

December 6, 1989

**Record of Conversation between M. S. Gorbachev
and President of France F. Mitterrand**

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Summary:

Gorbachev and Mitterrand discuss with concern German unification and Helmut Kohl's 10-point plan.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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Gorbachev. I will tell you honestly--I am not satisfied with the results of this part of conversation with Bush. Here is my conclusion. The Europeans should do the pioneer work in terms of making sense of the new world. Of course, with U.S. participation. But nonetheless, nothing will work without Europe.

[...]

Gorbachev. I have a feeling that the U.S. is not completely open about their position, that they are not presenting it fully.

Mitterrand. That is true... The Americans are not telling the complete truth, including on the German issue. Nevertheless, I do not think they are ready to take the position of breaking the European borders.

[...] I am speaking with you absolutely freely. We have special relations with the FRG. In 1963 De Gaulle and Adenauer signed an alliance treaty. And I am abiding by that treaty. That is why it is more difficult for me than, maybe, for others, to deny the Germans the right to make mistakes. But I am true to my duty--to preserve the balance in Europe.

We should not change the order of the processes. First and foremost among them should be European integration, the evolution of Eastern Europe, and the all-European process, the creation of a peaceful order in Europe. If the United States participates in these processes, it would give all of us additional guarantees.

Kohl's speech, his ten points, have turned everything upside down. He mixed all the factors together, he is rushing. I told Genscher about it, and he did not oppose my conclusions very much.

Gorbachev. This is interesting! But I will speak about it later.

[...]

Mitterrand. What, exactly, are you going to do next?

Gorbachev. First of all, we are going to continue the line of peaceful change. Let every country determine its direction on its own. We are convinced that there should be no external interference, the will of the peoples should not be misrepresented.

[...] You are right in saying that we should not only observe, but act. We need to trust every country, to expand cooperation.

Gorbachev. [...] We had a big conversation with Genscher. And it could not have been otherwise--for us, the German issue is a painful one. Our society reacted sharply to the Chancellor's actions. And I told him directly--if you want to blow up--to destroy--everything that we have achieved--then continue to act as you do. But then all the responsibility lies with you. Do not forget that even politicians of middle range should calculate their actions 2-3 steps ahead.

The Chancellor spoke about a confederation of the GDR and the FRG. By the way, he said in Brussels that Bush supported the idea. I asked Genscher, what did a

confederation mean? Doesn't it mean a single foreign and defense policy? It is written in all the textbooks. But how can two German states work out this single policy? I asked--what this new confederation would be a part of--NATO or the Warsaw Treaty? Or will it be neutral? Then what will be left of NATO? I asked: Did you think about everything?

Then I asked Genscher whether he knew about Kohl's ten points before they were made public? Genscher admitted that he heard them for the first time in the Bundestag. Then I asked him whether he was going to behave that way in the future?

Mitterrand. You know, we, like Genscher, were not informed about Kohl's proposals beforehand.

Gorbachev. I asked--could you talk to him? What are all our agreements on consultations worth? Do you know how your behavior is called?--Provincial politics. You are acting so crudely on such a universally sensitive issue.

Genscher was very confused. He assured me of his loyalty to the all-European process, reminded me of everything that he had personally done for its success. I told him that we knew him and valued him. But two questions still remain: why did he assume the role of Kohl's attorney, and whether he, Genscher, was prepared to reject everything that has been achieved in the recent years with his help[?]

I said: It is your business to decide how you will act. It is in your authority. And it is in our authority to make conclusions. I asked him to pass all this on to the Chancellor.

Genscher tried to persuade me for a long time that we misunderstood Kohl's ten points. And then he asked: how were we going to present our conversation to the press? I told him--let us say that we had an open and serious conversation. So far, we do not want to put into doubt everything that we have done during these years. And I stressed--so far. But we will monitor future developments very carefully, because the FRG's behavior resembles that of an elephant in a china shop.

[...]

Mitterrand. Is there any serious response to the idea of unification among the people of the GDR?

Gorbachev. Yes, there is a response. But you know, more than half of the population of the GDR would like to preserve the existing character of their country, of course, with changes in its political structure, with democratization, etc. They see relations between the GDR and the FRG as relations between two sovereign states. [GDR leader Hans] Modrow is speaking about a new agreement-based community.

Mitterrand. I will visit the GDR regardless of the developments. But I will stress that it would be a state visit.

Gorbachev. I think it would stress the natural character of the processes unfolding in the GDR.

[...]

Mitterrand. You are working under a lot of stress. You are loyal to your heritage, and at the same time, you continue to deepen your revolution.

Gorbachev. We are trying to do what is necessary for our country, for the entire world, and for the socialist idea, to which we both are devoted. In this respect, our contribution should also be decisive.

Mitterrand. I appreciate your courage in the struggle for the goals that you have set. One has to be brave to reject the established, inherited from the past, ideas. But you radiate calm. And you are even in a good mood. This gives us hope.

Gorbachev. I have made my choice.