

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 1, 1985

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

This is in reply to your letter of October 12, 1985, concerning the possibility of a confidential exchange of opinions on a non-official basis. My reasons for mentioning this possibility to Foreign Minister Shevardnadze were twofold.

First, it seemed that there could be some intrinsic value in exchanging opinions informally and privately without the constraints imposed by official formality. But I also wished to resolve certain ambiguities in how we communicate. From time to time in recent months Soviet officials have approached American officials or private citizens who are in touch with senior officials in our government and have offered comments which, they suggest, represent your views. Naturally, I have paid close attention to these comments since I take your opinions very seriously and wish to do the utmost to understand them with full clarity. However, the comments received in this manner have not always been consistent and thus I have difficulty determining to what degree they in fact represent your views. It therefore seemed worthwhile to seek a clarification.

I judge from your reply that you consider established channels adequate for communication between us. That is agreeable to me. Consequently Secretary Shultz will continue to look forward to receiving Ambassador Dobrynin at the State Department. Similarly, we will expect that Ambassador Hartmann will enjoy corresponding access to you in Moscow.

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I hope that the meetings Secretary Shultz has in Moscow will lay the groundwork for a productive meeting between us in Geneva. I am very much looking forward to meeting you there and continue to hope that we will succeed in setting relations between our two contries on a more constructive course.

Sincerely yours,

Ronald Reagan

His Excellency
Mikhail Sergeyeovich Gorbachev
General Secretary of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
The Kremlin
Mosocw