

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

November 12, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: George P. Shultz *GPS*

SUBJECT: What to Expect from Gorbachev in Geneva

My meeting last week in the Kremlin with Gorbachev provided us with our most detailed look yet at the new Soviet leader. I was struck in our conversation by the curious blend of new and old in Gorbachev. He displayed the intellectual quickness and articulate debating skill which have impressed other western leaders. At the same time he showed us the blunt, sometimes browbeating style characteristic of so many of the older generation of Soviet leaders.

Substantively, he trotted out many of the old Soviet negotiating ploys and fell back repeatedly on many of the old stereotypes about the United States which we heard so often from the older leaders. While some of this undoubtedly represented a tactical approach to put me on the defensive, there is no question that Gorbachev and his younger colleagues really share much of this old "collective wisdom." It is also clear that however much Gorbachev represents the "new Soviet man," he and his colleagues are not about to squander the legacy of Soviet power and influence bequeathed to them by Brezhnev, Andropov and the old guard. The question is whether they are ready to deal with us on the basis of real equality.

Since Gorbachev will undoubtedly put forward many of these same points in your conversations in Geneva, I have had my Soviet experts examine parts of our conversation to give you a flavor of what to expect. They have extracted key statements Gorbachev made to me and prepared points which you might draw on in responding to Gorbachev. In every case, I think the best response is to rebut his point forcefully and then reiterate our concrete proposals for addressing the problem in question. If Gorbachev rejects our ideas, you should press him to put forward a practical means of resolving our differences.

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NEW SOVIET PROPOSALS/OLD U.S. PROPOSALS

Gorbachev Statements

Our side has tried to signal a desire to improve relations and the only response we get from you is that you call this "propaganda." If we do something and make suggestions, you say it is propaganda and we are weak. If we don't, you say we are intransigent.

The Administration is sticking with old positions. This will not lead to an improvement in Soviet-American relations on the basic issues.... The U.S. should think of making new proposals and not sticking with old policies. You should understand that the Republican Administration can't leave office with only old proposals. You can't continue to wrap these up as if they were new.

Analysis

It is a standard Soviet negotiating tactic to disparage U.S. arms control ideas as nothing new. At the same time they will repeatedly call on the U.S. to explore the so-called "new ideas" embodied in their proposals when there is in fact little if anything novel. The approach is designed to put pressure on the U.S. to come forward with further concessions, before the Soviets reveal any further compromises. The best way to get beyond such a semantic debate is to call a spade a spade and agree to probe those elements in which both sides have some interest.

Response

-- There's some question about just how "new" your proposals are; for example, Soviet calls for a moratorium on nuclear testing have been around for years. Back in the 1960s, we accepted one of those proposals, and you took advantage of it to prepare the ground for the most concentrated nuclear test series in history.

-- I have to be candid. A lot of your proposals look pretty empty to us. We cannot accept declarations of benign intent or calls for freezes which give you unilateral advantages.

-- You and I should get beyond these declarations and secondary matters, and get to work on the heart of the problem -- deep reductions in real systems that are dangerous to stability.

50

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

- 3 -

-- When we have found positive elements in your proposals, we have said so. I stated in my UN speech last month that we found seeds worth nurturing in your Geneva counterproposal. We responded within a month. Have you said anything similar about our latest offer? When will we see a new move from you?

-- And as for new ideas, we're still waiting for a positive response from you on the many ideas we've put forward in arms control and other areas -- to name a few, confidence-building measures, people-to-people exchanges, resolution of regional conflicts, human rights.

-- We don't expect you to take all of these ideas as proposed, but we do expect a fair hearing and a constructive response.

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NLRR FOI 114/3 #7979

BY CI NARA DATE 10/30/67

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 4 -

SALT II AND THE DECLINE OF DETENTE

Gorbachev Statement

We know full well that SALT II had been buried and was long dead before the events of Afghanistan. ... There was a process at work in U.S. society, a deep distrust. The SALT II Treaty was buried because scientific achievements had come along which required that the U.S. drop the restraints in the Treaty ... the invasion of Afghanistan was used as the excuse. ... The Administration should not be so tied to the military-industrial complex, which just chews up money and programs by the billions. ... The Soviet Union wishes to know the desires of the Reagan Administration: does it wish to improve relations ... or complete its eight years in office with no change and therefore not disappoint the military-industrial complex.

Analysis

At several points in the meeting Gorbachev referred to the influence of the political right in the Republican party. He cited what he called the Administration's ties to the military-industrial complex and its support for American military superiority over the Soviet Union. Like other Soviet leaders he took pride in what he saw as his insight into our political life. To demonstrate his "knowledge" of the U.S. political scene, for example, Gorbachev cited the Hoover Institute study "America in the Eighties" whose conservative defense and social programs he alleged have been totally adopted by the Administration. In fact, Gorbachev's knowledge, undoubtedly based on material from Ambassador Dobrynin, reflected a shallow perception of the dynamic of American politics. You will want in your comments about your domestic agenda to give Gorbachev a more sophisticated appreciation of our political process.

Response

-- As you acknowledged to Secretary Shultz, both our countries have sectors of society that are concerned with national defense. They push us in that direction. Within limits, I welcome their concern with our national security. In any case, that's a fact of life.

-- But to say these sectors are the arbiters of public views toward the Soviet Union is far off the mark. The American people have no animosity towards the Soviet people. They want nothing more than peaceful relations with your country, and relief from the defense burden. They have no desire for endless confrontation and competition.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

52

-- But they also have a deep-seated mistrust of the Soviet government's objectives and purposes -- and that's the result of Soviet actions, not plots by American defense contractors or political currents.

-- The fact is, we hoped detente would bring about a new period of restraint on your part. It did not.

-- Beginning in the mid-1970s, we saw a string of Soviet military interventions in the Third World. You kept building up your military forces against the U.S. and our Allies. It was these events, not defense contractors or American political factions, that damaged our relations.

-- Everything that caused so much harm to our relations in the 1970s is still happening. You are still building up your nuclear arms. You or your allies are still engaged in the conflicts of the 1970s.

-- You and I have an opportunity to make a new start. Frankly, that's going to require some very concrete steps on your part. We're willing to do our share.

-- I have made specific proposals to deal with all these problems. If you don't like them, I'd be glad to hear some fresh, concrete thinking from you.

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NLRR F010-114/3 #7980

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

- 6 -

BY CN NARA DATE 10/30/07

SOVIET RESPONSE TO SDI

Gorbachev Statement

If you want superiority through your SDI, we will not help you. We will let you bankrupt yourselves. But we also will not reduce our offensive missiles. We will engage in a build-up that will break your shield. We don't want war, but neither are we going to allow unilateral advantage. Therefore, we will increase nuclear arms. But we are patient and we still have hope.

Analysis

Stopping the SDI program was Gorbachev's primary theme in his conversation in Moscow. At several points during the conversation he attacked your recent decision on ABM reinterpretation. He and his colleagues are undoubtedly motivated by fear of U.S. technological capability and by the threat they perceive SDI eventually posing to the massive Soviet offensive strategic arsenal assembled at great cost during the 1970's and 1980's. Your meeting provides an opportunity to explain the potential benefits of SDI, if it proves feasible, and to determine where Gorbachev draws his bottom line on strategic defense.

Response

-- You are very aware of political developments in the U.S. and Europe, so you should know that SDI has strong public support, not just in my country but in others as well.

-- The reason it has this support is that people believe, as do I, that if there is a better way to preserve peace and maintain security than by making each other nuclear hostages, we have a duty to look into it.

-- It's hard to understand why you object so strenuously to our research program, when you know very well that you are doing the same kind of research, and when you have long placed a very high military premium on strategic defense.

-- There is nothing obscure about our research program and our objectives. Both have been well publicized. It's a different case with the Soviet strategic defense program. You have acknowledged that the Soviet Union is also engaged in fundamental research. But what are your objectives? What do you plan to do with the knowledge gained?

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

53

-- We have made no secret of the potential difficulties of a transition to greater reliance on defenses. We have tried hard to engage you on this in Geneva. Let me ask you what you plan to do if your own research proves that you can develop and deploy an effective strategic defense. Are you planning to discuss a joint, cooperative transition with us?

-- In the last analysis, we have an historic opportunity here; a chance to get a grip on the technology at an early date and see if can turn it to the task of securing peace and stability. That's going to require hard thinking by both our countries. We're willing to engage in this process. What about you?

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NLRR F06-114/3 #7981

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

BY CAS NARA DATE 10/30/07

- 8 -

U.S. ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION

Gorbachev Statement

Gorbachev said that the U.S. was full of illusions. First, that the U.S. believed the Soviet Union was less economically powerful and therefore would be weakened by an arms race. Second, that the U.S. had higher technology and, therefore, the SDI would give the U.S. superiority over the Soviet Union in weapons. Third, the Soviet Union was more interested in negotiations in Geneva than the U.S. These are all illusions ... the U.S. apparently fails to draw lessons from history.

Analysis

It was ironic that Gorbachev lectured me on our illusions about the Soviet Union even as he reiterated many standard old Soviet misconceptions about the United States. His comments reflected a standard Soviet view that no one understands the security threat which is posed by adversaries on every side. As you have said, one of the benefits of your meeting with Gorbachev will be the opportunity to air the suspicions and misconceptions which have arisen between our two countries over the years. You will want to recognize legitimate Soviet security concerns, but insist that Gorbachev must take into account the concerns of the U.S. and our allies.

Response

-- I have no doubts that you or any other Soviet leader will take the steps necessary to assure your security, whatever the cost. You can be assured that I, and my successors, will do what's necessary for the defense of America and its allies.

-- We're not trying to bankrupt you. I have never considered that an option.

-- We are proud of our technological prowess, but we know full well that the Soviet Union has a formidable ability to produce advanced arms. Indeed, that's one of the major causes of tension between us -- from our standpoint, you produce many powerful weapons that far exceed legitimate needs.

-- If all we wanted to do was bleed you in arms race, we wouldn't be negotiating in Geneva and elsewhere to lower force levels.

-- We're not seeking unilateral advantage in these talks, but rather equality. We see fair agreements as profiting both sides, not just one partner.

SECRET/SENSITIVE



56

THE SOVIETS AND THE THIRD WORLD

Gorbachev Statement

Because of our belief in our principles, we will continue to support national liberation movements. The U.S. wants us to give up but we cannot. It is a matter of principle with us. You on the other hand should give up your illusions and then we can move along together even on such questions as human rights.

Analysis

The Soviets make much of the clause in their constitution calling for support for national liberation movements. They use it to justify ideologically and pragmatically their activities in the Third World. While we do not deny the Soviets legitimate interests in the developing world -- we would like them to provide their share of economic aid -- they cannot use "their principled position" to justify intervention in the affairs of less developed countries or the use of force in unstable Third World regions. This issue goes to the heart of American disillusionment with the Soviet policy of detente, which attempted to exclude Soviet activities in the Third World from its legitimate place in our overall relationship.

Response

-- We don't accept your claim to a right either to intervene in the affairs of others or to use force to impose your system on others.

-- We don't have any obligation to accept or respect what you claim is a constitutional right to foist wars of national liberation on other peoples.

-- Your efforts to carry out your so-called principles have cost thousands of lives, driven millions of people into refugee camps, and wrecked the economies of the countries involved.

-- No other factor has done more to make the American people deeply suspicious of your ultimate objectives and worried about their own security. I can tell you that so long as you operationalize this "right" or "duty", there will never be "normal" relations between our two peoples in any meaningful sense.

-- We are not going to sit by idly. Our sympathies lie with peoples who are fighting for genuine self-determination. They are the real movements of national liberation. We are going to help them.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

- 10 -

57

-- But I want to stress this is not the way we prefer to go. It is not the way to reduce tensions between us.

-- The question is, how do the U.S. and Soviet Union go about correcting the situation?

-- I gave you my ideas about how we can clear up the five most pressing active conflicts. I've gotten no positive reaction from you, which is disappointing.

-- Perhaps you have your own ideas; if so, I'd be glad to hear them.

-- But if you don't have any fresh thoughts of your own, you should reconsider what I offered in New York.

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NLRR F06-114/3 #7982

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- 11 -

BY CJ NARA DATE 10/30/07

U.S. SEEKING MILITARY SUPERIORITY

Gorbachev Statement

Does the United States consider that its present policies of force -- exercising pressure, strength -- that these policies have brought the Soviet Union back to the negotiating table? If that is the type of thinking which seems to motivate people who surround the President, then no success is possible

Analysis

The Soviets continually attack us for seeking military superiority. At the same time they insist that our relationship must be based on the principles of "equality and equal security." It is wrong in their view for the U.S. to seek any form of military advantage, but they reserve the right to maintain military force equivalent to that of all their adversaries put together. The question of what constitutes genuine equality in military forces goes to the heart of your discussions with Gorbachev on the geopolitical balance. It affects not only the NST negotiations in Geneva but other arms control negotiations such as MBFR and CDE. You will want to put our views on this core issue on the record forcefully early in your meeting with Gorbachev.

Response

-- Whenever I hear these kinds of complaints, I'm reminded of the story told to me by an American who was once in your country.

-- The American was watching your annual military parade. As the missiles and tanks rolled by, a Soviet woman turned to her, after realizing there was an American present, and said, "There, you see how much we want peace!"

-- That woman recognized that strength is a necessary ingredient of peace. Anyone familiar with your media, or who followed your treatment of this year's 40th anniversary of the end of World War II, knows that in the Soviet Union this principle is axiomatic. That's no less true for the United States than it is for the Soviet Union.

-- We think you've been trying to establish nuclear superiority for years. Now you say we are trying to get the edge. The question is what you and I are going to do about this situation.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

59

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

- 12 -

-- I have said many times that we do not seek military superiority. We do want a stable balance of forces at radically lower levels. That's what we've been trying to negotiate with you for years.

-- Our experience is that negotiations work only when both sides have incentives to reach an agreement, and that means that one side cannot outweigh the other.

-- More important, the ultimate objective must be equality; anything less will be inherently unstable.

-- Look at our negotiating proposals and you'll see that when we propose limits on Soviet systems, we put our own comparable systems on the table as well. Can you say that about the Soviet negotiating positions at Geneva?

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LINKAGE

Gorbachev Statement

Gorbachev went on to say that it had been an idea of Nixon's to call for linkage. He said this was old hat and should be put in mothballs.

Analysis

The Soviets have repeatedly rejected the concept of linkage in principle, but have in fact practiced it to the present day. For example, they have linked the opening of new Consulates in Kiev and Moscow to our agreement to a resumption of Aeroflot air service to New York. While we should expect them to continue to criticize linkage, particularly in regard to making progress on human rights, we should have no illusions that linkage will remain a political fact of life in our relationship.

Response

-- My Administration has never dwelled on linkages, and you know that.

-- But you should also recognize that linkages are a fact of political life. It is naive to think that what happens in one area of our relationship won't have an impact, for better or worse, on the others.

-- Actions by the Soviet Union in violation of international agreements -- whether that means repression of the Helsinki monitors, or building of the Krasnoyarsk radar -- inevitably affect our relations.

-- When the Soviet Union invades Afghanistan, suppresses freedom in Poland or fuels conflicts in other regions of the world, Americans very naturally begin to worry about your purposes in the world, and about their own security.

-- I have never said that nothing will be solved until everything is solved. I am ready to make as much progress in all areas as possible, but I recognize that some matters will have to proceed at their own pace. The important thing is to get to work to start narrowing the differences between us. If we succeed, the linkage question will take care of itself.

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NLRR f06-114/3 #7983

BY CA NARA DATE 10/30/07

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Gorbachev Statement

[Although Gorbachev did not directly rebut our position on human rights in Moscow, he has in the past responded by attacking U.S. practices along the following lines:] You talk about human rights in the Soviet Union but you ignore the terrible injustices of American society -- poverty, hunger, unemployment, crime, racial discrimination, maltreatment of your Indians. We don't have these problems in the Soviet Union.

Analysis

While the older Soviet leadership responded to our human rights complaints by rejecting them as illegal intrusions on Soviet internal affairs, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze have responded by actively rebutting our points and trying to turn the tables on us. You should be ready in Geneva to respond to an aggressive attack on our human rights record and refocus the discussion on Soviet violations.

Response

-- The United States isn't perfect. We have never made any secret that many of our citizens haven't been able to share in the prosperity enjoyed by the majority of Americans.

-- But we're working hard to change that -- and I'm proud of the record of my Administration. We've created some eight million jobs since I came into office. Our health services are making stunning improvements in such things as higher life expectancies, lower infant mortality rates, and pioneering new techniques for curing diseases.

-- I could cite figures to demonstrate how much we are spending on social programs and the considerable progress we are making. Perhaps the best demonstration, however, of the attraction of the American dream of prosperity and freedom is to point to the thousands of immigrants who want to come to our shores, sometimes at great risk when they leave their native countries.

-- We are working hard to eradicate poverty, feed the hungry, house the homeless, to find jobs for the unemployed. We will never be satisfied that we've done enough.

-- Pointing to our shortcomings, though, doesn't relieve you of yours. Human rights is a central aspect of our relationship, a matter of deep concern to all Americans. You have international obligations which you've freely assumed. In the end, there can never be much trust and confidence between our peoples when the Soviet Union ignores fundamental humanitarian principles.