

foreign policy. During the first two years of his leadership, Gorbachev replaced all the leading personnel responsible for foreign policy. This included the Foreign Minister, the head of the International Department of the Central Committee, the head of the Central Committee department responsible for relations with Communist countries, the chief foreign policy adviser attached to the General Secretary's personal staff, and the Minister of Foreign Trade. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was extensively reorganized, several new departments were created, and numerous new appointments were made at the level of Deputy and First Deputy Minister.¹²³

We know from two brief notices that appeared in *Pravda* that a highly unusual conference "On the Tasks of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs" took place on 23-24 May 1986. This conference was addressed by Gorbachev and the new Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, among others, and its participants included three members of the Secretariat with foreign policy responsibilities (Aleksandr Yakovlev, Anatoli Dobrynin and Vadim Medvedev), high ranking Central Committee officials, various Ministers and Deputy Ministers, and Soviet Ambassadors. Some indication of the general tenor of what was said behind closed doors can be gleaned from *Pravda's* report that Soviet diplomacy "was discussed in a critical and exacting Party fashion" and that "measures were outlined to improve its entire performance in implementing the strategic policy of the 27th C.P.S.U. Congress."¹²⁴ Similarly, a terse report of a follow-up meeting that was held in the Foreign Ministry a year later stated: "The situation whereby stagnation phenomena affected the approaches [of the Foreign Ministry] to a number of major problems and important trends has been substantially rectified."¹²⁵

¹²³ These personnel changes are discussed in Timothy J. Colton, *The Dilemma of Reform in the Soviet Union*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1986, revised ed., pp. 178-182, and Archie Brown, "Change in the Soviet Union," *Foreign Affairs*, LXIV, No. 5, 1986, pp. 1049-1053.

¹²⁴ *Pravda*, 24 May 1986, p. 1; *Pravda*, 25 May 1986, p. 2.

¹²⁵ *Izvestiia*, 6 May 1987, p. 4.