

Politburo, February 25, 1988

On the outcomes of Shultz' visit to the USSR

Gorbachev: We should lay the foundation for the SNF Agreement while Reagan is in office. He is also striving for this. He needs results from his visit to Moscow. Right now we have entered a level of relations with the United States at which we have not been for many years.

During the discussion of the relationship between the SNF and space, as well as the SDI, somebody turned toward the idea that it is easy to find a solution in the military-technical sense, but from the political point of view we cannot come to an agreement. We had to remind this colleague that we are doing politics here, that we will not get far with technocratic approaches. We all have to think politically, although of course we will not be able to do without a scientific military-technical analysis and prognosis. For example, what is the SDI—is it a bluff, or a reality? An accurate answer will allow us to develop the only right policy. Right now this question is strongly tied to domestic policy, as well.

Yes, we have achieved a military-strategic parity with the United States. Nobody calculated what it cost us, but we should have. Now it is clear that without a significant reduction in military spending we will not be able to solve the problems of *perestroika*. Parity is parity, and we should preserve it. But we also have to disarm. Right now we have an opportunity to do so, because politically we have entered a new situation in our relationship with the United States.

We need to preserve a high dynamic in the negotiations over disarmament questions. We have a vital interest in securing *perestroika* through foreign policy. Security will always be in the first place for us. Pacifism is unacceptable. But the point at issue is that we need to clearly realize the enormous significance of foreign policy for the success of *perestroika*.

In turn, *perestroika* and its success will change people's perception of the security issues and break down the stereotypes of reckless and oftentimes pointless disposal of means on military needs. The security of our nation plus the living conditions of our people—this is the equation that we should constantly keep in mind.

We can argue, we can make mistakes, and we can even do some foolish things. But we will pull *perestroika* through if we do not lose the support of the people. We will even deal with such problems as Nagorno-Karabakh, which is nothing short of one of the delayed action mines that were laid in the preceding years.

The disarmament question connects two psychological factors. On the one hand, a secure peace (people still remember 1941!); on the other hand, people have already had a taste of *perestroika*, they've felt the breath of a new life and the perspective of prosperity. This is why the problem of adjusting military spending while maintaining security is the problem of problems. There cannot be any disregard or underestimation in this matter.

What have the recent years shown from the perspective of evaluating the possibility of adjusting military spending? We see, for example, that the West is not afraid of our bombs. This is not what scares them. They are scared by *perestroika*'s success. But if millions of people were afraid of the bombs, only a small circle is afraid of *perestroika*. This is our chance, a colossal chance for our true intentions to be understood. I am not even mentioning the fact that in these almost three years we have come a long way: we've learned a great deal, we've gotten used to many things, and understood the meaning of cooperation. Besides, we are not the only ones experiencing difficulties. They also have difficulties, which are also related to the arms race.

They are also realistic. That is why they understand that they have to conduct affairs with the USSR in a new way.

Let's give an order to thoroughly analyze what it means to have a strong modern army, what it means to safeguard security, and what the qualitative aspect of security is. When we calculate all that, we will reduce all the rest. We need to economize and economize, and create a new budget for the 13th five-year-plan.