



Record of Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Margaret Thatcher, Moscow, September 23, 1989

[Excerpt]

Thatcher: I would like to raise the issue of the situation in the countries of Eastern Europe. I was very impressed by the courage and patriotism of General Jaruzelski in Poland. For you, of course, the future of Poland and its alliance with you has great significance. I noted that you calmly accepted the results of the elections in Poland and, in general, the processes in that country and in other East European countries. I understand your position in the following way: you are in favor of each country choosing its own road of development so long as the Warsaw Treaty is intact. I understand this position perfectly.

Now I would like to say something in a very confidential manner, and I would ask you not to record this part of the conversation.

Gorbachev: As you like. *(The following part of the conversation is recorded by A.S. Chernyaev immediately after the conversation.)*

Thatcher: We are very concerned with the processes that are underway in East Germany. It is on the verge of big changes, which are being caused by the situation in that society and to some extent by Erich Honecker's illness. The thousands of people who are escaping from the GDR to the FRG are the primary example. All that is the external side of things, and it is important for us; but another issue is even more important. Britain and Western Europe are not interested in the unification of Germany. The words written in the NATO communiqué may sound different, but disregard them. We do not want the unification of Germany. It would lead to changes in the post-war borders, and we cannot allow that because such a development would undermine the stability of the entire international situation and could lead to threats to our security.

We are not interested in the destabilization of Eastern Europe or the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty either. Of course, the internal changes are apt in all the countries of Eastern Europe, but in some countries they are more pronounced, in some countries not yet. However, we are in favour of those processes remaining strictly internal; we will not interfere in them and spur the decommunization of Eastern Europe. I can tell you that this is also the position of the U.S. president. He sent a telegram to me in Tokyo in which he asked me to tell you that the United States would not undertake anything that could threaten the security interests of the Soviet Union, or that could be perceived by Soviet society as a threat. I am fulfilling his request.

Gorbachev: Thank you for the information. In general, you formulated our position correctly. We think that the socialist countries should make their own decisions about their internal affairs; they should be able to choose which road to take, and at which tempo, in implementing their socialist choice. We do not want to, and we will not, interfere in these processes; but we were, of course, helping, and we shall be helping our friends and allies. As far as Erich Honecker's health is concerned, he is planning to participate in all the events commemorating the 40th anniversary of the GDR. I can inform you that I am planning to visit the GDR on October 6 and 7 for the celebration of the anniversary.

Thatcher: Thank you. The confidential part of my talk is over; you may now resume recording. [...]

[Quelle: c.]