

Anatoly Chernyaev's Notes from the Politburo Session, 8 May 1987

On the Doctrine of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

The essence of the issue is whether to say that we have more troops in the center of Europe than NATO has, or not. We need to close down Vienna somehow. If we want to be honest, we have to say that. We were cunning for 13 years, and we have to admit it now.

Letting the lies stand would create even more problems with the public opinion. We are raising the issue of disarmament, and trying to avoid it ourselves.

Akhromeev. I think that we should try to find a solution on the issue of the disbalance of armaments in Europe, and we should state it openly.

Gorbachev. Policy in the main issue here. The speculations are going on. Remember, I told you about my meeting with Thatcher. She said that they were afraid of us. That we invaded Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Afghanistan. This perception is widespread among the public there. It persists in the minds of many people. Anti-Soviet propaganda is based on it. We should strengthen our policy for humanization of international relations with our actions.

We should let them know that we are not just sitting or lying on our military doctrine, but we are trying to find a way to make the world more stable. Now even parity seized to be a guarantee. Therefore, we propose to act in an appropriate fashion. And we will not be stubborn about having 27 thousand tanks and almost 3.5 million soldiers there.

We overlooked a very important question--the question of sufficiency. Many scientists, the public responded to this idea. And we need to make a statement that we are striving to keep the armaments at the lowest level.

About disbalance. Nobody in the Defense Council could explain clearly what strategic parity was. This not a question of statistics, it is a question of policy. Strategic

parity means that we have a reliable guarantee of defense of our country. And the enemy will not attack us because in that case it would receive an unacceptable retaliatory strike. If we anticipate such a result, we have parity. But we start counting--a gun there, and a gun here--then we should stop building of socialism. They have 6 billion people working on armaments. So should we try to catch up with the number? We should put an end to such an approach.

We are stealing everything from the people. And turning the country into a military camp. And the West clearly want to pull us into the second scenario of arms race. They are counting on our military exhaustion. And then they will portray us as militarists. And they are trying to pull us in on the SDI. These are the positions, from which we should formulate our military doctrine.

And when we speak about the number of our troops in Europe, and if we state the numbers honestly, then we would have to come to the decision to withdraw them at an appropriate time. It is important for the leadership of our allies that we keep our military presence there. And it is not so important how many troops there are. We also need the presence, it is a political element--so that others knew. If they touch our allies--they would have to deal with our power.

Therefore, the approach of one soldier there, and one soldier here, they have a bullet, and we have a bullet--is not our approach.

We need to make it clear. Let us say, we keep 170 thousand. But there should be no rush--like we were going to withdraw the rest immediately. In short, we should push the Budapest initiative. We should not allow this to look like a retreat. We need to think this through, discuss with our allies, and then propose to the West during negotiations. Let them react. Maybe they will tell us that we do not need to do it. It is important for us to untie the line of trust, trust, and trust once again. The West is speaking about it all the time, and we are just cunning around.

And if we are speaking about Europe: from the Atlantic to the Urals, where we will have to deal with the troop numbers, they are afraid of it, because they would have to ship the Americans over the ocean.

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