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Anatoly Chernyaev's Notes from the Politburo Session

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Summary:

Anatoly Chernyaev's notes from the Politburo session on comments by Gorbachev on his meeting with the Trilateral Commission regarding the integration of the Soviet Union into the world economy and the possibility of a united Europe

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Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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Gorbachev is speaking about the Trilateral Commission, with which he met ([former US Secretary of State Henry A.] Kissinger, [former French President Valéry] Giscard d'Estaing, [former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro] Nakasone). It [the commission] is interested in everything that is going on, especially in our country. It is working on all issues of European world policy. I would emphasize two issues.

First is how are you—meaning we, the Soviet Union— going to integrate into the world economy? These issues are [being] considered in the Trilateral Commission. If you are going to integrate, we should be ready for it, they said to me.

Giscard told me directly that for us (the USSR) this problem would be extremely difficult, but for them as well.

Second issue. They are coming to the conclusion that the biggest fights of perestroika are still ahead of us. And in the international sphere the main problems for us will emerge in the Third World. They think that the West “lets the Third World live,” and the Third World, in turn, “lets the West live.” But how are we going to deal with the Third World? They believe that in 10-20 years we all will have to deal with a federation of states named Europe.

Kisa [Kissinger] just shrugged at this statement by Giscard, and asked me a direct question: How are you going to react if Eastern Europe wants to join the E[uropean] C[ommission]? It is not an accident that they asked me about it. They know that our friends are already knocking on the door. And we should also look at what processes are going on there now—the economic and the political—and where they are drifting.

What is going on in Hungary, for example? An opposition party led by [Miklos] Nemeth has emerged there. Hungary is on the eve of a serious choice. Of course, it will be different. And I think that every country should have, and has, its own face. And we will continue to be friends, because the socialist basis will be preserved in all of them. The roads of our development will be very diverse, while we will preserve our commonality. We need a mechanism that will ensure our mutual understanding and interaction. There will be a lot of political, economic, and military-political questions. We should consider them in the Central Committee's Commission on Eastern Europe. We should undertake situational analysis with scholars. For example, how would we react if Hungary left for the EC? Comrades, we are on the eve of very serious things. Because we cannot give them more than we are giving them now. And they need new technologies. If we do not deal with that, there will be a split, and they will run away.

And then there is the question of what we should present to the working groups of the leaders of the socialist countries. By the way, let the Commission give us a substantiated answer whether we need this meeting at all. Before it, we should work out what we can give to our friends, and compare it with what the West can give them.

The answer to this question, I am sure, lies with our perestroika, with its success. And we should try to involve our friends, to get them interested in our economic reforms. Let [Aleksandr] Yakovlev, with scholars, look at it. We are facing a serious problem there.

The peoples of those countries will ask: what about the C[ommunist] P[arty of the]

S[oviet] U[nion], what kind of leash will it use to keep our countries in line? They simply do not know that if they pulled this leash harder, it would break.

It is time to transfer our relations to the forms that we practice in our relationship with China, but we can get to such forms only via the market, and, of course, via technological and scientific developments in our own country.

In that case, we would break the old rule that we keep them attached to us only by means of energy resources.

At the same time, we cannot just tell them that we would cut the deliveries. That would be a betrayal.

Kisa hinted at the idea of a USSR-US condominium over Europe. He was hinting that Japan, Germany, Spain, and South Korea were on the rise, and so, let us make an agreement so that the "Europeans do not misbehave."

We should work on this range of issues also, but in such a way that it would not leak, because in Europe they are most afraid of that what they understand the Reykjavik summit means. And if you remember, in Reykjavik they saw an effort at conspiracy between the USSR and the USA over Europe.

My impression from the meeting with the Trilateral Commission is the following: they understood in the West that the world needs a peaceful breathing spell from the arms race, from the nuclear psychosis, as much as we need it. However, we need to know it all in detail in order not to make mistakes. They want to channel the processes in such a way as to limit as much as possible our influence on the world situation, they are trying to seize the initiative from us, present criteria of trust as tests: if the Soviet Union would not want to agree to something, we would act in a way to gain more points.

That is why we have to keep the initiative. This is our main advantage.