

(2)



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

You may like
to see these
two very
interesting papers by
Chris Donnelly,
which he has
sent me.

(He is David Hart's
main source). CD 2/2/2

DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

BOULEVARD LEOPOLD III
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NATO UNCLASSIFIED

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET

From: PRIVATE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

..... SOCIOLOGIST - IN RESIDENCE

FAX NO. (02) 728 46 56

To:

..... THE CHARLES POWELL

..... PRINTE SECRETARY - No. 10

FAX NO. 000 24 71 93 0 1419

No. of pages incl. cover sheet 10 Date AUG 27 1990

subject PRIVATE COPIES OF 2 PAPERS

Remarks:

Released from XMT P.O. (P. 01)

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NOTES FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE

CURRENT POLITICAL OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES IN THE USSR

1. There seem to me to be three important political groupings in the USSR at the moment:
 - (a) The conservatives, who break down into:
 - (i) Party traditionalists - important because they provide bureaucratic inertia; and
 - (ii) Nationalists - a growing and vociferous group;
 - (b) The 'reform communists' - led by Gorbachev. Architects of the current reform programme; and
 - (c) The radicals, who take an anti-communist line, led by Yeltsin, with Popov and Sobchak (Mayors of Moscow and Leningrad) as key players.

2. The general consensus of these groupings (with the exception of Party traditionalists, who act as a brake), is that:
 - (a) The USSR will decommunize rapidly and adopt a market economy; and
 - (b) Russia must be rebuilt as a great power;

NB: I have no confidence that any of the senior advisers in each group really have an understanding of what a 'market economy' means.

3. The current debate between the groups centres around:
 - (a) The shape of a post-communist USSR;
 - (b) The speed and extent of reform;
 - (c) What role the 'reform communists' should play;
 - (d) The relationship of Russia to the other national republics of the USSR.

4. The radical grouping hold that the only way ahead is to 'grasp the nettle', viz:
 - (a) The non-Russian nationalities must be allowed to choose their own path immediately;
 - (b) There should be immediate progress towards a convertible currency and a market economy;

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- (c) A fully democratic political process must be achieved quickly.

The radical grouping does not see any significant role for the reform Communists in the post-Communist political establishment in the USSR.

5. The 'reform communist' grouping wants a gradual reform process. They:

- (a) Accept the ultimate inevitability of redrawing the relationship between Moscow and the non-Russian republics, but:

(i) Wish to move slowly and gracefully so as to avoid conflict;

(ii) Think that there will be various levels of relationship and that some republics will wish to be closer to Moscow than others;

- (iii) Include the Ukraine and Belorussia as Russian;

(iv) Fear that the large Russian population in non-Russian areas, and border disputes between the republics, may so complicate this process of separation that it will be impossible to accomplish peacefully;

- (b) Fear that rapid introduction of a market economy will cause national revolt;

- (c) Hope to introduce democracy gradually and in a limited way, and to play a leading role in the running of the post-communist USSR.

6. The conservatives are really two groups:

- (a) The Party conservatives are demoralized and, with the exception of some truly committed ideologists for whom the current reforms are pure heresy, they seem to play a passive role, albeit important. They will dominate the bureaucracy and have a lot of power to slow down the course of reforms and sometimes to thwart the efforts of the leadership altogether.

- (b) The nationalist conservatives, whilst unlikely to take power in a future government, are very vocal, and their influence is growing in Slav areas because they express deeply-held Slav - and especially Russian - values. These values are, at least in part, held by many Russians otherwise belonging to different political groups. These views are as follows:

-2-

-3-

- (i) They have a very robust attitude to non-Slav nationality problems, and hold that the current problems are caused by lack of discipline. However, as their commitment is to a revival of Russian/Slav values and fortunes, they could accept the loss of non-Russian areas if this became inevitable;
- (ii) They are concerned to see economic recovery, and are therefore prepared to accept a move towards a market economy, but fear the adoption of economic institutions which do not fit with Russian tradition;
- (c) The nationalists were prepared to support the CPSU as long as that had popular credibility as serving Russian interests. As the CPSU loses credibility, the nationalists will abandon it in favour of other institutions which reflect Russian-ness;
- (d) ~~The nationalist conservatives have a concept of a new international order as follows: there is an ongoing struggle of civilizations and their organizing principles. This sees Western societies as gregarious, cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic. They are opposed by civilizations which are homogeneous, self-directed (even if market economy) and monolithic.~~

The most current example used has been that of China/Japan vs USA in the Pacific.

This is a cultural conflict, and is the product of traditional Slavic thinking, reflecting the Slav-Western debates of the 19th Century.

Russia, in this view, is not a Western nation.

7. This dichotomy goes some way towards explaining the contradictions in Soviet foreign relations. ~~Conservatives~~ playing the 'Westernizing' game, of the attempt to go the multi-national path of the UN, common and collective security, etc., in the Gulf crisis.

~~The conservative view is to find strength and influence in developing national institutions.~~

11 In the view of the Soviet conservative nationalists, the Soviet Army is the main repository today of Russian nationalist ideas. The Church is also important. Recent developments in Army-Church relations are evidence of this.

8. The Soviet military is not uniform in its opinions. There are the major divisions:

-3-

-4-

- (a) There are very few military supporters of the reform communist wing;
- (b) There is widespread but rapidly falling military support for traditional communism;
- (c) There is substantial and growing support in the lower officer ranks for the radical cause;
- (d) There is an influential mid-level group of officers calling for radical military reform but not political reform;
- (e) The overwhelming bulk of senior officers support the conservative nationalist cause;
- (f) There is a strong element of Russian nationalism even amongst military supporters of other political positions.
- (g) The General Staff has an inherent fear of radical political and economic reform. This is because the introduction of a liberal democracy and a market economy would remove the basis of current Soviet military control of industry and mobilization potential. This has always been seen as their greatest advantage over liberal democracies in war-fighting terms; it has been the major offset to compensate for Western overall technological and economic superiority.

NOTES FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE

SOVIET POLICY IN THE CURRENT GULF CRISIS

1. There is a vast gulf between the foreign policy views of the bulk of the senior officer corps and the Soviet leadership (Gorbachev and Shevardnadze).
2. In the build-up to the current crisis, the Soviet leadership has been preoccupied with domestic concerns, viz: the CPSU Congress et al; the economic crisis; and the nationalities issue. This has distracted Gorbachev and Shevardnadze from the developing Middle Eastern crisis, and the ~~running of~~ relations with Saddam Hussein has been left to initiative of minor Foreign Ministry officials. These men may not have appreciated the significance of political developments, which consequently probably went unnoticed until Saddam Hussein took the initiative into his own hands and invaded Kuwait.
3. High-level lack of interest and an inability to recognize the international implications of what was happening until it was too late also left the way open for the Soviet military to conduct their own policy towards Iraq. The Soviet Armed Forces has had a very high level of commitment to Iraq for a long time - over 2,000 advisers in recent years. The current Military Advisory Group (said to be ~~just~~ under 200 strong) is led by General A. Bannikov, an extremely competent general staff officer. Given this fact, plus the fact that KGB and GRU advisers have been instrumental in setting up Iraq's intelligence organization and must be expected to have established a network of informers, it must be regarded as virtually certain that the Soviet General Staff would have known beforehand about the proposed invasion of Kuwait, even if their advisers had no hand in actually planning the operation. However, given the current differences of opinion that exist, it is ~~not~~ certain that this information would have been passed on to the Foreign Ministry.
4. If, as was reported recently in the press, Col. Gen. Sergei Makashov did indeed visit Iraq from 17 July to 18 August, this would be further confirmation of General Staff foreknowledge. The rapid and fervent decision, first by the Foreign Ministry and then by the MoD that this visit took place shows just how sensitive the leadership is to the suggestion⁽¹⁾.
5. Gorbachev's priorities are Soviet national survival and economic recovery. For the latter, he cannot do without Western support, and therefore he cannot afford to alienate the west by his attitude to the Gulf crisis.

-2-

However, Gorbachev has other factors to consider which seriously complicate the approach he must take to the Middle East crisis. The most important are: (a) loss of long-term Soviet influence in the Middle East; and (b) ethnic nationalist conflict in the southern USSR.

6. The US and allied action in the Gulf has alarmed Moscow on several counts:
- (a) They were immensely impressed by the firm political will and military efficiency which brought about the rapid commitment of forces to the Gulf area. The Soviet military exercise in the Odessa area can be seen as a somewhat unconvincing attempt by the Soviet General Staff to demonstrate (to Gorbachev?) that they too could have made a similarly efficient move at short notice.
 - (b) The Western position, if it is ultimately successful, threatens to replace Soviet influence in several Arab states, and to diminish Soviet influence in the region generally. To counteract this, it is important for the USSR to keep as many doors open as possible to Arab States. This would provide some of the basis for leaving military advisers in Iraq - so that if the crisis blows over, the USSR would have maintained its position of influence there.
 - (c) Western military activity may spark off conflict which would create a long period of instability in the Middle East, and which would inflame the already tense situation prevailing in the USSR's southern states. On this point, the recent Armenian declaration of self-determination is very important because it claims the right to maintain a national Armenian army. This is nothing less than a resurgence of the national concept of 'Greater Armenia', bringing the Armenians not just into further conflict with their Shi-ite Arab neighbours, but also potentially with Turkey, whose borders include land which Soviet Armenians consider to be Armenian.

The fact that US aircraft based in Turkey might be used in a conflict with Iraq, with the potential for retaliation on Turkish soil, adds, in Soviet eyes, to the potential for serious escalation in event of conflict.

7. A further complicating factor, from Gorbachev's point of view, is the presence of Pakistani forces in the Gulf. Given the Soviet view that Indo-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir is very likely and indeed imminent, and given the Soviet Union's firm ties to support India, it would have serious implications for Soviet-Pakistan relations in a full-scale Gulf conflict.

-3-

8. The unstable situation of the western position in the Gulf also gives the Russians cause to worry. ~~Without any~~ West's ability to sustain the burden of an effective blockade for very long, and point to the extreme political pressures in the West - especially the US - which might push the US forces and their allies to rapid escalation of the crisis, if only out of frustration.
9. Furthermore, the Soviets are particularly afraid of being involved in a hostage crisis which allows the Arab world to equate them with Westerners. Much of their influence in the Arab world is based on their claim that they are not to be identified with the 'Great Satan' of the USA or its Western allies, but are somehow different.

If they find themselves in the same hostage boat as the UK and the US, this claim will be disproved, and this will have an adverse impact on Moscow's image not only in the Arab world but also among its own Muslim nationalities.

10. If ~~Arab leaders~~ ~~see~~ ~~US~~ ~~Western~~ ~~attack~~ ~~on~~ ~~Iraq~~ ~~by~~ ~~launching~~ a military offensive too, this will tend to compound the ~~Arab~~ ~~problem~~ very seriously. It would make much easier Saddam Hussein's task of convincing undecided Arab opinion that the Western intervention was essentially cause for a 'jihad'. Consequently, we should expect ~~the~~ ~~USA~~ ~~to~~ ~~discourage~~ ~~Israel~~ from any precipitated Western military action in the Gulf. Gorbachev is likely to try and get Soviet civilians evacuated from Iraq but to leave his military advisers (a) as hostages themselves; and (b) as a foot in the door for future political links.
11. Gorbachev would like to see Iraq leave Kuwait, but not at the expense of war. He wishes to avoid war at all possible, as this would be detrimental to his policy interests in all ways.
12. Consequently, we must expect Gorbachev to lean heavily on his 'international' ~~base~~, supporting action concerted by the UN, trying to tie the USA into an international network of agreements and collective authority which will at the same time:
- Resist US capability to profit by increasing its influence in the region at Soviet cost;
 - Limit the US freedom of action to legitimate supplies, thus keeping the situation predictable;
 - Deliver him of the charge of co-operating with the 'Great Satan' etc; or enabling Soviet forces to form part of a multi-national (including Arab) force.

Soviet support for enforcement of sanctions is not even an
abstention from the voting at the UN would have the desired
effect here.

13. In other words, Gorbachev is not playing a double game
with the West, but trying to have his cake and eat it, too,
ie, keep friends with the west but keep his influence in
Iraq. Attempts to keep Iraq from being isolated as a
adversary as fulfilling their contracts also to be seen as a
gamble to appeal to what the Soviets see as Western
mercantile interests. Saddam Hussein's fear of Soviet
reprisals (perhaps against him personally, in any case the
crisis must have encouraged him to play along with the
Russians to some degree on this point.

14. The Soviet military situation may up to now have been based
on different criteria. Firstly, their long-term relationship
with the Iraqis are not so easily broken. Secondly, the
nationalist conservative ideology sees a withdrawal
from the Gulf as being on the long run unprofitable and not to be
put off indefinitely. Thirdly, precipitation of US military
action in the Gulf would support their case that Gorbachev
has misled them and the USA is not a reliable partner.
Fourthly, the control of oil enables the Soviet Armed Forces
to obtain that area resources again by analogy. This
has indeed been made in a recent leading article in the
Daily paper 'The Red Star'.

15. However, there is no reason why the Soviet Army should
be reluctant to co-operate with the West in their tactical
plans, and if the collaboration is attainable which is
what national UN efforts involving other Arab States
show that the Armed Forces have been playing their own game
in the Gulf now does not mean to say that they will not be
allowed to do so, with impunity, that they have not
been forced to take charge of the situation.

16. If the USSR vetoes the enforcement of sanctions at the UN
it would be a strong indication of US weakness. However,
if the UN vetoes the enforcement of sanctions at the UN
however, this seems to be the event to watch.

ENDNOTE:

1. The main provisions of the Act are to provide for the appointment of Alexander Mackenzie as the first Governor of the Northwest Territory, to be in effect from the date of the coming into force of the Act. The Act also provides that the Governor shall have the authority to appoint and dismiss judges of the courts and to appoint and dismiss magistrates. The Act also provides that the Governor shall have the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the Executive Council of the Territory and to appoint and dismiss members of the Legislative Council of the Territory. The Act also provides that the Governor shall have the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the judicial committee and to appoint and dismiss members of the advisory committee. The Act also provides that the Governor shall have the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the public service commission and to appoint and dismiss members of the public service board. The Act also provides that the Governor shall have the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the public service tribunal and to appoint and dismiss members of the public service appeals board. The Act also provides that the Governor shall have the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the public service review board and to appoint and dismiss members of the public service review committee. The Act also provides that the Governor shall have the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the public service review tribunal and to appoint and dismiss members of the public service review appeals board. The Act also provides that the Governor shall have the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the public service review commission and to appoint and dismiss members of the public service review board. The Act also provides that the Governor shall have the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the public service review tribunal and to appoint and dismiss members of the public service review appeals board.

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..... SOCIETOLOGIST - IN: RESIDENCE
FAX NO. (02) 728 46 66

TO: TP CHARLES POWELL
..... PRIVATE SECRETARY - NO. 10
FAX NO. 0 00 244 71 93 0 1219

No. of pages incl. cover sheet 10 Date AUG 27 1990

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-2-

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8. The unstable situation of the western position in the Gulf also gives the Russians cause to worry. ~~They doubt the West's ability to sustain the burden of an effective blockade for very long, and point to the extreme political pressures in the West - especially the US - which might push the US forces and their allies to rapid escalation of the crisis, if only out of frustration.~~
9. ~~Furthermore, the Soviets are particularly afraid of being involved in a hostage crisis, which allows the Arab world to equate them with westerners. Much of their influence in the Arab world is based on their claim that they are not to be identified with the 'Great Satan' of the USA or its Western allies, but are somehow different.~~

If they find themselves in the same hostage boat as the UK and the US, this claim will be disproved, and this will have an adverse impact on Moscow's image not only in the Arab world but also among its own Muslim nationalities.

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-3-

Soviet support for enforcement of sanctions - or even abstention from the voting at the UN would have the desired effect here.

- 13. In other words, Gorbachev is not playing a 'double game' with the West, but trying to 'have his cake and eat it too' i.e. keep friends with the West but keep his influence in Iraq. Attempts to pass off the withdrawal of military advisers as 'fulfilling their contracts' must be seen as a gimmick to appeal to what the Soviets see as Western mercantile attitudes. Saddam Hussein's fear of Soviet reprisals (perhaps against him personally) in any hostage crisis must have encouraged him to play along with the Russians to some degree on this point.
- 14. The Soviet military's action may up to now have been based on different criteria. Firstly, their long term links with the Iraqis are not so easily broken. Secondly, the nationalist-conservative ideology sees a 'colourful' crisis as being in the long run inevitable, and not to be put off indefinitely. Thirdly, precipitation of US military action in the Gulf would support that case that Gorbachev has misled them and the USA is not a suitable partner. Fourthly, any conflict will enable the Soviet Armed Forces to claim that arms reductions would be essential. This case has indeed been made in a recent leading article in the Army daily paper 'The Red Star'.
- 15. However, there is no reason why the Soviet Army should be too reluctant to co-operate with the West if these factors change, and if the collaboration is strictly seen as being a multi-national UN effort involving other Arab nations. The fact that the Armed Forces have been playing their own game up until now does not mean to say that they will continue to be allowed to do so, with impunity, now that Gorbachev has been forced to take charge of the situation.
- 16. If the USSR vetoes the enforcement of blockade within the UN it would be a strong indication of just how weak Gorbachev's internal political position was vis-à-vis the military. However, this seems at the moment to be unlikely.

Handwritten signature or initials, possibly 'M', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left and a vertical stroke extending upwards.

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ENDNOTE:

1. The main proponent for the extreme nationalist cause is Alexander Samsanov. He is widely published in military and civil journals, and his comments on domestic and foreign policy affairs. Col. Gen. Albert Makashov, Commander of the 1st Guards Military District, is another extreme nationalist. Makashov is very popular in the Soviet Armed Forces and is very competent. He commanded an Army in the Group of Soviet Forces in East Germany (designated for high-speed offensive operations) and replaced Samsanov in the Caucasus in 1988 when the former's policy of negotiation had failed. Makashov applied a much firmer concept of control.

Makashov has been outspoken in his criticism of the current Soviet leadership as "letting the country go".

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