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For a Conversation with Prime Minister of India I. Gandhi (Privately)

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Summary:

Material sent to L. I. Brezhnev in preparation for a private conversation with I. Gandhi. Potential topics for conversation include the Soviet Union's commitment to strengthening India's defense capability, India's role in the non-aligned movement, and recent steps in the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations.

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for a conversation with Prime

Minister of India I. Gandhi

(privately)

Dear Madam Prime Minister,

The relations of trust and mutual understanding established between us allow us to exchange opinions openly, as is and should be between friends. This time I would like to share with you some views confidentially.

First of all I want to confirm our readiness to continue to give India assistance in strengthening its defense capability. These questions were discussed in detail during the visit to India of Marshal Ustinov, and things are going well here.

In helping supply the Indian armed forces with modern weapons and military equipment we do this for India on exclusively preferential conditions. We do this guided not by commercial, but political considerations, striving to give it support.

An indicator of the high level and, I would say, special nature of our military collaboration is the aid of the Soviet Union to India in the creation of its atomic submarine fleet. Considering those requests which we have already received from the India side, the volume of this collaboration, evidently it will not only remain, but grow in the foreseeable future. We take this into account when determining priorities in our planning. We believe that the Indian side has the same approach.

All this quite compellingly raises the question of the desirability, yes even the business necessity, of creating some joint body which would make it easier to solve current questions and the long-term planning of our military collaboration. If the Indian side shares this opinion then experts could come to agreement about the specific form of such a body.

We are ready for a further expansion of collaboration with India on Indian Ocean questions. In our view, the situation developing here requires a broader exchange of confidential information on military and political questions of the situation in the Indian Ocean and stepping up our collaboration in the naval area. If the Indian leadership agrees in principle with this formulation of the question then we could charge the appropriate representatives of both sides with preparing specific proposals on this matter.

I would like to also touch on such a question. Madam Prime Minister, you well know how highly we appreciate the role of the non-aligned movement in world affairs. As experience shows, this role is more authoritatively the more cohesive and actively it advocates for peace and against the aggressive intrigues of imperialism. Those who would like to confront it from anti-imperialist positions and use [it] for their narrow ends understand this. In the final account all this would lead to a division of the movement and a lessening of its authority and influence. In expressing these views we proceed from the position that such questions cannot fail to trouble India, which has done so much to strengthen the unity and increase the authority of the movement.

Some words about the malicious activity of the Pakistani leadership against Afghanistan. It not only offers complete freedom to the interventionists on its territory, but actually rewards and coordinates their activity. At the same time Pakistani officials deny their complicity in this. Reliable information about the participation of the Pakistani authorities in the training, supply, and transport of the interventionist bandits into Afghanistan has great importance in unmasking the two-faced policy of the Pakistan leadership. We have such information and it is quite complete. But, as they say, you can never have too much of a good thing, and we would be grateful to friendly India if it considered it possible to share information at its disposal on this matter confidentially.

In conclusion I want to confidentially inform you of some steps we have recently taken in the sphere of relations with China.

In the middle of this August the chief of the PRC MFA Department of the USSR and Eastern Europe Countries was passing through Moscow. At his request conversations were held with a deputy minister of foreign affairs and a chief of a USSR MFA

department.

In the course of these conversations the PRC MFA representative said that the PRC and the USSR could make efforts to eliminate the serious obstacles to the development of relations between the two countries and to hold consultations with this purpose on some questions which are these obstacles. However, in his expression, among the first-priority questions which ought to be solved as preconditions to an improvement of relations between the two countries the Chinese representative named questions touching on the relations of the Soviet Union with Vietnam, Kampuchea, Mongolia, and Afghanistan.

Essentially the PRC MFA representative repeated the same preliminary conditions which the Chinese side raised earlier both publicly and in the course of negotiations about a normalization of relations between the USSR and the PRC in the fall of 1979.

The PRC representative was told that, as has been repeatedly pointed out, the Soviet proposals directed at a normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations remain in effect. It was decisively stressed at the same time that a discussion of the questions concerning third parties is unacceptable to us.

On 20 August of this year an aide-memoire was sent to the PRC Embassy. In development of what I said in my speech in Tashkent of this year it said that the Soviet side is ready to discuss the problems of bilateral relations between the USSR and the PRC with the Chinese side at any time. It mentioned in the note that the Soviet Union counted on the Chinese side taking our position into account and doing everything necessary to put Soviet-Chinese relations into a calm direction, and to create an appropriate atmosphere for the development of good-neighborly relations and cooperation between our two neighboring countries. However, the Soviet-Chinese talks or negotiations cannot be held to the detriment of third countries.

In response to our aide-memoire the Chinese side expressed a desire not at all long ago to continue contacts between the USSR and the PRC about the question of improving intergovernmental relations through special representatives of the rank of deputy foreign minister in turn in Peking and Moscow and proposed to hold the first meeting in Peking at the beginning of this October. We will see what these meetings lead to.

The true intentions of Peking both in the sphere of foreign policy as well as in the sphere of Soviet-Chinese relations might be judged more definitely from the real political practice of the Chinese leadership after the 12th CPC Congress.

In a word, as before, we will try to somehow improve and normalize relations with China, but in no way at the expense of the principles of our foreign policy or relations with our friends such as India, Mongolia, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and others.