

November 18, 1989

**Excerpt from Protocol No. 182 of the Meeting of the
Politburo CC CPSU, 'On Additional Measures in the
Informational Sphere'**

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Summary:

Proposal recommending increased openness, freedom of speech, and the end of restrictions on the press in the Soviet Union, including the free distribution of foreign media.

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Communist Party of the Soviet Union. CENTRAL COMMITTEE.
COMPLETELY SECRET

No. P172/9

To comrades Gorbachev, Ryzhkov, Kriuchkov, Medvedev,
Shevardnadze, Yakovlev, Kapto, Pavlov A., Falin, Shkabardne.

□ Excerpt from protocol No. 182 of the meeting of the Politburo CC CPSU of 18
November 1989.

On additional measures in the informational sphere.

□ To agree with the thoughts stated in the report of Coms. E.A. Shevardnadze, V.A.
Medvedev, A.N. Yakovlev and V.A. Kriuchkov of 19 October 1989 (proposed).

□ To present the issue connected with their practical realization for examination by the
Soviet of Ministers of the USSR.

SECRETARY OF THE CC

[Attachment]

□ As per point 9 of protocol No. 172

Secret

CC CPSU

On additional measures in the informational sphere

□ Of late, the processes of reconstruction, and first and foremost - the unprecedented
openness of the work of the first Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, afford
convincing evidence of a broad and consistent supplement to the cause of the
principles of openness in the informational sphere, democratization and increasing
the effectiveness of the press, the radio and other mass media in the Soviet Union

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□ In this same direction, we are conducting measures on expanding international
cooperation in the area of information and on introducing internal legislation and
normative acts in keeping with existing world legal practice. At the Informational
Forum which took place not long ago in London, the Soviet Union came out with an
innovative philosophy and program of concrete actions relating to turning the
European continent into a space of openness and free speech, with concrete
proposals on developing a broad exchange of information, and on improving
journalists' working conditions. This approach of ours, which is maintained in the
spirit of the new political thinking, was received positively by the participants of the
forum, in particular, as a sign of the USSR's full intention to fulfill the obligations
taken on through the final documents in Helsinki, Madrid, and Vienna.

□ As a result of the discussions at the London forum, a solid package of proposals have
been accumulated which, taken as a whole, constitute a system of good reference
points for further forward movement in a common European informational sphere, as

well as for improving the informational situation in some separate countries. In particular, the introduction of proposals in the forum which affect the development of cooperation with the countries of Western Europe, the US and Canada in the area of the newest communications technology, have practical significance for us.

□ In measure with the further diffusion of the new political thinking and democratization, more attention is demanded by the issues connected with the development of openness and cooperation in the sphere of information and with the consistent elimination of the remaining obsolete restrictions here. This applies to a complex of issues connected with the persistent closure to the press of a substantial [nemalyi] number of aspects of a political and economic, not to mention military, character. Wider access to the sources of official and unofficial information and opportunities to contact both official departments and representatives, and private persons and autonomous organizations in the interests of receiving information and data of interest to the press is needed. Here the issue of free access by Soviet citizens to foreign periodicals, foreign satellite television programs, duplication technology, and audiovisual materials is of relevance.

□ Proceeding on from the arguments around these issues at the London Information Forum, Western representatives have emphasized that data and other analogous issues, if not solved, would definitely be raised by them at the upcoming general-European meetings, including the conference on humanitarian issues in Moscow in 1991.

□ Considering the results of the Information Forum and also taking into account the vital demands of the process of democratizing Soviet society and creating a legally grounded state, it is important to intensify work on and realize further measures directed at expanding openness in the informational sphere, a fuller opening of the role of the press as a part of civil society, an abandonment of censoring-limiting measures which contradict international law and do not correspond to the obligations which the Soviet Union has taken on itself through documents of the general-European process.

□ On a practical plane, we are talking about solutions touching on the following group of issues.

□ 1. Expanding the volume, nomenclature, and network of free sale foreign periodical publications in the USSR, including publications from countries which are participants of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, in the interests of more authoritative, social-political, literary-artistic, scientific-popular and other periodicals. Permitting institutions, cooperative and citizens to subscribe to foreign publications through payment in foreign currency out of their own resources, as well as through subscription payments by foreign partners or relatives of USSR citizens who are living abroad. To provide free access to foreign periodical publications distributed on USSR territory in the reading rooms of libraries and in cultural-informational centers.

□ 2. To ensure institutions, organizations, including cooperatives, and citizens the opportunity to use copy-duplicating technology to copy materials whose contents do not contradict constitutional norms and the legal acts which are in force in the country. To permit libraries and cultural-enlightenment and organizations to receive copying-duplicating technology as gifts from Soviet enterprises, cooperatives and foreign donors.

□ 3. To operate on the assumption that USSR citizens have the opportunity to receive, collectively and individually, foreign programs by satellite and other kinds of cross-border television transmission, to use other receiving equipment in keeping with GOST USSR and international recommendations.

□4. To ensure the opportunity for access by citizens to audiovisual materials and an expansion of the network of rental and sale of video products.

□5. To continue work on a fuller realization of obligations to create the conditions for foreign correspondents on USSR territory which are demanded by international practice and which allow them to carry out their professional activities in observance of the principles of mutuality.

□6. To work out thoughts on establishing cooperation with Western countries in the area of the newest communications technology in consideration of the proposals put forward at the London Informational forum. To prepare proposals on the issue of the possibility of the Soviet Union's joining the Convention of the Council of Europe on trans-border tele-transmission.

□E. Shevardnadze V. Medvedev A. Yakovlev V. Kriuchkov

19 October 1989