

April 27, 1978
CPSU CC Politburo Transcript, 27 April 1978
(excerpt)

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Summary:

The CPSU CC Politburo discusses recent negotiations with US Secretary of State Vance regarding Soviet-American relations and Soviet criticism of the Carter administration's foreign policy and position on strategic weapons.

Credits:

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Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Top Secret
Only copy
Working Transcript
MEETING OF THE
CC CPSU POLITBURO
27 April 1978

Chaired by Comrade BREZHNEV, L.I.

Attended by Coms. Andropov, Iu. V., Grishin, V.V., Gromyko, A.A., Kirilenko, A.P., Kosygin, A.N., Kulakov, F.D., Mazurov, K.T., Pel'she, A. Ia., Suslov, M.A., Ustinov, D.F., Demichev, P.N., Solomentsev, M.S., Chernenko, K.Y., Kapitonov, I.V., Dolgikh, V.I., Zimianin, M.V., Riabov, Ia.P., Rusakov, K.V.

I. About the results of the negotiations with the Secretary of State of the USA, C. Vance

BREZHNEV. My conversation with Vance took place after his two-day negotiations with Comrades Gromyko, Ogarkov, and others had concluded. He, evidently, had picked out in advance several issues which he had not brought up in the course of the general negotiations. We can assume that he had an agreement with Carter on this. It is characteristic, that Vance did not take any of the members of his delegation in to the meeting with me. Only the ambassador came with him. But I, from my side, also did not presume to broaden the circle of our participants. Comrades Gromyko, Dobynin, and Aleksandrov participated in the conversation.

Thinking over the plan of the conversation, we set ourselves some tasks:

1. Set forth our understanding of the main results of the negotiations which Vance this time had conducted in Moscow, and from him receive confirmation of that understanding.
2. To openly express to him our evaluation of the contradictions of Carter's inconsistent foreign policy line, his constant swings between assurance that he is for an improvement of relations with the USSR and calls for a cranking up [nakruchivanie] of the arms race; to remind Vance (and through him, Carter) that there are things which are more important than the foreign policy maneuvers of the moment, particularly: issues of war and peace.
3. To once again express our attitude about a possible meeting with Carter, about which he, as you know, continues to hint through all possible channels.
4. To make known to the USA administration in advance our steps in response to Carter's decision to defer the production of the neutron bomb.
5. To give a rebuff to several political maneuvers which, as we assumed and as was confirmed, Vance could take. We are talking, primarily, about the attempt to put forth an accusation to the address of the USSR and Cuba in regard to events in Africa.

I will not dwell in detail on the course of the conversation. A transcript of it was just distributed. All the comrades, probably, have familiarized themselves with it. I will say only that the mentioned program was entirely fulfilled. Vance agreed with our evaluation of the negotiations on strategic weapons. He accepted with due attention the criticism of the foreign policy zigzags of the Carter government, and will, of course, pass them on to the President.

The attempt to deliver a reproach for Africa and African affairs which are linked with the development of relations between the USA and the USSR, received such a strong rebuff that Vance, excuse me, was not glad that he had raised that issue. He found it necessary to take a defensive position, and to justify himself.

Overall, I think, the conversation was useful. It will help Carter to see several things in a more realistic light. The tone of the conversation was correct and friendly. Vance behaved well, and even cordially.

SUSLOV. Carter has a great desire to meet with Leonid Il'ich.

Members of the Politburo, Candidate members of the Politburo, and Secretaries of the CC say that they have read the transcript of the conversation. The conversation was very good, substantive, sharp in its tone, as was appropriate. It has an aggressive character.

KOSYGIN. The conversation really forced Vance to think over many issues, and he will of course pass all the content on to Carter.

USTINOV. Leonid Il'ich spoke very well about offensive strategic weapons. They should know our position on that issue.

SUSLOV. Leonid Il'ich did very well in conducting the conversation with Vance.
KOSYGIN. The main thing is that they now know perfectly our position on all the issues.

SUSLOV. We have to take a decision to approve Leonid Il'ich's conversation with Vance and the negotiations of Comrades Gromyko, Ogarkov, and others on issues related to the limitation of strategic weapons.

ALL. Correct.