

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: President's Telephone Conversation with Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Rudolf V. Perina, NSC (Notetaker)
Dimitri Zarechnak, State Department
(Interpreter)

General Secretary Gorbachev
Unidentified Soviet Interpreter

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: January 23, 1989, 12:33 p.m. - 12:46 p.m.
Oval Office

The President said he appreciated very, very much the cordial message of congratulations which he received from the General Secretary. He said this was a thank you call to express his appreciation.

General Secretary Gorabchev said he welcomed the call and was very pleased to speak on the telephone with the President. He again wished to congratulate him on his inauguration.

The President thanked Gorbachev and said his intention was to go forward as they had discussed on Governor's Island. He was undertaking policy reviews immediately which would come up with ideas on how to improve the bilateral relationship and the policies started by President Reagan. He could assure the General Secretary that there would be no unnecessary delay. He just wanted to take a new look at policies and would then be ready to move forward as quickly as possible for both sides.

General Secretary Gorbachev thanked the President for his words. He said that, for his part, he wished to reaffirm all that they had discussed on Governor's Island. Everything he had told the President remained valid. General Secretary Gorbachev said that he had familiarized himself with the President's speech and found new elements that were of interest and importance in it, especially on the subject of U.S.-Soviet relations. Combined with what the President had just said, it strengthened his conviction that the two would expand relations and build upon the assets which already existed.

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The President thanked Gorbachev and said he had just two points to make. He wanted the General Secretary to know that his son and grandson had been deeply moved by their visit to Armenia. This had not been a political trip but rather a way to express how Americans felt about the enormous tragedy in Armenia. The President said he and Mrs. Bush were very grateful for the warm way in which their son and grandson had been received.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he wished to confirm that this very human gesture had been very well received by the Soviet public.

The President thanked Gorbachev and said his second point was that the General Secretary had been very generous in his time with Henry Kissinger. General Scowcroft would be inviting Kissinger to the White House in the next few days, and they would listen attentively to what Kissinger reported. They would not necessarily believe everything because this was, after all, Henry Kissinger but they knew that the General Secretary had been generous with his time, and they would listen attentively to what Dr. Kissinger said.

General Secretary Gorbachev thanked the President for this information and said he hoped that the President would find something of interest in what Dr. Kissinger reported.

The President said he had one last point. He hoped that Jim Baker, after consulting in Europe with Allies, would be able to establish a relationship with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze along the lines of the one Secretary Shultz had had. The President said that Jim Baker was very close to him, and a good working relationship with Foreign Minister Shevardnadze would benefit U.S.-Soviet relations.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he understood fully and would do everything in his power to assure that the relationship between the two foreign ministers would not only be maintained, but also expanded and multiplied.

The President thanked Gorbachev and said he looked forward to working with him to strengthen world peace.

General Secretary Gorbachev said the President could rely on full cooperation from him in this effort. Everything which they had discussed remained valid. The Soviet side would proceed from a position of realism but also see the broad perspectives and try to act in a manner which benefited both the Soviet and American people and the world community as a whole. General Secretary Gorbachev said he had heard that at 7:30 that morning the President had sworn in his White House team. He sent regards to all these people, and thanked the President for his call. He also wished to pass sincere regards from him and Mrs. Gorbachev to the President's wife Barbara.

The President thanked Gorbachev and said that his wife looked forward very much to getting to know Raisa even better. The two would get along very well.

General Secretary Gorbachev said he was very pleased by their conversation and wished the President all success in his activity.

The President thanked Gorbachev and wished him good-bye.