

July 9, 1987
**Anatoly Chernyaev, Notes from a Meeting of the
Politburo**

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Summary:

Gorbachev and other Politburo members discussed the pressing issue of the return of Crimean Tatars to Crimea.

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Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Meeting of the Politburo on 9 July 1987. Discussion of the Issue of Return of the Crimean Tartars to the Crimea.

(...)

Solomentsev: A decision should be taken, even though it is not an easy issue. And it should be resolved simultaneously with the issue of the Volga Germans. Because we admitted that their evictions were not justified. And we returned the Ingushi, Kaluks, Karachaevans... Almost everyone, but not the Volga Germans and not the Crimean Tartars. But I am against the autonomous region [in the Crimea for the Tartars]. The ethnic map of the Crimea has changed considerably. Before the war 13% of the population there were Ukrainians, now 26%. There were 49% Russians, now 68%.

And the transfer of the Crimea to the Ukraine – it was not accompanied by applause, They gave it along with Sebastopol, the city of Russian glory.

An autonomous region is a mongrel idea [ubliudochnoie resheniie]. Maybe I am maximalist. But we have a good Decree that Lenin once had signed. If we are striving to live by Lenin, then we should lean on this Decree. And it will make it hard to show hurt feelings. Both for Russians and Ukrainians. These peoples will “adjust” to each other.

Gorbachev: So you think that the Crimea must be again part of the RSFRS, as Lenin had decreed. Do you remember when [Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Nikolai] Podgorni demanded that Krasnodar and Kuban should be transferred to the Ukraine? Because in his opinion the Cossaks were of Ukrainian origin. . Returning the Crimea back to Russia might be correct from a historical and a political angle. But the Ukraine will stand like a mountain against it [vstanet goroi].

Vorotnikov: Postpone this issue. I am afraid we could create yet another huge – Ukrainian problem. I am for autonomous region, but meanwhile there should be conditions [for the Crimean Tartars] created in Uzbekistan. I am against the simultaneous resolution of the issue of the Germans.

Shevardnadze. I favor the creation of conditions in Uzbekistan. And for allowing gradual resettlement to the Crimea for all who would want and would be able to.

Yakovlev. Let's define, for instance, 15-20 years as a transnational period of resettlement to the Crimea. And meanwhile [make their life better in] Uzbekistan.

Dolgikh supports this

Gromyko. Why are we in such a hurry? Nothing has occurred. The tartar delegation keeps going to the Presidium of Supreme Soviet and other places of authority, so what? Let them go. And the decision on resettlement is justified by [Second World] war conditions.

The transfer of the Crimea to the Ukraine was, of course, an arbitrary act [proizvol]. But how can we reverse it? I am for letting this issue be decided by life and history. And against creating an [autonomous] region. The Tartars should be settled in Uzbekistan. Even if this does not provide a satisfying decision, at least it will weaken the pressure to adopt the Crimean option. I propose to think again and refrain from a final decision.

Lukyanov is for an autonomous region in the Crimea.

Gorbachev. (...) Return of the Crimea back to the RSFSR will create a chink where we do not need it, in the Slav core of the “socialist empire.” Before the revolution the Russian nation was the basis of the country's independence. Today all others are as well. We must create conditions in Uzbekistan for a normal [polnokrovsky] life for the Tartars, we must take care of them. Those who are already in Crimea we should let

stay there. And help them as well. But let's work to delay the resettlement to the Crimea. And let's appeal to the people to stand on the ground of realism.

Commission [of the Politburo] is created from: Gromyko, Scherbitsky, Vorotnikov, Usmankhodzhaev, Demichev, Chebrikov, Lukyanov, Rasumovsky, Yakovlev.

Gorbachev. [Volga Germans'] issue we will not touch so far. But if the Commission excels in the Tartar issue, then we will unleash her on the Germans. The Commission should seek contact with Tartar delegations, speak to the mass media. In a word, this process should be tackled in a democratic way.

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