

March 3, 1989

**Record of Conversation Between M.S. Gorbachev
and Member of the Central Committee of the
Hungarian Socialist Workers' Part, Chairman of the
Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of
Hungary M. Nemeth**

Citation:

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<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/134866>

Summary:

Conversation between Gorbachev and Miklos Nemeth about protecting Hungarian borders, Hungary's decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, and the Soviet Union's potential normalization of relations with Israel.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Nemeth. It is absolutely fair. It would be bad if somebody began to talk about it before time. We understand the necessity to be aware of the negotiating process completely.

One more question. We made a decision - to completely remove the electronic and technological protection from the Western and Southern borders of Hungary. It has outlived the need for it, and now it serves only for catching citizens of Romania and the GDR who try to illegally escape to the West through Hungary. Hungarians no longer violate the border, they have an opportunity to leave the country legally. Of course, we will have to talk to comrades from the GDR.

Gorbachev. We have a strict regime on our borders, but we are also becoming more open.

Nemeth: About relations with Israel. In the end of April-beginning of May, if nothing bad happens in the Middle East, we plan to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

Gorbachev. You know that Eduard Shevardnadze just returned from the Middle East. He met with the Israeli Foreign Minister. The Israelis put a lot of pressure on us, but we are not in a hurry, because establishing diplomatic relations is currently our strongest argument. Therefore we tell them: go forward to the Arabs, agree to an international conference, and we are ready for normalization. The Soviet Union will recognize the state of Israel, its security on an equal basis with security of other states of the region; we are even ready to give our guarantees. We have a lot of contacts, as you do. However, now, we, together with West Europeans, for example the British, and the French, want to pressure Israel to take a more constructive position. Something of that kind is going to happen, and I would worry not to sell my trump cards too cheap, so to say. Maybe it would be helpful for your Foreign Minister to meet with our Foreign Minister and discuss this issue.