



## The Last Superpower Summits

**New book analyzes detailed transcripts of Gorbachev, Reagan and Bush meetings 1985-1991**

**Key documents show Thatcher's endorsement of Gorbachev, Bush's anxiety about Gorbachev's popularity, and missed opportunities on arms control, regional conflicts, and European integration**

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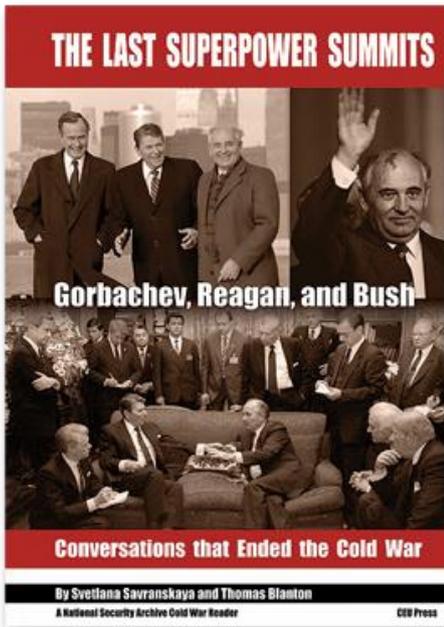
[Washington History Seminar today, January 23, 2017](#), features authors Svetlana Savranskaya and Thomas Blanton, at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, co-sponsored by the American Historical Association

**Washington D.C., January 23, 2017** – The historic summit meetings between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and two U.S. presidents, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, built an intensive learning process on both sides that ended the Cold War, but missed numerous other opportunities to make the world safer, according to the new book, *The Last Superpower Summits*, featured today in the Washington History Seminar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The book's authors, Svetlana Savranskaya and Thomas Blanton of the National Security Archive, argue that the summit conversations that began at Geneva in 1985 and ended in Madrid in 1991 just before the USSR dissolved, dramatically reduced both sides' sense of threat but often struggled with Cold War preconceptions that left on the table potential arms control reductions and further solutions to Third World conflicts. Ultimately, even though the summits achieved unprecedented levels of partnership, their unfinished business left a legacy that helped prevent the integration of the former USSR into Europe.

Today's Web posting of declassified documents include several of the most significant that are published in the book (Central European University Press), and another dozen that provide important context for the summits. Among the highlights:

- British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's praise for Gorbachev during her first visit to Camp David in December 1984.
- President Reagan's first letter to Gorbachev in March 1985 citing "our common ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons."
- President Bush's advice from top aide Brent Scowcroft in March 1989 about "Getting Ahead of Gorbachev," in order to create "the image of America's foreign policy as driven by clear objectives."
- The Gorbachev-Bush memcon from the Paris summit, November 1990, where neither mentions European integration, instead focusing on Bush's plea for Gorbachev's support in the upcoming Gulf War.



## ABOUT THE BOOK

"Based on transcripts of the intense and often passionate dialogues and negotiations between the main initiators of the end of the Cold War, as well as their personal letters; and memoranda, notes and diaries of aides and advisors, this book offers the reader an exceptional chance to be 'a fly on the wall' at U.S.-Soviet summits ... This is exciting reading and a real textbook on the skill of statesmanship for new generations of political leaders."

**Andrei Grachev**, author of *Gorbachev's Gamble* and *Final Days: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Soviet Union*; former Gorbachev press secretary

"This book is a triumph of history at a turning point- the end of the Cold War. In private conversations and once-secret documents, the leaders of the United States and Soviet Union struggle to end the superpower standoff. Fascinating, authentic and invaluable, *The Last Superpower Summits* combines the raw material of history and polished, compelling analysis. The book transports a reader back in time."

**David E. Hoffman**, Pulitzer-Prize-winning author of *The Dead Hand: The Untold Story of the Cold War Arms Race and Its Dangerous Legacy*

"The formerly classified documents and the astute commentary on them in this book are absolutely indispensable for understanding how the Cold War ended. Kudos to the National Security Archive for collecting, translating and analyzing them!"

**William C. Taubman**, Amherst College, Pulitzer-Prize-winning author of *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*

## READ THE DOCUMENTS



## [Document 01](#)

### **Thatcher-Reagan memcon, December 10, 1984, Camp David**

This remarkable, detailed memorandum of conversation records British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's first-ever visit, in December 1984, to the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, decorated for the holidays with fires in the fireplaces, all highly conducive to relaxed conversation. Thatcher has come to debrief Reagan about her encounter in London with the rising Soviet star, Mikhail Gorbachev, a likely successor (but who knew it would be so soon?) to the ill and aged Konstantin Chernenko at the top of the Soviet pyramid. Here Thatcher expands on her earlier public comment upon meeting Gorbachev - "I like Mr. Gorbachev. We can do business together" - and describes him to Reagan as an "unusual Russian.... Much less constrained, more charming..." and not defensive in the usual Soviet way about human rights. Coming from the Tory "Iron Lady" who was busy breaking up labor unions in Britain and denouncing communism around the world, such endorsements mattered to Reagan and had a pronounced effect on U.S. politics, especially Reagan's conservative base.

This memcon is also noteworthy for spelling out Reagan and Thatcher's very different ideas about nuclear abolition and missile defense - disagreements that would figure throughout the summits to come. Reagan directly declares his intentions regarding the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), including sharing any successful technology internationally, even with the Soviet Union, and abolishing nuclear weapons. In contrast, Thatcher vividly expresses her opposition to abolition (which "would make conventional, biological, or chemical war more likely"), her insistence on sticking to traditional deterrence, and her warning that the deployment of defensive systems could lead to an increase in Soviet offensive weapons to overcome those defenses, and thus actually diminish the West's security. In the impending summits, Gorbachev would agree with Reagan about abolition, but would show even more anxiety than Thatcher about missile defense.



## [Document 02](#)

### **Reagan letter to Gorbachev, March 11, 1985**

Vice President George H.W. Bush hand delivered this first letter from President Reagan to the new leader of the Soviet Union, after the state funeral for Konstantin Chernenko in March 1985 ("you die, I fly" as Bush memorably remarked about his job as the ceremonial U.S. mourner for world leaders). The letter contains two especially noteworthy passages, one inviting Mikhail Gorbachev to come to Washington, and the second expressing

Reagan's hope that arms control negotiations "provide us with a genuine chance to make progress toward our common ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons." Reagan is reaching for a pen-pal, just as he did as early as 1981, when he hand-wrote a heartfelt letter during his recovery from an assassination attempt, to then-General Secretary Brezhnev suggesting face-to-face meetings and referring to the existential danger of nuclear weapons - only to get a formalistic reply. Subsequent letters between Reagan and the whole series of Soviet leaders ("they keep dying on me," Reagan told his wife) contain extensive language on many of the themes - such as the ultimate threat of nuclear annihilation - that would come up over and over again when Reagan finally found a partner on the Soviet side in Gorbachev. Even Chernenko had received a hand-written add-on by Reagan appreciating Soviet losses in World War II and crediting Moscow with a consequent aversion to war.



### [Document 03](#)

#### **Reagan-Gorbachev memcon, First Meeting, Geneva, November 19, 1985**

This was the meeting Ronald Reagan had dreamed of, when he could get a Soviet leader in the room man-to-man and convince him the U.S. had no intention of attacking, in fact, that the two leaders were partners for world peace. The schedulers had only allotted 15 minutes for this meet-and-greet session with just interpreters present, but Reagan and Gorbachev would talk for a full hour, while their aides paced in the halls of the Maison Fleur d'Eau. This memcon, written by the veteran U.S. interpreter Dmitri Zarechnak (Yuri Uspensky is with Gorbachev), showcases Reagan's pitch, speaking about the mistrust and suspicions of the past and of the need to begin a new stage in U.S.-Soviet relations. Gorbachev describes his view of the international situation to Reagan, stressing the need to end the arms race. No wallflower, Gorbachev keeps going even when Reagan suggests perhaps it is time to join their aides. Interestingly, when Reagan expresses his concern that Soviet activity in the Third World is helping socialist revolutions in developing countries, Gorbachev does not challenge the assertion directly, but replies jokingly that he does not wake up "every day" thinking about "which country he would like to arrange a revolution in." At the very end of the session, Gorbachev alerts Reagan to some "confidential information" from the Soviet Academy of Sciences concerning the likelihood of earthquakes in California. Reagan graciously accepts the warning.



### [Document 04](#)

#### **Shultz memo to Reagan, "Reykjavik," October 2, 1986.**

This briefing memo from Secretary of State George Shultz to President Reagan, labeled "Super Sensitive" in addition to being formally classified as "Secret/Sensitive," shows that

Washington did not expect to reach any final agreements at Reykjavik, but, rather, aimed mainly at preparing the ground for a future summit in the United States. Shultz talks about placing ceilings on ballistic missiles but fails to anticipate Gorbachev's dramatic proposals for 50 percent cuts and a process leading to the abolition of nuclear weapons. Ironically, Shultz says one of the U.S. goals is to emphasize progress "without permitting the impression that Reykjavik itself was a Summit," whereas history now sees Reykjavik as in many ways the most dramatic summit of the Cold War.



### [Document 05](#)

#### **Soviet Politburo meeting, October 14, 1986.**

At the first Politburo meeting after Reykjavik, Gorbachev reports on the results, beginning with a standard ideological critique of Reagan as a class enemy who furthermore showed "extreme primitivism, a caveman outlook and intellectual impotence." However, Gorbachev goes on to describe the summit as a breakthrough, and the attainment of a "new, higher level, from which now we must begin the struggle for the liquidation and complete banning of nuclear armaments." The Politburo agrees with the assessment and approves the general secretary's tough posturing. But Gorbachev would soon understand that Reykjavik's higher level was higher than the Americans would ever come to again.



### [Document 06](#)

#### **National Security Decision Directive 250, November 3, 1986.**

Largely the work of NSC staffer Robert Linhard, who participated at Reykjavik, NSDD 250 attempts to keep the U.S. national security bureaucracy focused on President Reagan's goal of eliminating ballistic missiles while walking back from Reagan's expressed intent at Reykjavik to eliminate all offensive nuclear weapons. In fact, the NSDD's version of Reykjavik completely leaves out the Reagan and Shultz statements to Gorbachev about welcoming the abolition of nuclear weapons. Yet even this limited effort did not succeed in moving the U.S. bureaucracy toward realistic planning, and in fact the Joint Chiefs of Staff promptly weighed in with National Security Adviser Poindexter, arguing that eliminating missiles would require large increases in conventional military spending.



### [Document 07](#)

#### **Soviet Politburo meeting, February 26, 1987.**

This Politburo session took the historic decision to "untie the package" - that is, to offer the U.S. a separate agreement on intermediate range nuclear forces (INF) without linking this to other arms control issues. Convinced by a memo from top aide Alexander Yakovlev the day before, Gorbachev likely arranged the preliminary decision during conversation in the adjacent Walnut Room in the Kremlin before the formal Politburo meeting, while these notes show the former foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, now the ceremonial head of state, making the proposal official. Gorbachev argues strongly for this decision as the only way to jumpstart the negotiations, which had been "stuck" since Geneva. Here he also proposes to invite George Shultz to Moscow, and to proceed to a speedy agreement on INF and then on strategic offensive weapons. He shows his frustration with U.S. backtracking on arms control after Reykjavik. All the Politburo members present speak in favor of separating the talks, including Yegor Ligachev and Defense Minister Yuri Sokolov, who would later criticize the treaty as concessionary. Both Shevardnadze and Gorbachev echo Yakovlev's argument about timing and linking the decision to the need to restore trust in European public opinion after the resumption of Soviet nuclear tests.



#### [Document 08](#)

#### **CIA Deputy Director Robert Gates, "Gorbachev's Gameplan," November 24, 1987**

On the eve of the Washington summit, the top U.S. intelligence analyst on the Soviet Union--Robert M. Gates, then the deputy director of CIA--gets Gorbachev almost completely wrong. In this memo (forwarded by the CIA director William Webster to Vice President Bush and other top officials), Gates predicts that the Soviet reforms are merely "breathing space" before resuming the "further increase in Soviet military power and political influence." Gates misses the Soviet recognition that the Stalinist economic system had failed; he incorrectly predicts that Gorbachev will only agree to arms reductions that "protect existing Soviet advantages"; he claims the Soviets are still committed to the protection of their Third World clients--only three months later, Gorbachev would announce the pullout from Afghanistan; and Gates sees any Gorbachev force reductions as a threat to "Alliance cohesion" rather than a gain for security in Europe. This hard-line assessment of Gorbachev is not shared by President Reagan, who would rescind his "evil empire" rhetoric while standing in Red Square in May 1988.



#### [Document 09](#)

#### **Reagan-Gorbachev memcon, December 10, 1987, Washington D.C**

After raising regional issues briefly the day before, Reagan and Gorbachev devote this entire final session before the concluding luncheon to a discussion of third world conflicts where both countries had significant interests and supported the opposing parties. Gorbachev pushes hard for bilateral cooperation in settling those conflicts, saying that they affect bilateral relations and could be successfully resolved if both of them showed resolve and willingness to cooperate. Gorbachev says "[t]he world [is] looking for the U.S. and the Soviet Union to cooperate in a businesslike way." On Afghanistan, the Soviet side feels that the U.S. attitude was "you're there, you should extricate yourselves, it's your problem." He asks Reagan to agree "without any publicity" that Soviets would start withdrawal and the U.S. would stop its assistance to the rebels. He makes a similar proposal about Nicaragua-to agree to stop outside arms supplies, excluding small arms. Reagan objects saying that in such situation the governments would have all the military power and would not allow opposition to participate in the political process, therefore, opposition should also be armed, both in Afghanistan and in Nicaragua. He does not respond to Gorbachev's more general appeal to cooperate on resolving regional conflicts. There is much more meeting of the minds on the issue of the Iran-Iraq war, with the exception of Gorbachev's proposal of a UN military force. Gorbachev cites his brief one-on-one conversation with Bush, who expressed his opposition to the idea of engaging UN forces in the Middle East.



## [Document 10](#)

### **Shevardnadze-Shultz memcon, April 21, 1988, Moscow**

This State Department memorandum of conversation records the third set of negotiations between the U.S. Secretary of State and the Soviet Foreign Minister leading up to the Moscow summit (February in Moscow, March in Washington, now April back in Moscow). Shevardnadze presses for progress on START, but Shultz responds that still-unresolved issues like sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) would not "reach full closure during the next month," so agreement is unlikely for the summit. (Arguments over these nuclear-armed cruise missiles would hold up START negotiations for years, pushed by the parochial interests of the U.S. Navy rather than a consideration of the national interest, but by 1991 their lack of strategic value would lead to President George H. W. Bush's unilateral decision to withdraw all tactical nukes from U.S. ships.) The bulk of the discussion here concerns human rights issues, including an interesting exchange about the Vienna follow-up meeting on the Helsinki Final Act (CSCE). Shultz raises his "disappointment with the performance of the Soviet delegation" at Vienna, which "was not prepared to go as far in its statements as what the Soviet leadership was saying in Moscow." Shevardnadze responds, "We have a hard delegation" in Vienna, we tell them one thing, "They do something different."



## [Document 11](#)

## **Georgy Arbatov memo to Gorbachev, June 1988**

This memorandum to the General Secretary from the influential Georgy Arbatov, head of the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Institute for USA and Canada Studies, provides an after-action assessment of the Moscow summit and the state of U.S.-Soviet relations. Arbatov points to the significance of the summit as being a "discovery" of the Soviet Union by the West and the breaking of the enemy image. He outlines the broad arms control agenda that remains, but cautions Gorbachev that during the last stages of the electoral campaign in the United States it would not be realistic to expect any serious progress. Arbatov clearly believes the Reagan administration has exhausted its potential to make any serious steps on strategic or conventional weapons. In one part of the memorandum, he carefully suggests that it might be time for the Soviet Union to undertake some unilateral initiatives on conventional weapons in Europe, such as significant reductions in tanks, which would impress European public opinion and make quick progress with the new U.S. administration more likely.



### **[Document 12](#)**

## **CIA Testimony to U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, December 7, 1988**

This remarkable closed-door testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee by the top three CIA analysts of the Soviet Union (Doug MacEachin, Robert Blackwell, and Paul Ericson) occurs at the precise moment that Gorbachev is speaking to the United Nations on December 7, 1988. MacEachin opens his testimony by saying "in about 15 minutes or so we may find out if one of my analytical judgments is going to turn out to be correct," referring to his prediction that Gorbachev will have to cut the proportion of Soviet resources that go to the military. At the same time, MacEachin disparages the "plausible but totally unfounded story of very large cuts"; but later he mentions that "Blackwell just went down the hall to watch some" of the U.N. speech on television, and some 36 pages into the transcript MacEachin mentions the "news bulletin" of the astonishing 500,000 troop cut announced by Gorbachev - 10 percent of overall Soviet forces. Ericson comments that this is "analysis on the fly." Most striking is the way this testimony illustrates the rifts within the U.S. government between Gorbachev skeptics like Robert Gates and the new national security advisor Brent Scowcroft on one side, and the career analysts like MacEachin on the other. MacEachin remarks that "if Gorbachev is successful he will cause major social displacement in the United States" because "[t]here are not many homes for old wizards of Armageddon, and it is kind of like old case officers trying to find employment." And MacEachin offers a true confession in an extraordinary passage that demonstrates how prior assumptions about Soviet behavior, rather than actual intelligence data points, actually drove intelligence findings: "Now, we spend megadollars studying political instability in various places around the world, but we never really looked at the Soviet Union as a political entity in which there were factors building which could lead to the kind

of - at least the initiation of political transformation that we seem to see. It does not exist to my knowledge. Moreover, had it existed inside the government, we never would have been able to publish it anyway, quite frankly. And had we done so, people would have been calling for my head. And I wouldn't have published it. In all honesty, had we said a week ago that Gorbachev might come to the UN and offer a unilateral cut of 500,000 in the military, we would have been told we were crazy. We had a difficult enough time getting air space for the prospect of some unilateral cuts of 50 to 60,000." After MacEachin admits that the Soviet agreement for on-site inspections under the INF Treaty were far more "intrusive" than the Americans "were willing to accept," Senator Bill Bradley (D-New Jersey), who is presiding over the classified hearing, remarks on meeting some U.S. military intelligence officers in the European Command who had become "disoriented and depressed" because after spending their careers just trying to get into the Soviet space, now "you're giving me the key and saying walk in, there's an easy chair, take a look around and do you want a beer?"



### [Document 13](#)

#### **Scowcroft to Bush, "Short-Range Nuclear Forces and NATO's 'Comprehensive Concept,'" circa February 10, 1989**

In this short and pointed memo the new national security adviser, retired Air Force general Brent Scowcroft, expresses the first priority of the new Bush administration-not further arms reductions but the maintenance of a credible nuclear deterrence in Europe, even when the countries whom the deterrent was supposed to protect (Germany), spoke against any new nuclear weapons on their soil. As if not noticing that the international environment has changed completely, Scowcroft calls for sticking to the 1983 Montebello treaty, which included a provision for the deployment of a follow-on to the aging Lance land-based missile (FOTL) in Germany. Kohl, complains Scowcroft, instead of supporting the U.S. policy on modernization, "urges the immediate initiation of negotiations with Moscow on SNF systems." Such negotiations, Scowcroft correctly perceives, would create "almost irresistible pressures for a 'third zero'" and thus "hasten denuclearization of Europe." The memo reads as if the national security adviser has never heard Gorbachev's speech at the United Nations announcing deep unilateral conventional arms reductions in Eastern Europe. Scowcroft's grand strategy for Europe from this memo appears to be to keep the U.S. nuclear presence in Europe "viable and survivable."



### [Document 14](#)

#### **Scowcroft to Bush, "Getting Ahead of Gorbachev," March 1, 1989**

This document reveals how justified were George Shultz's concerns about the inability of the new administration to pick up the momentum developed between Gorbachev and Reagan. The overriding need that national security adviser Scowcroft sees for Bush's foreign policy is "getting ahead of Gorbachev," which he calls "a complicated and enduring task." The memo has no indication that the Cold War is over or that bold initiatives from Gorbachev, if responded to, would lead to a transformation of international relations very much in the U.S. national security interest. No new initiatives are proposed; moreover, Scowcroft warns the president that now "is an especially bad time to put forth flashy proposals on the assumption that Gorbachev cannot accept them. He has surprised us before." He complains that Gorbachev is capturing the public's imagination, especially in Europe, and that the U.S. needs to counteract this and grab the limelight. The memo sets out several goals, the first one of which is domestic-to create "the image of America's foreign policy as driven by clear objectives." No mention is made of the Gorbachev's groundbreaking speech at the United Nations and his unilateral troops cuts are only referred to as "reported." In contrast, the memo suggests that "[i]n the European security realm, our first priority is to underscore the credibility of NATO's nuclear deterrent through modernization." This suggestion would lead to Bush's failed campaign to persuade Germany to modernize Lance short-range missiles (FOTL), which took three months and a lot of effort of the administration. Gorbachev's idea of a common European home is also seen as a challenge not a welcoming sign of new thinking; Scowcroft suggests that the United States needs to "counter" it "by pointing out that we remain in that home as welcome guests, not as with the Soviets in Eastern Europe, as occupiers." Finally, the memo makes clear that the administration is not likely to provide any substantial economic aid to the reforming countries as compared to other allies: "for political and economic reasons, Japan and Europe are more sympathetic than we to East European and Soviet requests for Western investment."



## [Document 15](#)

### **Rowny memo to Baker, November 17, 1989**

This concise memo for secretary of state James Baker sums up the American position going into Malta that "the meeting must not become an 'arms control summit'"--since the Bush administration believed that Reagan had gone much too far in embracing Gorbachev and major arms reductions. Long-time SALT negotiator and retired Army General Edward Rowny even goes so far as to recommend "If Gorbachev says that Malta should move arms control forward, we should focus the discussion on process and not engage on substance..." Since "there are potential risks and few gains in discussing START," various potential Gorbachev offers such as "moratoria on fissionable materials and production of strategic weapons" "are all losers for us," and naval arms control is a "no-win situation." By 1991, Bush would reverse course on almost all these positions, but too late to help Gorbachev demilitarize the Soviet Union.



## [Document 16](#)

### **Gorbachev-Baker memcon, May 18, 1990, Moscow.**

The fascinating conversation covers the arms control issues in preparation for the Washington summit and includes extensive but inconclusive discussion of German unification and of tensions in the Baltics, particularly the standoff between Moscow and secessionist Lithuania. On the issue of German unification, Gorbachev makes an impassioned effort to persuade Baker that Germany should reunify outside of blocs, in the context of the all-European process. Baker provides Gorbachev with nine points of assurances to show him that his position is taken into account. Point eight is the most important for Gorbachev—that the United States is "making an effort in various forums to ultimately transform the CSCE into a permanent institution that would become an important cornerstone of a new Europe." This assurance notwithstanding, when Gorbachev talks about the need to build new security structures to replace the blocs, Baker lets out a personal reaction that says a lot about the real U.S. position on the subject: "It's nice to talk about pan-European security structures, the role of the CSCE. It is a wonderful dream, but just a dream. In the meantime, NATO exists ..." When Baker asks Gorbachev if he has a realistic alternative to Germany in NATO, Gorbachev does not provide one but talks about a possibility that Germany would choose the Warsaw Pact. He also suggests that if the U.S. side insists on Germany in NATO, then he would "announce publicly that we want to join NATO too," and continues, "our potential membership in NATO is not such a wild fantasy. After all, there was a big coalition at one time, so why is it impossible now?" Shevardnadze is more specific about the price they would have to pay for Germany in NATO: "if united Germany becomes a member of NATO, it will blow up perestroika. Our people will not forgive us. People will say that we ended up the losers, not the winners." Echoes of this statement can still be heard in Russia 25 years after the German unification.



## [Document 17](#)

### **U.S. State Department, "Washington Summit Briefing Points," June 4, 1990**

Immediately following the summit, the State Department sends these SECRET talking points to the Deputy Secretary, Lawrence Eagleburger, away from Washington in Paraguay. The cable notes that separate (and presumably more expansive) Presidential letters are being sent to U.S. embassies in NATO countries as well as in Warsaw, Prague, Berlin and Budapest. Here we see the basis for subsequent accounts claiming that the meeting "was essentially different from any previous U.S.-Soviet summit"—"beyond containment to an era of enduring cooperation." In addition to substance, the cable mentions the open and

sincere nature of the conversations. The document points to such breakthroughs as the agreement on eliminating chemical weapons, discussions on limiting nuclear testing, and of course the progress on German unification - although the main action on Germany would come later that summer at the Arkyz conversations between Gorbachev and Kohl. To sum up, this was an "extraordinarily productive summit."



## [Document 18](#)

### **Gorbachev-Bush memcon, November 19, 1990, Paris.**

The most astonishing aspect of this one-on-one conversation, happening on the margins of the Paris CSCE summit, is that neither Gorbachev nor Bush ever mentions the themes of European integration or the common European home that has been Gorbachev highest aspiration. Instead, they focus on their major priorities at the time-the domestic situation in the USSR and the war in the Persian Gulf. This is the moment where both leaders need each other probably more than ever. Gorbachev essentially warns Bush that he is going to introduce "methods resembling harsh administrative measures" saying that even president Roosevelt had to use similar measures. He tells Bush about his recent speech to the Supreme Soviet and deputies' approval for his proposals dealing with "order and discipline," even "a presidential rule, presidential system, where executive power will be directly under the President's control." This is exactly what Shevardnadze would warn about when he resigns unexpectedly at the end of December. Although not endorsing this directly, Bush reacts with understanding, only raising the issue of the Baltics. He tries to persuade Gorbachev to let the Baltic republics leave the Union and not resort to violence there. Then, after discussion of the Soviet internal situation, Bush asks to "turn to the most difficult, festering issue:" the Persian Gulf. Now, as never before, Bush needs Gorbachev to ensure a U.N. Security Council resolution on the use of force. This request goes against Gorbachev's expressed preference to avoid violence in the Gulf and could be damaging for him domestically because of the strong opposition to military action among the Soviet leadership. Bush uses all his powers of persuasion to sway Gorbachev to give his support for the resolution. Bush says he wanted to talk to him in private to "pour out my heart to you," and that he does not want to use force either. Gorbachev eventually agrees, in part because it is important to him to manage the Gulf conflict strictly within the U.N. framework where the USSR has veto power. The conversation is filled with assurances of partnership and future possibilities in U.S.-Soviet relations. However, after Gorbachev gives his agreement and the Soviet representative votes in favor of the U.N. resolution, Gorbachev is never really consulted about the course of actions in the Gulf, while the United States conducts close consultations with its NATO partners and Saudi Arabia

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