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Mr Powell NO 10.

Just received from Mr Shevardnadze's
Paris

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Eduard Shevardnadze's
Address to the Political
Commission of the European
Parliament (19.XII.89)

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I regard my meeting with you today as a sign of the times.

It shows how much has become possible today. But now we must all be ready for what will become possible tomorrow.

What, then, could become possible tomorrow? In a situation like this, the role of an oracle can only be thankless. It is therefore better to focus on the signs of the times, which, like a magic crystal, enable one to see the outlines of a previously unthinkable reality.

We have come to Brussels at a time when the Second Congress of the USSR People's Deputies is in session. The screens of our television sets reflect the extremely rapid advancement of such democratic principles as diversity of opinions and freedom of voicing them.

As Jean Monnet said, "We cannot stop when the whole world has been set in motion". But, observing the world today -- a world in motion -- it would be unfair to say nothing about the force that initiated that movement. In our country we call that force perestroika, a process of democratization and renewal brought into being by the objective requirements of our development.

This complex and contradictory process has shown to others that new times are dawning indeed and that no one would even think of trying to force newly emerging streams into old channels. If you are busy rebuilding your own house and organizing life in it on fundamentally new principles, then why should you obstruct the same kind of work in other countries?

The only thing that should worry you is the possibility that the process might lose its formative criteria, the possibility of chaos and confusion in an area that is vital for our continent and for the world.

Only with that caveat in mind is it appropriate to say that the world, having been set in motion, is moving in the right direction. My advice would only be not to make hasty statements about the end of history and of socialism.

Let us draw a distinction between a specific model of socialism, which operated in a particular country, and the socialist idea as a component part of a single process of civilization.

In the countries of Eastern Europe, as in the Soviet Union, we are witnessing the natural breakdown of administrative and command structures of social organization and the transition to democratic forms of government, which, incidentally, has been happening in other countries as well.

Today, many are trying to find the right road. Many would like to know exactly which road leads to the temple and, indeed, what kind of temple people need.

We feel that we have come close to an answer. But, in solidarity with the leaders and people of allied countries, we have no intention of giving any directions to them. Moscow does not wish to be, and it will not be, a guardian of old "standards of behaviour" to which other socialist countries must aspire. We are not directing our call for de-ideologizing relations between states to the West only. Naturally, as we and our friends have common values we remain faithful to them; however, in practical politics we do not make the ideological aspect preeminent.

It would probably be difficult to criticize us for a lack of candor and political courage. We have spoken the hard truth about ourselves. We have said the truth about Afghanistan, and about many other things. We waited for our friends to become ready to do the same. Where they preferred to remain silent, the people have now spoken.

We would like to believe that people in Czechoslovakia have understood for some time what we think of the events of 1968. The very logic of perestroika shaped our attitude to those and other events, and to the forces of retardation in certain countries of Eastern Europe.

As those countries are changing, everyone has had a chance to see that people there are completely free to choose their own path and their own methods of building a new society. Our respect for their choice means respect for full sovereignty of the countries of Eastern Europe, unconstrained by ideology; respect for their independence without precluding possible transformations in their socio-economic and political institutions.

It is notable that all of those countries have reaffirmed their alliance obligations under the Warsaw Treaty. We regard this as an important prerequisite for preserving stability in the current situation. Of course, our time calls for adjustments in the system of relations within our alliance. Modernizing its structure can only benefit our common interests. It is our view that its nature must change, with political aspects prevailing over its military substance.

This work is already under way. It became particularly active after the Bucharest session of the Political Consultative Committee, and is now nearing completion. In this context we welcome recent remarks by the US Secretary of State Mr. James Baker about the first new task of NATO, in which the military component should be reduced, and the political component reinforced.

This problem is not a momentary one. Some of its aspects can only be addressed on a multilateral basis, within the framework of agreements between military-political alliances, within the framework of the Helsinki process.

The skies have become clearer after the recent storm over Malta. Mikhail Gorbachev and President Bush at their Mediterranean meeting decided to help accelerate the pace of talks on reducing conventional arms in the zone from the Atlantic to the Urals. Both sides regard the task of completing them in 1990 as quite realistic.

That, however, does not mean that we are putting off our own tasks until some better times. In politics the best time is, I would say, the right time. So the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia will shortly begin consultations about our troops in that country, with due regard for the overall European process of disarmament.

But those are all material things. Perhaps we should also talk about concepts. After all, there has been much debate recently in the West, sparked by the developments in the East, about what is basic--the spirit or the matter, ideas or the material factors behind them.

As you have probably guessed, I shall speak of the socialist idea.

Mikhail Gorbachev's recently published article "The Socialist Idea and Revolutionary Perestroika" contains a profound theoretical interpretation of that concept in light of contemporary realities.

Without repeating myself, let me just say that the socialist idea, which accumulates people's universal yearning for equality and justice, is a constant component of civilization. As such it incorporates man's age-old dreams of a dignified life in a society that is from the start and forever free of violence, arbitrary force and the enrichment of some through plunder and the impoverishment of others.

There is probably no period in the history of mankind in which those dreams would not manifest themselves in one form or another. Historians, including Western historians, have proven convincingly that as far back as the 21st century B.C. attempts to realize that ideal were being made in the land of the Shumers. Similar things happened in the Ptolemeis' Egypt, in Ancient Rome, in China during the old era and after it, and in the State of the Incas.

The administrative and command system has distorted the socialist idea. Let us not elaborate on the reasons for it, which were both objective and subjective.

Nevertheless, it was not for the sake of distorted notions but for the sake of great ideas that millions of people accepted sacrifices and deprivations. And whatever course the events take in a particular country, we are convinced that guideposts of a socialist nature will continue to be important for those societies.

There are trends and currents of human thought which neither time nor accusations of "heresy" could ever stop. Being well aware where I am now, I would like to refer to the period of Reformation.

It is my personal view that perestroika, in addition to its other vocations, is a Reformation of the socialist idea and practice, which, I am convinced, will finally prove itself to be a genuine expression of justice, equality and freedom.

This could be an overly daring supposition, but in an interdependent and integrated world the notions that shape the bipolar view of things will gradually fade away.

I have no intention of exalting capitalism. I would not say that capitalism today is compassionate toward man or that it no longer produces profound social ills. It is beyond doubt, however, that in the more advanced countries capitalism has evolved and is now quite different from what was described by Charles Dickens or Upton Sinclair. It had to reckon with the struggles of the working masses and it wisely accepted some of their demands. In fairness let us recognize that it has adapted many of socialism's ideas and its survival owes much to that fact.

Now that socialism is evolving we are entitled to dream and speak of a time in the future which will synthesize, on the basis of universal human values, the highest achievements of the world's socio-political thought.

In the process, let every one of us remain what we feel ourselves to be. Let no one try to convert the others, to replace the export of revolution with the export of "Western values".

We remain what we are. The victims, hardships, mistakes and sacrifices have not been forgotten. The ashes of Claes are still knocking at our hearts, and we can still feel how hot they are. But the painful awareness of our past, coupled with our vision of the future, compels us to search for something that would unite different systems, a common axis of social, spiritual and material coordinates.

As applied to Europe, those suggestions, hopes and explorations revolve around a very specific and practical question. It is whether Europe should remain a zone of power poles, or it can become a polycentric commonwealth of nations and states.

I would think that what is happening these days on our continent, and what is now happening here, leaves no doubt that the second alternative is prevailing.

Europe's beauty and strength lies in its deversity, the diversity of styles, cultures and philosophies. Its identity and spirituality are a unique amalgamation of Antiquity, the Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassicist and Modern traditions. For Europe, the organic fusion of differences is not a product of eclectic imitation but a profound, essential requirement.

So the movement that is bringing us closer to each other is part of the same trend.

The agreement on cooperation between the Soviet Union and the European Communities enhances the confidence of all Europeans that a united Europe is possible, and imparts a new quality to the mutual rapprochement between the East and the West.

The processes of integration reflect an objective requirement whose nature is more than just economic and cultural but is also political and security-oriented.

We have been forgetting somehow that Europe, although divided into blocs and military alliances, is politically the most closely integrated region in the world. All European states participate in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is a forum for solving all problems and issues through a consensus.

Each of our countries has assumed certain obligations and subordinated its behaviour to generally recognized norms and standards.

Even today we can speak of the existence of certain elements of a common European legal space. We are all bound by the Helsinki Final Act, the Vienna agreement, and other accords.

Many aspects of European life are shaped by the international legal instruments relating to the post-war settlement, by the continuing responsibility of the four great powers, by the functioning of allied military missions in both German states, and by the treaties concluded by the GDR and the FRG with their neighbours.

The legal space in Europe is of such density that it is the duty of any state to act with due regard for the existing realities. Otherwise, if one tugs at any single part, one could, even inadvertently, ruin the whole structure.

More specifically I am referring to the situation around the German Democratic Republic.

The position of the Soviet Union on that score was set forth in Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee held on December 9.

We emphasize with utmost determination, he said, that we shall protect the GDR from any offense. That country is our strategic ally and a member of the Warsaw Treaty. It is necessary to proceed on the basis of the post-war realities, namely, the existence of two sovereign German states members of the United Nations. A retreat from that is fraught with destabilization in Europe.

Let me also quote another point:

We are in favour of peaceful cooperation between the GDR and the FRG based on the principles of respect for the equality and sovereignty of the two German states. As for the future, it will be shaped in the course of history within the framework of the evolving European process.

This is a clear, unambiguous and complete position. Within its bounds, let me say a few words by way of thinking aloud.

The current developments are taking place within the context of the existence of two German states recognized by the whole world and accepting themselves as such.

As part of that context, the two states belong to two different and, what is more, opposing military-political alliances.

In the future the need for such alliances will disappear but the road to that goal will not be easy. It presupposes a profound change in relations between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty, a change in the very nature of those organizations.

It is significant that the Treaty on the basic principles of relations between the GDR and the FRG, which was concluded in 1972 and is of unlimited duration, calls for only a gradual evolution of relations between the two sovereign German states, ascending step by step from existence side by side with each other to existence together with each other, and the development of closer forms of state-to-state cooperation between the GDR and the FRG in accord with the evolution of the overall European process.

I feel that this is a sober-minded view and that this prospect would best serve the interests of all European nations and of the Germans themselves. The idea of a gradual, balanced and responsible approach to the issues that arise and of intensifying relations between the GDR and the FRG has been present in statements by the leaders of both German states.

This is to be welcomed. The foundation of the development of the Helsinki process must not be either questioned or destroyed on German soil. That would be unacceptable.

The allied powers bear the obligations under the four-party agreements and decisions adopted during the war and the post-war period. They have large contingents of their armed forces, equipped with nuclear weapons, on the territories of the GDR and the FRG.

The juridical and legal realities cannot be ignored without jeopardizing the existing order of things, which for over forty years now has assured peace and security and a constructive development of relations among states in Europe.

The reversal of the historic process of development would not be in anyone's interest.

One of the principal components of the German question and of the entire European situation is the recognition of the fact that the question of borders in Europe has been solved in a definitive and irrevocable manner. Whoever would call that into question would thus close off any possibility of meaningful changes in relations between the GDR and the FRG.

Of course, each German state retains the right to self-determination. But it can be only exercised in the context of other norms and principles of international law, with due regard for the special position of the two German states and their responsibility to assure all nations of Europe and the world that a threat of war will never again come from the German soil.

Furthermore, the very notion of self-determination implies the need to exclude any outside pressure on a country. Therefore any appeals or advice "to exercise self-determination" or prescriptions as to how and when to change the GDR system of government are not only inappropriate but may raise doubts about the authenticity of the eventual allegedly free choice.

For historical reference let me recall that right until the time that the FRG was included in NATO the Soviet Union favoured a united, democratic and demilitarized Germany and was of the view that unification of the two German states was possible under certain conditions, in an appropriate politico-historical context and given a clearly stated willingness of the two German states.

Following the refusal of the FRG to accept free elections throughout Germany in 1952 and the inclusion of the FRG in the system of closed Western military-political and economic blocs, the circumstances changed. Since then new realities have evolved, which have grown organically into the new post-war European structures.

The question of self-determination of the German states has recently become a subject of heated debate. The appeals to the GDR to join the FRG have aroused concern not only among political parties and people in the GDR, who are being advised to renounce their statehood and to make the GDR a part of NATO.

The neighbours of the GDR and the FRG are also concerned. That too is understandable. Is it possible realistically to raise the issue of the modalities of reestablishing German unity or of the practical approaches to that issue while there is no clarity regarding a number of vitally important aspects?

First. Where are the political, legal and material guarantees that German unity would not eventually create a threat to the national security of other states and to peace in Europe? There has been no answer to that question.

Second. Will such a hypothetical Germany, if it takes shape over time, be ready to accept the existing borders in Europe and renounce any territorial claims? As we know, the government of the FRG has avoided answering that question.

Third. What would be the place of such a national German entity in the military-political structures existing on our continent? After all, one cannot seriously expect the status of the GDR to change radically while the status of the FRG would remain the same.

Fourth. If such German unity were to take shape, what would be the military potential of such a new entity, its military doctrine and the structure of its armed forces? Will it be ready to accept demilitarization, adopt a neutral status, and restructure fundamentally its economic and other relations with Eastern Europe, as was envisioned in the past?

Fifth. What would be the attitude to the presence of allied troops on German soil, to continued functioning of military liaison missions, and to the 1971 four-party agreement?

Sixth. How would the possible creation of such a German entity fit with the Helsinki process and would it promote a constructive evolution of that process in the direction of ending the division of Europe, excluding any discrimination in relations between European states, and further progress toward creating integrated legal, economic, ecological, cultural and information environments in Europe?

Seventh. If the German states were to express themselves in some form for initiating movement toward German unity, would they be ready to take into consideration the interests of other European states and to seek on a collective basis mutually acceptable answers to all questions and problems that might arise in that regard, including the conclusion of a European peace settlement?

The list of such questions could be continued. There are good reasons for asking them. They deal with the basic conditions for the existence and development of European nations. Surely the peoples of the Soviet Union are entitled to know what any changes in Central Europe would mean for their future and their security. We paid the price of 20 million lives for the existing European stability.

Furthermore, can the German people themselves forget the national tragedy brought onto them by Hitlerism?

As one of the allied powers the USSR cannot renounce its responsibility for the possible consequences of any particular course of events in Europe. But neither do we want to oppose the legitimate interests of the Germans, a great nation which is our close neighbour in Europe.

We wish both German states only well. With the GDR we are linked by alliance and friendship. With the FRG we are cooperating in many areas and have a wide-ranging relationship. It is based on a system of treaty obligations crowned by the historic statement signed last summer by Mikhail Gorbachev and Federal Chancellor Kohl.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, the Soviet Union will be guided by the determination, embodied in the UN Charter, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in our lifetime has brought untold suffering to mankind".

This is precisely the situation where the legitimate interests of some nations should not be juxtaposed with the legitimate interests of others, where a solution can be found not through unilateral actions or faits accomplis but through mutual agreement of all concerned.

Any right includes the duty to respect the rights of other people and other nations. Rights go together with obligations and responsibilities. Anything else is tantamount to the infamous Faustrecht, the law of force.

We share President Mitterand's view that no European country can act without due regard for the European balance, without taking account of the interests of others and the existing historical situation that resulted from the Second World War.

If our political optics serve us right, we can say that we have detected in Europe certain signs of political extremism, one that would ignore political realities and the historic memory of hundreds of millions of people; one that would like to fashion something while forgetting the old wisdom that you should not stitch the fabric in one place so that it comes apart in many others.

It would be a crime to forget that in today's Europe, saturated as it is with weapons, including nuclear arms, it is very easy to destabilize the situation, to provoke epidemics of hatred and enmity, to bring about a time of chaos and misfortune.

For Europe, which many times in the past saw the national idea shadowed by the banners of war and which feels the consequences of that even today, heightened prudence is the imperative of history. And yet history also tells us that the national idea in the service of a noble cause has promoted progress, peace and the general welfare of European nations.

Today, the process of European development is of extraordinary complexity. On the one hand, we see the trend toward integration under the star-spangled flag of a united Europe -- Project 1992, to which the Soviet Union wishes every success, and on the other, the dangerous irrationality of destroying the post-war realities to the detriment of the common interests.

Whatever assessment one gives to what is happening today in the Western and Eastern parts of Europe, it is clear that it is going through one of the periods of greatest responsibility in its history.

The Cold War is over. No one seriously disputes that. European evolution is entering a period of peace -- a period of great complexity and turbulence. A straight and smooth road is not guaranteed. All kinds of things might happen. Who could vouch that there is no danger of new dictatorships or totalitarian transformations, of crises on a European or even global scale?

It is therefore necessary to protect what has been achieved, to preserve European consensus, and to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation.

Leading Europe through the zone of risk looming ahead is the task of the present generation of policy-makers. We cannot afford to fail.

The only way to promote the creation of a truly united Europe is through the intensification of the CSCE process while resolutely dismantling the structures of military confrontation and concurrently designing and building a common European house and the structures of integration in various spheres.

What we need now, today, is to redouble our efforts and speed up the pace of talks dealing with all types of weapons, in Europe as well as outside it, and talks on enhancing and expanding confidence-building measures.

We also need to create the momentum of reciprocal movement in the issue of nuclear weapons. We are in favour of abolishing them; our partners respond by insisting on minimum deterrence. All right, we agree. Let us begin to negotiate on that basis, and proceed to the next stage later.

At a time when the situation in Europe is stimulating political thought, we are being presented with a real cornucopia of projects and proposals for our continent. Some of them have already been translated into specific agreements. I am referring, for example, to the Statement of the session of the Council of Europe held in Strasbourg at the level of heads of state and government and its decision to set up the European Development Bank and the Personnel Training Fund.

The foreign affairs schedule has also become heavier. What I would call positive concern has been bringing together the best political minds of Europe and of the world. Among many recent contacts, dialogue in Italy and at the Vatican, at Malta and in Kiev has brought out a number of distinctive features of the current situation in the world and in Europe.

Above all, it provides convincing proof of the creative role of the CSCE process, of the awareness that it must preempt the course of political developments, shaping its dynamics and its guidelines. We regard our proposal for a CSCE summit meeting next year as part of that trend and in light of the events now happening in Europe.

Given the lack of time, which is particularly acute because of the extremely rapid pace of developments, the participants in the European summit could combine the signing of agreements on conventional arms and confidence-building measures with a discussion of possible ways towards further dismantling military confrontation in Europe, and also consider and develop an agreed approach to the current situation on the continent.

I believe that the meeting could also discuss permanent structures and working bodies, whose absence holds back the overall process. The gap of three years between CSCE participants' meetings of the Vienna type is too great given the current tempo of European developments. Also outdated is the fact that most of the work to develop new ideas and proposals within the CSCE framework is done on a national level. We are convinced that there is now a need to coordinate such ideas in special multilateral bodies, such as CSCE committees or centres comprising groups of highly competent experts. Such bodies could later assume consultative functions and perhaps even become supranational in nature, if all 35 CSCE countries so decide.

The implementation of projects such as the centre for reducing the risk of war and preventing surprise attack, the centre for emergency ecological assistance, the European human rights institute and others, could lay down the first milestones along the way towards setting up a CSCE participating countries' committee of foreign ministers, establishing a

tradition of annual meetings of heads of state on a systematic basis, and creating a forum for ongoing CSCE contacts through missions of all 35 countries.

A discussion of military doctrines is to be held in Vienna. It would perhaps be useful if the Chiefs of General Staff participated in it.

The question of practical cooperation between the North Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Treaty Organization is also on our agenda. It should not wait until the internal evolution of those alliances is completed.

A few months ago the Warsaw Treaty countries suggested that the two alliances should initiate a political dialogue and establish contacts between their representatives. We are pleased to note the growing interest of the NATO countries towards that proposal.

This morning I have had a meeting and discussion with the NATO Secretary General Mr. Worner and with the Ambassadors of the member countries of the alliance. I believe that the press is not exaggerating when it describes that meeting as unprecedented. I would add that it was interesting and very promising.

In this context I feel I have to refer to the December session of the NATO Council and the communique adopted by it. That document requires a careful and thorough study, and we are now studying it. But we can point out even now that, apart from certain elements of routine propaganda, it is a serious document, consistent with the spirit of the new times and very much unlike those preceding it.

All of that is also among those signs of the times that seemed impossible only yesterday. But, as I have already said, it is more interesting to think and speak about what could become possible tomorrow.

We are looking forward, for example, to most active cooperation with the institutions of European integration, such as the European Communities which are becoming an increasingly significant and dynamic factor in international politics. Our dialogue with the Twelve, although it is less than one year old, has already gained a rapid momentum and become a promising channel for East-West contacts. With the Council of Europe we have started working together to identify the conventions which have every chance of becoming truly all-European, a first practical contribution to the creation of a European legal space.

And we could perhaps apply to West Berlin, too, this principle: Whatever is not prohibited is permitted.

We have every reason to be optimistic, every reason to affirm that, however contradictory the current developments are, we are by no means witnessing a decline of Europe. No one, least of all the Europeans themselves, would wish that. To the contrary, what we all wish, what we all want to achieve is a political Renaissance on our continent, and above all an end to the division of Europe.

We should end the division of Europe on the basis of values chosen freely and without any promptings by the European nations, including the nations of Eastern Europe. They should not be treated as if they were a mirror reflecting, in the words of some of our Western colleagues, "the everlasting strength of the best Western values". Propaganda and rhetoric are not the best tools for building a road which, contrary to Kipling's words, should bring together the West and the East.

This could be the first such opportunity in post-war history. A factor working in this direction is the Soviet-American dialogue, which is evolving from confrontation to mutual understanding, and eventually to cooperation. The Mediterranean storm provided a counterpoint to Mikhail Gorbachev's very clear statement that the Soviet Union was ready not to regard the United States of America as its adversary and would under no circumstances start a war against it.

I think there is no need to explain to this gathering the significance of that statement, which in effect is opening up a new chapter in world politics.

The meaning of that historic phrase is not just that we shall not start a war. It is even more important that we are ready "to start a peace". Indeed, we have already started it, and our main concern today is to make room for peace so that it could advance in Europe and then all over the world. It is now the duty of all of us to banish the notions of confrontation and the images of adversary and to replace them with the concepts of cooperation, mutual understanding and working together.

May the creative genius of Europe, which more than once has triumphed in battles with the demons of evil and violence, help us in this undertaking.

I thank you for giving me a chance to speak here.

