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October 30, 1985

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. MCFARLANE *RCM*
SUBJECT: Gordiyevsky's Suggestions*RR*

You will recall that Margaret Thatcher gave you a paper summarizing points made by Soviet KGB defector Gordiyevsky regarding dealing with Gorbachev. Gordiyevsky worked for British Intelligence for years before his defection and provided the information on which the recent mass expulsion of Soviet agents from the UK was based. Therefore, there seems no reasonable doubt of his bona fides. His view would be that of a person who worked in the most "sensitive" Soviet security organization and was well informed about the attitudes of those around him and of his superiors, but one who did not have direct access to the highest policy making levels.

His observations and assessments are in general accord with my own. I would agree with him that the principal Soviet concern over SDI is not so much that they consider it a threat as that they feel that it forces them to accelerate their own program in a way that they cannot afford if they are to tackle the economic problems plaguing their economy. But there can be little doubt that they will try to keep up with us if they feel they have to.

I also think that Gordiyevsky is right when he says that they will not be persuaded by the argument that we would share the results of our research with them. Soviet leaders (like many other people) tend to judge others by their own standards. They know that they would under no circumstances share such information and cannot be persuaded that such offers on our part are made in good faith. Rather, they would be inclined to view such arguments as a blatant attempt to deceive them.

Gordiyevsky's suggestions for dealing with this problem, however, are a bit unclear. When he speaks of removing Soviet "paranoia" "by making lots of practical suggestions for bureaucratic devices," we cannot be certain of the precise meaning. However, he may have in mind certain types of confidence-building measures, proposals for specific negotiations, and proposals for cooperative efforts in areas of Soviet interest. If so, we are well off in this respect, having made a number of suggestions in these areas.

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On the other hand, I am dubious about his suggestion regarding the argument that money saved on reducing offensive weapons can be applied to strategic defense. I don't see how Gorbachev could find this persuasive; it would be asking him to forego an area where his military-industrial complex has an excellent track record (turning out offensive weapons) for one where he knows they would be competing at a disadvantage (developing new complex technologies).

I would think that a better way to approach this problem is to press Gorbachev to tell you exactly what he finds threatening about SDI. Why does he think it might be part of a first-strike strategy on our part? A discussion along these lines might give us some further clues to his real concerns and reveal whether there are practical steps we could take to meet them (in exchange for sharp reductions in offensive weapons, of course) without crippling our SDI program. It is conceivable -- though not likely -- that Gorbachev is looking for a fig leaf to justify turning down demands by the Soviet military for massive increases in their SDI budget. Even though the odds are that this is not the case, we should probe to make sure, since if it is the chances of reaching an agreement for radical nuclear arms reduction would be much improved.

I agree with Gordiyevsky that the Soviets are to a degree under the influence of their own propaganda. Often, of course, they manipulate the truth quite cynically, but over time the perpetrators of lies often begin believing them -- or at least half believing them. Therefore, I agree that you need to be very clear and forceful (though at the same time reasonably tactful) in pointing out how we see Soviet actions and why we see them as a threat.

Gorbachev's need for a "personal diplomatic success" -- which I believe is real -- does give us a certain leverage, if we apply it correctly. This may incline Gorbachev to pay some concrete prices in areas of interest to us in return for the appearance of having extracted U.S. respect and treatment as an equal. Such leverage is limited, however, and will not be very effective on the larger issues. One relatively cheap way to flatter Soviet egos without running into larger problems is to praise their role in World War II.

Gordiyevsky's comment about the Soviet military becoming increasingly dissatisfied about the deterioration of the economy is interesting. If true, and if agreements with the U.S. can be "sold" as improving Soviet ability to cope with their economic problems, this attitude could mitigate to some degree the traditional reluctance of the Soviet military to agree to real arms reduction.

George Shultz and I will probably have a better feel for some of these matters following our trip to Moscow next week, and we will keep them in mind as we prepare the materials for your Geneva meeting.

Attachment:

Tab A Summary of Gordievskiy's Points

Prepared by:
Jack F. Matlock

SUMMARY OF GORDIEVSKIY'S POINTS

1. Strongest wish of the Soviet Union not to be involved in strategic defence, which would impose a terrible economic strain.
2. They would see the American proposal for sharing information about the SDI but not stopping research and development as a trick. They would believe that the United States was trying to ruin the Soviet economy.
3. The Russians could be brought aboard only if the Americans could remove Russian paranoia about the aims of the United States and of the West generally. This could be done by making lots of practical suggestions for bureaucratic devices.
4. Another argument would be to say that money saved on reducing offensive nuclear missiles can be devoted to strategic defence. This would avoid the need for an overall increase in military expenditure.
5. But the Soviets will invest heavily in strategic defence if it has to. The leadership would justify this to their people by means of a greatly stepped up propaganda campaign against the United States.
6. The Soviet leaders are too self-confident and too much under the influence of their own propaganda. The United States needs to set out its views on permissible Soviet behaviour more forcefully.
7. The President also needs to explain to Gorbachev the real nature of developments in various parts of the world. Gorbachev's own information will be heavily influenced by propaganda.
8. Gorbachev's priorities are arms control and Soviet/United States relations. Everything else is secondary.

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9. Gorbachev's main motives for improving Soviet-United States relations will be to gain better access to Soviet U.S. technology and science; and to score a personal diplomatic success. It is also psychologically important for the Russians to feel that they are the equal of the United States. United States/Soviet co-operation in World War II was very flattering for them.

10. They need to have the security of feeling equal above all in the nuclear field. They think there is nuclear parity at present but fear the situation is changing in favour of the United States.

11. It will be very difficult for the Soviet leaders to improve the functioning of the Soviet economy, and much more so if they have to go for the SDI. But the Russian people are probably prepared to accept further hardship if necessary.

12. Gorbachev and the Party are not dependent on the people. The military complex is a real power: and the military are increasingly dissatisfied with the deterioration in the economy.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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October 29, 1985

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

SIGNED

FROM: JACK MATLOCK *JM*
SUBJECT: Gordiyevsky's Suggestions

As you requested in your PROF's note, I have prepared a Memorandum (TAB I) for the President which discusses the points made in the paper which Prime Minister Thatcher gave the President last week.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the Memorandum to the President at Tab I.

Approve Disapprove

Attachments:

- TAB I Memorandum to the President
- Tab A Summary of Gordiyevsky's Points

dlh *8/7/06*

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27315	PAPER	DUPLICATE OF #7944; SUMMARY OF GORIEVSKIY'S POINTS <i>R 11/29/2011 F1997-013/3</i>	2	ND	B1

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