Anatoly Chernayev's Notes

Gorbachev's Instructions to the Reykjavik Preparation Group

October 4th, 1986.

We must find such an approach that would allow us to pull Reagan into the conversation, so he would agree on directives to the negotiators. It seems we could achieve something, although most likely nothing can really be done with this administration. Europe, the world community and the [U.S.] Congress are putting pressure on Reagan. [Pierre Elliot] Trudeau [Canadian Prime Minister] warns us that we will not be able to come to an agreement with Reagan, who is a product of certain forces, and who has been appointed and sponsored by them. But, he says, you are doing the right thing and have already reached the ears of the [U.S.] Congress.

In order to move Reagan, we have to give him something. Something with pressure and break-through potential has to be done. We have to decide for ourselves what is realistic, in what the USA is bluffing and what they are ready to do, what we can get out of them right now. To do this we must come back to our strongest moves in the recent months.

If we fail, then we can say – look, here's what we were prepared to do! We must place strategic weapons, not nuclear testing, as the top priority of our push-and-breakthrough position. Strategic weapons concern everybody most of all other issues. And we must emphasize that we are proposing the liquidation of nuclear weapons, which we already discussed with the President in Geneva. The talks must be devoted precisely to this goal. We should link this position with my January 15th statement.

Our proposals are: to reduce every type of nuclear weapons by 50% in the first stage. There is something that the Americans do not like about this. They are holding on to 30% and so far are not linking this to anything else. We have to secure our agreements in such a way that the negotiators would receive directives to balance the different structures of weapons and other details. We should not link this position with space [issues].

About intermediate-range missiles: we got pulled into [discussion] of possible options on this issue. But we have a strong position here – to remove all intermediate-range missiles from Europe. I repeat, this is a strong position. Everyone understands that 100 missiles are enough to [blow up] all of Europe and a large part of the Soviet Union. The pivotal idea in the course of all

talks must be: are we planning to go to war?! We, the Soviet Union, are not planning to go to war. That is why we are acting like this. Your optimal American position is not optimal for me, Gorbachev, so to say. I am for having no missiles at all, although we are not touching France and England [French and British missiles] for now. We can begin the talks on nuclear artillery tomorrow, if you like.

I repeat, the leitmotif is the liquidation of nuclear weapons, and the political approach prevails here, not the arithmetical one.

We must bring out the ABM [anti-missile defense] issue and link it with the ban on nuclear testing. How do we approach this? Start with the fact that up until now orders to resume talks on a full testing ban have not been issued. Are the Americans going to join the moratorium or not? We will not raise this question for now, as well as the question whether we ourselves will resume [the testing]. Because if we sit down at the negotiating table with a goal to reach an agreement within two years, why would Congress assign money for this. But if the testing is stopped and we do not pull out of the ABM treaty (beyond laboratory experiments), it will be a blow to the SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] and to the prospects of space weapons development in general.

Take a look at what can be achieved as a result of such approach.
[The Americans] will seize [the issue of] the strategic weapons, but might not meet us halfway on the ABM issues. But if they agree not to pull out of ABM, then the talks will have some potential.

If we start from the assumption that someone is planning to wage a nuclear war, then it is a whole different matter. We surely are not planning on it. If one wants to conquer the world, then let us discuss everything precisely from those positions. Then everything we said about politics can only be discarded. As far as parity is concerned given the differences in the types of weapons, it is a technical military issue.

I summarize:

1. Preparation of a [draft] agreement based on the maximum program. My ultimate goal is the liquidation of nuclear weapons.

2. Complete liquidation of INF in Europe, with the understanding that we will conduct separate negotiations concerning the missiles in Asia.

3. To prepare an agreement on the ban on nuclear testing with the goal of making it impossible to put nuclear weapons in space.
Not to get involved in the discussion of "thresholds." The whole world is in favor of banning nuclear weapons, [so] coming out with a half-way proposal would mean that we are retreating. By doing that we would only instigate further modernization of nuclear weapons.

The format of negotiating directives. They must be prepared for the General Secretary, not for comrade Karpov [a Foreign Ministry representative who led the Soviet delegation at the Geneva talks on strategic weapons.]. If Reagan does not meet us halfway, we will tell the whole world about this. That's the plan.

We should not arouse big hopes for Reykjavik in the press, but for ourselves first and foremost keep in mind the task of knocking the Pershing II's out of Europe. It is a gun pressed to our temple.

Chebrikov. Our main approach is political... The Americans' aim is to push us toward interim solutions. I would not use the term "concession." We are looking for ways to reach agreements, but instead we should look for ways to mount a broad political attack on the US administration. There is a huge distance from Reykjavik to a real agreement. Therefore, maybe now is not the time to get involved in arguments over numbers: 1600 missiles, etc. Right now is not the time to do arithmetic.

And one more important detail: the ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles] have the widest range; the Americans know their location. The second part of the triad is the aviation. It is also targeted on the airfields. It is more complicated with submarines. But the INF are mobile [weapons]. And the Americans do not know for sure where they are located at any particular moment.

Gorbachev. How do you explain that they are pressuring us particularly about the ICBMs?

Chebrikov. I am not saying that we must by all means hold on to the INF. But we must keep in mind that we would be left without weapons that are not targeted. Also, why do they not stop the testing? Perhaps they invented some new type of weapon? We also need to search for our own thing, rather than make scrap metal. We cannot do that without testing.

Gorbachev. What about the methods of rapid deployment?

Zaikov. I cannot imagine that after January 1st the USSR would resume testing. I cannot imagine it. The world will not understand us.

Gorbachev. As far as the SDI is concerned, I will tell Reagan in Reykjavik that our response will be effective. And not from the direction, from which you, so to say, expect it. I will look him straight in the eye as I say this. If you do not meet us halfway, well, then my conscience will be clean before you and before myself. Now I have to explain to my people and to the whole world, why nothing worked out between us. I regret very much that we wasted the time.

Our position will be the following: if there is no agreement about directives for negotiations, there will be no Gorbachev visit to the States. This is a hook on which we can hold Reagan.

By solving these problems, we will not weaken our security, but rather strengthen it... if, of course, we achieve what we have agreed on here. It would strengthen our security significantly. But all of us – myself, the Politburo, and the MFA – must understand that nothing will come out of it if our proposals lead to a weakening of US security. The Americans will never agree to it. Thus the principle is as follows: increased security for all along the way toward equal reduction of armaments levels. We will remove the intermediate-range missiles, which serve as a political dictate for Western Europe, and at the same time we will create a better situation in the military sphere.

Our goal is to prevent the next round of arms race. If we do not do this, the threat to us will only grow. And if we do not compromise of some questions, even very important ones, we will lose the main point: we will be pulled into an arms race beyond our power, and we will lose this race, for we are presently at the limit of our capabilities. This is especially so because we can expect Japan and the FRG to join the American potential very soon. That is why it is most important is to prevent a new round of arms race. This is the criterion right now for developing stable and equitable solutions. If the new round begins, the pressure on our economy will be inconceivable. That is why to avoid the new round of arms race is the task of tasks for us.
I have read everything available on the SDI. We should concentrate all our resources on the development of our own anti-SDI [system], [we should] give people material incentives. We must

not allow the US superiority in this issue. So far, from what I have read up till now, and from what was reported to me, I see that we can reach the result with smaller expenditure. If the Americans do not accept an agreement, then we will tell them that we will be looking for a move, which they do not expect. Prepare the position as I explained it to you, as materials for conversation with Reagan. Prepare draft directives for the ministries on possible outcomes of Reykjavik, and also [draft] positions on all other questions: regional, chemical weapons, and human rights.

Chebrikov, Zaikov, Kovalev, Chernyaev, Akhromeev were present.

Additional Reykjavik instructions to Chernyaev.
Evening, Saturday, October 4th, 1986.

Gorbachev. We need assertive human rights material. If Reagan raises this issue from the start, we should immediately go on the offensive. I could say that I, Mr. President, am also very concerned about the state of affairs in the United States. And present a concrete list of issues, in particular: the homelessness, unemployment, gangs, lack of safety on the streets, treatment of colored people, violation of human rights in third world countries. I will tell him that his concern is a result of misinformation. You misinform your population and try to misinform us. Let us talk seriously: we will stop silencing "The Voice of America." But let us agree that our voice should reach America as well, since you have freedom of information.
On bilateral relations. Count up everything, what we have and what we do not have. But the question of bread import may come up. Think about how to present it.
On organization of the trip. Prepare to make a statement at the airport, a courtesy visit to the Icelandic authorities on the day of the arrival; but decline lunch politely.
Give instructions for the steamships that should go there in advance, where the entire Soviet team will be staying.
Conduct talks with the mayor of Reykjavik. Tell them that Raisa Maksimovna will be coming. A cultural program for her is at the discretion of the hosts: everything that they offer.

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