

March 11, 1985
**Minutes of a CC CPSU Politburo Session Nominating
Gorbachev for General Secretary**

Citation:

"Minutes of a CC CPSU Politburo Session Nominating Gorbachev for General Secretary",
March 11, 1985, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsKhSD, F.89.
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120771>

Summary:

CC CPSU Politburo Session nominating Gorbachev for General Secretary after the death of Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko. Many members of the politburo spoke in favor of Gorbachev for General Secretary. They make a unanimous recommendation to the Plenum of CC CPSU.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

CC CPSU POLITBURO SESSION[1]

11 March 1985

Chaired by cde. M.S. GORBACHEV

In attendance: comrs. G.A. Aliev, V.I. Vor-otnikov, V.V. Grishin, A.A. Gromyko, D.A. Kunaev, G.V. Romanov, M.S. Solomentsev, N.A. Tikhonov, P.N. Demichev, V.I. Dolgikh, V.V. Kuznetsov, B.N. Ponomarev, V.M. Chebrikov, E.A. Shevar-dnadze, Zimyanin, I.V. Kapitonov, E.K. Ligachev, K.V. Rusakov, N.I. Ryzhkov.

GORBACHEV. Comrades, yesterday at 19 hours and 20 minutes Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko passed away. Death followed a severe and protracted illness. We have lost our dear and esteemed friend, leader, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium. I ask you to observe a minute of silence in bright memory of Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko.

(All rise).

GORBACHEV. cde. Chazov[2] is in attendance. I yield him the floor.

CHAZOV. You, comrades, know that Konstantin Ustinovich has been seriously ill for an extended period of time and during the last few months has been under inpatient care. The Fourth Chief Administration took all necessary steps to treat Konstantin Ustinovich. But his illness did not respond to treatment, and it continued, slowly at first, and then ever more rapidly to undermine his strength. His condition deteriorated most with respect to the bilateral pneumonia which Konstantin Ustinovich contracted during his respite in Kislovodsk. There were moments when we managed to mitigate somewhat his heart and lung failure, during which time Konstantin Ustinovich found enough strength to go to work. He presided over a few Politburo sessions and maintained a working, though abbreviated, day. The emphysema of the lungs and deteriorating heart and lung failure had intensified significantly during the past two-three weeks. An additional illness developed--chronic hepatitis, i.e. a disease of the liver which developed into cirrhosis. The [liver] cirrhosis and intensifying dystrophic changes within organs and tissues led to the continuing deterioration of health, despite daily increases in active therapy. At 3PM on March 10, Konstantin Ustinovich lost consciousness, and at 19:20 death ensued as a result of cardiac arrest.

GORBACHEV. His illness was indeed severe. We saw this ourselves. Of course the doctors tried to help the ailing [Konstantin Ustinovich], but the illness was so severe that therapeutic measures taken by doctors did not result in a positive outcome. It is very difficult to acknowledge that Konstantin Ustinovich is no longer among us.

But life goes on, nothing you can do. We gathered here today in order to resolve issues pertaining to Konstantin Ustinovich's funeral, cadre affairs, and the convention of a special CC CPSU Plenum.

TIKHONOV. Yes, all these issues must be resolved without delay.

□ CONCERNING THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF CC CPSU

□

GORBACHEV. Noting that all members and candidate members of the CC CPSU Politburo are present at this meeting, with the exception of cde. Shcherbitskii, who is currently on his way, we must first resolve the question concerning the General Secretary of CC CPSU. I ask comrades to express their opinion on this matter.

GROMYKO. Of course we are all despondent over the passing at Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko. But whatever our emotions may be, we must look to the future and not lose for even one iota our historical optimism and the belief in the validity of our theory and practice.

I will say directly: when thinking of the candidacy for the post of the General Secretary of CC CPSU, then, of course, one thinks of Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev.

This would be, in my opinion, an absolutely fitting choice. We all know Mikhail Serge'evich very well. For seven years we have been working together with him.[3] I remember L.I. Brezhnev inquiring for my opinion and the opinion of other comrades during the discussion of transferring M.S. Gorbachev to work in Moscow. I have no doubt that we all made the right decision then to support that proposal.

What are the traits that stand out when judging Mikhail Serge'evich's candidacy?

First--his irrepressible creative energy, his struggle to do more and do it better.

Second. His connection with people. You see, the higher a person's standing, the greater the role played by his ability to establish relationships with people--relationships both essential and demanding. I have never heard of Mikhail Serge'evich dominated by desires for personal gain. No, he always puts the interests of the party, the interests of society, and the interests of the people first.

Third. M. S. Gorbachev is much experienced in party work. This is experience at both levels--regional[4] and central. He has worked as CC secretary, was candidate member and finally member of the Politburo. He presided over Secretariat meetings, and then, in the absence of Konstantin Ustinovich, [presided over] Politburo [meetings]. This type of work requires not only knowledge, but also patience and party loyalty. This is a very valuable characteristic. One more observation: when we look into the future, and I will be honest, many of us by now have difficulty looking in that direction, we must have a clear sense of perspective. And this consists of the fact that we have no right to allow any kind of breach in our unity. We have no right to allow the world to observe any kind of split in our relations. And abroad there abound all types of speculation on this subject. This means that we must all act in solidarity and unanimously, understanding the full responsibility of our great task.

I do not claim to have mentioned all of Mikhail Serge'evich's qualities. But I think that we can unhesitatingly say that we would not be mistaken by electing him as General Secretary of CC CPSU. I would like to once more emphasize that he has tremendous knowledge and significant experience, but this experience must be multiplied by our experience. And we pledge to give the new General Secretary of CC CPSU all possible help and assistance. You, Mikhail Serge'evich, may be entirely assured of this help and assistance.

TIKHONOV. Recently we have worked a great deal with Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev. We came to know each other particularly well during our work on the Commission for the improvement of the agricultural mechanism.

What can I say about Mikhail Serge'evich? He is an approachable person--with him one can discuss subjects, and discuss [them] on the highest level. This is the first among CC secretaries who is well versed in economics. You can understand how important that is. Tomorrow we will bury Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko, but we cannot postpone questions of economic development--they will not wait. We will have to address them, and address [them] together, as we have done until now, with close contact between the Central Party Committee and the Government.

Therefore my opinion is unconditional: the person suitable for General Secretary of CC CPSU is Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev. This post needs an official who possesses knowledge, experience, and the ability to work with people. Therefore I believe that we have every basis to put forth Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev's candidacy before the Plenum of CC CPSU.

GRISHIN. Today we are deciding an exceptionally important issue. We are not just dealing with the continuation of party affairs and government succession. The General Secretary of the CC is a person who organizes the work of the Central Committee. Therefore this post must be occupied by a person who can answer the highest demands. He must possess knowledge, integrity and experience, as well as extreme patience. Last night, when we were informed of the death of Konstantin Ustinovich, we to some extent pre-decided this issue by agreeing to name Mikhail Serge'evich chairman of the funeral commission. As I see it, he more than meets the requirements of the post of General Secretary of CC CPSU. This is a highly erudite person. He received his degree in law from the Moscow University and his degree in economics from the Institute of Agriculture.[5] He has much experience in party work. Therefore I believe that we do not and cannot have any proposal but the proposal to nominate M. S. Gorbachev to be elected for the post of General Secretary

of CC CPSU. As far as we are concerned, each of us will actively support him from our own posts.

Therefore I am completely in favor of the proposal that has just been put before this Politburo meeting.

SOLOMENTSEV. We are indeed, comrades, deciding an extremely important issue. You see, the day-to-day enactment of our party policies very much depends on the General Secretary. I know Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev back from his work in Stavropol. There as well he left in his wake a good and lasting vestige. That is why we supported L.I. Brezhnev's proposal to transfer cde. Gorbachev to work in Moscow. Now we have already worked seven years together. Mikhail Serge'evich is distinguished by his irrepressible energy and desire to actively involve himself in events. When he was occupied with agriculture, he did not pass by other matters; he addressed questions of agricultural development from a broad and complex perspective, and put in a lot of effort in order to move forward in areas of crop production, animal husbandry, and agricultural machine production. No matter how nature mocks us, we are still moving forward in agricultural production. And much of this merit goes to Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev.

What is it that I particularly like about him?

It is the spirit of innovation. He is well prepared for CC Secretariat and Politburo meetings, makes new proposals during discussion of issues, shares interesting ideas. This spirit of innovation is very valuable. The comrades here have already spoken of his integrity and fastidiousness. I would like to point out that Mikhail Serge'evich displays these traits with great tact. At the same time, in all his work he unswervingly adheres to the course of our party and to Leninist principles.

That is why I believe that we simply do not have another candidacy, and support the proposal to elect Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev as General Secretary of CC CPSU. The future holds for us difficult issues in both domestic and foreign policy. This important work rests on the shoulders of Mikhail Serge'evich and on all of us. I am convinced that the CC Plenum that will be meeting today will uphold the proposal to elect M.S. Gorbachev as General Secretary of CC CPSU. He can unite our collective and we will assist him with all available means.

KUNAEV. Following the summons, 25 people have arrived from Kazakhstan for the CC Plenum. We represent twenty regions and 800 thousand communists. Today we met at our permanent representative's [office] in Moscow to discuss questions pertaining to the Plenum. And I would like to report to you that I was entrusted to say at this Politburo session that however this discussion turns out, the communists of Kazakhstan will vote to elect Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev for General Secretary of CC CPSU.

Where did our decision come from? It came from practical experience of working together with Mikhail Serge'evich. He has exceptional ties with regional party committees, with party organizations and with communists. And this, comrades, is most important. M. S Gorbachev possesses a wealth of working experience. He worked together with Leonid Iliyich Brezhnev, Yurii Vladimirovich Andropov, and this past year with Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko. We wish you, Mikhail Serge'evich robust health and want to assure you that all of us, all the communists of Kazakhstan, will be your trustworthy assistants.

ALIEV. The election of General Secretary of CC CPSU is a serious, historic matter. In my view, the candidacy of Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev is entirely appropriate. He has worked in Stavropol and in Moscow, gained tremendous experience in both party and economic development, has become a great political figure, a large-scale figure. He is well versed in economics and domestic policy and demonstrates knowledge in many areas of economic and social life.

M. S. Gorbachev has earned tremendous respect among the workers of our country and in countries within the socialist community. As far as our contact with him is concerned, we have always felt his support and his ability to unify the CC CPSU Politburo and the CC Secretariat.

Mikhail Serge'evich is plain, modest and approachable. This gives us the ability to say with conviction that he will deal fully with the responsibilities of General Secretary. Therefore I am in full support of enacting the proposal and would like to

wish Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev health and much success at work.

ROMANOV. Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev has gone through the abundant school of life. He started in the lower ranks of the Komsomol and later--party organizations. And there he demonstrated his abilities as an organizer and leader of the masses. I can say from my previous work that the active core of the party evaluates highly M. S. Gorbachev's work. He is an erudite person. For example, he has very quickly understood the particulars of many of the most complex issues of scientific and technical progress. Moreover, he not only understood but began to seek out ways of deciding many of the issues pertaining to the production applications of scientific and technical advances. Nikolai Aleksandrovich Tikhonov has spoken here of Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev's work on the Commission for the improvement of the agricultural mechanism. The tone of this commission is set by cde. Tikhonov, while Mikhail Serge'evich, with the help of CC departments, tactfully introduces his proposals, most of which are ratified by the Commission.

In his work, Mikhail Serge'evich is very exacting. But his exactitude is supported by active assistance to people as well as his trust in them. Therefore I believe that he will insure complete succession of leadership in our party and will fully deal with the responsibilities placed on him.

VOROTNIKOV. This is a very great and crucial task--to come up with a proposal for the candidacy to the post of General Secretary. The candidacy of the person who would meet these very difficult responsibilities must be selected and considered from every angle. And here one comes to the inevitable conclusion that life's own logic has led us to this decision. Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev clearly stood out among regional and territorial party secretaries. His greatest attributes are responsibility, ability to listen to others' opinion, and understanding of the matter at hand. That is why he has gained such a great reputation among the active core of the party. And all comrades (and I had the opportunity today to meet with a large number of representatives of Russian regional party organizations) express the opinion that cde. M. S. Gorbachev ought to be selected as General Secretary of CC CPSU.

Why is M. S. Gorbachev's office always full of people?

Because he is able to hear them out and wants to help them. At the same time, he is not a meek leader. He is capable of demanding something from a person. And this, as you yourselves understand, is a very important attribute for our vast country.

On the whole, comrades, I, like the majority of representatives of Russian regional party organizations, am deeply convinced that the candidacy of M. S. Gorbachev for the post of General Secretary of CC CPSU is fitting in every respect.

PONOMAREV. The post of General Secretary of CC CPSU is a post of exceptional responsibility. You see, our party sets an example not only for our country, but for the whole world. Such a post requires a person with an exceptional theoretical foundation, ideological steadfastness, and ability to maintain contact with the masses. Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev possesses all these qualities.

In recent times we have been much occupied by the new edition of the party program. And I have been personally convinced that he possesses a deep understanding of Marxist Leninist theory and is able to comprehend the most complex program issues. M. S. Gorbachev takes an active position in discussions with figures from communist and labor parties of foreign countries. Such ability to work with foreign representatives is exceptionally important for the General Secretary of CC CPSU. Therefore we all sincerely wish Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev success in the new post of importance and responsibility, and each of us will actively assist him in his new duties.

Over the past three years we have lost three General secretaries: Leonid Iliyich Brezhnev, Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov and Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko. But the strength of the party lies in that we are moving forward, that we are all joined in solidarity, that no loss can shake the unity of communists in our country. We wish you, Mikhail Serge'evich, great success in your future work.

CHEBRIKOV. The tone of today's discussion has been set by Andre'evich Gromyko. He said very accurately that we must look to the future. This ability to look to the future is, right now, perhaps more important than anything else. I was also especially affected by A.A. Gromyko's words on the importance of preserving and

strengthening the unity of the Politburo, the Central Committee, and our entire party as a whole. And today, when we are talking about the General Secretary of CC CPSU, we must precisely determine who is the person who is able to carry out these most difficult duties. And I am convinced that Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev will fulfill these duties honorably. It was for these abilities that L.I. Brezhnev, Vu.V. Andropov, and K. U. Chernenko so highly valued cde. Gorbachev.

The leader of our party must possess a thorough grounding in theory and in practice. One could refer to a number of articles and speeches by Mikhail Serge'evich. But I will mention only his speech at the recent All-Union Theoretical Conference.[6] I believe that everyone observed the boldness and fortitude of this speech.

Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev is a person of contact. He is capable of listening to others and relates with understanding to problems being discussed. There are plenty of problems in our country, and to solve them we need a person possessing great working capacity and erudition. M.S. Gorbachev possesses in full such erudition and working capacity.

Today on my way to the Plenum I sought advice from my comrades at work. Our department is such that requires thorough knowledge of not only foreign policy matters but also of problems of internal and social nature. It was with all these factors in mind that the chekists entrusted me to recommend the candidacy of cde. M.S. Gorbachev for the post of General secretary of CC CPSU. You understand that the voice of the chekists, the voice of our active core--that is the very voice of the people. As for us, we will do our best to work on the mass of issues facing the Committee for State Security. The united chekist collective will do everything in order to work even better, with the CC CPSU Politburo at the helm. And the latter will be announcing the new General Secretary of CC CPSU: M.S. Gorbachev.

DOLGIKH. At this time it is difficult for us to judge the historical importance of this moment that we are living. I am completely and entirely in agreement with the comrades who have proposed to put forth the candidacy of M.S. Gorbachev for the post of General Secretary of CC CPSU. We are all unanimous in the opinion that he has behind him not only tremendous experience but the future as well [sic]. Right now, like never before, our country needs an energetic leader, able to get to the bottom of an issue, a leader who is forthright, bold, and exacting. Therefore, I wish you, dear Mikhail Serge'evich, health, success and all the best. And you can count on our support for you.

KUZNETSOV. I would like to emphasize once again that I am entirely in support of the proposal which was put forth today at this session of the Politburo. I also share the opinion of the characteristics that have been attributed today to Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev. He is very accessible, is able to grasp quickly the crux of an issue. This particularly pertains to the work of the Council of People's Deputies, with which M.S. Gorbachev is well acquainted.

It is very good that a collective has formed in our country and in our party that is suffused with unanimity. This is a guarantee for a successful resolution of problems facing us, a guarantee for progress and the future. Our non-friends abroad are hoping for a split within the party leadership and a collapse of the Soviet system. Several foreign magazines, especially American ones, have made the most unbelievable prognoses and expressed every type of opinion regarding the disagreement with the Politburo. But our unity will not be shaken.

We wish Mikhail Serge'evich great success. I have no doubt that the Soviet organs and Soviet workers, among whom he is very popular, will completely support this point of view.

SHEVAR DNADZE. It is very good that each of us has the opportunity to speak at this historic session. This characterizes once more the genuine Leninist collectivist style of work at the Party Central Committee and its Politburo. I have known Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev even before his work as CC CPSU secretary. I will say directly that following his selection for the CC Politburo, he has remained the same plain, modest, and responsible person as he was. Ours is a vast multi-national country. And I know how precisely and attentively Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev relates to the national question. This is a great and highly important quality for the General Secretary of CC CPSU. As for the candidacy of M.S. Gorbachev for the post of General

Secretary of CC CPSU, I will say directly --our entire country and our entire party is awaiting this decision. I have no doubts in that.

DEMICHEV. I will say very succinctly. I am convinced that what we are doing today is entirely the right choice.

Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev is well known in our country. He is also known abroad. His trips to England, Canada, and the People's Republic of Bulgaria convincingly demonstrate that he is able to work abroad.

GROMYKO. And Italy as well.

DEMICHEV. Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev has the feel for that which is new, has extensive erudition and organizational talent. This is a fascinating man. After all, it is no secret that following Yu. V. Andropov's death he occupied himself with all matters of the Central Committee, and accomplished particularly much in the advancement of our agricultural complex. One can say without exaggeration that our scientists, creative intelligentsia, and writers were drawn to him. All in all, this is an entirely suitable person for such a high post.

ZIMYANIN. First of all, I would like to express full support for the proposal that has been expressed during today's Politburo session, and I would like to add only two points.

Working together in the CC CPSU Secretariat we were convinced of Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev's activism, depth, and erudition. He is capable of isolating the essential, and this is important, since the General Secretary of CC CPSU must accumulate the opinions of multitudes and their forecasts for the future. Secondly, when addressing M. S. Gorbachev, I have always found and continue to find a quick decision based on the most exact understanding of the subject. He differs in that he is constantly increasing his knowledge. And this is the most important quality for a person's growth. I believe that I express the feeling for each of us by saying that you, Mikhail Serge'evich, may entirely depend on us.

KAPITONOV. The comrades have spoken here very well of Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev. I completely agree with their terrific words. He is in every respect an accomplished person. He has experience, has multi-faceted knowledge, and an incisive, analytical mind. He demonstrates excellent party loyalty and integrity; he displays singular exactitude toward himself and other people. Therefore I warmly support the proposal and am entirely convinced that this proposal will be ratified by our party and our people.

LIGACHEV. First of all, I would like to applaud the very important beginning made here by A.A. Gromyko. Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev possesses without a doubt all the features of a great political figure. Moreover, he has a vast reserve of intellectual and physical strength. It is important to point out that M.S. Gorbachev is characterized by a great passion for work, a desire to seek out matters great and small, and the ability to organize a situation. And this, as you well understand, has an enormous importance for all party and organizational work--for improving its style and its methods. This work encompasses cadre policy and activities of the Soviets, the labor unions, and the Komsomol, and Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev is very familiar with this work and is highly respected among party, labor union and Komsomol organizations, among the activist core of our party, and among the people as a whole. I have heard this today from many regional and territorial party committee secretaries. The nomination of M.S. Gorbachev will bring forth pride in our people and will raise the authority of the CC CPSU Politburo.

RYZHKOV. I believe that today we are making the absolutely right decision. Moreover, we understand the enormous and difficult burden being placed on the shoulders of Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev. We see how, in front of our very eyes, he is growing as a political figure, always striving to move forward, not content with his previous accomplishments. For us, secretaries of the CC, the work of the Secretariat is a tremendous well of experience. It gives great satisfaction not only to us, but to all the Secretariat meeting participants. M.S. Gorbachev is well acquainted with issues of the overall economy. This is particularly important for the General Secretary of CC CPSU. Yes, we understand that it will be difficult for him-- very difficult. But he has all the qualities needed to perform the most important party and government functions. We, Mikhail Serge'evich, will always be your trusted

assistants.

RUSAKOV. I am in complete agreement with what has been said here about Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev.

This is a person with a capital "P." Today's discussion, relating to the great misfortune that has befallen us, has a bonding significance for our entire party, the Politburo, and the people. And I am convinced that we can look forward to working effectively under the leadership of M.S. Gorbachev. Mikhail Serge'evich Gorbachev is well known among Socialist countries, and that means that we can look forward to intense and well-coordinated work by the entire socialist community. Remain the same as you are now, Mikhail Serge'evich, and all will go well.

GORBACHEV. First of all, I would like to say that it is most important and most meaningful that today's Politburo discussion is taking place in the spirit of unity. We are living through a very difficult, pivotal time. Our economy needs a strong dynamism. This dynamism is vital to our democracy and the continuing progress in our domestic policy.

I am well aware that in the end the CC CPSU Politburo would always find the necessary solution, would always pick the necessary candidate. Nevertheless, since today's discussion concerns me, I respond to your words with tremendous worry and apprehension. It is with these feelings that I listen to you, dear friends.

I also understand entirely that the discussion concerns an enormously difficult responsibility. To fulfill this responsibility without support and without the atmosphere of mutual understanding in the Politburo is practically impossible. That is the reason I draw the conclusion again and again that collectivism and unity is a priceless quality of our party, our Central Committee, and its Politburo.

Nine years of work in the Stavropol territory and seven years of work here have clearly shown me that our party holds an enormous creative potential. It has this potential because, above all, communists are actively supported by the people. This is clearly demonstrated by the latest elections to the Supreme and local Soviets. These elections illustrate the great trust that the people have toward our party and at the same time demonstrate the magnitude of the responsibility being placed on our shoulders.

My immediate task I see thus: together with you to seek new solutions, paths of further progress for our country, ways of increasing the economic and defense strength of our country, and improving the lives of our people.

I am deeply attached to the idea of collective work and believe that in it lies a potential which is still far from being employed to its fullest. Our collective potential must work still more effectively and yield still greater returns.

We need not change our policy. It is a true, correct, and genuinely Leninist policy. We need to gather momentum, move forward, expose and overcome shortcomings, and clearly envision our bright future.

I assure you that I will do everything in order to justify our party's great trust--your trust, comrades; I will do everything in order to smooth our friendly work. And I very much place my hopes in our mutual support and our unity.

Since all present Politburo members, Politburo candidate members and CC secretaries have spoken here, and, so far as I understand, your opinion is unanimous, we may go out with a unanimous recommendation to the Plenum of CC CPSU, which will commence in 30 minutes.

POLITBURO MEMBERS. Right.

GORBACHEV. Since A. A. Gromyko was the first to speak today, it seems that it would be expedient to entrust him to present the Politburo-ratified proposal for consideration by the Plenum of CC CPSU.

POLITBURO MEMBERS. Right, A. A. Gromyko may be entrusted. Resolution is ratified.

□ ON THE SPECIAL PLENUM OF CC CPSU

GORBACHEV. There is a proposal to convene a special Plenum of CC CPSU on 11 March 1985. The Plenum is to consider one question--the election of the General

Secretary of CC CPSU. I think we will do this in the following manner: examine all prepared organizational questions before the commencement of the Plenum, and at 17 hours commence the Plenum in the hall of CC Plenum meetings. By that time, I think, all Plenum participants will be able to arrive in Moscow.

Resolution is ratified.

□ON ORGANIZING THE FUNERAL OF GENERAL SECRETARY OF CC CPSU, CHAIRMAN OF THE USSR SUPREME SOVIET PRESIDUM K. U. CHERNENKO.

GORBACHEV. We have on our hands a comrade-prepared proposal. Are there any comments regarding the text of the announcement of K. U. Chernenko's death?

POLITBURO MEMBERS. No comments.

GORBACHEV. The proposal is accepted to transmit the announcement on television and radio on 11 March at 17 hours and publish it in the press on 12 March. No objections?

POLITBURO MEMBERS. Agreed...

[1] As of 11 March 1985, the CC Politburo included 10 members and 6 candidates. In addition to M. S. Gorbachev, the Politburo members consisted of: G. A. Aliev--first Vice-Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers; V. I. Vorotnikov--Chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers; V. V. Grishin--first secretary of the CPSU Moscow City Committee; A.A.Gromyko--first Vice-Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs; D. A. Kunaev--first secretary of the CC CP of Kazakhstan; G. V. Romanov--secretary of CC CPSU; M. S. Solomentsev--chairman of the CC CPSU Party Control Committee; N. A. Tikhonov--Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers; V. V. Shcherbitskii--first secretary of CC CP of Ukraine (not present at the Politburo meeting, being in transit, on his way back from the US).

The Politburo candidate members: P. N. Demichev--USSR minister of Culture; V. I. Dolgikh--secretary of CC CPSU; V. V. Kuznetsov--first Vice-Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium; B. N. Ponomarev--secretary of CC CPSU; V. M. Chebrikov--chairman of USSR KGB; E.A. Shevardnadze--first secretary of CC CP of Georgia. The others present at the Politburo meeting--M. V. Zimyanin, I. V. Kapitonov, E. K. Ligachev, K. V. Rusakov and N. I. Ryzhkov were secretaries of CC CPSU.

K. U. Chernenko--the only General Secretary during whose regime the membership of the CC Politburo and Secretariat remained unchanged, excluding the death of the Minister of Defense D. F. Ustinov in December 1984.

[2] E. I. Chazov--director of the Fourth Chief Administration at the USSR Ministry of Health, responsible for the health care of the highest party and government nomenclature; physician for L. I. Brezhnev, Yu. V. Andropov, K. U. Chernenko; academician under the USSR Academy of Sciences; member of CC CPSU.

[3] M. S. Gorbachev was transferred to work in Moscow and selected as candidate member of CC CPSU Politburo and CC secretary on 27 November 1978; he had been member of CC CPSU Politburo since October 1980.

[4] From 1955 M. S. Gorbachev was involved in Komsomol work [in the Stavropol region], and from 1962--party work in the Stavropol region; from 1970 he was first secretary of CPSU territorial committee [in Stavropol].

[5] Graduated from the College of Law at MGU [Moscow State University] in 1955; from Stavropol Institute of Agriculture in 1967.

[6] Reference is to M.S. Gorbachev's report at the All Union Scientific-Applied Conference on "Improving the progress of socialism and ideological work of the party in light of the decisions of the June (1983) Plenum of CC CPSU," which he presented on 10 December 1984. Among those who assisted in the preparation of the report were V. A. Medvedev (director of CC CPSU Department of science and educational institutions), Ya. N. Yakovlev (director of the Academy of Sciences- Institute of world economy and international relations) and other future comrades-in-arms of the General secretary during "Perestroika."