



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Impromptu Toasts by the Two Principals
Date: November 19, 1985
Time: circa 9:15 PM
Place: Soviet Mission, Geneva, Switzerland

General Secretary Gorbachev's Remarks

General Secretary Gorbachev rose and remarked that he was happy to have everyone here together, and there would certainly be no speeches at this dinner. However, he said he wanted at this table this evening, where such a good atmosphere reigned, to welcome the President and Mrs. Reagan. (Mrs. Reagan remarked to the Soviet interpreter that the General Secretary had referred to her as "Nancy.") He welcomed President Reagan and his American colleagues to the Soviet Mission, on this "little bit of the Soviet Union."

He said that everyone present knew the reason why they were in Geneva. Yet, he said the fact that they had relaxed a little bit at this dinner did not mean that they would neglect the reasons why they had come here. He added that his purpose in rising to speak was not to bring up the seriousness of the reasons why they were in Geneva. He said that first, he simply wanted to greet his guests very cordially.

He said that speaking in human terms, he was happy to get acquainted with his guests and he expressed the hope that it would be possible to achieve the kind of understanding and spirit in which it would be possible to discuss "people" problems.

He noted that one day of the meetings had passed, and only one day was left. He said he wanted to recall a line from the Bible to express the Soviet side's desire as to how the meetings should go. The Biblical quotation was to the effect that there is a time to throw stones, and there is a time to gather them; now is the time to gather stones which have been cast in the past. The seven years in which there were no meetings between the Presidents of the United States and the General Secretaries of the Soviet Union were filled with considerable changes in the world. It would be possible to

SECRET/SENSITIVE

DECL: OADR

F96-087 #60

d/b

5/14/02

describe and explain what happened in the world during that time and much could be said by way of explanation. More important than that, however, is the lesson of those times, namely, that the President and the General Secretary must meet and talk about where the two countries are, and how they view each other, and how the two countries intend to build their relations in this many-faceted world of ours. He said that the current day was waning and in a positive atmosphere at that. He noted that the participants had laid out their positions on a broad range of problems of concern to the USSR and the U.S. and to all of the nations of the world. He said he had noticed the word "responsibility" used frequently in relation to this meeting. He said both the President and he understood that the frequent use of that word in itself emphasized the responsibility they bore as world leaders.

He continued that as far as the future is concerned, it can be built, if it is built by the two countries together. That can be done despite all of the countries' differences and the depth of those differences -- that had been visible even in the discussions held today -- because the process of moving toward each other through this method of meetings had begun, and it was necessary to continue the process of moving forward.

He said that it was true that one cartoonist had sent him a cartoon which showed him and President Reagan standing on the two sides of the abyss. On one side was President Reagan and on the other side was Gorbachev. Reagan calls to Gorbachev across the abyss "Gorby, I am prepared to go my part of the way," and "Gorby" says to Reagan, "Come ahead." Joking aside, he said, if the two leaders go their part of the way together, they will not end up in the abyss finally, but rather with a higher degree of understanding and trust that will be the basis of the long-term outlook of U.S.-Soviet relations.

He continued that there are certain questions without whose examination it would be difficult to leave Geneva, and he recalled the Nobel prize winner's letter saying that he and the President should stay in Geneva as long as necessary to resolve the questions of war and peace. (He said he thought at that rate they would be there until Christmas.) He added that, seriously, there were problems which would require thinking and an overall approach. If those questions are not addressed, it will be difficult to go on, and there will be more accusations and recrimination. It is evident that the people of the world are sick and tired of the mutual accusations and recriminations the U.S. and the USSR addressed at each other.

He said that he could not say for sure that the sides would reach agreement in the course of the current meetings, even if they worked all night. (He jokingly suggested that all the

others ought to work all night.) He suggested that, jokes aside, he and the President should nevertheless continue to work to accomplish the necessary goals.

He said he wished to raise a toast to the President, to Nancy Reagan, and to the U.S. people, whom the Soviet people regard so highly; he wished to drink to the success of the current talks, to an improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations, and to the resolution of outstanding problems between the sides.

President Reagan's Response

In response to General Secretary Gorbachev's remarks, President Reagan said that the American delegation was pleased to be here in Geneva on this mission.

He said that while the General Secretary was speaking, he had been thinking of various problems being discussed at the talks. He said that previous to the General Secretary's remarks, he had been telling Foreign Minister Shevardnadze (who was seated to the President's right) that if the people of the world were to find out that there was some alien life form that was going to attack the Earth approaching on Halley's Comet, then that knowledge would unite all the peoples of the world.

Further, the President observed that General Secretary Gorbachev had cited a Biblical quotation, and the President, also alluding to the Bible, pointed out that Acts 16 refers to the fact that "we are all of one blood regardless of where we live on the Earth," and we should never forget that.

The President quoted Theodore Roosevelt to the effect that the true goal of nations is peace with self respect. Theodore Roosevelt loved his people as the current U.S. President and General Secretary love theirs, and Roosevelt believed in peace and security for his people, although some of his detractors would construe that to mean that there was something militaristic in his attitude. Yet despite some such negative attitudes about him, he had been the first person to win the Nobel Prize for peace, and that was specifically for his efforts devoted to ending the Russo-Japanese War.

The President pointed out that there was something else significant about this particular time and this particular occasion. It was exactly 43 years ago on this date that the Soviet Army had begun the counterattack at Stalingrad which had actually turned the war around. The President suggested that this 43rd anniversary of that event could also be the beginning of yet another turning point for all mankind -- one that would make it possible to have a world of peace and freedom.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 4 -

The President raised his glass to the General Secretary and Mrs. Gorbachev, to the Soviet people, to peace, freedom, to our great nations, and to the peoples of the world -- that they may have a world of peace and freedom.

Drafted by: William Hopkins, Department of State, Staff
Interpreter

SECRET/SENSITIVE