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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 29, 1989

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
AND PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY  
UPON DEPARTURE

The Diplomatic Entrance

8:45 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Let me just say that Prime Minister Mulroney has very generously come down here and given us a very full briefing, his observations from a long and detailed trip that he took to the Soviet Union. I don't know why he is not more wiped out by jet lag because I last saw him just a few weeks ago in Central America -- he'd come from Asia. Now he's been to the Soviet Union. But it was most generous, Mr. Prime Minister, for you to come here. And on behalf of the Secretary of State and Brent Scowcroft, John Sununu, those of us who will be in the meetings, I can't tell you how much I appreciate your advice and your observations.

And it's a little unorthodox, but if you'll excuse me -- I understand you're going to take some questions here.

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: I will.

THE PRESIDENT: All right. Thank you. And our love to Mila, and thank you, sir, very much. It was most generous of you.

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: Thank you very much.

Q What's the best advice he gave you, Mr. President?

Q What was the best advice?

Q Mr. Prime Minister, what did you give him? What did you tell him? Right off the bat, what's the big one?

Q Don't you think they ought to try to achieve something at this summit?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: Well, I think they probably will. I had lengthy meetings with Mr. Gorbachev and Prime Minister Ryzhkov and Mr. Shevardnadze in the Soviet Union, and my belief is that President Gorbachev looks upon the Malta summit not with a view to achieving any miracles, but with a view to building a sustained and solid relationship with President Bush that will give rise to major accomplishments down the road.

I believe that -- I think that he's in for the long haul himself. I think he's got an ambitious, progressive agenda for the future. And given some ongoing changes, it may be an agenda that can be accommodated as time goes on.

And I had a very good meeting with the President and his advisors tonight. I find that, as the leader of the Alliance, President Bush is in a -- has a very constructive approach to the challenge that exists, the opportunities. He's very sensitive and alive to the unique opportunities that are there, not in Malta, but in the months and the years that will follow Malta. And so I'm very pleased with our meeting and I'm, as a member of the Alliance and as Prime Minister of a neighboring, friendly country, I'm very happy with the attitude and the prospects.

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Q What did President Bush ask you, Mr. Mulroney? What was on the top of the agenda tonight? What did you advise him when he goes to meet with Mr. Gorbachev two days from now?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: Well, as I say, we've had very extensive recent meetings with President Gorbachev and his colleagues, and I gave the President and his colleagues our view of the opportunities and the attitudes and how we best think they should be grasped. We think that President Gorbachev is for real, that he is in for the long haul, and that his -- some of his suggestions are worthy of thoughtful and generous response.

Q Like what? What in particular?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: On the basis of that, there are some gestures that can be taken, to respond to Helen's question. There are gestures, for example -- we think that there is -- the President, among other things, could consider observer status at the GATT for the Soviet Union; that the President could accept an idea that at the end of every economic G-7 summit that there be a meeting with the outgoing chairman of the summit and President Gorbachev.

After all, the G-7 -- the harmonization of monetary and economic policies of the G-7 has brought about the greatest sustained economic growth in modern history. And some of those ideas would clearly be of benefit to President Gorbachev, who says very clearly that what he wants to do is integrate the economy of the Soviet Union more totally into those economies that have known such success. But there's a long way for him to go, and one of the ways that this could be done is by receiving firsthand the views and the opinions of the outgoing president -- or chairman of the G-7 summit, which this year happens to be President Bush -- and next year will be another one of us.

But it could put in train a very valuable series of consultations that would be beneficial to President Gorbachev and would bring the Soviet Union more closely into the ambit of the industrialized nations.

Q Do you think there will be any conditions, sir? Should there be any conditions, sir?

Q -- assurances should Mr. Bush give? What political assurances should he give Mr. Gorbachev?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: I don't think that President Gorbachev is looking for any political assurances from President Bush beyond the assurance that he speaks very clearly for the Alliance, which he does; that the Alliance is committed to a constructive relationship. We're encouraging the events in Eastern Europe. We realize that a lot of this has come about because of the attitudes set in train by President Gorbachev. And this has to be responded to. And President Bush is in the process of preparing to do precisely that.

Q Should there be any conditions, sir? Should there be any conditions? If you're suggesting the Soviet Union should have observer status at GATT and perhaps at the G-7, is that tomorrow --

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: I never suggested that they have observer status at the G-7. That they should have observer status at the GATT, that there might be a series of steps to bring them more closely into the IMF and World Bank ambit in a progress manner over a period of time. But that the chairman of the G-7 be mandated on an outgoing basis to meet with President Gorbachev on an ongoing basis. That was my -- that was one of my -- one of many suggestions that we made.

Q What did he think of that? What did he say to that?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: What did President Bush think of it? I think he kind of liked it.

Q Prime Minister, the administration has been criticized for reacting very slowly to events in Eastern Europe. Do you share that perception?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: The administration has a responsibility to act with prudence. President Bush is President of the United States and leader of the Western Alliance. And it is important that he act not in haste, but that he act effectively. And I believe that his intensive preparations and his very constructive attitude, I believe that this is going to bring about good results. And I think that's the way that we should approach it.

Q He assured you of no surprises here? He assured you of no surprises, no foreswearing nuclear arms?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: Oh, you can be certain of that.

Q Is Gorbachev in trouble?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: Gorbachev is not in trouble. I think that he's remarkably popular, inside and outside the Soviet Union. The Soviet economy is in trouble. The Soviet economy is in big trouble. But he's in the -- his reforms are designed to improve that. And it is important, I think that as he seeks to improve his own economy, that it's in our interest, the interest of the West, the interest of the industrialized world, to cooperate with him, to assist him in bringing about and achieving these historic reforms.

Q Mr. Prime Minister, did you discuss any specific issues? I'm thinking of some of the highlights from your trip last week. Did you discuss, for example, any sort of environmental agreement that he might enter into with the Soviets regarding the Arctic or a demilitarization of the Arctic -- any of those things?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: Well, certainly not the last two you mentioned. But we discussed many specifics, yes.

Q Bilateral issues, sir? Were any bilateral issues discussed tonight?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: Yes, we discussed some bilateral issues.

Q Did you discuss lobster, sir? Anything about lobster? (Laughter.)

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: You can always count on the Canadians.

Q How about Salvador?

Q Did you discuss El Salvador?

PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY: Yes, we did.

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