

Anatoly Chernyaev's Notes

Conversation with Gorbachev.

November 17, 1986.

GORBACHEV: We should not allow an impression to be created that something is not working here or there. It is clear that now we cannot go below Reykjavik, and the Americans will not go above Reykjavik. They are exploiting the fact that we have superiority in conventional weapons. I see this as an effort to lead the disarmament discussion away from the main issue. And the main issue for us is to decrease the [level] of confrontation. And not to allow them to impose their definition of the situation on us.

Now we should emphasize contacts with big figures. I should go to Europe to meet with Thatcher, and with Mitterrand. Shevardnadze should also go [abroad] more often. We should oppose the SDI by all means. We should expose the American demagoguery to the effect that the Soviet Union can only think about security in the context of offensive weapons, while the USA are standing by a defensive concept (SDI).

We should never let it slide if we notice that they are trying everywhere, under every pretext, to aggravate the situation. As soon as some hopeful development appears, for example with the Middle East conference, they try immediately to undermine it. Right now we have big reserves in our foreign policy. We propose a noble and honest cooperation. The attractiveness of our ideas, of our peace-loving policy will work, but we have to use our brains and to think big. The American administration is attacking Iran, Lybia, Nicaragua. By doing this, they are also trying to switch the world politics away from Reykjavik. We have to be vigilant.

I want to give an interview to Der Spiegel.

*Source: Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation
Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya
For the National Security Archive*