

“The Putin-Trump Handshake in Hamburg Is a Historic Opportunity: Let’s Not Miss It”. Gorbachev

By [Giulietto Chiesa](#)

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At about 12.00 pm, my telephone rang. On the other end of the phone, Mikhail Gorbachev was speaking, former Russian president and my old friend. He asked: ‘Do you have news about the meeting of yesterday in Hamburg?’

I replied that I didn’t know more than I got from the news agencies.

He interrupted me with a firm voice and a vibrant, unusual pitch.

‘Do you know what the Putin-Trump handshake reminded me of? It reminded me of a dialogue over nuclear disarmament that I started with Ronald Reagan, US President at the time. It was a crucial moment. After the first diplomatic and closed-door meetings, I received information from our Black Sea Fleet. The Command told me that US warships were entering in the Black Sea. They were heading towards our territorial waters at full speed. They asked me what they were supposed to do. I was thinking about that and I understood that we were dealing with a provocation: somebody in Washington – at the Pentagon – didn’t want this dialogue to carry on and was letting us know it indirectly.

Then I replied

“Do monitor them very closely. In case they will enter into our territorial waters, then shoot. But DO NOT TARGET THEM DIRECTLY. SHOOT SOMEWHERE CLOSE TO THEM”.

We didn’t have to fall into the trap. It was very important to keep control. This is what the Putin-Trump handshake reminded me of. I liked it, it is a good sign. When I saw it I thought:

“This is a historic chance, a unique opportunity”.

We will have to deal with many difficulties, but the connection was established and has to be kept in place. We need to take this chance and to look forward further developments. We can get unexpected achievements. We can get something that was unthinkable until not long ago. I suggest you write about it immediately and spread the word’.

While Gorbachev was talking to me, I was thinking that usually, he doesn’t talk much, only on important occasions.

That’s why I understood the relevance of his message. Evidently, this is one of them. A

thread has been tied.

It's still very thin, but it has been tied.

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