

August 29, 1985

**Meeting of the Politburo of the CC CPSU, Regarding
Yelena Bonner's Request to Travel and Andrei
Sakharov's Situation**

Citation:

"Meeting of the Politburo of the CC CPSU, Regarding Yelena Bonner's Request to Travel and Andrei Sakharov's Situation", August 29, 1985, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 53, Ll. 1-14.

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Summary:

The Politburo discusses whether to permit Bonner to visit the United States to receive medical treatment and visit relatives, a decision complicated by concern about the potential risk of an embarrassing uproar if her request was denied barely two months before Gorbachev's planned summit meeting in Geneva with Reagan.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Top Secret
Single Copy
Working Notes

MEETING OF POLITBURO OF CPSU

29 August 1985

Chair: Com. GORBACHEV. M.S.

Present: Comrades Aliev G.A., Vorotnikov V. I., Ryzhkov N.I., Chebrikov V.M., Shevardnadze E.A., Demichev P.N. , Dolgikh V.I., Kuznetsov V.V., Solokov S.L., Yeltsin B. N., Zaikov L.N., Zimyanin M.V., Kapitonov I.V., Nikonov V.P.

I. Concerning the results of the meeting in the CC CPSU on the question of formulating State plans of economic and social development of the USSR in 1986 and the Twelfth Five-Year Plan

GORBACHEV: I won't touch on all the issues that were discussed at the conference in such detail, because the majority of the comrades were there. Now it is clear that we acted correctly by having such a conference. At the April Plenum of the Central Committee and the June meeting of the CC CPSU the party developed a conception of acceleration of the social-economic development of the country and marked out the principle path of its realization. The people fully supported the party's course. The tension and vitality of party life has increased, as has all social life of the country. In such a case we have the right to calculate that the results of the work to accelerate economic and social development will be reflected in the first year of the Five-Year Plan. It was emphasized that the views of some ministries and departments in developing the plans for next year and the Twelfth Five-Year Plan have aroused concern in the Central Committee. We are asking our comrades to leave their department's trenches and approach the development of plans from an all-union position.

SHEVARDNADZE: One observes a huge contrast between the mood of society and the actions of the U.S. administration.

GORBACHEV: As a whole the discussion was heated, but constructive.

Now a few works on another subject. At the end of July 1 received a letter from the not unfamiliar Sakharov. He is requesting that his wife, Bonner, be allowed to go abroad to undergo treatment and visit with relatives.

CHEBRIKOV: This is an old story. It has been going on for 20 years. During this time various situations have arisen. Appropriate measures were employed in relation to Sakharov and Bonner. But no actions were permitted which would have violated the law. This is very important and should be emphasized.

Sakharov is now 65 and Bonner is 63. Sakharov is in poor health. He's undergoing oncological tests because he has been losing weight.

Sakharov as a political figure has basically lost his image of late and has been saying nothing new. Bonner should probably be allowed to go abroad for three months. According to the law, it is possible to interrupt the exile for a short period of time (Bonner, as you know, is in exile). Of course in the West, she could make a statement and receive some award, etc. We cannot exclude the possibility that from Italy, where she's going to obtain treatment, she could go to the U.S. Allowing Bonner to

go abroad would have the appearance of a humanitarian step.

Two variants of her future behavior are possible. First, she returns to Gorky. Second, she refuses to come back and begins to raise the question of reunification of the family, which means giving Sakharov permission to leave. In this case, appeals from Western officials and even some representatives of the communist party could follow. But we cannot let Sakharov go abroad. Minsredmash [Ministry of Middle Machine-Building] is against this because Sakharov knows in detail the entire path of development of our atomic weapons.

According to specialists, Sakharov could continue to work in military research if he would be given a laboratory. Bonner has a strong influence on Sakharov's behavior.

GORBACHEV: Now there's real Zionism.

CHEBRIKOV: Bonner has a 100 percent influence over him. We believe that without her his behavior will change. He has two daughters and a son from his first marriage. They behave well and can influence their father.

GORBACHEV: Is it possible to do things in such a way that Sakharov would state in his letter that he understands that he cannot go abroad? Is it possible to convince him to make such a statement?

CHEBRIKOV: We must resolve this question right now. If we make this decision prior to or even right after your meetings with Mitterrand and Reagan, it will be seen as a concession, which is undesirable.

GORBACHEV: Yes. We should make a decision.

ZIMYANIN: No doubt that Bonner will be used against us in the West. But the rebuff of her attempts to reunite with her family could be handed over to our scientists, who could make the appropriate statements. Comrade Slavsky is correct — we cannot let Sakharov go abroad. And you can't expect any kind of decency from Bonner. She's a beast in a skirt, an imperialist plant.

GORBACHEV: What will hurt us more—to allow Bonner to go abroad or to forbid it?

SHEVARDNADZE: Of course there are serious doubts about allowing Bonner to go abroad. But all the same we will win politically. We should make a decision now.

DOLGIKH: Is it possible to influence Sakharov?

RYZHKOV: I am for allowing Bonner to go. It is a humanitarian step. If she stays there, of course, there will be a lot of noise. But we will be able to influence Sakharov. He even escaped to the hospital in order to feel freer.

SOKOLOV: I think we need to take this action, it won't make things any worse for us.

KUZNETSOV: The case is complicated. Not allowing Bonner to go abroad could be used in propaganda against us.

ALIEV: It is difficult to give a precise answer to this question. Bonner is under control now. Anger has pent up inside her over the years. It will pour out of her once she

gets to the West. Bourgeois propaganda will have a concrete person for conducting various sorts of press conferences and other anti-Soviet acts. The situation will worsen if Sakharov raises the question of reuniting with his wife. So there is an element of risk here. But let's take the risk.

DEMICHEV: Most of all I am thinking about Comrade M.S. Gorbachev's meetings with Mitterrand and Reagan. If we allow Bonner to go abroad before this, then in the West a loud anti-Soviet campaign will be raised. So it would most likely be better to do this after the visits.

KAPITONOV: If we let Bonner out, then the story will drag out. She will have a case to unify with her family.

GORBACHEV: Maybe we will do this: confirm that we have received the letter, and say, that we have attended to the matter and given the appropriate assignments. We have to let it be known, say, that we can meet him halfway on his request to allow Bonner to leave, but everything depends on how Sakharov will behave himself and on how Bonner will act abroad. For now it is advisable to limit ourselves to this.

(Signed) A. Lukianov