

## Session of CC CPSU Politburo, April 16, 1987

### Once again on the outcomes of Margaret Thatcher's visit

Gorbachev. Remember how long we debated whether to invite her or not? Now we can say that we made the right choice. The visit and the dialogue with Thatcher follows our line. The main strength and main object of our foreign policy right now is the United States. Nevertheless, we know that the European direction is key. It is in our interest to raise the British role in international affairs. This has an impact on France and Germany. Kohl felt what a dumb move he made with his statement (*compared Gorbachev to Goebbels – A.Ch.*)<sup>1</sup>. He regrets it now. He's repenting. The Italians are afraid that we may get closer to the FRG, etc. We should never forget that everyone has their own interests. We thought that the dialogue with England would be the most difficult one. But now we see that it was doable.

Two things played a role here. Great Britain seems to be a sidekick to the United States. But Thatcher sees that Reagan is getting old, that Mitterrand is in opposition with Chirac, and that Kohl is in a sticky situation. So it is her chance to stand out, plus there is the confrontation with the Labour Party. Here she also needs a win. So she had a complex goal for the visit. We calculated all of this and created a tough but constructive tactic. We started a dialogue. Everything happened as we anticipated.

She appreciated the speech at the reception. The speech had some metal in it, but in nice packaging. The conversation was conducted in the same manner: taking account of the realities and emphasizing the need to get rid of 1940s thinking.

During the talks in the Kremlin there was a moment when I felt the approach of a political fight. By lunch break she was in a very agitated state. She got offended. I was even afraid that there would be no continuation of the talks. During lunch at the embassy, to which representatives of our social society were invited, she complained to them.

She prepared for the visit thoroughly. She spouted strong arguments: they freed the colonies, withdrew the troops, and provided assistance. She is an audacious woman; she acted as if she were in her own parliament. You couldn't see this in any theater. She didn't look at any notes, either. Only when we were talking about missiles she referenced the calculations.

In a word, we did the right thing by inviting her. We have to see what is in the minds of these people. The French and Germans are not ready to defend the interests of the West like this, while she took this role upon herself. At the same time, she is acting out of the desire to raise her authority by dealing with Moscow. Unlike Mitterrand, she cannot hide her true thoughts and intentions. She is clever, but audacious. And her interest in what is happening in the Soviet Union is real, and very strong. It is a genuine interest. She connects it to her own foreign policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Note by Anatoly Chernyaev.

It was important for her to see how the Soviet leadership builds its internal policies, and to draw conclusions regarding how domestic policy affects foreign policy. She came in contact with our people. And it made a strong impression on her.

She met in a narrow circle with representatives of the intelligentsia. She wanted to find out this way the mood in our society, the attitudes towards *perestroika*. She came in contact with our people; she wanted to decide for herself what the USSR is right now. This was the most important thing for her.

In this sense, dear comrades, we can see how important everything that we are doing right now is. Including from the point of view of international relations.

She is a fervent anti-communist, but in the end she agreed: live as you wish. She said this to me back in Chequers. I reminded her of this phrase. However, she started denouncing communism. Nevertheless, she recognizes the Soviet Union's choice, but does not rule out criticism.

She failed in her goal to expose human rights violations in the Soviet Union. And probably unexpectedly to herself, she said too many positive things about us.

Something happened inside her. She got a huge impression. And right now, in this state, she probably began to think. She is hardened, convinced, and cluttered with stereotypes. But she hasn't lost the ability to look at things realistically.

After the first day she was almost ill. Everyone noticed it when she returned to the embassy. They say she was in a state of panic, she fussed, which is unusual for her. She did not want her visit to be called a failure.

The main conclusion for us is that Thatcher puts trust at the forefront in international relations. She argued adamantly that the Soviet Union undermined its credibility: "We do not believe you," she kept telling me. "You very easily make decisions—on Hungary, then Czechoslovakia, then Afghanistan. We could not imagine that you would enter Czechoslovakia in 1968. But you did. You brought your troops into Afghanistan. We are afraid of you. You were warned what effect the introduction of "SS-20" missiles would have on Europe and their trust. But you installed the missiles."

So, comrades, this feeling is strong in Western minds. And the Military-Industrial Complex, which needs new appropriations, is not the only factor in the arms race. There is also this fear of the Soviet Union.

She told me that we are raising a ruckus around the world. At this point I really gave it to her. I told her in the end that we don't want to undermine the North-South, East-West relations. But we are against plundering the third world. Let us look for a solution. Thatcher did not want

to delve into the roots of these conflicts. This confirms the line of the “G-7,” which wants to continue plundering.

When we came back to the question of trust, I told her about New Thinking. I added that we are sincerely on the side of liberation movements. In this sphere I could not see any progress on her part. She kept bringing up the “Brezhnev Doctrine.” But somewhere, I think in Georgia, I believe she said that Gorbachev is moving away from “socialist expansion.” Of course, she reminded me about the Baltic States, which we “occupied.” I reminded her that the Baltic States became a part of Russia under Peter I.

On the topic of trust I raised the issue of conventional weapons, but I saw that she, and the West, needs them to dominate the third world. They will hold on to this. So it will be very difficult to reduce conventional weapons. And, of course, her position in favor of nuclear weapons is like paranoia. I simply shamed her. I told her that her position goes against worldwide sentiments. The U.S. and USSR are beginning a process of disarmament; we are upholding a moratorium, while Great Britain does nothing. How do you appear in the world public opinion?

We need an intermediate stage for nuclear weapons. I saw this from my arguments with her. She wants to carry everything as a block. She blames any delay on us. She does not want to give everything to Shultz if we work something out with the Americans. The Americans could meet us halfway, especially if we offer an intermediate stage. Reagan’s personal ambitions are playing a part here. She is ready to negotiate on intermediate-range missiles, but ties them to operational tactical missiles.

The fact that we published both her speeches disarmed her. She became convinced that *glasnost* works. How much stink would there be if we had cropped anything out of the text!

In general, the fact of her visit in the current international atmosphere can be reduced to this formula: those who do not have relations with us lose credibility at home. Kohl, for example.

Our dialogue was at the level of representatives of great powers. This was right, and had an impact on her. It is also important that Thatcher practically supported the *perestroika* policy. The Americans are calling this her biggest mistake. We criticized her, rebuffed her, but without hostility.

Overall conclusion: it seems we did not really gain anything from her visit, but we did not lose anything either.