

BBC Summary of World Broadcasts

October 4, 1991, Friday

SECTION: Part I The USSR; A. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; 1. GENERAL AND WESTERN AFFAIRS; SU/1 194/A1/1;

LENGTH: 659 words

HEADLINE: GORBACHEV MEETS US JEWISH SPOKESPERSON

SOURCE: TASS World Service in Russian 1935 gmt 2 Oct 91

Text of report

in English 2059 gmt 2 Oct 91

BODY:

Today M.S. Gorbachev had a conversation with Mrs **Shoshana Cardin**, chairperson of the US national conference for the affairs of Soviet Jews, which represents 50 federal and 30 local organizations and which enjoys the support of the majority of US Jews. S. Cardin is a member of the US delegation at the Conference on the Human Dimension in Moscow. She is also in our country in connection with the 50th anniversary of the tragedy of Babiy Yar.

She was interested to hear the president's views on the problems to which she has devoted her activity. M.S. Gorbachev began with the question of emigration. There are, of course, certain circumstances, family links and interests. But we are pained by the continuing emigration. We would like everything that is now being done for the democratic transformation of our society to benefit all our peoples, including the Jewish people. The atmosphere in society is really changing and it is also changing with regard to the Jewish question. Our international links have also changed considerably - with Jewish business and with the state of Israel. We value this and we intend to develop healthy relations. We see that Israel has a great interest in our life and concern for our country. This is natural because a vast number of Israeli citizens are emigrants from here. We are in favour of increasingly close and direct all-round links between the peoples of the two countries.

Of course, there are problems connected with anti-Semitism. There are different reasons for this. But on the whole, the president noted, society is not infected with it. The growth of democratic processes and the strengthening of the legal foundations of state life will remove anything morbid and negative.

S. Cardin put the Jewish question in the context of relations between the USSR and the USA. M.S. Gorbachev expressed his well-known assessment of the importance for the world of improving these relations and underlined the resolution to move towards harmonizing and bringing together the interests of the two great peoples. At present, interaction is concentrating not only on tasks of the full elimination of the nuclear threat, which found impressive expression in George Bush's initiative and our response to it, but also on the economic aspect of these relations, which moved to the forefront of today's agenda. It is very important - and it is also in the interests of the whole world community, the president noted - to stimulate real assistance to the democratic process in our country by all means, including on the part of organizations represented by Mrs Cardin at a difficult transitional period of our development.

An answer was given to the question which particularly worries foreigners at the moment - the fate of the union, relations between the republics and what state other states will have to deal with. M.S. Gorbachev spoke about preparing an economic agreement which will be signed any moment now - the union treaty. I am convinced, he said, concluding this subject, that the logic of life will overcome the logic of any other intentions.

The British Broadcasting Corporation, October 4, 1991

In reply to a request by S. Cardin, M.S. Gorbachev promised to return to the question of "the duration of secrecy restrictions" and of the so-called "refuseniks". The president gave his reaction to the forthcoming remembrance ceremony in Babiy Yar. He talked about the feeling of deep bitterness and anger which this terrible Nazi crime provokes. It is important that the date is commemorated on such a large scale - the tragedy of innocent people who died there deserves an eternal memory and it is important for those living now.

When bidding farewell to S. Cardin, M.S. Gorbachev expressed satisfaction that the meeting had taken place and wished that it would become part of the process of extending mutual understanding and developing good relations.

Martin Vanik, A.S. Grachev and A.S. Chernyayev were present at the meeting.