

**Record of Conversation between Bush and Gorbachev following
Summit, Washington
December 10, 1987**

Bush: My wife and I watched your press conference practically in full. It made a very strong impression on us. The visit is ending successfully.

Gorbachev: Yes, this is the thought I wanted to express in my introductory statement and in answers to questions. Without exaggeration but still to make it clear that we are evidently entering a new stage in our relations. New opportunities are obvious. We have to use them to the maximum.

Bush: I agree. Now we have conditions for that. You personally contributed to it greatly.

As part of my electoral campaign, today I took part in a live TV show "Questions and Answers," talked with residents of the Midwest, our heartland. There, the reaction to your visit is literally verging on euphoria. The treaty you and the president signed enjoys huge support.

Gorbachev: This is very valuable. Overall, something is clearly changing. It is changing right in front of our eyes, literally during these days. See, for example, the

people gathered on sidewalks, welcoming us, waving their hands. Take our stop today and the conversation with the people!

Bush: It is being shown on TV again and again. There happened to be only one cameraman with a camera there--from CNN.

Gorbachev: That is good.

Bush: I have to say that you answered questions at the press conference very well. Some of them were not easy ones. For example, the question by [Washington Post columnist] Mary McGrory about whether the summit met your expectations in terms of arms control issues. By the way, she is a very good journalist. But in response, you, and very rightly so, cited your introductory statement--it had indeed said everything.

Gorbachev: That's why it was quite extensive. But my main thought right now is that we have to do a lot of work in the coming months.

Bush: I would like to speak about the coming months. For me they will be mainly occupied by the electoral campaign. Everything will become clear by about mid-to-late March. If my campaign goes as well as it is going right now (and according to the polls, it is going well), and I am able to achieve significant success in the primaries, then

the issues of my nomination from the Republican Party will be settled. If it fails, then [Robert] Dole will be nominated. The rest--[Pierre] DuPont, [Jack] Kemp, Robinson [sic: Pat Robertson] and [Alexander] Haig--do not have a serious chance.

I am committed to the cause of improving Soviet-American relations. If I get elected, I will continue what we started. Dole, by the way, could also make a very good president, including with regard to developing Soviet-American relations. All in all, if we take a broader view of things, it would probably be better for you to deal with a Republican president. Of course, we may face more difficulties of one kind or another, but that is not the main thing. In the past, we needed Richard Nixon to go to China. Today, we need Ronald Reagan to sign and ensure ratification of the treaty reducing nuclear weapons. This is a role for a conservative. And there is nobody in America to the right of Reagan. There is no [such thing as] right of Reagan. There is only the extremist fringe. But they don't count. The broad spectrum [of the population] is in favor of the treaty.

You would do generally well with the Democrats. But they, as we say, "do not guarantee delivery." They cannot ensure support for big agreements. Although, I have to

admit, your relations with any of the currently running Democrats would probably develop quite smoothly.

In the coming months, the busy electoral campaign notwithstanding, I would be willing, if need be, to assist you with resolving some Soviet-American issues, to remove possible unpleasantries. Of course, I am hoping that there will be no such issues. But if they emerge, I have certain capacities of my own—to make an impact, to influence things. [...]

Gorbachev: I appreciate what you just said. I appreciate the spirit in which it was said. I also believe that staying in contact as you proposed could be useful. You already expressed this idea to A.F. Dobrynin, and he told me about it. I support this. And if you are destined to become the leader of this country, then I hope that we will continue our interaction.

Bush: What I am destined to--this, as I said, will become clear in the next three or four months.

My position is quite unique. The vicePresident does not have a defined "sphere of work." But it gives one an opportunity to see things in a broad perspective, to think about them. I have extensive contacts.

I met with [Polish leader Wojciech] Jaruzelski recently. I was impressed with him. I had an opportunity to

get to know him during [my] visit to Poland. The visit was useful. Our talk with Jaruzelski was good, substantive. He is an interesting person and a strong leader who inherited a difficult situation. But I think he chose the right road.

Gorbachev: Jaruzelski called me and told about your visit and conversation with you. He is satisfied with the conversation. [He] spoke well about you personally.

Bush: This is good to hear. I hope he is not too angry with me for meeting with [Solidarity leader Lech] Walesa. Poland is not an ordinary country. Things are not going easy for them, and, by the way, during the visit we discussed opportunities for resolving the problems in our economic relations to help development of the economy of that country. There are such opportunities.

Gorbachev: And you and I have a great potential. We should use it.[...]

Bush: If I may, I would like to ask about Korea, especially because you've already mentioned it during the negotiations and passed on the document, which I looked at. This is my question: what do you think about Kim Il Sung's son? What are his chances--will he be pushed aside or gradually move up to the top position?

Gorbachev: You know, we should figure this out. Maybe both of us should. This is an issue to think about. I have

never met him. He does not leave the country very often. As you know, he is not without talent. But they have all kinds of people there.

Bush: We do not have [diplomatic] relations with North Korea, and we know very little about them. But judging by the information that we have, he is some kind of brat, a spoiled child. They say they are not too happy with him there.

Gorbachev: It is hard to tell. Obviously, his father is a greater figure. I would limit myself to this.

Bush: I understand. And how, in your opinion, will Soviet-Chinese relations develop, the policies of China?

Gorbachev: We analyzed this and came to a firm conclusion: China will always have an independent policy. And this, as we believe, is positive. [We] will develop our relations with China. China will of course defend its own interests, and we ours. But we can find a balance. We are ready, and I think Soviet-Chinese relations have a future. At the same time, we do not intend to harm U.S.-China relations in any way.

Bush: I agree with you. I do not see any danger for the United States in the development of Soviet-Chinese relations. I am often asked about this and every time I respond that I do not see any danger.

Gorbachev: China will be more and more active.

Bush: True, its energy already causes concerns among its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region, and ASEAN.

Gorbachev: Yes, we noted that.

Bush: Especially on the part of Indonesia.

Gorbachev: It is clear that China will be reaching for international connections more and more actively, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. And the Soviet Union will as well. We are also part of that region.

When I spoke in Vladivostok, I expressed one thought, which I would really like to bring to the attention of the American leadership: by entering the Asia-Pacific region, the Soviet Union is not in any way trying to hurt anyone's interests, especially not undermine the old interests of the United States. We understand the importance of that region for you and for the West. We did not and do not have any secret intentions, nothing except for the desire to interact and develop cooperation with the countries of the region.

Bush: That's the way I think about it too.

[Source: Record was compiled from Mikhail Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy* (Moscow: Novosti 1995), vol. 2, pp. 67-69, and *Otvechaya na vyzov vremeni*, pp. 189-191. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya]