

**January 20, 1987**  
**Memorandum of Conversation between CPSU  
Secretary for International Relations Anatoly  
Dobrynin and Socialist Unity Party (SED) General  
Secretary Erich Honecker in Berlin**

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**Summary:**

Dobrynin and Honecker discuss Gorbachev's recent visit to India and the preparations in Afghanistan for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

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[...]

Dobrynin: The Soviet Union's relations with India are developing to a new level after the meeting with [Indian Prime Minister Rajiv] Gandhi.<sup>[1]</sup> There was a very open one-on-one talk between the two leaders. We can even jokingly say that in some matters, he [Gandhi] had positions like a member of the Warsaw Pact.

Honecker: We evaluate highly the results of M. Gorbachev's trip to India.

Dobrynin: Two words on Afghanistan. Najib wanted to come to Moscow alone.<sup>[2]</sup> M. Gorbachev suggested meeting with the whole Politburo and to have a private meeting. Now Najib has understood that that is the correct step. He says it took him a half year to convince the others that Gorbachev had said just that. Two thirds of the Politburo were in Moscow. Comrade Gorbachev expressed a very simple thought: the Soviet Union has always been for friendship with Afghanistan. But now is the time for the Afghans to take power into their own hands, not to count on the Soviet troops, looking on as they fight. The CPSU assumes that the Afghans must put themselves into play in order to let the Soviet troops leave soon. This could happen in about two years. The Afghan comrades were at first hurt. Najib knew about it in advance, but not the others.

He agreed with M. Gorbachev and said: it will be hard, but we can do it. Now Afghanistan is in a difficult phase. Najib suggested the solution of a national reconciliation and the Soviet side agreed. To his question as to who could be brought back from the emigration, we answered that he knows best. If someone is to be brought into the government, just do it, except for the key posts. Now practically everything is agreed except for the timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. With [UN Special Envoy Diego] Cordovez, we have been talking about three-and-a-half years. Pakistan demands a period of four months. The Soviet side advised him not to even talk about such a period. He suggested 18 months. He received the reply that he should speak with Afghanistan.

The solution of a national reconciliation was a surprise for the bandits. Their leaders want to have four weeks to think about it. They don't want to take advice from anyone in this period. [US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Michael H. ] Armacost was sent to [Pakistani President] Zia Ul-Haq<sup>[3]</sup> to say it was a Russian trick. Comrade [Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly G.] Kovalev was also sent to Pakistan to explain the Soviet position.

<sup>[1]</sup> Gorbachev visited India from 25-28 November 1986; he and Rajiv spent nearly 10 hours in talks. See "Rajiv and Mikhail," *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 December 1986, p. 27; and "Gorbachev in India," *The New York Times*, 1 December 1986, p. A12.

<sup>[2]</sup> An Afghan government and party delegation visited Moscow in December 1986.

<sup>[3]</sup> Armacost visited Pakistan in mid-January 1987.