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Prime Minister (2)

PRIME MINISTER

10 April 1989

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GORBACHEV'S GUILDHALL SPEECH

In an uninspired speech one passage struck me, the sharp warning to NATO to drop the idea of modernising tactical nuclear weapons. I was surprised it was put so directly and wondered whether this might not prove to be going a little too far. But the speaker had judged the tolerance of our public opinion well: the point was made without disturbing the general euphoria.

The passage is, however, interesting in a number of ways:

- (a) First, as a confirmation of the steady thrust of Soviet policy towards dismantling West European defence. The objective is a denuclearised Western Europe, while the Russians retain conventional and chemical superiority, and modernise their own tactical nuclear weapons. On this last point Gorbachev told what is in effect a direct lie: "we are ourselves not modernising nor do we intend to modernise them unless we are forced to". In fact they have modernised and are continuing the process.
- (b) In a more general sense, as a warning of the shape of things to come, if we are not careful, - an illustration of the way we may expect Soviet influence to be exerted in the common European home. We shall be told that if we wish to avoid vaguely defined adverse consequences and if we wish to preserve good relations with the Soviet Union, we shall have to modify or abandon certain policies

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we have in mind. And there will be many voices on our side urging the wisdom of compliance. The Soviet government will come to establish a droit de regard over West European foreign and defence policies and from this base can hope to move on to exert a predominant influence. There will be no need to move troops; simply steady and increasing political pressure from a position of military superiority.

- (c) Finally the move is very reminiscent of Brezhnev's warnings about the adverse effects of a Western decision in favour of the neutron bomb. Plus ca change

The passage makes it even more critical that we reach an unambiguous decision to modernise at the NATO summit. We have been challenged and our will is now under public test. If we flunk this one the rot will set in and the demands will move up a notch next time.

PERCY CRADOCK

I think there are three points to be made:
- you were absolutely right to say on TV that we would not respond to this sort of threat.
- the sinking of the Russian nuclear submarine and the disturbances in Tibet are a useful reminder of the real nature of the Soviet Union.
- by making a threat, Gorbachev has actually weakened his position. CDB

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Mikhail Gorbachev's Address at Guildhall

Friday, 7 April 1989

Prime Minister Thatcher,
My Lord Mayor,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I know that it is a great honour in Great Britain for a foreign official to speak from the rostrum of London's Guildhall. I appreciate the responsibility that I assume addressing the entire British people.

Speaking from this historic place with age-old traditions I want first of all to greet the people of Britain and on behalf of my people to express respect for the nation that has given the world great authors, scientists, artists, historians and philosophers without whom it would be difficult to think of European culture; the nation of famous seafarers, inventors, workers and engineers without whom it would be difficult to think of modern civilization; the nation whose political experience has enriched the history of the world.

Speaking from this rostrum I state with satisfaction that important positive changes are taking place in relations between our two countries. Our relations are gaining in trust. I believe that their prospects are good.

I

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This building itself, which is reminiscent of so many events, brings up the thought of history. The 20th century is drawing to a close. It has been rich in tumultuous events and has truly marked a turning point in the history of the entire human civilization.

It must be a rare person who is not wondering today: where do we go from here? What lies beyond that watershed?

In recent years the awareness of the crucial nature of our time has become universal. It is associated with hope but is also ridden with alarm.

The world community stands at the crossroads of two policies. One, speaking generally, is a policy of force. It is rooted in the past.

The other policy is only now being shaped. It is sustained by the rapid process of the crystallization of the world's integrity and interdependence. The priority of universal human interests and values is its imperative.

Only very recently Soviet people have seen its highest expression in the solidarity shown by the world in response to the earthquake in Armenia.

We sincerely thank the government and people of Great Britain, all its citizens, who took our misfortune to heart, expressed sympathy and gave us support.

The present generation of political leaders are shouldering the burden of crucial choices, the burden of making momentous decisions. None of them has the moral right to shirk that responsibility.

We in the Soviet Union began by looking at ourselves. Four years ago in April 1985 we made a choice, asking ourselves the most difficult questions. We have tried to answer them honestly and straightforwardly. We have set out to reappraise our experience, our history, the world around us and our own position in it.

We have firmly opted for overcoming ossified dogmas and stale patterns of thinking and stereotypes. This has produced perestroika and the new thinking and the domestic and foreign policies based on them.

Happening in a country like the USSR, this has evoked extraordinary interest everywhere and has had an impact on the international atmosphere and the realities of the political situation in the world.

Our perestroika is the subject of hundreds of books, thousands of articles, official reports and academic studies, of debates at seminars and conferences and of radio and television broadcasts.

Even today the interest in our perestroika is not diminishing. And as I understand you expect me to answer the question of what the state of affairs is now, how perestroika will develop further, and what its chances are now?

Well, our perestroika is in earnest and for the long term. There is no turning back for anyone. The people have firmly linked their destiny with perestroika.

The election of people's deputies of the USSR, which was held in a democratic atmosphere unprecedented in our entire history, has demonstrated that Soviet people are not going to turn off the path chosen four years ago.

The battle of feelings and views, the upsurge of interest in public and government affairs, the desire to make the most of glasnost and to protect it, the variety of conflicting opinions and proposals and the concern that words should not be again at variance with deeds - all this reflects both the fundamental gains of our perestroika and the massive support that it enjoys.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union received in this election powerful support of the people.

We launched perestroika with our eyes open. We foresaw the complexity and the special nature of the process, realizing that it would shake up thoroughly our entire society.

We were not wrong about what counts most. It is also true, however, that the magnitude of many domestic problems - political, economic, social and moral - was not evident at

once but revealed itself as the process moved on. That calls for fresh approaches and solutions and most intense intellectual and practical work.

As for the difficulties - and they do exist - we accept them as a natural expression of contradictions inherent in a transition period.

None of these difficulties indicate that the concept itself of perestroika is wrong. They only accentuate the watershed character of the period we are going through, when the old ways are still alive and cannot be done away with overnight while new approaches are as yet unable to pick up full speed. Habitual structures, ideological dogmas and psychological stereotypes are being shattered.

In a situation like this, problems and difficulties are unavoidable. For it involves far-reaching changes in everything - in the way of life and in the attitude towards work and civic duty.

We have chosen, definitively and irrevocably, the route leading to new forms of life - democratizing our society in all spheres.

We are convinced that democratization will create conditions for full self-expression of the individual and freedom of thought, and that it alone will make it possible to develop the values inherent in socialism such as social protection, justice and humanism in production and human relations.

In so doing, we set our sights on the highest standards of glasnost and keeping people informed - both those that are accepted internationally and those that stem from our own ideals and cultural and historical traditions.

We are convinced that only through democratization is it possible to build a well-functioning, healthy and dynamic economy. Radical economic reform, which blends together planned regulation and the market, will help us devise a new economic mechanism, harmonize the numerous forms of socialist ownership

and economic activities, and give ample room to producers' initiative and enterprise.

We have formulated a new agrarian policy, seeking to tear down the administrative-command system in agriculture. Various forms of leasing help to restore the status of farmer-peasant, his right to be in control of land, machinery and the product of his work.

The decisions adopted are of fundamental importance not only for agriculture, but also for the social and economic development of our country as a whole and even for the theoretical concept of our society's development.

Despite the exceptional changes that our society has undergone in the last four years, despite the obvious fact that we are already living in a different intellectual and political climate, moving at a different historical pace, we still believe that this is only the beginning of the road for us. Perestroika takes time, patience, perseverance and creative effort.

We are aware that tests and trials are still ahead for us. We are faced with problems resulting from a lack of political culture and the imperfection of mechanisms that safeguard democracy and protect it against destructive, anti-social actions.

And weakness is impermissible here also because it can slow down the process of democratization itself.

We have a great deal to do in the sphere of interethnic relations. We shall do that while adjusting our federation to the processes that are under way in Soviet society.

Our fundamental principle of a strong centre and strong republics reflects the will of all Soviet peoples.

Reforming our political system is a powerful tool for tackling all those problems and implementing all our initiatives.

We are building an open, democratic and free society which has learned the lessons of its past, a society based on law and responsibility, a society that keeps its citizens well informed that rests on its citizens' initiative and enterprise, on Soviet socialist patriotism and dedication to humane socialism aimed at elevating the human being.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Perestroika in the Soviet Union is a far-reaching and fundamental process that responds above all to the needs of our country's internal evolution. However, it also mirrors changes typical of modern world in general. Self-isolation is alien to the very nature of perestroika.

At the same time we note with satisfaction that it is making a positive impact on the international scene. The democratization of Soviet society proceeds together with the process of setting democratic standards of openness in international affairs.

The policy of building a state based on the rule of law in our country coincides with the trend towards enhancing the role of law in relations between states.

Our economic reform presupposes the Soviet Union's closer integration into the world economy and may be conducive to building a truly global market and a new world economic order.

In recent years we have seen the emergence of real opportunities to close the last page of post-war history and enter into a new period of peace.

Reliance on force is a dangerous approach, which leads to an impasse. The realities of today have laid bare the failure of the philosophy of confrontation.

The decades of the Cold War have cost too dearly, both to East and West. Continuation of all-out confrontation may spell catastrophe for all.

This is the objective logic of world politics at its present stage. Our new political thinking is governed by its laws.

Its fundamentals and practical conclusions in summarized form were outlined in the UN General Assembly in New York.

Let me just recall that it sets forth the fundamental long-term course of Soviet foreign policy and a blueprint for specific measures.

We invite everyone to dialogue and interaction for the sake of survival and progress.

One can read in the newspapers every day about the various dangerous and pressing problems facing mankind. I would only point out a simple fact which is sometimes overlooked - all of them are interrelated.

It is impossible to cut this knot with a single stroke, but it can be untied. We cannot put off this common task.

We shall not be able to ensure genuine and substantial disarmament unless we make concurrent radical changes in the political climate on our planet.

We shall not be able to save the environment unless we embark on the path of disarmament and releasing resources to solve environmental problems.

We shall not be able to make the situation throughout the world healthier unless we change the nature of North-South relations.

We shall not be able to eliminate famine in the world, combat drugs, AIDS and terrorism or put an end to gross violations of the rights of individuals and entire nations until we recognize that all that is our common concern, until we rise above the narrow egoistical understanding of our interests and draw up guidelines for international interaction in keeping with the needs of today.

Recent experience testifies to the possibility of a peaceful order based on the principles of freedom of choice and balance of interests in the context of reducing weapons arsenals and lowering the level of military confrontation. We will continue to prove this with our deeds.

As I have already announced, our armed forces will be reduced by 500,000 men, which is 12 per cent of their total strength, during 1989-1990. The military budget will be cut by over 14 per cent, and the production of weapons by nearly 20 per cent. We have already started implementing this programme.

I take this opportunity to tell you that we have recently decided to cease this year the production of enriched weapon-grade uranium.

In addition to the industrial reactor for the production of weapon-grade plutonium shut down in 1987, we plan to shut down two other such reactors this and next year without commissioning new units to replace them. This is yet another major step towards the complete cessation of production of fissionable materials for use in weapons.

The elimination of chemical weapons is a most important problem in efforts to demilitarize international politics.

We appreciate the position of Great Britain which has eliminated its chemical weapons unilaterally and was the first to raise this issue at an international conference. Our bilateral cooperation has been quite good.

Soviet experts have visited the British Research Center in Port Down while British experts have visited our centre. We have completed the construction of a facility for the destruction of chemical weapons and intend to invite soon your representatives to visit it.

The Soviet Union will be vigorously working for an early conclusion of a global international convention on the complete prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

We have adopted several important decisions for the conversion of our military industries. A considerable number of military factories and design bureaus and their related research potential are becoming involved in manufacturing consumer goods, machinery, equipment and other facilities and products for agriculture and the light and food industries.

A substantial number of military transport aircraft will be used for carrying civilian cargos.

The Soviet Union has made several major steps towards transparency of its military activities.

We have already stated that we are going soon to make public our defence budget data. This will be done by the new Supreme Soviet. The difficulty here is that the non-convertibility of the rouble hampers an objective comparison of our military expenditures with those of the West. We are looking for the most appropriate way of presenting our data.

As for the numerical strength of our armed forces, I can now say the following. As of January 1 this year, they number 4,258,000 men including 1,596,000 in the ground forces and 437,300 in the Navy, while missile forces, air defence troops, the air force and combat support and logistics forces account for the rest of that figure.

After the unilateral reduction of our armed forces their total strength by the end of 1990 will be approximately 3,760,000.

By way of comparison, the total strength of the US armed forces including the National Guard (in our country similar components are integrated in the armed forces) exceeds 3,000,000. It should be noted that the strength of the US Navy is more than double that of the Soviet Union.

We have published data on the military potentials of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO in Europe. They show approximate parity.

The comparison between the armed forces of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO as a whole, including strategic nuclear forces, gives the following figures for the Warsaw Treaty Organization: 5.3 million men, 10,500 aircraft, 4,200 combat helicopters, 80,000 tanks, 160 large surface ships. NATO is superior to the Warsaw Treaty Organization in all those components with the exception of tanks.

In short, fears about the "Soviet military threat" are groundless.

Negotiations and a search for compromise between major countries involved in the protracted arms race would clear the way to a reduced level of military confrontation, fewer weapons and a less onerous burden of military expenditures.

In this regard the Vienna document and the start of the talks on reductions in the armed forces and armaments in Europe and on confidence-building measures are an event without precedent in the nuclear age. The Soviet Union is prepared to take very far-reaching steps towards a demilitarization of Europe and in the overall European process.

We are prepared to engage in a most constructive dialogue and cooperation with Great Britain concerning all matters relative to the Concluding Document of the Vienna meeting.

It is well known that we are opposed to unjustified linkages in disarmament matters. We do not make agreement on one issue contingent on a solution to another. But this is rather a problem of how best to organize the negotiating process. Objectively speaking, in our century everything is linked.

So, of course, there can be no doubt that if, for instance, NATO goes ahead with its programme of "modernizing" tactical nuclear weapons, this is bound to affect the Vienna talks, confidence-building measures and the situation in Europe in general. This is bound to devalue much of what has been achieved under the INF Treaty.

In this context it is appropriate for me to recall once again that Britain contributed to creating conditions for making the Treaty possible.

We strongly oppose any plans for the modernization of nuclear weapons. We are not modernizing, nor do we intend to modernize them unless we are made to. I believe that common sense will prevail.

We are convinced that the time has come to start negotiation on reducing Soviet and US naval forces and those of the Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Alliance.

The question of 50-percent reductions in Soviet and US strategic offensive arms continues to be on top of the agenda of our relations with the United States. We are ready to resume negotiations at any time.

As for the doctrine of "nuclear deterrence", I believe that it is high time, instead of speaking of how to "deter" others with nuclear weapons, we spoke of how to deter, to keep in check nuclear weapons themselves. It means putting an end to the accumulation and upgrading of those weapons, gradually but steadily destroying their stockpiles and ultimately their complete elimination and prohibition of their production.

We believe that it is really possible to build a safe and nuclear-free world. Undoubtedly, the road to such a world lies not only through greater openness and reliable verification. It also requires building confidence which depends on many aspects of today's international affairs.

Soviet-British relations can make a substantial contribution to these efforts. They possess an extraordinary political and historical potential supplemented by a factor which is becoming increasingly important at present - both countries are permanent members of the UN Security Council. If constructively pooled together, our efforts do not merely add up but multiply as an international factor.

Conferences on humanitarian questions and human rights could produce a major breakthrough towards new frontiers in the European process. In a few weeks time the London Information Forum will launch this series, and the 1991 Moscow Conference will conclude it.

We see areas of agreement in Soviet and British approaches towards the settlement of regional conflicts. Here, too, some experience has been gained, but what matters most is that the leaders of both countries are prepared to explore and propose in a calm and business-like manner their ideas and good offices to the parties concerned.

We are in favour of using Soviet-British dialogue for internationalizing economic problems of today's world. A conclave of several personalities, even influential ones, will not suffice for that. All have the right to be involved in matters which concern everyone.

Only common efforts on the basis of equality would make it possible to avoid disastrous upheavals in the world economy. And such upheavals may occur if we put off our search for radical and just solutions and rely on stop-gap measures.

As regards environmental issues, the Soviet Union will faithfully abide by existing agreements and cooperate in international programmes, and will soon adhere to those it is not yet party to.

I believe that in this area, too, many opportunities exist for enriching Soviet-British relations.

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To conclude, I must tell you that our relations are changing for the better.

Both our governments have put in a lot of efforts to make this happen.

We duly appreciate consistent efforts made by British Prime-Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher.

Certainly, all is not so simple in politics. Substantial differences and disagreements still exist. Problems could also arise in implementing what was agreed upon yesterday at

Downing Street. *What was meant. There might difficulties be.*

However, it is my impression that we have set the right guidelines. Horizons of trust have expanded. We have seen even more clearly that we are able to act in the spirit of mutual understanding and in a productive manner in upholding our national interests within the framework of the universal values of modern civilization.

And the fact that we are different is an incentive for exchanges, cooperation and dialogue between our two states and peoples.

It is with these feelings that we are going back to Moscow full of impressions of your city and of the people whom we have had a chance to meet during the brief time here.

At the conclusion of our stay in your country we shall visit Her Majesty the Queen.

I would like to wish all those present in this hall, all who are listening to me and all British families happiness, well-being and peace.

All the best to you!

Unofficial translation

Speech at the state dinner
at Downing Street, 10
Evening of April 6, 1989

Madam Prime Minister,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Comrades,

The talks and other events of this day will, obviously, be subjected to a serious analysis by the leaders of both countries and, of course, by political and public circles and the international press. I am convinced that they deserve it.

I can say right now that our first contact established late in 1984 when we met Mrs. Thatcher in the Chequers proved to be very viable and promising.

With each new meeting--and this is the fourth one--the Soviet-British dialogue gains in substance and importance, not only in

terms of our bilateral relations but also in European and broader terms.

The fact that Madam Thatcher and I tell each other only what we mean to say builds a stable atmosphere of trust and enhances the predictability of our policies.

At the same time, our problems and differences assume clearer outlines. This alone makes it easier for us to tackle them.

All this is extremely important at the turning point the world is going through.

Our countries' growing interest for each other, earnest efforts to really sort out internal developments, broader contacts, discarding nonsensical stereotypes, a greater tolerance of differences and peculiarities combine to become the sign of the times and indicate that relations among states grow more humanized.

That means accomodating each other. And I believe that our perestroika and new thinking contribute to that end.

In the future both in the area of Soviet-British and international relations in general the West's correct assessment of our perestroika will be crucial.

However we have noticed that as it becomes increasingly evident that Soviet society will undergo renewal according to its own choice, refusing to duplicate somebody else's models, more vigorous attempts are made to discredit perestroika.

They say that perestroika is doomed to failure and the Soviet Union will roll back. The confrontational anti-Soviet syndrome acts up again as ~~that~~ syndrome served well for some people during the cold war.

That wave coming from well-known sources will not knock us off the course we have chosen. As they say, we are "doomed" to succeed with out perestroika. And our great country has everything it needs to succeed.

The main outcome of the elections of people's deputies is that the people have voted for perestroika, and a more vigorous perestroika in the future. They have staked their future on it.

The attempts made in the West to sow mistrust in, and suspicions about, the goals and purposes of perestroika and to distort its progress are aimed at torpedoing the efforts to improve international relations.

This is why here in one of the capitals of the Western world I take this opportunity to tell you what we think about it.

We advocate that progress in Soviet-British relations should naturally fit the

all-European process and, generally, the dialogue between nations in the East and in the West, and that this progress should be a permanent positive element in the movement of the world community to a new peaceful era.

It is a question of establishing an international political and legal order which would exclude wars, violence, intimidation, aggression and expansion, which would imply unconditional respect for the freedom of choice, would be based on full equality of all and be favourable to a civilized coexistence of all nations and to their joint efforts to preclude global risks for life itself on Earth. There is just no other sensible option.

However, the problem is that there remain a no small number of people who are reluctant to give up the stereotyped perceptions of the rules of conduct in the world and the criteria inherited from the past which are

used to assess one's own actions and the actions of others.

In the course of a radical perestroika and renewal of our society we, in the Soviet Union, have generated a new unbiased vision of ourselves and the world that surrounds us. Last December from the United Nations rostrum we urged the world community to do the same.

Ladies and gentlemen, the talks and meetings with Mrs. Thatcher are not just discussions and arrangements on some specific issues, however important they may be. This is truly a dialogue, one that always addresses overall philosophical subjects and general political problems.

My impression is that today we can say we understand each other better.

Underlying this outcome is the positive experience of a long history of relations

between our two nations, in particular, between Britain and the Soviet state.

Underlying this outcome are also the lessons taught by the losses inflicted by enmity and hostility which marked whole years and even longer periods in our relations. Which means we are able to draw conclusions from the past. Well, this is of no small importance.

We are mindful of the fact that the British leadership was among the first in the West to discern the approaching big changes in the Soviet Union.

Now, too, we value the interest shown toward us, which is being translated into the growth and enrichment of British-Soviet relations.

Certainly, there remain differences, which are sometimes not insignificant, in

Soviet and British approaches to certain issues. Both in Moscow and in London this is taken into account. But both capitals seem to have learnt not to dramatize the differences but rather continue to look for points of contact while sticking to one's own convictions. And this, too, is a sign of a new quality of our relationship.

I am a confirmed opponent of nuclear weapons and strongly advocate their total elimination. Mrs. Thatcher perceives a good measure of romanticism in this approach. I cannot accept that--my position reflects the harsh realities of our time.

There are many difficulties along the road toward a nuclear-free world. Some interim stages will also be necessary. Nevertheless, it is our firm intention to work toward that goal.

The new climate in political relations promotes a situation where in business relations between our two countries as well there are signs of a turn toward greater mutual interest.

There is a no small number of problems in this field as well. We are aware of them as you are, but perestroika impels us to tackle these problems looking for considered, sound and long-term solutions.

In all areas we have much hard work to do. It is in our common interest to try to assure that our deeds are more eloquent about us than the loudest words.

In conclusion I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Mrs. Thatcher, to her colleagues and all those who accompanied us and assisted us today, for the consideration, cordiality and hospitality we all enjoyed here, in your capital.

I wish to propose a toast to the good health of the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, and to the development and expansion of relations between our two peoples and nations.