

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SYSTEM II
90543

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: The President's Meeting with Monks in Danilov
Monastery (U)

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
The President
The First Lady
Secretary of State George Shultz
General Colin L. Powell, National Security
Advisor
Thomas Griscom, Director for White House
Communications and Planning
Jack Matlock, U.S. Ambassador to Moscow
Rudolf V. Perina, Director for European and
Soviet Affairs, NSC Staff (Notetaker)
William Hopkins, Interpreter

USSR
Metropolitan Filaret
Archimandrite Tichon
14 Unidentified Monks

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: May 30, 1988, 2:28-2:47 p.m.,
Father Superior's Residence, Danilov
Monastery, Moscow, USSR

After the President delivered his prepared remarks, the press was asked to leave and an unidentified monk delivered a message of greeting to the President. He said that the monastery wished to greet the President on behalf of all members of the Russian Orthodox Church, which had traditions dating back a thousand years. He said that when the grace of the Holy Spirit acted in the hearts of people, the world would be saved from destruction. The President had come on a mission of peace, and if the Summit meeting advanced the cause of peace, Jesus Christ would be present. He concluded by asking God to bless the Summit and to fulfill the prayers of both Russian and American Christians that this mission of peace be successful. ~~(et)~~

Archimandrite Tichon then asked to say a few words about the members of the monastery. He said they included people of varied ages; he himself was 40 years old but some were older and some much younger. Some were still in religious schooling. He briefly introduced each of the monks present and their duties in the monastery. ~~(et)~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR

CONFIDENTIAL RELEASED

F92-004/2 #11

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DATE 8/29/00

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

2

Tichon went on to say that he had earlier served at a different monastery. But the year before he had been appointed Abbot of Danilov Monastery. Restoration of this monastery had been underway since 1983, with the intention to complete as much of it as possible in time for the Millenium celebration of the Church. The restoration was financed by contributions from believers, both money and precious objects which they donated for this purpose. The government was now returning other monasteries to the Church, and several had been returned just in the past year. (C)

Tichon added that the monastery was grateful for the visit by the President and believed the President's mission would contribute to peace. He said that the problems which the President had mentioned in his prepared remarks were at present finding satisfactory solution. He concluded by saying that he prayed the President's talks with General Secretary Gorbachev would prove successful. (C)

In response to Tichon's mention of his (Tichon's) age, the President quipped that if anyone was self-conscious about age, they should remember that he had celebrated his 39th birthday 38 times. (U)

Tichon asked the President if he had any questions. (U)

The First Lady responded that she would have a question. She said that, out of curiosity, she would like to know if those present believed that the Church in Russia would ever be free of the state. (C)

Tichon responded that the Church was separate from the state under the constitution. Both Church and state had their own responsibilities: the Church to teach the faith, and the state to lead the political life of the country. (C)

The First Lady asked if believers and non-believers in the Soviet Union would ever have equal opportunity for advancement in life. (C)

Metropolitan Filaret said that this was what the Church hoped for. It was hoped that, after the meetings between the President and the General Secretary, all such problems would go away. The First Lady said she hoped so also. (C)

The President said he had already discussed this subject with General Secretary Gorbachev. The United States was one nation under God, but church and state were totally separated. The government could not interfere in the affairs of churches in any way. (C)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Filaret said it was the same in the Soviet Union by law, but the Church was trying to make sure that the law would be fully implemented. ~~(S)~~

The President said he hoped the Church would win. Filaret concluded the meeting by saying that Christ would win. ~~(S)~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~