

Remarks of the President and Soviet Chairman Gorbachev and a Question-and-Answer Session With Reporters in Malta

December 3, 1989

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, President Gorbachev has graciously suggested I go first. And I don't think anyone can say that the saltwater get-together was anything other than adventure -- at least out in the harbor here.

First, I want to thank Prime Minister Adami and the people of Malta and others for their warm and gracious hospitality. I want to thank the captain and crew of Belknap for the great support that they have given us. I think they were wondering if I was about to become a permanent guest. And a special thanks to the captain and crew of Gorky for their hospitality, and also thanks to the captain and crew of Slava, who have been so hospitable to many on the American side.

I first approached Chairman Gorbachev about an informal meeting of this kind after my trip to Europe last July. Amazing changes that I witnessed in Poland and in Hungary -- hopeful changes -- led me to believe that it was time to sit down with Chairman Gorbachev face to face to see what he and I could do to seize the opportunities before us to move this relationship forward. He agreed with that concept of a meeting, and so, we got rapid agreement. And I think that the extraordinary developments in Europe since the time that the meeting was proposed only reinforce the importance of our getting together.

And so, I'm especially glad we had this meeting. And we did gain a deeper understanding of each other's views. We set the stage for progress across a broad range of issues. And while it is not for the United States and the Soviet Union to design the future for Europeans or for any other people, I am convinced that a cooperative U.S.-Soviet relationship can, indeed, make the future safer and brighter. And there is virtually no problem in the world, and certainly no problem in Europe, that improvement in the U.S.-Soviet relationship will not help to ameliorate. A better U.S.-Soviet relationship is to be valued in and of itself, but it also should be an instrument of positive change for the world.

For 40 years, the Western alliance has stood together in the cause of freedom. And now, with reform underway in the Soviet Union, we stand at the threshold of a brand-new era of U.S.-Soviet relations. And it is within our grasp to contribute, each in our own way, to overcoming the division of Europe and ending the military confrontation there. We've got to do more to ameliorate the violence and suffering that afflicts so many regions in the world and to remove common threats to our future: the deterioration of the environment, the spread of nuclear and chemical weapons, ballistic missile technology, the narcotics trade. And our discussions here will give greater impetus to make real progress in these areas.

There's also a great potential to develop common opportunities. For example, the Soviet Union now seeks greater engagement with the international market economy, a step that certainly I'm prepared to encourage in every way I can.

As I leave Malta for Brussels and a meeting with our NATO allies, I am optimistic that as the West works patiently together and increasingly cooperates with the Soviet Union, we can realize a lasting peace and transform the East-West relationship to one of enduring cooperation. And that is a future that's worthy of our peoples. And that's the future that I want to help in creating. And that's the future that Chairman Gorbachev and I began right here in Malta.

Thank you, sir, for your hospitality.

The Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, comrades, there are many symbolic things about this meeting, and one of them -- it has never been in the history that the leaders of our two countries hold a joint press conference. This is also an important symbol. I share the view voiced by President Bush that we are satisfied, in general, with the results of the meeting.

We regard this informal meeting -- the idea of it was an informal meeting, and the idea belongs to President Bush. And I supported it -- that we would have this informal meeting without restricting it to any formal agenda, to have a free exchange of views -- because the time makes great demands to our countries, and this increases the responsibility and the role of our two countries. And I can assure you that in all our discussions -- and our discussions lasted for 8 hours, in general -- this responsibility on both sides was present.

Our meeting was characterized by openness, by a full scope of the exchange of views. Today it is even difficult, and perhaps there is no sense, to explain the entire range of issues that we have discussed. I wish to say right away, nevertheless, that on all the major issues we attempted in a frank manner, using each side's arguments, to explain our own positions, both with regard to the assessment of the situation and the current changes in the world and Europe and as it regards disarmament issues. We addressed the Geneva negotiating process, the Vienna process, and also negotiations on the elaboration of the convention on chemical weapons ban. All those questions were considered thoroughly.

The President and I myself also felt it necessary to exchange views on our perception, both from Moscow and Washington, of the hot points on our planet. And this exchange of views was very significant and thorough. We reaffirmed our former positions that all those acute issues must be resolved by political methods, and I consider that this was a very important statement of fact.

We not only discussed problems and explained our positions. I think that both sides had many elements which, if they are taken into account in our future activities -- activities of both governments -- then we can count on progress. This concerns the subject of the reduction of strategic offensive arms by 50 percent, and we have an optimistic assessment

of the possibility to move even next year to the conclusion of the Vienna treaty. We both are in favor, and this is our position -- naturally, we can be responsible only for our position -- we are in favor of signing this document at the summit meeting.

This time we discussed much bilateral relations; and I, on my part, would like to note many positive elements and points which were contained in statements and words by President Bush. Thus, I would say that in all directions of the political dialog of our discussion, including bilateral relations, we not only confirmed the consistency of our political course, the continuity of our political course -- and I should say it -- although we had an informal meeting, we met only for the first time with President Bush in his capacity, and the confirmation of the continuity of the course is an important element. What is also important is that during this informal meeting, we have laid the foundation for increasing this capital. And I believe that, in the first place, it serves the interests of our both countries and also the interests of the entire world community.

Well, we have made our contact, a good contact. The atmosphere was friendly, straightforward, open; and this enabled us to make good work. In our position, the most dangerous thing is to exaggerate. And it is always that we should preserve elements of cautiousness, and I use the favorite word by President Bush. [Laughter] Our world and our relations are at a crucial juncture. We should be highly responsible to face up to the challenges of today's world. And the leaders of our two countries cannot act as a fire brigade, although fire brigades are very useful. We have to keep it in mind also. This element was also present.

I would like once again to thank the President for the idea of holding this meeting with which we are satisfied, I hope. And I would like to thank the people and the Government of Malta and to express the words of appreciation and gratitude for the hospitality. Thank you, Mr. President, for your cooperation.

The President. Thank you.

The Cold War

Q. Chairman Gorbachev, President Bush called on you to end the cold war once and for all. Do you think that has been done now?

The Chairman. In the first place, I assured the President of the United States that the Soviet Union would never start hot war against the United States of America, and we would like our relations to develop in such a way that they would open greater possibilities for cooperation. Naturally, the President and I had a wide discussion -- rather, we sought the answer to the question where we stand now. We stated, both of us, that the world leaves one epoch of cold war and enters another epoch. This is just the beginning. We're just at the very beginning of our long road to a long-lasting peaceful period.

Thus, we were unanimous in concluding about the special responsibility of such countries as the United States and the Soviet Union. Naturally, we had a rather long discussion, but

this is not for the press conference; that is, we shouldn't explain that discussion regarding the fact that the new era calls for a new approach. And thus, many things that were characteristic of the cold war should be abandoned, both the -- [inaudible] -- in force, the arms race, mistrust, psychological and ideological struggle, and all that. All that should be things of the past.

Central America

Q. President Gorbachev. What are the hot spots, President Gorbachev, that you spoke about? There's El Salvador. Were you able to assure President Bush that the Soviet Union would use its influence on either Cuba or Nicaragua to stop the arms shipments? And, President Bush, were you satisfied with President Gorbachev's response?

The Chairman. This question is addressed to me? This subject has been thoroughly discussed. We have reaffirmed once again to the President that we have ceased arms shipment to Central America. We also reaffirmed our position that we're sympathetic with the political process that is going on there regarding the settlement of the situation. We are in favor of free elections, with the representatives of the United Nations and other Latin American countries, to determine the fate of Nicaragua. We understand the concerns of the United States. We listened carefully to the arguments by President Bush, in this respect, and we assured him that our position of principle is that we are in favor of a political settlement of the situation in Central America.

I believe -- and now I wouldn't like to explain everything that we discussed on the subject -- but to sum up, I would say that there are possibilities to have peace in that area, tranquillity in the interests above all of the peoples of that region, which does not run counter to the interests of the people of the United States.

The President. Please ask the question.

Q. The question was: Were you, Mr. President, satisfied with -- [inaudible] -- --

The President. My answer is that we had an in-depth discussion on these questions, as President Gorbachev said. I will not be satisfied until total self-determination takes place through verifiably free elections in Nicaragua. And the Chairman gave me every opportunity to express in detail the concerns I feel about that region. He, indeed, has cited his concerns. So, I can't say there are no differences between us. But we had a chance to talk about them. And if there are remaining differences, I like to think they have been narrowed. But you know -- all you from the United States -- the concerns we feel that the Nicaraguans go through with certifiably free elections and that they not export revolution into El Salvador. So, we had a big, wide-ranging discussion, and I would simply say that I feel we have much more understanding between the parties as a result of that discussion.

East-West Economic Cooperation

Q. The Izvestia newspaper to President Bush, and if there are comments from Comrade Gorbachev, we would welcome it. There has been a longstanding issue of expanding economic [co]operation between the United States and the Soviet Union. It is a very acute problem, taking into account our economic reforms and our economic difficulties. To what degree that issue has been discussed during your meeting, and what is the position of your administration, Mr. President, regarding the expanding of your economic [co]operation and whether the U.S. business would like to promote contacts with the Soviet Union?

The President. We had a long discussion on economic matters. We made some specific representations about how we can work more closely on the economic front with the Soviet Union, and we've made certain representations that I will now follow through with, in terms of observer status. And I think one of the most fruitful parts of our discussions related to the economy. And I would like to have a climate in which American businessmen can help in what Chairman Gorbachev is trying to do with reform and, obviously, with glasnost. But I think the climate, as a result of these talks, for investment inside the Soviet Union and for certain things we can do to help the Soviet Union and, indeed, other countries seek common ground with these multilateral organizations related to finance: All of that is a big plus. It was an extraordinarily big plus as far as I'm concerned.

Q. President Gorbachev?

The Chairman. I would like to comment, the answer. First of all, I confirm what I've said, what the President said. And the second point: The things that have taken place at the meeting could be regarded as a political impetus which we were lacking for our economic cooperation to gain momentum and to acquire forms and methods which would be adequate to our contemporary life.

Well, as to the future course of this process, this will depend on the Soviet actions, whether legal or economic. You understand that today we tried to turn drastically our economy towards cooperation with other countries so that it will be part and parcel of the world economic system. Therefore, we think and hope that that which has happened during the meeting on this subject of the agenda -- well, let's call it the agenda -- these are of principal importance.

Lebanon

Q. With the tense situation in Lebanon -- how did you discuss the military option in Lebanon? And what have you decided on the Middle East in general? How did you discuss it? The question is both President Bush and President Gorbachev.

The Chairman. We couldn't address this Lebanese conflict because both the U.S. and the Soviet people are sympathetic with the grave situation and sufferings of that people. We shared our views and assessments in this respect and agreed to continue the exchange of views so that each, according to its possibilities -- and I think that everyone has its own

possibilities -- well, President Bush thought that we had more possibilities and I thought that we had equal possibilities, in order to resolve positively this conflict.

The President. And our aspirations, shared in by President Gorbachev, is to see a peaceful resolution to the question regarding Lebanon. We support the tripartite agreement. He has supported it very actively. We do not want to see any more killing in Lebanon. The Chairman agrees with us. We're in total agreement on that. And so, Lebanon was discussed in detail, and we would like to see a return to a peaceful, democratic Lebanon. And everybody in the United States, I think, share the agony that I feel about the turmoil in Lebanon. But we're going to try to help. We're trying any way we can to help.

Soviet-U.S. Relations

Q. My question is to President Bush. You, as President of the United States, participate for the first time at the summit meeting, but you were the Vice President of the previous administration that took part in forming foreign policies. So, what is your assessment of the course that our two countries have passed since Geneva to Malta?

The President. That's what we call a "slow ball" in the trade. [Laughter] It's an easy question because I really think they are improving dramatically. There is enormous support in our country for what Chairman Gorbachev is doing inside the Soviet Union. There is enormous respect and support for the way he has advocated peaceful change in Europe. And so, this meeting accomplished everything that I had hoped it would. It was a no-agenda meeting, and yet it was a meeting where we discussed, as the Chairman said, many, many subjects. So, I think if a meeting can improve relations, I think this one has.

Arms Control

Q. Did you reach any actual understandings on instructions or timetables or deadlines to negotiators on chemical weapons, nuclear weapons, conventional arms?

The Chairman. Well, we devoted much time to the discussion of concrete issues related to disarmament negotiations on different types of arms. And just as an example, to show you that this was a substantive discussion, I'll tell you that in the near future our foreign ministers will meet, which have been instructed to do some specific work to move the positions closer.

In connection with new interesting proposals by President Bush regarding chemical weapons, which have the goal of a global ban and provides for certain phases and movement toward this global ban, then we have the possibility of a rapid movement towards it.

As to strategic offensive arms, the analysis of the situation and the instructions that have been given regarding the preparation of that treaty demonstrate that we may be able by the second half of June -- and we agreed on the formal meeting at that time -- to do the

necessary work to agree on the basic provisions of this treaty, which there later in the coming months would be ready for signature.

Therefore, I highly assess and evaluate what we have done here. Well, of course, there are questions which would require detailed discussion so that there will be no concerns on both sides. As to our concerns, as regards to strategic offensive arms and the preparation of the treaty on the 50-percent cuts of such weapons, they concern SLCM's [sea-launched cruise missiles]. Well, and in general, we raised a question with the President that when we have events along different directions on the reduction of nuclear arms and conventional forces, when we move towards defensive doctrines -- that is, we, the Soviet Union -- we are interested in having new elements in the military doctrines of the NATO countries. And therefore, the time has come when we should begin discussing naval forces. We should discuss this problem also.

Thus, I would also like to confirm -- and I think that the President would confirm it -- that our discussions were very thorough, which encourages; and therefore, we can count on success. This was a salute.

Malta Meeting Results

Q. Can I ask you a question, Mr. President? Will you tell us, President Gorbachev -- will you tell me why you were so cautious at the beginning of the negotiations? The Soviet side was very optimistic, and now you voice certain optimistic elements. What is the reason for it? Maybe that optimism was not justified. This is Portuguese television to President Gorbachev.

The President. This is for you. Go ahead.

The Chairman. Well, I would say that there were elements of optimism and pessimism here, and I wouldn't dwell into the details.

Q. Could you just -- --

The Chairman. Well, the core of the question is that -- if I read you correctly -- is that to what degree we can speak of optimism or pessimism regarding the results of this meeting. Or perhaps, I didn't understand you correctly. Did I get you right? Yes. Well, you know, on the eve of the meeting, both sides were restrained and had a well-balanced position, a cautious one. I would say it again. This did not mean, however, that we were pessimists. That meant that we were highly responsible. Today, now that the meeting has taken place and we have summed up the results together with the President, I can tell you that I am optimistic about the results and the prospects that are open now. This is dialectics.

Naval Arms Control

Q. President Bush, may I refer to the question of naval forces, please, that President Gorbachev raised just a moment ago? Can you respond to your feeling and exactly what

you've told President Gorbachev about your disposition toward reducing naval forces, NATO's disposition, on that regard? And if in fact the Soviets are prepared to move to a defensive posture, is not it time to consider some cuts in this regard?

The President. The answer is that this is not an arms control meeting in the sense of trying to hammer out details. We still have differences with the Soviet Union -- he knows it, and I know it -- as it relates to naval forces. But the point is we could discuss these things in a very constructive environment, and the Chairman knows that I could not come here and make deals in arms control. And I'm disinclined to think that that is an area where we will have immediate progress.

But we talked about a wide array of these issues, but we have no agreement at all on that particular question of naval arms control. But the point is he knows that, and I know that. The point is he had an opportunity to let me know how important it is. And I can, as a part of an alliance, have an opportunity to discuss a wide array of disarmament questions with our allies. So, it's exactly the kind of climate for a meeting that I had envisioned and that he had envisioned. We can sit there and talk about issues of which we've had divisions over the years, try to find ways to narrow them. And we did narrow them in some important areas. And there are still some differences that exist. There's no point covering that over.

European Security

Q. Did you discuss the Soviet proposal on Helsinki II? And an adjoining question: Are you prepared to take a joint initiative with Soviet Union about the Middle East crisis?

The Chairman. The first question is regarding Helsinki II. I think that we have found during this meeting, we have come to a common understanding of the extreme importance of the CSCE process and have noted the positive results of the CSCE process, the results that have made it possible to proceed with deep changes in Europe and in the world as well, as Europe has a great influence on the world due to certain reasons. Both the President and myself are in favor of developing the CSCE process in accordance with the new requirements that are required by our times so that we would think of and build a new Europe on the basis of common elements among the European countries. We reaffirmed that this is a common affair for all the European countries that signed the Helsinki Act, including the whole EC [European Community]. And this element was present everywhere whenever we discussed Europe and other parts of the world with the active and constructive participation of the United States and Canada. Thus, we are in favor of the process gaining in strength and in force.

The transformation of the CSCE-Helsinki institutions at this stage should be such that their nature would change, or rather would be adequate to the current changes. Take, for example, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. They should not remain military alliances, but rather military-political alliances, and later on just political alliances, so that their nature would change in accordance with the changes on the continent.

We are also entitled to expect that when the Common Market and the CMEC would also change in respect of greater openness, with the active participation in economic processes of the United States. Thus, we think that the time has come for us to act, step by step, in a thorough manner, in accordance with the requirements of the times, taking full responsibility, without damaging the balance and security. We should act in a way that we would improve the situation, stability, and security. We will strengthen security in this way.

This was the manner of our discussion. And I believe that the President can only nod and say that we have coincidence of views of this. [Laughter]

Q. President Gorbachev, did you assure President Bush that you will not -- --

Q. Mr. Gorbachev -- a question to Chairman Gorbachev.

Military Forces in the Mediterranean

Q. The meeting took place at the center of the Mediterranean. How did you discuss the problem of the reduction of the military presence of the size of the Mediterranean?

The President. Is this to me? Well, first on the reduction, we did not have specific figures in mind. The Chairman raised the questions of naval arms control, and I was not particularly positive in responding on naval arms control. But we agree that we want to move forward and bring to completion the CFE that does affect Italy and other countries, in a sense -- they're a strong part of our NATO alliance. So, we didn't get agreements, crossing the ``t's," dotting the ``i's" on some of these issues, but that's not what we were trying to do.

May I respond to this gentleman's last half. The question was Soviet and U.S. -- --

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Joint initiative.

The President. It doesn't require joint initiatives to solve the Middle East question. But we have found that the Soviet Union is playing a constructive role in Lebanon and trying throughout the Middle East to give their support for the tripartite agreement, which clearly the U.S. has supported. And so, there's common ground there. That may not always have been the case in history. And that may not always have been the way the United States looked at it as to how constructive the role the Soviets might play. But I can tell you that after these discussions and after the discussions between [Secretary of State] Jim Baker and [Soviet Foreign Minister] Shevardnadze there is a constructive role that the Soviets are implementing. And again, I cite the tripartite agreement. I'm sure that they share our view after these talks, in terms of peaceful resolution to these questions in the Middle East, be it Lebanon or in West Bank questions. So, I don't think we're very far apart on this.

Q. President Gorbachev, did you assure President Bush that the Soviet Union will -- --

The Chairman. Well, my opinion on the Middle East, in terms of discussions at the meeting, I can only add to what President Bush has said -- that we have just discussed very thoroughly, rather thoroughly, this subject. And I believe that we have come to an understanding that we should use our possibilities and interact in order to promote solution to this protracted conflict, which affects negatively the entire world situation.

As it seemed to me, we also agreed that, as a result of the side's progress, we have approached the point when we have a realistic chance to start the settlement process. Therefore, it is important not to lose this chance because the situation is changing very rapidly. Therefore, we think we will contribute to this.

Eastern European Reforms

Q. I'm from the group of Czechoslovak journalists. President Gorbachev, did you assure President Bush that the changes in Eastern Europe are irreversible and that the Soviet Union has forsaken the right to intervene there militarily? And President Bush, similarly, as a result of this meeting, are you now more trusting that the Soviets have indeed renounced the Brezhnev doctrine?

The Chairman. I wouldn't like you to consider me here or to regard me as a full-fledged representative of all European countries. This wouldn't be true. We are a part of Eastern Europe, of Europe. We interact with our allies in all areas, and our ties are deep. However, every nation is an independent entity in world politics, and every people has the right to choose its own destiny, the destiny of its own state. And I can only explain my own attitude.

I believe that those changes, both in the Soviet Union and in the countries of Eastern Europe, have been prepared by the course of the historic evolution itself. No one can avoid this evolutionary process; and those problems should be resolved on a new basis, taking into account the experience and the potential of those countries, opening up possibilities for utilizing anything positive that has been accumulated by mankind. And I believe that we should welcome the thrust of those processes because they are related to the desire of the people to make those societies more democratic, more humane, and to face the world. Therefore, I'm encouraged by the thrust of those processes, and I believe that this is highly assisted by other countries.

I also see deep, profound changes in other countries, including Western European countries, and this is also very important because this is a reciprocal movement so that the people will become more close around the continent, and preserving at the same time the identity of one's own people. This is very important for us to understand.

Q. I ask a question on the part of the Czechoslovak journalists. We are discussing the future of Europe?

The President. May I just respond briefly? There is no question that there is dramatic change. Nobody can question it. And as President Gorbachev talks about democratic change and peaceful -- that certainly lays to rest previous doctrines that may have had a different approach. And so, he knows that not just the President but all the people in the United States would like to see this peaceful, democratic evolution continue. And so, I think that's the best way to answer the question because the change is so dramatic and so obvious to people.

But I will say we had a very good chance to discuss it in considerably more detail than I think would be appropriate to discuss it here.

Central America

Q. President Bush, you have accused the Soviet Union for sending arms to Central America, and, President Gorbachev, you have denied those charges. Now both of you sit here together. Who is right? [Laughter]

The President. Maybe I ought to take the first shot at that one. I don't think we accused the Soviet Union of that. What we did say is arms were going in there in an unsatisfactory way. My view is that not only did the Nicaraguans acquiesce in it but they encouraged that to happen. And the evidence is demonstrable. But I'm not challenging the word of the Foreign Minister. He and Jim Baker talked about that, and President Gorbachev and I talked about it.

All I know is that -- and he said it earlier -- elections, free elections, should be the mode. And I also reported to him what Mr. Oscar Arias [President of Costa Rica] called me about, blaming Castro and the Sandinistas for exporting revolution and for tearing things up there in Central America.

So, we may have a difference on that one, but I want to be careful when you say I accused them of sending these weapons. I did not, because Mr. Shevardnadze made a direct representation to Mr. Baker. And everyone knows that there's a wide international arms flow out there. But whatever it is, however it comes, it is unsatisfactory for countries in the region that want to see the evolution toward democracy continue.

The Chairman. The President explained correctly the discussion on the subject. We were never accused, and we didn't have to accept or reject anything. We informed the President that we had firm assurances from Nicaragua that no arms, including those aircraft, are being used. And the President took our arguments and agreed to them. As regard the fact of principle -- I have mentioned it -- is that we are for free elections so that this conflict would be resolved by political means and the situation was kept normal.

The President. Well, that's what we agreed on. I agree that that's the assessment. I still feel that arms are going into El Salvador. We've seen clear evidence of it. But I can't argue with the factual presentation made here.

But we have a difference -- I don't believe that the Sandinistas have told the truth to our Soviet friends. And why? Because we know for fact-certain that arms have gone in there. I'm not saying they're Soviet arms. They've said they aren't shipping arms, and I'm accepting that. But they're going in there. And I am saying that they have misled Mr. Shevardnadze when they gave a specific representation that no arms were going from Nicaragua into El Salvador. So, we have some differences in how we look at this key question. And the best way to have those differences ameliorated is to have these certifiably free elections in Nicaragua. And Castro: I have no influence with him whatsoever, and maybe somebody is yelling that question at President Gorbachev. But look, we've got some differences in different places around the world.

Q. What about Cuba?

Q. Question to both Presidents.

The Chairman. What do you mean?

Q. Oscar Arias apparently called President Bush and told him that Cuba was really creating the situation in the region by commenting -- --

The Chairman. We discussed the situation in Latin America and Central America, and explained our assessments. On the basis of our analysis, on our own analysis, and our assessment, I told the President that there were conditions emerging for improving the situation for the better, as different countries had the desire to change the situation and normalize the situation -- both in the United States and in other countries.

Q. Will you give, Mr. President, an answer?

The President. I'd be glad to. Somebody better tell me what the question was then if I'm going to answer. The question of Germany?

German Reunification

Q. Whether the German question was discussed and your attitude toward the Kohl [Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany] plan.

The President. The United States, as part of NATO, has had a longstanding position. Helsinki spells out a concept of permanent borders. I made clear to President Gorbachev that we, for our part, do not want to do anything that is unrealistic and causes any country to end up going backwards or end up having its own people in military conflict, one with the other. And so, I think we have tried to act with the word that President Gorbachev has used to -- and that is, with caution -- not to go demonstrating on top of the Berlin Wall to show how happy we are about the change. We are happy about the change.

I've heard many leaders speak about the German question. And I don't think it is a role of the United States to dictate the rapidity of change in any country. It's a matter for the

people to determine themselves. So, that's our position, and the last word goes to the Chairman on this.

The Chairman. Yes, and the President wrote a note to me in English. I don't read English, but I answered in Russian -- he doesn't read Russian -- but we agreed on it anyway.
[Laughter]

I'll be brief. In the past few days, I already answered a few times on the question. I can only confirm what I said before. But as we have discussed with the President this question, I can say that we approach this subject on the basis of the Helsinki process, which summed up the results of the Second World War and consolidated the results of the war. And those are realities. And the reality is such that we have today's Europe with two German states, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, which are both members of the United Nations and sovereign states.

This was the decision of history. And I always revert to this subject, or thesis, which saves me. Indeed, in order to remain realists, we should say that history itself decides the processes and fates on the European continent and also the fates of those two states. I think this is a common understanding shared by anyone. And any artificial acceleration of the process would only exacerbate and make it more difficult to change in many European countries those changes that are now taking place now in Europe. Thus, we wouldn't serve that process by an artificial acceleration or prompting of the processes that are going on in those two countries.

I think we can thank the media for their cooperation. We are not yet aware of what they will write about us.

The President. Right to thank them afterward you mean? [Laughter] After they've written?

The Chairman. We should thank them in advance, and therefore, they will do better in the future. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your cooperation.

The President. We're going to have to leave at 1:20 p.m. Should we each take one more question or not? Last one to me, right here. No rebuttal. No backup questions. Last one.

Soviet-U.S. Relations

Q. What's your personal relationship now between you two leaders? And would regular contacts that would perhaps no longer be called summits be helpful?

The President. I had known President Gorbachev before, and I'd let him speak for himself. But I think we have a good personal relationship, and I believe that helps each side be frank, point out the differences, as well as the areas we agree on. And that is a very, very important ingredient, I think, because of the standing of the two powers and because of the dramatic change that is taking place.

And I am not saying that if he likes me, he is going to change long-held policies, and I am going to say that if I like him, we're not going to change long-held policies. But what we've been able to do here is to get together and talk about the difference without rancor, and frankly as possible. And I think it's been very constructive. So, I couldn't have asked for a better result out of this nonsummit summit. [Laughter]

The question is regular meetings. I'm open to see him as much as it requires to keep things moving forward. We've already set a summit meeting. That summit meeting will drive the arms control agenda. And that's a good thing because I represented to him that we wanted to see a START agreement, a CFE agreement, and hopefully, a chemical agreement. That's a very ambitious agenda, but I think if we hadn't sat here and talked we might not have understood how each other feels on these important questions.

The Chairman. I would like to confirm what President Bush has said: that we have known each other for a long time. But I would also add -- and I have not agreed on it with the President in advance, but this is no secret -- that we have had considerable exchanges of views in previous contacts, and we had an understanding of the positions of each other. And we would only mention the Governors Island or our discussion in the car, and then we would understand what we are talking about. Then we exchanged letters.

And today's meeting boosts our contacts to a higher level. I'm satisfied with the discussions and meetings we had, including our two private discussions. I share the view of the President that personal contacts are a very important element in the relations between leaders of state, the more so we are talking about the leaders of such countries as the United States and the Soviet Union. And I welcome those personal relations.

And the President was quite correct in saying that this didn't mean that we would sacrifice our long-held positions at the expense of our personal ties or that we forget our responsibility. I think our personal contacts help us implement our responsibilities and help us better interact in the interests of our two nations and in the interests of the entire world community. And I, myself, would like to thank the President for cooperation for this meeting, for the cooperation in a very important joint Soviet-U.S. endeavor. And our share is 50 - 50.

The President. Well, I guess we're going to fly away to Brussels.

Note: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. aboard the Soviet passenger liner "Maxim Gorky" in Marsaxlokk Harbor. Chairman Gorbachev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.