

SECRET

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MR POWELL

4 April 1989

GORBACHEV BRIEFS

In the light of our discussion with the Prime Minister yesterday, I have drafted a rather simpler and shorter series of questions on the internal situation (attached).

I also attach an amended and slightly shortened version of the speaking note on chemical weapons. It takes account of the points made by the Prime Minister yesterday. Gorbachev's original statement in April 1987 was made during an official visit to Prague. But of course it was all said again by Shevardnadze at the Paris conference on chemical weapons in January this year. A copy of Karpov's letter is also attached.

I also attach an updated and very much abbreviated version of the note on North Korea. It takes account of further developments (US/Soviet talks), of which I have just heard.



PERCY CRADOCK

SECRET

QUESTIONS FOR GORBACHEV: INTERNAL SITUATION
AND EASTERN EUROPE

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General

1. How is perestroika going? You have said that it faces considerable difficulties. Which are the greatest?
2. How long do you think you have before you have to show tangible success, eg more goods in the shops?

Agriculture

3. Are the agricultural proposals, allowing for a variety of systems from state farms to leasing, the result of a difficult compromise? Will the farmers be ready to take risks and operate the new systems?

Elections

4. Do not the recent election results suggest that people want a greater degree of pluralism? What do you intend to do with those party leaders who failed in the elections?

Nationalities

5. Will the plenum on nationalities later this year be able to lay down guidelines which will be equally valid for the very different nationality problems within the Soviet Union? Do you foresee a new federal structure? Presumably some freedom of choice will be essential for long-term stability.

6. Some other "socialist" countries, eg Hungary, are contemplating multi party systems. Do you think the need to maintain "socialism" imposes limits on this process, or could you contemplate a situation in which the Communist Party could, theoretically, be voted out of power? Does not the concept of "freedom of choice" in any case preclude the Soviet Union from taking action in such circumstances?