

SYSTEM II  
90336THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

March 25, 1985

SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EYES ONLY FOR THE PRESIDENT AND NSC ADVISOR MCFARLANE

NEW HAS SEEN

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: George P. Shultz *GPS*

SUBJECT: Letter from Gorbachev

Soviet Chargé Oleg Sokolov delivered to Rick Burt today the attached letter to you from Gorbachev. Dobrynin had called me earlier with a preview. The tone of the letter tracks closely with Gorbachev's comments to the Vice President and me, and could therefore reflect his personal touch.

I draw your attention in particular to the final paragraphs of the letter, in which Gorbachev says he has a "positive attitude" to the idea of holding a summit. He indicates that it would not be necessary to sign documents at such a meeting, although agreements on issues of mutual interest which had been previously worked out could be "formalized" during the meeting. He defines the main purpose of a meeting as a "search for mutual understanding on the basis of equality and taking account of the legitimate interests of each side." Gorbachev thanks you for your invitation to Washington, but asks that you agree to return to the question of timing and venue for a summit at a later point. The Soviets may be thinking of suggesting a summit in Helsinki in August, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the CSCE Final Act. In a meeting last week with Art Hartman, Gromyko pointedly asked for our plans on attendance at Helsinki.

Gorbachev's letter is also notable for its non-polemical tone. In fact, his message seems to be that we should both tone down public rhetoric and do business in a calm way that avoids "deepening our differences" and "whipping up animosity." Predictably, he also stresses the priority he attaches to arms control and my January agreement with Gromyko on the "subject and objectives" for Geneva. Here too he picks up themes he used with George and me in Moscow.

I am holding the text of the letter very closely, and will be sending you a suggested draft response for Gorbachev in the next few days. In answering press inquiries about a Soviet response to your summit invitation, I suggest we reply simply that our two governments are in touch, but that as the media knows, we do not intend to discuss our confidential diplomatic exchanges in public.

Attachment: As stated.

*GPS* 799-051 #321  
7/25/00

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DECL: OADR