

THE WHITE HOUSE  
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Gorbachev

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

President Gorbachev  
Anatoliy Chernyayev, Aide to the President

DATE, TIME June 1, 1990, 11:00-11:48 a.m.  
AND PLACE Oval Office

President Gorbachev: This visit is a major event. The atmosphere is important. The meeting with Congressional leaders led me to believe there is now a new atmosphere. My contacts with ordinary people show a real change for the better. Thanks for your cooperation--you can count on mine. (S)

I told Congressional leaders we were worried about the trade agreement. We looked on it as an organic part of the summit--equal with START. These two were the principal pillars of the summit. Business people have been visiting--they now feel they have a chance. In practical terms, an agreement would not cause much of an increase in real trade for years. But an agreement would let a serious business effort begin. The Japanese and Germans, who are everywhere, would not have a monopoly. Of course, we could say that since we are working well with the Europeans, why worry about a trade agreement with the U.S. I am looking to the long term. Our long-term relations cannot thrive without a trade underpinning. (S)

The President: I agree. (S)

President Gorbachev: Moreover, we are moving to a market economy, closer to the U.S. If this visit included an agreement, this would be an important political signal. I wanted to emphasize these points. (S)

The President: What you said last night made a real impression on me. Here is my letter to you (President read the letter). The letter has never been made public. I wanted to explain to you how our political process works. You think Lithuania is an internal matter, but it has a real impact on my political situation. We want a trade agreement. It is in the U.S., and I hope, in the Soviet, interest. If not for Lithuania we wouldn't be discussing this issue at all. I was hopeful when you sat down with Mrs. Prunskiene. You heard Mitchell and his linking it with the People's Republic of China. What you saw was political

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linkage. How do we get out of it? (S)

President Gorbachev: I didn't feel Congress had a real cerebral problem with it. I talked with Bentsen also who was positive. (S)

The President: If a dialogue went on, and the blockade were lifted, the agreement would go through in a minute. The only hangup is Soviet economic might being used against Lithuania and the absence of dialogue. I understand why you can't have us in your internal affairs and I don't want to. But it is a dilemma. I know Congress. I know I can't get it through Congress with the present situation. (S)

President Gorbachev: We have each made our points. I can't force you to agree with my points. You have chosen the Baltics over me and let's leave it at that. (S)

The President: But what are the chances of getting talks going? You have said you would do that. (S)

President Gorbachev: As I told Congress, I favor a dialogue within a constitutional framework, but I won't talk outside of that framework. I want to return to the original situation and proceed toward discussing proceedings. I have some more words. Lithuania is progressing toward some kind of dialogue when I return. (S)

The President: Maybe we can discuss this tomorrow. Because of history, we have a special problem with Lithuania. We want a trade deal. I don't want to publicize any conditions because that makes it look like I am dictating to you. But there is no point in sending up legislation and having the hell kicked out of it. (S)

President Gorbachev: OK. I see you have given thought to this. I see no way to work harder. We are without a trade deal today and have been without a trade deal for many years. This is not a life and death issue. But everyone knows a trade deal was part of our summit. So we have some explaining to do. (S)

The President: I know. They were yelling at me yesterday. It troubles me because I want this summit to be a success. Let's try to work it out. (S)

President Gorbachev: It is more my problem. I have explained it to you and know it is in your hands. (S)

The President: Let me ask about my April 27 letter. I wonder whether you actually saw that letter. Our bureaucracy..... (S)

President Gorbachev: Mr. President, I read everything. (S)

The President: OK. Last night, you didn't seem to be familiar with it. (S)

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President Gorbachev: It can't happen that a letter from the President of the United States wouldn't be shown to me. They would not last on my staff if that happened. Let us say our concerns about the Baltics are as deep as yours. We want to find a solution because otherwise it would be a blow to Perestroika. But life is not always under our own control. (S)

The President: Let me give it some more thought and we will discuss it again tomorrow. (S)

- End of Conversation -