomatic gestures towards several of the USA's allies, such as China, Germany, Japan, and Israel, to influence regional policies and undermine trust in the U.S. administration. It was also crucial for the USSR to achieve success due to internal disputes within the country; Gorbachev could not afford to fail. They also believed that the U.S. congressional elections in 1986 and the presidential elections in 1988 would change the situation to be more favorable. They calculated that the Republicans would lose seats in Congress, and during the presidential elections, they would like the successor to the president to be at least less hostile towards the USSR than President Reagan. They believed that high interest rates in the U.S. and budget and trade deficits would force a reduction in military spending.

In the second CIA report, *Moscow's View of the Reagan Administration*, attention was drawn to the following observations: "The Soviets believe President Reagan and his long-time, closest advisors share a conscious, deep-seated hostility to the Soviet Union and would like to turn back the clock of history if they could. They see the President as much more of an ideological warrior than his predecessors; they believe that while the latter also would have liked the USSR to be different, … They regard U.S. support for insurgents in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola, and elsewhere as rejection of the status quo and an attempt to reverse Soviet gains in the Third World. They believe the Administration's commitment to SDI and the other strategic programs it would like to pursue are aimed at outmoding Soviet strategic forces and regaining U.S. strategic superiority for the purpose of dictating political terms to the USSR. They think the Administration wishes to create political and military pressures that will undermine the Soviet economy enough to make it unable to compete militarily and force internal changes in the Soviet system that would threaten its very nature."

On 17 September, in the letter to his key associates (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 92), President Reagan characterized Soviet policy as highly variable. Furthermore, he added, "… we cannot forget that the sole basis upon which the Soviet Union holds the status of a superpower is because of its military strength. Economically, it certainly is not a superpower."

Despite the consistent emphasis on SDI in U.S. policy, Secretary Shultz, in his memorandum titled *Preparing for Gorbachev*, stated: "There is one key reality that we must face: SDI will not be deployable before the end of your Administration." (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 93-95; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph…* 576.) He added that "…—the research program will not yet have achieved the necessary criteria of effectiveness; —effective deployed defenses will still be a long way off; and, as circumstances develop, it may well be that: —the program then will be under attack by Congress and the media for its cost, for its alleged violations of the ABM treaty, and for having undermined the traditional arms control regime based on the concept of deterrence through the threat of massive destruction, —and the Soviets could be well into a program of offensive buildup designed to saturate our defenses. … We want to avoid this situation. We want to protect SDI against its enemies and ensure that it will be a sustained program over the next several decades."

In September and October 1985, several high-level visits took place with the clear intention of presenting their own positions and gathering information from the partner on specific issues related to the upcoming meeting. The preparation of the leaders and the potential for success depended on this. Let us recall Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's visit to New York with a team of negotiators on 25-27 September (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 99; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph…* 576-577). They had a series of discussions, including bilateral talks between the foreign affairs ministers, and Shultz received his Soviet counterpart very positively (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 101). Shevardnadze was received by President Reagan on 27 September, supported by several key advisers (FRUS SU, 1981-1986, vol. V, doc. 105-106; Hayward 478-482; Nitze 412-415). The president confirmed his readiness for reductions in offensive weapons and pointed out instances of Russian violations of the ABM Treaty. In turn, Shevardnadze emphasized the need for intermediate-range weapons reduction, the importance of building confidence measures discussed in

Stockholm, and the belief in the success of the Vienna MBFR talks. Regarding SDI, the Soviet envoy expressed a willingness to accept only laboratory research and criticized the idea of militarizing space. It was agreed to tone down mutually aggressive statements in the media. During another meeting later that day between Shultz and Shevardnadze, both leaders confirmed their strong, almost emotional interest in the upcoming meeting (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 107-108).

At the end of October and the beginning of November, the last exchange of letters between the leaders took place before the summit (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 127-128). They did not bring anything new, except for establishing a secret contact between both sides through Ambassador Dobrynin in Washington and Ambassador Hartman in Moscow. Analyses were still being prepared to help the president understand Soviet political realities, and the CIA presented the opinion that Soviet strategic thinking is based on subordinating Soviet military strength to maintaining the political system and increasing the capacity for the use of force externally (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 133; Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev…* 134).

The intelligence community's assessments were more pessimistic, including the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) from 18 November 1985, stating that the economic challenges facing Gorbachev would not allow him to make significant changes in the USSR over the next five years. This did not bode well for a readiness to make far-reaching changes in relations with the U.S. (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 141). The State Department's opinions were also not optimistic (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 145-147). It was assumed that Gorbachev would not be ready to make significant concessions to the U.S. before the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February, as it would undermine his image as a tough leader, even though he knew that certain concessions were necessary to reach an agreement on arms control. Gorbachev needed to create the impression that he was an effective leader in foreign affairs and determined to remove the "old guard" at the upcoming congress.

Shultz also presented his observations to the President regarding what to expect from the Soviet leader in Geneva (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 143, as well as doc. 145 and 147). In a very detailed analysis, he wrote that during their last meeting, he was struck by the blend of old and new in Gorbachev's attitude. The General Secretary displayed impressive intellectual agility and negotiation skills in front of foreign leaders. At the same time, he exhibited the stubbornness characteristic of many older-generation Soviet leaders. Indeed, Gorbachev and his younger colleagues shared a lot of the old Soviet "collective wisdom." The Secretary of State commented, "It is also clear that however much Gorbachev represents the 'new Soviet man,' he and his colleagues are not about to squander the legacy of Soviet power and influence bequeathed to them by Brezhnev, Andropov, and the old guard. The question is whether they are ready to deal with us on the basis of real equality."

Even before his departure for Geneva, the President, in his interactions with Congress and the public (including a televised address on 14 November), sought to build positive expectations for the upcoming summit (Service 155; Hayward 448-450). He traveled to Geneva well-prepared in terms of shaping U.S. policy and ensuring the protection of national interests. The President was also aware of significant differences of opinion between the two sides and the desired negotiation tactics. However, he relied more on beliefs and the awareness of possible success in talks with a man who was also eager for success.

High-Level Talks in Geneva

Finally, the first Geneva meeting took place at the Maison Fleur d'Eau in the Versoix villa owned by Aga Khan, on 19 November, between President Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev[4] (FRUS SU 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 150; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph…* 586-607; Inboden 344-380).

The first in a series of meetings occurred with just two interpreters present. It marked a friendly exchange of their own experiences, although Reagan acknowledged, "The U.S. and the Soviet Union were the two greatest countries on Earth, the superpowers. They were the only ones who could start World War III, but also the only two countries that could bring peace to the world." Hence, the a need for discussions on arms control and reducing mutual suspicion. While both nations did not accept each other's political systems, peaceful coexistence was essential.

Gorbachev expressed satisfaction with the meeting since the last high-level contact was six years before, and many issues had arisen that needed addressing at this summit. "Gorbachev was convinced that there was not only the fear of mutual destruction, although this did exist; a realistic evaluation showed that the U.S. and the Soviet Union could cooperate, and they had done so in the past, without changing their political systems, culture or ideologies." He emphasized that the primary goal was arms race reduction, with other significant issues including economics, structural change, ecology, sociology, and conflicts among superpowers in regional areas and Third World states.

President Reagan referred to the lack of trust the U.S. had regarding Soviet intentions, citing the USSR's support for socialist revolutions through force as a source of concern. Gorbachev responded polemically that, given the facts that the American, French, and Russian revolutions were aimed to overthrow the prevailing order, they should have failed. Currently, actions were directed towards changing political situations in India, Indonesia and Algeria, but the USSR believed that imposing a new order was impossible without societal readiness (Inboden 370-371).

On the same day, from 11:27 AM to 12:15 PM, the first plenary meeting of both delegations and their leaders took place (FRUS SU 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 151; Reagan 369-370). The U.S. was represented by President Ronald Reagan, George P. Shultz (Secretary of State), Donald T. Regan (Chief of Staff, White House), Robert C. McFarlane (Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs), Arthur Hartman (Ambassador to the USSR), Rozanne Ridgway (Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs), Jack F. Matlock, Jr. (Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs), Robie M. Palmer (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State), Dimitri Zarechnak (Interpreter). The USSR was represented by General

[4] M. Gorbachev, in *Memoirs* (405), states that during the summit, he had 5-6 private meetings with Reagan that went beyond the established schedule. He added that, "our dialogue was very constructive and intensive, sometimes even emotional. But what is more important, it was frank, and increasingly friendly the better we got to know each other. Tempers flared whenever we touched upon topics such as human rights, regional conflicts, and the notorious Strategic Defense Initiative. Nonetheless, by the end of our two-day meetings, it became evident that Ronald Reagan too was a man you could do business with." In these memoirs, there are also less flattering references to Reagan as a "political dinosaur."

Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, Eduard Shevardnadze (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Georgy M. Korniyenko (First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs), Anatoly F. Dobrynin (Ambassador to the United States), Aleksandr Yakovlev (Chief, Propaganda Department, Central Committee, CPSU), Leonid M. Zamyatin (Chief, International Information Department, Central Committee, CPSU), Andrey M. Aleksandrov-Agentov (Assistant to General Secretary Gorbachev), Sergey P. Tarasenko (Assistant to Minister of Foreign Affairs), Yury P. Uspensky (Interpreter).

After the conventional speeches and an earlier photo session, a series of statements began. Gorbachev reminded the attendees that he had told Shultz and McFarlane about the misconceptions regarding Soviet affairs in American think tanks. There was a perception that the Soviet economy was on the brink of collapse and that the USSR would use the arms race as leverage against the U.S. because Russians only possessed potential in the military sphere. He added that the USSR was also accused of causing problems in Europe and the Third World.

President Reagan noted that both nations had fought together in two wars, but it was replaced by mutual suspicion in their relations. He suggested that the first meeting should focus on arms reduction, as the U.S. observed the growing Soviet potential. Additionally, the Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Angola, and Yemen had fueled American distrust towards the USSR.

On that day, another plenary meeting took place from 2:30 to 3:40 PM with the same composition of both delegations (FRUS SU 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 152). At the President's request, Gorbachev was the first to speak. In reference to previous statements, he stated that the Russians rejected the simplistic approach to world affairs that assumed everything was a result of Soviet actions, and events in Afghanistan, Angola, and South Yemen were associated with Soviet expansionism. This was either a misunderstanding of policy or a deliberate distortion. Somewhat sarcastically, he added that the USSR did not hold a monopoly on concessions and did not intend to build military bases in the Third World. The USSR was not behind the revolutions in Afghanistan and Ethiopia, nor did it have plans for any revolutions. Gorbachev added that for 20 years, there was no strategic balance; the U.S. had four times more means of delivering strategic weapons and a system of bases. As a result of the talks, they achieved balance, and the USSR did not seek to surpass the U.S. potential. Today, the rule of existing parity with different armed forces structures was confirmed by institutions, including the ISS in London. Now was the time for talks on reducing parity while maintaining balance, reducing strategic weapons, and ending "efforts to outsmart or overrun the other side," even when one side raised issues related to activities in space.

Gorbachev finally addressed the most important issue of SDI, stating that it would lead to an arms race in space with an offensive character. This type of weapon was difficult to verify and would raise suspicions. He added that he was aware that Reagan was attached to the idea of this weapon. "If the U.S. embarks on SDI, the following will happen: (1) no reduction of offensive weapons; and (2) the Soviet Union will respond. This response will not be a mirror image of your program, but a simpler, more effective system… The Soviets are ready to compromise. If space weapons are banned, the situation would be completely different; it would create a new attitude on the Soviet side" (Gorbachev 407).

The President responded that Gorbachev's statement reflected a lack of trust and a high level of suspicion on the part of the USSR, which was difficult to accept.

He reminded Gorbachev that despite the initial advantage on the side of the U.S., both countries established a certain level of balance. The U.S. had fewer ICBMs, but that was enough for an effective response. However, despite the withdrawal of 2,400 warheads from Europe, the USSR threatened Europe with its SS-20 missiles, and the allies of the United States requested U.S. assistance against this weaponry.

Regarding Afghanistan, it was obvious that the local leader was supported and supplied by the USSR; in fact, they replaced him with someone more aligned with Soviet plans. The Soviet aggression caused a wave of 3 million refugees. It was necessary to find a solution with the UN, withdraw foreign troops, and appoint a leader supported by Islamic countries and chosen by Afghan citizens. In the case of Cambodia, where the Vietnamese entered, it was necessary to ensure the formation of a government elected by the Cambodians. Concerning Nicaragua, the Russians had advisors there, and the Sandinistas built a totalitarian government. All of this raised suspicions and lack of trust. He reiterated that SDI would never be used to increase offensive capabilities or for a first strike. Reagan also addressed the issue related to the previous Soviet proposal for a 50% reduction in nuclear weapons, indicating that given the different structure of arsenals on both sides, specialized talks were required.

Afterwards, the leaders had a private conversation with only interpreters present from 3:40 to 4:45 (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 153). They arrived at the billiard house while walking and discussing Reagan's old films (Nitze 419).[5] There, to Gorbachev's surprise, Reagan handed him texts with nine points that would allow them to better understand each other. Gorbachev read the documents in Russian in silence.[6] Reagan added after a moment that these were initial reflections from the talks, which could serve as a basis for instructions for negotiators in Geneva.

However, Gorbachev mentioned that he had some comments and questions. Regarding the reduction of arsenals by 50%, he was obviously in favor, but from the talks of foreign ministers in January, it emerged that these reductions should be negotiated along with the idea of stopping the arms race in space. The President responded with the familiar statement that he did not believe this defensive weapon was part of the arms race in space. Moreover, if this weapon was successfully created, as he mentioned during the plenary meeting, the USA would be willing to share this technology with other nuclear-armed states. Gorbachev's second point was about the necessity of concluding an agreement limiting land-based INF missiles with the

[5] In his diary on 19 November, Reagan wrote of this private meeting: "We walked down to a pool house on the lake shore. Eddy had a fire going and we did about 2 hours on S.D.I. He's adamant but so am I. I scored one we've worried about – that the meetings should be on an ongoing basis. He accepted my invite to the U.S. next year, and I'm invited to the U.S.S.R. in '87. That in itself could make the meeting a success" (Reagan 370).

[6] Publishers of FRUS inform that this note has not been located. Gorbachev, in his memoirs on pages 407 and 408, mentions this fact, adding that he read the note leisurely, indicating that it contained points unacceptable to the USSR, particularly the acceptance of the SDI program. He added that this did not bode well for the atmosphere of the talks. After the meeting, during a walk to the conference building: "…the President unexpectedly invited me to visit the United States, and I reciprocated by inviting him to Moscow. …We both sensed that we must maintain contact and try to avoid a break. Somewhere in the back of our minds a glimmer of hope emerged that we could still come to an agreement."

possibility of completely eliminating this weapon. Gorbachev asked if this also applied to the weapons held by France and the United Kingdom. Additionally, he inquired why this agreement only concerned land-based medium-range missiles and what about cruise missiles launched from airplanes and aircraft carriers. Finally, Gorbachev moved on to the third paragraph of the document concerning research in the area covered by strategic ABM defense. He assumed that such research was already taking place in laboratories but could not include the creation of prototypes or testing, as per the ABM Treaty. Gorbachev stated that he was aware that the White House had two interpretations of the ABM Treaty. One accepted that there was a limitation on research not leaving the laboratory, and the other assumed that creating prototypes would be allowed, which Reagan also accepted. In the further course of the conversation, Gorbachev stated with some emotion that if they wanted to restrain the arms race, then why take action to deploy weapons that were so unknown and unpredictable? Where was the logic in that?

The President responded by reminding that unlike nuclear missiles, it was not a weapon that killed people and destroyed cities. He emphasized that they should focus on the vast quantity of weapons that both sides already possessed and not get fixated on SDI, which was still far from being operational. He opposed labeling SDI as a space weapon, as the USA had no intention of placing anything in space that would harm Earth. Gorbachev suggested concentrating on reducing weapons by 50% and potentially allowing inspections of laboratories but only after an agreement banning the construction of SDI weapons was in place.

Gorbachev acknowledged that he understood the SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative) issue on a human level because this idea was deeply ingrained in Reagan's consciousness. However, as the leader of another country, he had to reiterate that if he were to accept the SDI concept, he would have to build counter-weapons against it. This would lead to a new arms race, which raised concerns among many politicians. Gorbachev asked the President to reconsider this matter. The President also asked Gorbachev to reconsider, adding that both sides had made important statements on these matters, and it "… would be difficult for either of them to reverse direction. However, it seemed to him that in his idea of ultimately sharing the results of research, there was something that might be of interest to both of them. He had to tell to Gorbachev that our people overwhelmingly wanted this defense."

Gorbachev responded that much depended on the leaders. However, if SDI were to be launched, and American and Soviet weapons were to appear in space, only God knew what would happen, adding: "… In this connection he would note that God provides information only very selectively and rarely. He appealed to the President to recognize the true signal he was conveying to him as President and to the U.S. Administration as a whole that the Soviet Union did indeed wish to establish a new relationship with the United States and deliver our two nations from the increasing fear of nuclear weapons."

During the private meeting of the leaders, a discussion among politicians and diplomats from both sides took place starting at 3:40[7] (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V,

[7] In his memoir, Shultz recalled: "While they were talking by the fire, Shevardnadze and I and all the others chatted among ourselves. The two leaders returned an hour later, having discussed inconclusively our approach to arms control. Both were obviously in a good mood.

doc. 154). Those in attendance included Shultz, Nitze, McFarlane, Shevardnadze, Dobrynin, and Korniyenko. In a quick exchange of views, it was noted that Gorbachev's primary concern was to introduce a ban on the development of space weapons and focus on the differences in the approaches of both sides. Shultz reminded that the U.S. would not agree to halt research in this area. He further explained that the U.S. goal was to transform the concept of deterrence into a more humane approach. This was meant to reduce offensive weapons in favor of increased effectiveness and mobility. A shield is necessary not an arms race, but rather in cooperation. Shevardnadze expressed doubt about cooperation unless a ban on space weapon development is introduced. He added that the Russians were also conducting research in this field and may be slightly ahead of the U.S. Nitze, however, believed that the Russians had made significant advancements in the area of laser weapons. Shevardnadze added that no treaty could guarantee that defensive weapons would not be transformed into offensive ones, especially when new weapons were created and new political objectives emerged.

Shultz mentioned the details of the plenary discussions, where new approaches were presented. In Gorbachev's statement, they welcomed his assertion that, concerning Afghanistan, nothing was needed except a political agreement. It was agreed to continue the meeting in the evening to discuss NPT issues, the cultural agreement, as well as regional and aviation matters, etc.

The last item on the agenda for that day was an official dinner at the Soviet mission villa from 8:00 to 10:30 PM.[8] (FRUS SU 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 155). The delegations consisted of top officials from both sides and the spouses of the two leaders. It was an amicable conversation that began with information about mutual invitations of leaders and then touched on topics like music, rivers, literary works, Russia's role in the history of drug addiction and alcoholism issues, particularly Gorbachev's anti-alcohol campaign, and the significance of family. Hopeful toasts for the success of the talks complemented this event.

The next day, 20 November, began with a private meeting between the two leaders with only two translators present at the Soviet mission in a small room next to the delegation meeting place[9] (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 156; Matlock, "*Ronald Reagan…*" 67).

The president made an important announcement to us. They had agreed on reciprocal visits: first Gorbachev to a Washington summit, then Reagan to a Moscow summit. I was surprised and encouraged, as much by the obvious rapport between the two men as by their quick agreement without hesitation on reciprocal visits for two follow-on summit meetings. Such agreement was one of our main objectives in Geneva. The president's brand of personal diplomacy seemed to be working." (Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph…* 601).

[8] On November 19, Reagan wrote in his diary: "Tonite to their place for dinner. And what a dinner—they must be influenced by the Orientals. Course after course and for half of them I thought each one had to be the entrée. Finally dessert and by this time it was time to go home and that's what you did because the host and hostess pushed back their chairs & escorted us to the front door. When you have dinner with the Russians – dinner is the full evening's entertainment." (Reagan 542).

[9] Reagan wrote in his diary: "The last day of the summit and this time Mr. G. was host. We went to the Soviet mission and he took me into a small room with interpreters. This was my chance to have at human rights. I explained that I wasn't telling him how to run his

Reagan initiated discussions on matters that the USSR considered meddling, which pertained to internal affairs and, to some extent, human rights. He reminded that in America, there are many religious and national groups, such as the Irish, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Poles, who have their organizations raising issues concerning these nations. He asked Gorbachev to resolve the problem of uniting families of these groups, as was done with Jewish families. Gorbachev stated that human rights issues were being exploited for political purposes, a point he returned to later in the conversation, indicating that it was a source of consternation that could threaten important agreements. He suggested that a permanent working group should be established to investigate specific matters, although, as the President added, many of these issues were covered by agreements and practices established in the Helsinki Accords. However, being major nations, they had to maintain their own contacts. The President stated that both of them were concerned about their political image and did not want it to appear that someone was influencing them. He added that it was necessary to resolve these matters in confidential contacts between the two leaders to prevent them from appearing in the press.

The President wanted to address one more matter, reminding that in the U.S., there is a law that "prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, national origin, sex, and race." Gorbachev stated that they do not discriminate anybody. The President openly stated that it would be easier for him to implement agreements with the USSR if he were not beset by people from Congress and organizations who have information from relatives and friends, raising issues related to the right to choose one's place of residence and the right to emigrate. Gorbachev should take this into account. Gorbachev expressed doubt that the President was so dependent on the opinions of small groups and believed that, as a leader, the President could do a lot of what he wanted. The President stated that Gorbachev did not fully understand the political system in the U.S. and the President's capabilities. Gorbachev said he understood the system in the U.S. and had the opinion that the President was hiding behind the rules of the system. In conclusion, Gorbachev expressed satisfaction with this private meeting; they could address important issues and get to know each other. This built the chances for further communication, should important problems arise.

On that day, there was a third plenary meeting at the Soviet mission headquarters (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 157; Reagan 542). Essentially, all the same participants from the previous stage of talks attended the meeting.

Starting the meeting, the President emphasized the importance of arms control and nuclear weapons negotiations. He added that there was a definitional

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country – I was asking for his help; that I had a better chance of getting support at home for things we'd agreed to if he would ease some of the restrictions on emigration etc. I told him I'd never mention what he was doing out loud but he'd find that I could better meet some of his requests for trade etc. He argued back sort of indicating that he thought they treated their people better than we did ours. He quoted statements made by some of the feminist extremists to prove we were unkind to women. I fought back – only time will tell if I made any headway." (Reagan 370). Gorbachev's views can be found in his *Memoirs* on page 408, where he stated that he did not notice anything new in Reagan's approach to these matters. However, he did appreciate the fact that Reagan raised these issues in a private conversation, anticipating a critical Soviet response.

dispute stemming from the different structures of both nations' arsenals. Regarding intermediate-range nuclear weapons, the American proposal was based on Soviet projects, and he expressed readiness to discuss the reduction of these weapons, highlighting the need for covering by future agreement also the area outside NATO.

Gorbachev was asked for comments. He stated that he welcomed the acceptance of the plan to reduce nuclear arsenals by 50%. He consistently criticized the U.S. pursuit of radical reductions in defensive nuclear weapons while ensuring an arms race in space. In his view, this devalued the other elements of the American proposal. Gorbachev stated that he did not intend to delve into the reasons behind the U.S. taking such a position, but the proposal itself was the source of the problem (408-409). He believed that the U.S. was convinced that it outpaced the USSR in technology, information transfer upon which the space system relied, and consequently, this created the possibility of "… obtain[ing] military superiority over the USSR. The U.S. possibly even considered to obtain a first-strike capability, or under certain circumstances, to launch a first strike. The Soviet Union needed to consider worst cases in developing its policies." Gorbachev expressed the opinion that he did not understand the President's fascination with SDI; after all, it would destabilize the international order and worsen relations with the USSR. He doubted it would be possible to meet again if the U.S. continued this path of armament.

In response, the President reiterated the well-known opinion that SDI "… was not a weapons system or a plan for conducting a war in space." For the President, it was a more civilized way of deterrence and preventing war than thousands of missiles with nuclear warheads that would kill millions of people on both sides if used. That would be the end of civilization. He added that even if they reduced offensive weapons by 50%, there would still be too much of that weaponry.

Gorbachev responded, stating that he understood the President's arguments but did not find them convincing. He noted that there were many emotional elements in them, some of which were based on dreams. Gorbachev added that SDI could be constructed as a defensive system, but it would still possess the capability to strike the Earth (H. Brown 435-454). There was no certainty that it would not happen. SDI would initiate a new arms race. The President added that the idea of open laboratories could allow researchers to determine if the research was headed towards offensive weaponry. Gorbachev interjected that the idea of open laboratories could only be realized when the development of space weapons was halted and prohibited. In turn, the President added that Soviet researchers would be able to visit American laboratories regardless of whether the U.S. produced destructive weapons or shields, but the U.S. favored a shield. He emphasized that they should move beyond suspicion. Gorbachev, somewhat emotionally, asked why the President did not believe him when he said the USSR would never attack the U.S. Gorbachev also questioned the "… sincerity of the President's willingness to share SDI research," especially since the U.S. did not share the most advanced technologies even with its allies. He requested a more realistic discussion. The USSR was ready for a compromise. However, Gorbachev saw that the U.S. believed the USSR was weak and could be pushed into a corner. He called it an illusion. The U.S. wanted to achieve technological superiority. Gorbachev stated that the Soviet ABM system was in line with the ABM Treaty. Among other things, he noted that in his opinion, the President's advisors feared the President's prestige "… would suffer if he gave up SDI.

Gorbachev was '500 percent' convinced that the President would actually benefit from such a decision."

Further exchanges of brief statements showed that both leaders wanted to achieve success and were aware of the point of contention. The somewhat nervous state of searching for final arguments to persuade the other party did not yield results. The USSR saw no justification for building new weapons in the USA if an agreement on a 50% reduction could be reached. The President argued that an agreement on the reduction of arsenals would give the public in both countries the impression that their leaders could reach an agreement and make progress on this important issue, and the U.S. was determined to work towards that goal.

On that day, from 2:45 to 3:30 PM, the fourth plenary meeting of both delegations took place at the Soviet mission headquarters with almost the same personnel in attendance (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 158).

After Gorbachev had opened the meeting, President Reagan summarized the two days of talks. He stated clearly that after two days of candid discussions, it was evident where there was a clear difference of opinion, namely in matters related to nuclear weapons and the political philosophies of both nations. He emphasized the need to be realistic and have no illusions about these differences. What was important was that both sides had expressed commitments to a plan for deep reductions in nuclear weapons and hope for the complete elimination of these weapons. The President reiterated his belief in the need to transform deterrence based on strategic weaponry into a defense-based system. He described the talks with Gorbachev as rich in content and constructive. He added that he was pleased that both leaders had promised to continue the talks by visiting each other's countries. He looked forward to Gorbachev's visit in 1986 and intends to go to Moscow in 1987 himself.

Next, the President read a statement regarding the Nuclear and Space Talks (NST), with the expectation that the Russians would highlight it and it would become a joint statement. It was stated that both leaders had negotiated on nuclear and space weapons to achieve the goals set in the Joint U.S.-Soviet Agreement of 8 January 1985, to prevent an arms race in space and limit the arms race on Earth. Both announced that offensive nuclear weapons would be significantly reduced to the level of 50%. Furthermore, they expressed their belief that a separate interim agreement would be reached announcing "reductions and limitations on land-based, intermediate-range nuclear missile systems as a step toward the total elimination of this class of missiles."

After President Reagan's statement, Gorbachev took the floor and positively assessed the conference as contributing to a better understanding and candid discussions. However, he expressed the opinion that both sides were not able to develop a common concept for resolving these issues. They agreed to continue the political dialogue. The USSR wanted discussions based on the January 1985 Joint Statement regarding restraining the arms race and preventing its transfer into space.

At the President's request, Secretary of State Shultz presented very detailed options for an official summary of the talks. The difference between them essentially lay in the degree of uniformity, with the extreme negative version being a set of separate documents and comments focusing on differences. It was realized that this was an important issue, and the document's content and the precision of the leaders' statements should be carefully considered.

Gorbachev agreed that it was important that both sides wanted to continue the talks. He added that the USSR was inclined to accept the American suggestion for a communiqué or joint statement, as without it, the conference might conclude without success. It was agreed that senior staff from both sides would work out a solution and form for publicizing it.[10]

The final meeting of this summit was dinner at the Maison de Saussure on 20 November from 8:00 to 10:30 PM (FRUS SU, 1981-1988, vol. V, doc. 159). The same participants as those present at the first official dinner attended. The conversation began with a casual exchange on the younger generation, the anti-alcohol campaign, and the revival of religion in the USSR. Apart from discussing the role of Christianization, there were also mentions of Islam and Khomeini's role in relation to Islamic groups in the USSR, going beyond the scope of classic small talk.

Finally, Gorbachev mentioned that regardless of the details, President Reagan had done a lot to initiate this process, but they could not expect great success immediately. Donald Regan expressed the same opinion about the Secretary-General. In this spirit, he raised a toast. Gorbachev responded that he was sure they had started something important. They would carefully study these matters, and every beginning is difficult. There were significant differences, but he would like to invite the U.S. to work together towards mutual understanding in a spirit of responsibility.

At this stage, the document highlights additional discussions, the so-called Afterdinner Conversation. It is stated that after dinner, the meeting participants went to a study room where Secretary Shultz presented suggestions to the leaders regarding their individual statements during the closing ceremony the following day. He mentioned that people from both countries and the entire world would like to see both leaders at this ceremony. This concerned not only their presence and signatures but also the statements they made.

Gorbachev responded that he had thought about a joint statement or communiqué because it would enhance the value of such documents, confirming that the negotiators were able to agree on matters of fundamental importance. However, if leaders included certain inappropriate phrases in their comments, it could diminish the importance of these documents. It was necessary to protect the significance of these documents. President Reagan emphasized that a full statement would be honest and sincere, especially when it pointed out where they had reached agreement and where they had not, as well as the continuation of the talks. Gorbachev accepted

[10] Gorbachev recalled in his memoir: "during our afternoon meeting we agreed to entrust Foreign Affairs Minister Shevardnadze and Secretary of State George Shultz with the task of finding a way to some kind of agreement. I spent the afternoon with the American President at the Soviet mission, waiting for results. By five PM it was clear the remaining disagreements left little hope of a breakthrough. They parted to explore possible solutions within the delegations. Reagan and I instructed our colleagues to resume negotiations and to brief us in the evening on the progress achieved. I added, half-jokingly: 'I hope they won't ruin the evening.'" (Gorbachev 409); On 20 November, Reagan wrote in his diary: "In the PM session I tried out a written proposal for a joint statement. Upshot was we cut short the meeting and our teams went at the problem of a joint statement. He and I and the interpreters went into a small room and wound up telling stories. We were there 'till 5:30 then the teams came in with a number of things agreed upon and several we didn't. We broke up to leave them still at it so he and I could get ready for the reception at the Swiss President's home" (Reagan 370).

the idea of short 1-3 minute statements by each leader, and Reagan added that it was his idea not to go into details. In a brief discussion, they agreed on the timing of this ceremony, from 10:30 to 11:00, but Reagan preferred 10:00 at the Geneva International Conference Center because he had to prepare an address informing Congress and the citizens about the results of the talks.

In further statements by Korniyenko and Shevardnadze, the question arose of what could be considered a success, although it did not concern the details. Gorbachev stated that he was convinced that the document's drafters would be sufficiently rational and not try to influence the leaders' agreements with the content of the prepared documents. He added that it should not be an empty, anemic document because that was not the intention. Reagan added that this was their first meeting, and they lacked experience in this regard, but looking at their predecessors, there was no impression that they had done much more.[11]

Results and Assessment of the Summit

The following day, during the concluding press conference, both leaders presented a joint statement they had signed on the Geneva talks and made brief remarks. The document, titled "Joint Soviet-United States Statement on the Summit Meeting in Geneva," outlined the composition of the delegations and contained key agreements[12] (United States Department of State 7-11; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph…* 606-607;

[11] As Gorbachev wrote in his *Memoirs* (410), the dinner was coming to an end, and the statement had not yet been prepared: "We left the table and went to a small adjacent living--room. Reagan and I sat down. When the negotiators finally arrived, Deputy Minister Korniyenko started briefing us. George Shultz reacted heatedly and that sparked off an argument. Korniyenko was virtually leaning over me and speaking in a harsh and extremely nervous tone. Shultz, usually calm and even-tempered, suddenly burst out, 'Mr. General Secretary, you can now see for yourself how we work. How are we supposed to achieve anything in this way?' President Reagan and I were quietly watching the scene. 'Let's put our foot down,' he suggested. 'Agreed,' I replied. We separated and I went to discuss the problem with my colleagues. From Korniyenko's tone and behavior, I assumed that there must be some fundamental disagreement or serious threat to our interests. But from what Bessmertnykh was saying it became clear that they simply could not agree on the wording, and the problem was quickly taken care of."

[12] In his *Memoirs* (411), Gorbachev cited a fact that: "We signed the joint communique. In this truly historic document the leaders of the two superpowers declared that 'nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.' Admitting this and implementing it in practice made meaningless the arms race and the stockpiling and modernizing of nuclear weapons. 'The parties will not seek military superiority,' This fundamental statement was not just a general phrase to soothe the public. The American President and I had already committed ourselves to giving the necessary instructions to the negotiating teams at the nuclear arms talks in Geneva. Both parties declared their intention to improve bilateral relations – in particular, humanitarian exchanges and contact between our young people – and to resume air traffic between the two countries. The President and I each gave a short address. I stressed that the summit meeting was too important an event to be judged by simplistic standards. It had shed light on our differences and allowed the overcoming – 'at least I hope so' – of some biased judgments about the Soviet Union and its policies."

Inboden 376-377). It acknowledged that a broad range of issues had been discussed candidly, but differences remained, particularly in critical areas related to systemic differences and the assessment of the international situation. However, there was agreement on many important issues, and both leaders expressed the intention to meet again soon, alluding to plans for reciprocal visits.

A review was conducted of areas where common ground had been reached and differences identified. In the realm of *Security*, both sides expressed opposition to war, both conventional and nuclear, and affirmed their commitment to avoiding actions that could lead to military supremacy. Regarding the *Nuclear and Space Talks*, they agreed to expedite negotiations with the aim of achieving the goals outlined in the Joint U.S.-Soviet Agreement of 8 January 1985, aimed at preventing an arms race in space and ensuring strategic stability on Earth. The principle of a 50% reduction in nuclear arms was agreed upon, as well as the idea of a temporary INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) agreement (Hyland 17; Nye 1-20). Significant progress was made in verification measures. In the sphere of *Risk Reduction Centers*, there was recognition of the need for expert discussions to reduce the risk of nuclear war, taking into account the outcomes of the Geneva negotiations. The Soviet-U.S. hotline was set to be modernized. Concerning *Nuclear Non-Proliferation*, both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and expressed interest in cooperating with other states to strengthen the treaty's effectiveness. They expressed satisfaction with the treaty's compliance and readiness to work towards nuclear arms reduction and disarmament in accordance with Article VI of the treaty. They also pledged to enhance the position of the International Atomic Energy Agency in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. They positively evaluated ongoing bilateral consultations on these matters.

Regarding *Chemical Weapons*, both sides confirmed their support for a complete ban on chemical weapons and the destruction of their stockpiles. They declared their willingness to engage in bilateral expert talks on the prohibition of such weapons and verification procedures. In the case of *MBFR* (Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions), both sides affirmed their readiness to work towards achieving the results of the Vienna talks. Concerning *CDE* (the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe), it was acknowledged that the project needed to be implemented based on mutual understanding and the guarantee of not using armed forces. Regarding the *Process of Dialogue*, Reagan and Gorbachev agreed on regular dialogue at various levels, starting with leaders and extending to various government agencies, not only on security and foreign affairs but also on issues like agriculture and environmental protection. Both sides supported the development of bilateral cultural, educational, scientific, and technical exchanges, as well as the expansion of trade and economic ties. It was noted that both leaders had participated in signing the Agreement on Contacts and Exchanges in Scientific, Educational, and Cultural Fields. Additionally, there was satisfaction with the cooperation between both countries and Japan in ensuring the safety of air routes over the northern Pacific. Talks were announced on issues referred to as *Civil Aviation/Consulates*, with plans to restore air communication and open consulates general in New York and Kiev. Both sides confirmed their readiness for cooperation in *environmental protection*, with detailed talks planned for the following year in both capitals.

In the part of document called *Exchange Initiatives*, the expansion of scientific, educational, medical, and sports exchanges was mentioned, with initiatives to promote language studies in Russian and English in the U.S. and the USSR, increased exchanges of professors for studies on culture, history, and the economy of both countries, and scholarships for outstanding students. There were plans to renew cooperation in cancer research. The implementation of these plans would be discussed by the leaders during their next meeting. Finally, the importance of research on controlled thermonuclear fusion for peaceful purposes was highlighted, with strong support for international cooperation in this area in the Fusion Research section.

On the same day, at 9:20 AM, President Reagan delivered an address before a joint session of the United States Congress (Gerhard and Woolley; Service 158; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph…* 607).[13] Besides compliments to the audience, his wife, and the heads of both houses, he touched on fundamental issues. He mentioned the 15 hours of talks with Gorbachev, including five hours of private discussions. These were constructive talks to the extent that he had invited Gorbachev to the USA the following year and accepted his invitation to visit Moscow the year after. He acknowledged the ideological differences between them but stressed the importance of peaceful competition. Their goal was nuclear arms reduction, and progress had been made in these talks, although there was still a long way to go. "Specifically, we agreed in Geneva that each side should move to cut offensive nuclear arms by 50 percent in appropriate categories. In our joint statement we called for early progress on this, turning the talks toward their chief goal—offensive reductions. We called for an interim accord on intermediate-range nuclear forces, leading, I hope to the complete elimination of this class of missiles – and all of this with tough verification. We also made progress in combating, together, the spread of nuclear weapons, an arms control area in which we've cooperated effectively over the years." Reagan mentioned other arrangements presented in the joint statement and added important information: " I described our Strategic Defense Initiative, our research effort, that envisioned the possibility of a defensive system which could ultimately protect all nations against the danger of nuclear war. This discussion produced a very direct exchange of views. Mr. Gorbachev insisted that we might use a strategic defense system to put offensive weapons into space and establish nuclear superiority. I made it clear that SDI has nothing to do with offensive weapons; that, instead, we are investigating a nonnuclear defense system that would only threaten offensive missiles, not people. If our research succeeded, it will bring much closer the safer, more stable world that we seek. Nations could defend themselves against missile attacks, and mankind, at long last, escape the prison of mutual terror. And this is my dream."

Later, he reiterated his declarations presented to Gorbachev, that in developing new weapons he preferred to concentrate on defense rather than on offense, emphasizing that they did not seek nuclear supremacy or preparations for a first strike.

[13] Reagan mentioned this speech in his diary: "I haven't gotten such a reception since I was shot. The galleries were full and the members wouldn't stop clapping and cheering" (371). Next public presentation of the result of the conference by Reagan – see: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum. "Radio Address to the Nation and the World on the Upcoming Soviet-United States Summit Meeting in Geneva." *Reagan Library*, https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/radio-address-nation-and-world-upcoming-soviet-united-states-summit-meeting-geneva.

In the event of SDI's successful development, they would sit down with the USSR and their allies to discuss how to replace strategic ballistic missiles with this defense system. President Reagan mentioned the discussion of regional matters, including efforts to end conflicts in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Angola, and Cambodia, outlining the American position clearly. He also highlighted their discussions on human rights, the signing of agreements on cultural and personal exchanges to eliminate stereotypes and counter propaganda. He noted the decisions to open consulates and ensure air safety over the northern Pacific. This marked the beginning of building stable relations with the USSR, though it was a long road to moving Russia away from expansionism. The United States "… will continue to support the heroic efforts of those who fight for freedom. But we have also agreed to continue, and to intensify, our meetings with the Soviets on this and other regional conflicts and to work toward political solutions." President Reagan informed about planned next meetings which would allow to build bridges between both powers adding: "I have made it clear to Mr. Gorbachev that we must reduce the mistrust and suspicions between us if we are to do such things as reduce arms, and this will take deeds, not words alone. And I believe he is in agreement".

In summary, the summit's value can be best captured by the assessment of William Jackson, who wrote that while both leaders got to know and understand each other's positions better, the meeting did not yield far-reaching results in reshaping the Cold War-era relationship between Washington and Moscow (Jackson 623; Schlesinger 960; Matlock, "Ronald Reagan…" 68; S. Brown chapter 26; Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph…* 606-607).

Both leaders remained cautious of each other, but Gorbachev, in private discussions, expressed the possibility of establishing contact with Reagan despite his stubbornness and conservatism. In hindsight, given Gorbachev's subsequent leadership and the subsequent summits in Reykjavik, Washington, and Moscow, there was merit in this perspective (Larrabee and Lynch 3-28). P. Nitze wrote that there was no sign of the Russians backing down from their demand for a ban on SDI research, but it was encouraging that "… the Soviet might be willing seriously to discuss all three aspects of the negotiations – START, INF, and space defense – without demanding a prior agreement to ban SDI research…" (Nitze 420). Another author, Evan Luard, wrote: "There was some disappointment, though no great surprise, at the failure of the November 1985 Geneva summit to provide much hope of agreement on nuclear arms. But there was general satisfaction, in Europe as elsewhere, at the understanding reached there for regular consultations on regional conflicts" (Luard 1006). This is an accurate assessment that can be drawn from the documents, memoirs, and scholarly literature cited.

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