

ЗАСЕДАНИЕ ПОЛИТБЮРО ЦК КПСС

13 ноября 1986 года

Председательствовал тов. ГОРБАЧЕВ М.С.

Присутствовали т.т. Воротников В.И., Громыко А.А., Зайков Л.Н., Рыжков Н.И., Соломенцев М.С., Чебриков В.М., Шеварднадзе Э.А., Демичев П.Н., Долгих В.И., Ельцин Б.Н., Талызин Н.В., Бирюкова А.П., Добрынин А.Ф., Зимянин М.В., Медведев В.А., Никонов В.П., Разумовский Г.П., Капитонов И.И.

I. Об итогах Рабочей встречи руководителей братских партий социалистических стран-членов СЭВ (Москва, 10-11 ноября 1986)

ГОРБАЧЕВ. Состоявшаяся встреча была беспрецедентной по широте круга проблем, обсуждавшихся на ней, по своему составу атмосфере. Произошло большое и важное событие. Оно будет работать на сближение братских партий, развитие сотрудничества социалистических стран. Можно сказать, что во время этой встречи мы достигли больших результатов, чем когда-либо в прошлом. Эти результаты целиком и полностью отвечают политике нашей партии.

Встреча ознаменовала утверждение линии XXIII съезда партии в рамках социалистического содружества. Если до сих пор только на отдельных съездах братских партий эта линия бралась на вооружение, да и то не полностью, то теперь по существу концепция ускорения, перестройки, активизации человеческого фактора воспринята друзьями как общая линия. В этом состоит важнейший политический итог состоявшейся встречи.

Всеми участниками Рабочей встречи были положительно восприняты наши позиции по вопросу о принципах отношений между братскими партиями, наши соображения о необходимости всю систему

CPSU CC Politburo transcript
(excerpt), 13 November 1986

Top Secret
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MEETING OF CC CPSU POLITBURO
13 November 1986

Chaired by comr. GORBACHEV M.S.

Also present: comrs. Vorotnikov V.I., Gromyko A.A., Zaikov L.N., Ryzhkov N.I., Solomentsev M.S., Chebrikov V.M., Shevardnadze Eh.A., Demichev P.N., Dolgikh V.I., Yeltsin B.N., Talyzin N.V., Biryukova A.P., Dobrynin A.F., Zimyanin M.V., Medvedev V.A., Nikonov V.P., Razumovskii G.P., Kapitonov I.V.

[...] 11. On [former Afghan king] Zakhir Shah.

GORBACHEV. Have all comrades familiarized themselves with the memorandum from comrs. Chebrikov V.M., Shevardnadze Eh. A., Sokolov S.L., and Dobrynin A.F.?

POLITBURO MEMBERS. Yes, we have.

GORBACHEV. Then let us exchange opinions. I have an intuition that we should not waste time. Najib needs our support. He objectively evaluates the situation and understands the difficulty of the existing problems. He believes that the activation of measures directed towards national reconciliation, strengthening of the union with the peasantry, and consolidation of political leadership of the party and the country is a pressing task.

Karmal is stalling. [translator's note: Gorbachev here uses an idiomatic Russian expression—"Karmal vydelyvnet Krendelya"—which literally means, "Karmal is walking like a pretzel." The expression, derived from a term for the weaving and unsteady gait of a drunkard, in this case signifies Gorbachev's assertion that Karmal is not behaving in a straightforward manner.]

We have been fighting in Afghanistan for already six years. If the approach is not changed, we will continue to fight for another 20-30 years. This would cast a shadow on our abilities to affect the evolution of the situation. Our military should be told that they are learning badly from this war. What, can it be that there is no room for our General Staff to maneuver? In general, we have not selected the keys to resolving this problem. What, are we going to fight endlessly, as a testimony that our troops are not able to deal with the situation? We need to finish this process as soon as possible.

GROMYKO. It is necessary to establish a strategic target. Too long ago we spoke on the fact that it is necessary to close off the border of Afghanistan with Pakistan

and Iran. Experience has shown that we were unable to do this in view of the difficult terrain of the area and the existence of hundreds of passes in the mountains. Today it is necessary to precisely say that the strategic assignment concludes with the carrying of the problem towards ending the war.

GORBACHEV. It is necessary to include in the resolution the importance of ending the war in the course of one year - at maximum two years.

GROMYKO. It should be concluded so Afghanistan becomes a neutral country. Apparently, on our part there was an underestimation of difficulties, when we agreed with the Afghan government to give them our military support. The social conditions in Afghanistan made the resolution of the problem in a short amount of time impossible. We did not receive domestic support there. In the Afghan army the number of conscripts equals the number of deserters.

From the point of view of evaluating the domestic situation in Afghanistan, we can sign under practically everything that Najib suggests. But we should not sharply cut off Karmal, as he serves as a symbol to his people. A meeting of our representatives with him should be held. It is also necessary to try keep him on the general track; to cut him off would not be the best scenario. It is more expedient to preserve [his relations] with us.

Najib recommends a rather wide spectrum of steps. They deserve attention. One path is to draw in the peasant masses on the way of supporting the government power; another - negotiations with Islamic parties and organizations inside Afghanistan and beyond its borders, which are ready to compromise; third path - relations with the former king. I think that we should not spurn them. This should be done possibly in a combination other than proposed by Najib. Right now a more concrete stage of discussion with him concerning these questions is needed. A certain plan of actions is necessary. Here, it seems, our participation is needed, in particular, through the course of our contacts with Pakistan.

Concerning the Americans, they are not interested in the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. On the contrary, it is to their advantage for the war to drag out.

GORBACHEV. That's right.

GROMYKO. It should be considered how to link India into the settlement. A de-

lay in the resolution of these problems does not increase our opportunities for settlement. Right now the situation is worse than half a year ago. In one word, it is necessary to more actively pursue a political settlement. Our people will breathe a deep sigh if we undertake steps in that direction.

Our strategic goal is to make Afghanistan neutral, not to allow it to go over to the enemy camp. Of course it is important to also preserve that which is possible in the social arena. But most important - to stop the war.

I would agree that it is necessary to limit this to a period of one-two years.

SOLOMENTSEV. It would be good to complete a political settlement for the 70th anniversary of [the 1917] October [Revolution].

GROMYKO. It is difficult to talk about such a period of time.

CHEBRIKOV. On this question many decisions have been made. Much energy has been put in. But, unfortunately, the situation, both in Afghanistan and around it, continues to remain difficult. I support the proposal of Mikhail Serge'evich [Gorbachev] that it is necessary to liven up and push the problem towards a logical conclusion. Indeed, we posed the question of closing the border. Andrei Andre'evich [Gromyko] is partly right, speaking about the difficulties of such a closing, due to the geographic and other conditions. But partly the failure in the closing is also tied to the fact that not everything was done that could have been. Right now the enemy is changing its tactics. He is going underground. It is necessary to look for the means to a political solution of the problem. The military path for the past six years has not given us a solution.

What should have been done? First of all, it was necessary to receive Najib in Moscow. He has never visited us. It is possible that Karmal's conduct can be in some way explained by the fact that as of now we have yet to invite Najib to come here. There have been telephone conversations with him through intermediaries, but that's not [enough]. A direct conversation is necessary. It could clear up a great deal. It is important not to put off such a conversation; a day or two should be found for the purpose.

Another important question - the question of cadres.

GORBACHEV. Who is preventing him from solving the cadre questions?

CHEBRIKOV. Well, each of us, a little bit. Such was the case with Dost, with the minister of defense, with supplementing the membership of the CC PDPA Politburo.

GORBACHEV. I thought that we gave Dost agreement on deciding these questions.

CHEBRIKOV. Then why is nothing being decided? We speak less about Afghanistan than we do about where will Dost work and where will the minister of defense be sent. Then it is necessary to give instructions to comr. Kryuchkov who is now in Kabul, not to avoid these questions in meetings with Najib, but to tell him directly that he must decide them as he finds necessary.

SHEVARDNADZE. Right now we are reaping the fruit of un-thought-out decisions of the past. Recently, much has been done to settle the situation in Afghanistan and around it. Najib has taken up leadership. He needs practical support, otherwise we will bear the political costs. It is necessary to state precisely the period of withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. You, Mikhail Serge'evich, said it correctly - two years. But neither our, nor Afghan comrades have mastered the questions of the functioning of the government without our troops.

After the trip to India, it would be expedient to invite Najib to Moscow. We must regard Afghanistan as an independent country and entrust Najib to make decisions independently. He wants to create a headquarters for the military command. Why should we hinder him?

I expressed hesitation concerning the replacement of Dost, as he is an experienced diplomat and has a wide cultural horizon. But nevertheless, if the first secretary of the PDPA believes that it is necessary to replace him, then we must give him the liberty to make the decision.

Arguments are being made as to who must accomplish the closing off of the borders - the army or state security organs? And this question must be decided by Najib, not by us.

Bearing in mind the prospects for future development in relations with Afghanistan, it is important to put stress on economic cooperation. Without this, our foundations there will be difficult in the future.

I support the proposition of Victor Mikhailovich [Chebrikov] on the importance of meeting with Najib.

GORBACHEV. We can give corresponding instructions to comr. Kryuchkov.

SHEVARDNAZDE. Both comr. Kryuchkov and comr. Vorontsov are good people, but their discussions cannot replace meeting with the General Secretary.

GORBACHEV. Here, probably, Akhrome'ev S.F. hears about the organization of a headquarters for the military command of DRA and smiles. Would these headquarters really command our troops?

DOBRYNIN. We must give liberty to Najib. Two questions arise here. First—the idea of national reconciliation, and second—the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan.

Karmal must be removed. But we must remember that through national reconciliation, not a single member of the CC PDPA Politburo supports Najib. There is no concept of such reconciliation.

GORBACHEV. The concept of settlement exists—we have established that—but in practice the problem is being resolved. Sergei Fedorovich, perhaps you will solve it?

AKHROME'EV [USSR dep. minister of defense]. No, it will not be possible to solve it.

DOBRYNIN. The question of the concept has not become the most important for the Afghan government. I come out in favor of receiving Najib in Moscow. Right now a message could be given to comr. Kryuchkov about the meeting with Najib. Let him tell Najib that he himself should make the decision concerning Dost, Karmal, but that this must be done without stirring up factionalism.

AKHROME'EV. Military actions in Afghanistan will soon be seven years old. There is no single piece of land in this country which has not been occupied by a Soviet soldier. Nevertheless, the majority of the territory remains in the hands of rebels. The government of Afghanistan has at its disposal a significant military force: 160 thousand people in the army, 115 thousand - in Tsarando and 20 thousand - in state security organs. There is no single military problem that has arisen and that has not been solved, and yet there is still no result. The whole problem is in the fact that military results are not followed up by political [actions]. At the center there is authority; in the provinces there is not. We control Kabul and the provincial centers, but on occupied

territory we cannot establish authority. We have lost the battle for the Afghan people. The government is supported by a minority of the population. Our army has fought for five years. It is now in a position to maintain the situation on the level that it exists now. But under such conditions the war will continue for a long time.

50 thousand Soviet soldiers are stationed to close off the border, but they are not in the position to close off all passages where cargo is transferred across the border. I repeat that we can maintain the situation at the current level, but we need to look for a way out and resolve the question, as Andrei Adre'evich [Gromyko] has said. We must go to Pakistan.

GORBACHEV. Why do you hinder Najib?

AKHROME'EV. He should not be building headquarters, but a state committee on defense. We allow him to make cadre changes.

VORONTSOV. A few words to continue the thought, just expressed by comr. Akhrome'ev S.F. Afghanistan is a peasant country (80 percent of the population are peasants). But it is exactly they who have least benefitted from the revolution. Over eight years of the revolution agricultural production has increased by only 7 percent, and the standard of living of peasants remains at pre-revolutionary levels.

By the acknowledgment of comr. Najib himself and a member of Politburo, comr. Zeray, in a conversation with me, the party "has still not reached the peasantry," land-water reform has turned out unsuccessful and has not been realized (now comr. Najib has already taken up to review from a more stability-of-life oriented perspective), the peasant has not received significant material benefit from the revolution. Even right now, in the words of comr. Zeray, when there are only 5 mln. people out of a population of 18 mln. under the control of the government (moreover, 3 mln. of them live in the cities and only 2 mln. in the country - this is no more the 300-400 thou. families), the party and the government have not inherited from the previous government precise plans on how to quickly raise the standard of living of these 300-400 thousand peasant households which are under the sphere of influence of the government.

By the declaration of the member of the Politburo responsible for the economy

and agriculture, comr. Zeray, "because of various reasons, the status of peasants in the government zone is in certain ways worse than in regions of counter-revolutionary activity." To the question of how this can be explained, comr. Zeray told me that "the regions under the control of the counter-revolution are better supplied with goods of first necessity (these goods are shipped there by contraband from Pakistan). A similar situation exists in Khost, Uruzgan, and other border regions. Sometimes a paradoxical situation arises when the peasants in regions under our control, said comr. Zeray, receive goods not from us, but from zones of gang-formation." Urgent measures are needed in this most important question - the improvement of the situation of peasants in the government zone.

Many members of PDPA leadership are without initiative, and have gotten used to waiting for recommendations from our advisors and have become sort of armless. It seems that our advisors in the beginning frequently "struck them on the arms."

Such is not comr. Najib. He creates the impression of a talented and decisive person. He must be given the opportunity to make decisions himself, only looking to make sure that because of his [inexperience] he does not amuse himself with secondary details. And he must have the opportunity to himself create his own "command" [or team].

GORBACHEV. In October of last year [1985] in a Politburo meeting we determined upon a course of settling the Afghan question. The goal which we raised was to expedite the withdrawal of our forces from Afghanistan and simultaneously ensure a friendly Afghanistan for us. It was projected that this should be realized through a combination of military and political measures. But there is no movement in either of these directions. The strengthening of the military position of the Afghan government has not taken place. National consolidation has not been ensured mainly because comr. Karmal continued to hope to sit in Kabul under our assistance. It was also said that we fettered the actions of the Afghan government.

All in all, up until now the projected concept has been badly realized. But the problem is not in the concept itself, but in its realization. We must operate more actively, and with this guide ourselves with

two questions. First of all, in the course of two years effect the withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan. In 1987 withdraw 50 percent of our troops, and in the following [year] - another 50 percent. Second of all, we must pursue a widening of the social base of the regime, taking into account the realistic arrangement of political forces. In connection with this, it is necessary to meet with comr. Najib, and, possibly, even with other members of the CC PDPA Politburo.

We must start talks with Pakistan. Most importantly, [we must make sure] that the Americans don't get into Afghanistan. But I think that Americans will not go into Afghanistan militarily.

AKHROME'EV. They are not going to go into Afghanistan with armed forces.

DOBRYNIN. One can agree with USA on this question.

GORBACHEV. We must give instructions to comr. Kryuchkov to meet with Najib and give him an invitation to visit the Soviet Union on an official visit in December 1986.

It is necessary to also tell comr. Najib that he should make key decisions himself.

Entrust comrs. Shevardnadze Eh.A. (roll-call), Chebrikov V.M., Sokolov S.L., Dobrynin A.F., Talyzin N.V., and Murakhovsky V.S., taking into account the discussion which took place in Politburo meetings, to coordinate, make operative decisions, and make necessary proposals on solving the Afghan question and settling the situation around Afghanistan.

POLITBURO MEMBERS. We agree.

The resolution is passed.

[Source: TsKhSD, f. 89, per. 42, dok. 16; provided by M. Kramer; trans. by D. Rozas.]