1. On the practical implementation of and practical support for the results of the visit of Cde. Gorbachev M.S. to the U.N.

Gorbachev: [….] We can state that our initiatives pulled the rug from under the feet of those who have been prattling, and not without success, that new political thinking is just about words. The Soviet Union, they said, still needs to provide evidence. There was plenty of talk, many nice words, but not a single tank is withdrawn, not a single cannon. Therefore the unilateral reduction left a huge impression and, one should admit, created an entirely different background for perceptions of our policies and the Soviet Union as a whole. [….]

Such impressive positive shifts created among the conservative part of the U.S. political elite--and not only in the U.S.--concern, anxiety and even fear. Thatcher also shares some of it. This breeds considerations of another kind, the essence of which is to lower expectations, to sow doubts, even suspicions. Behind it is the plot to halt the process of erosion and disintegration of the foundation of the "cold war." That is the crux of the matter. We are proposing and willing to build a new world, to destroy the old basis. Those who oppose it are in the minority, but these circles are very influential.

In the classified information that we receive, they speak directly: we cannot allow the Soviet Union to seize the initiative and lead the entire world…

[….]

What kind of policy will the U.S. conduct with regard to us? There are several very interesting and serious possibilities […]

Here is one: changes in the policy of the USSR are caused by the profound crisis in communism and socialism, and what is happening in the socialist world and the Soviet Union is allegedly a departure from these ideas. In other words, we are dismantling socialism with our perestroika and renouncing communist goals. This version is being used to devalue our peace initiatives. These are just forced steps, so they say, they do not have any other way to go. Well, there is some grain of realism in this, but only to a degree. We had something different in mind when we formulated our policy. Of course, we considered internal needs as well.

On the basis of this version comes the conclusion that the United States should do nothing for its part to consolidate the positive shifts in international relations. The Soviet Union, so they say, as well as other socialist countries, have no way out. [The USSR] will give up its positions step by step. This is serious, comrades. The Washington Times is writing about it. And the Heritage Foundation prepared a recommendation for the future Bush administration along these lines.

And here is the viewpoint of the liberal circles: The USSR is not renouncing socialism but is rescuing it, as President Roosevelt once rescued American capitalism through the New Deal. They remind us that capitalism, to solve its problems, many times borrowed socialist ideas of planning, state regulation, and social programs based on the principle of more social fairness. So they do not want to allow the Right to play on their version and to devalue our peace initiatives.

[….]

If this [conservative] version prevails, it will have a serious political effect. Incidentally, some elements from this concept are present in the thinking of [George] Bush, as if they are passing from Reagan to Bush. They are present in Western Europe: they say that under Reagan the United States has built up its military potential, activated its support to freedom fighters in various regions, and thereby convinced the Soviet Union that an expansionist policy has no future. Some Europeans also want to see the source of change in Soviet policy as emanating from American power.

This seems to be the most influential current. In essence, it is close to the official viewpoint. Its harm is obvious, since, if it takes root and is laid in the policy foundation of the future administration, it will contribute to the arms race and to military interference by the U.S. in other countries. I am now following these things very closely. [….]

Now we should work out a longer-term plan of practical measures to implement the announced concept [at the U.N.] On this issue the Politburo has received considerations from departments of the CC, Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Defense, and the Committee of State Security [KGB]. They provide a program of actions for the near and long term. Perhaps this is still a first draft. We should put our heads together and give it time. […]

Among the things that were discussed during my stay in New York, the major issue was the future of perestroika. And this I would like to emphasize before the Politburo. Could there be a turn backwards? Incidentally, this is an object of most intense speculation among the Far Right. […] And if you analyze the content of recorded foreign broadcasts in the languages of our country on all foreign stations, the emphasis is clearly on the difficulties of perestroika, on growing obstacles to the process in the economy, in relations among nationalities, in the process of democratization and glasnost, etc.

When I had to stay in isolation [during the trip], I tried during those twelve days, day by day, to analyze and systematize the materials on this score and to give them my assessment. [Radio voices] are hammering away at the Soviet audience that perestroika is losing ground, grinding to a halt, that it has not given anything to the people, that chaos reigns in the leadership and the party, and that the country is sliding toward chaos. No matter what the leadership undertakes, it will sooner or later end up in a trap. And the future of the present leadership hangs by a thread. To be frank, they say that Gorbachev is living through his last days. According to most optimistic forecasts, he may have a year, or a year-and-a-half. True, Vladimir Alexandrovich [he addresses Kryuchkov]?

Kryuchkov: People say many things.

Gorbachev: You do not want to speak up. It is so. I should not say we are very surprised by all this. I do not want to be excessively cheerful, but if they are upset, if they try to make these forecasts, it means that they are afraid of our perestroika. [….]

Of course, it is still premature to draw serious conclusions about the policy of the future administration, but something can be said on the basis of contacts and certain information. First, it is hard to expect that this administration will aggravate relations with the USSR or will get involved in some risky international venture that could undermine these relations. There seem to be solid grounds for saying this. On the other

hand, comrades, I believe with full certainty that the administration is not ready for a new, serious turn in relations with the USSR, which would be adequate to the steps our side has undertaken. At least such is the picture today. So they say: we will remain prudent, we will not hurry.

Still, at the last moment, when I managed to tear myself away from Reagan, I spoke to Bush about this indecisiveness. He snapped back: you must understand my position. I cannot, according to American tradition, come to the fore until a formal transfer of power has taken place. This I understand, no question about it. We will have an understanding. And he assured me--there will be continuity. He believes we should build on what has been achieved and will make his own contribution.

All that we picked up from different channels says that from their side they will augment the efforts to develop our relations.

We should take into account that Bush is a very cautious politician. They say that his idiosyncratic feature is the "natural caution" of Bush. It is inside him. We should see it. And what can make Bush act? Only [the threat] of a loss of prestige for the administration. So we need [these sorts of] circumstances, which we have now created through our initiatives, to promote this process.

The mood of the present administration mostly reflects centrist sentiments in U.S. political circles. And Bush himself says: I am in the Center. Most of those who today turn out to be on Bush's team are people who are called traditionalists in America. These people were brought up in the years of the Cold War and still do not have any foreign policy alternative to the traditional post-war course of the United States with all its zigzags to the right and to the left, even with its risky adventures. And we should understand that. And much will depend on how we act. I think that they are still concerned that they might be on the losing side, nothing more. Big breakthroughs can hardly be expected. We should produce smart policy.

[Georgy] Arbatov has just shared the following ideas. They [the Americans] have suddenly sent a trial balloon: we are not ready; let's wait, we will see. In general, they will drag their feet, they want to break the wave that has been created by our initiatives. In response they heard that, of course, we could wait because we have much to do in other directions--European, Asian, Latin American. Then they say: Well, you misunderstood us.

So we should have a thoughtful, dynamic, practical policy. We cannot allow the future administration to take a prolonged time out and slow down the tempo of our political offensive. […]

[….]

Shevardnadze: [….] There is a draft resolution [on point 1 of the Politburo agenda]. Of course, I do not consider it a final draft. We will have to work on it [….]

It is not true that the draft has not been cleared with the Ministry of Defense. The reasons are well known: comrades were not in place, only Comrade Lobov[1] was present and all these issues, all these points we agreed on with him. We went to him, obtained his

[1] Oleg Lobov, Chairman of the Security Council

signature, etc. But this is not so important. I am worried about something else. What, for instance, does the Ministry of Defense propose in its report? To present data to the Supreme Soviet only after their discussion by the Defense Council and the Politburo, etc. Should we do that, if we are getting ready for a new Supreme Soviet with a new status, new rights, new content and forms of its work? I believe it should not be done.

I have serious reservations about a proposal that the Supreme Soviet receive information only about the main lines of a military build-up and not the plans of this build-up, as the draft suggests. This may result in a lack of any details in the Supreme Soviet's discussion of this issue and in the same negative consequences we have already spoken about. Specific plans will continue to be adopted and implemented in secrecy without the Supreme Soviet. We should probably not let that happen. It is absolutely unclear how the Supreme Soviet, without information on specific plans, will be able to consider seriously and approve defense expenditures. This is a very serious issue. It is also hard to understand the reasons for the objection to these clauses of the [Foreign Ministry's Politburo draft resolution] where it speaks about the presentation of a plan and schedule for withdrawal of our troops from Allied territories and about the discussion of this with our friends.

As far as I know, a specific schedule for withdrawal has not been discussed in the Committee of Ministers of Defense [of the WTO]. We should have plans [for agreeing on a withdrawal with the Allies], we should agree on them with the Allies and announce them publicly so that everybody knows about our firm intention to carry out what was stated at the United Nations, in a systematic, purposeful and orderly way. Otherwise, if everything is to be decided, as the comrades [from the Ministry of Defense] write--in the usual course of business, we will become a target for allegations that we are trying to sidetrack the issue of withdrawal [from Eastern Europe] and troop restructuring, and not to do things as was announced from the podium at the General Assembly.

The following moment [in the proposals of the Ministry of Defense] is in direct contradiction to what was said from the Assembly's podium and to the clause of the [Foreign Ministry] draft resolution. I have in mind the formula of the Ministry of Defense that [Soviet] forces that will remain on the territory of socialist countries after [unilateral] cuts will adopt a more, I stress, more defensive bearing. These are just words, but they have significance in principle. Cde. Gorbachev spoke about giving these forces a different, unequivocally defensive structure. This is an important and big difference. We will be caught at every turn, so to speak. And now they propose that we talk not about structure but about some kind of abstract direction. Behind this difference in terminology stand various methods of implementation of the general secretary's address. In practice we should act in accordance with the speech at the U.N., so that deeds do not diverge from words.

I also cannot agree with how the draft of the Ministry of Defense treats the issues of glasnost and openness, which are today of principal importance, of the highest importance. When we carry out our unilateral steps, glasnost and openness will be maximized, in my opinion. Otherwise the desired effect will be lost, and, it seems to me, our policy will sustain a propaganda defeat. Our opponents will not hesitate to take us up on this and to sow doubts [to the effect] that the announced steps are not being implemented in full.

[The military] proposes not a maximal level of openness, but a level that would be acceptable. What that means--acceptable openness--is not clear. Even more important is that even this acceptable glasnost and openness are suggested to be applied only to the withdrawal of our troops from Allied territory. As to reduction measures on our territory, apparently no glasnost is admitted. This is probably wrong as well.

In general, my conclusion is that the amendments [to the Foreign Ministry draft proposed in the Ministry of Defense's] draft resolution, in particular to the military-political section, are designed not to allow genuine glasnost and openness. And I still believe that these issues are of great importance.

In conclusion, Mikhail Sergeyevich, several words. You spoke about certain informational reports [….] They want us to be nervous. And look at them, they are serious people, serious politicians […]

Gorbachev: Yesterday in the morning [U.S. Ambassador Jack] Matlock asked for a meeting with [Alexander] Yakovlev and arrived. He listened to a broadcast from Leningrad, inspired by comrade [Iurii Filippovich] Soloviev [First Secretary of the Leningrad Party Organization]. During this program the chairman of the Administration of the GDR also spoke and said that one should keep in mind the plots of the imperialist intelligence services and their subversive activities against perestroika. Well, Matlock then said: "I have a special request from my leadership, both the current and the future one, to declare that we support perestroika."

Shevardnadze: You know, sometimes we help ourselves discredit certain foreign authorities. We found an analysis of this fellow, Kissinger. Look what remained of his theory after your speech.

Gorbachev: Nothing remained.

Shevardnadze: If one says, another, a second, a third, we should not take it as absolute wisdom. I think we should treat it more seriously.

Gorbachev: We get used to the fact that in our country if someone speaks up it is not necessarily an official viewpoint. And there they just prattle on, you see.

[….]

Gorbachev: When we discussed [alternative military service] at the Defense Council and even considered it at the Politburo, we spoke about a reduction of troops by five hundred thousand. Then, in order to resolve the issue with students, we said: add to these five hundred another hundred thousand to remove the issue of enlistment of students, but let's continue talking everywhere about five hundred thousand. These five hundred [thousand] are army troops, and one hundred [thousand] are construction troops. Eduard Amvrosievich [Shevardnadze] would like to announce the figure six hundred thousand, and I told him--no, because when we start comparing numbers of troops, they will always poke their finger at the fact that these are construction troops, and we will insist that they are not. Therefore, officially we speak about five hundred thousand.

[….]

Yakovlev: Yesterday I met with Matlock. He told me that Bush is more professional, better informed, but at the same time is more cautious. He tried to convince

me that he always took part in the preparation of specific decisions, was interested in details, and knew many--i.e. he cast the new president in the best possible light.

What else should we keep in mind in terms of putting pressure on the Americans? They are very afraid of our European and Pacific policies. They would not like to jump on a departing train, not to mention a runaway train. They are used to driving the engine. They are upset by our active foreign policy in other regions [….]

Most important, Mikhail Sergeyevich--you spoke many times about this--is the disappearance of the image of the enemy. If we continue to advance in this direction and we carry out this business, we will ultimately pull the carpet from under the feet of the military-industrial complex [of the United States]. Of course, the Americans will be forced radically to change their approaches.

[….]

Yazov: In accordance with the decision of the Defense Council taken on November 9, the Ministry of Defense has already worked out the plans for withdrawing our troops from the GDR, ČSSR, HPR and PPR.

After your speech at the United Nations, I attended a party conference of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany. There was not a single question or a provocative remark. Fourteen people spoke, and all accepted this with approval. On Saturday I was at a conference in the Kiev district of Moscow. There was the question: "Would the withdrawal affect preparedness for defense?" I answered. There were no more questions, everyone reacted with understanding. The entire armed forces of the country regard this with understanding. In the Committee of defense Ministers held in Sofia, all the ministers accepted it with understanding.

I believe that we are ready to report to the Defense Council on our plans for implementing the proposals that were announced at the United Nations.

The Ministry of Defense does not object to publicity of the issues of military build-up in the Commission of the Supreme Soviet. But while according to the Constitution, the Defense Council exists I believe that all the issues should be considered at the Defense Council before they are moved to the Commission of the Supreme Council. I do not know why Cde. Shevardnadze disagrees with this. Before Mikhail Sergeyevich presented these proposals at the United Nations, this issue had been considered by the Defense Council and over here at the Politburo. How could it have been otherwise? The Americans do not let us know everything either. What we really want to learn from them we cannot buy for any amount of money in the world. And why should we pass everything right away through the Commission of the Supreme Soviet? Today the Commission of the Supreme Soviet will include a very broad circle. And not everybody should know everything.

Gorbachev: I think it is a misunderstanding [....] There are many things that Americans consider behind closed doors.

Yazov: Absolutely true.

Gorbachev: There are things that the Congress does not even consider. They can be carried out at the discretion of the president and the National Security Council.

Yazov: Now, on the formula about our defensive direction. In his speech Mikhail Sergeyevich has mentioned cuts by 10,000 tanks. In doing this, we have to touch on all troops that are located in the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany. We have to include our tank divisions [in the reduction]. There are motorized regiments in tank divisions. We intend to preserve these motorized regiments, and to remove tank regiments from the tank divisions that will remain in Germany so that more tanks can be withdrawn. In this situation should we really reveal the entire structure only because we want more glasnost?

I believe that is the prerogative of those countries which provide their territory for our troops. In any case, we will reveal what can be revealed, but it is not necessary to go all the way.

As to the schedule for withdrawal, we are ready to make a report on it. We propose to withdraw three divisions from Eastern Europe this year and three divisions next year.

As to the part concerning the USSR and Mongolia, we are also prepared to report to the Defense Council regarding the schedule.

Ligachev: I would like to mention two or three circumstances [….] In a word, perestroika in international relations is very substantial. Meanwhile, it does not lose its class character, which was stressed by Mikhail Sergeyevich in his report at the XIX Party Conference. At the same time, we spoke, and justifiably so, about the priority of common human values, common human interests. I believe that if it were not for the common interests of the countries that belong to different social-economic systems, there would be no unity of action. There is apparently a common interest in the following areas: the huge burden of military budgets, this is felt by the socialist world as well as by the capitalist world. Issues related to the survival of humanity and ecological problems have become burning issues. All this, taken together, and above all our policy of initiatives, have led to some changes for the better. This is the first point I wanted to mention.

The second point: foreign policy is a very large complex of issues. The most important among them is disarmament. […]We need disarmament most of all. We took such a burden upon ourselves with relation to the military budget that it will be difficult to dramatically solve anything in the sphere of the economy; plus, sometimes we took on this burden without sufficient grounds for it. I've already mentioned this before.

But this does not mean that we should weaken the country's defense preparedness. We have enough ways, approaches, and means to reduce excessively large military expenditures and to use rationally, pragmatically the means for strengthening the nation's defense readiness. We should tell the party and party activists about this. Today, when the world has already begun to disarm, slowly but surely, in the final analysis the power of the state will be determined not by military might but by a strong economy and by the political cohesion of society.

[….]

Vorotnikov: […] I would mention only one point. You, Mikhail Sergeyevich, in your speech have emphasized an ambiguous approach to perestroika and the reaction in

capitalist circles, including the United States. But even in the socialist countries we run into serious problems.

Maybe in our draft resolution we should formulate the course for our policy towards the socialist commonwealth after all? Indeed, there is nothing in the draft besides [the point about] telebridges [telemostov] that should be arranged with socialist journalists. I consider the situation in a number of socialist countries to be so complicated that we should clarify our thinking in one document or another. This flows from your speech.

Gorbachev: Comrades, let us call it a day. Our campaign, which we had prepared for so long and have implemented, has generated much publicity. It elevates us to a new level in our thinking and work. [….]

I think that our resolution encompasses in general all these areas [political, diplomatic, ideological follow-up]. But the comrades should read it once again. Perhaps they will add something useful to it or suggest some corrections.

I also have two points to add. Vitaly Ivanovich [Vorotnikov] said that people ask around the country and even at home: how did it come about that we are once again "stripping down" of our own accord? And Yegor Kuzmich [Ligachev] approached this theme from another angle: the party should know. We are still keeping it a secret, frankly. And we keep this secrecy for one reason: if we admit now that we cannot build a longer-term economic and social policy without [unilateral cuts], then we will be forced to explain why. Today we cannot tell even the party about it. First of all, we should bring in some order. If we say today how much we remove for defense from the national revenue, this may reduce to nothing [the effect] of the speech at the United Nations since a situation of this sort does not exist in any other country. Perhaps only in poor destitute countries, where half of their budget goes for military spending.

Shevardnadze: For instance, in Angola.

Gorbachev: Yes. But there the budget and everything is different. We are talking about another story. If we take this [glasnost] approach now, then [people] will tell us: your proposal is rubbish, you should cut your military expenditures by three-to-four times. How do we go about that, comrades? First, in our plans we build in military expenses that are twice as large as the growth of national income; then our national income turns out to be down the tubes; yet we stick to our military plans. So put two and two together about what is going on here. For that reason we should be patient for a little bit longer. But you are all correct--we will have to speak about it. Meanwhile, only in political sense. […] By the time of 13th five-year plan, Yuri Dmitrievich [Masliukov], we will implement all these decisions and will have something to say. Then our expenses on this item will be somewhat closer to the American expenses.

[….]

A lot of work should be done on the issue of our [military] grouping in Eastern Europe. We should do it in a systematic way. I know that all these proposals are in preparation for the Defense Council. We agreed to hold [a meeting] in early January and to discuss all these issues. […]

[….]

Let's finish our exchange. It was necessary. This is really large-scale policy-making. I propose to instruct Comrades Shevardnadze, Zaikov, Yakovlev, Yazov, and Kamentsev V.M. to finalize the draft resolution of the CC on these issues, keeping in mind the discussion at the Politburo.

Members of Politburo: Agreed.

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