

Excerpts of the Russian Transcript of the Summit

From a conversation with US President Reagan on May 30, 1988

Gorbachev: We consider it very important to have a decision on the ratification of the Agreement on medium and short-range missiles by the time of our meeting. An exchange of ratification documents of this Agreement will be an important political element of the Moscow summit, it would testify to the progress in the process of real disarmament.

[...]

We are ready to continue our work with you on the issue of strategic offensive weapons. Particularly, we are ready look for a solution to the issue of sublevels combined with the issue of mobile ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles]. I think that if we combine these two problems we will find a solution to them. I would like to point out that while you are concerned by our ICBMs, we are concerned by your submarine missiles and we deem it necessary to set a sublevel for warheads for this kind of missiles. I think that if we can resolve the issue of mobile ICBMs by determining quantitative limits and developing methods of control, then together with this decision we could find a resolution to the issue of ICBM warhead sublevels. Let our experts work on this problem.

[...]

The issue of sea-launched cruise missiles is key. Since Reykjavik we have assumed that it has to be resolved in the context of SNF [strategic nuclear forces]. This has to be done. We understand that sea-launched cruise missiles are not included in the SNF ceiling levels; it is a separate issue which we still have to closely connect with 50 percent reductions of SNF. If these reductions take place without the resolution of the sea-launched cruise missile issue, then the doors will be left open to continue the arms race in a different direction. This would discount the SNF agreements, and the enormous amount of work that has been done on these issues...

I understand that America's power is to a large degree based on your naval forces, and that you need these weapons. We do not want to act like people who do not see or understand anything. However, we hope that you will also be able to understand that it is impossible to resolve the issue of reducing SNF without an agreement on sea-launched cruise missiles. Let us look for this agreement. I think we have an understanding that we need to establish a ceiling for this type of missiles and it would be very important if we could agree on the ceiling while we are here.

As for air-launched cruise missiles, my colleagues tell me that we have some progress with this question and that we could come to an agreement.

[...]

I will tell you this about the Krasnoyarsk radar. Firstly, we have frozen the construction of this station, no work is being done there. Secondly, your scientists visited the site and saw that it is not what you think it is. And thirdly, we are ready to dismantle the Krasnoyarsk radar if the Soviet and American sides come to an agreement on the issue of ABM. At the same time I have to mention that you have a number of proposed radars that we have raised questions about. You know what I have in mind.

In a word, I propose to continue the discussion of the entire body of these questions, including the American side's suggestions about information sensors.

More about verification. I think that we need to overcome the resistance of American naval forces on this question.

You always said that you are for the strictest verification, that you are ready for any kind of verification. And now we are persuading you to agree to this kind of verification.

[...]

We support universal verification, which would extend to ships, planes, and mobile missiles, the area where they are stationed, etc. And please do not use the private property excuse. What difference does it make to us whether missiles or some other kind of weapons are manufactured by the state, a cooperative, or a private enterprise? The main thing is that they are being made...

[...]

We are proceeding from the idea that we should have universal conventions, and, accordingly, universal verification. This should be the subject of future negotiations.

[...]

Moving on to another question. The American side has proposed the idea of signing a separate agreement on notification of the launching of ICBMs and sea-launched cruise missiles not only outside of the national territory, but also within the country's borders.

Shultz: Launching any ballistic missiles.

Gorbachev: We can agree to that. At the same time we ask the American side to consider our proposal.

Thus, we will work out an agreement here on the notification of launching ICBMs and sea-launched cruise missiles and sign it in Moscow. This will be an important step. For my part, I would like to propose that we assign our experts to make an agreement, or at least start

negotiations in Moscow, on notification of launching sea and air-launched cruise missiles; and the simultaneous takeoff of heavy bombers, let's say 100 heavy bombers. After all, when 100 American or Soviet heavy bombers are airborne, there might be a question or a doubt whether this is an exercise or an attack. Further, we should agree to notify each other of strategic exercises, also to come to an agreement on the ban on low trajectory ballistic missiles. By the way, this is an American idea. We think that an agreement on these questions would allow us to increase predictability, lessen the threat of nuclear war, and strengthen strategic stability.

Thus, we propose to develop an agreement based on your proposal and to assign our experts to study the questions we have raised.

Carlucci: Regarding the low-trajectory missiles: you are proposing to ban research and development in this area, or to notify each other when they are launched?

Gorbachev: We are proposing a ban on low-trajectory missiles. Let us discuss this proposal, since it was originally offered by the American side. Let us see whether right now you will accept your own proposal. I hope that you will.

Shultz: Do I understand correctly that you are prepared to sign here an agreement on notifying each other about the launching of ballistic missiles?

Gorbachev: Yes, we are prepared to sign it.

Shultz: As for the other questions, for example the notification about the takeoff of 100 and more heavy bombers, we can agree to study them and possibly some other similar confidence-building measures. Do I understand you correctly?

Gorbachev: Yes, we are proposing to study these questions and come to agreements, if not now, then later.

Carlucci: What about the ban on low-trajectory missiles?

Shultz: As I understand, this question is to be studied.

Reagan: I think that the signing of such an agreement will testify to the progress that has been made as the result of the talks on SNF.

Gorbachev: Right now I propose to discuss the question of conventional weapons and forces in Europe. In general, the matter is moving in the right direction. In the nearest future we could agree on a mandate for negotiations on this issue. We only have to decide on the subject of the negotiations. E.A. Shevardnadze told me that on the 11-12 of May he and the Secretary of State Shultz seemingly found an answer to the issue of the subject of negotiations. The sides agreed that the topic will be conventional armed forces and conventional weapons and technology; and no conventional armed forces, weapons, or technology will be excluded from the negotiations, because they can be used together with the conventional and other ammunition.

Nuclear weapons will not be included in the negotiations. It was decided to give this wording to Vienna. If the American side is ready to confirm this agreement, then we are ready to discuss how to reflect this in our joint document. I think this would be very important; it would practically solve the mandate problem.

[...]

We propose to conclude the discussion of the negotiations' subject and finally start the negotiations. There would be three stages in these negotiations. At the first stage, we would reveal and liquidate imbalances and asymmetries. In order to achieve this we would like to offer a new proposal right now: to conduct a review of base data through on site inspections immediately at the start of the negotiations, in order to eliminate the differences in estimates. At this stage the sides would decide on ways to liquidate imbalances and asymmetries, the methods of reducing armed forces under strict control.

At the second stage, after the imbalances and asymmetries have been liquidated, the sides would reduce their armed forces by about 500 thousand men each.

At the third stage, the armed forces of both sides would be structured strictly for defense purposes, so that they would not have the capability for offensive operations. At all the stages of the negotiations we are ready to mutually reduce offensive weapons—strategic nuclear weapons, striking aviation, tanks. We could discuss measures like the creation of corridors that would not have nuclear weapons and that would separate our troops.

This is our logic. I do not understand what might be objectionable in it. What does not suit you? What is keeping you from seriously discussing these questions? I do not think that anything should hold you back. Why then is the question of conventional weapons still used as a red cloth against a bull? I think if you behave like this, you are working for propaganda, not for politics. There are many propagandists around us, but we are politicians. If that is the case, I am sure that we have a basis for serious statements that could be agreed upon here, in Moscow.

[...]

Did you take note of the fact that we are proposing to conduct inspections to review base data at the very beginning of the negotiations. This would allow us to determine the appropriate numbers, asymmetries, imbalances, etc.

Overall, it seems to me that something may be hatching here. But it is important that it is something good...

[Source: The Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Fond 1, opis 1., Translated by Anna Melyakova for the National Security Archive]