

**Anatoly Chernyaev**  
**Notes from the Politburo Session**

*October 8, 1986*

**Gorbachev.** The right [wing politicians] are concerned about Reykjavik, they are intimidating Reagan. Once again we hear appeals to expand the borders of freedom, once again they are speaking of “a crusade,” threatening to send socialism to the scrap heap of history. Reagan is working on placating the right for his agreement to go to Reykjavik.

From all this, it follows that the meeting will be very difficult. We should not exclude a possibility of a failure. But Reagan understands (and information from [Pierre Elliot] Trudeau confirms this) that the line of action suggested to him by the extremists is not acceptable for the world. He sees a way out for himself in holding a meeting for the sake of a meeting.

It is important for us that the whole world is pressing for positive dynamics in international development. And we are the bearers of this positive dynamics, we support the forces of realism. It is not clear to the administration what will come out of Reykjavik, what will happen there. But the majority in America is inclined to think that nothing will happen. Nevertheless, we have no plans to get into arguments.

We will aid those forces that are represented by [Hans-Dietrich] Genscher, for example, with whom we met recently.

Let us make concessions on intermediate-range missiles, having France and England in mind. But we will insist on non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and the cessation of testing – this is what the whole world demands. No “intermediate” approaches will satisfy us.

On human rights, our starting position is the following: not to feel shy about showing what is happening in America: unemployment, poverty, lack of personal safety and property safety, drug problems, etc.; and in what direction is America pushing the world with such values. We should call things by their proper names. What you do at home is your business, but if you want to impose your ways on everybody – then it is dangerous. Let’s unload all this during the press conference at the end.

**Gromyko.** We cannot reverse our position 180 degrees. But it also will not work to talk only of equality in armaments. In America, they do not admit the existence of equality and parity for a long time now.

*[He] acknowledged that the deployment of SS-20 was a gross error in our European policy.*

**Ryzhkov.** Our biggest plus is that we made Reagan come to the summit. And he is counting on such an outcome of Reykjavik that would help him save his political face.

**Gorbachev.** People around the world are inclined to demand a constructive outcome. Reagan needs this as a matter of personal ambition, so as to go down in history as a “peace president.” The elections are just around the corner.

**Ryzhkov.** Even if our proposals are not accepted, we will have to seek solutions by way of negotiations. All three of our positions (by the strategic “triad”) are based on the January 15<sup>th</sup> Statement.

**Gorbachev.** Still, we have a defensive position on human rights. We talk more about what is going on here, but we should rather press on what they have there. And we should continue in the assertive spirit. And, of course, we need a serious analysis of the whole situation – our own, and everywhere in the world – and to have a conception of human rights.

**Ligachev.** Neither we nor America can carry the burden of arms race any longer. The situation now, a year after Geneva, is more favorable to begin disarmament: [considering] Stockholm, the non-aligned movement conference in Harare, the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] conference.

If we do not succeed with Reagan in Reykjavik, perhaps we should agree to the option of partial reductions. Would this be acceptable or not?

It is right to link strategic weapons with negotiations over testing and to the ABM.

All the same, I think that if nothing comes of Reykjavik, we should not abandon the dialogue or (*Gorbachev's*) visit to the U.S. And of course it will be very important to explain everything to the whole world at the press conference afterwards.

**Chebrikov.** A moratorium on testing... We agree on holding it for a year. But the USA needs two years just to calculate the results of the explosions they are conducting now. So they will gladly agree to it.

**Shevardnadze.** On the conventional arms the majority of Europeans support us...

**Gorbachev.** Our military speak about difficulties which would arise if we reduce or remove the INF missiles. They grudge it! However, they supported the Politburo position.

**Shevardnadze.** I would not exclude a positive result in Reykjavik, because there is a very strong pressure on the USA:

- on the ABM – they might agree to the dates.
- on the “triad” – to cut by 50% -- they might agree;
- on the intermediate range missiles... Here our weak point is the Asian rockets. We must think through all the options.

An acute domestic struggle is going on in the West and in the USA. This is why the contradictory statements.

That is why we can expect the most unexpected steps. However, any results will become a major political capital for us.

**Karpov.** Why are we against a global option on the intermediate range missiles? Do we want a “double decision” for NATO and for Asia? There are no American rockets there, only airplanes for now.

**Gorbachev.** Can we agree to 100 intermediate range missiles in the East? The US has only 10 intermediate range missiles there, although, truly, they have aircraft carriers, air bases, etc.

... Reykjavik will allow us to improve the image of our foreign policy. It will highlight its constructivism, our desire to untie the knots, to end the deadlock that Geneva brought us into. Something needs to be done on this central direction after all. It needs to be pushed forward. The United States has an interest in keeping the negotiations machine running idle, while the arms race overburdens our economy. That is why we need a breakthrough; we need the process to start moving.

... The Americans need this meeting, otherwise they would not have agreed to it. Reykjavik's timing was well chosen for many reasons. These are the alternatives we are facing: either we achieve practical results, or we expose the absence of practical policy in this administration.

They are probably not ready for the first option, but we have them on a hook – by our visit to the USA.

Our strategic goals are:

1. To remove the “Pershings” from Europe. They are a serious threat to us. This is also politically beneficial in our relationship with Western Europe.

2. Following from this is the “zero option” for Europe. If we leave 100 missiles [aimed at] Europe it will not be the same, absolutely not the same!

So for Asia we can push for 100, but for Europe – zero!

The most important task is to prevent a new round of arms race. Otherwise [we will have] – modernization of strategic weapons.

“Tridents,” “Minutemen...” entering the space with weapons. Then [we will face] a degradation of our ecological, strategic, and political security – a loss on all sides, because first and foremost it lead to a wearing-out of our economy. This is impermissible. That is why it is impermissible to cling to particulars, to details, to fail to see the bigger picture behind the details, to confuse one's own head with arguments over details.

If they impose a second round of arms race upon us, we will lose! For now we have some criteria: SALT I, SALT II... Because of the submarine, which just sank, everybody knows, everybody saw what shape we are in.

And then, inevitably, we will start to panic – “hurry, hurry up! We are falling behind!” The value of the decisions we make today is enormous for the country.

We must seek guarantees of our security on two directions:

- 1) The quality of weapons, their penetrating ability. We must succeed not through quantity. We could multiply the number of missiles and warheads a hundredfold, but to no avail! The point is not in the power of the warhead, but in having 99% hit accuracy, for 1% of the weapons we have already in enough to destroy the world.  
We already have something, which can be brought to the proper quality level.
- 2) Our reply to the SDI. There are two options – cheaper, and in a different way than the American version.

Therefore, we must not calculate our security through arithmetic. And we cannot give up our positions. We can take very brave, decisive steps. As a last resort, we could do more work on the intermediate range missiles in Asia. We must have a backup plan: after the main conversations with Reagan, to suddenly offer him Asia as well...

Our positions are honest, even before the Americans.

#### *Procedural Questions*

1. Where should we conduct the concluding press conference, considering the time difference? I think there [in Reykjavik]! The Americans are afraid of publicity in these matters.
2. About informing the socialist countries. Where? I think in Warsaw, at the foreign ministries level.
3. The date of my visit to the USA?
4. We must not end the press conference on a pessimistic note, so as not to give an impression that we came there for nothing. We should address Reagan, saying: think it over, consider everything. We will be patient.
5. About grain deliveries – weave this into the context of the meeting.
6. About human rights. We need some “acceleration” here: to put an end to the routine and take this problem off the Central Committee’s shoulders, and to get our departments moving. Let the Ministry of Interior look into it, what do they have there... Open the way

back to the USSR for thousands of emigrants. Get the return flow in motion; there are already some who came back. Receive them at Gromyko's, Shevarnadze's. We need to be more upbeat about these things, more upbeat!

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