



November 21, 1989
**Record of Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and
Prime Minister of Canada Brian Mulroney.**

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Summary:

Gorbachev and Mulroney discuss US interference in Eastern Europe and increasing cooperation with Western Europe. They also briefly discuss George Bush's leadership.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

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Gorbachev. [...] Now all intelligence services of the world and the press are debating the question of how much time is left for Gorbachev. Well, they have their work to do, they have a subject to talk about. But this is not the decisive factor. The country will not go back, it has to change.

Maybe some other team would be able to affect the speed of the changes, but the country will change anyway. And in this sense, one can say that Gorbachev has already accomplished his mission. Of course, I am not going to abandon the course that I began.

Mulroney. I have more confidence in your political longevity than in my own. And I, by the way, plan to work for several more years. [...] better let somebody else make sacrifices. There can be no changes without problems.

Gorbachev. Our people are prepared to persevere. But they want to know, they want to be confident in the results, in the success of perestroika. Our people are patient, but their patience is not endless. You cannot test the limits of the people's patience. They can rise like no other people.

[...]

Mulroney. This brings us to the question of specific features of different peoples. For example, the Americans and the Canadians. The Americans see the world in a very simple way: free enterprise, capitalism, the American flag, McDonald's--everything is OK.

Gorbachev. If it was only that... No, they have other specific traits too.

Mulroney. In any case, they have achieved a lot implementing the principle of free enterprise. [...]

Gorbachev. I would like to emphasize one more issue. We are faced with attempts to interfere in the affairs of our federation on the part of the USA--by the administration, and especially by the Congress. It is not easy for the Americans to comprehend the essence of the new world, of the new values. The habits of the global policeman are still very strong, also strong is the desire to impose their opinion, the efforts to dictate to the others.

I will have to tell the President in Malta: if you want to help somebody, try to help Quebec. It is closer to you, and we will sort out our problems on our own. It seems like the American Senators have lost their sleep over Nagorny Karabakh. And why is their sleep not disturbed by what has been happening in Northern Ireland for fifteen years now? And this is in the country where almost thirty percent of population is of Irish origin.

Interference is impermissible. You know that every federation has its own problems. Take, for example, Yugoslavia. We need sensitivity here, an attentive and careful consideration. And the Americans have an itch: to give everybody advice how to live. This for Americans is like an illness--AIDS--so far there is no treatment for it.

[...] I have to say that as far as Eastern Europe is concerned, it is hard for the United States to give up the habit of teaching others. It is not an accident that they call the American Ambassador in Hungary "Gauleiter" [sic, for "German," taken from Nazi occupation jargon]. People notice his behavior. However, as far as President Bush and Secretary of State Baker are concerned, it seems to me that after a difficult period of doubts they came to very realistic positions. And not only on Eastern Europe, but on the entire spectrum of international problems. That is why I think, that we will have a good conversation in Malta.

Mulroney. I agree with your assessment of President Bush's position.

Gorbachev. By the way, recently you visited him for four days. What were you talking about?

Mulroney. About you (Laughter).

Gorbachev. Well I take it as a statement.

Mulroney. Indeed, Bush and Baker have a reasonable and balanced approach to Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, there were demands that the President should immediately go to Berlin, stand in front of the wall, and deliver a big speech.

Gorbachev. Was it a request of the Democrats?

Mulroney. Yes, it was a request of the Democratic leader [George] Mitchell, who is, generally speaking, quite a reasonable person.

In these circumstances, Bush showed himself as a mature politician. The majority of the European leaders are behaving in the same way.

I would like to ask you one more question about Eastern Europe. You implied that these countries are free to search for their own road in terms of economic development. Do you put any limits to that? What if the GDR begins to experience the same processes that are underway in Hungary and Poland: emergence of new political parties, demands for free elections? Is a situation possible where a certain country would want to reconsider its relations with the Warsaw Treaty Organization? Do you think that the status quo should be preserved--two Germanies, the existing political institutions in the conditions of more freedom?

Posing these questions, I would like to assure you that you cannot find two more reasonable people than Bush and Baker in the entire West. And I would like to ask you again to look ahead for five years. What do you think, what changes might happen in the next five years in the international political structures, in the relations between the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organization as a whole, and Europe, the European Communities, the West as a whole? Do you anticipate any cardinal changes?

Gorbachev. First of all, I tell all my guests: let us develop the Helsinki process, let us not destroy what we have built. I think that now we are entering a new stage of this process, a stage where it is necessary to have a new understanding of the changes that are happening. That is why, when I was in Finland [in late October 1989], I suggested to convene a Helsinki-2 summit.

We are coming from the fact that we support the changes that are underway in Europe, and not only in the East, but in the West also. We are saying that they should continue in a situation of stability, I would say, strategic stability. We can help this process by giving a new substance to the activity of the existing military and political organizations. This has already begun. We can see that representatives of the Warsaw Treaty Organization meet NATO representatives get to know each other, inspect the military technology, discuss military doctrines. The character of these organizations should change.

Contacts between the COMECON and the European Community are being established, and we need to stimulate this process. It is important that the new relations between them take into account the requirements of our time. New organizations of ecological and cultural types, and new foundations, are emerging. That creates new opportunities for contacts between people, youth exchanges. We need to support and stimulate all this.

As far as the German issue is concerned, as I said many times before, that issue emerged in certain historical circumstances. And let history itself solve it. This is not an issue to be solved today. To force progress on this issue would be to feed people an unripe fruit, to poison us.

Today the reality is that there are two states that are members of the United Nations, and of the existing military-political structures. I am not a prophet, but at some stage, in the framework of the new Europe, to which we are moving now, there could be some changes that would involve the two German states. But this is an issue of the future. Today we must act on the basis of the existing realities, without forcing the processes. We need to walk all the way through, without leaping over stages. Otherwise we can make a lot of mistakes, otherwise, we will make a mess, not policy.

[...] Mulroney. You know, Reagan spoke from his cards even when we spoke on the phone. Bush is a completely different person.

Gorbachev. But you cannot deny Reagan's impressive political intuition

Mulroney. That is completely true. By the way, I saw him recently--for the first time after his operation. I have to say that he has changed a lot, he looks older.