

**FOREIGN
RELATIONS
OF THE
UNITED
STATES**

1969–1976

VOLUME XIV

**SOVIET UNION,
OCTOBER 1971–MAY 1972**



**DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE**

Washington



**Foreign Relations of the
United States, 1969–1976**

Volume XIV

**Soviet Union
October 1971–
May 1972**

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Preface

The *Foreign Relations of the United States* series presents the official documentary historical record of major foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity of the United States Government. The Historian of the Department of State is charged with the responsibility for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series. Under the direction of the General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series, the staff of the Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, researches, compiles, and edits the volumes in the series. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg first promulgated official regulations codifying specific standards for the selection and editing of documents for the series on March 26, 1925. These regulations, with minor modifications, guided the series through 1991.

Public Law 102-138, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, which was signed by President George H.W. Bush on October 28, 1991, established a new statutory charter for the preparation of the series. Section 198 of P.L. 102-138 added a new Title IV to the Department of State's Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 USC 4351, et seq.).

The statute requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be a thorough, accurate, and reliable record of major United States foreign policy decisions and significant United States diplomatic activity. The volumes of the series should include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major foreign policy decisions and actions of the United States Government. The statute also confirms the editing principles established by Secretary Kellogg: the series will be historically objective and accurate; records should not be altered or deletions made without indicating in the published text that a deletion has been made; the published record should omit no facts that were of major importance in reaching a decision; and nothing should be omitted for the purposes of concealing a defect in policy. The statute also requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be published not more than 30 years after the events recorded, a requirement that the Office of the Historian is striving to meet. The editors are convinced that this volume meets all regulatory, statutory, and scholarly standards of selection and editing.

Structure and Scope of the Foreign Relations Series

This volume is part of a subseries of volumes of the *Foreign Relations* series that documents the most important foreign policy issues and major decisions of the administrations of Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford, 1969-1972. When all volumes are published, the subseries will contain 41 print volumes and 16 electronic-only volumes. These 57 volumes will document all aspects of foreign policy during

the 8-year period. More volumes are allocated to the first Nixon administration than the Nixon-Ford administration, with the issue that is covered determining the beginning and ending dates of the volume. For example, the volume on Chile culminates with the overthrow of President Salvador Allende in September 1973, and the first volume on energy covers 1969-1974, ending with the post-oil embargo Washington Energy Conference. Two volumes cover the 1969-1976 period, South Africa and European Security. This volume, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume XIV*, documents U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union from October 1971 to May 1972. This is a short time span but a period of great change and accomplishment. The volume culminates with extensive coverage of the Moscow Summit between President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev.

Focus of Research and Principles of Selection for Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume XIV

The scope of this volume is different from previous volumes on the Soviet Union and reflects a reexamination of how the Office of the Historian should present documentation on U.S. relations with its major opponent in the Cold War, the Soviet Union. In the past, volumes on the Soviet Union primarily documented U.S.-Soviet bilateral relations, and much of the documentation on U.S.-Soviet global confrontation and/or cooperation was found in other *Foreign Relations* volumes. On the advice of the Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, the Office of the Historian revised its approach. In *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963, Vol. V, Soviet Union*, the editors made a concerted effort to use editorial notes to highlight key instances of U.S.-Soviet conflict or collaboration in other volumes in the subseries. The publication of an additional volume, VI, on Kennedy-Khrushchev exchanges also sought to broaden the coverage of U.S.-Soviet relations. This volume continues the trend.

The administration of Richard M. Nixon presented an even more pressing argument to look at the U.S.-Soviet relationship in its broadest, global context. President Nixon created a secret, private channel of dialogue and negotiation between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, Henry A. Kissinger, and the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Anatoly F. Dobrynin. The documentary record of that channel is presented in its entirety in this volume, as well as a virtually complete record of the Moscow Summit. In his relations with Moscow, President Nixon insisted on linkage of other issues, e.g., Vietnam, the Middle East, South Asia, Arms Control, or trade, with improvements in U.S.-Soviet Relations. The President also employed triangular diplomacy—Nixon often referred to it as “the game”—to put pressure on the Soviet Union by improving U.S. relations with the People's Republic of China, while denying to Soviet officials that he was

doing so. Finally in 1972, Richard Nixon made his first Presidential visit to Moscow and signed a number of agreements with the Soviet Union that initiated a period of détente. These new initiatives and extensive connections between the two superpowers required a redesign of *Foreign Relations* coverage of the Soviet Union. The number of documents printed and the scope of their content were greatly expanded. There are five volumes for the Soviet Union within the Nixon-Ford subseries, 1969–1976, three of which document the crucial first Nixon Administration. These volumes document U.S.-Soviet relations worldwide and more accurately reflect the global nature of the Cold War.

These changes do not mean that documentation on U.S.-Soviet competition and cooperation is not in other *Foreign Relations* volumes of the subseries. The Soviet Union volumes are the core documentary account of U.S.-Soviet conflict and cooperation during this period of the Cold War. They are the volumes to consult first. In the end, of course, the *Foreign Relations* series must be viewed and used as an integrated publication of many volumes. The Soviet Union volumes—with their extensive use of extracts and editorial notes highlighting and summarizing relevant related material in other volumes in the subseries that impact on U.S.-Soviet relations—emphasize the core issues of the Cold War, as seen through the prism of U.S.-Soviet global relations. This volume on the Soviet Union provides a summary account of U.S.-Soviet worldwide confrontation, competition, and cooperation during the 8 months it covers, and directs the reader to *Foreign Relations* volumes in which other aspects of U.S.-Soviet relations are covered, such as the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty Talks, U.S.-Soviet negotiations for a Middle East peace settlement, U.S.-Soviet discussions on a negotiated settlement in Southeast Asia, U.S.-Soviet negotiations over Germany and Berlin, U.S.-Soviet negotiations over security and cooperation in Europe, and U.S.-Soviet interaction in South Asia.

Editorial Methodology

The documents are presented chronologically according to Washington time. Memoranda of conversation are placed according to the date and time of the conversation, rather than the date the memorandum was drafted. Documents chosen for printing are authoritative or signed copies, unless otherwise noted.

Editorial treatment of the documents published in the *Foreign Relations* series follows Office style guidelines, supplemented by guidance from the General Editor. The documents are reproduced as exactly as possible, including marginalia or other notations, which are described in the footnotes. The editors have supplied a heading for each document included in the volume. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are retained as found in the original text, except that

obvious typographical errors are silently corrected. Other mistakes and omissions in the documents are corrected by bracketed insertions: a correction is set in italic type; an addition in roman type. Words or phrases underlined in the source text are printed in italics. Abbreviations and contractions are preserved as found in the original text, and a list of abbreviations is included in the front matter of each volume.

Bracketed insertions are also used to indicate omitted text that deals with an unrelated subject (in roman type) or that remains classified after declassification review (in italic type). The amount and, where possible, the nature of the material not declassified has been noted by indicating the number of lines or pages of text that were omitted. Entire documents withheld for declassification purposes have been accounted for and are listed with headings, source notes, and number of pages not declassified in their chronological place. All brackets that appear in the original text are so identified in footnotes. With the exception of Presidential recordings transcribed in the Office of the Historian by the editor(s) of the volume, all ellipses are in the original documents.

The first footnote to each document indicates the document's source, original classification, distribution, and drafting information. This note also provides the background of important documents and policies and indicates whether the President or his major policy advisers read the document.

Editorial notes and additional annotation summarize pertinent material not printed in the volume, indicate the location of additional documentary sources, provide references to important related documents printed in other volumes, describe key events, and provide summaries of, and citations to, public statements that supplement and elucidate the printed documents. Information derived from memoirs and other first-hand accounts has been used when appropriate to supplement or explicate the official record.

The numbers in the index refer to document numbers rather than to page numbers.

Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation

The Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, established under the Foreign Relations statute, reviews records, advises, and makes recommendations concerning the *Foreign Relations* series. The Advisory Committee monitors the overall compilation and editorial process of the series and advises on all aspects of the preparation and declassification of the series. The Advisory Committee does not necessarily review the contents of individual volumes in the series, but it makes recommendations on issues that come to its attention and reviews volumes, as it deems necessary to fulfill its advisory and statutory obligations.

Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act Review

Under the terms of the Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act (PRMPA) of 1974 (44 USC 2111 note), the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has custody of the Nixon Presidential historical materials. The requirements of the PRMPA and implementing regulations govern access to the Nixon Presidential historical materials. The PRMPA and implementing public access regulations require NARA to review for additional restrictions in order to ensure the protection of the privacy rights of former Nixon White House officials, since these officials were not given the opportunity to separate their personal materials from public papers. Thus, the PRMPA and implementing public access regulations require NARA formally to notify the Nixon Estate and former Nixon White House staff members that the agency is scheduling for public release Nixon White House historical materials. The Nixon Estate and former White House staff members have 30 days to contest the release of Nixon historical materials in which they were a participant or are mentioned. Further, the PRMPA and implementing regulations require NARA to segregate and return to the creator of files private and personal materials. All *Foreign Relations* volumes that include materials from NARA's Nixon Presidential Materials Staff are processed and released in accordance with the PRMPA.

Declassification Review

The Office of Information Programs and Services, Bureau of Administration, conducted the declassification review for the Department of State of the documents published in this volume. The review was conducted in accordance with the standards set forth in Executive Order 12958, as amended, on Classified National Security Information and other applicable laws.

The principle guiding declassification review is to release all information, subject only to the current requirements of national security, as embodied in law and regulation. Declassification decisions entailed concurrence of the appropriate geographic and functional bureaus in the Department of State, other concerned agencies of the U.S. Government, and the appropriate foreign governments regarding specific documents of those governments. The declassification review of this volume, which began in 2000 and was completed in 2003, resulted in the decision to withhold no documents in full, excise a paragraph or more in 1 document, and make minor excisions of less than a paragraph in 21 documents.

The Office of the Historian is confident, on the basis of the research conducted in preparing this volume, and as a result of the declassification review process described above, that the documentation and

editorial notes presented here provide an accurate and comprehensive—given limitations of space—account of the Nixon administration's complex policy towards the Soviet Union, October 1971–May 1972.

Acknowledgments

The editors wish to acknowledge the assistance of officials at the Nixon Presidential Materials Project of the National Archives and Records Administration (Archives II), at College Park, Maryland. The editors wish to express gratitude to the Richard Nixon Estate for allowing access to the Nixon Presidential recordings and the Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace for facilitating that access. Special thanks are due to John Haynes of the Library of Congress who facilitated access to the Kissinger Papers. The editors were able to use the Kissinger Papers with the permission of Henry Kissinger. The Central Intelligence Agency and Department of Defense provided full access to their records.

David C. Geyer, Kent Sieg, and Nina D. Howland collected the documentation for this volume, and joined by Edward C. Keefer (then acting head of the European and General Division), made the selections and annotated the documents. This was a team effort, with all members of the team consulting on each others' selections and annotation, but individual historians having responsibility for specific chapters. The first chapter, "Announcement of the Summit Through the South Asia Crisis," was prepared by Edward Keefer; the second and fifth chapters, "Preparing for Moscow and Nixon's Trip to China" and "Summit in the Balance," were prepared by Kent Sieg; the third and fourth chapters, "U.S.-Soviet Relations and the Spring Offensive in Vietnam" and "Kissinger's Secret Trip to Moscow," were prepared by David Geyer; and the sixth chapter, "Nixon at the Summit," was prepared by Nina Howland. Susan C. Weetman coordinated the declassification review. Vicki E. Futscher, Renée A. Goings, and Kristin L. Ahlberg did the copy and technical editing. Juniee Oneida prepared the index.

Marc J. Susser

The Historian

Bureau of Public Affairs

November 2006

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Sources

Sources for the Foreign Relations Series

The *Foreign Relations* statute requires that the published record in the *Foreign Relations* series include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation on major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant U.S. diplomatic activity. It further requires that government agencies, departments, and other entities of the U.S. Government engaged in foreign policy formulation, execution, or support cooperate with the Department of State Historian by providing full and complete access to records pertinent to foreign policy decisions and actions and by providing copies of selected records.

The editors of the *Foreign Relations* series have complete access to all the retired records and papers of the Department of State: the central files of the Department; the special decentralized files ("lot files") of the Department at the bureau, office, and division levels; the files of the Department's Executive Secretariat, which contain the records of international conferences and high-level official visits, correspondence with foreign leaders by the President and Secretary of State, and memoranda of conversations between the President and Secretary of State and foreign officials; and the files of overseas diplomatic posts. All the Department's indexed central files have been permanently transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Maryland (Archives II). Many of the Department's decentralized office (or lot) files covering the 1969–1976 period, which the National Archives deems worthy of permanent retention, have been transferred or are in the process of being transferred from the Department's custody to Archives II.

The editors of the *Foreign Relations* series also have full access to the papers of President Nixon and other White House foreign policy records, including tape recordings of conversations with key U.S. and foreign officials. Presidential papers maintained and preserved at the Presidential libraries and the Nixon Presidential Materials Project at Archives II include some of the most significant foreign affairs-related documentation from the Department of State and other Federal agencies including the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dr. Henry Kissinger has approved access to his papers at the Library of Congress. The papers are a key source for the Nixon-Ford subseries of *Foreign Relations*.

Access to the Nixon White House tape recordings is governed by the terms of the Presidential Recordings and Materials Preservation Act

(PL 93–526; 88 Stat. 1695) and an access agreement with the Office of Presidential Libraries of the National Archives and Records Administration and the Nixon Estate. In February 1971, President Nixon initiated a voice activated taping system in the Oval Office of the White House and, subsequently, in the President's "hideaway" in the Executive Office Building, Camp David, the Cabinet Room, and White House and Camp David telephones. The audiotapes include conversations of President Nixon with his Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger, other White House aides, Secretary of State Rogers, other Cabinet officers, members of Congress, and key foreign officials. The clarity of the voices on the tape recordings is often very poor, but the editors made every effort to try to verify the accuracy of the conversations. Readers are urged to become listeners, i.e., to consult the recordings for a full appreciation of those aspects of the discussion that cannot be fully captured in a transcription, such as the speakers' inflections and emphases that may convey nuances of meaning, as well as the larger context of the discussion.

Most of the sources consulted in the preparation of this volume have been declassified and are available for review at the National Archives and Records Administration. Research for this volume in still classified material was completed through special access to restricted documents at the Nixon Presidential Materials Project, the Library of Congress, and other agencies. While all the material printed in this volume has been declassified, some of it is extracted from still-classified documents. The Nixon Presidential Materials staff is processing and declassifying many of the documents used in this volume, but they may not be available in their entirety at the time of publication.

Sources for Foreign Relations, 1969–1976, Volume XIV

The editors made considerable use of materials already compiled for other volumes in the *Foreign Relations* series, including those on South Asia, China, and Germany and Berlin; they also collected material subsequently compiled for volumes on Vietnam, SALT, and the Middle East. Readers interested in these subjects should consult the relevant volumes for further information on the specific sources used in research.

In preparing this volume, the editors thoroughly mined the Presidential papers and other White House records from the Nixon Presidential Materials Project at the National Archives; this collection proved the most valuable source of documentation on the Nixon administration's conduct of relations with the Soviet Union. Many of the most important records for this volume were found in the Project's National Security Council Files, in particular, the Country Files, Soviet Union. A collection of sensitive documents on the Soviet Union is also in the Kissinger Office Files, in particular, records of his secret trip to Moscow

in April 1972 and of his periodic meetings with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. Most of the documentation on the Moscow Summit itself is in the President's Trip Files, including briefing materials and memoranda of meetings between Nixon and Brezhnev. The President's Trip File, moreover, was the source of another important collection for this volume: the records relating to the "confidential channel" between Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. The so-called "D" File includes memoranda of their conversations and correspondence exchanged, thus documenting dialogue at a high level between the United States and Soviet Union on a wide range of global and bilateral issues. The National Security Council Institutional Files (H-Files) were an essential source for recording formal decision-making processes on foreign policy and crisis management; the records of the Washington Special Actions Group, for instance, were particularly valuable in covering the response to the North Vietnamese offensive in April and May 1972. Under President Nixon, decision-making on issues related to the Soviet Union, however, was largely informal, i.e., formulated and implemented outside normal bureaucratic channels. Rather than rely on formal decision papers, Nixon and Kissinger made many of these decisions in person through a series of meetings and telephone conversations. The editors, therefore, made extensive use of two crucial sources: Nixon White House Tape Recordings and the Kissinger Telephone Conversation Transcripts. The latter source includes a key collection of telephone conversations with Dobrynin. The Haig Telephone Conversations (Haig Chronological File) and the Halde- man Diaries—including the book, the CD-ROM, and handwritten notes (Staff Member and Office Files)—were also useful in revealing the President's thinking not only during the summit but also during Kissinger's secret trip to Moscow. Nixon occasionally revealed his thoughts in writing, either in memoranda or in marginalia, for key members of his staff and cabinet. Many of these documents were found in the President's Personal Files, in particular, the President's Speech File, which contains a wide range of materials used in preparation for important public statements.

During the Nixon administration, the White House generally excluded the Department of State from important decision-making on the Soviet Union. This exclusion is well reflected in the records of the Department. Several Department of State sources, however, proved useful in the compilation of this volume. The Department's Central Files contain day-to-day communications, including telegrams, memoranda, and correspondence, on relations between the United States and Soviet Union. The lot files of Winston Lord—Kissinger's Special Assistant at the time and later his Director of Planning and Coordination Staff at the Department of State—helped to clarify some of the President's preparations for the summit.

The Kissinger Papers at the Library of Congress largely replicate documentation found in other collections. Since this volume was compiled, copies of the most important source—the Kissinger Telephone Conversation Transcripts—have been deposited at the Nixon Project at the National Archives. Although the citations in this volume refer to Kissinger Papers, copies of the transcripts as organized in the original collection are available to the public at the National Archives.

The editors also had access to the files of Nixon Intelligence Files at the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of Defense. The files of the Central Intelligence Agency, particularly the NIC Registry of NIE and SNIE files, were essential for intelligence reports and assessments on which the Nixon administration based its policy decisions.

The following list identifies the particular files and collections used in the preparation of this volume. The declassification and transfer to the National Archives of the Department of State records is in process, and many of these records are already available for public review at the National Archives.

Unpublished Sources

Department of State

Central Files. See National Archives and Records Administration below.

Lot Files. For lot files already transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Maryland, Record Group 59, see National Archives and Records Administration below.

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

Record Group 59, Records of the Department of State

Central Files

- DEF 6–2 USSR, Soviet naval forces
- DEF 18–3 AUS (VI), arms control and disarmament, organizations and conferences relating to Vienna, Austria [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) in Vienna]
- DEF 18–3 FIN (HE), arms control and disarmament, organizations and conferences relating to Helsinki, Finland [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) in Helsinki]
- DEF 18–4 US–USSR, arms control and disarmament, agreements and treaties between the United States and Soviet Union
- DEF 19–8 US–USSR, military assistance, equipment and supplies between the United States and the Soviet Union
- POL 7 US/BUTZ, visits and meetings, Secretary of Agriculture Butz
- POL 7 US/NIXON, visits and meetings, President Nixon
- POL 7 US/STANS, visits and meetings, Secretary of Commerce Stans
- POL US–USSR, general US–Soviet relations
- POL 33–6 US–USSR, US–Soviet issues on the high seas
- POL 1 USSR, general policy and background, Soviet Union
- POL 27 VIET S, military operations in Vietnam

Lot Files

PA Files:

Records of the Office of News and Its Predecessor, Records Relating to Press Conferences, Transcripts of Daily News Conferences of the Department of State, 1946-1980.

Policy Planning Files, Director's Files (Winston Lord), E-5027, formerly Lot 77 D 112
Records of Winston Lord, 1969-1976, as member of the National Security Council Staff and then as Director of the Policy Planning Staff at the Department of State.

Nixon Presidential Materials Project

Henry Kissinger Telephone Conversation Transcripts (Kissinger Telcons)

Chronological File

Dobrynin File

Home File

National Security Council Files

Agency Files: [Department of] Agriculture, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, [Department of] Commerce, National Security Council, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB)

Backchannel Files

Backchannel Messages

China Trip/Vietnam Negotiations

Country Files: USSR, People's Republic of China, Vietnam, United Arab Republic [Egypt]

For the President's Files—China/Vietnam Negotiations [Files for the President]

For the President's Files (Winston Lord)—China Trip/Vietnam [Files for the President—Lord]

Haig Chronological Files: Haig Chron, Haig Telcons

Haig Special Files

Howe Chronological Files

Indo-Pak War

NSC Unfiled Material

President's Trip Files: Dobrynin/Kissinger [File], [Files] For the President's Personal Briefcase, President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, President's Moscow, Iran, Poland, Austria Trip, USSR Issues—Papers

Presidential/HAK Memcons

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks [Files]

Subject Files: National Security Decision Memoranda

Vietnam Country Files

Vietnam Subject Files

Kissinger Office Files: Country Files: Europe, USSR, Far East, Middle East; Kissinger Trip Files

National Security Council Institutional Files (H-Files)

Meeting Files: National Security Council Meetings, Senior Review Group Meetings, Verification Panel Meetings, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings

XVI Sources

Minutes of Meetings Files: National Security Council Minutes, Senior Review Group Minutes, Verification Panel Minutes, Washington Special Actions Group Minutes
Study Memorandums: National Security Decision Memoranda Files
Policy Papers: National Security Study Memoranda Files

Staff Member and Office Files

Haldeman Files: Haldeman Notes
White House Central Files: President's Daily Diary

White House Special Files

President's Office Files: Memoranda for the President
President's Personal Files: Memoranda from the President, President's Speech File

White House Tapes

Camp David
Executive Office Building
Oval Office
White House Telephone

National Security Council

Nixon Intelligence Files
40 Committee Files: Minutes

Central Intelligence Agency

NIC Registry of NIE and SNIE Files, Job 79-R01012A

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Papers of Henry A. Kissinger
Chronological File
Geopolitical File: Soviet Union
Memoranda to the President
Miscellany: Record of Schedule
Telephone Conversations: Dobrynin File, Chronological File

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Documentary Collections

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Abbreviations and Terms

ABM, anti-ballistic missile
ACDA, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
AEC, Atomic Energy Commission
AH, Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
AMB, ambassador
AP, Associated Press
ARE, Arab Republic of Egypt
ARVN, Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ASAP, as soon as possible
ASW, anti-submarine warfare

B-52, all-weather, intercontinental, strategic heavy bomber
BDA, bombing damage assessment
BH, Bob Haldeman
BW, biological weapons

C-130, high-wing, 4 turbo prop engine aircraft used for rapid transportation of troops and/or equipment
CBW, Convention on Biological Weapons
CC, Central Committee
CCC, Commodity Credit Corporation
CDU, Christian Democratic Union
CDU/CSU, Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union
CEQ, Council on Environmental Quality
CES, Conference on European Security
ChiCom(s), Chinese Communist(s)
CIA, Central Intelligence Agency
CIEP, Council on International Economic Policy
CIEPDM, Council on International Economic Policy Decision Memorandum
CIEPSM, Council on International Economic Policy Study Memorandum
CPD, series indicator for communications sent by President Nixon while at Camp David
CPSU, Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE, Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

D, Democrat; also Anatoly F. Dobrynin
DCI, Director of Central Intelligence
DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission
Dept, Department
Deptel, Department of State telegram
Dissem, dissemination
DMZ, demilitarized zone
DOD, Department of Defense
DOD/ISA, Office of International Security Affairs, Department of Defense
DOS, Department of State
DRV, Democratic Republic of Vietnam

EC-121, unarmed, four-engine propeller-driven reconnaissance aircraft
Emb, Embassy
Embtel, Embassy telegram
EOB, Executive Office Building

XX Abbreviations and Terms

ESC, European Security Conference

EST, Eastern Standard Time

ETA, Estimated Time of Arrival

EUR, Bureau of European Affairs, Department of State

EUR/SOV, Office of Soviet Union Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs

Exdis, Exclusive distribution (extremely limited distribution)

XIM (or Ex-Im), Export-Import Bank of Washington

FBI, Federal Bureau of Investigation

FDR, Franklin Delano Roosevelt

FonMin, Foreign Minister

FRG, Federal Republic of Germany

FUNK, National United Front of Kampuchea

FYI, for your information

GDR, German Democratic Republic

GM, General Motors Corporation

GMT, Greenwich Mean Time

GVN, Government of (South) Vietnam

HAK, Henry Alfred Kissinger

HAKTO, series indicator for messages sent from Henry A. Kissinger while away from Washington

HEW, Department of Health, Education and Welfare

ICBM, intercontinental ballistic missile

IG, interdepartmental group

INR, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

INR/DRR/RSE, Office of Research and Analysis for USSR and Eastern Europe, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

INR/DRR/RSE/FP, Soviet Foreign Affairs Division, Officer of Research and Analysis for USSR and Eastern Europe, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

JCS, Joint Chiefs of Staff

JFK, John Fitzgerald Kennedy

K, Kissinger

KGB, *Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti* (State Security Committee)

LBJ, Lyndon Baines Johnson

LDX, Long Distance Xerography

Limdis, Limited Distribution

LP, liquefied petroleum

MACV, United States Military Assistance Command in Vietnam

MARC, Modern ABM Radar Complex

MBFR, Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions

ME, Middle East

Memcon, memorandum of conversation

MFN, Most Favored Nation

MIRV, multiple independently-targetable reentry vehicle

MR, Military Region (in Vietnam)

MSR, Missile Site Radar

NASA, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization

- NBC**, National Broadcasting Company
NCA, National Capital Area
NEA, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State
Niact, night action, telegram indicator requiring immediate action
NIC, National Intelligence Council
NIE, National Intelligence Estimate
Nodis, No Distribution (other than to persons indicated)
Nofor, no foreign distribution
NPT, (Nuclear) Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSA, National Security Agency
NSC, National Security Council
NSC-IG, National Security Council Interdepartmental Group
NSDM, National Security Decision Memorandum
NSSM, National Security Study Memorandum
NVA, North Vietnamese Army
NVN, North Vietnam
- OLPAR**, Other Large Phased-Array Radar
OST, Office of Science and Technology
- P**, President
PFIAB, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
PM, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Department of State
POL, petroleum, oil, and lubricants
POW, prisoner of war
PR, public relations
PRC, People's Republic of China
PRG, Provisional Revolutionary Government (for South Vietnam)
- R**, Republican
Ref, reference
Reftel, reference telegram
RG, Record Group
RN, Richard Nixon
ROK, Republic of Korea
- S**, Office of the Secretary of State, or Secretary
SALT, Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
Septel, separate telegram
SITTO, series indicator for messages sent to Henry A. Kissinger while away from Washington, especially during his secret trip to Moscow in April 1972, when communications were routed through the Situation Room in the White House
SLBM, submarine-launched ballistic missile
Sov, Soviet
SOV, Office of Soviet Union Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs
S/P, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State
SRG, Senior Review Group
SU, Soviet Union
SVN, South Vietnam
- TAC**, Tactical Air Command
TASS, *Telegrafnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza* (Telegram Agency of the Soviet Union)
Telcon, telephone conversation
TOHAK, series indicator for messages sent to Henry A. Kissinger while away from Washington

XXII Abbreviations and Terms

UAR, United Arab Republic

UK, United Kingdom

ULMS, Undersea Long-range Missile System

UN, United Nations

UNSC, United Nations Security Council

US, United States

USAF, United States Air Force

USDEL, United States Delegate/Delegation

USIA, United States Information Agency

USIB, United States Intelligence Board

USS, United States Ship

USSR, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

USUN, United States Mission to the United Nations in New York

V, Vietnam

VC, Vietcong

VIP, very important person

VN, Vietnam

WH, White House

WSAG, Washington Special Actions Group

WTE, series indicator for messages sent from Henry A. Kissinger while away from Washington, especially during his secret trip to Moscow in April 1972, when communications were routed through Kissinger's airplane at an airport outside Moscow

Z, Zulu Time (Greenwich Mean Time)

Persons

Abrams, Major General Creighton W., USA, Commander of the United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

Agnew, Spiro T., Vice President of the United States

Aleksandrov-Agentov, Andrei M., Member of the Secretariat of the General Secretary, Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Brezhnev's foreign policy adviser)

Alkhimov, Vladimir S., Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade

Allen, Richard V., Executive Director of the Council on International Economic Policy

Atherton, Alfred L. "Roy," Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Bahr, Egon, State Secretary (Foreign, Defense, and German Policy) in the West German Federal Chancellery and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany in Berlin

Baibakov, Nikolai K., Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers and Chairman of the State Planning Commission; also Full Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Barzel, Rainer C., Chairman of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party Group and CDU Party Chairman; also, from November 29, 1971, CDU/CSU Chancellor Candidate for the 1972 Bundestag election

Beam, Jacob D., Ambassador to the Soviet Union

Blee, David H., Chief of the Soviet/Eastern Europe Division, Directorate of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency

Brandt, Willy, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany

Brezhnev, Leonid I., General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Bui Diem, South Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States

Bunker, Ellsworth, Ambassador to South Vietnam

Burger, Warren E., Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Butz, Earl L., Secretary of Agriculture from November 11, 1971

Carver, George C., Special Assistant for Vietnam Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency

Castro Ruz, Fidel, Premier of Cuba

Chancellor, John, anchor on the *NBC Nightly News*

Chapin, Dwight L., Deputy Assistant to the President (President's Appointments Secretary)

Churchill, Winston L. S., former British Prime Minister (1940–1945, 1951–1955)

Colson, Charles W., Special Counsel to the President

Connally, John B., Jr., Secretary of the Treasury until May 16, 1972

Cromer, Earl of (George Rowland Stanley Baring), British Ambassador to the United States

David, Edward E., Jr., Science Adviser to the President and Director of the Office of Science and Technology

Davies, Richard T., Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs

De Gaulle, Charles, former President of France (1944–1947, 1959–1969)

Dobrynin, Anatoly F., Soviet Ambassador to the United States; also Full Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Douglas-Home, Alexander F., British Foreign Minister

Dulles, John Foster, former Secretary of State (1953–1959)

XXIV Persons

- Ehrlichman, John D.**, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs
Eisenhower, Dwight D., former President of the United States (1953–1961)
Eliot, Theodore L., Jr., Special Assistant to the Secretary of State and Executive Secretary
- Falin, Valentin M.**, Soviet Ambassador to West Germany
Farley, Philip J., Deputy Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Flanigan, Peter M., Assistant to the President for International Economic Policy
Ford, Gerald R., Congressman (Republican, Michigan); House Minority Leader
- Gandhi, Indira**, Prime Minister of India
Garment, Leonard, Special Consultant to the President
Garthoff, Raymond L., Deputy Director, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs; also Executive Officer and Senior Adviser, U.S. Department of State Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I)
Gierek, Edward, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' (Communist) Party
Grechko, Marshal Andrei A., Soviet Minister of Defense and Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Green, Marshall, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Grinevsky, Oleg A., Deputy Chief of the International Organizations Department in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Gromyko, Andrei A., Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs; Full Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Guay, Colonel George R., USAF, Air Attaché at the Embassy in Paris
- Haig, Brigadier General (from March 1972, Major General) Alexander M., Jr.**, USA, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Haldeman, H. R. "Bob," Assistant to the President (White House Chief of Staff)
Hannah, John A., Director of the Agency for International Development
Harriman, W. Averell, former Ambassador to the Soviet Union (1943–1946) and Governor of New York (1954–1958)
Helms, Richard M., Director of Central Intelligence
Heath, Edward R. G., British Prime Minister
Hicks, Coleman S., Member of the Office of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Kissinger's personal assistant)
Hillenbrand, Martin J., Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs until April 30, 1972; then Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany
Hinton, Deane R., Assistant Director of the Council on International Economic Policy
Holdridge, John H., Member of the National Security Council Operations Staff (East Asia and the Pacific)
Honecker, Erich, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of (East) Germany
Howe, Commander Jonathan T., USN, Staff Member (Military Assistant) of the Office of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Huang Hua, Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations from November 23, 1971
Humphrey, Hubert H., Senator (Democrat, Minnesota); from January 10, 1972, also candidate for the 1972 Democratic nomination for President
Hussein II, King of Jordan
Hussein, Saddam, Vice President of Iraq and Vice-Chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council
Hyland, William G., Member of the National Security Council Operations Staff (Europe)

- Jackson, Henry M. "Scoop,"** Senator (Democrat, Washington); from November 19, 1971, also candidate for the 1972 Democratic nomination for President
- Jarring, Gunnar,** United Nations Special Representative for the Middle East
- Johnson, Lyndon B.,** former President of the United States (1963–1969)
- Johnson, U. Alexis,** Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
- Katushev, Konstantin F.,** Member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (responsible for liaison with other Communist Parties)
- Kendall, Donald M.,** Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Pepsi Co.
- Kennedy, Edward M.,** Senator (Democrat, Massachusetts)
- Kennedy, John F.,** former President of the United States (1961–1963)
- Kennedy, Colonel Richard T.,** USA (Ret.), Director of the Planning Group, National Security Council Staff
- Kishilov, Nikolai S.,** First Secretary, International Organizations Department, Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs; also General Secretary and Senior Adviser, Soviet Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I)
- Kissinger, Henry A.,** Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
- Khrushchev, Nikita S.,** former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers (1953–1964)
- Kornienko, Georgi M.,** Chief of the United States of America Department and Member of the Collegium in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Kosygin, Alexei N.,** Chairman (Premier) of the Soviet Council of Ministers; also Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- Kovalev, Anatoly G.,** Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Kraft, Joseph,** syndicated columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*
- Krimer, William D.,** Interpreter and Language Officer, Office of Language Services, Department of State
- Kuznetsov, Vasily V.,** First Deputy Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Laird, Melvin R.,** Secretary of Defense
- Le Duan,** First Secretary of the Central Committee of the (North) Vietnamese Communist Party
- Le Duc Tho,** Special Advisor to the North Vietnamese Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks
- Lodge, Henry Cabot,** Personal Representative of the President to the Holy See (Vatican)
- Lord, Winston,** Staff Member of the Office of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Kissinger's Special Assistant)
- Luns, Joseph M.A.H.,** Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- MacGregor, Clark,** Counsel to the President for Congressional Relations
- Mansfield, Mike,** Senator (Democrat, Montana); Senate Majority Leader
- Manzhulo, Alexei N.,** Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade
- Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung),** Chairman of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party
- Matlock, Jack F., Jr.,** Country Director for Soviet Union Affairs (Director, Office of Soviet Union Affairs), Bureau for European Affairs
- Matskevich, Vladimir V.,** Soviet Minister of Agriculture; and Full Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- McCloskey, Robert J.,** Deputy Assistant Secretary for Press Relations and Special Assistant to the Secretary of State (Department of State spokesman)
- McCloy, John J.,** Chairman of the General Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament

- McGovern, George**, Senator (Democrat, South Dakota); from January 18, 1971, also candidate for the 1972 Democratic nomination for President
- Meir, Golda**, Prime Minister of Israel
- Mikoyan, Anastas I.**, former First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers (1955–1964) and Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1935–1966)
- Mitchell, John N.**, Attorney General until February 15, 1972; then Chairman of the Committee to Re-Elect the President
- Moorer, Admiral Thomas H.**, USN, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Mosbacher, Emil, Jr.**, Chief of Protocol
- Muskie, Edmund S.**, Senator (Democrat, Maine); from January 4, 1972, also candidate for the 1972 Democratic nomination for President
- Negroponte, John D.**, Member of the National Security Council Operations Staff (Vietnam)
- Nguyen Thi Binh (Madame Binh)**, Chief Delegate of the Provisional Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam
- Nguyen Van Thieu**, President of the Republic of (South) Vietnam
- Nitze, Paul H.**, Member of the U.S. Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (Department of Defense Representative)
- Nixon, Richard M.**, President of the United States
- Nutter, G. Warren**, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
- Odeen, Philip A.**, Director of the Program Analysis Staff (Defense and Arms Control), National Security Council Staff
- Okun, Herbert S.**, International Relations Officer, Office of the Country Director for Soviet Union Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs
- Parsons, J. Graham "Jeff,"** Deputy U.S. Representative to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I)
- Patolichev, Nikolai S.**, Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade; and Full Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- Pauls, Rolf**, West German Ambassador to the United States
- Peterson, Peter G.**, Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs and Executive Director of the Council on International Economic Policy
- Pham Van Dong**, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam
- Podgorny, Nikolai V.**, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet; also Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- Pompidou, Georges**, President of France
- Ponomarev, Boris N.**, Member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Chief, International Department); also Candidate Member of the Politburo
- Porter, William J., Head** (Ambassador) of the U.S. Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks on Vietnam
- Price, Raymond K., Jr.**, Special Assistant to the President (Speechwriter's Office)
- Rabin, Yitzhak**, Israeli Ambassador to the United States
- Reagan, Ronald W.**, Governor of California (Republican)
- Richardson, Elliot L.**, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare
- Rockefeller, Nelson A.**, Governor of New York (Republican)
- Rodman, Peter W.**, Staff Member of the Office of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
- Rogers, William P.**, Secretary of State

- Roosevelt, Franklin D.**, former President of the United States (1933–1945)
- Rush, Kenneth**, Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany until February 20, 1972; Deputy Secretary of Defense from February 23, 1972
- Sadat, Anwar (Mohamed Anwar Al-Sadat)**, President of Egypt
- Safire, William L.**, Special Assistant to the President (Speechwriter's Office)
- Samuels, Nathaniel**, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs until May 31, 1972
- Saunders, Harold H. "Hal,"** Member of the National Security Council Operations Staff (Near East and South Asia)
- Scali, John A.**, Special Consultant to the President
- Scott, Hugh D.**, Senator (Republican-Pennsylvania); Senate Minority Leader
- Scowcroft, Brigadier General Brent**, USAF, Military Assistant to the President from February 12, 1972
- Semenov, Vladimir S.**, Deputy Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs; also Representative (Ambassador) and Chairman of the Soviet Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I)
- Shakespeare, Frank J., Jr.**, Director of the United States Information Agency
- Shelest, Petro Y.**, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine until May 21, 1972; then Soviet Deputy Prime Minister; also Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- Shultz, George P.**, Director of the Office of Management and Budget; from May 16, 1972, Secretary of the Treasury
- Sisco, Joseph J.**, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
- Smirnov, Leonid V.**, Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers
- Smith, Gerard C.**, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; also Representative (Ambassador) and Chairman of the U.S. Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I)
- Smith, Wayne S.**, International Relations Officer, Office of Soviet Union Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs
- Sokolov, Oleg M.**, First Secretary, Soviet Embassy in the United States
- Sonnenfeldt, Helmut "Hal,"** Member of the National Security Council Operations Staff (Europe)
- Spiers, Ronald I.**, Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs
- Stalin, Josef I.**, former General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1922–1953)
- Stans, Maurice H.**, Secretary of Commerce until January 27, 1972; then Chairman, Finance Committee to Re-Elect the President
- Stennis, John C.**, Senator (Democrat, Mississippi); Chairman of the Armed Services Committee
- Sukhodrev, Viktor M.**, interpreter, Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Sullivan, William H.**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
- Thompson, Llewellyn E. "Tommy,"** former Ambassador to the Soviet Union (1957–1962; 1966–1969); also former Member of the U.S. Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (1969–1971)
- Timerbaev, Roland M.**, Deputy Chief of the International Organizations Department in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Train, Russell E.**, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality
- U Thant**, Secretary General of the United Nations until December 31, 1971
- Volpe John A.**, Secretary of Transportation
- Vorontsov, Yuli M.**, Soviet Minister Counselor to the United States

XXVIII Persons

Walters, Major General (from March 1972, Lieutenant General) Vernon A., USA, Military Attaché at the Embassy in Paris; from May 2, 1972, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Warner, John W., Under Secretary of the Navy; from May 4, 1972, Secretary of the Navy

Woods, Rose Mary, President Nixon's Personal Secretary

Xuan Thuy, Chief of the North Vietnamese Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks

Yahya Khan, General Agha Mohammad, President, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan (Chief Martial Law Administrator) until December 20, 1971

Zamyatin, Leonid M., Director General of the Telegram Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS)

Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai), Premier of the People's Republic of China

Ziegler, Ronald L., White House Press Secretary

Soviet Union, October 1971–May 1972

Announcement of Summit Through the South Asia Crisis, October 12–December 1971

1. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 12, 1971, 11 a.m.

HENRY A. KISSINGER BRIEFING OF WHITE HOUSE STAFF

SUBJECT

Soviet Summit Announcement

Kissinger: I want to read the announcement that the President is making. Then I will make a few general comments; then answer any questions you may have.

[Reads text: “The leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union in their exchanges during the past year have agreed that a meeting between them would be desirable once sufficient progress had been made in negotiations at lower levels. In light of the recent advances in bilateral and multilateral negotiations involving the two countries, it has been agreed that such a meeting will take place in Moscow in the latter part of May 1972.

“President Nixon and the Soviet leaders will review all major issues with a view towards further improving their bilateral relations and enhancing the prospects for world peace.”]²

This will be made simultaneously in Moscow and Washington at 12:00 Noon today.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1025, Presidential/HAK Memcons, Memcon—Henry Kissinger, Briefing of White House Staff, Oct. 12, 1971. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. No drafting information appears on the memorandum.

² Brackets in the source text. President Nixon read this announcement at his press conference in the White House Briefing Room, beginning at 11:27 a.m. on October 12. The President then answered questions on the upcoming summit in Moscow, U.S.–USSR relations, and other issues. The press conference ended at 11:55 a.m. The announcement and the text of the press conference are in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1971*, pp. 1030–1037.

Now, the major point I would like to get across to this group is this. While the President sometimes accuses us of not pushing him enough, in this case the danger is of overkilling. We must maneuver this between China, Russia and our allies. The danger is that if we claim too much, we will infuriate the Chinese and give impetus to feelings in Western Europe similar to Japan. And above all we lose our negotiating position with the Soviets. Success will come not from the fact of the visit, but from what comes out of it.

We have to be hard. Our experience was that the Soviets before July 15 thought they had us on the ropes; the China announcement³ has had an effect. We have had the best period with the Soviets since then.

The meeting speaks for itself; we should hold it in low key. With my interim trip to China,⁴ and beating them over the head in Vietnam, this is as much as the traffic will bear. It will help us if each thinks we have an option, but neither thinks we are squeezing them.

R. Allen: Were the Germans and the others notified? Won't there be a Nixon shock?

Kissinger: The key ones have had fair advance warning,⁵ though not all of them.

Flanigan: Some will have had more than the Japs have had.

Kissinger: There have been six months of consultation. Some of them have been travelling without telling us. The United Kingdom, France and Germany have had substantial advance notice.

Allen: Will this take the wind out of the Ostpolitik sails?

Kissinger: It is hard to tell with that government. If there is a race to Moscow, they won't win it.

Colson: Why announce it now? There will be speculation.

Kissinger: It was arranged some weeks ago; it fitted in the game plan. It is the same lead time as the Peking trip. Our judgment was to make it open, so that both sides knew.

Colson: Will it be interpreted as a delay in SALT or MBFR?

Kissinger: You have to assume the opposite: the leaders would expect to have an agreement by then. How we stage the completion is a tactical issue. In a negotiation started by an exchange of letters, you have to assume that the summit is not predicated on failure.

Colson: The speculation will be.

³ Reference is to Nixon's announcement of Kissinger's secret trip to China via Pakistan, July 1–13.

⁴ Reference is to Kissinger's upcoming trip to Beijing, October 20–26, to prepare for the President's visit to the People's Republic of China, February 21–28, 1972.

⁵ The German, French, and British Governments were informed on October 11.

Kissinger: Let Humphrey⁶ scream if it is not this year. We will do it in March.

Ehrlichman: What response do we give to questions about the domestic impact? Is it a cheap political shot, or a dumb play into Russian hands?

Kissinger: Let them compare what the President said about summits at the beginning of his term with the situation at the summit. He said there had to be progress. Progress there has been, on SALT, on Berlin, on accidental war, and so on. This is the earliest possible time. Secondly, we are engaged in an historical process and we will be judged by the outcome.

Flanigan: Why is the President going there?

Kissinger: The last time Khrushchev came here. That was the last official bilateral visit. Khrushchev issued an invitation to Eisenhower; it was accepted and then cancelled.⁷

Allen: Richard Nixon in the campaign (“Nixon on the Issues”) talked of a “series of summit meetings.” We should get that out.

Garment: Are there any theories of the likely Chinese reaction?

Kissinger: We have some idea, but I don’t want to get into that.

McGregor: The President is going to the Hill and will get a warm reception. Is this consistent with low key?

Kissinger: A good reception in Congress will be great. As long as he doesn’t get carried away. The key thing to avoid is a statement that the United States and the USSR as two superpowers can settle everything. This will drive the Chinese and our allies up the wall.

Petersen: “First China, then Russia.” Where do our friends stand? The Japs will ask.

Kissinger: We have an answer. Emperor Hirohito had to come first—this was their requirement. Second, the Japanese can’t do it in the summer because Sato⁸ will be stepping down then.

Scali: How do we answer the question: Were the Chinese advised in advance?

Kissinger: Yes.

Price: Specifically, will the Mideast be discussed?

Kissinger: Look at the text: “all major issues.”

⁶ Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D–Minnesota).

⁷ Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev made an official visit to Washington and Camp David, Maryland, September 15 and 25–27, 1959. President Eisenhower’s scheduled June 10, 1960, visit to the Soviet Union was cancelled by Khrushchev on May 16, 1960. Khrushchev cited U.S. unwillingness to apologize for U–2 reconnaissance flights over the Soviet Union as the cause.

⁸ Eisaku Sato, Prime Minister of Japan.

Colson: Who announces in the USSR?

Kissinger: TASS.

Scali: Who arranged it?

Kissinger: Gromyko brought an invitation to the President.

Scali: And the President agreed in that meeting?

Kissinger: Yes—but we have been discussing it for a year.

Scali: Through State channels?

Kissinger: Yes.

McGregor: My wife says I believe you, sweetheart, but millions wouldn't.

Shultz: I have suppressed euphoria.

Kissinger: The building blocks are getting in shape. It is a delicate structure. If one part unravels, all of it will.

2. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's File¹

Washington, October 12, 1971, 12–12:54 p.m.

SUBJECT

President Nixon's Meeting with Congressional Leaders on October 12, 1971, 12 noon–12:54 p.m. in the Cabinet Room. (List of participants is attached.)²

The President began the meeting by noting that at that moment the announcement he would shortly be reading out to the Leaders was being simultaneously published in Washington and Moscow. The President said that after reading the announcement he would provide some background and then be open to questions. He looked forward to a good discussion in this small group. The President then read out the announcement concerning his trip to the Soviet Union in May, 1972 (Tab A).³

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 315, Subject Files, Congressional, Vol. 3. No classification marking.

² Attached but not printed. Attending the meeting for the bipartisan Congressional leadership were Senators Hugh Scott, John Stennis, Mike Mansfield, Allen Ellender, Milton Young, and Congressmen Gerald Ford, Les Arends, Carl Albert, Hale Boggs, George Mahon, and Thomas Morgan. Accompanying the President were Rogers, Kissinger, Counsel to the President for Congressional Relations Clark MacGregor, and Sonnenfeldt.

³ Attached but not printed; see Document 1, footnote 2.

Turning to the background, the President recalled his first press conference in January of 1969 when the question of a summit with the Soviets was raised.⁴ At that time he had said that we should not have such a meeting unless something came out of it, otherwise it would be merely cosmetic and there would be a great letdown. This also turned out to be the Soviet view. In April, 1970, the Soviets began exploring the possibility at lower levels. But the President did not think that a meeting at the highest level at that time could serve a useful purpose. There then ensued a period of many discussions at various levels. In the last few weeks the Soviets indicated that they thought the time was ripe and Gromyko brought a formal invitation when he came to Washington.

The President continued that in fact we had made sufficient progress. He cited agreements on biological warfare, the seabeds, the hot line and accidental war. But the most important one was on Berlin. That problem was not solved totally but the United States and the Soviet Union, plus the two other countries involved, were able to reach agreement on an area where our interests clashed. Now the President drew the conclusion that it was possible to go to other areas.

The President then took up the point of why the meeting was set for May rather than, for example, next month. In the first place, he said, the Soviets set the date. In addition, we were having very intensive negotiations on strategic arms. While we were aiming for agreement this year it might not come until next year. The subject was high on the agenda. In this connection, the President referred to recent stories about the huge Soviet arms build-up, particularly on the Soviet side. While SALT had made progress on the defensive side, agreement would not be reached without the offensive side because that was where the Soviets were ahead. We cannot have an agreement based on defensive equality but freezing Soviet offensive advantage. The President was confident that we would have a SALT agreement but it must not freeze us into inferiority.

The President cautioned against euphoria in connection with this Moscow trip. There continued to be great differences: in the Caribbean and Southeast Asia, in Europe and most fundamentally as regards systems of government. Nevertheless the overwhelming fact was that if there ever was a superpower conflict there would be no victors, only losers. The Soviets know this as well as we do. Neither super power would let the other get an advantage sufficient to enable it to launch a preemptive strike. Therefore, we should explore areas where we can limit or even perhaps reduce arms.

⁴ Nixon is apparently referring to his second press conference, February 6, 1969, when he was asked about future meetings with Soviet leaders; see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, p. 67.

Apart from arms, there were such problems as Europe and trade. Without listing an agenda, the President said the Moscow talks would deal with all “questions of mutual interest.” This included peripheral areas like the Middle East, where we hoped for progress before the summit; Southeast Asia and its future, where we will go forward with our two-track policy and will not wait until May; and the Caribbean.

To sum up, the President said when we look at the future of the world negotiations rather than confrontations were essential. It did not matter if we had a difference with a small country like Bolivia, but in the case of the Soviet Union it could be disastrous. The President then stressed that the two trips he was planning—to Peking and Moscow—were completely separate and independent. We were in the position of pursuing the best relations with both, but not with one at the expense of the other. The President added that we had informed Peking, the European allies and Japan of the Moscow trip, but because of the Soviet passion for secrecy, which they share with other communists, we had to be extremely careful not to risk a leak.

Invited by the President to comment, Secretary Rogers said that we had given good advance notice in this case, something we had not been able to do in the case of the Chinese trip. The Secretary commented that in his view the US-Soviet climate at the moment was the best ever, at least on the surface. The President said that we were not taken in by climate alone. The substance of relations this year differed from last year like night and day. Secretary Rogers continued that in the Middle East the maintenance of a cease-fire was very important and constituted progress in itself. He felt that the President’s trip to Moscow would give us additional time in the Middle East. The Secretary concluded that at the UN, where he had seen more than 45 foreign ministers, the most important thing was the question of US-Soviet relations. Today’s news would reassure everyone at the UN further.

In response to a question by the President concerning Peking’s reaction, Dr. Kissinger said that the President had set the tone by saying that each relationship contributed to peace. We would not collude with one side against the other nor involve ourselves in the Sino-Soviet dispute which turned on ideology and the border question. Dr. Kissinger said we were meticulous in keeping each side generally informed about what we were doing with the other. The President interjected that the Soviets had been informed of Dr. Kissinger’s forthcoming trip to Peking. Dr. Kissinger concluded that we had been completely honest with both Moscow and Peking.

The President noted that there might be forces in the Soviet Union and China which had reservations about what was happening. Their radios would undoubtedly say critical things. But he had made a command decision not to play one off against the other. The President re-

called his first NSC meeting where the decision was made against “condominium.”⁵ The President commented that just on practical grounds, it made no sense for us to join the stronger power against the weaker. In any case we have to remember that the Chinese have a great future. But we were following a delicate course and were on a tightrope. The President thought that the allies and many Asians welcomed what we were doing. Secretary Rogers added that the Europeans had all welcomed the President’s China move.

Senator Mansfield said he welcomed the information the President had given but he wondered about Peking’s reaction and whether an advisory notice had been enough. Dr. Kissinger said that the Moscow trip had been discussed in general terms when he was in Peking, although not in specifics. The President said Dr. Kissinger had been candid and had said that we would proceed with the Soviets. Dr. Kissinger commented that today’s announcement was helpful to the Chinese in that it undercut the Soviet argument that the Chinese were colluding with us. Senator Mansfield said he would like to see nothing that interfered with the Peking trip because the letdown would be very bad.

Representative Mahon asked whether the Peking trip would occur before the Moscow trip. The President said that it would. Actually, the Soviets had proposed July but this was too close to our political conventions. So the Soviet visit would be in the second half of May but before the first of June. The President added that the meeting would take place in Moscow because it was our turn to go there since Khrushchev had come here. The question of having the meeting here had not even been raised. No US President has been to Moscow while the Soviets have been here twice, counting Kosygin at Glassboro.⁶

Senator Ellender said he was proud the President was going. Ever since the President had entered office the Senator had asked him to go. The last time when he asked to see the President he had been sent to Dr. Kissinger. He now wanted to ask the President to receive him before leaving for Moscow. The President responded that he would. The Senator went on to say that he had information vital to the President and he had been instrumental in setting up the Kennedy–Khrushchev meeting in Vienna.⁷ He then recalled an incident when Khrushchev came to lunch with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and had greeted Senator Ellender with hugs and kisses in full view of everyone.

⁵ For minutes of the January 21, 1969, meeting, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume II, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969–1972.

⁶ Soviet Premier Kosygin visited Glassboro, New Jersey, for an informal summit with President Johnson, June 23 and 25, 1967; see *ibid.*, 1964–1968, vol. XIV, Documents 217–238.

⁷ Reference is to the summit meeting in Vienna between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev, June 3–4, 1961; see, *ibid.*, 1961–1963, vol. V, Documents 82–85 and 87–89.

The Senator said that he had talked to Khrushchev and other Politburo members many times and he also had some wonderful movie pictures which he thought would be helpful for the President to see. Concluding, Senator Ellender said he had been in every part of Russia. He admonished the President to “keep the military out of this.”

The President said that he would have extensive consultations with Congressional Leaders, depending of course on what subject comes up and where things stood at the time of the meeting. Trade certainly would come up as would Vietnam. We will have extensive consultations with the Leaders and, of course, also with our allies. The President wanted to stress, however, that when you deal with Communist Leaders they have a phobia, almost a paranoia, about privacy. But he would want the fullest input before the meeting. The President noted that just as with the Chinese there were no advance understandings with the Soviets in connection with the Moscow trip.

Representative Boggs said that his Committee had had extensive hearings on East-West trade but had had no luck with legislation. Secretary Rogers said the President’s trip might help in this regard. The President commented that the Soviets were paranoid on the question of linkage of one subject to another though they themselves, of course, link everything. The fact was that trade and trade legislation were related to the situation in Southeast Asia, as the war winds down the possibility for trade goes up.

Senator Scott said that in the three years since he had been in the Soviet Union, there had been tremendous progress especially in the field of precision instruments. As an example, the Senator said he was wearing a \$150 Russian watch which only cost him \$14.40. The President pointed out that we were moving ahead on trade and had granted export licenses for the Kama River project, amounting to \$400 million. Everyone could be sure that trade would be a very lively subject.

Speaker Albert said he was happy about the President’s trips and glad that the one to Peking would occur before the one to Moscow. The President said that if he had gone to Moscow before Peking, the Chinese trip would have been blown. The Soviets did not object to the sequence. Secretary Rogers said they had no chance to object.

Senator Stennis said he was very impressed with the President’s plans. He assumed that SALT would not be stopped as a result of this announcement. The President said it would not. On the contrary, the announcement may give impetus to it. The President went on to say that with the way the Soviets were moving with their build-up, with SALT where it was and the summit coming up, he had to fight for a credible defense program in order to maintain our bargaining position. He realized that there were some who objected to the size of the Defense budget but our purpose was not to have an arms race but to stop

it. It was essential to stop the Soviets because they were moving ahead. Secretary Rogers noted that the President had said to the press that we would try to get a SALT agreement before the summit and, failing that, would talk about it at the summit. The President said that the SALT agreement at present under negotiation was only a freeze so there would be a lot more to talk about after an agreement.

Representative Boggs recalled that he had sat in the Cabinet Room when President Kennedy had reported that the Soviet missiles were being removed from Cuba, and when President Johnson had reported the first Chinese H-bomb explosion. He was conscious of how important today's news was.

When Representative Ford began to speak in support of the President's plans, the President commented that he expected support from Republicans but also appreciated the help of the Democrats. We all had the same goal. The important thing was not to miss the chance to exert influence with one superpower and one potential superpower. It might not work but we would certainly try. And it was very important to remember that we were not playing one off against the other. We were very meticulous in keeping each informed.

Reverting to the earlier discussion, Congressman Mahon said it was especially important to get the Defense budget for the President even if the Defense Department sometimes does stupid things. The President pointed out that the Soviets were not cutting back, therefore, we could not cut back.

Senator Stennis wondered why there was a better climate with the Soviets. The President said he would not attempt to speculate, but he felt there were good reasons of Soviet self-interest. For a long time the Soviets had to catch up in armaments but now there was a rough balance. They now have to make a command decision about whether to go on. They must know that if they did, they could get away with it only for a short time. There would be a new arms race and who would be the gainer? The President thought the Soviets were also concerned about the situation with respect to their neighbors and the Middle East. In addition, despite the progress they had made they were still behind economically. While the Soviets were now Mr. Big and undoubtedly still wanted to expand and hold on to Eastern Europe, their future would not be served either by an arms race with us or by a confrontation which could produce no victors if it becomes war.

As the photographers entered, Mr. MacGregor told the President that Senator Fulbright could not participate in the Leadership meeting because he was attending the 100th anniversary of the University of Arkansas, whose President he had been at one time.

While the pictures were being taken, the group talked about the World Series and the football season.

3. Notes of Cabinet Meeting¹

Washington, October 12, 1971, 4:37–5:38 p.m.

[Omitted here is discussion on the economy, wage and price controls, taxes, and labor.]

The P then turned to the Russian Summit. Made the point that this did not develop out of the blue, that there have been discussions in detail over the past two years, that there could be no meeting until there had been progress in other areas to indicate that a Summit would be useful. Gromyko brought the invitation this year, and we accepted it. You have to realize what has happened up to now in foreign policy, such as the sea beds, the completion of the nonproliferation treaty, biological warfare, accidental war, hot line,² and most significant, Berlin. What about Vietnam, Middle East, arms control and trade? That all depends on the situation at the time. Those are all possible areas of discussion with the Soviets. The agenda will be determined by developments between now and May. There will be a very limited group going with the P. It'll be a working visit. Regarding China, each of these trips is separate. We're seeking new relations with China, and we're seeking to continue our negotiations with the Soviets. We're doing neither at the expense of the other. We're not playing them against each other. About our allies, on questions such as mutual balance, enforced reductions, etc., we'll discuss with them in detail first before we take any steps with the Soviets. What it really means to United States defense is that the fact of the meetings is itself a hopeful sign, but we recognize that our differences are very deep and very broad. We will continue to have different views, and we've only agreed to discuss those differences. For some to conclude naively, as they have, that the whole world has changed, and so forth, is ridiculous. None of that type of thing is true. We're aware of the differences, but we should talk about them. Re Soviet Union, now in military strength—offensive—well ahead of US and still building so US must continue its own program

¹ Source: *The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*. No classification marking. The diary is based on Haldeman's handwritten notes, portions of which are inserted below. The time of the meeting is from the President's Daily Diary. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) Special Assistant to the President, Raymond K. Price, Jr., also prepared notes of this meeting. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 86, Memoranda for the President, Beginning, October 10, 1971)

² The phrase "biological warfare, accidental war, and hot line" was excised from the published *Haldeman Diaries*. It is reinserted here from Haldeman's hand-written notes. (Ibid., Staff Members and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 44, Haldeman Notes, Oct.–December 1971, part I)

until have agreement on offensive and defensive [weapons] that doesn't put us [in] inferior [position].³

We welcome the opportunity to talk, it could be hopeful. It can change the relationships, but there is no reason for euphoria. There is no real change in either attitude, but the big fact overall is that the superpowers know that if there's a conflict, there are no winners now, only losers. And neither of us will allow the other to gain an advantage. So if SALT breaks down and the Soviets continue their buildup, then the United States must also build up. So the two great powers have a common interest in limiting the arms race and negotiating the areas where they rub, such as Berlin, the Middle East, South East Asia, Caribbean, etc. We look to this period to continue to maintain our strength, to continue to negotiate with the Soviets and to work on a new relation with China. We're on a very high wire. We're trying to stay there vis-à-vis the Soviet and China. Ironically, we're in the position that each of them rates the other as more of an enemy than either of them rates the United States. So we must handle the whole thing very evenhandedly.

Rogers then made the point that it's very important that no one attempt to express substantive views, that there's no need to add anything to what the P has said on the subject (*of the Summit*). He said that he felt there were four ideas that we should consider. First, that there's no time in the history of the United States where a President has undertaken such a comprehensive effort for peace. No President has ever tried so hard before. Second, the world is a more peaceful place now than it was two and a half years ago. What the P has done has been effective up to now. Third, everything the P has done is consistent with what he said since the beginning. In other words, it's an orderly foreign policy. It's hard to handle and anticipate, and the way the P has managed it has helped in being able to do this. Fourth, as a result of all this, it is an era of negotiation. So you add it all up, and it's clear that the P is the world leader for peace. People will come to appreciate this, the kind of leadership the people expect. Other country's leaders will say this, and it's time that we started recognizing it.

[Omitted here is discussion of Vietnam, prosperity, and baseball.]

³ This sentence was excised from the published *Haldeman Diaries* but is reinserted here from Haldeman's handwritten notes. (*Ibid.*)

4. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 15, 1971, 8:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Ambassador Anatoli Dobrynin
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Dobrynin greeted me in his oiliest fashion. He called in his cook to explain the menu to me, and to say that this is the menu he had only for very special guests. Indeed it had one course more than usual.

Preliminary Matters

Dobrynin began by producing a message from Brezhnev to the President, which is attached at Tab 1.²

Secondly, he said that our warnings about the danger of an India-Pakistan war had been taken very seriously in Moscow. Moscow had made immediate representations in both India and Pakistan, and had been informed by India that Pakistan had moved 10 divisions to the Kashmir frontier. I said that our information was different; our information was that Yahya Khan had agreed to a withdrawal of his forces from the frontier provided India would do the same, and had suggested talks among the chiefs of staff. Dobrynin asked whether this applied to West Pakistan also. I told him that it did and that we would appreciate the Soviet Union's good offices in this respect. Dobrynin said he would do his best.

Dobrynin then said he had a number of other messages. One concerned a forthcoming visit by Kosygin to Cuba. Dobrynin pointed out that it was next to impossible for Kosygin to visit Canada and refuse to visit Cuba. The visit would be of very short duration and would be in very low profile.³

Finally, Dobrynin said that Brezhnev had been very grateful for the manner in which I had so far handled the Middle East discussions. They appreciated the information I gave them about the overtures to

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Soviet Embassy. This memorandum of conversation is attached to an undated and unsigned memorandum to the President summarizing the discussion.

² Tab 1, a "non substantive message" from Brezhnev to Nixon, October 16, expressing satisfaction about the summit and suggesting that "there will indeed be plenty to talk about" is attached but not printed.

³ Kosygin visited Canada October 17–26 and Cuba October 26–30.

the Egyptians. They wanted to assure me that the matter would be kept in the strictest confidentiality, even in the conversations with the Egyptians in Moscow during Sadat's visit. (The overture he was referring to was my informing him of the proposal made by Rogers for both sides to send secret emissaries to New York.)

In response, first of all, I repeated that our information was that the Pakistanis were prepared to withdraw from the border.

Secondly, with respect to the visit to Cuba by Kosygin, I had to point out that Cuba was a subject of special sensitivity to the United States and of particular sensitivity to the President. Therefore, a demonstrative visit would not be taken well. This would be particularly true of a visit by Brezhnev, as was being reported in the newspapers. (Dobrynin interrupted to say that Brezhnev had had an invitation for a long time to visit Cuba but had so far avoided it.) I then told Dobrynin that the visit by a Soviet naval flotilla to Cuba the week after the summit announcement was not particularly helpful. The visit was not against our understandings as such, but it nevertheless could not be considered a particularly friendly act. Dobrynin said that the Soviet government suffered very much from the separation in its top ministries. He was sure that the Foreign Ministry knew nothing about this visit. He was practically certain that it had been approved several months before, since the plans of operations of the Navy are usually approved at 4-month intervals. Nevertheless, he said, he would take the point and see whether there could be some restraint on provocative actions.

I said finally, with respect to the October 12 summit announcement, that the Soviets' prior notification of France and Japan, two of our allies with whom our relations were most precarious, did not sit particularly well. Dobrynin in reply avoided the explanation transmitted to me from Gromyko. He said that he had no explanation for the Japanese case but in the case of France it must have been because of Brezhnev's imminent visit. However, he said, I should note the offer in Gromyko's communication that henceforth in cases of notification we would agree ahead of time who would be notified when, and they would keep these agreements. (Gromyko's communication is at Tab 2.)⁴

⁴ In an attached copy of a telegram from Gromyko to Kissinger, communicated to Kissinger by Dobrynin by telephone on October 12, the Soviet Foreign Minister admitted that the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Tokyo "committed a blunder" in informing his counterpart 1 or 2 days before the announcement of the summit, but stated that since the fact was not made public, no serious damage was done. Gromyko suggested that the United States had made this kind of mistake in the past and the United States was well aware that "the confidentiality of our negotiations is strictly adhered to by the Soviet Government."

The Middle East

We finally turned to the Middle East.⁵ There was a long discussion of procedural and bureaucratic problems and a long recital by Dobrynin again of the absolute futility of dealing with Sisco. I explained to Dobrynin that before I could commit myself to engaging in these negotiations I had to know where they were going, and I also had to know whether they were diplomatically manageable. I told Dobrynin I was not sure that I could guarantee results in the present circumstances, and therefore he should understand that we should have about a month of discussions. He said he wanted to go on leave and it would be highly desirable if I could let him know by November 20th or 22nd. I said I would do my best.

Dobrynin said I had to understand the Soviet position. The Soviets had rejected urgings by the Egyptians to give them offensive weapons. The Egyptians had even offered them special facilities in Egypt in return for offensive weapons. The temptation to do so was very great. On the other hand, it also had the danger of confrontation with the United States and was inconsistent with the general approach now pursued by Brezhnev. Therefore the matter was not trivial. If we decided that we were not ready, this would not mean that the summit would fail, but it did mean that both sides would continue to pour commitments into the Middle East, and the future was unpredictable.

Dobrynin said that on the tactical level the way he visualized matters was as follows: If I told him that there was a chance to proceed, then the Soviet Union would approach the Egyptians early in January to tell them that they would try to negotiate secretly with us. He said they would take about a month for this. If Egypt agreed, we would point for an interim agreement to be concluded about the time of the summit and then a final agreement to be consummated within six months of the President's inauguration, or around July 1973. This was the time frame that Gromyko had envisaged based on his conversation with me.

Dobrynin said he could not understand Israel's objections. This was the most generous offer the Soviet Union would ever make. They were offering withdrawing their forces, limiting arms shipments into the Middle East, and guaranteeing the settlement. What more could Israel possibly want? I said that, well, a lot would depend on their with-

⁵ At the President's instruction, Kissinger, during a meeting with Gromyko in Washington on September 30, suggested that he and Dobrynin use their private channel to begin "exploratory conversations . . . to test the feasibility of a bilateral understanding on a Middle East settlement." The memorandum of the Kissinger September 30 conversation with Gromyko as well as that of Nixon with Gromyko on September 29 are scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

drawing their forces. Dobrynin said he was authorized to tell me that they were willing to reduce their forces in Egypt to the level of the U.S. forces in Iran, that is to say, not in organized military units. Even that, he said, was the maximum figure; they might well agree to a lower figure, and they were willing to implement this starting with the time the interim agreement was signed.

I said I proposed that we reverse the usual procedure—that instead of talking about an interim agreement first, we would try to talk the next time about the nature of the final settlement and work back from that. I said that I had the impression that if it was possible to leave some Israeli troops in Sharm el Shaikh, with perhaps some land connection of an extra-territorial nature which did not affect Egyptian sovereignty necessarily, the problem could be settled very easily. Dobrynin said they would agree to any foreign troops in Sharm el Shaikh—American, Soviet, French, or any combination of forces that seemed reasonable. But Israeli presence was out of the question and could never be sold to the Egyptians.

Dobrynin repeated that he did not understand the hesitation to accept such a settlement. As for the interim settlement, he said it didn't make any difference whether the withdrawal was 25 or 35 miles and we shouldn't even discuss the depth of the withdrawal until we were clear about the final settlement. Dobrynin said that the Soviet Union was prepared to have an embargo on arms into the Middle East or at least to limit severely additional shipments into the Middle East. As for guarantees, Dobrynin said they would agree to almost anything we proposed, and it was really up to me to make the suggestion. In short, except for the frontier, which he believed had to be the international frontier, he said that the Soviet Union would be extremely flexible in the settlement.

I said that the settlement might be easier to sell to Israel if it was decoupled from a Syrian and Jordanian settlement, that is to say, if the Israelis did not believe this was the first step in that direction. Dobrynin said that this was no problem for them as far as Jordan was concerned. They had no major interest in a Jordanian settlement. (He avoided the Syrian point.) He again stressed the importance to our relationships of making some positive progress on the Middle East.⁶

⁶ On October 16 at 10:20 a.m. Kissinger briefed the President over the telephone about this discussion with Dobrynin on the Middle East. "They [the Soviets] say they will make a commitment that will not organize units and they will have a commitment on either an arms embargo or . . . [limitation of arms?] into Egypt and this interim settlement should be stretched out and that will keep the Egyptians quiet until the end of the year." RN: "Do you think the Israelis will squirm?" Kissinger responded, "That is a decision we will have to make in December—we will have to be tough on both sides. RN: We can't give the Israelis the moon." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) At 10:55 a.m. Kissinger telephoned Dobrynin to inform him that Nixon "approves our proceeding in that way" (as described above). (Ibid.)

Conclusion

We talked briefly about the mechanics of the President's visit, e.g., what time of the day he should arrive. Dobrynin said that they preferred their foreign guests to arrive around four in the afternoon, but it was still quite premature.

I showed him the letter that the President proposed to send to Brezhnev.⁷ He said it would be very important if he could get it soon, since the Politburo was meeting in the early part of the following week.

The conversation then ended.⁸

⁷ See Document 6.

⁸ On October 16 Haig sent Kissinger a memorandum stating that Dobrynin called (Kissinger had left for Beijing) to inform him that at their meeting of October 15 he did not have a response for Kissinger on Vietnam. Dobrynin received a response from Moscow after the meeting. Haig summarized Dobrynin's remarks: "D. stated that the ideas which were brought to his Foreign Minister's attention by you were conveyed to the leadership of North Vietnam. In principle, the North Vietnamese side is prepared to continue contacts with the American side to try to find agreement on the quickest way of ending the war. The North Vietnamese side prefers to use the mechanism which already exists in Paris, especially the confidential talks with you." The memorandum was also sent as backchannel message WH10882 to Lord for Kissinger (en route to Beijing), October 16. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8)

5. Editorial Note

On October 16, 1971, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger sent President Nixon a memorandum analyzing the recent trip of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to the Soviet Union. Sadat was in Moscow October 11–13 for talks with General Secretary Brezhnev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Kosygin, and President of the Presidium N.V. Podgorny. The analysis, drafted by Harold Saunders and Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council staff, was based only on public reaction and public statements. After speculating why Sadat went to Moscow—to pressure the United States and Israel, to obtain additional Soviet military help, and to repair damage in Soviet-Egyptian relations—Kissinger informed the President that, "Judging from the public statements and speeches, Sadat gained assurance of continued military assistance. How specific this is in terms of new equipment remains to be seen." Moving to the Arab-Israeli situation, Kissinger stated that "it is not clear what occurred in Moscow. The speeches and communiqué seem to reflect Soviet-Egyptian differ-

ences. Sadat's tough language about the use of force to pressure Israel was not endorsed in the communiqué, and the Soviets generally avoiding talking about the dangers of war." "The idea of an interim settlement was not mentioned" and the Soviets couched their statements "in terms of the UN [242] resolution and Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, and a settlement reached through [UN envoy] Jarring. Podgorny did say, however, the Soviets supported efforts inside and outside the UN to reach a settlement." The memorandum concluded that "the Soviets will evidently provide some further aid but have continued to hold to the position that a military solution is not feasible at this time." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 637, Country Files, Middle East, UAR, Vol. VII) The condensed version of the communiqué, October 14, as well as Podgorny's speech on October 12 are in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 23, No. 41, pages 5–8.

In a subsequent undated memorandum to the President, Kissinger reported to Nixon that Sadat had informed the Soviet leaders that he planned to initiate military action against Israel, that he needed new Soviet military equipment to respond in depth to expected Israeli retaliation in depth, but he would only do so if the Israelis made the first strike. Kissinger recounted, "Brezhnev cautioned that unpleasant propaganda would result from initiating military action and stressed the need for a political solution." The Soviet Defense Minister assured Sadat that he already had more and better military equipment than Israel and a substantial Soviet military presence including 50 Soviet fighter aircraft, 9,500 advisers, and satellite and aircraft reconnaissance capability. Nonetheless, agreement was reached to provide 10 missile carrying TU-16 aircraft (Egypt's deep strike capability against Israel), 100 MIG 21's and a squadron of MIG 23's, all having new engines, one battalion of 180 mm guns with a range of 26 miles, and 220 mm mortars with ammunition. Deliveries of bridging and minefield equipment as well as artillery pieces would be made in 1971 with aircraft deliveries stretched out to 1972. Kissinger concluded: "A reading of the full transcripts give the impression that the Soviet position is ambivalent; it could be interpreted as either extremely tough or a holding action. The Egyptian posture, on the other hand, is decidedly abject." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 637, Country Files, Middle East, UAR, Vol. VII)

6. Letter From President Nixon to Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev¹

Washington, October 19, 1971.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I appreciated receiving your letter of September 7.² I have reflected carefully on it as well as the very full and, I believe, constructive talks we have had with Foreign Minister Gromyko.³ I want to stress again what I already told Mr. Gromyko: my belief that our two countries have a special responsibility for peace and progress. This attitude underlies our policies on specific issues. We are prepared to subordinate tactical advantages to global concerns and we understand from Mr. Gromyko that this is your attitude also.

Now that the meeting in Moscow has been announced, both sides have a concrete goal on which to concentrate. I have asked Dr. Kissinger to begin to work with Ambassador Dobrynin in this special channel on the agenda of the forthcoming conference. Our attitude will be to reach the widest area of understanding before you and I meet so that the Moscow Summit can indeed mark a new departure in U.S.-Soviet relations. With this in mind, let me touch upon some of the issues which are of mutual concern.

I note with gratification that since I wrote to you on August 5⁴ the Four Powers completed the first important stage of an agreement on Berlin.⁵ This was a major concrete accomplishment on the road to a stable peace and demonstrated the effectiveness of cooperative efforts by our two countries. At the present stage, the Berlin negotiations are in the hands of others but it is clear that our two Governments have a direct interest in seeing the agreement as a whole completed so that it can take full effect. This will then set the stage for additional progress in removing the elements of crisis and confrontation between East and West in Europe so that relations will become increasingly constructive and cooperative in character.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. An undated and unattributed draft of this letter has handwritten revisions by Kissinger. The major substantive change made by Kissinger was to insert paragraph two of the letter. (Ibid.) On October 16 Haig sent an unsigned copy of this letter to Dobrynin. (Ibid.) A note at the top of the page reads: "Orig hand carried to Amb. Dobrynin, 10/19/71."

² The letter is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–76*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

³ Printed *ibid.*

⁴ Printed *ibid.*

⁵ The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin, signed September 3, 1971.

I am, of course, fully aware of your interest in a conference on European questions. As I explained to Mr. Gromyko, I believe that such a conference could be of benefit if it can produce meaningful accomplishments. The necessary explorations and preparations, with the participation of other interested countries, could, I believe, fruitfully begin as soon as the Berlin agreement is complete. Meanwhile, I believe it could be advantageous for Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Dobrynin to have some informal and very private talks to clarify the concrete objectives of a conference. I think that experience has shown that some mutual understanding of what a negotiating effort is intended to produce can be of considerable help for the prospects of that effort.

As you know, Mr. Secretary, the U.S. Government, together with governments allied with it in NATO, has for some time conducted the most serious and intensive preparations for possible negotiations to reduce military forces in Europe. While for objective reasons, such as the facts of geography, this is a very complex subject, I believe that the coming year could yield some significant progress in this area as well.

In my conversation with Mr. Gromyko, I outlined in some detail my view of the present status of our negotiations on the limitation of strategic armaments. We, and, I am sure, you too, are now preparing for the next round of the formal negotiations in Vienna. If, as in the past, there is opportunity for additional progress through private exchanges here in Washington I am, of course, prepared to undertake them. Much detailed work has been done on an ABM agreement and I think we should now also intensify the parallel work on measures limiting offensive weapons. I believe it is important to view this first major strategic arms agreement for which we are both striving as one whole, even if we are dealing with it in separate parts. Because it will be the first agreement—the foundation upon which further agreements and, indeed, our overall relations in the years ahead will be built—it is important that it command wide support and confidence. Realistically, it is probably not feasible in this first stage to eliminate certain disparities in the numbers, types and dispositions of the strategic forces which our two countries have come to maintain. What we should strive to do, in proceeding on the basis of the principle of equality, is to reach agreements which as a whole prevent the further growth of our respective arsenals and safeguard our relative security positions. We should, in other words, work for a “freeze” in both the major areas under negotiation. I am convinced that if we can make the political decisions required to give concrete definition to such a “freeze,” the agreements themselves can be completed quite rapidly.

Mr. Secretary, I have carefully reviewed the points you made on the Middle East in your letter and also the remarks of Mr. Gromyko on this subject. The unsolved crisis in this region remains the most acute threat to the general peace and therefore a most urgent task for

our two Governments to address. I found some of the ideas presented by Mr. Gromyko very constructive. Without repeating in detail my own views, which Mr. Gromyko will have reported to you on the basis of his talks here, let me state my conviction that progress is unlikely to be made on the basis of the total or "ideal" proposals advanced by or in behalf of the parties to the conflict. The lasting settlement of which I spoke in my letter of August 5 will, I believe, come about only if a start is made on a more limited or "interim" basis. In addition, it will be essential for outside powers, especially great ones such as ours, to display restraint in all their activities with respect to the region. At the present stage it would be desirable for Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Dobrynin to review the situation as it now exists and to explore informally the ways in which our two Governments can best contribute to progress toward a settlement.

Together with the Middle East, Vietnam remains a factor complicating relations between us. I do not wish to repeat the points I made in my last letter. I would simply say that the United States is and has long been ready for genuine negotiations. That is our preferred way of concluding the Vietnam conflict. But if that road remains foreclosed, we will continue to solve this conflict in our own way.

Mr. Gromyko, in his talks with me, referred to our trade relations. As our relations generally have improved over the past year or more, the opportunities for better commercial relations have grown also. I have made a number of decisions, of which you are aware, to give impetus to this trend. While in the present world situation certain limits remain, further progress can be made in the mutual interest. I am prepared to send the Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Maurice Stans, to Moscow in November for a thorough exploration of the possibilities. To ensure the success of such a mission it would be helpful to have from you a precise indication of your interests.

Finally, I should like to repeat again that our relations with other countries will not be conducted in any sense to threaten Soviet interests. As I pointed out to Mr. Gromyko, pressure by one side can only generate pressures from the other and thereby run counter to the objectives we have set for ourselves in the development of our mutual relationship.

Mr. Secretary, we have, I believe, a large and significant agenda before us. I look forward to the opportunity of reviewing all the matters that are of common concern to us at the time of my visit to Moscow in May next year. I agree with you that the prospects are good for moving ahead in our relations and for dealing constructively with the major problems that still cast a shadow on the road to a stable peace. When that happens, all of mankind will benefit.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

7. Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State¹

Moscow, October 22, 1971, 1030Z.

7916. Personal for the Secretary.

1. We seem to be enjoying something like an “era of good feeling” and I favor making the most of it. The cordial reception tendered our Incidents at Sea delegation at the professional level is a case in point.² Granted that we had an outstanding group, they have been treated with openness and warm cordiality. The same applied to the eight American governors, also a superior delegation, who were accorded generous hospitality and courtesy. The Foreign Office has gone out of its way to point to the more favorable press we have been getting.

2. The claws of the Russian bear (aptly symbolic of the political hierarchy) occasionally emerge. Speaking to our Navy men, Gorshkov, the top Soviet Admiral, realistically described US-Soviet “friendship” as a future rather than a present blessing and it seemed to me that geniality was a slightly painful gesture for some of the governors’ hosts, such as Kosygin and the new Premier of the Russian Republic (who is understood to be a Politburo aspirant). Nevertheless, the order has obviously gone out to create an appearance of improved relations.

3. There have been previous thaws. The one after Stalin’s death lasted until the Beria crisis³ restored the freeze. There was also a period of optimism and favorable press in 1959. This time, however, there is no exaggerated euphoria, since many Russians recall that improved relations and summits are vulnerable to incidents in the US and here, and to uncontrollable international crises.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US-USSR. Confidential; Exdis.

² Reference is to the U.S.-Soviet talks on reducing incidents at sea. The talks took place in Moscow October 12–22. Under Secretary of the Navy John Warner headed the U.S. delegation and Admiral of the Fleet V.A. Kasatonov was the Chief of the Soviet delegation. On October 23 Haig sent the President an interim report of the first round of the negotiations ending in Moscow on October 22. The delegations developed agreed statements on international rules of the road, obligations of ships involved in surveillance operations, use of proper signals, avoidance of harassment and simulated attacks, measures to avoid hindering ship maneuvers—especially carriers—instructions to aircraft pilots on approaching ships and in avoiding specific simulated attacks. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 716, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XVI)

³ General Secretary Joseph Stalin died March 5, 1953. In June 1953 Minister of Internal Affairs and former Stalin supporter Lavrenti Beria was accused of trying to seize power in the post-Stalinist power struggle and was subsequently shot. He was publicly condemned in December 1953.

4. The turn-around came not immediately but some weeks after the President's July 15 announcement of his China trip and picked up momentum with Gromyko's visit to the US and the news of the President's intended visit to the USSR.⁴ It should not be forgotten of course that while the atmosphere of US-Soviet relations is improving, the Soviets have not ceased pursuing their own interests, at the expense of US interests, in Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere. Soviet policy toward other countries and regions will continue to have a dynamic of its own and will not necessarily be affected by improved atmosphere in US-Soviet relations.

5. Whatever may be the combination of Soviet motives—European détente, re-insurance against China and a desire for accommodation with the US for material and economic gain—it has produced one of those rare and perhaps transient occasions when a Soviet disposition to deal with the US can be probed for substance. One immediate benefit may be that Brezhnev's enthusiasm for a summit meeting should make him a short-term crisis manager who insofar as he is able will try to head off unnecessary troubles. By the same token, we should make use of the interval to try to clear up some of the inequities imposed upon us locally by the Soviets.

6. It is still too far from the vent to draw up detailed plans for the Soviet summit. It is bound to be influenced by the results of the President's China trip and perhaps by the eventual shaping-up of a conference on European security. It is of course the tradition in the Soviet Union for such visits to be accompanied by public statements and speeches. This would give us a unique opportunity to present our own views in the Soviet press, not merely to counter destructive and obstructive Soviet views but also to offer constructive views of our own. The Soviets presumably will offer up sets of general principles reflecting invidiously on US policies, and may also publicly or privately advance proposals based on the so-called Brezhnev peace program, consisting of some dozen propositions presented at the 24th Party Congress.⁵ We would expect economic concessions to be among Moscow's priority objectives.

7. A debate along such lines will be inevitable but we will be in the better position if we can come forward with one or two practical and well-staffed out ideas involving joint engagement and dialogue on

⁴ The text of President Nixon's July 15 announcement of his visit to China is in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1971*, pp. 819–820. Documentation regarding Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko's visit to the United States is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

⁵ At the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on March 30, Brezhnev unveiled his "peace program," including proposals for European security.

issues of mutual concern and world interest. Experience teaches that reason, firmness and restraint influence the Soviets and often lead to eventual acquiescence. Brezhnev's moves toward some measure of détente are in themselves a reaction to the President's initiatives.

8. In any case, in the intervening months we should be busy paving the way for the summit by pressing with negotiations of special interest to us. The exchanges programs should of course go forward. Each thaw offers us a chance to try to circumvent or undermine the dead hand of party dogmatism by expanding every feasible type of contact and peaceful involvement.

Beam

8. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 30, 1971, 12–1 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Vietnam & China

Dobrynin was again unusually affable. He said that he regretted the misrepresentations in the press according to which Brezhnev had attacked Chinese-U.S. collusion with respect to Vietnam. He said it was absolutely untrue; on the contrary, the precise text of what Brezhnev said would indicate that he made a general statement for North Vietnamese consumption that the war had to be settled between Hanoi and Washington.

He then asked me about my visit to China. I said we were received with extreme cordiality. There was a deliberate attempt to expose us

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. Lord and Rodman submitted this memorandum of conversation as well as a memorandum from Kissinger to the President summarizing the discussion to Kissinger on November 1. Both memoranda were sent to the President on November 9. (Ibid.) The President also saw the summary memorandum; significant portions of the summary memorandum are noted in footnotes below.

gradually to the public, first to the cadres and then to the public. I told him about the incident at the Peking opera,² and then gave him a lot of totally meaningless details of the sessions and technical arrangements. He asked, “Why did this have to be handled by Chou En-lai?” I pointed out that the Chinese government was extremely centralized. As to substance, I said that we just engaged in a general review of the world situation. He asked whether the Soviet Union was mentioned.³ Only in contexts that lumped us together, I said, such as the stationing of troops on foreign territory. In these discussions I had the impression that the Chinese were more concerned about Soviet troops in Mongolia than about American troops in Japan, but I couldn’t be sure, and I wouldn’t be surprised if they gave the opposite impression in Moscow. Dobrynin laughed grimly and said, “They are not talking to us in Moscow *or* in Peking.”

Dobrynin then asked me about the outcome of the President’s visit: what did I think would happen in Peking?⁴ I said that, as he knew, I wouldn’t pretend to him that I did not have some general idea of the outcome. However, there was this problem: if I could write the idea strategy for the outcome, I would concentrate our relations with the Chinese on bilateral issues, while I would concentrate the communiqué with the Soviets on global issues. The reason was that our interests with the Soviets were in a global settlement, of building a new peaceful structure, while in all honesty we could not pretend that with the Chinese much was possible except on a purely regional basis. On the other hand, if the war in Vietnam were still going on at the time of our Peking visit, no doubt Peking would insist on saying something about it. We in turn

² Kissinger is referring to his visit to the Great Hall of the People with Acting Chinese Foreign Minister Marshall Yeh Chiang to view a revolutionary opera on the evening of October 22 during his preparatory trip to Beijing October 20–26. The U.S. and Chinese parties arrived 2 hours late to find the hall filled with 500 middle-level Chinese officials. Kissinger stated in *White House Years*, that “the point was surely driven home: these Americans were distinctly *personae gratae*.” (p. 779)

³ In an undated memorandum for the President, prepared in November 1971, Kissinger reported on his discussions with Chou En-lai and other Chinese leaders. Although U.S. relations with the Soviet Union were discussed, Kissinger reported that the Chinese seemed more interested in other issues. For the memorandum from Kissinger to the President, November 1971, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVII, China, 1969–1972, Document 165. A complete set of Kissinger’s memoranda during the trip, including his discussion with Chou En-lai on October 22 from 4:14 to 8:28 p.m., in which the Soviet Union was one of the topics discussed, is in the electronic volume, *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume E–13, Documents on China, 1969–1972.

⁴ According to the November 9 summary memorandum to the President: “Dobrynin had a number of questions about Chou En-lai’s role, about the Chinese view of the Soviet Union, and what we expected from the Peking summit.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8)

could not address Vietnam as the only foreign policy issue, and therefore we would insist on wrapping it up into some more global considerations. This is what I had meant some weeks before when I said that Vietnam was a distorting influence on world affairs, and this is why I believed it was crucial to settle the war. I said that the attitude towards the communiqué reflected our attitude towards the summit; as he well knew we opted for Peking first only after being turned down by Moscow. Dobrynin grimly said that he knew this was so—with the air of a man who did not wish to be reminded of his mistakes.

Dobrynin said that I might not believe it, but during the previous Administration the Soviets actively supported the Vietnamese war, and in the early part of this Administration they took a “hands off” policy, considering that it was our mess. But now they have concluded that it was time to end the war, and they had expressed this on the occasion of Podgorny’s visit to Hanoi last month. Dobrynin said that he hoped that the war would be settled certainly by the Moscow summit.⁵ I said that from our point of view it would be best if it were settled by the Peking summit, because it would enable us then to deal with the issues there on a much more regional basis.⁶

Dobrynin asked whether I was aware of the fact that Peking had given reassurances to Hanoi. Hanoi had told Podgorny⁷ that Peking had told them that they considered that the settlement of the war had to be between Hanoi and Washington—that they would not play a role in settling it. I said that this looked to me like a rather tame reassurance. Dobrynin said, “We are not going any further than that ourselves.” I said, “If our recent initiative will succeed, then I think foreign policy will return to normal relations.”

⁵ In discussing the meeting with the President in an October 30 (1:55 p.m.) telephone conversation, Kissinger noted that Dobrynin said “in the first two years we [the Soviets] have kept our hands off but now it’s time to settle.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

⁶ Kissinger described the connection between the war in Vietnam and the communiqué after the Beijing meeting in his summary memorandum to the President as follows: “I explained to Dobrynin that it was in the Soviet interest to have the war settled by the time of the Peking summit. With the war over, the Peking communiqué would probably be confined to bilateral or regional issues. But if the war were still going on, the Chinese would want to mention it. Since we would not want it to be the only non-bilateral issue mentioned, this would produce a communiqué that gave US-Chinese relations a more global cast.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8)

⁷ Apparently during Chairman of the Presidium Podgorny’s trip to North Vietnam October 3–8.

Middle East

We then turned to the Middle East. Dobrynin said he didn't understand what Sisco was up to. Why were we so eager to get a negotiation started that was bound to fail? I said that there was some hope that progress could be made on the interim settlement. Dobrynin said that he hoped that I had no such illusion under the present ground rules. I avoided an answer. Dobrynin then said, "We are at the point where some important decisions have to be made. The politburo has in effect accepted both the President's and your statements of July 1970 and they have told you that they will accept almost any settlement in terms of guarantees and other requirements in return for a solution.⁸ You owe them some sort of reply. If the reply is negative, we will just conclude that nothing is possible for a while and wait for another opportunity. But we think a good solution is now attainable.

I asked Dobrynin how he visualized translating our agreements into a settlement. He said that he thought that after the summit we should talk to Israel and they would talk to Egypt. I said my understanding was that we would not begin implementing the agreement on our side until after the elections; I had made this point clear to Gromyko that we could come to an understanding which of course on our side would have to be very binding, but that the actual implementation would be left until 1973. Dobrynin said that their understanding was we would tell the Israelis immediately but not implement it. I replied that if we tell them, then we might as well implement it; the price will be the same—though this is a detail. Dobrynin again urged me to give him some specific proposals on guarantees. He said that they would accept almost anything that was half-way reasonable. He was sure that Egypt was not eager for the Soviet Union to negotiate on its behalf, but still he thought the one good result of the Sisco initiative would be that it would bring home to the Egyptians the futility of the present effort.

We agreed to meet next Thursday⁹ for a review of the situation.

⁸ Apparent reference to President Nixon's remarks to television journalists about the Middle East, July 1, 1970 (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 557–559), and to a background press briefing given by Kissinger at San Clemente California, June 26. (Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 579–580) In both instances the two men suggested that the removal of the Soviet military presence in Egypt should be a part of negotiations for a settlement in the Middle East.

⁹ November 4; see Document 10.

9. Editorial Note

At a November 3, 1971, meeting of the interagency Verification Panel, a subgroup of the National Security Council chaired by Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger and responsible for arms control negotiations and policy recommendations, Kissinger informed the panel of the relationship between Strategic Arms Limitations Talks and the Moscow summit.

“Dr. Kissinger: I have just come from the President. He has confirmed that we will have an NSC meeting on SALT next week. The President clearly understands that some of the more reflective minds in this town realize what he has done to the SALT talks by agreeing to a summit meeting in Moscow. Some people are assuming that if an agreement is reached, it will be delayed so that it can be announced in Moscow in May. The President wants us to ignore these assumptions and go ahead as rapidly as possible. If an agreement is reached in advance of the summit meeting, we will then begin discussions on phase two of the talks. The important point is that we should do whatever is needed to get an agreement we want and can live with, and we should get it as quickly as possible. On the other hand, we should not take whatever we can get simply to try to come up with an agreement by May.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-107, Verification Panel Minutes, Originals)

The National Security Council Meeting was held on November 12 and dealt primarily with the anti-ballistic missile proposals and submarine launched ballistic missiles issues. (Ibid., Box H-110, NSC Minutes, Originals)

Kissinger and Gerard Smith, head of the delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, had a phone conversation at 2:20 p.m. on October 12, 1971, when the summit was first announced. Smith believed Kissinger and Nixon were taking over the SALT negotiations. Kissinger tried to assure Smith that SALT would be discussed at the May summit only if there was something left to be discussed. Smith suggested that by announcing that SALT would be discussed at the summit Kissinger and the President had ensured that would happen. (Transcript of a telephone conversation; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 369, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) Smith discusses this issue and other problems he had with the announcement in *Doubletalk*, pages 319–320.

10. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, November 4, 1971.

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The purpose of the meeting was to review the possibilities of progress on Middle East negotiations and other matters. As it turned out, the conversation concerned almost entirely the Middle East.

After some desultory remarks on Napoleon's strategy in 1812 and the Germany strategy in World War II, the discussion turned to current business. Ambassador Dobrynin asked whether the date for the visit to China had been set since it would help Soviet planning. He said they had had a report that the meeting would be in late February or early March, obviously quoting a Japanese report. Dr. Kissinger responded that the U.S. was aiming for February but a definite date had not yet been set.

Ambassador Dobrynin then turned to the subject of the Middle East settlement. Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Dobrynin first discussed procedures. Dr. Kissinger said there were two ways of proceeding. One was for the United States to tell the Israelis and for the Soviets to tell the Egyptians that we were proceeding along this track. In such a case, of course, Dr. Kissinger noted there was a high possibility that it would surface. He could believe that President Sadat would keep matters quiet since he was getting what he wanted, but the Israelis had every incentive to focus public pressure. The other possibility was to bring the Israelis in on an interim settlement but to keep vague its relationship to an overall settlement until 1973. Dr. Kissinger observed that the first procedure was the more honorable course; the second might be the more effective course. Ambassador Dobrynin said he would check in Moscow as to their preference.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. This lunch conversation was held in the Map Room at the White House. According to Kissinger's Record of Schedule, the meeting was held from 1:10 to 3 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–76) Kissinger sent a summary account of the Middle East portion of this meeting to the President on November 23 to which this memorandum of conversation was attached. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8)

The Ambassador then said that the Soviet Union had made major concessions. They were prepared to withdraw their forces, to have an embargo on arms into the Middle East, and to join a Soviet-American force for guarantees. In other words, they would be very flexible about anything that was within the Soviet discretion. Matters that required Egyptian approval were more complex. He therefore hoped that Dr. Kissinger would be able to concentrate in their discussions on those three items.

Dr. Kissinger told Dobrynin that the guarantees issue was really quite simple and that it would probably be settled fairly easily. If their talks were to have any chance of success, Dr. Kissinger would have to be able to demonstrate to the Israelis that they were getting something as a result of these talks that they were not getting as a result of the Rogers/Sisco approach. Ambassador Dobrynin responded by noting that the Israelis were getting the withdrawal of Soviet forces and a Soviet arms embargo.

Dr. Kissinger then said it would also help if the terms of the interim settlement were better than those now being negotiated. Ambassador Dobrynin asked what Dr. Kissinger meant. For example, did he mean that the line should be at the western end of the pass and not on the eastern end, that is on the Suez Canal side of the passes not on the Israeli side of the passes.

Ambassador Dobrynin also asked whether under those conditions it was conceivable that some Egyptian troops could cross the canal. Dr. Kissinger replied that it was conceivable but that he had no really clear idea, and that issue would have to wait.

Ambassador Dobrynin then asked for Dr. Kissinger's concept of the final settlement. Dr. Kissinger replied that he did not really believe in shooting blanks and therefore would be very careful. It seemed to him that the demilitarized zones were an essential element. Ambassador Dobrynin commented that it was very tough to get a demilitarized zone that did not include some territory on the other side of the Israeli frontier. Dr. Kissinger stated that in such a case all of Israel would be demilitarized if the zones were equal. He then proposed jokingly that the zones start equi distance [*sic*] from the capitals. Dobrynin reiterated that it would be very hard not to have a demilitarized zone on the Israeli side. Dr. Kissinger remarked that if Ambassador Dobrynin could, however, get agreement on it this would be a tremendous step forward.

Dr. Kissinger finally said that it seemed to him that the matters which could represent enormous progress would be: if the Egyptian settlement could be separated from the others, if the demilitarized zones could be kept entirely on the Egyptian side, if the interim settlement could be on terms more favorable to Israel than the present one, and a determination of concessions Sadat ought to be prepared to

make if he knew an overall settlement was coming. Dobrynin noted that he would consult Moscow but would like Dr. Kissinger to make a specific proposal at the next meeting.

Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Dobrynin then went over the guarantees negotiations as they stood at the time, but Dr. Kissinger turned the issue aside, saying that this was relatively the easiest matter.

Ambassador Dobrynin then told Dr. Kissinger about his conversation with Assistant Secretary Sisco.² He said first of all that Sisco had initiated the conversation. Secondly, with respect to his being at ease about Phantoms,³ Dr. Kissinger knew very well that the Soviets wanted the United States to hold the Phantoms to fuel the Soviet-American negotiations. Therefore, Ambassador Dobrynin could not have said what Dr. Kissinger told him Secretary Sisco had reported. As for the rest, Dr. Kissinger could rest assured that Ambassador Dobrynin would proceed very cautiously until he knew the results of their conversations.

Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador [Dobrynin] agreed to meet again around November 15 to pursue this conversation.

² An account of Sisco's lunch conversation with Dobrynin was transmitted in telegram 199411 to Moscow, November 2. The "two principal impressions" that emerged were a "very relaxed Soviet view" on the question of U.S. aircraft to Israel and Dobrynin's belief that discussions on the Middle East would form an important part of the Moscow summit. (Ibid., Box 717, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XVII, November–31 December 1971)

³ Fighter aircraft.

11. Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon¹

Washington, November 10, 1971.

SUBJECT

Your Trip to the Soviet Union

Looking ahead to your visit to the Soviet Union next May, I should like to offer some preliminary thoughts on what the Soviets will want to achieve as well as certain ideas on how we may further our own purposes vis-à-vis Moscow during your visit.

I. *Setting and Scope*

Reduced Tension. For the Soviets, the summit meeting will be a major occasion to set a tone of reduced tension in US-Soviet relations with the purpose of leading the US to be more accommodating on bilateral questions and more relaxed as to the growth of the Soviet presence and influence in third areas. The first visit of an American President to Moscow will be portrayed by the Soviet leadership as symbolizing US acknowledgement of the Soviet Union's equality as one of the world's two superpowers and as representing an important success for the policy of détente laid out by Brezhnev at the XXIV Communist Party Congress last spring.

China. At the same time, the Soviet leaders will undoubtedly view your visit in relationship to your earlier visit to Peking. They will want to counter any adverse effects of the latter on their position. They will want to sound you out on your views of China's future and of the triangular relationship between Moscow, Washington, and Peking. Whether Brezhnev will go as far as Kosygin did at Glassboro in suggesting mutuality of American and Soviet interests against China is an open question; the Soviets may now wish to be more circumspect. But whatever is or is not said about China, the Soviets will see your visit—particularly as it may emphasize the theme of US-Soviet equality and US-Soviet mutuality of interest in nuclear arms control—as having the message for Peking that US-Soviet relations are more developed and

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 989, Haig Chronological Files, Nov. 4–12, 1971, [2 of 2]. Secret. Haig sent this memorandum to Kissinger under cover of a November 12 note in which he wrote that Rogers left this memorandum for the President and characterized it as “obvious ploy to get his licks in early on the Soviet Summit.” On December 10 Kissinger sent this memorandum to President Nixon with a 1-page covering memorandum summarizing it. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL-294, Memoranda to the President, 1964–1974, December 1971)

of greater importance than the incipient American initiative towards China.

Bilateral and Multilateral Issues. Putting aside the factors relating to China, I believe your visit to Moscow will provide a setting in which we can move toward the resolution of some of the many bilateral and multilateral issues between the Soviets and ourselves. In this regard, I think that some of our specific objectives should be:

- to make a decisive advance in SALT;
- to make clear that the Soviet policy of détente should be accompanied by concrete steps to ease the confrontation between East and West;
- to probe for Soviet cooperation on the Middle East and the India–Pakistan situation;
- to promote tangible progress in our bilateral relations; and
- to counteract any impression of “superpower condominium”—which would divide us from our Allies and diminish the hopes of Eastern Europeans for greater elbow-room in their relations with the West.

SALT. Whatever results may have been obtained in SALT by then, SALT will figure predominantly in the visit as the most important US-Soviet negotiation, and as the one which represents the unique capabilities and responsibilities of the USSR and US as the world’s two superpowers. The Soviets probably calculate—correctly, in my view—that both sides would find it useful to have as much tangible accomplishment on record as possible—even perhaps an agreement for signature.

The effect of such a calculation on Soviet negotiating behavior in the meantime is extremely difficult to reckon. Would the Soviets be more prone to make concessions to get an agreement? Would they reckon that they could toughen their negotiating position and force US concessions? We have no reason to prefer either hypothesis and, indeed, suspect they may in part be self-cancelling. The Soviets would not in any case be any more likely than we to make major changes in their positions on security issues for the sake of an agreement by a certain date, but they may anticipate a brisker paced discussion in SALT.

In any case, I believe we will want to press as hard as we can for an early agreement, with the summit in mind as well as the very favorable impact such agreement will have on both international and domestic opinion. If agreement in SALT is achieved prior to your visit, your discussions could appropriately center on next steps in this important area.

Europe: CES and MBFR. On European issues, the Soviets are more likely to look to the side effects of a display of American-Soviet cordiality than to specifics. They will expect thus to stimulate further West European interest in détente. In Eastern Europe, the Soviets might hope that the emphasis upon the US-Soviet relationship would tend to play

down the importance of Romania's independent policies, and perhaps make the US less prone to cultivate the Eastern Europeans in ways which Moscow tends to view as undercutting its position in that area. Your visit will also mark in Soviet eyes the end of East-West acerbity over Czechoslovakia.

Emphasis by you in your discussion with the Soviet leaders on our firm intention to maintain our security relationship with Western Europe should leave them under no illusion that *détente* is a one-way street. At the same time, their pretensions to hegemony in Eastern Europe can be blunted by reassertion of our desire to normalize our relations with the countries of Eastern Europe without wishing to undermine the legitimate security interests of the Soviet Union in that area. I advance further specific suggestions on both of these points below.

It is still too early to suggest how we might wish to approach other European security questions in the context of your visit. Progress on the Berlin issues and the related preparations for a Conference on European Security may have reached a point where a CES is on the distant horizon. Similar progress toward MBFR is possible. Both topics will be discussed at the December NATO Ministerial meeting. Both CES and MBFR will certainly be on the agenda at Moscow and we will be making further suggestions about their treatment.

Middle East. It is impossible now to predict where we will then stand with respect to our mediatory efforts toward an interim Suez Canal settlement. If these efforts are still in train, your discussions may be helpful in moving us toward this objective. They may also permit us to explore once again possibilities of mutual limitations on Middle East arms supply.

With respect to the broader problem of ultimate resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute, on which the USSR can be expected to place primary emphasis, the Soviets will also want to hear your views. In this connection, Moscow might hope to persuade you to take a more active line in pressing the Israelis toward abandoning territorial claims as part of a settlement, but it is doubtful that the Soviets would expect much more than an expression of mutual concern that the problem not get out of hand.

India–Pakistan. If tensions in South Asia are still running high (although outright hostilities have been avoided), your visit will provide an opportunity to seek Soviet collaboration in bringing peace to the troubled subcontinent. The Soviets will want us to pressure Pakistan to make concessions agreeable to India, but Moscow has no interest in seeing the situation deteriorate into war between India and Pakistan and, in this sense, our interests are compatible with those of the Soviet Union. Some understanding on mutual efforts toward an improved situation

may therefore be envisaged. At the least we will have a further opportunity forcefully to urge the Soviets to greater cooperation on a variety of matters including more effective participation in relief assistance, greater pressure on India to cooperate with the UN, the need for India to pull back its military forces, and perhaps indirect encouragement of the East Pakistanis to negotiate with Yahya.

Vietnam. Any embarrassment to Moscow which might arise over seeming to treat with the enemy of a socialist country will tend to be mitigated by the fact of your Peking visit. The USSR would not, of course, wish to be in the position of publicly condoning whatever American presence remains, and most likely will look to keeping this issue out of the limelight. Your discussions, however, might well be used again to urge Soviet cooperation on the POW issue. Additionally, you may be able to explore Soviet thinking on broader security questions in Asia, such as Brezhnev's allusion to an Asian security arrangement.

Trade and Cooperation. The Soviets will most likely seek some statement in favor of increased US-Soviet trade. While they do not foresee in fact any dramatic expansion in that trade, the Soviets do have an interest in making various equipment purchases from American suppliers. They also have long been rankled by what they regard as American discrimination in the trade field. I will want to advance later suggestions on what we can do to reduce trading impediments as we approach your visit.

No doubt, the Soviets also anticipate that your visit will be the occasion for announcing some new developments in US-Soviet cooperation, but at this time we have no indication of Soviet preferences for what topics this might cover. In the past, space has been a good area for both sides, and particularly for the Soviets, because it emphasizes the primacy of the US and USSR. Environmental questions or medical research might also be fields in which a further expression of our ability and willingness to cooperate would be more desirable.

II. The Visit Itself

Aside from substantive discussion, your visit will lend itself to highly visible activities likely to create a lasting impression on the Soviet people and to further our long-range objective of opening up Soviet society.

The most effective means for direct communication with the Soviet people would be nationwide radio and television appearances. Your 1959 Moscow speech² had a great and lasting impact on Soviet popu-

² Reference is to Vice President Nixon's speech when opening the American Exhibition Sokolniki Park in Moscow, July 24, 1959; see *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1959*, pp. 881–886.

lar attitudes toward the U.S., even though it was not carried nationwide. President Eisenhower was to have made a nationwide TV speech during his visit to the USSR in 1960, just as Khrushchev had done in the US. The Soviet Government could not refuse your request for air time, and you could quite properly set forth your concept of a generation of peace in the context of improving US-Soviet relations. The novelty of hearing the American viewpoint directly and fully would help reinforce the development of Soviet attitudes in this direction.

Another possible opportunity for a public statement with good media appeal in the USSR and abroad would be the formal opening of our Consulate General in Leningrad. Your endorsement in 1959 of the idea of exchanging consulates makes it fitting that you should preside at a ceremony, which would symbolize a milestone in the implementation of the US-Soviet Consular Convention and a significant step in our political relations. The only impediment to your doing so is the slow pace of renovation of the official premises we are leasing from the Soviet authorities. It is likely that the work could be completed by May if your desire to open the Consulate General were made known to the Soviet Government. If we are to do this, we would need to inform the Soviets of your interest within the next few weeks. I would therefore appreciate receiving an early indication of your reaction to this suggestion.

Another opportunity for a symbolic act with high visibility in Moscow, to complement your formal talks with Soviet leaders, would be a ground-breaking or the laying of the cornerstone of the new American Embassy Chancery. Preparations for construction should be sufficiently well advanced by May to make this feasible. Like the opening of the office in Leningrad, the beginning of construction would emphasize to the world and the Soviet people the permanence of our commitment to improved relations with the USSR.

III. The Aftermath

To help dispel any appearance of “superpower condominium” and to counteract Soviet pretensions to hegemony in Eastern Europe, you may wish to consider two stopovers on your return from Moscow. One would be your appearance at a NATO session in Brussels, the other a visit to Poland.

Our NATO Allies are the most important category of nations keenly interested in the outcome of your visit. Prior consultations will dispel many possible doubts on their part, but I think it would also be desirable for you to stop in Brussels to report on your discussions in Moscow. Alternatively, if you prefer, this is something I could do.

A visit to an Eastern European Communist country would demonstrate the value we continue to attach to the aspirations of the peoples

of this area for greater autonomy. Your visits to Romania and Yugoslavia have already highlighted this policy, but an additional gesture directed towards the Poles would be highly desirable following a Moscow summit. This purpose could be achieved by a brief stop—perhaps a day, or even less—in Warsaw. The effect on the people of Poland and those elsewhere in Eastern Europe would be particularly positive, as was so clearly evidenced by your 1959 visit. The Soviet Government might not be overjoyed by the addition of Poland to your itinerary, but such a visit is fully justifiable in terms of the European détente Moscow is currently promoting.

IV. An Encore

The Soviets will expect an invitation for a return visit. Doubtless they will provide some signal as to which of the Soviet leaders you might invite and perhaps give some indication of a suitable time frame for a return visit. Even if the invitation for a return visit is nothing more than a dictate of courtesy, it will have the effect of adding a dimension of continuity to a dialogue which has proceeded only fitfully since the invitation to President Eisenhower went by the boards.

V. Interim Progress

The announcement of your visit well in advance should provide new impetus to progress on the wide range of issues we have outstanding with the Soviets. I am attaching a list of the matters we expect to be discussing with the USSR before your visit³ and have asked the Chairman of the Interdepartmental Group for Europe to submit monthly reports on their status to your staff. As opportunities for action emerge, I shall be sending you specific recommendations.

William P. Rogers

³ Attached but not printed is "Status of Current Points of Issue in U.S.-Soviet Relations."

12. **Conversation Among President Nixon, Secretary of Commerce Stans, Secretary of State Rogers, and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹**

Washington, November 15, 1971.

[Omitted here is an exchange of pleasantries]

Nixon: Now the other thing is, as Bill will tell you, that anyone who has talked to the Russians, our Russian friends, Gromyko and the rest, they're enormously interested in trade. That's one of the big things we've got for them.

Stans: Yep.

Nixon: It's something that we must not indicate is going to be linked with something else. But they, in their minds, know very well that if you make progress on the political front, that you'll make progress on the trade front. The way I've always described it is this: that you never say trade and political accommodation are linked. But the two are just inevitably intertwined. If you move on one it helps the other. If you move on—and it just moves like that. So—And we know that. Now I think the thing I want to do is to go out and—If you look at the situation and notice that their—I think it's \$16 billion worth of trade the Soviet Union has at the present time; \$16 billion dollars worth and we've got \$250 million dollars worth, approximately.

Stans: That's in both directions.

Nixon: That's right.

Stans: Our exports were less than—are worth about half of that.

Nixon: That's what I mean. And, so we—we've got a helluva big say in this. On the other hand, we—And frankly we have been fairly careful up to this point. I think more than anything else it's a, it's a—to the extent you can and then, Bill, if you have a different view,

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 617–18. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met Stans, Rogers, and Haig in the Oval Office from 5:21 to 5:55 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume. In a November 11 briefing memorandum for a meeting Kissinger was to have with Stans, scheduled for November 12 but cancelled, Sonnenfeldt suggested to Kissinger: "You might want to stress again that it [Stans' trip] is to be *exploratory rather* than conclusive, that he is to hold out *the promise* of greater trade but *not* to make specific *promises*." In particular, Stans was to be advised to say or do nothing that implied a commitment to seek Most Favored Nations legislation or Export-Import Bank loans or guarantees, both of which Sonnenfeldt suggested were the President's prerogative. Should Stans meet with Kosygin or Brezhnev, he "should *mostly listen* and generally *stay away from political subjects*." (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 213, Agency Files, Commerce (1971), Vol. II)

you can express it. I think what we want is for Maury to talk to everybody; listen and learn everything you can. But I don't think we want to appear to be panting so much after. I don't think we want to be—I don't think we—I mean I don't—I think we oughta—I think—Let me put it this way: there's some things we'd like to get from them. I mean if, for example, we're still screwing around on Vietnam because [unclear] and, the arms control and the rest. Trade is something. Trade from us to them is infinitely more important than it is for us to have trade with them. We'd like—you know what I mean—I read the *Times* story about, you know, how much it would mean if we had all this and the Europeans are going to trade. But this is something that means a helluva a lot more to them than it does to us. Now you, of course, I don't think you should play it that way. That's too crude. But isn't that about what it is? And I don't want hear a blanket [unclear] as a matter of fact. Bill, do you agree?

Rogers: Mr. President, I agree to everything.

Nixon: [unclear]

Rogers: It's important to let them know that the climate for trade has improved; that the political climate is better.

Nixon: Exactly.

Rogers: The political climate will be better when the President goes there, particularly if they cooperate with us on some of these things that we're trying to accomplish—Berlin, Indochina and other matters.

Nixon: And arms control.

Rogers: And arms control. Now they need to trade a helluva a lot more than we do. They, they've got a real problem because what they're doing—some of their allies, particularly Hungary, is doing a lot better in the trade field than they are, so they're trying—

Nixon: Hungary is?

Rogers: Oh yeah. Hungary is doing very well. And, of course, Romania is building up a little trade. So they're concerned about having more trade with us. And I think we should, we should set the prospects for trade—

Nixon: Right.

Rogers: And listen and see where we can get some benefit, but not seem over-eager. If they think we're over-eager for trade, they'll snap at it. Furthermore, they've got a lot of other irons in the fire. They want this conference on European security very much.

Nixon: Yeah.

Rogers: They want discussion on mutual balance force reduction.

Nixon: Watch all of this.

Rogers: They want an agreement on Berlin, but they don't want to concede very much. Now, as the President said, the presence of trade is something of a weapon that we have. They need it. Now it will benefit us some, and politically it's always good to talk about it. But if you analyze it in real terms, it doesn't amount to a helluva a lot with us and it won't for some time, little bits and drags once in awhile.

Stans: Now I differ a little bit on that, Bill. There's a great interest on the part of American businessmen and quite a number have been over there recently—

Rogers: Oh, yes.

Stans: There's a group of 50, of a 100, including our friend Don Kendall, who's going to be over there the last day or two that I'm there.

Nixon: Let me say, let me say Maury, I think that you're absolutely right. I know Don Kendall and all this group. But what I'm suggesting that you do, to you is that you play a different game. That's our businessmen, and they're over there panting around over the Soviets so much that they're slobbering away and giving away our bargaining position. You should not go there and say—I want you to take the position, which indicates that we're going to look at this stuff. We're very interested in hearing what they have to offer. We have people, of course, who would like to do this, that, and the other thing. But you see, 'cause I think—I really do believe that on the, this business side of it—Bill, I've talked to some of these guys and, gosh, they'd give away the store.

Rogers: Yep. But we don't disagree on this thing.

Nixon: [unclear exchange]

Rogers: The total impact at the moment, for the next couple of years, isn't going to amount to a lot. We can talk about it.

Nixon: That's right.

Rogers: We should tell American business we're doing everything we can. We want to increase our trade, but if you look at it in the total, in the overall picture, it's not going to amount to a helluva a lot in the next couple of years.

Stans: Well, I think there's millions of dollars of business there. The big problem is that they have difficulty in paying for it.

Nixon: Yeah.

Stans: And the next thing they're going to ask, and I'm sure they're going to press it with me, is two things: export-import credits so they can buy more; and MFN so they ship more to the United States.

Nixon: Yeah.

Stans: These are the roadblocks. I think that the business is there. I think that we could have 4 or 5 billion dollars by 1975 if we—

Nixon: You think so?

Rogers: But think about what they'll use to give us. What have they got that we want? That's the problem.

Stans: Well, they're—they've taken a new line, which is a very interesting one. And I've spent a lot—

Nixon: You haven't said that before.

Stans: I've spent a lot of time over the last couple of weeks talking to American businessmen. They're talking about joint ventures. Not of the type that we're talking about in Romania, Yugoslavia where the American company would have a 50 percent interest in the business and a 50 percent interest in profits. They're not willing to give up title to property or define profits. But what they are talking about is having American companies come over there and develop natural resources—oil, gas, copper, other minerals, and so forth—under a deal where we put the technology and part of the money. They put in some labor. We get the product; get our money back out of the product and then have share in the product rather than in the profits. Now there's a lot of minerals—oil and natural gas—that would be a great deal to us. They're already talking with one American company about a deal for natural gas similar to the Algerian deal where there would be about a billion dollars worth of gas moving over the year beginning about 1975. And the American companies who would go in there and invest wherever they think the natural gas is, freeze it, and bring it over to the United States. Now they're talking some real big things to think you know [unclear] Real big things of that nature. And, of course, the one thing our American business has to learn is that anything we do in terms of trade is not going to be small potatoes because the Russian Government is the buyer for the whole economy.

Nixon: That's right.

Stans: They can buy 10,000 lathes at one time if they want to and spread them around to all their plants. They can buy 2,000 drill presses.

Nixon: Oh, I—what we—what—What I look upon this trip as being, which you have—Would you have—Tell the photographer I want to get his pictures of this. So that we could [unclear, pause] I think that it would be very helpful for us to know, that we just, just before the world [unclear]. What do you have in mind? What do you think? Don't you think so, Al?

Haig: Yes, sir. I think [unclear]

Nixon: And incidentally I would say that you have mentioned these other things. If they raise, and I don't know the extent to which they get it, the European Security Conference and all the rest. That should stay miles away.

Stans: I thought I would listen and ask them if they have any message for me to bring back to you. But the message—

Rogers: But, you know, if they do they're just playing games because they talk to us all the time.

Nixon: Yeah. Yeah. I would stay away from the political questions because we're not—we don't want to talk about a European security conference. We're not, but—

Stans: I'm not informed on the military—

Nixon: And I would just simply say that that's not your responsibility. That's—You'd just rather not express any opinions on it, that you're just an expert in the one area. I think that's very important to play. Why don't you shoot the picture there so that we can [unclear].

Stans: I would—I would like to look at ideas that you could develop for your May visit. I think that maybe some things could come out of this that you could use it for May.

Rogers: [unclear] that they could give us some gold [unclear]?

Stans: Well, they don't have much gold left. They only have about a billion eight.

Rogers: They've got more [unclear]?

Nixon: What? Is that right?

Stans: In reserves. A billion eight.

Rogers: No, they've got a lot in the mines.

Stans: They've got it in the ground.

Rogers: They've got petroleum and aluminum, what chrome and a few other minerals. [unclear] If they start—If they start exporting petroleum to this country, that's a whole other ball game.

Stans: That's an element of risk according to—for that to be on a minimum basis. But what I propose to do is go over the whole list of possibilities; talk to all of them; see what needs to be done. As I say, they're going to press for export credit. They're going to press for MFN treatment—most favored nation.

Nixon: I think on those things that you can, you can indicate, —the thing that we have done and the conversation we've had here with Gromyko is to indicate that there are very great possibilities in this country for improvement in those areas. But obviously they are contingent upon, they're related to improvement in political areas. Now we can't talk about the MFN, the Export-Import Bank as long as they're helping the North Vietnamese.

Rogers: Or joint ventures for that matter. You know, our large investment for joint ventures has got to be—The political climate has got to be pretty good.

Nixon: Yeah.

Stans: I think the American companies are going to want that.

Nixon: But we have a very—Our, our, our attitude toward progress on the political front is very, very open. And our attitude toward progress on the trade front is very open.

Rogers: How about manufactured goods? We could send them manufactured goods.

Stans: Well, I think they'll buy something. I don't think they'll buy much—

Rogers: See, that's what we should push for.

Stans: It's machine tools they want—

Rogers: That's what we should push for. We've got plenty of manufactured goods we can send them.

Nixon: Boy they need [unclear].

Stans: They need it.

Nixon: Exactly. Their economy has been flat for how many years? Four or five years?

Rogers: Oh, yeah, at least. What they want us to do is teach them how to manufacture them so they don't have to buy them from us—

Stans: Well—

Nixon: They want computers. [unclear] They want technology. They don't want the goods.

Rogers: Machine tools.

Stans: Right, but the American automobile companies and some of them have been pretty smart about this. Ford and General Motors have told them and told us that they're not interested in going over there and building a plant for them. They're interested in going in there and working with them if there's a longtime relationship of some kind from which they can benefit. They're not going to build a plant and walk away from it. And I, I told a group of American businessmen today that I'm concerned about selling our technology too cheap—

Rogers: You're damn right.

Nixon: You're so right.

Stans: Three per cent patent and license fee and so forth doesn't give us much of anything.

Nixon: No. Oh boy.

Stans: If we can't get more than that out of it. If we can't—

Nixon: It will do absolutely no harm at all for you to be a very shrewd trader—Yankee trader—with the Russians. That's the way they are. They expect it and they'd be very surprised—But, well, you know, as you would, of course, with a very, very—We're very interested in this, but as you know this is the way our guys look at it. It's something

we may want to do. If you'd like to help on this sort of situation, but we've got some real problems and what can you do? And they come. They come that way. The Russians are a tough bunch of bastards.

Rogers: Sell them campers and television sets and radios.

Nixon: Any day, any day.

Stans: They're probably buying those from the Japanese right now.

Nixon: Have you been there before?

Stans: I've never been in Russia before, no.

Nixon: What cities are you going to visit?

Stans: Well, it's still pretty indefinite. We've—We will go to Leningrad the first weekend, on Sunday, and spend a day there. The second weekend I suggested that we go south to Georgia. They're suggesting Baku and Tbilisi and possibly—

Nixon: [unclear]

Stans: —Samarkand and Tashkent. Which is—

Nixon: Samarkand?

Stans: Strictly sightseeing.

Nixon: Go.

Stans: Really?

Nixon: Beautiful place.

Stans: Never been there.

Nixon: Well, Samarkand has—you know that's one of Genghis Khan's residences. It has those magnificent little temples.

Stans: It sounds heavenly.

Nixon: Oh yeah, yeah. Oh you go. Go.

Stans: Well, I'd love to do that. I think—

Nixon: That's worth going [unclear] out there, but I'd go.

Stans: They're making quite a thing of this because—

Nixon: And you'll see Asians out there. That's the interesting thing. You see you'll get out there and you realize that Russia is not a country of Russians. There are all sorts of Asians. You go down the [unclear]—which is right near—

Stans: I'd like to see that—

Nixon: —the Chinese border—

Stans: It looks pretty fun.

Nixon: —You'll see the valley of apples. And, by God, they're all Chinese. They're all slant eyed. It's a fascinating thing to see this.

Stans: Well, they're putting out the red carpet because they say is an ordinary expense. They want me to stay even longer. We'll probably stay longer [unclear]

Nixon: Are you going to—how about to one city—for example, I wonder if they'd want you to see it. How about Sverdlovsk? Are they going to have you to go there?

Stans: They haven't mentioned it—

Nixon: It's a huge steel complex place. Novosibirsk, in Siberia, how about there?

Stans: They offered to take us to Lake Baikal, but that's so far. It's 7 hours outside Moscow on the fastest jet. It's farther than across the United States.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Moscow summit.]

Stans: Well, Mr. President, I'm going to stop over in Sweden on the way over to rest a day.

Nixon: Oh, for Christ's sake—

Stans: And—

Nixon: —Why did you have to stop in Sweden?

Stans: Well, they're a big customer. They buy a lot of goods from us.

Nixon: Fine. All right, fine. Sell them something they don't want. [laughter]

Nixon: All right, that's fine. That's fine. Have you ever been there before?

Stans: No.

Nixon: Neither have I—

Stans: We're going to stop in Warsaw on the way back. We're—I didn't realize [John A.] Volpe had been there, but the Embassy [unclear]—

Nixon: That's all right.

Stans: —the Embassy and then a press conference—

Nixon: That's all right.

Stans: Is there any special message in Warsaw?

Nixon: You get your message [unclear]?

Rogers: Yeah. We—I told them "Be cool. Be polite but cool." —

Nixon: What? Yeah. They've done an awful lot for us—[unclear exchange].

Nixon: We respect their—We respect their people. They've contributed so much to this country. But basically we, we're not too damned happy about the way they kick us around the world. But that's fine. Let them do it. That's their choice. Warsaw is another matter. I think there, we do want to play the line of—the more—and all the rest. They are—

Rogers: Yes they are.

Nixon: They are already [unclear]—

Rogers: But we also have good, good relations with them. And they've improved some in the last year—

Stans: Warsaw, oh, excuse me.

Rogers: And the people, of course, particularly Poles, very much—

Nixon: They love Americans.

Stans: Warsaw doesn't have [unclear] credit, and they're actually going to press for that. I would guess from all the discussion [unclear] that they'll come after Romania. Possibly fairly soon.

Nixon: Well, what—

Stans: They're—

Nixon: Well, let me say this. I think what the Russians, and all the rest, I'd hold it all out there. Hell, [unclear] hold it all. This is something you'll look into and so forth. Don't you think so, Al?

Haig: Yes, sir. I think [unclear] sympathetic with us—

Nixon: Yeah.

Haig: And with that we can—

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Moscow summit.]

Nixon: You have to remember that Khrushchev—Incidentally, you can also recall, [he] wrote in his book,² he bragged that he helped to defeat Nixon in 1960. And we're quite aware of that. That may come up. You might bring it up. See? And at this time, we're, we, —It's just an interesting little point. That just shows how much they care about our politics.

Rogers: Be a little careful with him, Maury, if you raise this. They'll—They leak things all over, hell. Particularly Dobrynin. So we wouldn't want to be in a position of asking for any help for the President.

Nixon: Oh, God no.

Stans: Oh, no. No.

Nixon: [unclear exchange]

Rogers: The thing that we really need to do is convince them that he [Nixon] is going to be the sure thing.

Nixon: Yep.

Rogers: Because that's what they pay more attention to than anything else. I think they've come around to that point of view. I think that's one of the reasons they're anxious for the President's visit.

Nixon: I think that's probably why they agreed to it. The—I think there might be a, a—Basically, they'll want to know what kind of a man

² *Khrushchev Remembers*, translated and edited by Strobe Talbot (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970).

is this—another point, Bill, I think you would agree—what kind of a man is the President? And so you tell them [unclear] is like that. But particularly emphasize, though, that he's a man you can make a deal with. But he's a, I mean a—Eyes totally open; You know, he's a pragmatic man.

Stans: Analytical.

Nixon: Analytical and far-seeing. You know, give them all that crap. Because they—I think this is the important thing. I noticed that when I talked to Tito he was very interested in telling me what kind of a fellow Brezhnev was. And, and he compared Brezhnev to Kosygin. The Communists are quite interested in men. I mean in the—

Rogers: In what sense? In how they get along?

Nixon: That's the point. In their personalities. You could say, "Here he is and—" You could say—I must say—I mean I have to be because we deal with a Democratic Congress and I'm naturally conciliatory all the time.

13. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, November 18, 1971, 8:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin
Henry A. Kissinger

The dinner lasted three and a half hours. It was marked by great cordiality.

Advance Trip to Moscow

Dobrynin opened the conversation by saying that he had been asked by his government to find out in an informal way whether there was any possibility of my visiting Moscow. Gromyko had been very much impressed by his conversation with me, and he felt that it would advance the Summit significantly if I could go there. He said I could arrange it either secretly or openly, and, of course, a secret visit would be guaranteed to remain so. He said the issue was all the more urgent because the Secretary of State had already asked twice to be invited.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The dinner meeting was held at the Soviet Embassy.

Dobrynin said there was no particular desire to invite Rogers to Moscow, but there was a great interest in seeing me.

I said that we had thought, on the whole, existing channels were working very well and that it was not a situation comparable to the one we faced with Peking where there really were no channels of communication. I therefore did not see too much point in a visit by me to Moscow. A secret visit would compound the problem because it would leave an impression of collusion that would be totally unwarranted by the facts.

Vietnam

Dobrynin then wanted to return to the Middle East, but I interrupted him to tell him that I wanted to discuss Vietnam. I began by reciting the events that had led to the Vietnamese cancellation of the meeting,² adding to it my conversation on September 29 with the Soviet Foreign Minister.³ (See note to North Vietnamese at Tab A.)⁴ I said I wanted to make it absolutely clear that we were reaching the end of our patience. If present methods continued, we would have to reserve the right to take whatever action was necessary. We would not tolerate the humiliation of the President, and if the North Vietnamese thought that they could bring about a military solution, they would confront the most violent opposition from the United States. In fact, I wanted the Soviet leaders to be aware that we reserved the right to take strong action to bring about the release of our prisoners in any event.

Dobrynin said he was very surprised. He could understand, of course, that we would react strongly to an attack. This would not be approved in Moscow, but it would be understood. But we had always said that we would end the war either through negotiation or through

² On November 17 the North Vietnamese informed Kissinger that Special Adviser Le Duc Tho was "ill" and could not meet secretly with Kissinger in Paris on November 20. (Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1040)

³ The memorandum of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

⁴ Attached but not printed at Tab A is an undated U.S. note to North Vietnam recalling that on October 11, the United States made a "comprehensive proposal" to end the war "on a basis just for all parties," taking into account the concerns raised at the last Kissinger–Le Duc Tho meeting of September 13. The note expressed U.S. willingness to take into consideration other points discussed in the secret channel and reviewed how the meeting for November 20 had been agreed upon and then cancelled by North Vietnam. The note stated: "The U.S. side regrets this illness. Under the circumstances, no point would be served by a meeting." It concluded: "the U.S. side stands ready to meet with Special Adviser Le Duc Tho, or any other representative of the North Vietnamese political leadership, together with Minister Xuan Thuy, in order to bring a rapid end to the war on a basis just for all parties. It will await to hear recommendations from the North Vietnamese side as to a suitable date."

Vietnamization. Had we lost faith in Vietnamization? If we escalated the war without provocation by the other side, then the reaction in Moscow might be very serious, and Moscow might have to take certain preparatory steps in any event to make clear its position in advance.

I said that I wanted to sum up our views. If there were a North Vietnamese attack, then we would respond without restraint. If there were no North Vietnamese attack, then we nevertheless reserved freedom of action. If we went substantially beyond the existing framework on such matters, e.g. operations approaching Laos and Cambodia, the Soviets would have some advance indication that methods like this were being considered.

Dobrynin then asked whether I was disappointed in the Chinese efforts to end the Vietnamese war. I said that I had never expected any significant Chinese effort to end the Vietnamese war, and therefore I was not. Dobrynin said that he knew that Hanoi had brought Peking back into line by threatening a public attack on Peking's policies and by taking its case to the Communist Parties around the world, on the ground that Peking was betraying their revolution. I said there was no cause for it because we had never expected Peking to intervene directly in the negotiating process.

Middle East

We then turned to the issue of the Middle East. Dobrynin said he had answers to two of my questions.⁵ The first question was whether Moscow insisted on the settlement of all the Arab/Israeli border issues. He said that while the Soviet Union had to insist on the fact that all these settlements were connected, de facto it was prepared to proceed with an Egyptian agreement alone.

The second question was with respect to my point that some Israeli presence in Sharm El-Sheik was essential. He said a military presence was out of the question, but that the Soviet Union was prepared to explore some other type of presence and wanted some specific proposals from me along that line.

I told Dobrynin that I had explored the possibility that the White House might enter the negotiating process with Rabin, without going into any specific Soviet proposals that might have been made to us. In response to a question, I said Rabin had been very intransigent and indicated no particular willingness to yield, but had indicated a desire for me to enter the negotiating process which was slightly inconsistent.

⁵ Dobrynin is referring to issues raised at the previous meeting with Kissinger; see Document 10.

Dobrynin asked me what I thought Israel wanted. I said Israel might accept Egyptian sovereignty over the Sinai, but it would ask for some presence beyond its borders. Dobrynin said it would be difficult but not impossible to negotiate on this basis. I asked Dobrynin what the Soviet reaction was to my proposition that perhaps the Middle East negotiations might be concluded secretly and not surfaced with respect to the Israelis until 1973. Dobrynin said that he construed the silence on the Soviet side to mean that they agreed to this procedure.

Dobrynin then asked how we might proceed. I told him that Golda Meir was coming, and that we expected to have full talks with her.⁶ This would give us an idea of what was possible. Dobrynin asked whether I thought it might be possible to have a settlement by the time the President was in Moscow. I said it was conceivable that there could be an interim settlement then, and some agreement on what steps might be taken during 1973 and 1974, but that of course could not be published.

Dobrynin said that he would try to add a vacation to his visit to Moscow for a Central Committee Meeting and that, in that case, he might not be back until after the first of January. I said this would not be inconsistent with the schedule that I outlined.

SALT

We then discussed SALT. Dobrynin asked me what possibilities I saw. I said it was important that we concluded an agreement. Was it his understanding that it would be finished by the time of the Summit? Dobrynin said it was the firm intention of the Soviet leadership to conclude the agreement in such a manner that it could be signed at the Summit.

Dobrynin asked about my view with respect to defensive weapons; specifically, whether I could imagine a compromise. What was our reasoning for rejecting the Soviet proposal of September 7th?⁷ I replied that the practical consequence of it might be that it would give them three sites as against one for us. They would defend two missile fields plus Moscow while we would have to destroy our defense at one missile field but would get the right to defend Washington, for which we could not get any money. Dobrynin said he believed this but no one in Moscow would believe that the American Government could not get money for the defense of its capital, and therefore this was considered a weak argument in Moscow.

⁶ Israeli Prime Minister Meir made an informal visit to Washington December 2.

⁷ Apparent reference to the Soviet proposal that the United States have one ABM site to defend its national capital area and retain another ABM site to defend one of its ICBM sites where ABM construction had begun. The Soviet Union would deploy ABM sites to defend an equal number of ICBM silo launchers. (Smith, *Doubletalk*, p. 268)

I pointed out that the Moscow system already defended 400 missiles. He said, “Yes, but it is only one point, while the American system has two points and thus provided a basis for area defense.” Dobrynin asked whether I thought we would accept a two-for-two trade—one missile field in the Soviet Union, even if it had fewer missiles, for NCA. I said it was premature, but I did not think so. He said “let them talk another few weeks, and we will reconsider it in January.”

We then turned to offensive limitations. He said that the record of the discussions prior to May 20th was unclear, but he had to say that it concentrated, in his mind, mostly on ICBMs. I said that the situation seemed to me to be as follows: Legally, the exchange of letters certainly left us free to include SLBM’s, and there had even been some discussion of it in our conversations.⁸ At the same time, I had to grant him the fact that we were more concerned at that time with ICBM’s, and the thrust of our conversations dealt with them. I was not concerned with the legal argument, but with the substantive one. It would be difficult to explain to the American people why ICBM’s should be constrained but a race at sea should continue. I had to tell him frankly that there were many in our government who were not particularly eager to constrain SLBM’s because it gave us an opportunity to relaunch a new weapons program at sea. Therefore, if the Soviets rejected our SLBM proposal, our Joint Chiefs of Staff would in my judgment not be a bit unhappy. On the other hand, it seemed to me it would be best if we did limit it. Dobrynin asked why, if we insisted on maintaining superiority at sea, would we be willing to settle for 41 modern submarines for each side? I said I was not sure, but this was not an unreasonable proposition, though I recommended that they surface it through his channel first so that I could make a final check.

Dobrynin said that when he came back from Moscow, he would have an answer, but he hoped we had until March.

Dobrynin then asked how all of this would be affected if China started developing a large nuclear arsenal. Did we think that China could have 50 nuclear submarines while we were constrained to 41? I said that, of course, if we agreed on SALT, we would start an evolution of a common approach to the whole issue of strategic arms that would have to take into account an evolving threat by other nuclear

⁸ On May 20 President Nixon announced that the United States and Soviet Union would work out an agreement for the limitation of ABMs during the year as well as agree on “certain measures with respect to the limitation of offensive strategic weapons.” The text of the announcement is in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1971*, p. 648. President Nixon and Premier Kosygin also exchanged letters, negotiated by Kissinger and Dobrynin, that mirrored the President’s statement but also provided that replacement and modernization of weapons would not be precluded in measures to limit strategic offensive weapons, which are scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

countries. We could not use SALT agreements to give other countries an opportunity to outstrip us.

Dobrynin then suggested very strongly that the chief Soviet reason for an ABM buildup was Communist China. I said, on the other hand, we are told by Smith all the time that you really want a zero ABM. Dobrynin said, "I wish Smith would stop playing games. We are only dealing with him on this basis so that we do not have to bear the onus of rejecting a zero ABM, but please do not propose it to us."

China

The conversation then turned to China. Dobrynin said that he found the long-term trend of our China policy hard to understand. He said that my trip to Peking to some extent, and certainly the President's visit to Peking, is giving the Chinese status that they could not have achieved through years of effort on their own. In return for that, what were we getting? A little publicity and the uncertainty of all of our allies. Was it really such a good bargain? Moreover, he said that he had noticed that the Chinese speech at the UN was really more hostile towards us than towards them.

I said that our China policy had to be seen in a general context—that is to say, it was all very well in the abstract to speak about long-term and short-term interests, but one had to keep in mind the circumstances. As I had told him, there were two conditions that made the trip to China inevitable: first, the Vietnamese war; secondly, the rather ungenerous reactions of the Soviet Union to our repeated efforts to bring about a fundamental change in our relationship. In the face of these conditions, we had no choice but to get ourselves freedom of maneuver. If Dobrynin asked what we had achieved with the China initiative, it was freedom of maneuver.

As for the benefits China was supposed to derive, one had to remember that many of those could have been achieved—most of those, in fact could have been achieved—no matter what we did. If one remembers the tremendous publicity for the invitation of the table tennis team, and if one considers that the next Chinese move might have been to invite leading Democratic politicians, the impression would have been created in every country, in any event, that the People's Republic's rapprochement with the United States was to all practical purposes inevitable, and then the consequences he described would have occurred. We may have speeded up the process a little bit, but that had to be measured against the increasing freedom of action.

Dobrynin said then one had to ask oneself what the freedom of action would consist of. He said he hoped we didn't consider Communist China a superpower, because it wasn't a superpower. It was very weak. I said I could only repeat what I had told him last time, that the

Vietnamese war introduced distortions out of proportion to any possible benefits. If we could deal with Asian problems on their merits, we could then deal with Communist China as a reality in terms of its real power.

Dobrynin said he did not mind telling me that my visit in Peking had produced consternation. Moscow had had a few days advance warning that I was in Peking, but they had no idea that I would come back with the announcement of a Presidential trip. Now Moscow was watching warily. Of course, China could not be a threat for five years, or even ten years, but it was a major long-term danger as he had already pointed out to me with respect to the SALT negotiations.

South Asia

We then had a brief discussion on the situation in South Asia. Dobrynin said that he saw no reason why we should be competitive in that area and that the Soviet Union was urging restraint on India. I said the shipment of arms was not restraint. He responded that the shipments had been kept at very low levels. I told him it would make a very bad impression if Soviet actions produced a war.⁹ He said there was no danger of that, though their assessment was that there were many elements in India which wanted war.

Miscellaneous

We talked briefly about the Stans visit.¹⁰ Dobrynin asked whether there was any possibility for Most Favored Nation treatment. I said there was a chance that this might come along if the Summit proved successful.

The meeting ended with a general exchange of pleasantries dealing with the life of Cossacks and the beauties of Siberia.

⁹ On November 15 at 12:33 p.m., Kissinger had telephoned Dobrynin to remind him that “we are extremely concerned about the South Asia situation. India–Pakistan. We will not put it as rudely in diplomatic cables. We think India is determined to have a showdown. When I see you I will tell you what we suggested for a reasonable solution if someone could encourage them.” Dobrynin responded that “Both sides play down.” Kissinger answered: “In our view sending arms into India is adding fuel.” Dobrynin retorted, “I doubt that. I think it’s publicity. I will check.” (Transcript of a telephone conversation; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 369, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

¹⁰ Reference is to Commerce Secretary Stans’ trip to Moscow for trade talks and a meeting with Kosygin on November 20; see Document 14.

14. Editorial Note

During the last 2 weeks of November 1971, Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans traveled to the Soviet Union for trade talks with Soviet officials. On November 20 Stans met in Moscow with Chairman of the Council of Ministers Alexei Kosygin. Their discussion was summarized in telegram 8649/Stansto 05 from Moscow, November 20.

“1. Major development in full, friendly three-hour twenty minute talk with Kosygin latter expressed strong desire for greatly enlarged commercial relations with US and made expected pleas for end of US ‘discrimination’ against USSR in economic matters. He avoided other contentious matters. No specific political matters mentioned.

“2. Stressing that Stans’ visit should leave ‘notable trace’ for President’s visit, Kosygin proposed exchange of aide-mémoires in which two sides would envisage setting up four expert working groups to consider elements of a new economic relationship. These would draw up arrangements and propositions in 3 and 4 months which might be signed before or at summit and announced at that time. Aide-mémoires, Kosygin twice stressed, would not imply legal or legislative commitments.

“3. Experts would deal with

“(1) general legal/legislative issues such as MFN

“(2) various financial issues

“(3) ‘pure trade’, i.e. all commodities other than ‘equipment’, which presents more complex problems. (Kosygin subsequently clarified that ‘equipment’ also included in trade.)

“(4) general economic ties such as joint development of Soviet natural resources and major manufacturing projects, also schemes involving third country marketing.

“4. Kosygin suggested experts could meet in Soviet Union and US and he himself prepared to meet them from time to time to help move matters along and same might be done on US side.

“5. Stans indicated interest but reserved specific response pending further discussions with Patolichev. Indicated desire to work with Patolichev on aide-mémoire idea and go as far as we able to at this time.

“6. Kosygin later suggested adding experts group on science and technology.

“7. Rest of discussion ranged widely over economic issues. Specific item of interest was Kosygin’s reference to Soviet interest in five-year agreement to buy 2–3 million tons of corn per year provided credit available. Also suggested possibility of immediate order for synthetic leather technology.

"8. Stans noted inter-relationship between progress in political and economic relations and need for US public opinion to be sympathetic to improved economic relations. Kosygin said political relations should be even better by time of summit. On basis of own experience he thought most political and business circles in US now oppose tensions and confrontations, though some probably will always exist who advocate tensions." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US STANS) Also printed in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume IV, Foreign Assistance, International Development, Trade Policies, 1969–1972, Document 349.

On November 22, 1971, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger sent a memorandum summarizing this discussion to President Nixon who saw it. Kissinger wrote on the November 22 memorandum transmitting the summary the following directive apparently from the President: "Instruct Stans to reserve final decisions to Washington." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 213, Agency Files, Commerce, (1971), Vol. II) On November 26 Deputy Assistant to the President Alexander Haig sent a message to Stans which reads: "The report of your conversation with Chairman Kosygin has been reviewed by the President with appreciation. As to the specifics of the program outlined by Kosygin and other proposals Soviets may make during course of your visit, President prefers to reserve final decisions until after you have returned to Washington. He wishes to review substantive findings of your mission in their entirety." (Ibid.) On November 25 Stans met with Soviet Minister of Trade Patolichev, a report of which was transmitted in telegram 6231 from Moscow, November 25. (Ibid.)

On November 29 National Security Council staff member Helmut Sonnenfeldt prepared an analysis of the Stans trip for Kissinger, noting at the beginning that the trip "is a good example of what happens to American negotiators, under pressure of atmosphere, the need to be successful and domestic pressure." At the end of the memorandum, Sonnenfeldt assessed the damage:

"I think when all is said and done, Stans avoided concretely committing the President; and with one major exception (the "Watershed" comment to the press) confined his remarks to economic matters. On the other hand, his mission has obviously generated enormous momentum to move ahead in trade matters and does create *implied* commitments—both to the Soviets and the American business community—that (1) we will continue to liberalize export controls, and (2) seriously consider and perhaps grant in the next several months EXIM credits and guarantees. He is also committed to some form of follow-on to his trip, though for now only on matters within the jurisdiction of Commerce; and that this work will produce some concrete results by the time of the summit.

“He is less committed, though not excluding it, on MFN and on a possible umbrella trade agreement (for which the Soviets are very anxious). He also showed sympathy, but without commitment, to Kirillin’s proposal for a formal agreement on scientific and technological cooperation.

“Stans did an effective job in impressing on the Soviets the need for better facilities for US businessmen.

“He also made a cogent statement on the need for trade to be based on a constructive political relationship (no contradiction from the Soviets), but diluted it in public with cliches about how trade will breed understanding which ‘diplomats’ are unable to produce.” (Ibid.) Additional documentation on Stans’ trip is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume IV, Foreign Assistance, International Development, Trade Policies, 1969–1972.

15. Editorial Note

On December 1, 1971, the National Security Council met to discuss the related issues of Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions in Europe (MBFR) and the Conference on European Security (CSE). While the upcoming Brussels meeting of the North Atlantic Council, December 8–10, 1971, was the immediate reason for the discussion, the role and motivation of the Soviet Union were a principal concern. Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger summarized the work of the Senior Review Group on MBFR and CSE as culminating in their meeting of November 23, 1971. The record of that meeting is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-112, SRG Minutes, Originals, 1971. At the National Security Council meeting, Kissinger stated:

“First, MBFR. The idea goes back to the 1950s, when it was called ‘disengagement.’ It has been taken up in recent years for a variety of reasons, which have consequences for determining the strategy for dealing with the issues. It was initiated by the previous administration as an argument against pressures from the Congress for force reductions. Secretary General Brosio then picked it up as a means of forestalling unilateral reductions by the U.S. The Soviets, for some reason not entirely clear, became interested.

“But until your administration, Mr. President, there was no systematic analysis done. There was no idea of the impact of mutual reductions on the military balance. In the interagency group we have done several studies in depth. We reviewed 15 cases of possible

combinations of reductions, with such elements as limits on stationed forces, limits on indigenous forces, and various combinations.

“We have studied four categories:

“—First, small symmetrical reductions, of say 10 percent.

“—Second, larger symmetrical reductions of 30 percent.

“—Third, a common ceiling.

“—Fourth, a mixed package, though in this case we have not done as much work as in the others.

“The following conclusions have emerged from our analysis: Though there is considerable debate over methodology, the conclusions do not differ. A reduction on the order of 10 percent or less cannot be verified. We would not know if the other side had actually reduced. This size of reductions would minimize the deleterious military effects. There would still be a deleterious effect, but not a major one. Any other percentage reductions will make the situation worse; the larger the cut the worse the effects.”

After Kissinger distributed charts showing the relative strengths of the NATO and Warsaw forces under these categories, he suggested that both the mixed package and the common ceiling were not negotiable, but stressed that it was not necessary to choose one solution since the Soviets were not yet prepared to negotiate. He then stated:

“The major point to stress to the Allies is to analyze what the effect is on security. If the work is driven by a desire for negotiations, there will be a consensus for a percentage reduction, but this is the most deleterious. The danger is that MBFR will become a political debate. We have done serious work in analyzing the effects, but the others want MBFR for détente, for a bargaining chip, or because of their own internal domestic opinion. It is in our interest to force the European Allies to focus on security in order to have an understanding of the military consequences; otherwise we are in a never-never land. At the NATO meetings, Secretary Rogers could say that we will follow up our studies with more presentations, including models submitted by Secretary Laird.

“Let me turn now to the European Security Conference.

“This is a nightmare. First, it was started with the idea of including all security issues. Then Berlin was broken out; then MBFR. Now the Soviets want an agenda with three issues: (1) renunciation of force and respect for frontiers, (2) expansion of economic, cultural and other contacts, and (3) establishment of some permanent machinery. On our side we are proposing similarly vague general principles. The good paper developed by State opens the way to addressing the security issues, to give concreteness to a conference.

“If we look at the enormous effort the Soviets have been making for a conference—including Gromyko’s talks with you, Mr. President—and compare their effort with the conceivable results, there must

be some objective beyond trade and cultural relations. They will use a climate of détente to argue that NATO is unnecessary. A permanent security organ would be offered as a substitute for the alliances. Now, Brandt is already in hock to the Soviets, to show progress in Ostpolitik. The French have two motives: first to outmaneuver the Germans in Moscow, and second to take the steam out of MBFR. The danger is that we will get both CES and MBFR.

“The problem of the substance of a Conference is whether in addition to the general topics we can incorporate security issues. The pro is that it makes the conference more concrete; the con is that a conference is probably not the forum to deal with issues of monitoring force movements, for example.

“Before dealing with an agenda, however, we have the question of how rapidly to move. The French and Germans are committed. The Soviets are pressing for preparatory talks. Normally, preparatory talks could be used to delay, but the issues do not lend themselves to delay. Up to now we have said that a Berlin agreement is a precondition for preparatory talks. But once the inner-German talks are finished, this may be a tough position to hold. But we can say Berlin must be completed. There will be enormous pressures if we say this, because this will bring pressure on the Bundestag to ratify the treaties.

“In summary, we can use Berlin to delay further preparations, and we can use the argument that we need a unified Western position and should have a Western Foreign Ministers’ meeting. Third, we can delay in the preparatory talks, but there are divided views on how to string out these talks.

“It is premature to debate what would be in a conference until we decide how to string out the timing.”

The President then asked how long before the Berlin talks were wrapped up. Secretary of State Rogers answered that it would take the Bundestag 2–3 months to ratify the Moscow treaty and the United States could be dilatory. Rogers stated that he told the Soviets “it was unrealistic to think of a conference in 1972. There are pressures for preparatory talks, but we can fend them off.” Kissinger suggested that, “The Soviets are playing into our hands in linking Berlin and the treaty.” Rogers suggested that after the President’s visit to Moscow, “We could show interest in holding talks, but hold a Deputy Foreign Ministers meeting some time after signing the Final Quadripartite protocol.” The President asked if the United States could do nothing and delay beyond 1973. Rogers replied affirmatively, noting that he already told the Soviets there could be no conference in 1972. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-110, NSC Minutes, Originals, 1971)

As a result of this meeting, the President issued National Security Council Decision Memorandum 142 on December 2, which stated that

the United States was not prepared for decisions on MBFR or CES and should proceed slowly with the principal criterion for any MBFR proposal being the maintenance of Western military security. The United States could not support any single approach to reductions, but would tell the Allies that it supported the concept of a sequential approach to negotiation. The Allies should also be assured that there would be no negotiations with the Russians on bilateral reductions and that an exploratory phase was required before multilateral reductions. As for CES, the United States insisted that the final Quadripartite Protocol on Berlin be signed before any preparations for a conference which would be preceded by a meeting of NATO Deputy Foreign Ministers. Western preparations were not developed enough for multilateral East-West contacts and the United States had no interest in a conference before 1972. Finally, the United States maintained its position of keeping MBFR and CES separate. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 364, Subject Files, National Security Council Decision Memoranda)

16. Note From President Nixon to the Soviet Leadership¹

Washington, December 3, 1971.

1. The President wishes to inform the Soviet Government that his talks with the Israeli Prime Minister² enable him to continue careful

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. No classification marking. A note on the first page reads: "Handed by K[issinger] to Vorontsov at 6 p.m., Fri, 12/2/71." The President and Kissinger discussed this note and the deepening crisis in South Asia on the telephone beginning at 10:45 a.m. on December 3. Kissinger told Nixon: "I think I should give a brief note to the Russians so that they don't jump around about conversation [see footnote 3 below] yesterday and say we are going on your conversation with Gromyko [September 29]. A strong blast at their Vietnam friends and behavior on India. We are moving on our side but they are not doing enough on theirs. P: On India certainly but on VN I wonder if it sounds hollow. K: We will crack them [the North Vietnamese] in a few weeks anyway. P: You may hear from them. It's hard to believe that with everything going our way why we didn't hear from them. They must be asking for it and they must know it. Maybe it's what they want. K: It won't hurt to show the Russians that we can pick the topic. P: Say we are in accordance with the President's statement that we are coming through on our side of the bargain and very distressed that no reciprocal action on their side." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) The September 29 conversation between Nixon and Gromyko is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

² Nixon and Kissinger met with Golda Meir and Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin from 3:05 to 4:53 p.m. on December 2. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) A record of the conversation is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XXIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969–1972.

consideration of the Middle East question along the lines of the conversations between the President, the Soviet Foreign Minister, Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Dobrynin. A final answer will be given to Ambassador Dobrynin when he returns to Washington in January. In the meantime, the President wanted the Soviet Government to know that his current evaluation of the prospects for direct U.S.-Soviet talks is positive.

2. At the same time, the President wishes to convey his extreme disappointment about the Soviet actions on Vietnam. No reply has been received to the proposal outlined by Dr. Kissinger to Foreign Minister Gromyko on September 29 and formally submitted to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Paris in October.³ The direct private negotiations which the Soviet message of October 16⁴ said were preferred by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam have failed to materialize. If this situation should indicate a decision by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to rely on a military solution, the President wishes to leave no doubt that he is prepared to take appropriate measures regardless of the impact on other policies. If the road to a negotiated settlement is closed, the President will reconsider the advisability of continuing the private Paris talks. It goes without saying that in this channel the U.S. is not interested in pro forma talks but in serious negotiations by qualified representatives at the highest level to bring about a rapid and just solution of the war.

³ See footnote 4, Document 13.

⁴ See footnote 8, Document 4.

17. Editorial Note

At 4 p.m. on December 5, 1971, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger met Soviet Minister Counselor Yuli M. Vorontsov, acting for Ambassador Dobrynin, who was on leave in the Soviet Union, to discuss the undeclared war between India and Pakistan. For over a year, natural disaster, Bengali demands for autonomy, a local guerrilla war in East Pakistan, a refugee crisis, and Pakistan's anti-guerrilla campaign had steadily escalated the crisis to the point of conventional war. India invaded East Pakistan on November 22; Pakistan attacked India on December 3. Although the Department of State maintained a neutral position, President Nixon insisted that the United States "tilt" toward Pakistan. Kissinger passed the following oral message for Secretary

General Brezhnev to Vorontsov, noting that he was doing so at the instruction of President Nixon:

“—The President did not understand how the Soviet Union could believe that it was possible to work on the broad amelioration of our relationships while at the same time encouraging the Indian military aggression against Pakistan. We did not take a position on the merits of the developments inside Pakistan that triggered this sequence of events. We have, indeed, always taken the position that we would encourage a political solution. But here a member country of the United Nations was being dismembered by the military forces of another member country which had close relationships with the Soviet Union. We did not understand how the Soviet Union could take the position that this was an internal affair of another country. We did not see how the Soviet Union could take the position that it wanted to negotiate with us security guarantees for the Middle East and to speak about Security Council presence in Sharm El-Sheikh, while at the same time underlining the impotence of the Security Council in New York. We did not understand how the Soviet Union could maintain that neither power should seek special advantages and that we should take a general view of the situation, while at the same time promoting a war in the Subcontinent. We therefore wanted to appeal once more to the Soviet Union to join with us in putting an end to the fighting in the Subcontinent. The TASS statement which claimed that Soviet security interests were involved was unacceptable to us and could only lead to an escalation of the crisis. We wanted to appeal to the Soviet Union to go with us on the road we had charted of submerging special interests in the general concern of maintaining the peace of the world.

“—The President wanted Mr. Brezhnev to know that he was more than eager to go back to the situation as it was two weeks ago and to work for the broad improvement of our relationship. But he also had to point out to Mr. Brezhnev that we were once more at one of the watersheds in our relationship, and he did not want to have any wrong turn taken for lack of clarity.”

After listening to the oral message, Vorontsov told Kissinger he hoped that the United States and the Soviet Union “were still at this good point in their relationship” as they were 2 weeks ago. Kissinger told Vorontsov that “we were developing severe doubts, both because of the Subcontinent and because of developments in Vietnam.” Vorontsov then asked Kissinger if he could convey to the Soviet leadership something positive from the United States about a political settlement in the Subcontinent. Kissinger stated that if there was a cease-fire and a withdrawal of Indian troops, the United States would be prepared to work with the Soviet Union on a political solution that could include “substantial political autonomy for East Pakistan.”

Kissinger stated that “the major thing was to get the military action stopped and stopped quickly.”

The two men then discussed a Soviet proposal for Kissinger to visit Moscow in January to discuss issues, especially the Middle East, in preparation for the Moscow summit in May. Kissinger responded:

“Vorontsov asked me what was happening on my invitation to Moscow. The Soviet leaders, he said, were really looking forward to seeing me at the end of January. I said, ‘There are major bureaucratic obstacles, but now there are major substantive ones as well.’ Vorontsov said, ‘In a week the whole matter will be over.’ I said, ‘In a week it will not be over, depending on how it ended.’ He said he would transmit this immediately to Moscow.” (Memorandum of conversation, December 5; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8) The invitation handed to Kissinger on December 1 by Vorontsov is *ibid.*

On the evening of December 5, Kissinger telephoned Vorontsov and returned to their conversation of that afternoon:

“K: I am sorry to call you on a Sunday, but I was just talking to the President to report our conversation and I mentioned that at the end of our conversation you said that in a week or so it will be over and he said that he would like you to report to Moscow that in a week or so it may be ended but it won’t be over as far as we are concerned if it continues to take the present trend.

“V: Yes.

“H: He wants it to be clear that we are at a watershed in our relationship if it continues to go on this way.

“V: I understand.

“H: We cannot accept that any country would take unilateral actions like that.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

On December 8 at 3:50 p.m., Haig called Vorontsov on Kissinger’s behalf to remind the Soviet Minister that the “watershed” term that Kissinger relayed in his telephone conversation with Vorontsov “was very, very pertinent, and he [President Nixon] considers it a carefully thought-out and valid assessment on his part.” Vorontsov told Haig: “I will have this in mind and transmit it to Moscow.” (*Ibid.*)

18. **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**¹

Washington, December 5, 1971, 11 a.m.

[Omitted here is discussion between Nixon and Kissinger about guidance the President should give Secretary Rogers for the upcoming UN Security Council meeting on South Asia. Kissinger suggested that there would be a cease-fire and withdrawal resolution put forward that the Soviet Union would veto, and then the danger was the Council would move towards a cease-fire resolution alone “that would leave half of East Pakistan in Indian hands.”]

K: I must underline, Mr. President, if we collapse now in New York, the impact on this international situation, we’re going to do away with most of the gains of the last two years. The way Rogers keeps putting the issue—the Russians are playing for big stakes here. When all the baloney—all the *New York Times* editorials are said and done if the Soviets and Indians get away with this, the Chinese and the United States will be standing there with eggs on our faces. And they will have made us back down and if we have ordered [watered] down our own Resolution from yesterday that had an 11 to 2 majority so that it becomes a pretty insipid thing, our only hope in my judgment, we’ll never get it through State, is to become very threatening to the Russians and tell them that if they are going to participate in the dismemberment of another country, that will affect their whole relationship to us.

P: Um-hmum.

K: Right now they still want the Middle East from us.

P: Um-hmum.

K: And other things. If we just play this in this nice incipit way, we are going to get through this week all right then but we are going to pay for it—this will then be the Suez '56 episode of our Administration.

P: Um-hmum.

K: That is what in my view is at stake here now and that’s why the Russians are playing it so toughly and if we have made any mistake in the last two weeks it’s this—if we had over-reacted in the first two or three days as we wanted to in the White House, it might at least have scared the Russians off, not the Indians, but it might have scared

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 396, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

the Russians off. We are pretty well committed anyway, we can't take the curse off it now. The problem—I know it will always be put on the ground that we want to save the China trip but these people don't recognize that without a China trip, we wouldn't have had a Moscow trip.

P: No, that's just small stuff. I know what they have put in on that—that's just sour grapes crap.

K: If the Chinese come out of this despising us, we lose that option. If the Russians think they backed us down, we will be back to where we were in May and June.

[Omitted here is discussion on Security Council resolutions on the South Asia crisis; for text, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971, Document 229.]

19. Letter From President Nixon to Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev¹

Washington, December 6, 1971.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I address this urgent message to you because of my profound concern about the deepening gravity of the situation in the Indian Subcontinent.

Whatever one's view of the causes of the present conflict, the objective fact now is that Indian military forces are being used in an effort to impose political demands and to dismember the sovereign state of Pakistan. It is also a fact that your Government has aligned itself with this Indian policy.

You have publicly stated that because of your geographic proximity to the Subcontinent you consider your security interests involved in the present conflict. But other countries, near and far, cannot help but see their own interests involved as well. And this is bound to result in alignments by other states who had no wish to see the problems in the Subcontinent become international in character.

It had been my understanding, from my exchanges with you and my conversation with your Foreign Minister, that we were entering a new period in our relations which would be marked by mutual re-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. No classification marking. A draft of this letter by Sonnenfeldt is *ibid*.

straint and in which neither you nor we would act in crises to seek unilateral advantages. I had understood your Foreign Minister to say that these principles would govern your policies, as they do ours, not only in such potentially dangerous areas as the Middle East but in international relations generally.

I regret to say that what is happening now in South Asia, where you are supporting the Indian Government's open use of force against the independence and integrity of Pakistan, merely serves to aggravate an already grave situation. Beyond that, however, this course of developments runs counter to the recent encouraging trend in international relations to which the mutual endeavors of our two governments have been making such a major contribution.

It is clear that the interests of all concerned states will be served if the territorial integrity of Pakistan were restored and military action were brought to an end. Urgent action is required and I believe that your great influence in New Delhi should serve these ends.

I must state frankly that it would be illusory to think that if India can somehow achieve its objectives by military action the issue will be closed. An "accomplished fact" brought about in this way would long complicate the international situation and undermine the confidence that we and you have worked so hard to establish. It could not help but have an adverse effect on a whole range of other issues.

I assure you, Mr. Secretary, that such a turn of events would be a painful disappointment at a time when we stand at the threshold of a new and more hopeful era in our relations. I am convinced that the spirit in which we agreed that the time had come for us to meet in Moscow next May requires from both of us the utmost restraint and the most urgent action to end the conflict and restore territorial integrity in the Subcontinent.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

20. **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and Secretary of Commerce Stans¹**

Washington, December 7, 1971, 10:07 a.m.

K: I want to talk to you a minute before the meeting with the President.² He will repeat it. You know we have presented these Russian licenses to fit in with foreign policy situation. We said we would open it wide when conditions good and they were when you were there. But they are taking a tough line on South Asia. Can you calm down your eager beavers? Call it off so they notice it but not forced to explain it?

S: Certainly will. Nothing is on.

K: It will open in a couple of months. It might not take that long but we want them to notice something quickly.

S: I am seeing the President at 3:00. Your timing was absolutely right. They had laid the red carpet for us. We are ready to go. I came back with an ambivalent viewpoint there. Lots of opportunity there but a lot of reservation on what should be done. We should make a constructive move or offer some and tie it to something we want them to do.

K: Like what?

S: I would offer to extend export-import credits provided that your lend-lease tied (?).

K: Now we can consider it on conditional basis if they behave better. We don't exclude that. Will you sit on the other one? I have to run see the President before his Head of State arrival.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² Stans met with President Nixon, Peterson, and Haig from 3:12 to 4:15 p.m. to report on his trip. Stans reported that the Soviets expected to do \$2 billion in trade with the United States by 1975, and they hoped for a 5-year grain agreement. Stans then stated that the Soviets were especially interested in most-favored-nation status, additional credits, relaxation of export controls, a trade agreement, and scientific and space cooperation. Stans pushed for export-import credits as a way to enhance and expand U.S.-Soviet trade. The President thanked Stans for his report and undertaking the mission, but he noted "it was essential that the U.S. attitude with respect to increasing trade with the Soviet Union be governed completely by the state of our political relations." (Memorandum for the President's File, undated; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 213, Agency Files, NSC, (1971), Vol. II) The time of the meeting is from the President's Daily Diary; *ibid.*, White House Central Files. A tape recording of this meeting is *ibid.*, White House Tapes, Recording of conversation among Nixon, Stans, Kissinger, Haig, and Ziegler, December 7, 1971, 3:55–4:49 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 631–4. For Kissinger's assessment of Stans as the leading proponent of trade with the Soviet Union, see *White House Years*, p. 901.

21. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, December 8, 1971, 8:05 p.m.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Moscow summit.]

P: What I was thinking about with regard to the options—maybe we have to put it to the Russians that we feel under the circumstances we have to cancel the summit.

K: No, I think it is too drastic at this early stage.

P: I want you to know we are prepared . . . Do you have a minute now?

K: Yes.

P: The things that we have to consider now are the cost of letting this go down the drain and then doing the other things. On the other hand, we have to figure we may not be around after the election. On the other hand being around after the election may not matter if everything is down the drain.

K: If we play it out toughly we can get some compensation. Then you can go to Moscow and keep your head up. After all the anguish we have gone to setting it up, nobody wants to jeopardize it.

P: I could send a letter to Brezhnev—I'll write it. Say I was pleased with Secretary Stans' conversations; with the conversations you had on the Middle East; SALT, etc., and it is hard for me to believe all of this can be jeopardized by this area of the world.

K: The major problem now is that the Russians retain their respect for us. If they are going to play into an absolute showdown then the summit was not worth it.

P: The thing here is what we want as a way out—what do we say to them? What is the method of settlement? We can't say go back to status quo ante. We can say get out of Pakistan, etc.

K: We have to prevent Indian from attacking West Pakistan. That's the major thing. We have to maintain the position of withdrawal from all Pakistan but we have to prevent West Pakistan from being smashed. But it is a little premature to make the move to the Russians. They still owe us an answer to your previous letter.² Therefore we have to hold

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² Document 19.

it up a little bit. I believe, Mr. President, we can come out of this if they maintain their respect for us. Even if we lose we still will come out alright.

P: You mean moving the [military?] and letting a few planes go in—maybe.

K: Right now we are in the position where we are telling allies not to assist another ally that is in mortal danger. We are in a situation where Soviet stooge uses Soviet weapons to attack a country that we are legally obligated to defend and we do nothing.

P: The Chinese thing I still think is a card in the [hole?]. If they just move a little.

K: I think if we move absolutely nothing we will trigger the Soviets into really tough actions and if we can scare somebody off—it may open the Middle East solution again.

P: Don't underestimate that if Congress gets off this week and we smack North Vietnam that it will be a message to these people.

K: If we send a message to China we should leave an interval so that they won't think we used it as a pretext to getting to Vietnam.

P: That's right. I think message to the Soviets is more important now.

K: That's right.

P: Although they must be agonizing now.

K: But they are so weak. They had a semi-revolt in the military. A million Russians on the northern frontier . . .

P: A movement of some Chinese to the border would scare those Indians to death.

K: (Something re talking to the Chinese—I missed it) I would plan to do that on Friday when I see Golda Meir.

P: If we could enlist them it would be something. I think the delivery of a few planes to them would certainly help. What time do you want to be ready to talk tomorrow?

K: I have a WSAG meeting in the morning. I am seeing Connally at 11:00. I could do it anytime after 11:00.

P: Let's get together around 12:00.

K: Fine, Mr. President.

22. **Note From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**¹

Washington, December 9, 1971.

HAK

*Brezhnev Reply*² to President's December 6 Letter.³

The tone is moderate. The letter sidesteps the points concerning our basic relationship made in the President's letter and instead continues to deny any element of US-Soviet confrontation and to suggest "parallel action".

Although the letter denies Soviet one-sidedness it details what are in fact basically pro-Indian positions regarding a settlement in the pre-hostilities period. It ignores, naturally enough, the objective encouragement given the Indians to take military action by the Soviet-Indian treaty and Soviet arms and equipment supplies (after the US cut off such supplies to Pakistan).

The letter does not take up our point about Pakistan dismemberment and on its face suggests continued Soviet commitment to some kind of Pakistani integrity (e.g. the references to "East Pakistan"). However, the proposed Soviet solution (identical to the one advanced December 7)⁴ can have no other effect than the dismemberment of Pakistan under present circumstances.

¹ National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. Secret; Sensitive.

² Vorontsov handed Kissinger an unofficial translation of Brezhnev's December 8 letter on December 9 at 8:20 p.m. (Ibid.) Brezhnev agreed with Nixon that neither side should seek unilateral advantages in crises like the one in South Asia, but also suggested that the United States and Soviet Union act to resolve the crisis and bring about peace. For text, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971, Document 253.

³ Document 19.

⁴ On December 7 at 11 p.m., Vorontsov delivered to Kissinger a message on South Asia from the Soviet leadership dated December 6. In a December 7 note to Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt suggested that the Soviet leaders' message of December 6 was clearly written before Moscow received President Nixon's letter of December 6 and was in response to Kissinger's conversation with Vorontsov on December 5; see Document 17. Sonnenfeldt characterized the December 6 Soviet message as follows: "The thrust is that we have a little misunderstanding which is only natural and we are wrong to suggest that this should be made a federal case of. In line with this, the tone of the message is moderate. As regards substance, there seems to be some slight movement though not of course enough (no withdrawal)." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8) The Soviet message of December 6 is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971, Document 241.

Thus there is no reference to withdrawal of forces.

Moreover, the suggestion of resumed negotiations between “The Government of Pakistan” and the “East Pakistani leaders”—even accepting the qualification that negotiations should be resumed at “the stage where they were discontinued”—at least requires further explanation under conditions when India has already recognized a separate government in East Bengal. In fact, I think *this proposal is a phony*—and the Soviets either know it or the news has not caught up with them. I do not see how Yahya will negotiate with anybody in East Pakistan when the place is practically occupied by India; and I do not see how the East Pakistanis will negotiate with Yahya when they see victory in their grasp.

What Next?

1. I see no point in another letter from us. If the President sees Matskevich,⁵ that is a better channel right now, anyway.

2. However we elect to talk to the Soviets—you with Vorontsov, President with Matskevich (maybe supplemented by yourself later), or whatever, I think these should be the points to make:

—there must be categorical guarantees that the Soviets will not support the dismemberment of Pakistan, *de facto* or *de jure*;

—there must be a cease-fire⁶ *plus withdrawal* as part of any settlement effort;

—there must be convincing evidence that the Soviets are working to restrain the Indians, in word *and deed*;

—we will be glad to work for the resumption of negotiations provided the real status quo ante is restored; this is the only basis for “parallel” US-Soviet action;

—in any case, matters will take an even more serious turn if the Indians move against the Paks in the West;

—we reiterate what we consider the broader implications for our relations if the dismemberment of Pakistan proceeds.

Sonnenfeldt⁷

⁵ See Document 23.

⁶ Haig crossed out the word “plus” and added the following handwritten revision: “after very categoric assurances there will be” at this point in the note. Haig then wrote the following comment at the end of this note: “HAK—Hal [Sonnenfeldt] is now drafting talking points along foregoing lines. He will soften conditions and language in recognition of our weak position and diplomatic niceties. You should let us know if you want substance changed. AH.”

⁷ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

23. Memorandum for the President's File¹

Washington, December 9, 1971.

SUBJECT

The President's Meeting with Soviet Minister of Agriculture Vladimir Matskevich on Thursday, December 9, 1971 at 4:00 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Minister Matskevich
Soviet Chargé Yuly Vorontsov
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

The President received Minister Matskevich in order to impress upon the Soviet leadership the seriousness of his concern over the India/Pakistan conflict and its potential implications for US-Soviet relations.² The meeting was held to 15 minutes, and there was no press or photo coverage.

Minister Matskevich opened the conversation by conveying orally an official communication from General-Secretary Brezhnev to the President. Brezhnev looked forward to seeing the President in Moscow in May and believed the President's visit would further the cause of peace. Brezhnev expressed the hopes of the whole Central Committee of the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 86, Memoranda for the President, Beginning December 5, 1971. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for information. Drafted by Kissinger. Kissinger sent the President a December 9 briefing memorandum, which stressed that the point of the upcoming meeting was to "convey to the Soviet leadership your view of the India/Pakistan conflict and its potential implications for US-Soviet relations." A stamped note indicates Nixon read it. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8) In his diary, December 9, Haldeman noted that "Henry then made an urgent pitch that the P see the Soviet agriculture minister who was here today, because he's a strong personal friend of Brezhnev's and has a message from Brezhnev, and also the P can give him a message back, laying it out very sternly." Haldeman also stated that he, Haig, and the President agreed that Kissinger was so "physically tired, that he doesn't realize that he is at fault in the failure in India-Pakistan to date and doesn't like that feeling. Also Haig pointed out that Henry basically is bored. He's just tired of fighting the bureaucracy on all these things." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

² President Nixon prepared handwritten notes apparently in anticipation of this meeting. They read: "Our relations are at a critical turning point; 1. Stans—trade, 2. Berlin, 3. SALT, 4. Mideast. Based on mutual restraint—no advantage. Now: we decide—What happens Pakistan 1. What happens to Russ[ia] & Asia—could be disastrous for World. 2. We can't allow dismemberment by force of a friendly country. 3. Must be a ceasefire—negotiations within Pak framework—withdrawal. You [Soviet Union] gain with India. You beat China. You imperil relations with U.S." (Ibid., President's Personal Files, Box 70, President's Speech File, December 9, 1971 Meeting)

CPSU that the Moscow summit would have a beneficial impact on the future, and added a personal word that he looked forward to his meetings alone with the President.

President Nixon responded that he, too, looked forward to his meetings with the General-Secretary. These could be the most important heads-of-government meetings in this century. Minister Matskevich could assure Mr. Brezhnev that President Nixon approached the summit meeting in the same spirit as he did.

The President then told the Agriculture Minister that he wanted to discuss a current and urgent problem very frankly. "We are in correspondence with General-Secretary Brezhnev. I want you to know how strongly I personally feel about this issue. You can convey a sense of urgency, that may help lead to a settlement. Great progress has been made in US-Soviet relations. No one would have said two years ago that such progress was possible. I told your Foreign Minister, Mr. Gromyko, when he was here that our meeting at the highest level had to be on the basis of equality. There must be total mutual respect. I respect the Soviet leaders. The United States and the Soviet Union have made progress in SALT and on Berlin; we have agreed to a spring summit. We have also discussed the possibility of a European Security Conference, and have begun discussions on the Middle East. We have an opportunity for a totally new relationship between our two countries. We won't agree on everything, but if we can progress in all these fields we'll be as close as our two nations were in the war. All this is possible."

"Now, speaking quite frankly," the President continued, "a great cloud hangs over it—the problem of the Subcontinent. Six-hundred million will win over 60 million. Pakistan will be cut in half. In the short range, this may be a gain for the Soviet Union and a setback for China. It is certain to be a tragedy for Pakistan. What is far worse is that if we continue as we are it will poison the whole new relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. What I want to suggest is that you ask whether India's gains—which are certain—are worth jeopardizing your relations with the United States. I don't say this in a threatening way. Let the US and the USSR find a way to work together.

"The first requirement is a ceasefire. The second requirement is that India desist from attacks in West Pakistan. If India moves forces against West Pakistan, the United States cannot stand by. The key to a settlement is in the hands of the Soviet Union. If the USSR does not restrain the Indians, the US will not be able to deal with Yahya. If the Indians continue their military operations, we must inevitably look toward a confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviet Union has a treaty with India; we have one with Pakistan.

You must recognize the urgency of a ceasefire and political settlement of the crisis.

“Let us not let our differences on this issue obscure the great opportunities before us for improving our relations,” the President concluded.

Minister Matskevich replied that he was grateful to have the President’s frank appraisal of the situation and would convey this message to the Soviet leadership.

After a brief exchange of leave-taking formalities, the meeting ended.

24. Editorial Note

Between December 10 and 12, 1971, the military crisis in South Asia reached a climax. Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger and Soviet Minister Counselor Vorontsov as well as President Nixon and Soviet leaders exchanged multiple messages in an attempt to bring an end to the fighting and resolve the crisis.

On December 10, at 11:59 a.m., Kissinger met with Vorontsov and outlined a newly modified U.S. proposal for a settlement of the war that no longer required Indian withdrawal, but instead a cease-fire and standstill agreement between India and Pakistan monitored by United Nations representatives in East and West Pakistan. After the cease-fire took effect, negotiations would lead to troop withdrawal and satisfaction for Bengali aspirations in East Pakistan. (Kissinger’s Record of Schedule; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, and *White House Years*, page 905) In describing the meeting to President Nixon, Kissinger reported that he told Vorontsov that the United States had a secret treaty with Pakistan (actually a secret understanding, see *Foreign Relations*, 1961–1963, volume XIX, Document 100, and footnote 6, Document 191) and characterized his informing the Soviet Minister Counselor of it as a “veiled ultimatum.” Nixon responded, “If Brezhnev does not have the good judgment not to push us to the wall on this miserable issue, we may as well forget the summit.” Kissinger assured the President that there would be an acceptable cease-fire by December 12 or 13 supported by the United States, the Soviet Union, and China. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, December 10, 1971, 12:47–1:01 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 635–17) Also on December 10, Nixon sent Brezhnev a letter responding to Brezhnev’s letter of December 8; see Document 22 and footnote 2 thereto. Nixon’s letter proposed a joint US–USSR ap-

peal for an immediate cease-fire. Nixon suggested that if the Soviet Union was unwilling, the United States would conclude: "there is in progress an act of aggression directed at the whole of Pakistan, a friendly country toward which we have obligations." Nixon asked Brezhnev to use his influence and take responsibility to restrain India. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/ Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8)

At 7:30 p.m. on December 11, Kissinger telephoned the President and discussed taking the issue to the UN Security Council the next day. Nixon insisted that "we have to use the word aggression—naked aggression." Kissinger agreed: "And if this continues, now that East Pakistan has practically fallen there can no longer be any doubt that we are dealing with naked aggression supported by Soviet power." Kissinger suggested informing the Soviet leaders what the United States planned to do in the Security Council the next day. Nixon was at first dubious about "telling the Russians before we hear from them," but then agreed that Kissinger should inform Vorontsov that night. Kissinger suggested: "We will then take public steps, including the Security Council steps, in which we will publicly have to say what their [USSR's] role is." The President responded, "Well, I would rather it be stated in which it will be clear what their role is—that the steps would inevitably show what their role is unless they cooperate in a policy of stopping aggression at this point." Next Kissinger and Nixon discussed China's probable reaction, with the President doubting they would do anything and Kissinger suggesting they would support Pakistan. Kissinger then complained, "Bleeding hearts are saying that we are driving India away and that no one mentions what the Russians are doing." The President then authorized Kissinger to call Vorontsov. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Soon after this telephone discussion (there is no time on the transcript), Kissinger called Vorontsov and informed him of his discussion with the President. Kissinger told Vorontsov: "He [Nixon] has asked me to tell you that if we don't hear from you by tomorrow morning that we will proceed unilaterally. We have now waited for 48 hours and in a matter that affects the peace of the world in these circumstances we will proceed unilaterally and if we do we will have to state our view about the involvement of other countries." Vorontsov replied "Kuznetsov [Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister] is embarked on a mission to India now; and I have reasons to believe that that's in direct connection to whatever we have discussed here." After confirming when Kuznetsov left—that morning, Moscow time—Kissinger told Vorontsov, "I cannot stress to you sufficiently seriously how gravely we view the situation." The Soviet Minister Counselor said he understood, that Kuznetsov's trip also showed the Soviets' serious view.

Vorontsov suggested that he might have something from Moscow the next day. Kissinger responded, "Well, I understand it, you have to understand that we have not made a move for 72 hours in order to give us a chance of moving jointly. We cannot in all honor wait any longer." Vorontsov asked what Kissinger meant by unilateral action. Kissinger answered: "We will of course move unilaterally in the UN, but we may also take certain other steps which were not irrevocable [but which] would be preferable if we did not have to take them." Kissinger added that, "We again want to underline that this is something that we prefer to do." Vorontsov said he understood and "in Moscow they understand that." Kissinger was referring to U.S. plans to move an aircraft carrier task force into the Bay of Bengal, but he did not specifically inform Vorontsov of that fact. Vorontsov promised to transmit Kissinger's message to Moscow. (Ibid.)

The morning of December 12, President Nixon and Kissinger, later joined by Deputy Assistant to the President Haig, had a long meeting on South Asia in which they agreed to send a "hot line" message to Moscow, the first use of that channel by the Nixon administration. Nixon outlined the message as follows: "Basically all we are doing is asking for a reply. We're not letting the Russians diddle us along. Point one. Second, all we are doing is to reiterate what I said to the Agricultural Minister and what you [Kissinger] said to Vorontsov." Nixon and Kissinger agreed this was a good plan and a bold move. Most of the meeting was taken up with discussing China's potential reaction, especially after Haig informed the President and Kissinger that the Chinese wanted to meet with them. The three men discussed the likelihood of Soviet military action against China in the event of Chinese military moves to threaten India. Kissinger stated: "If the Soviets move against them and we don't do anything, we'll be finished." The President asked: "So what do we do if the Soviets move against them? Start lobbing nuclear weapons?" Kissinger suggested that if the Soviets moved against China it would be "the final showdown" and if the Soviets succeeded "we will be finished." After tentatively considering restraining the Chinese, Kissinger suggested, "I think we can't call them off frankly" Kissinger continued, "If we call them off, I think our China initiative is pretty well down the drain." The three men then discussed the crisis at length in ever increasing disastrous scenarios. Kissinger suggested, "If the outcome of this is that Pakistan is swallowed by India, China is destroyed, defeated, humiliated by the Soviet Union, it will be a change in the world balance of power of such magnitude that the security of the United States may be forever, certainly for decades—we will have a ghastly war in the Middle East." The President then suggested that China and the Soviet Union would not go to war, but Kissinger demurred. Finally the President agreed with Haig and Kissinger that if the Chinese moved against India, the United States

would tell the Soviets that war with China was “unacceptable.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Recording of conversation among Nixon, Kissinger, and Haig, December 12, 1971, 8:45 a.m.–9:42 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 637–3)

At 10:05 a.m., Vorontsov called Kissinger and read him the text of a message from the Soviet leadership, which Vorontsov then gave to Haig at 10:45 a.m. The message read: “The first contacts with the Government of India and personally with Prime Minister I. Gandhi on the question which was raised by President Nixon in his letter [December 10] testify to the fact that the Government of India has no intention to take any military actions against West Pakistan. The Soviet leaders believe that this makes the situation easier and hope that the Government of Pakistan will draw from this appropriate conclusions. As far as other questions raised in the President’s letter are concerned the answers will be given in the shortest of time.” (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 492, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8)

At 10:27 a.m., Kissinger and the President met again in the Oval Office to discuss the hot line message in light of the interim Soviet message read to Kissinger at 10:05 a.m. They revised the hot line message. The President and Kissinger alternated between optimism and fear that the crisis could take a dangerous turn, especially if the Chinese supported Pakistan. The overall assessment was one of optimism that the Soviet Union was unwilling to move towards military confrontation with the United States. (Ibid., White House Tapes, Recording of conversation among Nixon, Kissinger, and Haig, December 12, 1971, 10:27–10:37 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 637–6) At 11:30 a.m., the White House dispatched the “hot line” message to Brezhnev drafted earlier that morning by Kissinger and the President. It read: “Mr. General Secretary: I have just received your interim message concerning the grave situation in the Indian Subcontinent. However, after delaying for 72 hours in anticipation of your reply to my conversation with Minister Matskevich and Counselor Vorontsov I had set in train certain moves in the United Nations Security Council at the time mentioned to Counselor Vorontsov. These cannot now be reversed. I must also note that the Indian assurances still lack concreteness. I am still prepared to proceed along the lines set forth in my letter of December 10, as well as in the conversations with your Chargé d’Affaires Vorontsov, and my talk with your Agricultural Minister. In view of the urgency of the situation and the need for concerted action I propose that we continue closest consultations through established confidential channels. I cannot emphasize too strongly that time is of the essence to avoid consequences neither of us want.” (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 492, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8)

Kissinger then called Vorontsov at 11:45 a.m. to inform him about the “hot line” message and to chastise him about not receiving a

message from the Soviet leadership until after 10 a.m. despite Kissinger's earlier insistence to Vorontsov that the United States would move in the UN Security Council that morning unless they received a Soviet response by 9 a.m. Although concerned about trouble in the Security Council, Vorontsov suggested there would be an agreement from India by the time the Council met. Vorontsov then hoped that "maybe everything will fall into place." Kissinger responded: "We can still make it fall into place." "We need an agreement," Vorontsov said. "I hope you will not be insistent on a fist fight in the Security Council because we are in agreement now. All that is needed now is the tactical things. The terms will be acceptable to you." Kissinger responded: "You will find us cooperative. Make sure your leaders understand this." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Before leaving for the Azores with the President to meet with French President Pompidou, Kissinger called Vorontsov at 12:30 p.m. and gave him the following message: "Yuli, I just talked to the President again. I reported our conversation to him and he asked me to tell you that we will work it out in a spirit so there are no winners or losers. And so we are not looking for any public humiliation of anybody. We also believe—and we will use our influence in the Security Council as it evolves to come up with a compromise so far as the UN is concerned in which everybody gives up a little. We are also prepared to proceed on our understandings on which you are working. We want to make sure that you approach us first so that for [from] now on we will not take any additional steps beyond what we have told you . . . and then work out a strategy and tactics and then work toward a solution as rapidly as possible. That is the spirit in which we will approach it as soon as we get confirmation from you." (Ibid.)

The afternoon of December 12, Haig met with Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations Huang Hua in New York and discovered that China was not prepared to support Pakistan militarily, but rather wanted a cease-fire, mutual troop withdrawal, and settlement brokered by the United Nations. The full text of the conversation between Haig and Huang Hua, which was sent to Nixon and Kissinger en route to the Azores, is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVII, China, 1969–1972, Document 177.

Haig called Vorontsov at 7:40 p.m. on December 12 to inform him that he had just spoken to the President and Kissinger in the Azores. Haig stated the President and Kissinger were holding up the movement of the U.S. Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal for 24 hours to give the Soviets time to nail down an agreement with the Indians and to avoid publicity. Vorontsov responded: "During this 24 hours we might have good results." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

25. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, December 14, 1971, 6 p.m.

SUBJECT

Meeting between Henry A. Kissinger, Soviet Minister Vorontsov, and Brigadier General Haig, Tuesday, December 14, 1971, 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Kissinger informed Minister Vorontsov that the President had asked him to meet with the Minister to again reiterate and expand on some of the items that General Haig had discussed with him earlier that day.² Dr. Kissinger noted that when the crisis in the Subcontinent became acute, the U.S. Government delayed initiating unilateral action or action in concert with other governments with the hope that the U.S. could work jointly with the Soviet Union in the established confidential channel in a search for a constructive and peaceful solution to the dilemma. It was specifically for this reason that the United States held up military moves and other actions which it might otherwise have undertaken in its own interest and in the interest of world peace. Despite this fact, the prolonged time that lapsed between Mr. Vorontsov's discussions with Dr. Kissinger on Sunday morning (December 12)³ and the receipt of a formal Soviet response early Tuesday morning⁴ resulted in certain unilateral actions by the U.S. Government. These same delays were experienced following Dr. Kissinger's earlier discussions with Minister Vorontsov during the outbreak of the fighting.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. No drafting information appears on the memorandum.

² Haig's memorandum for the record of his conversation with Vorontsov at 12:40 p.m. on December 14 is *ibid.* and printed in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971, Document 303.

³ Regarding the Kissinger–Vorontsov telephone conversations on the morning of December 12, see Document 24.

⁴ At 3 a.m. on December 14, Vorontsov delivered to Haig a message from the Soviet leadership to President Nixon. The Soviet leaders called for a "calm, weighed approach" to the crisis. The leaders stated: "We are in constant contact with the Indian side. . . . We have firm assurances by the Indian leadership that India has no plans of seizing West Pakistani territory. Thus as far as intentions of India are concerned there is no lack of clarity to which you have referred. In the course of consultations the Indian side has expressed willingness to cease fire and withdraw its forces if Pakistani Government withdraws its forces from East Pakistan and peaceful settlement is reached there with the lawful representatives of East Pakistani population, to whom power will be transferred and conditions will be created for return from India of all East Pakistani refugees. At the same time the Indians have no intentions to impose their will on the East Pakistani people who themselves will determine their lot." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8)

Dr. Kissinger stated that he noted with satisfaction the Soviet Government's assurance that the Government of India had absolutely no territorial designs on West Pakistan, and he wanted it clearly understood that he was referring to a return to the status quo ante or the existing dividing lines between India and West Pakistan and that efforts would not be made to modify these dividing lines in the current crisis. Mr. Vorontsov replied that this was precisely the Soviet view and their understanding of the assurance provided to the United States Government; in other words, that there should be a precise return to the status quo ante which existed prior to the current crisis. Dr. Kissinger stated that Mr. Vorontsov may have noted the press reports coming from Air Force One during the return of the Presidential party from the Azores.⁵ Mr. Vorontsov indicated that he was aware of those remarks. Dr. Kissinger stated that these remarks were somewhat overplayed by the press and they should be interpreted as confirmation of the U.S. view that there was no longer any justification for failing to settle the conflict on the Subcontinent. Further delays of the kind we have been experiencing constitute a temporary irritation in U.S./Soviet relationships and the remarks on the plane were designed to note the U.S.'s concern. Should the situation continue to deteriorate, it must have an impact on future U.S./Soviet relationships. Soviet actions thus far are not consistent with the United States Government's conception of joint U.S./Soviet action in search of an improved environment for world peace.

Dr. Kissinger noted that the United Kingdom now had a resolution before the United Nations.⁶ While this resolution appeared to be changing hourly, it is in the general framework of the kind of resolution that the U.S. believes the Soviet Government and the U.S. Government should support. The United States Government is not aware of the view of the People's Republic of China on this resolution, but if all parties could get behind such a resolution then the situation on the Subcontinent could be settled tomorrow. If this is not the Soviet Government's view, how should the United States then interpret the communication from the Soviet leaders? Mr. Vorontsov asked why the

⁵ Apparent reference to Kissinger's remarks on December 13, as reported in *The New York Times*, that President Nixon regarded the Soviet Union as capable of restraining India and if it did not do so, the President would reassess the US-USSR relationship including his decision to attend the Moscow summit.

⁶ In a December 15 memorandum to Kissinger, Harold Saunders of the NSC staff summarized the British resolution as a "simple ceasefire on all fronts," with "enough said about a political settlement to hint that it could be what India wants," and a mechanism whereby "a UN special representative sorts out political and humanitarian problems." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 573, Indo-Pak War, South Asia, 12/14/71–12/16/71)

United States Government would not be willing to go beyond a resolution calling for a simple ceasefire since this was not adequate in the Soviet or the Indian viewpoint. Dr. Kissinger stated that the resolution might be expanded to include withdrawal since Indian forces have penetrated much Pakistani territory. Thus far, Soviet reactions have been slow and characterized by delaying tactics. The U.S. has observed the Soviet bureaucracy move with the greatest speed when it chooses to do so. Minister Vorontsov stated that the complication arose when the United States Government changed on Monday the proposals it had made the previous week to the Soviet Government.⁷ This was a cause of great concern to the Soviet leaders. Of particular concern was the fact that the United States Government dropped reference to a political solution which was contained in the language given by Dr. Kissinger to Minister Vorontsov earlier. Dr. Kissinger stated that this was true but that the reasons that it was necessary to do so was the failure on the part of the Soviet Government to respond promptly to the U.S. proposal. Minister Vorontsov said the problem is obviously not a question of Soviet or U.S. ill will but one of the complexity of the problem. Dr. Kissinger stated that he was less concerned about the immediate handling of the situation but could not help but blame the Soviet Union for letting the situation develop in the first instance. For example, the provision of massive amounts of modern military equipment to the Government of India, and threats to China which served as a guarantee and cover for Indian action had to be considered as the cause of the difficulty. Minister Vorontsov replied that the Paks had U.S. armament, some Soviet armament and some Chinese armament. The real problem was the result of grievous errors made by Pakistan in the East. Dr. Kissinger stated that we are now dealing with reality which must receive urgent attention. The U.S. is prepared on its part to give up its demand for withdrawal and it has asked that the Soviets on its part give up its demands for a political settlement. This poses an obvious compromise. Minister Vorontsov noted that the U.S. departure from its earlier language is what has caused the problem. Dr. Kissinger reiterated that this was forced on the U.S. side because the Soviet Government gave no answer over a prolonged period. Thus, the U.S. was forced to move based on the principles to which it adhered. There was no Soviet response even after the President's departure for the Azores. Thus, the United States had no alternative but to adhere to the moral principles associated with the issue. Minister Vorontsov said it should be noted that when the United States dropped the three essential points contained in its initial proposal, Moscow was

⁷ Apparent reference to the message sent by Nixon to Brezhnev on Sunday, December 12; see Document 24.

greatly disturbed. Moscow had originally been very pleased by the U.S. move in Dacca which the President noted in his letter to Mr. Brezhnev but then a sudden departure from the political initiative caused great concern in his capital. The problem now is that it is time to prevent a bloodbath in East Pakistan. It is essential that all parties act now. A viable resolution can only transfer power to the Bangla Desh. Dr. Kissinger said that the U.S. Government cannot go along with this kind of resolution. Mr. Vorontsov replied that the question was now academic since he had seen on the news that the East Pakistan Government had already resigned. Dr. Kissinger stated that he would now like to summarize his understanding. This understanding was that:

—The Indians would not attack the West.

—The Indians would not seek to acquire Pakistan territory and would return to the territorial limits that existed prior to the crisis—in other words to a status quo ante.

Minister Vorontsov said that that would also be the Soviet Union's understanding. Dr. Kissinger stated the issue is now to get a settlement in East Pakistan. Minister Vorontsov agreed noting that a means must be found to prevent the bloodbath which will follow. Dr. Kissinger stated that the original U.S. statement was an objective one not suitable for a U.N. resolution. Minister Vorontsov agreed. Dr. Kissinger stated that continual haggling between parties in the Security Council could only lead to sterile results. If it continues, it cannot sit well with the United States Government. For this reason, something like the U.K. resolution, which the United States side does not like either, appears to offer the best compromise. On the other hand, if the Soviets continue to seek a *fait accompli*, then the U.S. Government must draw its own conclusions from this reality. Minister Vorontsov asked what Dr. Kissinger considered an ideal solution. Dr. Kissinger stated that the U.S. Government knows that East Pakistan will not go back to the West. On the other hand, the U.S. cannot legally accept an overt change in status at this moment, and efforts within the United Nations to force the U.S. Government to do so must be vetoed. The U.S. considers that a *fait accompli* has occurred in the East and the problem is to proceed from that point. On the other hand, India seeks not only to break East Pakistan away from the West but to do so under a mantle of legitimacy. This is more than the United States can accept. Just two weeks ago, Madame Gandhi said that the situation in East Pakistan was an internal Pakistani problem. Thus, steps from this point on should be to stop the fighting. Why should the United States struggle with the Soviet Union at costs in its relations with the Soviets on an issue like the Bangla Desh, especially when there are such great issues like the Middle East to be settled between the two sides? Furthermore, the United States is not anti-India as some would infer. Certainly, the Soviets know what the real problem is. Minister Vorontsov stated that the real problem in

Moscow is concerned that the United States continually airs its complaints in the press. Statements like the Summit statement earlier in the day cause real problems in Moscow. Dr. Kissinger stated that General Haig had advised Minister Vorontsov that we had waited for an extended period for a Soviet response but none was forthcoming. The U.S. had informed the Soviet Government that we were prepared to take parallel action and was confident that the Soviets would join with us. There is no way that the U.S. could permit Pakistan to be dismembered officially in the United Nations framework. It was the U.S. view that an agreement could be worked out between the two governments quietly in the confidential channel. Certainly, the Chinese would oppose such a solution in the United Nations. President Nixon interpreted the Soviet response as a delaying action. Minister Vorontsov noted that the U.S. neglected to reiterate the West Pakistan concession made in Dacca. Dr. Kissinger stated that the President did not focus specifically on that issue. For that matter, Dr. Kissinger himself did not. The U.S. now appreciates this and therefore both sides could wind up the matter without further delay. Minister Vorontsov said that the Soviets would need some help with respect to the Summit statement as soon as possible that would tend to limit the damage in Moscow. Dr. Kissinger stated that the U.S. side would calm public speculation on the issue. Dr. Kissinger directed General Haig to insure that Press Secretary Ziegler modify the exaggerated play that was given to the statement on Air Force One. Dr. Kissinger continued that since Friday, President Nixon had been concerned that the Soviet leaders were not doing all possible to arrive at a settlement. On the way to the Azores, he commented that it would have been most helpful if he could tell the French that the U.S. and the Soviets had concerted to arrive at a settlement. In the face of continued delays, however, the President began to believe that the Soviet Government was providing words only with the view towards letting events on the ground dictate the ultimate outcome. It is not President Nixon's style to threaten. Certainly he hopes that the U.S./Soviet Summit will work but in this context, President Nixon has long sought a genuine change in U.S./Soviet relations. Despite his desires, however, the Soviets proceed to equip India with great amounts of sophisticated armaments. If the Soviet Government were to support or to pressure other foreign leaders to dismember or to divide an ally of the United States, how can the Soviet leaders expect progress in our mutual relationships? This is the source of the President's concern. He has never questioned mere atmospherics but intends to make major progress in U.S./Soviet relations.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

26. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 15, 1971, 11:30 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Soviet Chargé Yuly Vorontsov

I met with Vorontsov at my request to hand him a draft letter to Kosygin (attached) on the need to put an end to hostilities.²

Vorontsov said that I had to believe him that a major effort was being made to induce the Indians; however, they were not being very reasonable. I said that there was no longer any excuse; the President had made any number of personal appeals, all of which had been rejected, and it was time to move. Vorontsov asked me whether it could be dealt with in the United Nations. I told him yes, we were prepared to support the British Resolution³ if the Soviet Union would. Vorontsov said that the British Resolution was not very agreeable; the Soviets were trying to promote the Polish Resolution.⁴ I said I wanted him to know that we would not agree to any resolution that recognized a turnover of authority. There was a question of principle involved. It was bad enough that the United Nations was impotent in the case of military attack; it could not be asked to legitimize it. However, as I pointed out, we were prepared to work in a parallel direction.

Vorontsov said that the letter presented some difficulties. The Soviet Union was prepared unconditionally to guarantee the United States that there would be no Indian attack on the Western front or on

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House.

² The draft letter was attached. A handwritten note at the top of the first page reads: "Draft shown to Min. Vorontsov by HAK, 11:30 a.m., 12/15/71." The draft letter noted that the military conflict in East Pakistan was moving to a conclusion and the remaining task was to end the bloodshed there and end fighting in the West. Since UN efforts had not yielded progress, Nixon asked: "Is it not therefore urgently desirable that our two countries should take prompt and reasonable steps to ensure that the military conflict does not spread and that assurances be given against territorial acquisition by either side?" The President hoped that the United States and Soviet Union could "cooperate to achieve an end to all the fighting, to remove the concern that the war will become one of conquest, and to eliminate the threat to peace that has arisen." Nixon's draft letter added, that this "would, of course, not prejudice anybody's position with respect to an ultimate political solution."

³ For a summary of the British resolution, see footnote 6, Document 25. The resolution is UN doc S/10455.

⁴ UN doc S/10453.

Kashmir, and that when they referred to West Pakistan they meant the existing dividing line. However, to do this publicly would mean that they were in effect speaking for a friendly country. After all, India was not a client state. I said that the course of events was obvious: Either there would be a ceasefire soon in the West anyway through the UN or through direct dealings with us, or else we would have to draw appropriate conclusions.

Vorontsov said, "In a little while we will go back to where we were." I said, "I have told you for two weeks now that this is not the case." On this note, we left.⁵

⁵ At 5:55 p.m. on December 15, Kissinger reported on this conversation by telephone to President Nixon who was vacationing in Key Biscayne, Florida. Kissinger said: "I never had a chance to give you a report from Vorontsov. I gave him the draft letter to Kosygin asking him for joint action to stop the fighting. I told him we put it forward not to get any additional confrontations. I also said they could support the British Resolution which is really at the very edge, well beyond the edge of what is tolerable." The conversation then dealt more generally with the South Asia crisis, with Kissinger telling the President of reports that the Soviet Union was encouraging India to take Kashmir, but with both hoping that it might not happen. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

27. National Security Study Memorandum 143¹

Washington, December 15, 1971.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Secretary of the Treasury
The Secretary of Commerce
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

SUBJECT

Review of US–Soviet Negotiations

¹ Source: National Security Council, NSSM Files, NSSM 143. Secret. Copies were sent to Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Richardson, Chairman of the JCS Moorer, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality Train, the President's Assistant for International Economic Affairs Peterson, Director of ACDA Smith, and Director of USIA Shakespeare.

As part of the process of planning for his meetings in Moscow, the President has directed that all bilateral issues that may be subject to discussions or negotiations with the USSR between now and the summit meeting be reviewed by the Senior Review Group. Multilateral negotiations, other than on major international issues (e.g. SALT, Berlin, MBFR, CSCE, etc.) will be included in this review.

To initiate this review each agency should prepare a brief status report of those issues within its jurisdiction which are currently under discussion with the USSR as well as any questions that may be discussed or negotiated in the next five months. All issues will be included even though they may be the subject of separate NSSM study. These status reports should include a description of the issue, its current status, prospects for agreement and the possible interrelationship with other questions being discussed with the USSR.

The agency status reports should be submitted through the Chairman of the NSC Interdepartmental Group for Europe not later than December 29, 1971 for consideration by the NSC Senior Review Group.² The Chairman, NSC-IG Europe will assure a uniform format, and will submit, along with the agency reports, a brief summary of the interrelationship among the various issues reported. For the purposes of this special project, the Senior Review Group will include representatives of the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of the Treasury, and NASA; other agencies will participate if there are matters concerning the USSR in their area of responsibility that are likely to arise between now and the summit.

The President has directed further that no agreements with the USSR will be initialed or otherwise concluded without his approval.

Henry A. Kissinger

² See Document 34.

28. **Backchannel Message From the Chief of the Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (Smith) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**¹

Vienna, December 15, 1971, 1807Z.

32. Dear Henry:

In post-plenary December 15th, I expressed personal concern to Semenov that events in the subcontinent could have a prejudicial effect on the prospect for improvement in Soviet/American relations in which I thought SALT progress had had a part.² I asked if he shared this concern.

He referred to the no-linkage understanding and to earlier situations during SALT when there had been international strains. He said that there were other contacts between our governments to go into matters such as this. I said that it was clearer than ever before to me that in SALT we were not working in a vacuum.

Semenov said that on a suitable occasion when we were not as busy as now he would present his views about the subcontinent situation in a personal way. He did not believe this question could influence the development of relations between our countries. Our governments had different positions on certain aspects of this problem, but he did not believe that these differences were any deeper than differences between us on some other questions which had not affected our negotiations; therefore, he personally did not share Smith's concern. Of course, the question in itself was important and he would not be averse to holding an exchange of personal views, but not at the present moment.³

Warm regards.

Gerry Smith

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, SALT, 1971. Top Secret; Eyes Only.

² In backchannel message WH11135 to Vienna for Smith, December 13, Kissinger stated: "The situation in South Asia is such that it is most important that the U.S. Delegation maintain a cool and somewhat more reserved attitude towards their Soviet counterparts. This demeanor should be adopted immediately and maintained until further notice. President of course leaves up to your best judgment the manner in which this perceptible shift in U.S. attitude should be conveyed but he anticipates your complete cooperation in this endeavor until situation in South Asia clarifies." (Ibid.)

³ On December 15 Kissinger sent WH11186 to Vienna, informing Smith that President Nixon "was alarmed that you raised directly the issue of South Asia with Semenov." Kissinger stated that the President's intent was a shift in demeanor, not that Smith should raise the issue directly. Kissinger instructed Smith not to engage in further private discussions, but "rather initiate a stalling procedure in your SALT discussions without attributing the shift in any way to events in South Asia." (Ibid.) Smith defended his action in backchannel message 34 from Vienna to Kissinger, and expressed puzzlement that his action "alarmed" the President. (Ibid.) Smith mentions this series of telegrams in *Doubletalk*, pp. 341–342, and notes as soon as the crisis was over in South Asia, it was back to business as usual.

29. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, December 15, 1971.

SUBJECT

Moscow Visit

I thought you might be interested in reading the attached report from the NSC staff member who accompanied Secretary Stans on his recent trip to the Soviet Union.² The report states that:

—For a variety of reasons the Soviets made the trip into a major event.

—It was obvious that the Soviets want more trade with us, particularly US technology and credits.

—The Soviets want the May summit to produce a number of agreements.

—Brezhnev is plainly the top leader and still moving. Kosygin was impressive both in his manner of presentation and his command of substance.

—You can expect to be received with effusive official hospitality but a strictly controlled public reception.

Tab A

Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

Washington, November 30, 1971.

SUBJECT

My Visit to Moscow

The Soviets were obviously intent on making Secretary Stans' trip³ a major event. Atypically, *Pravda* covered it daily, as did radio and TV. Hospitality was effusive and all the talks were to the point and un-polemical, even when the Soviets raised their long-standing grievances

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 294, Memoranda to the President, December 1971. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information.

² Tab A.

³ Regarding Commerce Secretary Stans' trip to Moscow, see Document 14.

about US “discrimination.” The public attention was, of course, in large part intended for the Chinese but it could not help signaling to the Soviet public that there is a warming trend in US-Soviet relations. At the same time, we know from the numerous orientation lectures which our Embassy people attend that Party propagandists are putting out the line that the US motivation, including the President’s, is colored by current domestic politics and it is therefore subject to change.

The Soviets obviously want more trade with us; they want our technology and our credits. And they are talking about projects running 20 to 30 years—like the exploitation of their natural gas deposits—implying a more or less stable political relationship. Of course, their concept of stability still involves strong elements of competition (as Kosygin indicated when he revived the notion of an economic race with us). The chief American expert in the Soviet Foreign Ministry made clear to me in a private talk⁴ that a major strand in the present Soviet mood is that the Soviets are historically entitled to a period of ascendancy after a quarter century in which the US was Number One. I tried to point out the dangers of their pressing excessively since we were bound to respond.

Secretary Stans effectively made the case that long-term trade relations must be rooted in stable political relations and require broad American public support, which is only now developing. He stressed, too, that American firms and their representatives require normal working facilities in the USSR; the Soviets said they understood but avoided commitments. Obviously, some of the activities to which American business representatives are accustomed are incompatible with the rigidities of Soviet life.

Secretary Stans will be reporting fully to the President,⁵ so I will not go into details on the Stans mission. He reserved major political decisions for the President—i.e., on MFN and EXIM credits—but held out promise of substantially increased commercial relations. I think we can anticipate that American firms will be encouraged by the Stans mission to pursue intensively contract negotiations with the Soviets in many fields. Because the only way the Soviets can finance large imports is by credits and improved access of some of their goods to the US market, we can expect mounting pressure on the President to move on MFN and EXIM credits. This will come not only from industry but from the farm States since Kosygin will take care that his proposition to Stans for annual billion dollar grain purchases on credit will become public knowledge. I think we should recognize that MFN and credits

⁴ The account of this conversation is at Tab B, which was attached to a covering memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, November 30, but was not sent to the President.

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 20.

remain useful political tools for us in our relations with the Soviets and decisions should not be driven by domestic concerns alone.

It is clear from my talks that the Soviets want the May summit to be productive. They are formalistic and like documents that can be signed. This is also important for them *vis-à-vis* China. They mentioned a trade agreement, a science and technology agreement, an agreement on space cooperation and the agreement on preventing naval incidents now being negotiated. And we know of their interest in a maritime agreement, the moon treaty, an environmental agreement and medical cooperation. They also want to get their German treaty ratified and are now bargaining with Scheel about a compromise on the linkage of that treaty to the Berlin agreement. They would undoubtedly like to be on the way to a European conference by May and get the President's firm commitment to it. I did not get a clear feeling whether they want a SALT agreement before May—their latest offensive proposal has many flaws and suggests a bargaining posture; they might hope to extract some key concession from the President.

In any event, we should probably be responsive to some degree to Soviet desires for signed documents when they accomplish something specific and concrete. Vague "umbrella" agreements play into Soviet hands by arousing the Chinese and our Allies and creating euphoria. Moreover, they usually solve none of the practical problems of implementation which always dog relations with the Soviets.

My impression from my talks is that the Soviets are groping for ways to defuse the Middle East and India/Pakistan, but they remain committed to their friend's position in each case. Just how helpful we can expect them to be in a positive sense is difficult to say.

I can only comment superficially on the leadership from my observations. Brezhnev figures so prominently in the press that he is plainly at the top of the heap and still moving. At the Supreme Soviet, he was the only one made up for TV (powdered face and neatly dyed hair and eyebrows) and the only one who got up and took a break during Kosygin's long speech. At one point when applause began to rise to what the Soviets call an ovation, Brezhnev stopped clapping and everyone else took the cue.

Kosygin in the meeting with Stans was, as always, impressive in his command of the subject. He used no notes and spoke systematically and authoritatively, though obviously on instructions. Interestingly, the lesser ministers seemed not to know what he would say; they took copious notes and subsequently referred to them religiously. He was also psychologically shrewd, interspersing his substantive pitch for US concessions with genial and flattering personal remarks and even a winning smile. He showed no signs of any health problem, though I found it curious that his hands trembled nervously as the

meeting with Stans began. Later he was composed. At the Supreme Soviet, he stood up for two hours and spoke with a deep, resonant voice from beginning to end, not stopping for water or stumbling over the complex terminology and interminable statistics typical for a Five Year Plan presentation. (Incidentally, his interpreter, who worked for Khrushchev and undoubtedly will translate for Brezhnev in May, and is known to the President from 1959/60, is more idiomatic than precise. We should take care to keep a check on him.)

While I was in Moscow the Central Committee was meeting and there was the usual speculation about leadership tensions. The Germans, according to their Ambassador, are convinced that Ukrainian party boss Shelest, who was listed as the first speaker after Brezhnev's secret foreign policy report, leads opponents to the Brezhnev line. It was noted that the recently resigned, reportedly anti-Brezhnev, prime minister of the Russian Republic (RSFSR) was not removed from the Politburo while his pro-Brezhnev successor was only elected a candidate member. The conclusion was that Brezhnev is as yet unable to manipulate top leadership fortunes at will.

In conclusion, the President on present form can expect to be received with effusive official hospitality but a strictly controlled public reception. I am sure a night in the Kremlin will be offered and a comfortable guest house after that. The streets are wide and the people will be kept well away from the VIP center lane. We have enormous limitations as far as setting up secure working quarters is concerned, but communications should be adequate. I am sure the Soviets will be helpful on our press needs. But we should get an advance team to Moscow at least two months before the summit to make the physical arrangements. On substance, we need to keep tight White House control over all on-going negotiations so that we can pace them in a way that best suits the President's wishes.

Tab B

Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)⁶

Washington, November 29, 1971.

SUBJECT

Private Talks in Moscow

⁶ Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only.

At a lunch arranged for me by our DCM, Korniyenko, the American expert in the Foreign Ministry, asked me if I could delay my departure by some hours to have a private lunch with him on Friday, November 26. I told him that I would have to check the air schedules and also asked whether it might be possible to see Aleksandrov. At dinner that evening, Dobrynin pulled me aside to urge me to have the private lunch on Friday. I asked him whether I could assume that Korniyenko was informed about the state of US-Soviet relations and various exchanges. Dobrynin said this assumption was correct except for a very small fraction which went “directly to the top.” He said that Korniyenko was charged with making preparations for May.

At the DCM’s lunch the two Soviets present were Korniyenko and the Foreign Office disarmament chief, Timerbayev. I have known both for a dozen years. The conversation dealt entirely with MBFR and ESC. On the former, the Soviets complained about the Brosio mission on the ground that (1) it made MBFR a bloc-to-bloc affair, (2) Brosio is identified with the Cold War, and (3) the mission is a scheme for delay.⁷ I said these objections sounded formalistic. Brosio has a very substantial brief to talk from and Soviets would find it worthwhile to talk to him. I went on to say that the European troop question affected the interests of many of our allies and we would therefore be meticulous in consulting with them and preparing jointly with them for negotiations. It was therefore hard to avoid a certain “bloc” connotation to these negotiations on our side, just as I assumed Soviet consultations with affected Warsaw Pact states would give them such a connotation on their side. Moreover, if troops were ever cut, they clearly would be from the two alliances. This argument, therefore, struck me as artificial. As regards delay, I said we had made a start to get talks underway with the proposed Brosio mission but the Soviets were stalling on a reply. I said that they should make up their mind whether and how to get moving; if they had an alternative opening formula they should say so. Korniyenko then said that they had not rejected Brosio yet and were still considering their response.

I said that they would make a mistake if they thought they could sit back and wait for the US Congress to cut troops unilaterally. If the Congress did so—which I thought unlikely—an opportunity for constructive negotiations would have been missed. Korniyenko complained that we used Soviet statements on MBFR and diplomatic conversations for domestic political purposes; I said that on this as on other issues domestic and foreign aspects were closely intertwined, as the Soviets very well knew. The main thing was to get an idea whether the

⁷ Manlio Brosio, former Secretary General of NATO, appointed by NATO to represent the organization at MBFR talks with the Soviet Union.

Soviets wanted serious negotiations. We should worry less about forms since the substance was complex enough already.

On ESC, the Soviets registered their objection to the linkage to Berlin which, they said, we had engineered to block the conference. I said they were misinformed since the Belgians and Germans had written the linkage into the NATO communiqué.⁸ Our position was that we were neither violently opposed to nor enthusiastically in favor of a conference; we just wanted to know what it was supposed to do. Korniyenko said it should register the post-war status quo on the pattern of the Soviet-German treaty. I said this seemed superfluous since with the German treaty all the formal registering that the Soviets could want had been done; but if the Soviets felt more secure if Portugal and Iceland also underwrote the Soviet-Romanian and Soviet-Polish frontiers we would not expend our capital to prevent it. Reverting to the linkage with Berlin, I said this was a reality which the Soviets would have to live with; moreover, what sense was there to talk about European security as long as the one specific issue that could endanger it remained unresolved. I added that I was confident that there would be a satisfactory conclusion to the intra-German-Berlin talks, that the other linkage problem—Berlin/Soviet-German treaty—would be acceptably solved and that then the explorations of an ESC could go forward on a multilateral basis, as proposed by NATO. Korniyenko asked why they should accept our sequence of events. I said because that was the only way they could get a conference if there is one at all.

At our private luncheon meeting on Friday (only the two of us), I asked Korniyenko whether the Soviets intended to pursue the avenue opened in the President's talk with Gromyko to have private, informal bilateral exchanges on the ESC. He said not until Dobrynin returns at the end of the year.

The first part of the private lunch dealt briefly with technical aspects of the President's visit. Korniyenko said the normal practice was for an advance party to come about six weeks before the event, but no later than four weeks before. If we wanted it, the advance party could come earlier than six weeks before. (I think this would be very desirable.) I asked whether the Soviets would invite the President to stay in one of their houses. Korniyenko said this was not yet decided. De Gaulle had stayed in the Kremlin one night.

We then talked about who the President would see. Korniyenko said there might have to be one or more meetings with the top (three) leaders but these would be more of a formality. There might also have

⁸ Apparent reference to the NATO Communiqué, June 4, 1971. (Department of State *Bulletin*, June 28, 1971, pp. 819–821)

to be a ceremonial call on Podgorny as president. The main conversations would of course be with Brezhnev, probably alone with interpreters, but perhaps with Kosygin and someone from our side. He indicated this could all be worked out to our satisfaction.

Korniyenko asked whether the President would be mostly conceptual and philosophical in his conversations or would he touch on concrete questions. I said both: the President probably would want to lay out his general approach to our relations and world affairs, but then discuss particular problems. Korniyenko said he assumed that the Middle East and India–Pakistan would come up but he said it was hard now to predict the status of these problems. I agreed.

I said the President had already indicated he expected to talk about SALT, though the nature of the conversation would depend on where the negotiations stood. If agreement had been reached on a first phase, the conversation would presumably be about how we can best go about the follow-on negotiations; if no agreement had yet been reached, there presumably would be an effort to solve the remaining problems.

I then said that if Soviet strategic forces continued to grow at their present pace the President would begin to have increasing difficulty to hold back on new programs of our own. Korniyenko said that the Soviets had long lived under a crushing US superiority and we should get used to the reverse situation. I said the past was over with. It was quite possible to design Soviet forces which would give the USSR the same capacity to damage the US as we had vis-à-vis the USSR with a good many fewer delivery vehicles than the Soviets were now acquiring. Korniyenko said they need more SLBMs than we because they lacked forward bases and their route of approach was longer. I said they already had more SLBMs operational and under construction. In any case if we were going to operate under conditions of parity the standard ought to be capacity to do damage. A gross numerical imbalance, particularly when SS-9s, once MIRVed, would pose a greater threat to our land-based forces than our ICBMs posed to theirs, would lead to new weapons decisions on our side and then we would both be wasting our money to maintain the same ratio of forces. Korniyenko said we should not worry because we would always have 31 Poseidon boats for assured destruction. I said only a portion of these were on the line at any one time and could become vulnerable to ASW if the Soviets chose to concentrate on that. So we simply could not stand idly by. I concluded that the best thing would be to get a good offensive agreement in SALT so we could at least get numbers under control.

I asked how Korniyenko saw the Middle East. He said Rogers and Sisco were much too optimistic; there could not be an interim agreement unless the Israelis agreed to the goal of evacuating all occupied territory. I said that without getting into details it seemed to me that

insistence on assurances concerning ultimate goals would produce no breakthrough. I then said we had an additional problem: we could not underwrite an agreement in the Middle East, as we and other great powers presumably would have to do in some form, if it legitimized a permanent Soviet military presence in Egypt. Moreover, I doubted that the Israelis would ever accept an agreement under such circumstances. Korniyenko said we had bases in the Western Mediterranean, why then did we object to Soviet military presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. I said the point was that we would not guarantee a Middle Eastern settlement of whatever kind if it means that we thereby underwrote a Soviet military presence in the area. Korniyenko said we should remember the circumstances that brought the Soviet military presence to the Middle East. If these circumstances changed so might the situation regarding Soviet presence. I said that the Soviet presence was not only connected with the Arab-Israeli problem but served Soviet unilateral purposes and I hoped that the Soviet military would not carry so much weight that the political leadership would be unable to do something about it.

I then asked Korniyenko whether Brezhnev ever got independent advice on the validity of claims made on him by the Soviet military-industrial complex. Korniyenko said we could be sure that Brezhnev got all the advice he needed but that in any case there were no groups in the USSR interested in the arms race since they could gain no personal profits from it as in the US. I said there were ministries and managers that deal with armaments and as a result obtain all the best resources and privileges; this must result in vested interests. Korniyenko said these groups included those in the civilian aircraft industry—now no longer, he said, simply an offshoot of the military aircraft industry—and some other high priority civilian industries. The line was thus not a clean one. I said in any event it was to be hoped that political leaders in the USSR examined military programs with the utmost care so that in a period when the US was clearly braking the momentum of its programs the Soviets would not be leaping ahead to higher and higher levels. This could only result in a reversal of the trend in the US because the President has a strong constituency that would insist on it, quite apart from the objective requirements with which Soviet efforts would confront us.

I asked whether Korniyenko thought China would come up at the summit. He said not directly but of course it would figure indirectly. The Soviet view remained that normalization of US-Chinese relations was alright but collusion against third countries was not. I said we had made our motives clear.

I said I assumed Vietnam would come up in some way. I wanted to be sure Korniyenko understood our position. It was that we would

prefer a political solution through negotiations and would be pleased to see a Soviet contribution toward that end. But if present DRV/VC negotiating tactics continued we would simply continue on our present unilateral course. The other side should recognize that if it sought to take military advantage of us we always had open to us the kind of course we took in Cambodia. Korniyenko said we should not believe those who argue that the USSR likes the Vietnam war because it ties down the US. The Soviets want it to end because they recognize it complicates their relations with us. I said one could make a case that the Soviets saw some advantages in the continuation of the war. Korniyenko said perhaps one could in logic, but politics did not always follow the dictates of logic. I said this did not sound unreasonable.

I wondered whether the Caribbean might arise in the May meetings. Korniyenko said he could not see why “Secretary Laird” made such a fuss about the Soviets extending the period on-station of their Yankee Class submarines when we did the same thing by means of Rota and Holy Loch. I said he should not pin this concern on Secretary Laird. The point was we were in a new period and neither side should push forward to new military positions. I assumed the understanding of last fall remained valid and there would be no reason to discuss the matter further.

Korniyenko then said that we should try to reach some formal agreements on lesser matters, like space cooperation, so that there would be concrete results in May. I said there seemed to be several matters of this sort now under negotiation—incidents at sea, the forthcoming maritime talks, space, etc.—and I saw no reason why we should not try to move ahead on them. Whether the President would wish to sign any of them personally in Moscow I could not say at this point. I asked whether the Soviets would insist on completing the second phase of the incidents-at-sea talks before they would agree to formalize the understandings reached on the first. Korniyenko said the Soviets definitely wanted to go beyond the memorandum resulting from the first phase to the other matters (i.e., air activities) that interested them.

On India–Pakistan, Korniyenko said the Soviets are doing what they can to stop the fighting and prevent major war. I said it seemed to me that no doubt for different reasons, the US, USSR and China each wanted to see the situation subside.

Korniyenko said in conclusion that an answer to the President’s letter to Brezhnev would be sent in due course but that one aspect of it, i.e., the Stans trip, had of course already been acted on.

Addendum. At the luncheon with the DCM the Soviets said that their judgment was that the question of a new UN Secretary General would become deadlocked “because the US refused to back a good

candidate like the Chilean Herrera" and that then U Thant would agree to serve another year. I said this was not our impression.

At the private lunch I noted that the Soviets in Vienna had started unveiling their position on offensive measures. I asked whether they would provide some details on how to handle replacement and modernization. Apparently misunderstanding, Korniyenko said it had always been agreed that this would be allowed. I said what I was interested in was precisely what would be allowed under the Soviet concept, replacement and modernization of missiles or of silos. If the latter, I said, there could be some verification problems and questions about whether the freeze was being adhered to. Korniyenko did not answer directly but seemed to imply that the provisions would apply to missiles.

30. National Intelligence Estimate¹

NIE 11–10–71

Washington, December 15, 1971.

THE USES OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER IN DISTANT AREAS

Note

This Estimate assesses present and prospective Soviet capabilities and intentions with respect to using military forces in areas distant from the USSR. It is concerned with situations short of general war and with the Soviets' use of these capabilities to enlarge the sphere of their global operations and to expand their influence among the non-aligned countries of the underdeveloped world. Accordingly, North Korea and North Vietnam are largely excluded from the analysis. They are, however, occasionally referenced since the substantial involvement in both has had implications for the subject of this paper. However, it is impossible not to refer to another Communist state, Cuba, because it has been a central factor in the USSR's unfolding role in Latin America and is an indispensable prop to its naval operations in the Caribbean.

While the Estimate alludes where appropriate to the military implications for the US, NATO, and China of the USSR's military

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79–R01012A, NIC Files. Secret. The Central Intelligence Agency, the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense and the National Security Agency participated in the preparation of this estimate. The Director of Central Intelligence submitted this estimate with the concurrence of all the USIB members except the representatives of the AEC and FBI who abstained because it was outside their jurisdiction.

involvement in the Third World, it does not address Soviet strategic or general purpose forces as such, which are the subjects of other Estimates. And the emphasis is as much on the USSR's political purposes as on military purposes since it is clear that Soviet forces, advisors and assistance in distant areas serve both purposes, and as often as not the former are more important.

A word of caution is in order concerning the use of some terms. Soviet involvement in Third World areas has different aspects in different cases; a frequent manifestation is military aid, usually accompanied by some training or technical assistance to the recipient country. This form of aid is an important part of the total Soviet effort in the countries concerned; it does not, however, amount to a "military presence" or "distant military capabilities". The latter terms are reserved for cases where Soviet combat forces or personnel are present or may be deployed in some numbers with some military capability of their own. A military presence, in turn, is not limited to Third World countries; the most extensive military presence in distant areas is on ships at sea.

Summary and Conclusions

A. Despite setbacks and frustrations, the USSR has made impressive progress in the last decade and a half in developing political influence in the Third World. It clearly assigns great importance to its position in certain parts of the Third World; is prepared to accept high costs and some risks to defend and advance this position; and has significantly increased the size and flexibility of its military forces which are capable of conducting distant operations.

B. There have been several instances of direct Soviet military intervention in Third World countries (most notably, and currently, in Egypt). But Moscow has generally preferred to use diplomatic instruments and economic and military aid programs to promote its interests. It has, of course, been greatly helped by intense anti-Western sentiments in many areas and by the existence here and there of the kinds of trouble and conflict which create eager customers for Soviet assistance (e.g., Egypt and India).

C. The Soviets must feel that, over the past 15 years, they have accomplished a great deal in the Third World. They have broken the ring of containment built by the West and opened many areas to their own influence. They have seen a number of states—e.g., Egypt, Syria, and Iraq—become largely or almost totally dependent on Soviet military equipment and support. They have exposed many of the nationals of these countries to Communist ideas and techniques and have developed close relationships with military men who hold or may hold key positions in their countries. They have established the USSR as the most influential great power in most radical Arab states, have gained ac-

ceptance of their right to concern themselves closely with the affairs of all the Middle East and South Asia, and have extended their influence into parts of Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

D. Still, Soviet activities in remote areas have not met with unqualified success and there are a variety of circumstances which impose constraints on Soviet policies. The USSR has encountered many disappointments—in Cuba in 1962, in the Middle East (e.g., the Arab-Israeli war in 1967), in Africa (Ghana, Sudan), and in Southeast Asia (Indonesia). Aid programs have been expensive—only a quarter of the \$5.4 billion of arms aid drawn has been repaid to date. The recipients of aid have often been ungrateful, most of them resist Soviet tutelage, and only Cuba has joined the Soviet camp. And in some areas, Soviet efforts have been complicated by the appearance of the Chinese as alternate sources of aid and as bitter competitors for influence.

E. As a consequence of frustrations such as these, the Soviets have continuously had to revise their expectations and adjust their tactics in the Third World. They have not, however, lost their ambition. On the contrary, they are now anxious to demonstrate that, as a world power, the USSR has legitimate interests virtually everywhere. And, indeed, Moscow now has the ability to support policies in distant areas and the capability to extend its military presence in one form or another considerably beyond the negligible levels of the 1950s and early 1960s.

F. Since then, new multipurpose naval ships, better suited to distant operations, have entered the Soviet Navy. Naval infantry and amphibious shipping have doubled in size; the Soviet merchant marine has tripled its tonnage, and now includes nearly 400 ships suited to the needs of military sealift. Soviet military transport forces have been re-equipped with new turboprop aircraft with greater capacity and range, and civil aviation has expanded overseas. Command and control capabilities to support distant military operations have also been improved.

G. Not surprisingly, then, the frequency and extent of Soviet military operations in the Third World have picked up considerably. The expansion of the USSR's presence in the Mediterranean and the Middle East (including some 50 surface ships and submarines in the Mediterranean Squadron and some 16,000 Soviet military personnel stationed in Egypt) owes much, of course, to the Arab military weaknesses exposed in 1967. But it is also evident that Moscow has for some time had military interests in the Mediterranean (including the US Sixth Fleet) which extend beyond the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since 1967, these two sets of interests have by-and-large coincided, so that Egypt has been strengthened vis-à-vis Israel and the USSR has not only gained influence in the area at the expense of the West, but has also obtained facilities for its Mediterranean Squadron's forward deployment in defense of the USSR.

H. The USSR's increased visibility in the Indian Ocean includes not only its modest naval presence, but also its civil air routes, arrangements for facilities for the Soviet fishing fleet and increased diplomatic and trade relations. As for the Caribbean, the Soviets are not likely to attempt to use the naval facilities in Cuba for forward basing of their submarine launched ballistic missiles so long as they have reason to anticipate strong US opposition. But they will probably continue to probe US reaction to different levels and types of naval deployment by, for example, deploying other types of submarines as well as missile ships and submarine tenders to Cuba.

I. The Soviets have substantial ground, air, and naval forces which can be used effectively to establish a presence in distant areas. This capability enables them to support political forces friendly to their policies and influence. It may make it possible in some situations to preempt the actions of others or to deter their intervention. But Soviet capabilities to use force at long range to establish themselves against opposition are limited. Against a submarine or surface ship threat, Soviet naval forces in distant waters could be increased substantially over present levels for short periods, but a sustained augmentation would require additional logistic support and ships to defend that support. The USSR still has only small numbers of naval infantry and amphibious ships, and it lacks long-range tactical aircraft and aircraft carriers. And the Soviets would need to make a substantially greater effort in developing these forces than is now evident if they were bent on establishing substantial capabilities for military action against opposition in countries remote from their borders.

J. Indeed, the growth in the USSR's capabilities for distant operations has not followed the course that might have been expected if the Soviets were interested principally in direct military intervention in Third World countries. The expansion of their forces can, in fact, be attributed in large part to other causes. Increasing Soviet naval deployments to distant areas were, in the first instance, in support of potential general war missions; once begun, the USSR found in these activities opportunities to buttress its claim to a world power role equal to that of the US. The growth of the merchant fleet has been in line with the increasing requirements of Soviet foreign trade. Most of the transport aircraft added to military transport aviation are designed to improve airlift capabilities in theater operations. The capabilities of amphibious forces have improved but continue to be oriented primarily toward the support of theater forces on the flanks.

K. Nevertheless, continued improvement of Soviet capabilities for distant action can be anticipated. Some of this improvement will be a by-product of the expansion of naval, merchant marine, and airlift forces in support of their separate primary missions. Naval programs

now underway will, by 1975, bring forth new surface ships and submarines capable of distant operations.

L. Soviet military requirements for foreign bases are more likely to grow than diminish. Prospects for Soviet antisubmarine warfare and strategic attack forces, as well as the trend in increased out of area operation of general purpose forces, both point in this direction. Soviet bases in the Third World are not easily acquired but the Soviets have been seeking additional facilities ashore and the search can be expected to continue. In general, however, for political and economic reasons as well as military, the USSR is most likely in the next few years to favor a gradualist approach in seeking to expand its influence in the Third World. And Soviet efforts abroad will continue to be aimed more at increasing Soviet influence than at establishing Communist-dominated regimes.

M. If the Soviets should again involve themselves militarily in a Third World country, as they have in Egypt, it would probably come about as an outgrowth of a Soviet military aid program. But circumstances leading to the establishment of a Soviet military presence in distant areas are unlikely to arise frequently. Virtually all Third World leaders are ardent nationalists and hence little disposed to inviting Soviet forces to be based on their territory. Only in exceptional circumstances, such as a compelling threat, would one of them be disposed to accept that kind of Soviet help. Moscow for its part would have to make its own calculation of risks and advantages before granting it. The record of recent years shows the Soviets are capable of bold decisions when they consider the stakes high enough or their interests and prestige sufficiently involved—as in Egypt.

N. The Soviets may feel that with their attainment of rough strategic parity with the US, they will in the future have wider options to project their influence in distant parts of the world. Given only a gradual accretion of forces useable in distant areas, there will be more instances in which the Soviets can, if they choose, try to use such forces to exploit opportunities—particularly if one or another government in the Third World should ask Moscow for assistance. The Soviets will be inclined to exercise caution in areas where US interests are deeply engaged, but even in these circumstances the Soviets may calculate that an assertive policy will entail fewer risks to themselves than in the past.

[Omitted here is the body of the estimate, which contained the following sections: "I—Introduction; II—Development of Soviet Interest and Influence in Distant Areas; III—Expansion of Soviet Military Power to Distant Areas; IV—General Posture in Areas of Major Interests; V—Current Soviet Capabilities for Distant Action; VI—Longer Term Outlook: Constraints and Options; and VII—Epilogue." Also omitted are

Annexes A–I, “Soviet on Distant Station General; Pattern of Soviet Naval Port Visits; Indian Ocean Operations; Caribbean and West African Operations; Oversea Base and Facilities Arrangements; Amphibious and Merchant Marine Sealift Capabilities; Capabilities of Military and Civilian Airlift to Support Distant Operations; Soviet Military Aid.”]

31. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

December 16, 1971, 9:30 a.m.

[Omitted here is discussion of the press reaction to Nixon’s meeting with French President Pompidou in the Azores, December 12–14, the prospect of India agreeing to a cease-fire with Pakistan, and prospects for preventing India from receiving U.S. aid already in the pipeline.]

P: If the Indians continue the course they are on we have even got to break diplomatic relations with them. Don’t you agree, Henry?

K: I agree. There is already a strong victory statement and an unbelievable setback for the Chinese which is none of our business but they have certainly humiliated them.

P: And also let it be known they have done nothing.

K: That is right.

P: In the event they [crush?] West Pakistan, is there anything more that can be done? Are they going . . .

K: They gave us flat assurances there wouldn’t be. If that happens we will have to reassess our position with the Russians. We will have until Saturday morning to see that.

P: What are they doing?

K: I said to Vorontsov if you don’t do it at the UN, do it as a bilateral exchange of letters.

P: And they have not responded?

K: No, it is a little early. They could have if they wanted to.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking. The President was in Key Biscayne, Florida, from December 15–18; Kissinger was in Washington. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President’s Daily Diary)

P: The question is . . .

K: Well, the question is—let's look at objectively. So they put it to us and they saw because you acted in such a [omission in the source text] way here, we are going to drop the summit . . .

P: Well, dropping the summit is not the first thing I would do.

K: Well, you have to look to see how much we are willing to pay in terms of where we are going.

P: To keep ourselves in perspective we have to realize the Russians have put it to us previously in other parts of the world so we have to just grin and bear it, right?

K: But not you, Mr. President.

P: No, but my point is we try everything that we can, but we have to realize the Russians—we have to let them know our options.

K: Our options are limited.

P: They are limited, but even with them we can't deal with those Soviets and continue to talk about sales and various other problems.

K: Our options are not all that good.

P: They are not good but they will get results. If after all these appeals and . . .

K: They are going to continue to butter you up.

P: My view is this: I won't let them do this. Did the Jordans [*Jordanians*] send planes.

K: 17.

P: Well, my point is so we have done a check of these little things. Now in the event we are going to end up by saying to the Russians you proved to be so untrustworthy we can't deal with you on any issues. Let's use that card now.

K: We have pretty well told them that.

P: Well, we told them that privately, they may not believe that.

K: Well, if they don't believe the President of the United States in a private meeting . . .

P: You don't understand. We threatened it. Let's do it.

K: No, for that it is premature, Mr. President. That we cannot do because they still may get us a ceasefire. If they don't get a ceasefire, what do we do then?

P: Cut off the Middle East talks, pour arms into Israel, discontinue our talks on SALT and the Economic Security Council can go [to] the public and tell them what the danger is. It is a risk group but the right one. It is pretty clear. I would go further. We have to stop our talks on trade, don't let Smith have any further things on the Middle East and stop seeing Dobrynin under any circumstances.

K: That is right. Break the White House channel.

P: And be very cold in our public statements toward them. What I am getting at is if we are prepared to go and have the card to play where we would not talk at all. Another thing I would beef up the Defense budget plans then.

K: The Defense budget is being worked on.

P: You will have that done by Friday night?²

K: Yes.

P: Now, Henry, I am not satisfied and I am really mad that this assistance report is not down here. LDX it down here in two hours—Indian aid for next year and last, how much PL-480, how much economic assistance, unilateral assistance—I want to see it.

K: We have got it, but we will get it down.

P: I know the bigger game is the Russian game, but the Indians also have played us for squares here. They have done this once and when this is over they will come to ask us to forgive and forget. This we must not do. If they want to be dependent on the Russians, let them be, but when the chips are down India has shown that it is a Russian satellite. What I am really saying here is and what I am proposing to do—if India pursues this course, then we will reevaluate their program of aid and cut it off. Has anybody told them that?

K: We would, but remember you have got to realize everything is being done out of this office. We have a bureaucratic system to deal with. I think it would be better if State told them.

P: Call Sisco. He is to call in the Indian Ambassador and tell him that the U.S., under the circumstances, if there is not a ceasefire we will have no choice and all Indian assistance of all types will be taken out of the budget and call me in an hour.

K: Yes, Mr. President.

[Omitted here is additional discussion of cutting off U.S. aid to India.]

² December 17.

32. **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**¹

Washington, December 16, 1971, 10:40 a.m.

K: The Indians have just declared a unilateral ceasefire in the West.² We have made it.

P: What's it mean?

K: Ordered forces to stop fighting.

P: What's territory? From what you said yesterday—taken Kashmir?

K: In West have [taken?] some desert and Pakistanis have taken a bit of Kashmir. Major [objective?] is to stop defeat of Pakistan army.

P: What's the source?

K: Official announcement.

P: It's the Russians working for us. We have to get the story out.

K: Already a call from State. Until this morning we were running the UN thing. Now they are and say they will go over resolution. They are pulling off the British Resolution. You pulled it through and should take credit. I will give a backgrounder tomorrow afternoon.

P: Get people in and set story for the weekly news magazines.

K: Can't do it today. We have to clean it up.

P: Any other thing—in view of *Time* Man of the Year thing get [Jerry] Schechter in. He will understand it. Or who at *Time* would know more about this subject?

K: I will start with Schechter. He has been decent.

P: *Time* might write best analysis of crisis. You really feel that they mean—let me come back to it. You were bearish last night.

K: I felt nothing [would] happen until Dacca fell. Soviets were dragging their feet because Indians took longer on taking Dacca than they figured. So this morning I said next 24 hours will tell.

P: If Soviets have cooperated on this I think we have got to play on an arms-length deal.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 370, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² On December 16 at 2:30 p.m. Indian local time, India announced the surrender of Pakistan forces in Dacca and a unilateral cease-fire to take place in the West the following day. India also indicated that it had "no territorial ambitions in the conflict" and expected an immediate response from Pakistan.

K: We have to get straight what they did.

P: What they did in '67 June war.

K: 60% instead of 100%.

P: June war.

K: Except they lost.

P: They got credit for bringing peace to the M.E. Agreed to peace after defeat of their army. And they were responsible for the war. Not a public statement but internal relations with Soviets. You handle that. [Omission in the source text.] You agree?

K: Absolutely. So far they have not done anything. Indians did official doing. But I am sure it's Soviets that produced it.

P: On unilateral ceasefire what?

K: UN resolution making it official. When in [omission in the source text] for weeks they want to come out and mastermind it. We have agreed to the British. Chinese are set with it. I will say I have talked with you and it is what you want done.

P: The President is committed to it. We have told the British and Chinese. Will the Russians accept it?

K: Probably.

P: Might not. If they do it's done.

K: One way or other there will be a resolution to put it together. State is trying to scavenge on your agony. Put it together with a UN resolution.

P: The average person doesn't understand about this. Pick the real movers and shakers. Ask [John] Scali and let him sit in. Ask him who and Ziegler. Make it small enough to be powerful. I don't care if they are friends or enemies. Maybe [Joseph] Kraft. It's very important to do *Time* people and maybe a couple of network people.

K: [John] Chancellor.

P: Anybody. You sit down there. Work it out. Get hold of Scali. A cold, blooded deal. On other levels let Scali carry the line. And Ziegler.

K: That would be good.

P: It's good to hear.

K: The record will show again that you were ready to go the whole way this morning.

P: I almost called at midnight last night to say to Russians we are putting the summit on the line.

K: India would have taken Kashmir and [omission in the source text].

P: Shastri got India's victory wings. Only 30% of them.

K: 30% more than we expected.

P: You think the Russians did it? India would not have done it for us.

K: For us they would have done it (?).

P: I want strictest—President make own decision. Hannah, Sisco, Rogers. I don't want Indian aid to leak out but I will decide it. Shultz to examine budget and no Indian aid in it.

K: \$300 million for S. Asia. \$200 million to Pakistan and rest we will hold.

P: Give it to Ceylon.

K: Then we don't get argument we are cutting it. We can give agricultural stuff to India for economic relief.

P: They have to pay for aid.

K: Congratulations, Mr. President. You saved W. Pakistan.

P: Go off to other. No backgrounder until tomorrow.

K: As soon as it's cleaned up. I will get on it.

P: Don't do it pre-maturely.

K: Get Sunday papers.

P: *Time* and networks.

K: Congratulations!

33. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, December 22, 1971.

SUBJECT

Some Indicators of Soviet Behavior

Soviet conduct in the Indo-Pak crisis has been deeply disturbing, but it can be explained to a large extent by their calculation of their

¹Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 717, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XVII, November–31 December 1971. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. Sonnenfeldt sent this memorandum to Kissinger under cover of a December 17 memorandum with a recommendation that he sign it. Sonnenfeldt noted: "It is a catalogue of diverse activities which struck me as disturbing. No sweeping conclusion should be drawn from the listing, but it seems worth bearing in mind that whatever their motives for wanting a better relationship with the US, other Soviet interests (including internal Soviet politics) will continue to work in the other direction."

regional interest in the subcontinent and relations with China. We cannot conclude that there has been some fundamental change in Moscow in their interest in a limited improvement in their relations with us. Nevertheless, reviewing a number of diverse Soviet activities underscores that Soviet policy continues along lines that are inimical to our interests, could become highly dangerous, and cut across our own efforts to reach a more durable relationship with the USSR.

The following is a catalogue of some disturbing Soviet actions and attitudes though there is no certain pattern in them.

Middle East

Within the last month we have seen (a) the shipment of medium jet bombers, armed with air-to-surface missiles; (b) the reported remarks by the Soviet Ambassador in Cairo that if the solution chosen by the UAR is war, then “we support you so that it is a war with minimum losses”; (c) a tour of the Middle East and Persian Gulf by Minister of Defense Marshal Grechko, and there are unconfirmed reports that one of his purposes is to nail down an agreement on a Soviet naval base in Somalia. (There has also been a report of renewed Soviet support of the guerrilla movement against Portuguese Guinea.)

Cuba

Castro’s provocative seizure of the vessel off the Bahamas might suggest he has some Soviet support, or at least feels that he can embark on such dangerous actions with impunity. Moreover, while remaining within the technical limits of the understanding of last year, the Soviet flouts its spirit by (a) sending a cruise missile submarine to Havana; (b) prolonging their current visit of an attack submarine and cruiser and conducting almost daily exercises from Cuba.

A recent CIA report² claims that the Soviets accepted a Cuban offer in 1970 to establish a base in Cienfuegos, but planned to use it sporadically to give us the impression that it was only a rest and relaxation stopover. The Soviet plan called for visits to be increased to the point where there would be a Soviet flotilla constantly in port.

Criticism of the US

During his visit to Denmark, Kosygin is reported to have told the Danish Prime Minister that he knew of no country where domestic conditions play so important a role in foreign policy as in the US. In commenting on your visit to Moscow, Kosygin added that he saw US domestic factors as the chief motivating force. Reports from the Embassy in Moscow on public Soviet orientation lectures concerning Soviet for-

² Not attached and not further identified.

eign policy reiterate this theme. In other words, the Soviets view our policy not as motivated by intrinsic national interests but by calculations of domestic political expediency.

While the Soviets have not sharply increased their accusations against us for “collusion” with China, nevertheless, this theme has become more prominent as the public explanation for various events, especially in the UN. The Soviet Ambassador in Tokyo, while taking a moderate line in general, told our Ambassador that Moscow believed your trip to Peking would be a failure. If this is actually the operative estimate in Moscow, the Soviets may feel they have less reason to build up your trip to the USSR. (A sidelight on Soviet attitudes was the menacing tone of Kosygin’s remarks in Norway, where he is reported to have warned the Norwegians against permitting any increase of US naval activities off their own shores.)

SALT

There has been no abrupt change in the negotiations, but the tone seems to be degenerating somewhat. The Soviets persist in putting forward their proposals in the most one-sided fashion, in terms they can be virtually certain we will resist. Moreover, they make claims about the status of their forces (i.e., that we both have approximately the same number of ICBMs) that we know to be wildly inaccurate. Most important, one suspects that the Soviets may have made a decision to proceed with the expansion of their ABMs, and want to codify this in SALT under the guise of insisting on equality (this too could be another Soviet bargaining ploy).³

The Soviet Press

Usually, the Soviet press is some guide to the intensity of Soviet policy. While not unusually different in its treatment of the US, there does seem to be very little effort to credit our good will or intentions,

³ On December 20 Director of Politico-Military Affairs Ronald I. Spiers sent Rogers a memorandum outlining the unresolved issues from the just completed SALT session at Vienna. Spiers summarized the month-long session: “Although the USSR acceded to our demand that there be a serious discussion of offensive limitations as a first priority at Vienna, significant differences remain with respect to both ABMs and the offensive freeze.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 AUS (VI)) On December 23 the Verification Panel met to review SALT policy. The Panel agreed that Kissinger should seek from Nixon “some interim guidance for the Delegation prior to its return on January 2. This will include, at a minimum, a decision whether the ABM agreement should be a treaty and the modification of our position on SLBMs to permit the replacement of old SLBMs with new models.” The SALT working group would prepare an options paper on modifications to the U.S. ABM position, whether inclusion of SLBMs was “make-or-break proposition,” and the duration and withdrawal propositions of both proposed agreements. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-107, Verification Panel Minutes, Originals, 1969 thru 3/8/72)

even prior to the Indo-Pak crisis. You personally, are excluded from criticism, but by various euphemism the Administration is belabored almost daily.

The Soviet Leaders

The Kremlinologists are satisfied that Brezhnev is still out in front, and the recent party and government meetings on the new five year plan seems to confirm this. However, since last Wednesday, all of the politburo has been out of Moscow in various cities participating in unusual regional meetings. This has only occurred three times since 1964. Almost certainly, the participation of the top leaders in regional briefings means the subject is one that either is quite complicated, or likely to create unease or resistance from the rank and file. No one knows exactly what is involved, but my guess would be the subject is foreign policy and probably China.

Summing up, it seems fair to speculate that Soviet interest persists in better relations with us, as manifested in both Berlin and SALT and even evident to some extent in handling of their contacts with us in the Indo-Pakistan crisis, but is offset by other interests which can draw them into dangerous situations. Moreover, China is so predominant in Soviet thinking that one wonders whether another Sino-Soviet crisis similar to the border incidents in 1969 is not almost certain in the wake of the Pakistan crisis and in light of what the Soviets may see as an internal weakness in Peking. (CIA has at least one report⁴ that there were some in Moscow who would have welcomed Chinese intervention on Pakistan's side so that Moscow would have had a pretext for "delivering a blow" against China.)

In addition, there is the chance that having acquiesced, if not encouraged, the war in the subcontinent, the Soviets will find that they cannot very effectively argue against the use of force in the Middle East.

In both instances—a deliberate Sino-Soviet crisis or a Middle East confrontation—the Soviet leaders would have to weigh seriously the effect on the summit or on our general relations with them. In doing so, they may now attach somewhat less importance to their relations with us than three or four months ago.

⁴ Not attached and not further identified.

34. Summary Prepared by the Interagency Group for Europe¹

Washington, undated.

SUMMARY OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG ISSUES

The issues on which discussions or negotiations with the Soviet Union are taking place, or are likely to take place, before the President's visit reflect the breadth and complexity of the U.S.-Soviet relationship in the political, military, and economic spheres. Where there are specific, close relationships between an issue and other U.S.-Soviet matters, this has been indicated in the description of the issue.

The issues under discussion below fall into four categories:

—*Diplomatic and Political.* Disarmament issues are a prime example of diplomatic and political matters in the multilateral sphere, as are the many questions that come before the United Nations. Narcotics control, law of the sea, and the international environmental conference scheduled for Stockholm belong in this category. In dealing with Moscow on these matters, we must reconcile the conflicting objectives of accomplishing our purposes and avoiding the appearance of collusion.

This category also includes a number of subjects relating to the conduct of our relations with the Soviet Union, such as the construction of new chanceries, regulating the travel of diplomats, and access to the public in the other state through activities under the exchanges agreement. The cardinal principle governing such bilateral diplomatic questions is reciprocity. In dealing with the closed and highly controlled society of the Soviet Union, strict observance of this principle has given us our only effective leverage in carrying out tasks that are routine in most foreign countries.

—*Military.* These issues extend from efforts directed at stabilizing the strategic balance between the two countries (which are not treated in this study) to measures designed to prevent incidents between our navies on and over the high seas. In addition, there are

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-188, NSSM Files, NSSM 143. This summary response to NSSM 143 was prepared by the Interagency Group for Europe under the chairmanship of Hillenbrand. The response itself is a series of status reports on issues, comprising 57 pages and prepared by the agencies responsible. In a covering memorandum to Kissinger, December 30, Hillenbrand noted that the major interrelated issues (SALT, Berlin, MBFR, CSCE) and certain bilateral issues (consulates in Leningrad, and San Francisco, jamming, Soviet Jewry) were not included in keeping with Kissinger's instructions in NSSM 143 (Document 27).

military implications in many of our other dealings with the USSR, e.g. disarmament, law of the sea and space cooperation.

—*Economic*. Volume and composition of trade, credit and payments, shipping, aviation, and fisheries are some of the issues. Certain of the economic issues may be examined in military-strategic terms, but this is rarely the controlling factor. The main consideration is the relatively high degree of economic self-sufficiency of both nations.

—*Scientific and Technical*. There is no firm distinction between this category and the economic one. The exchanges agreement is relevant here, along with some specific endeavors undertaken under it, such as those in the fields of space, atomic energy, health research, conservation, and environment. Because of the gap between U.S. and Soviet capabilities in many fields of science and technology, agreements in this category are sometimes relatively advantageous to the USSR. Nevertheless, this is not universally the case and there are usually net gains to both sides. Not the least of these is the personal bond established between the scientific intelligentsia of the two countries.

Mutuality of Interest

These issues can be assessed according to the degree of mutuality of interest between the two countries. This assessment of mutuality can be only tentative, and there are always contending interest groups within each country which would assign different priorities to agreement on any given issue. Bearing in mind these caveats, we would judge mutuality of interest to be high, medium, or low as follows:

—*High Mutuality*. There appears to be a high congruence of interest in space cooperation, including a joint docking mission. Substantial common interest also exists in cooperative research and exchange programs in the health and atomic-energy fields. Both countries have a strong interest in renewing the exchanges agreement, stemming from the balance between the scientific and technical benefits sought by Moscow as against the political and social objectives pursued by the U.S. Finally, there appears to be a strong common interest in developing measures to avoid naval incidents.

—*Medium Mutuality*. A second group of issues shows a more mixed pattern. In the trade area, the Soviet appetite is generally large, while the U.S. interest varies according to commodity, credit terms, and other factors. Disarmament issues similarly present a mixed pattern. The Soviet desire for politically visible agreements is to some extent in conflict with the U.S. view that the contents of a proposed agreement must be the foremost consideration. The two countries have similar objectives with respect to law of the sea but differ on related issues concerning ocean resources. Agreements concerning conservation of natural resources, e.g., fisheries agreements, and protection of the natural

environment, are generally more attractive to the U.S. than to the USSR, owing to the different levels of economic development in the two countries and the resultant gap between national perceptions of the problems of modern industrialized societies.

—*Low Mutuality.* Finally, there are some matters on which U.S. and Soviet interests diverge considerably. The Soviets would very much like enhanced civil aviation rights in the U.S. and improved access to the U.S. for the commercial shipping, but have comparatively little to offer the U.S. in these fields. Cooperation in certain multilateral endeavors, such as the control of narcotics and dangerous drugs, is of great interest to us, but concerns the Soviet leaders little. There are other such issues, not treated in this study because only one side is interested.

Trade-Offs

There is a practical limit to the trade-offs that can be made. Neither country is likely to yield on matters closely linked to its national security for the sake of economic or political concessions. Nor can either country be expected to compromise basic political principles for the sake of cooperation in science and technology. Categorizing issues by type and by mutuality of interest, however, allows some preliminary consideration of possible trade-offs.

—*By Type.* Our general assumption is that the Soviets wish specific and formal bilateral agreements in as many fields as possible. Any U.S.-Soviet agreement is of interest to the Soviets not only because of its intrinsic merits—for example, the acquisition of technology—but also because it would enhance the détente image which Moscow is seeking to foster. Thus, the Soviet interest lies in fragmenting U.S.-Soviet negotiations into discrete compartments. In contrast, the U.S. interest lies in keeping all the negotiations within a single framework, giving us more leverage over the final mix of agreements.

This unitary approach also recommends itself because in many instances the U.S. desiderata—for example, the cessation of jamming of U.S. broadcasts into the Soviet Union or the issuance of exit visas to Soviet citizens with relatives in the U.S.—are not subject to formal negotiation. The U.S. side will be in the best negotiating position if it can say that the conclusion of certain key agreements, as well as of a series of relatively minor agreements, is dependent upon Soviet positions not only in the key negotiations but also in certain areas outside the field of formal negotiation.

Within the four major categories under which the issues are grouped, the advantages of agreement are greater for the Soviet Union in the scientific-technical field, and greater over the long run for the U.S. in the political-diplomatic field. Certain advantages would accrue to both sides in the economic field, and also in the military-strategic

field, varying from issue to issue, although in the specific case of a U.S.-Soviet economic agreement the Soviet side may feel the need of an agreement keenly enough to make this one of its major goals. Looking at the overall balance, therefore, there is the possibility of a trade-off between the scientific-technical and political fields. The U.S. can also insist upon parallel progress in the trade and political fields.

—*By Mutuality of Interest.* Within the second conceptual framework, we could delay agreement in certain areas of strong mutual interest as an incentive to reach agreement in areas of lesser mutuality. We could also attempt to develop a balance of mutual concessions on unrelated issues where the congruence of interests is small. The latter approach has been used in biennial renewals of the Exchanges Agreement, which serves as an umbrella for a host of contacts.

Preparing for Moscow and Nixon's Trip to China, January 1–March 29, 1972

35. Editorial Note

From January 3 to 10, 1972, Deputy Assistant to the President Alexander Haig visited the People's Republic of China to prepare for President Nixon's visit scheduled for February. While responsible for facilitating arrangements for the trip, Haig also emphasized to Chinese Premier Chou En-lai that U.S. representations and threats had forced the Soviet Union to pressure India to end hostilities in South Asia. In a January 3 meeting with Chou En-lai, Haig stated:

"We believe and we have very strong confirmation that those steps were effective in convincing the Soviet Union to influence the Indians to accept a cease-fire rather than to proceed with attacks against West Pakistan—in other words to stop short of what had been their goal in West Pakistan. One of those steps was Dr. Kissinger's reference to the possible cancellation of the President's Moscow trip if the conflict continued. Since the cease-fire has gone into effect, we have made a very careful assessment of the overall implications of recent events on the subcontinent and we have concluded that up until recently the Soviet policy on the subcontinent had been, in general, to keep the subcontinent divided. This was manifested in their performance during the earlier conflict between India and Pakistan but we think they have decided on a rather precipitous shift in their policy to adopt one in which they would now seek to encircle the PRC with unfriendly states. We believe that this modified Soviet strategy has evolved as a result of recent events and has caused them to overhaul their former strategy for the subcontinent. We also noted when the crisis developed that the Soviets tried very hard to divert us from the course that would converge with the policy of the People's Republic. In short, they sought to influence us to maintain a hands off policy. During the period when this crisis started to develop, they invited Dr. Kissinger to Moscow personally on several occasions as guest of Mr. Brezhnev. They also offered to reach agreements with us in the accidental attack and provocative attack areas, all of which we rejected. We rejected these approaches by the Soviet Union on two grounds—one was on the issue of principle. We felt we had certain obligations with respect to Pakistan and we felt we could not tolerate use of force to dismantle that country. But we also rejected the Soviet approaches because we felt that the future viability of the PRC was of the greatest interest to us and a matter of our own national interest."

Haig also added:

“In the context of what I have just said, we have concluded that the continuation of the war in Southeast Asia can only give Moscow an opportunity to increase its influence in Hanoi and to further the encirclement of the People’s Republic. We feel strongly that Moscow is urging Hanoi in the direction of continued military action and as such, they are forging another link in the chain which is designed to constrain the People’s Republic. In all of these circumstances, we also believe that President Nixon’s visit takes on a new and immediate significance which transcends its earlier importance. In the context of these events I have just described, i.e., the immediate effect to the People’s Republic and the revised Soviet strategy, the President’s visit is not only one of long term historic significance—the original motivation and the guiding force underlying the visit—but now we see an immediate significance which must now be considered with respect to the President’s visit. In light of our own strategic interests—America’s strategic interests which I described earlier—we are convinced of and dedicated to the proposition that the viability of the People’s Republic should be maintained.”

In turn, Chou responded that “Soviet meddling in the South Asian subcontinent and in Indochina, in my opinion, is not due to a change in the strategic policies of the Soviet Union but rather a necessary consequence of reaction on the part of the Soviet Union toward the coming closer between China and the United States.” A record of this conversation is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVII, China, 1969–1972, Document 183.

36. Editorial Note

On January 14, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger sent a memorandum to Secretary of State William Rogers that reads:

“The President has directed that henceforth meetings with representatives of the Soviet Embassy in Washington on any topic and with representatives of foreign governments on the Middle East situation be cleared with him. In conjunction with these clearances, the President wishes to have a memorandum outlining the objective of the meeting and the manner in which it will be conducted. Following the meeting, the President wishes to have a written memorandum for the record covering the contents of the decision.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR)

In his memoirs Kissinger noted that during January “Summit preparation speeded up, and, as usual, they started with an internal

row over who would supervise them, Secretary of State Rogers or I. By this time our relations had so deteriorated that there was no longer any pretense that it could be done jointly." (*White House Years*, page 1127) The impetus for the January 14 instruction was the growing lack of communication between Kissinger and Rogers which had developed into a "problem." In his diary entry for January 3, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman wrote:

"The Attorney General [John Mitchell] had breakfast with Henry this morning, so he had the latest batch of Henry's input, although I had met with Henry also during the day today. Henry boiled it down to the point that he's got to have his demands met. First of all, that Rogers has to understand that any attack on K[issinger] by the State Department or any of its people is a direct attack on the P[resident]. Second, that all cables and communications out of State must be cleared at the White House first. Third, that there is to be no communication between State and the Soviets without prior knowledge of the White House and without a memcon afterwards summarizing everything that was discussed. Henry feels these are probably impossible demands, and therefore he'll have to leave, but he won't do so until after the Russian trip. In discussing this, the P understood Henry's view. I went further than the Attorney General and told the P about Henry's further view that the P had lost confidence in him and that the evidence, at least to Henry, was the fact that the P was constantly trying to butter him up and keep him happy and was not really getting into the nitty gritty of foreign policy anymore. Henry sees this as slippage in his own standing, and that probably is what worries him more than anything else. That, plus the fact that he knows he made the mistake in India–Pakistan and doesn't know how to cope with it. In any event, the P agreed that we should put the ultimatum to Rogers and agreed with my recommendation that Mitchell and I do it as soon as we get back from San Clemente." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

According to Haldeman's diary entry of January 10, Kissinger was so upset that he considered quitting by January 27. The next day, Haldeman noted Rogers' feeling that "Henry has lied to him, and he has admitted it, saying he was lying under orders, and that's the only time he did lie, but that leads Rogers to distrust everything Henry says." (*Ibid.*) On January 13 Haldeman recorded that Nixon wanted Haig "to take a very hard line with Henry" because "it's better for him to blow now than after Russia, and if we don't face up to it now he may go off cockeyed during the [1972 Presidential] campaign, as he did in '68." (*Ibid.*) Three days later, Haldeman observed:

"Because K goes in and complains to the P all the time, he gets his way. Rogers doesn't complain, so he gets left out. He said he'd be glad to sit down together with the P and Henry to work together on this thing. That we've got to work it out, but he sees no reason why he should be kept out. He agrees that State people have to be kept out of some things, but not Bill. He says he's had newspaper people tell him what the NSC people have said to them, but he doesn't care about that.

He says the P knows all about the Israel stuff, that he has memos from the P about what he should do. That the policy in the Middle East has been good, and he will not have Henry second-guessing him all the time. He's happy to keep the P fully advised. Says the meetings he's had with [Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak] Rabin were pursuant to a directive from the P. He doesn't want the thing to end up as if State is withholding things. The main thing is that K doesn't keep Rogers advised at all on what he's doing. For instance, he knows nothing about the Russia and China trips except what Al [Haig] told him the other day. Therefore, he will disregard the instructions from K; he's not working for K. If the P wants to tell him, 'I don't want you to know about Russia' and so forth, at least he'll know where he stands, but when the P says 'I want Bill to know everything,' then he expects to know it, without K screwing it up." (Ibid.)

In his diary entry for January 16, Haldeman noted that he received a telephone call from Rogers who stated:

"I have a preemptory note memo from Henry and I won't take it. I have orders from the P and I'm following those. I thought we had an understanding here that this was a two-way thing. The theory is that the P has announced his policy, the State Department's carrying it out. He doesn't mind checking with Henry if Henry agrees to check with him too, and now he wants to talk to the P about it. He thinks it's hurting the whole situation." (Ibid.)

Haldeman noted in his diary entry for January 18 that he and Attorney General John Mitchell "agreed that the only way to solve this was a memorandum from the P to both Rogers and K" that would propose a process for keeping Rogers informed while at the same time cement White House control over foreign-policy making. In devising the memorandum, Nixon suggested the following additional language (later excised by Haldeman and Mitchell):

"It's necessary for all of us to consult closely with each other, and it's imperative that I be informed. I cannot and don't want to become involved in matters that are not of importance. But on three major issues, China, Russia and Middle East, I want to be totally and completely informed at all times, so I've asked Haldeman to set up a procedure under this where I want to see all of the advance notice, and so on. That will keep both of you informed on whatever activities I may undertake independently but I anticipate none at this time. The only winner from our failure to work together would be our enemies both at home and abroad. I hope we can all subordinate our personal considerations for these higher goals." (Ibid.)

Haldeman added that "both Henry and Mitchell feel it's ridiculous for the P to subordinate himself in this fashion." (Ibid.)

In a January 19 memorandum to Rogers and Kissinger, Nixon established a "basic operating procedure" with regard to issues relating to the Soviet Union, as well as China, the Middle East, Cuba, and Chile. He directed that he be informed of and approve any proposed actions

taken on these matters beforehand and that all meetings with representatives from these areas be cleared with him in advance. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda from the President, 1969–1974, Memos–January 1972) On January 20 Haldeman made the following notation in his diary:

“Earlier today, right after the Cabinet meeting, I gave Bill Rogers the directive from the P and Henry wanted put out that orders him to notify the P in advance of all meetings with Russians, Chinese, etc., and Rogers obviously didn't like it very well, and leaped into my office with the Attorney General and we had some discussion of it. He's making the point that the real problem here, still, is how we make sure that Henry keeps him informed of things. It's just impossible to get through to him the point that there's a difference between keeping the Secretary informed and keeping the P informed, but I guess if we keep hammering away it will work out.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

37. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, January 17, 1972.

SUBJECT

The Pace of Our Negotiations with the Soviets: Relationship to China Trip and Moscow Summit

As you are aware, there are currently in circulation in the agencies, the press and academic community a number of theories about how the White House wants (or should want) our negotiations with the Soviets paced in relation to the China trip and the Moscow summit. Some suspect (or argue) that we should withhold major agreements with the Soviets before the China trip in order not to arouse Chinese suspicions or, conversely, in order to give the Soviets an incentive for concessions. Others argue that we should reach certain agreements with the Soviets in order to make the Chinese more forthcoming. Then there is the school that feels that all good things should be saved for the President in

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 717, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XVII. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for action.

May and we should therefore stall the more substantive negotiations until then and leave it to the President to consummate them. There are others who feel that we should amass as many agreements as possible before the May summit so that the atmosphere will be good, the President can use most of his time to talk about fundamentals and the final outcome will be to provide an agenda for the next phase. Still others worry that if too many issues are left unresolved the President may be under pressure to make last-minute and possibly unwise concessions to get agreements in May and this will be bad for the country and in any case cause him more trouble on the domestic right. Curiously enough, almost everyone claims to have a White House signal on which he bases his preferred tactic.²

There is, of course, some merits in most of these ideas, even where they are mutually exclusive. But it is never easy—and certainly not in this Government—to fine-tune one’s diplomacy in this fashion. Moreover, it takes two to tango and Soviet calculations of what is optimal timing from their standpoint will frequently run diametrically opposite to ours.

I think therefore our best rule of thumb continues to be to conduct negotiations on their merit. It certainly is the best public posture and the least confusing one for providing guidance to the agencies. We discussed this briefly before Christmas when Brzezinski³ claimed that the working level at State was going on the assumption we wanted as many agreements as possible before May. Since that time I have, as we agreed, taken the line in IG and other meetings that we do not want negotiations with the Soviets either speeded up or delayed because of the May summit; that above all we want sound substantive positions and that negotiations once begun should be conducted on their merit.

*Unless this gives you a problem, I would like to continue taking this line and hope you will also when the SRG considers NSSM 143 (Review of US-Soviet Negotiations).*⁴

² In a year-end review transmitted in telegram 136 from Moscow, January 6, the Embassy noted: “China has emerged as a potent competitor on the diplomatic scene with its anti-Soviet bent if anything intensified. Changes in the U.S.-Chinese relationship have made China even a more key factor in Soviet security calculations. The President’s initiative toward China, together with the further winding down of the Vietnam war, has given the U.S. greater policy freedom, and Moscow added incentive, to engage in serious negotiations on SALT and a broad range of other issues.” (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR)

³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, Director, Research Institute for International Change, Columbia University and Consultant to the Department of State.

⁴ See Document 48. Haig signed the approve option for Kissinger.

38. Conversation Between President Nixon and His Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, January 20, 1972.

Kissinger: Dobrynin called me.

Nixon: He did?

Kissinger: Yeah. Through Haig. Said he had a—he needs a long conversation with me. I made some jokes about India—Pakistan. He said, “Let’s put it behind us. Let’s work positively for the future.” And I’m having dinner with him tomorrow night.

Nixon: So he doesn’t appear to be negative about it?

Kissinger: Not at all. No. One massive problem we have is in Vietnam. We had a message from Abrams today. They’re putting in every reserve unit they have. Everything. They’re stripping North Vietnam.

Nixon: The North Vietnamese?

Kissinger: Yeah, they’re stripping it bare and—

Nixon: What can we do?

Kissinger: Well, he wants to bomb the southern part of North Vietnam where they have their logistic buildup. So we’ve got to look at it tomorrow. I want to talk to Dobrynin and tell him, “Look, if this offensive”—of course, they want to put it to us.

Nixon: I think they want to put it to us. My view is that we may have to risk the Chinese thing, Henry. I—

Kissinger: It’s my view too, Mr. President.

Nixon: I just don’t believe you can let them knock the shit out of us. I mean, the Chinese—the Chinese aren’t going to cancel the trip.

Kissinger: No.

Nixon: They’re not going to cancel the trip because—

Kissinger: I don’t think you should go quite as far north but we should, as we did in the last attacks—I think we should let him do something. I think we—

Nixon: Henry, you remember I—

Kissinger: Particularly after your peace speech.² I don’t think you should do it.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 652–17. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met Kissinger in the Oval Office from 6:08–6:36 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² For Nixon’s January 25 “peace” speech, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 100–106.

Nixon: Wouldn't do it now. We'll wait until after the peace speech. I think you're right.

Kissinger: I'd wait until they've—

Nixon: Did they respond with—to our speech with increased buildup?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: I think so too.

Kissinger: That's my understanding.

Nixon: Just simply—What does Abrams—does Abrams have a plan?

Kissinger: Well, he has targets. And I think they probably are going to make an all out—and then they're going to settle. If they don't tip it then, they're going to settle. They're going to settle either way, because if they win, of course, they're going to—and if they don't make it, then they're going to—

Nixon: When you speak in terms of the win, what are they doing? What do you envision?

Kissinger: Well, what they could wind up doing is have a massive attack in the II Corps and come across the DMZ and across the—and go all out in I Corps. Now we ought to be able to handle it with massive air. If they go across the DMZ, of course, they'd be violating the understanding totally.

Nixon: Yes.

Kissinger: And, of course it's also conceivable that Dobrynin brings us a message tomorrow. I don't really believe it. Not on Vietnam. He's—But he was very conciliatory and very—somewhat apologetic.

Nixon: About what?

Kissinger: India–Pakistan.

Nixon: You think so?

Kissinger: Yeah. I said to him, "You know, Anatoly, every time you leave town I know you're doing something mischievous 'cause every time you're out of town things are in crisis. He said, "Oh, I can tell you some interesting things." He said, "Let's put it behind us. But as a friend, I'll give you a lot of explanations which will—" ³

Nixon: He'll probably say that Kuznetsov tried—

Kissinger: Well that I believe. But that, in fact, there's no doubt. Because we have the telegram from the Soviet Ambassador to India,

³ In a telephone conversation between Kissinger and Dobrynin, January 20. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Pegov, who told the Indians on Friday, which was the 10th that they should take Kashmir as quickly as possible. And on Sunday Kutznetsov showed up and everything began to turn. So the signals were clearly changed after your conversations with that Agricultural Minister.⁴

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: There's no question. No question.

Nixon: Let me ask you, is there anything that—there's nothing you can do with Dobrynin on that damn Vietnam thing. Not a damn thing—

Kissinger: Well, I'm gonna . . . Well, I'll see him tomorrow.

Nixon: You're going to have to see him tomorrow night?

Kissinger: Tomorrow night. For dinner. I'll call you.

Nixon: Is your present thinking though that we still go ahead Tuesday night? That's what we want to do?

Kissinger: I think so. Oh, no question about that.

Nixon: [unclear] I mean, in relation to the Dobrynin conversation, will that change anything?

Kissinger: Well, unless he has a message that they are ready to start talking in which case—but that's inconceivable to me. They wouldn't send it through him.

Nixon: You think that what they're really doing is—what Abrams says is a massive buildup?

Kissinger: Biggest buildup in 4 years. Every reserve division they've got. Literally, they've stripped it. If we could land one division on North we could drive to Hanoi.

Nixon: And where are they all? He says—

Kissinger: Well they're coming down—

Nixon: How'd they get there so fast?

Kissinger: Well some are on the train and some are just north of the DMZ. And they've built a road across the DMZ, which they don't need for infiltration—

Nixon: Well what the hell. Why aren't we hitting the road?

Kissinger: Mr. President, this has been one of the—

Nixon: What in the name of God are we doing about the road?

Kissinger: Well, oh yeah, we are bombing it. But it's one of the worst disgraces, that here the great U.S. Air Force can't keep a road from being built. They still haven't finished it completely so I don't think they'll start the DMZ attack yet. Our judgment is, or the intelligent judgment is, that they'll start their attacks in Vietnam in February, and in the

⁴ Nixon met with Soviet Minister of Agriculture Vladimir Matskevich on December 9, 1971; see Document 23.

Second Corps area in March, and the I Corps area. I think they'll have knocked it off by May 1st. They will not—My judgment is that the Russians will not want you to come to Moscow—They'd like you to be in Peking.

Nixon: Peking—

Kissinger: With egg on your face. But, if we set up these negotiations on the Middle East properly, they'll need you to deliver on it. If you're the one that delivers, you need to be strong. If we—That's why we have to set up trade and the Middle East in such a way that you are the one that has to deliver it after the election.

Nixon: Coming back to this immediate problem, I see no choice but to, do what Abrams recommends on that. The—

Kissinger: We kicked the Russians in the teeth when we had to for the national interest and we'll have to do it to the Chinese.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: But I'd do it after the peace offensive.

Nixon: Yeah. Yeah, I think you're right. That isn't going to make that much difference, is it?

Kissinger: I think we should send a note to the Chinese when you give your speech and a note to the Russians. And—

Nixon: If they'll [unclear] escalation we will have to respond in kind?

Kissinger: Yeah. And we hope—

Nixon: It's not [unclear] against them.

Kissinger: And we hope that they'll use the affair to help us . . . to help our settlement.

Nixon: Who will you do that through? Have Walters deliver it in Paris?

Kissinger: Walters in Paris and I can give it to Dobrynin on Tuesday⁵ just before your speech.⁶

Nixon: I'd do it beforehand. That's what I'd do. I really would.

Kissinger: Well, the warning I can give Dobrynin tomorrow, but I think the speech with the request—we don't want to—

Nixon: Yes, yes, I know.

Kissinger: Because otherwise—

Nixon: What will you tell him tomorrow?

Kissinger: Well, I'll tell him—

⁵ January 25.

⁶ For the full text of the "Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union," see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 41–74.

Nixon: Do we think, for example, that our air strike did any good? We do, don't we?

Kissinger: Yeah. I'll tell him that what—I'll say now look, you've watched the President. Time and again he's done things, which you would have not predicted. Run enormous risks, and I'll tell you now he's going to do it again if this Vietnam offensive comes off at the scale at which we're now seeing it develop.

Nixon: Incidentally, what are the South Vietnamese doing in terms of preparing to meet the offensive? Are they—

Kissinger: Well, he's changed a commander of the second—of two of the divisions in II Corps.

Nixon: Has he?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Has he—the commander change been—They must be pretty good now, the South Vietnamese.

Kissinger: Well, in I Corps they're pretty good but that's where they may run into a lot of tanks. This may be a replay of the—

Nixon: We have tanks there now, remember? We've been delivering tanks to [unclear].

Kissinger: No, no. That should be a gory battle but, you know, it would be a lot of publicity in this country.

Nixon: Look, if it doesn't involve Americans, it's all right. They're going to have publicity on it anyway.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Moscow summit.]

Kissinger: I told Dobrynin—I said, "I saw you applauding the defense program part." He said, "No, you must have been watching this [unclear]."

Nixon: Did he say anything?

Kissinger: I said it as a joke. I knew he hadn't applauded. But it was a good story.

Nixon: Well, we had one little hooker in there, for the good of the Russians too. We said, "We're for limitation of arms, looking to the future." We want to reduce arms. Dobrynin should know that.

Kissinger: Oh, yeah.

Nixon: That we're willing to talk about that.

Kissinger: Mr. President—

Nixon: He didn't object to the speech, did he?

Kissinger: Oh, no.

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: Mr. President, I have—one thing is clear to me ever since my meeting with the [Soviet] Cultural Minister [Ekaterina A. Furtseva].

What we did in India–Pakistan, I don't care what it does here, we've got new respect from the Russians. She's now sent me presents and a note of [unclear].

Nixon: Did she?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Great.

Kissinger: And Dobrynin. I can tell how he slobbers. He says, "I have some very interesting communications for you and it's terribly important. We have a big agenda. Let's get right to work." And he wanted to come for breakfast, as you know. He said—but he said he needs most of the morning, so I said, no, why don't we do it—

Nixon: At least it's—at least the summit is still on. You know, you hear about these people that—I—

Kissinger: I told your staff this morning that I thought we would have more results—

Nixon: They kept saying—they kept saying, "Well, because of India–Pakistan Dobrynin will come back and tell you to go to hell." Well if they do then we know where we are.

Kissinger: Mr. President, there is absolutely no chance—

Nixon: They've got [unclear].

Kissinger: He told me—I had told his minister, his Trade Minister—I dropped in at Sam's for drinks with his Trade Minister and I said, "You know the President is prepared to do things that are beyond the imagination of everybody. On the other hand, if you don't stop these propaganda attacks on us, we can only conclude you—you want—you don't want improved relations and in that case we're not going to trade." So we've got to get Dobrynin back. We've got to get him back. He's the only guy that can straighten it out. And Dobrynin said he really had intended to stay another week, but they made him come back right after that conversation because they are determined to have this thing develop. So—

Nixon: Why don't you talk to him about Vietnam and give, you could give 'em almost anything right now. The trade, of course, you could give them.

Kissinger: Oh, yeah.

Nixon: But damn it, they don't want to play. I don't know what we can do. We don't have any cards there, Henry, nothing but the damned air force. We'll use it. We've got to use the air force—

Kissinger: Mr. President, I think the demonstration of impotence, of getting them out of Vietnam physically—

Nixon: What's that? I couldn't hear you.

Kissinger: I mean—

Nixon: If the demonstration what?

Kissinger: Of being run out physically. It would be too great.

Nixon: Oh, we can't do it.

Kissinger: Of course, I think they will be—after this shot—I think they . . .

Nixon: They've got to settle.

Kissinger: Yeah. That's it.

Nixon: Don't you think so?

Kissinger: They've got to settle this summer. One way or the other. I think in making your planning, you can pretty well assume one way or the other it's going to be—

Nixon: [unclear] we get number three?

Kissinger: It's going to be—

Nixon: Remember we always talked in terms of two and three.

Kissinger: Well, we got the two. I think we'll get number three.

Nixon: You know, it's interesting when you think, when you put down, you read the little foreign policy section in that speech. It's a pretty goddamn good policy, isn't it?

Kissinger: It was very strong.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: And very thoughtful.

Nixon: And you know we've said our commitments will be minimal. We will not enter in militarily, but we will do this and that. And also we've got in—we'll use our military—we've got it all down there. People know exactly what we will do and what we won't do. And it's damn strong. And of course, as you know, the kicker is an interest.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Oh. It's what—That means everybody gets it. I might decide that our interests were threatened in Bolivia, right?

Kissinger: It was no—

Nixon: See the interest is the thing that they—that the peaceniks will . . . Well, some of them will be smart. But a lot of peaceniks will say, "Ah, thank God we're not going to intervene." Bullshit. We'll intervene in any place—

Kissinger: [unclear]—

Nixon: If [unclear].

Kissinger: Well, with you as President, I—

Nixon: They'd be scared to death I might do something foolish.

Kissinger: Foolish hasn't been your record but something tough.

Nixon: I wish we could do something tough in Vietnam. I don't—Well, goddamn it. That air force plus the South Vietnamese should be

able to do it—I don't think the North Vietnamese are that strong. I can't believe—

Kissinger: We ought to do—

Nixon: —in Laos, in Cambodia they could be that strong.

Kissinger: What we ought to do is get a series of 1 or 2-day strikes. I don't think we can do 5 days at a clip, but—

Nixon: No, I—we can't—As I told you before, I really think that the last 2 days of the last [unclear] it wasn't fatal, but it didn't help us. I don't think it was worth [unclear] continuing. It looked like we just—Hit 'em for a couple of days and then stop. As you noticed that, we stopped the bombing. They quit talking about [unclear] for 3 days.

Kissinger: Yeah. In 2 days, we can do 1 week. And then 2 weeks later, another day. They've just got to—

Nixon: I think that the fact—the reason I asked you about the other one, Henry, I think the fact that we did that 5 day—

Kissinger: Oh, that was very—

Nixon: Gave them some pause.

Kissinger: Oh yeah—

Nixon: —Don't you think it worried them a little? They needed some [unclear].

Kissinger: I think we may have to hit them early in February. I don't think it's—

Nixon: Well that means next week maybe, though.

Kissinger: No, the week after your proposal.

Nixon: Oh, you want to wait that long?

Kissinger: Oh, maybe at the end of the week. I'd like to give your proposal a little more ride. I think they're going to—

Nixon: Yeah, I think we should let it ride the weekend, if we can. How about that?

Kissinger: And, if they hit us, then maybe we hit them for 5 days. You know, if they respond to your proposal with an all-out offensive.

Nixon: That's right. But we—and you're agreed you could hit that—I don't want to say—I don't want to threaten in my speech if you think I should.

Kissinger: No, you should not.

Nixon: I don't think I should be threatening at all in the speech.

Kissinger: No, no.

39. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, January 21, 1972, 8 p.m.–12 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Ambassador Anatoli Dobrynin
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

The meeting lasted nearly four hours and was conducted in an atmosphere of effusive cordiality, buttressed by slugs of vodka and cans of caviar.

Dobrynin had just returned from the Soviet Union and had called me for an appointment.²

He began the conversation by telling me that he had just spent three days with Brezhnev at the Soviet version of Camp David, after having spent two days previously consulting with the Government to review the Soviet attitude towards the United States. Dobrynin described the physical layout of the Soviet equivalent of Camp David. He stressed that it did not have any houses earmarked for particular

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. This meeting was held over dinner at the Soviet Embassy. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. On January 28 Kissinger sent this memorandum and the attached letter to Nixon. A January 21 memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger contained a briefing for this meeting. (Ibid.) On January 31 Haig sent Eliot a sanitized version of this memorandum of conversation that did not mention the Middle East, South Asia, summit preparations, trade, and Vietnam. (Ibid.) Kissinger recounts this meeting in *White House Years*, pp. 1126–1127.

² In a January 4 telephone conversation, Kissinger told Vorontsov that on important issues, especially regarding the upcoming Presidential trip to China, he was "not holding up because of other visits and we don't care if it's known" but was awaiting Dobrynin's return from consultations in Moscow. Vorontsov replied that Dobrynin was aware and "will have something for you" upon his return. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) In a January 20 telephone conversation, Kissinger chided Dobrynin upon his return: "When you leave town you are up to mischief." They arranged the next evening's dinner during the conversation. (Ibid.) In a January 21 telephone conversation at 10:30 a.m., Nixon instructed Kissinger: "Your line with him will be conciliatory on the big things but we cannot have the defensive. We will respond—at a level they don't expect. Let them think we will hit Haiphong." (Ibid.) In a January 22 telephone conversation, Kissinger told Nixon the conversation "went very well" and that the Soviets were aware of the consequences of their support for any precipitous North Vietnamese action. (Ibid.) In a conversation with Nixon, January 17, Kissinger noted that Gromyko had sent an oral message stating that Dobrynin's delay in returning to Washington was "in order to facilitate negotiations." Kissinger then stated: "Well, I think we're on a good course with them. They wouldn't have bothered with that if they didn't want to talk." Kissinger also noted that Vorontsov "was practically drooling over me" when the message was delivered. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, January 17, 1972, 11:30 a.m.–1:23 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 648–4)

individuals, but that Brezhnev used it more than anyone else, especially when he was preparing major speeches. This led him into a discussion of Alexandrov, who is Brezhnev's principal assistant. Dobrynin said it was amazing what role accident plays in careers. Alexandrov had been an official in the Embassy in Stockholm when Brezhnev, a relatively low-ranking member of the Politburo, needed a speech writer and he was assigned to him. Today, Alexandrov is the closest equivalent to me that the Soviet system has.

Dobrynin then brought the conversation around to a discussion of topics in Soviet-American relations.

Vietnam

I began with Vietnam. I said that as a general matter it had been difficult for us to understand Soviet behavior in the fall. We were extremely unhappy about Soviet actions prior to the India/Pakistan crisis, and we found their behavior on Vietnam also very hard to comprehend. I had talked to the Soviet Foreign Minister about Vietnam at the end of September. We had transmitted a specific proposal. We had received a reply from the Soviet Foreign Minister as well as from the Vietnamese that they were ready to talk. We accepted the Vietnamese date for the meeting and three days before, it was cancelled.³ Since then we had not heard from them. If a Communist offensive occurred, I emphasized that we would certainly take the strongest possible action, which in turn would have effects on our relationship. It was clear that the Soviet Union might think it could embarrass us in Peking by encouraging North Vietnamese attacks now, but it paid a heavy price in our goodwill. Certainly if the Vietnam issue were removed, all other areas in our relations would make quick progress.

Dobrynin replied that he wanted me to understand the following: First, the Soviet Union had recommended our plan to Hanoi early in October and had been under the impression that Hanoi would negotiate. Secondly, the Soviet Union had no interest in an offensive by Hanoi, because if the offensive took place now prior to the Peking summit it could be repeated prior to the Moscow summit. The last thing the Soviet Union wanted was a confrontation with the United States in the months before the Moscow summit. Thirdly, the Soviet Union believed that the war should come to an end now. But it was

³ On October 11, 1971, the U.S. Government proposed an eight-point peace plan. For text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, February 21, 1972, pp. 229–230. On November 17, 3 days prior to scheduled meeting with U.S. officials, the North Vietnamese notified U.S. representatives that Le Duc Tho was "ill" and would not be able to attend the meeting. The North Vietnamese did not agree to the rescheduling of an alternate date. See Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1040.

not prepared to bring pressure to this end. I said that, in that case the objective tendency of Soviet policy was to exacerbate the tensions and to encourage Hanoi. I pointed out that the spate of articles in the Soviet press that accompanied Haig's visit to Peking reinforced this and were taken very ill in Washington.

Dobrynin replied that if we read those articles carefully we would see that they were not directed against the United States but against China. They were placed into the Soviet newspapers on the pages reserved for Chinese affairs, and they represented an opportunity for the Soviet Union to hit back at China with some of the charges China had made against them.

With respect to the North Vietnamese behavior, Dobrynin continued, it was the impression in Moscow that what had really aborted the negotiations in the fall was the Chinese intervention. It was Moscow's impression that after my visit to Peking⁴ the Chinese raised the new U.S. proposal with the North Vietnamese and the North Vietnamese took violent exception to this. They were furious with the Chinese in any event because they believed that the Chinese had aborted their seven-point plan⁵ and that the campaign they had planned in support of their plan was destroyed by my visit to Peking, about which Hanoi had not been informed ahead of time and of which Hanoi was informed only 36 hours prior to the announcement.

When the Chinese raised our peace plan with them, Hanoi decided that it was essential that if peace is negotiated it appear as the result of Hanoi's actions and not of Great Power pressure. They scheduled a visit to Peking and did not receive full assurances. It was Moscow's impression, however, that recently they had received fuller assurances.

I told Dobrynin that, whatever the convoluted maneuvers of inter-Communist politics, the fact of the matter was that if the Soviet Union had also joined the appeal there would have been peace, so that the objective tendency of Soviet policy was to encourage a continuation of the war even if they never used words to that effect. I also stressed that if the Soviet Union were really as concerned about U.S.-Soviet rapprochement as it professed to be, it should consider that an end of the Vietnam war would remove one of the principal obstacles to it. Dobrynin said he thought this was realized in Moscow, but it was a very difficult situation.

⁴ Documentation on Kissinger's secret trip to China in July 1971 is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVII, China, 1969–1972.

⁵ The text of the PRG seven-point peace plan of July 1, 1971 is in *American Foreign Relations, 1971: A Documentary Record*, pp. 295–298.

India/Pakistan

We turned to the India/Pakistan crisis. I told Dobrynin that we thought that Soviet actions either by design or miscalculation had made the outbreak of the war more probable and the settlement of the conflict once it started more difficult. While I regretted what I had said on Air Force One,⁶ since a public statement was not called for at that point, it did accurately reflect the state of mind of the President and of the Administration, and he should have no illusions about the real blow to U.S.-Soviet relations that the India/Pakistan war had represented.

Dobrynin replied that, whether I believed it or not, the Soviet Union had exerted maximum counsels of restraint prior to the outbreak of the war. If I could see all Soviet documents, I would find that the Soviet Union had consistently opposed Indian military action. I interjected that it didn't matter what the Soviet Union said; the decisive aspect was what the Soviet Union did. Dobrynin said that once the war started, however, the Soviet Union was convinced that it would only end with the freedom of Bangla Desh and therefore they were puzzled as to the purpose of our actions. Were we trying to embarrass them with the Indians? Were we conducting a concerted policy with the Chinese? He could assure me that in none of the deliberations in Moscow did Soviet policy in the sub-continent have an anti-U.S. character. If any other country was being considered, it was China, not the U.S. But when we went back to the Security Council, forcing a Soviet veto, it looked like a provocative action in the Soviet Union.

I said to Dobrynin our problem was the following: We had told Vorontsov and his Agriculture Minister that an attack on West Pakistan would create the gravest problems;⁷ we received an answer 48 hours later that an attack on West Pakistan was not being planned.⁸ But (a) there was no assurance in it as to whether Kashmir, where two-thirds of the Pakistan forces were, was included in West Pakistan, an ominous signal because the Indians had deliberately excluded it; and (b) there was an ambiguity about the word "planned" because the Indians might have claimed they were moving in self-defense. We therefore had to lay the legal basis for taking a strong stand on behalf of West Pakistan.

⁶ Reference is to off-the-record remarks made to reporters traveling on the Presidential airplane Air Force One on December 15, 1971. Kissinger told reporters that Nixon intended for the Soviet Union to restrain India during the war with Pakistan, and if it did not do so the President would reassess the relationship with the Soviet Union, including the summit. (*The New York Times*, December 15, 1971)

⁷ See Document 23.

⁸ See footnote 4, Document 22.

Dobrynin pointed out, as a sidelight, that the Soviet Minister of Agriculture was in a very difficult position when he was in the President's office. In the Soviet system, the Minister of Agriculture is not permitted to express any opinion on foreign policy, either towards foreigners or within the Soviet system. So the poor Minister did not reply to any of the President's comments. The result was that he was criticized in Moscow for having let the President's exposition go unchallenged. He didn't think the Minister would ever request another appointment at the White House.

As to the substance of the matter, Dobrynin said that whether I believed it or not, the Soviet reply was drafted in response to our note. We had said we were concerned with an attack on West Pakistan, so the Soviet Union replied that an attack on West Pakistan was not contemplated; they were not aware of the fine points of the distinction between West Pakistan and Kashmir. Also the Soviet Union was in the dilemma that to agree to a ceasefire before Dacca had fallen would have mortgaged their relationships with India, and therefore he freely admitted that the Soviet Union was trying to delay until Dacca had fallen. But there was never any question in Moscow that it would then use maximum pressure to get the war ended and he could assure me that that pressure had been used.

He also wanted to say that until I made my comment on Air Force One about possibly cancelling the summit, the Soviet leadership had not realized completely how much we thought Soviet-U.S. relations were involved. I told him that I had not actually intended to make a formal statement to that effect, and explained some of the circumstances. At the same time, it accurately reflected our thinking and our concern. Dobrynin said he wanted to assure me that the Soviet Union was in a way trapped by events, and that it did not want a crisis in South Asia.

Dobrynin then asked if we would work with the Chinese now to make Bangla Desh a base for operations against West Bengal. I said we were in much less frequent contact with the Chinese than with the Soviet Union, and that in any event this was not our policy. Dobrynin said we had to understand that on the subject of China people in Moscow were extremely emotional. My visit to China and the President's acceptance of the invitation had had a tremendous impact among the Soviet leadership. They made special studies and concluded that there wasn't really a great deal that we could do of a concrete nature with the Chinese. At the same time, anytime we made a move that looked pro-Chinese, the anti-U.S. people in the Politburo got the upper hand again. So during the Indian crisis the only explanation believed in Moscow was that we were pursuing a concerted policy with the Chinese. I responded that the Soviets had an unusual ability to

bring about a concerted policy between us and the Chinese. As Dobrynin well knew, the Moscow summit would have preceded the Peking summit if the Soviet Government had been more generous in its responses last summer. We had had no intention when I left for Peking to agree to an earlier summit, but then when we received the Soviet reply the President decided to go all-out in that direction. The danger now was that the more intransigent the Soviet Union was, the more we would respond by compensating moves towards Communist China; it was therefore important that we get our relationships on a sensible basis.

Dobrynin said that this was exactly his intention.⁹

The Moscow Summit

Dobrynin then added that he was instructed by his Government to express its views on U.S.-Soviet relations. He produced a letter from Brezhnev in which he said there were three principal questions: (1) Did the United States want a summit; (2) were we prepared to make major progress at the summit; and (3) were we prepared to discuss a precise agenda and agree ahead of the summit about its probable outcome? He was also authorized to discuss with me all the technical questions.

I answered Dobrynin as follows: (1) We remain interested in the summit and look forward to it; (2) the reason we look forward to the summit is because we expect it to have constructive results, and we are therefore prepared, with respect to question three, to engage in detailed discussions of the agenda as well as the substance.

Dobrynin asked how long we expected to stay in the Soviet Union. I said we were prepared to stay as long as we did in the People's Republic, that is, seven days. He said, "Let's say five–seven days." He asked how many places we wanted to visit. I said tentatively maybe three. He said, "Let's say Moscow, Leningrad and the third place to be mutually agreed upon." He asked what form of final statement we wanted: a communiqué, a joint draft statement, or what. I told him we would have specific proposals in a couple of weeks.

We then turned to substantive issues.

SALT

The first subject was SALT. Dobrynin asked whether we were prepared to accept their proposal on ABM. I said that as far as we could

⁹ The issue of Soviet involvement in South Asia was discussed during the Senior Review Group meeting of January 19. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-113, SRG Minutes, Originals, 1972)

see it would wind up as a practical matter as three-to-one in their favor. Dobrynin said no, this was a question of justice. I said, "Well, how would you feel if we asked for an increase in the number of missiles on the offensive side, since you seem to be arguing that we should stay where we are offensively but reduce our advantage defensively?" Dobrynin said that he thought they would look at it favorably if we wanted to increase the number of offensive weapons.

He then turned to the limitations on submarines, asking what exactly we had in mind with this new program. If the program were adopted, would this be in addition to the 41 boats I had indicated that we would be prepared to accept as an overall ceiling? I said no, my understanding was that if we accepted the 41 boats as an overall ceiling we would have to retire an old boat for every new boat that we put into the inventory. Dobrynin then said his impression was that we were no longer talking about boats but about the total number of missiles on submarines. He asked why we had made that change. I said that it was to accommodate Soviet concerns that more missiles could be put on submarines and that we might count old Soviet submarines as part of the 41. Dobrynin said that he thought that they would probably prefer a limitation on boats.

He added that as far as he could see there were three possibilities intellectually: (1) no limitation on submarines; (2) a limitation on the total number of submarines; and (3) a limitation on the total number of missiles, with freedom to mix between land-based and sea-based. I noted that intellectually there was a fourth possibility, namely separate ceilings for sea-based and land-based missiles. He said he thought the fourth possibility was a subdivision of the third. He also said that he thought that if the Soviet Union would agree to include SLBM's the total-ceiling approach would probably be the best; at any rate he wanted me to know that he was prepared to discuss the subject. Dobrynin then wanted to know what impact the SALT agreement might have on the rate of our SLBM program. I said under those conditions we might consider moving it at a more measured pace. He asked why, as long as we had a new SLBM program, did we need a SALT agreement on it at all? He could see why we couldn't agree to exclude SLBM's before, because Congress might have objected to our not having an SLBM program while the Soviet Union continued. Under present circumstances, it might be best to exclude them altogether and keep the seas unconstrained. I said that at the moment this would be unacceptable to us. Dobrynin asked whether it would still remain unacceptable in early May if we still hadn't broken the deadlock. I said I had no idea but at this moment it was unacceptable.

Dobrynin noted that the Soviet leadership was very eager to sign a SALT agreement at the summit. He said he thought that we should

be eager also, because otherwise there would be too many disappointed hopes in both countries. I said we would do our best.¹⁰

Middle East

We then turned to the Middle East. Dobrynin said Moscow understood that I had not committed us to enter negotiations. Could I give them some answer on the subject now? I said we had felt that we could not proceed on this subject without talking with the Israelis at least in general terms, because their intelligence was so good and the danger of leakage in the Middle East was too great to proceed according to the Soviet suggestion. The President had therefore had a conversation with Golda Meir, and so had I.¹¹ On the basis of these conversations the President had concluded that talks could proceed.

Dobrynin asked whether I thought there was a possibility of concluding an interim agreement at the summit. I said I thought there was a good possibility if both sides were reasonable, and that we had obtained some concrete Israeli proposals along that line. It was essential, however, that they take no military action before, since we could not act under duress. Dobrynin said he agreed, and that they were using their influence in this direction.

We then turned to the overall settlement. I said that we needed longer discussion on the subject but I could say in a preliminary way that the Israelis were prepared to let us proceed with discussions, on the understanding that the plan would not be identical with the Rogers plan.¹² In what way should it differ, Dobrynin asked. I said there would probably have to be some Israeli presence beyond the dividing lines, though not in the form of sovereign presence. It would be a test of our ingenuity whether we could come up with some appropriate formula. Dobrynin said it would be very tough but he would ask for instructions in Moscow. I added that it was important to have a maximum ceasefire after an interim agreement. Dobrynin said it was understood

¹⁰ Kissinger transmitted Dobrynin's comments on offensive weapons to the head of the SALT delegation in backchannel message 28110 to Smith, January 28. (Ibid., Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, 1972, SALT) Smith replied with his personal assessment of Dobrynin's "intellectual possibilities" in backchannel message Vienna 144 to Kissinger, January 31. (Ibid., Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 2])

¹¹ See footnote 2, Document 16. Atherton met with Vorontsov on January 7 to discuss the Middle East. (Memorandum of conversation, January 7; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR)

¹² The Rogers plan was a peace proposal put forth by the Secretary of State in a December 9, 1969, speech that included most notably a call for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Egyptian territories in return for peace between Egypt and Israel. For text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, January 5, 1970, pp. 7–11.

in Moscow that we could not raise the issue of a final settlement with the Israelis until well into 1973.¹³

We agreed that we would have a meeting devoted to the Middle East soon.

Trade

We next turned to the issue of bilateral relations. Dobrynin said that their trade delegation was extremely eager, and he had the impression that our Commerce Department was putting them under even greater pressure. In fact, the Soviet trade people were so eager that they had been trying to get him back to the U.S. earlier than he planned so that they could make a preliminary agreement. He wanted us to know that the Kremlin was eager for these negotiations to proceed, but the final agreement should be signed in Moscow at the summit. Did I see any major obstacles? I replied that we were conducting a review now but we were approaching it in a positive manner. I pointed out, however, that it was really hard to conceive how the U.S. could even consider major credits to a country whose military equipment was shooting at Americans.¹⁴

¹³ In a January 21 memorandum to Kissinger discussing key points for a Middle East peace settlement, Haig noted: "The interim phase would be dragged out at least until the Summit, to insure a ceasefire through the Summit." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2 [Pt. 2])

¹⁴ During January Stans continued to meet with a Soviet trade delegation. According to a transcript of a January 10 telephone conversation with Kissinger, Stans reported that "the head of the delegation says they have authority to negotiate with us for 5 years of feed grains—\$5 billion." He also noted that the Soviets were interested in discussing Lend-Lease debt repayment and an Export-Import Bank loan. Kissinger offered the following advice to Stans: "No doubt we want to move in both those directions and question whether we will use them to screw us or they will use us. Helpful signs. They are not looking for major crisis. Don't get Agriculture in yet. Keep it between you and me." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) On January 14 Stans reported on his meeting with the Soviet delegation 2 days earlier. He noted that the Soviets had notified him of their readiness to begin discussions on both agricultural issues and on the lend-lease debt renegotiations. Kissinger stated his preference for holding off on the commencement of such talks until around February 10, which would afford him the opportunity to discuss these issues with Dobrynin. Kissinger added: "It's practically settled. We want it underway before Peking. I want to settle these other things. It will be done. You did exactly what we wanted." (Ibid.) On February 11 Nixon and Kissinger discussed the issue further in a telephone conversation. (Ibid.) In NSDM 151, February 14, the President directed that the Department of State take the lead in developing recommendations for renewed lend-lease discussions with the Soviets and that the Department of Agriculture devise policy recommendations on grain sales to the Soviet Union. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-230, NSDM Files, NSDM 151)

European Security Conference

We then discussed the European Security Conference. Dobrynin asked whom on our side he should be in touch with; I had told Gromyko that I was in charge but Rogers had told him the opposite. I told him I would have to check with the President, but in any event issues of principle should be checked with me. He said that they were now prepared not to force the pace of the European Security Conference, but they hoped that some direction could be indicated at the summit.

Other Matters

Dobrynin also said that they were prepared to sign agreements on outer space and cooperation on health at the summit, and that we should get preliminary talks underway.

Finally, Dobrynin handed me a letter from Brezhnev for the President [Tab B],¹⁵ pointing out that I had only spoken of an improvement in relations while Brezhnev had, in his concluding paragraph, talked of a substantial improvement in relations. I said we would accept that formulation.

Dobrynin said if we were going to work out all these issues before the summit it was essential that we meet regularly, at least once a week, and he hoped that we would not wait until after the Peking trip. I told him I would be prepared to meet with him on a weekly basis, starting immediately.

The meeting then concluded.

Tab B

Letter From Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev to President Nixon¹⁶

Moscow, January 17, 1972.

Dear Mr. President,

I would like to outline to you some of my considerations in continuation of the exchange of opinion which has begun between us and which I consider very useful.

¹⁵ Brackets in the source text.

¹⁶ No classification marking. The letter is marked "unofficial translation" and a notation indicates the President saw it.

We share the opinion expressed in your letter of October 19, 1971,¹⁷ that the prospective Moscow meeting in May 1972 can mark a new departure in Soviet-U.S. relations. For it to become the one, it is necessary—and we are in accord with you on this—to reach a widest possible mutual understanding before the meeting itself, by way of preparing it.

It seems to us that the time is coming when it is necessary to get down to practical work on the questions which will be discussed at the meeting. Going over the details of the appropriate questions is, naturally, to be the job for our entrusted representatives. In this regard we, as well as you, attach special importance to the existing confidential channel.

At the same time, it seems, it would be right if we periodically compare our viewpoints on the key aspects of the most important issues in order to facilitate progress in the search for their constructive solutions.

In this letter I do not intend to dwell in detail on all the problems under discussion between our sides. I would like to dwell briefly only on certain aspects taking into account the development of events which have taken place of late.

I share your view that the signing on September 3, 1971, of the Four-Power agreement to West Berlin was a concrete accomplishment on the road to a stable peace and demonstrated the effectiveness of cooperative efforts by our two countries. It also gives us gratification that since then agreements have been reached between the GDR and the FRG, as well as between the GDR and West Berlin in connection with the above Four-Power agreement and that the process has been started to ratify the treaties between the FRG and the Soviet Union and between the FRG and Poland.

We consider it important, proceeding from the favorable situation, to undertake further concrete steps, that would consolidate the détente and safeguard security in Europe, and we count on a constructive approach to those questions on the part of the U.S. A confidential exchange of views, suggested by you, regarding the Conference on European Security and cooperation would, I believe, be useful indeed.

The situation in the Middle East, Mr. President, causes serious concern. The tension there is not diminishing. Rather, to the contrary. Many elements in Israel's behaviour cause apprehension. But it should be clear that attempts to carry out its known designs toward the Arab territories would lead to far-reaching consequences.

¹⁷ Document 6.

In conversation with you in Washington our Minister for Foreign Affairs set forth in detail considerations concerning the questions of Middle East settlement. We are prepared, as before, to work in real earnest to find concrete solutions on the basis of the principles set forth in that conversation, and to bring what has been started to successful conclusion. And here it is desirable to act without delay.

On the question of Vietnam I would like—without repeating what we have said earlier—to express once again our confidence that a basis for peaceful settlement in that area does exist. However, the actions by U.S. armed forces, especially lately, raids against the DRV can only push events in the opposite direction. Yet, Mr. President, in all times, and more recent ones included, the peoples duly appreciated not those who started or expanded a war, but those who decisively put an end to it, guided by the highest interests of their people and of peace.

I already wrote to you about the seriousness of our intentions both with respect to the whole of the problem of strategic armaments limitation and to the realization of the agreement of May 20, 1971.¹⁸ Taking due account of your wishes we instructed the Soviet delegation at the Vienna negotiations to conduct a parallel discussion of the questions of an ABM agreement and of certain temporary measures in the field of offensive strategic weapons. You are aware, of course, of those proposals which the Soviet delegation put forward in Vienna. And, as we understand, those proposals are now being studied in Washington. On our part, we, too, continue to analyze the U.S. position, taking into account also those considerations that have been transmitted to us through the confidential channel. Given the mutual regard for the interests of both sides we shall be able, one can hope, to achieve progress at the negotiations.

Recently there has been a certain development of bilateral relations between our countries, including the area of trade and economic matters. We regard as useful the recent visit of Maurice Stans, U.S. Secretary of Commerce, to the Soviet Union. The exchange of opinion that took place here with him and the understanding reached regarding the continuation of the work, that has been initiated, toward removing the obstacles to a mutually advantageous development of trade and economic cooperation, will help, we hope, to prepare positive decisions on these questions for the May summit meeting.

In our correspondence there have already been mentioned potential possibilities for expanding Soviet-U.S. cooperation also in a number of areas of science and technology. Now it seems that in a practi-

¹⁸ For text of the agreement and its annexes and attachments, see Department of State *Bulletin*, September 27, 1971, pp. 318–325.

cal way, respective agencies should be charged with the task of preparing intergovernmental agreements on scientific and technological cooperation, including the questions of exploration of the outer space and the world ocean, protection of the environment, as well as in the field of public health—these questions to be dealt with separately from the general exchange agreement. The signing of the above new agreements could be timed with the meeting in May.

In conclusion I would like to emphasize the great significance that we attach to the forthcoming meeting with you as well as to the kind of situation it will be taking place in. We expect that it will open prospects for moving ahead in our relations and for dealing constructively with major international problems. This is all the more important since, as you rightly mentioned in your letter of October 19, all of mankind would benefit from the successes of the Moscow meeting.

Let me express the hope that the new year of 1972 will be a year of substantial improvement of Soviet-U.S. relations, a year of further strengthening the peace and international cooperation.

Sincerely,

L. Brezhnev¹⁹

¹⁹ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

40. Letter From President Nixon to Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev¹

Washington, January 25, 1972.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The speech I am making on Tuesday evening, January 25² reaffirms once again the United States desire to reach a negotiated settlement of the Indochina war.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 2]. No classification marking. Kissinger gave this letter to Dobrynin on January 28. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) A similar message also was passed to the People's Republic of China on January 26.

² For text of Nixon's January 25 speech on peace in Vietnam, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 100–106.

We are offering a new plan for peace, the essence of which was transmitted to the North Vietnamese over three months ago.³ Hanoi has chosen to ignore this proposal, cancelling a private meeting with Mr. Kissinger at the last moment in mid-November. Since then we have had no reaction from the North Vietnamese except a step-up in their military actions throughout Indochina.

This plan reflects the conversation Foreign Minister Gromyko had with me and Mr. Kissinger last September. It is specifically designed to take account of the obstacles to a solution that still remained after considerable progress during the summer. It offers a political process which would give all forces in South Vietnam a fair chance for political power, as well as committing the United States to total withdrawal within a short period. Alternatively, as I make clear in my speech, we remain ready to settle military issues alone, as we proposed privately last May. In this case, we would withdraw all American and allied forces within six months in exchange for an Indochina ceasefire and release of all prisoners. The political question would be left for the Vietnamese to settle among themselves.

The United States has now taken every reasonable step to meet North Vietnamese concerns and respect the sacrifices and interests of all parties. These proposals go to the limits of United States generosity. They make it clear that there is no reason for the conflict to continue.

The North Vietnamese nevertheless seem intent to keep on trying to embarrass the United States by a major military offensive. The Soviet Union should understand that the United States would have no choice but to react strongly to actions by the North Vietnamese which are designed to humiliate us. Such developments would be to no one's benefit and would serve to complicate the international situation.

The United States believes that all concerned countries have an interest in helping end this war and that its proposals mean that the Soviet Union could promote this objective without in any way compromising its principles.

I am sending you this note in the spirit of candor and mutual understanding which have characterized our exchanges.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

³ See footnote 3, Document 39.

41. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, January 28, 1972, 1 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

The meeting lasted 2½ hours and took place in an extremely warm atmosphere.

Dobrynin began the conversation by talking about the Washington Press Club speech that I had given two days before. He said he thought it was extremely funny, and that he had forwarded my joke about Gromyko to Moscow.

Vietnam

We then turned to Vietnam. Dobrynin said that at first he had thought our action (the President's address of January 25)² precipitate, but if we were really convinced that there would be an offensive, he could see the sense in it. He wanted to assure me again that the Soviet Union had no interest in seeing the war continue; on the contrary, the Soviet Union had every incentive to see the war end, because methods that could be used prior to the Peking Summit might also be applied prior to the Moscow Summit.

I said there was another reason why the Soviet Union had an interest in seeing the war end. Many of the things we were talking about presupposed a President who had authority enough to implement them after his election, and it could not be in the Soviet interest to undermine Presidential authority. Finally, there would be the major problem that if an offensive took place we were determined to make a sharp response. We would simply not hold still for an American humiliation. Dobrynin said that this point had been made abundantly clear.

Dobrynin then asked whether I had any ideas for ending the war. Was the offer of a military arrangement still open? I said it was, as long

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. Kissinger summarized the meeting in a February 8 memorandum to the President, to which he attached this memorandum of conversation. A notation on the summary memorandum indicates the President saw it. (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2]) The lunch ran from 1:10 to 3:30 p.m. (Library of Congress, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule)

² See footnote 2, Document 40.

as it involved elements of a ceasefire. Dobrynin asked whether the ceasefire was an absolute requirement. I said a standstill of military operations was a requirement. The formality in which it was expressed could be perhaps the subject of negotiation. Dobrynin said that this was an interesting point. I stressed that I was thinking out loud and that it represented no commitment.

Summit

We then turned to the Summit. Dobrynin said that Moscow was eager to find out the form of the communiqué we had in mind. Did we want one joint statement?³ Or could we have a communiqué with a statement of principles attached? I said that in all honesty I couldn't really tell the difference. Dobrynin said that Moscow did not want to press us, but it would be helpful in their own thinking if they could learn our preferences. Brezhnev leaned towards a communiqué that expressed our formal agreements and a statement of principles, but for them to begin working on it there would have to be a governmental decision, and Brezhnev did not want to submit it to the government if it were going to be turned down. I told him that I would check and would let him know at the next meeting.

SALT

The next subject of conversation was SALT. We again went over much of the same ground as we had at the previous meeting—that is to say, the nature of defensive limitations and the nature of offensive limitations, and Dobrynin made again essentially the same points about the intellectual possibilities that existed with respect to offensive limitations.

Dobrynin asked whether there was any chance of our accepting the Soviet proposal on defensive limitations. I said that I saw no possibility of that in their present form. I raised the issue of hard-site defense. I said there were some people in our country who thought that if we could have a hard-site defense of one site, it would be better than a Safeguard defense of both sites, and in that case there might be a possibility of our looking at the proposal more seriously. Dobrynin did not quite understand what was meant by hard-site and I then explained it to him, which took some time. Dobrynin promised that he would check informally in Moscow, but that it would take two weeks to get an answer.

³ In a January 27 briefing memorandum to Kissinger prepared for this meeting, Sonnenfeldt suggested various forms for the joint statement to follow the Moscow summit meetings. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt 2])

We both agreed that we would come to an agreement in principle before the negotiators met again at the end of March, and that we would gear the conversations to an agreement at the Summit.

Middle East

We next spoke about the Middle East. Dobrynin said that he was horrified by what he read in the newspapers about Sisco's activities. His experience with Sisco had been that he had a compulsive tendency to talk and that one never really knew where one was going. There was also the danger that Sisco would complicate their problems with the Egyptians because the Soviets could not put forward a position that was softer than the one Sisco might put forward. Wasn't there some possibility that I could simply order Sisco to stop? I said, well, there was some advantage in having public attention focus on something other than a deadlock. Dobrynin said, in that case, how much could they explain to the Egyptians?

I said that was their problem; we were going to keep the Israelis informed about the main lines of our conversations, but we could be sure that the Israelis would not leak. I think we could deliver some sort of interim agreement by the time of the Summit. On the other hand, matters would get very sticky when we reached the overall settlement. My concern was that Sadat would start explaining to his people the reason for not pressing harder. Dobrynin said that Sadat was going to come to Moscow, and they would have a very difficult time explaining their position to him. Would I leave it in Gromyko's hands how much he would be told? I said, yes, as long as it was understood that a significant leak would blow up the whole conversation.

Dobrynin urged again that we exercise the greatest restraint in the Sisco conversations, and he wondered whether it mightn't be better to get Jarring started again, rather than the Sisco talks, because at least Jarring could be controlled by both sides and he was guaranteed to produce a stalemate. I said I doubted it.

Trade

We then turned to trade issues. Dobrynin again indicated the Soviet interest in having a massive increase in trade, and he urged that we do not link it too formally. He said Stans was very heavy-handed, and every time he was stuck he would blame the White House for failure to get authority to proceed. He, Dobrynin, understood very well that this was a form of Stans' bringing pressure on the White House, but his colleagues thought it was a form of linkage and it got the backs up of the suspicious people in the Politburo. I said, "You understand that we consider trade related to political progress and, conversely, that if your political behavior is unacceptable, something will happen to trade. But we see no need to make that point in every negotiation, and

I will make sure that it does not come to you in this way anymore. In any event, the synchronization between the White House and Commerce will greatly improve after Peterson moves in. You will hear much more similar views.”

Dobrynin suggested that we meet weekly while we were preparing for the Summit, and we made another lunch date for the following Friday (February 4).⁴

Dobrynin then urged again that we be very careful about too ostentatious an embrace of the Chinese because reactions in the Soviet Union on that subject were very volatile. I said that our relations vis-à-vis the Chinese were being distorted by the Vietnamese war, and that if that were ended, everything would fall in its proper perspective.

We parted cordially.

⁴ See Document 45.

42. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between White House Chief of Staff (Haldeman) and the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, February 1, 1972, 7:25 p.m.

K: Sorry to bother you at home. I found out that Rogers is seeing Dobrynin.² I know this sounds again like we are starting a constant fight but this is going to blow up the summit.

H: What should we do?

K: Somebody has to be in charge. To let this snake maneuver between the two of us.

H: What do we do?

K: No discussions until after the summit. First of all, it is an insolent note. It is useless. To say that he will cover the subjects covered at other levels of Government, that’s me.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² See Document 45.

H: Yeah.

K: I don't give a damn about that. What I give a damn about—I told Haig the minute he gets our memcon,³ he will get a meeting. I think I told you too.

H: Yeah.

K: The trouble is this will get—the trouble is it gives Dobrynin the chance to maneuver between us. . . . and no telling what Rogers will give on the Middle East. Then Dobrynin can take whatever is the softer version and whipsaw us with it.

H: When is he seeing him?

K: Tomorrow.

H: You don't know when?

K: No.

H: I can't do anything now because he and the President are both at a dinner.

K: It won't be early. I made my biggest mistake—I sent him a Brezhnev letter deleting the references to me. Now I have got to call Dobrynin and tell him what he knows and doesn't know.

H: I will see if we can turn it off in the morning.

K: And there is a chance of another thing about these airplanes. He is all for surfacing the May 31 proposal.⁴ No one has asked for it. It will only get us in trouble.

H: So what has happened?

K: Only surfaces those proposals the North Vietnamese had . . . him and Ziegler; him and Haig; him and McCloskey; McCloskey and Haig. You ask Ziegler if that wasn't a totally artificial crisis.

H: You mean surfacing?

K: That's right. No one has asked for it. We put a lot of things in from which we could depart and that's why he wants to surface it.

H: That's turned off now.

K: Yeah, but if he has this meeting you can't tell what he will do. What worries me is the Russian summit. Everything we give him he turns into a goddamn fight. If the Russian Summit goes the way Dobrynin and I have planned it, it will be such a smashing success it can't fail.

H: Let's see if we can turn him off in the morning.

³ Document 41.

⁴ Reference is to the May 31, 1971, U.S. offer, as made public in Nixon's January 25 speech, to set a deadline for mutual withdrawal that was rejected by the North Vietnamese; see footnote 2, Document 40.

43. Editorial Note

In an assessment of a February 3, 1972, meeting between Soviet General-Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat transmitted to President Richard Nixon in an April 8 memorandum, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger concluded: "In sum, the record of the meetings in Moscow indicate that the Soviet-Egyptian relationship is considerably more reserved than it was before Nasser's death. Sadat is trying to manipulate the relationship primarily to strengthen his domestic political situation. He does not seem genuinely interested at this time in war with Israel. The Soviets, for their part, are still holding Sadat at arms' length. They are playing for time until they see how our private negotiations develop. The Soviets are clearly keeping their options open. The Soviets are willing to provide new arms to the Egyptians but they are concerned about the Egyptian request for an industrial base which would enable them to produce their own weapons. Such a development obviously would make Egypt less dependent upon the U.S.S.R. for weapon supply." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 638, Country Files, Arab Republic of Egypt (UAR) 1972, Vol. VIII) Kissinger attached an undated synopsis of this discussion. In a June 30 memorandum to Nixon, Kissinger summarized further meetings between Brezhnev and Sadat during the period April 27–29: "The overall theme of the late April talks reflect Sadat's fears that the Soviets would sell him out at the summit. He was also insistent that the Middle East situation called for more explicit Soviet diplomatic support of the Egyptian position and for delivery of new types of arms to give Egypt a convincing offensive capability, especially in the air. The protocols do not suggest that Sadat received much real satisfaction." (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 134, Country Files, Middle East, Rabin–1972–Vol. III)

44. Memorandum From President Nixon to Secretary of State Rogers¹

Washington, February 3, 1972.

With regard to your memorandum of February 1,² I would like for you to have the following guidelines in mind in your conversations with Dobrynin.

He obviously will be trying to find out what we are prepared to discuss or to concede at the Soviet summit and we, on our part, should therefore try to find out as much as we can as to what the Soviet leaders may be thinking with regard to the summit. As much as possible, therefore, I would like for you to get from him his evaluation of the recent conversations he has had with Brezhnev and Kosygin and other Soviet leaders on the summit and to avoid as much as possible giving him anything more than generalities with regard to our attitude toward the summit.

With regard to the summit agenda, I would suggest that you say that we both should be thinking about the agenda but that it will depend in large part on events that may occur between now and the time of our meeting in May and that, consequently, definitive discussions on agenda should not take place until around the first of April. This is, of course, true with regard to such subjects as the Middle East, SALT, and Vietnam, all of which are under active discussion in other channels at this time and which we will be able to appraise when we get closer to the date of the summit.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda from the President, 1969–1974, Memorandum to Secretary of State, 2/3/72. Top Secret; Sensitive. Other drafts of this memorandum are *ibid.*, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 2] An alternate memorandum from the President, drafted by Kissinger and instructing Rogers to limit his discussion on several issues, was not used. (*Ibid.*)

² In accordance with the January 19 Presidential directive (see Document 36), Rogers had notified Nixon of this upcoming meeting with Dobrynin in a February 1 memorandum: "I plan to see Ambassador Dobrynin later this week to get a report from him on his recent conversations in Moscow. I will focus on the matters which are presently being discussed with the Soviet Union at various levels of our two governments. This will permit me to make an assessment on what we need to do or decide upon now in order to have these matters come to fruition when you are in the Soviet Union." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9, [Pt. 2]) In a February 1 memorandum to Haldeman, Kissinger noted that on four recent occasions the NSC Staff had transmitted to the Department of State documents relating to ongoing U.S.–USSR negotiations while "in return we have received nothing." He added: "Since the President's directive we are worse off than ever before." (*Ibid.*, Kissinger Office Files, Box 148, State/White House Relationship, Vol. V, February 1, 1971–March 1972)

On European Security, as you know, my views are to move as slowly and cautiously as feasible. In fact, since meeting with Gromyko, I have told Luns, Heath, Brandt and Pompidou in discussing this subject that there can be no conference this year and that while we do not reject the idea we cannot agree to it even in principle until we have had an opportunity to evaluate with our allies and later with the Soviet what the substance of such a conference would be. In other words, discussion of the European Security Conference—but without commitment should be our line at this point.

With regard to SALT, the guidelines developed by the verification panel would seem to provide the best line for all of us to follow.

With regard to trade, we, of course, should continue to indicate interest but again avoid commitments until we are further down the road on other subjects. While direct reference to linkage, of course, must be avoided for reasons we are both aware, it is my view that as far as our actions are concerned how forthcoming we will be on the trade issue, particularly where credits are concerned, will depend on how forthcoming the Soviet leaders are on political issues in which we are concerned. Incidentally, on this point, I do not share the view of Stans, Peterson, et al, that trade with the Soviets is a good thing for us in and of itself. Trade is far more important to the Soviet than it is to us. It is one of the few bargaining chips we have and while we must not say that we consider it to be a bargaining chip we must be sure that we don't give it away for nothing.

On the Middle East, because of the high sensitivity on this issue during 1972 in this country, I believe it is essential for us to assess the on-going discussions with the Government of Israel and the other governments concerned in the area before going forward with discussions with the Soviets on this subject. This does not mean that we may not want to discuss the subject with them at a later time. However, this is an excellent example of one of those subjects on which no determination should be made with regard to the agenda until we get much closer to the summit date due to the fact that there are on-going discussions at this time which might change the situation before we meet in May.

Because of the frankness of some of the views I have expressed in this memorandum, I would like for you to keep it in your own possession and not distribute it to others in the Department. It is for your guidance only. I am giving Henry a copy so that in any discussion he might have with Dobrynin he will follow the same guidelines.

RN³

³ Printed from a copy that indicates Nixon signed the original.

45. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 4, 1972.

PARTICIPANTS

The Secretary of State
Ambassador Dobrynin

The Secretary called in Ambassador Dobrynin February 4 for their first formal conversation since his return from vacation.² They had a cordial talk for an hour and a quarter. The focus was the President's forthcoming trip to the Soviet Union and what might be done by way of preparation between now and May. The Secretary said that on our side we saw 1972 as a year of opportunity for bettering U.S.-Soviet relations; Dobrynin said he had spent three days discussing the visit with Brezhnev and Kosygin and they looked forward to constructive talks that would lead to positive, concrete results.

To begin the conversation the Secretary ran down the list of possible items of discussion given in Brezhnev's letter to the President of January 17. The rest of the conversation was in this context and covered the following main points:

Berlin. The Secretary asked when the Soviets intended to sign the final protocol on Berlin and Dobrynin replied that this depended upon FRG ratification of the Soviet-FRG treaty. The Secretary asked whether the Soviets had thought about signing the protocol in connection with the President's trip to Moscow, perhaps in Berlin en route to or from Moscow. Dobrynin said he did not believe his government had thought about this possibility—which was complicated of course by the involvement of the other countries—but he would inquire.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR. Secret; Nodis. Transmitted to the President under cover of an attached February 7 memorandum from Rogers. The Department transmitted summaries of the conversation in telegrams 21094 and 21101 to Moscow, both February 5. (Ibid.)

² On January 31 Dobrynin told Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Richard Davies that "he had spent a longer time than originally planned in Moscow in order to have extended discussions with 'our very top people' about the President's trip to the U.S.S.R. in May. He had stayed at a dacha near Moscow and these talks had taken place in 'a quiet, unhurried atmosphere,' so that the Ambassador could impart to the Soviet leadership all his thoughts on both the substance of our relations and on administrative arrangements for the President's trip and so that he could absorb the thinking of the leadership on both these aspects of this important subject. As a result, he said, he was fully aware of Moscow's views and was prepared to discuss them now. He concluded that if the Secretary were interested in exchanging views, he was prepared to do so." (Memorandum of conversation, January 31; *ibid.*)

CSCE. Dobrynin said that his government is eager to discuss convening a European Conference with us. The Secretary indicated that we may have something to say at a later date, but made no commitment to discuss the subject.

MBFR. The Secretary asked why the Soviets objected to our term “balanced” force reductions. Dobrynin asked for a definition of the word, and when the Secretary remarked that “balanced” meant essentially that reductions should not result in a net advantage to either side, Dobrynin said that this was close to the position taken by the recent Warsaw Pact statement.

The Secretary asked particularly about the Brosio mission.³ Dobrynin said several times that there had been no decision, either to receive or not to receive Brosio. When the Secretary pressed him about when he expected an answer, he said, “I do not expect an answer.”

During this discussion Dobrynin referred to the “bloc-to-bloc” implications of the Brosio mission. The Secretary pointed out that the nature of MBFR was such that the subject was inevitably of primary concern to the members of the two alliances. Dobrynin conceded that the major involvement in negotiations would be by the two alliances, but said that non-members—he named the Scandinavians, Spain and Yugoslavia—had a clear interest and we must avoid any impression of trying to decide the fate of others. In an allusion to France, Dobrynin also noted that not all NATO members agreed on the “bloc-to-bloc” approach.

Middle East. This subject came up in regard to the list given in Brezhnev’s letter,⁴ and Dobrynin asked about our current efforts to get close-proximity talks going between Israel and Egypt. The Secretary described in general terms how we thought the talks would operate, and in response to Dobrynin’s question, said that our current proposal envisaged the same role for the U.S. that we could have played earlier. We did not have concrete proposals to offer, but thought the parties themselves should come forward with proposals. If we saw possibilities of bridging the gap we might offer suggestions to facilitate agreement.

The Secretary told Dobrynin that a great deal depended on what the Soviets did with regard to Sadat and reminded Dobrynin of our long-standing interest in a limitation on arms supplies to the area. The Secretary also noted that Sadat seemed to have a need now to get talks

³ Exploratory talks on MBFR with the Soviet Union with Manlio Brosio, former Secretary-General of NATO, as the head of a delegation to Moscow, had been proposed at the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting on October 6, 1971, but had yet to be accepted by the Soviet Government. See *Keesing’s Contemporary Archives*, January 1–8, 1972, pp. 25015–25016.

⁴ Dated September 7; Scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

started. Dobrynin denied any special insight into Sadat's views, maintaining that Sadat told the Soviets just about what he said publicly. He added that he was not authorized either to encourage or discourage the current U.S. effort, and he said the Soviets had not tried to block earlier U.S. efforts to move towards a peaceful settlement.

Dobrynin also asked about the Israeli attitude towards a renewal of the Jarring mission, reporting that Jarring himself was discouraged by the Israeli attitude. The Secretary said that we would favor a renewal of the Jarring mission but that the parties kept raising pre-conditions. He thought Egypt had been relatively forthcoming and hoped Israel would make a further effort.

Finally, Dobrynin asked about a possible resumption of the four-power talks in New York, and the Secretary said we doubted they would be helpful at this point.

U.S.-Soviet Trade. Dobrynin said that the Soviet leaders had been well pleased by the visits of Secretary Stans and Assistant Secretary Gibson⁵ but wondered if since then there had been a change in our policy. He asked if we were backing away from what had earlier appeared to be a businesslike approach to settling outstanding economic issues. The Secretary told him that our policy had not changed and there was no deliberate pulling back from earlier positions. The Secretary explained that our talks on trade matters up to now had been purely exploratory, and we had to consider many questions carefully before proceeding. He added that the overall state of U.S.-Soviet relations was a factor in determining how much movement in the trade area would be acceptable to public opinion and Congress.

When Dobrynin pressed for a commitment that what the Soviet negotiator Manzhulo was told in the recent talks at the Department of Commerce represented the official U.S. position, the Secretary stated that what was said stands but we want to make it clear that we consider these talks exploratory.

Bilateral Matters. In a general review of issues we hope can be settled before May, the Secretary said we hoped to have a new Exchanges Agreement and to reach agreement on maritime and related issues.⁶ He also cited an agreement on construction conditions for new Embassies and the completion of facilities for the Consulates General in Leningrad and San Francisco as matters which we would like to

⁵ See Document 14.

⁶ In NSDM 146, January 3, Nixon directed that the Under Secretaries Committee prepare instructions for maritime talks and include the stipulations that "named U.S. ports open for calls by Soviet vessels should be open on the basis of 96-hours advance notification" and that "the U.S. objective at the talks should be the development of ad-referendum understandings based on discussion of the issues contained in the proposed

conclude before May. Dobrynin mentioned the case pending in Federal Court in Alaska against the two Soviet fishing vessels charged with violation of the contiguous zone and expressed the hope that the case could be settled expeditiously and not delayed several months because of a crowded court calendar.

The Secretary and Dobrynin agreed that between now and May they would meet periodically to review progress in the various areas of bilateral matters, looking toward a culmination, where possible, during the President's trip to Moscow. The Secretary informed Dobrynin that Assistant Secretary Hillenbrand would be in charge of coordinating for the State Department the various discussions and negotiations now in train, and they should be in touch on a regular basis.

U.S. agenda." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files) Box H-229, NSDM Files, NSDM 146) In NSDM 150, February 1, Nixon "decided that the United States should continue to seek a U.S.-Soviet understanding on measures to avoid incidents at sea." (Ibid., Box H-230, NSDM Files, NSDM 150) In a February 14 memorandum to Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt expressed concern that a Soviet protest over homeporting plans in Greece "had an implied warning of Soviet responses in Cuba." (Ibid., NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2]) In addition, NSSM 144, January 14, directed that Soviet naval deployments in the Caribbean be evaluated. (Ibid., NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files) Box H-189, NSSM Files, NSSM 144) This study was completed and submitted to Under Secretary Johnson in the form of a March 13 memorandum from Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs Ronald Spiers. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, DEF 6-2 USSR)

46. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 7, 1972, 1:07 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Possible Brezhnev Visit to U.S.

Dobrynin, who was in a very affable mood, began the conversation by giving me his account of Yevtushenko's report of his meeting

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. Kissinger forwarded the President a summary of the meeting in an undated memorandum. (Ibid.)

with the President.² Yevtushenko had reported to him that the President wished to see an avant-garde theater, to have a meeting arranged with intellectuals and writers, and to have disarmament on the agenda of the Summit conference. The President had also said he would extend an invitation to Brezhnev to visit the United States. I told Dobrynin that he had to remember that Yevtushenko talked 90 per cent of the time. Everything he just told me referred to statements by Yevtushenko to which the President had listened but on which he had expressed no opinion.

Dobrynin said it would be a little difficult in Moscow to treat the matter of Brezhnev's invitation in this way. He knew for a fact that Brezhnev was rather interested in coming to the United States. I told Dobrynin that if our talks went this year as I expected them to go, an invitation would seem to me to flow normally from a successful Summit, and might be extended for anytime next Spring or early Summer. Dobrynin said he would report this to Moscow.

Moscow Summit

Dobrynin asked me how we felt about the final statement following the summit—whether it should be one statement, or whether it could be split into two parts, a communiqué and a statement of principles. I told him we would be prepared to look at a statement of principles. He said that this was of interest to them also.

German Treaties

Dobrynin then mentioned the Soviets' impression of what Barzel had been told in the United States.³ It was that the United States was technically neutral with respect to ratification of the treaties, but in fact leaned towards it. This was sufficient help and was within the spirit of our arrangement. I did not contradict the point, but simply said that we wanted a relaxation of tensions and that we were pursuing a positive course.

Trade

Dobrynin then asked what progress could be expected on trade and other matters. I said that this depended—that we were studying the trade issues in a positive way and were getting ready to proceed

² Nixon, with Kissinger, Haldeman, and Ziegler, met with Yevgeny Yevtushenko, a Soviet poet, from 2:25 to 4:10 p.m. on February 3. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) A tape recording of this meeting is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Yevtushenko, February 3, 1972, Oval Office, Conversation No. 665–7.

³ West German opposition leader Barzel visited Washington in late January; see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*; vol. XL, Germany and Berlin, 1969–1972, Document 338.

with sending a delegation to Moscow in the second half of March. Dobrynin wondered whether this could be announced before our China visit. I said I would look into the matter. Dobrynin asked whether we were delaying because of the China trip. I said, no, because the Chinese would be just as angry after as before, and because we didn't believe in paying such a price.

Rogers–Dobrynin Talks

Dobrynin then gave me a rundown of his conversations with Rogers.⁴ Rogers had avoided SALT by saying he understood that this had already been discussed between Dobrynin and me, but Rogers had pressed very hard on Soviet help in the proximity talks. Dobrynin asked me whether I thought we could manage our talks in this circumstance. I said we would certainly try to.

Middle East

The conversation then turned to the Middle East. Dobrynin summed up his understanding, which was that we would try to have an interim settlement by the Summit which would be public, and a private understanding of a final settlement, which would be implemented in 1973. As for the interim settlement, Dobrynin said that the Soviet Union had never been very interested in it but would go along with it. Everything depended on the final settlement.

I replied, with respect to the interim settlement, that I would have some concrete proposals to make at the next meeting. However, it was important to keep in mind that the Israeli interest in an interim settlement would grow in proportion as the length of peace it would buy. If an interim settlement was just a short stage toward a final settlement, the Israelis would rather await a final settlement on the banks of the Suez Canal than at some distance back of it. Dobrynin asked me what I had in mind. I said my understanding was that there were Israeli elections in October 1973, and that Israel would therefore prefer to wait and move to the final settlement after the fall of 1973. Dobrynin said their expectation was that we would move towards a final settlement in the first six months of 1973. I said that we should leave this open for the time being.

Dobrynin then asked me whether I had any ideas on a final settlement. I said that it was clear to me that there were two requirements: (1) Israel was not prepared to accept the Rogers plan; and (2) Israel wanted some presence beyond its frontiers, however the issue of sovereignty was decided. Dobrynin asked me which Rogers plan I was

⁴ See Document 45.

talking about—the one of 1969 or the one before the UN last October? The one of 1969, I said, because the one at the UN simply stated some general principles. Dobrynin said that the key issue was the territorial issue, and on that one it was very difficult for Egypt to be flexible or for the Soviets to press the Egyptians. I said that we could not settle it now, but maybe we should put our ingenuity to finding some formula which would define the presence beyond the frontiers other than by sovereignty.

Dobrynin said that they were reluctant to make proposals but they would very carefully examine any proposals that we could make in that connection. Dobrynin reaffirmed their commitment to withdraw their forces and to accept limitations on arms aid under conditions of a settlement. He also promised me that he would give me an account of the Sadat meeting. We agreed to meet on the following Tuesday.⁵

Vietnam and Brezhnev Letter

As the meeting was breaking up, Dobrynin suddenly produced a letter from Brezhnev [Tab B]⁶ in answer to the letter communicating the President's speech [Tab C].⁷ Dobrynin said he wished to point out that the letter was deliberately phrased in a very conciliatory fashion.

For example, none of the arguments made against the President's peace plan were embraced by the Soviet Union; they were all ascribed to the Vietnamese. He said he wanted to reaffirm officially that the Soviet Union was willing to help us end the war, but the Vietnamese were telling them a number of things that seemed very difficult: (1) the Vietnamese claimed that we were determined to maintain a residual force there indefinitely; (2) the Vietnamese were very concerned that if they made an agreement with us this year, we would break it after the President's re-election; and (3) the Vietnamese simply did not understand our political proposal.

I replied that with respect to the first point, it would be easy to reassure the Vietnamese. With respect to the second point, they should ask themselves what the President might do if he was not constrained by an agreement, since it was not unnatural for him to take decisive and violent steps. Dobrynin said he liked the phraseology "not unnatural." With respect to the third point, I said it underlined the crucial importance of the restoration of private negotiations. I was prepared to resume them either in Paris or in Moscow. I did not think it was possible any longer to go to Paris privately, so I would go openly next time

⁵ February 15.

⁶ All brackets in the source text.

⁷ Document 40.

and simply not reveal the content of the negotiations. I also reiterated my offer to come to Moscow secretly. Dobrynin said he would communicate all this to Moscow and let me have their reaction.

I then asked Dobrynin whether there was any particular point in replying to Brezhnev's letter, since the exchange was becoming so general that it might depreciate the utility of the Brezhnev/President channel. Dobrynin said no. Dobrynin said it would be best if we drafted a very brief letter just confirming the continuation of the channel, what issues would be discussed in it, and that we would reserve the Brezhnev/Presidential channel for the most crucial issues and to stay periodically in touch.

The meeting then broke up.

Tab B

Letter From Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev to President Nixon⁸

Moscow, February 5, 1972.

Dear Mr. President,

I received your letter of January 25. I also went through the text of your speech of the same date, in which the U.S. proposals on Vietnam, earlier transmitted to the DRV Government in a confidential manner, were made public.

You are undoubtedly aware of the reaction of the Vietnamese side to those proposals. The Vietnamese side notes that the proposals leave unsolved, as before, the question of complete withdrawal without conditions of U.S. troops from Vietnam, since this question is tied together with a number of terms of political and military nature. It is also emphasized that the U.S. proposals avoid the question of establishing in South Vietnam a broad government of national accord which would organize free and democratic elections. The idea of holding elections which would in fact be prepared by the hands of the present Saigon administration and be held in the conditions when U.S. troops still remained in South Vietnam, is viewed by the Vietnamese, as you know, as incompatible with the genuinely expressed free will of the people.

I will tell you frankly, Mr. President: such reaction of the Vietnamese to the U.S. proposals is quite understandable to us. It is not

⁸ No classification marking. A handwritten notation on the letter reads: "Handed to HAK by D on 7 Feb 72." A notation on the letter indicates the President saw it.

difficult to understand also the attitude of the Vietnamese side to the very fact of the disclosure by the U.S. side of the contents of the confidential negotiations between the representatives of the White House and Hanoi. At your request we made known to the DRV Government the readiness you expressed to restore confidential contacts with it. However, in view of the violation by the United States of the previous understanding concerning the confidential nature of those contacts, the question cannot but arise with the Vietnamese—and not with them alone—as to the real intentions of the other side, the more so that simultaneously threats are repeated to undertake new military actions.

As for the Soviet Union, we continue to believe that the conflict in Vietnam can and must be solved by a peaceful way on the basis of respect for the lawful rights of its people. We are ready, as before, to facilitate overcoming the difficulties that arise on this way, to the extent in which necessary realism will be displayed by the American side.

Sincerely,

L. Brezhnev⁹

⁹ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

47. Editorial Note

On February 9, 1972, President Nixon issued his third annual report to Congress on foreign affairs entitled: "U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970s: The Emerging Structure of Peace." In an accompanying transmittal message, Nixon explained the function of the report: "As I prepare to set out on my summit trips to Peking and Moscow, it is especially timely for the American people and the Congress to have available a basis for understanding the Government's policies and broad purposes in foreign affairs." See *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, page 194. The report contained a review of the previous year's foreign policy and also a forecast for future decisions in regard to various global regions. The portion of the report on the Soviet Union was under a section entitled "Areas of Major Change." This section also included a review of policy towards China, Europe and the Atlantic Alliance, Japan, and International Economic Policy. In the subsection addressing the proposed summit meeting, the President stated:

"In Moscow, we will have three central objectives. We want to complete work on those issues which have been carried to the point of

final decision. We want to establish a political framework for dealing with the issues still in dispute. And we want to examine with the Soviet leaders the further development of the U.S.–Soviet relationship in the years ahead.

“The tasks ahead rise logically from the present state of relations:

—An accord on an initial strategic arms limitations agreement, or on the issues to be addressed in the second stage of the SALT negotiations.

—A discussion of the problem of the Middle East and the reasons for the failure to reach a peaceful settlement there.

—A discussion of the problem of European security in all its aspects and the identification of mutually shared objectives which will provide a basis for future normalization of intercourse between Eastern and Western Europe. No agreements in this area, however, will be made without our allies.

—An exploration of our policies in other areas of the world and the extent to which we share an interest in stability.

—An examination of the possibility of additional bilateral cooperation. The steps taken so far have been significant, but are meager, indeed, in terms of the potential. There are a variety of fields in which U.S.–Soviet cooperation would benefit both. Our economic relations are perhaps the most obvious example. Bilateral cooperation will be facilitated if we can continue to make progress on the major international issues.

“We do not, of course, expect the Soviet Union to give up its pursuit of its own interests. We do not expect to give up pursuing our own. We do expect, and are prepared ourselves to demonstrate, self-restraint in the pursuit of those interests. We do expect a recognition of the fact that the general improvement in our relationship transcends in importance the kind of narrow advantages which can be sought only by imperiling the cooperation between our two countries.

“One series of conversations in Moscow cannot be expected to end two decades’ accumulation of problems. For a long period of time, competition is likely to be the hallmark of our relationship with the Soviet Union. We will be confronted by ambiguous and contradictory trends in Soviet policy. The continuing buildup of Soviet military power is one obvious source of deep concern. Soviet attitudes during the crisis in South Asia have dangerous implications for other regional conflicts, even though in the end the U.S.S.R. played a restraining role. Similarly, the U.S.S.R.’s position in the Middle East reflects a mixture of Soviet interest in expansionist policies and Soviet recognition of the dangers of confrontation.

“In the past year, however, we have also had evidence that there can be mutual accommodation of conflicting interests, and that competition need not be translated into hostility or crisis. We have evidence that on both sides there is an increasing willingness to break with the

traditional patterns of Soviet-American relations. A readiness to capitalize on this momentum is the real test of the summit.

“The U.S.S.R. has the choice: whether the current period of relaxation is to be merely another offensive tactic or truly an opportunity to develop an international system resting on the stability of relations between the superpowers. Its choice will be demonstrated in actions prior to and after our meetings.

“For our part, we are committed to a new relationship. I made this comment in my Inaugural Address, at the United Nations, and in my exchanges with the Soviet leaders. Our actions have demonstrated our seriousness. We have the opportunity to usher in a new era in international relations. If we can do so, the transformation of Soviet-American relations can become one of the most significant achievements of our time.” (Ibid., pages 211–212) The full text of the report is *ibid.*, pages 194–346.

In a similar report from the Department of State entitled “United States Foreign Policy 1971: A Report of the Secretary of State,” submitted to Congress on March 8, Secretary of State Rogers noted:

“The President’s visit to Moscow will provide an opportunity to exchange views on world problems where greater understanding between us could contribute to peace. It should also greatly enlarge the prospects for bilateral progress. No visit in itself—not even a summit visit—will remove the very real differences separating us. The visit should, however, give impetus to the movement, already apparent, toward increased cooperation. Our objective is to see that it does.”

The full text of the report is in Department of State *Bulletin*, March 27, 1972, pages 459–470.

The Soviet reaction to especially the President’s Report was harsh. In a February 24 memorandum to Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger, Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council staff reviewed official Soviet criticism in the press and other media and noted that “the Soviets have not been reluctant to attack the Report.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2]) Peter Rodman of the National Security Council staff submitted a February 29 memorandum to Kissinger that also analyzed the Soviet reaction. In particular, he offered arguments Kissinger could take to assuage Soviet apprehension:

“—As your friend [Dobrynin] himself noted on February 15, the parts of the Report that discuss the U.S.-Soviet relationship as a whole (i.e., Soviet and Watershed chapters) deal with it in a very balanced fashion. These sections make clear the positive thrust that the President has all along been aiming for.

“—At the same time, the individual chapters (e.g., Mideast, South Asia, Strategic Forces) simply reflect the fact that the two global

powers impinge on each other in many ways and many places. You referred to this in your briefing accompanying the Report. The Report is thus a reflection of reality.

“—Candor and realism have all along been characteristic of this Administration. They are the only basis on which a durable positive U.S.-Soviet relationship can be constructed. This is our intent.” (Ibid.)

48. Minutes of Senior Review Group Meeting¹

Washington, February 11, 1972, 3:32–4:03 p.m.

SUBJECT

Review of U.S.-Soviet Negotiations

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State:

Mr. John N. Irwin, II

Mr. Martin Hillenbrand

Mr. Joseph Neubert

DOD:

Mr. G. Warren Nutter

Mr. Lawrence Eagleburger

JCS:

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Rear Adm. James H. Doyle

CIA:

Mr. David Blee

CIEP:

Mr. Deane Hinton

OST:

Dr. Edward David

NASA:

Dr. George Low

CEQ:

Mr. Russell E. Train

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-113, SRG Minutes, Originals. Secret. These notes were attached to and transmitted under cover of a February 15 memorandum from Davis to Kissinger. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

Commerce:

Mr. Harold Scott

Treasury:

Dr. Charles Walker

Mr. John McGinnis

NSC:

Mr. Helmut Sonnenfeldt

Mr. Richard Kennedy

Mr. William Hyland

Mr. Dennis Clift

Mr. Mark Wandler

It was agreed that:

—The three issues discussed at the meetings—a joint space docking mission; environmental cooperation; and a joint commission on scientific and technical cooperation—will be put to the President for decision.

—All agencies should submit to the IG/EUR a list of bilateral issues which might be brought to a point before May and a list of agreements which might be ready for the President to sign at the Moscow Summit.

Dr. Kissinger: I thought we should have a brief meeting to go over the response to NSSM 143: the Review of the U.S.-Soviet negotiations.² As I see it, some of the more important bilateral issues are already the subject of separate White House instructions and guidance. U.S.-Soviet Trading Relationships, for example, are covered by NSSM 145.³ We have also provided guidance on U.S.-USSR Cooperation in Health and Medical Affairs. Isn't that agreement going to be announced today?

Mr. Hillenbrand: Yes. Secretary Richardson did it this morning.

Dr. Kissinger: Good. (to Mr. Hillenbrand) We will also send you some guidance shortly on the Maritime Talks. I want to concentrate here on three things: (1) the status of the proposed Joint Space Docking Mission; (2) bilateral Environmental Cooperation; and (3) the proposed U.S.-Soviet Commission on Scientific and Technical Cooperation. With regard to the whole menu of negotiations, we have two basic

² In NSSM 143, December 15, 1971, Nixon "directed that all bilateral issues that may be subject to discussions or negotiations with the U.S.S.R. between now and the summit meeting be reviewed by the Senior Review Group." (Ibid., Box H-188, NSSM Files, NSSM 143) The response is printed as Document 34.

³ In NSSM 145, January 17, Nixon noted the various proposals for the U.S.-Soviet trading relationship and directed that these proposals should be reviewed and considered. (Ibid., Box H-189, NSSM Files, NSSM 145) In NSDM 151, February 14, the President directed that the Department of State take the lead in developing a position on lend-lease negotiations and that the Department of Agriculture take the lead in developing scenarios relating to grain sales to the Soviet Union. (Ibid., Box H-230, NSSM Files, NSDM 151)

decisions to make. The first is which negotiations do we want to sign or conclude in Moscow, and the second is which negotiations do we want to give an impetus to in Moscow—so that there will be substantial post-Summit negotiating activity. Let's have a brief word now about the docking mission.

Dr. Low: The working level negotiations have been going well so far. We agreed with the Soviets at a meeting in Moscow late last year that such a mission would be technically feasible. The mission, which would take place in 1975, would involve the rendezvous and docking of a leftover Apollo craft and a Salyut-type space station.

In our view, there is no reason why we can't proceed with this mission. But it will be expensive. We estimate it will cost about \$275 million over and above what we are planning to do.

Dr. Kissinger: Will the \$275 million be the joint cost or just our cost?

Dr. Low: It will be our cost, and we are not sure we can get Congressional support for this expenditure. To sum up, then, the project is technically feasible, and there is support for it on both sides. There are, however, questions of cost and Congressional support, although I must add we have not yet tested the idea out in Congress.

Dr. Kissinger: Why is the cost so high? Since this is a joint project, I would think the cost should be lower.

Dr. Low: The cost is very high because this is a mission that would not be flown in the normal course of events. The Apollo program is ending, and there are no manned flights scheduled between the Skylab project of 1973 and the first Space Shuttle missions of 1978 or 1979. The proposed joint docking mission would use one of the leftover Apollo spacecraft, but we would still have to pay for the maintenance of the entire system. Despite the budgetary problem, I think it would be an advantage for us to fill the gap in scheduled manned flights.

Dr. Kissinger: Are you saying you need a Presidential decision to go ahead with the project?

Dr. Low: Yes. We also need a budgetary decision on the expenditure of these funds. Once that is done, we would have to test the idea out in Congress.

Dr. Kissinger: If the President is behind it, I don't think you would have very much to worry about. Let's not worry about what Congressional Committees may say. It will be difficult to argue against the abstract decision if this is a joint U.S.-Soviet project, with full Presidential commitment. Can you bring the whole thing to a head by summer?

Dr. Low: Yes, I think so.

Dr. Kissinger: Okay. We will get a Presidential decision before we let MacGregor's people out.

Dr. David: There is one time-critical factor in this situation: the President's Research and Development message to the Congress in March. It would be useful to have a decision on the docking mission before the message is submitted to Congress.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we get a firm decision on the mission by the end of May?

Dr. Low: We have a technical agreement now. Both sides say it is technically feasible to go ahead with it.

Dr. Kissinger: There's nothing else required of us, then, except a Presidential decision?

Dr. Low: That's right. We have already ratified the technical agreement, but the Soviets have not done so yet.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Hillenbrand) Marty, doesn't this fall into your area now?

Mr. Hillenbrand: Yes. We will keep track of it.

Dr. Kissinger: I think you should be the focal point for bringing this about.

Mr. Blee: I would like to point out that the CIA space analysts feel some frustration with this proposed mission. Our analysts feel that the Soviets are not yet ready to share a lot of their technical knowledge with us. This is particularly so in such areas as communications and telemetry. Therefore, we feel we may have some difficulty with the implementation of the mission.

Dr. Kissinger: Can't we explore this with the Soviets? Can't we tell them what our concerns are and ask them for some answers before we sign the agreement?

Mr. Blee: If we did that, we would end up with a very detailed agreement. It would certainly be a much more detailed agreement than we are now contemplating.

Dr. Low: We have already had two technical meetings with the Soviets, and we have reached agreement on certain things, such as the size of the docking vehicles and the lights to be used. There are many more issues, however, remaining to be settled before and during the mission. One of these issues, as David [Blee]⁴ said, is communications. That is a very complicated area.

Dr. Kissinger: Do we need a Presidential decision on that?

Dr. Low: No, I don't think so.

⁴ All brackets in the source text.

Dr. Kissinger: We should get down on paper all the issues concerning us and then tell the Soviets about them.⁵

Dr. Low: We would need one or more technical meetings to get all these issues settled. The next meeting isn't scheduled until June.

Dr. Kissinger: Wouldn't it be possible to move that meeting up to April? I understand your point. It would be embarrassing if the President says we are going ahead with the project—and it then collapses. But he can say that we are going ahead with it, although we realize we still have many technical details to work out. Then there is no embarrassment if the project is cancelled because of technical difficulties.

Dr. Low: You are right.

Dr. Kissinger: Does anyone have any other views on this?

Adm. Moorer: I would like to return to the communications problem. For safety purposes, there has to be a good deal of coordination. Everything will be alright if there is no emergency. If there is an emergency, however, we could be faced with a great problem.

Dr. Kissinger: I would think that the Soviets' interest in this area is as great as our interest.

Mr. Blee: In any event, I think it will be impossible to work out all the details between now and May.

Dr. Kissinger: You may be right. I don't know all the issues. Nevertheless, we should take those issues of concern to us—issues that might abort the mission—and try to settle them before May.

Mr. Blee: We have no objection to that. I want to point out, though, that there are a large number of detailed issues of concern to us.

Dr. Kissinger: Alright. We can see if the Soviets agree that we need more coordination on communications. If so, we can settle the details later. What we should do between now and May is agree on what details will be settled later. (to Mr. David) Ed, do you want to work with Dr. Low on this? If we can identify issues which may hinder the agreement, we can make decisions on them.

Dr. David: I will work with NASA on this.

Mr. Hillenbrand: We need a political decision now. When we have that, the experts can work out the modalities.

⁵ On February 16 Irwin transmitted to Kissinger the Department of State paper on U.S.-Soviet bilateral matters relevant to the summit. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/NIXON) The President provided guidance for bilateral negotiations on a joint space docking mission, environmental cooperation, and a joint scientific commission in NSDM 153, February 17. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-231, NSDM Files, NSDM 153)

Dr. Kissinger: We should narrow the issues down sufficiently so that by the time the President goes to Moscow we will not suddenly be faced with any hidden issues.

Mr. Hillenbrand: We need a feasibility study.

Dr. Kissinger: That's right. You know that Brezhnev won't sign any agreement at the Summit if he knows the project is not feasible.

Dr. Low: I don't want to be negative, but I should point out again that we don't have problems with the major issues. The detailed issues are the ones we're concerned with.

Dr. Kissinger: But what do we have to lose by having another round of talks with the Soviets?

Dr. Low: These detailed issues can't be solved at one meeting. We need at least a year to work them out.

Dr. Kissinger: They can say they will work these issues out with us. Then it may very well be that the mission is not feasible because of some technical reason. There's nothing wrong with that. (to Dr. Walker) Do you want to say anything?

Dr. Walker: No. I'm just listening and learning. I do think, though, that we might have some difficulty with the idea of safety.

Dr. Low: We won't have difficulty on the value of safety—just the procedures for achieving it.

Dr. David: I think these technical issues can be settled because they are not high-profile issues. The dangers are there, alright, but they can be overcome because no one would lose face by giving in a little on any particular issue.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we live with a directive saying the President wants to go ahead with the joint mission and that he wants one more meeting before the Summit to try to narrow the differences? A technical group, composed of NASA, CIA and Marty's people, should agree on the technical issues we want to discuss and then conduct the talks.

All agreed.

Dr. Low: If we do have a second round of talks, can we tell the Soviets that this topic will be on the Summit agenda?

Dr. Kissinger: Sure.

Mr. Hillenbrand: It would be a good idea to tell them that because it would give the talks a sense of urgency.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Hillenbrand) I assume Marty, that you will be telling Dobrynin, anyway.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we talk now about environmental cooperation?

Mr. Train: Yes. We have identified several areas where environmental cooperation would be beneficial to both sides. We have drafted, with the State Department, an agreement which would establish a

framework for continuing exchanges in this area. We have questions of timing, not of technical difficulties.

Dr. Kissinger: What programs do you have in mind?

Mr. Train: We recommend such things as: water problems; solid waste management; arid land problems; preservation of species; and earthquake prediction. The Soviets claim, incidentally, great expertise in earthquake prediction. If we want to reach an agreement in any of these areas in May, we have to get cracking now.

Dr. Kissinger: It seems to me that we have two choices. The President could sign a final agreement in Moscow, or he could sign a preliminary agreement, saying that there will be post-Summit negotiations in this area. I want to stress that we don't have to reach a final agreement in Moscow on every bilateral issue between us and the Soviets. On environmental matters, you and Marty could have preliminary discussions with the Soviet Embassy here on how to get the negotiations started. Then, perhaps, the President could sign an agreement in Moscow which would call for a cooperative six-month study in certain areas. This kind of an approach would take away some of the frenzy to reach final agreements. (to Dr. David) Ed, do you want to tell us about scientific cooperation?

Dr. David: We made one major proposal, to set up a joint commission on mutual scientific and technical matters. I think the commission would help us because the Soviets are ahead of us in several areas. We, of course, have done a great deal of work in areas they are interested in, too. I think it would be a good proposal to discuss at the Summit, since it would focus high level attention on the idea. What we have to do now is staff out the idea—find out how the commission would be set up and what kind of work it would do. We can go ahead with it, if you wish.

Dr. Kissinger: We can handle it by saying at the Summit that a technical group will work out the details later.

Dr. David: It can be done that way.

Mr. Hillenbrand: How would this commission affect our regular exchange agreement?

Dr. David: We would say that whatever exchanges are initiated by the commission would not be considered as part of the regular exchange agreement.

Mr. Hillenbrand: I think that's the right way to do it. Our exchange agreement is in delicate balance. If the commission pulls any exchanges out of the regular agreement, it will create problems.

Adm. Moorer: I want to point out the Law of the Sea segment in the NSSM response is, in our view, over-optimistic. I don't think we are anywhere near total agreement with the Soviets, particularly on the

issue of what constitutes an international strait. I suggest we get a substitute paper for page 14 [Law of the Sea Discussions]. We would also like to see some other changes made.

Mr. Irwin: I don't think there is any magic language in any of these papers. Even if some of them may be too optimistic, that should not change the basic concept.

Dr. Kissinger: We're not going to agree with the Soviets on the basis of these papers, anyway.

Mr. Irwin: Tom's point was a good one. We can redo some of the papers.

Adm. Moorer: We're not out of the woods yet with the Soviets on straits.

Dr. Kissinger: I want to stress that if any agency has discussions with the Soviets, Marty should be kept fully informed. And once in a while, he will inform me.

Mr. Nutter: To follow up what Tom was saying, we have some comments on trade questions. We think a few of the papers should be revised.

Dr. Kissinger: These are status reports, not negotiating papers.

Mr. Irwin: That's right.

Dr. Kissinger: We will have a decision by the end of next week on the three matters we discussed today. We should all review what items might be brought up at the Summit. There is no need for the SRG to review every item. We just want to work on those items which the President might touch at the Summit. All agencies, therefore, should let us know by the middle of next week which items they want to bring to a point before we go to Moscow.

Mr. Irwin: Do you want to say anything about the negotiation of the exchange agreement?

Dr. Kissinger: No. What about it?

Mr. Hillenbrand: This will be negotiated next month by Ambassador Beam in Moscow. It should be ready for signing in May.

Dr. Kissinger: Are there any interagency problems with it?

Mr. Hillenbrand: No.

Dr. Kissinger: We are going to make a policy statement stating that we will act as a united government at the Summit. This will be announced next week. All agencies should keep Marty scrupulously informed about their discussions with the Soviets. Let the IG know next week which items you think should be ready for signing in Moscow.

Mr. Hillenbrand: There are several other items besides the ones we discussed today. These include the exchanges agreement and the agreement on Consulates General.

Dr. Kissinger: We will have to make up a checklist for the President so that he gets all these things into his mind.

Dr. David: I will start working with John Walsh on the joint science and technology commission.

Dr. Kissinger: You won't work with the Soviets?

Dr. David: No.⁶

⁶ In a March 31 memorandum for Kissinger entitled "Review of U.S.-Soviet Negotiations," Sonnenfeldt noted that responses had been received from the Departments of State, Interior, and Defense on these various bilateral negotiations. He noted that Irwin had a priority list of issues in terms of whether agreements on them could be ready for signature at the summit, that Laird had suggested maritime-related talks "should proceed on their merits without linkage to the Moscow visit," and that Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton had suggested that an agreement for bilateral cooperation in an additional technical research field could be signed at Moscow. (Ibid., NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2])

49. Editorial Note

On February 14, 1972, President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger discussed the impact of the upcoming historic visit to Peking on U.S.-Soviet relations:

Kissinger: "Well, you remember, Mr. President, before this—before this move, I said that I figured that they would make a move between the Peking, and the Moscow summit, that they didn't want to settle this before the Peking summit, which would have given the impression that the Peking, that the Peking move did it for her."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "And they probably don't want to be in the position at Moscow—in the Moscow summit where you and Brezhnev conceivably pressure them. That Brezhnev letter to you last week was extraordinarily mild."

Nixon: "Umh."

Kissinger: "In fact, it didn't give them any support. It just quoted what the North Vietnamese were saying but it didn't say that the Soviets endorsed it. You remember, I said that before this. And therefore my calculation has always been: one, that they'd make a move between the two summits. Secondly, that there was something like a 50–50 chance that they'd settle before the election. In fact the way I put it to myself was if it looked as if you would probably win or possibly win, they'll settle before November. If it looked as if the other side would probably or possibly win, they'd certainly not settle before November."

If it was a stalemate, then I would guess they'd still try to settle before November because it's too risky to have you back in office unconstrained.

"But what you've done in the last few weeks is strip away the secret negotiations, to attack your domestic problems. In this respect, what Bob did was tremendously helpful with Hanoi because it showed that we are going for broke at home. That we are not just going to sit there and let ourselves be chopped—"

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: "—and this massive movement of airpower."

Nixon: "Yes, and that helped. I know."

Kissinger: "We've moved 35 B-52s to Guam. We've taken—"

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: "Yep. Yep, we've put two more aircraft carriers on station. We only moved one out there, but they've always had one on leave. We've cancelled all leave. That's how the news hit about the one coming back from Hong Kong."

Nixon: "We've only had one out there?"

Kissinger: "Well we had—Actually, we had one on stage, one being repaired, and one on leave."

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: "And there will be another one in San Diego. Now we have four on station."

Nixon: "Well not yet"

Kissinger: "Well we will have on March 1st. But we have three on station within another week. So I think this whole combination of events—their fear of the pressure. It isn't just that for the first time our dealings with them, in two administrations, that they have asked for a meeting. All previous meetings we've asked for. But also that they have asked for lunch. I mean, I know, Mr. President—I'm not saying they're going to settle. I'm saying if nothing else happens except that they've invited me to lunch. It means we have a month of no offensive, almost certainly. It means that they—"

Nixon: "You'll get a hell of a tip against—"

Kissinger: "The probability is, Mr. President, that this is not going to be the only meeting. We have never had just one meeting with them."

Nixon: "But the thing I'm thinking, though, Henry is that they may be willing for other reasons"

[unclear exchange]

Nixon: "—with the hope that we will lay off our preemptive air strikes."

Kissinger: "They think you are getting ready to club the North Vietnamese. There's no question about that."

Nixon: "That's right. But now I'm not sure we want to wait."

Kissinger: "Oh, I wouldn't—we can wait 'till the 8th."

Nixon: "Well I—you can't wait too late because then you'll have it just before the Russian [unclear]—"

Kissinger: "Mr. President, you're coming back on March 1. Presumably you'll report to the nation on the second or third."

Nixon: "Is that right? I don't know."

Kissinger: "I don't know what the date is. But you wouldn't want to divert everybody that week anyway."

Nixon: "No."

Kissinger: "So we're talking about a week or two."

Nixon: "Right."

Kissinger: "That is—"

Nixon: "All right. Understand, I'm just trying to see what would go through their minds if they're trying to screw us."

Kissinger: "Well I think, Mr. President—"

Nixon: "[unclear] The second thing it made me think of was that—they must, in other words, you've got to assume that their purpose is not to invite you to talk. Their purpose is to keep us from doing something else. One is that they're afraid that we're going to hit the North. Fine, they've accomplished that purpose."

Kissinger: "Yeah, but we won't do more than 24 or 48 hours anyway."

Nixon: "What? I know that. But what I mean is, what I mean is if that occurs—now that's interesting. The other thing is, if you put it to them on this offensive thing—I can't believe that they would tell you on the other side of the coin, now I might be wrong, but they would have you for a private meeting and then proceed to kick the hell out of us."

Kissinger: "It's almost inconceivable."

Nixon: "How could they? Because that's why [unclear]."

Kissinger: "Absolutely."

Nixon: "Because if, for example, let's put it another way. If you accepted the meeting and then they kicked the hell out of us and then we cancelled we're in a [unclear] if you warn them in advance. Right?"

Kissinger: "That's right. Mr. President, you've been very tough with them. You know, we cancelled this Thursday's meeting because of the Versailles conference. I mean, we're just—we have to look at it through their eyes. They must think we are looking for an excuse to kill them in the North."

Nixon: "You think so?"

Kissinger: "Oh, yeah. The last few times we cancelled meetings we've then hit them for 5 days. I believe that our December strikes did a hell of a lot more damage to them than our idiotic Air Force will admit."

Nixon: [laughter]

Kissinger: "Because if they hadn't they would have had people there looking at their holes."

Nixon: "Yeah. That they didn't amount to anything?"

Kissinger: "That they didn't amount to anything. That they hit the open fields. That they hit peasant houses. That they wanted the French to protect them and the French said let's look at where the damage is, they refused to show them. And we've had another report that has been particularly—they inflicted enormous casualties on some troop barracks. Now, I wouldn't place this report in the absolute context that it is, I didn't put it in here—"

Nixon: "Sure."

Kissinger: "Because you don't want to bother with these things."

Nixon: "I know."

Kissinger: "So they are worried that you may go for broke against them in the North."

Nixon: "Um-hmm."

Kissinger: "And that they want to stop. On the other hand, you and I know that you were going to go for broke against the North. So that what they're going to stop is not something we wanted to do."

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: "Secondly, they are terrified that when all is said and done, Peking and Moscow are not going to let them screw up the whole détente."

Nixon: "You think so?"

Kissinger: "Yeah. After all—"

Nixon: "I must say, when you read though, totally all the records of Chou En-lai's comments and so forth [unclear], it's a hard-line goddamn thing."

Kissinger: "Well it's hard-line. But in practice—"

Nixon: "On the other hand, they show that they are susceptible to [unclear]. They always show that we make big promises that we can't keep, and we never do this. And yet, their behavior in the India-Pakistan thing was goddamn timid."

Kissinger: "That's right."

Nixon: "They talked about the Russians being timid. They were timid. Chou En-lai told you in July that they would not stand idly by. And then he went on and [unclear]. And then afterwards admitted Bhutto let you down. Now they know what the hell they did."

Kissinger: "Oh, exactly. So—but also the North, actually with respect to the North Vietnamese, you'd have to read the whole record."

What they do is they're asking for, cuddling for, the things we are going to do anyway. Like troop withdrawal."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "They've never done much about the political conditions."

Nixon: "Yeah, I noticed that. I noticed that."

Kissinger: "So the Chinese are building up a fierce record on those issues, which are not contested, and they have been no help to the North Vietnamese. They killed their seven points by having the announcement of your July—of your visit of July 15. So that the North Vietnamese will not forgive. I believe that they did make an effort to get them to negotiate because for about 6 weeks after you were there—after your announcement of July 15, the North Vietnamese press were beside themselves. Then in November after I was there for another 6 weeks the North Vietnamese press was yelling at them. Then [North Vietnamese Premier] Pham Van Dong went to Peking and in public speeches never declared complete identity of interest between the two countries. It's only in the last few weeks as we are going there that Peking has been making some noises. But even so when I proposed that if Le Duc Tho was in Peking that I was prepared to meet with him there, they sent back a very mild reply saying we are not going to meddle in the Vietnamese war but you could read it both ways. And the reason I sent that message was so that if the Russians came through with an invitation to meet in Moscow, we could then go to Peking and say we offered it to you first. On the other hand, I believe the more we can get the Russians to press for a meeting in Moscow, which they want for their reasons, the more eager Hanoi will be to have the meeting in Paris because Hanoi will under no circumstances in my view settle in either of the other Communist capitals."

Nixon: "I see."

Kissinger: "So the reason I'm going—I'm going to see Dobrynin tomorrow and I'm going to put it to him again that I'm eager to meet them in Moscow. And I'll bet it's a poker game. It's a way of—I already know they proposed a meeting in Paris."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "There isn't a chance of a snowball in hell that they will accept a meeting in Moscow. They've already objected in October so they—"

Nixon: "Did it work?"

Kissinger: "But if Moscow proposes a meeting, it's to them a sign that Moscow is eager to settle. I'm certain that Moscow is playing such a big game that they are not going to let Hanoi screw it up in May. So they're up against a whole series of deadlines. Then they see you—if you look at the press, say look at *Time* and *Newsweek* this week, it's

a little play of the State of the World report, which is on the whole positive. But above all it's China. So they know for the next 3 weeks." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 670–13) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

50. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, undated.

Soviet Policy and Vietnam July–November 1971

There is some evidence that in the period between the announcement of the President's visit to China and the North Vietnamese refusal to continue the secret talks, Soviet policy toward a peaceful settlement in Vietnam significantly hardened. While the exact advice they gave to Hanoi is not clear, the thrust of the Soviet position in this period was that Hanoi should persevere with the military struggle, lest the United States succeed in promoting a solution through its contacts with Peking.

The shift in the Soviet attitude must be viewed in the context of the Soviet diplomatic counteroffensive which was activated in July–September in the wake of the President's announcement of the Peking visit.

—In the West, the Soviets accelerated the negotiations over Berlin; in late July they urged an end to the negotiations at the secondary levels and that the Ambassadors go into almost continuous sessions, which, in fact, led to the agreement of August 28;²

—In the SALT talks, after rigidly insisting on one ABM proposal for almost a year, in early August the Soviets offered three new alternatives, and in September a still further variant;

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 146, 1972 Offensive—Miscellaneous. Secret. In an attached February 15 covering memorandum to Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt wrote: "We discussed this last week and you asked for a paper that you might use in Peking. It is attached. Although slightly tailored for the purpose envisaged, I consider this a plausible piece of analysis which fits the evidence as we know it." A notation by Kissinger on the covering memorandum reads: "Take on trip."

² The agreement which led to the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin, signed on September 3, 1971.

—A number of outstanding invitations for high level visits were accepted; Kosygin to Algeria and Morocco, and later to Canada, Denmark and Norway; Brezhnev to France, and of course Podgorny to Hanoi;

—In the East, Soviet overtures toward Japan were strengthened, a new trade agreement was arranged in September; talks were held on Japanese participation in the development of Siberian resources and Shelepin traveled to Tokyo for a Trade Union meeting;

—Most important were the hints of a softening of the Soviet position on the Southern Kuriles. According to reports, Podgorny assured the leaders of the Japanese Communist Party that the issue was not closed—potentially a major reversal of Soviet policy;

—In the subcontinent, of course, Soviet policy centered on the new treaty signed on August 9 with India³; while at the time this may have relieved internal pressures on Mrs. Gandhi, subsequent events suggest that this treaty was a virtual Soviet guarantee of support in whatever action against Pakistan India chose; Soviet support for Indian military action was reported by some sources after Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Moscow in late September. One report indicated the Soviets promised a "diversionary" action in Sinkiang if China threatened to intervene.

In short, the Soviets were conducting a policy aimed at encircling the Chinese and strengthening Moscow's position on the Chinese flanks.

Against this background, Soviet policy in Hanoi, however, was probably ambiguous. On the one hand, a settlement of the war held opportunities for the USSR to strengthen its own position through post-war economic aid, and to lessen North Vietnamese dependence on Chinese supply lines, once hostilities ended. On the other hand, the Soviets were concerned that their own leverage would greatly diminish after the war, and that China would be the predominant power in Southeast Asia. While the Soviets might have had no choice but to tolerate such a situation, an end to the war plus a rapprochement between the US and China would jeopardize the future of the Soviet position in Asia.

One alternative for Soviet policy, therefore, was to encourage the North Vietnamese in the military effort, at least through early 1972 until after the President's visit to China. This might disrupt the visit, or gain a period of time in which the Soviets could try to drive a wedge between Peking and Hanoi by playing on North Vietnamese concern over contacts between Washington and Peking. Accusations of secret deals and collusion, in fact, became a strong theme in the Soviet propaganda treatment.

³ The Soviet-Indian Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation.

Podgorny's visit to Hanoi (October 3–8) may well have been a turning point. It occurred after the North Vietnamese, in the secret talks, had rejected our proposals of August 16,⁴ and before we made our proposal of October 11.⁵

There were several features to Podgorny's visit:

—For the first time Moscow emphasized, in a Podgorny speech on October 4,⁶ the imminence of a "military victory"; though he endorsed the 7 point plan, the effect of his remarks was to downgrade the possibilities of a peaceful settlement;

—This line appeared in the final communiqué in the form of a Soviet commitment to continue its support—military, economic, and political—until "complete victory;"

—Second, Podgorny's delegation signed a new military aid agreement that reportedly will *exceed* last year's, and amount to more than \$500 million; the supply of trucks will be an important feature;

—An economic assistance agreement was also concluded; for the first time there was a mention of the USSR participation in "long range" economic development—a reference to the USSR position in Vietnam after the war ends.

Subsequent to Podgorny's visit the North Vietnamese did agree to another session of the secret talks. In the period that followed between the setting of the November 20 meeting and its cancellation on November 17 there is one Soviet event worth noting.

At the time of Dr. Kissinger's second visit to Peking, Brezhnev addressed the Vietnam issues in unusually frank and critical terms during his visit to Paris. On October 27, he warned: "This problem cannot be solved either by attempts to impose an alien will on Vietnam by means of force, or by way of secret combination behind the Vietnamese people's back."⁷ It is reasonable to assume that if Brezhnev was taking this line in public, in private the Soviets were telling the North Vietnamese that secret bargains were dangerous. Interestingly, Brezhnev ignored the 7 point proposal and limited himself to saying that the only correct way to solve the issue was to end "foreign interference."

By the time of the cancellation of the secret session, however, the Soviets were again stressing the value of a negotiated settlement. For example, on November 16, the day prior to Hanoi's cancellation, the

⁴ The eight-point U.S. proposal offered on this date was unpublished but later revealed by Nixon in his January 25 speech on Vietnam; see footnote 2, Document 40.

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 39.

⁶ For text, see *Izvestia*, October 4, 1971.

⁷ For text, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, November 30, 1971, vol. XXIII, No. 44, pp. 4–6.

Soviet newspaper *TRUD* stated “the way out of the Indochinese impasse does not lie along the path of war, but at the negotiating table.” Perhaps, by then they knew this was a relatively safe position since secret negotiations were coming to an end.

The evidence is not conclusive that the Soviets actually intervened to sabotage the secret talks. But the burden of their policy seems to have been to play down negotiations, at least for a time, and to stress to Hanoi the dangers of collusion between Washington and Peking.

This would be consistent with a report we received in July which stated that Moscow’s general line, as reported from Eastern Europe, was that “the USSR wanted peace in Vietnam, but did not wish it to be brought about by China. The Soviet Union would almost certainly raise objection to any terms for a solution that would be agreed upon between the US and China.” As was evident from Soviet propaganda in this period July–November, the Soviets were at pains to make it appear that any US proposals were tactical maneuvers growing out of Washington’s overtures to Peking—a line designed to play on Hanoi’s fear that the great powers would reach a settlement against North Vietnam’s interests.

In sum, we can conclude (a) the Soviets do not necessarily oppose any peaceful/political settlement; but (b) they will work against one that is reached without their participation, or that grows out of any Chinese-American contacts; (c) to the extent that the Soviets will work toward a settlement, it will only be one that ensures their own dominance in Southeast Asia, as a component of their broader policy of encircling China; and (d) failing that, they have supported Hanoi’s rigidity.⁸

⁸ In a February 25 memorandum to Kissinger entitled “New Frictions Between Moscow and Hanoi?”, Sonnenfeldt described recent press reports that Moscow was ready to make a deal over Vietnam to prevent further Sino-American rapprochement. “The facts do not justify these extreme conclusions or interpretations, but there is a suggestion of DRV concern over the Soviet position,” Sonnenfeldt concluded. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 717, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Vol. XIX)

51. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 15, 1972, 1 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

The atmosphere at the lunch was friendly but still somewhat more reserved than at previous meetings. Dobrynin wanted to turn to the Middle East right away, but I opened the conversation by telling him that it was best if we took care of other pending business first.

I therefore handed Dobrynin a letter from the President [attached at Tab A] in reply to Brezhnev's letter of January 17th.² The President's letter allocated responsibilities for the preparation of the Summit. Dobrynin said it would be very useful.

We then went through a series of secondary issues.³ With respect to space cooperation, I told Dobrynin that I recommended that we bring matters to a point where joint docking could be agreed to in Moscow. With respect to environmental studies, I told him that we were prepared to have preliminary talks leading to an agreement in Moscow

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 1]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Soviet Embassy. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. Kissinger sent a summary of this meeting to the President on March 6. (Ibid.) According to Kissinger's Record of Schedule, the luncheon meeting was from 1:10 to 3:32 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976) Sonnenfeldt summarized the state of bilateral affairs for Kissinger's meeting with Dobrynin in a February 14 memorandum. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2])

² All brackets in the source text. See Tab B, Document 39.

³ Other secondary issues involved Greece and Cyprus. During this luncheon, Dobrynin gave Kissinger a note from the Soviet Government which noted "serious consequences both militarily and politically" if the U.S. 6th Fleet established a base in the territory of Greece. That same day Sokolov delivered a note to Haig from the Soviet Government protesting the interference of Greece in the internal affairs of Cyprus and pledged that it would become an issue for discussion at the Moscow summit. On February 17 Haig handed Sokolov a note which in part read: "The President wishes to assure the Soviet leaders that the United States opposes any actions that would aggravate the situation in Cyprus or in that general region of the world. The efforts of the United States are designed to bring about a restoration of calm and a normalization of this situation. To this end, it has endeavored to use its influence to urge restraint on all the parties concerned, and it will continue to do so. President Nixon welcomes this opportunity to make his views known to the Soviet leaders, particularly since he feels certain that Soviet efforts are likewise directed at calming the situation." The full text of these notes is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2].

on environmental matters similar to what had been signed on health between Richardson and Dobrynin.

Trade

On trade, I told Dobrynin that we were ready to go ahead now on the settlement of lend-lease, that we were prepared also to make an agreement on grain sales, but that other matters such as MFN and Export-Import Bank guarantees would have to wait for the Summit. We were prepared, however, to look at these in a constructive manner.

Dobrynin asked how we would handle the trade issue concretely. I suggested that we send Butz to Moscow to negotiate the grain deals but that he could have some other experts with him. Dobrynin said the difficulty with this procedure was that grain imports were handled by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and that therefore there would be no opposite number for Butz. I asked Dobrynin what exactly he wanted the Commerce Department, specifically Peterson, to discuss. He said what they most wanted in Moscow was to continue the discussions with Scott, looking toward a comprehensive trade agreement. I said it seemed to me that none of these matters was yet ready for signature. Dobrynin said that in that case the best way perhaps to proceed would be to send Butz accompanied by some expert from the Commerce Department. This would then lead to a visit by the Soviet Foreign Trade Minister to the United States, followed by a visit of Peterson to the Soviet Union. I said we had no trouble with the principle; our major concern was the timing, to make sure that these visits were more than just symbolic and had something concrete to talk about.

Middle East

We then turned to the Middle East. Dobrynin asked whether I was prepared to make a specific proposal. I said that with respect to the interim settlement, I understood that the Israelis would be prepared to go back, but no further than the western edge of the passes; that they insisted on freedom of navigation; that some uniformed personnel could cross the Canal, though not members of the armed forces, but personnel that had responsibilities for security of the population; and that the ceasefire should be for two years.

Dobrynin asked what I meant by military personnel. I said, well, it would be something better than the doormen in the hotels in Cairo, and that, seriously, this was a test of our ingenuity to figure out. Dobrynin then asked about the overall settlement. I said that as I understood the Israelis, they wanted some rectification of the borders and also some presence beyond whatever borders would be agreed to that would not necessarily be attached to sovereignty and that did not in every respect have to be military. Dobrynin said a change of the border was absolutely out of the question; it would lead to a breakdown

in negotiations. The question of presence was more discussable, he said, but he waited for me to make some concrete proposals. Dobrynin remarked that he was in a way disappointed that I always seemed to tell him what the Israelis might accept. He was much more interested to know what the United States would accept. This was one of the reasons why the Soviet Union had approached us.

In any event, Dobrynin continued, he felt our relations were now in a curious state. On the one hand, his talks with me were going very well. On the other hand, there had been a whole series of events that created some doubts in the Soviet Union. For example, the World Report—while the chapter on the Soviet Union was very constructive—contained many references in the Middle East, Defense, and South Asia chapters that were totally unjustified. Nothing that the Soviet Union had done in South Asia was in any sense directed against the United States; Dobrynin could assure me of that on the basis of his conversations. He also found our SLBM program extremely disturbing. This was coupled with what Dobrynin considered our tough behavior on the issues of the two trawlers and the arrest of the spy; this could easily give suspicious people in Moscow the impression that we were heading into a new hard period.

I denied this, stressing that the Soviet press was certainly not very friendly towards us.

Dobrynin said that the fact of the matter was that there were many in the Soviet Politburo who were very suspicious of the policies of détente with the United States, and that had to be kept in mind. He also was bound to say that he found me the most difficult American with whom he had negotiated in his ten years of association. I said that what counted was the results, not the ease or difficulty with which they were achieved, and I had the impression that we had made reasonable progress on a number of issues. Dobrynin agreed.

SALT

We then turned to SALT.⁴ Dobrynin said that the new American SLBM program made an agreement very difficult. It would not be easy in the Soviet Union, he said, to explain why a freeze would not

⁴ In a February 10 memorandum, Sonnenfeldt supplied Kissinger with a list of issues to discuss with Dobrynin on SALT, including the topics of SLBMs, ABMs, “duration and linkage,” and an ICBM “freeze.” (Ibid., Box 493, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 2]) Smith also covered these issues in his SALT delegation report of February 16 which reviewed the “Vienna round” of November 15, 1971–February 4, 1972. (Ibid., Box 199, Agency Files, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Vol. IV, 1 January 1972) In addition, Kissinger and Smith discussed the SALT negotiations during a telephone conversation the evening of February 15. (Library of Congress, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

simply be a device for stopping an ongoing Soviet program while giving the United States an opportunity to tool up for a new submarine program. The military people had been on the defensive before, but now he could foresee that they would be very much on the offensive, and this was a factor that could not be neglected. He would have a very difficult time convincing Moscow that an SLBM deal was in the cards, partly because he thought that our program was neatly timed to start right after the expiration date of any projected freeze.

As for ABMs, Dobrynin said he wondered whether we would settle for the Soviet proposal plus giving us two sites, of which one did not have to be Washington. I said I thought we should handle the SLBM and the ABM question together and that our position was not at this time subject to modification.⁵

I told Dobrynin I would look into his complaints on the trawlers, and the meeting adjourned. [This matter was soon afterwards resolved through telephone conversations with Attorney General Mitchell, records of which are at Tab B.]⁶

⁵ A story on the compromise on ABMs based on sources reportedly within ACDA appeared in *The New York Times* on February 18. Kissinger and Nixon were upset by the leak and directed Smith to institute measures to prevent such occurrences in the future. See Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*, diary entries for February 18 and 19. Haldeman's diary entries and a February 19 handwritten message from Nixon to Smith is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Notes, Jan.–March 1972, Part I.

⁶ Attachment B consisted of a series of three transcripts of telephone conversations on two Soviet fishing trawlers that had been seized by the U.S. Coast Guard in Alaskan waters. In a February 15 conversation with Kissinger, Mitchell agreed to look into the matter. He reported back the next morning that the trawlers could be released if the Soviet Government paid a \$250,000 fine. Kissinger telephoned Dobrynin at 2:30 p.m. on February 16 and informed him of the argument, especially noting: "I understand they talked about \$300,000 but we interceded." Dobrynin responded that his government likely would agree to the settlement of the issue "because I am rather looking at the political side. It's a huge sum of money, though." (Library of Congress, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) In a February 21 memorandum to Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt reported that, in a "somewhat hastened" departure, the Soviet trawlers left Alaska on February 18. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 991, Haig Chronological Files, February 18–29, 1972)

Tab A

Letter From President Nixon to Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev⁷

Washington, February 15, 1972.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have read with interest your letter of January 17, 1972, and welcome the fact that both of us approach the development of relations between our countries and our forthcoming meeting in May in the same constructive spirit. I, of course, share your hope that this year will mark substantial improvements in our relations which in turn will strengthen international cooperation and peace generally.

I am closely following the discussions in the existing confidential channel through which the ground is being prepared for our discussions in May.⁸ I am likewise keeping in close touch with other specific negotiations in progress between representatives of our governments and believe that there is reason to be confident that significant new agreements in several fields of cooperation will soon be reached.

As preparatory discussions between our two governments intensify in the remaining weeks preceding our meeting, I believe that it might be helpful to outline for you my views on the topics which should be reserved for discussion within the existing confidential channel and those which would be better left to normal negotiations between the representatives of our governments. In my view, the topics best suited for the existing confidential channel would include: discussion of the future developments in the Middle East, the situation in

⁷ No classification marking. A handwritten notation reads: "Delivered by HAK to D, 1:15 p.m., 2/15/72." Sonnenfeldt drafted the letter on February 2. (Ibid., Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 2]) According to a February 14 covering note to Kissinger, Haig had reworked the draft letter into its final form. (Ibid.)

⁸ That morning Nixon and Kissinger discussed arrangements for the summit trip prior to Kissinger's meeting with Dobrynin. Kissinger told Nixon: "You've made more progress with the Soviet Union than any other President. The Western alliance is in better shape. It's not in good shape. It's certainly in better shape." Kissinger also suggested that Nixon include stops in Belgium on the way over for a NATO meeting, at Kiev as a secondary stop while in the Soviet Union, and in Tehran following the summit. However, the President felt that Rogers should go to Brussels. "I think we should do the Shah anyway. It's a nice flip on the Russian trip," Nixon said, adding that the reason that could be given would be that "he has a long-standing commitment to the Shah and this is the opportunity to do it on the way back." The dates for the visit were set for the week following May 22. (Ibid., White House Tapes, February 15, 1972, 9:12 a.m.–12:47 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 672–2)

Southeast Asia, and those broad policy questions dealing with arms control, especially the outcome of the crucial talks on the limitation of strategic arms and perhaps some preliminary exchanges on Mutual Force Reduction. With respect to the talks on strategic arms and within the existing confidential channel, we must now concentrate on those points where our positions still diverge so that the period after the resumption of talks in Helsinki can be used to put the final touches to the agreement. As in the case of the talks that culminated in the announcement of May 20, 1971, I am hopeful that this channel will lead us to success.

The existing confidential channel also appears to be best for discussions on the overall objectives of the May meeting and especially discussions as to the final outcome of the meeting, to include consideration of a final statement or joint communiqué.

Finally, I have previously set forth my views concerning the European question. It is my hope that the Berlin agreement which is now complete in its essential parts will soon be brought into force. This is precisely the kind of concrete step to which you refer in your letter. I continue to believe that in Europe, as elsewhere, a true *détente* can best be achieved by precise and concrete understanding. That is why I suggested in my last letter that informal and private exchanges to clarify the concrete objectives of a possible multilateral conference would be helpful. Preliminary discussions on this topic would also be best confined to the existing confidential channel. I will, of course, be prepared to discuss these matters during our meetings in Moscow in the expectation that such a discussion would make subsequent discussions in regular channels and eventual negotiations between all the interested governments fruitful.

With respect to other discussions between our two governments, I visualize that normal channels should be used to advance our respective positions on a full range of bilateral issues, including trade, cultural exchanges, environment, health and space cooperation. Also included in regular channels would be the continuation of discussions on Incidents at Sea. In this forum, discussions dealing with preparations for our meeting in May should be confined to such topics as a formal agenda and the administrative modalities of the visit itself.

I am confident that by confining our discussions within the respective frameworks outlined above, maximum progress can be achieved on the full range of issues we will wish to discuss during our forthcoming meeting.

Mr. Secretary, I believe that on the basis of our written communications and of the other exchanges that have taken place, my visit to your country will be an important milestone in the improvement of re-

lations between our countries. Certainly, that will be the objective toward which American representatives will be working with those of the Soviet Union in the coming weeks of preparation.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon⁹

⁹ Printed from a copy that indicates Nixon signed the original.

52. Editorial Note

President Richard Nixon visited China during the last weeks of February 1972. With a party of over three dozen government officials that included Secretary of State Rogers, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger, and White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman, the President left Washington on February 17 and returned February 28. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

Prior to the visit, Nixon received extensive preparatory briefings. Among the papers the President reviewed were reports on China's perception of Soviet actions in various regions of the world and recommendations for the position that Nixon should take during his discussions with Chinese officials while in Peking. The briefing books for the trip are *ibid.*, NSC Files, Box 847, China Trip/Vietnam Negotiations, China Trip Books I–VI.) Documentation on the trip, including the conversation among Nixon, Kissinger, and Chou quoted below, is in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, volume XVII, China, 1969–1972.

The morning of their departure, Nixon, Kissinger, and Rogers briefed the Congressional leadership on the context of the China trip: "They, naturally, wondered if it was an anti-Soviet move. The Secretary said we assured the Russians that it certainly was not and until recently the Russian press has been quite restrained on the matter. The President interrupted to say that we are trying to embark on a very limited and very even-handed policy with China and the Soviet Union. He noted that the administration was playing them very equal." (Memorandum for the President's Files by William Timmons, February 17; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 87, Memoranda for the President, December 12, 1971–February 20, 1972) Kissinger also made a final telephone call to Dobrynin that morning to bid farewell. (Transcript of telephone conversation between Kissinger and Dobrynin, February 17, 8:25 a.m.;

Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Among the various meetings in China, Nixon and Kissinger's discussion with Premier Chou En-lai on February 23 dealt most directly with the Soviet Union and its triangular relation to Sino-American relations. Chou recapitulated the history of recent Sino-Soviet relations, especially the Sino-Soviet border dispute during 1969 and the perceived threat on both sides. Kissinger stated that the "Soviets are a little bit hysterical on this subject." Nixon added: "Certainly China is not a threat to the Soviet Union at this point because of the nuclear superiority of the Soviet Union over China. So what we think is that they are not so concerned about the border, which is a pretext, but about the leadership and doctrine of what they say is the socialist camp, which you don't accept. They also must be afraid of whether China could become powerful in the future, because the Soviet leaders in my experience tend to take a long view. Certainly we will conduct ourselves with complete correctness in dealing with them and will make every effort to see that no pretext will be created by this meeting to indicate we are setting up a condominium against them." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 87, Memoranda for the President) Drawing on the experiences of the China trip, Nixon insisted that when he went to Moscow he would not be available to the press and would not include the rest of the party in his sightseeing tours. (Haldeman's diary entry for February 26; *The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*, and in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Subject Files, Staff Memos and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, Jan.–March 1972 [Part 2])

53. Note From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon¹

Moscow, February 23, 1972.

Moscow acknowledges receipt of the President's letter to L.I. Brezhnev of February 15² on questions concerning the forthcoming

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 1]. No classification marking. According to the handwritten notations on the document, Haig received the note from Sokolov at 4:45 p.m. on February 23.

² Printed as Tab A to Document 51.

summit meeting in May. In a while we will, of course, outline our considerations on this score.

But at the moment the following question arises with L.I. Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders. What indeed is going on?

On the one hand, there is a conversation going between us, mostly in a confidential matter, on improving relations between our countries, on strengthening peace and international security. It is precisely in this way that we agreed with the President to conduct preparation for the summit meeting too.

On the other hand, in the United States more and more frequently statements are made and documents published, which contain totally groundless reproaches addressed to the Soviet Union and in which its policy is presented in a distorted light and intentions are ascribed to it which we never had and do not have. And this is being done not by private persons or small functionaries. What is meant here is the statements of the President himself and such a document as his foreign policy report to the U.S. Congress outlining the fundamental approach to the questions of relations with foreign states, including the Soviet Union.

Or, to take as another example, the speeches and recent report of the U.S. Secretary of Defense Laird which abound with concoctions alleging a "Soviet threat". Largely the same can be said also about that report, the only difference being that Secretary Laird decided to apply still more zealous efforts in the same direction.

What is all this being done for? Indeed, that kind of statements make a deliberately distorted picture of the Soviet Union's policy and accordingly shape the public opinion, setting it in fact against improvement in the Soviet-American relations.

It is also quite clear that we, on our part, cannot and shall not bypass that kind of distortions. We have to explain to the public opinion the real state of affairs regarding both our policy and the policy of the U.S. But the main thing is that all this, in our deep conviction, is not at all facilitating but, rather, can only hamper the conversation which is being held between ourselves in a confidential manner. It is, indeed, impossible to conduct business in a double way at the same time: in a business-like way and in parallel also in another one which contrasts the first one. To try to merge both these ways is in practice unrealistic. It seems to us that the President cannot but agree with that.

On our part, we believe, as before, that both sides should have to work for better Soviet-American relations and to prepare ourselves for the summit meeting accordingly. With all the existing differences which are viewed by both sides with open eyes, we duly appraise the significance that the meeting may have, proceeding from the responsibility

of our countries for the preservation of peace and from the assumption that it is desirable to use their possibilities for influencing the general international situation. Relaxation of international tensions and improvement of relations between the USSR and the U.S. would be, we are confident, in the interests of our peoples and other peoples of the world. Such is our firm line and we are consistently following it.

It is important, however, that both sides have the same approach as regards the main thing—the genuine desire to constructively solve the questions which have accumulated. That is why we decided to express the above thoughts in hopes that this will be useful from the viewpoint of achieving those aims which, as we suppose, both sides set for themselves, specifically in connection with the forthcoming meeting as well.³

³ Haig forwarded the note to Nixon and Kissinger in China in telegram WH20461/ToHAK 112, February 24. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 717, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Vol. XXIX) In a telephone conversation with Dobrynin, Haig relayed their response: "And they wanted you to know—both the President and Henry—that they have read it very carefully and understand it and Henry will give you a reply at some length upon his return. In the interim they want you to be assured the sentiments of the President are reflected in the policy that has been outlined to you and which he intends to fully implement." (Transcript of telephone conversation between Haig and Dobrynin, February 25, 9:10 a.m.; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) Following Nixon and Kissinger's return from China, Kissinger told Nixon that "last week the Russians sent us a message saying, 'What's going on? You keep criticizing us,'" to which the President responded that the Soviets were in fact not being criticized. Kissinger added: "I sent them a message saying quiet down; we are serious about pursuing a détente. Since then there have been no opposing articles and TASS so far has communicated only in a very factual way." Nixon directed that Kissinger see Dobrynin and promise him a meeting with the President at a later date. (Transcript of telephone conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, February 28, 10:55 p.m.; *ibid.*)

54. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 1, 1972, 1 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Ambassador Dobrynin
Henry A. Kissinger

The luncheon meeting took place at my initiative because I had told Dobrynin prior to our departure for China that I would brief him as soon as we came back.

China

Dobrynin was extremely jovial but clearly under instructions not to ask any questions or show any excessive interest. He violated these instructions consistently, in the form of pretending that while he knew his government was not particularly interested, it would help if I volunteered certain information. I gave him a brief rundown of the communiqué, which followed pretty carefully the President's remarks on arrival at Andrews Air Force Base on the evening of February 28. [Attached at Tab B.]²

Dobrynin asked a number of very specific questions. He said first of all that he did not see enough of a quid pro quo in the communiqué.³ What exactly did the Chinese get out of it? I replied that I supposed they wanted to normalize relations with us, as they had constantly stated. Dobrynin said there had to be something more to it, and he wondered whether any agreement had been made at the expense of the Soviet Union. I said that since he had consistently refused to tell me what he considered to be at the expense of the Soviet Union, I found it difficult to answer. But I could not imagine that anything we discussed could be at the expense of the Soviet Union. We stuck by our position in the President's Foreign Policy Report,⁴ which is to say that we would not intervene either in the ideological or in the border

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 1]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. This memorandum was attached to a covering memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, March 8, that summarized the discussion. A notation on the covering memorandum indicates the President saw it.

² Attached but not printed; for text, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 381–384.

³ Reference is to the Shanghai Communiqué of February 27, for text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 20, 1972, pp. 435–438.

⁴ See Document 47.

dispute between China and the Soviet Union which we understood were the only outstanding issues.

Dobrynin asked whether I felt that the People's Republic felt threatened by the Soviet Union. I said I was a very poor judge of which country felt threatened, but the People's Republic did not express such a fear to us. Dobrynin said it is absolutely ridiculous; he knew for a fact that the Soviet Union had no intention of attacking the People's Republic. Dobrynin asked whether we got into the question of the Sino-Soviet border dispute. I said we did not, first because we had no competence to understand it, secondly because we were going to be meticulous about not getting involved even to the extent of getting briefed on it. Dobrynin said well at least you could get the information that would be helpful to you. I said our desire was to stay out of the border dispute.

Dobrynin inquired whether I foresaw any long-term credits to the People's Republic. I said that any move in the economic field would be made with the Soviet Union first, though it was our general policy to keep them both at roughly the same level. Dobrynin asked what I thought the Chinese attitude would be if the Soviet Union and we made a number of major agreements. I said the People's Republic had no particular sensitivity with respect to that. Dobrynin concluded by saying it would be helpful if the President replied to the letter that was received while he was in China,⁵ because that would put matters in clear perspective in Moscow.

The Middle East

We then turned to preparations for the Summit. Dobrynin said things had gone more slowly than he had anticipated. Taking the Middle East first, he said they had offered us a clear horse-trade: Soviet presence for, in effect, the 1967 borders. I said they had never said Soviet presence for the 1967 borders, but Soviet presence for a final settlement. I asked Dobrynin whether the Soviet Union could not make some proposition on border rectifications and the presence of some Israeli bases beyond the 1967 line. Dobrynin said that I had to understand that this was a very difficult problem for them. First, if we were talking about minor rectifications, they could be considered. If we were talking about some Israeli presence beyond the border, that could also be considered. But it was impossible to ask the Soviet Union to originate these proposals; it was much better to put them in the position of reacting to our proposal. I said that was fair enough, and I would see whether I could come up with anything within two weeks.

⁵ Document 53.

SALT

We then turned to SALT. Dobrynin said that our new submarine program had shaken a lot of people in the Soviet Union, including himself. He did not mind telling me that he had always been in favor of including the submarines, but now it had to look in Moscow as if we were trying to stop the Soviet program while we were tooling up for ours. Was there some compromise possible, or should we put SALT on the back burner? Couldn't we leave the submarines for Brezhnev and the President to settle in Moscow? I said that that would make it impossible, because SALT involved so many technical issues that I saw no way these two could settle the issue there. He wondered if we could work out all other issues before. I said that at this moment it was next to impossible for me to predict what position we would take, but it would be very hard for us to change our position. It was one of the few issues in which my recommendation would not be decisive, since the military felt very strongly that submarines had to be included.

Dobrynin said that we had to come to some general understanding, and he outlined three possibilities. One, that we would make an agreement including submarines. Two, that we would make an agreement excluding submarines. Three, that we would make an agreement which excluded submarines but which put submarines as the top item on the agenda of the next agreement or perhaps even made them the subject of a separate agreement, like the one on ABM, in the new phase. I told him I would report this to the President and give him a reaction at the next meeting.

Dobrynin then stressed the need for making more rapid progress and affirmed the extreme interest of the Soviet Union in having a constructive summit. I showed him some of the harsh criticism of the President in the Soviet press. He said, well, newspaper commentators in the Soviet Union do not have the same status as a Presidential report.

We set another meeting for the following Thursday,⁶ and parted.

⁶ March 9.

55. Editorial Note

In a March 7, 1972, conversation with White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs Ehrlichman, and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Kissinger, President Nixon noted the difficulties he was having with

Secretary Rogers over Rogers' role at the Moscow summit. In particular, Rogers expected to play a larger role in Moscow than he had during the Beijing visit.

During the course of the conversation, Nixon noted that the Soviet protocol was very different than that of the Chinese. "You can also point out that it's not unusual in the case of totalitarians," he told Kissinger; "it is a totally different game. Rogers came away insulted, he said the Foreign Minister is fifth on their protocol list. But to have sent the Secretary of State to talk to Chou En-lai would not have worked." Nixon added: "But the reason it would not have worked is that they do not consider Secretaries of State to be negotiating people." For example, he noted that Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko had more power than most foreign ministers, but never negotiated directly. Nixon stated: "We can't go through with the meeting if we're going to have the same damn thing with the Russians. We can't go through with that. We need to find a way to deal with it before then." He did not want to have the "same damn thing" with the Soviet summit as had occurred in China. Haldeman suggested that the President inform Rogers that he must handle it the way that the administration wanted it. Ehrlichman added that the Soviets needed to know foreign policy was made in the White House and that the Department of State only played a secondary role. Haldeman added that all Rogers needed to do was "to tie himself to the kite because it's soaring." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, March 7, 1972, 11:41 a.m.–12:31 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 679–8)

That evening, the same participants met with Rogers to discuss summit arrangements. Rogers suggested that, since the principal subjects to be discussed during the Moscow trip would be the Middle East and European security, either Haig or Assistant Secretary Hillenbrand should be sent on an advance trip. The President responded that no advance trip would occur. Haldeman noted that the administration had avoided advance contact with a government other than at the protocol and security levels, and that arrangements would be much tighter in Moscow. Nixon also added that he did not want to stay in a Russian guest house but in the Embassy, on American soil.

Rogers asked that the President "get the word out" that Rogers was planning and supervising the Moscow trip. Of course, Rogers said he would be working closely with Kissinger. Rogers' main concern in this regard was the impression being created in the press that the Department of State was cut out of everything. The President noted that the planning had to be done from the White House. Rogers countered that the logistics would not be done by the White House. Haldeman added that such an announcement would downgrade Rogers rather than building him up. Since Kissinger always stated that he had con-

sulted with the President as well as the Secretary of State on the agenda and backgrounders of similar meetings, the optimal role for Rogers was to be “a principal rather than the guy doing the background work.”

The President noted that the first few days in Moscow would simply “be talk.” Then announcements of agreements would begin occurring daily. Nixon assented that Rogers could make the initial announcements and could brief the press on the daily agreements reached, which would be an appropriate role for him. Rogers noted his concern that the Department of State had to be included in the planning process. Nixon pointed out that having Rogers make the announcements would prove that the Department of State was substantively involved. Haldeman said that this would avoid press reports saying that the Department of State is humiliated, which had been a problem of the Department on the China trip. Rogers believed that the current “flak between the White House and the State Department” was based upon the negative reporting of the press. (Ibid., March 7, 1972, 4:56–6:18 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 679–15)

56. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 9, 1972, 1:15–3:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Ambassador Dobrynin

The meeting started on an especially jovial note because it was Dobrynin’s 30th wedding anniversary, and I had sent him and his wife a bottle of champagne to celebrate it. Dobrynin insisted that we drink it jointly. Dobrynin reminisced about how he had met his wife when they were both students at an institute in Moscow that had been moved to Alma-Ata during the German invasion. He said, “You see, we were watching the Chinese even then.” He said that they had been separated for a year during the war while his wife continued her studies

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 1]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held during lunch at the Soviet Embassy. This memorandum of conversation was attached to a March 20 summary memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, under which he transmitted the texts of both the March 9 and March 10 memoranda of conversation. A notation on the covering memorandum indicates the President saw it.

at Alma-Ata, but had been together ever since. Dobrynin added that what we did not understand was that the Russians were a deeply sentimental people, and that if you did things with them on the basis of friendship, it was always better than doing it from a position of strength. We then went to lunch.

Before I could start my list of subjects, Dobrynin handed me the oral note about bilateral negotiations, attached at Tab A. We reviewed them subject by subject, to insure that we understood exactly what their proposition was in each case.

Trade and Other Technical Bilateral Issues

Discussing trade, Dobrynin said that it would be useful if we could agree on a subject. I told him that I would check with the President and let him know the next day into what channel he should put what answer. I assured him that Butz would go to Moscow, that there was a chance, however, of getting a trade delegation to go, and that we would be prepared to start negotiations on all the remaining subjects along the lines of our previous discussions. This took some time, because there were a number of problems with the meaning of the Soviet note, none of which, however, had any substantive import.²

We then turned to other bilateral issues. Dobrynin handed me a note about a Mr. Jay (Tab B)³ who allegedly was engaged in espionage activities in the Soviet Union but had been permitted to leave the country without Soviet interference. He said no answer was expected.

Middle East

With respect to the Middle East, I told Dobrynin that I would have for him within a week some tentative ideas of how to proceed. He said this would be very useful.

² In a March 10 memorandum to Kissinger entitled "Responses to Dobrynin re bilateral Negotiations," Sonnenfeldt wrote: "I see no reason why you should let yourself get hustled into a trade delegation *until we know precisely what we want to accomplish*. It is clear what the Soviets want—they want to pin us down on Ex-Im facilities, on our going for MFN legislation and on negotiating a 'trade agreement.' But we are not ready for this." (Ibid.) The Export-Import Bank financing and the extension of MFN are detailed in a March 13 memorandum from Flanigan to Kissinger. (Ibid., Box 718, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Vol. XX, March 1972) Flanigan also summarized the economic issues in an undated memorandum entitled "Scenario for U.S.–U.S.S.R. Economic Relations." (Ibid., Box 992, Haig Chronological Files, March 7–15, 1972) Rogers assessed U.S.–Soviet economic relations in a memorandum to Nixon entitled "Next Steps with Respect to U.S.–Soviet Trading Relationships. (March 10; *ibid.*, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Vol. XXI)

³ In this undated note, attached as Tab B but not printed, the Soviet Government accused private U.S. citizen Edward Jay of attempting to persuade Soviet citizens to defect to the West. "However, the Soviet side, guided by the interests of improving relations between our countries and, specifically, having in mind President Nixon's forthcoming visit to the U.S.S.R., deemed it possible not to institute criminal proceedings against Jay and let him freely return to the U.S.," the note asserted.

SALT

With respect to SALT, Dobrynin raised again the issue of submarines. He said it was going to be an increasingly tough issue, particularly if we were asking for equivalence. I replied that he must have misunderstood me, because there were a number of modifications: first, as Smith had already hinted to Semyonov, we were probably prepared to shift the cut-off date, which would add a number of submarines to the total; secondly, we had already proposed that they could convert some of their G- and H-class submarines, which would add six more. I then said that, thinking out loud, there was even a possibility of converting a few of their oldest missiles into submarines. He asked me to give him some idea of what total number would be permitted on this basis. I said that the total number I did not know, but I would let him know as soon as possible.

Communiqué

Dobrynin then turned to the issue of the communiqué. He wondered whether the principles that had been agreed to between the Soviet Union and France could serve as a model. I said that I would have to study them again carefully. He asked whether we could submit a draft communiqué to them. I told him that we would also be interested in seeing their draft. Dobrynin replied that if he submitted a draft communiqué it would become a decision by their government and, in that case, any modifications would also require a decision by their government. He thought the better method would be to work from our draft.

I then raised the issue of the conduct of the Moscow meetings. We wanted to separate the meetings between Brezhnev and the President from those of the larger group. Dobrynin said that there was no problem about this in principle. At Glassboro,⁴ for example, Kosygin and Johnson were alone except for an interpreter, while Rusk was occupied with Gromyko. On the other hand, to make this a formal proposal right now would put the Soviet leaders in the difficult position of having to make a formal reply, and this quite frankly would raise some tension within the leadership group. He could assure me that Brezhnev and the President would spend many hours alone together, or with just me and Alexandrov. As for Rogers, he would be kept amply busy by Gromyko and by other members of the Politburo who would be available.

⁴ Reference is to the summit meeting of June 23–25, 1967, between President Lyndon Johnson and Kosygin; see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XIV, Soviet Union, Documents 217–238.

Vietnam

Dobrynin asked me whether I had any news about the Vietnam situation. I said I did not.

China

Dobrynin then said he had a question to raise on the highest authority. Moscow had been told by Chinese sources that on my October visit I had given them a complete rundown of the “dislocation” of Soviet forces on the Chinese border, as well as of the location of Soviet missile installations. The gravest view would have to be taken of such a matter in Moscow if this were true. I replied that I had had no discussions of a military nature during my October visit, but that in any event we would not get involved in military things. I might have said on one or two occasions that I thought their fears of Soviet strength were exaggerated. Dobrynin wanted to know whether I then gave the correct figures. I said, no, it was always done in a general context.

I followed this up in a telephone call (Tab C)⁵ by explaining the context as one in which the Chinese were afraid of a simultaneous attack by all their neighbors.

Dobrynin remarked that the Soviet leaders were determined to make the Summit meeting a success, and the meeting closed on this note.⁶

⁵ Tab C was not found.

⁶ In a March 8 memorandum to Kissinger entitled “Your Next Meeting with Dobrynin,” Sonnenfeldt advised Kissinger to point out to Dobrynin that while “formal preparations” for the summit, such as scheduling and activities planning, were “lagging,” the “substantive preparations,” such as agreements on bilateral issues, were moving forward and “could well be completed in time for May.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2]) In a conversation with Nixon that evening, Kissinger noted that Dobrynin called McCloskey earlier that day regarding trip arrangements. Kissinger, wanting nothing prematurely leaked, directed McCloskey not to return Dobrynin’s call until after Kissinger had talked to him. In agreement, Nixon noted: “It’s the President’s trip, not the Secretary of State’s trip.” Kissinger replied: “Otherwise, they’ll have you in the position that they’ve done it all.” (Ibid., White House Tapes, March 9, 1972, 6:09–6:20 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 681–7)

Tab A

Note From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon⁷

Moscow, March 9, 1972.

1. We consider as settled the procedure of conducting preparatory work for the meeting, having in mind that exchange of opinion on questions regarding Europe, Middle East, Southeast Asia, limitation of strategic arms and coming to an agreement on the meeting's final documents as well as on other issues of principle will be confined to the confidential channel. Practical matters of bilateral relations will be discussed and worked upon through regular diplomatic channels as well as between appropriate ministries and agencies of both countries.

2. As for the practical issues of bilateral Soviet-American relations, we agree that in the remaining period preceding the meeting concrete agreements should be prepared on the maximum range of those questions.

Trade and Economic Matters

a. We confirm that we agree to receive an American trade delegation in Moscow this March for further concrete discussions of trade and economic matters.⁸ We request at the same time that the American side informs us in advance of the questions, the U.S. delegation would wish to discuss in Moscow, as well as of the level and the composition of the delegation.

b. We confirm that the USSR Ministry for Foreign Trade agrees to receive in Moscow in March–April the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for negotiating and concluding a long-term agreement on deliveries of feed grain on credit terms as well as of soy beans.⁹

c. We inform that our attitude is positive in principle to the idea of the USSR Foreign Trade Minister visiting the U.S. before the May meeting and of a subsequent visit to the USSR by a new U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

As regards taking a final decision on this matter it would be advisable, in our view, to come to it somewhat later, with due account of progress in trade negotiations in Moscow.

⁷ No classification marking. A handwritten notation on the attachment reads: "Handed to HAK by D on 9 Mar 72."

⁸ Kissinger wrote in the margin: "Trade delegation—Peterson."

⁹ Kissinger wrote in the margin: "Friday."

d. We confirm that we agree to hold negotiations on lend-lease in March–April in Washington.¹⁰

e. We confirm that we are prepared to receive an American delegation for continuing talks on settling the questions of shipping between the USSR and the U.S.¹¹

Questions of Cooperation in Science and Technology

a. We positively regard the idea of creating a joint Soviet-American committee on cooperation in science and technology. Our appropriate agencies will be prepared to conduct concrete discussions in March–April on its composition and functions as well as to work out an appropriate agreement on this matter, which would be signed at the meeting in May. At the same time they will be also prepared to discuss questions concerning protection of environment, including the question of establishing cooperation in this field, within the framework of a general agreement on cooperation in science and technology (which we consider preferable) or by concluding a separate agreement.¹²

b. We confirm that the Soviet side is prepared to continue discussions, in the period remaining before May, of cooperation between the USSR and the U.S. in exploration of outer space, including docking of space ships, having in mind the possibility of formalizing at the summit meeting the agreement reached on this score.

c. As for cooperation in the area of health we proceed from the understanding that as a follow up of the recent exchange of views between the Ministers of Health of the USSR and the U.S., the Soviet-American committee on these questions, which will start its work at the end of March, could prepare an appropriate concrete agreement, that may be signed in May.¹³

d. As for the continuation of the negotiations on preventing incidents at sea we expect that the American side makes a suggestion with regard to a specific date of their resumption.

¹⁰ Kissinger wrote in the margin: "State."

¹¹ Kissinger wrote in the margin: "State."

¹² Kissinger wrote in the margin: "Separate possible."

¹³ Kissinger wrote in the margin: "Check Richardson—Point to agreement."

57. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 10, 1972, 2:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Ambassador Dobrynin

The meeting took place so that I could give Dobrynin the answers to his questions of the previous day.²

I told Dobrynin which departments to approach for what problems, explaining that on the President's instructions I had split up the topics among the various departments in order to prevent a State

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 1]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room of the White House. Attached to a March 20 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, transmitting the texts of both the March 9 and March 10 memoranda of conversation. A notation on the covering memorandum indicates the President saw it. According to Kissinger's Record of Schedule for March 10, he met with Dobrynin from 2:50 to 3:30 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976) An attached note reads: "The Soviet leaders have no objections to make public in the nearest future, for example, on March 17, simultaneously in Moscow and Washington the previously agreed date, May 22, of President Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union. We have in mind to publish a brief announcement on this matter of the following comments: 'About United States President R. Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union. As it was announced in October, 1971 agreement was reached between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the President of the United States R. Nixon to hold a meeting in Moscow in the latter part of May, 1972, at which all major issues would be considered with a view toward further improving the bilateral relations between our countries and enhancing the prospects of world peace. Now the sides have agreed that President Nixon will come to Moscow on an unofficial visit on May 22, 1972.'" A notation on the attached note reads: "Handed to K by D, 3:00 p.m., 3/10/72."

² In a conversation with the President on March 10, Kissinger noted that he would establish the primary agency leads through which the various agreements to be negotiated in Moscow would occur. "I'm going to split the thing up into so many different agencies that no one can claim that they did it all," Kissinger proclaimed. Kissinger noted that the Soviets had encountered similar issues relating to bureaucratic coordination. Kissinger continued: "Funny enough, they have the same problem we have. I told him about private meetings between you and Brezhnev, and he said, it's guaranteed, it will happen, and there'll be many of them, but if they make it a formal thing now there'll be a terrible row between Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorny. So they'd consider it a favor if we didn't make it a formal thing now and just had it as a private understanding. I said sure." Nixon asked, "Is he going to bring him into Rogers?" Kissinger replied, "He said Rogers is going to be so busy. He said, you know Gromyko, he can keep Rogers so busy. And he says he'll run in whichever leader isn't with you. So either Kosygin or Podgorny see him." Nixon then asked, "But he knows the game, doesn't he?" Kissinger replied that he did. Nixon agreed and noted that Dobrynin would "be suave enough to handle the Rogers problem too." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, March 10, 1972, 12:50–1:10 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 682–8)

Department monopoly of negotiations with the Soviet Union. I asked him to take up science with Dr. David,³ but only at the end of the week. I suggested that he give the answer on lend-lease and also shipping negotiations at the State Department; that the answers on agriculture should be given to Beam in Moscow; that he should go to Commerce on the trade matter; and that he should conduct the health discussions with Dr. Egeberg in HEW,⁴ who in turn would be instructed to bring matters to the point of an agreement in time for the Summit.

I then mentioned to Dobrynin that I might go on vacation on March 20th. He said, "On March 20th or April 15?" I said on March 20th. He said, "I thought the meeting had been changed to April 15." I asked which meeting. He said the meeting with the North Vietnamese. I told him that I had not informed him of it because this was a matter on which the North Vietnamese should inform their own allies. However, if this constant postponement of meetings continued, we would break off the channel. Dobrynin said we took the North Vietnamese too seriously, but he hoped things would work out.

I showed Dobrynin a memo written to me by Scali (Tab D)⁵ which raised the same point as he had the day before about the allegation that I had given information to the Chinese. Dobrynin said that his information was that it had occurred last October—not on my first trip in July, as the Scali note maintained. I said either information was incorrect.

Dobrynin handed me a Soviet draft (Tab E)⁶ of the announcement setting the date of the President's visit to Moscow. The Soviet Union suggested the announcement for March 17th. I suggested that March 16th might be more convenient for the President. Dobrynin said he was certain this would be no problem but he asked me to call him.⁷

I then gave Dobrynin the figures for the ceiling on submarines if various options were exercised, and indicated that it might go as high as the middle 50's as against our 41. Dobrynin said he could not understand our eagerness to get an agreement which was so unequal. How would we justify a Soviet preponderance in this to our public? I

³ Dr. Edward E. David, Science Adviser to the President and Director of the Office of Science and Technology.

⁴ Dr. Roger Egeberg, Special Consultant to the President.

⁵ Tab D not found.

⁶ Attached but not printed.

⁷ Kissinger discussed the date for the announcement in separate telephone conversations with Dobrynin on March 8, 8:50 p.m., and with Nixon, March 10, 5:30 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

said we would have to explain it on the ground that the Soviets could keep a smaller number deployed at any given number of submarines. Dobrynin said, "There must be some angle. What is it?" I said there was no angle, but there was serious concern about submarines. Dobrynin said he would examine the question and let me know.

58. Memorandum From President Nixon to his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, March 11, 1972.

I believe that the expectations for the Moscow trip are being built up too much. What I am concerned about is not that we will fail to achieve the various goals about which there has been speculation but that when we do make the formal agreements there will be no real news value to them because of their having been discounted by an enormous amount of discussion prior to the Summit.

There are two ways to attack this problem. First, as I have already indicated to you, it is vitally important that no final agreements be entered into until we arrive in Moscow and it is also important that speculation with regard to negotiation of such agreements be limited. I realize that the latter objective is very hard to achieve due to the fact that so many people will be talking to Dobrynin but we should make every possible effort to put a lid on speculation with regard to matters we expect to reach agreement on at the Summit with the Russians.

Another line of attack which should be used to the fullest extent possible is to begin a line of pessimism with regard to what may be accomplished in certain fields. This is particularly important insofar as SALT is concerned. When I see a news story to the effect that we are asking Congress for funds to implement our SALT agreement as if it were an accomplished fact, I realize how difficult it is going to be for us to make the agreement seem like an achievement at the Summit. We know that there would be no possibility of the SALT agreement had we not done the work we have participated in up to this time. On the other hand, there will be an attempt to make it appear that all of this could have been achieved without any Summit whatever, and that all we did was to go to Moscow for a grandstand play to put the final

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda from the President, Memos—March 1972. Eyes Only.

signature on an agreement that was worked out by Gerry Smith, State, etc. The Mideast is another case in point. Of course, we should attempt to see that very little is said about the Mideast as a possible Summit agenda item, but at any event we should indicate wherever the subject is raised that we expect very little at the Summit on that score.

As far as the other items are concerned, probably most of them are too far down the track for us to do much about them. But I think that to the extent you can, through backgrounders, in which you can possibly use Scali rather effectively in those cases where you do not want to involve your own credibility, you should indicate that there are some very serious problems involved in reaching agreement on the major items, that there are road blocks that we may not be able to break, and thereby build a case for having a Summit for the purpose of removing those road blocks.

Again emphasizing the danger I see emerging, our critics who oppose summitry in any event will try to say that everything we finally agree to was all worked out through the usual State Department and other channels and that the Summit was really not necessary except as an election-year spectacular.

With regard to the Summit on another point, I realize that the Russians will have far more plenary sessions than did the Chinese. They have to give a considerable amount of lip service to the whole idea of collective leadership. In view of the fact that Brezhnev, Podgorny, and Kosygin will be on their side I think it is important for us to limit the participants on our side. In other words, if they have those three as well as Gromyko we should have Rogers, yourself and myself as the three on our side, possibly adding Hillenbrand if that becomes necessary. I suppose that Beam poses a problem and it might be that you would have to have him included. Where I think you should draw the line, however, is on the attendance at plenary sessions, except where they are totally formal, by Scali, Ziegler and other press people. The moment we add them on our side they will have to add others on their side and the meetings will become so big that they will be totally useless. There, of course, should be a note taker on our side and I suppose in this instance we would have to have our translator because we should not rely only on theirs, but I want you to make every possible effort to limit the number of people who participate in the plenary sessions. Needless to say, in any session I have with Brezhnev I only want you, our translator and a note taker present on our side. Under no circumstances would Beam or any State Department representative be present.

59. Editorial Note

Over the course of the day on March 13, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin devised the text for the joint announcement of the upcoming summit meeting in Moscow. Starting with the text offered by Dobrynin on March 10 (see footnote 6, Document 57), the announcement evolved into final form. An excerpt from Kissinger's 10:30 a.m. telephone conversation with Dobrynin reads:

"K: What I want to do is to send you the text as we have written it. It uses the phrases from the original announcements and I think all it is making three sentences from one.

"D: There is no change in the substance?

"K: I don't believe there is, but that's why I want you to check it. After you check it, if you have any questions call me." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

At 3:48 p.m., Kissinger and Dobrynin spoke again:

"K: Did they send over the text to you?

"D: No.

"K: Well, there are a few dead bureaucrats and there will be one more in 15 minutes. It is going to be over in half an hour.

"D: Now they decided to make it at the same hour. What do you propose?

"K: 3 o'clock.

"D: In Moscow it will be 11. You are not going to make it earlier, no?

"K: Well, let me check with the President and I will let you know. If there is a possibility of a Presidential press conference it will be at 3:00. Let me see what we can do.

"D: You will call me today?

"K: In an hour." (Ibid.)

At 4:25, Kissinger called White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman and requested that he get Special Assistant Chapin to make arrangements for the joint announcement with Soviet Embassy official Vorontsov. (Transcript of telephone conversation between Kissinger and Haldeman, March 13, 1972, 4:25 p.m.; *ibid.*)

At 5:55 p.m. on March 13, Kissinger and Dobrynin engaged in further discussion on the announcement.

"D: This English text—first, there is nothing said about the second half of May.

“K: We will put that in. We will just take whatever the communiqué said.

“D: Mine?

“K: Your draft.

“D: No, I don’t think so. I have the Russian text.

“K: I don’t like that wording either: ‘It was agreed that a meeting should take place.’

“D: In October, you remember your text. Simply an agreement was announced that a meeting was held in Moscow.

“K: No, I propose your text, but that agreement was announced that a meeting be held in Moscow between the President—

“D: An agreement was announced that a meeting be—

“K: It was announced that an agreement had been reached on a meeting—

“D: That is better.

“K: That is no problem.

“D: It was announced that agreement has been reached on and then put it this way, in the second half of May or in late May. How would you like it?

“K: In the second half of May.

“D: In the second half of May because otherwise it would not be clear.

“K: And it has now been agreed that President Nixon’s visit to Moscow will begin on—

“D: What about October 12?

“K: Let me read it. On October 12, 1971, it was announced that agreement had been reached on a meeting between President Nixon and leaders of the Soviet Union in the second half of May or to take place in the second half of May.

“D: To take place.

“K: It has now been agreed that President Nixon’s official visit to Moscow will begin on May 22, 1971, as stated in the October 12 announcement.

“D: Good.” (Ibid.)

At 6:10 p.m. on March 13, Kissinger called Nixon to inform him of the progress on the announcement:

“P: Is there any last minute news?

“K: No, things are fairly quiet. I worked out with Dobrynin a text for the announcement for Thursday at 11:30 in the morning.

“P: Good, and we are announcing it just the same as the China one with the delegation, and Mrs. Nixon is going, I presume?

“K: We aren’t going to go into the technical end.

“P: Oh fine, leave it out. I just want to be sure we don’t add any more.

“K: We might say Mrs. Nixon will accompany you.

“P: We did it in the China one. ‘He will be accompanied by Mrs. Nixon and Rogers.’

“K: Let Ziegler answer that in the questions. We have agreed on the text but he can answer that in questions.

“P: Fine. Otherwise things are fairly quiet.” (Ibid.)

The final revised text of the announcement, as completed the next day and released at 11:30 a.m. on March 16, reads: “On October 12, 1971, it was announced that agreement had been reached on a meeting between President Nixon and the leaders of the Soviet Union to take place in the second half of May. It has now been agreed that President Nixon’s official visit to Moscow will start on May 22, 1972. Mrs. Nixon will accompany the President. As stated in October, President Nixon and the Soviet leaders will review all major issues, with a view toward further improving bilateral relations and enhancing the prospects for world peace.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 9 [Pt. 1]) However, the Soviet Union released their original text of March 10. In a March 16 memorandum to Kissinger, Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the NSC staff commented: “What point is there in negotiating out a specific set of words if the Soviets then blithely proceed to use, in Russian and English, without the slightest change the language they originally proposed? If this is going to be their practice when we negotiate the Moscow communiqué there will be nothing ahead but trouble.” (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2])

60. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the White House Chief of Staff (Haldeman)¹

Washington, March 15, 1972.

SUBJECT

The President's Visit to the Soviet Union

At Tab B is a memorandum of March 14, 1972 to you from Secretary Rogers. The memorandum informs you that Secretary Rogers has taken personal charge of State Department coordinating efforts with the various relative departments of the government in connection with the President's visit to the Soviet Union. A personal coordinating role by the Secretary could, obviously, pose serious problems with respect to the preparation of substantive matters which have already been set in motion under the provisions of NSSM 143 of December 15, 1971, NSDM 153 of February 17, 1972 and the Joint NSSM and CIEPSM 145 and 20 and the Joint NSDM 151 and CIEPDM 6, dated January 17, 1972 and February 14, 1972 respectively (at Tab C).² I believe it is essential that you move promptly to remind the Secretary that whatever coordinating role he visualizes for himself should be within the framework of the provisions of the NSC directives which have already been promulgated.

At Tab A is a memorandum for your signature to Secretary Rogers which:

—Acknowledges receipt of the Secretary's memorandum and advises that it has been discussed with the President

—Reiterates the requirement that the preparation of bilateral U.S.-Soviet matters preparatory to the Summit be conducted within the framework of the NSC system (Senior Review Group and CIEP) and,

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 992, Haig Chronological Files, March 7–15, 1972. Secret. Drafted by Haig. The memorandum is unsigned. In his March 7 diary entry, Haldeman wrote that Nixon "had me sit in the Rogers meeting this afternoon, and Bill made a pitch for the need to solve the problem of his apparent downgrading and the press coverage thereof. His solution was for the P[resident] to announce that Rogers was in charge of the planning for the Russian trip. The P finessed that, as he should have, and made it pretty clear and directly to Rogers that he wasn't about to be put in charge of the trip." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

² Attached as Tab C, but not printed, are NSSM 143, "Review of U.S.-Soviet Negotiations," December 15; NSSM 153, "Review of U.S.-Soviet Negotiations," February 17; NSSM 145/CIEPSM 20, "U.S.-Soviet Trading Relationships," January 17; and NSDM 151/CIEPDM 6, "Next Steps with Respect to U.S.-Soviet Trading Relationships," March 15.

—Advises the Secretary that Dwight Chapin has been designated as the point of contact with an appropriate Soviet counterpart for the trip's physical arrangements and agrees to include the State Department representative, Mr. John Thomas, in appropriate forums related thereto.³

Recommendation:

That you:

—Discuss the Secretary's memorandum and my proposed response for your signature with the President.

—Sign and dispatch the response to Secretary Rogers as soon as possible.⁴

³ In a March 21 memorandum for the file, Chapin discussed his meeting that morning with Vorontsov during which they discussed arrangements for the Moscow trip and specifically places where Nixon could visit. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10) In a March 28 memorandum to Nixon, Rogers discussed a variety of activities that Nixon could undertake while in the Soviet Union. (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 74, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Moscow Summit 1972 [2 of 2]) In a March 29 memorandum to Kissinger transmitting the Rogers memorandum, Sonnenfeldt noted that "there are several good ideas in this memorandum which are useful for Dwight Chapin to have available." (Ibid.) In a February 29 memorandum to Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt also suggested possible stops for Nixon during his visit to the Soviet Union, including Leningrad, Tblisi, Yerevan, or Askhabad. He also advised on setting up an advance team before and briefings following the trip, and the procedures for drafting a communiqué. (Ibid., Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2]) An additional step preparatory to the summit was the prohibition of reconnaissance flights over parts of and restrictions on flights close to the Soviet Union for the duration of Nixon's visit to the U.S.S.R. (National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, 40 Committee Files, Minutes, Originals, 1972)

⁴ In his diary entry for March 16, Haldeman wrote: "The other problem today was a memo from Bill Rogers to me, saying that he was going to take charge of the Russian trip and start coordinating the Departments, and so on, which had Henry pretty disturbed. And I raised it with the P when he came down from Camp David, or raised it on the phone with him, when he was just chatting with me, and he said I should just level with him on it. That the P's taken many trips, he's always in charge of his own trips, and following that practice, the P will be in personal charge and will not delegate that to anyone. He told me to take a very hard line with Rogers on this. Not back off at all. So I am writing Bill a memo in response to take care of that." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) According to Kissinger's memoirs, Haldeman did sign and transmit the draft memorandum on the orders of the President. (*White House Years*, p. 1128) In his diary entry for March 20, Haldeman wrote: "Rogers discussed with me the question of his memo on Moscow; said he wanted to simply avoid the thought that State can't be avoided because they can't be trusted, but he doesn't think the staff realizes that under the law the State Department has the responsibility, or the Secretary does. Other Departments can't start exploration with other governments without going through the Secretary of State; therefore, he wants to be informed, and he says, 'I'm going to find out all that's possible about whatever one is doing. I'll be god-damned if I'll operate in the dark.' For instance, the Commerce Department's last negotiations with the Soviets—we had to back off because they came in illegally. Said he was sending a memo to the P on this, and we need to get the word out. For example, he's heard the Secretary of Agriculture's going to Moscow, and he thinks he should be in touch with him. So on. Still worrying about his own position rather than how to be of assistance to the P." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

Tab A

**Draft Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff
(Haldeman) to Secretary of State Rogers**

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

The President's Visit to the Soviet Union

I have shown to the President your memorandum to me of March 14th. He is delighted that you are giving personal attention to the preparations for his visit to the Soviet Union. At the same time, he is concerned that preparatory substantive arrangements be conducted consistent with the provisions of NSSM 143 of December 15, 1971, NSDM 153 of February 17, 1972 and the Joint NSSM and CIEPSM 145 and 20 and the Joint NSDM 151 and CIEPDM 6, dated January 17, 1972 and February 14, 1972 respectively, which designate the NSC Senior Review Group and the CIEP as the focal points for coordination of substantive bilateral matters pertaining to the Soviet Summit. Due to the myriad of departmental interests in the substantive issues, it is important that there be no misunderstanding about the coordinating mechanism which should be followed.

With respect to the physical arrangements, the President has designated Dwight Chapin as the point of contact with whomever Ambassador Dobrynin might designate from the Soviet side. You may be sure that Mr. Chapin will include John Thomas in the preparatory forums which are established for implementing the physical arrangements for the trip.

H.R. Haldeman⁵

⁵ The draft copy bears this typed signature.

Tab B

**Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to the
White House Chief of Staff (Haldeman)⁶**

Washington, March 14, 1972.

SUBJECT

President's Visit to the Soviet Union

As we intensify preparations for the President's visit to the Soviet Union, I plan to take personal charge of State Department coordinating efforts with the various relevant departments of the Government. I shall be having a series of meetings this week within the Department of State to review the current situation, after which I intend to call in Ambassador Dobrynin to discuss the various bilateral negotiations presently or potentially under way which might have a bearing on the Summit conference. We may also be meeting with representatives of other agencies who are, or will be conducting discussions with the Soviets during the pre-Summit period, with a view to insuring that their efforts fit into the general framework both as to timing and possible use in connection with the Presidential visit. Marty Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, will be working closely with me on the substantive side pursuant to Presidential decisions.

As far as planning the physical arrangements for the trip are concerned, our principal representative will be John Thomas. I will appreciate it if as you proceed to make plans for the visit that Mr. Thomas can attend meetings and be kept fully posted.

William P. Rogers

⁶ Confidential.

61. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and Secretary of State Rogers¹

Washington, March 16, 1972, 9:40 a.m.

R: Hi, Henry.

K: Bill, you called me last night?

R: Last night? No.

K: I got a message that you called last night and you might call again this morning.

R: No, I didn't call you last night. But on this business about the Qs and As today on the Soviet Union trip, I am perfectly prepared to be reasonable about how we state it but I don't want it to appear that we in the State Department are only doing routine things.

K: I agree completely. Bill, I don't care how they state the damn thing. I don't think it is good for either of us to be in charge of it in this way. Did they send you what I suggested they say?

R: No. Well, they sent me something that said the State Department will handle diplomatic matters which will be okayed at the White House.²

K: What do you think we should say?

R: Well, first this is a coordinated effort under the direction of the President; that the diplomatic and substantive matters will be handled the normal way by the State Department with full cooperation of Dr. Kissinger and his staff.

K: Well, let me see if we can phrase something like that and I will check it with Ted³ before we give guidance. I don't think we should do anything that . . .

R: No, and I think it gives us more of a chance to say this is a cooperative effort. The reason China was different was because we didn't have diplomatic relations with them.

K: Well, as far as I'm concerned . . . I want you to know anything I can do to make it appear to be a cooperative effort I will do.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² See Document 60.

³ Theodore Eliot, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State and Executive Secretary of the Department of State.

R: I think this is important because there has been so much speculation.⁴

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Moscow Summit.]

⁴ According to a transcript of a telephone conversation on March 18 at 11:58 a.m., Kissinger requested that Rogers visit Europe and consult with NATO allies prior to the summit. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

62. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 17, 1972, 1 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President (at beginning)
Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

The Summit

The President joined us at the beginning of the meeting. The President made two points: he said he was going to Moscow in order to do serious business. There were some places to go for drinks and toasts, and there were other places to do business. Moscow was the place where he wanted to do business.²

Secondly, the President wanted to make sure Dobrynin understood the arrangements for preparing the visit. Kissinger was in complete charge of the summit. We would parcel out specific assignments to specific individuals in the bureaucracy, but this would be done at Kissinger's initiative and Dobrynin should take his guidance from me. He hoped that Dobrynin would cooperate in this effort. Dobrynin said

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. Kissinger sent a March 28 summary memorandum of this meeting to Nixon. (Ibid.) Kissinger's Record of Schedule gives the time of the meeting from 1:10 to 3:10 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976)

² In his memoirs Kissinger noted that "on March 17 Nixon dropped in on one of my meetings with Dobrynin and told him that I was to supervise all major summit preparations. Technical negotiations on economic relations or scientific or cultural exchanges were turned over to the Cabinet departments, with the State Department playing the lead role, but the key policy issues were to be handled in the channel." (*White House Years*, p. 1128)

that he understood that the big issues such as South Asia, Southeast Asia, Middle East, and SALT would be handled in the meetings with me and that others might go to the bureaucracy. The President said that was correct, but he should take the general instructions from me.

Dobrynin then said, "Our friend Henry is very modest. Is he or is he not coming to Moscow?" The President replied that a visit was impossible before the summit. One, I had gone to Peking because there was no Chinese Dobrynin in Washington, and two, it would break too much china in our bureaucracy. However, he would be glad to have me go to Moscow *after* the summit. Dobrynin said this could be settled either at the summit or shortly after.

At this point, the President left. Dobrynin and I continued the conversation.

I told Dobrynin that I had a complaint about the March 16 joint announcement³ of the date of the President's visit. I showed him the text which I thought we had agreed upon and the text TASS published (attached at Tab A).⁴ I said I simply did not understand Soviet procedures. Here I had checked every word with him, giving him four different drafts, and finally when the announcement was published it turned out to be exactly what the Soviets had proposed to begin with. It corresponded in no way to the text we had been discussing. This was all the more remarkable because there were no disagreements as to substance. Was it really worth undermining confidence in this manner? Dobrynin replied that if there was any fault, it was entirely his. He had thought that the Soviet text was generally acceptable and that we had asked for an alternative formulation only to improve the English. He had checked our text for its consistency with the Russian, not to produce an identical text. I said I hoped that we would once agree on a joint text; we have made four unsuccessful attempts. That would, of course, affect our estimate of how we could cooperate on the communiqué. We could not possibly afford two different versions. Dobrynin agreed.

Trade

We then turned to substantive matters. Dobrynin said that the trade situation seemed to be in hand. After his conversation with Peterson,⁵ he had come to the view that it might be better for Patolichev to come over here in April. He did not see much sense in having second-level people conduct negotiations that were better conducted at a higher level. I told him this was, of course, agreeable to us.

³ See Document 59.

⁴ Attached but not printed.

⁵ Peterson reported on his March 16 discussion with Dobrynin in a March 17 memorandum to Kissinger and Flanigan. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10) In a March 13 memorandum to Kissinger entitled "Soviet Economic Negotiating Strategy—Some

The Middle East

He then asked, "What about the major items? Let's talk about the Middle East. You told me you would have some proposition to make." I said that the first question that I wanted to raise was: could they give me some expression of how they propose to inform the Egyptians if some agreement were reached between the President and Brezhnev? It seemed to me extremely dangerous to inform the Egyptians at all since they were bound to be penetrated by the Israelis. For us it was a matter of the gravest importance. Dobrynin grew somewhat restless. He said delivering the Egyptians was their problem and they could not be accountable on that. I said that was not the issue; the issue was whether the process of notification would create substantive difficulties that would affect our situation and the possibility of carrying through with any understanding that might be reached. For example, I said,⁶ the interim agreement we were discussing was worse than what Bergus had offered them in the bilateral discussions. If they were going to be asked by the Soviets to accept a worse interim agreement, there had to be some argument that would make this plausible. Dobrynin again said that I seem to be producing one red herring after another to avoid facing concrete issues. I said this was not the case, and I insisted that they produce some expression from Moscow of how they would deal with the implementation of any agreement.

Turning to the substance of the settlement, Dobrynin asked whether I had formulated any ideas. I told him that it seemed to me that the irreducible Israeli position was for the airfield just east of Eilat, control over Sharm el Sheikh, and a land connection with Sharm el Sheikh. This perhaps could be wrapped up in some riparian arrangement of the states along the Gulf of Aqaba, which perhaps might provide a fig leaf for Israeli presence in Sharm el Sheikh. (Attached at Tab B is a memorandum explaining this.)⁷

Dobrynin asked my view of demilitarization. I said in my view demilitarization would have to take place at least to the western edge of the passes. Dobrynin said that in effect I was giving him the Israeli position. I said that if he talked to the Israeli Ambassador, he would not get that idea; this would be next to impossible to sell to the Israelis.

Preliminary Thoughts," Peterson offered the following caution: "If major asymmetry is likely, and I have detailed projections through the end of this decade to validate it, we could find ourselves in a kind of 'reverse-linkage' situation. The Russians, knowing our vulnerability, could then threaten us with non-payment and perhaps turn our generosity into both their short-term economic and longer-term political advantage." (Ibid., Box 992, Haig Chronological Files, March 7–15, 1972)

⁶ Donald Bergus, principal officer, U.S. Interests Section, Cairo.

⁷ Not attached.

What I was trying to do was to get a position which the Israelis might accept with some considerable pressure but short of actions that would lead them to conclude that they were better off going to war. Dobrynin said that in effect we were returning to the old position in which all the sacrifices had to be made in Egypt. I said that the pity was that Dobrynin could never seem to understand that these were negotiating arguments that we had already heard in New York and Washington. If he was talking to me, he should face the substance of the problem, and the substance was that we were prepared to use our good offices with the Israelis but only within a framework that we thought would not drive them to acts of total desperation.

Dobrynin asked why the demilitarized zone had to be entirely on the Egyptian side. I said it was because equivalent demilitarized zones would drive the Israelis back to Jerusalem. Dobrynin asked whether we would consider proportional demilitarized zones. I said it seemed to me extremely improbable, but if he wanted to make a proposal this was of course open to him.

Dobrynin indicated that he did not think we were making much progress. He said the difficulty was that we did not take the Soviet proposals sufficiently seriously. The Soviet Union had offered to withdraw all its forces from Egypt, except a number roughly equivalent to what we had in Iran, not to establish bases elsewhere, and to accept limitations on its arms shipments. This responded exactly to what we had said publicly in July 1969 we wanted. Now we were haggling about a few miles of territory.

I responded that Dobrynin always had the great ability to present his position in the form of enormous concessions, without ever looking at what we were doing on our side. For example, the Soviet proposal was a way for the Soviets of extricating themselves from a difficult situation. Their client could not win a war with the Israelis. Therefore, a continuation of the situation would lead to one of two situations: either a conviction on the part of the Arabs that their alliance with the Soviet Union was not adequate to produce a settlement, or a war by the Egyptians which would face the Soviet Union with a decision of military support and a risk out of proportion to anything that could be achieved.

Dobrynin answered that this was partially true, but there was a third possibility that the Soviet Union had to consider. The Soviet Union was now at a watershed; its next move would be a considerable increase of its military presence in Egypt and other Arab states. He could assure me they were deluged with offers, for example, to provide air protection to other Arab countries. The Soviet Union had requests for a massive influx of arms which then could be given with the argument that the Soviet Union would stay there until the local people were in a position to defeat the Israelis militarily. [Note: This seems confirmed by

Israeli intelligence.]⁸ Also the Soviet Union was well aware of the fact that its proposal really opened up the field for us to compete with them much more effectively in the Arab world than is now the case. In short, it was a major policy act by the Soviet Union, and if we did not pick it up, the consequences might be quite serious. However, he would transmit my suggestions to Moscow and he would give me their reaction.

SALT

We then turned to SALT. Dobrynin asked how serious we were about SLBMs. I repeated once more that we were extremely serious, and that indeed I doubted that an agreement was possible that did not include SLBMs. Dobrynin said he would transmit this to Moscow. He asked me for our ABM position. I hinted at movement in the direction of two-for-two, but put it in form of thinking out loud with no definite prospect of a final decision.⁹

Communiqué

At the end of the meeting I handed him a draft of an agreed statement of principles and outline of the joint communiqué (attached at Tab C).¹⁰ Dobrynin expressed great appreciation and indicated that it was a step forward to have something to work on. We then discussed the dates for further meetings, and settled on March 30.

⁸ Brackets in the source text.

⁹ Following extensive discussion at the Verification Panel meeting of March 8, Kissinger noted that on the ABM issue: "There are two basic decisions: 1) whether to grant the Soviets any ICBM defense, and 2) whether we should make any modification in our proposal. If the President decides these two issues, we can make a technical decision on the other aspects." As to "the question of inclusion of SLBMs," Kissinger continued, "There are two issues: 1) whether or not they *must* be included; we are all agreed that we want them included if we can get them, but the question is how essential is it that they be included; and 2) what modifications could we make in our proposal that would make their inclusion more probable?" Kissinger later added: "I have a horror of the President's getting into technical details in Moscow." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-107, Verification Panel Minutes, Originals) At the NSC meeting on March 17, Nixon noted: "We don't have to have an agreement because we are going to Moscow. We do it in the context of the national interest—they are moving in the arms race and we are not. We are beginning on both sides to halt the escalation in a race that neither side can be allowed to win. We can't let them go to massive superiority—but its more difficult for us to match them." (Memorandum for the record, March 17; *ibid.*, Box H-110, NSC Minutes, Originals)

¹⁰ Tab C was attached but is not printed. In a March 16 memorandum to Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt described the draft joint communiqué: "You will note that this draft finesses who the President will meet and in what circumstances; it also leaves open what bilateral negotiations will be completed; it keeps the economic part vague; it merely lists a section on SALT without any text." (*Ibid.*, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2]) In discussing SALT issues during a telephone discussion with Dobrynin, March 18, Kissinger stated: "We can do them like we did some other things. Also we want to leave something open to be settled at the summit. You and I can agree but we should leave something to be settled at Helsinki." (Transcript of telephone conversation between Kissinger and Dobrynin, March 18, 10:40 a.m.; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

63. Editorial Note

On March 18, 1972, President Nixon met with his Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger to discuss issues relating to the upcoming summit in Moscow. Nixon noted the importance of the “press needing to see that there’s something to go to the summit for.” Kissinger noted that “having the summit put a deadline on these negotiations that could have dragged on for years” and thus in and of itself brought about a successful conclusion to the variety of agreements that would come out of the Moscow meetings.

Nixon stated his desire to keep Secretary of State William Rogers from “end-running” the administration during the summit. Kissinger noted that Rogers would handle “subsidiary” negotiations. Nixon also expressed that there was no reason for private talks between Rogers and Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev. Kissinger noted that the Soviet Government had agreed “informally” to avoid such interchanges. Nixon noted that he would send Rogers over to Europe for meetings on regional security prior to the Moscow summit “so nothing gets screwed up.” Kissinger recommended dispatching Rogers to Europe following his own secret trip to Moscow in late April. At that time Rogers could discuss with the Europeans the whole range of the summit. Nixon added that it was “a good move to get him in play but not in play too”; additionally, such a trip involved the Europeans in summit preparations. Nixon suggested that Kissinger call Rogers and discuss the issue as “it might make him feel better.” Kissinger believed that it was a good idea and certainly would help out his relations with Rogers. Nixon said to tell Rogers that they did not want to consult with him beforehand as his trip to Europe would be a very useful and effective exercise. The trip was set for the end of April.

A discussion of various issues that would be faced during the summit ensued. Nixon advised not getting the SALT issues too pinned down. On the Middle East, Kissinger recommended avoiding it in conversations with the Soviets and instead concentrating on it after reelection, when the administration could trade a restoration of the pre-1967 boundaries in exchange for a withdrawal of Soviet forces from the region. The President believed that getting the Soviets out would be “a damn good deal for just a few hunks of desert.” If all else failed, Nixon noted, then the issue could then “be turned back to Rogers.” On Vietnam, Kissinger argued for the launching of offensive military action now so that they could “get it over with” prior to a summit. Even if the North Vietnamese were not amenable in the near future to a peace agreement, “it would be much tougher for them after the election than before,” Nixon surmised. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, March 18, 1972, 11:07–11:52 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 688–4)

64. Memorandum From President Nixon to White House Chief of Staff (Haldeman)¹

Washington, March 20, 1972.

On Saturday afternoon, just before he left for Acapulco, I discussed with Henry an idea I had had the night before that Bill Rogers should go to Europe to consult with the major European leaders prior to our Moscow trip.² Henry thought it was a very good idea and at my suggestion called Bill and Bill, according to Henry, jumped at the idea and wants to go forward on it.

The problem we have to work around is the date of Henry's trip to Europe, which will take place sometime in the latter part of April unless some plans change. In any event, the best time for Rogers to go would be the first two weeks of May. From the first of May on this would mean we could start the build-up of the Moscow trip and it would allow him time to get back here four or five days before we took off for Moscow.

I want you to discuss the matter with Haig—I see no need to talk with Henry further about it because he has already raised the subject with Rogers. I just don't want Rogers to get frozen in on dates that will be unacceptable. And then I think you should talk to Bill along the following lines. Tell him that the first two weeks of May would be better from our standpoint and that April is a month that I will be making a considerable amount of news on the domestic front; that from the first of May on we want to start the build-up for the Moscow trip. Second, I think it is important in terms of giving his trip the proper build-up, that it not be leaked out by State, but that it be announced from the White House. However, it is up to him, but in this instance his controlling the leaks will be very much to his advantage. If this appears simply as a State Department trip it will not have near the impact it will if it appears to be the Secretary of State going abroad at the request of the President to consult not just with foreign ministers but with the heads of government of our major European allies.

Along the same lines, after the Moscow trip Bill, as you know, is going to NATO. There is the question of whether or not he might be able to stop over for a day in Stockholm at the Environmental Conference. I think you could discuss this with him to see whether he could

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda from the President, Memos–March 1972. No classification marking. The text of the memorandum was dictated by Nixon.

² See Document 63.

work it into his schedule. It is probably a very good PR device for the Administration to have that kind of ranking representative as the head of our delegation. Also, it avoids the problem within the Administration where there is a considerable battle going on as to who will be the head of the delegation. Incidentally, I was talking to Elliot Richardson briefly at the church services and he indicated that he would probably rather go to Japan than to Stockholm. I think this is a good idea because more attention being paid to Japan probably is in our interest, apart from the fact that it will avoid some of the rivalry that will inevitably be produced if too many VIPs go to the Stockholm meeting. Be sure that Bill knows, as far as the Environmental Conference is concerned, however, that it is his choice. If he prefers not to go we then have to put another Cabinet officer in charge of the delegation. It would give him excellent speech material when he returns to add to the speech material that he would have on China and also on Moscow.

65. Editorial Note

In a March 20, 1972, speech before the Soviet Trade Union Congress, General Secretary Brezhnev reviewed the overall foreign policy of the Soviet Union and offered a wide-ranging assessment of current issues that Soviet policymakers faced. Among U.S. Government circles, the speech was viewed as having cast a positive light upon the impending Moscow summit. In Intelligence Note RESN-35, March 20, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research noted that Brezhnev's "concluding endorsement of the upcoming summit emerges as an endorsement of a calculated policy step, taken without illusion and without weakness, in the interest of a higher good." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 1 USSR) In a March 20 information memorandum from Executive Secretary of the Department of State Theodore Eliot to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger, the Department of State noted:

"Brezhnev expressed a positive view of the President's forthcoming trip to Moscow. The overall message is that the Soviet Union has digested the Peking trip and is still approaching the Moscow summit, as Brezhnev put it, from 'businesslike, realistic positions.' He made a positive statement about SALT, and went on to hope for other 'fields of cooperation' to 'give Soviet-American relations a more stable nature.' This seems to us a Soviet response to the President's and your own recent foreign-policy messages to Congress, and expresses a cautious Soviet hope—and need—for specific agreements before and during the Moscow summit." (Ibid.)

The Department of State also transmitted an additional assessment of the Brezhnev speech in telegram 50559 to the U.S. Delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Embassies in Germany, the Soviet Union, France, and Britain, March 24. (Ibid.)

In a March 21 memorandum to President Nixon, Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Haig placed the speech in a slightly different context:

“The speech is fairly good evidence that despite many concerns of the past several months the Soviets intend to at least go through the summit meeting in Moscow before considering any major changes. Brezhnev was, in effect, calming the waters, and denying suggestions of a crisis on Soviet policy, while saying that if the German treaty failed or Chinese problems got worse, it was not the fault of his policies. At the same time, this speech is some confirmation that pressures may be growing on Brezhnev to vindicate himself, and his first reaction is to offer some concessions, rather than turn to a much tougher line.” (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Vol. XX, March 1972)

In a March 2 memorandum entitled “Brezhnev and Soviet Foreign Policy” from National Security Council staff members Helmut Sonnenfeldt and William Hyland to Kissinger, which both Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Alexander Haig and Kissinger agreed was an “excellent analysis,” the two National Security Council staff members concluded:

“Summing up, one can see evidence that Brezhnev policies are in some jeopardy. He is vulnerable to a major setback in Germany (and so are we) and he has already suffered a reversal in China. He is subject to the more general critique that as Khrushchev, he has mortgaged too much of the U.S.S.R.’s freedom of action to the good will or policies of opponents.

“More speculatively, Brezhnev might be in some trouble because of developments in the U.S. and relations with Washington. Critics could point to the Indo-Pak crisis, Chinese-American ‘collusion,’ and perhaps Soviet yielding to American pressure. More recently, they could point to the decision on ULMS as pressure to make an unfavorable SALT agreement, and they could use the Foreign Policy Report as evidence that Brezhnev misjudged the alignment of forces in the U.S. Such an attack, of course, would be more serious if Brezhnev had in fact argued earlier that he could do business with the U.S. and the Soviet’s power position was such that the U.S.S.R. could do so from a position of strength. (He came close to such an argument last June in a speech.)

“This is not to say that he is in any real danger of losing his position or under the kind of serious attack that would force him into positions he firmly opposed. Indeed, despite the criticisms that may have been leveled at him, the main lines of his policy still seem intact. It will be after the next phase, centering around the summit, that his course could become open to major change.

“In short, as he moves toward the summit meeting with the President, Brezhnev has lost some of his flexibility but also some of his leverage over us. At bottom, he needs a successful summit, at least as much as we do, and perhaps a shade more.” (Ibid.)

66. Editorial Note

On March 21, 1972, from 3:03 to 4:06 p.m., President Nixon met with the General Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament, chaired by John J. McCloy, to discuss SALT and the summit. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

According to the memorandum of conversation, the President told the Committee:

"In two months he would be on his way to Moscow. There may be a deal then or possibly before—one could not be sure. After the Peking trip there had been many questions about who won or lost. The agreements reached in Peking actually were largely non-substantive and both sides won; each wanted agreement. But with the Soviets an agreement will be very substantive and many things were going on with the Soviets, perhaps because of China. Because agreements will be substantive, there will be real questions about who won or lost. Noting that he had listened with great care to the Defense Department and given it perhaps more time at the NSC than the others, the President said the problem will be with the defense minded people in the Congress and in the country. The arms control people will support anything, but the defense minded people will ask; would we get taken? Are we inhibited while the Soviets can move ahead of us? Therefore, we will need support for the agreement that we may reach, support, if the members of the Committee agree, for the point that the agreement is not detrimental to the security of the United States. In addition, the President went on, our Allies will wonder whether we had now become inferior. He had just been talking to the Turkish Prime Minister. The Turks felt surrounded and saw us a long way off. If there were a debate in the United States in which many said that we were inferior, we would have serious international problems. The President continued that the issue was not war; it involves how two major powers conduct foreign policy. It is true that the Soviets were still aggressive and that the Chinese continue to support revolution, but as regards SALT we must seize the present moment which is perhaps the last moment. (The President interjected that he was perhaps more confident about including SLBMs than some others.)

"In 1962, at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, it had been 'no contest,' because we had a ten to one superiority. But it is not that way now. The possibility of our going into a massive arms build-up is no longer what it was. It might be possible to frighten the US people into doing something but time is running out. The question is: can we seize this moment with both sides recognizing that neither will allow the other to get ahead? With the Soviets this is a credible point; but with us it is getting less credible. In this room we know—and Soviet intelligence knows—that we have weaknesses.

“Why, the President went on to ask, would the Soviets make a deal then? The reasons were perhaps temporary. The arms race is burdensome, the Soviet economy has been flat, their neighbor to the East could be a big problem in 20 years, so that may be a good opportunity to deal with the US. The Soviets may also hope to break up NATO, for example, by coupling SALT with a European Security Conference. And the Soviets may hope that an agreement might help them keep Eastern Europe under control. Soviet reasons were obviously different from ours. Publicly, we say with them: let us curb the arms race and prevent nuclear war. But this is not the real Soviet reason so—we had better make as hard-headed a deal as we can. There may be no other opportunity.

“The President continued that the present SALT negotiations dealt only with the tip of the iceberg. There would be an ABM treaty and an understanding of offensive weapons, but after that would come reductions. And this was the second area where the President would like to look for help from the Committee.

“In conclusion the President reiterated that we needed the Committee’s help with the hawks. And secondly, we need suggestions where we go after Moscow over the next four or five years if the United States and the Soviet Union are to make further progress in the strategic arms area.” (Memorandum for the President’s Files from Alexander Haig, April 7; *ibid.*, White House Special Files, President’s Office Files, Box 88, Memoranda for the President, Beginning March 19 [1972])

Later the afternoon of March 21 from 5:10 to 5:47 p.m. Nixon met with Ambassador Gerard Smith and Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Haig to discuss the strategic arms control process. An excerpt from this meeting reads:

“The President then asked whether or not the Soviets underestimated our domestic environment, and Ambassador Smith replied that he thought they did.

“The President next asked whether or not Ambassador Smith believed the Soviets really wished to reach an agreement. Ambassador Smith answered that he was convinced they did and that they hoped to complete the new round by May 1st. This, he stated, was Semenov’s view. The time was short, therefore, and decisions would have to be made very quickly as the new round got underway.

“The President commented that it was evident that in the Ambassador’s view the Soviets believed they must have a deal. Ambassador Smith replied that the Soviets believed the U.S. side needed to deal more than it did, but at the same time they also felt the need for an agreement. The President commented that under this concept we should keep the hardsite option on the table. It tended to worry the Soviets. Ambassador Smith agreed and said that he would do so.

“The President asked what former Ambassador Thompson thought about this issue. Ambassador Smith stated that he felt Ambassador Thompson believed that a SALT agreement, with or without SLBM restraints, would be very worthwhile. It was obvious that the left would say the agreement did not go far enough if submarines were not included. The President remarked that the left was not the problem in a political sense.

“Ambassador Smith then stated that he now believed it might be wise not to have the final agreement until the Summit, at which time the President would be ready to sign. If the agreement surfaced before the Summit, then it would only be subjected to knifepicking by opponents. Thus, the best strategy might be to hold off on any final agreement until the President personally signed it in Moscow. The President commented that it was obvious there would be some remaining problems to be solved at the Summit and that at that level it would be easier for the President and the Soviet Leadership to iron these problems out. For this reason, it might be necessary to play a few games at Helsinki.

“Ambassador Smith stated that among the issues that could serve to hold up final agreement would be the duration of the agreement and the withdrawal issue. The President commented that it would not have to be settled at the moment but that Ambassador Smith should manage this on his own without bringing the entire Delegation in. Secondly, there would be the problem of who would participate in the signing. Thought should be given to whether or not the whole U.S. Delegation should be in Moscow. Ambassador Smith said that this might be a problem and the Delegation certainly would understand if they were not invited. On the other hand, Paul Nitze could be a problem.

“The President then informed the Ambassador that the SALT Decision Memorandum would soon be released, and it would be necessary for Ambassador Smith to stay in closest touch in the days and weeks ahead. Certainly, the submarine issue was one of the toughest problems. Ambassador Smith stated that he noted some shift in Admiral Moorer’s position on this.” (Memorandum for the President’s Files from Alexander Haig, March 21; *ibid.*)

In National Security Decision Memoranda (NSDM) 158, March 23, President Nixon decided that the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) delegation initially would concentrate upon reaching an agreement on offensive weapon systems with a final decision on the nature of antiballistic missile (ABM) systems “heavily influenced by the scope of the Interim Agreement.” Also, the delegation would make the effort to include limitations on submarine-launched weapons in the Interim Agreement. Nixon instructed the SALT delegation to prepare to dis-

cuss alternate numbers of ABM systems if the Soviets were willing to include these limitations. Additionally, the NSDM laid out technical details relating to the freezing of further construction of intercontinental ballistic missile launchers and limitations on overall numbers. The NSDM also contained the following instructions to Smith:

“The Chairman of the Delegation should, at a time which he deems appropriate, make a statement along the lines that: If the U.S.S.R. were to undertake a concerted program which substantially increased the threat to the survivability of our strategic retaliatory forces, the U.S. would consider this to jeopardize our supreme interests. Consequently, this could be a basis for withdrawal from the ABM treaty.” (Ibid., NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-232 NSDM 158)

67. Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon¹

Washington, March 22, 1972.

SUBJECT

Status of Bilateral U.S.-Soviet Issues

Ambassador Dobrynin came in to see me today to review the status of various bilateral issues we have under negotiation or discussion with the Soviets in preparation for your visit. The state of play on each can be summarized as follows.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Secret. The notation “Action: Sonnenfeldt” appears on the memorandum. Rogers also sent a summary of his discussion with Dobrynin in telegram 49839 to Moscow, March 23. (Ibid.) An attached covering note indicates that Haig transmitted the telegram to Kissinger via backchannel message WH21106, March 23. In a March 16 memorandum to Nixon, Rogers wrote: “I intend to hold one of the regular meetings with Ambassador Dobrynin on Monday in preparation for your visit to Moscow.” (Ibid.) In a March 18 memorandum to Nixon, Kissinger wrote: “There is no indication of what the Secretary plans to take up. I believe Dobrynin understands what topics are to be pursued in what channel.” (Ibid.) An attached note from Special Assistant Bruce Kehrli to Kissinger, March 29, reads: “The attached was covered with the President verbally by HRH [Haldeman].” Hillenbrand sent a March 17 briefing memorandum to Rogers in preparation for his meeting with Dobrynin. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR) Hillenbrand had met with Dobrynin on March 14 and covered the same issues. His report appeared in an undated memorandum from Rogers to the President. (Ibid.) It was also transmitted in telegram 49710 to Moscow, March 23. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10)

Lend-Lease Talks. The Soviets have agreed to send a delegation to Washington to negotiate a settlement of their outstanding lend-lease debt. I proposed to Dobrynin that the talks begin April 7.²

Feed Grain Delegation. The Soviets have agreed to receive a delegation to discuss credit sales of feed grains. I told Dobrynin that you had asked Secretary Butz to participate in the talks on grain sales.

Maritime Talks. I informed Dobrynin that our negotiators are prepared to go to Moscow for a second round of talks on outstanding maritime issues, but we are still waiting for a clarification of the Soviet position regarding port entry for non-commercial vessels. (Agreement was impossible during the first round because the Soviet delegation was not empowered to negotiate on this basis.) Dobrynin said that a reply would be forthcoming, but it might take a week or more since it would require Politburo approval.³

Space Cooperation. Technical talks on a joint space-docking mission will resume in Houston March 27 and we have proposed that a NASA team go to Moscow April 3 to work out the broader aspects of an agreement. Dobrynin indicated that this is acceptable in principle, and that his government expects an agreement to be reached.

Trade Delegation. I asked Dobrynin to clarify a suggestion he made earlier that we send a delegation to Moscow for another round of trade talks. He said that the Soviets have in mind further talks to prepare the ground for possible political decisions at the summit. Topics they would like to pursue include MFN tariff treatment, credits, trade offices, joint development projects and a joint committee on science and technology. No commitment was made to Dobrynin to talk on any of these subjects and none will be until we receive a directive from you.⁴

² In a March 25 memorandum to Kissinger and Flanigan, Peterson strongly objected to the Department of State proposal of \$500 million at 2 percent interest over 30 years to settle the lend-lease debt owed by the Soviet Union and proposed several alternative terms. (Ibid., Box 718, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Vol. XX, March 1972)

³ In a March 21 memorandum to Hillenbrand, Spiers noted that the understanding on preventing incidents at sea previously reached in discussions in Moscow could not be finalized due to the lack of definitive provisions on aircraft overflight of ships and air-to-air incidents. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR) In a March 22 memorandum to Nixon, Rogers expressed his concern that the guidelines for the incidents at sea talks as specified in NSDM 150 would not provide “sufficient flexibility” to allow for an acceptable agreement and would likely result in an impasse during the second round of these talks. (Ibid., POL 33–6 US–USSR)

⁴ In a March 22 memorandum to Secretary of Labor James Hodgson and Flanigan, Peterson outlined the “complex inter-relationships” between domestic labor issues, Soviet trade, and “possible side effects on the Soviet Summit meeting.” (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10)

Other Agreements. Prospects appear good for an agreement on health cooperation. HEW plans to have further discussions with the Soviet Ministry of Health later this month. Mr. Train⁵ will give Dobrynin a preliminary draft tomorrow to be used as the basis of discussion for an agreement on cooperation in the field of environment. We will also be entering a second round of talks on preventing incidents at sea, probably in April.

Removing Irritants. I mentioned to Dobrynin three areas where irritants in our relations might be removed, thereby improving the atmosphere for your visit. I mentioned the possibility of reduction of travel restrictions, and the cessation of jamming the Voice of America. Finally, I told him that Soviet action to allow persons in the Soviet Union to join their families here would be a favorable step.

SALT. After our review of these bilateral issues, Dobrynin asked how we view the prospects for a SALT agreement. I told him that we thought progress had been made but I stressed the importance we attach to an offensive weapons freeze which would include SLBM's.⁶

William P. Rogers

⁵ Russell Train, Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality.

⁶ At a news conference in the Oval Office of the White House, March 24, Nixon remarked: "The Moscow trip, at the present time, will be very different from the P.R.C. trip in the sense that it will be primarily devoted to a number of substantive issues of very great importance. One of them may be SALT, if SALT is not completed before Moscow. It does not appear now likely that they can complete SALT before Moscow, because in my conversations with Ambassador Smith before he left, I find that while we are agreed in principle on the limitation of offensive and defensive weapons, that we are still very far apart on some fundamental issues—well, for example, whether or not SLBMs should be included, matters of that sort. Mr. Smith went back to the meetings, this time in Helsinki, with very full instructions from me, both written and oral, to do everything he could to attempt to narrow those differences. I believe that there is a good chance at this point, particularly in view of Mr. Brezhnev's quite constructive remarks in his speech the other day, that we may reach an agreement on SALT in Moscow on defensive and offensive limitations, and also agreements in a number of other areas. This is our goal, and I would say that at this time the prospects for the success of this summit trip are very good." (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, p. 498)

68. Memorandum From President Nixon to his Chief of Staff (Haldeman)¹

Washington, March 22, 1972.

I want you to have a frank talk with Haig with regard to the Polish invitation. Assuming for the moment that the invitation is a trap to get us involved in the German treaty ratification process, I think we should examine it to see if we can avoid the trap and still get the benefit. There is very little question in my mind that a visit to Poland, from the standpoint of its effect in the United States, would be an enormous plus. It would have more effect than all of our other visits put together from a strict political standpoint. This is something that neither Haig nor Henry understand and that they cannot be expected to consider. Take a hard look at it in any event and see what we can work out.

On the other hand, I do not want to discuss this matter with Henry. You discuss it with him and then give me a recommendation.²

On the same subject, I believe that a brief stop in Istanbul might be a good idea also as we return from Russia. This would mean going to Iran first without making that stop more than a day and then a stop at Istanbul which need not be overnight. Going to Istanbul would not require a state visit kind of reception and would avoid the problem with other NATO countries. Also, an argument can be made on the point that Turkey is the only NATO country with a border on the Soviet Union, and that we have just received a visit from the Turkish Prime Minister and are returning it in an informal way. The Prime Minister came back to the subject several times saying that it would give enormous psychological lift to the Turks if we would just put down for a few hours at Istanbul on our way back to the States.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda from the President, Memos–March 1972. No classification marking. This memorandum was transcribed from a dictation by Nixon. Haldeman and Nixon discussed this issue in a conversation on the morning of March 21. "Maybe the Soviets are playing a game," Nixon conjectured. "Add Poland on given that it's a good thing to do on the domestic level." But he did question Haig's assertion that there was a strong foreign policy reason for taking the side trip. (Ibid., White House Tapes, May 21, 1972, 10:19–10:34 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 690–7)

² In his diary entry for March 22, Haldeman wrote: "P spent the day at the EOB, preparing for his press conference. He had me over at 11:00, reviewing mostly trip plans and general foreign policy questions vis-à-vis our political needs. He wants to be sure that I go to work on Haig and Henry, through him, to make the point that some of the decisions have got to be made on the basis of the effect they'll have on the election. For example, P feels strongly we should go to Poland after the Russian trip, while Henry is equally strongly opposed to that, so we've got to convince Henry that his position isn't right, which may be hard to do. The P's view is that the political benefit here, of a stop there, greatly overrides the risk." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

69. Backchannel Message From the Presidents' Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, March 23, 1972, 2214Z.

Following is a note received from our friend today. I have told Dwight to avoid confrontation on the Kremlin and the length of stay until you return. He is preparing a recommended position for your use on these two items which he understands you will handle.

Begin text of note:

"The Soviet leadership suggest to fix the duration of President Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union as eight days. If this corresponds with the intentions of the President himself.

In this case the arrival of the President in Moscow could be planned for the second part of the day on May 22, and departure from the USSR—by the end of the day on May 30.

As a third city, besides Moscow and Leningrad, we suggest Baku, from where the President could fly directly to Teheran.

The residence for the President and Mrs. Nixon will be in the Kremlin.

A separate appropriate program will be prepared for Mrs. Nixon in accordance with her wishes."

Warm regards.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. Sent from the White House to the Embassy in Mexico City. Kissinger remained on vacation in Acapulco through March 27. According to a notation on the original, Dobrynin delivered it to Haig on March 23. (Ibid.)

70. Notes of Meeting¹

Washington, March 27, 1972, 11–11:45 a.m.

Meeting with Dobrynin, Monday, March 27, 1972, 11:00–11:45 a.m.

SUBJECT

Patolichev Mission

1. *Timing*

Based upon my telephone conversation with him last week, he said he had done some preliminary checking and the situation looked quite favorable with regard to the possibility of Patolichev coming over here. We had agreed that I would not give him anything in writing and would try to be as general as possible with regard to the specific content of the agenda.

Also, it seemed to me desirable to give us enough time to prepare ourselves for this visit and we spent the first part of the meeting discussing possible dates. I gave him the general period between April 27 and May 10 as the best period from the standpoint of my own calendar. We're thinking in terms of a visit that lasts no more than a week and, hopefully, several days.

2. *Agenda*

Having settled this, I then asked him when he would like to talk about it. He immediately said that as per our last meeting he would like to have a clear understanding of the specific items that would be discussed at this session and what the purpose of the session would be. He says his government feels that after the Patolichev–Stans visit and the visit here earlier this year, there has been a lot of ventilation of what the issues are. He thinks the time has come to work out at least a set of possible scenarios on when progress might be made on what issues and under what circumstances. I told him this did not mean that he would get specific decisions at this meeting or even the Summit meeting on

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Vol. XX, March 1972. Secret. In an attached March 28 covering note transmitting the meeting notes to Kissinger and Flanigan, Peterson wrote: "The attached report on my meeting with Dobrynin on March 27 should speak for itself. It covers the (1) timing of such a trip; (2) agenda; (3) joint ventures; and (4) the U.S.–Soviet Commercial Commission. During the course of the visit, he mentioned the lend-lease negotiations were to begin on April 6 or 7. I had not realized they would begin so soon and will try to get our proposals done prior to that time." Peterson outlined the purpose of the Patolichev visit in a March 22 memorandum to Kissinger and Flanigan. (Ibid., Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10)

some of the questions he would like answers to. Rather, we might be able at least to lay out what the obstacles are and what the various possibilities might be for resolving them, including timing scenarios.

He then launched into illustrative kinds of items that he would like to have discussed and started with MFN, to which I said nothing. It is obviously something that will come up and I think we have to have at least thought through what we do say about this issue.

He then went to financing. I simply said that we would be prepared to discuss the issues which arise in conjunction with financing but that I very much want Patolichev to elaborate further on the question of “reciprocal credits” that he has brought up before. Dobrynin asked for an elaboration on this and I indicated that Patolichev indicated that he might be willing to explore allowing this credit equivalent to what they bought and Dobrynin said, well, that would depend, obviously, on what we were able and willing to buy from them. I indicated that I understood this, but I wanted to be sure that we understand what the reciprocal credit arrangements might involve as we should be prepared to discuss the problems and possibilities on Ex-Im financing.

We then discussed the whole business office Kama River Purchasing Commission question which he said had been brought up before. I told him the corollary point to that, of course, was what American companies could do in the Soviet. He said that in principle they were willing to let us have company offices over there, but that it was important that we specify which companies and that the presence of those companies have a legitimate commercial trading interest in the Soviet. I then said perhaps one of the things we could think through is what the *criteria* might be for the placing of offices in the Soviet. He said that would be his thought and that also could we, perhaps, think of a specific list of companies that might want offices over there—again emphasizing that there should be good and practical reasons—or I should say “commercial” reasons for being there.

I then mentioned the tax treaty possibility. He said he was not very aware of that. I said that it was something that Treasury would have an interest in and it has to do with a variety of subjects, but some might well include the question of payments of income, royalty income for instance for technology. He said he would look into that.

The next subject I mentioned was tourism since it had been mentioned before and it is of specific interest to this Department. He said one of their problems was certain “natural restrictions” such as the lack of facilities—hotels and convention facilities and things of that sort. We agreed it could be a subject for discussion.

I then mentioned arbitration and the agreements on how we would handle commercial disagreements and he said “yes”, he thought that was something that should be discussed.

I mentioned the copyrights and patents arena and he understood that.

He then mentioned “joint ventures”.

3. *Joint Ventures*

He mentioned joint ventures and I told him that I thought we should be prepared to at least discuss in this first meeting *how* we would go about approaching joint ventures. I said in my preliminary exploration of this issue it seemed to me that we were probably talking about two phases. There was the first phase of any joint venture of exploring, in depth, the *feasibility* of the project and whether it, indeed did make good economic and technical sense. The second phase was the actual carrying out of the project. I said that we might well talk about how we would approach the phase one aspects since there would be considerable cost involved and there would be important questions that would have to be reviewed as to how to go about sharing them. In this meeting, while he mentioned gas in his example, I did not get the sense that they were preoccupied as the one case they wanted to put all their emphasis on. He later mentioned copper, chrome, oil, and other metals. I am having, over here, work done now on how we might approach some of these other projects where I suspect the US dollar exposure might be far less.

What he did emphasize, however, was the need for their coming up with an *example* or a prototype as to how the United States and Russia could handle joint ventures. In other words, they wanted a case study from which we could go from the general to the specific.²

His continuing discussion of these joint ventures makes clear two things. First, if we are at all concerned about the prognosis on the gas deals (and I am waiting for Peter Flanigan’s office to give me any further indications that he has as a kind of joint effort with a Commerce group on the prognosis of the LP gas possibilities). Second, we should get other people from these other fields in to see what the prospects and problems might be there so that we haven’t put all of our emphasis just on the LP gas possibility.

² In a March 22 memorandum to Flanigan, Peterson wrote: “In putting together and analyzing material on subjects we need to discuss with Patolichev, I have found that we need to know much more about what institutional arrangements and mechanisms other countries have to handle economic and commercial relations with the Soviets. Specifically, what I have in mind is to send a small group to Europe next week to investigate systematically how the major Western Europe countries conduct their trade relations with the Soviets. If we are to proceed after the Summit with a kind of joint U.S./Soviet commercial mission, we need the best information that we can get on what others are now doing.” (Ibid.)

I'll see if we can't get some forward motion with people who might have an interest in copper, chrome, oil, etc. so we can better understand what Phase I would amount to on these other ventures as well as the kinds of dollar exposure we might be talking about. Also, we need to think through what an approach might be on these joint ventures that can form the basis of my discussion with Patolichev. For example, we have talked about the possibility of Ex-Im insuring Phase I if that became necessary and desirable to get US companies involved in the process. It may well be that our starting position should be some kind of sharing of these costs with the Soviets until we decide whether to go ahead with Phase II. Whatever we decide, I think the joint ventures are something that Kosygin is very much interested in and we should be prepared to at least discuss how we want to approach them.

4. *US-Soviet Commercial Commission*

Dobrynin then brought up this Commercial Commission and we agreed, as we did before, that this meeting should be devoted partly to clarifying what we mean by those commissions. He indicated to me that France and the Soviet Union had something very analogous to this. I think we should explore that one very carefully so we understand what it is all about. As we now see it, part of the Commercial Commission would be to lay out the terms of the trade agreements as well as to make specific studies of whatever important matters come up in the commercial area.

All this seemed quite agreeable and I did not give him any papers at all. After some chit chat about how my wife and I should come over and visit the granddaughter who is now staying with them, we agreed that the next step was up to him on the question of dates.³

Peter G. Peterson⁴

³ On March 30 Kissinger met with both Peterson and Flanigan to discuss the next steps in discussions over trade. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) No record of the meeting has been found, but Sonnenfeldt briefed Kissinger for this meeting in a March 29 memorandum, which advised Kissinger to “tell Peterson that next time he sees Dobrynin it should be to get replies to Peterson’s last presentation. No further U.S. initiative except to agree to Patolichev date, until we have an agreed agenda in our government.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Vol. XX, March 1972)

⁴ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

71. **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**¹

Washington, March 27, 1972, 8:25 p.m.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Moscow summit.]

K: We have to get the summit in shape.²

P: Well, we have kept everything in limbo for the last week.

K: I notice now that Dobrynin has surfaced those things in official channels.

P: He has?

K: He has been playing the game and kept it divided among various departments.

P: Right.

K: I will see him this Thursday.³ I just spoke to Haig briefly. On the Middle East, get it done before the election and brutalize them after the election.

P: That secret deal still concerns me.

K: That's the problem—not to do it at the summit but conclude it a little later. There will be less time for it to blow.

P: That might be but I don't want to raise the opportunity—

K: We have made very concrete propositions to them. It is now up to them. We have got to get the Soviets out of the Middle East.

P: We can talk about it. We need to get a plan to know what we are going to do. That is one area we want to take charge of the policy and run it our own way. State is looking at it in terms of just the Middle East. We are looking at it in terms of the Soviets.

K: That's it.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Moscow summit.]

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² In his diary entry for March 29, Haldeman recorded: "K was in talking about the Russian trip and the problems of whether we stay at the Kremlin or not, how many days we stay in Russia, and all that sort of thing. The P also raised the point of whether he ought to speak to the Russian people on television as Eisenhower did, or was going to do and Nixon actually did." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

³ March 30; see Document 76.

72. Note From Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev to President Nixon¹

Moscow, March 27, 1972.

Dear Mr. President:

I would like to express some further considerations in continuation of our correspondence, having in mind your letter of last February 15² and the conversation with our Ambassador in Washington on March 17.³

I and my colleagues likewise closely follow the course of preparation for the May meeting in Moscow as well as all the events attendant to that preparation.

Now, when the range of questions to be discussed at the meeting has, in the main, taken shape and we have agreed on the manner of their preparation, the principal thing is to elicit, through preliminary exchange of views on the substance of the questions, actual possibilities for reaching agreement on them. Such exchange of views on a number of questions is already under way.

Both in public statements and confidentially we repeatedly outlined our views and put forward certain specific proposals on problems concerning Europe. We understand the readiness expressed by you to a confidential exchange of opinion on this score, in such a way that in the course of the preparation for the meeting appropriate specific considerations will be expressed by the American side as well.

You, Mr. President, noted on a number of occasions the great significance of the quadripartite agreement on West Berlin. Such is our appraisal of that agreement, too. Its entry into force will indeed make a major step on the way to strengthening the *détente* and ensuring security in Europe. It is clear at the same time that the agreement on West Berlin is inseparable from other European problems and, above all, from the entry into force of the treaties of the Soviet Union and Poland with the FRG. We therefore believe it very important for all the participants of the quadripartite agreement on West Berlin, including the United States, to actively facilitate, with all the means at

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. No classification marking. A notation on the note reads: "Handed to K by D at 12:45 p.m., 3/28/72." According to his schedule, Kissinger met with Dobrynin in the Map Room at the White House from 12:55 to 1:20 p.m. (Library of Congress, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) No record of the meeting has been found.

² See Document 51.

³ See Document 62.

their disposal, completion of the ratification of the above treaties with West Germany.

I want to use this occasion to emphasize anew the positive significance of the fact that both the Soviet Union and the United States have worked hard enough to make their contribution to the attainment of the above agreement on West Berlin.

I and my colleagues attach special significance as you do, Mr. President, to the forthcoming discussion in Moscow on the questions of strategic arms limitation. We would like to hope that the discussion on those questions will be constructive and yield concrete positive results. Of course, this will require maximum joint efforts to be applied in the remaining period so as to find a mutually acceptable solution based on the principle of equal security for both sides.

I think it is quite realistic. Let us take a question on which a proximity of positions has already emerged—that of cessation, beginning from July 1, 1972, of new construction of silo launchers for land-based ICBMs. This would mean that for a specified period the sides would not increase the number of such launchers which each of them would have as of the date of the beginning of the “freeze”. The time-period to be established could be lengthier, namely—three years, while in the meantime, as agreed, further active negotiations would be pursued on strategic arms limitation. An agreement on such a “freeze” should not, of course, involve the possibility for modernization and replacement of appropriate weapons on which there already exists agreement between the two sides.

Conclusion of such an agreement on “freeze”, along with a treaty on limitation of anti-ballistic missile systems—and here our positions have drawn nearer as well—would be such an important step in the relations between our countries, that its significance can hardly be overestimated. That fact would undoubtedly make a profound favorable impact both in our countries and in the whole world.

As for the considerations transmitted by you with regard to fixing, on a temporary basis, appropriate levels concerning submarines with ballistic missiles, we are carefully studying those considerations with due account of all related factors, whose complexity, it seems, you also recognize, and we shall inform you of our opinion.

We hope to be able soon to let you know our more detailed considerations on the Middle East settlement elaborating on the basic scheme that was talked over with you last fall. We consider this problem very important both internationally and from the point of view of its impact on the relations directly between our countries. In the absence of its radical, and also without any delay, solution the danger in that area will not only persist but will increase. And with that danger there, our relations will, for understandable reasons, be subject to risk

with insuing unpredictable consequences. It is clear that such a prospect would not be in the interests of either the United States, or the Soviet Union and would constantly overshadow the relations between them.

On the other hand, a speedy settlement of the Middle East conflict with active support by our two countries, would bring about a long-awaited peace to the peoples of that region, would remove a source of dangerous tension. Such a turn of affairs would have very favorable consequences for the Soviet-American relations as well.

In conclusion I would like to emphasize again the importance of a situation in which our talks are prepared and will be held in Moscow. On that, of course, in many respects will depend the results of the negotiations themselves. Making conditions most suitable for our meeting should in an equal degree be a concern of both sides. Therefore, I would like to tell you frankly, Mr. President, that continued bombings of the DRV—which, as I wrote to you in my previous letter, push the developments in Vietnam in a direction opposite to peaceful settlement—can only complicate the situation. We hope that you will weigh all aspects of this question.

Sincerely,

L. Brezhnev⁴

⁴ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

U.S.-Soviet Relations and the Spring Offensive in Vietnam, March 30–April 18, 1972

73. Editorial Note

On March 30, 1972, North Vietnam began its long-awaited spring offensive as regular army units steadily advanced into South Vietnam along three fronts: across the Demilitarized Zone toward Dong Ha and Quang Tri, from bases in Laos toward Dak To and Pleiku in the Central Highlands, and from bases in Cambodia toward Loc Ninh and An Loc northwest of Saigon. President Nixon and Assistant to the President Kissinger were meeting in the Oval Office from 9:58 to 10:45 a.m. when Kissinger received a note on the invasion. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary; Nixon, *RN: Memoirs*, page 586; and Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) Nixon and Kissinger then discussed the news.

Kissinger: "It looks like they are attacking now in Vietnam."

Nixon: "The battle has begun."

Kissinger: "Yeah. Right at the DMZ. And [unclear] again. I made them check whether the, of course the weather is too bad for us to bomb. We must have the world's worst air force."

Nixon: "What's the situation? They, is this the, this is an attack on a broad front?"

Kissinger: "It looks that way. They have attacked eight fire-support bases, which is usually the way these things start. And they are attacking within range of the SAMs and all—"

Nixon: "How are they doing?"

Kissinger: "It appears they're doing fairly well, but, you know, the first six hours of an attack, you know, who can tell?"

Nixon: "How's the ARVN doing? Doing fairly well?"

Kissinger: "Yeah. That's what they say. They say it's really acting well but—"

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "—but you can't believe that. I think if this is a real attack, we should hit the SAMs in North Vietnam—"

Nixon: "Sure."

Kissinger: "—that are protecting—And we told them we were going to do it."

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: “And—”

Nixon: “Well, I don’t see why we don’t do it right now.” [unclear]

Kissinger: “Well, let’s wait until the end of the day to see whether it’s a real attack or just a blip.”

After considering various diplomatic and military means to stop the invasion, the two men linked the war in Vietnam to relations with the Soviet Union. Kissinger mentioned that “Brezhnev wrote you a letter this week [Document 72] which is very, very conciliatory.” Nixon then raised Kissinger’s meeting that afternoon with Dobrynin, including plans to consult the Soviets on the President’s proposed trip to Warsaw.

Nixon: “First of all, do your best to cut the deal on Poland.”

Kissinger: “I think I can handle that.”

Nixon: “But the second thing—And then say, and you can point out that, he can have, he need to be not concerned about what I say on Poland. He can be very sure. There’s no problem on that. That we’ll be totally discrete. But that I think we’re going to be in a terrible position if we turn it down. Second point is, I think you should tell Dobrynin that, we’re rather surprised by this attack. I’d tell him [unclear], and you can say, ‘Look, you don’t know what—the President has said he wants to make the best possible arrangement with Brezhnev. We’re all on—we’re on the same track. But an attack on North Vietnam may make it impossible. It may spoil it.’”

Kissinger: “Well—”

Nixon: “I’d play it very hard.”

Kissinger: “In fact, at the end of his letter, he had a rather mild expression of hope that we wouldn’t bomb North Vietnam. And I can just take off from that and say—”

Nixon: “Sure.”

Kissinger: “—we have showed great restraint.”

Nixon: “Great restraint since this. Now, instead we’re going to have to do it. And it’s only because they’re attacking. And you’ve just got to keep, have them knock off this attack or we’re going to bomb them. But I’d tell him, ‘Now look, Mr. Ambassador, I cannot vouch for what he won’t do. I mean don’t think that it’s going to be limited to what we have done before.’ Throw that in again. ‘If these attacks continue, I believe I owe it to you to say that don’t assume that it will not be—that it will be limited to the kind of a bombing we’ve done before.’” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, March 30, 1972, 9:38–11:10 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 697–2) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

74. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, March 30, 1972.

SUBJECT

The Soviets and the Middle East Dilemma

On several recent occasions, Soviet diplomats, including Gromyko, have made it clear that the Middle East will be a "major item" on the Summit agenda. And they may be holding out to Sadat and possibly other Arabs the hope of significant movement toward a peace settlement resulting from the Summit. As long ago as November, Dobrynin speculated to Sisco that an agreement on a set of "principles" ought to come out of the summit,² and in the last weeks the Soviets have been actively probing what the US might have in mind.

There are some worrisome aspects in this situation. Some people, like the Israelis, believe that the Soviets are preparing to set us up for a diplomatic kill in Moscow by accepting the Rogers' Plan as a basis for an Arab-Israeli settlement. According to this theory, the Soviets, knowing that the Egyptians would settle on this basis and that the Israelis strongly oppose because of the provision for full withdrawal, would attempt to draw the President out by endorsing our earlier position. This would put us on the spot again because we could not produce the Israelis. If it worked, the Soviets would be seen as favoring an American plan but they could also pose as the champions of peace in the Middle East and demonstrate to their Arab clients that they are doing something useful in the diplomatic realm.

They may, of course, simply be interested in eliciting some sense of what could be the basis for negotiation now rather than in seriously embarrassing us. This would be more likely to be the case if they genuinely want (a) progress toward a settlement and (b) to avoid a situation where they would have to commit forces.

Nevertheless, the question arises, at least as a contingency in the Soviet view, of what their alternatives would be should it become clear that diplomacy had run its course. Could the Soviets contemplate military action; indeed, could they stop it even if they insisted? The Egyp-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2]. Secret; Outside System. Sent for information.

² Sisco and Dobrynin discussed the Soviet proposal for a set of "principles" on the Middle East during a meeting on November 1; see footnote 2, Document 10.

tians seem generally to be waiting for the outcome of the summit before deciding on next steps, and the reaction could be sharp if they are disillusioned by its results. The Israelis, of course, hope that the Egyptians and Soviets would then conclude that they have no recourse but to negotiate with Israel. The Soviet-Arab alternative is to try to increase the threat of military action another notch.

Judging by the performance in the Indo-Pak confrontation, there comes a time when the Soviets realize that if military action cannot be avoided, they must have achieved some degree of influence over timing and tactics, and the outcome. In contrast to their political role at the UN in the Indian crisis, in the Middle East, their military presence almost ensures some direct involvement of their own personnel, at least in Egypt. If it is true that the present balance would guarantee a defeat for the Egyptians, then one line of Soviet action would be to use their own forces to redress the balance and guarantee at least a stand-off, or possibly some limited Egyptian gains. This, of course, would run a very high risk that we would enter into picture to “right the balance” in favor of the Israelis. Against this background, it is worth noting the rather extensive Soviet diplomatic activity in the past two months.

1. *Egypt*. The Soviets have long held the view (as we have) that Egypt’s basic military problem is not the quality and quantity of its equipment but the morale, technical capabilities and proficiency of its military personnel. Yet despite the fact that more advanced weaponry at this point only brings marginal improvement, the Soviets, in response to Egyptian pleas, keep introducing it. Thus when Sadat went to Moscow in February³ and made a strong pitch for more advanced equipment, they promised TU–22 supersonic bombers, more advanced versions of the MIG–21 and T–62 tanks. This followed the provision of a squadron of missile carrying T–16 bombers and several high-altitude FOXBAT reconnaissance aircraft with Soviet pilots and a training program as a result of Sadat’s visit to Moscow last October.⁴ The point is that in Egyptian hands this equipment will not significantly improve their offensive capability, although it will give them at least a temporary psychological boost and will maintain Soviet influence in Cairo.

Marshal Grechko visited Cairo soon after Sadat’s mission to Moscow,⁵ and brought with him a very high level military delegation, including the commander of the Soviet Air Force and the first deputy

³ See Document 43.

⁴ See Document 5.

⁵ Grechko visited Egypt from February 18 to 21, 1972. For a summary both of the visit and of the joint communiqué, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIV, No. 8, March 22, 1972, p. 22.

commanders of the Soviet Navy and Air Defense and a first deputy Chief-of-Staff. The result was a cryptic announcement of an “exchange of views” on strengthening Egypt’s “defense capacity” but the Soviets must be reviewing their own military position.

2. *Iraq*. While Grechko was in Egypt, the Iraqi leader, Saddam Husayn, led a delegation to Moscow, apparently at Iraqi initiative.⁶ He made a speech about the need to develop relations to the level of a “firm strategic alliance.”

The final communiqué (February 17) referred to a “study of measures” that could be taken “in the near future” to consolidate relations in “treaties.” On March 12, Moscow radio predicted a new treaty. This is not a purely Arab-Israeli development, since Soviet interests in Iraq also relate to their ambitions in the Persian Gulf.

3. *Syria*. Almost immediately after the Iraqis departed from Moscow, a Soviet delegation, led by Politburo member Kiril Mazurov, arrived in Damascus.⁷ The first result was a “cooperation agreement” between the Baath party and the CPSU. A party-to-party agreement is something of an achievement in terms of Soviet efforts to exert influence in the Arab world through ruling parties, and to steer them toward national fronts that include the communists. The visit, however, had military aspects. The communiqué indicated that “possible” steps for promoting Syria “defense capability” had been discussed. And Mazurov in a speech referred to a “document” having been signed on this subject. There is also speculation that the question of a Soviet-Syrian treaty was discussed. It is also noteworthy, though not necessarily directly related, that the Syrians shortly after the visit publicly accepted Security Council Resolution 242—as interpreted by the Arabs—as a basis for a peace settlement.

4. *Libya, Algeria, Cyprus*. Despite the rather bitter Libyan denunciation of Moscow during the Indo-Pak war, Jallud⁸ came to Moscow in early March to discuss economic, political, and military relations—and speculation is that he bartered Libyan petroleum for Soviet military aid (which might be eventually destined for Egypt). Soviet relations with Algeria also took a small turn for the better as a result of Foreign Trade Minister Patolichev’s negotiation in Algiers for a new trade agreement.

⁶ Hussein visited the Soviet Union February 11–17. For a summary of the visit and a condensed text of the joint communiqué, see *ibid.*, vol. XXIV, No. 7, March 15, 1972, pp. 7–8, 32.

⁷ Mazurov visited Syria from February 21 to 26, 1972. For a condensed text of the joint communiqué, see *ibid.*, vol. XXIV, No. 8, pp. 20–21.

⁸ Major Abdul Salam Jalloud, member of the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council and Minister of the Economy and Industry.

Of course, the Soviets have been active in pressing their special claims in the Eastern Mediterranean, through warning against interference in Cyprus, protests against US homeporting in Greece, and in his March 20 speech Brezhnev characterized Soviet-Arab relations as broadening in “defense cooperation.”⁹

The conventional wisdom is that the Soviets are hedging against a deterioration of their relations with Egypt and, to this end, are consolidating their position in the Arab world generally. Moreover, it is still the standard estimate, based to some degree on Soviet reassurances, that the USSR is a force for moderation and restraint or at least is not willing to take actions which might risk a confrontation with us.

This is reasonable, but looks mainly to the past record and present situation. It is not inconceivable that the Soviets are toying with the notion of a deeper military involvement or at least trying to create the impression of a greater military threat to Israel. Certainly, signing treaties with the erratic regimes in Damascus and Baghdad would be a step toward a greater identification of Soviet power and prestige with governments they cannot control.

One can only wonder how the Soviets would honor whatever treaty obligations they undertake toward Syria. One possibility would be to tentative station Soviet forces there.

⁹ See Document 65.

75. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, March 30, 1972.

SUBJECT

Your Next Meeting with Dobrynin

Polish Trip. I don’t know where exactly this stands and whether you plan to take it up with Dobrynin. If you do, you can assume that

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Sonnenfeldt Papers [2 of 2]. Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. Sent for information.

his response will be positive, or that he will refer the question home and then come back with a positive response. Although Gierek undoubtedly has particular objectives of his own in issuing the invitation, the idea was bound to have Soviet approval. It is almost certainly intended to help Brandt in the ratification debate and, in the longer term, to deflate Romania's special position. Both the Poles and Soviets presumably are prepared to run the risk of emotional demonstrations in the streets of Warsaw. (For us the question is whether the undoubted short-term spectacular that will occur is worth the fact that there will be few longer-term results and that we risk offending the West Europeans who have been told, via Luns,² that the President cannot stop for schedule reasons.)

*Brezhnev Letter.*³

1. It is generally positive in tone and you should tell Dobrynin that this is our reaction. You should also agree with him that this correspondence should now be held in abeyance until there is something specific to write about.

2. *SALT.*

a. As you know, Brezhnev offered a three-year freeze. I assume Semyonov will unveil this shortly. We, of course, will propose five years. You should note the Soviet move and point out that we will make our own proposal in Helsinki. Clearly, the final duration will have to depend on the contents of the agreement. You should not go beyond this with Dobrynin this time.

b. Brezhnev indicates some possible Soviet flexibility on SLBMs. In Helsinki, there have been similar signals, though nothing specific yet. You could see whether Dobrynin has something concrete to offer. Smith has hinted to Semyonov that we may be ready to accommodate the Soviet desire to defend ICBMs *if* the Soviets accommodate us on SLBMs. It is too early to unveil our two-for-two position but you should reinforce what Smith has said in general terms. If Dobrynin does have an SLBM proposal, you should still withhold our ABM position to give us time to examine the Soviet proposition.

3. *Europe.*

a. Brezhnev again picks up our readiness to talk confidentially about the conference⁴ (though, curiously, he does not actually mention the conference *per se*). He claims they have already made specific proposals and it is now our turn. You should avoid this for now and tell

² Joseph Luns, Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

³ Document 72.

⁴ Reference is to the proposed Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Dobrynin that we have never really had a persuasive private Soviet explanation of what they want to accomplish by a conference (i.e., stall).

b. Presumably; you will want to comment on Bahr.⁵ The point here is to keep the burden of promoting ratification on the Soviets. Hence you should *not* stress Bahr's optimism. You should also make the philosophical point that it is important that ratification is a *German* decision, rather than one *forced on* the Germans either by overt US pressure or by Soviet threats. We want German-Soviet reconciliation to be *lasting* and not vulnerable to a stab-in-the-back legend.

Other Issues.

If you review the status of other matters, the main one is trade. To avoid later misunderstandings, you should tell Dobrynin that Peterson has kept you informed of their exchanges,⁶ that we look forward to Patolichev's visit, but that the Soviets should not expect basic decisions on EXIM and MFN before the summit. (Avoid a specific commitment to do them at the summit.) The Patolichev visit should be seen as part of the preparations for the summit and should not preempt it. We should make progress on the simpler issues and agree on terms for a US-Soviet Commercial Commission to be set up at the summit.

Patolichev apart, we would hope to have an agreement by the time of the summit on (1) grain deal—Butz and (2) shipping, and substantial progress, if not agreement on lend-lease.

Trip Arrangements.

I am not up to date on what Chapin and Vorontsov have been doing. One idea that evidently has germinated is a Presidential radio-TV address in Moscow. (Eisenhower was to have done this: Khrushchev in 1959/60 and Kosygin in 1967 had televised press conferences.) If this has not yet been mentioned to the Soviets you should do so promptly since it undoubtedly requires Politbureau action.

If Dobrynin has a communiqué text or comments on ours, take them under advisement. It is probably too early to begin textual haggling with him.

Note: The Soviets have twice—including once at Kuznetsov–Beam level—suggested that summit preparations be carried on in Moscow

⁵ Bahr met Kissinger at the White House on March 28; see *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XL, Germany and Berlin, 1969–1972, Document 348.

⁶ In a March 28 memorandum to Kissinger, Peterson forwarded an account of his meeting with Dobrynin the previous day to discuss the proposed visit of Soviet Trade Minister Patolichev. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XX)

as well as Washington. You should tell Dobrynin to get this knocked off until further notice. It will only confuse.

Note: The Soviets jumped the gun by a day on the agreed announcement of the BW signature ceremony.⁷

⁷ At the end of the memorandum, Haig added the handwritten note: "You will wish to review Hal's think piece on ME [Document 74]."

76. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 30, 1972, 1:15–3 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Henry A. Kissinger

I had a luncheon meeting with Dobrynin during a hiatus in which he was still waiting for instructions on a number of issues.

I opened the conversation by discussing the possibility of a visit to Poland by the President. I told Dobrynin that I had mentioned the fact that the visit to Iran would be the last stop. However, we had now received a formal invitation to Poland; previously it had been only a feeler, but now it would be very difficult in an election year to turn it down. We would not go to Poland in order to embarrass the Soviet Union. When we went to Romania, we knew that it might create some difficulties but we were willing to pay the price, though it was not our intention even there deliberately to produce difficulties. In the case of Poland, our motives are quite different.

Dobrynin replied that he was very moved by the fact that I bothered to check with him. He recognized that we did not have to check our movements in eastern Europe with him, but it was an example of our goodwill. He was certain that Moscow would not object, but it

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Soviet Embassy. No drafting information appears on the memorandum. Kissinger forwarded it and summarized its contents in an April 5 memorandum to the President. A notation on the April 5 memorandum indicates the President saw it. (Ibid.)

would make a very good impression in Moscow if we could hold up our decision until we got a formal answer.

We then turned to a number of the technical arrangements for the summit. There was a long discussion about the floor plan in the Kremlin and the possibility of housing the necessary number of members of the party in the Kremlin. Dobrynin said he hoped we would accept the offer of the Kremlin under all circumstances, because it was really an unusual honor and one which was above all designed to symbolize to the Soviet people that we were serious about establishing mutual ties. He said that the overflow could easily be housed in the Rossiya Hotel right across Red Square. I told him that I was sure we would be able to work out something that was mutually satisfactory. I suggested that Dobrynin send us a floor plan of what was available; then we could make much more reasonable decisions. I also told Dobrynin that we would accept 8 days and that Baku was a suitable third city [as they had suggested in their note of March 23, attached at Tab B].²

We then turned to a quick review of a number of issues. Dobrynin said he thought that the SLBM question was now being actively considered in the Soviet Union, though they still thought that even a limit on ICBMs would be major progress. I said that I hoped that the Soviet leaders would notify us in Washington before making any proposals in Helsinki. Dobrynin also said that they would make some proposals to us on the Middle East. He wondered how we should handle mutual force reductions in Europe. He said that he had thought we would make some specific proposals. He still thought it might be helpful if we suggested something before the summit, so that perhaps there could be a preliminary discussion of it at the summit.

I mentioned to Dobrynin that during the President's visit I would probably not go along to Leningrad but rather would work on the communiqué in Moscow. He said that would be a good idea. He could then have me to his house, and also Gromyko would no doubt want me at the Foreign Office Guest House for some time so that we could work on the communiqué there.

We briefly discussed the visit of the Soviet Minister of Trade. Dobrynin said that there had not yet been an official decision but he had had a private letter which made it appear very likely.

Dobrynin said that there was obviously a big push going on to put the State Department back on the map. He said that he was amazed. He had only talked to the Secretary of State about SALT for one minute when the Secretary had said submarines should be included one way or the other in the SALT agreement. When Dobrynin had asked which

² Brackets in the source text. Tab B was not attached, but see Document 69.

way, the Secretary said, well, he didn't know any of the details.³ The State Department then announced that a major discussion had taken place. I pointed out that it wasn't the Secretary's job to know all the details.

We had a general discussion then of Dobrynin's own views and background. He told me that his mother had been extremely religious, but his father was a factory worker and quite agnostic. He hoped that perhaps on one of my visits, either now or if I came back in September, I would meet his parents. I said I hoped so.⁴

³ Dobrynin met Rogers at the Department of State on March 22 for a review of outstanding bilateral issues; see Document 67. During a conversation with Nixon at 10:17 a.m. on March 31, Kissinger mentioned Dobrynin's comment on Rogers. Kissinger: "Dobrynin said to me yesterday, he said he went to see Rogers and they talked for thirty seconds about SALT and State put out a long blip of how Rogers had put it into him on SALT." Nixon: "Put it in to him? You mean—?" Kissinger: "You know Rogers. Rogers had said to him, 'We want SLBMs in SALT one way or the other.' So Dobrynin asked him, 'Well, what do you mean?' Rogers said, 'Well, I don't know all the details. I'm just telling you.' And—." Nixon: "That's the trouble. Dobrynin does know the details." Kissinger: "And Dobrynin does know the details. And I had told him our position. But at any rate they're playing it in such a way that it's all going to surface—." Nixon: "Yeah." Kissinger: "—at the summit." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Ziegler, March 31, 1972, 10:17–11:14 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 699–1)

⁴ Kissinger called Dobrynin at 2:45 p.m. on March 31 to continue their discussion of issues related to the summit. After an exchange on housing arrangements in Moscow, Kissinger mentioned a report that the Soviet side was confused "about whether anything should be settled before or whether the submarines should be left for the President and Mr. Brezhnev." "Now I don't care," he continued. "We won't give any formal answers there but our idea is to get more of the big issues settled and just leave some technical issues for Moscow. If we can get some things settled in principle we can work out the final details in Moscow. But you let me know your position before the people in Helsinki get it." Dobrynin agreed to call Kissinger as soon as he had anything to report on the matter. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

77. **Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹**

Washington, March 30, 1972.

Kissinger: Well, I had a long talk with Dobrynin. And I put the Polish proposition to him. And I said, "You know, the basic departure that we are doing here is that we want to build policy on the recognition of we're two superpowers and that we don't want to interfere in each other's basic concerns." And I took—I showed him the cable we had from Warsaw² and the reply we gave. I said, "This is the spirit which we would like to deal with you. We don't need to ask you whether we want to go there but we want to show you the President is particularly concerned in what your reaction is." So he was practically in tears. He said, "This is the most generous thing I've heard. You will—I cannot tell you, Henry, how much this will impress Mr. Brezhnev."

Nixon: That we asked because he knew what we did on Rumania.

Kissinger: Yeah. I said, "I want you to know, when we went to Rumania, we knew it would annoy you. We're going to Warsaw because, and if it raises any problems for you, we'll look [unclear]." And he was practically in tears. He said, "Speaking informally and as a member of the Central Committee, I am certain that they will say yes. But if you can wait 'til Monday,"³ he said—so that he is formally—"so that you get a formal reply from us, it would mean a great deal to us. But I can tell you now that it will be yes. It will almost certainly be yes." But he was practically in tears.

Nixon: You see, they, we have to realize we've got some chips to play too here.

Kissinger: Oh yeah.

Nixon: And they, they know we can just, that, but it does show we're trying to cooperate.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Nixon: And you told him that I would not embarrass them and that I—

Kissinger: I said you will say nothing that would embarrass, and I said it [unclear] to our support in domestic considerations.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 698-2. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 3:17 to 3:27 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² See Document 76.

³ April 3.

Nixon: He understood that?

Kissinger: Oh yeah. And I said, “We are not doing this for the same reason as we did Rumania, which wasn’t done to annoy you, but in which we were willing to pay the price.”

Nixon: Um-hmm.

Kissinger: “In this case, we frankly want to stay on the same.”

Nixon: You told him that—did you reiterate that I felt that the importance of the summit was utmost on my mind?

Kissinger: Oh, well, that’s how I started.

Nixon: He liked that, didn’t he?

Kissinger: Oh God, yes. And then on Vietnam I said, “You know, you’ve been mentioning now two or three times that Vietnam may be discussed.” And I said, “First of all I want you to know what the President just said to me.” And I mentioned—

Nixon: That’s why I called you.⁴

Kissinger: That’s what—

Nixon: I didn’t know you were there. I called him here to talk about it. And then when I found you, I thought, what the hell, I’ll just call. That impresses the son-of-a-gun. He knows that we are in contact.

Kissinger: Secondly, he said, “Now let me make a proposal to you which just occurred to me.” He said, “It’s got no official standing; it’s just my own idea. But how would this be.” He said, “Why don’t you offer a withdrawal for a deadline?” I said, “Well, if we do that then they’ll say you have to stop military aid too and we can’t do that.” He said, “But maybe we can help there.” He said, “Supposing you made, this were the proposal: that you withdraw in return for a deadline: you give a deadline for withdrawal in return for prisoners, and you and we agree not to give any more military aid—we to North Vietnam and you to South Vietnam.” That wouldn’t be a bad deal.

Nixon: Ha. I’ll say.

Kissinger: So I said, “You know,” I said, “Frankly the President thinks he’s got this war won. You know I—.” I played it very tough. I said, “We feel that if we can last ‘til November, which I’m sure we can,

⁴ When he called Kissinger in the Map Room at 12:45 p.m., Nixon assumed that Kissinger was there for a meeting with Dobrynin. A tape of their brief telephone conversation on U.S.-Soviet relations is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, March 30, 1972, 12:45–12:47 p.m., White House Telephone, Conversation No. 22–53. According to his Record of Schedule, Kissinger and Haig, however, met Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin in the Map Room from 12:29 to 1:15 p.m.; Kissinger then left for his luncheon with Dobrynin at the Soviet Embassy. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule)

that we have four years to settle accounts. So your, we don't feel any pressure. You stage an offensive, I'll tell you right now we're not going to have any secret or other meetings." [unclear]

Nixon: Yeah.

[Omitted here is discussion of the President's schedule.]

Kissinger: [I told Dobrynin] "That if you want to find out how Moscow reacts to this proposition, the President has always said that he'd be open-minded and I'll explore it in the meantime with the President." I frankly think if we could get that sort of a deal, it would be—

Nixon: What, you mean that they would stop their aid, we'd stop ours, we could agree to that?

Kissinger: Military aid. We can continue to give economic aid.

Nixon: Why the hell shouldn't we give military aid if the North—

Kissinger: I think if the North doesn't get military equipment, why should the South then get military equipment?

78. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, March 30, 1972.

Nixon: I was thinking more about your conversation with Dobrynin. Trying to look at it pragmatically, Henry, what the hell is in it for them pulling us off over in Vietnam?

Kissinger: Well—

Nixon: I'm just being the devil's advocate. I don't know.

Kissinger: Well, I'm not sure they're going to do it. But—

Nixon: No, no. I'm just—that's what I mean. That's why we don't know whether it's worth exploring unless you think it's—

Kissinger: What's in it for them is as long as Vietnam goes on we have an additional incentive to play with the Chinese. Secondly, we—

Nixon: Also it avoids most favored nation and other little things.

Kissinger: We are setting up a lot of things now in the economic

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation Nos. 698–7 and 698–8. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 5:07 to 5:30 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

field. They're really moving massively with us, and I have every intention of let—And, well, at any rate it's so set up that we can control the delivery. And—

Nixon: I see.

Kissinger: —and I don't think we should deliver unless they do something.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: Then they're really panting after the Middle East. Now—

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: I—I haven't—

Nixon: [unclear] with respect to the Middle East—

Kissinger: I haven't bothered with all the details, but I've made some propositions to them on the Middle East, which they won't accept, but they have promised me a reaction, which is the first time they have moved off the position of just blanket endorsement of the Egyptian position. In turn—What I have to do with the Israelis, it's got to be very tricky. I told them they were such double-crossers that I was disengaging from the negotiations. That I did—

Nixon: And you told Mr. Dobrynin that?

Kissinger: I told Rabin that.²

Nixon: Ha.

Kissinger: And I told the Israelis this only in order to be able to stay in the negotiations, because if they think we're talking, we've got to be a little—I want to see first a little bit more of what's going on.

Nixon: I thought we might take a little walk . . .

[Omitted here is a brief exchange on the President's schedule. Nixon and Kissinger then walked through the South Grounds of the White House from 5:11 to 5:18 before returning to the Oval Office. Following their walk they discussed Vietnam and arrangements for the President's trip to the Soviet Union, Iran, and Poland.]

Kissinger: You'll have a tremendous one in Tehran. You'll have a big one in Warsaw. And my instinct tells me the Russians somewhere along the line are going to—

Nixon: Will let people out? If they do, they'll react. The Russian people are an emotional, strong people.

Kissinger: One thing he told me was that, you know, we're having a little problem of our space in the Kremlin. And he said, "For God's sakes, don't turn the Kremlin down. It's the biggest honor that Brezhnev could pay you."

² See footnote 4, Document 77.

Nixon: I won't turn it down. Space for what? For staff?

Kissinger: Yeah. And he said "Above all, the Russian people, that's for the Russian people that means that there's a solid basis for our relationship, and it's a tremendous signal to our people.

Nixon: Mmm.

Kissinger: To have the President in the Kremlin.

Nixon: Hm-mmm.

Kissinger: And I think that's right.

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: But I think, if I may make a suggestion, I don't—I think we should play it very cool about the summit. We should give the impression that not much is going to happen at the summit.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: [unclear] Right now no one really expects much out of the Moscow summit and that's great. We've got the thing split up over the bureaucracy in such a way—

Nixon: That's good. Well, I think we can play the line that there are a number [of] things we're going to discuss, but some things that we're pretty far apart on too.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: That we're pretty far apart.

Kissinger: Yeah. They're going beautifully now on SALT.

Nixon: Is it?

Kissinger: Yeah. That's moving.

Nixon: Don't get—but Smith's not going to settle now?

Kissinger: Oh, no.

Nixon: Well, the Russians aren't, right?

Kissinger: No. I told Dobrynin again today.

Nixon: You did?

Kissinger: On the Middle East, if we could get an interim settlement—

Nixon: That's already—

Kissinger:—and defer the final settlement until, say, September. They are sort of counting on my going out, over there in September, because it's—

Nixon: It's done. We've got to do China too.

Kissinger: I've got to go there at the end of June.

Nixon: Incidentally, it's good to go to China and good to go to Russia, because we're going to have to use everybody in the campaign that can be used and you can come back from China and garble around a bit. Then, you see, you can do a television thing, and then after you

go to Russia you can do the same thing. You see, I want to be—we've got to really throw the big guns in.

Kissinger: [unclear]

Nixon: We need foreign policy up front and center in that period too.

Kissinger: China, we now have scheduled for the end of June, just before the June Democratic Convention.

[Omitted here is brief discussion of plans to announce Rogers' trip to Europe.]

79. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 3, 1972.

[Omitted here is a brief exchange on political leadership in the Pentagon.]

Kissinger: It is clear that there is a massive attack.

Nixon: Oh, we know there is.

Kissinger: They've now got 50 tanks near Dong Ha.

Nixon: I noticed this morning, it says Abrams considers the situation is grim, which he, of course, shouldn't say.

Kissinger: Of course. I've asked him to—

Nixon: And, of course, the press is using these terms they did in Laos—rout, disarray, and so forth and so forth. I don't think it's that bad but nevertheless I don't know.

Kissinger: I think—

Nixon: The GIs, they say, are voicing opposition to the war. And Abrams, or MACV, is saying that ARVN was taken by surprise. Now, for Christ's sakes, we're in charge of the goddamned intelligence up there. We can't—The military can't cop out on this one, Henry.

Kissinger: That's right.

[Omitted here is discussion of the military situation in Vietnam and of political leadership in the Pentagon.]

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 700–2. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 8:54 to 9:09 a.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Kissinger: They're attacking close to the centers of, close to their own border, shows how far they've been pushed out. And I think we shouldn't panic now. What—In a way it's a godsend. We should give them a tremendous punishment.

Nixon: Yeah. Because—

Kissinger: I believe—

Nixon: It's a godsend because they could've done this. What they've done now they could do next October. Although the weather would still be bad, wouldn't be as good then as it now, would it?

Kissinger: Well, in October it will be about like now. It will be the end of the rain.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: They can—

Nixon: Same thing.

Kissinger: —do it in October.

Nixon: It's just as good, well to have it right now.

Kissinger: It's just as well. We can now precipitate. I'm going to get Dobrynin in and I'm going to tell him, I'm just going to threaten him with the non-ratification of the Berlin treaty.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: I'm going to say, "Now this is it."

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: And—

Nixon: And keep in mind the fact that you, that we still want to drive a hard bargain on the summit. Oh, they want that summit. [unclear]

Kissinger: Mr. President, they can no more afford to not have that summit.

Nixon: They can't trade Vietnam for this. The Chinese—You've already sent a message now?

Kissinger: No, that's going tonight. Or as soon as I get them on the phone, we'll get somebody up there to deliver it.²

Nixon: Oh, I see.

Kissinger: I think we could play this into an end of the war.

Nixon: I think you're right.

Kissinger: I think it's—

² Lord delivered the message to representatives of the People's Republic of China in New York that evening; for text, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVII, China, 1969–1972, Document 219.

Nixon: I think you're right but, I'll tell you, it will provided this bombing attack that we put on is one of the, is the best, is the finest goddamn thing that's ever been, the military, that's ever been done.

[Omitted here is discussion of political leadership in the Pentagon and plans for handling the press on the North Vietnamese offensive.]

Kissinger: If the ARVN collapses, we've done everything we can, Mr. President.

Nixon: We will. If the ARVN collapses? Don't say—That's just a, that's a question that we can't even think about. If the ARVN collapses? A lot of other things will collapse around here. If they think we're going to collapse, we'd had to do it a year ago. We can't do it this year, Henry.

Kissinger: Right. They're not going to collapse. I know—

Nixon: You see what I mean? We can't take it.

Kissinger: I agree. That's why we've got to blast—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: —the living bejeezus out of North Vietnam. We will gain nothing for restraint—

Nixon: That's right. That's right.

Kissinger: —and it would be—I think if we shock the bejeezus out of them, we can get Japan—

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: —Hell, we can get Russia and China to help us, because they cannot want to have this whole thing. But we've got to get them to move now.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: And Laird is already saying the 48-hour strike won't be done now until Friday.³ We've got to hit fast.

Nixon: Why?

Kissinger: Well, partly weather, partly because he says he needs the air assets in the combat zone. But if we build enough of a fire under the Chiefs, they'll get it done. Maybe we can wait 'til Wednesday but we ought to hit soon.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I'll go and get that briefing now.⁴

Nixon: Well, well—

³ April 7.

⁴ Kissinger attended a briefing by JCS representatives from 9:16 to 9:40 a.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule)

Kissinger: And I'll report to you.⁵

Nixon: Like I say, let's don't talk about well if the ARVN collapses. That's something we can't have. That's fine with regard to this. But we're playing a much bigger game. We're playing a Russian game, a Chinese game, and an election game.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: And we're not going to have the ARVN collapse.

Kissinger: I agree.

Nixon: It isn't that urgent. This kind of an attack is not urgent provided, provided we fight back and the ARVN holds.

Kissinger: Mr. President, by May 1st we'll be through it. I think it will lead to negotiations.

[Omitted here is discussion of the President's schedule and of the military situation in Vietnam.]

⁵ Kissinger reported to Nixon on his JCS briefing from 9:49 to 9:59 a.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Haldeman, April 3, 1972, 9:18–9:59 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 700–3)

80. Editorial Note

On April 3, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger met Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin in the Map Room at the White House from 5:37 to 6:15 p.m. to discuss the impact of the North Vietnamese offensive on U.S.-Soviet relations. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) In the Executive Office Building earlier that afternoon, Kissinger and President Nixon discussed their plans to enlist Soviet support in Vietnam during the meeting with the Soviet Ambassador:

Nixon: "When are you going to see Dobrynin?"

Kissinger: "5:30."

Nixon: "When are you, when are you—are you passing a message to the Chairman?"

Kissinger: "Right. Well, we've got the Russians really in a bad bind because they want the Berlin treaty ratified. And I'm going to tell Dobrynin, 'Russian tanks, Russian artillery, including [unclear], including in there, because of air strikes, because of Brezhnev's letter,' we can't do it [unclear], that's true, but I'll say—"

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: "And I'd say, 'this is it now.' [unclear] Every time we've laid down the law to them—"

Nixon: "They've done something."

Kissinger: "—they've done something."

Nixon: "Whether they can do anything now with these people, I don't know. Because these people probably see [unclear] the thing that they can stroke with Russia and China. Well, maybe they can." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, April 3, 1972, 12:55–1:28 p.m., Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 328–25) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Although no substantive record has been found of the 5:30 meeting, both Kissinger and Dobrynin later described the conversation in their memoirs. According to Dobrynin, Kissinger had requested the meeting on an urgent basis and was "unusually agitated."

"On behalf of the president, he [Kissinger] wanted to inform the Soviet leadership that North Vietnam had launched large-scale military operations across the demilitarized zone, penetrating ten to fifteen miles to the south. The president, Kissinger said, will therefore have to take military countermeasures, and he hoped that Moscow would not regard them as hostile to its own interests, nor would they affect our relations on the eve of the Moscow summit. Kissinger added that the advancing North Vietnamese troops were 'armed 90 percent with Soviet-made weapons,' and the North Vietnamese command had gambled nearly all its regular troops on the offensive." (Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, page 243)

According to his own account, Kissinger accused the Soviets of "complicity in Hanoi's attack." He also emphasized, however, the importance of linkage between North Vietnam and West Germany.

"If the offensive continued, we would be forced into measures certain to present Moscow with difficult choices before the summit. In the meantime we would have to call off some steps of special concern to Moscow. For example, Moscow had asked us to send a message to West German leaders to urge the ratification of the Eastern treaties, scheduled for a vote in about a month's time. We had been reluctant to intervene to such an extent in Germany's internal politics. We used the North Vietnamese offensive as a pretext to avoid what we were reluctant to do in any event. Under current conditions, I told Dobrynin, we could not be active in Bonn. Moscow could not ask for our assistance in Europe while undermining our position in Southeast Asia. The Kremlin was put on notice that North Vietnamese actions might jeopardize some fundamental Soviet goals." (*White House Years*, page 1114)

After Dobrynin left, Nixon telephoned Kissinger at 6:20 p.m. to review the meeting.

"P: Hi, Henry. You finished with your meeting?"

"K: Yes, are you in your office?"

"P: No, I'm over at the residence. I will be over there in a half hour or so if you want to wait until then.

"K: Well, no. I told him what you said and he said, 'Isn't it amazing what a little country can do to wreck well-laid plans.' I said, 'The President wants you to know we will under no circumstances accept a defeat there and we will do what is necessary not to.' He said, 'What do you want us to do?' I said, 'First to show restraint and secondly you have to ask yourselves whether this isn't the time to bring an end to the war. There is, after all, when I look around the world I see no areas where we should be in conflict.' He said he did not either—not even in Vietnam. Then I brought up the Berlin thing. I said, 'Look, here we are. We get the ratification thing coming up in Germany, the President has been asked to write to Brandt, but he can't under these circumstances and he wants you to know if we should lose in Vietnam that is the last concession we will make this year.' He said, 'You aren't going to lose. In our assessment you can't lose.'

"P: I think he's right.

"K: I think we are going to see this through." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

The two men continued to discuss Vietnam and the Soviet Union when Kissinger called Nixon at 7:10 p.m. After assessing the effect of weather conditions on American air and sea operations, the President underlined his determination to avoid defeat in Vietnam.

"P: I will do everything necessary including taking out Haiphong.

"K: The more we shock them the better.

"P: Is there anything we could do in the Haiphong area?

"K: I think it is still too early. I think the Russians will do something. They are not going to risk everything.

"P: They will [not] risk Summit, Berlin, German treaty—correct?

"K: That's right. I told Dobrynin. We can't consider sending a message to Brandt under these conditions.

"P: I won't.

"K: I don't think you should send it anyway—so any excuse. I think if we don't hear from them [the Soviets] about Poland tomorrow we should just do it.

"P: That I am sure about. Why do you think they delayed on it?

"K: They may not have had a chance to have everyone together—or they may just be cute. They may be going to Poland now.

"P: I don't think our going to Poland will change anything. Tell them tomorrow. We can't hold it any longer—it's starting to leak." (Ibid.)

81. Editorial Note

On April 4, 1972, the Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG), chaired by Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger, met in the White House Situation Room from 10:50 to 11:47 a.m. to discuss the North Vietnamese offensive, including the impact of Soviet military supplies. Kissinger emphasized that the U.S. response to the invasion must include a strategy to influence decision-making not only in Hanoi but also in Moscow and Beijing. “We have issued many warnings and said many times that we will not be run out of Vietnam,” he declared. “We want the Russians and Chinese to understand that we are serious. We want to jolt them. If we get run out of Vietnam, we won’t have a foreign policy. I don’t know if the Russians want to risk everything under these circumstances.” After considering the effect of weather conditions on military operations against North Vietnam, Kissinger advocated political pressure against the Soviet Union, issuing instructions for Robert McCloskey, the Department of State spokesman, to emphasize the role of Soviet equipment during his daily press briefing. “We want the Soviets to realize that they are involved—because the North Vietnamese are using Soviet tanks, trucks, and supplies,” he explained. “We don’t say the Soviets are directly responsible for the offensive, but they do have the supply responsibility.” (Minutes of WSAG Meeting, April 4; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-115, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

During his briefing of the press that afternoon, McCloskey stated that North Vietnam had clearly diverged in military strategy from guerrilla to conventional warfare. The source of divergence was equally clear. “These units are supported,” he explained, “in a very large way by heavy military equipment from the Soviet Union.” Although determined to underscore its effect on Vietnam, McCloskey was reluctant to discuss the effect this equipment might have on Soviet relations with the United States.

“Q: Bob, in raising the Soviet supplies here it raises the question: Is there any consideration now to looking at our relationship with the Soviets—particularly, in light of the trip to Moscow that’s planned?”

“A: There is no reconsideration on the projected visit of the President to the Soviet Union, and I wouldn’t want anything I say to directly confirm an affirmative response to the other part of the question.

“Q: Bob, you said here that all options remain open. Now, is the option open of cancelling the trip to Moscow, or isn’t it?”

“A: No, no; And I don’t think that anyone in this room—I’d be surprised if they included that as one of the options that I’ve been talking about here for two days.” (Transcript of Press, Radio and Televi-

sion News Briefing, April 4; *ibid.*, RG 59, Records of the Office of News and Its Predecessors, Records Relating to Press Conferences, Transcripts of Daily News Conferences of the Department of State, Jan. 1946–Dec. 1980, Vol. 69 of 137, Mar.–Apr. 1972)

Kissinger later wrote, however, that McCloskey “carried off the assignment so well that he triggered a series of confirming comments from other agencies, raising speculation that the entire US-Soviet relationship, including the summit, was in jeopardy. This was a little more than we wanted, but it erred in the right direction.” (*White House Years*, page 1115)

The WSAG members continued to discuss the role of Soviet decision-making on Hanoi during its meeting at 10:08 a.m. the next day. Kissinger asked whether the Soviets might try to slow the North Vietnamese advance, particularly before the rainy season. Director of Central Intelligence Helms said that there was no evidence that the Soviets were trying “to control the North Vietnamese.” The discussion then proceeded as follows:

“Dr. Kissinger: Assuming Hanoi wins, we can’t make any concessions in Moscow. Therefore, I don’t see why these operations are in the Russian interest. If the situation is inconclusive and if we are popping North Vietnam while we are in Moscow, that won’t make Moscow look very good.

By the way, I want to mention that we have been handling the press and other aspects very well.

“Mr. Irwin: McCloskey, as you know, brought the Russians into this during his briefing yesterday. What should we say now?

“Dr. Kissinger: I talked to the President about this. He wanted to fire a shot across the bow, but we don’t [want] to say anything more now. We don’t want to keep escalating the situation.

“Mr. Irwin: I agree.

“Dr. Kissinger: If a question comes up, just say that we pointed out the facts and that we stand on what we said.” (Minutes of WSAG Meeting, April 5; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-115, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

82. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 4, 1972.

[Omitted here is a discussion of the military situation in Vietnam and of political leadership in the Pentagon.]

Kissinger: Mr. President, our major thing now is to get across to the Russians, to the Chinese, and to Hanoi that we are on the verge of going crazy. This is how we broke the India-Pakistan situation last year.

Nixon: With nothing.

Kissinger: With nothing.

Nixon: With nothing.

Kissinger: By just giving the impression that you were just crazy enough to fight for West Pakistan. If we could make that one stick, we can make this one stick.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: And we'll, we'll escalate it. And that's why we've got to pour things in there.

[Omitted here is further discussion of the military situation in Vietnam and of political leadership in the Pentagon.]

Nixon: Have the Chinese and Russians warned us yet?

Kissinger: No

Nixon: Not to intervene, not to bomb?

Kissinger: Not yet.

Nixon: Well, they will. They would have to because the stories all indicate we're going to.

Kissinger: Well—

[unclear exchange]

Kissinger: It's dangerous to warn them if you do so, then it is ineffective. I think, the wilder we look the better it is for us. We will get—The worst is to look hesitant because then they'll want to get a point for keeping us from doing what we might not want to do.

Nixon: Sure. We're not [unclear]

Kissinger: No, no. I mean we've done it in Jordan. We've done it now. We did it in India-Pakistan. And we've got to play it recklessly. That's the safest course.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 701–17. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 1:17 to 1:32 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Nixon: Yeah, I see your point. Your idea, Henry, is the appearance of some recklessness here and the—

Kissinger: If—

Nixon: —the hell with the election and all the rest is the thing that's going to make these bastards, they—You see, that's the point I raised with you yesterday. Is there some possibility in the back of their mind, they might feel I was restrained—because of the damn election? You see my point? They might.

Kissinger: They, they might. You see, Mr. President, I think you will not trigger the Russians into this unless they think you might just blow the whole damn thing.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: They're not doing the summit to do you a favor.

Nixon: Oh, no.

Kissinger: In fact, when they thought the summit was doing you a favor, they played a damn tough game.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: They gave you an answer only—They started coming the other way only when they started needing you. They need you now on the Berlin ratification. They have a big crisis—

Nixon: Does that make any, any imprint—

Kissinger: Oh, yeah.

Nixon: —on Mr. Dobrynin's mind?

Kissinger: Well, and he knows it's a fact. "If you start raising hell with us, that strengthens the enemies of ratification in Germany." That's a fact.

Nixon: I see.

Kissinger: And—

Nixon: You told him that?

Kissinger: Oh, yeah.

Nixon: Good. So, so your view is, as far as the Russians are concerned, they'll—

Kissinger: In fact, I told State. State—

Nixon: Let me say, let me say, if the Russians, if the Russians knock off the summit as a result of this—

Kissinger: They won't.

Nixon: Well, let me say, if they do, I'm simply going to say I, that we are not going to have the Russ—, the Communists determine our foreign policy.

Kissinger: They won't.

Nixon: We'll hit them right in the nose.

Kissinger: Inconceivable, Mr. President. They will not do it.

Nixon: What did you say to State?

Kissinger: Well, State got a question yesterday about what do we think of the Russian military mission in Hanoi. And he avoided it. I told them today if the question comes to say, "Let's not forget, we're not saying the Russians are planning these operations. We are saying it's Russian equipment that's making them possible."²

Nixon: Well, be sure that that's in Mel Laird's statement: Russian equipment, Russian tanks, Russian planes.³

Kissinger: And Russian tanks—and Russian trucks.

Nixon: And jeopardizes, jeopardizes Soviet-American relations. That's—Isn't that a good idea?

Kissinger: Excellent.

[Omitted here is discussion of Kissinger's meeting with Joe Alsop.]

² See Document 81.

³ During a news conference on April 7, Laird charged that the Soviet Union was a "major contributor" to the North Vietnamese offensive, providing military supplies rather than political restraint. Laird also promised that the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam would continue until Hanoi withdrew its regular troops from the South. (*The New York Times*, April 8, 1972, p. 1)

83. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 5, 1972.

SUBJECT

Your Next Meeting with Dobrynin, April 6, 1972

SALT

Their new ABM proposal (Tab A),² as you are aware, is their old two for one with a deferred three for two. The number 225 for inter-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Sonnenfeldt Papers [1 of 2]. Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. Haig also initialed the memorandum.

² The text of the Soviet note, Tab A, which Sokolov gave Hicks on April 5, reads: "The United States, besides ABM defense of one base of ICBM's, would have the right

ceptors is simply a straight line projection from their previous 150 for two for one, i.e., presumably 75 at each of their sites and 100+ at each of ours. This is, of course, the first time the Soviets have offered “deferral” (guess who taught them the idea).³ This proposal is, if anything, worse than the December 15 one,⁴ although having broached deferral it may be intended to carry some implication of one for one with eventual two for two. The three to *five* year period is also of some interest in view of Brezhnev’s shift to a three year offensive freeze. This has not yet surfaced in Helsinki.

You should tell Dobrynin that your *first reaction* is negative—no advance, in principle, over their previous position.

You should go on to stress the clear relationship in our view between what happens on ABMs and what happens on SLBMs. The present Soviet position means clear inequality in our disfavor in both defensive and offensive weapons. This may be a situation that cannot be avoided without an agreement but we certainly cannot accept it *as the result* of agreement.

It is in this context that Smith today is offering two for two on ABMs (instead of our present two for one) if the Soviets move on SLBMs.⁵ (Note: Smith has not made any new specific SLBM proposal, other than a straight freeze. But *you* have given Dobrynin a modified

to deploy ABM facilities for defense of Washington, D.C.; and the Soviet Union, besides ABM defense of the capital and of ICBM silo launchers amounting to 50% of the number of launchers at the abovementioned US base, would have the right to additionally deploy ABM facilities for the defense of yet other 50% of the same number of ICBM launchers in the United States. This right would not be used *by the sides* during an agreed period (for example, 3–5 years). The total number of ABM launchers, with due account of those which could be additionally deployed for the abovementioned purposes, should not exceed 225. The rest of the conditions for limitations should be similar to those which go with the version now under discussion.”

³ Reference is evidently to the oral note Kissinger gave Dobrynin on April 26, 1971, in which he suggested that “the decision on the nature of sites to be permitted in the ABM agreement be deferred to subsequent negotiations.” (Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 817)

⁴ In his statement at the conclusion of negotiations in Vienna on December 15, Semenov submitted the following proposal: “The U.S. would retain ABM system components at one ICBM base. In the USSR the ABM system would be limited to defense of the National Capital and also to protection of a number of ICBM silo launchers amounting to 50 percent of the number of launchers at the U.S. ICBM base which is protected by ABM systems components.” (Telegram 1134 from USDEL SALT VI, December 15; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 AUS(VI)) Odeen and Sonnenfeldt assessed the proposal in a December 16 memorandum to Kissinger. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 882, SALT, SALT (Helsinki), Sept.–Dec. 1971 (Memoranda & Misc.))

⁵ Semenov presented the Soviet ABM proposal (see footnote 2 above) during an informal meeting at Helsinki on April 6; Smith then outlined the U.S. position (see Document 66), linking inclusion of SLBM’s in the interim agreement and its “two-for-two” proposal on the number of sites allowed in the ABM treaty. (Telegram 1240 from USDEL SALT VII, April 6; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN(HE))

freedom-to-mix, G and H to Yankee, proposition.⁶ There has been no Soviet response to either.)

I believe you should not today debate further the merits of either ABM proposal but *stress the need for basic decisions if we are to get anywhere near agreement by the summit*. We have made a basic decision—permitting the Soviets an ICBM defense which they do not now have. You hope the Politburo is addressing more fundamental matters than the tactical—and discouraging—revisions in the latest Soviet ABM proposal.

(*Note: We will do a more considered analysis with Odeen when the Soviets have tabled their proposal in Helsinki.*)⁷

Other Matters

A progress report on bilateral issues is at Tab B.⁸ (State does not know about Peterson's talks with Dobrynin about Patolichev⁹ and a Joint Commission.)

Matters Are Moving Too Slowly on Some Key Issues:

—On Lend-Lease, Dobrynin has just told State that the Soviets will not even make a decision until April 6. We have long since proposed April 7 as the *opening date*. (There is no point having Patolichev come if there has not at least been one round on lend-lease.)¹⁰

—On maritime relations, there is fencing about the date for round two (maybe April 17) and there has been no substantive Soviet response

⁶ Kissinger floated this proposal in his meeting with Dobrynin on March 9; see Document 56. Also see Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1131.

⁷ Although their analysis of the Soviet ABM proposal has not been found, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt gave Kissinger an April 17 memorandum, assessing SALT in light of evidence that previous estimates of the Soviet SLBM program had been "significantly inflated." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box TS 5, Chronological File, 1969–75, 1972–April)

⁸ Attached at Tab B but not printed is a March 31 memorandum from Hillenbrand to Kissinger, providing a bi-weekly status report on negotiations with the Soviet Union, pursuant to NSDM 153 (Document 52).

⁹ See footnote 6, Document 75.

¹⁰ In a note to Haig on April 6, Sonnenfeldt forwarded a directive for the conduct of the lend-lease negotiations. "It has now become extremely urgent," he explained, "because following Henry's talk with D[obrynin] the Soviets have not informed us that their delegation will come next weekend and be ready to open talks April 10." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXI) The directive—issued on April 7 by Kissinger and Flanigan to Rogers and "his designee as lend-lease negotiator"—included the following instructions: "Our negotiator should *not* link a lend-lease settlement with other trade or credit matters. If the Soviets raise additional issues, we should indicate that we wish to settle the lend-lease issue first and that any trade and credit matters of interest to the Soviets will be considered apart from the lend-lease negotiations. If the foregoing is not negotiable, our negotiator should attempt to complete the lend-lease negotiations as a separate matter while informing the Soviets that, if they insist, the settlement will not come into force until a later date. If this proves unacceptable to the Soviets, our negotiator should seek further instructions." (Ibid.)

to our round one proposals (although there are preliminary indications of some give), thus preventing us from developing a round two position. You should impress on Dobrynin the importance of these talks and the importance we attach to our position.

—On incidents-at-sea we are in process of exploring a date for round two (the Soviets have made clear they will not complete the round one understandings without a second round and we have gone to our fallback of agreeing to it).

—The agricultural project seems on the rails. Butz and Palmby¹¹ are due in Moscow April 10.

—Health and Space are OK. On Environment, they owe Train a response to his illustrative umbrella agreement, David owes them something on science. (We are reviewing a US position paper looking toward some preliminary agreement at the summit.)¹²

Summit Arrangements

There appear to be no snags at this point. The advance is to get to Moscow by April 19—Embassy Moscow is exploring this date. (You may want to mention that Hyland is going from here.)

You have a separate memo to Chapin giving him the green light to raise the *radio-TV address* with Vorontsov on Friday.¹³ *You should mention this* to Dobrynin.¹⁴

General

There is no way of telling how the Soviets evaluate the McGovern victory in Wisconsin.¹⁵ You may want to give Dobrynin your judgment that it has improved further the President's chances because it has increased the uncertainty among the Democrats. (The Soviets may be estimating that they have some new leverage on the President because of Vietnam and the strength of protest votes.)

At Tab C, FYI, there is an interesting Soviet indoctrination lecture on the President's trip which you may want to look over.¹⁶

¹¹ Clarence D. Palmby, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for International Affairs and Commodity Programs.

¹² Not found.

¹³ Not found.

¹⁴ Kissinger wrote "Press" after this paragraph.

¹⁵ Senator George S. McGovern (D-South Dakota) won the Democratic primary in Wisconsin on April 4 with 30 percent of the vote.

¹⁶ Attached at Tab C but not printed is airgram A-249 from Moscow, in which the Embassy reported: "Judging from questions being asked at Leningrad lectures, President Nixon's forthcoming visit to the USSR is not popular with the local public." Also in the National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 7 US/NIXON.

84. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 6, 1972, 8:16–9:27 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Ambassador of the USSR

Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

I met with Dobrynin for breakfast in General Scowcroft's office for a quick roundup on where we stood prior to my departure for Key Biscayne with the President.²

Vietnam

I opened the meeting by pointing out to Dobrynin the inadmissibility of what was going on in Vietnam. I recalled a conversation in January³ in which I had indicated that we might have to take action to bring the war to a decisive conclusion. At that time Dobrynin had said that he could understand our taking action if there was an offensive, but that if the war just wound down he saw no reason why we should precipitate a showdown. I had been impressed with that argument, and as he knew we had shown enormous restraint.

I said now we were confronted with a situation in which there was an all-out attack on South Vietnam, putting in jeopardy the 69,000 Americans who were remaining. This was absolutely intolerable for us. Dobrynin said perhaps we took the situation too gravely, because after all the Soviets' estimate was that the situation was far from being out of hand, and the South Vietnamese probably would have a chance to defend themselves. I said I hoped so for their [the Soviets']⁴ sake.

Dobrynin asked whether I really thought that they had anything to do with planning it. I said there are only two possibilities, either they planned it or their negligence made it possible. In either event, it was an unpleasant eventuality.⁵

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Military Aide's office at the White House.

² After a brief stop that morning for a Presidential address in Philadelphia, Kissinger accompanied Nixon at 12:58 p.m. for the flight to Key Biscayne. Kissinger returned to Washington the following afternoon; Nixon returned the evening of April 9. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

³ Reference is to the conversation between Kissinger and Dobrynin on January 21; see Document 39.

⁴ Brackets in the source text.

⁵ During a conversation in the Executive Office Building at 9:16 a.m. on April 5, Nixon and Kissinger discussed the issue of Soviet complicity. Kissinger doubted that

SALT

We then turned to other matters. Dobrynin raised the issue of SALT. He said the matter had been carefully studied in Moscow and the conclusion had been reached that it would be very difficult to include submarines in the proposal. On the other hand, there was the conviction that if submarines were not included we would be able to come to a solution fairly rapidly. I told Dobrynin that the question of SLBMs was a very difficult one for us, and that I was not very optimistic that we could move on it. It was a point on which our military felt extremely strongly.

Dobrynin asked whether some progress could not be made by settling on land-based missiles plus the ABM agreement and agreeing to make SLBMs the first item on the agenda of the follow-on discussions. I told him that we would consider that and I would give him an answer at one of our next meetings. At the same time I said that our problem was extremely difficult. We were being asked to accept inferiority in land-based missiles as part of the freeze, and equality if not worse in the ABM agreement. That was an inequitable arrangement. Therefore if SLBMs were to be excluded one would have to find compensation elsewhere by having some slight ABM advantage on the side of the United States.

We agreed to consider that at a subsequent meeting.

Middle East

Dobrynin then turned to the Middle East. I said that there had to be some rectifications of the Israeli border in the direction of Sharm El-Sheikh and of the heights containing the airport near Eilat, but I could not go beyond that at the moment. Dobrynin said they were working on a reply and would let me have it.

Moscow had approved Hanoi's offensive. "They [the North Vietnamese] are putting it to Moscow," he explained, "the way China put it [to Moscow]." The two men then had the following exchange. HAK: "Because here, Moscow has to risk everything, all its relations. For what? I mean, what can Moscow possibly get out of it? If we get run out of South Vietnam and if—." RN: "Well, this will tell us a lot about Moscow." HAK: "That's right." RN: "Because if Moscow is willing to risk everything for a cheap little victory by liberating South Vietnam, then it means that ideology is going to override their pragmatic considerations." HAK: "But look at it from Moscow's point of view. Realistically, if we get run out of Vietnam and the summit goes on as it were, you will have to be tough as nails in Moscow. You couldn't possibly make any major concessions in Moscow. Having just been defeated in Vietnam, you can't come back from Moscow having made another deal." RN: "We won't go." HAK: "Whatever they wanted to get out of the summit they cannot have if Hanoi wins." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, April 5, 1972, 9:16–9:55 a.m., Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 330–7)

Dobrynin then asked me about Hussein's visit.⁶ Had we discussed a peace settlement with him? I said not in very specific terms, but it seemed to me there was some possibility of making progress there. Indeed if we could achieve agreement with respect to the Egyptian points I would be prepared to discuss with Dobrynin whether a Jordanian settlement should come before or after, and I could see advantages in both. Doing it before might help establish some principle such as Demilitarized Zones, which would otherwise be difficult for the Egyptians. Dobrynin asked, why not simultaneously? I said that was in no sense excluded.

Bilateral Issues

We discussed bilateral matters and agreed that they were in good shape. The visit of the Economic Minister was tentatively scheduled for April 27 and would proceed on that basis.

The conversation then ended.

⁶ King Hussein met Nixon and Kissinger at the White House on March 28. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule)

85. Editorial Note

On April 6, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger received memoranda from Secretary of Defense Laird and Deputy Assistant to the President Haig on contingency plans for military operations against North Vietnam. Laird explained in his memorandum that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, had developed "outlines" for two possible actions against Haiphong: a one-time air strike against military targets in the area; and a mining operation against shipping in the harbor. Laird doubted, however, that either plan would lead to any military advantage. Bombing would be largely ineffective, he argued, since North Vietnam not only operated an intricate distribution system but also received most of its military supplies from the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Without an intensive air campaign, mining might also fail to interrupt the shipment of military supplies. Laird did not believe that the proposal to mine the harbor merited "serious consideration" at the time; he believed rather that political factors, both at home and abroad, should determine the American response. Laird emphasized this point in a handwritten postscript: "The political impact of these plans may be what is wanted by the President—The military impact would be minor and

the impact on present battle would be even less. If the Russians want an excuse to stop their present major (80% supplies) contribution to North Vietnam, mining might have that political impact but I would doubt it." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1079, Howe Chronological File's, Feb–Mar–April 1972)

Haig dismissed the "negative attitude" adopted by Laird on the issue of bombing and mining North Vietnam, noting that Kissinger was already considering "a directive for operations of much greater scope." (Memorandum from Haig to Kissinger, April 6; *ibid.*) In a separate, undated memorandum to Kissinger, Haig proposed "an intense no-holds barred air and naval campaign" to force Hanoi to retreat on the battlefield and return to the negotiating table. The campaign consisted of bombing every area in the country (except a buffer zone along the Chinese border); bombarding the entire coastline; mining and blockading every port. Haig further urged a political campaign of psychological warfare against North Vietnam and diplomatic pressure against its allies, including the Soviet Union. There was, however, a price to be paid: "It is recognized that these actions may force cancellation of the summit and it is assumed that the summit would be laid on the line as one of the early diplomatic steps in the preparatory phase." (*Ibid.*)

Although he admitted ignorance of these contingency plans, Winston Lord of the National Security Council staff also addressed the impact of air operations against North Vietnam in an April 8 memorandum to Kissinger. Lord made a distinction between "effective" and "harmful" bombing: the former, limited to the battle zone and direct support areas, was already justified by provocation from Hanoi; the latter, extended to the rear areas of North Vietnam, was likely to provoke an outcry not only in Washington but also from Moscow and Beijing. Lord assumed that Kissinger was actively considering punitive bombing on a short term basis "to show Hanoi (and Moscow and Peking) that we are capable of going bananas." The result of such action, however, would be "the worst of all worlds," doing more damage to U.S. policy than to the North Vietnamese military. "I agree that this is a decisive test for our Vietnam policy and for our global policy," Lord concluded. "I also believe we may pass the test with the help of effective bombing. More spectacular bombing cannot rescue us and indeed could wreck the chance we do have." (*Ibid.*, RG 59, S/P Files: Lot 77 D 112, Box 335, [Lord–Chron], April '72)

In spite of the reservations expressed by Lord and Laird, President Nixon decided that the contingency plan outlined by Haig would be implemented by May 8 if the South Vietnamese army proved unable to withstand the North Vietnamese assault. (Haig, *Inner Circles*, page 282; Kissinger, *White House Years*, page 1116)

86. Editorial Note

On April 8, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger called Deputy Secretary of Defense Rush at 12:43 p.m. to discuss linkage between Soviet policies on North Vietnam and West Germany. Ten days earlier, West German State Secretary Bahr had been in Washington to review the prospects for ratification of the Moscow and Warsaw treaties; on March 28, he met Kissinger and telephoned Rush—until recently the Ambassador in Bonn. (See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XL, Germany, 1969–1972, Document 348.) After returning to West Germany, Bahr sent a special channel message to Kissinger on April 1 requesting a memorandum of support for ratification talks between the government and the opposition, led by Rainer Barzel, chairman of the Christian Democratic Union. (Ibid., Document 349) Kissinger raised the issue of how to respond to such requests in his telephone conversation with Rush.

“K: I was calling you because [1 line of source text not declassified] you told Bahr you might write Barzel.

“R: Bahr wanted me to write Barzel.

“K: While this crisis goes on we have to be sure there is no move which gives aid and comfort to the Soviets. If you can tell Bahr we cannot consider it, it would be helpful.

“R: I don’t know how he got that.

“K: You know what an oily guy he is.

“R: I told [West German Ambassador] Pauls when he saw Barzel that he (Pauls) could say he was talking to me and I was worried about the image of the German people.

“K: Yes, you told this to me.

“R: Bahr called me and asked if I would write Barzel, and I said no.

“K: Can you get it across to the Germans—say to Bahr you and I have been talking and we are working in this direction. But we are confronted a second time in four months with an offensive backed by Soviet arms, and we have to reassess our whole situation.

“R: I can get word to him on that.

“K: How?

“R: I can think of four ways: (1) go through your backchannel; (2) go through the State Department; (3) go through Rolf Pauls . . .

“K: Why not go through Pauls. That is the most likely to leak. Do it in a way saying we are not going to do it because we have to reassess. Do it as an individual and not as a government. Can you do it this weekend?

“R: I will do it right now.

“K: Can you let me know after you do it?

“R: Certainly.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Rush called Kissinger back at 1:05 p.m. to report on his conversation with Pauls.

“R: I got hold of Rolf and he has promised to send a message forthwith to Bahr.

“K: Under these conditions?

“R: I told him I told Bahr I would not write a letter. This was all we could do. However, there was no [reluctance?] on your part or on my part personally with regard to changing of position, but as of now we could do nothing with regard to approving something for the Russians. Rolf understood completely.

“K: Did you put it in the context of this offensive?

“R: I said in light of this heavy invasion with nothing but Russian equipment we obviously could not get behind something the Russians wanted.

“K: Okay, Ken; well done.” (Ibid.)

On April 8 Kissinger also responded to Bahr’s earlier request for a memorandum of support. “[W]e now confront the problems posed by a massive invasion of South Vietnam based on Soviet arms,” he stated. “We are undertaking an urgent review of the implications of that situation and will communicate with you after it is completed.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 424, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, Europe, 1972) Kissinger later explained the tactical side of his response: “Bahr, with the ratification of Brandt’s Eastern treaties hanging in the balance, was certain to convey these sentiments to the Soviet Ambassador in Bonn. And Moscow would be reminded that we were not without means of pressure.” (*White House Years*, page 1117)

During a meeting with the President in the Old Executive Office Building at 3:10 p.m. on April 10, Kissinger read the text of his message to Bahr and reported on his conversation with Rush. Kissinger told Nixon that he would ask Bahr, who was already “running to the Soviet ambassador [Falin],” to forward the message. Kissinger also explained how the information, as passed by Rush to Pauls, would leak anyway: “The Ambassador has to report back through channels, so many people in the German Foreign Office will read it. It’s certain to be picked up.” Although the Soviets might think the summit was “something for us,” Nixon commented, “the German thing is something they apparently need.” Kissinger replied: “The summit, as long

as it was something for you, they were screwing you all over the place. The summit became something for them when we developed the Chinese option.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, April 10, 1972, 3:10–3:55 p.m., Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 330–31)

87. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

April 9, 1972, 10:45 a.m.

[Omitted here is discussion of the decision to have 12 B–52s bomb supply depots near Vinh, a port below the 19th Parallel in North Vietnam. The strike, which took place on the morning of April 10 (afternoon of April 9 in Washington), was the first time the long-range bombers were used north of the Demilitarized Zone by the Nixon administration.]

P: I think we have to go forward. We have to put the chips in the pot. The pot is too big now. We can't get out. This is something—many other things have been suggested: truck parks, Haiphong. Why not this?

K: Actually, we have a curious situation. Joe Kraft² called Haig the other day saying I was too soft on the Soviets. That is a new situation. He called again this morning and asked me some questions.

P: Soft how?

K: I told him it was not a conspiracy—but incompetency. He is going to write a column.

P: We all know what this is. It is a damn conspiracy. The Indian thing, the UAR and this is a massive attempt on the Soviet part to put it to us.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Kissinger placed the call. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) Nixon was in Key Biscayne, Florida; Kissinger was in Washington.

² Joseph Kraft, syndicated columnist with *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Daily News*, and other newspapers.

K: They haven't understood all the implications. I don't believe they would put the test to us into an area where their intelligence is so bad. They don't know how this can be going. I think they saw a chance of picking up a cheap trick against Peking and blundered into a confrontation with us again. That is more worrisome than the other. If it is a conspiracy, we could turn it off. I think they are to blame—no question.

P: We are coming to the point—with Safire working on the draft³—of knocking off of the Soviet Summit becomes more and more a possibility.

K: I am afraid so. I do not have another view. I do not think we can survive a Soviet Summit as a country if we are humiliated in Vietnam. Unless they accept rules of conduct, we may have to confront them. It is easy for me to say. But if one looks at an election on that platform . . .

P: The country would be done then.

K: I think our bargaining position in Moscow, if it came out of a position of total weakness, would be hopeless.

P: I have been arguing for sending more carriers, planes, etc. and taking the heat on it because I realize everything rides on this. If we lose this one, the other stuff won't hold up. Our great China initiative—we at least opened the door, and handle ourselves as gracefully as we can—and quietly leave the scene.

K: That is essentially it. It is easier for me to say how I feel.

P: With that much on the plate, we have to take whatever risks we can. I think we many times have done things like Menu⁴ which didn't have a psychological effect.

K: That had an effect but never decisive enough. And this won't be decisive.

P: But it will have some effect.

K: If we hadn't acted the way we have . . .

P: We have to look closely at our whole American purpose as to whether or not it is possible for one Communist country to defend itself and leave. We know it is possible for a Communist country to do that. I am not sure. We shall see. All right; we will go forward now.

³ On April 8 Nixon tentatively decided to explain his position on Vietnam to the public in a speech on April 12; Haldeman relayed the necessary instructions that afternoon to William Safire, a senior speechwriter at the White House. (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) The President planned to emphasize in the speech the importance of using American air power to stop an invasion supported "with the most modern Soviet equipment." (Safire, *Before the Fall*, pp. 417–420; and Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1116–1117)

⁴ Reference is to the secret bombing from March 1969 to May 1970 of North Vietnamese bases areas in Cambodia, collectively called "Menu" after the code names for the individual missions, "Breakfast," "Lunch," "Dinner," etc.

K: It doesn't require an additional order.

P: We told them. Laird won't run out?

K: I have him on tape. I called him. He said if we want to get the message across, we do it.

P: All right. How is everything going? Are Safire and Lord working?

K: They are waiting for me now. [Omitted here is further discussion of the military situation in South Vietnam.]

P: As Al says, everybody gets alarmist when an offensive begins. Considering the South Vietnamese are fighting in all territories with American air support, they should be able to hold it. Is it still your view we should do it Wednesday night?⁵

K: Absolutely. It should be tough.

P: When I do it it will be tough.

K: I think I have found a way of mentioning the private things without blowing it. We have to shoot the works now. The main thing is to rally our people. If the North Vietnamese want to settle, they will.

P: We have to get the Goldwaters, Towers, Buckleys.⁶

K: We have those. We have to get the confused middle ground. We will get them. There's a different mood. Max Frankel with a little coaching from me has an article on the front page which is not bad at all.

P: You keep that up.

K: He printed it pretty much as I gave it to him.

P: Call Dobrynin in and tell him.

K: He is coming in to see the Chinese films this afternoon.

P: Tell him the summit is on the line now. I think he has to know with this going as it is that we are under enormous pressure. The whole Summit is being jeopardized. Our hole card is to play more with the Chinese.

K: I have talked to him sternly twice last week.⁷ I sent a message to Bahr.⁸ They requested a letter from you recommending ratification of the treaties. I was against it and sent a message saying under the circumstances—since this is the second time Soviet arms are engaged in an offensive—we are reassessing the whole policy. He will run to the Soviet Ambassador—we have some intelligence on him. He gave back exactly what we gave him here.

P: I wonder if I shouldn't send a message to Brezhnev.

⁵ See footnote 3 above.

⁶ Senators Barry M. Goldwater (R-Arizona) and John G. Tower (R-Texas) and William F. Buckley, Jr., editor-in-chief of the *National Review*.

⁷ April 3 and 6; see Documents 80 and 84.

⁸ See Document 86.

K: The danger is if they don't see a way out they may have to confront you. They got the message and I would save this. Let me work out a scenario for you.

P: We both agree to go ahead under those circumstances. I wondered if you could maybe on a line out there have a talk with . . . get a report directly from Bunker as to how the South Vietnamese are fighting and how their morale is.

K: It's better by backchannel. I will do it from here.⁹

P: In the meantime, we will keep our chins up and keep kicking them in the balls. I made a decision no summit if this thing goes. We have no other choices now. We can't be in a position of letting our whole policy be hostage to a couple of summits.

K: That's the difference between us and the Democrats.

P: Did anybody attack Teddy¹⁰ yet?

K: Agnew and Goldwater.

P: Okay, Henry.

K: Right, Mr. President.

⁹ Kissinger sent the backchannel message to Bunker that afternoon. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 414, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, 1972, To: ABM Bunker—Saigon)

¹⁰ Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D–Massachusetts).

88. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 9, 1972, 4:56–5:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Ambassador of the USSR

Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. No drafting information appears on the memorandum. The meeting was held in Haldeman's office at the White House.

I invited Dobrynin to the White House at his request to see the Chinese films of my Peking visits.² My parents and Mrs. Dobrynin were there also. At the end, he asked to see me alone for a minute.

Dobrynin told me that his military attaché thought our buildup in Asia was getting very ominous. I said “Anatol, we have been warning you for months that if there were an offensive we would take drastic measures to end the war once and for all. That situation has now arisen.”

Dobrynin said the question now was not the right or wrong of how we got there but what was needed to end it. He thought that the April 24 meeting would be extremely crucial, and he could tell me that his Government had been in touch with Hanoi to make sure that this meeting would take place. He said “Are you prepared to talk and fight at the same time?” I said no, there had to be a rapid end of the war now and it would not be acceptable to us any more to talk while the fighting was going on. Dobrynin said he would transmit this to Moscow. He was sure he would be in touch with me.

² Kissinger and Dobrynin met at 3:35 p.m. in Kissinger’s office before viewing the Chinese films at 4 p.m. in the White House Situation Room. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) Dobrynin then gave Kissinger a copy of the floor plan to determine the housing arrangements for the American delegation at the summit in Moscow. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10) For Kissinger’s published account of the afternoon, which he described as “a unique exercise of triangular politics,” see *White House Years*, p. 1117.

89. Editorial Note

On the morning of April 10, 1972, President Nixon prepared for a televised address to the nation on the North Vietnamese offensive. In handwritten notes for the speech, Nixon emphasized that the “massive invasion”—supported by Soviet tanks and guns—was intended to impose a Communist government on South Vietnam. “If Soviet supported indirect aggression succeeds here,” he wrote, “it will be tried elsewhere, U.S. credibility will be mortally damaged and danger of more war increased.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President’s Personal Files, Box 74, President’s Speech File, Monday April 10, 1972, Vietnam) At 8:57 a.m. the President discussed the speech, and his efforts to influence Soviet strategy on Vietnam, with Assistant to the President Kissinger in the Oval Office. (*Ibid.*,

White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) The two men also reviewed the news, relayed by Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin the previous day, that Moscow had emphasized to Hanoi the importance of a private meeting in Paris on April 24. Although Kissinger was "very impressed by this Dobrynin move," Nixon adopted a more cautious approach.

Nixon: "The thing that concerns me about your talk with Dobrynin is that it may be the same malarkey that they've given you, Henry, and given us for, since we started private talks over 2 years ago. You've had 12. They use these damn talks for the purpose of sort of stringing us along."

Kissinger: "But stringing us along—"

Nixon: "[unclear] And on the private talk. And I would urge you, if you're going to see Dobrynin again, you've got to tell him that they've got—not that they've got to talk seriously, say they've got to settle now."

Kissinger: "Yeah, I told him."

Nixon: "You see, what I'm afraid of is that they're going to get into this thing again. We're going to haggle around again about 8 points, 10 points, 14 points, 6 points, and so forth, and we don't have time. We've got time for two more meetings and that's all."

After an exchange on reaction in the United States to developments in Vietnam, Kissinger reported: "I told Dobrynin yesterday. I said, 'The President is determined. We've withstood demonstrations here time and again. We'll withstand any demonstration and the more pressure is put on us, the faster we'll act because that just shifts the time. This is not President Johnson. Under no circumstance—.' I was brutal with him." The two men continued their discussion of domestic opinion on Vietnam, including the President's plans to emphasize the Soviet role in a televised address.

Nixon: "You understand that we're going to have to face something else. As a result of this we'll get attacks. And, you know, one of the things that helped us in China was that we had good polls before we went. We'll get attacks. We will suffer in public opinion. And that will hurt us on our Russian thing."

Kissinger: "No it won't."

Nixon: "I know it's just a small thing. On the other hand, we—it doesn't make a hell of a lot of difference due to fact that, as far as I am concerned, by the time the Russian summit comes off, we will know how this thing has come off one way or another. And if we've lost, the hell with it. If we win in Vietnam, I don't give a damn what the polls show."

Kissinger: "Mr. President."

Nixon: “The Russian summit [unclear]—”

Kissinger: “We are facing—”

Nixon: “I’m just pointing out what, that’s the argument that Haldeman made to you.”

Kissinger: “I know. But polls won’t help you in Russia; only geopolitics will. The fact is, if this succeeds, that Soviet arms will have overturned the balance on the Indian subcontinent and will have run us out of Southeast Asia, I don’t care what your polls show.”

Nixon then rehearsed his draft of the speech, including the passage on Soviet assistance to North Vietnam.

Nixon: “‘If, for example, a Communist country with the support, or any country with the support of Soviet arms is allowed to take over a neighboring country, to conquer a neighboring country, and is not stopped, then that tactic will be used all over the world. It will be used in the Mid-East. It will be used in the Americas. It could even be used in Europe.’ Therefore, what we are talking about is the critical time, you know, to stop. Now that’s what this game is about. You see the crap that Safire and all the rest of these people write, it’s all too, it doesn’t go to the heart; the State stuff has never gone to the heart of it. As Haig was saying to me yesterday, when I was talking to him along these lines. He said, ‘The difficulty is you’re the first one that’s been President since this goddamn war started, who has seen it in the correct sense of it’s being, of the Russian role.’ ‘You see,’ he said, ‘they all took the Harriman line, that the Russians—.’ I remember Lodge. Henry, I was in Vietnam seven different times, since—more than you were, as a matter of fact.”

Kissinger: “I know. Much more.”

Nixon: “Lodge was there five of those different times and on five different occasions. And on the other case, the other occasion, Taylor told me; and on the other occasion, this fellow Porter told me because it was the line. He told me, ‘Now the Russians really don’t want this. The Russians really want peace out here. The Russians don’t want the Chinese to move Vietnam.’ I think that’s all bullshit. I think the Russians—it isn’t a question that the Russians aren’t thinking that much. The Russians just want to win. They are supporting them and they’ll go as far as they can go. The difficult—And that’s what the Indian thing showed us. I mean, the reason that Rogers and all those State Department people made the mistake on India, Henry, was that they did not see, properly estimate what the Russians want to do. The Russians were willing to take great risks to knock over Pakistan and support India because it [unclear] around the world. The Russians are doing that every place. That’s what was involved in Jordan. It was a Russian move, not a Syrian move. You knew that; I knew it. And this is a Russian move. Now what I’m really getting down, I’ve talked around a lot. If that

point were to be made, you're goddamn right. It would shake them to their eyeteeth. And that might mobilize American public opinion."

Kissinger: "Mr. President."

Nixon: "You see my point?"

Kissinger: "I believe it's premature to do this now."

Nixon: "You agree with my analysis?"

Kissinger: "I agree completely with your analysis."

Kissinger urged Nixon, however, to drop the televised address and instead send a signal to the Soviets at the signing ceremony for the Convention on Biological Weapons later that morning. Although Nixon thought his draft statement for the ceremony was "the most gooeey, gooeey shit I ever saw in my life," Kissinger recommended adding several sentences that the Soviets would understand "as being relevant to the situation." "What will help us with Hanoi and Russia," he explained, "is the feeling that, Jesus Christ, this guy is going crazy." After approving this recommendation, Nixon raised the Soviet response to U.S. military operations.

Nixon: "First, do you think the fleet movement had some effect on this with Dobrynin."

Kissinger: "Tremendously."

Nixon: "And he really thinks we're going to blockade?"

Kissinger: "That's right. I believe, Mr. President, that we on—Sure they're using these talks. But as long as we bomb the bejeezus out of them in the meantime, they're not keeping us from doing one thing that we should be doing. Not one. I'm not recommending that we stop one military operation. We now have to break their back. The only thing I've become very leery about is your speech—or any public appearance by you now."

Nixon: "Well, I'm not going to say anything about the war in any public appearances."

Kissinger: "No, no. I mean any public appearances about the war."

Nixon: "Oh, yeah."

Kissinger: "I mean, Philadelphia, Ottawa—that's all fine. I think, incidentally, I should cancel my trip to Japan for this reason."

Nixon: "I agree."

Kissinger: "The Russians will never believe that you are planning a blockade if I am in Japan."

Nixon: "That's right. Oh, hell yeah. Also your canceling the trip to Japan, that's a goddamn good signal to the Russians."

Kissinger: "That's what I mean."

Nixon: "That's a goddamn good signal. They'll think we're here plotting something."

Kissinger: "That's right."

Nixon: "What Dobrynin said to you was, whatever the hell he said, 'What do you want?'"

Kissinger: "No, no. But he didn't give me the usual malarkey you're not interested in."

Nixon: "Right."

Kissinger: "He said, 'Give me something concrete we can do.'"

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "I said—"

Nixon: "[unclear] the bombing, but he said they can't do that."

Kissinger: "No, he didn't say that. He said, 'Can't you talk and fight at the same time.' I said, 'No.'"

Nixon: "You said, 'This President won't do that.'"

Kissinger: "I said, 'This President isn't Johnson. He won't do it. Now, it's got to be settled.' He said, 'Well, can't you wait to settle 'til the 24th? Must you take irrevocable steps before the 24th?' Well, Mr. President, since you and I know we're not doing, going to do any irrevocable steps before the 24th, but I didn't even promise him that."

Nixon: "No sir."

Kissinger: "I said, 'It depends entirely on what, how this develops. It is now going to end. We are not going to put up with any more. They have turned the screw one too many.'"

Nixon: "Good."

Kissinger: "'You have gone too far. And what you now have to decide is—.'"

Nixon: "You let him know that we were aware of the fact that they were putting in Russian tanks and Russian—Does he know that I, that that's what I'm looking at—the Russian role, Russian tanks and Russian guns?"

Kissinger: "And that's why I think just one or two sentences, which they'll understand in your speech because this is on worldwide, would help."

Nixon: "Good." (Ibid., White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, April 10, 1972, 8:57–9:55 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 705–2)

During a meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group at 10:13 a.m., Kissinger reported that Nixon would "say a word about the Soviets" at the CBW ceremony. "The President is planning to say that this is a good agreement," Kissinger explained. "He will probably say something to the effect that the great powers should not do anything to encourage—either directly or indirectly—aggression. He won't refer specifically to Vietnam." (Minutes of WSAG Meeting, April 10; Ibid.,

NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

Shortly before noon, Nixon followed this script at the Department of State auditorium as Dobrynin listened from the audience. After stating the “enormous significance” of the agreement, the President declared that the goal of world peace depended on two propositions: 1) that every nation must renounce the use of force; and 2) that every great power “must follow the principle that it should not encourage directly or indirectly any other nation to use force or armed aggression against one of its neighbors.” (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pages 525–526) Before returning to the White House, Nixon approached Dobrynin to deliver a more direct message in private. “Afterward Nixon took me aside to say that he stood behind what Kissinger had told me about Vietnam the day before,” Dobrynin later recalled. “He only wanted to add that in going through the crisis, he wanted our two governments to keep themselves under control so as to do the least possible damage to Soviet-American relations. Although the president was not specific, I came away with the feeling that the White House was preparing to launch dramatic new actions against North Vietnam.” (Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, pages 243–244; see also Nixon, *Nixon: Memoirs*, page 589)

Kissinger elaborated on Nixon’s remarks in a telephone conversation with Dobrynin at 12:26 p.m.

“K: Anatol, one thing the President did ask me to tell you in answer to what it is that can be completely done. Our view is whatever is completely done must be done quietly. Any public pressure on us can only make matters worse. We don’t want a huge propaganda campaign started. One way we judge the seriousness is if they have something to say, say it on the 24th.

“Dobrynin: They come . . .

“K: I don’t see any chance in talking to them if they make a public proposal.

“D: I understand your point.

“K: No, this is in a friendly spirit as to what can be done. We want to find something you can reasonably say to them.

“D: I understand. And secondly can I receive word from you . . . on another matter about the American correspondents. We are prepared to accept up to 100 correspondents.

“K: Including television.

“D: They didn’t say anything about that. They just said to tell Dr. Kissinger we are prepared to receive 100 correspondents. So perhaps I have to check back with them.

“K: Good.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

According to his memoirs, Kissinger told Dobrynin that the United States “would not stand still for the tactic by which Hanoi had whipsawed us in the last two series of secret talks. If Hanoi once again published new proposals in the middle of negotiations, the secret channel would be at an end. Dobrynin used this occasion to mention that we could take a hundred reporters to the summit in Moscow. Clearly, nothing had yet happened to change the Kremlin’s priorities.” (*White House Years*, page 1118)

Nixon and Kissinger met again in the Oval Office at 12:44 to link decisions on the Soviet Union and Vietnam. Kissinger remarked that Dobrynin was “really slobbering,” satisfying the U.S. position on a number of bilateral issues, including the number of press representatives. Kissinger further reported that the Soviet Ambassador wanted a briefing on the President’s “personal likes and dislikes” and that Irina Dobrynin wanted to meet Pat Nixon. Nixon quickly called his wife to arrange a meeting for the following afternoon; Kissinger called Dobrynin to make the necessary arrangements. Kissinger then continued to report on his telephone conversation with Dobrynin.

Kissinger: “[I told him,] ‘One thing you can tell them [North Vietnamese] is if you, if they make a public proposal before the 24th, we’re assuming they’re not serious.’”

Nixon: “Yeah.”

Kissinger: “‘If they are serious, then they make it to us and we’ll treat them decently. But if they try to bring public pressure on us the only result will be that we will accelerate what we’re doing because it will foreshorten the time we have available. We will not hold still for these salami tactics.’ He said, ‘What if they want to do both?’ I said, ‘They can’t do both.’ Mr. President, we have—”

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: “Yeah, but I think we have a chance now. We really have a chance.”

After reviewing initial press coverage of the CBW ceremony, the two men discussed various signals to the Soviets, including military exercises in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Kissinger: “Another thing we’re doing now, Mr. President—”

Nixon: “Yeah.”

Kissinger: “—this is with your approval. We’re beginning to follow, not harass, every Soviet ship that approaches Hanoi. We’ll just fly over it—”

Nixon: “Correct.”

Kissinger: “—and occasionally send a destroyer after it as if we were practicing interceptions.”

Nixon: “Hm-hmm. Hm-hmm.”

Kissinger: "But we won't come close. I mean they can't object to it."

Nixon: "I know."

Kissinger: "And we're loading mines again."

Nixon: "I'll bet you, incidentally, that Smith, the disarmament boys at ACDA are probably just shitting their pants because of this thing today, because we should have kept the emphasis on peace and all that. The hell with them."

Kissinger: "Mr. President—"

Nixon: "What sense does it make to sit there with the Soviet Ambassador at a time they're raiding South Vietnam and say that they made a great contribution to peace by signing the silly biological warfare thing, which doesn't mean anything? Now, you know it and I know it."

Kissinger: "Mr. President, you're going to come out—You see, anything you do now—They made a horrible mistake. They should have done it after the Moscow summit. Because anything you do now, you can wipe away with the Moscow summit. The Soviets aren't going to cancel the summit. Inconceivable."

Nixon: "Well, if they do—We might cancel it. That's the other possibility."

Kissinger: "That's the other possibility."

Nixon: "You understand, as I told you—"

Kissinger: "If you come to Moscow, having stared down Hanoi—"

Nixon: "Yeah. But if we come to Moscow not having crushed South Vietnam, we can't go, Henry. There ain't no way."

Kissinger: "There's no way you can then go. But I—"

Nixon: "After that, the U.S. is finished as a—"

Kissinger: "If we can hold another—"

Nixon: "The U.S. will be finished as a world power. It's that bad."

Kissinger: "Well—"

Nixon: "It isn't like the British in the Boer War. People told me about that. And it isn't like the French and Algeria—"

Kissinger: "The British won the Boer—"

Nixon: "I know. But my point was that many said they shouldn't have fought so hard and all that sort of thing because it didn't make any difference. My point is though that they couldn't keep it up; maybe they could and maybe they didn't. But my point is, I don't think we've really ever had a situation where so much was on the line, because the credibility of U.S. foreign policy is on the line. It isn't the domino theory. It isn't anything else. It really is a test. It's a test like the Spanish civil war never was. And that's a different era, a different time. But it's really a test as to whether a nation supported by Soviet arms is allowed to get away with naked aggression."

Kissinger: "That's right."

Nixon: "And if they get away with naked aggression they're going to try it next in the Mid-East."

Kissinger: "That's right."

Nixon: "You know goddamn well they will."

Kissinger: "That's right. Of course, I told Dobrynin yesterday, 'If you're going to play this game, let me be honest with you. Supposing we started pouring weapons into Israel and told them there are no restrictions.'"

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: "'How long do you think your friends could last? Then you would say our problem in the Middle East. Now that's the world we're going to be in.' Now, this is the best month for it to happen. The Soviets—If the Soviets start a major crisis with us, their Berlin treaties are down the drain."

Nixon: "And he knows that?"

Kissinger: "That's right. So this is the worst month—"

Nixon: "Does Dobrynin [know we could ruin] the Berlin treaties—"

Kissinger: "Two phone calls and I'll ruin them. Look, Ken Rush and I between us could ruin those treaties in one afternoon."

Nixon: "Could you really, Henry?"

Kissinger: "Oh yeah."

Nixon: "Great."

Kissinger: "So they just are in a hell of a spot." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, April 10, 1972, 12:44–1:06 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 705–13)

90. Intelligence Note Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research¹

RESN-42

Washington, April 10, 1972.

USSR/DRV: HANOI'S OFFENSIVE: IS MOSCOW HAPPY?

North Vietnam's action in undertaking the major offensive now underway raises questions about Moscow's role in the decision and its timing.

The Case for Soviet Complicity. The visit of a high-ranking Soviet military delegation headed by Marshal Batitskiy, chief of the Soviet air defense forces, on the very eve of the offensive² suggests the possibility that the Soviets participated in the decision to launch the offensive and in its timing, and that therefore Hanoi's action was designed to serve the interests not only of the DRV but of the USSR as well. Indeed, it is possible to argue that a successful offensive by the North Vietnamese at this time would strengthen Moscow's credentials in Hanoi over those of Peking, improve the position of the USSR in Asia in dealing with both China and the US, and strengthen the Soviet leadership's hand in negotiating with the President when he goes to Moscow in May. Under this argument, the failure of Soviet media to publicize the Batitskiy visit appears as a rather obvious attempt by Moscow not to make its complicity so blatant as to jeopardize the President's visit to the USSR.

The Argument to the Contrary. It is also possible to argue that the case for Soviet complicity is outweighed by evidence of more important Soviet considerations.

The case against using Batitskiy's visit as evidence of direct Soviet complicity in the offensive rests mainly on the logic of the situation—that the USSR would achieve only marginal advantages, or even

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 VIET S. Confidential; No Foreign Dissem. Drafted by Igor N. Belousovitch (INR/DRR/RES/FP), cleared by Director of INR/DRR/RES Martin Packman, and approved by Deputy Director of the Directorate for Regional Research David E. Mark. The following note appears on the first page: "This report was produced by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Aside from normal substantive exchange with other agencies at the working level, it has not been coordinated elsewhere."

² Batitskiy visited Hanoi March 16-27. *Pravda* published the following announcement on March 28: "The D.R.V. Ministry of National Defense reports that a Soviet military delegation, headed by Marshal of the Soviet Union P. F. Batitskiy, has arrived in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on a visit of friendship at the Ministry's invitation. Leaders of the Vietnamese People's Army and officers arranged a warm reception for the delegation, the Vietnamese News Agency reports." (*Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIV, No. 13, April 26, 1972, p. 23)

disadvantages, to its own interests from the outcome of the offensive on the eve of the President's visit. At the same time, the USSR would see important Soviet interests threatened if the offensive were to jeopardize the President's trip.

Underneath Hanoi's frequent expressions of gratitude for Soviet aid (reiterated in DRV press treatment of the Batitskiy visit), and Moscow's frequent assurances of support for the DRV, there is a history of a more complex relationship between the USSR and the DRV. Over the years the Soviets have tended to hedge their bets by leaving open the option of a political settlement. There have been two recent instances of this tendency. Both showed Moscow and Hanoi to be in disagreement over the conduct of the war and the handling of peace negotiations, with the Soviets taking positions that favored a diplomatic rather than a military solution.

On February 11, TASS described an audience between Kosygin and the DRV Ambassador in Moscow as having involved a "frank" discussion. The latter evidently protested Moscow's slowness in condemning President Nixon's 8-point peace plan of January 25, although it is also possible that they were arguing over a Soviet effort to arrange an understanding between Hanoi and Phnom Penh. Subsequently, a DRV/FUNK communiqué of March 5 expressed Hanoi's public disapproval of the Soviet diplomatic initiative, labeling it as "foreign interference."

Effects of the Offensive on Moscow Visit. Given this background, it would appear unlikely that Moscow's failure to publicize Batitskiy's visit showed the Soviets to be engaged in a surreptitious effort to incite Hanoi to escalate the war in Indochina. To the contrary, the Soviets could well have had reservations about Hanoi's intentions, either because they regarded the timing of the offensive to be inappropriate, or perhaps because they had doubts about Hanoi's ability to score a significant military success. If Soviet leaders were hoping to discuss the possibility of a diplomatic settlement of the conflict with the President in Moscow on terms generally favorable to the DRV, any demonstration of military weakness by Hanoi at this time could significantly weaken Moscow's negotiating position and strengthen that of the US. And since the Soviets have matters to discuss with the President even more important than Vietnam, it seems hardly plausible that they would wish to jeopardize the visit by helping North Vietnam to press for a military victory at this time.

A senior Soviet official in the UN Secretariat told a former US diplomat on April 4³ that the timing of the offensive was "most un-

³ See footnote 2, Document 115.

fortunate” and expressed the hope that it would not interfere with the President’s trip. He stressed that Moscow was in no way involved in the planning of the attack. Such an approach, while clearly self-serving, gains in credibility when added to the record of discord in Soviet-DRV relations.

It is even possible to argue that in seeking an optimum posture for the Moscow talks, the Soviets would want to preserve a situation in Indochina which would allow them some flexibility to discuss a political settlement short of Hanoi’s maximum objectives. If Hanoi had just scored a significant military success, the Soviets would not have this latitude, for they would find themselves, as before, locked into a rigid posture of supporting the DRV while Hanoi continued to press for an unconditional victory.

By the same token, Hanoi is currently under great pressure to demonstrate its capability and determination to press the war to a successful conclusion. Given the fluid diplomatic situation in the wake of the Peking visit, the North Vietnamese are apprehensive that the great powers may seek understandings at their expense.

Recent statements from North Vietnam have clearly shown Hanoi’s awareness that both China and the USSR have matters to consider more important to them than the attainment by the DRV of its maximum objectives. Thus, Hanoi probably concluded that it must gamble in order to keep both locked into a posture of commitment to the achievement of victory.

Batitskiy Visit in Retrospect. In this context, the Batitskiy visit appears in an altogether different light. It would seem rather that Moscow knew about the imminence of the offensive but was concerned about Hanoi’s capability to limit the damage from the heavy US air raids, which were all but certain to be the US response to the offensive. This would explain the choice of the chief of the Soviet air defense forces to head a group of high-ranking air defense commanders to inspect North Vietnamese air defense capabilities.

If the Soviets have their fingers crossed over the current fighting, this is not to say that they are prepared to sell out Hanoi. After all, in the larger sense, the offensive was made possible by the USSR’s long-time supply of economic and military aid to North Vietnam. If the offensive succeeds, Soviet support of the DRV will continue as before, and with fewer qualifications. If it fails or the results are inconclusive, Moscow will assume the probability of a political settlement and trim its sails accordingly, while continuing to support North Vietnam in a measured way until such time as Hanoi comes around to a recognition of political realities.

91. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 10, 1972.

SUBJECT

The Soviets and Vietnam—Our Signals

If the situation in Vietnam should deteriorate and assuming we want to signal more explicitly to the Soviets, we need to select a set of actions that convey our meaning without prematurely jeopardizing the summit. This means either slowing down or freezing in discussions or contacts that are of substantial interest to the USSR.

As always in these situations, these things do not come free of charge since we—or important segments of our society—also have an interest in what is being done with the Soviets. The main object, however, would be to signal that we will not “do business as usual.” Consistency alone would seem to dictate some action comparable to what we did in the India-Pakistan crisis, the 1970 Middle East crisis and the 1970 Cuban fracas. Except possibly for the last, none of these involved Soviet actions—acts of commission and omission—quite as directly damaging to us as what is happening in Vietnam. I don't mean to draw simple analogies: there are many important differences cutting in different directions. In South Asia, the Middle East and Cuba there was a potential for direct US-Soviet confrontation. Soviet capacity to influence what was happening was considerable—in Cuba the Soviets could actually control events. In Vietnam, the Soviets' involvement is indirect (unless we moved against Haiphong) and their influence is more conjectural; yet Soviet support through matériel and advice is a crucially important asset to the DRV. It is killing Americans, could unhinge the Administration's whole policy line in Southeast Asia and could injure the President domestically.

I think we should operate on the broad hypothesis that whatever the precise Soviet motive and role in Vietnam, in the end the present

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Sonnenfeldt Papers [1 of 2]. Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. Sent for urgent action. The memorandum was forwarded through Haig, who initialed it. Kissinger wrote “OK” on the top of the first page. According to his memoirs, Kissinger requested the memorandum. “To keep up the pressure,” he explained, “I asked Hal Sonnenfeldt, my principal adviser on Soviet affairs, what negotiations with the USSR we could slow down that were of substantial interest to the Kremlin leaders.” (*White House Years*, p. 1118)

Soviet leaders probably have at least as large a stake as the President in not having the US-Soviet relationship degenerate. Consequently, the type of moves listed below should have the effect of inducing the Soviets to exert some pressure on Hanoi. Even if this judgment is wrong it is important to structure the situation in a way that brings home to Brezhnev that he, too, will have to bear some of the cost of what is happening in Vietnam; and that we are sufficiently serious and confident that we are prepared to pay a price ourselves in US-Soviet relations.

US Actions

(*Note:* 1. Public statements a la Laird and McCloskey² should be stopped for now.

2. You should background selected journalists on the meaning of the President's statement at the BW ceremony;³ also Dobrynin.)

The *grain sales talks* are underway; the key issue is credit. This is perhaps the area that we would be most vulnerable to charges of cynicism—extending credit to the USSR to buy grain while they ship heavy equipment to Hanoi. Unfortunately, it is also the area where we stand to make a commercial gain. Since no agreement is likely without credits, this should become for now our sticking point. In other words, *this affair should not reach agreement in the Moscow session* (see draft message to Butz, Tab A).⁴

The *maritime talks* open on April 17; we will have a rather high level delegation in Moscow (Samuels, Gibson, Dick Davies, Eagleburger).⁵ The unfortunate aspect will be the visibility—banquet toasts,

² Laird declared in a news conference on April 7 that the Soviet Union was “a major contributor” to the North Vietnamese offensive by failing to limit the use of its equipment to defensive purposes. (*The New York Times*, April 8, 1972, pp. 1, 11) For McCloskey's remarks on April 4, see Document 81.

³ See Document 89.

⁴ Kissinger approved the attached backchannel message, which was sent to Butz in Moscow on April 12. The text of the message reads: “Peter Flanigan has already told you of the President's wish not to have your current grain negotiations completed in Moscow. The President wishes to reinforce this directive in light of the Vietnam situation. Until that situation and Soviet role with respect to it are clarified the President must fully retain option not to proceed with the type of agreement you are negotiating. Tactical judgement as to which issues in your negotiation should be left unresolved is left to you and Palmby. In social and other contacts and particularly in any public statements you should avoid all optimistic language concerning overall US-Soviet relations. You should be aware that the President is deeply concerned about Vietnam and Soviet role relating thereto.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXI) The White House received a reply that afternoon, however, reporting that Butz had left Moscow before the message could be delivered to him. (*Ibid.*)

⁵ Nathaniel Samuels, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs; Samuels, Andrew E. Gibson, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Maritime Affairs; Richard T. Davies, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs; and Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy Plans and National Security Council Affairs.

etc. There is also the angle easing regulations for Soviet ships to enter our ports, which evokes images of Soviet shipping to North Vietnam. Because of the protocol sensitivities of Gibson and State, it may be difficult to change the composition of the delegation. But we can ensure that the talks do not yield agreements in this round, or we could postpone them by a week. At least, we should tell Samuels to avoid camaraderie and we could tell him like Butz, not to permit matters to reach completion.

Incidents at sea is still awaiting a Soviet response to beginning a second round. The Soviets will not agree to the first round understandings in any case, until there has been another round. Whenever they reply with a date we can decide at that time whether to let the timetable slide. High-level discussions with Soviet Admirals would be rather unseemly while we charge the Soviets with supporting the North Vietnamese offensive.

Health, Science, Environmental and Space Cooperation do not lend themselves very well to linkage or slowdowns since our rationale is that we and the Soviets benefit about equally and these are more or less in the interest of "mankind."

Lend-Lease is clearly in our interest and useful in linkage to the other economic questions. The talks start this week and we already have a tough, probably non-negotiable position.

The Exchanges Agreement will be signed on April 11. There is little purpose in stopping it, but we could get word to Beam to keep the rhetoric down.

The Patolichev Visit is the most highly visible project in the immediate future (April 27). He will receive considerable publicity as will the general topic of Soviet-American economic relations. *To call it off would be a strong signal, but should be considered if the situation in Vietnam continues.* If he does come, you might consider telling him that Vietnam could well set back economic relations since our public would not understand our moving on such things as credit under present circumstances.

SALT. A freeze in SALT would be a strong signal, of course, though this begs the question of who has the greatest interest in the agreement. These talks have remained fairly well insulated from other events, despite Smith's blunder in telling Semyonov of your message on India-Pakistan.⁶ Since the negotiations are now so tangled that a signal might not even get through, the best source is probably to continue without change for a week or two. By standing on our SLBM position, and our ABM proposals we, in effect, convey at least some firmness.

⁶ See Document 28.

Cuba. The Soviets still have a guided missile cruiser and an F-Class attack submarine in Cienfuegos. They have been at sea exercising with the Cubans. *If* we want to signal, then some more intensive surveillance and even harassment could be laid on. It has some merit in its own right since the prolonged stay of some Soviet naval vessels seems to be a violation, at least in spirit, of the “understanding.”

High-Level Diplomacy. You will recall that at the end of Brezhnev’s last letter⁷ he referred to the bombing. He brought it up in his March 20 speech,⁸ but this particular passage was censored out of the printed version. It is a peg for a Presidential message, but I would think that this should come later in the scenario. If we intended to engage the Soviets over North Vietnam directly at the Presidential level then we should have a clear message in mind. Do we want to tax the Soviets with their supplies? Do we want to threaten some action? Or are we going to press them to use their influence for negotiations? (If you wish, I could begin working on a draft.)⁹

The Summit. Whatever we decide on sending small signals or escalating our diplomacy, we have to consider that in the next two weeks or so the summit in its broadest outline and in some detail will be set (the advance Party arrives April 19). If we are concerned that by May 22 we may be in a difficult situation vis-à-vis bombing and the situation in the South, we might consider cutting back on the visit. For example, shortening it by a day or so, dropping off the third stop in Baku. This does not mean much but it might be prudent to begin thinking of what the visit would be like if the situation worsens.

We might consider dropping off the Polish visit, since it is marginal in any case. After all Poland does participate in the three power commission for Indochina, though retaliation against Warsaw is a rather cloudy signal.

We may of course find ourselves confronted by a Soviet decision to call off the summit or a threat to do so; and I note that for unexplained reasons the Poles have still not reacted to our acceptance of their invitation. For the moment, it would be imprudent for us to escalate the situation by tinkering with summit plans. That complex of decisions is at least as tough for the Soviets as it is for us and the best course for now is to wait. But we should *not* for now have Ziegler say anything on the itinerary, whatever the leaks.

⁷ Document 72.

⁸ See Document 65.

⁹ Kissinger wrote “Yes” in the margin near the end of this paragraph.

In sum, here is a modest game plan for gradualism:

—Ensure that the grain sales talks yield no results for now (message to Butz at Tab A).¹⁰

—Keep the maritime talks in low key and avoid final agreement; tell Samuels and Gibson.¹¹

—Hold off agreeing to date when Soviets propose one for the second round of incidents at sea.¹²

—Stay tough on lend-lease.¹³

—Leave other bilaterals alone for now, but tell Beam to keep rhetoric low when Exchanges Agreement is signed April 11.¹⁴

—Harassment of Soviet ships in Cuba.¹⁵

—Use Patolichev visit to take tough line, but *not* involve the President. Cancel, if situation deteriorates.¹⁶

—Letter to Brezhnev later this week.¹⁷

Could you let me know which, if any of these, you wish pursued, and how. The message to Butz for your approval is at Tab A.¹⁸

¹⁰ Kissinger initialed his approval of this recommendation.

¹¹ Kissinger initialed his approval of this recommendation and issued the following handwritten instruction: “Avoid excessively friendly toasts. Want to delay a week.”

¹² Kissinger wrote “want to think” next to this recommendation.

¹³ Kissinger initialed his approval of this recommendation.

¹⁴ Kissinger initialed his approval of this recommendation.

¹⁵ Kissinger wrote “no” next to this recommendation.

¹⁶ Kissinger initialed his approval of this recommendation.

¹⁷ Kissinger did not indicate a decision on this recommendation.

¹⁸ Attached but not printed.

92. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, April 11, 1972, 10:11–11:42 a.m.

SUBJECT

Vietnam

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

John N. Irwin

William Sullivan

Defense

Kenneth Rush

Warren Nutter

Maj. Gen. Fred Karhos

JCS

Maj. Gen. Louis Seith

CIA

Richard Helms

[*name not declassified*] (only for Mr. Helms' briefing)

NSC

Maj. Gen. Alexander Haig

Richard Kennedy

John Negroponce

Mark Wandler

[Omitted here is a summary of conclusions from the meeting.]

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Helms) What do you have today?²

Mr. Helms: There's not much to report on since the last sitrep. You are familiar with the Communist effort to reinforce in the DMZ and the A Shau Valley. The weather is lousy in most of South Vietnam. The Chinese have also issued a statement.³

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-115, WSAG Minutes, Originals. Top Secret; Sensitive. No drafting information appears on the minutes. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room. According to Kissinger's Record of Schedule, the meeting lasted from 10:12 to 10:41 a.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976)

² Attached to the minutes but not printed is a copy of Helms' briefing on the situation in South Vietnam.

³ Reference is to the Chinese statement of April 10, which expressed confidence that North Vietnam, and its allies in Laos and Cambodia, would "win complete victory in the war against U.S. imperialism and for national salvation." An April 13 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, assessing this and a similar statement of April 12, is in

Mr. Kissinger: My experts claim the Chinese statement is mild. What do you think?

Mr. Helms: It is mild. They made one charge of aggression, but they didn't say anything about aiding Hanoi. And they didn't threaten to intervene. Our Consulate in Hong Kong also sent in a report,⁴ saying the statement was mild.

Mr. Kissinger: As long as they claim North Vietnam is winning, there is no need for them to do anything.

Mr. Irwin: I agree with Dick's [Helms]⁵ assessment. There is one small point, though. The Chinese claimed the right to go across the DMZ, but this conflicts with earlier statements which in effect recognized four states within three nations in Indochina and thus totally accepted South Vietnam. On the whole, their statement is mild.

Mr. Helms: It's very reserved, compared to previous statements. I think they were about as mild as they could be—and still stand up.

Mr. Kissinger: What about the Soviets?

Mr. Sullivan: I take it you saw the Brezhnev–Honecker statement?⁶

Mr. Kissinger: Yes.

Mr. Irwin: There was a radio commentary in the Soviet Union yesterday which tried to make it appear the President's trip was still on. The commentary took a positive approach, and it didn't mention the war.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Helms) Dick, the Soviets surely must have known the offensive was coming. How do you explain their behavior?

Mr. Helms: I think it's their way of telling you not to pay that much attention to Vietnam. They are saying the war has been going on a long time—and they are not agitating it. We have much bigger matters to discuss, and Vietnam shouldn't get in the way. That's the real reason

the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 525, Country Files, Far East, PRC, Vol. IV.

⁴ Telegram 2447 from Hong Kong, April 11. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 VIET S)

⁵ Brackets in the source text.

⁶ Reference is to the communiqué issued at the conclusion of Honecker's visit to the Soviet Union, April 4–10, which stated: "Comrades L.I. Brezhnev and E. Honecker affirmed the fraternal solidarity of the Soviet Union and the G.D.R. with the heroic Vietnamese people and with the patriots of Laos and Cambodia. They expressed concern in connection with the recent expansion of U.S. aggression in Indochina. Following the boycott of the Paris talks, the U.S.A. embarked on a path of new bombings of D.R.V. territory. The peoples of the Soviet Union and the G.D.R. decisively condemn these aggressive actions of the U.S.A." (*Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIV, No. 15, May 10, 1972, pp. 16–17)

for their restraint and the radio commentary. It's their way of keeping you from getting agitated at them.

Mr. Sullivan: Bui Diem told us that he thought the Soviets provided the equipment to the North Vietnamese with the hope that the offensive would be launched in February—to spoil the China trip. He said he thought the North Vietnamese delayed the offensive until now because they wanted to embarrass the Russians. I want to emphasize that this is strictly Bui Diem's view.

Mr. Helms: The timing of the offensive slipped because of military factors, not political factors.

Mr. Kissinger: From the Russian point of view, the worst thing that could happen would be for the offensive to succeed. If we are run out of Vietnam, the Moscow trip would be called off, or we would go there as tough as nails. We couldn't possibly make any concessions.

Mr. Rush: It would also have a bad effect on the ratification of the German treaties and CSCE.

Mr. Irwin: The Soviets are caught in a dilemma, unless they cut off the flow of supplies to North Vietnam.

Mr. Kissinger: Butz [Secretary of Agriculture]⁷ is in Moscow now. Can we send him a message, telling him not to offer any exalted toasts to eternal U.S.-Soviet friendship? He should be polite, of course. If need be, he can say something in one sentence, similar to the sentence the President used yesterday at the CBW treaty signing.⁸

Mr. Irwin: We can tell Butz not to propose any toasts, but he will have to drink in response to the Soviet toasts.

Mr. Kissinger: It's just that we don't want him to give the impression that everything is fine.

Mr. Irwin: We will send him a message.⁹

[Omitted here is a detailed discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

⁷ Brackets in the source text.

⁸ See Document 89.

⁹ In telegram 61093 to Moscow, April 11, Irwin informed Butz that the administration had decided that in any public statements he should "exercise restraint in referring to prospects for US-Soviet cooperation." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 7 US/BUTZ) Also see footnote 4, Document 91.

93. **Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹**

Washington, April 12, 1972.

SUBJECT

Your Next Meeting with Dobrynin

Vietnam/Summit. There is no evidence so far that the Soviets are actively considering dropping the summit. On the contrary, while Soviet propaganda and Brezhnev himself (publicly in a communiqué with Honecker² and privately to Butz³ and of course directly to the President)⁴ are critical of US bombing in Vietnam, they clearly talk of the summit as a fact. Arrangements for the advance are proceeding; Brezhnev was quite fulsome to Butz about the “big welcome” the President would get and the “new big step” the visit would represent. In other respects, too, the Soviets are proceeding in their dealings with us as before.

On our side the picture is of course a bit different. The Soviets will assume that columns like those by Kraft and Evans and Novak⁵ were officially inspired. And they have no doubt hoisted in what the President said at the BW ceremony⁶ together with the press play about it and the earlier public statements by Laird and McCloskey.⁷ (Only Secretary Rogers has been slightly off this pattern in making a broadly positive public statement on the new US-Soviet Exchange Agreement yesterday.)⁸

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Sonnenfeldt Papers [1 of 2]. Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. Haig initialed the memorandum.

² See footnote 6, Document 92.

³ See Document 101.

⁴ See Document 72.

⁵ Joseph Kraft, syndicated columnist, and Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, co-authors of a syndicated column; both appeared in *The Washington Post* and other newspapers.

⁶ See Document 89.

⁷ See footnote 2, Document 91.

⁸ The exchange agreement was signed by Beam and Smirnov in Moscow on April 11. For text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, May 15, 1972, pp. 708–714. In a statement welcoming its signature, Rogers declared: “President Nixon has expressed this administration’s strong conviction that a sound relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union is an essential ingredient in our search for peace and security in the world today.” (*Ibid.*, p. 707) In an April 13 memorandum to the President, Kissinger also assessed the agreement in positive terms. “State is justifiably pleased with the Agreement,”

With the Canadian Parliament speech coming up,⁹ it is probably best for us to hold our fire now as regards the Vietnam/summit inter-relationship. While we want to keep the pressure on the Soviets to do something in Vietnam, we don't want to build pressure *on ourselves* to do something about the summit. We should remember (1) that Brezhnev obviously wants the summit and that he now knows we make a connection and (2) that if by the time of the summit the DRV has been fought to anywhere near a standstill the President will go to Moscow in a strong position. We can now afford to wait.

SALT. My reading of latest developments on SLBM is that the most that is obtainable now is some assurance that they will be taken up as the first order of business in the next SALT phase. Soviets at all levels have referred to the "complicated" problems involved and I would judge that this relates to the fact that the Soviets are busy bringing in a follow-on boat and the SS–NX–8. There may be genuine perplexity in the Politburo.

If you do pursue the idea of a follow-on negotiation you should nail down that this will not be tied to FBS. An agreement to SLBM follow-on negotiations may well be suitable for summit promulgation.

(*Note:* I personally have reservations about this course, but if we cannot get anything on SLBMs in this phase, it may be a lesser evil.)

At the same time you may want to go one more round with Dobrynin before in effect dropping SLBM for now.

As regards ABM, you and Smith have rejected the latest Soviet proposal.¹⁰ This ought to be made definitive so no more time is wasted on it.

Smith as you know has gone forward with our two for two proposal conditioned on SLBM inclusion. The delegation has also told the Soviets that we have no ABM position for the case that the Soviets do *not* agree to include SLBMs. This is strictly speaking true and it is tactically sound since we don't yet want to give up on SLBMs. But you and Dobrynin have already in effect begun to talk around

he explained, "which meets US objectives and is the best in the series going back to the fifties. The Soviets were very responsive during the negotiations—an encouraging and positive sign and probably attributable to the pre-Summit atmosphere." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXI)

⁹ See Document 100.

¹⁰ Although no record has been found of Kissinger's rejection, the Department informed Smith on April 10 that the President had decided that the "Soviet ABM proposal of April 6 is unacceptable in its present form." (Telegram 61537 to USDEL SALT VII (Helsinki), April 10; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN(HE))

this possibility and you have, I think, made clear that if SLBMs are not included we need some advantage on ABMs.¹¹ (You have Odeen's and my paper on how to do this; see Tab A.)¹²

The situation is going to be complicated when Smith makes his "personal" inquiry about substituting NCA for the second US/ICBM site.¹³ (Incidentally, is this with SLBMs included or excluded? If the latter it would provide us with an advantage only by *Soviet definition*, i.e., that our ICBM site defense would "protect" more ICBMs than a single site Soviet ICBM defense.) *I think you should today establish the principle that if SLBMs are excluded we will need an ABM advantage. Next time you should make him a specific proposal. (Note: If Dobrynin is going to be in Moscow for an extended period, this may have to be done by Smith.)*

Other Issues

Bilateral matters seem to be under control.

Grain talks, despite some unnecessary public statements by Butz in Moscow, will probably deadlock on the credit issue. The Soviets want concessionary terms—up to ten years at low interest rates. We cannot, by law, go above three years at commercial rates. (Brezhnev told Butz he can survive without a deal.) I suggest you stay away from this one for now.

Lend-lease begins here this week.

Commercial Shipping. The Soviets have given us a forthcoming counterproposal but a good deal of work still needs to be done. The talks are scheduled for Monday April 17 in Moscow (Nat Samuels, Gibson, etc.). I got your word to postpone for a week too late to hold up on this. But I will tell Samuels to cool the rhetoric. Again, I think you can stay away from this one for now.

Incidents at Sea. Nothing needs to be said to Dobrynin.

Patolichev. You may want to hint that this visit may have to be postponed if Vietnam gets worse. (You may recall that this was to be the occasion when we would intimate that EXIM may be in the cards at

¹¹ See Document 84.

¹² Not attached. Reference may be to the briefing book Odeen and Sonnenfeldt prepared for Kissinger under cover of an April 15 memorandum. The briefing book contains a draft memorandum from Kissinger to the President, which addresses the SLBM issue in detail—including the proposal to seek an advantage in the ABM treaty if SLBMs were excluded from the interim agreement. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-011, SALT Briefing Book 4/15/72)

¹³ Smith made his "personal" inquiry in a meeting with Semenov on April 22; see Document 147.

the summit.) The precise state of play is that Dobrynin owes Peterson an answer to the invitation for the period between April 27 and May 10. Pete thinks he may get a response at a Valenti/Dobrynin affair Thursday night.¹⁴ (Incidentally, I told Peterson's man that if Pete goes he should keep it cool and correct.)

Exchanges Agreement. Signed.

Science: David has his marching orders and will be getting back to Dobrynin in the next several days.

Environment. Dobrynin told Hillenbrand he will be contacting Train with a Soviet reaction to our illustrative proposal.¹⁵

Space Docking. NASA says all issues are under control as directed by the SRG.

Summit Preparations. The advance is to leave early April 17. Practical arrangements for the group are in train. We will have a problem with Soviet insistence that the President fly in Soviet aircraft inside the USSR. Scowcroft is appalled at sloppy Soviet flight and safety practices, even for their VIPs. The Soviets maintain that if their top leaders are to accompany the President, as they did de Gaulle and others, it will have to be in one of their own planes. (They also refer to what happened in China.) We may have to consider a compromise by using a Soviet plane to Leningrad and ours to Baku.

(*Note:* I have the impression Chapin is not fully aware of your discussion of arrangements with Dobrynin. You should fill him in, if necessary.)¹⁶

The Soviets are apparently being tough on the press question (100 man limit). Unless this has already been settled it is worth trying to improve on.

MBFR. My recollection is that you owe some sort of a response. We now have a paper¹⁷ on principles which you will get shortly. It is based on what is already common ground with the allies. You may

¹⁴ Reference is presumably to a social event on April 13 hosted by Jack Valenti, President of the Motion Picture Association of America.

¹⁵ Hillenbrand invited Dobrynin to meet at the Department on April 10 for a review of outstanding bilateral issues, including Train's proposals for cooperation on the environment. An account of the discussion is in telegram 61736 to Moscow, April 10. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR)

¹⁶ According to his Record of Schedule, Kissinger met Chapin, Haig, and Hyland on April 13 at 4:05 p.m. for 20 minutes to discuss Moscow. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976) No other record of the discussion has been found.

¹⁷ Reference is to a memorandum Odeen and Sonnenfeldt gave Kissinger on MBFR principles for the summit on April 14. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 482, President's Trip Files, MBFR–CSCE Backup Book [Part 1])

want to indicate that the President will be prepared to discuss principles in Moscow. (The other two possibilities—an effort to agree on a “quick and dirty” reduction, and an understanding on negotiating procedures—have many problems and pitfalls.)¹⁸

¹⁸ Kissinger wrote “5%” in the margin next to this paragraph, an apparent reference to the proposed level of “quick and dirty” mutual and balanced force reductions.

94. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 12, 1972, 12:55–2:40 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Ambassador of the USSR

Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

It was one of our regularly scheduled weekly luncheons.

Dobrynin began the conversation by talking about Vietnam. He said that as of the day before, the April 24 meeting was still on. He considered the April 24 meeting very crucial and he hoped nothing would happen to interfere with it. I said we had cancelled the plenary sessions that were supposed to precede this meeting, and that maybe now the other side would cancel the meeting itself.

Dobrynin said that he could assure me that his leadership was not interested in this conflict. I said “Let’s be realistic. You are responsible for this conflict, either because you planned it or because you tried to score off the Chinese and as a result have put yourself into the position where a miserable little country can jeopardize everything that has been striven for for years.” This was essentially a Soviet decision to make, I continued. The Soviet Union must have known when it signed two supplementary agreements during the year that it was giving the North Vietnamese the wherewithal to launch an offensive. What did the Soviet leaders expect? Did they expect the President to wait while

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. No drafting information appears on the memorandum. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. For Kissinger’s memoir account of the meeting—based largely on the memorandum of conversation—see *White House Years*, p. 1120.

the South Vietnamese army ran the risk of being defeated and 69,000 Americans were taken prisoner?

Dobrynin interjected by saying that the North Vietnamese had often offered to repatriate them immediately. I said "Anatol, this is not worthy of comment, and that situation will not arise. There must be a meeting this month. It must lead to concrete results, and if it does not there will be incalculable consequences. I might also point out that our whole attitude on a host of issues depends on it. How could the Soviet leaders ask us to proceed on the Middle East or to give support for the ratification of the [Moscow] Treaty while the war was taking this acute form? We were prepared to let it wind down. Why did the North Vietnamese not wait if they felt so confident? But now that the situation had arisen in which we were being challenged directly, we had no choice but to proceed."

I was also bound to tell Dobrynin that I was not authorized to discuss any of the other subjects with him.

Dobrynin replied that it seemed to him that a visit by me to Moscow was more urgent than ever. He thought that we should reconsider the decision for me not to go. He felt that I should go and discuss Vietnam with their leaders and at the same time accelerate preparations for the Summit. I told Dobrynin I would put this proposition to the President.²

Later on that afternoon I called him to tell him the result. [Telecon attached.]³

² Dobrynin later argued that Kissinger suggested the trip on his own initiative. According to Dobrynin, "Kissinger informed me that, in view of the dangerous aggravation of the situation in Vietnam, the president believed Kissinger should pay a short visit to Moscow to meet Gromyko and Brezhnev." (*In Confidence*, p. 244)

³ Brackets in the source text. Document 97.

95. **Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹**

Washington, April 12, 1972.

Kissinger: I think we're [unclear], to him, Mr. President.

Nixon: Dobrynin?

Kissinger: No. No, he's blubbering. He says Moscow can assure me—First of all, he's been told he can't go back to Moscow this week. They have a communication for him. The second thing he can assure me: they are in the most urgent touch with Hanoi. He said they have a terrible problem. For once I believe him, because—

Nixon: Yeah. What did he say?

Kissinger: He doesn't give me that bullshit about peace [unclear]. And he doesn't claim he's put upon when he's here. He said [unclear]. That's not your [unclear] what can be done. He says, "We can't turn, we can't turn them off from one day to the next, vis-à-vis when to get our military equipment"—which is very interesting. "It will take 3 months to take effect." He said, "We'll get them there on the 24th [of April], even though you canceled the plenary session." He said that he can assure me—or he thinks he can assure me.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: But I told you that. He said, however, they have one problem. He said right now all they can say to Hanoi is that it hurts the summit but Hanoi doesn't give a damn about the summit.

Nixon: Sure.

Kissinger: Therefore he cannot make some proposition, any proposition that they can transmit to Hanoi. I said, "Anatol, the President has set the eight points. We can't fool around." He said, "Can we at least tell them that you're willing to negotiate?" He said, "We, for the first time, are prepared to tell them you are serious and it's important." I said, "Anatol—." Frankly, I could have given him some garbage. I don't have—

Nixon: I know. I know.

Kissinger: I said, "I've got to talk to the President. He's very determined on this. The war has got to end."

Nixon: Yeah. Good.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 330–36. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger from 2:47 to 3:01 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files.) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Kissinger: He said, I said, —He said, “Are you sure you can see me tomorrow?” I said, “I’ll talk to the President.” He said, “May I tell them you’ll give me something tomorrow?” I said, “I’ll tell you tomorrow what the President said. What he will decide I can’t promise you because he makes these decisions very much on his own. But, I can tell—we are involved in a crisis [unclear]. I can tell him you guys are serious.” Then he said something. It may look, sound wrong again but I must tell you that, all he said. [unclear]. He said he believes that if I could talk to Brezhnev, if I could go there secretly, [unclear] and could I go for a few days prior to the Paris meeting, they would guarantee total secrecy and they would let me fly in on military routes, you know, uncovered by European radar—

Nixon: Uh-huh.

Kissinger: And—

Nixon: What do we tell him about—?

Kissinger: Well, I believe—

Nixon: That doesn’t give them [Soviets] anything to tell them [North Vietnamese].

Kissinger: No.

Nixon: Yeah. Why don’t they tell them? Why don’t they tell Hanoi that?

Kissinger: But you see, I believe, Mr. President—

Nixon: You see my point?

Kissinger: If it turns out—

Nixon: Rather than our giving anything to Hanoi now, why don’t we say that you’re going to go talk to Brezhnev?

Kissinger: Well, we can do two things, Mr. President.

Nixon: And the other thing I was thinking. It’s been doing a little [unclear] Do you, don’t you have to catch the plane?

Kissinger: I’m not going. I put off the meeting with the Chinese. But he was really serious. He said, “How about the Chinese? What if the Chinese turn against us if we do that?” I said, “Anatol, if you and we can pull off Vietnam, we don’t need the Chinese.” And—

Nixon: [laughter] That got him blubbering, didn’t it?

Kissinger: Yeah. But I can easily—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —give him a general formula tomorrow that doesn’t give him anything. Just—Plus if I said I’ll go there secretly before the 24th, provided there is a meeting on the 24th.

Nixon: How about this? How about telling them that you’ll go to Hanoi?

Kissinger: Well, that's too confusing.

Nixon: Well, let me see. You see, I'm trying to think of gimmicks now, for a minute, that don't—You know, I'm all for atmospherics and I'm not much for substance on a thing like this now but that is, giving them atmospherics is nothing.

Kissinger: Well, Mr. President—

Nixon: I just want—

Kissinger: For me to go to Hanoi, now—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: It looks like—

Nixon: We're hat in hand.

Kissinger: I think—

Nixon: I think your going to Russia's fine.

Kissinger: Well, secretly.

Nixon: If they can guarantee secrecy to Russia, I think you should go to Russia.

Kissinger: But, you see, I believe, Mr. President—

Nixon: Also there's some advantage in your sort of finding out what Brezhnev is like for us.

Kissinger: You see, I could also set up the thing for you there in such a way that—The way we had the Chou thing set up.²

Nixon: If he'll guarantee secrecy, then you tell him, "Now look, You have to know the President says that he's got a hell of a problem to be quite frank, with Rogers [unclear] you've got to show him every courtesy [unclear] you can say that, that is, that you can go. The President says that you can go, and you think it would be a good chance for you to discuss the summit at the same time. That will—You see this will put more heat on the Russians.

Kissinger: We have to make two conditions. One is I can go only if they deliver the North Vietnamese in Paris on the 24th.

Nixon: Yeah. But it isn't just delivering them. They'll be there on the 24th. But, Henry, they've been delivered 12 times and they haven't done anything.

Kissinger: Well, they've never been delivered to me.

Nixon: Well, all right. OK.

Kissinger: This time I told them—

Nixon: You mean, delivered—well, I understand. They will talk maybe this time, but you understand we haven't got any more talk left.

² Reference is presumably to arrangements for Kissinger's secret trip to Beijing in July 1971.

Kissinger: Mr. President, if they see me—First of all, if Brezhnev sees me after what we are doing to Hanoi—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I said to him, for example, “Look, we are going to take increasingly strong military measures before the 24th. I just want you to know this so that your people don’t feel we are fooling them.” He said, “Are you going to attack our ships?” I said, “I can’t tell you anything—”

Nixon: Good.

Kissinger: But until the 24th we will try to exercise as much restraint as the situation permits.” But, if these guys see me while we are clobbering Hanoi, either way, if they keep it secret—They have more of an incentive to keep it secret than we.

Nixon: Yeah. The Russians?

Kissinger: Yes. Because it—

Nixon: But I mean, what I’m getting at, I still get back to the fundamental thing. Now what, who’s going to, [unclear] what effect does it have on Hanoi?

Kissinger: On Hanoi it will have a disastrous effect.

Nixon: The fact that you’re going to Russia?

Kissinger: If I go to Russia before I see them?

Nixon: [unclear] want you to go.

Kissinger: I told him, again it puts us into, if it ever does come out, but it won’t come out. They have every—

Nixon: We don’t care. You understand?

Kissinger: But I think, Mr. President I’ve got—

Nixon: He’s got to worry about it.

Kissinger: I have a lot of experience with these guys now. And I can assure—I can tell you they are grappling. He said Mrs. Dobrynin was moved to tears by Mrs. Nixon³ and has written a personal letter to Mrs. Brezhnev. I told him, “Look, at this—.”

Nixon: I think the Russians want the summit, don’t you?

Kissinger: I think the Russians must. The whole position of Brezhnev depends on the goddamn summit. I told him, he asked me about SALT. I said, “I can’t make a new proposition to you. I can’t go to the Navy while we’re moving our fleet into—.”

³ Reference is to the meeting the previous afternoon between Irina Dobrynin and Pat Nixon; see Document 89.

Nixon: What you should have told him too, if you didn't, was how tough the Leaders were this morning.⁴

Kissinger: I told him that.

Nixon: They want to break off the summit and fight.

Kissinger: I told him. [unclear] But, well, he said that you are the greatest mind, one of the greatest psychologists he's ever seen. He said that he is in awe—We talked [unclear]. Well, I said to him, he said—Well, now, he asked me what I thought about this [unclear]. And I said, "Listen, Anatol, the thing that bothers me about you people is that you always pick up all the loose change that's lying around and you lose all your good will that way." He said, "Well—." And I said, "By contrast, frankly I will say this about the President: he never picks up loose change but when he moves, he moves for all the marbles. Remember that when you see our fleet moving out." I said, "Do you think—?" He said, "How about an armistice? Armistice for a month." I said, "Anatol, do you think you're going to keep our fleet sitting out there?"

Nixon: [When] the fleet moves, it means something. They even thought it meant something with India.

Kissinger: Mr. President—

Nixon: What do you think?

Kissinger: We have them bugged. And I believe really that a secret trip by me—

Nixon: That's right. I approve of that.

Kissinger: —has the advantage they're so panting after it that any slight chance there might be of their attacking us for what we're going to do will disappear.

Nixon: Right. For the secret trip to be taken, let's figure out what you can give to Hanoi.

Kissinger: Nothing.

Nixon: But this is before. What are you going to say to them? What are you going to say to him?

Kissinger: I'll just give them gobblygook—

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: Which restates my—

⁴ The President met 19 Republican congressmen, 9 senators, and 10 representatives, in the Cabinet Room from 8:05 to 10:14 a.m. After the meeting, Nixon met Senator Hugh Scott and Congressman Gerald R. Ford, minority leaders in the Senate and House, respectively, in the Oval Office until 10:26. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

Nixon: We'll be glad to discuss the eight points⁵ and the modalities of the elections.

Kissinger: Mr. President, it would be a mistake to give them anything this early.

Nixon: I agree.

Kissinger: We've got their knees shaking now.

Nixon: That's right. But the point is, what Dobrynin is saying, "Can't you give us anything?"

Kissinger: I'll say, "We'll go there—."

Nixon: I think giving, going to Russia is giving them something.

Kissinger: I'll say, "Tell them we will go there with an open mind, that our eight points are, of course, we are willing to negotiate about them—."

Nixon: But we're not going to negotiate a surrender.

Kissinger: And, "Of course, we won't ask you to surrender."

Nixon: Or we won't—

Kissinger: I'll just give him then general gobbledygook which commits us to nothing.

Nixon: But also that it has to be done now.

Kissinger: But we must now bring it to a conclusion.

Nixon: Before the summit.

Kissinger: And I tell you, Mr. President. Every instinct I—I have never said to you that we have a chance—at any particular time period. But we've never had the Russians begging us for specifics.

Nixon: Right. Well let's just keep in our Canadian speech [unclear].

Kissinger: Let me think. Let's wait until tomorrow. He may have a message. He said he was coming with a message. So—

Nixon: Well, the message will just be to give you a little crap.

Kissinger: Oh, no. No, no. Mr. President—

Nixon: But, on the other hand, what harm does it do to leave it in?

Kissinger: I would leave it in. My best instinct is to leave it in. But—

Nixon: What harm does it do to them? I mean—

Kissinger: But, what I think I would like to do now is to tell him that you are considering this trip idea, because when you hit them with B-52s they'll be under pressure to protest.

⁵ Reference is to the proposal for a peace settlement, which the United States first gave to North Vietnam in Paris on October 11, 1971. For text, released by the Department of State on February 1, 1972, see Department of State *Bulletin*, February 21, 1972, pp. 229–230.

Nixon: You'll tell him that way?

Kissinger: I won't tell him that you are, that you have approved it.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: But I'll tell him you are actively considering it—

Nixon: Tell him that he can tell his government.

Kissinger: —that there is a chance—

Nixon: Tell him, "The President is going to Camp David tonight. And he says that he will, he thinks there's a, that he will, there's a chance that you should take the trip. But we'd like to see what, but he wants to see their message first." How's that?

Kissinger: But, they didn't say definitely that they'd leave a message.

Nixon: Well then tell him he—

Kissinger: Just say you want to think about it.

Nixon: I think we ought to still make the Canadian thing. I've got a domestic problem here too, you know.

Kissinger: Then make it.

Nixon: You see my point?—It's fine. Can you [unclear] It was decent language.

Kissinger: I read it. I'd make it—

Nixon: That ought to be said for the Chinese too.

Kissinger: Mr. President, if you pull this one off, I'll—I think we should spend the Fall killing the goddamn Democrats.

Nixon: I'm sick of them. I'll tell you one thing. If it does come off, what we have to do is to get them further out on the limb too. I think we ought to force Kennedy and the others—

Kissinger: Well let's wait until we get that meeting. I will guarantee you one thing, Mr. President. Not guarantee—I think there is a two chance out of three that we can stop the war for the rest of this year. That's the minimum I think we can get. But if we can stop it altogether, I don't know. But that I think we can get.

96. **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**¹

Washington, April 12, 1972, 3:10 p.m.

P: With the Chinese I think you probably ought to . . . no need to play too hard a game with them on the rhetoric side, do you think? Say we understand but please, as the President said to the Prime Minister Chou, anything we do here is not directed against you. We wouldn't want them to say Mansfield and Scott shouldn't come or something like that.²

K: No, Mr. President, I think exactly that's the right course to take and that's what I planned to do.

P: Also give them the idea we are playing them against the Russians. Have you got any ideas on that?

K: Tell them the same principle is involved here as in the India–Pakistan thing.

P: We are not getting along well with the Russians; say the President has indicated that to the Russians, and so told the legislators. Say we are not putting any pressure on them. Are you going to call Dobrynin and say we will consider the trip to Mr. Brezhnev? If you are

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking. A tape recording of Nixon's side of the conversation is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 330–37. Several substantive discrepancies between the transcript and the tape (as transcribed by the editors specifically for this volume) are noted in the footnotes below.

² According to the tape recording (see footnote 1 above), Nixon said: "we wouldn't want [them] to say they're excited Mansfield and Scott are coming or something like that sort of thing." Senators Mike Mansfield (D–Montana) and Hugh Scott (R–Pennsylvania), majority and minority leaders respectively, visited the People's Republic of China April 19–22. For documentation on their trip see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVII, China, 1969–1972.

going for this purpose anyway, we can say . . . this is the major concern.³ Incidentally, did any strike get off?

K: They are going off now Mr. President.

P: At 2:30 today. I wonder when I will have a chance to see Haig.

K: Tomorrow. . . . Mr. President I have a call coming in from Dobrynin now.

³ According to the tape recording, Nixon said: "Yeah, but I mean, I meant another way to indicate that we're not getting along very well with the Russians and that the President has directed his remarks to the Russians and so too the legislative leaders. Why don't you put it that way? And that he's not putting any responsibility on the Chinese. How's that? Now, you've got to call Mr. D[obrynin] and just tell him that we will consider a trip to Russia. I think that has great merit. If they'll do it secretly and provide also the opportunity we would like to have anyway of your taking a trip to prepare the summit, which you see, which we did, we couldn't with the bureaucracy for its purpose. Nobody can squeal at the end of the secret. See? So I think it has an advantage for us apart from this. On the other hand, this is the real, this is the major reason."

97. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Soviet Ambassador (Dobrynin)¹

Washington, April 12, 1972, 3:15 p.m.

D: Calling you from gas station.

K: I called you because I just talked to the President and I am leaving town for a couple of hours² and I wanted to get word to you. The President is inclined to approve the secret trip of mine to Moscow if we can do it in conjunction with the Paris thing, a week from Saturday and Sunday.

D: What date?

K: 22 and 23.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² Kissinger left his office at 3:30 p.m. for a meeting later that afternoon in New York with Huang Hua, the Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations. (Ibid., Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) During the meeting, Kissinger briefed Huang on proposals for talks with the North Vietnamese and plans for the summit with the Soviets. The memorandum of conversation is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVII, China, 1969–1972, Document 220.

D: I guess you are right. 22 and 23?

K: Right. Arrive in Moscow around the evening of the 21st.

D: 21.

K: Right. That would give us two evenings and two days there. It's not yet 100 percent sure.

D: Could I pass it?

K: Yes, you can. I think it would be useful for them to know it on the assumption that it would be done secretly.

D: You tell me reasons from your side. From our side it could be done easily. Direct flight from Washington to Moscow?

K: Yes. If you would like to send a navigator over here. . . .³ Like to take route outside the radar of Europe.

D: You tell me the route.

K: On this I will give you a recommendation and you specify the airfield. It's not yet 100 percent sure; the President is going to Camp David⁴—he wants to think about it overnight. Our assumption is it would be secret. I would talk to Mr. Brezhnev and we would do it in the spirit I described to you and because I am going over anyway.

D: I understand. I think it is very helpful. I will pass this information to Moscow.

K: Good, and also I will have some word for you tomorrow you can tell them definitely. It will not be very precise, but you can explore their attitude. The President is going to Camp David to think about it and will instruct me in the morning.

D: [Omitted here are comments about Dobrynin's schedule.] So your call was the only cheerful one. It lifts my spirits. So tomorrow you will give me a call?

K: Yes, and we will get together. I will call you first thing in the morning.⁵

³ On April 14 Vorontsov gave Haig a handwritten note on arrangements for the Soviet navigators first to arrive in Washington and then return, with Kissinger, to Moscow. "All measures are going to be taken by the Soviet side," the note concluded, "to ensure the full secrecy." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10)

⁴ The President flew by helicopter to Camp David late that afternoon and returned to Washington by car the next morning. While at Camp David, Nixon met Haig for dinner (6 p.m.) and called Kissinger in New York (7:25 p.m.). (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) No substantive record of either conversation has been found.

⁵ No record of a telephone conversation between Kissinger and Dobrynin the morning of April 13 has been found.

98. **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**¹

Washington, April 12, 1972, 3:22 p.m.

K: I wanted to give the word to Dobrynin. He said it's the most cheerful news he had all day. I didn't even say you had agreed, just you were considering it. He said he will pass it to Moscow right away.

P: I feel you ought to go, not only to discuss this but the Summit. Was he happy?

K: He was slobbering. Brezhnev saw the Hanoi Ambassador today and made a statement of support. I showed this to my Europe man [Sonnenfeldt] who doesn't know what the hell is going on and said what do you think. He said if we made a statement like that about an ally he would conclude we were getting ready to screw him, and he knows nothing.

P: That's why we must keep the Russian thing in in Canada.² Don't you think?

K: Yes.

P: Okay, you go up to New York.³ Is the weather improving any?

K: Yes.

P: You will be back from New York by . . . I won't get a chance to see Haig. I'm staying up there until noon. You want Haig to see me there or you and I see him together? Or maybe he doesn't need to, good God, I guess he knows.

K: He knows your thinking.

P: How about my taking him with me up to Camp David, seeing him there for an hour and then sending him back? Tell him to go with me at 4:30 and come back about 7:30.⁴

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Kissinger placed the call at Nixon's request. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files)

² Reference is to the President's address before a joint session of the Canadian Parliament on April 14; see Document 100.

³ See footnote 2, Document 97.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 97.

99. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, April 13, 1972, 10:06–10:58 a.m.

SUBJECT

Vietnam

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

U Alexis Johnson

William Sullivan

Defense

Kenneth Rush

Armistead Selden

Maj. Gen. Fred Karhos

JCS

Adm. Thomas Moorer

CIA

Richard Helms

[*name not declassified*] (only for Mr. Helms' briefing)

[George Carver]

NSC

Maj. Gen. Alexander Haig

John Negroponte

Mark Wandler

[Omitted here is the Summary of Conclusions and a detailed discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

Mr. Kissinger: As I understand it, there are two factors which may cause the North Vietnamese to slow down their attacks; (1) the rainy season and (2) attrition due to combat.

Mr. Carver: That's true, but there is a parallel relationship between those two factors. Operations won't necessarily have to stop because of one of them. For example, they have pre-positioned men and supplies, in the hope that they won't have to break off contact when the rainy season begins. I think the two factors are timed to end at more or less the same time.

Mr. Kissinger: Would you say in about six weeks—starting two weeks ago?

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals. Top Secret; Sensitive. No drafting information appears on the minutes. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

Mr. Carver: You can figure on the end of May.

Mr. Kissinger: Do you think the enemy is bloody-minded enough to carry through while we are at the Summit in Moscow?

Mr. Carver: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: You think the Russians will let them do that?

Mr. Carver: The Russians, I don't think, have any way of stopping them right now. Perhaps they can do it later on—by cutting off the POL flow, or something like that.

Mr. Sullivan: The North Vietnamese have shown before that they are sensitive about POL.

Mr. Carver: There's quite a bit of lead time involved with cutting of the POL. If the flow stopped tomorrow, they would still have enough to carry through the offensive in MR 3. It would be a different story, of course, in the next campaign cycle.

Mr. Helms: The Communists have everything they need down there.

Adm. Moorer: The Russians have stepped up the flow of fuel to Haiphong in recent months. If I recall correctly, the increase in recent months has been around 30 percent.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Helms) Can you give us a rundown of the Soviet supply effort to North Vietnam in the last year?

Adm. Moorer: I can give you that. It's been higher than 200,000 tons a month during recent months. Fuel used to be one-sixth of the total tonnage, but in recent months it has been about one-fourth of the total.

Mr. Kissinger: How does the 200,000 tons compare to earlier times?

Adm. Moorer: It's higher. The figures used to be about 160,000 or 175,000 tons a month.

Mr. Helms: (to Mr. Kissinger) I will do a paper for you. We were just talking about this at the Agency, and I understand that it is more difficult than you would think to come up with the correct figures. For one thing, you have to rate the different kinds of equipment.

Mr. Kissinger: Do the paper.² We want to get some kind of a judgment on whether the Soviets knew they were increasing the offensive capability of the North Vietnamese. They may just have been continuing the flow of supplies at the normal—or a slightly increased—rate. On the other hand, they may have known that the requests for additional supplies would result in increased offensive capabilities.

² Document 117.

Mr. Sullivan: You may be aware that the Soviets and North Vietnamese recently concluded a supplementary aid agreement which included such things as POL and food.

Adm. Moorer: I'm positive the increased POL shipments are even above what the North Vietnamese requested.

Mr. Kissinger: How do you know that?

Adm. Moorer: I believe that was the way it was worded in the intelligence reports. I'll have to go back and check on it.

Mr. Kissinger: We can say the Soviet supply effort was one of three things. First, it may have been a plot which was designed to weaken us. Second, it may not have been a plot. But they should have known, anyway, that the increased aid would give the North Vietnamese greater capabilities. It's sort of like a loaded revolver. Third, it may have been that the guy in the Politburo in charge of Vietnamese accounts decided for some reason just to keep on going—and no one paid any attention to what was going on.

Adm. Moorer: Are you saying the Soviets have no better control over their aid program than we have over our own?

Mr. Kissinger: It's not inconceivable to me that someone in the Politburo was anxious to goose us because of the China initiative and, without thinking, increased the aid to North Vietnam. If the aid to North Vietnam has increased 30 percent, it is due to criminal negligence or total irresponsibility.

Adm. Moorer: We certainly knew about the increase in POL shipments.

Mr. Kissinger: Were we able to deduce that the offensive was coming?

Adm. Moorer: I connected the POL increase with the movements of the various North Vietnamese divisions.

Mr. Carver: There's no doubt that the timing of the offensive was thrown off. It should have started in January or February—and been over before the Summit. By the time you went to Moscow, the North Vietnamese wanted to have defeated the South Vietnamese. They wanted the situation to still be in peril, but they wanted the major fighting to have ended.

[Omitted here is detailed discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

100. Editorial Note

On April 13, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger met Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin in the Map Room at the White House from 12:05 to 12:46 p.m. to discuss his upcoming trip to Moscow and proposals for talks with the North Vietnamese. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) Although no substantive record has been found, Dobrynin described the meeting in his memoirs: “When I informed Kissinger on April 13 that we agreed to receive him on his secret mission, he said he was also willing to meet the North Vietnamese in Moscow if they wanted (they said they preferred Paris). He briefed me on the basic American position, but the leadership in Hanoi did not let us know where it stood.” (*In Confidence*, page 244) Kissinger then briefed President Nixon in the Executive Office Building at 2:16 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President’s Daily Diary)

Kissinger: “I had another talk—”

Nixon: “Right.”

Kissinger: “—with Dobrynin.”

Nixon: “Another talk?”

Kissinger: “He came in and said he’s already got a message back from Moscow saying that it’s very important I should come.”

Nixon: “Right.”

Kissinger: “They want me to come.”

Nixon: “Did you give him the answer then today and say it was OK?”

Kissinger: “I said you were not yet back, but I would give him the final answer. I just thought that we should—”

Nixon: “Right.”

Kissinger: “—wait for—”

Nixon: “Right. I’m waiting. Right.”

Kissinger: “Vietnam will be agenda item number one. And therefore they request that I get there a day earlier than I had suggested. And also they said the Vietnamese delegation for their talk with me is coming through Moscow on Sunday [April 23]. And they want to have completed their talks on Vietnam with me before Sunday.”

Although Kissinger commented that the Soviets were “really slobbering right now,” Nixon first wanted to discuss domestic politics and public relations, including his address the following day to a joint meeting of the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa (see below). Kissinger then continued to report on his meeting with Dobrynin.

Kissinger: "Now, one thing Dobrynin told me is that as of Tuesday night [April 11] the North Vietnamese were still coming on the 24th. And—"

Nixon: "Yeah. Well—"

Kissinger: "Well, but that's, they made three conditions: that we come on the 13th; the 20th, the plenary session; and that we stop the bombing of the north. We have not met any of these conditions. If they come under those circumstances, that in itself is an unbelievable confession of weakness."

Nixon: "I agree."

Kissinger: "Secondly, if they come after I've been in Moscow—and he told me that Moscow [unclear] my going there—which is fine. They won't leak it; they have no interest."

Nixon: "We don't care about the leak."

Kissinger: "But after that visit, now what Dobrynin said to me—You know, it's very different cycle now. None of this—"

Nixon: "I know he gets to the cold points. I know."

Kissinger: "It's now as cold—Now, it's like your conversation—"

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: "—at the time you were building up the [unclear]. None of this baloney about what are we doing to us, how does this—"

Nixon: "Well he comes in and says, 'My government [unclear] that.' And then he talks just like it's straight out of the horse's mouth."

Kissinger: "He says, 'Look, we have this problem. Our national interest is against what's going on in Vietnam now.' He also—"

Nixon: "Yeah, they've been saying that. That's the Harriman line."

Kissinger: "Well, yeah but not—No, there's been no reply like this."

Nixon: "I know, I know. But, you know, that's, that is the Harriman line. Go ahead."

Kissinger: "No, but—"

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: "No, their line used to be that we were ruining the possibility of good relations with them."

Nixon: "Oh, I get it. Go ahead. But whatever it is—"

Kissinger: "He was saying their national interests. On the other hand, he said we shouldn't push them in a position where they seem to be selling out."

Nixon: "Right."

Kissinger: "But, he said, 'Let's be realists. What do you want?' I said, 'We want an end of military operations. That's the minimum. We are not going to sit there and talk and get ourselves chopped up over a period

of months. We've now got our forces together out there and we're going to use them.' He said, 'Can you, is that an irrevocable decision against us?' I said, 'We will do what is necessary but the war in Vietnam must stop.' He said, 'If we give, get you a guarantee that military action stops for a year, is that satisfactory?' Mr. President, frankly—"

Nixon: "If he needs it. Did you tell him that?"

Kissinger: "If these guys after this attack—"

Nixon: "Well, the point is that you could have a truce for the purpose of talks. That's what I have in mind. But go ahead."

Kissinger: "Well but we may even get peace, that's why I don't want to—"

Nixon: "Yeah, but don't give it away. Oh I know."

Kissinger: "Don't give it away yet. But, if after cranking up this operation, they stop—I said, 'Now the first thing, you have to remember, Anatol, is we don't believe a word Hanoi says. So Hanoi can offer us anything but you, you've got to guarantee it publicly before we can even con—, before I can even take it to the President. Because the President is in such a mood now that if I come to him and say Hanoi promises something he will throw me out of the room.'"

Nixon: "Good. What'd he say? Does he believe you?"

Kissinger: "Oh, yes."

After discussion of U.S. naval presence in the Gulf of Tonkin, Kissinger reported a Soviet proposal for negotiations on Vietnam.

Kissinger: "So he said, 'Are you prepared to do this?' He said, 'If we get military operations stopped, are you prepared to say to the North Vietnamese you have proposed a coalition government, we've proposed an election; We're willing to talk whether a compromise is possible between these two positions? Talk about a compromise we can do, Mr. President.'"

Nixon: "Sure."

Kissinger: "If they stop military operations for a year, they're finished."

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: "Because that would be interpreted all over Vietnam as a massive defeat for Hanoi."

Nixon: "Right."

Kissinger: "Then he said, 'Well, what about this limitation of military aid if both of us agree?' I said, 'All of your allies would have to agree too. We can't let you send stuff in through Czechoslovakia.'"

Nixon: "And your allies, the Chinese, have to agree too."

Kissinger: "Well—"

Nixon: [laughter]

Kissinger: "All I'm trying to say, Mr. President, is—You remember how many years we tried and they wouldn't even communicate our messages—"

Nixon: "I know."

Kissinger: "—to Hanoi."

Nixon: "I know."

Kissinger: "He tells me they're in active daily contact. He says, Vietnam is agenda item number one when I get there. He says—"

Nixon: "When you get there?"

Kissinger: "When I get there—"

Nixon: "Oh yeah. Hell yes."

Kissinger: "But they're trying to get the goddamn thing—They're not saying, 'If you blockade, you'll be in a confrontation with us.'"

Nixon: "Well, I hope that he doesn't feel, though, that he doesn't come out with coalition government concession from you."

Kissinger: "There's no chance of it, Mr. President. What he's looking for, as I understand it, is some face-saving formula that enables them to stop the war for a time—"

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "—in which we are committed to talk about something and they are committed to stop fighting. We will have achieved—If they stop fighting, Mr. President, it will be a bigger victory by far than the Cuban Missile Crisis."

Nixon: "Oh, shit, we didn't lose—The Cuban Missile? Christ, we didn't lose any Americans. The Cuban Missile didn't involve Americans; it involved a bunch of damn Cubans."

Kissinger: "Let's look at it another way. Supposing tomorrow morning Hanoi publicly said to you, 'We are willing to make a compromise on the political thing, are you willing to talk about a compromise without making a proposal?' We've got to say, 'Yes, we'll talk about it.'"

Nixon: "Basically what we'll have here is a bombing halt with, with action on their side rather than an understanding."

Kissinger: "But the ball is on their side."

Nixon: "On both sides."

Kissinger then recommended that Nixon approve plans for "some strikes on truck parts and POL depots around Haiphong and Hanoi this weekend." Kissinger argued that bombing in the North was more effective than fighting in the South, which "won't get the Russians in."

Kissinger: "Because if the battle is confined to the South—"

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: “—the Russians will believe that if Hanoi wins that’s good for us, for them because it weakens us; and if Hanoi loses, it’s good for them because it increases Hanoi’s dependence on them. So the southern battle they don’t mind. What’s panicking the Russians is that we will blockade or that we will so tear up North Vietnam that they will be forced to put in something in an area in which they have nothing to gain. And, therefore, risky as it is, we’ve got them to where we are in this game by running enormous risks.”

Nixon: “The Chinese raise hell about it. That’s what I would do.”

Kissinger: “Well they’ll all raise hell about it. I’ve already told Dobrynin we’re going to do something intensified. And he said, ‘Well, must you do it?’ I said, ‘Yeah.’ He said, ‘Well, as long as [unclear] but it won’t be a good [unclear].’”

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: “The point is, Mr. President, the extent of the damage.”

Nixon: “Yeah.”

Kissinger: “We don’t have to do it. But I think showing that we keep coming, that this thing is going to get worse and worse is helpful.”

Nixon: [unclear] “in my view—And of course we always run the risk of blowing the whole thing.” [unclear]

Kissinger: “Mr. President, I cannot believe that. I believe that the only thing that can blow this is if we blink now.”

Kissinger suggested another link between the military situation in Vietnam and political relations with the Soviet Union. Dobrynin had recently said that Moscow “very much appreciated” Nixon’s decision to avoid “ostentatious connections with the Catholic Church” during his trip to Poland. “What we have to show the Russians,” Kissinger told Nixon, “is that they are jeopardizing this sort of cooperation by horsing around in Vietnam.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, April 13, 1972, 2:16–2:50 p.m., Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 329–32)

During the meeting Kissinger also convinced the President, albeit temporarily, to delete a sentence from his Canadian speech. (Ibid., White House Special Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I) The sentence, which had been intended as one of a series of signals to the Soviets, reads: “The great powers cannot avoid responsibility for the aggressive actions of those to whom they give the means for embarking on such actions.” (President’s Reading Copy; *ibid.*, President’s Personal Files, Box 74, President’s Speech File, Friday, April 14, 1972, Canadian Parliament Speech) According to White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman, who also attended the meeting, Kissinger insisted that the

United States should respond to but not initiate a public debate with North Vietnam. (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) In his Ottawa address on April 14, the President delivered a clear message to Moscow on Vietnam—including the sentence previously deleted at Kissinger’s request. Although his visits to Beijing and Moscow were “for the peace of all mankind,” Nixon warned that summit meetings might create “unrealistic euphoria.”

“The responsibility for building peace rests with special weight upon the great powers. Whether the great powers fulfill that responsibility depends not on the atmospherics of their diplomacy, but on the realities of their behavior.

“Great powers must not treat a period of détente as an interlude between periods of tension. Better relations among all nations require restraint by great nations—both in dealing with each other and in dealing with the rest of the world.

“We can agree to limit arms. We can declare our peaceful purposes. But neither the limitation of arms nor the declaration of peaceful purposes will bring peace if directly or indirectly the aggressive use of existing weapons is encouraged.

“And great powers cannot avoid responsibility for the aggressive actions of those to whom they give the means for embarking on such actions.

“The great powers must use their influence to halt aggression—and not to encourage it.” (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, page 540)

101. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, April 14, 1972.

SUBJECT

Secretary Butz's Meeting with Brezhnev

Secretary Butz was received by Brezhnev on Tuesday² for an informal conversation on political subjects as well as on trade and the current grain negotiations. The fact that the Secretary was received—the first American official visitor Brezhnev has talked to since 1963³—was an unusual gesture, and received front page *Pravda* treatment. Though this was in part a courtesy in return for your having met with Agriculture Minister Matskevich,⁴ it is relevant to Vietnam and the summit; it may be a signal to us that the Soviets are apprehensive about Vietnam, and to the Soviet people (and Hanoi) that Brezhnev is interested in keeping our relations on an even keel.

In any case, *Brezhnev assured the Secretary that you would receive a "big welcome" and the visit would be a new, big step since he (Brezhnev) was sure that there would be many points in common.* Brezhnev referred to having been in touch with you recently,⁵ "answering" many of your questions. (This is a reference to his correspondence with you, which may arouse curiosity in our Embassy and the recipients of the reporting cable from Moscow.)

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXI. Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. Sent for information. The memorandum is largely based on an attached report from Beam. (Telegram 3355 from Moscow, April 12; *ibid.*, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/BUTZ) No drafting information appears on the memorandum. Sonnenfeldt forwarded it to Kissinger on April 12 under cover of a separate attached memorandum, in which he recommended a postponement of several days on Butz's request for an appointment with the President. "To receive him immediately," Sonnenfeldt explained, "would certainly play up the grain talks (which Butz already did for the press in Moscow) and undercut any other efforts to make a record on Vietnam."

² April 12. Kissinger briefed the President that afternoon on the meeting between Brezhnev and Butz. Haldeman noted in his diary: "K came in to report on Vietnam and said the Russians are falling all over us, that they had a glowing meeting with Butz and were in great praise to the P[resident] and so forth." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) A tape recording of the meeting is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, April 12, 1972, 12:41–12:55, Oval Office, Conversation No. 707–10.

³ Reference is to the meeting on May 29, 1963, between Brezhnev and Glenn Seaborg, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission; see *Foreign Relations, 1961–1963*, vol. V, Document 325.

⁴ See Document 23.

⁵ See Document 72.

Brezhnev said you would be invited to stay in the Kremlin, and a plane would be at your disposal to visit places you wish to go. He said, however, that more emphasis would be put on useful discussion than protocol. In a different context, Brezhnev stressed the US and Soviet people are genuinely for peace and the two greatest nations must live together in mutual respect and understanding. He was “pondering” ideas about new contacts which should be established. (This rather cryptic reference might be an allusion to establishing some sort of a permanent consultative mechanism, which the Soviets have in their agreement with France and Canada and which has been mentioned in my talks with Dobrynin.)⁶

Brezhnev referred to your trip in 1959, and seemed to criticize Khrushchev for initiating the Kitchen Debate.⁷ He added that he remembered you from that visit, since he was a member of the Politburo. (In fact, Brezhnev was present at Sokolniki Park during the debate.)

On Vietnam, Brezhnev said to bring to your attention the deep feeling of the Soviet people over the bombings—which he said was an unnecessary extension of the war. The Soviet people were saddened (by the bombing) because of their own experience in World War II. Secretary Butz and Ambassador Beam were unable to reply to this intervention because Brezhnev kept changing the subject. The Ambassador notes that though the remarks were gratuitous, they were not made in an offensive tone.⁸

Much of the conversation was about *US-Soviet trade*, in a very general fashion. Brezhnev called for increase on the basis of equality. He noted the grain talks and said he would be following them. Secretary Butz mentioned grain purchases of about \$200 million on terms as favorable as we give to any nation (this was also proposed in the talks). Brezhnev merely replied he wanted the talks to succeed, but that the USSR would need adequate credit terms. The Soviet Union could survive without such deals if necessary, he added. (In fact, in the negotiations the Soviets opened with a proposal for 10 year credits of 2 per cent interest, which was suggested only half jokingly. They later mentioned 6–8 years and wanted major concessions.)

⁶ Kissinger and Dobrynin discussed the issue during their meeting on March 9; see Document 56.

⁷ Reference is to the exchange between Vice President Nixon and Soviet Premier Khrushchev at the American National Exhibition in Moscow on July 24, 1959.

⁸ In addition to the telegram cited above, Beam later forwarded in a separate telegram his impressions of Brezhnev from the meeting. “Brezhnev struck me as crude but impressive,” the Ambassador reported. “He is a burly man and seems to move massively and fast in everything he does. Although mentally collected, he was physically nervous, like someone who has been ordered by his doctor to give up smoking and cannot do it. He smoked three cigarettes while we were there, and kept compulsively playing with a stack of pens on the table.” (Telegram 3463 from Moscow, April 14; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/BUTZ)

On other trade matters, the Secretary suggested the Soviets could expand their exports to repay credits by supplying natural gas since our energy needs were doubling within ten years. Brezhnev said they favored “big scale” trade, and he promised to send the Secretary a list of suitable Soviet exports.

The Secretary is returning to the US on Thursday, and will probably want to meet you after the Canadian trip.⁹

⁹ Butz met Nixon on April 18 from 3:12 to 3:37 p.m. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President’s Daily Diary) A tape of the conversation is ibid., White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Butz, April 18, 3:12–3:37 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 711–21. In an April 18 memorandum to the President, Kissinger briefed Nixon on the meeting with Butz, including “a Moscow press conference during which he made several remarks which Peter Flanigan has since pointed out to him when beyond the scope of his mission.” Kissinger suggested that the President “inform Secretary Butz that with regard to credits you are considering EXIM and Most Favored Nation treatment but that this is heavily related to the situation in Vietnam and to negotiations with the Soviets during your forthcoming visit to Moscow.” (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 196, Agency Files, Agriculture, 1971–[1974], Vol. II) On April 18 Sonnenfeldt also forwarded Flanigan’s account of his meeting with Butz on April 13 and a transcript of Butz’ press conference in Moscow the previous day. (Memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, April 18; ibid.)

102. Editorial Note

On April 15, 1972, North Vietnam cancelled the private meeting with Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger scheduled for Paris on April 24; later on the same day, the United States began a 2-day strike against military targets near Hanoi and Haiphong. Although coincidental, these two decisions on Vietnam directly affected relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. As he returned to Washington from Ottawa aboard the *Spirit of '76* that morning, President Nixon seriously considered canceling Kissinger’s trip to Moscow in response to North Vietnam’s refusal to meet in Paris immediately thereafter. White House Chief of Staff Haldeman recorded a discussion of the subject with Kissinger in his diary: “Henry told me on the plane that there’d been a problem in that the North Vietnamese now want to put off the April 24 talk and the question is whether he can go to Moscow or not. His inclination is to go anyway, and then just come back. He doesn’t feel he can go to Moscow in May when the Paris talk will be, because it’s too close to the P’s trip. He spent quite a little time on the plane with the P on that subject.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia*

Edition) Nixon also wrote a diary entry on the airborne debate of what, in his words, Kissinger deemed “a crisis of the first magnitude.”

“I laid down the law hard to him that under these circumstances he could not go to Moscow. I told him that what the Russians wanted to do was to get him to Moscow to discuss the summit. What we wanted to do was to get him to Moscow to discuss Vietnam. I can see that this shook him because he desperately wants to get to Moscow one way or the other. He took it in good grace. Then I told him that we had to consider our option with regard to imposing a blockade.” (*RN: Memoirs*, pages 590–591)

During an hour-long meeting in the Old Executive Office Building at 1 p.m., Nixon and Kissinger conducted a series of calculations between their military options in Vietnam and their diplomacy with the Soviet Union.

Nixon: “Now, let’s talk about the blockade a moment because that fits into what you say here.”

Kissinger: “Right.”

Nixon: “It might provide another way to go [unclear]. Let me tell you about the blockade. In my view, if we’re going to do it, we got to do it very soon or we will not have the support for it.”

Kissinger: “I agree.”

Nixon: “And that support runs out as time goes on. In fact, we probably should have done it this week, you know. I’m just saying, I’m just saying, I’m speaking in terms of having public support in the United States.”

Kissinger: “Right.”

Nixon: “The support can run out. If the blockade comes at a time that disaster is impending in the South, and people know it, or when riots are going on here, then it looks like an act of desperation. But if we can move before either of those things happen, then we might have a great deal of public support for it—for a while. You see that’s my reasoning for doing it sooner rather than later.”

Kissinger: “Right. I agree.”

Nixon: “The second point is that that could be an argument for your going to the Soviet even though there’s no meeting on the 24th. The idea being that you go [unclear] with the condition that the primary subject for discussion is Vietnam. Unless there’s something positive, tangible to offer that the President is going to take action. And at that time, you would tell them—”

Kissinger: “I wouldn’t tell them what action is planned [unclear]—”

Nixon: “[There will] be strong action. It will not be directed against you [Soviets].”

Kissinger: “The way to do that if I play out that scenario.”

Nixon: "All right, let's play that out."

Kissinger: "As I thought of it—it was one of the things I had in mind."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "What I would say then is, 'Vietnam is, must be the first agenda item. There must be concrete progress on this.'"

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "If there is no concrete progress on it, I would refuse to go on to summit agenda items."

Nixon: "Right. Right."

Kissinger: "If there is concrete progress on it, I would be entitled—empowered to discuss summit agenda items."

Nixon: "Yeah. Right."

Kissinger: "But the progress cannot be an agreement to talk."

Nixon: "Yeah." [unclear]

Kissinger: "And it must be a precise description of how the war will come to an end."

Nixon: "How the war will come to an end. Yeah. Yeah. Not just an agreement that they will deliver the South Viet—, the North Vietnamese to a meeting. That isn't going to work."

Kissinger: "Right that's not going to work."

Nixon: "Second point."

Kissinger: "It will slightly affect the message we send to them [the Soviets] this afternoon, Mr. President."

Nixon: "That's what I'm thinking. The second point is—"

Kissinger: "It also has the advantage vis-à-vis our domestic opinion. That we have gone absolutely the extra mile."

Nixon: "Sure. Yeah. Well, that brings me to the second point: the reason for your going. Put on that basis, then you go. [unclear] have to figure that you've got to look at the hard place, which would be that if we don't get anything on Vietnam, except, you know, discussion or something of that sort and the South Vietnamese fold whether we really can still go to the summit. We're going to have to make, we're going to have to make an evaluation. It may be, it may be, that we may still go. In other words, let me put it this way. As I look at going to the summit, Henry, we cannot go—there are two extremes—we cannot go if the South Vietnamese are on the rocks."

Kissinger: "Impossible."

Nixon: "We could go, we could go, and I'll make this concession, if the situation is still in flux, with the understanding that we will discuss it at the summit and something is going to come out of it at the summit. But there's our problem there. Now, the point that I make is that your going—They want the summit. They want it badly. And

you're going to of course hold over their heads the—I don't know if the blockade is going to worry them, but the German thing is. And it's been a [unclear] thing but I'll sink that without any question. We'll just tell Barzel and the Russians now we're against it. Do you agree?"

Kissinger: "Right."

Nixon: "Now—"

Kissinger: "But that means we have to get across it soon."

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: [unclear] "I told them May 4th."

Nixon: "[That's] another reason for going. [unclear] So as distinguished from this morning [unclear] I'm inclined to think that probably [our] message to them should be that, in view of this, the President has now changed [his] opinion. The directions are corrected as follows. That—"

Kissinger: "I should say this." [unclear]

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: [unclear] "they have turned us down now for the 24th."

Nixon: "Right."

Kissinger: "The—"

Nixon: "Would you tell them about this rigamarole with Porter?"

Kissinger: "Well, then there's the point that, look, they've turned us down for April 24th, which means they absolutely cannot deliver them—which raises then serious questions about the utility of my trip to Moscow. I should be very tough. Secondly, the President had turned down originally a meeting in Moscow simply to prepare the summit for reasons that he has explained to Dobrynin. [The reason that I'm] now going to Moscow is [unclear] to discuss Vietnam and in connection with that [I] also would be authorized to discuss the summit. Now we have offered the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese a meeting again [unclear] for the 24th, with a promise of coming on the 27th."

Nixon: "And an announcement."

Kissinger: "And we are prepared to make that announcement before the 24th. Secondly, we have to have a clear understanding before I come to Moscow that some concrete progress will be made towards a rapid end of the Vietnam War. And before the President can give his final approval to my trip, he would like to hear the Soviet response to this [message]."

Nixon: "Right. [And we need a] response immediately [because you've got to make your plans.]"

Kissinger: "That's right."

After discussing the details on the ground, the two men considered the global implications of their military options in Vietnam.

Kissinger: "And another problem, Mr. President. The Russians have two reasons why they don't want this. One is it would drive, it would force them into a confrontation with us."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "Second is, it would force Hanoi towards Peking. Because the only way that Hanoi could possibly be supplied is for Peking to supply the—"

Nixon: "Yeah. Yeah. And of course, well then that brings me to the point, the effect. The effect would be for Peking to have to get more deeply involved in the war, or get the hell out of the blockade."

Kissinger: "Right."

Nixon: "The effect also is it will brake our China initiative. The effect—Huh?"

Kissinger: "[It will] be tough on our China initiative."

Nixon: "Yeah. What would it do to the Russian initiative? If the Russians call off the summit, we blockade, [unclear] here you would, you would have—what we're doing is we're making ourselves hostage, putting it quite brutally, to the Soviet on Vietnam. On the other hand, the alternative is that the Soviet initiative and the China initiative [unclear] all that hangs on, isn't going to be worth a hell of a lot if Vietnam goes down the tubes. So—"

Kissinger: "If it doesn't go—"

Nixon: "We have no other choice."

Kissinger: "If it doesn't it would be the result of strength. You see what the Soviets want from us on the summit is in effect to screw us. Now, I know we're doing it because of long term interests and all of that."

Nixon: "I know."

Kissinger: "But after what we've done to Taiwan, Israel, Vietnam [unclear] its just not—then this policy that Trudeau described of throwing our weight to one side or the other. It doesn't work because we won't have any weight to throw."

Nixon: "If the Russians don't come up with anything here, we have no choice but to blockade. I really have no doubt about it."

Kissinger: "[unclear] recognition, Mr. President, that [unclear]"

Nixon: "Unless the battle in South Vietnam just goes a hell of lot better than we think it will." [unclear]

Kissinger: "That's right."

Nixon: "It could."

Kissinger: "It could."

Nixon: "[unclear] could be wrong, do you see what I mean? The forces of opposition in this country and around the world will begin

to build next week. If they build too great, the blockade then comes at the wrong time. The blockade could come right now. We could do it tomorrow. If we, you know, if we see, you know, action, we always say, stops the [unclear] debate—for a while. That's why I'm just wondering whether or not maybe our option isn't to blockade now."

Kissinger: "Well, Mr. President, with that people are just not—First of all we have to play the Russian string out here a bit."

Nixon: "Fine."

Kissinger: "I'll say this for the Russians. They are bloody-minded sons-of-bitches. But Hanoi hasn't fought for 35 years in order to be pushed around by the Russians either. So we have the problem that we must let Soviet pressure on Hanoi begin to operate, and we must bring home to the Soviet Union that you are really deadly serious about this. [unclear] And then we've got to give them some time. But not a hell of a lot of time."

Nixon: "Well, I'm just saying, the blockade option is going to run out, Henry."

Kissinger: "Two weeks."

Nixon: "I'm afraid—"

Kissinger: "We have to do it, if we do it, by the middle of—"

Nixon: "I'm afraid because I, I'm afraid basically our domestic support for a blockade, which is—I don't give a shit about the foreign support—but our domestic support for a blockade might erode in 2 weeks."

Kissinger: "Incidentally, I'm strongly in favor—I didn't want to leave, leave the wrong impression—any group that calls for [unclear] I'd be strongly in favor of."

Nixon: "Well, we're going to try." [unclear]

Kissinger: "You see if I go to Moscow, it's a hell of a—That's one of these confusing moves again."

Nixon: "I know."

Kissinger: "[unclear] the Communist groups would start screaming at us while I'm in Moscow."

Nixon: "I know the [unclear] will know you're in Moscow."

Kissinger: "Well, if the Communists [unclear], the Germans won't get their peace treaty."

Nixon: "We may have to reveal the Moscow trip, though, if you go. [unclear] I'd just reveal it, and say, 'Now, Dr. Kissinger went to Moscow at their suggestion and it didn't do a damn thing. Under the circumstances, I'm calling off the Russian summit and I'm blockading.' I wouldn't let them call off the summit. That's my point. Do you agree or not?"

Kissinger: "I agree completely. I would list all the sins."

Nixon: "Right. They're furnishing arms, they're doing this, they didn't help. We're not going to have it. A hell of a lot people would support calling off that summit. We're ready to talk tough."

Kissinger: "[unclear] give them all the initiative. I don't think they'll let it get to that point."

Nixon: "Well, based on your conversations this past week—"

Kissinger: "And Dobrynin is not [unclear]."

Nixon: "Not on this."

Kissinger: "Not on anything. I mean, he may say things that aren't true but they never said [unclear]"

Nixon: "Did you lie, [unclear]?"

Kissinger: "No."

Nixon: "I'm inclined to think, Henry, you ought to take the trip to Moscow. Couch the message in a way that you go."

Kissinger: "OK."

Nixon: "I'm changing my view on that."

Kissinger: "If you are inclined [unclear] that I would go to Moscow, then I have to couch the message somewhat less aggressively, because then I don't want to put ourselves in the position—I'd still have to say—"

Nixon: "Say that you're coming to Moscow on the condition the President has the clear understanding—what I would say, a clear understanding that Vietnam will be the first thing, first item of the agenda and unless progress is made on that you're not prepared to discuss the other items. I think you can say that."

Kissinger: "That's right. And I'd have to say that [unclear] understanding that this is one last effort."

Nixon: "That's right. You see what I mean? I'm sure that you could go to Moscow on that basis. Then they know they've got to fish or cut bait on Vietnam or you're not going to discuss the summit. They aren't going to—They're going to want you to come."

Kissinger: "Oh, yeah. That I can do. But the question is do I tell them you must come back with an answer by Monday that tells us how we're going to make progress? Or is it enough to say [unclear]."

Nixon: "They won't be ready."

Kissinger: "That's my concern."

Nixon: "They won't be ready—I wouldn't tell them that. I mean, I—Look—"

Kissinger: "I would say do you agree with this understanding. This I can say."

Nixon: "Yeah. There must be an understanding, and that there's not just to be a discussion, but they are to have a proposal at that time, which we can—a solid proposal—to discuss. That is our understanding; that's the basis. That lacking such a proposal you will return to Washington immediately without any further discussion as far as summit matters are concerned. [unclear] Well, in other words, you are giving them the fact that they don't have to tell you that something on Monday, they presented to you on Thursday. You're there. And if you don't get it, you get the hell out of there."

Kissinger: "Let me write something out."

Nixon: "Does that sound like a good deal to you?"

Kissinger: "Right. It sounds fine. And I should,—I think ought to write it out because this is an important message, Mr. President."

Nixon: "Oh, I know."

Kissinger: "[unclear]—I myself, my first instinct was that, playing it cold-bloodedly, what we get out of the trip is more than they get out of it."

Nixon: "Right. I agree. That's right."

Kissinger: "I mean the worst is they're suckering me along."

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: "And telling me nothing. But they have—"

Nixon: "We have then gone the extra mile."

Kissinger: "Then we've gone to Moscow."

Nixon: "We've gone the extra mile."

Kissinger: "And then all the little shit heads here—"

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "—who say, the man doesn't want to negotiate."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "Hell, you have me in Moscow."

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: "Then you surface my talk with Gromyko last September. All the overtures we've made through Moscow, because then we don't give a damn."

Nixon: "Right."

Kissinger: "And—"

Nixon: "Surface the Moscow overtures."

Kissinger: "And—"

Nixon: "And then on the basis of that—"

Kissinger: "If we lose, we—"

Nixon: "On the basis of that—We then have the basis for a very strong case for the blockade."

Kissinger: "That's right. And if we don't want a blockade then just use the Moscow trip for—"

Nixon: "For the purpose of flushing the summit?"

Kissinger: "Well, for the purpose—"

Nixon: "Of what?"

Kissinger: "I mean, supposing you then, supposing—"

Nixon: "You see, here is the question. Is there any way that we can—We just got to look at all of our cards here. Let me say, you have to realize, we have to realize that there's a lot more on the line here than simply a trip to Moscow, I mean, the war in Vietnam and so forth. Because then I've got to do some heavy, a lot of heavy thinking as to how we can do something about trying to get a candidate in this presidential race." [unclear]

Kissinger: "[You mean] who can be a candidate?"

Nixon: "[unclear] You get somebody else."

Kissinger: "Why?"

Nixon: "Because, you have to realize, you have to realize that the position that we have, if we fail, which we could well fail on all fronts, you know, the summit is canceled and the blockade does not succeed—you understand that we're putting everything on the line. That's my point."

Kissinger: "But, there's one other possibility, Mr. President. And this is another reason for going to Moscow. If I don't go to Moscow, then your time is foreshortened. If I do go to Moscow, we have the excuse that I'm going to Moscow and that is why we're not doing more right away."

Nixon: "Doing more what? You mean bombing?"

Kissinger: "Like blockade. If we don't start blockading by the end of the week—"

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "—without my going to Moscow, the question is why the hell not?"

Nixon: "Yeah. In other words—"

Kissinger: "I'm now looking at all things—"

Nixon: "Yeah, from the standpoint of the Russians."

Kissinger: "From the standpoint—"

Nixon: "It means we're not ferocious. If you're in Moscow, it buys time, I agree. Now understand that doesn't help us on this domestic front. This domestic—"

Kissinger: "No, no, but I'm back then [unclear] We've talked about the possibility of canceling the trip and going to a blockade."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: “Now, there are other variations on this. There is the variation that having been in Moscow, if the South Vietnamese fold, then we might still decide to bomb the shit out of them in the North and go to Moscow. Because if we can break—”

Nixon: “And not blockade.”

Kissinger: “And not blockade.”

Nixon: “My—On reconsideration I think the Moscow trip ought to be on. It helps the message in a way that, you agree to go and they’ll figure that they can sucker us in one way or another. But we’re going to be awfully hard to sucker.”

The President then began to assess how developments in foreign policy might affect his re-election campaign.

Nixon: “If there is a way really, Henry, to not allow Vietnam to sink the Soviet summit—That’s what I’m thinking about. If we can, we ought not to do it, having in mind the fact that the Soviet—Let’s face it. And here we look at the other side of it. If we can find a graceful way to let Thieu down the tubes, then maybe we’ll just have to die and live to fight another way—if we fight like hell before it happens. My point is—You see my point? But, on the other hand, if there is no graceful way then the summit goes out the window. That’s the problem here we’re confronted with.”

Kissinger: “It’s our long-term position as a people. It’s—”

Nixon: “That’s why I—well, understand, I’m only putting it up as what to me is a totally rhetorical matter. In my view, there is no graceful way you can let him go. Remember, you always say, let him go or something. How the Christ can you do it?”

Kissinger: “Exactly. It never was good. It never was—”

Nixon: “It would never work. It was never right.”

Kissinger: “Well some of it was a fleeting chance.”

Nixon: “Yeah. But now, I think what we have to do is this. I think what I have to do is to say in effect that we’re going to, everything is on the line. Let them cancel the summit—We have to realize that if the Russians cancel the summit or, as a matter of fact, if we cancel the summit because of the blockade, we are virtually assuring the certainty of a Democrat win unless I can find a way to—and I have been thinking about this too—of trying to move one of the other Republicans and there’s only—Well when you come down to it, you’ve got Rockefeller, who probably couldn’t get the nomination. You’ve got Reagan, who could.”

Kissinger: “Yeah.”

Nixon: “He couldn’t do—Another possibility, which never would have occurred to you, would be Burger, who has been suggested. And the other one, and this is really the only long shot that just might pull

the plug on the whole bunch, and help you get the whole South, is that I could have a talk with Connally before all this began. You know, and I'd say, 'Now look here, you've got to change your party.' And then I could bow out—"

Kissinger: "There's no way—"

Nixon: "And endorse Connally. And then Connally—I mean with what I had to go through—Connally without the scars could go on and win it."

Kissinger: "Mr. President—"

Nixon: "You see, there's your problem. But the point is, we have to realize that, we have to realize that if we lose Vietnam and the summit, there's no way that the election can be saved."

Kissinger: Mr. President, they are—"

Nixon: That's the problem."

Kissinger: "Mr. President, there's no way we can permit the Vietnamese to destroy two Presidents. That can't be permitted. Secondly—"

Nixon: "I don't know how you can avoid it. Maybe, you see, the blockade might work. That's my point."

Kissinger: "Secondly, there is no realistic alternative to you. Thirdly—"

Nixon: "Except Connally."

Kissinger: "No. In foreign policy—"

Nixon: "Well I know."

Kissinger: "That's the main thing."

Nixon: "Well, not really, Henry."

Kissinger: In all humility, Mr.—"

Nixon: You see it's something that you could be around with any of these people."

Kissinger: "I think—"

Nixon: "The only one you couldn't handle would be Reagan. I think he's too much of a lightweight."

Kissinger: "Mr. President—"

Nixon: "You could handle Rockefeller. You could handle Burger."

Kissinger: "Mr. President—"

Nixon: "You could —"

Kissinger: "It's very hard policy if one has worked as closely with a President as I have with you, to work in a similar position with his successor. That I would never do under no circumstances. And after—"

Nixon: "Well, then you realize what we look at. We're looking at Muskie, Humphrey, or Teddy. It's as cold as that. As President. That

you see is, that's why so much rides on this damn thing. Now you come around to this proposition that—"

Kissinger: "Absolutely."

Nixon: "—maybe the Soviets—Well look, my point is if we can we've got to handle this way to save the Soviet summit and mitigate Vietnam. What I'm getting at is that, I don't mean to sink Thieu. But I, if you get—Do you see what I'm getting at?"

Kissinger: "You see I don't think there's a way any more of mitigating Vietnam, Mr. President, because we'll either win or lose. I think your first analysis was right."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "If we lose, it doesn't matter how softly we've played it."

Nixon: "Yeah. If we lose then we're out."

Kissinger: "Well then you'd be under such violent domestic opposition."

Nixon: "Right."

Kissinger: "And you'd be under murderous pressure at the summit."

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: "If you win, now if—I think a blockade ought to be—"

Nixon: "You think the blockade is going to help?"

Kissinger: "No. I think, Mr. President, we, as far as anybody else is concerned, you must give the impression of being on the verge of going crazy."

Nixon: "Oh, absolutely. I've got everybody so scared then. Go berserk. Worry them. Why not [unclear]?"

Kissinger: "With all respect, you must forget any doubts of anyone—Between you and me I think a blockade should be very, very carefully considered."

Nixon: "I agree. And after you [unclear]—"

Kissinger: "But very prayerfully considered—I mean we shouldn't do it lightly. But I would like in Russia to act as if you just did not give a damn."

Nixon: "That's true. That's the way I feel."

Kissinger: "I would like to leave the impression—"

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "—that the hell with the summit; you'll go to, you're impressed by the Wallace vote."

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: "You're going to go to the solid South. You're going to go on an anti-Communist kick and by God you've had enough. That's what I've been telling Dobrynin."

Nixon: "That's right."

Kissinger: "Now, I—In all of history, the Russians have always backed off when we've" [unclear]

Nixon: "Yeah, but I know. The Russians can back off but there's nothing—the North Vietnamese might not."

Kissinger: "Well, that is true. But if we can get the Russians to back off, then the question is can we buy the [unclear]."

Nixon: "Right."

Kissinger: "Even for my own selfish reasons. I'm not eager—we'd both be [unclear] in an unbelievable way."

Nixon: "Yeah."

Kissinger: "And all the reputation that has been achieved for great foreign policy would be—"

Nixon: "Sure. Down the drain, we know that."

Kissinger: "So I have not as much of a stake but also—"

Nixon: "I know."

Kissinger: "—a stake in not having what I've worked on—[unclear]"

Nixon: "To go to Russia. I know. I know that. I know that. But we've got to play the Russian card out. I think that's why you have to go, Henry. So write your message that way."

Kissinger: "Let me write the message and bring it back."

Nixon: "[unclear] but I think that what I want—What I'm really trying to tell you is that I am prepared to go all the way. And that I am prepared to take all the consequences. But, and that means that you have the blockade as a card to play over there. You may not play it there. But I mean, you see if you know that's going to come, you could be a hell of a lot tougher than if you know it isn't going to come."

Kissinger: "Right."

Nixon: "If they think we've turned the last screw, there ain't much more to be done."

Kissinger: "You see we may not want to do a blockade; we may just bomb Haiphong [unclear]. In that case—"

Nixon: "Why would we do that?"

Kissinger: "Block every port. We just start bombing every port. So that it's unusable. And then—"

Nixon: "Why is it better to bomb them?"

Kissinger: "Because then the Russian ships will come in."

Nixon: "Now, they just hide them outside?"

Kissinger: "And we're not challenging the Russians directly."

Nixon: "You mean, bomb on the shipfront and the harbor? Is that what you mean?"

Kissinger: “No, just bomb the bridges. They had it pretty-well cut off.” [unclear]

Nixon: “All right.”

Kissinger: “Well, and it takes longer to do that.”

After a brief exchange on American support for the war in Vietnam, the two men discussed the text of a message, which Kissinger planned to give Ambassador Dobrynin later that afternoon, to elicit Soviet support for a settlement.

Kissinger: “So, all things considered, I would tend to go for the blockade. But my judgment is also that if we play the Russians calmly and flexibly, they’ll help us. It may not be enough, depending [on] what your bottom line is.”

Nixon: “I think you’ve got your message to—Do you want—?”

Kissinger: “Well—”

Nixon: “I have—”

Kissinger: “—you want to do something else?”

Nixon: “I do. I do but [unclear] do you want to bring it back? Is that all right? Going on, you say, 3:00 or what? When do you want to send it?”

Kissinger: “I’d like to send it as early as possible.”

Nixon: “But why don’t you [unclear].”

Kissinger: “With the eight hour time difference [unclear]”

Nixon: “We all understand that. We all understand that.” [unclear]

Kissinger: “I will say this. That when we accepted the trip to the Soviet Union—”

Nixon: “Yeah. Right.”

Kissinger: “—the principal purpose of it was to see whether the two great powers must now bring about a rapid end of the war in Vietnam. Also, whether on the basis of this, to speed up the preparation of the summit on the broadest possible basis. It now appears, despite some assurances by the Soviet Ambassador, that the—”

Nixon: “North Vietnamese are not going—”

Kissinger: “—North Vietnamese have refused to come on the 24th, and had asked us to come to a meeting on the 27th.”

Nixon: “Publicly.”

Kissinger: “Publicly. We have notified the North Vietnamese that we will come on the 27th [unclear]. The President wants to, is prepared to send Dr. Kissinger if, on the assumptions made here: he would likely hear an expression from the Soviet Government how it [unclear]. If the Soviet Government shares this view, then Dr. Kissinger is prepared to leave. And that would be [unclear].”

Nixon: “No. You’ve got to say, you know, that the first item on the agenda will be—”

Kissinger: “Vietnam.”

Nixon: “—that and a concrete proposal must be prepared for discussion and unless one is that we will not go—you are not authorized to go to other items on the agenda.”

Kissinger: “Well—”

Nixon: “Or do you want not to be that hard?”

Kissinger: “I think—That I’d rather do there.”

Nixon: “Oh, fine.”

Kissinger: “You can instruct me to do that, and I’ll do it.”

Nixon: “Do it there, fine. Okay. All right. The only thing is I want to be sure they are prepared to make a concrete proposal. Why don’t you say that you are coming with the understanding that they will have a concrete proposal?”

Kissinger: “That there will be—”

Nixon: “And then don’t say that—[unclear]”

Kissinger: “That the first item on the agenda will be—”

Nixon: “Will be that. And that they will have a concrete proposal. You can say that.”

Kissinger: “So each step for a rapid settlement of the war.”

Nixon: “Rapid. Right. And then when you’re there, you knock it off. You say, All right? ‘Right, I’m not going to discuss anything further.’”

Kissinger: “If we don’t make any progress. I will then say, ‘Gentlemen—’”

Nixon: “Right. Right.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 329–42)

As soon as Kissinger left, Nixon called Haldeman to report on the conversation. According to Haldeman: the “P called me at 2:00 after I got home, said that they worked out Henry’s problems and that he would probably still go ahead with the Moscow trip.” Nixon also reported that despite advice from General Abrams, the Commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam—he was “going ahead with the strike tonight and that he’s seriously considering putting on a blockade later this week.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

103. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 15, 1972, 5–5:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Minister Counselor Vorontsov

Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

I read the attached oral note to Vorontsov who took it down very carefully. I then added comments to the effect that we had exercised great restraint during March in order not to jeopardize the Soviet Summit. Our military leaders had watched this build-up and three times had recommended attacks on the North to prevent it. Each time it had been rejected by the President. Now we were in the position where we had jeopardized the whole security of South Vietnam and we were not prepared to take any further steps.

Vorontsov said that the reason the negotiations were so difficult now was our having gone public on the other channel. I told Vorontsov that this was an absurdity; he knew very well that the North Vietnamese had proposed the March 15 date because they had expected to launch their offensive before it, and they had pushed back the date consistently in order to gear it to the preparation of their offensive. If he wanted to talk to me in this channel there was no sense repeating all the things that were already said in propaganda.

Vorontsov said he knew the attack on Haiphong would raise the most serious problems in Moscow. I said we were aware of that. Vorontsov asked whether I was still coming under these conditions. I said "Let's hope that it is still possible, but the situation has greatly worsened."

The conversation then ended.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. Before meeting Vorontsov, Kissinger conferred with Sonnenfeldt for 40 minutes. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) Although no other record of their conversation has been found, the two men presumably drafted the oral note, which contains several of Kissinger's stylistic handwritten revisions.

Attachment

Oral Note From President Nixon to the Soviet Leadership

Washington, April 15, 1972.

In their discussions, Ambassador Dobrynin and Dr. Kissinger agreed that the private meeting scheduled between the North Vietnamese and the United States in Paris on April 24, 1972 could represent a decisive turning point.²

On April 15, 1972, the North Vietnamese informed the United States that Hanoi was calling off the April 24 meeting and made its attendance at a future private meeting conditional on a resumption of the public meetings on April 27, 1972.³

The President wants to emphasize to the Soviet leadership the extreme seriousness and urgency with which he views the current situation. The President agreed to send Dr. Kissinger secretly to Moscow to talk to the Soviet leaders in order to see whether the two great powers could bring about a rapid end of the war on a basis just to both sides before the great objectives they have set themselves are irrevocably damaged. Dr. Kissinger was also to be authorized to prepare for the Summit meeting on the most comprehensive possible basis and in the most generous spirit.

The North Vietnamese April 15, 1972 message cancelling the April 24, 1972 private meeting raises new obstacles to this proposed mission. The President questions what progress can be made in Moscow if the Soviet Union cannot assure even a meeting on an agreed date. The President remains prepared to send Dr. Kissinger to Moscow to see whether a basis can be found to bring the war in Vietnam to a rapid and just conclusion and to seek to prevent consequences which could jeopardize what both sides have worked so hard to accomplish and brought so near to fruition. Needless to say, Dr. Kissinger will be instructed to deal with the Summit agenda in a constructive, comprehensive, forthcoming and generous manner.

The President would appreciate the Soviet view on these considerations as soon as possible before proceeding further.

² Dobrynin and Kissinger reiterated this point in their meetings on April 9 and 12; see Documents 88 and 94.

³ A copy of the North Vietnamese message, forwarded to Haig by Guay on April 15, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1041, Files for the President, Vietnam, US–NVN Exchanges, January–October 5, 1972.

For the information of the Soviet Government:

The United States side is proposing to the North Vietnamese the following compromise: The United States is prepared to state that it will agree to resumption of the plenary sessions on April 27, 1972 if the North Vietnamese attend the private meeting agreed upon for April 24, 1972. The United States would be willing to announce publicly its agreement to a plenary session on April 27, 1972 as soon as the North Vietnamese indicate that they will attend the private meeting on April 24, 1972.⁴

⁴ In a backchannel message to Guay on April 16, Haig forwarded this proposal to the North Vietnamese. (Ibid.)

104. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 15, 1972, 9 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin

Dobrynin came over to discuss our oral note² with me.

He asked, "What exactly is your proposition? Could you have a plenary session take place the same day as the private meeting?" I said that was impossible, first of all because the plenary session on the same day meant that Xuan Thuy would not be able to attend the private meeting. Secondly, I could not wait in Europe until Thursday³ and the plenary sessions had never been held on another day except Thursday unless there was a holiday.

Dobrynin asked whether we could not resume this Thursday. I said it was now technically out of the question because we had already turned it down and because indeed the other side had not asked for

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held at Kissinger's residence. For their memoir accounts of the discussion, see Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1122; and Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 244.

² Printed as an attachment to Document 103.

³ April 20.

it. Dobrynin asked whether he could report then that simultaneous meetings were acceptable. I said that was the sense of our proposal. Dobrynin asked why we then did not accept the May 6 date. I said because it was too late; we wanted to see some progress before that. Dobrynin asked whether he should report then that May 1 was the outside deadline for a private meeting. I said yes.

Dobrynin said he could not tell from my note whether I was actually coming to Moscow. I said we wanted to make sure that there was some major progress toward a Vietnam settlement; this was the principal reason for my going. He said of course in Moscow they were rather looking at it the other way: The principal reason for my going was to prepare the Summit, and also to talk about Vietnam. I said there had to be some progress. He said they could not promise progress. I said, but Vietnam had to be the first item of the agenda, which would affect all others. Dobrynin said, well, we can agree on that; Vietnam will be the first item on the agenda. However, he said, what if General-Secretary Brezhnev wants to discuss another item first? He is after all the leader of the largest Communist Party. I said in that case I would be bound by instructions, without any disrespect to the General-Secretary.

Dobrynin was extremely friendly and suggested that, after all, great powers must be able to put local differences aside to settle fundamental issues. I said "Anatol, for us it isn't just an international problem; it has now become a major domestic problem. We cannot permit our domestic structure to be constantly tormented by this country 10,000 miles away. The war must now be brought to a conclusion, and we will do it either together with the other great powers or alone."

The meeting then ended.

105. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 15, 1972, 11:30 p.m.

[Omitted here is brief discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

P: Well, I'll tell you they [North Vietnamese] are being punished and they are taking heavy casualties. The bastards are—

K: Mr. President, if they don't make it this time, they are not going to come back for two years.

P: If they don't make it this time, we're out of the woods, but the point is that we have to realize though that our hole card is the blockade. However, that's why you've got to get it settled with the Russians now. I don't want a meeting—you see, when you meet with them it's either got to be on the way to settlement or we blockade. You see that's the one thing I'm concerned about, these bastards, that they will filibuster us.

K: They can't filibuster you beyond the 25th of April.

P: Right.

K: And on the other hand, Mr. President, the major thing now is to beat down these North Vietnamese. I told them that you could not have a reasonable summit meeting if there were major action going on in Vietnam.

P: Right. He [Dobrynin] understands that, doesn't he?

K: Oh, yes.

P: Good God, we can't go there with Russian tanks and Russian guns killing South Vietnamese and Americans. Hell, no, we're not going to go! We won't go. It isn't just a reasonable summit; it means there ain't going to be no meeting, that's what he's got to understand.

K: Right.

P: And you can—so you've got a few cards to play yourself on your trip.

K: Well, I think when I say if we keep our nerves, I don't mean you. I mean if as a country we keep our nerves, we are going to make it. Assuming the South Vietnamese don't collapse on us but there is no sign of this.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 397, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

P: They may be stronger than we think.

[Omitted here is detailed discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

K: Well. We've got a few hole cards.

P: I think we've got Bill [Rogers] on salvo; he'll take a hard line. I think he knows it.

K: I mean, Mr. President, even if some protests start next week, we've got a big hole card.

P: Well, the fact that you've been to Russia.

K: Exactly.

P: When we blow that one, that's going to really—of course, if we blow that one, you realize we will say then that we are not going to the summit. But that's—

K: Well, no, but there may be conditions which we may blow it—

P: And still go, huh?

K: And still go to the summit. For example, supposing we get a settlement which the Russians guarantee.

P: Oh, that! Oh, any settlement.

K: My assessment is that the chances are 50–50 that we may want to blow it at some point. But at any rate, it is a good hole card to have.

P: Well, we shall see. Oh, yes, that's the reason why you are going. It's a good thing to do. As I said, after reversing earlier the decision, I think it's right; you've just got to go. Whether they come or not, the Vietnamese—

K: You could even make a case if they come a week later, it gives them a better chance to work them over.

P: Yeah, yeah. Well, also, we've got a chance to work them over too. You understand if they don't show—I mean, after you meet the Russians—

K: Oh, we go right back to him.

P: Don't you agree.

K: Oh, yeah.

P: And the Russians have got to damn well understand that. And, also, they've got to understand—Well, I don't know, I just have a feeling, Henry, that the strategy, which you and I both agree on, is the right one.

K: No question.

P: Everybody thinks it's too hawkish; too unreasonable and so forth but what the hell else can you do?

K: Mr. President, if we had pursued the Laird strategy, we might have won in the South but the war would have dragged on and on

and on and winning in the South is no—doesn't bring the Russians in. What brings the Russians in—I mean, we wouldn't have won in the South, we could have held in the South and what brings the Russians in is the fact that the situation may get out of hand. Pouring that Fleet in there has made more of an impact on the Russians than the defense of An Loc which they don't understand.

P: Yeah. The Fleet shakes them because they think it's a blockade.

K: Of course.

P: And they're right.

[Omitted here is discussion of the military situation in Vietnam and of Rogers' upcoming testimony on Capitol Hill.]

106. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Soviet Minister Counselor (Vorontsov)¹

Washington, April 16, 1972, 11:40 a.m.

V: He [Dobrynin] is walking outside the Embassy but he will be back by 1:00 o'clock.

K: He ought to be in good condition.

V: I hope so.

K: I have three things. We would appreciate it if you would send the text over of what the Ambassador read to me² and could you deliver this to Colonel Kennedy. He is sitting in Haig's office.

V: I will do that.

K: Second, I wanted to confirm what I told the Ambassador last night,³ and what I also told you,⁴ that this operation is now completed.

V: I see. That's good.

K: And the assurance I gave is now in effect until we get a reply from the other side.

V: Good.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² See Document 110.

³ See Document 104.

⁴ See Document 103.

K: And finally just as he advised me yesterday about our actions—I do not think that it would be very conducive to the success of what you and I are planning. If your reactions could be as calm as the circumstances make possible. It would be very difficult for me to be there while protests and demonstrations are going on.

V: I understand your point.

K: Now, one final thing. Commander Howe will be ready to discuss technical things with you.

V: All right.

K: Should he call you?

V: Yes, he can call me. I will be here in the Embassy and he can come here or I will come to his office.

K: We will use your interpreters, is that all right?

V: Fine, we have very good ones.

K: All right. Then you will bring that over here.

V: I will take and get it to Colonel Kennedy.

K: I will be difficult to reach but I can be if necessary. I will be at a christening. My office knows where to reach me.

V: Good.

107. Note From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon¹

Washington, April 16, 1972.

1. In accordance with the wishes of the President we have brought to the attention of the leadership of the DRV the considerations on the Vietnam question expressed by the President and by Dr. Kissinger in their conversations with the Soviet Ambassador. The leadership of the

¹ National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. No classification marking. The note is handwritten. A notation on the first page indicates that Vorontsov handed the note to Kennedy in Kissinger's office at 1:30 p.m. Kissinger later recalled in his memoirs that "the next morning, April 16, Dobrynin read me a message from the Soviet leadership stating that they had brought my complaint about the aborted secret meeting to the attention of Hanoi." (Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1122) Kissinger met Nixon at the President's office in the Executive Office Building the morning of April 16 (10:20–10:55 a.m.). (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) No record of the conversation between Kissinger and Dobrynin, whether in person or by telephone, has been found.

DRV was in particular informed of the wishes of the American side in connection with the prospective confidential meeting on April 24 between Dr. Kissinger and representatives of the DRV in Paris.

In reply to this the Vietnamese side confirmed their position regarding the negotiations of four sides in Paris. They are ready to resume these negotiations—the arrival to Paris of Nguyen Thi Binh² testifies to that.

So far as confidential meetings between the representatives of the DRV and Dr. Kissinger are concerned, the Vietnamese side could agree to such meetings. An appropriate representative of the DRV would be ready to come to Paris to the agreed date—April 24. But these meetings should, as before, be conducted in parallel with the official four-sided negotiations, having in mind the fact that these two forms of negotiations should facilitate each other. That is why in the situation when the United States unilaterally suspended the official negotiations and during the time of the US continued refusal to renew these negotiations, the Vietnamese side does not deem it possible to conduct confidential meetings as well.

The Vietnamese side also stressed the dependence of the renewal of negotiations on the bombings of the DRV. The Vietnamese side considers it wrong to sit down at the negotiating table at a time when American aviation expands bombings and strafings of the DRV territory.

2. The leadership of the DRV were informed about a new approach of the American side on April 13 concerning a possibility of having a confidential meeting between Dr. Kissinger and representatives of the DRV in Moscow. In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in Hanoi the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the DRV Nguen Fui Chin [Nguyen Duy Trinh] confirmed the principle position of the DRV on the question of confidential meetings as it is stated above. He promised to give later on a reply to the concrete suggestion of Dr. Kissinger.

As soon as the reply from Hanoi is received we shall inform the President through Dr. Kissinger.

² Chief delegate of the Provisional Revolutionary Government in South Vietnam.

108. **Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State**¹

Moscow, April 16, 1972, 2020Z.

3535. Subj: Soviet Protest re Bombing of Haiphong.

On half-hour notice I responded to summons of DepFonMin Kovalev to receive from him at 10:30 p.m. April 16 following protest:

Begin text:

As a result of the bombing and shelling of Haiphong in a raid by American aircraft on April 16, the Soviet merchant vessels *Simferopol'*, *Boris Lavrenev*, *Samuil Marshak*, and *Selemdzha* received damages, including numerous shell-holes, some of which were in the living quarters of the crews. The lives and safety of Soviet crewmen were threatened. There were dead and wounded among the workers of the port who were carrying out loading operations on the Soviet ships.

These gangster activities by American aircraft are flagrant violations of generally accepted norms of international law and of freedom of shipping. The US Government bears full responsibility for these provocative actions of the American armed forces and for the possible dangerous consequences of such activities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR on instructions of the Soviet Government protests to the US Government this criminal act against Soviet merchant vessels in the port of Haiphong and insists that American authorities take strong measures to insure that similar provocations will not occur in the future. *End text.*

I replied I could not accept language of his message but I would transmit it to my government because of its important nature. He said statement corresponded to the facts.

Beam

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 VIET S. Confidential; Niact; Immediate. Repeated to Saigon. Another copy is *ibid.*, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Received at the White House at 2041Z (3:41 p.m., EST).

109. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and Secretary of State Rogers¹

Washington, April 16, 1972, 4:30 p.m.

K: Bill.

R: You've seen this protest I guess that was delivered to Beam.²

K: No, I haven't.

R: Yeah, well, they've made a protest and they say that four of their ships were hit. They do not make any claim that there were dead or wounded among the Soviet employees; they say there were dead and wounded among the workers of the Port.

K: Yes, that's what intercepts indicate, yes.

R: The tone of the protest seems to me to be milder than the ones that they made in '67 and '68, and it's a lower level. In that case the protest was made to Rusk himself, I guess in both of those cases.³

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² See Document 108. During a telephone conversation at 3:10 p.m., Rogers asked Kissinger to inform him if Dobrynin wanted to deliver a formal protest. Kissinger replied: "If we get any word here we will send them over to you. I think the way to handle it [is] we should make a formal protest, admit it and apologize." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) Nixon and Kissinger discussed by telephone at 3:35 p.m. how to brief Rogers on the secret trip to Moscow. Nixon: "You would wait 'til you left before he [Rogers] was told." Kissinger: "Yes, because he's going to drive you crazy if it's done before. And he will go to Dobrynin before." Nixon: "Yeah." Kissinger: "He'll call him in. This way he can't reach Dobrynin." Nixon: "Yeah." Kissinger: "And he will be no madder one way or another." Kissinger thought that Haldeman and Haig should handle the assignment. Nixon agreed and suggested they tell Rogers that "the Russians have decided to get into the act; they've asked you [Kissinger] to come there and the idea is to discuss the matter and that the North Vietnamese may be there." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, April 16, 1972, 3:35–3:54 p.m., White House Telephone, Conversation No. 22–159) Haldeman himself followed this line in a visit to Rogers' house on the evening of April 19. "He took it extremely well," Haldeman wrote in his diary, "we didn't have any problem at all with him, which was kind of a surprise. So that worked out probably better than we expected." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 442)

³ In June 1967 U.S. aircraft inadvertently hit two Soviet ships, the *Turkestan* and the *Mikhail Frunze*, in separate strikes near Haiphong. For texts of Soviet notes protesting each incident, both of which were delivered to the Embassy in Moscow, see *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, 1967, pp. 939–941, 945. For further background, see *Foreign Relations*, 1964–1968, vol. V, Document 188. On January 4, 1968, U.S. aircraft accidentally hit another Soviet ship, the *Pereyaslavl—Zaleskiy*, in Haiphong harbor. For further background on the incident and the subsequent exchange of notes, see *ibid.*, vol. VI, Document 10.

K: Yeah.

R: And this is a protest to Beam by their Deputy Foreign Minister, Kovalev.

K: That's pretty mild so we shouldn't be too provocative in our reply.

R: No, I think we've got to tone down our answer.

K: Right, I agree.

R: And I'm preparing one now to send over; I don't know as we have to rush getting it back.

K: I don't think we should reply until tomorrow, Bill.

R: I think that's right.

K: That's pretty encouraging, don't you think.

R: I think so, yeah. Just a minute here. TASS has also put out a statement.⁴ The statement TASS put out is a little tougher; it says the Soviet people wrathfully condemn these U.S. acts of aggression, and so forth.

K: Yeah, well of course they've got to do something like that.

R: But I think in reading, comparing this protest with the others it doesn't accuse us of intentionally and deliberately doing this as far as they're concerned. And the general rhetoric is somewhat softer, so . . .

K: I think we should give a fairly low-key reply, Bill. I don't think we should confront them that way when we are after all somewhat in the wrong in the actual act.

R: I agree. Well, I think what we can do is pretty much along the lines of the last one. We don't want to be more apologetic than the last time because I think that last time was a direct hit. I think we can . . . we're not sure of course whether these were hits by American planes or whether it was misfiring on the part of the North Vietnamese.

K: Yeah.

R: Well anyway, we'll have something drafted to send over.

K: Good, thank you Bill.

R: Right, bye.

⁴ Presumably a reference to the TASS statement, published in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* on April 17, which stated: "[The] Soviet people angrily condemn these acts of U.S. aggression in Vietnam." (*Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIV, No. 16, May 17, 1972, p. 4)

110. Note From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon¹

Washington, April 16, 1972.

1. President Nixon and the U.S. Government are well aware of the USSR principled position with regard to the war being conducted by the United States in Vietnam.

On a number of occasions we called the attention of the President, including through the confidential channel, to serious consequences that an expansion of the U.S. military actions in Vietnam and bombings of the DRV's territory in particular could entail.

In L.I. Brezhnev's letter to President Nixon of March 27,² outlining considerations in connection with the Soviet-American summit meeting, our concern was expressed that bombings of the DRV push the developments in Vietnam in a direction opposite to peaceful settlement and can only complicate the situation.

But instead of stopping such bombings and other military actions against the DRV, the United States began to extend them—now to the areas of Hanoi and Haiphong.

This step by the United States seriously complicates the situation and not only in the South-East Asia.

We cannot qualify the motives, with which the American side tries to somehow justify further expansion of the bombings of the DRV's territory and to preserve a "free hand" in their resuming at any moment, otherwise but as clearly artificial and completely unacceptable.

But what's going on? The American side would like to dictate the DRV its schedule of holding private meetings and the whole procedure of Paris talks in general. If the DRV, being an equal participant of the talks, makes its own proposals on that matter, Washington responds to this by intensifying the bombings.

Thus, first come ultimatum demands and threats, and later—their implementation. Application of such a method against a people who steadfastly struggle for many years for their rights, does not promise anything good to those resorting to such methods. We would like to say that with all frankness to President Nixon.

There is also another serious aspect here. As a result of the American air raids against Haiphong a damage was also caused to some of

¹ National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10. Top Secret. The note is handwritten. A notation on the first page indicates that Vorontsov handed the note to Kennedy at the Soviet Embassy at 9:30 p.m.

² Document 72.

the Soviet ships in that port. Moreover, there are casualties on the Soviet ships—several persons were killed from among the Vietnamese workers. It should be absolutely clear to the President what all this means in the present circumstances. It also goes without saying that we shall be faced with the necessity of taking all appropriate steps to protect Soviet ships wherever they would be.

Taking into consideration the importance of all the circumstances arising in connection with the new bombings of the DRV's territory, we address President Nixon with an urgent appeal not only to suspend those bombings but to put an end to them. Depending on the President's reaction to this our appeal we shall determine our further line with regard to all abovementioned questions.

2. Contents of what Dr. Kissinger said during last talk with the Ambassador on April 15 is being brought to the attention of the DRV leadership.³

³ See Document 104.

111. Editorial Note

On April 16, 1972, Deputy Assistant to the President Alexander Haig arrived in Saigon to prepare a personal assessment of the military situation in Vietnam for President Nixon. During the 3-day visit, Haig focused not only on the North Vietnamese offensive but also on Soviet diplomacy, linking the two in meetings with General Abrams, the Commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam (MACV), and Ambassador Bunker. Assistant to the President Kissinger informed Haig on April 15 that he had told the Soviets that his secret trip to Moscow was up in the air unless they played a "helpful role" on Vietnam. (Backchannel Message WHS 2045 from Kissinger to Haig, April 15; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 414, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, 1972 To: AMB Bunker—Saigon). Haig replied on April 17 that, while "the fat [was] in the fire" in Washington, Abrams had finally agreed to support the "diplomatic hand" against Moscow by diverting the necessary military resources—including long-range heavy bombers (B-52's)—to Hanoi. (Message 0065 from Haig to Kissinger; *ibid.*, From: AMB Bunker—Saigon [Part 2])

Haig further emphasized the Soviet side to U.S. strategy on Vietnam in talking points for a meeting with Bunker. Although no record has been found of the meeting, Haig's talking points reflect the con-

sideration of strategic issues within the White House at the time. “One of the prime reasons for massive movements of ships and planes and our gradually escalated bombing of the North,” Haig noted, “is to make the Russians think that we are capable of drastic actions. They are particularly sensitive about the possibility of blockading Haiphong and our movements are designed to spook them on that contingency as well.” After reviewing how Nixon and Kissinger had recently played the “Soviet card,” Haig outlined the linkage they made between the policies of the Soviet Union and North Vietnam. “We do have reason to believe that Moscow is genuinely concerned about the implications of the current military activity, and our strong response to the North Vietnamese offensive,” he explained. “They have great stakes in the Summit and in other areas such as the German Treaties, not only because of their relations with us and concern with the European front, but also because of the Chinese factor.” Haig also planned to inform Bunker of Kissinger’s secret trip, which—coming as the bombing of North Vietnam continued—would likely unsettle leaders in Moscow as well as Hanoi. According to Haig, Kissinger intended to remind the Soviet leadership of the “serious implications for their interests, both in terms of bilateral relations and their global perspective, of the North Vietnamese attempt to win a military victory.” In the process, Kissinger would probe Soviet willingness to encourage negotiations, and then guarantee an agreement, possibly by enforcing elements of the settlement or by agreeing to limit arms shipments in the future. (Ibid., Box 1014, Haig Special Files, Haig Trip Papers—4/14–4/19/72 [1 of 2])

In a message to Haig on April 17, Kissinger picked up on the latter issue, possibly in response to the discussion at a meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group earlier in the day (see Document 118). After requesting an urgent assessment of the military equipment South Vietnam would require over the next year, Kissinger asked: “In light of those needs, could we accept some limitation on replacement deliveries if the Soviets agreed to a similar limitation for a like period[?]” (Backchannel Message WHS 2050 from Kissinger to Haig, April 17; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1014, Haig Special Files, Haig Trip Papers—4/14–4/19/72 [2 of 2]) Haig replied in detail on April 18, estimating that, although the data was still incomplete, “a moratorium would permit us to cash in on our decision to overstock [South Vietnam] and it would capitalize on [North Vietnamese] errors in becoming enmeshed in a war of attrition of the types of equipment with which they are most dependent on the Soviet Union.” (Backchannel Message 0069 from Haig to Kissinger, April 18; *ibid.*)

As soon as he returned to Washington on April 19, Haig delivered written and oral reports on his trip to the President: the former is *ibid.*; for a brief account of the latter, see Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, page 442. See also Haig, *Inner Circles*, pages 282–283.

112. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 17, 1972.

SUBJECT

Soviet Message of April 16 on Vietnam²

The Soviet message is in the first instance the minimal, required communication to the President. It makes a record of rejecting our present course of conduct and of avoiding any implication of Soviet collusion with us against the DRV.

Beyond that, it does two things:

1. It lays the basis for disrupting the Summit and the HAK mission if this layer becomes their choice. (Incidentally, while the note calls for a "reaction" from the President to the appeal to stop bombing it does not stipulate that this be in the form of explicit assurances.)
2. It threatens military responses by Soviet vessels (an unsurprising threat in these circumstances).

While the note seemingly rejects our manner of dealing with DRV maneuvers over the secret talks, it ends up by assuring us that Moscow has nevertheless transmitted our last proposal. The Soviets are thus in a position where the DRV has now explicitly made cessation of bombing a precondition to secret talks while the Soviets have *not* (except in the elliptical manner indicated above) made it a precondition either to the Wednesday³ mission or to acting as an intermediary with Hanoi.

With no further attacks against Hanoi and Haiphong now scheduled, the Soviets may try to hold to this position (despite the discrepancy with Hanoi). —but obviously one cannot be 100% certain that a demand to stop the bombing will not still be made. However, it is virtually certain that such a demand will be the Soviet starting position for the HAK mission. For us, this means countering with a *package* involving simultaneous obligations on both sides, with the Soviets using

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 11. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. Sonnenfeldt did not initial the memorandum.

² Document 110.

³ April 19.

their aid as leverage. (This is the gamble we are taking on the assumption that Brezhnev has so much riding on his relations with us that he will go to considerable lengths to save it).⁴

⁴ In his memoirs, Kissinger assessed the second Soviet note of April 16 as follows: “What was significant was not that the criticism stopped well short of a protest but that Moscow maintained its invitation even in the face of an unprecedented assault on its client. Moscow obviously would not lightly hazard the forthcoming summit after Nixon had already visited Peking.” (*White House Years*, p. 1122)

113. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 17, 1972.

Kissinger: Good morning, Mr. President.

Nixon: Hi.

Kissinger: We had another cable from Haig.² It says, “Obviously the fat is on the fire at your end. We will need the coolest of nerves from here on in. From my perspective it is essential that we continue to play our hand with the utmost calm and confidence. As you know several occasions in the past have involved similar risk taking although there has been less opportunity for events to be influenced by spasms of uncertainty on the domestic scene. On balance the military situation here is now well under control. As I reported yesterday, in the near term the enemy will only suffer severe setbacks.” And then the rest is all technical stuff. And he’s discussed with Abrams this idea of a troop withdrawal of 20,000, of an announcement, which would get us down to 5 by July 3rd, which would get us down to, to where we could say that we’ve withdrawn 500,000 troops. And he thinks it can be done but he wants to let me know tomorrow. And that I would recommend you announce at your press conference, if you have one next week.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 709–8. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 8:58 to 9:24 a.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² Reference is to backchannel message 0065 from Haig in Saigon to Kissinger at the White House, April 17. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 1014, Haig Special Files, Haig Trip Papers—4/14–4/19/1972 [2 of 2]) The excerpt read by Kissinger is nearly identical to the corresponding text sent by Haig. Regarding Haig’s trip to South Vietnam, see Document 111.

Nixon: Yeah. [unclear]

Kissinger: Now, last night, after you had retired, Dobrynin came in with a Russian message—³

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger:—which he said, since they don't want to say too much publicly—It's rather tough; it doesn't have any concrete things. But after five pages of tough talk, which is standard tough talk, he said they'd transmitted our considerations to Hanoi and they'll give us a reply as soon as—which is amazing because in the past they always took the position that they weren't. Now my recommendation is that we say to this there will be no answer. They know what our policy is and we are just going to pursue it. And if that's going to be their attitude, I think, I can tell them now, nothing will come out of the discussion.

Nixon: He seems to understand. Dobrynin. Dobrynin must be certain that we'll go.

Kissinger: I think, I think it puts us domestically—The reasons you had for deciding to go: I don't agree that it's two for them and one for us; it's two for us and almost nothing for them.

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: And what do they get out of it? They receive me 3 days after we bomb Hanoi and Haiphong.

Nixon: Yeah. In any event, the, as far as, when Dobrynin came, comes in, your trip is still on?

Kissinger: Yeah. Oh, yeah. They didn't cancel it.

Nixon: Fine.

Kissinger: They didn't do anything. It's just—What I think they did, Mr. President, is to send this first part—

Nixon:—to Hanoi.

Kissinger:—to Hanoi to say, to show, because publicly they've been rather mild. The CIA has—

Nixon: The Chinese have been mild as well. Chou En-lai [unclear].

Kissinger: Very mild.

Nixon: Compared to what we're used to getting.

Kissinger: Now, let me read you this CIA analysis⁴—and the CIA is always alarmist. "Moscow has given its population only [unclear] of the U.S. air strikes on Hanoi and Haiphong. Publicly the Soviets have not acknowledged damage to their ships at Haiphong."

Nixon: How many were there? Were there 40?

³ Document 110.

⁴ Not found.

Kissinger: Yeah. Soviet—

Nixon: They were—

Kissinger: Poor things.

Nixon: That's not too damn bad.

Kissinger: That's good.

Nixon: I think it's good.

Kissinger: Yeah. The protest failed to mention the strikes on Hanoi or anywhere else in North Vietnam. Its concentration on the damage to Soviet shipping, its failure to mention any injury to Soviet personnel, and its delivery at the low level of deputy foreign minister, indicates that the Soviets did not want to over-stress the implications of the air strike on U.S.-Soviet relations. Maintaining Moscow's recent public reticence about aid commitments to North Vietnam, the TASS statement merely noted that the USSR met its international duties. The analysis of Chou's remarks is: "Chou's remarks add little more than a compendium of clichés used by the Chinese over the past year to describe the war. It makes no mention of Chinese assistance, of President Nixon, or of damage to the Soviet ships." Then Hanoi has made a public statement saying that their friends in the world would in time condemn the United States. In time. And the CIA says, "[unclear] appears to be another call for greater support from the USSR and China. In this connection, the North Vietnamese have been playing the Soviet aspect of the raid." And so forth. Now one problem we have, I hope Rogers goes in there determined and tough.⁵ This is the one—

Nixon: Huh. God only knows what he could do.

[Omitted here is discussion of Rogers' pending testimony that morning before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Nixon's side of a telephone conversation with Rogers on his testimony, and a brief exchange afterwards on Rogers and the proposal to blockade North Vietnamese ports.]

Nixon: When I say I'm for a blockade, you don't, you think I'm just gassing. But I—

Kissinger: Mr. President—

Nixon: But I'm totally committed to a blockade—

Kissinger: Mr. President, I don't think you're gassing.

Nixon: —at the end of this week.

⁵ In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that morning, Rogers argued that the North Vietnamese attacks in the South "dropped the pretense that this war is in any sense a 'popular uprising' and have exposed it as a naked aggression of the most flagrant type." (Department of State *Bulletin*, May 8, 1972, pp. 668–671)

Kissinger: You've done—Well, we have to wait until I get back from Moscow but—

Nixon: That's what I meant. That's the end of this week.

Kissinger: No, I'll be back Sunday night.⁶

Nixon: That's the end of this week. Oh, the first of next week.

Kissinger: The first of next week.

Nixon: I mean, as soon as you get back from Moscow, if it's a hard line, rigid attitude, blockade them.

Kissinger: Mr. President, I think that you've always done what you said you would do. And I have every—No, I think that's what you will do and I think that's what you should do.

Nixon: You see, if you, when you really carry out, Henry, to your, to the extreme, your analysis, that you can't have the North Vietnamese destroy two Presidents. In that, it isn't really quite in all [unclear] because Johnson destroyed himself and in my case I will not do it that way. I will do it frankly for the good of the country. But nevertheless—

Kissinger: No. But that is for the good of the country. That's why I'm saying that, Mr. President, with all my loyalty—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I think we cannot have these miserable little bastards destroy confidence in our government.

Nixon: Well, anyway, I was going to tell you. I am convinced that this country—You see, for me, let me be quite—Kennedy, even leading a nation that was infinitely stronger than any potential enemy, was unable to conduct a very successful foreign policy because he lacked iron nerves—

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon:—and lacked good advisers.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: All right. Johnson was in the same position for other reasons because he didn't have any experience. Now, I am quite aware of the fact that because of the, what is happening here and the rest, I mean, that, that there is a very good chance—and I don't, and it doesn't bother me one damn bit from a personal standpoint—that there is very good chance that sitting in this chair could be somebody else. It could be a Muskie; it could be a Humphrey; it could be a Teddy; one of those three on the Democratic side. Now on the Republican side it won't be Agnew or Reagan but it, Rockefeller probably couldn't get the nomination. I don't know who they would nominate, but nevertheless, but

⁶ April 23.

here's the point. I have, I know that, I have to leave this office in a position as strong as I possibly can because whoever succeeds me, either because of lack of experience or because of lack of character, guts, heading a weaker United States would surrender the whole thing. You understand?

Kissinger: I know.

Nixon: So that is why, that is why what I have to do—I have to do it not only to assure that if I am here we can conduct a successful foreign policy. I have to do it—and this is even more important—so that some poor, weak son-of-a-bitch is sitting here, with the best of intentions to conduct—It will be hard enough [unclear] next year. It will be hard not for him to conduct a foreign policy of the United States that's knocked the hell out of South Vietnam. It will be very hard because it is a jibbery nation at times; well intentioned but jibbery. Muskie has proved that he has no character. And Teddy is, well, unbelievable. [unclear] Now, what the hell can you do? So you cannot leave the, you just can't leave the thing. Now, under these circumstances, as I've often said that it may be that I am the last person in this office for some time, until somebody else is developing along the same lines, I mean who's tough and experienced, who will be able to conduct a strong, responsible foreign policy. So goddamn it, we're going to do it. And that means, that means, take every risk; lose every election. That's the way I look at it. Just pull the plug. Now people say well if you win or lose I'm not sure. But the main point is, we have no choice, you see?

Kissinger: That's my view.

Nixon: The foreign policy of the United States will not be viable if we are run out of Vietnam. That's all there is to it.

Kissinger: Mr. President, that is exactly my point of view, selfish, shortsighted, personal point of view.

Nixon: We shouldn't, we shouldn't—

Kissinger: Your incentive is not to do it.

Nixon: We shouldn't make a deal.

Kissinger: And my incentive is—I have less at stake but—

Nixon: I know. Your incentive is to not have all these great foreign policy initiatives flushed down the tubes.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Nixon: Which is exactly what's on the line.

Kissinger:—and is what we're concerned about. Public position, one would say—

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger:—one could remain—

Nixon: The Man of Peace, the Generation of Peace all that stuff.

Kissinger: Although, Mr. President, I must say one thing. You are taking less heat this week than you would if Hue had fallen. The first week, the worst heat we took, it began to build up, was when all these little pip-squeaks were saying Vietnamization was a failure.

[Omitted here is discussion of domestic politics, press coverage, and the military situation in Vietnam.]

Nixon: I think you ought to tell Rabin you heard the President say it. I want you to get Rabin in and say you heard the President say it. To the leaders, he said, if he's said it a dozen times, he said it once, and I always start with Israel and then I go to Europe. But I say if the United States fails in Vietnam, if a Soviet-supported invasion succeeds there, it will inevitably be next tried in the Mid-East and the United States will not stand there either. That's what's on the line. And they should know that. And I think we should get some of our Israeli friends to start to support us.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: What do you think?

Kissinger: I think so.

Nixon: Don't you believe this is true?

Kissinger: I'll call Rabin. Now to go through—

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger:—immediate tactical issues.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: Do you agree, Mr. President, that I call in Dobrynin and say there is not going to be any reply to this?

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: "The President is determined. You know his course. There is no sense in engaging in rhetoric."

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: "And we will not reply to this. And I must tell you informally if this is what you are going to say to, in Moscow, my trip is going to be a waste of time."

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: Because we will not be able to make progress—

Nixon: The point is, it's just the usual thing that we should stop the bombing of Hanoi.

Kissinger: Oh yeah. Yeah. It's—They had to do it, Mr. President, because—

Nixon: And just say, just say we did it. Why don't you put it more like I talked to Chou En-lai: "Look, the President read this and rather smiled." Look, just say, "He smiled and said, he said, 'They have to say this, he said, but,' and then he turned cold and said, 'There will be

no reply to this. If the Russians want to talk settlement, fine. But if they want talk to this way, there isn't going to be a summit.'"

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: I'd be very tough. 'Cause I'd very much like to see Johann [Franz Josef] Strauss. I like the old fart.

Kissinger: Right, right.

Nixon: You understand?

Kissinger: [laughter]

Nixon: Don't you think that's the way we play it?

Kissinger: Absolutely.

Nixon: I think Dobrynin expects you to play that way, doesn't he?

Kissinger: Oh, Dobrynin. When he said, "I'll bring you this," he went on to say, "We have to do this in confidential channels because they're not saying much in public channels."

Nixon: Well, Bill asked me whether Humphrey responded. We have responded to the Russian note, haven't we?

Kissinger: No. He had sent over a cable for clearance.⁷ I held it last night because it was just too anxious, saying you had retired, which was true. And that you would clear it in the morning. And what you said was yes.

Nixon: Hmm.

Kissinger: I mean what you said was exactly that. You cleared it in the morning, this morning.

Nixon: Let me tell you about your trip. I realize it's not two for them and one for us in terms of cosmetics. It may be two for them and one for us in other terms. But, nevertheless. Basically because looking at their big game, the China game, what they want is Henry Kissinger in Moscow because you went to China.

Kissinger: Oh yes.

Nixon: You see? That's what's in it for them. And you've got to realize. Don't undersell what the hell we're giving those sons-of-bitches. Now, the other point I make, Henry, is, however, we're doing it for our own reasons. Our own reasons are, you're going to go and then we'll blow it.

Kissinger: Of course.

Nixon: And I'll blow it. Hell, maybe the day you come back; I might do it in the press conference.

[Omitted here is discussion of plans to announce Kissinger's trip to Moscow and of the President's schedule.]

⁷ Document 114.

Nixon: I think that with the Russians, there's one weakness in our game plan with Hanoi. We haven't got a goddamn thing we can do this week.

Kissinger: Oh, no. Well, first of all, we are holding in the South, Mr. President.

Nixon: You think we are holding?

Kissinger: Oh yeah. And that is the worst for them. And—

Nixon: But that's only temporary, you know, holding.

Kissinger: I don't know. I think it's, I think it isn't temporary.

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: But secondly, we are bombing the southern part of North Vietnam intensively.

Nixon: Is there any bombing that you could do, changing even the pattern this week, so it looks like it's a different kind of strike? Is that something that could be done? Could we have another B-3 type strike? Just so it's—

Kissinger: In the South or in the North?

Nixon: In the South.

Kissinger: Oh, in the South. Easily.

Nixon: Yeah. I would like, I think what I meant is, I want something that can be described as a massive, different kind of a strike. Is there any place where you think we could do it?

Kissinger: I'll get off a message right off.

Nixon: Put it this way. That this week—You see what I mean?

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: I don't want you to go over there—Well, frankly people won't know you're there. I don't want the people here to get the impression—You see what we're up against.

Kissinger: But next week they'll know why you did it.

Nixon: I know. But this week they'll be writing, because of Russian and Chinese protests, the United States didn't do it again. You see my point? We can't be in that position. Now, we can ride a week of it, I guess.

Kissinger: We can ride a week of it. If they accuse you of being both too tough and too soft at the same time—And then next week, I think if we can avoid—I mean, we've really put it brutally to them. It isn't—We haven't shown any softness. And they know, I mean, they know you now, Mr. President. They know when I come back without anything to show for it, we're going to blow the lid off, particularly having proved that we've made every effort.

Nixon: Hm-hmm. Now, the last thing to consider before we try to do a Wednesday thing. You see the deep-down decision you've got to

make is whether, do you want to conduct the Moscow talk in a way that will enable us to have a Moscow summit or in a way that will make it, leave us no choice but to blockade and flush the summit? Now there's one point that's very important. If the summit is canceled, I want to cancel it. I don't want them to.

Kissinger: Well, what I would like—

Nixon: That's got to be like the U-2. You understand?

Kissinger: What I would like to suggest, Mr. President, is this. I think we should conduct the summit part of the talks in a very conciliatory and forthcoming manner in such a way that they get a maximum panting after the—

Nixon: That, that I understand.

Kissinger:—after the summit.

Nixon: I understand all that. All of that.

Kissinger: On the Vietnam thing, on the other hand, we should be tough as nails, because the middle position, we will not impress these guys with conciliatoriness. They were not passing messages while Johnson was drooling all over them.

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: So I think we should do both simultaneously. On Vietnam, we should be very tough. What I'm playing with now—

Nixon: What do we get out—what do get out—what are we— Sorry.

Kissinger: Well, what I think, if we are—

Nixon: We certainly have got to have a cease-fire while we're in Moscow. That's my point.

Kissinger: Oh, one outcome, Mr. President, that I think we might get is to say, to offer to the Russians, we'll go back to the conditions of May, of March 29th. That is to say, the North Vietnamese withdraw the three divisions they put across the DMZ, north of the DMZ; they scale down their military actions to the levels they were on March 29th; this is guaranteed by the Soviets; we in turn stop the bombing of the North; and we resume plenary sessions in Paris.

Nixon: That's a good deal.

Kissinger: That would be a damn good deal, Mr. President.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: It would be such a defeat for the North Vietnamese, if they are to stop their offensive.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: And it makes us look damn good in domestic opinion.

Nixon: Withdraw—

Kissinger: If we say—

Nixon: Withdraw across the DMZ, those forces across the DMZ. After all, we can't tell them to get out of everything.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: And we'll stop the bombing of the North in return. Because we will have—

Kissinger: But they have to scale down military actions—

Nixon: We will have shellacked the North by that time anyway.

Kissinger: That's right.

[Omitted here is further discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

114. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union¹

Washington, April 17, 1972, 1424Z.

65559. For Ambassador. Ref: Moscow 3535.² Subj: Reply to Soviet Protest Note.

Ambassador requested to deliver following reply to Soviet protest note to Kovalev or other appropriate senior official as soon as possible.

Begin Text:

Deputy Foreign Minister Kovalev on April 16 delivered a note to Ambassador Beam which contained a protest dealing with alleged acts against Soviet Merchant shipping in the port of Haiphong. The United

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 VIET S. Confidential; Flash; Exdis. Drafted by Green, Sullivan, and Matlock on April 16; cleared by Hillenbrand and Kissinger; and approved by Rogers. In an April 16 memorandum forwarding a copy of the draft telegram to Kissinger, Kennedy noted that Sonnenfeldt believed "it would be best to hold it up and not reply for a day or two to avoid getting into a further exchange before Wednesday [April 19]." "If you want to go ahead and release the cable tonight," Kennedy continued, "please just let me know and I will take care of it." According to Kennedy's notation on the memorandum, Kissinger cleared the telegram that evening and the President approved it the following morning. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 493, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 10)

² Document 108.

States Government has considered this protest and makes the following points:

1. Every effort is made to limit air strikes to military targets used in direct support of aggression against South Viet-Nam. Consequently the air strikes were not aimed at or intended to affect third parties and precautions were taken to prevent this from occurring.

2. If damage to shipping has in fact occurred, it could well be the result of anti-aircraft fire or misfirings from the North Vietnamese side.

3. If any damage to international shipping in the Haiphong area was produced by ordnance dropped by U.S. aircraft it was inadvertent and regrettable.

4. In recent weeks the North Vietnamese forces have launched massive invasions across the Demilitarized Zone and from points in Laos and Cambodia against South Viet-Nam. Countries which supply offensive equipment to the North Vietnamese and enable them to mount an invasion of South Viet-Nam share responsibility.

5. Nevertheless the Soviet Government may be assured that U.S. authorities will continue to make every effort to avoid any damage to international shipping. *End Text.*³

Rogers

³ Beam delivered the note to Kovalev that afternoon. Kovalev, citing the point on the responsibility of military suppliers, declared that the Soviet Union “had rendered in the past and will continue to render all necessary support to the DRV in its struggle against outside aggression.” Beam replied that the U.S. Government had given careful consideration to its response, including the point in question, which he believed “was critical and stated our case cogently.” Beam later commented in his reporting telegram that the note had apparently “blunted current Soviet charges.” (Telegram 3574 from Moscow, April 17; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 VIET S)

115. Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State¹

Moscow, April 17, 1972, 1515Z.

3568. Subj: Soviet Role in Vietnam Crisis. Ref: A. USUN 1242;² B. New Delhi 4551;³ C. Vientiane 2870.⁴

1. Summary: Embassy's assessment is that Soviet remarks contained in reftels are deliberately misleading. Moscow is fully committed to provide DRV with means to conduct military operations in Indochina under conditions of Hanoi's own choosing, including current offensive. Opening of Sino-US dialogue has if anything increased staunchness of Soviet support for Hanoi. High-level Soviet visitors to Hanoi in recent months provide further evidence of close Soviet-DRV ties at present, while recent Soviet lecturer described DRV as more independent from China than at any time in recent years. We have detected no wavering of Soviet support for Hanoi because of approaching Moscow summit. Moscow's personal preferences probably less important than other factors in determining timing of DRV offensive. While Soviets are carefully controlling their response to developments in Indochina, they are making clear their refusal to be deterred by summit considerations in accepting challenge posed by US countermeasures in Vietnam. End summary.

2. We have noted number of recent cables reporting conversations with Soviet diplomats or other officials in which Soviets have attempted to dissociate Moscow from planning role in current DRV offensive (refs A and C) and to lay blame at Chinese door (refs A and B).

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 VIET S. Confidential; Priority; Limdis. Repeated to Hong Kong, Saigon, and USDEL France.

² In telegram 1242 from USUN New York, April 6, the Embassy reported that Kalinkin, a key Soviet official in the UN Secretariat, had approached David Henry, a retired U.S. Foreign Service officer, to discuss the North Vietnamese offensive. According to Henry: "Kalinkin stated invasion most unfortunate, particularly coming at this time, and he hoped it would in no way interfere with President's forthcoming trip to USSR. Kalinkin stressed Soviets in no way involved in planning or coordination of invasion and exercised no control over North Vietnamese; control is effectively maintained by PRC over Hanoi, he added." (Ibid.)

³ In telegram 4551 from New Delhi, April 12, the Embassy reported that Ivan Shchedrov, a *Pravda* correspondent, noted in a conversation with a Soviet diplomat that the North Vietnamese offensive began shortly after Chinese Premier Chou En-lai visited Hanoi. The Embassy commented that this attempt to blame the Chinese appeared to parallel the previous report on Kalinkin. (Ibid.)

⁴ In telegram 2870 from Vientiane, April 12, the Embassy reported that the Soviet Military Attaché told an Embassy official that the North Vietnamese offensive obviously reflected "political decisions" related to the Moscow summit rather than careful military planning. (Ibid.)

We consider these to be disingenuous efforts to obscure Soviet intentions. They conflict with our own reading of Soviet policy and with other evidence available to us. Following represents our assessment of Soviet role at present.

3. In technical sense, Moscow is not the guiding hand behind DRV actions in South Vietnam and other parts of Indochina. Hanoi still gives every indication of being master of its own house. At same time, Moscow is fundamentally opposed to US goals in Vietnam and is fully committed to provide DRV with the wherewithal to conduct military operations in Indochina under conditions of Hanoi's own choosing, including current offensive. If at times Moscow has desired to lower threshold of risk in Indochina for its own reasons, we do not consider this to be decisive factor at present. Critical factor has been and remains Hanoi's will to continue struggle; availability of means to do so has thus far not been problem.

4. Aside from continuing factors underlying Soviet policy in Vietnam—e.g., Socialist solidarity, desire to destroy credibility of US defense commitment, sap US economic and military strength, and shake US willingness to assume similar responsibilities in future—opening of Sino-US dialogue has if anything increased staunchness of Soviet support for Hanoi. Soviets now have even greater interests in containing Chinese influence and in establishing their own credentials as country which can provide most reliable support and protection against "imperialist aggression."

5. Recent months have provided convincing evidence of close Soviet ties with Hanoi. Three Soviet ministers visited DRV during March and presence of Air Defense Chief Batitskiy⁵ in North Vietnam on eve of current offensive leaves little doubt that Soviets were fully aware of DRV plans and anticipated US reaction.

6. Only visible indication of Soviet-DRV differences that has occurred in recent months resulted from DRV Ambassador's call on Kosygin Feb 11, which was described as taking place in atmosphere of "friendly and comradely frankness" (Moscow 1322).⁶ We would guess that this "frank conversation" most likely concerned Sihanouk,⁷ who arrived in Hanoi the following day amid rumors that new Indochinese summit might take place (Hong Kong 943).⁸ We consider it highly unlikely on eve of President's China visit, when Soviets were going out of their way to demonstrate solidarity with Hanoi, that Soviets would

⁵ See Document 90.

⁶ Not found.

⁷ Prince Norodom Sihanouk, former President and Prime Minister of Cambodia.

⁸ Not found.

have openly disagreed with Hanoi on development related specifically with Vietnam.

7. As further factor, Soviet lectures in recent months have consistently played down Chinese influence in Hanoi and emphasized importance of Soviet aid, which described as amounting to 80 percent of external assistance to DRV. In latest example, Soviet lecturer April 13 claimed USSR has increased its military assistance to DRV in recent months so that Hanoi could better withstand both American and Chinese pressure. As result, he described DRV as being more independent from China than at any time in recent years.

8. We have detected no watering of Soviet support for Hanoi because of approaching Moscow summit. On the contrary, both before and after announcement of President's trip to Moscow, Soviets have clearly indicated that they had no intention of moderating their full backing for DRV. Short time before Moscow summit was announced, Podgorny signed major new economic and military aid agreements in Hanoi.⁹ Since then they have continued to pour supplies into DRV. Their heavy-handed exploitation of Vietnam issue against Peking in connection with President's China visit anticipated their current posture.

9. It is conceivable that Soviets considered test of strength in Vietnam desirable in advance of summit talks. Not only do they have less to lose than Washington, since US prestige is more heavily engaged in success or failure of Vietnamization than their own, but if Vietnamization program could be shown to have "feet of clay" prior to Moscow talks, general Soviet negotiating posture would be strengthened. At same time, given DRV offensive's potential for spoiling atmosphere of Moscow summit, to detriment of both sides, Soviets probably preferred that it occur sooner rather than later before Moscow talks. Hanoi, on other hand, may have seen advantages in having Vietnam issue on active irritant during summit, thus reducing likelihood of some "great power" understanding that would reduce level of Soviet support for Hanoi war effort. Political wishes of either Moscow or Hanoi with regard to summit, however, may well have been less decisive in timing of offensive than considerations of weather and increasing Saigon military strength.

10. Once offensive was unleashed, the die was cast and Moscow could only be expected to give full support to Hanoi, at same time resorting to "disinformation" maneuvers like those reported reftels to minimize US reaction in pre-summit period. In general Soviets have

⁹ Podgorny headed an official Soviet delegation to Hanoi October 3–8, 1971. For public documentation, including speeches delivered during the visit and the joint statement issued at its conclusion, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIII, No. 40, November 12, 1971, pp. 1–2, 5–12, 16.

carefully controlled their response and have avoided striking more provocative posture than is inherent in fundamental nature of their differences with us over Vietnam. Thus, Brezhnev took care to frame his expression of support for Hanoi primarily in defensive terms.¹⁰

11. The Soviet leaders are obviously concerned that, if the scale of fighting and retaliatory bombing continues to mount, it could jeopardize not only the atmosphere of the summit but the visit itself. Nevertheless, Moscow appears to be signalling that it will not be deterred by summit considerations in accepting challenge posed by US countermeasures in Vietnam. This was forcefully stated in *Pravda* commentary by political observer Korionov Apr 15, which emphasized that Vietnamese people have faithful reliable allies and warned that “nothing” will prevent Soviet people from completely fulfilling their “sacred international duty” to aid patriots of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. With Soviet position laid on the line, commentary indicated in conclusion that crucial factor is how US itself chooses to resolve Vietnam problem.

Beam

¹⁰ Presumably a reference to the meeting between Brezhnev and the North Vietnamese Ambassador in Moscow on April 12; see Document 120.

116. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 17, 1972.

[Omitted here is discussion of Democratic criticism on the military situation in Vietnam.]

Kissinger: The Chinese statement is very mild, Mr. President. Mansfield made a statement saying this will prolong the war; it will make his task in China harder.² It just proves he doesn't know a goddamn thing.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 709–13. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 10:51 to 11:03 a.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² Senators Mike Mansfield (D–Montana) and Hugh Scott (R–Pennsylvania), majority and minority leaders respectively, visited the People's Republic of China April 19–22. For an account of their trip, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVII, China, 1969–1972, Document 223.

Nixon: His task in China! You know, we've, we've allowed, we have given him really the extra bit of rope here, as if he had any god-damn special task commission—He doesn't have a thing. He's a pain in the ass.

Kissinger: Mr. President, when I tell the Chinese Ambassador tomorrow that I am going to Moscow³—We are now playing this reverse.

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: They are not going to look for trouble with us.

Nixon: That's right. That's right.

Kissinger: Because that shows them we have a—

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: What we get out of the Moscow trip is pressure on Peking, pressure on Hanoi. What they get out of the Moscow trip is pressure on Peking. But that's—

Nixon: Right. We don't mind giving them pressure on Peking. But as far as Mansfield is concerned, let me say that when he returns, he's got to be savagely taken off too, because he has been, you want to remember, with his nice manner, he has been vicious in a way that he has—

Kissinger: You see what I think, Mr. President, is, I now think that deal that I suggested to you this morning⁴—I don't think the Russians could, if they wanted to, deliver a final settlement. What I should do—

Nixon: No.

Kissinger: —is pretend that that's what we want, and retreat to an interim solution, so that it looks reasonable.

Nixon: The interim solution being again?

Kissinger: The interim solution being, we say let's return to the status quo before the offensive.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: They withdraw the three divisions that came across the DMZ; we stop the bombing; they scale down their offensive actions in the South; Russia guarantees this and talks; Le Duc Tho returns to Paris; and talks start. Mr. President, if we deliver that, I think, first of all, we can murder our critics here. Second, I believe if talks start under those circumstances, Hanoi may negotiate seriously for this reason. They've thrown their Sunday punch this year; they were defeated on the ground and hit very hard in the North; if they do it again next year, after you've been re-elected, they'll be even worse off.

³ Kissinger met Huang Hua, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, in New York on April 18 from 5:30 to 5:55 p.m. to report on his upcoming trip to Moscow; *ibid*.

⁴ See Document 113.

Nixon: I'd make one other condition. We'll stop the bombing in the North, provided they withdraw their three divisions across the DMZ and return the POWs. I think we've got to insist on that at this point.

Kissinger: Well, that they won't do.

Nixon: Try it.

Kissinger: I'll certainly try it.

Nixon: You understand? Or at least they've got to do something on POWs. You know, you see you can even retreat there. They've got to start with some token on the POWs, the sick and wounded, for example.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: Doesn't that make sense?

Kissinger: That makes sense.

Nixon: But, let me say that I am not—

Kissinger: But, you see, then I would murder the Democrats. If that is done, I would—

Nixon: Well, we can murder them, except, you understand, Henry, they go into their convention, we go into the campaign, with the war still going on. That's our problem. You see the only way that we can get this thing out of the way—That's why we may have to go the harder line, the blockade and the rest, rather than taking the half-ass line like this. The only way we can get this out of the way is to get the war over with.

Kissinger: I think, Mr. President, we go this route and if we get the Russians involved getting it settled this far, we have a real chance of getting this settled well before the election, because then I do not see what Hanoi is going to wait for. What will be better for them next year than—?

Nixon: Well, it has to be tied in then with an announcement in June. And as I've said we've got to consider the May announcement as to whether or not that has got to be thrown now. I wonder if the May announcement—

Kissinger: I would not announce anything this week. Why not do it next week?

Nixon: That's what I mean, next week.

Kissinger: Oh yeah.

Nixon: The May announcement.

Kissinger: For your press conference.

Nixon: But the point is, whether that May announcement should simply be a reduction of forces or whether at that point we want to use the draft—

Kissinger: I would not, Mr. President.

Nixon: I agree.

Kissinger: To announce the reduction of forces in the middle of an offensive is such a show of confidence that I—Besides we have the Moscow thing next week too available.

Nixon: You mean maybe. You mean, you mean to surface it?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: But, I mean, but we wouldn't surface it if talks were going on, would we?

Kissinger: Why not? If we said it was arranged in Moscow.

Nixon: Well, you know, that might be an idea.

Kissinger: Supposing you—

Nixon: I might just open the press conference with that.

Kissinger: That's what I mean. You say—

Nixon: Kissinger's been to Moscow and talks are going to resume. And then—Boy and that would flabbergast those sons-of-bitches.

Kissinger: Well, that's what I mean. And then I would, sort of in a low-key way also get a few thousand troops out of there.

[Omitted here is a brief exchange on troop reductions.]

Kissinger: My instinct is, Mr. President, that next week I am going to—You know, the Russians are tough and I may not be able to get it done, but we should try—

Nixon: This talk with Dobrynin today, what's it about?

Kissinger: Nothing.

Nixon: Is he bringing a message?

Kissinger: No, he brought me the message.⁵ The talk with Dobrynin is just to show him we're tough. To say, you know, we won't reply to this—

Nixon: Oh, oh, he's going to reply to the message—

Kissinger: No, no. I'm going to reply to the message he brought last night.

Nixon: Oh, you're going to say, "We've received it. The President has noted it. We understand that's the position you have taken. And we—"

Kissinger: I won't even say that.

Nixon: Wait a minute. "But you've got to understand that we're taking the position that we're going to take and the President is not going to be deflected one bit and he has no answer to this."

Kissinger: Good.

Nixon: You see what I mean?

⁵ Document 110.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: “Not going to be deflected a bit. You’ve got to understand that and our talks as far as the summit are a separate matter, a separate matter from Vietnam.” You know what I mean. But then link your talks on Vietnam with mine. Stick it to them.

Kissinger: Right. I think—

Nixon: You know what worries them though—

Kissinger: Oh the blockade worries them.

[Omitted here is discussion of press reports on the military situation in Vietnam and on preparations for the Moscow summit.]

117. Intelligence Memorandum Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, April 17, 1972.

PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN SOVIET MILITARY AID TO NORTH VIETNAM

I. The Politics of Aid: Moscow, Hanoi’s Offensive, the Summit

1. Two basic factors must underly any analysis of Soviet involvement in Vietnam. First, the USSR would like to see an eventual Communist victory in Vietnam. Conversely, some decisive Southern victory in the conflict would be felt as an important setback to Soviet interests, given the high degree of Soviet commitment and support to Hanoi’s cause.

2. Yet this proposition must be qualified. The USSR certainly does not attach the same priority to the struggle that the DRV does. In 1954 the Soviets worked out a deal with the French that fell well short of North Vietnam’s objectives; by 1964 Khrushchev was all but ignoring the area. His successors have proven truer and more consistent allies to Hanoi, but—even given the interests shared on the two sides—Moscow can hardly be expected to subordinate all its international concerns to this single problem.

3. The second proposition is that Soviet room for maneuver is limited. It is dealing, not with a puppet, but with a distant, independent

¹ Source: National Security Council, Washington Special Actions Group Files, Meeting Files, 4-17-72. Secret; Spoke; Sensitive.

client to which, in the Communist context, it has obligations of some weight. Furthermore, this client has, in the People's Republic of China (PRC), another patron that is eager to pillory the Soviet Union for any faltering in its support to Hanoi's cause and that gives North Vietnam military and economic aid of its own. The Soviets should derive some leverage from their position as supplier of complex, advanced weapons, but even here the Chinese could confound their attempts to apply this leverage by replacing them in this function as well, albeit incompletely and with difficulty.²

4. Last, in this concrete situation theoretical leverage does not have much practical effect. The North Vietnamese themselves are immensely jealous of their independence, and they assiduously work their relations with their two big supporters not only to maximize the aid but also to minimize the influence of the donors.

5. We lack direct evidence of the real tone of the Soviet-North Vietnamese relationship, although we do occasionally receive indications, mostly indirect, on this matter. Relying on these and on deductions from the above propositions, we surmise that these relations are somewhat as follows. The Soviets feel a special obligation to help in the air defense of North Vietnam, as a socialist state under bombing by the imperialists. As for military supplies intended for use in the South, the bulk are by now routinely supplied; and, beyond this, Moscow is anxious to help the DRV overcome the advantage in modern weapons that the other side has enjoyed. Hanoi for its part probably submits its aid requests with a minimum of explanations. Hanoi's leaders have consistently said that they need no advice from outside strategists, and they have excoriated any North Vietnamese who seem to be coming too heavily under outside influence. Moreover, they are always wary of getting caught in a bargaining relationship with their patrons, and they thus almost certainly avoid being drawn into the kinds of consultations that might grow into joint planning. The Soviets can draw many conclusions from the kinds and volume of aid requested, as well as intelligence from their people in North Vietnam, but they have no apparent mechanism for advising on strategy and tactics—that is, on matters beyond those affecting training in and use of their equipment. They also recognize that, given Hanoi's sensitivities and its Peking option, they would be treading on delicate ground if they sought to intrude into this sphere.

² In terms of total value, Chinese military aid in 1965–71 was about 40% that of the USSR. In the last two years, however, the Chinese have supplied almost 95% as much military aid, by value, as the USSR. This is mainly because the DRV's air defense needs, met primarily by the USSR, declined for several years after the bombing halt of 1968. [Footnote in the source text.]

6. If these views are correct, then it is likely that over the last year or so, and particularly after the DRV's heavy losses of equipment in Lam Son 719,³ the Soviet Union has been delivering to North Vietnam large shipments of weapons and supplies, some of which are undoubtedly being used in the present offensive. The signing of a number of military aid agreements has been announced during this period, including one in August 1971, another in October, and the most recent in December (the Chinese have kept pace throughout with similar announcements of aid deals). We cannot associate Soviet decisions on particular weapons or volumes with individual agreements, but Moscow would clearly have been aware that Hanoi was building up large inventories of tanks, for example, and long-range artillery. This process almost certainly began before the Soviets were aware of President Nixon's planned visit to Peking and before their own summit was scheduled. The Soviets could easily infer that the North Vietnamese were preparing for large-scale conventional action, which would occur during a dry season. They may have been told as much, but they were probably not kept abreast of the details of Hanoi's evolving plans for a multi-front offensive.

7. When, with this buildup in process, summit diplomacy began to develop from July onward, first in Peking and then in Moscow, the Soviets must have had to consider the relationship between their diplomacy and the Vietnam war. By November, with the breakdown of secret US-North Vietnamese negotiations, their task had become how to relate what they knew of Hanoi's military plans to the May summit.

8. At least by the first of the year, Moscow almost certainly knew that an offensive was in the offing and could foresee several outcomes. First, a North Vietnamese offensive might score victories of a scope to have major repercussions on South Vietnam's stability. This would be welcome for its own sake and (the Soviets would reason) would put them at an advantage vis-à-vis President Nixon in Moscow. At the summit, in any discussion of a Vietnam settlement, it would require the United States to be the supplicant. This would be a desirable result unless the United States reacted so negatively as to postpone or cancel the summit. The Soviets would see some benefits even in this reaction, in that they would anticipate a weakening of the President's domestic political position.

9. It is possible to argue that these advantages are so great that the USSR hoped that a North Vietnamese offensive would provoke the

³ Reference is to South Vietnamese offensive of February and March 1971—supported by American advisers and aircraft—to disrupt the Ho Chi Minh Trail at Tchepone, Laos.

United States to put off the summit and even contrived to arrange matters to this end. Putting aside for the moment the question of its ability to control events in this fashion, it is doubtful that Moscow sees this as the preferred outcome. Its interests in a successful summit is substantial. It has a stake of some importance in certain bilateral matters, especially arms control and trade. It has an interest in improved US-Soviet relations as the centerpiece of a *détente* campaign, which is meant to forward its interests in Western Europe. Most important, it is a matter of deep concern not to encourage the rapprochement between its major antagonists (China and the United States) to proceed to a stage of active anti-Soviet cooperation, a contingency to which the Soviets have shown themselves acutely sensitive.

10. Second, the North Vietnamese might suffer a major defeat. This would clearly be a bad outcome from the Soviet standpoint. Its only virtue would be to deflate the importance of the Vietnam issue as a problem in Soviet-US relations, thus leaving more time for the bilateral matters that are Moscow's primary incentive for a summit. But if this defeat had been accompanied by heavy US bombing deep into North Vietnam, the Soviets would have a hard time justifying any summit at all.⁴ Thus this outcome could be a double defeat for the USSR.

11. Third, major action could have eased off with no decisive result. This would be, in terms of summit considerations alone, a manageable result, since Vietnam would then not play a critical role in the Soviet-US encounter.

12. Fourth, the outcome might be undecided and still hotly contested at the time of the summit itself. This would run the major risk of the first case—a US postponement or cancellation—and would put Moscow under pressure to do the same. If the summit nonetheless took place, this situation would almost guarantee that Vietnam would dominate the political atmosphere. Vietnam, to the Soviets, is the wrong issue for this meeting.

13. This review shows how hard it would have been for the Soviets to make confident calculations of the best way to relate the evolving conflict in Vietnam to their summit diplomacy. In fact, however, there was little they could do about Hanoi's plans. The Soviets have long been committed to the military support of North Vietnam, and

⁴ In this connection a Soviet KGB officer in Vientiane, evidently acting on instructions, told an Agency officer on 10 April of his concern that US bombing of North Vietnam could force Moscow to cancel the summit. This line, while obviously intended to persuade the United States to stay its hand, probably does reflect a genuine concern about the political damage to the USSR's position, *vis-à-vis* other Communist states, of summit negotiations under these conditions. [Footnote in the source text.]

they began to be committed to the aid that supports the present offensive before they arranged the Moscow summit. For the Politburo, it would have been a momentous decision to change course in the latter part of 1971. Supporters of a summit would have had the greatest difficulty in mustering a majority behind the proposition that North Vietnam should be pressed to call off its offensive plans. In fact, it is doubtful that they would have prevailed, especially since it would have been argued that Hanoi would not have turned aside from its plans in any event. No matter how the individual Soviet leaders appraised the situation, it would be uncharacteristic of the present leadership, which is closer to a collective than to the Khrushchevian model, to consider such radical alternatives.

14. In sum, the Soviets, through their long commitment to North Vietnam and the momentum of their military aid program, probably began to underwrite the expansion of North Vietnam's offensive capabilities before the summit was in view and without being fully consulted on Hanoi's specific intentions.⁵ They see dangers to their interests in the way in which Vietnam and the summit have become related, but the alternatives available to them as this relationship developed were even more unpalatable. As of now, they want both a North Vietnamese victory and a summit, but they find that the key choices are beyond their control.

[Omitted here is the remainder of the memorandum, including Appendix A on Soviet military visitors and the North Vietnamese Offensive, and Appendix B, which consists of statistical tables on military and economic assistance to North Vietnam from the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe.]

⁵ The visit of Marshal Batitskiy (16–27 March) came far too late to fit into any scenario of major decision-making. The composition of his delegation suggests that his purpose was to advise on the air defense of North Vietnam, probably in connection with renewed US bombing expected as a consequence of the North Vietnamese offensive. Batitskiy's and other recent Soviet visits are discussed in Appendix A. [Footnote in the source text. For further analysis of the Batitskiy visit, see Document 90.]

118. Minutes of Washington Special Action Group Meeting¹

Washington, April 17, 1972, 11:05–11:48 a.m.

SUBJECT

Vietnam

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

U Alexis Johnson

William Sullivan

Defense

Kenneth Rush

Armistead Selden

R/Adm. William Flanagan

JCS

Adm. Thomas Moorer

CIA

Richard Helms

George Carver

[*name not declassified*] (only for Mr. Helms' briefing)

NSC

Richard Kennedy

Mark Wandler

[Omitted here is the Summary of Conclusions.]

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Helms) Dick, do you have anything for us?

Mr. Helms: Yes, but first I want to mention that the study you asked for on Soviet assistance to North Vietnam is in front of you.²

Mr. Kissinger: Does the study prove what we wanted it to prove, or should it be withdrawn?

Mr. Helms: It's a little bit of both. [Reads attached briefing]³

[Omitted here is detailed discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals. Top Secret; Sensitive. No drafting information appears on the minutes. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

² Document 117.

³ Brackets in the source text. Not attached.

Mr. Sullivan: [Referring to Mr. Helms' briefing] You said the Soviet statement of protest to us mentioned damage to their ships.⁴ I don't think they said that in public, though.

Mr. Johnson: No, they haven't.

Mr. Sullivan: In the public statement, they just mentioned the barbarity of attacking Haiphong.⁵ I don't think our press statements should say anything about damage to Soviet ships.

Mr. Kennedy entered the room at this point.

Mr. Johnson: If the Soviets want to keep the ship business quiet, let's help them do it. The TASS statement said nothing about ship damage. The press here and in Moscow assumes Tass' statement contained the substance of the note to us. Let's let it ride.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree. But the press is getting leery. Joseph Kraft called over here this morning, and he was amazed that the Soviets seem to be ducking a confrontation.

Adm. Moorer: The skipper of one of the Soviet ships sent a message to Moscow, which we intercepted. The message described some of the damage.

Mr. Rush: I thought we were not sure that the damage was caused by us.

Mr. Johnson: That's right.

Adm. Moorer: The North Vietnamese fired over 200 missiles.

Mr. Johnson: There was a radio report this morning of an East German statement which said the Soviet ships were damaged as a result of our air attacks.

Adm. Moorer: That's correct. But the German report was based on the report of the Soviet skipper, who also said all crews are seeking safety—a wise move.

[Omitted here is detailed discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

[Kissinger:] I have not had time to read the paper on Soviet aid. Can you tell me what it proves?

Mr. Carver: It shows that there is a great deal of lead time between stockpiling aid and using this aid in tactical situations. It's obvious that the Soviets tried to make up the Lam Son 719 losses. They must have been aware, too, that they were augmenting the North Vietnamese offensive capabilities. I doubt, though, that there was an orchestration

⁴ Brackets in the source text. See Document 108. *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, however, published on April 18 the text of the protest note, which did mention the damage to their ships and personnel. (*Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIV, No. 16, May 17, 1972, p. 4)

⁵ For text of the TASS statement, published by *Pravda* and *Izvestia* on April 17, see *ibid.*

between the step-up of aid and the launching of the offensive. The schedules indicate the aid requests were placed before Hanoi jelled its plans for the offensive.

Mr. Kissinger: When did Hanoi jell those plans?

Mr. Carver: The North Vietnamese probably decided late last summer to go to main force action in Vietnam this year. They probably decided in late September or October on the step-up of activity in Laos.

[Omitted here is detailed discussion of the military situation in Laos and Vietnam.]

[Kissinger:] (to Mr. Carver) You don't think, then, that the increased Soviet aid shipments and the launching of the North Vietnamese offensive were part of an orchestrated plot?

Mr. Carver: No, I don't.

Mr. Kissinger: But you think the Soviets knew they were increasing the North Vietnamese offensive capabilities.

Mr. Carver: Yes, I'm sure the Soviets knew.

Mr. Sullivan: The increased POL shipments alone should have told the Soviets that.

Mr. Carver: Of course. The Soviets knew the increased POL shipments had to augment the North Vietnamese capabilities.

Mr. Kissinger: We can say therefore one of three things: (1) that the Soviets didn't know anything—that this was really the normal flow of aid; (2) that the Soviets knew the specific target date of the attack; and (3) that the Soviets didn't know the specific date, but they did know they had given the North Vietnamese a considerable improvement of offensive capabilities.

Mr. Carver: I think number three is where we would come out. The supply shipments increased at the end of the summer, but Hanoi's plans had not yet jelled.

Mr. Kissinger: You mean the timing of the offensive, don't you?

Mr. Carver: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: But the Soviets knew their increased aid would certainly make it easier for the North Vietnamese to launch an offensive.

Mr. Carver: Of course they did.

Mr. Kissinger: I'm not trying to put words into your mouth. I'm just trying to understand the situation. Would it be correct to say that a prudent Soviet Government from January on—knowing that the Summit was approaching in May—might have known with each passing month that the coincidence between the Summit and the North Vietnamese offensive was becoming much sharper?

Mr. Carver: That's correct. It's also inconceivable that when Marshall Batiskiy left North Vietnam the Soviets did not know what was

on Hanoi's mind. The main task of the Batskiy mission was to review the North Vietnamese air defenses—and they obviously did that because they knew they would have to use these defenses in the near future.

Mr. Rush: Let's assume for the sake of argument that the offensive was supposed to start in February and that all the supplies were in the pipeline. As the date slipped from February, could the Russians have done something to cut the pipeline—and stop the offensive, so that it would not interfere with the Summit?

Mr. Carver: It's not that neat. Even if the Soviets did that, Hanoi could drawdown on the existing stockpiles. You can't plot the movement of a particular shipment to the tactical situation. The supply system doesn't work like that.

Mr. Rush: Everything was all geared up for the February offensive, and the Russian and Chinese supplies were coming in. Did the supplies continue to come in when the offensive was delayed? The Russians could have been concerned about the delayed offensive coinciding with the Summit, and they may have cut the supply flow when they found out the offensive was delayed.

Mr. Carver: That didn't happen. Anyway, the supply system is not that responsive.

Mr. Kissinger: Since February, though, the Russians should have been expecting the offensive with each passing week.

Mr. Helms: It's interesting to look at the POL shipment line in our study.

Mr. Carver: You can see a very obvious surge in the line in the fourth quarter of 1971 and the first quarter of 1972.

Adm. Moorer: That's due to several reasons. First, the North Vietnamese are using more trucks to deploy men and supplies. Second, they are operating more tanks—a long way from home, too. Third, they are flying the MiGs more often, and the MiGs gobble up fuel.

Mr. Kissinger: Will our air strikes on Haiphong have much of an effect on POL distribution?

Adm. Moorer: The strikes won't have much of an effect on this offensive. But the effects will be felt later on.

Mr. Rush: Let me repeat the question I asked earlier. Seeing the delay in the offensive and not wanting it to coincide with the Summit, couldn't the Russians have cut the supply flow?

Mr. Carver: They could have done that. But if the cut had come after the first of the year, it would not have had any effect on Hanoi's stocks.

Mr. Kissinger: They may not have known the exact day the North Vietnamese planned to launch the offensive. But sending a military mission to Hanoi a week before the offensive was no sign that they wanted Hanoi to call it off.

Mr. Carver: Even if the Soviets wanted Hanoi to call the offensive off, they would have taken much criticism from the North Vietnamese and the Chinese. There is simply no evidence that Batiskiy told the North Vietnamese to call it off—because of the Summit or any other reason.

Mr. Sullivan: The Soviets may have known the offensive was laid on for February, in the hope that it would cause us a maximum embarrassment during the China visit. Then, although the offensive was delayed, they were committed—and they couldn't turn it around.

Mr. Kissinger: They wouldn't tell Hanoi to let the offensive run to May 5, would they? They would have to let the offensive run its course.

Mr. Helms: That's right. Once they are locked into something, they take their losses to the bitter end. They have to go all the way with the North Vietnamese. Otherwise, as the leading Communist power, they would be open for a great deal of criticism. When we went into Cambodia, we had a time limit for getting out. On the other hand, if the Russians had been in our place, they would have let the operation run its course. They are not subject to domestic pressures.

Adm. Moorer: The North Vietnamese are now shooting the works. They can go all out, and when they are finished they can be refurbished by the Soviets and the Chinese. They are not gambling because they know they won't be invaded.

Mr. Kissinger: Assuming the North Vietnamese are defeated in the South, there is nothing the Russians could do in time for the Summit, even if they quadrupled their aid.

Mr. Rush: Is there anything the Russians could do to make the North Vietnamese disengage before the Summit?

Mr. Carver: No.

Adm. Moorer: George is right. But the Soviets could make sure the North Vietnamese don't launch another offensive.

Mr. Johnson: Won't the Chinese pick up the shortfall in supplies if the Soviets let up?

Mr. Carver: The Chinese will pick up some of the shortfall.

Mr. Sullivan: I'm not sure the Chinese are totally behind what the North Vietnamese are doing. They support a protracted war strategy.

Mr. Carver: I don't think the Chinese are anxious to see a big North Vietnamese victory.

Mr. Kissinger: You think the Chinese interest is to keep the war going?

Mr. Carver: The Chinese will not welcome a big North Vietnamese victory in the near future. If the war continues and the North Vietnamese are kept occupied on their southern borders, that will be okay with the Chinese.

Mr. Kissinger: Otherwise?

Mr. Carver: Otherwise, Hanoi might start flexing its muscles—in Thailand, for example. I’m not suggesting that Peking doesn’t want the North Vietnamese to win. It’s just that continued North Vietnamese concern for problems closer to home will not be a bad thing for Peking.

Mr. Kissinger: We’ll meet tomorrow at 10:00.

119. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 17, 1972.

Kissinger: I was talking with Dobrynin.² Bill has done very well, Mr. President.³

Nixon: That’s the report we get. I’ve been thinking that I don’t—What’s your, what’s the purpose of your conversation with Dobrynin? Just to go about getting this message?

Kissinger: Yes. And just to keep the—

Nixon: And you’ve done that—

Kissinger: I’m not finished yet because he—

Nixon: Well, I don’t want you to offer this or even suggest that there is a chance that we might go on this interim idea—

Kissinger: Oh, no.

Nixon: — that an exchange for a—Let me tell you the weakness in that. I’ve written it out here.⁴ The weakness in that, in view of Haig’s report, is that it sees it tactically in the short run, but does not

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 709–19. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 12:15 to 12:28 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² According to his Record of Schedule, Kissinger met Dobrynin in the Map Room at the White House from 12:07 to 12:15 p.m. and—following his conversation with the President in the Oval Office—from 12:30 to 1:24 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976) No substantive record of the meeting has been found.

³ See footnote 5, Document 113. Haldeman wrote in his diary entry for April 17: “He [Nixon] is very pleased with Rogers testimony on the Hill today. He did a good job, took a hard line, although before he went up, the P was very concerned about whether he would do so. As it turned out, he was really very good.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

⁴ Not found.

adequately look, in my opinion, at the long run, the risks. In the short run, it would be a great gesture and we could punish our critics very, very heavily, if we could get them to withdraw from I-Corps across the DMZ. Then we would give up the bombing of North Vietnam and there would be some reduction in fighting and we would go back to the conference tables. All right. The difficulty is that the enemy's capability still to launch significant offensive action is there. That, you know, it doesn't much matter how much time you've got. The difficulty is too that the pressure on the Russians is enormously lifted as far as this confrontation is concerned. Oh sure, we can go to Moscow and we can agree on SALT and a lot of other things. But the point that I make is that having taken the heat that we have already taken for escalation, I think what we have to do is to escalate all the way.

Kissinger: Well, Mr.—

Nixon: Unless, what I'm saying is, that I think the position that you're going to have to be in in Moscow is not the one being willing to back down. In other words, let us sell them, let us sell—Let them sell to us talks for halting the bombing, which is what this really gets down to.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: After all—Now wait a minute. They invaded; that's true. We bombed them; that's true. But when you finally get down to it, we're giving up the bombing and we go back to talks; and pressuring the Russians is not going to be very great. And my view is, what I really want, you know, I want to caution you with Dobrynin: it's going to be, it's going to have to be tougher than that, Henry. At least, right now, the time, you can't let the time flee by, Henry. We have to have the blockade. I don't give a goddamn about the election. We'll blockade those sons-of-bitches and starve them out. And that's what we're going to do.

Kissinger: Well—

Nixon: I'd rather do that than have any talks going on this summer. Talks this summer are not going to help us.

Kissinger: Well, you have to make this judgment, Mr. President. If—First of all, I agree with you that nothing should be said about this interim solution to the Russians now. That should be the result of a stalemate.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: And I'm not going to make any proposition to the Russians now.

Nixon: Sure. I understand. But I just don't think that—

Kissinger: But that should be said in Moscow if it's said anywhere. But, if I may make this suggestion, Mr. President: if we convince the Russians that they, that we are asking something that they cannot in the best

will in the world deliver, then we may force them into brutal preemptive action to bring you down this year. That may be their only hope.

Nixon: I know that.

Kissinger: No, no, but—

Nixon: Meanwhile, we've lost the war.

Kissinger: Well, if they think they can bring you down—I'm just giving you the case for the other side—then all they have to do is endure 6 months of a blockade. That they can probably do.

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: So, what, that interim solution has this advantage, Mr. President. First, it will be seen as a clear defeat for them.

Nixon: You see, that's temporary. Go ahead.

Kissinger: I know it's temporary. Secondly, it gets us through the Russian summit. After all, the reason you can do this now is because of the China summit. And it's just awfully hard to paint you into the position of a warmonger. It gets us through the Russian summit with some notable successes. We can build into the Russian summit a lot of things, like a Middle East settlement, that we have to deliver next year, which they'll be just as reluctant to break next year.

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: Then, Mr. President, after your election, I'd go all out with the North Vietnamese.

Nixon: Yeah, but the point is, we'd still have the war on our hands all summer long. As Haig says, which is the disturbing thing in his memorandum; you read it to me yesterday and I quite agree with him. He says, well, after, we'll hold now; and then we've got to get ready for another offensive in July. We're not going to take any offensive in July.

Kissinger: No, no. No, no, no, no.

Nixon: [unclear] no offensive in July.

Kissinger: No, no. Part of this deal would have to be a reduction in Soviet deliveries and a guarantee that there would be no offensives this year. All of this year. We're not talking about now.

Nixon: If we get that, fine.

Kissinger: We're talking about the rest of—

Nixon: [unclear] I don't mind having a little [unclear] out there [unclear]—

Kissinger: No, no.

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: Oh, Mr. President, if we can only get this offensive called off with no promise about July. Nor can we accept—I'd go a step further. We cannot accept a Hanoi comment either; we have to get a Soviet public assurance. Now then this would also change the negotiating

position. Because then I believe, Mr. President, Hanoi would feel that by its own actions—maybe you'll be brought down, but you cannot be brought down by Hanoi's actions. Therefore it is probable that you'll be President after November; that having acted this violently now, there is no telling what you will do in November. And—

Nixon: You know, their gamble is that they can have the war going on and they'll still have the POWs up until November. And that under those circumstances the possibility of our surviving the election is very, very low. You see my point?

Kissinger: I think if they are pulled off this attack now, they, particularly if they get ground down more as they do every day—I mean this deal couldn't happen before May 5 to 10 anyway, in which case much of their offensive would have broken its back anyhow. So I, so I think that for you to do—The reason a blockade will work is if you can endure it. If they think they need only to wait 6 months, they might just stick it out until November. This is what worries me about the blockade, Mr. President. And, you remember, I had some dealing toward it in '69. You weren't postured well diplomatically to do it in '69. And I strongly supported your not doing it. But this is the reason why I think an interim solution in which—But we should throw in the prisoners anyway.

[Omitted here is discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

Kissinger: But I frankly believe, Mr. President, that your enormous skill has been that you have been extraordinarily tough. That if—You walked up to all the tough ones but at the same time maintained a peace posture so that they couldn't put you into the position of just chopping away at you. The reason that people trust you is because they know that you have done everything. And therefore, all things considered, I think it is in our interest not to get the Russian summit knocked off as long as we can do it while preserving our essential integrity in Vietnam. That is the major thing.

Nixon: Yeah. I agree.

Kissinger: And if this Moscow meeting does not work at all—

Nixon: Or maybe we'll blockade in September, you mean?

Kissinger: No. I would think if the Moscow meeting doesn't work then I think we—No, I mean, [if] mining doesn't work, then you might want to go to a blockade.

Nixon: We might have to, you see.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: You can't hold the card.

Kissinger: That's right. I'm not—We certainly should keep the posture that you will go to a blockade. I think we've really got their attention.

Nixon: That's for sure.

Kissinger: But I—

Nixon: Maybe that's all I want you to get back from Dobrynin. And—

Kissinger: We've brought this thing a hell of a long way—

Nixon: I had a very nice visit with the Polish Ambassador. And I appreciate what he's worked out in that respect, but we—

Kissinger: Mr. President.

Nixon: To bring that fucking, for that little ass-hole to come in here, this Polish Ambassador, not that he's a strong man, but for him to come in here this day is fine.⁵ Now they may knock it off, but I don't want to let them.

Kissinger: They won't knock it off.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: The Russians may knock it off but the Poles will do it only if the Russians do. And I don't think the Russians will right away. I think we've got the Russians concerned.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I can tell him, Dobrynin—

Nixon: Is Dobrynin talking about knocking it off now?

Kissinger: No, no.

Nixon: Better not.

Kissinger: No, no.

Nixon: Because if he could get any deal with this, remember I'll move first.

Kissinger: Yeah, but, Mr. President, for me to be received in Moscow 3 days—

Nixon: I agree but—

Kissinger: — after the bombing of Haiphong is unbelievable.

Nixon: Yeah, well, of course, some of the papers this morning were saying that the Russian leaders were out of town over the weekend and that's why they didn't react to the bombing. So, they don't—

Kissinger: Baloney.

Nixon: They know.

Kissinger: We've got this Brezhnev message.⁶ They just don't know anything in our papers.

⁵ Nixon met Polish Ambassador Trampczynski in the Oval Office on April 17 from 10:34 to 10:45 a.m. During the meeting, Nixon formally received and accepted the Polish invitation to visit Warsaw after the Moscow summit. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

⁶ Document 110.

Nixon: Thank God. I'll see you later.

Kissinger: Right.⁷

⁷ At 2:15 p.m. Kissinger went to the Old Executive Office Building to brief Nixon on his meeting with Dobrynin. In spite of his hard-line stance on Vietnam, Kissinger reported that Dobrynin was "slobbering all over me" and had "conceded all the agenda items for the summit." According to Kissinger, the damage to Soviet shipping in the Gulf of Tonkin was, in fact, "worse than they're admitting," including the apparent deaths of two Soviet citizens. Nixon: "What about this business about the two Soviet citizens? Look, now if they want to have a reason to break off the summit—" Kissinger: "Mr. President—" Nixon: "—they can use any goddamn line they want." Kissinger: "Mr. President—" Nixon: "If they use it now, then we do have to go hard. You realize then we have no choice." Kissinger: "Mr. President, we've given them so many reasons to break off the summit. If they were looking for a reason—They are in the worst possible position to have a confrontation with us." Nixon: "Why?" Kissinger: "If they [unclear] now, they lose the German treaties, European security conference, they lose the credits, they lose—" Nixon: "Maybe they'd lose the possibility of a Mid-East settlement." Kissinger: "They lose the possibility of a Mid-East settlement. They lose [unclear] the Chinese. And for what? We will never have them in such a position again." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Kissinger, April 17, 1972, 2:15–2:28 p.m., Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 331–2)

120. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, April 18, 1972.

SUBJECT

Soviet Reaction to the Vietnamese Situation

From the beginning of Hanoi's offensive until April 10, the Soviets dealt with the military situation in a guarded, reserved manner. Reporting in the Soviet press and in Soviet broadcasts was not extensive, and confined to news report from Hanoi, Paris or Washington. The impression created was one of a limited military operation that was succeeding. Much more emphasis was on US unwillingness to continue the Paris talks and the US bombings. There were no "official" government statements or TASS statements, even though Moscow usually

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXI. Secret. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. Sonnenfeldt forwarded the memorandum, and the texts of Soviet statements analyzed in the memorandum, to Kissinger on April 13. (Ibid.) According to an attached routing form, the memorandum was "noted by Pres" on April 20.

endorses various North Vietnamese protests. The DRV statements were reported but no authoritative announcements were forthcoming from Moscow, although one Soviet official claimed a TASS statement was to have been released on April 8.

The Soviets have been careful to avoid reporting or commenting on any statement concerning the role of Soviet equipment. Though they reported Secretary Laird's statement, they cut out all references to the USSR.²

The first major pronouncement came on April 10 in the communiqué signed by Brezhnev and Erich Honecker as the East German Party Leader was ending his unofficial visit to the USSR.³ In this document the people of the USSR and the GDR (i.e., not the governments) "decisively condemned" US aggressive acts, and there was an expression of "concern" over the situation and solidarity with the Vietnamese, the Laotians and the Cambodians. By Soviet standards, this was not a major statement even though in Brezhnev's name. Considering the situation it was a minimal effort.

Two days later on April 12, the Soviets finally went on the record more definitively in a report issued after the DRV Ambassador called on Brezhnev (somewhat unusual in itself).⁴ The Ambassador thanked Brezhnev for the "large, valuable assistance" to the DRV "for the construction of socialism" (that is, not military aid), and for Soviet support for the struggle of the people of Vietnam.

Brezhnev is reported to have extended "wishes for further success in defending the freedom and independence of their (the Vietnamese) motherland and the construction of socialism" (i.e., only the DRV). *The key passages from Brezhnev*, however, were to "continue to give assistance and support" to "all patriots" of Indochina, and to "resolutely condemn" US aggression in Indochina and "demand an immediate end to the bombing of the DRV."

² As reported by the Embassy in telegram 3265 from Moscow, April 10. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files, 1970–73, POL 27 VIET S)

³ See footnote 6, Document 92.

⁴ On April 13 *Pravda* published the text of the joint statement on the meeting the previous day between Brezhnev and Ambassador Vo Thuc Dong. (*Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIV, No. 15, May 10, 1972, p. 16) In its analysis of the meeting on April 13, the Office of Current Intelligence (CIA) pointed out that the Soviets had deleted from the public statement any reference to the North Vietnamese request for more aid. "It is uncertain how far this will develop," the analysis concluded, "but authoritative Soviet comment thus far suggest to us that Moscow does feel somewhat constrained by the need to take into account US sensitivities on the eve of the summit. We believe Secretary Butz' unprecedented meeting with Brezhnev was laid on in anticipation of the meeting with the North Vietnamese. The Soviets probably realized that they could not continue to temporize with the North Vietnamese and wished to soften the impact of what the Soviets felt compelled to say on Hanoi's behalf." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXI)

This seems a rather limited statement that might have been issued any time in the past years. The only slight escalation is the demand for an immediate end to the bombing. Among the omissions in the statement that are perhaps most significant, there are no references to: the Paris talks, halting the war, a political settlement or American withdrawal, and DRV plans to end the war. Considering that this meeting occurred almost two weeks after the offensive began, it would seem a very cool Soviet treatment.

However, on his Turkish visit,⁵ President Podgorny on the same day went beyond Brezhnev in bringing up the question of negotiations. Podgorny criticized Vietnamization and “hypocritical phrases” such as our “love of peace.” He said “one cannot fail to note that the US is actually evading talks in Paris and is expanding its air war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.”

Perhaps more significant, he stated flatly: “*The Soviet Union believes that a political settlement of the problem of Indochina* (based on) the proposals of the DRV offer a reliable and constructive basis.” He added that the “interventionists should leave and allow the people to shape their destiny.” He claimed that support (undefined) for the “just struggle of the people of Indochina promotes international détente . . .” (a rather odd formulation).

In other words, Podgorny and Brezhnev have both generalized their support, and Podgorny emphasized a political settlement.

Other Soviet Moves

This rather careful reaction must be viewed against the background of Soviet policy moves in the past few weeks.

It is a reasonable assumption that Moscow would have had a fairly good notion of what Hanoi planned. And Soviet actions in the period preceding and during the offensive take on a certain significance. Two events are worth noting: the Brezhnev speech of March 20 and Soviet Marshal Batitskiy’s mission to Hanoi just prior to the offensive.⁶

The most important fact of Marshal Batitskiy’s mission is the contrast between the emphasis given by Hanoi to his presence and Moscow’s deemphasis. This suggests a political decision in advance of the offensive to disassociate the USSR from it. Brezhnev, in his March 20 speech, said the USSR “wrathfully condemns the bandit bombings of DRV territory and demands an end to them.” *This passage was cut out*

⁵ Podgorny visited Turkey April 11–17; for text of the joint communiqué, in which the two sides expressed “serious concern” on the situation in Vietnam, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIV, No. 16, May 17, 1972, pp. 8–9 and 32.

⁶ For discussion of Brezhnev’s speech, see Document 65; for an analysis of the Batitskiy visit, see Document 90.

of the printed version. The censoring of the General Secretary suggests that he or his aides knew he would look silly calling for an end to bombing that was not taking place but that later his “demand” to end DRV bombing might look weak.

It is doubtful that the Soviets had any control over the scope or timing of the North Vietnamese offensive. Aware of the general nature, however, they took precautionary measures to limit its damage to the summit prospects. Thus Brezhnev’s optimistic appraisal of the summit in his March 20 speech was reinsurance, as is Soviet agreement to begin the grain talks, lend-lease talks, and to receive in Moscow an American delegation for a second round of the maritime talks. In addition, the Soviets have agreed to resume the talks on incidents at sea, and have proposed moving up the date from May 1 to April 24.

Brezhnev’s reception of Secretary Butz was an unusual gesture in itself (and publicized). He was very general on Vietnam, and he pointed up the warm welcome awaiting you in Moscow.⁷

This does not mean that the Soviets see no gains in the offensive, but the game they may be playing is an intricate and delicate one. To the extent that the bombings of the North increase and are prolonged, the Soviets have to react politically much as they did before the China trip. This risks deterioration of relations with the US. On the other hand, if the American-South Vietnamese position is badly damaged then the Soviets might believe you would be in a weak position at the summit. However, the Soviets have to allow for failure. In this case, by limiting their own political support to Hanoi they might count on escaping without severe consequences for their relations with the US. And should Hanoi intend to resume “serious” negotiations, the Soviets would want to play a diplomatic role, now or at the summit.

Summing up, it seems from the overt evidence that the Soviets held their fire until the military situation began to clarify and, once it became apparent that the offensive had not scored major success, began to ensure that their relations with us would not be damaged, and their association with Hanoi would be limited.

⁷ See Document 101.

121. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 18, 1972.

[Omitted here is discussion of the military situation in Vietnam, including worldwide reaction to the U.S. bombing campaign.]

Kissinger: Maybe something will come out on the Vietnam side on this trip. I'm not optimistic but, hell, you'll destroy them.

Nixon: Let's talk just a bit about the, before your conversation tomorrow which you will have.² The more I think about it incidentally that—You know Scali's³ getting so concerned about the Chinese, ping-pong team, he and others [are] worrying about whether Moscow is going to get mad and so forth. If they do, we better learn it now.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: I mean, if they're going to use this as provocation—The other thing I think we ought, we have to know, is this. That you mustn't have, as I told you, any doubts about the Haiphong strike because we would have been in too weak a position with your going to Moscow if we did not have the strike.

Kissinger: No question.

Nixon: You remember—

Kissinger: That's what [unclear]

Nixon: [unclear] why we ordered the goddamn thing.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: We had it in mind, but you remember, we wanted to give them a pop in order to convince Dobrynin—

Kissinger: —that you were out of control.

Nixon: That's right. You told him that last week, is that not true?

Kissinger: Yeah, but—

Nixon: Now, if you had just continued the Laird–Abrams thing, of pounding the South when the weather was good, you realize that wouldn't have scared them at all.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 711–3. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 9:22 to 10 a.m. (*Ibid.*, White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² Reference may be to Kissinger's meeting with Dobrynin the following afternoon; see Document 126.

³ John Scali, Senior Consultant on Foreign Affairs.

Kissinger: On the contrary, it gives them an incentive to stay in because it makes Hanoi more dependent on them, which is what they want.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: They run no risk whatsoever, because if Hanoi wins they will get the credit and if—

Nixon: And we'll be embarrassed.

Kissinger: That's right. And if Hanoi loses—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —it will become more dependent—

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: —on them.

Nixon: Having said that, Henry, the—I've been trying to take a longer view too. It seems to me that your position in going to Moscow is very strong. I mean it's strong because of Haiphong. It scares them.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Nixon: It scares them that we might do something more.

Kissinger: And because I told them we'd do something by May 1st now—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —if they didn't. So we've got—If I come back without anything, we've got to do something wild next week.

Nixon: Hit them again.

Kissinger: Wild.

Nixon: Hit the same thing.

Kissinger: For several days.

Nixon: That's right. Now, having said that, you know, the problem is that—but I'm trying to keep a broader perspective. There is the chance that we cannot get that. First, that, even if we enlist them, that they will not be able to do enough to get Hanoi to negotiate seriously before November. Let's say we play that game out. All right. Then the real question is what do we do about the summit? Is there something in it for us still? The answer would have to be yes. We would have to go back to our line that the war has to be settled in Hanoi, not in Moscow or Peking. In other words, putting all the pressure we can on Moscow and Peking, but knowing that we have very little. But then we could go back to Moscow in a reasonably strong position due to the fact that we would in the meantime have been goddamn tough on Hanoi and would have beaten their offensive. You see, that's the way the game plan would have to come out. We will have to beat their offensive before we go to Moscow. Let me put it this way. Either out of your trip Moscow begins to help us on the war, or, or we will have had to give Hanoi a hell of a shock in terms of beating their offensive so that I don't

go there hat in hand. Because if we go there—But assuming that that, assuming that game plan, which is possible, assuming that the offensive has been petering out, assuming that we have continued and [are] cracking pretty good. I mean, you see, you've got two, you've got the idea that Moscow, as a result of what we've done, will be triggered into trying to get something under the conference table. I hope so. It might happen. On the other hand, it might not happen. If it might not happen, I think that's what we've got to look at to see what our option is because this will, also [has] got to do a great deal. It seems to me that if it doesn't happen with great reluctance I would have to say we still have to play the Moscow string out. I think we should play it as if we would not go to Moscow unless they give help on Vietnam, openly, publicly.

Kissinger: But that won't be our position next week. Our position next week will have to be, if I come back from Moscow without anything, which the odds favor, that I won't get anything, then—

Nixon: Then what do we do?

Kissinger: Are we just going to subside?

Nixon: Oh, no.

Kissinger: Or are we just going to bomb or blockade, or something like that, them to smithereens? Now, I believe, Mr. President, after what we've cranked up, if we simply back off—

Nixon: We won't. No, no, no. I see, I see what you mean.

Kissinger: I mean, that's the big question. Now, if they give us—As you remember, yesterday I told you we should not lightly knock off the Russian summit.

Nixon: I know.

Kissinger: But—

Nixon: We could.

Kissinger: No, I don't think we should do it.

Nixon: The only thing is, I'm thinking that, I'm thinking that the Russian summit may have something in it for us, provided we have given Hanoi a hell of a good bang. That's what I mean.

Kissinger: Yeah, but we haven't given Hanoi a good bang yet.

Nixon: Not yet. Not yet. We've given them enough of a bang for your trip, but not for mine.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: [unclear] That's the magnitude.

Kissinger: Now, for my trip, we're in good shape.

Nixon: Well, you have two choices then. We either have the choice of what we call a 3-day strike kind of an operation, which could be a hell of a thing, you know. Let everything that flies knock the bejeezus out of the things up there. Or we have the choice of a blockade. Now if we have

a blockade, we've got to look down the road and see what the Russians and—What do they have to do? What do they say? Of course, these are the things that you'll have down on your paper, you know.⁴

Kissinger: Well, what I have to do, Mr. President, in Moscow though is to give them the impression that you may well have a blockade.

Nixon: Yeah, I know. I'm just trying to think though—

Kissinger: You'll never get as much—

Nixon: I thoroughly intend to do either the blockade or the strike, you know. We're, you, we were between the two. Yesterday, you were raising the point that the blockade would take too long and we'd be—

Kissinger: You see the trouble—

Nixon: —in confrontation and all that sort of stuff.

Kissinger: You see the trouble—but so would they. You see the trouble is right now we have a plausible force out there.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: If we don't do something with it for 2 months—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: —we'll have to start pulling them out again. And—

Nixon: Well, let me tell you what my feeling is, the reason I've gone through this exercise with you. You see what we really confront is if you don't get something out of Moscow probably our only choice is a blockade.

Kissinger: I'm afraid there may be a lot in that.

Nixon: And—but it's a, so maybe it would go on for 6 months. I think the American people would rather have a blockade going on for 6 months than—but with the blockade, would the things give us our prisoners? Or would we have to set it up for free? By the way, I mean, in a clever way. Well, we'll have to see.

[Omitted here is discussion of a meeting that afternoon in the Rose Garden with the table tennis team from the People's Republic of China and public demonstrations against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.]

Nixon: You see, on the blockade, Henry, we've got the force out there to do it. I guess, you know, I can't get over this Laird—⁵

⁴ Document 125.

⁵ Nixon met Laird and Moorer in the Oval Office on April 17 from 5:13 to 5:50 p.m.; Kissinger also attended the meeting. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) A memorandum of conversation, in which Nixon urged Laird to "keep hammering away at the fact of the massive invasion by North Vietnam backed by heavy Soviet equipment," is *ibid.*, White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 88, Memoranda for the President, Beginning March 19 [1972]. A tape of the conversation is also *ibid.*, White House Tapes, Conversation among Nixon, Laird, and Moorer, April 17, 1972, 5:13–5:50 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 710–4.

Kissinger: You see they [the Soviets] are leery of a confrontation, Mr. President. They ordered all the ships that are coming into Haiphong to slow up.

Nixon: I heard that from Moorer.

Kissinger: I saw—

Nixon: I wonder if that is true.

Kissinger: No, I saw the intercept. I saw the order they sent to their merchant ships not to proceed very—

Nixon: They must be afraid of a blockade.

Kissinger: Yes.

Nixon: Or mining.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Do you agree with—this is only a technical matter with Moorer. He seemed to favor mining over a blockade.

Kissinger: Well, if you mine, then you may have the problem that they'll send minesweepers down.

Nixon: Then you have to bomb them.

Kissinger: And you have to police them. Mining avoids the problem of daily—

Nixon: —confrontation.

Kissinger: —of daily confrontation with the Russians. That takes care of shipping also with a lot of other countries.

Nixon: Well, mining plus bombing. Blockade. Blockade sounds better diplomatically. You know what I mean. It sounds stronger.

Kissinger: The advantage of—If you blockade, there ought to be, you know, a week of heavy raids to run down their supplies and to reduce, 5 days, 3 days of heavy raids. God, a few more days of raids like we had yesterday and they'd be in, they really hurt.

Nixon: Well, we're prepared to give it to them.

[Omitted here is discussion of political leadership in the Pentagon and of press coverage on the military situation in Vietnam.]

Kissinger: I don't know what the Russians are going to do and indeed I don't know what the Russians can do.

Nixon: Well, look, they desperately, I think, want you, you in, you, I mean, in Moscow.

Kissinger: That's for sure. And they—

Nixon: It's fine if Dobrynin's going with you in that plane. It's just as well.

Kissinger: And they eagerly want the summit. Those—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: —three things we know.

Nixon: We've got the one thing. The one thing, let me say, that you can do while you're in Moscow, if you could, the very least you can get out of it is this. All right, the President will come to the summit. You understand? But he wants you to know that before he comes to the summit [phone rings] we are going to blast the living bejeezus out of them and we don't want to hear anything but the most mild [unclear]. Is that clear? You see what I mean?

Kissinger: I don't think I should tell them what we're going to do.

[Omitted here is Nixon's side of a telephone conversation with Laird and further discussion of the meeting with table tennis team from the People's Republic of China and the military situation in Vietnam.]

122. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, April 18, 1972, 10:01–10:29 a.m.

SUBJECT

Vietnam

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

U Alexis Johnson

William Sullivan

Defense

Kenneth Rush

R/Adm. William Flanagan

JCS

Lt. Gen. Richard Knowles

CIA

Richard Helms

George Carver

[*name not declassified*] (only for Mr. Helms' briefing)

NSC

Richard Kennedy

John Holdridge

Mark Wandler

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-115, WSAG Minutes, Originals. Top Secret; Sensitive. No drafting information appears on the minutes. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

[Omitted here is the Summary of Conclusions and discussion of newspaper and intelligence reports on the military situation in Vietnam.]

Mr. Kissinger: What about the report about the Russians intensifying their airlift of supplies to North Vietnam via India?² Has that been confirmed?

Mr. Carver: No. We are still checking on this. However, there doesn't seem to be any indication that Soviet planes have been airlifting supplies through India. [2 lines of source text not declassified] As I said before, though, the Soviet flight patterns don't indicate they are moving supplies through India.

Mr. Johnson: (to Mr. Kissinger) Have you seen Moscow's 3568?³ It is consistent with the paper CIA prepared.⁴

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, I've seen that message. It says that Soviets are prepared to give the North Vietnamese all-out support, although they will use muted language.

[Omitted here is discussion of a North Vietnamese statement on negotiations and an Indian statement on the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong.]

Mr. Johnson: You may know that Hogen [Japanese Vice-Foreign Minister]⁵ was in to see me yesterday. He brought up an interesting point—that the Indians had asked the Japanese and Indonesians to conclude a treaty with them—similar to their treaty with the Soviets.⁶

Mr. Helms: This would be a treaty of friendship, wouldn't it?

Mr. Johnson: Yes. The Japanese point was that they thought the Indians were acting as the cat's-paw for the Soviets.

Mr. Kissinger: Isn't it also a consultation treaty?

Mr. Johnson: Yes.

Mr. Helms: It's interesting that the Soviets are going flat-out, trying to conclude as many friendship treaties as possible.

Mr. Johnson: Brezhnev recently called for a non-aggression conference, sort of an Asian Security Conference.⁷ Hogen thinks this subject may come up in Moscow, too.

² In an April 15 memorandum to Kissinger, John Holdridge of the NSC staff summarized an unconfirmed report from the U.S. Defense Attaché in New Delhi that the Soviet Union was transporting military equipment, particularly surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), to North Vietnam via India. (Ibid., Box H-085, WSAG Meeting, Vietnam, 4/17/72)

³ Document 115.

⁴ Document 117.

⁵ Brackets in the source text.

⁶ Reference is to the 20-year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and India signed in New Delhi on August 9, 1971.

⁷ Brezhnev issued an appeal for a conference on collective security in Asia during his address to the trade unions in Moscow on March 20; see Document 65.

Mr. Kissinger: Would the Japanese want to sign a treaty of friendship with us?

Mr. Johnson: They don't know. Right now they see the Soviets trying to use them in Asia.

Mr. Kissinger: Didn't Brezhnev suggest an Asian Security Conference in 1969?⁸

Mr. Johnson: Yes. The Soviets asked Asian countries for their opinions of the idea. Most countries went back to the Soviets, asking them to flesh out the idea a little more, but the Soviets never did that.

Mr. Kissinger: Isn't the real Soviet aim to encircle China?

Mr. Johnson: Of course.

Mr. Kissinger: An encirclement of China would certainly be the result of Indian consultation treaties with other Asian countries.

Mr. Johnson: The Soviets are clearly trying to encircle China, and India is acting as the Soviet cat's-paw. Hogen said the Japanese gave the Indians a flat turndown. They want nothing to do with the Indians in their part of the world.

Mr. Sullivan: The British put out a good statement yesterday.⁹

Mr. Kissinger: I know. Secretary Rogers laid down the line perfectly on negotiations.¹⁰ I don't think we need any further guidance. We should just follow the Secretary's line.

Mr. Johnson: We sent out some guidance, based on the Secretary's testimony yesterday, to the field.

Mr. Kissinger: The President was delighted with the Secretary's performance. Does anyone have objections to what the Secretary said?

No objections.

Mr. Kissinger: We should just follow his line.

Mr. Rush: Right.

Mr. Sullivan: What should Bob [McCloskey]¹¹ say? Should he say there is no truth to the stories in the papers today?

Mr. Kissinger: There is no truth to them. He should say we will not comment on tactical operations.

Mr. Johnson: The Secretary made a point yesterday of saying that we will not say what we will not do, with two exceptions. We will not

⁸ Brezhnev also advocated the establishment of "a system of collective security in Asia" during an address before the international conference of Communist parties in Moscow on June 8, 1969. For text of the speech, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, July 2, 1969, vol. XXI, No. 23, pp. 3–17.

⁹ Not found.

¹⁰ See footnote 5, Document 113.

¹¹ Brackets in the source text.

send ground forces back to Vietnam, and we will not use nuclear weapons.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. That's a good line, and we should follow it. Has CIA made an analysis of how far the Soviets will really push in Vietnam?

Mr. Helms: No.

Mr. Kissinger: Can we get that tomorrow?

Mr. Helms: Yes. We've tried to handle this in a roundabout way, but we haven't addressed ourselves to that one simple point.

Mr. Kissinger: The Soviets would like to pay no price in Vietnam and they would also like the offensive to succeed. The question is how far are they willing to go? So far, we have only engaged in some preliminary sparring, and we shouldn't expect them to indicate doubt at this point. They followed a hard line well into the Cuban missile crisis.

Mr. Helms: Do you want us to estimate how far they see us going?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. We also want an estimate of how far they will go in backing Hanoi. And how far could we go, for example, within limits, before there would be a conflict? I realize this is conjectural, but I think we need these estimates.¹² We'll meet tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.

[Omitted here is discussion of Kissinger's plans to visit Tokyo and of Japanese politics.]

¹² The minutes summarized the conclusion on this point as follows: "CIA should continue to check on reports that the Soviets are airlifting supplies to North Vietnam, via India. CIA should also provide an estimate tomorrow of how far we and the Soviets can go in Vietnam before we risk a confrontation." For the estimate, see Document 124.

123. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 18, 1972.

Nixon: What I am concerned about is something you talked about [unclear]. I thought that when you talked to Dobrynin, you told me,

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 711–5. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 11 to 11:24 a.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

you gave him assurance that we would not hit the Hanoi–Haiphong area—

Kissinger: That is correct.

Nixon:—while you’re there. Well, the feeling that we’re going to sort of keep to the level relatively and then down, let me tell you, that we have a desperately difficult problem with our domestic situation if there is any indication—

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon:—that we aren’t bombing the hell out of them now.

Kissinger: No, no.

Nixon: It would be just—You see, what ruined Johnson was to start and stop; You remember how many bombing halts he had. Now we cannot be in that position, even though you’re going, because you don’t know what you’re going to, what we’ll be doing here. What I’d like to see is in this next week, I mean this week while you’re gone, I think on the battlefield, I think everything that can fly should be hitting the whole battlefield, including the stuff up to the 19th Parallel.

Kissinger: Of course.

[Omitted here is discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

Nixon: I don’t want anybody in the Haiphong–Hanoi. I think that’s a fair deal with the Russians. Incidentally, you’ve got to pick up on the point that Bob [Haldeman] told me that Butz feels he’s got to report to me on his trip.² So has he reported to you?

Kissinger: No, I’ll talk to him today.

Nixon: Well, no, I’ll see him say around 3:30. He’ll be in here to finish it up because—

Kissinger: At 3:30 I’m—

Nixon: Well—

Kissinger:—going to be—³

Nixon: Well, you talk to Bob. You talk to Bob. I want you to be there because he’s becoming a great problem—I told Bob that the great problem in sending anybody abroad is, if it’s Romney, or Butz, or [unclear], or anyone they let him come in to report—

Kissinger: Well, and also—

² For discussion of Butz’ trip to Moscow, including the meeting among Butz, Nixon, and Kissinger that afternoon, see Document 101.

³ Kissinger left the White House at 3:45 p.m. to meet Huang Hua, Permanent Representative of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations, in New York. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) For information on the meeting that evening between Kissinger and Huang, see footnote 3, Document 116.

Nixon: They should report to you; they shouldn't report to me. But they don't know it. But anyway, look it's an interesting little flap. Beam thinks that Brezhnev is personally not hostile to the President; and he, Butz, is convinced that Brezhnev is personally hostile to the President, says that he didn't like the way that the President conducted himself officially. Well, now it doesn't mean anything. Goddamn it. Beam doesn't—Beam's evaluation I don't give one shit about. He doesn't know anything. Or Butz's even less.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: I mean Brezhnev—You see these people are all, they're all confusing this business of personal hostility. Who in the hell cares? I don't make decisions based on whether a person is still hostile or not. He is an enemy. I know that. Isn't that the silliest—What, why does Beam—? Oh, Christ. What gets me now though is how our people are so goddamned naïve.

Kissinger: He had—

Nixon: Brezhnev. Brezhnev is, he might, if he would—Whether Butz is right or Beam is right is irrelevant. And anyhow we'll have to listen respectfully to him because he's a nice fellow and he's trying to do well. But, goddamn, why do they have to get into this?

Kissinger: Well, Butz is a bit of an egomaniac. He goes there. We told him before he went that this was to be the President's show. He doesn't know the big game.

Nixon: Yeah. He wants to [unclear] a press conference and announce the grain deal?

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: Well, he's not going to do that. He didn't do it, did he?

Kissinger: He didn't do it but it was very good. We had to let a lot of blood—

Nixon: Did we?

Kissinger: —to get it done.

Nixon: Well, you see, Henry, isn't it amusing when, when I'm going to see Butz because [unclear] that he and Beam disagree as to whether Brezhnev is personally hostile to the President? The point is that has nothing to do with it.

Kissinger: I believe that Brezhnev has committed his whole prestige to this, to this policy. And to see what—

Nixon: As a Communist, Dobrynin is personally hostile to the President. You know that.

Kissinger: Oh, personally—

Nixon: Totally. Totally.

Kissinger: Mr. President—

Nixon: And I am personally hostile to him. But in a, but in a social way, we get along fine.

Kissinger: The vitality of your foreign policy is shown—

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger:—by the fact that you could knock off, you could attack Hanoi and Haiphong and get really only the most mild, mumbling—

Nixon: To this point.

Kissinger: No, now it's not going to happen anymore. Because today in China—for 2 days they didn't cover it in the press at all. Today they have an editorial in the *People's Daily* which was so mild. And then when they protest about over-flying them, instead of making it public they send it through the secret channel,⁴ and they say one plane violated, they give the time and they don't say you must stop the bombing of Haiphong.

[Omitted here is a brief exchange on Democratic criticism of the bombing campaign in Vietnam.]

Nixon: The timing basically was: we didn't pick the time. Son-of-a-bitch. They attacked. That is the provocation.

Kissinger: Mr. President, I must tell you I know no President who would have had the guts to do it now.

Nixon: That's what Laird thinks.

Kissinger: To do it with a—

Nixon: They think it's wrong to do it politically. Or isn't that really what they're—?

Kissinger: To do it with an invitation to Moscow for you in the pocket, and a secret invitation to me, it really shows a lot of gall. They invite us on Thursday⁵—I mean on Thursday they make it definite and on Saturday we clobber Haiphong to tell them, "All right, you bastards."

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: "This is the game that's going to be played in Moscow." But it so strengthens my hand in Moscow. That it was a risk that had to be taken.

Nixon: You couldn't have gone.

Kissinger: I could've gone but in a very weak position.

Nixon: Well, in a position of only talking about the summit.

⁴ That afternoon Huang Hua met Peter Rodman in New York to deliver a note protesting the recent entry of a U.S. aircraft into Chinese airspace over Hainan Island.

⁵ April 13.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: Now we're in the position of talking about Vietnam. Oh, the only other thing I wanted to tell you. It seems to me, Henry, that the least you should get out of your game with the Russians is that when we return, that the President should be able to announce that Vietnam would be first on the agenda at the Moscow summit. You get my point? That would put it to them hard. Why not? Just—understand, I'm not, I'm not concluding this. Let's discuss this tomorrow. But, you see, anything like that that would come out of your trip—

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon:—that even if you would get only that, even though you don't get a settlement, if we could say, "Vietnam would be on the agenda of our discussion." Now that, of course, makes it necessary for us to get something out of Vietnam in the summit.

Kissinger: It would be—The only hesitation I have, Mr. President—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger:—is we, they are now scared. They have to be.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: You've got a massive armada there. We have to make sure they're not just playing for time.

Nixon: Yeah. So maybe they would agree to that.

Kissinger: Well no, this is playing for time; this gives them 5 weeks.

Nixon: Yeah, yeah. Oh, no, no. I'm just thinking though—

Kissinger: No, no. We—

Nixon: I think, I'm thinking that when you return, if you've got nothing, we've got to bomb the hell out of them.

Kissinger: No question.

Nixon: Or blockade.

Kissinger: No question.

Nixon: One of the two.

Kissinger: No question.

Nixon: If we blockade them, do you think there'll be a summit?

Kissinger: No.

Nixon: Well, then do you think we should take that risk? That's the real danger.

Kissinger: Mr. President—

Nixon: We may have to.

Kissinger: You and I should act towards everybody—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger:—as if we were going right off the cliff.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: That's the only way we can make it work.

[Omitted here is discussion of political leadership in the Pentagon and of the military situation in Vietnam.]

Kissinger: Joe Kraft has an article this morning. Considering that he's violently opposed to everything we're doing, it's very mild. Of course, he's saying again that we should knock off the summit. Oh yeah. The Democrats would like nothing better.

Nixon: He's so desperate to want to knock off the summit.

Kissinger: Of course.

Nixon: Isn't he—

Kissinger: But it's helped our game with—

Nixon: The Chinese summit killed him.

Kissinger: Yeah. But it helped us with the Russians.

Nixon: Yeah. The Chinese summit killed him. He knows the Russian summit will help us. He's desperately trying to knock it off, isn't he?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Isn't that what Kraft is trying to do?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Son-of-a-bitch. Wouldn't he die if he—? Well, anyway, we'll see. The Russians are going to have to have this summit, Henry. They are, because [unclear] I think that we must have no illusions after your conversation yesterday that if they don't have the summit, we have no other choice than to blockade. I don't really see any other choice.

Kissinger: That isn't going to be part—oh no, that's clear but what isn't clear is what—

Nixon: If you don't get anything, what—

Kissinger: If we don't get anything, whether we then blockade—and we can directly knock off the summit.

Nixon: If we knock off the summit. That's right.

Kissinger: That's the question.

Nixon: That's the tough one. Well, we may. We may. Because we sure aren't going to let them knock it off if we can help it.

Kissinger: Well, we'll know by Sunday what there is.

Nixon: Do you have that note [unclear] North Vietnamese?

Kissinger: No, but that I wouldn't expect. If you think about it, Mr. President, I gave Dobrynin a note—⁶

Nixon: Yeah.

⁶ See Document 103.

Kissinger: —for the North Vietnamese between our first and second wave—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —of attacks. That note must have reached Hanoi the day that Haiphong was burning. And for Russia to transmit a note to them is, in itself must be, an unsettling experience for them because—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —up to now Russia has taken—

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: —that they wouldn't, that they wouldn't [unclear] while the bombing was going on. But they never—You remember that for 3 years we tried to get them engaged and they never did it.

Nixon: Well, we shall see. I'm not sure it will go to that. It seems to me though if you don't get—Well, we'll have to judge it by what you get. But I think that the credibility of our position if you come back with nothing, that the mountain [unclear] produces a mouse, would be totally impaired. If only the—only alternate to blockade was the massive bombing—

Kissinger: I agree.

Nixon: That we might do.

Kissinger: That is better than a blockade, because with massive bombing we might still have the summit.

Kissinger: Exactly. Exactly.

Nixon: They have got to know if you come back with nothing that the man in the White House is going to go berserk.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Nixon: Is that what you're going to do?

Kissinger: Yes.⁷

⁷ Kissinger called Dobrynin at 2:48 p.m. on April 18 to discuss the handling of lend-lease negotiations. Kissinger: "On the lend lease negotiations you people are linking the two—financial and MFN which our delegation is not authorized to do at this point. Our original proposal shows you combine it to the sums and so forth. You and I understand that when Patolichev come here you will link them together . . ." Dobrynin: "You see, Henry, while in Moscow they give it as a matter of principle to link it in a way . . . what you mention. And I am prepared to tell them once more. Patolichev will be here on the 7th of May so I am sure he will discuss it privately with [Nixon?]." Kissinger: "I am trying to get these present discussions off a stalemate course. Look, here we are prepared to look at this matter with an understanding rather than say, 'No, we are not going to discuss it.'" (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 371, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

124. Intelligence Memorandum Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency¹

No. 0856/72

Washington, April 18, 1972.

SUBJECT

Moscow's Position in the Current Vietnam Situation

1. Soviet military aid has been indispensable in arming North Vietnam with the capability of mounting its present offensive. Yet we think it wrong to conclude from this that Moscow has conspired with Hanoi over the last year to bring about exactly the present state of affairs. In fact, in their strategic planning the North Vietnamese have taken pains to keep both the Soviets and the Chinese at arms length, fearing to be drawn into a bargaining relationship which would invite the use of foreign leverage and compromise the integrity of their national policy-making. Instead, they have relied upon the obligations of Communist solidarity, and even more upon the rivalry between Moscow and Peking, to assure the necessary flow of supplies while keeping major decisions about the war in their own hands.

2. The Soviets clearly have not been unwitting of the buildup of North Vietnamese strength over the past year. But they have long been committed to military support of the DRV, and at least some of the aid agreements covering Soviet-supplied matériel being used in the present offensive were almost certainly made before the Soviets arranged the Moscow summit. In the event, the precise timing of the North Vietnamese offensive has highlighted the contradiction in Soviet policy between the desire to support its ally and the desire to engage the US in a summit meeting. But it would have been extremely difficult in the second half of 1971, as a summit began to take shape, to muster a majority of the Soviet collective leadership behind the proposition that North Vietnam should be pressed to stand down, particularly since there could have been no assurance that Hanoi would comply, or that Peking would not increase its aid to fill the gap. At the same time, the improvement in Sino-US relations was increasing the Soviet stake in its own summit policy.

Present Soviet Objectives

3. The Soviets still deem it essential to maintain, both in posture and in reality, their support of North Vietnam. Their commitment of

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-085, WSAG Meeting, Vietnam, 4/17/72. Secret; Sensitive. According to the minutes of the WSAG meeting on April 19, the participants all agreed that the memorandum was "very good" but failed to discuss its conclusions in detail. (Ibid., Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

prestige is heavy and long-standing. To break ranks now would expose them to telling criticism from Peking and Hanoi, arouse contempt and misgivings among other Communist states, and risk their prospects for a substantial future role in Southeast Asia. Further, they believe that, if they drew back now, the US would conclude that it had bested the Soviet Union in an important contest of will, and that they would in consequence be at a considerable disadvantage in the summit bargaining. All these concerns will be weighing upon the Soviets as they canvass ways to contain the Vietnamese situation in order to permit the summit meeting to go forward. In the process, however, they will want to preserve the chances for eventual success of Hanoi's cause, even though they do not wish that cause to be pushed, at the present juncture, to limits which jeopardize larger Soviet interests.

Present Soviet Options

4. One Soviet option is to wait—to hope that the US will forebear from further strikes in the deep north, that the fighting will slow down in the South, and that by mid-May Vietnam will have receded sufficiently into the background to permit the summit to take place in the atmosphere originally intended. This is in fact what the Soviets are doing now, with their restrained public statements, their protest carefully confined to the fate of their ships in Haiphong, and their willingness to continue ongoing bilateral talks. But this is probably no more than a holding action as the Soviet leaders debate their future course; they probably do not expect that either Hanoi or Washington will back down of its own volition. Thus they will be considering how they might work on both parties to bring the situation under control.

5. With respect to Hanoi, interrupting military shipments is not a realistic Soviet option. Moscow knows that even an immediate and total cut-off would not affect North Vietnamese capabilities on the southern battlefields during the next five weeks. It almost certainly calculates that Hanoi would fight on, and that Moscow would have to suffer all the consequences described above in paragraph 3. In fact, Hanoi may choose the present occasion to ask for additional assistance, in part intending to put Soviet support to the test, and the USSR would probably feel compelled to meet the request.

6. From the viewpoint of its relations with Hanoi, the USSR's best option is to encourage any interest which might appear in a new start on negotiations. This is a delicate matter. Moscow will be acutely aware that pressure on North Vietnam to alter its negotiating position is likely to be both dangerous and futile. While the Soviets might try delicately to put any proposals passing from Washington to Hanoi in a positive light, we do not believe that they would press their ally to accept terms which the North Vietnamese considered a compromise of their basic position.

7. With respect to the US, the USSR will not have similar inhibitions about commending DRV negotiating proposals. But it will not have much expectation that any proposals from either side will resolve the crisis soon. It will therefore be searching for ways to generate additional pressures on the US to de-escalate its attacks upon the North within a negotiating framework acceptable to Hanoi.

8. The means of pressure available to them are limited. They could quickly insert limited air or naval forces into the area, thereby posing the threat of a Soviet-US military confrontation. But this would be a highly risky move, leaving to the US the initiative of whether to engage inferior Soviet forces. We think that these risks would, in the Soviet view, exceed their stakes. Thus they would probably choose instead to create a political linkage between Vietnam and other problems of priority interest to the US, threatening that the US will suffer in other ways if it persists in unacceptable attacks upon North Vietnam. Moscow would calculate that this course would have the advantage of mobilizing domestic US opinion against the President's Vietnam policy.

9. At some point, therefore, we expect the Soviets to begin to intimate to the US that bilateral US-USSR relations will be deeply affected by further such US attacks. They will start to do this when they conclude that the US intends, not merely to make a limited manifestation of its willingness to bomb the populated north, but to persist in this course. They have a variety of ways to pursue this tactic. They might gradually introduce a more threatening tenor into their public statements; they might pass private statements through intelligence or other channels; they might begin to drag their feet in SALT or other negotiating forums; they might make a blunt, high-level approach. Whatever the tactics, the message they would be seeking to convey would be that, if deep bombing raids on North Vietnam were to continue, the USSR could not receive the US President on 22 May.

10. In our judgment, this would be a serious message, not a bluff. We believe that in fact the collective leadership would find it both easier and preferable *not* to receive the President while the US is attacking the DRV on the scale of the past weekend.

11. If matters came to this pass, there would probably be considerable debate among the Soviet leaders as to whether they should confine themselves to postponing the summit (and other bilateral talks), in order to limit the damage, or convert their frustration into a general recasting of their policy toward the US in the direction of invective and hostility. Proponents of the former course would argue that Soviet interests of real import—primarily arms control and increased trade—were worth salvaging, and that it would be fruitless as well as demeaning to defer to anticipated Chinese criticism. Opponents of this view, perhaps including some who harbored earlier reservations about

summitry, would argue for a sharp reversal on the grounds that this would fortify the USSR's position in the Communist world, would not seriously damage the Soviet position in Europe, and might even improve it in the Middle East and South Asia. They would further argue that this course would strengthen domestic US criticism of an American Vietnam policy which could be represented as having sabotaged the summit. We are inclined to think that the former view would prevail, but the issue might become entwined in factional struggle, with unpredictable results.

A Special Contingency

12. A US attempt to close the port of Haiphong, by mining or blockade, would pose an issue of a different order. The Soviets would perceive this as a direct challenge to themselves. To the rest of the world, it would appear in much the same light (during the missile crisis of 1962, once the US announced a naval quarantine, Cuba became incidental).

13. We see little likelihood that the Soviets would contest such a measure with force, say, by providing naval escorts for their Haiphong-bound ships. The local military balance overwhelmingly favors the US. The issue would not be so grave as to lead the Soviets to run the risks of provoking a military counter-confrontation elsewhere in the world. Instead, we believe that they would withdraw the invitation to the President, probably in a hostile and acrimonious manner. Thereafter, they would take other retaliatory steps, perhaps including a controlled testing of any blockade. Whatever the specific measures they attempted, the Soviets would almost certainly issue grave warnings and attempt to create the impression that a major world crisis could soon result from the US action.

Conclusions

14. In sum, we believe that the USSR will continue its political support to North Vietnam in the present situation. It will probably feel compelled to meet new requests for military aid. It will wish to contain tensions so that the May summit can take place, and to this end it will want to facilitate any US-North Vietnamese negotiations which might promise an early resolution. But it will not push Hanoi to alter its negotiating position substantially, fearing to forfeit its position in Vietnam in a futile effort. If US bombing continues deep inside North Vietnam, the Soviets will warn that they cannot hold the summit meeting as scheduled. If the bombing continues in the face of these warnings, they are likely to postpone the summit and might turn to a hostile line vis-à-vis the US across the board. If Haiphong is mined or blockaded, the more extreme of these reactions is likely, and a major Soviet-American crisis would be at hand.

Kissinger's Secret Trip to Moscow, April 19–25, 1972

125. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, April 19, 1972.

SUBJECT

Moscow Trip

This book contains the basic papers relevant to my trip including:

- the text of my opening statement
- a summary of the issues
- a Vietnam strategy paper²
- a discussion of SALT choices³
- a discussion of European problems⁴

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

² Attached but not printed are two papers on Vietnam. In the first, entitled "What Do We Demand of Moscow and Hanoi?," drafted on April 17, Negroponte and Lord developed a strategy for negotiating a settlement in Vietnam, including immediate steps on the ground, a sequence for subsequent negotiations, and ways to secure Soviet support throughout the process. They suggested a two-sided approach to encourage the Soviets to use their leverage to force the withdrawal of North Vietnamese divisions behind the demilitarized zone. "Our *stick*," they explained, "is our bombing of the North, and our naval deployments, with specific reference to Haiphong." "Our *carrot* is a conciliatory posture on summit-related topics." The second paper, entitled "Possible Flexibility in Our 8-Point Plan," unsigned and undated, addressed the possible "appearance of flexibility" in the 8-point negotiating plan offered by the United States and South Vietnam on January 25—specifically in the provisions for troop withdrawals and a political settlement.

³ Attached but not printed is an undated memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, discussing, in particular, the inclusion of submarine-launched ballistic missiles in the interim agreement to freeze offensive weapons, and the level of anti-ballistic missile coverage in the proposed treaty. The memorandum is summarized in the attached memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, printed below.

⁴ Attached but not printed is an undated memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, discussing the ongoing talks for mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) as well as a conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The memorandum is summarized in the attached memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger.

—a summary of current bilateral US-Soviet negotiations⁵
—a paper on a possible “Declaration of Principles” to be issued at the summit.⁶

Although my proposed opening statement is on the whole a conciliatory one, you will note from the issues paper that the strategy I would follow would involve a tough opening position on Vietnam. I would impress on Brezhnev that you are prepared to do what is necessary to turn back the DRV offensive and that you expect the Soviets, who must share responsibility for the offensive, to use their influence to bring about de-escalation. After laying this groundwork, I would then indicate the substantial areas where we and they can cooperate and improve relations. I would seek to structure the talks in such a way that discussion of Vietnam will precede any detailed discussion of other questions, such as SALT, Europe and bilateral matters.

The most important points apart from the Vietnam issues I would like to discuss with you relate to the question of excluding SLBM's in a SALT agreement and to maintaining some margin of advantage in ABM's if we have to agree to SLBM exclusion. Both these issues will require early settlement in order to complete an agreement by the time of the summit.

The Soviets will probably press for trade concessions but while giving them some general encouragement, I believe we should not go beyond that for a few weeks until we can see how they perform on Vietnam.

I would also like to discuss the general nature of the final communiqué to be issued at the summit.

⁵ Attached but not printed is an undated paper briefly discussing the current status of all significant U.S.–USSR bilateral negotiations.

⁶ Attached but not printed is an undated and unsigned paper, discussing the proposed U.S.–Soviet declaration of principles, including copies of the following: the draft joint communiqué Dobrynin gave Kissinger on March 17 (see Document 62); the principles of cooperation signed by Brezhnev and Pompidou in Paris on October 30, 1971 (see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIII, No. 44, November 30, 1971, pp. 7–8); and the joint statement released on September 27, 1959, following discussions between Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Camp David (see *Public Papers: Eisenhower, 1959*, pp. 692–693).

Attachment

Draft Opening Statement⁷

April 18, 1972.

OPENING STATEMENT

1. *Our relations in context of present international situation*

a. Since the war three summits (K 59, K 61, LBJ–Kos 67). They occurred when major issue was war or peace between US and SU. Specific crises in which we both involved (Berlin, Middle East). Whether rightly or not each of us was seen as a leader of hostile coalition and relationship between these two camps was seen as major determinant of international politics.

b. We now have a different situation. It was wise of both leaderships to let contours of new situation emerge more clearly before agreeing to new summit. We think Soviets now do not see Western camp as monolithic and US guiding hand. We for our part do not see Communist world as monolithic—not because we have deliberately set ourselves task of disrupting Soviet-led coalition, but because we recognize differentiation and play of autonomous forces.⁸

c. Present and foreseeable situation characterized by play of several major actors, on one hand, and continued disparity in power as between US and SU and rest of countries. Each of us is still the dominant power in its coalition. Problem now not so much prevention of direct conflict (though still not wholly solved) but cooperation between us so that our power and influence can be used to stabilize international situation as a whole.

d. This is neither “condominium” nor ignoring of continuing major differences—in systems, in outlook, in history. It means recognizing that we have role to play in containing the dangers of diversity while capitalizing on its assets.

⁷ This is the fourth and final draft of Kissinger’s proposed opening statement; excerpts from the same draft were first published in Safire, *Before the Fall*, pp. 433–436. On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “We are the 2 that matter now—But others (Japan & China *could*). We are equal—neither can push other around—neither will allow other to get advantage.” Nixon also wrote and circled the words: “sick POWs.”

⁸ On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “*Single Standard*. ‘Liberation’ of their camp? But we can’t tolerate forceful ‘liberation’ in ours.”

2. *How we view each other*

a. Evolution of new relationship between us faces many obstacles, some real but some more “subjective” than “objective”. In past 25 years we have probably never really tried to sort these out but now have opportunity to start this process.

b. We understand Soviet sense of “encirclement”, though we believe some of this is due to the way the Soviet Union entered the world scene after its revolution which challenged not only domestic values but also international ones. We perceived Stalinist Russia, after WW II as outward-thrusting and aggressive and responded accordingly. We recognize that in responding we may have conveyed a purpose that to Soviets looked like a design to maintain USSR in a permanently disadvantageous position. We were perhaps less conscious of Soviet concerns stemming from experience of WW II than we should have been. We were perhaps insufficiently conscious that security requirements of continental power differed from one, like ourselves, surrounded by oceans. Our history of no foreign invasion since 1812 made us less sensitive to problems of nation invaded many times in same time span.⁹ At the same time, a more sympathetic comprehension of Soviet outlook was complicated by nature of Stalinist regime and by universalist claims which Soviets advanced in regard to their doctrines and domestic values.

c. We recognize that Soviets may have viewed us as having similar universalist pretensions.

d. We think both of us are approaching point where we understand each has legitimate security interests, especially in adjacent areas; and each has broader world-wide interests.¹⁰ In any case, we think both of us now know that this is the only basis for a sound relationship between us. We know that great powers cannot be induced, or persuaded, or pressured or flattered into sacrificing important interests.¹¹ We know that any agreement reached on such a basis cannot last because no great power—nor indeed any power in a relationship of essentially equality with another—will long abide by a disadvantageous agreement. In fact we know from history that agreements or arrangements that may have been made at a moment of disadvantage will become the source of new instability and conflict as soon as the affected party gains or regains its strength. You and we have many problems but we do have the advantage, at the present time, of being able to deal

⁹ The President wrote a question mark in the margin next to this sentence.

¹⁰ The President underlined most of this sentence.

¹¹ The President underlined most of this sentence. Nixon also wrote on the back of the previous page: “RN respects B[rezhnev] or strong man (also respects Mao).”

with each other from positions of essential equality. And that provides us with a unique moment in our histories to reach everlasting agreements. In fact, the opportunities for broad cooperation open to the leaders of our two countries at present have never been greater and may decline again if they are not grasped.

e. You have known President Nixon for more than a decade and he is aware that you have raised questions about his attitudes, orientation and predictability. Some of your public statements have tried to analyze his behavior in terms of “forces” influencing him. The President combines concern for long-term evolution with detailed interest in concrete day-to-day decisions. The evolution he sees—and wants to contribute to—is one of a world of several interacting major powers, competitive but respectful of each other’s interests. Within this basic framework, he sees an opportunity for all countries to develop their own identity. This view of the world corresponds to the President’s personal background and up-bringing.

At the same time, he can be tough and even ruthless in dealing with specific problems. You probably recognize that the President is bound to see the present situation in Vietnam not only in its local context but as a renewed effort by outside powers to intervene in our domestic political processes. Moreover, as President he is bound to be keenly sensitive to the fact that our last President was forced to vacate his office because of the effects of the Vietnam war. President Nixon will not permit three Presidents in a row to leave office under abnormal circumstances. It may seem that what he is doing to prevent this from occurring is “unpredictable”. It is in fact quite consistent with his fighting instincts when issues of principle and vital interest are at stake. His reaction should have been expected.

But I have also found that once a matter is settled, the President is prepared to proceed with matters that are in the common interest with those who were on the opposite side in a dispute. This is true in his domestic as well as foreign policies.¹² We would say that he “does not bear grudges.” The President can look beyond the issues of the moment to the broader evolution and the wider interests. He is conciliatory because he recognizes that only those agreements are kept which nations wish to keep.

Let me make this more specific and relate it directly to you. The President has a reputation from his past as an anti-Communist. You may think that this is a basic prejudice which sooner or later will assert itself. (Actually, I would not find such a view on your side

¹² On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “President has decided politics be damned, fatalistic. He can deliver the right.”

surprising. I would have thought that you would only regard it as normal that a “capitalist” should be anti-Communist and that you would not respect him if he were not.)

But as a practical matter the President understands that whether he likes your system or not will not affect its existence; just as your likes and dislikes do not affect our existence. He will enter a contest with you when you challenge him and he will do and say things that you may regard as challenging you. But he will not lose sight of the special role that our two countries must play if there is to be peace in the world. That, rather than anti-communism, is the point that will again and again reassert itself—whatever the turbulences of the moment.

Of course, it is also characteristic of the President to be patient and tenacious. His political biography testifies to that. He will accept a setback or a detour—and wait until he can rechart his course. When he has done this, he has shown unusual consistency, even when he makes the most radical moves—which his position enables him to do.

f. Let me in this context mention China. We understand that nothing we can say to you will persuade you to judge our relations with the PRC other than by actual events. But since this is so, we also know that no purpose will be served—except to create new *misunderstandings*—if we tried to mislead you. We have understood you to say that you favor a normalization of US–PRC relations; but you have expressed reservations about the *timing* of our actions over the past three years, arguing that they coincided with a deterioration of your relations with Peking. But this is an objective fact, not a matter of arbitrary choice by us.

However, the fact that the state of Sino-Soviet relations in a sense contributed to the development of contacts between ourselves and Peking does not mean that that is the basis of the American relationship with China. The fact is that you are too powerful and influential for our relations with China or any country to be based on hostility toward you. Objectively, there cannot be American-Chinese collusion against the USSR in the world of today.

In addition, while we attach great importance to the opening of a dialogue with the PRC, we recognize that with the Chinese we are at the beginning of a process. Major concrete agreements are not likely in the near future.

With you—given the objective facts of the world situation—we have several important matters on our agenda that can be resolved if there is a mutual respect for each other’s interests.

g. As regards our internal systems, we should not gloss over the differences; but difference is not synonymous with incompatibility. We are content to let history judge which system ultimately produces the

most productive and contented society. We welcome a certain spirit of competitiveness—this is part of our make-up and we think it is part of theirs too.

3. *Our Tasks*

a. Cooperate to eliminate or at least contain crises over which we both have influence;¹³

b. Cooperate where we can to help bring about solutions to problems that have a potential for becoming dangerous crises;

c. Develop bilateral cooperation (including in arms control) so that US-Soviet relationship becomes a force for international stability. In this respect, our relationship is unique because the US-Soviet relationship affects the nature of international relationships generally.

d. In particular, this means developing, either explicitly or by practice, some “rules of conduct”:

—recognize that each of us has certain areas of special sensitivity which should be respected;

—subordinate short-term tactical advantages to longer-term stability; neither side will permit the other an accumulation of short-term gains and the effort to make such gains will merely produce counteractions;

—exercise restraint in crises in which, given our continued competitive relationship, we find ourselves on opposing sides; indeed avoid letting situations get to crisis stage;

—use our influence, if necessary by regulating aid and arms supplies, to induce parties to a crisis or conflict to moderate their behavior.

4. *The Summit*

Although it comes after some three years of preparation and in that sense is a sort of culmination of our efforts, it is also a beginning. It will engage the leaders of both countries; it will establish a pattern of contact; it will provide dramatic impetus to our future endeavors for a peaceful international order (though of course only if there are concrete accomplishments).

a. HAK has been sent to Moscow because the President wanted to assure the most comprehensive and meticulous preparations of the Summit. He understood you to have the same motivation.

b. We had not of course anticipated that our Summit would coincide with the renewed intense fighting in Vietnam. It is a tough problem and we must take account of your assistance to the DRV's effort

¹³ On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “Spirit of C[amp] D[avid]—Spirit of Vienna—Spirit of Glassboro—We need spirit of Moscow! 2 hard-headed strong men can do it.”

to win the war and drive the President out of office. While leaving a more detailed discussion until later, I can say now that this affects not only the climate of the Summit but the specific accomplishments that will flow from the Summit.¹⁴ For this reason, both of us have an interest in getting the escalation of the fighting stopped and to have negotiations resumed. In our own country, the Congress and the public will measure the achievements of the Summit to an important extent by whether the trend of the last three years toward a winding down of the war will be resumed. In the Soviet Union a similar test may be applied. We do not want the Summit to be merely an episode—another meeting of no particular historical significance—we want it to be a new beginning that sets us on a new path. Our energies should be concentrated on the task of constructing peace, not diverted to those of fighting war. We think you see it the same way. Inevitably, at this moment, this problem has to be uppermost in our mind and on our agenda.

c. If it were not for the acute problem of Vietnam, strategic arms limitation would engage most of our attention. We recognize that the agreement we are now talking about may disappoint some and it will indeed only be a starting point. Yet for that very reason—a starting point opening the way for more to come—this first agreement must be such that both of us can be satisfied that our interests are protected. And it must be such that we have a real platform from which to proceed to the next step. The subject is intricate and technical but both of us understand that we are dealing now with political decisions serving political ends as well.

d. The viability of any agreement in so central an area as that of strategic arms depends heavily on the general political relationship between us. The President strongly feels that arms control agreements serve little purpose if existing arms are used for aggression or pressure.

e. As regards Europe, so long the center of our concerns and the source of tension and danger, we want now to find ways of building on what has been achieved. We in the US are prepared to play our role, recognizing that some aspects involve Europeans more directly than ourselves.

f. Middle East.

g. Bilateral relations and trade. Here we have broad long-term opportunities to develop cooperative relations. We are currently engaged in a whole series of negotiations ranging from trade issues, to scientific and outer space cooperation. Both of us stand to gain. But we must

¹⁴ On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “successful summit—indispensable to have progress on V. Nam.”

be realistic: a lasting and productive set of relationships, with perhaps hundreds or thousands of our people working with each other and perhaps billions of dollars of business activity, can only be achieved in a healthy political environment. The past history of our relations has clearly shown the connection between the political aspects and others, like the economic. The President wants to be candid with you: he cannot make commitments, say for credits or tariff concessions, if these measures do not command wide support among our public and in the Congress.¹⁵ And this depends critically on the state of our political relations. Moreover, we must make sure that once commitments have been entered into they will not soon be undermined by renewed crises and deterioration of our relations. I say this not because we want you to “pay a price” for economic and other relations with us or because we expect you to sacrifice important political and security interests for the sake of trade relations. I say it as an objective fact of political life.

h. The final communiqué—public framework for our relations.

SOVIET INTEREST IN A VIETNAM SETTLEMENT

Talking Points:

1. We go on the assumption that you have an interest in bringing the Vietnam war to an end. We do not assume this because we think you have an obligation or a desire “to help us” but because we think you have more direct interests.

2. In the first place, as long as the fighting goes on you apparently are under obligation to supply military material to the DRV. This is not only a drain on your resources, but more important, puts the DRV in a position to use military means you supplied at times and for purposes over which you may not have full control. This means that Hanoi has the ability to determine the international climate in which you conduct your policy.

3. More specifically than that, you run a certain risk that your supply operations could become involved in the fighting. This is of course not a matter of design on our part but simply inherent in the situation.

4. Even if Hanoi were to win the war with the means you supplied (which we will do what we can to prevent for our own reasons), this will not mean that your interests in the area of Southeast Asia will subsequently be protected. Geopolitics argues against it.

5. On the other hand, a negotiated settlement can hardly be made without your support. You will be far more likely to be able to protect your interests in the area with a guaranteed settlement that assures the

¹⁵ On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “Congress won’t approve credits—if political tensions exist.”

status of all Indochinese nations rather than under conditions of continued conflict.

6. Historically, US-Soviet relations have been inhibited by the Vietnam war. Objectively, both of us can survive when our relations are poor and distant. But both of us, and the rest of the world, are better off when there can be a measure of cooperation between us.

—Intensified fighting, or even a continuation of lower levels of fighting, inevitably puts us on opposite sides; this makes it more likely that we will be on opposite sides in other conflict situations; this increases the overall danger of conflict between us and diverts resources.

—All forms of cooperation, particularly those in the areas of trade and technology, are inhibited.

—A deterioration of American-Soviet relations is likely to spill over to your relations with other industrialized nations—again not by our design but because of the operation of objective factors inherent in the present international structure. (“Selective détente” can work as a temporary tactic but not as an extended policy.)

7. I do not mean by all this that you have a greater interest than we in getting the war stopped. Many of the factors mentioned apply to us as well as you. It does mean that we have a *joint* interest in getting the war stopped and this is the basis of our approach to you.

Attachment

Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹⁶

Washington, April 19, 1972.

SUBJECT

Issues for My Moscow Trip

The first issue is one of *strategy*: how do we relate what happens in Vietnam, and the Soviet role with respect to it, to the summit and the substantive issues we are in process of negotiating with the Soviets? I believe it has become clear to the Soviets that you intend to do what is necessary militarily to stop the Communist offensive and in that sense are prepared to subordinate your relationship with the USSR to the immediate requirements of the Vietnam situation. To judge from Soviet behavior—including, of course, their urgent desire to have me come to Moscow—Brezhnev does not wish to sacrifice his “Western”

¹⁶ Sent for action.

policy to Hanoi's purposes. Consequently, we should have some flexibility in insisting on a constructive Soviet role regarding Vietnam before we turn to the summit-related substantive issues of US-Soviet relations.

Vietnam

As regards Vietnam, the following set of propositions would be put to the Soviets:

—We want the Soviets to use their influence to get the North Vietnamese to desist from their invasion across the DMZ; to pull back to North Vietnam the three NVA divisions, accompanying armor, artillery and anti-aircraft equipment involved in that invasion; and to fully restore the 1968 understandings, including complete respect for the DMZ and no shelling attacks on major South Vietnamese cities.

—If this is agreed and, as it is being implemented, we will correspondingly reduce our air and naval bombardments against the DRV and cease them completely when the foregoing has been accomplished.

—If this is agreed we are also ready to resume public and private talks towards a settlement which could take place as implementation of the above is underway.

—It would be made clear to the Soviets that we would expect the Soviets to use their material aid to the DRV as leverage.

The Soviets must bear considerable responsibility for the Communist offensive in Vietnam and we should therefore not be expected to "reward" them for using their influence to bring about deescalation. Nevertheless, the most promising *tactic* for implementing the general strategy will probably be to hold out to Brezhnev the *prospect* of a broad improvement in relations with us.

In sum, our approach would be to indicate that we will not shy away from the military actions necessary to beat back the Communist offensive in Vietnam; but that if our proposed scenario for deescalation is followed, there will be an opportunity for substantial progress in US-Soviet relations.

SALT

The major substantive subject being negotiated prior to the summit is SALT. It is at the moment stalled on two major issues and several minor, largely technical ones.

The major issues are (1) whether to include SLBMs in the offensive agreement and (2) where each side can deploy its ABMs. We have related these two by taking the position that an offensive agreement excluding SLBMs would confer such numerical advantages to the Soviet Union that it would be impossible for us to accept equality in the defensive agreement. The Soviets argue that the defensive agreement is permanent and therefore should be equal, while the offensive one is merely interim and any imbalances can be worked out in the follow-on talks for a permanent offensive agreement.

We have not yet exhausted all possible fallbacks on the *SLBM* question. These would involve schemes whereby the Soviets could continue construction of SLBMs in exchange for dismantling older SLBMs and ICBMs. Present evidence, however, suggests that the Soviets are unwilling to include an SLBM even if, as under the above schemes, they could in fact continue their present rate of construction for several years. Thus, we must confront a decision as to whether to accept a SALT agreement without SLBMs and perhaps with only an understanding that submarines will be the first subject of follow-on negotiations. If there is to be a SALT agreement in the next several weeks, we would probably have to take this step.

As regards *ABMs* we can probably expect only a slight advantage, even if we concede on SLBMs. I would not propose in Moscow to accept equality even if the Soviets remain adamant in insisting on it. A number of variants involving certain advantages for us have been examined within our Government. But one special issue needs to be faced: are we prepared to give up our second ABM site at the Malmstrom ICBM field in exchange for an ABM site in Washington? Secretary Laird and Gerry Smith have both recommended this,¹⁷ and there is some evidence that the Soviets might accept a deal whereby each side would have one ABM site in an ICBM field (Grand Forks for us) and one around the national capital. Such a scheme would still permit us to defend a larger number of ICBMs since our ICBM fields contain more launchers than do Soviet fields. If the Soviets continued to make an issue of this “inequality” we would have to consider the matter between my trip and the time of the summit.

A further SALT issue relates to the *duration* of the offensive agreement. We have argued for an indefinite duration, the Soviets for three years. (If the agreement lapsed after a fixed period we would end up with an ABM-only agreement, which we oppose.) But we can probably accept some fixed duration, e.g. four years, on the understanding that if by that time there was no permanent offensive agreement, we might abrogate the ABM treaty.

European Security

The next major subject—of particular interest to the Soviets—is Europe. As you know, they have been eager to engage us in bilateral talks about their conference proposal but so far they have not shown much interest in *MBFR*. Our own interest in *MBFR* has been largely

¹⁷ Smith recommended this position in a backchannel message to Kissinger on April 8. (Backchannel message 0924 from Smith to Kissinger, April 8; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, SALT 1972) Also see Smith, *Doubletalk*, pp. 363–364.

the result of our need to counter Senator Mansfield¹⁸ with a positive position. While at the moment our domestic pressures for troop reductions are manageable they could of course arise again, and we would probably be in a stronger position to meet them if we had some sort of MBFR negotiation in prospect with the Soviets.

We have already in various ways agreed in principle to preparations for a *European conference* once the Berlin agreement takes effect. Although the conference idea remains nebulous, we could try to use our agreement to proceed with conference preparations as a means to get the Russians to agree to MBFR preparations. As part of this latter process we could attempt to develop certain principles. As you know, however, we have had little success in coming up with any substantive MBFR position that is both negotiable and in our security interest. Consequently, our main interest will continue to be to use MBFR *talks* to prevent the unraveling of NATO through unilateral troop cuts.

Trade and Technical Cooperation

One of the major Soviet interests in seeking détente with us is to stimulate trade and access to our technology. We have more than a half dozen separate negotiations currently under way that relate in one way or another to these Soviet interests. The Soviets understand that progress here is related to our political relations, though they resent any explicit linkage.

The key decisions that will have to be made on our side in the next several weeks relate to making available EXIM Bank facilities to the USSR and to seeking MFN legislation. Both are essential if there is to be any sizeable volume of US exports to the Soviet Union. You already have legislative authority to move on EXIM Bank facilities; MFN authorizing legislation could probably not be obtained before 1973 although the act of asking for it this year would be read by the Soviets as a move favorable to them.

I would propose in Moscow only to indicate that, assuming a generally favorable trend in our relations, these important political/economic steps will be positively considered in the coming weeks. (Pete Peterson is to meet with his Soviet counterpart in early May. This will afford a chance to try to work out many of the detailed issues involved in an improved overall trade relationship.)

As regards science and technology, the Soviets are eager to have early institutional arrangements for cooperation. As a tactical matter, I

¹⁸ Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Montana), Senate Majority Leader. In addition to his efforts to legislate withdrawal from Vietnam, Mansfield repeatedly sought to pass legislation requiring a significant reduction in the number of American troops stationed in Europe.

would propose to indicate that we will proceed on the merits with each program. In fact, we can easily regulate the pace in accordance with the political situation.

Communiqué

A final issue to face is the Soviet desire to have a formal US-Soviet declaration of principles promulgated at the summit. They have done this with France and Canada, and they will have even more formal treaty arrangements with the FRG. The principles themselves essentially repeat the basic terms of the UN Charter and they involve a commitment to consult regularly. Historically, since the Eisenhower Administration, we have avoided this kind of declaration because we felt it could be used to undermine our alliance relationships even though the actual terms largely repeated the Charter.

I have given Dobrynin informally a watered-down set of very general principles (dealing with the need for negotiation of disputes, the desirability of restraint and of cooperation and a general clause to consult) to be embodied in the final summit communiqué.¹⁹ In view of the French precedent it may be difficult to avoid a more elaborate document. If we accepted this, we would have to inform our allies and to include language that made clear that no existing alliances or other commitments were affected.

Recommendation:

That you approve this approach to my Moscow meetings.²⁰

Attachment

Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)²¹

Washington, April 17, 1972.

SUBJECT

Issues for Presidential Decision

¹⁹ Kissinger gave Dobrynin the U.S. draft for a joint communiqué on March 17; see Document 62.

²⁰ The President initialed his approval with the following handwritten caveat: "OK—as modified by RN's oral instructions." For Nixon's oral instructions, see Document 126.

²¹ The memorandum is not initialed.

1. A fundamental strategic and tactical decision revolves around the *relationship between Vietnam and the rest of US-Soviet negotiations*. There are two aspects to this:

—On the one hand, we need to be clear about the extent to which we wish to make what happens in Vietnam, and the Soviet role with regard to it, a determinant of what happens next in US-Soviet relations.

—On the other, we need to be clear about the extent to which our substantive positions on other issues should be influenced by whatever the Soviets may do for us regarding Vietnam.

a. As regards the first question, do we require a return to the status quo ante (however defined) in Vietnam and a visible Soviet role in bringing this about *before* we proceed with further preparations of the Summit? The answer is presumably *negative*, given the present state of the battle. The next question is do we require a Soviet *commitment to take steps with Hanoi* to bring about a return to the status quo ante before we proceed further?

—A *tough position* would be to answer “yes”, on the hypothesis that Brezhnev has so much riding on his relationship with us and the Summit that he is prepared to move on Vietnam. (This is not the old illusion that Moscow will help us for the sake of some undefined benefits later. The assumption here is that the whole Brezhnev policy line, and perhaps his political future, is today more dependent on relations with us than was true 4–5 years ago.)

—A *more cautious answer* to this question would be to say that we lay out a more or less complete negotiating scenario beginning with Vietnam but comprising all major issues currently in play. That is, we lay out in relatively specific terms a vista of what will happen in US-Soviet relations *if* the Soviets agree to play ball on Vietnam.

—A *different approach* would be for us to talk about Vietnam in Moscow but to make clear that we, for our part, are prepared to continue with other issues irrespective of what happens in Vietnam. This would leave the initiative for establishing a linkage to the Soviets.

—A *more subtle variant* would be for us to proceed with other issues but to imply that (a) we will continue to do what is necessary against the North to defeat the offensive and (b) that at some unspecified point the Vietnam situation may make it difficult for us to proceed with other negotiations including the Summit.

b. The next question is whether we should calibrate our substantive flexibility on other issues according to what the Soviets may do constructively on Vietnam.

—With respect to *SALT*, we should probably draw no such precise connection. Vietnam with all its anguish and dilemmas is now a short-range problem; *SALT* involves a long-term strategic relationship and

any agreement we make this year should stand on its own feet. Moreover, it will have to be defended in Congress, before the country and with the allies on those terms.

—The same general philosophy applies to *Europe* where a longer-term relationship is involved. (It may, however, be reasonable to assume that if the US-Soviet relationship should deteriorate because of Vietnam, progress in Europe will be slowed and the German eastern treaties would suffer.

Conversely, a general impetus to US-Soviet relations at this moment, would probably intensify interest in progress on European issues and ease Brandt's task with regard to the eastern treaties. These processes are essentially self-regulating and require no specific decision by us, *unless we wish to play some explicit positive* role in behalf of the Brandt government on treaty ratification.)

—Bilateral issues lend themselves more readily to carefully calibrated concessions or rigidity. A logical connection can be made between Vietnam and our ability to move on MFN and EXIM facilities. The decision required is whether we should foreshadow early positive action on one or both in return for Soviet movement on Vietnam.

—We also have flexibility on environmental cooperation and science cooperation. On both, we are now proceeding deliberately. The Soviets want more speed so that specific agreements could be signed at the Summit. This is not a major decision but it could be made on a contingency basis for discretionary use.

2. *SALT* (See also the more detailed paper).²²

Presidential decisions are required on the interrelated issues of SLBMs and ABMs. The interrelationship here is not organic to the proposed agreement; it is largely psychological and political: how the agreement appears to the US and world publics. The manner in which the SLBM question is handled also bears on where we stand in the follow-on negotiations.

a. As regards *SLBMs*, the President must decide whether ultimately he can accept an agreement without their inclusion. Such a decision should represent an *ultimate fallback* which would not be used until other possibilities have been exhausted. These include:

- (1) replacement of G & H subs (8 subs, 100 SLBMs);
- (2) plus slipping freeze date to ratification date (plus 2 new subs, 24 SLBMs);
- (3) plus replacement of OLD Silo ICBMs (plus 6 new subs, 75 SLBMs);
- (4) plus replacement of soft Pad ICBMs (plus 11 new subs, 134 SLBMs).

²² See footnote 3 above.

Cumulatively, this could give the Soviet up to 70 new subs and as many as 985 SLBMs even with an agreement. Under less generous variants (i.e., permitting only *some* of the above substitutions), the Soviets could get up to 51 subs and 752 SLBMs at the lowest end of the spectrum. Although all these variants give the Soviets more subs and SLBMs than we have, those involving substitutions do require the Soviets to scratch other weapons, which so far they have shown no inclination to do. We would thus gain (1) an upper limit, (albeit quite high), to Soviet SLBMs and (2) the reduction of certain existing Soviet strategic forces (albeit of older vintage, though of use to the Soviets against our allies and in a first strike.) If any of these variants were accepted, we would have to scratch existing Polaris boats and possibly Titans as ULMS boats came in. We probably would be prepared to do this in any case in the time frame involved.

A *fallback* just short of total exclusion of SLBMs would involve incorporation in the interim freeze a commitment to negotiate on SLBMs either separately or as the first order of business in the follow-on negotiations. This may have the advantage of postponing any early renewed focus on FBS. It could have the disadvantage of having SLBM negotiations at a time when Congress focuses on ULMS funding. It might also make it difficult to obtain Soviet concessions on other SALT issues because of the non-inclusion of SLBMs.

b. *ABMs*. Here the President must focus on the essentially political decision whether to go for a US “advantage” if SLBMs are excluded or merely mentioned as a topic for follow-on negotiations; or whether to accept the Soviet point that this is a treaty which should stand on its own, and must therefore be “equal”.

—If the decision is for an “*advantage*”, the most logical variants are those that provide a US “advantage” as long as SLBMs are excluded but involve equalization as and when they are included. This argues for the deferral options.

—If the decision is for “*equality*”, we should probably go for Grand Forks and Washington vs. Moscow and *one* Soviet ICBM site. *Note*: The Soviets might object because of the lower number of ICBMs at their ICBM sites. Numbers of interceptors would be equal, however.

To repeat, however, the basic Presidential decisions are: (1) “advantage” vs “equality” and (2) whether under any variant we take Washington. Once these decisions are made, the variants can be juggled.

c. *Duration*. The basic Presidential decision here is whether there is to be any fixed time limit on the offensive freeze. Since the Soviets have proposed three years and we are prepared to go to five years, the logical decision is four years. We, of course, prefer an unlimited duration to avoid ending up with only an ABM treaty but we are protected, to a degree, by the supreme national interest clause.

d. *Radars*. This is highly technical and it is difficult to see a specific Presidential decision. As regards the NCA radar setup, we are relatively close to agreement. (MARCS) For ICBM sites we may have to fall back to a combination of quantitative and qualitative restraints since the Soviets are unlikely to accept the MARC concept. This should be settled between the two Moscow trips.

—On OLPARS, we now have the first signs of Soviet movement. The SALT delegation is probing further. The only Presidential decision now, if any, would be to insist that there must be *some agreed* restraint on OLPARS.

3. *Europe* (Note: See separate longer paper).²³

The decision here is, first, for authority to talk bilaterally to the Soviets. This follows logically from previous confidential exchanges, though these related to Europe generally (ESC) rather than to MBFR. This is a delicate problem because of European sensitivities. Moreover, we are committed not to talk specifically about ESC until after the Berlin agreement takes effect. No such restriction exists on MBFR.

The major current hangup relates to the *interrelationship between ESC and MBFR*. We have always wanted to keep them separate, largely for Congressional reasons but also because it makes no sense to have large numbers of European governments involved in MBFR negotiations that affect only a few countries.

If the German treaties are ratified and Berlin is settled, ESC preparations should begin next fall. The old imperative (Congressional) of holding open the possibility of MBFR while hanging back on ESC will no longer be valid then. We already have a USG decision to establish a tenuous link between MBFR and ESC, that is, to use the occasion of ESC preparations to try to get MBFR talks started also. This is worth trying out on the Soviets.

We also have a set of MBFR principles developed by the Verification Panel and generally consistent with what NATO has been doing. Brosio would have made an effort to probe the Soviets on some of these.

On balance, it seems wisest to confine preparatory work with the Soviets to the procedural issues.

ESC is a Soviet desideratum. We should stick to the NATO approach on timing. A Presidential decision might be made (1) that we can assure the Soviets we will cooperate with ESC preparations after Berlin, and (2) that we are prepared to maintain contact with them to help structure the conference most usefully.

²³ See footnote 4 above.

4. *Bilateral Issues.*

The basic Presidential decision is on trade issues. How far can you go to assure favorable action on EXIM facilities. What assurances can you give that we will seek MFN legislation (probably not obtainable this year.) Even a basic Presidential decision on EXIM still leaves us flexibility as to implementation. In any case, any public disclosure should be at the Summit.

Lesser decisions relate to the pace with which we move on environmental and scientific cooperation—before the Summit, at the Summit, after the Summit. Our present tack on both is an agreement in principle at the Summit with broad terms worked out before and details to be nailed down afterwards.

5. *Final Communiqué.*

The basic decision here is whether we want a separate declaration of principles (you have already given the Soviets a set, but as part of a final communiqué); and whether we want to point toward setting up a permanent consultative mechanism. This latter is mostly optical, since we can do all the consulting we want anyway and already have adequate top-level channels. The Soviets would want both principles and consultative mechanism; the trap for us is alliance reactions even though several allies (France, Canada) have already done the same. In-between solutions (probably preferable) are: a set of principles in the communiqué; a general agreement to consult but no special mechanism.

Note: Nothing included on Middle East.

126. **Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹**

Washington, April 19, 1972.

[The recording began while the meeting was in progress. Omitted here is discussion of domestic support for bombing Vietnam.]

Nixon: We have got to play it out. We must not now disappoint—

Kissinger: I could not—

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 713–1. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 3:27 to 5:01 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Nixon: You see. That is why if you come back and we've say we've agreed to resume our talks and stop the bombing—

Kissinger: Oh no. No, no.

Nixon: That's why I—

Kissinger: No, no, no. But, Mr. President, the point is the talks resume while the bombing goes on. Oh no, we won't stop the bombing. Absolutely not.

Nixon: We indicated that we might.

Kissinger: Oh—

Nixon: Retrogressively, but—

Kissinger: No, no. We will retrogressive, if they pull their troops out of South Vietnam.

Nixon: Well—

Kissinger: That's the proposition—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: First let me make one other—

Nixon: Understand, I'm not criticizing. I'm just trying to state, when you come back, I'd like to be able to say something in my press conference about—Oh, did you talk to him about the time of announcement?²

Kissinger: No. I'll do that there, but I've told him that we—because I don't want—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —to get them thinking that there will be an announcement 'til—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: —'til my last day there.

Nixon: That's right. Now look, presently though, Henry, for my own planning, you will be back Sunday night.³

Kissinger: Yes.

Nixon: Because you're going to see the son-of-a-bitch⁴ Friday.

Kissinger: And then Gromyko wants to spend all of Saturday with me.

Nixon: On the details of other things?

Kissinger: Well, I don't know, he—

² Kissinger met Dobrynin in Scowcroft's office on April 19 from 2:35 to 3:17 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) No other record of the meeting has been found.

³ April 23.

⁴ Brezhnev.

Nixon: Well, we'll see.

Kissinger: I have to admit, Mr. President, I would never say to anyone who comes into your office: "Don't spring any surprises on him, because he may not be able to handle it," which is in effect what they told me.

Nixon: Uh-huh.

Kissinger: Now—

Nixon: Oh, I see. That's what you mean.

Kissinger: That's what—

Nixon: Do you think you might see Brezhnev alone?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Or do think you'll have Gromyko there?

Kissinger: They said—

Nixon: —or whatever they want.

Kissinger: I have to be there. I don't know.

Nixon: The point is, if, if—Let me say this. There's one, there's another way this could be played. I'm trying to think of the minimum we need. Let me, let me figure out a way, and then we'll come back to you, to what you were saying. As we were saying over there early this morning, earlier this morning,⁵ what we must not assume, which is what we have been assuming to an extent, and I'm willing to do this in the event they, in the event they cancel the summit or we have to cancel the summit, you know, which we of course are prepared to do. Totally—

Kissinger: Not going to happen.

Nixon: They're not going to do that. We know that. Hell, they wouldn't be having you, if they—Look—

Kissinger: May I—

Nixon: These guys would be crazy to have you over there—

Kissinger: May I make two—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —other points, because you need that for your own thinking—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —before you [unclear]. One is, I told him again, I said "Anatol, I want you to know this. We will continue to bomb while

⁵ Nixon met Kissinger twice in his office in the Executive Office Building that morning, 9:20–9:55 a.m. and 11:20–11:47 a.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Tape recordings of the conversations are *ibid.*, White House Tapes, Recordings of Conversations between Nixon and Kissinger, Executive Office Building, Conversation Nos. EOB 331–13 and EOB 331–16.

I am in Moscow. I don't want Mr. Brezhnev to feel that while he's seeing me and his ally's being bombed that you didn't know that."

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: "Don't consider that a surprise." He said, "I understand." He said, "But you promised me no escalation." I said, "No, I promised you no attacks on Hanoi–Haiphong."

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: He said, "That's no escalation."

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: So now, Mr.—you know that's not a sign of strength.

Nixon: Ha!

Kissinger: The second point I'd like to make to you, Mr. President, is there is this port⁶ about 60 miles south of Haiphong—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —which is just snuggling up on the 20th Parallel.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: Now, our bombing line is the 19th for this week.

Nixon: So you might take that out this week?

Kissinger: But, if I might suggest, Mr. President—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —we ought to try to take that port tomorrow night.

Nixon: All right.

Kissinger: Because a) it's a good signal to the Russians.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: As long, as I've said, no Hanoi–Haiphong. Secondly, they've given us another holding reply out of Hanoi. Every time they give us an unfavorable reply, they get another back.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: And—

Nixon: Good, take it tomorrow night.

[Omitted here is discussion of recommendations of bombing Vietnam.]

Kissinger: Now, another, what I think we can have next week, Mr. President—

Nixon: Yeah.

⁶ Thanh Hoa.

Kissinger: —assuming I have to look at that message from the goddamn North Vietnamese—⁷

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —is—

Nixon: What do I announce, for example, on Wednesday?

Kissinger: Well, you can announce—⁸

Nixon: Or do you want me to go Monday? I can go Monday.

Kissinger: Well, you might well consider Monday. But I can cable you from Moscow. Or let's see what that message is.

Nixon: I see. Do you have adequate communications in Moscow?

Kissinger: Yeah. That's why we took one of your backup planes.

Nixon: Oh, you communicate through the plane?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Good. You don't have to use Beam?

Kissinger: No.

Nixon: Good.

Kissinger: Ah—

Nixon: Great, great. Go ahead.

Kissinger: Well, but we could announce, you could—you see if you could announce that I've been in Moscow, that tomorrow morning we're going to ask for a plenary session, you don't have to say any more.

Nixon: I should do it Monday. You see, Monday's a better day for the Congress.

Kissinger: And—

Nixon: Isn't that your point?

Kissinger: That's my point. I think that's enough. I mean that would shut up everybody—

Nixon: And then I'll make the troop announcement too.

Kissinger: Why not wait with that 'til later in the week?

Nixon: Just say I'll have an announcement on that later in the week.

[Omitted here is further discussion of the announcement on troop withdrawals.]

⁷ Reference is to a North Vietnamese proposal on talks, which Colonel Guay in Paris forwarded in a backchannel message to Colonel Kennedy in Washington on April 19. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1041, Files for the President, Vietnam Negotiations, US–NVN Exchanges, January–October 5, 1972)

⁸ During his address to the nation on April 26, Nixon announced the withdrawal of further U.S. troops from Vietnam by July 1; see Document 171.

Kissinger: And, you see, next week the mere fact, Mr. President—
Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: —that the Soviets discuss Vietnam with me—

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: —in the week that we bombed Hanoi and Haiphong, which these sons-of-bitches are condemning—

Nixon: Now they will ask, “Whose initiative is this meeting taking place?” I think we, and that I’ve got—and that’s another thing. We’ve got to say that it was at their initiative. I don’t want to hear that we went hat in hand to Moscow.

Kissinger: Mr. President, I—

Nixon: Or we can just say mutually.

Kissinger: I’d say it was mutual. These things always are mutual. We have, it’s important—What they are doing is really screwing Hanoi.

Nixon: That’s right.

Kissinger: I mean, imagine if they were bombing Iran and then you received Gromyko here at the White House the same week that they’re bombing one of our allies, what impression that would make on the Shah. There is no possible—

Nixon: Yeah. [unclear] Let me go over a few of the items now.⁹

Kissinger: [unclear]

Nixon: Take some notes. One thing that on the very limit of what we want to get out of these bastards. We’ve got to get something symbolic on the POW thing. Now what I would say is that if we could get the POW’s that have been there 5 years or something like that or sick POW’s. In other words, we release so many and they release, something along that. The second point is that we’ve got to and—

Kissinger: That I must include in the proposal.

Nixon: Huh? Just include that in the proposal.

Kissinger: Yes.

Nixon: Yeah. We just need something. Just a human, a humanitarian gesture. You understand?

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: Don’t you think we can include it?

Kissinger: Essential.

Nixon: I don’t think you’re going to get it.

Kissinger: No, I’ll, I think we must hold out—

Nixon: Yes.

⁹ See Document 125.

Kissinger: Mr. President, we've got some sweating on our—

Nixon: Well, we'll do this.

Kissinger: I'm not—The risk, with your permission—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —but because it's your risk—

Nixon: Yeah, yeah.

Kissinger: If I fail there, it may be because I'm turning the screw too much rather than not enough. Now—

Nixon: No, no. If you turn it too much—There's no greater pleasure frankly that I would have than to leave this office to anybody after having destroyed North Vietnam's capability. Now let me tell you, I feel exactly that way and I'll go out with a clean conscience. But if I leave this office without any use of power, I'm the last President—frankly I'm the only President, the only man with the exception of Connally, believe me, who had the guts to do what we're doing. You know it and I know it. The only man who had the possibility to be President, and Connally's the only other one who could do what I'm doing. Reagan never could make President to begin with and he couldn't handle it.

Kissinger: Connally would do it without your finesse though.

Nixon: Well, Agnew, Agnew would—

Kissinger: Agnew. Well, Agnew would have a—Agnew would be in a worse position than Johnson was.

Nixon: But you know what I mean. The point is, as you know, considering electability, I'm the only person who can do it. Now, Henry, we must not miss this chance. We're going to do it. I'm going to destroy the goddamn country, believe me, I mean destroy it if necessary. And let me say, even the nuclear weapon if necessary. It isn't necessary. But, you know, what I mean is, that shows you the extent to which I'm willing to go. By a nuclear weapon, I mean that we will bomb the living bejeezus out of North Vietnam and then if anybody interferes we will threaten the nuclear weapon.

[Omitted here is discussion of domestic opposition to bombing in Vietnam and of the U.S. Presidential election.]

Nixon: So, all we really need out of this at the present time is enough momentum, enough of this situation where it appears, frankly where we go forward with the Soviet summit because that's a big plus for us and where we cool Vietnam enough through the summer that after November we can kill them. Make any kind of a promise at all that we'll do everything to get it past November and then do it. I don't care whether it's a year, 8 months, 6 months, whatever the case is.

Kissinger: The only problem is—

Nixon: You see what I'm getting at. Now within that context, however, let me say that if we cannot get that kind of situation, if there is a risk that somebody else will be here after November who will sell out the country, then, by God, I'll do it. I'll throw, I'm willing to throw myself on the sword. We are not going to let this country be defeated by this little shit-ass country.

Kissinger: We shall not—

Nixon: It's not going to happen.

Kissinger: We'll never have these guys more scared than now.

Nixon: You think so?

Kissinger: The Russians. In November, you'll be in a good position too, but I agree with you in principle.

Nixon: I see.

Kissinger: My judgment, what we ought to get out of this, if we can get the offensive stopped, Mr. President, if we can get back to the levels of March 29th say—

Nixon: Yes.

Kissinger: —before this started—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: —get talks started which the Soviets guarantee, have the Soviets engaged—

Nixon: Right. All right.

Kissinger: —then we will have won this—

Nixon: Then, yes, talks are started—But now wait a minute. Talks are started but are we, but we're going to insist that they be held back over the DMZ?

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: They won't do that. But, on the other hand, on the other hand, that's what you've got to insist on. I think we've got to get that, they get back from the DMZ and so forth. What I'm getting at—

Kissinger: You see, but—

Nixon: But it mustn't appear that we gave up the bombing for talks. That's the thing.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: If we give up bombing for talks, we do what Johnson did.

Kissinger: No, no, but Mr. President, we will continue bombing during the talks. That's the difference. Now I believe, Mr. President, if the Soviets deliver this package that the North Vietnamese will settle during the summit. They'll settle because they will have to figure, having thrown their Sunday punch and having been in effect not supported by the Chinese, not supported by the Russians, in fact squeezed

by the Russians, and bombed by us. Why would they be better off next year at this time than this year?

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: Therefore I would bet, if we can get this—

Nixon: They misjudge American public opinion.

Kissinger: Mr. President.

Nixon: You don't see these people—

Kissinger: No, no. But I will bet that American public opinion—If on Monday night, if everything works well, you can announce this trip, what are the goddamn peaceniks in this country going to say? That a week after, and the talks start again while we are bombing, what are they going to say about bombing then? And if Haig's report is correct—Haig is back, Mr. President.

Nixon: I'm going to talk to him tonight. I thought that you had to go to dinner and—

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: And I want to be sure Haig—I want to take him out on the *Sequoia* and brief me a little.¹⁰

Kissinger: Oh good. Wonderful.

[Omitted here is discussion of the President's schedule, including the announcement of Kissinger's trip.]

Kissinger: I sort of hinted it to Dobrynin but I'm afraid that if we tell them we want to do it—

Nixon: They may want to leak it.

Kissinger: —then they'll start leaking it to their allies ahead of time.

Nixon: That's right. I think what you should do is tell Dobrynin that we will announce this.

Kissinger: Well we may tell him after. Let me see what—

Nixon: Tell him, you can even put it this way: look, we can't keep it secret. And, that's the way I'd do it. We drag it into—

Kissinger: Oh, no, they'll agree to announcing it; that won't be the problem. The problem is—

Nixon: Whether it gets out before—

Kissinger: Well, we would have to keep them—We don't want to encourage them to leak it before. And therefore the later they know

¹⁰ Nixon met Haig and Haldeman that evening aboard the Presidential yacht *Sequoia* on the Potomac River. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) According to Haldeman, "the *Sequoia* dinner with Haig was partly a report on Vietnam and partly the P blasting the press and our enemies in Vietnam." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 442) No other record of the meeting has been found. Regarding Haig's trip to Vietnam, see Document 111.

we're to announce it. The sons-of-bitches always score cheap little points.

Nixon: Well, let's see. That's all right, Henry. Don't worry too much about the leaking. Just so we don't leak it. I mean, if it just leaks a little, we'll then, that will build up the press conference a little. We'll just maintain total dead silence here about everything, where you are and everything. We'll going to play it cold as ice.

Kissinger: I'm with—I'm in Camp David.¹¹

Nixon: That's correct.

Kissinger: What I thought I would do, Mr. President, to take care of the problem, is when I arrive I'll chopper up to Camp David—

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: —then come back with you.

Nixon: Good. Sunday night. What time will you arrive back?

Kissinger: Well, I'll have to let you know. I won't know my schedule 'til I get there.

Nixon: Well, right. But you'll arrive sometime during Sunday afternoon, won't you?

Kissinger: On present plans, yes. By 6 o'clock, I think.

Nixon: Sure.

Kissinger: If I leave Moscow by 2 I'll be there at 6. And so—I think, I think that the North Vietnamese will settle this summer if we can get them to call off their offensive now. That's the main thing.

Nixon: Call it off. I'd punish them a hell of a lot more before [unclear]. But we'll get a lot of [unclear] won't we?

Kissinger: Well, this thing won't end—You see, if out of this meeting, just to war-game it. The best we can get out of this meeting is your announcement on Monday night that I was in Moscow, the strong indication on Vietnam and announcing that we are going back to a plenary on Thursday. It won't fool anybody.

Nixon: Right.

¹¹ In an April 18 memorandum to Kissinger, Jon Howe described the cover story for his trip as follows: "If pressed to explain your absence and that of other members of the staff, it will be acknowledged that you, Sonnenfeldt, Lord, Rodman, Derus, Pineau have gone to Camp David for intensive preparations for the Moscow summit. The President will go to Camp David on Thursday afternoon [April 20] and remain there until your return. He will be reviewing the international situation with you, after meeting with you in Washington on Thursday morning." "Due to the high probability of leaks for this mission," Howe added, "it is important that you bring a hat and not wear your glasses when in exposed areas." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2])

Kissinger: Then they will say about secret talks, say we never comment on secret talks.

Nixon: Right. That's right.

Kissinger: But once we have already—We can finesse that so that everyone will—

Nixon: —know there're secret talks. That's right.

Kissinger: You could just say Le Duc Tho will come back, as you know. Besides the less you say the better—

Nixon: Or I can say so damn little that it doesn't mean much. You know I—

Kissinger: All right.

Nixon: I have no problem with that.

Kissinger: So that's what will happen on Monday if we're lucky. On—then there's a private meeting with Le Duc Tho on Friday. We bomb the living bejeezus out of them all week long if everything goes well.

Nixon: Including this one tomorrow night, right?

Kissinger: Including that one tomorrow night. Then shortly after that we get the de-escalation thing done. So that would give us 2 more weeks of military action, it would, and then if that happens I would guarantee a settlement this summer because they have literally no place to go. Especially—

Nixon: The bombing tomorrow night, do you think, will help [unclear] to understand how we started the diplomatic line?

Kissinger: Yes. Mr. President, I'll bet—

Nixon: I think it will. But what do you think?

Kissinger: Right. What I think is that it's, we'll have some anxious moments. It's a gamble, one of these wild things. No other man in this country would have bombed Hanoi and Haiphong having an invitation to Moscow in his pocket—or in the pocket of his assistant. Now here we're bombing a port while I'm in Moscow. What we are saying—

Nixon: But we, but we're not breaking the deal with Dobrynin.

Kissinger: No, it's right up at the—it will be just what I told him.

Nixon: Right. Not in the Hanoi–Haiphong area.

Kissinger: That's right. And I'll tell Gromyko, you say, tomorrow night, I'll say that, listen, that this is—The more we do now the better. The more reckless we appear, because after all, Mr. President, what we're trying to convince them of is that we are ready to go all the way. The only way we are able to convince them is to do reckless things. For example, all Soviet ships on the way to Haiphong have been stopped—I don't know whether I've had a chance to tell you this—not just the ones from Vladivostok, from everywhere. And they are backing off, or at least they want to avoid them.

Nixon: Well, they don't want to be in the harbor while it's mined.

Kissinger: So, I must tell you, maybe they'll tell me Friday morning, "You son-of-a-bitch. You've just bombed Dong Hua while you are here. There is a limit. Go back on the next plane." That's the risk we are running. But it's precisely, I don't think, that isn't the way Dobrynin talks to me.

Nixon: Well, we're just, we're just going—You told him today that we would continue bombing.

Kissinger: I told him that the only things we will not bomb is Hanoi and Haiphong. My instinct is—

Nixon: That's enough to give them.

Kissinger: My instinct is the more we—After we've taken out Dong Hua then I'd go back to the 19th Parallel and stay there. That still gives us 140 miles to bomb.

Nixon: That's pretty good. With regard to your points here.¹²

Kissinger: Excuse me.

Nixon: I think I would say that, in talking about our relations, I think you could say that you've often heard the President discuss this matter, and he's aware that there are a number of important countries in the world these days, but he says there are only two countries that really matter in terms of power, as of now—the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Others, for example the PRC and Japan, could matter very much in the future. And we have to therefore make our plans accordingly. But today the Soviet Union and everything depends on us. Secondly, that this summit, as distinguished from other summits, comes at a time when the President agrees that we are equal. I would say that. When neither can push the other around. And also at a time where neither can or will allow the other to get an edge militarily. In other words, that is one of the reasons why they are [unclear] arms negotiations with us and the whole purpose of that is to tell them I am not going to allow them to get an advantage. See? That is they're escalating. So we're, this is how it differs from '59, '61 and '67. The other thing, in terms of cosmetics, is to say the President, as a student of history, knows that there have been spirits that have been raised and then dashed. We had the spirit of Vienna. We had the spirit of Camp David. We had the spirit of Glassboro. He does not want this to be that kind of a spirit. He thinks we should think incidentally of a place to meet outside of Moscow or find a different name than Moscow. In other words, that's why I think where we might have a meeting and then we could have the spirit of Dacha or Yasnaya Polynana or something like that. And that this,

¹² See the draft opening statement, attached to Document 125.

however, will be the real thing. Because Brezhnev has talked about the spirit of Yalta, you know, remember when the Agricultural Minister said it would be better to go back to that. Well, we're not going to go back to the goddamn spirit of Yalta. But nevertheless it shows that he's thinking in those terms. So this is in your soft-sell in the beginning.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: The President says let's don't have the spirit of Camp David; that failed. Let's don't have the spirit of Vienna; that was a failure. Let's don't have the spirit of Glassboro; that was a failure. I mean you're reflecting of course on, you're conceding that but it was a goddamn foolish thing. But this is the real thing. Here we're not only going to have the spirit, we're going to have the substance. And that's why this summit is by far the most important meeting in this century. Right? Lay it right out there, you know, in those terms. The President considered the Chinese meeting enormously important because of the future. But we're talking now about the present here in Russia. And he's aware of power. He's aware that China is potentially a great future power. He's also aware of the fact that the Soviet Union is a great present power. And for that reason we have things that bring us together. So—now, one thing I want you to be extremely hard on is, they have a single standard. We can't have this crap in effect that they can support liberation in the non-Communist world but that we, the Brezhnev doctrine must apply in their world.

Kissinger: That's a strong—

Nixon: Let me put it this way. Tell them the President doesn't know the particulars of the Brezhnev doctrine. Now, and the President realizes that the world has changed since 1959 when all over Russia he was harassed by directors of Khrushchev about the Captive Nations resolution.¹³ The President has no illusions about what we can do about liberating Eastern European countries. I'd just put it that way—by arms, force of arms. But the Soviet Union should have no illusions that it can directly or indirectly use force of arms to liberate non-Communist countries. I think you've got to say there's got to be a single standard on that. Now what we're really saying to them in effect, look we'll divide up the world, but by God you're going to respect our side or we won't respect your side. Don't you think that point should be made?

Kissinger: Absolutely. I'll—The one thing, Mr. President. They'll undoubtedly tape what I say.

¹³ Reference is to the resolution passed by Congress annually during the 1950s requiring the President to proclaim a week of prayer for the "captive nations" of Eastern Europe. President Eisenhower issued the proclamation several days before Vice President Nixon left on his trip to the Soviet Union in July 1959. For his account of the Soviet complaints about the resolution during the trip, see Nixon, *RN: Memoirs*, pp. 205–207.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I shouldn't say this is the most important meeting of this century because if they play it for the Chinese—

Nixon: I know.

Kissinger: But I—the thought—

Nixon: In terms of substance, you can say—

Kissinger: Oh, oh, oh. Its immediate impact or something.

Nixon: In terms of its immediate impact on substantive matters it could be, it could be you say, the most important, depending upon what we agree upon in terms of substance. The other was enormously important in terms of changing the whole world, because, you know—All we mean about that is the President thinks his China initiative is the most important thing he's done so far. I'd say that. Because we have to look to the future.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: Have to look to the future. But we're talking now about the present. And, we might say, it's very different from when Mr. Kosygin and Mr. Johnson talked about their grandchildren [unclear] at Glassboro. Say that President Nixon wants to talk to Chairman Brezhnev about ourselves and our children. Right now. It's not grandchildren. Children. They like that. The Russians like to use that kind of business [unclear]. Point out, give them a little bullshit to the effect that the President has great respect for Mr. Brezhnev—he's a strong man, a determined man.

Kissinger: I should start with it.

Nixon: He is not, the President is a, the President is a deeply believing ideologue just as Brezhnev is. He has no respect for weak men. He thinks, he thinks Brezhnev's strong. As a matter of fact, and I'd throw in, that's one of the reasons the President respects Mr. Chou En-lai and Mr. Mao Tse-tung, because they are strong men. If you want. Just stick in a little needle there. He respects them. He totally disagreed with them, but we found mutual respect. And the President, however, he sees Mr. Brezhnev, he believes he's a strong man, he deeply believes in his system, but that, and he's not going to do anything that will be detrimental to the security of the Soviet Union, he doesn't expect him to, but the President isn't going to do anything detrimental to the security of the United States. There can't be any winner. No winner in this contest. We both have to win or it will not be successful. In other words, unless the agreement is one that both have a vested interest in preserving, the agreement isn't going to be worth the paper it's written on. And he believes, that this, that you believe, having met, knowing the President, studied Mr. Brezhnev, that they will, that they are the kind of, they are two men who despite their differences in

backgrounds and the rest, could make very great progress, because they're direct men, they're strong men, but they're honest men. I'd put that crack in there. You see? Hey look, you might as well use flattery. You know the Russians use flattery. They're horrible that way. And also they're susceptible to it.

Kissinger: Okay.

Nixon: Now, say, on the other hand, that you're not using flattery. You know, you've got all that [unclear]. The other point is that you ought to get in a very strong line that you've heard, the President is very fatalistic about his position. You know he differs, tell them, you knew and respected President Johnson, you did some missions for him, and President Kennedy, you did some missions for him. But this President, each of them had his strong points, this President differs from them in one important fact. All three were politicians or otherwise they never would have been elected President. But President Nixon is one that you have heard say to the top officials when he decided to go forward on the Haiphong–Hanoi, he said politics be damned. That every one of his advisers have said to you, you can say, Mr. President, Mr. Chairman, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense were not suggesting, every one of them, Rogers—well you would say didn't oppose it, but point out the political risks. Say it that way. That the Presidents said politics be damned we're going to do what's right. And the President is going to take that line right down to the election. I don't want them to have any impression that I was affected one iota by public opinion, by polls, by anything of that sort. Don't you think that's a good point to make?

Kissinger: I think it's crucial.

Nixon: The other point that you've often made to the Chinese. The President is in a rather unique position. He can deliver what the so-called liberals promise because he has the confidence of the right in our country. And there's no President who could go to Moscow at this time, at a time Moscow is fueling a war that has cost 50,000 Americans. No President could go at this time and come back with an arms control agreement and so forth and sell it to the American people except this President. He would have a riot in the streets of the right wing. Now, tell them, now there are still a lot of McCarthyites in this country, Mr. Chairman. You know, tell them that. You know, Mr. Wallace.¹⁴ Scare them with Wallace. You see my point? But this President can deliver. He'll never promise a thing that he doesn't deliver on and he will deliver. In other words, what we have here is two hard-edged, strong

¹⁴ George C. Wallace, the Governor of Alabama, was then seeking the Democratic nomination for President.

men who can, can make this deal. [unclear] But to have a successful summit it's indispensable, not just necessary, but indispensable, to have some progress in Vietnam. That's all.

Kissinger: But some significant progress.

Nixon: Oh yeah. Fine. You know what I mean. You're going to sell them on it. I would point out on the trade. I don't think they care much about trade any more than the others.

Kissinger: Oh yeah. Oh, no, no, no, no.

Nixon: They do? But on the trade, you could say the President has looked this over. You could say, "Do you realize, Mr. Chairman, that there isn't a chance that the Congress would approve favored nation treatment, which has to be passed by our Congress, with the present state of Soviet-American relations, particularly in view of the Soviet support of North Vietnam? Not a chance. Now the President can get it through and he will. But that's why a cooling in Vietnam is essential. And then if we do that more is to come, favored nation, credits," all as I told Gromyko,¹⁵ a whole new world opens up. And I'll sell it to the Congress and I can do it. I think you need a little of that in the talks. Don't you agree?

Kissinger: Absolutely.

Nixon: Congress won't approve credits, won't approve favored nation treatment, if political tensions exist at the present level. [Nixon appears to be talking to someone else.]

Kissinger: On SALT, Mr. President.

Nixon: Yeah, let's go through some of those.

Kissinger: You don't have to make a decision on these various options except, are you prepared—

Nixon: I might with these things. I didn't mean that.

Kissinger: —are you prepared to give up on the submarines?

Nixon: Am I? Of course. I'm prepared to give up on it—I think we can sell it, can we?

Kissinger: Well, I think I'm going to tell that son-of-a—I'm going to tell Moorer the President has just said, your bloody honor, that you are going do it.

Nixon: But on that, let's give it up provided we have a hard-line that we immediately send our negotiators back to work on the SLBMs, you know, [unclear].

Kissinger: Right.

¹⁵ Nixon met Gromyko at the White House on September 29, 1971; see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

Nixon: But on that, I don't know, get what you can, but I must say that, you know—Let me put it—that we get everything we can, recognizing that we cannot have an arms control agreement that looks as if we got took. They're going to analyze that son-of-a-bitch right down to the wire teeth. So do the best you can. That's all I can say. And the same is true about whether we have a Washington and a Malmstrom, and all the rest. You know. Do the best you can.

Kissinger: All right.

Nixon: You're a hard worker. Do the best you can.

Kissinger: All right.

Nixon: Fair enough?

Kissinger: All right.

Nixon: I've looked at all these things. But if I were to start to say well take this, don't take that and so forth, this is a matter that will have to be determined—

Kissinger: Frankly, Mr. President, whether we get a 150 more interceptors or not is just of no consequence.

Nixon: Yeah. Listen, I don't think it makes a hell of a lot of difference. On the SLBMs, actually I think, I think it's to our advantage, if they don't settle, to continue to build some. Maybe not. Maybe we—You know we've got a hell of a budget problem. We've got to cut it down, we've got to cut 5 billion dollars off next year's defense budget. So, I don't want to [unclear] unless we've got some settlement with the Russians.

[Omitted here is further discussion of the budget and of the President's schedule.]

Nixon: On SALT, I know [unclear] but—Of course, Gerry Smith would give it all away, wouldn't he? What's he say about SLBMs? Does he want to give them away?

Kissinger: Well, what—Gerry would settle for—

Nixon: [chuckles] Right.

Kissinger: —for one—

Nixon: Zero ABMs. Right?

Kissinger: —for one site each. Plus giving up SLBMs. But we cannot—

Nixon: No.

Kissinger: Now, the only trouble is that we face two sites and one of them could be Washington. That puts them into the—If we say each side can complete what it's building, that's a reasonable proposition.

Nixon: All right. Let's do that.

Kissinger: But if we say we will scrap Malmstrom and go to Washington—

Nixon: I don't want to do that. I don't want Washington. I don't like the feel of Washington. I don't like that goddamn command airplane or any of this. I don't believe in all that crap. I really don't.

Kissinger: But we may be—

Nixon: Do the best you can not to add Washington. I think the idea of building a new system around Washington is stupid. Now that's my view. Very stupid. I do feel strongly about that.

Kissinger: Well, let me—

Nixon: I'd even rather build one-on-one than build Washington.

Kissinger: No, no. One-on-one is morally wrong for us.

Nixon: All right.

Kissinger: Because we'd just be getting a [unclear].

Nixon: All right. Good. Now my point is, I just don't see what's in it for us to do Washington. I just don't see what's in it for us to do Washington. I think we should complete what we've done. Both of us. Then maybe, and then maybe we'll give on SLBMs.

Kissinger: Laird has recommended Washington. Gerry Smith has recommended Washington. Now—

Nixon: Well. Why?

Kissinger: I think anything we get so that we can say we got a better deal on ABM.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: We have to get an advantage on ABM, a little bit. Not that it makes a hell of a lot of difference. But—

Nixon: I know you didn't want to accept it if it doesn't look all right to the folks.

Kissinger: Well, that was in—probably do. As you say—

Nixon: I don't know. I—It's hard for me to figure it out from the stuff I read here. [unclear].

Kissinger: Well, it is a terribly complicated thing. Basically we'd be better off with a two—with a simple formula that each side can complete what they've got. However, that runs into some problems with Laird. Therefore, if they'd let us have Washington and Grand Forks—what screwed us on Malmstrom was the strike. If that strike hadn't happened there'd be no issue; it would be two-thirds finished now.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: If we can have Washington, Grand Forks, and they finesse it somewhat so that we can say we got one, somewhat more than they did on the ABM, it would help us domestically. It would also help us in our position vis-à-vis them.

Nixon: All right.

Kissinger: But, you see, the problem is to make that plausible, we'd have to crash on submarines. And say that we're doing more submarine building.

Nixon: [turning pages] European security concerns me. I think we're getting sucked in there.

Kissinger: But there we're pretty well sucked in.

Nixon: Now, what are you going to do? Have European security without any linkage with MBFR?

Kissinger: Well, that's what most of our allies want. And that's what—

Nixon: I know. Let me tell you, when you have European security you can damn near forget NATO. It's going to be very—

Kissinger: That I'm convinced of too.

Nixon: But I am also rather convinced that NATO is done anyway so that's—just between you and me. That's nothing to—

Kissinger: I think European security won't hurt it as much as MF—MBFR will.

Nixon: Well, maybe then we'll just take European security and talk about peace and good will and exchange. Is that what you mean?

Kissinger: That would have a slight advantage. But that is not a decision, which we now need to take.

Nixon: No, I know.

Kissinger: Because—

Nixon: On the other hand, they'll want to announce a European security conference.

Kissinger: At the summit.

Nixon: That's right. But you've got to be in position to tell them we're willing. Bilateral issues—just don't give anything, you know, we won't [unclear] a goddamn thing—unless we get something on Vietnam. It's cold turkey. And I mean not a goddamn thing. [unclear] They know that—they know that Vietnam is an indispensable ingredient of anything we do in the other area. Don't you agree?

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: You see, the understandings of '68¹⁶ being in historical perspective. Jesus Christ. We've been having the understandings of '68 for 4 years and killed thousands of Americans in that period. I know. I

¹⁶ Reference is to the understanding announced by President Johnson on October 31, 1968, that the United States would no longer bomb North Vietnam, and that North Vietnam, in return, would no longer violate the demilitarized zone. See *Public Papers: Johnson, 1968–69*, vol. II, pp. 1099–1103. Also see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. VII, Vietnam, September 1968–January 1969, Document 169.

don't think many Americans are going to like that. Well, I guess you're just saying we're going to continue the bombing.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: But the understandings of '68 must be implemented with positive negotiating. That's the difference. That's what has not happened. We've had the understandings of '68, but not to go back to the talk-talk phase. We're going back to the negotiate-negotiate phase now.

Kissinger: Also—Mr. President, I think, leaving aside whatever we agree on, I think if they force them to call off their offensive, particularly since this camp had been for another 2 to 3 weeks where they suffer some more horrendous casualties—

Nixon: Yeah, yeah.

Kissinger: —so that the visible outcome of this was an offensive that failed—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —through a massive demonstration of U.S. power—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —that Moscow talked about Vietnam with us while we were bombing Hanoi and Haiphong, if all of this can be done, then, I believe, Hanoi during the course of this summer will settle with us. What's their prospect? They would have to be sure you lose. It isn't enough for them to think that you might lose.

Nixon: No.

Kissinger: I cannot, I don't know what your polls show, but I cannot believe that you would be anything other than even money—anything less than even money.

Nixon: By the time of the election?

Kissinger: Well, by the time they have to make their decision, Mr. President. See, if they run you right down to election day, they're in bad trouble.

Nixon: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It will be an even money election.

Kissinger: If by July it looks 53–47 for a Democrat, then I think they'll play it out to November. But in my view it's going to look more likely 53–47 for you.

Nixon: Could be.

Kissinger: And if it does—

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: Well, assume the scenario that I have described.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: If you assume that scenario, then there will be a negotiation on Vietnam and you will have been in Moscow and had had a

very successful Moscow meeting. Therefore by July, I cannot see anything that would put you into a minority position in the polls. That's when they have to make their decision whether they're going to settle or not, because if they play it to October and you get even further ahead in the polls, you may not want to settle in October.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: So, if they're going to settle, they're going to settle in September. By September. So in my judgment, we are now in a really crucial period, and the practical effect of this proposal is going to be that they will have to settle.

Nixon: You have to realize too that they are quite aware of American political things because there isn't any question but that they agreed to the bombing halt before the election because Johnson convinced them that that was the only chance of defeating Nixon.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: And Harriman—

Kissinger: As I told you all that fall, what the game was.

Nixon: That's what they were doing. Don't you agree?

Kissinger: Oh yeah. And that's why, now they've tuned it too finely.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: Because—

Nixon: They held out too long on—and Harriman didn't get, or whoever it was didn't get Thieu lined up.

Kissinger: You would have to appear to be in a hopeless position—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: For them to—

Nixon: We don't even have to be ahead in the polls. We just got to be close.

Kissinger: If you are—

Nixon: We got to be close.

Kissinger: You have to be even or slightly ahead or very tingly behind.

Nixon: Well, they aren't that fine-tuned, the polls are not, so they'd be scared to death if they showed 52–48 against us.

Kissinger: Yeah. That's what I mean.

Nixon: We still win.

Kissinger: But it won't—I don't honestly see how it could show 52–48 against you.

Nixon: Who knows.

Kissinger: I think, Mr. President, in fact, that once there's a Democratic candidate your polls are going to go up.

[Omitted here is discussion of the situation in Vietnam, the President's schedule, and arrangements at Camp David, including the cover story for Kissinger's trip to Moscow. Kissinger left the White House at 8:20 p.m. and returned home before attending a private dinner in Washington. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) In his memoirs Kissinger noted that he departed for Moscow on a Presidential aircraft shortly after 1 a.m. on April 20, accompanied not only by six staff members and two Secret Service agents but also by Dobrynin, "since it was the quickest way for him to get to Moscow." (*White House Years*, page 1124) Dobrynin also described the departure in his memoirs: "In deep secrecy, I drove in the dead of night in an embassy car to a prearranged place, where a station wagon from the White House was waiting for me. It took me to a military airfield near Washington [Andrews Air Force Base]. Kissinger also arrived secretly. On our way to Moscow we made a refueling stop at a NATO air base in Britain. Kissinger told me, half-joking, not to get out of the plane for exercise because they would faint if they saw the Soviet Ambassador walking around their super-secret base. To preserve the secrecy of our mission, he did not get out either." (*In Confidence*, pages 244–245) According to his trip itinerary, Kissinger was scheduled to arrive in Moscow at 7:50 p.m. on April 20. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2])]

127. Memorandum From President Nixon to his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 20, 1972.

After reflection on your briefing book,² I believe the opening statement should be much briefer. The general themes should all be mentioned. But I think we have to have in mind the character of the man we are meeting—Brezhnev is simple, direct, blunt and brutal. The sophisticated approach we used with the Chinese is neither necessary nor wise with him. On the contrary while you should, of course, be gracious and forthcoming, particularly at the beginning of your statement, I think you should very quickly get to the heart of the matter. You will find that his interest during your talks with him will be to filibuster in order to spend relatively little time on Vietnam. Our goal in talking to him is solely to get action on Vietnam. Anything you accomplish with him on the summit you could have accomplished just as well with Dobrynin. In other words, you should approach these talks recognizing that Brezhnev and probably Gromyko as well, will have as their prime aim getting you to talk about the summit. Your primary interest, in fact your indispensable interest, will be to get them to talk about Vietnam.

I know this is your goal and the latter part of your opening statement gets to that point and makes it strongly. But I think it would be well not to spend too much time on general philosophy, what kind of a man the President is, etc., having in mind the fact that he may pick you up on those subjects and delight in digressing in those fields so as to avoid coming to the tough question of discussing Vietnam which, of course, is your primary interest.

I think you can get across to him in asides what kind of a man the President is, but I think the most effective way you can get it across is to be tough as nails and insist on talking about Vietnam *first* and not

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Eyes Only. Rose Mary Woods transcribed the memorandum from Nixon's taped dictation; copies of the final version, and of a draft with Nixon's handwritten revisions, are *ibid.*, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow. In a message forwarding the memorandum to Kissinger, who was en route to Moscow, Haig wrote: "The President wanted you to have the attached memorandum as soon as possible." A stamped notation indicates that the White House Situation Room sent the message at 12:03 p.m. as Sitto 5 from Haig to Kissinger. (*Ibid.*, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]) According to Kissinger, he was "on the plane heading for Moscow" when the President's memorandum arrived. (Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1136–1137)

² Document 125.

let him get away with discussions of philosophy, personalities or other summit agenda items until you have reached some sort of understanding on Vietnam.

I realize you are going to have to play this pretty much by ear, depending on developments, and I have the utmost confidence in the decisions you will make on the spot. I have had some additional thoughts with regard to what you might seek to get out of the meeting.

First, it might be worthwhile to indicate quite bluntly that from now until the summit, the Soviets should desist from strong rhetoric in support of Vietnam. This was no problem before your trip. However, after your trip if the Soviet continues to indicate that they are giving all-out support to Vietnam our critics will jump on your trip as being a failure. This will be much more the case with the Soviets, incidentally, than with the Chinese. With the Chinese, we made no pretense about having made progress on Vietnam. On the other hand, with the Soviets we are going to try to leave the impression that we have made some progress.

With regard to a statement that could be issued jointly, one possibility would be along these lines: "The Soviet Government and the Government of the United States have agreed that Vietnam will be one of the priority agenda items at the summit meeting. The two governments will work toward achieving a negotiated settlement of the conflict."

To recap, I recognize that it will be important for the first half hour or so of your meeting with Brezhnev to set the stage with some of the personal observations and the historic opportunity of having a different spirit out of this summit than others. But I think that after you have gone through that for about a half hour you should quite bluntly turn to Vietnam and say, in effect, "Mr. Chairman, there are many important matters we should discuss. I can assure you that the President will be very forthcoming in meeting you half-way in reaching agreement which will be to our mutual advantage and of historic and profound significance in terms of creating conditions which could lead to a more peaceful and prosperous world. But I know that you are a very direct, honest and strong man. The President, as Mr. Dobrynin and Mr. Gromyko have probably reported to you, is also a very direct, honest and strong man. He believes in coming to the point, just as you believe in coming to the point. The point we both have to recognize is that we cannot have useful discussions on the other items on the agenda unless and until we get down to brass tacks on Vietnam and make some progress on that issue."

You are absolutely correct in your concern that we do not get ourselves tied down insofar as restricting our bombing activities because of the possibilities, either of another plenary session or of the upcoming Russian summit. Brezhnev must directly be told that as long as the

invading North Vietnamese are killing South Vietnamese and Americans in the South the President will have to resort to bombing military installations in the North that are supporting that invasion. When the invading armies withdraw to the North, the bombing of the North will stop but not until then.

Our meeting with Haig was excellent,³ but one thing that came through loud and clear is that our action in hitting Haiphong and Hanoi has had a dramatic effect on the morale of South Vietnamese forces and, perhaps just as important, the morale of our remaining forces in Vietnam. We both know that it has also had a significant effect in building up the morale of that decreasing number of Americans who support us on attempting to avoid a humiliating defeat in Vietnam. If our understanding with the Russians *in any way* indicates that we have been taken in and consequently are letting up on our bombing while the enemy continues its own level of fighting, we will have the worst of both worlds—the contempt of the left and total frustration of the right.

This brings me to the announcement of your visit in the event the Russians will agree to one. It *must*, at the very least, include some wording to indicate, directly or indirectly, that Vietnam was discussed and progress made on it.⁴

³ See footnote 10, Document 126.

⁴ Kissinger sent an immediate response from Moscow: “President’s message received. Please assure him it will be carried out meticulously.” A stamped note indicates that the White House Situation Room received the message at 12:16 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK’s Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]) For the more substantive reply, see Document 130.

128. Editorial Note

On April 20, 1972, President Nixon met with Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman from 8:41 to 9:38 a.m. in the Oval Office to discuss the Moscow trip of Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Kissinger. During the discussion Nixon mentioned his memorandum to Kissinger (Document 127), which he had just given Rose Mary Woods, his personal secretary, for correction.

Nixon: “I woke up early, about 3 o’clock this morning, and I’ve written a memorandum to Henry. I didn’t want to say it while he was here because, you know, he was so uptight, he worked so hard. But he had a very, very long, long, long statement he was going to make in

the open—he calls it an opening speech. He’s always got this fetish for making an opening speech. He does it to the Vietnamese. Now he’s going to do it to Brezhnev. With the Chinese, I think, it was all right. With the Communists, the Soviet, it is not all right. He’s writing for history, you see, that’s his point. And I put the thing, I’ll let you see the memorandum, it’s ‘Eyes Only,’ after I finish it. I’d like to cable it to him tonight in a couple hours. I put it to him this way. I said what you have to realize is that Brezhnev’s and Gromyko’s purpose will be to filibuster on Vietnam and talk about the summit. Your purpose is to talk about Vietnam. In other words, their desire is to talk about the summit, your desire is to talk about Vietnam. I’m saying that for two reasons. One, because Henry wants to talk about the summit. He just loves this excuse for going over there.”

Haldeman: “You’re damn right. He—”

Nixon: “You see?”

Haldeman: “There’s no question.”

Nixon: “And he’s, he’s believing now that he’s getting to do what he’s always wanted to do. To set up the summit. So I put this brutally to him, very tough. And I’m also saying—I read his statement again and I thought it was very good on the substance but he has to be brief—that Brezhnev was as distinguished as Chou En-lai, he was a simple, direct, brutal man. So he should be very simple and very direct after a few, just a few, you know, courteous remarks at the beginning. You see Henry is fine in negotiation after, when you get down to the specifics and the rest. He doesn’t, Bob, have—[sigh] Well, he gets so wound up and writing for history and the rest that sometimes he misses the point that you just don’t have to beat a goddamn subject to death.”

Haldeman: “Yeah.”

Nixon: “Sometimes you just go at it, you flick it, and you come back and so forth. You see what I mean?”

Haldeman: “But that’s not Henry’s way—”

Nixon: “No.”

Haldeman: “—and I don’t think we’ll ever get him to.”

Nixon: “No. [Nixon banging the desk] You go on this as I have—”

Haldeman: “Be specific.”

Nixon: “I’ve told him that, goddamn it, he’s got to get it simple, and he’s got to be direct and he’s got to get them on the subject of Vietnam [unclear]. Otherwise, what will happen is he’ll spend the day with Brezhnev. And I know the Communists. And they’ll—and Henry has a lot of philosophical stuff in there about how the cold war had changed, how obviously that, that Nixon in the old days thought of the whole Communist world as being monolith, which is true, that they thought the United States was being a threat to them, which is not true.

He's dead wrong on that, that's such an old Harvard line. As Dulles once said to me, the Soviet army don't believe we're surrounding them and the rest. That's just bullshit. It's like, Bob, he says—"

Haldeman: "It's rhetoric for their own purposes."

Nixon: "The thing is that he—And then a lot of stuff about, you know, in a very, in a way that Chou En-lai would enjoy enormously. But, you see, if you go into that kind of subject, let me tell why the danger of it is. The danger of it is if you go into that kind of subject, Brezhnev will immediately seize on that, pick you up on point after point after point, and Henry will be involved in that debate all day long. And then about 5 o'clock, Brezhnev will have to go and Henry will say, just a minute Mr. Chairman, can we talk about Vietnam? You see the point? That's exactly what he'll do. Exactly what he'll do. I predict it. Well, Henry, my way of handling him would be to go ahead and say, 'Mr. Chairman, I first want to say on the summit, it's going well. I've been talking with Dobrynin and we're all, and the President, everything is possible, the President will meet you half way on every major issue. Now, and I want to talk about that after we've concluded. However, without some settlement, some progress on Vietnam, significant progress on Vietnam, there can be no successful summit, and there may not even be a summit. 'Cause I have to be very direct with you. And I want you to know that. I know you're a direct man, and the President is a direct man. And you like it straight from the shoulder. And here it is. And I think we ought to talk about Vietnam and see what we can work out.' And get right into it from the start."

Haldeman: "In about the first paragraph."

Nixon: "Well, Henry said, I, he came in, and he belabored this, and I, because, I didn't push him, he was pretty emotional, you know, getting ready to go. But he, believe it Bob, he had, with translation, it would have taken about an hour and 15 minutes or an hour and a half, of general stuff, before he ever got to Vietnam. He got to Vietnam. He said I'm doing this is in order to sort of pave the way to Vietnam. But he talked about all the summit issues and he talked about all of those philosophical issues and then came to Vietnam and said now we've got to talk about Vietnam. That ain't no way to do it."

Haldeman: "I don't think so."

Nixon: "You see? Well, I know it's not the way because I know these bastards. These, these people are too smart and Henry will get his pants taken off. Look—"

Haldeman: "He ends up playing their game instead of ours."

Nixon: "Bob, his eight meetings with the North Vietnamese are not examples of good negotiating. They were in terms of the little nit-pick crap, you know, that he got to but they didn't give him anything in terms of substance. I mean he, you know, he farted around and this, that, and the other thing."

Haldeman: "Yeah."

Nixon: "But the point is that, Henry, when he gets into this, he spends hour and hours and hours on philosophical bullshit, you see, and arguing with them. And that is totally irrelevant to the whole thing. Now Rogers goes too much the other way. Rogers solely goes for what can be agreed on, you see?"

Haldeman: "Yeah."

Nixon: "And doesn't put it—You've got to put a little subtlety around it, you know. You've got to make it appear that you're talking philosophically. But very, very early in the game you've got to hit them in the solar plexus. You've got to get their attention. Stick that knife in deep and turn it. Well, that's what I was doing last night. But it's important, you know."

After Woods returned with a revised version of his memorandum, Nixon read much of the text aloud. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Haldeman, April 20, 1972, 8:41–9:38 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 714–2) Haldeman later commented in his diary: "Henry isn't going to like it, because it doesn't follow his style, but he may still go ahead and do it the way the P told him to." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, page 443)

As soon as Haldeman left, Secretary of the Treasury Connally entered the Oval Office for a wide-ranging discussion on domestic politics and foreign policy. After revealing the fact of the secret trip, Nixon reported the gist of his memorandum to Kissinger.

Nixon: "I dictated it last night at 3 o'clock 'cause I wasn't satisfied with his talking points; they were too long. I said be direct, be blunt, say [unclear] we'll do everything you want on the summit, the President will meet you half way, but we can't do anything unless you do something about Vietnam. So it's going to be cold turkey and we're going to find out. Now if they don't do anything on Vietnam, if they filibuster, if they don't give anything, then we're going to be up against a hard spot. The hard spot will be that then we may have to go to a blockade, because we cannot bluff on this and not carry it out."

Connally: "No."

Nixon: "If we go to a blockade, there will be all hell to pay around here. But, we will, you know what I mean, riots and all that sort of thing, but we will put in on the basis that we're going to remain until they withdraw their forces from South Vietnam and return our POWs."

Connally: "I think, I think it's wise."

Nixon: "Now that's going to be, that's the game we're playing. Now it's an enormously—"

Connally: "Tough."

Nixon: "—tough game."

Connally: "It sure is."

Nixon: "Because you see, the thing where the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese misjudged, and where Moscow misjudged, is that they thought that because of the political situation, that I would cave—"

Connally: "Right."

Nixon: "—as Johnson did."

Connally: "That's right."

Nixon: "And they read that I'm a political man. They're quite correct. But what they didn't realize is that I know that nobody can be President of this country, and have a viable foreign policy, if the United States suffers a defeat fighting the miserable, little Communist country, fueled by Soviet arms, and that the world is going to be a very dangerous place to live in. If the Soviet succeeds here, it will try the Middle East, it will try everywhere else, and the United States will roll over and play dead. So therefore this is the supreme test." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Connally, April 20, 1972, 9:38–11:06 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 714–4)

In a meeting with Deputy Assistant to the President Haig at 12:30 p.m., Nixon reviewed the Soviet role in Vietnamese peace negotiations, including plans to resume both plenary sessions and secret talks in Paris. The two men also discussed Kissinger's memorandum (Document 125) and Nixon's response, which the White House Situation Room had just relayed to the plane en route to Moscow.

Nixon: "Well, I woke up last night, and I read Henry's thing yesterday. And I didn't want to disturb him when he was getting ready to go. I think it's so vitally important for him to know, to trust—You know Henry. We have to face the fact, that he wanted to take this trip purely for the summit and would have taken it purely for the summit if we hadn't vetoed. That wouldn't have worked. Now Henry, of course, [unclear] priority, but on the other hand, he would consider it to be a success, if he just comes back and says well we worked out the agenda for the summit and the communiqué. No, no, no. It will not be. And—Did you read the memorandum?"

Haig: "I did. And it's—"

Nixon: "What did you think?"

Haig: "—precisely what I told him when I saw him last night. I said my greatest fear, and I think it will be the President's, is that we've done this now—"

Nixon: "That's right."

Haig: "—and it cannot appear to be a backing away. And I said that was Thieu's concern. And somehow we've got to be sure that Vietnam is the purpose of this trip and is portrayed as that."

Nixon: "What did he say?"

Haig: "He said he agreed completely. And he said that what we have to do is, hopefully, if they agree, to come out on Tuesday, announce that, announce the plenary, and we will defuse these bastards totally."

Nixon: "Well, if, for example, on Tuesday, you saw a very little simple line, I would continue to think I couldn't agree with that."

Haig: "I don't either."

Nixon: "[unclear] So you would agree that they would work toward a negotiated settlement of the conflict. Now that, that is a hell of a—They should say that."

Haig: "That's right. What worried me was that we would announce the plenary, you see, without having referred to Moscow and then it would look like we backed down—"

Nixon: "The plenary? No, I thought we turned that down today."

Haig: "Yes, sir. But in order to meet secretly, you see, now we're going to have to announce the 27th."

Nixon: "Yeah. When is the secret meeting? When is that? Did you read the message?"

Haig: "May 2nd. May 2nd."

Nixon: "Well, that's all right. That's the bottom line—"

Haig: "And it would be ideal if we can have the Soviets—"

Nixon: "But on the other hand, on the other hand, does this mean that the moment we make the announcement we have to de-escalate the bombing?"

Haig: "No, sir. He's not going to do that. And of course we might drop down from the Hanoi area and keep it down low as a sign of good will 'til we have our meeting. But we'll keep, we're going to bang tonight." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Haig, April 20, 1972, 12:30–12:57 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 714–14) The editors transcribed the portions of the conversations printed here specifically for this volume.

129. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 20, 1972, 11–11:40 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Soviet Foreign Minister
Anatoliy Dobrynin, USSR Ambassador to the United States

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Miss Julienne Pineau, Notetaker

Gromyko: We have a folk tale which is called “The Invisible Hat” and it is probably not an exclusively Russian tale anyway. But anyone who puts on this hat become invisible, and so I guess in your situation you should don a hat like that so no one will see you here except those who are supposed to.

Kissinger: You have done it very efficiently. You know who will be very angry with me? The Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Dobrynin: Why?

Kissinger: He absolutely insists I should make a secret visit to Jamaica.

Dobrynin: Secret?

Kissinger: Yes.

Dobrynin: And make it open after?

Kissinger: Yes.

Dobrynin: Nice place I am told.

Gromyko: So, how are you?

Kissinger: Fine. Had a good trip, slept on the plane, and have been treated very well here. But I am afraid I am going to gain too much weight here.

Dobrynin: We could put you on a diet tomorrow.

Gromyko: We are very pleased to see you here and we are ready to exchange views. And we are ready, as I say, to exchange views with you on the questions that are of interest to you and to ourselves. The questions have more or less clearly been delineated. I wish to say right away . . . to mention the level of the talks you will have in this country. You will be talking on matters of interest with Leonid Brezhnev and I will be there with him too. If you have any observations to make

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in Kissinger’s room at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

or wishes to express at this time, I am glad to hear anything you have to say.

Kissinger: First of all I am here because the President believes that our two countries have a historic opportunity at this moment to put our relationship on an entirely new basis. Through a combination of circumstances we can advance on a broad front, an opportunity which has not existed until this period.

Gromyko: All right, please go on.

Kissinger: But also I am here to see whether there is a possibility of removing the one obstacle we can now see that could produce consequences that I don't believe either of our countries want, and, which so far as we can tell are not in the interest of our two countries—namely Southeast Asia. I am authorized by the President to deal with you on a broad range of issues concerning the summit and also what will happen in the next month elsewhere. These are my main tasks in coming here.

Gromyko: During the conversations the position of the Soviet leadership on the cardinal problems which will be the subject of discussions will be set out to you in a clearcut way in a spirit of frankness. We understand and appreciate your emphasis on the significance of the relationship between our two countries and on the problems that will be the subject of discussions. This we fully appreciate, and for our part we attach great importance to you as an eminent representative of the President of the United States. This alone says a great deal of the importance of the forthcoming meetings and discussions with you. As regards the forthcoming meetings between the leaders of the Soviet State and President Nixon, you will certainly be aware from the communications made to the President through channels you are familiar with that we attach very great importance to the meetings and talks with the President. And this is what guided our leaders in taking the decision at the very outset regarding the forthcoming meetings with the President, and I wish also to emphasize it is from these considerations also that preparations are going forward on the part of General Secretary of the CPSU Leonid I. Brezhnev.

Kissinger: We believe also that the preparations have gone forward in a positive and businesslike fashion. And we will do all in our power to see that these meetings won't just be an episode but will start a whole sequence of events.

Gromyko: We are certainly quite sure that you are indeed making intensive preparations for the meetings and naturally I wish to say we too are preparing for them. As regards the preparations for that meeting, these meetings you will have here will have particular significance. We believe our two sides have decided to carry out their preparations deeply aware of the importance of the forthcoming meetings and the great responsibility that devolves on both sides in these meetings.

Kissinger: Perhaps what we should do first is develop a work plan: How long do you envision these meetings to last, what will be discussed, and how do you foresee the outcome for the coming meetings?

Gromyko: How long can you stay here?

Kissinger: I cannot stay longer than Monday.² I must be back Monday night. I prefer to leave Sunday night but I can stay to Monday if it is worthwhile.

Gromyko: Tomorrow Leonid Brezhnev is meeting you at 12:00. The meeting will continue through the afternoon. If necessary you have also the day after, first half of day, and if necessary the second half of day in the afternoon.

Kissinger: We are talking now about what, Brezhnev?

Gromyko: Yes, and then if necessary the day after.

Kissinger: You mean Sunday?

Gromyko: Yes. Or it is prohibited to work on Sunday?

Kissinger: Not for me.

Gromyko: What is the custom in Washington? What is the custom in the White House?

Kissinger: In the White House the custom is not to work on Sunday; in my office the custom is to work.

Gromyko: So it is not surprising.

Dobrynin: No, is necessary.

Kissinger: We should work on preparations that are necessary in Washington, but we don't have to do it tonight. Decide how long you think the meetings will last. But perhaps I can do this with Mr. Brezhnev.

Dobrynin: After the first meeting.

Kissinger: Right. I must be back in Washington and be seen in Washington sometime Monday evening, but I can stay here as late as 5:00 on Monday for that.

Gromyko: You have the advantage as far as time is concerned. You follow the sun.

Kissinger: So, we will decide tomorrow the length of the stay. As for substance, how do you propose we proceed?

Gromyko: I was told by the Ambassador in the beginning you probably are going to make some kind of observations, if my information is correct.

Kissinger: He gives me so much caviar and vodka I always tell him everything.

² April 24.

Gromyko: Probably this is mutual.

Kissinger: No, we have a very frank relationship on both sides.

Gromyko: This is good.

Kissinger: And only one suggestion I have made to the Ambassador. I might just as well bring all my assistants to the meeting, or does he not like so many?

Dobrynin: How many do you have?

Kissinger: Four.

Dobrynin: Think that is too many.

Kissinger: Okay, I will bring two and a girl; I will work out the rotation. I will bring tomorrow Sonnenfeldt and Lord.

Gromyko: And all questions of interest for you and for us can be discussed. I have my own problems we think should be discussed with the President.

Kissinger: I can just judge my knowledge of the President . . . Mr. Foreign Minister, you are wanted.

Gromyko: [Goes to door, talks with someone there, returns]:³ Maybe we should banish all telephones both in Washington and Moscow as the basic violators of human peace and quiet.

Kissinger: I agree. I am in an ideal situation here.

Gromyko: You have the advantage.

Kissinger: Yes.

Dobrynin: But you have a plane, so you are still in communication.

Kissinger: But not by telephone. I think, Mr. Foreign Minister, from my experience with the President, the more we can discuss some of the subjects we know he and Mr. Brezhnev will discuss, the further he will be able to go, because then he can prepare himself properly. So I am ready to discuss to any subject that will come up.

Gromyko: It is very good.

Kissinger: You realize you have driven my friend Smith crazy.

Gromyko: Why?

Kissinger: By calling Semenov back.

Gromyko: But it is helpful. He will stay in Helsinki.

Kissinger: Yes.

Gromyko: Nice place.

Kissinger: But he doesn't know I am coming here. He has two theories.

Gromyko: What are they?

³ All brackets in the source text.

Kissinger: One is that you are angry with us and have called your negotiator back. The other is that you are prepared to yield to all our points. [laughter]

Gromyko: Just regular consultation.

Kissinger: That's what we have said. It was a natural thing for him to come back.

Gromyko: It takes only one hour.

Kissinger: It was the most natural thing.

Gromyko: Absolutely. So all problems involved we will discuss preliminarily and they will be subjects for discussion here. They are known to you and to us.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Gromyko: In what order? . . . I think when we here have considerations probably you will speak at the beginning. Anyway both sides are free to make suggestions on how to proceed.

Kissinger: We will proceed in the manner most likely to achieve the results we want. We agree on the objective.

Gromyko: And mutually acceptable.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Gromyko: The main thing is the substance of the matter.

Kissinger: Exactly. So we meet then at noon tomorrow?

Gromyko: Absolutely right, at noon. The place of the meeting is this general region, not far from this house by car, very close, maybe just one minute. Very close. In this general area. This is your first visit to Moscow?

Kissinger: I have been in Moscow once with a scientific group.⁴

Gromyko: When was that?

Kissinger: In 1967 and 1968, just at New Year's Day.

Gromyko: How long did you stay?

Kissinger: Five days in Moscow and one in Leningrad and they were solving all the disarmament problems at the time.

Gromyko: That time you were thinking, thinking, thinking. This time you are thinking, thinking, thinking and working, working, working.

Kissinger: Some people think I don't think and just work. Among the issues, are there any to which you attach particular importance?

Gromyko: It is a question of the questions, how to build and develop our relations between two powers. This is a question of questions.

⁴ Kissinger had been a member of the so-called Pugwash Group, a group of Soviet, European, and American scientists, who frequently met to discuss issues of mutual concern, including arms control; the group first met at Pugwash, Nova Scotia.

As to particular problems we attach great importance to the problem of security in Europe and with respect to the development of events in the European continent. We attach importance you know—we say this to the President and to you—strategic arms limitation and ABM. We attach importance to the Middle East on which we talked when we met in Washington with you. We attach importance to economic problems. Some regions of the world cannot be avoided. You are familiar with the questions in the channel. Secretary General is ready to outline certain considerations.

Kissinger: So am I.

Gromyko: Certain considerations on Asian problems will be discussed. Not an exhaustive list.

Kissinger: Each side is free to raise any topic it wishes.

Gromyko: Of course.

Kissinger: And on all the topics you have mentioned I will be prepared to outline our position. We have two tasks here—one is to agree where we can on a course to solve the problems, or to make preparations, and the second is how to manage what we agree upon vis-à-vis other countries and vis-à-vis our own bureaucracy. That is my problem. I just want your understanding. When I say this will be done, I will tell you how long it will take and how we will do it, so you understand the circumstances.

Gromyko: Are you going to reach the point at which it is possible to finish the discussions of the Middle East at the next meeting with the President, or ready not to discuss in detail but in a preliminary way without completing the discussion of the problem on the forthcoming meeting?

Kissinger: I am prepared to discuss the documents with which to conclude the meeting.

Gromyko: It would be probably good.

Kissinger: In fact I think if I may suggest it the more of this sort of thing we can get done on this trip the better it will be when the President is here. If we can get a good part of it done we can concentrate on the key issues when he is here.

Gromyko: Good.

Kissinger: And on the topics you have mentioned we should agree how to complete them at the time of the meetings of our leaders, or how they can bring them as close as possible to completion.

Gromyko: It should be possible.

Dobrynin: It is more than possible.

Gromyko: I would not say more than possible. But I would like to broaden the possibility.

Kissinger: Mr. Foreign Minister, your Ambassador should be instructed to let me win an argument every three months so my self-confidence isn't destroyed.

Gromyko: You are not unfamiliar to us. I am glad we have met before. This man [indicating Dobrynin] is familiar to you.

Kissinger: Oh yes.

Gromyko: And we are your friends, your partners.

Kissinger: I am here with the attitude that we will make major progress.

Gromyko: Good.

130. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 20, 1972.

WTE 0004. 1. President's instructions² are extremely useful. You can assure the President that I will not fall into the summit trap and that I am aware of our principal concern. I have a caveat on only one point. I do not think it is a good idea to have a statement which defers Vietnam to the summit agenda.

We now have maximum momentum and Hanoi for the first time in the war is backing off. Also, the summit is one of our best bargaining counters. We therefore must get some concrete results now, such as a clear reduction of violence and a withdrawal of NVA forces. I hope the President lets me hold out for this.

2. Was greeted at the airport by First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov who took me to the State Guest House similar to Peking's. Gromyko called on me for one hour to settle the program. Atmosphere

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. No time of transmission or receipt appears on the telegram. Haig summarized the message in an April 20 memorandum to the President. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow) This and subsequent messages from Kissinger were transmitted via the Presidential airplane at the airport outside Moscow to the White House Situation Room. For his account of the message, and of communications for his trip, see Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1137, 1154–1155.

² Document 127.

so far is effusive, with endless protestations of eagerness to have summit and willingness to settle all issues. Apparently Brezhnev will conduct all the discussions, having cancelled his weekend plans. Gromyko said they have some “concrete considerations” regarding Vietnam. They seem eager to have me stay through Monday but this will of course depend on first substantive meeting and above all on Vietnam prospects.

3. Also please keep me informed of South Asia developments.³ I was told subject may come up. (We have briefing book here.)⁴

³ The next morning, Haig forwarded to Kissinger a memorandum from Saunders on the Soviet Union and South Asia. In his covering message Haig explained that he told Saunders, evidently to conceal Kissinger’s trip to Moscow, “that the President wanted to know on a preliminary basis how he should handle this issue at the summit.” (Message Sitto 17 from Haig to Kissinger; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK’s Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File) Saunders argued that “the principle objective in US-Soviet talks on South Asia should be to try to get the Soviets to acknowledge explicitly a common interest and some responsibility for stability in South Asia and a commitment to it” and mentioned four specific steps: 1) enlisting Soviet support for “an early peace agreement on reasonable terms”; 2) informing the Soviets that long-term stability in South Asia required getting “a grip on the arms race”; 3) securing Soviet assistance for Bangladesh—“if for no other reason than to put them a bit on the defensive”; and 4) warning the Soviets that any effort to “establish military bases of its own in South Asia would require a U.S. response.” (Memorandum from Saunders to Kissinger, April 20; *ibid.*)

⁴ Not further identified.

131. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 20, 1972, 8:25 p.m.

P: I got your memo from Henry.² I suppose now it is the middle of the night there. So he begins his conversations tomorrow—is that correct.

H: Yes, sir.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President’s Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (*Ibid.*, White House Central Files)

² See footnote 1, Document 130.

P: Do you gather that he is completely on salvo—from my memo³—it seems he is about as tough as I want him to be.

H: Yes, sir.

P: I think the fact they are slobbering around—let me say this—now he will be watching for their flattery—they are masters at it. But he is not going to sell out cheap.

H: It is inconceivable!

P: Let me suggest this—don't you have a WSAG tomorrow?⁴

H: I was going to postpone it.

P: Why don't we suggest—what were you going to do tomorrow?

H: I have a staff briefing at 8:45.

P: Rogers wanted you to do State.

H: Yes, sir, at noon.

P: Be sure you praise what he did on Monday.⁵

H: Oh, yes, sir.

P: You will have a report from Henry at noon. Could I suggest you drop up here and talk to me about it.⁶

H: Fine.

P: Have you had any report on the strikes?⁷

H: Have not had a report yet.

P: We don't know if we lost any planes yet. You don't think you will hear until late tonight.

H: Right, sir.

P: Let me suggest after you have the staff meeting you call me and give me a report on what went on last night there.⁸ But I think in view of the fact that Henry is having this meeting is good.

³ Document 127.

⁴ The WSAG did not meet again until April 24. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

⁵ April 17. Reference is to the Secretary's testimony that day before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. In his statement supporting security assistance for South Vietnam, Rogers argued that the North Vietnamese attacks in the South "dropped the pretense that this war is in any sense a 'popular uprising' and have exposed it as a naked aggression of the most flagrant type." (Department of State *Bulletin*, May 8, 1972, pp. 668–671)

⁶ See Document 136 and footnote 2 thereto.

⁷ Reference is to tactical air strikes against targets near Vinh, including petroleum storage, barracks, and railroad facilities.

⁸ According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon talked with Haig by telephone on April 21 from 10:47–10:59 a.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) No substantive record of the discussion has been found.

H: I think it is just ideal.

P: Is there anything to add—let's do it—maybe those naval ships could do something.

H: They have had a real tough fight in An Loc—knocked 10–15 tanks. That's a hairy one.

P: Yes, that's a second surge. Let's don't make An Loc a symbol that losing it will demoralize the South Vietnamese. But we may not lose it. What is your feeling?

H: I think they will hold it.

P: Abrams is certainly not going to think this strike in the north will stop him from hitting An Loc?

H: No. There were 18 strikes earlier and the total today was 30. They get these guys in close and you can't hit them with 52's you have to use outside stuff.

P: It's going to work, Al.

H: Right and we are going to have another carrier by Wednesday⁹—69 sorties. They should be in there now.

P: You come up tomorrow at noon and give me a report. We have to watch it. We can't leave it to chance. Having taken this great risk and putting it on the line—disappoint our friends—don't you agree.

H: Absolutely. Henry understands that. I hit it very hard and your memo was just too clear. He is in full accord.

⁹ April 26.

132. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 20, 1972, 0223Z.

Sitto 11. I have reviewed with the President your WTE 10 004² in which you discuss in greater detail the President's instructions.³ He would have no difficulty concerning your caveat. His main concern, as you know, is that no arrangement is accepted which would be interpreted as a sharp disappointment by his supporters, which is also of course the main thrust of his memorandum to you. He is completely comfortable with your proposed approach and is most anxious to have an early report on the outcome of your first substantive discussions.

Paragraph 2 of reference message looks most encouraging and you must know that you have our full confidence as well as our ardent prayers for the tasks at hand.

I am sending a separate message with draft communications and game plan for all parties concerned.⁴

Warm regards.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. This and subsequent messages from Haig were transmitted via the White House Situation Room to the Presidential airplane at the airport outside Moscow.

² Document 130.

³ Document 127.

⁴ In a subsequent message Haig outlined "a game plan" for transmitting news both of Kissinger's trip to Moscow and of the resumption of peace talks on Vietnam to the North Vietnamese and Porter (Paris); Thieu and Bunker (Saigon); Pompidou and Brandt. (Telegram Sitto 12, April 21; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

133. National Intelligence Estimate¹

NIE 11–72

Washington, April 20, 1972.

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICIES AND THE OUTLOOK FOR SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Summary

The USSR's View of Its World Position

A. Developments of recent years have given the USSR increased confidence in its security and strategic posture, in its capacity to engage its adversaries on favorable terms, and in the prospects for the long-term growth of its international influence. The Soviets have thus begun to pursue a more vigorous foreign policy and to accept deeper involvement in many world areas.

B. The attainment of rough parity in strategic weapons with the US has contributed more than anything else to the USSR's self-confidence. The Soviets have also been encouraged to see the US suffering a loss of influence in certain areas, facing economic difficulties at home and abroad, and coming under domestic pressure to curtail its world role. Largely on the basis of these considerations, Moscow believes that the US no longer enjoys a clear international predominance. It does not appear to have concluded, however, that US power has begun a precipitate or permanent decline; US economic, military, and technological capabilities continue to impress the Soviets. Thus, while they may be tempted to conclude that the US will no longer be the competitor it once was and may therefore be inclined as opportunities occur to use their greater strength and flexibility more venturesomely, they can still see themselves getting into serious difficulties with the US if they press too hard.

C. The China problem is another factor which limits Soviet confidence. It has become increasingly clear to the Russians that China is capable of seriously undermining their international positions, keeping

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79–R1012A, NIC Files. Secret; Controlled Dissem. The estimate was submitted by the DCI and concurred in by the USIB. The CIA, intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, and the NSA participated in its preparation. All representatives of the USIB concurred with its release except the representatives of the FBI and Treasury who both abstained because the subject was outside their jurisdiction. The summary section of the estimate is also published in Center for the Study of Intelligence, *CIA's Analysis of the Soviet Union, 1947–1991: A Documentary Collection*, edited by Gerald K. Haines and Robert E. Leggett, (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 2001), pp. 88–95

them off balance ideologically, and in the longer term, constituting a serious strategic threat. It unquestionably concerns the Soviets that China's ability to challenge them in all these ways would be all the greater in circumstances of Sino-American rapprochement.

Domestic Political and Economic Factors

D. The present Soviet leadership has been notable for its stability, and this has resulted in continuity in the decision-making process during most of the seven years since Khrushchev's overthrow. Brezhnev has clearly emerged as the principal figure in the regime and has been taking a vigorous lead in the area of foreign policy; he now has a personal stake in the USSR's current policy of selective *détente*. Decision-making, however, remains a collective process. Indeed, there are occasional signs of stress over the content and implementation of foreign policy. And maintaining a consensus behind a more active Soviet foreign policy, in circumstances of greater international complexity, may become increasingly difficult over time.

E. The USSR has been able to achieve rates of economic growth which are high by international standards and to maintain a military effort roughly equal to that of the US. But the Soviet economy is still backward in some sectors and it faces serious problems stemming from low productivity, the declining effectiveness of investment, and technological lag. Economic constraints do not *oblige* the Soviets to reduce military spending, however. While an agreement on strategic arms control would relieve somewhat the heavy demands which military programs impose on high quality human and material resources, agreements of the sort now contemplated would not enable the Soviets to increase the rate of economic growth appreciably.

The Strategic Weapons Relationship with the United States

F. We believe that the USSR has concluded that the attainment of clear superiority in strategic weapons—i.e., a superiority so evident that the Soviets could be assured of success in a confrontation and even “win” should they press the issue to nuclear war, say, by a first strike—is not now feasible. Nevertheless, there are no doubt those in Moscow who believe that it may still be possible to obtain a meaningful margin of advantage in strategic weapons which would give the USSR increased political-psychological leverage. The Soviet leaders must, at the same time, reckon with the possibility that any attempt to gain such an advantage would look to the US much the same as an attempt to move toward clear superiority and would produce the same counteraction. The course they have chosen, at least for the immediate future, is to attempt to stabilize some aspects of the strategic relationship with the US through negotiations, and they appear to believe that a formal

antiballistic missile agreement and an interim freeze on some strategic offensive systems, on terms they can accept, are within reach.²

G. Assuming such an agreement is reached, the Soviets would continue serious negotiations on more comprehensive limitations. But the Soviet leaders are probably not clear in their own minds as to where these negotiations should lead. They may fear that too comprehensive an agreement might involve disadvantages they could not anticipate or foreclose developments which might eventually improve their relative position. And the more complex the agreement being considered, the greater the difficulties the Soviet leaders would face in working out a bureaucratic consensus. Thus, their approach to further negotiations would almost insure that these would be protracted.

The Sino-Soviet Conflict

H. The Soviets understand that their difficulties with China are in many ways more urgent and more intractable than their difficulties with the US and that, as Chinese military power grows, the conflict may become more dangerous. Moscow no doubt expects that the approach to normalization in US-Chinese relations will strengthen Peking's international position and will make China even more unwilling than before to consider concessions to the USSR. It has also occurred to the Soviets that the US may gain some increased freedom of maneuver against them and that Washington and Peking will in some situations follow parallel policies to Moscow's detriment. The new US-Chinese relationship could, in addition, make a military solution to the Sino-Soviet conflict seem to the Soviets an even less attractive alternative than before.

I. Sino-Soviet relations will not necessarily remain as bad as they are now. At some point, the two sides might arrive at a modus vivendi which would permit them to "coexist" more or less normally. But to obtain any deep and lasting accommodation the Russians would have to pay a price they would consider unacceptably high, including a lifting of military pressures, some territorial concessions, disavowal of Moscow's pretensions as the paramount authority among Communists, and acknowledgment of a Chinese sphere of influence in Asia.

J. The Russians are likely to want to establish a wider role in Asia in the next few years. Consolidation of the Soviet position in South Asia, with the focus on India, will be one feature of this effort. The Russians will also continue to work to prevent an increase in Chinese in-

² For separate statements of the views of Lt. Gen. Jammie M. Philpott, Acting Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; Vice Adm. Noel Gayler, Director, National Security Agency; Rear Adm. Earl F. Rectanus, Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; and Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, Jr., Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, see their footnotes to paragraph 28, page 16. [Footnote in the source text.]

fluence in North Korea and North Vietnam. In the case of the latter, this will mean that Moscow will remain staunch in its support of Hanoi's effort to obtain a favorable settlement of the Vietnam war. The Soviets will, as a further objective of their policy in Asia, try to increase their influence in Japan, and an improvement in relations has already begun. Soviet prospects in this regard are, however, probably limited by Tokyo's greater concerns for its relations with the US and China.

Soviet Policy in Eastern and Western Europe

K. Although Moscow has made progress in restoring order in Eastern Europe, it has not come to grips with the root causes which have in recent years produced unrest or even defiance of Soviet authority there—in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Many East European leaders still hope for greater national autonomy and wider political and economic intercourse with the West. The USSR's task of reconciling its efforts to consolidate its hegemony in Eastern Europe with an active policy of *détente* in Western Europe can therefore only be complicated and delicate. If it came to a choice between erosion of their position in Eastern Europe and *détente* in Europe as a whole, the Soviets would choose to let the latter suffer.

L. The USSR's security concerns in Eastern Europe, its own economic weaknesses, and growing preoccupation with the Chinese have turned it away from a policy of crisis and confrontation in Europe. At the same time, the changing pattern of US-West European relationships and trends within Western Europe itself have evidently convinced Moscow that its long-standing European aims—including a reduction of the US role and influence there—have become more realizable than ever before. A conference on European security represents for Moscow one way of encouraging the favorable trends in Western Europe and slowing the adverse ones. The Soviets also hope that a conference would open the way to a definitive and formal acknowledgment of the status quo in Germany and Eastern Europe. Rejection of the West German-Soviet treaty by the West German Bundestag would deal a setback to Soviet confidence in the viability of its German policy and possibly of its wider European policy. We believe, however, that in these circumstances Moscow's inclination would still be, perhaps after an interval of threatening talk, to try to salvage as much as possible of these policies rather than to reverse course completely.

M. The USSR's position on force reductions in Europe appears to stem mainly from its overall European tactics rather than from economic pressures or from military requirements related to the Sino-Soviet border. Moscow has doubts about the desirability of reducing its forces because of its concerns about Eastern Europe and about its military position vis-à-vis NATO. We believe, nevertheless, that Moscow is coming to accept that, assuming continuation of present

trends in East-West relations in Europe, it could safely withdraw some of its forces from Eastern Europe, particularly from the large contingent in East Germany. This does not mean the Soviets have decided on any reduction or soon will. But, if they should decide to move beyond their present position, they will presumably see advantage in thoroughly exploring the possibilities of a negotiated agreement rather than acting unilaterally. On the other hand, if they should conclude that such negotiations are unpromising, they might make limited withdrawals on their own, mainly because they would judge that this would lead to more significant US withdrawals.

The USSR's Position in the Middle East

N. In order to protect their close political and military ties with Egypt, the Soviets have been willing to increase their direct involvement and to accept larger risks in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. A full-scale renewal of the Arab-Israeli war would, however, be unwelcome to the Russians and the present situation causes them some anxiety. There is thus some chance that Moscow will come to see the desirability of urging the Arabs to accept a limited, interim agreement which would diminish the dangers of renewed hostilities, while still allowing the Soviets to enjoy the fruits of continued Arab-Israeli animosity. The Soviets are, however, unlikely to be amenable to an explicit understanding with the US limiting the flow of arms to the Middle East, though they might see advantage in some tacit restraints.

O. The Russians are probably generally optimistic about their long-term prospects in the Middle East, believing that radical, anti-Western forces there will assure them a continuing role of influence and eventually an even larger one. But the Soviets are uncomfortable because their present position is tied so closely to the exigencies of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They have also seen that radical nationalism can occasionally take a violently anti-Russian turn and with increasing involvement they will probably encounter greater difficulty in following a coherent and even-handed policy among the diverse and quarrelsome states of the area. In order to put their position in the Middle East on a firmer foundation for the future, they are likely to try both to forge stronger political ties with the "progressive" Arab parties and to develop their diplomatic relations with the moderate Arab states.

The Third World

P. The USSR's policies in the Third World are greatly affected by its urge to claim a wider world role for itself and by the need to protect its revolutionary credentials, especially against the Chinese challenge. In addition to its strong position in the Middle East, the USSR has over the years won for itself a pivotal role in South Asia. It has also

gained wider influence in Latin America. In Africa, the Soviet record is considerably more mixed and Soviet activities there now have a relatively low priority. In the Third World as a whole, partly because of some serious setbacks in the past, the Soviets are now inclined to view their prospects somewhat more soberly than they once did. Their approach is in general characterized by opportunism and a regard for regional differentiation. Nevertheless, by virtue of its acquisition in recent years of a greater capability to use its military forces in distant areas—a capability which is likely to continue to grow—Moscow may now believe its options in the Third World are expanding.

Future Soviet-American Relations

Q. The USSR has compelling reasons for wanting to keep its relations with the US in reasonably good repair, if only in order to control the risks arising from the rivalry and tensions which Moscow assumes will continue. It realizes that the larger world role it seeks is unrealizable except at the expense of the US. Whether the USSR will in particular circumstances lean toward sharper competition or broader cooperation with the US will naturally depend on the interaction of many variables. Crucial among these will be Moscow's appraisal of US intentions and its assessment of developments in the triangular relationship involving the US, China, and itself.

R. Progress in talks on strategic arms limitations might, by buttressing the USSR's sense of security, help to wear away some of its suspicion of US intentions. But problems in other areas where the political interests of the two countries are deeply engaged may prove to be of a more intractable sort. The conflict of interests in the Middle East seems likely to be prolonged. This may be true also in Europe where the Russians have an interest in the kinds of agreements which contribute to the security of the Soviet sphere but not in a genuine European settlement.

S. Whether the future will bring a more meaningful modification of the Soviet international outlook seems likely to depend ultimately on the USSR's internal evolution. And here the crucial question may be how the Soviet leaders deal with the problem of adaptive change in Soviet society, including the problem of economic modernization: by minimal measures or by serious reform. The entrenched bureaucratic oligarchy now in charge is resistant to change. Among the younger men in the Politburo who now seem most likely to take over from the aging top leadership there may be some who harbor reformist views. But such tendencies, if they exist, are not now in evidence.

T. Thus, for the foreseeable future at any rate, Soviet policy, for reasons deeply rooted in the ideology of the regime and the world power ambitions of its leaders, will remain antagonistic to the West, and especially to the US. The gains the Soviets have made in relative

military power, together with the heightened confidence these gains have inspired, will lead them to press their challenge to Western interests with increasing vigor and may in some situations lead them to assume greater risks than they have previously. At the same time, their policies will remain flexible, since they realize that in some areas their aims may be better advanced by policies of détente than by policies of pressure. They will remain conscious of the great and sometimes uncontrollable risks which their global aims could generate unless their policies are modulated by a certain prudence in particular situations.

[Omitted here are the Discussion section of the estimate and an Annex on “The Prospects for Soviet-American Trade.”]

134. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 21, 1972, noon–4:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of Central Committee of the CPSU
Andrei Gromyko, Foreign Minister
Anatoliy Dobrynin, USSR Ambassador to the United States
A. Alexandrov-Agentov, Assistant to Mr. Brezhnev
Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter
Notetaker

Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, National Security Council Staff
Winston Lord, National Security Council Staff

SUBJECTS

Summit; Vietnam; Principles of U.S.-Soviet Relations

(There were some opening pleasantries during which Dr. Kissinger said what a tough negotiator Mr. Dobrynin was. Mr. Brezhnev asked Dr. Kissinger if he were comfortable. Mr. Brezhnev said that they could have given the U.S. party more pleasant accommodations but they wanted to be close to their plane. Dr. Kissinger replied the Americans appreciated not only the technical arrangements but also the human warmth. Mr. Brezhnev said that he was glad and as for the warmth, perhaps they could add to it in the talks. Dr. Kissinger wondered

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

whether that was a threat or a pleasant prospect and Mr. Brezhnev replied pleasant prospect. They were against threats.)

Mr. Brezhnev: How is President Nixon?

Dr. Kissinger: He is fine. He sends his warm personal regards.

Mr. Brezhnev: Thank you.

Dr. Kissinger: He lays great stress on personal contact and looks forward to his meetings with you.

Mr. Brezhnev: In fact I have met President Nixon personally, but it was some time ago. I was in a different position and he was too at that time. He probably did not pay attention to me at the time. I even have a photo of myself with him which I have now found. He may have one too.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand the General-Secretary was present during the so-called Kitchen Debate.² We don't expect to have the same at this meeting during this visit.

Mr. Gromyko: The famous Kitchen Debate.

Mr. Brezhnev: God forbid. I would never be capable of such debate. It was one of President Nixon's most famous debates. The great debate as the Foreign Minister said. But that indeed is talking of the past and has no bearing whatever on the present.

Dr. Kissinger: That is exactly our feeling.

Mr. Brezhnev: Is this the first visit to Moscow, Mr. Kissinger?

Dr. Kissinger: I was in Moscow once as a member of a scientific delegation. I met with some members of the Soviet Academy of Science to discuss disarmament.

Mr. Brezhnev: Let us endeavor to lead matters into a direction to enable us to visit one another's countries more often, Moscow and Washington. After all it does depend on us.

Dr. Kissinger: Exactly. We have an historical opportunity.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is true. I will, of course, convey friendly regards for President Nixon at the close of our discussions. But since you are probably in touch with him even today, even now I convey my warm good wishes to him.

Since you did mention earlier on the significance of our meeting, I would like to start out by elaborating on that subject for a little time. And we certainly understand and believe that President Nixon and your leaders generally attach great importance to this meeting. As for myself and my colleagues we too attach great significance to these meetings and express the hope that they will be successful and culminate in

² Reference is to the exchange between Vice President Nixon and Soviet Premier Khrushchev at the American National Exhibition in Moscow on July 24, 1959.

useful and constructive decisions. All hesitations or vacillations in regard to these meetings have now become a thing of the past. The decision that we took was a considered decision and we are therefore entitled to believe that these meetings will be not only important but perhaps even historic and epoch-making. This will all depend on the decisions arrived at.

We have already traversed a long road toward one another in preparation for these meetings. There are quite naturally on these roads various bumps and cracks, but that is not the crux of the matter. The most important thing is that both sides were guided by a desire to achieve positive results for this meeting and to ensure that it ends well.

Now I gather that you are aware of our desire as regards the way in which the meeting should be completed. We have no wish to bring about a quarrel in the meeting. That is something we could easily do by staying in Washington and Moscow.

Dr. Kissinger: We have proved that.

Mr. Brezhnev: And to quarrel so badly as not to be able to patch up the quarrel, that is something that requires no great wisdom. That is something any leader of much less rank can easily do.

But to find a good solution for our two big powers—such two big powers as the Soviet Union and the United States—is something that requires great statesmanship and foresight, and we will need to look forward into the future.

Of course, we can both note that the general atmosphere and general political situation is well. It is a fact that it plays not a second rate importance in our meetings, but that is only too natural. I would not be saying anything new, and you are as aware of this as we. We like yourselves want there to be a good atmosphere at the time of our meeting. At present world public opinion is riveted to the forthcoming meeting and a great deal is being said on the subject. We believe we should utilize all useful things and cast aside all harmful things. In the remaining month we should do what we can to produce what we can for successful negotiations. That is very important I feel.

You know we live at a time when due to well-known circumstances things can change very rapidly in world politics. There are forces in the world which seek . . .

At this point Mr. Brezhnev offered Mr. Kissinger some tea and told him not to drink water. Mr. Gromyko said that he had already earned some tea. Ambassador Dobrynin commented that the General-Secretary had earned some tea since he had done all the talking. Dr. Kissinger remarked that he hadn't said anything and that was right. Mr. Brezhnev promised to give him an opportunity. Dr. Kissinger remarked that maybe then he would want to take the tea away. Mr. Brezhnev replied that after that he would give him brandy, although perhaps he favored

whisky. Dr. Kissinger replied that he preferred brandy. Mr. Brezhnev and Ambassador Dobrynin noted that it would be a 5-star brandy.

Mr. Brezhnev: There are forces in the world which seek to bring about a heightening of tension, but of course the majority of the countries of the world endeavor to bring about an atmosphere conducive to the lessening of tensions and improvement in the atmosphere.

So both you and we can see both sides of this matter and others. Unfortunately it so happens that events in the recent period—shortly before this private meeting between us—dampened the atmosphere somewhat. I am not saying that this will reduce the prospects for our meeting. I am merely saying it as a statement of facts. Of course, the general question of atmosphere is one we will be able to elaborate on as the talks proceed. Now I wish merely to mention it as such. All the more so since I do not believe that either of us is limited in the time set aside for these negotiations. I am assuming—in fact I am counting on it—for myself and all my colleagues that the discussions with you and the discussions with President Nixon will be as frank as possible, direct and honest. This should be an obligatory condition if we want to assure a complete mutual understanding and leave behind no doubts or anything unsaid. The spirit of frankness I feel is the spirit of confidence. Because we intend to be very frank in our discussions with President Nixon, I believe this spirit of frankness should be the dominant spirit in these conversations we are going to have with you.

I was satisfied indeed to hear the news that you have broad authority to conduct discussions on a broad range of important issues and this I feel is a very important factor. I would say that the basic issues which will be subjects for discussions at the summit meeting have in principle been identified in the process of preparatory work in which you are playing a most active and perhaps a decisive role. There are included the basic issues of the day which neither of us can bypass in our discussions. I do not on the other hand rule out, in fact I assume, that we can discuss any question which you may wish to raise or I wish to raise. I would be happy if you acquiesce in that feeling.

Dr. Kissinger: Absolutely.

Mr. Brezhnev: If any of our aides would like to say anything, let's give them the opportunity. I don't mean that they should say nothing. That is the worst way to do that.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't run my staff as democratically as you, Mr. General-Secretary.

Mr. Brezhnev: I'm a great democrat, a great democrat, a great democrat. (He laughs). Dr. Kissinger, you are in agreement to that approach to our discussions.

Dr. Kissinger: Completely.

Mr. Brezhnev: Thank you. When I saw the range of questions we might discuss was very broad I decided to have no preparations in writing. It gives me a complete freedom of maneuver.

That was what I really wished to say by way of introduction. I would like to invite you to feel completely free in these discussions.

Here try this candy. It is very good; it is plums in chocolate.

Dr. Kissinger: I just started a diet before I came here, which has already been destroyed in 12 hours in Moscow. It is very good.

Mr. Brezhnev: Let me just record in that connection that I was a guest of President Kekkonen of Finland, and I gained 2½ kilograms in several days. I complained to him that this was all wrong. He asked me how much I had gained so I told him 2½ kilograms. He said that's nothing. When two of our engineers were in Moscow ten days with a delegation, each one added 8 kilograms in ten days. (Dr. Kissinger laughs.) About that I was very happy since I had only gained 2½ kilograms and not more. In good neighborly fashion.

May I make a few comments on procedures on our work with you?

Dr. Kissinger: Please.

Mr. Brezhnev: I would like to devote the maximum possible time to our meetings and discussions. Because they are indeed serious negotiations we ought to do our best to introduce the greatest possible clarity in our discussions and that will take time. I was in fact the sponsor of your coming earlier.

Dr. Kissinger: I know.

Mr. Brezhnev: You've got me revealing my secrets already. You haven't told me anything and I am giving away all my secrets. I'm losing all of my advantages now all because I am so kind. Now today unfortunately I can only stay with you until 4:00 p.m. Because after that we have a solemn meeting dedicated to Lenin's birthday and I have to attend it. Later in the evening I have family circumstances to prevent me from resuming discussions. But tomorrow and the day after I can devote all day to discussions. Perhaps that is all for the good because this evening you will have a chance to have some rest. If there is no objection to that procedure we could then be ready to start.

Dr. Kissinger: It seems like a very good procedure to me.

Mr. Brezhnev: I think it is business like.

Dr. Kissinger: Good. Yes.

Mr. Brezhnev: Very well. Dr. Kissinger, I know you have many instructions and duties to perform, and I would like to hear what you say.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, I appreciate your observations which are exactly in the spirit of my instructions and in fact also of the purposes which brought me here. The General-Secretary was very kind in calling me a diplomat, but I think that my major contri-

tribution to these meetings can be to cut through diplomatic discussions and to speak with you in complete frankness and answer any questions you might have with great openness.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is very very good. If you get rid of the State Department we will get rid of the Foreign Office.

Mr. Gromyko: Shall we burn the buildings down?

Mr. Brezhnev: We'll burn them down. Otherwise you'll get back into them again.

Mr. Gromyko: That's okay; you can build new ones.

Dr. Kissinger: With all respect, Mr. General-Secretary, we have made more progress in abolishing the State Department than you have in abolishing the Foreign Office. (Russian laughter.)

Mr. Brezhnev: I have to get to the bottom of that. I'm not all that familiar with American realities.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be sure that this part of our notes will be suppressed.

Mr. Brezhnev: You may rest assured that the same fate will befall our notes on this question. We are always true to our word. We have agreed that the talks will be strictly confidential, and that's the way it will be. If I may say in a very friendly way, sometimes your safes leak. There are holes in them, and things get into the papers. Perhaps it is necessary to send someone to put plaster or weld them tight. Perhaps there should be one big patch for the State Department.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be absolutely certain, Mr. Secretary, that these discussions will never leave the White House and will be seen only by the President and no one else.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's the way it should be. There is nothing to fear, however, since we are talking honestly.

Dr. Kissinger: So we can speak with complete openness and without fear of any embarrassment.

Mr. Brezhnev: This is the only way we can proceed, I'm sure.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, let me make a few general observations and then we can decide what topics to go into in greater detail.

Mr. Brezhnev: Well I'm prepared for anything you have to say in any order. You go ahead in any way that you see fit.

Dr. Kissinger: First, the spirit of the General-Secretary's remarks reflects the attitude of President Nixon. (Mr. Brezhnev nods.) He, too, believes we have an historic opportunity. The leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States have met on several occasions since the end of World War II when we were allies. But they have never managed to recapture the spirit of cooperation which characterized our relationship in that period, that is before the end of World War II. Their

meetings were episodes. We feel, as the General Secretary does, that we should begin an epoch.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is very true indeed if I may just butt in. Please excuse me if I occasionally interject.

Dr. Kissinger: That's much better. Otherwise we are just exchanging diplomatic notes.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's exactly right. If I wait until the end for my observations I have to write things down or forget them, and later I trust you will act in the same fashion.

Dr. Kissinger: Thank you.

Mr. Brezhnev: The name of President [Franklin] Roosevelt is very popular in the Soviet Union and whose name remains very popular in the minds of the Soviet people. I can say very sincerely, truly the Soviet people have maintained very good feelings toward President Roosevelt. There is no other President in my lifetime, and I am 65, in the history of Russian-American relations who enjoyed such a respect among the Russian people. I know about our people. I have been active in party life for 40 years. I am a war veteran. I know the attitude of our party generally and of our people. I agree with you when you talk about the attitude in that period. The attitude in that period was very important. I think all of us are so conditioned, so built in fact, that we always maintain in our memory either things that are very good or are very bad. The mediocre or second rate goes away from the memory. I think that concerns all nations, the Russian or American nation or anyone else. Those who really leave their mark in history are either bad ones or very positive figures relative to the times past, present and future. Napoleon, Wilhelm or Hitler are known in history, and in a positive sense President Roosevelt. This also goes for the various Czars. Peter the Great was one kind of Czar, Nicholas the Second another, and Catherine another.

Dr. Kissinger: Lack of personality was not one of the problems of Russian history.

Mr. Brezhnev: There were certainly different kinds of personalities.

Dr. Kissinger: You have had dramatic figures in your history.

Mr. Brezhnev: There were different kinds.

Anyway that's just by the way. I just touched on an area which belongs more to scholars, historians or other scholars. But even so it illustrates—the illustration might teach us where to go and the correct path.

Dr. Kissinger: Very much. Our intention is to recapture the spirit of the Roosevelt period. The reason why summit meetings since the war have never had a lasting effect was either because they only dealt with surface events and with personal relationships of leaders, or because they concerned only very narrow individual problems. On our

side there may have been the difficulty that we felt that we had to deal with you from a position of superior strength. That was in the past. I was speaking of the past. On your side there may have been the difficulty of looking at us in a certain way . . .

Mr. Brezhnev: That is completely fruitless. One does not deal from the position of strength.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is a complete waste of time.

Dr. Kissinger: On your side there may have been, in the earlier time, too much of the ideological aspect. In any event there were specific incidents, which may not have been intended by either side, that thwarted the progress of previous meetings.

On this occasion our opportunity is so unique because for the first time since the cooperation in the second World War we are proceeding on a very broad front. We are dealing with you from an attitude of complete equal and no pretense of a position of strength.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is very true indeed. I recall that when President Nixon first came into office, indeed he indicated when he was seeking office, that he advocated the formula that we should proceed from an era of confrontation to an era of negotiation.³ Perhaps it is taking too long a time in coming; the good thing is that the process has not stopped completely.

Dr. Kissinger: We are dealing with you on the basis of complete reciprocity. Any agreement we make with you must be in your interest as well as ours. You must want to keep it. It must be a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Mr. Brezhnev: Certainly, just by a word of addition, I certainly am in full agreement with that. I merely wish to add it is my view that we should conduct negotiations in a big way, not a small-minded way. And the arrangement which we achieve should be significant and should be well understood by the peoples of our countries. The arrangement should encourage tranquility in the world and respect in all states. I believe both states, the United States and the Soviet Union are worthy of such agreements. We are against talking about petty things, although that is necessary sometimes, but only as a corollary of big things.

Dr. Kissinger: That reflects exactly the attitude of President Nixon. Indeed, we believe the meeting between the General-Secretary and President Nixon is so important because our two countries are the two

³ Reference is to the President's first inaugural address, in which Nixon declared that the superpowers should move from an era of confrontation to an era of negotiation. (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 1–4)

strongest powers in the world today. The future peace of the world and the well-being of the world depend on big decisions made by the two leaders and not simply on tactical moves to deal with immediate crises.

Mr. Brezhnev: There is no machine in the U.S. which could translate your language into Russian and mine into English?

Dr. Kissinger: It would make things much easier.

Mr. Brezhnev: Perhaps we might make a resolution that you learn Russian and I English.

Dr. Kissinger: I started to learn Russian one summer but I am very bad at languages.

Mr. Brezhnev: I don't think I am too good. Besides I have no time.

Dr. Kissinger: The President once tried a system with a man speaking softly into a microphone simultaneously while he had on ear-phones. We threw the machine out after five minutes because it made him nervous. (Mr. Brezhnev laughs.)

Mr. Brezhnev: You just suggested one comment to me. Frankly, I did not intend to mention this at all, at least at the first meeting. In this connection, I do recall and I had occasion to mention it in one of my speeches when I referred to a remark attributed to President Nixon during his China visit.⁴ He said, these two countries, the U.S. and China, were holding the future of the world in their hands. I don't know whether he was misrepresented. I'm not asking a reply to this point. Maybe at some time in our discussions we can return to it. You pushed me into saying it. When I speak to President Nixon I will say that Dr. Kissinger pushed me into saying it. On second thought, I will just mention it to President Nixon, [without saying you pushed me into it].⁵ I don't think the crux is holding the future of the world in our hands; that is not the important thing. The important thing is to secure peace and tranquility in the world and respect others. That is what we should endeavor to do, our two countries.

Dr. Kissinger: If the General-Secretary will permit me, perhaps I can give an answer if we can keep it informal.

Mr. Brezhnev: I give you my word that this is between us. I will be content to wait for that reply, but not at this juncture. I would rather hear you go on with the general discussion.

⁴ Reference is to Brezhnev's speech at the 15th Congress of Soviet Trade Unions in Moscow on March 20. For an English translation, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, April 19, 1972, vol. XXIV, No. 12, pp. 1–9. In his speech Brezhnev cited the toast at the final budget in Shanghai on February 27, in which Nixon declared not only that "our two peoples [the Americans and Chinese] hold the future of the world in our hands," but also that "this was the week that changed the world." (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 379–380)

⁵ All brackets in the source text.

Dr. Kissinger: I may forget; therefore, I will give it to you now anyway. There are two things I would like to say very briefly about this comment. First, it was correctly reported. Secondly, it was made in a toast at the end of a very long banquet in which very much mao tai was consumed.

Mr. Brezhnev: I certainly don't want you to forget, so I want to listen to you now.

Dr. Kissinger: It was not a fully worked-out statement of national policy.

Mr. Brezhnev: Does President Nixon feel a bit bad about it now?

Dr. Kissinger: It was to express a general mood of friendliness rather than a detailed statement of our policy. In fact, since the General-Secretary mentioned this occasion and since I intended to speak about it anyway, why don't I just make a few observations on the subject of China? I had intended to do it anyway.

Mr. Brezhnev: No, no. We can get to that sometime in the future; I prefer you do what you planned. Had you intended to talk about it anyway? If you prefer, you can go on.

Dr. Kissinger: I was going to say three or four sentences in my opening remarks as I told the Ambassador on the plane yesterday.

Mr. Brezhnev: I too on my side have many questions I would like to raise and discuss. One thing I omitted to mention in my opening remarks. The way I see it, before we get to questions such as the relations with China and other countries, and we should discuss many such countries; perhaps we would make better progress by starting out on relations between our two countries, the Soviet Union and the United States. Of course, other issues hinge on this question—all are interwoven. I think the basic issue is U.S.-Soviet Union relations. You set out your views in any order that you prefer.

Dr. Kissinger: Our conviction is that peace in the world and progress in the world depends on the relations between our two countries. We are the two principal countries on whom this depends.

Mr. Brezhnev: Do you smoke?

Dr. Kissinger: I never learned to inhale.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's good then. Inhale or exhale?

Dr. Kissinger: Many of my colleagues in the bureaucracy hope that I also forget how to exhale. (Mr. Brezhnev laughs.) There are no other countries in the world that can take a global view of events or take the generous farsighted attitude which the General-Secretary described.

Mr. Brezhnev: I fully agree. I certainly agree with the additional thought that it is very true we can play such a role in the world provided we pursue a policy of peace. Then we can play a decisive role in the world. Of course, we can take different stands on different issues.

The role we can play is different, too. This is certainly something that is important to bear in mind considering the fact that the last century has been marked by wars. (Mr. Brezhnev stands and says, "Excuse me, I get tired of sitting.") There are still alive men and people everywhere who recollect the last war. During the war we had occupation and really great sacrifices, and wars are still going on in the world and one can not abstract one's self from this on this occasion.

Dr. Kissinger: In our view we can cooperate on many occasions and in others we can differ on occasion and in those cases we can cooperate to exercise restraint and keep our differences within limits.

With these attitudes, we believe we can settle a number of issues at the summit. We believe we can complete an agreement on limits on strategic arms. We should make important progress on the question of European security and other European issues. We are prepared to review the Middle East question. We are prepared to discuss any other part of the world in which we have a mutual interest. With respect to economic questions, we are prepared to consider such issues as most favored nation and long-term credits, a whole range of bilateral relationships, such as science and the environment in which negotiations are now progressing.

More important than these specific issues is that we have an opportunity to engage our peoples and governments on such a broad range of issues, that every time there are conflicts in parts of the world we will remember what unites us rather than what divides us. That could be the greatest achievement of the summit.

(Mr. Brezhnev then offered the Americans some pie that had been brought in. Dr. Kissinger said we would break Kekkonen's record and complained about gaining weight and Mr. Brezhnev said that he could start losing weight after the negotiations. Dr. Kissinger then said the summit would come and we would all put our weight back on. Mr. Brezhnev said that was right. By photos he saw that President Nixon had been losing weight. Dr. Kissinger replied that he kept quite stable. Mr. Brezhnev commented that was good. There were further exchanges between Dr. Kissinger and Mr. Gromyko and Ambassador Dobrynin in which Brezhnev said they were all youngsters. Mr. Gromyko said he appreciated that very much. Mr. Brezhnev said that he and Dr. Kissinger were much more serious minded than all those youngsters there.)

Dr. Kissinger: I am authorized to discuss all these subjects with the General-Secretary and bring them either to conclusion or closer to conclusion. Also, as I told the Foreign Minister yesterday, we should begin working on final statements of the meeting.

Mr. Brezhnev: I agree.

Dr. Kissinger: But there is one problem which I must discuss with the General-Secretary. The General-Secretary speaks about obstacles

that may be in the way of the summit that we should try to remove. That is a subject I would now like to address.

Mr. Brezhnev: Certainly.

Dr. Kissinger: That is the problem of Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam. I will put our point of view before the General-Secretary with complete frankness.

Mr. Brezhnev: Please.

Dr. Kissinger: The Soviet Union did not start the war in 1963 and 1964, and there have been many mistakes made since then. But the past is not of interest in the immediate crisis. I am talking about the situation of 1972, specifically April 1972. We are confronted now with a massive offensive by the North Vietnamese four weeks before a summit meeting, at a time when we are withdrawing our forces and in the process of slowly liquidating American involvement in the war. We had no intention of having a crisis at this time. As your Ambassador knows, I intended to take a vacation at this time. The only reason I didn't take one was he thought that the more intensive period for summit preparations would be now, so I moved it up three weeks.

Let me give you my judgment of North Vietnam with total frankness.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is the only way to talk.

Dr. Kissinger: You, of course, know them better than I.

Mr. Brezhnev: But I have never been there myself.

Dr. Kissinger: I haven't yet either. They are a heroic people but not a wise people. They are sometimes more afraid of being deceived than of being defeated. They are not prepared to leave anything to history. I know they believe that in 1954 they were deceived by the settlement at Geneva.⁶ But the objective conditions between 1954 and 1972 are entirely different. In 1954 John Foster Dulles conducted our foreign policy and he was constructing positions against what he considered Communist aggression all over the world. We were going into countries.

But in 1972, when President Nixon is conducting American foreign policy, we are seeking a policy not of confrontation with the Soviet Union or for that matter other major Communist countries, but negotiations. We are doing this in the spirit of cooperation which I described. We are not going into countries to build barriers; we are trying to work out cooperative arrangements. We don't want any permanent bases in Vietnam.

⁶ Reference is to the Geneva Accords, three agreements signed in Geneva on July 20, 1954, to end hostilities in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. For texts, see *American Foreign Policy, 1950–1955: Basic Documents*, vol. I, pp. 750–785.

We have two principal objectives. One is to bring about an honorable withdrawal of all our forces; secondly, to put a time interval between our withdrawal and the political process which would then start. We are prepared to let the real balance of forces in Vietnam determine the future of Vietnam. We are not committed to a permanent political involvement there, and we always keep our word.

Mr. Brezhnev: Do you have a sort of judgment of your own, an assessment of your own, as regards the withdrawal of your forces, or is this just a general principle?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. We have some ideas. We are talking of months, not years. The number of months is a detail.

Mr. Brezhnev: These plans or projections you have, have they already in any way been communicated to North Vietnam?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. But we don't believe . . . the difference is that the Vietnamese . . . we cannot withdraw our forces without getting our prisoners back and without some perspective of what follows afterward. This North Vietnam refused to do. But if we can get this, we are prepared to withdraw all our forces without any residual forces, and to close all bases within a period of months, which remains to be negotiated, but is not an obstacle to a solution.

Amb. Dobrynin: Within this year?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, by the end of this year. By the end of the year. The number of months will not be a question of principle. We have said six months in our last proposal.

Mr. Brezhnev: That would be starting from what date?

Mr. Kissinger: The date of agreement.

Mr. Brezhnev: Do you have really accurate data as to the number of American prisoners in Vietnam?

Mr. Kissinger: Not as accurate as the Vietnamese. They have never given any names officially. They have the irritating habit of dealing only with our domestic opposition. They have given others the names of about 500 prisoners but have published pictures of prisoners whose names they didn't give anybody.

Mr. Brezhnev: What would be the approximate figure? More than 500 or less; about what figure?

Mr. Kissinger: The confirmed number is about 500. Then there are about one thousand missing, not all of whom are confirmed as prisoners. Therefore, there is a maximum of 1500, certainly less than that, and a minimum of about 500.

These are our two objectives. What we will not do under any circumstances, no matter what military pressures and no matter what the results, is to meet their demand which is to install their government in Saigon. They claim that isn't what they want, but I can explain to the

General-Secretary that the objective consequence is that. I do not wish to waste time on that now because I wish to make a more fundamental point. But we are prepared to have a political process which gives political forces in Vietnam a chance to express themselves over a period of time, although we recognize this is difficult to design.

These are the general considerations which the President would have [*sic*] discussed with you in May. I only mention them to explain the immediate crisis. And that is the crisis started by the North Vietnamese offensive on March 30 which has the additional complication that it is conducted almost completely with Soviet equipment.

This affects us in four ways. First, as great powers; second in terms of what I already mentioned, whatever the Soviet role in this offensive has been. Third, the impact of this offensive on our immediate situation which also affects you, which I will explain in a minute. And fourth, the measures which must be taken to end the crisis.

Let me talk about the last two points first. If this offensive succeeds—and if I read *Pravda* I would be very concerned⁷—the impact on our relationship, quite unintentionally, would be very serious. I hope my reports are better than your newspaper.

Amb. Dobrynin: Unintentionally?

Mr. Kissinger: Unintentionally. I hope the General-Secretary forgives me for being so frank, but Ambassador Beam can put it in diplomatic language later on.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is exactly what I expect. Complete frankness is the only way to gain a true perspective of the state of affairs.

Mr. Kissinger: If the North Vietnamese offensive succeeds, there will be another 69,000 Americans who will become prisoners.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Do you believe in this?

Mr. Kissinger: That's at least what we must protect against. They are trying hard. If the South Vietnamese army collapses, which is what the North Vietnamese army is attempting to do, this will be the consequence. We cannot tolerate it, and we will not tolerate it at any cost.

Secondly, if we look at the perspective which we described before, it would deprive an American President of any authority to have the sort of discussions with the General-Secretary that it has been the principal objective of his Administration to bring about. We have had the . . . we are discussing now, for example, in Helsinki the limitations on

⁷ In an April 20 message to Kissinger, Haig forwarded an Associated Press account of an article in *Pravda* which charged that "the United States bombed downtown Hanoi Sunday and then lied about its targets." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

strategic arms, and the Soviet proposal is that submarines should not be included, the one that came through the confidential channel.⁸

Now, as I told the Ambassador, our military people have an almost religious conviction. The President, assuming he could come to Moscow, which would be very doubtful, [the translator omitted the last phrase] even if he came to Moscow he would have to be a very rigid participant. He could not say, after having suffered an enormous defeat in Vietnam, I have made the following concession to the leader of the country whose arms made our defeat possible. I want to tell you the truth. I am telling you facts, not subjective speculation. I am just telling you what the facts are.

But let us take a more realistic case, which is that North Vietnam will not win but will continue its offensive in order to gradually undermine our domestic support. Then we will be in Moscow under conditions where the issue is still in doubt, when major military operations are going on and our retaliatory measures are also going on. We understand that this creates great difficulty for you, and it also creates enormous difficulty for us. In that case, the major campaign will concern our domestic public opinion. Now, as your Ambassador knows, we have had riots every May since we came into office. And we have defeated them each time—by October people are always wearing American flags in their lapels each time. Upper middle class students are not good revolutionaries. In America at least, the upper middle class does not make good revolutionaries, but they make a lot of noise. [Mr. Brezhnev laughs.]

In order to defeat this domestic upheaval, especially in an election year, we will have to go right and have to appeal to those people who normally vote for Wallace.⁹

In short, a little country whose heroism derives from a monomaniacal obsession with local problems is bringing about a situation where the whole situation is clearly developing in a direction which neither of us wants, and which is not our preference, and which is imposed on us by developments which we would not have chosen. This is why we are determined to bring this issue to some sort of conclusion, either a final one or an interim one which removes it for this year, while you and we settle fundamental issues and while other developments take place.

We are doing this in no spirit of hostility. We are not asking for anything other than the two objectives I mentioned to the General-Secretary. And even if we defeat the offensive we will not change our objectives.

But what I must in all honesty tell the General-Secretary is that if developments continue unchecked, either we will take actions which will threaten the summit or, if the summit should take place, we will

⁸ See Document 84.

⁹ See footnote 14, Document 126.

lose the freedom of action to achieve the objectives which we described and which are the principal goal of our Administration.

We have read your last communication¹⁰ with great care, Mr. General-Secretary. We chose not to reply to the specifics because we knew we would have an opportunity to talk. We recognize that the Soviet Union is pursuing a principled foreign policy, and we would never ask you to betray an ally. I also, as a professor, have studied Russian history and know that it has not happened infrequently that certain sentiments of loyalty are put before tactical considerations. That's not the worst trait a country can have. All I can say is that we are prepared to deal with the issue with a spirit of generosity, fairness and broad-mindedness, and we hope this lays the basis for the development of U.S.-Soviet relations which will be a historic departure.

Mr. General-Secretary, I am sorry to have spoken at such length, but as a former professor it seems that my internal clock is geared to 50-minute presentations.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Fifteen minutes or 50 minutes?

Mr. Kissinger: Fifty minutes.

Mr. Brezhnev: No, I think that is all to the good because I do want to gain a better understanding of the way in which President Nixon and his Administration in general views the prospects for all these problems. After all, it is the United States and not the Soviet Union which is conducting this war in Vietnam.

(Mr. Brezhnev takes a document from Mr. Aleksandrov and reads it in Russian. Dr. Kissinger interrupts by saying that the only thing he understood was his name which happened very often.)

Mr. Brezhnev: I would like to broaden the Vietnam question in this discussion by introducing the following matter. Can you tell us why the U.S. suspended talks and what your view is regarding the resumption of talks in Paris? Because after all the questions have to be resolved by you and the Vietnamese, no one else, President Nixon and yourself. We have been in communication with Vietnam and have received this communication today. They have advanced their views regarding the resumption of meetings with the Americans. I have had no time to distribute this to my colleagues and will do so whenever there is an opportunity. They have informed our Ambassador about their position in response to the proposal put forward by Dr. Kissinger.¹¹ That is where I started reading from the cable:

"The Vietnamese are of the view that the Vietnamese problem must be resolved through negotiations in Paris and in no other place and

¹⁰ Documents 107 and 110.

¹¹ See Document 100.

only between the Vietnamese and the Americans. In this connection Dr. Kissinger's proposal for a confidential meeting in Moscow is not accepted by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

"The Vietnamese side continues to insist on the parallel conduct of talks, both official and restricted, but in this case the resumption of official talks must precede the resumption of the meetings between Special Advisor Le Duc Tho and Dr. Kissinger.

"The U.S. side has proposed first to have a restricted meeting, and if they should yield progress to resume official negotiations. The Vietnamese side has made its proposal regarding the date of the resumption of the official negotiations, that is April 27.

"The restricted meeting could then take place on May 6, but the U.S. side is free to make its own proposal as regards that date.

"If the U.S. side should state its readiness to hold the 148th meeting of the Paris talks on the 27th, Special Advisor Le Duc Tho could without delay fly to Paris. On April 20, instructions have been sent to Minister Xuan Thuy to get in touch with the U.S. side and communicate the above to the Americans, but it is also said that at their own discretion the Soviet comrades can communicate this reply to Dr. Kissinger in person."

This, as I have said, I received this morning. Only I have seen it; I have not had time to acquaint my colleagues with it. I will do it. (Mr. Brezhnev shows the document, pointing out that only his name had been checked off on the distribution list.)

Ambassador Dobrynin: They should have contacted you yesterday.¹²

Mr. Kissinger: They did. I was going to tell you.

Mr. Brezhnev: I see in that cable they have instructed Xuan Thuy to deliver this message to the U.S. side.

Mr. Kissinger: If I may point out to the General-Secretary, this note, even to the Soviet Union, and even more marked in dealings with us, contains an attitude which we cannot accept any more. They make proposals not as proposals but they say "must", "the U.S. must". If it is about a meeting, it is not so bad perhaps but it is impossible for proposals of substance; then it takes on an ultimate non-like character. And in negotiations they always take the attitude, even in private talks, as if I were a student taking an exam on the adequacy of my understanding of their proposals. They never answer my proposals.

But I will then give an answer to the question you gave me, Mr. General-Secretary, and will then give you our answer to this part of it.

Mr. Brezhnev: I wanted to add something.

Mr. Kissinger: The General-Secretary asked me why we suspended talks on March 23. I would be glad to answer his question if he wants. First of all, Mr. General-Secretary, there have been 147 plenary sessions

¹² See footnote 7, Document 126.

which have settled absolutely nothing, not one thing of even the most minor kind. Indeed, it seems to be the North Vietnamese strategy to demonstrate no progress in negotiations in order to maximize our domestic difficulty. Let me talk about specifics here. Since this is not a public forum, I can tell you absolutely honestly how the sequence of events came about.

Mr. Brezhnev: Perhaps we can take a ten-minute break and give the interpreters a break, a breather.

(There followed a 20-minute break during which the two parties walked around outside. 2:25 p.m.–2:45 p.m.)

Mr. Brezhnev: So how will you deal with this proposal of whether to resume the Vietnam talks or not to resume them? What is to be done, in short?

Mr. Kissinger: I don't insist—does the General-Secretary want an answer as to why we suspended talks? It is up to him.

Mr. Brezhnev: Of course, I want to hear everything you want to tell me.

Mr. Kissinger: Then I will give an answer to his question. First, as I already pointed out with regard to the plenary sessions, there have been 147 without any results. Now let me give the General-Secretary the sequence of events of recent months. I am doing it from memory, so my dates may be off by a day or two, but they are generally correct.

On February 15 (*sic*) North Vietnam proposed to us a private meeting for anytime after March 15. On February 18 (*sic*) we accepted this and proposed a date of March 20.¹³ The reason we proposed March 20 was because for reasons of secrecy, we always do it on a weekend, so we did it for the first weekend after March 15. On February 29, the North Vietnamese accepted the date of March 20.

Mr. Brezhnev: Some tea?

Mr. Kissinger: That would be good.

On March 7, they cancelled the meeting of March 20 and proposed instead April 15. They said we had bombed between March 2 and March 6, and also February 19 and 20. The first dates we had bombed, but this preceded the acceptance of our dates so they were irrelevant; they were 10 days before the acceptance of the date. The second date, it was a lie. We had not bombed; it was just an excuse.

On March 13, we accepted to meet in April, but we proposed April 24. The reason we proposed April 24 was that I had already agreed, as you know, to go to Japan the weekend of April 15, so we suggested the first weekend after my return from Japan.

¹³ The correct dates are, respectively, February 14 and 16. (Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1105.)

To this they didn't reply. When they had not replied for 10 days, we suspended the plenary sessions. We saw no sense in plenary sessions when they were playing games with the private sessions, and we were making no progress on plenary sessions. We suspended on March 23, 10 days after we accepted their date and had received no reply.

On March 27 . . .

Mr. Brezhnev: Please eat up. You will certainly have to report back to the President.

Mr. Kissinger: On March 27, the North Vietnamese accepted the date of April 24. As soon as they accepted the date, we notified them that we would return to the plenary sessions on April 13. We told them, in other words, that we would return to the plenary sessions, not because of their offensive but because they accepted the private meeting. The offensive had not started, or we didn't understand that it had started. So then the offensive had started, and so we cancelled the plenary meeting, but we maintained our willingness to go to the private meeting. They cancelled the private meeting again, and now we are playing children's games.

But the basic issue isn't this. We are prepared to find a solution as to how to have plenary and private sessions concurrently. We can probably tomorrow make a concrete proposal to you as to how we can do this because that is a subsidiary issue.

Mr. Brezhnev: You have not yet arrived at a final decision on that?

Mr. Kissinger: I will let you know tomorrow. I have an idea. I will let you know exactly what we propose to do. Because we just got their message and I want to think about it a little more.

Mr. Brezhnev: I was too late in communicating it to you.

Mr. Kissinger: No, it was really simultaneous.

The real issue is this. First, it is now obvious that they used this private meeting really in order to deceive us about their offensive. It is clear to us that they scheduled the private meeting to happen some period after their offensive started, and when their offensive was delayed they always delayed the private meeting.

But we will leave that aside. There is a more fundamental point. (The Soviet side holds brief discussions among themselves.)

But a more fundamental point is this. The North Vietnamese for four years now have pursued the tactics of selling us talks for concessions. They have done it with great skill. But they have to understand now, as far as we are concerned, the party is over. We are not interested in talks. We are interested in results. I like Mr. Le Duc Tho. He is a most impressive man, but the reason I want to see him is not for the pleasure of his company, but to have some concrete results. All their communications always talk as if it is a favor to see us and act as if a private meeting is a special concession to us.

So we have two requirements. The first is that the meeting cannot take on May 6; first, because I am occupied on that day and secondly, because that is too late, as I told your Ambassador. May 2 is the latest date I can attend and on which private talks still make sense. But we will make a proposal as to how to bring this about.

Mr. Brezhnev: As they write in their message, the American side is free to make their own proposal with regard to a date.

Mr. Kissinger: That is why I think it is a solvable problem, and I will make a concrete proposal tomorrow, but the second point is more important.

Mr. Brezhnev: It is an easier decision to make than the decision to bomb.

Mr. Kissinger: Bombing is very painful for us. In your own experience, when a leader has necessities and a country has necessities, he must take painful steps which he doesn't like to do. I have told your Ambassador socially that when you have acted, I have been impressed that you have done so massively, without looking back. These were observations that I made as a historian; it doesn't have anything to do with a specific situation.

But I agree with you, Mr. General-Secretary, we can solve this problem.

(During this time Mr. Brezhnev and Mr. Gromyko exchanged animated words.)

Mr. Brezhnev: You can hear what I said. You were evidently hinting at Czechoslovakia.¹⁴ I see you are a very astute lecturer.

Mr. Kissinger: And you a very good debater. But as your Ambassador can tell you, Mr. General-Secretary, I made the comment to him at the time in a spirit of understanding, in a complimentary way, not critically. (Ambassador Dobrynin explains to Mr. Brezhnev.)

The second point I wanted to make . . .

Mr. Brezhnev: You availed yourself of that opportunity to make a point; because I jokingly wanted to divert you from the subject you immediately seized on it. That is a diplomatic strategy. Although at first you said you were not a diplomat, I see that that is not so. You are just doing it as a diversionary tactic so you were starting an attack on me. So then it is a matter of a counterattack on my side. So you resorted to your lecturing tactic. So I resorted to my experience in war, though my true nature is that of a very peaceful man.

Mr. Kissinger: The General-Secretary is an expert at flanking maneuvers.

¹⁴ Reference is to the invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 23, 1968, by the Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact.

Mr. Brezhnev: War can teach you anything—flanking maneuvers and mounting frontal attacks. You weren't actually in the war, were you?

Mr. Kissinger: First, I was in the infantry, and then I was in intelligence.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's something I experienced from beginning to end. The Soviet people, our people, did too.

Mr. Kissinger: It was a very heroic effort.

Mr. Brezhnev: It was an awesome thing.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes.

Mr. Brezhnev: Our people are still very sensitive to matters related to that, and it is really something that no amount of propaganda can dull, particularly since the generation that really fought the war is still living. There are still hundreds of thousands of war victims, invalids, still living. There are still millions of families who lost their dear ones in the war—their mothers, their fathers and brothers.

Mr. Kissinger: The casualties, the deaths of the Soviet people were unbelievable.

Mr. Brezhnev: Entire generations of modern society have been affected by the war or the results of the war.

Mr. Kissinger: Our people did not suffer anything the way you people did. We didn't have nearly the casualties and none of the devastation.

Mr. Brezhnev: I am sure, God forbid, if your people had had to suffer anything like the Russian people did, the post-war American foreign policy would have been different. The average American is just not familiar with this, has not gone through this, and his mind is conditioned entirely differently.

Mr. Kissinger: Except in the South, where they had an experience with tragedy, most Americans have not experienced this.

Mr. Brezhnev: I have just developed this a little bit now. It is certainly not a time when anyone or any people can welcome anything like what happened before. It would do no one any good. The world is moving away from all such concepts. And particularly with the development of civilization, the raising of educational standards and the independent-mindedness of social groups is growing, especially working people. The opposition to war is mounting constantly everywhere. In these circumstances it is hard for anyone to justify a possible war in any way. And particularly if the clouds of world war, or even the prospect of anything like that, drives fear into the hearts of all people. They gird their loins to oppose such a possibility and any proposal of that sort breeds in the people a desire to rise in self-defense to oppose that. Perhaps these are invisible factors, but they are a very powerful force, and something that each of us must be alive to.

This is just an aside. I am sure we all understand it equally well. When we do talk about military action, it is something that must be borne in mind. That is particularly so for you historians—any war has always left a trace on human history. Conclusions have been drawn, and the wars, of course, more recently have taught people of all the world very important lessons. This is one digression which I wanted to make.

Mr. Kissinger: It is very important, because the overriding consideration must be to avoid confrontation and improve the general prospects for peace in the world.

Mr. Brezhnev: (Gesturing with his hand.) I vote for that. Our people and our Party are wholeheartedly in favor of that, and I also mention this because we will certainly spend as much time as possible on it in our talks with President Nixon. This topic is bound to come up.

Mr. Kissinger: The preservation of peace.

Mr. Brezhnev: We must find principles on which to base our relationship in this regard. It is always better to discuss this in man-to-man talk than to set it down on paper, because, for example, if the Politburo had asked me to write out exactly what I intended to tell Dr. Kissinger, I would have been hard-pressed because I don't know how the talks would develop, and how we would get along. As it turns out, these are frank and free discussions. We do have a chance to put forth views, to speak from the heart. And that is how it will go with President Nixon: talk about the prospects of peace. It is wrong to formally set out positions, to abstract oneself from the overriding problem of peace and the prospect of developing bilateral relations. Perhaps we will not write down all that we discuss. The mere fact that we talked about it and nodded to each other in a friendly way might sometimes be even more important than what is written on a piece of paper.

I am again saying this because as I see it, the talks you will have here will perhaps be more than one-half the discussions at the summit meeting. After all if we can reach mutual understandings—the problems we discuss with President Nixon when he comes—you can convey the substance to President Nixon and then we won't have need to cover the same ground if agreement is already reached. We will spend less time on these subjects.

Mr. Kissinger: But more time on broad perspectives.

Mr. Brezhnev: Yes, and we can then spend time on more specific and concrete things.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree, Mr. General-Secretary, that peace is not a piece of paper but an attitude. One of the more important things that could come out of the meeting is that, without formal obligation, we would ask ourselves what the General-Secretary thinks. And then this rapport between the two leaders would mean that they take each other seriously even without written commitment.

Mr. Brezhnev: I certainly have no intention of arguing with Mr. Nixon about whose kitchen is better, the U.S. manufacturer or the Russian one. (Mentions name of Soviet factory.)

Mr. Kissinger: This will not occur.

Mr. Brezhnev: Undoubtedly.

Mr. Kissinger: To get back to Vietnam, to our two difficult allies. Assuming we solve the problem of the sequence of plenary and private meetings, then the problem is what happens at the private meeting. We will not be satisfied simply with the presence of Mr. Le Duc Tho, much as I enjoy his company. We will come up with some formula for that prestige issue which we will settle.

Mr. Brezhnev: Parallel talks. It's really a procedural matter which one shouldn't fight over.

Mr. Kissinger: We will make a concrete proposal which we find acceptable, and we think they will find acceptable. And what must happen at this meeting or very shortly afterward is either a final settlement of the war, which is probably not possible, or a definite reduction in the violence which will be guaranteed at least for a substantial period of time, say through the period of this year. If this reduction of violence is achieved, we will, of course, be prepared to reduce our activities and remove some of our reinforcements that we have sent out.

Mr. Brezhnev: You have been sending in some reinforcements in certain quantities? Troops?

Mr. Kissinger: We have sent in substantial amounts of Air and Navy.

Mr. Brezhnev: Mainly Air Forces?

Mr. Kissinger: And Navy.

Mr. Brezhnev: Marines?

Mr. Kissinger: We have sent in Marine Air Force. We have not yet sent in ground forces. I can only repeat, Mr. General-Secretary, as a statement of objective fact, that if we are confronted with a continuation of major military operations, first we will have to take very drastic military steps, but secondly we will have to depend on people domestically that we would rather not choose to work with. So as I said, we have two problems—one the sequence of meetings, and second to bring about at least an interim result to the meetings.

Mr. Brezhnev: Well, as I understand the position of our Vietnamese Comrades, they too are prepared to resume the Paris negotiations and also seem to agree to the holding of a private meeting. The question is which comes before which.

Mr. Kissinger: That we will resolve.

Mr. Brezhnev: It should not be a stumbling block when dealing with the all-important issue of war. In any negotiations, for example

on matters of commerce and trade, people also barter and agree on sequence of steps to take and there is sometimes haggling. But in matters relating to war, resumption of negotiations, particularly as far as a private meeting is concerned, should not be affected by the prestige of either side.

Mr. Kissinger: We will make a concrete proposal tomorrow and solve the problem, even though we have been trying to set up a meeting since March 15 and our confidence in North Vietnam is not exactly overwhelming. We agree with the General-Secretary on which comes first. We will make a proposal tomorrow, and I think you will find it reasonable. We won't treat it as a prestige question. What is important is what happens at the meeting. This is a matter of great importance.

Mr. Brezhnev: Well, as I see it Dr. Kissinger will have the appropriate powers to conduct constructive discussions with Le Duc Tho.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, but will Le Duc Tho?

Mr. Brezhnev: That honestly I can't say. Well, that will probably depend in some measure on the proposal you come up with tomorrow and on what you want us to convey.

Mr. Kissinger: Our proposal tomorrow will only be procedural, how to get the talks started.

Mr. Brezhnev: But you probably have some plan in your mind as to what to endeavor to do whenever the meeting is finally organized.

(Ambassador Dobrynin to Dr. Kissinger: I just recalled what you told me recently.)

Mr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, I want to be honest with you. If North Vietnam follows their usual practice—I don't know how they talk to you—but if they follow the usual practice, they have a document with points, eight points, five points, etc., and each point says "you must." Then I say something, and they say you are not yet "concrete." Not being "concrete" means that we do not agree with them. If I accept one of their points, they say now I am concrete, and we go to the next point. In other words, they give a series of ultimatums. This will under no circumstances be acceptable. If this process is maintained, we will act unilaterally, at whatever risk to whatever relationship. I say this not as a threat but as our objective policy so that there is no misunderstanding.

I can give you tomorrow, if you are prepared to consider it, our idea of what steps should be taken this year to reduce the level of violence without giving up principles. I can give it to you tomorrow. If they proceed in normal fashion, it will be a very difficult session.

Mr. Brezhnev: Just by way of putting some lining in there at that point, let me comment that sometimes Americans find life too dull. Rock and roll is dull, and there are no domestic problems, so let's start a war in Vietnam.

Mr. Kissinger: With the most difficult people in the world.

Mr. Brezhnev: Now you complain. That was just an aside. Later certainly we will set out our views in detail on the Vietnam problem as a whole. But go on.

Mr. Kissinger: I said essentially what I have to say. As I said, there are two problems. First, the start of the talks on which we will make a proposal tomorrow and which is soluble. Second, how to make the talks fruitful in a brief period of time. On that we could make some suggestions. I would be glad to have your ideas.

It is a matter not only of Vietnam but a question really of the whole international situation. If it is not resolved, events will happen domestically and internationally—and basically for nothing. We don't want to stop there; we want to get out. You don't want to go in. For us to run the risk of a conflict in an area where neither of us have any vital interests left would be an historical absurdity.

Mr. Brezhnev: On Vietnam we will certainly continue our discussion tomorrow, perhaps in the context of concrete considerations and observations. We will be ready tomorrow to listen to any proposal you can state, and perhaps something practical will result. On the whole I would like to say that we would favor that. Of course, it's a very complex problem. I don't want to delve into the history of the Vietnam conflict except to say that it was not ourselves who started the war. It is the United States who started the war, the U.S. who intensified it when Kosygin visited Vietnam.¹⁵ Of course, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is a socialist country, and we fulfill our international duty of solid support for a socialist country. We make no secret of our support for the victims of aggression and the people who uphold independence and freedom.

What is the United States defending in Vietnam? It doesn't matter anyway. I doubt anyone would understand that the United States is truly defending that country. The war has been going on eight years, but for what sake? For what sake is money being squandered, for what sake are so many Americans being killed and thousands of Vietnamese? Has the war brought the United States anything positive? Surely nothing. For eight years this shameful war brought on the United States nothing but the wrath of the peoples. We did not engineer it. It is not something we are engaged in or directly involved. It is people's feelings coming to the surface. You know better than we the strong protests in the world against the war raging in Vietnam. This evokes all over

¹⁵ Kosygin was leading a high-level Soviet delegation in Hanoi when—in response to the Viet Cong attack of February 7, 1965, on an American military installation at Pleiku—the United States began to bomb targets in North Vietnam.

cries of imperialism all over. All this is on the shoulders of the present United States Government. Certainly this is a subject that you know better than we. Bombing is not a solution to any problem. Bombing will not solve the problem. It never has. Sometimes it will soften the opposition, then again there will be new fighting. Then what if there is another period of bombing, surely that is not the path for the United States to win new glory in the world.

If we take the situation today, the bombing at this time has particular consequences because it takes place at a time when we are preparing major steps forward to improve the world climate through the summit meeting between the leaders of our two countries. This will be a meeting which has significance not only from our point of view but great significance in the view of all public opinion. In the meetings we hope to affect the attitude of the world and attract the sympathy of the people all over the world to such decisions as we might take during the meeting.

I certainly don't think that the bombing at this time will help President Nixon get elected. I know he wants to have a successful election. We take no position in any way to prevent his re-election. That is why we are going to the summit meeting at this particular time—surely on our part this is the best assistance to the President. The best policy is for both of us to look at the problem from the standpoint of casting aside all negative things and for an attitude on all positions that will help ease and resolve this problem.

From some remarks that you made I tend to draw the conclusion that you feel we are in part to blame for the escalation of the fighting, for the offensive in Vietnam. Surely you do not dispute that you are fighting, not we. Is this your method of bringing certain indirect pressures to bear upon us? I feel that both perhaps President Nixon and yourself have been misled and deluded in this regard. There are certain forces in the world who by their activity try somehow to obstruct the American-Soviet summit meeting. They would be very gleeful and would gloat to see the Chinese meeting come off while with the Soviet Union no meeting would come off. We take a very firm decision about the meeting with the United States—we are taking no steps to prevent it, but it is not easy.

As regards Soviet assistance in Vietnam, I wish to say very clearly and openly that in the recent period there have been no additional agreements with regard to Soviet supplies, and I am sure you are aware that throughout the history of the Vietnam war we have nothing to do with the planning of the war. This is up to the North Vietnamese themselves. They never ask us to take part in the planning or ask for our acceptance. They know about wet and dry seasons. They know when to act in war.

Mr. Kissinger: They know too well.

Mr. Brezhnev: I for one, never having been there, would not have the slightest idea when things are best.

Mr. Kissinger: It took me two years to learn the rainy and dry seasons, because every region is different.

Mr. Brezhnev: And secondly, I take the sequence of events that preceded the offensive. President Nixon travelled to Peking and before he visited Peking Chou En-lai went to Hanoi and there was no offensive.

Mr. Kissinger: I thought that was after his visit.

Mr. Brezhnev: No, before.

Mr. Kissinger: I get it.

Mr. Brezhnev: There was no offensive during President Nixon's visit to China. Then after his visit Mr. Chou En-lai went again and then came the offensive.

Take a look at the Chinese press concerning Vietnam. It is now saying that the Soviet Union is now rendering immense assistance to Vietnam. They never said this before. They always said that our assistance was negligible. Now in one month's time all has changed in the Chinese press. And what is more, the American opposition press is writing in unison with the Chinese press. They too are writing that the Soviet Union has given North Vietnam such great assistance, not only to overrun South Vietnam but to go as far as India. That certainly shows that both the Chinese and opposition press are writing in parallel. They are acting to prevent, to block the summit between the Soviet Union and the United States.

I mention all this and list all the arguments because I feel they are weighty proof in opposition to what you said concerning Soviet arms in the offensive. Before our meeting, because of the continued talk about Soviet weapons and planning in Vietnam, I asked my people to draw up a special list of all weapons sent to Vietnam during recent years. I have it before me. Look at it. It definitely concludes that it is certainly not the Soviet Union who has organized the latest offensive in Vietnam. It is not the right time to show it to you. But you would see the point. It proves whether the Soviet Union is instrumental or not in organizing the offensive.

I say also that you should bear in mind that powerful forces in the world are out to block the summit meeting. It certainly would be quite a big gift to the Chinese if the meeting did not come off. It would only help China.

(Dr. Kissinger, noticing that Mr. Brezhnev is standing up, comments that he did not wish to keep him from his next appointment. Mr. Brezhnev looks at his pocket watch and indicates he still has time.)

I don't know whether President Nixon and yourself grasp Chinese philosophy. It is certainly centuries old and goes back in age. But China today, the country, does not really have a principled policy of its own, no consistency. First they took advantage of the international Communist movement to build hegemony. On other occasions they use accusations: "Social imperialists", they call us.

Mr. Kissinger: I thought they called you "revisionists."

Mr. Gromyko: That was in the past. They use stronger words now.

Mr. Brezhnev: "Revisionists" is old hat. They use "social Imperialists" now. For me they have ordained an honorable death. They plan to shoot me. Mr. Kosygin they plan to hang, and Mr. Mikoyan they will boil alive. At least I have an honorable fate, not like Mikoyan, like those who will be boiled alive. Just last year that country beheaded their own people, which is what is to be expected at a time of the so-called Cultural Revolution.

It is a very strange country indeed. First, they called our assistance negligible and now they call it tremendous. I don't know if you have studied their minds. They are certainly beyond the capacity of a European mind to fathom. (Mr. Brezhnev says to Mr. Gromyko: "beyond my European mind.")

We are in no way against the improvement of U.S.-China relations. I am not personally opposed, nor is the Communist Party. As I said publicly, we regard this as a natural process, provided it is not prejudicial to the interests of any third country. That is the position of our Party and Government.

The main thing you must understand is that nothing is accomplished by bombing. It can only spoil the atmosphere in light of forthcoming events. It objectively can lead to a situation where for President Nixon the trip might be impossible, just as events might confront us with a very difficult situation for the summit meeting.

I don't know the impact on U.S. society. That is up to you. I know the President wants to preside over an honorable expression of your 200th anniversary. You realize—we don't know what kind of celebration, but it would not be a good celebration, a happy holiday, if it comes at the time of unfriendly relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Before we end the meeting, I would very much like you to convey to President Nixon that I can confirm and reconfirm our view and the desire of our government to have a Soviet-American summit meeting. We attach immense importance to it. We believe it can be not only historic but epoch-making. We believe it is in the American interest and the Soviet interest, in the best interests of the Soviet and American peoples. We believe both our sides can exert a beneficial influence on all world affairs.

On that I will end this meeting. We believe the main issue between our two countries is the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, our two countries. To this end I would like to leave a document with you. It is entitled "Foundation of Mutual Relations between the United States and Soviet Union." This is a very important document, because we have several other suggestions about decisions that could be taken as to the outcome of the summit meeting with President Nixon. But I will announce this in our subsequent meetings.

This bears no relation to our previous discussions, but just last year I found a document in Leningrad, a document drawn up in 1894 by a certain geographer who lived near China. His name was Maximov. He was evidently a most intelligent man, and he gives a character study on the Chinese. I will read this later. Let me say that I don't think either your scientific institutes or ours studying China could produce anything better about China today. This is just a piece.

Mr. Kissinger: I would love to have it.

Mr. Brezhnev: It is just a piece of literature.

Mr. Kissinger: Could I get it?

Mr. Brezhnev: I will read it first.

It is in Russian and an unofficial translation into English. (Mr. Brezhnev hands over the document "Foundation of Mutual Relations between the United States and Soviet Union" to Dr. Kissinger. Attached at Tab A.)¹⁶

Mr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, we will read it with great care and give you our preliminary reactions certainly while I am here.

Mr. Brezhnev: We would certainly welcome any chance to reach a preliminary understanding or a final understanding while you are here. If you want to make it stronger, not weaker, we would welcome that. If you weaken it, we will make a public statement and say we had a very fine draft to improve relations on which we wanted help and wanted to adopt it, but Dr. Kissinger was against it, and he refused it. We would go on and say that since we were not willing to complicate relations with President Nixon, we were forced to accept a weaker document, but the blame lies squarely with Dr. Kissinger.

But if you strengthen the document, I will find equally strong words to praise you. I will then say that our Foreign Minister was very poorly informed about the conciliatory mood of Dr. Kissinger and

¹⁶ Not attached but both, including the unofficial translation printed as an attachment here, are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes.

therefore submitted a weak document and we are indebted to Dr. Kissinger for having strengthened it.

Mr. Kissinger: We will study it with great sympathy and try to reach a preliminary understanding.

Mr. Brezhnev: I trust you will take a serious view of it. It is a considered proposal of our government and the Central Committee, not just a man-to-man document.

As I said, I will not be able to give you more time today. We can meet tomorrow, Sunday and Monday if necessary.

Mr. Kissinger: I am prepared to stay through Monday¹⁷ if that turns out to be necessary. If I don't get home by Monday night, they will all think I have a new girl friend.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's not so bad. We hand out prizes for that, especially concerning men as old as I. If that were to happen to me I would get a medal. After 65, one gets the "order of the badge of honor" for one's ability.

So what do [you] say about a meeting tomorrow?

Mr. Kissinger: Any time.

Mr. Brezhnev: I am taking into consideration the fact that your body clock is at 5:00 in the morning.

Mr. Kissinger: No, that's okay.

Mr. Brezhnev: So I think 11:00.

Mr. Kissinger: Any time. It can be earlier.

Mr. Brezhnev: Let's aim for 11:00.

Mr. Kissinger: I know, Mr. General-Secretary, that today is a solemn day for you to celebrate the birth of one of the great figures in history. I would like to extend the best wishes and the respect of President Nixon and the American people on this occasion.

Mr. Brezhnev: Thank you very sincerely.

And I will see you tomorrow. I, for one, am satisfied with our discussions today. I am satisfied with the frankness with which we speak and the general method of discussing these questions. Let us try to look back on our experience today and work better tomorrow so that the President on no account will be angry with you, and I will not be criticized by the Central Committee. Both of us must take that into account. Both of us are charged with responsible duties and risk of being scolded.

Mr. Kissinger: I run a greater risk of having the President scold me than the Central Committee scold you.

¹⁷ April 24.

Mr. Brezhnev: Perhaps. I wouldn't like you to get into hot water either. We will in large measure affect the considerations of the President. He has to take our opinions into account. He is not all-powerful. The two of us will outvote him.

Mr. Kissinger: I have been pleased to meet you.

Attachment

Soviet Draft¹⁸

FOUNDATIONS OF MUTUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America,

Guided by the obligations assumed by them under the Charter of the United Nations and by a desire to strengthen relations of peace with each other and to place them on the firmest possible basis, in which the Soviet and American peoples are equally interested,

Aware of the necessity of making every effort to prevent the threat of the outbreak of nuclear war and to create conditions promoting détente in the world and the strengthening of universal security and international co-operation,

Believing that the improvement of Soviet-American relations and their mutually advantageous development in areas including the economic, scientific and cultural fields, will meet these objectives and contribute to better mutual understanding and business-like co-operation, without in any way prejudicing the interests of third countries,

Have agreed as follows:

First. The Parties will unswervingly proceed from the recognition of peaceful co-existence as the sole acceptable and essential basis of their mutual relations. Differences in the socio-political structures and ideologies of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. are not an obstacle to the development between them of normal international relations based on the principles of sovereignty, equality, noninterference in internal affairs and mutual advantage.

Second. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. attach important significance to preventing the occurrence of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of relations between them and will act in such a

¹⁸ The English language text is an "unofficial translation."

way as not to allow a military collision, and to preventing situations capable of causing an aggravation of the international situation. To these ends they will invariably display in their mutual relations a will to negotiate and to settle differences by peaceful means.

The necessary prerequisites for maintaining and strengthening relations of peace between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. are the recognition and implementation of the principle of the equal security of the Parties and the renunciation of the use or threat of force.

Third. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. intend to widen the legal and treaty basis of their mutual relations and to exert the necessary efforts so that bilateral agreements concluded between them and multilateral treaty acts to which they are parties are unswervingly translated into life.

Fourth. The Parties will continue their efforts, both on a bilateral and on a multilateral basis, with a view to limiting armaments, particularly strategic armaments. In those instances when this becomes possible, concrete agreements aimed at achieving this purpose will be concluded.

The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. consider the ultimate objective of their efforts to be the solving of the problem of general and complete disarmament and the ensuring of an effective system of international security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Fifth. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. reaffirm their readiness to continue the practice of bilateral exchanges of views on problems of interest to them and, where necessary, to carry out exchanges of opinions on the highest level, including meetings between leaders of the two countries.

The widening of contacts between representatives of the legislative bodies of the two countries will be encouraged.

Sixth. The Parties consider Soviet-American trade and economic ties as an important and necessary element in the strengthening of bilateral relations and will actively promote the strengthening and growth of such ties. The Parties will facilitate co-operation between the interested organizations and enterprises of the two countries and the conclusion of appropriate agreements and contracts between them, including long-term ones.

The Parties will contribute to the improvement of navigation and air communication between the two countries.

Seventh. The Parties consider it topical and useful to develop with one another contacts and co-operation in the field of science and technology.

Where suitable, matters of concrete co-operation between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. in the above-mentioned fields will be regulated

by appropriate agreements the conclusion of which will be encouraged by the Parties.

Eighth. The Parties reaffirm their intention to deepen ties with one another in the field of culture and to widen possibilities for the fuller familiarisation of each other with their cultural values. The Parties consider their objective to be to facilitate the creation of appropriate conditions for cultural exchanges and tourism.

Ninth. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. will seek to ensure that the ties and co-operation between them on all the above-mentioned lines, and on other lines which will correspond to their mutual interests, are built on a firm and long-term basis.

Tenth. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. do not claim for themselves and do not recognize the claims of anyone else to any special rights or advantages in world affairs.

The development of Soviet-American relations is not directed against third countries and their legitimate interests.

Eleventh. The provisions set forth in this. . . (name of the document) do not affect the obligations with regard to third countries earlier assumed by the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.

Twelfth. Each Party will take all the necessary measures to ensure conditions fully corresponding to the norms and customs of international law for the functioning on its territory of the diplomatic and other accredited missions of the other Party.

135. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 21, 1972, 6:15 p.m.

RN: Did you get the communications—can they be received?²

GH: Not yet. No. They can't—I have the message on the wire.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² According to reports from the American radio operator and the aircraft commander in Moscow, the communication outage was the result of problems with both equipment and logistics. (Ibid., NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2]) Kissinger later noted "an additional

RN: So we can't receive or send now. Another thing. About Rogers' comment³—our friends may be up to a trick—the Soviets offer something to Smith—they think we will push this if Smith is panting for something. Try to force us to go to the summit.

GH: Absolutely—that could be—but we are not sure.

RN: It may be just another game. Give me a call if you get anything. He is sleeping now. The strike went well in the North.

GH: Yes. Just the 52's—but it was a good solid jolt and [hit?] Vinh really good—buildings, air fields, etc. out of operation.

RN: This is the right thing to do right now.⁴

GH: Yes. Good leverage. Mr. Laird went over our air capabilities said they are better—more air than we had at the peak of the war. We are using it better and have got more of it now.

delay caused by interference with the communications" and suggested that the Soviets were jamming the transmission. (Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1154–1155) In a telephone conversation at 8 p.m., Nixon instructed Haig to transmit messages via Dwight Chapin, the President's appointments secretary, who was also in Moscow leading an advance team for the summit, "because we can't have the situation that the Russians may be messing us up—use Chapin's plane." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2])

³ According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon called Rogers twice from Camp David on April 21: from 3:24 to 3:32 p.m., during a meeting with Haig (3:15–4:05 p.m.); and from 4:09 to 4:11 p.m., after Haig had returned to Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files) No substantive record of either discussion, or of the meeting with Haig, has been found. For Haig's report to Kissinger on the subject, see Document 136.

⁴ Nixon called Haig again at 9:40 p.m. to urge further use of American air power. According to the transcript, the two men had the following exchange: Nixon "Al, on an urgent basis, get Moorer to send a 52 strike in North Vietnam—not particularly Hanoi. They can hit in the day, can't they?" Haig: "Yes sir." Nixon: "25 or 30 planes tomorrow while Henry is there." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2])

136. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 21, 1972, 0044Z.

Sitto 21. Communication failure at your end has been most disconcerting at this end.² I hope in future if situations like this develop, you can have Sonnenfeldt or Win call us on telephone using alias of member of advance and double-talk problem.

Secretary Rogers called President and passed to him substance of message from Smith which is attached.³ The President immediately concluded that your hosts may be hoping to trade flexibility in SALT for U.S. concessions on South Vietnam. The President is very concerned that we hold first and foremost to tough position on South Vietnam—that we not giving up bombing of North for illusory promises of negotiations with Hanoi or any other promise that is not firmly guaranteed.

Please note TDCS report contained in noon notes of April 21st⁴ touching upon discussions in Paris by Madame Binh and Xuan Thuy. This report is considered fairly reliable and would suggest that air action in north has been major shock to the other side. The President is apparently determined to continue raids on Hanoi/Haiphong area if your discussions do not appear fruitful. I impressed upon him the need to relax on this subject until May 2nd session, if the session gels.

The President informed me he is convinced that Soviets have been in league with Hanoi on the timing and objectives of Hanoi's offensive. He considers that Soviet summit was to be leverage that both sides considered would deter air action against North. He is now doubly suspicious that reasonable posture on SALT may be designed as pot-sweetener for concessions by us on South Vietnam. He has asked that

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² See footnote 3, Document 135.

³ Rogers received a separate message from Smith in which he reported that Semenov "expressed desire of his authorities to prepare both draft ABM treaty and interim offensive freeze for consideration and signature in Moscow at summit." After a brief exchange, Semenov suggested meeting the next day for a "fuller substantive discussion on informal basis with aim of developing mutually acceptable solutions to remaining issues." The telegram was received in the Department at 3:15 p.m., i.e. shortly before the first telephone conversation between Nixon and Rogers. (Telegram 1270 from USDEL SALT VII (Helsinki), April 21; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, DEF 18-3 FIN(HE))

⁴ Transmitted in message Sitto 18 from Haig to Kissinger on April 21. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Trip to Moscow Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

you recall Brosio's 1965 assessment to effect that hosts are biggest liars, best actors and greatest cheaters in international diplomacy.⁵

The President has asked that I convey foregoing to you in precise terms outlined. I have assured him that no one has better understanding of hosts than you do.

Situation in Vietnam is still under control with greatest danger area in III Corps. ARVN are moving one airborne brigade from II Corps to III Corps and replacing that brigade with Ranger group from I Corps. An Loc has been under heavy attack for past two days but remains intact although some apprehension is developing.

We are, of course, most anxious to receive report from you,⁶ as you can tell from this message, the President's mood is very strong at the moment.

Warm regards.

Attachment

Backchannel Message From the Head of the Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (Smith) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)⁷

Helsinki, April 21, 1972.

0328. Top Secret/Sensitive 211845Z Fm. Amb. Smith SALT Helsinki 0328. To the White House Exclusive Eyes Only Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Dear Henry

Semenov returned today at three. We met at six with Garthoff and Kishilov. Semenov reported that he had met several times at the highest level to consider SALT questions.

⁵ Nixon met Brosio, then Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, during a trip to Europe and the Soviet Union in March 1967. According to Nixon, Brosio "emotionally and emphatically expressed his doubts about Soviet intentions." "I know the Russians," he said. "They are great liars, clever cheaters, and magnificent actors. They cannot be trusted. They consider it their duty to cheat and lie." (Nixon, *RN: Memoirs*, p. 281)

⁶ In message WTE 005 to Haig, April 21, Kissinger briefly reported: "It is hard to overemphasize Soviet eagerness for summit. President will be royally treated but none of this matters if we do not settle Vietnam." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2]) The message, however, was also initially garbled in transmission. (Ibid.)

⁷ Another copy of this message is *ibid.*, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages SALT 1972.

He then read the following: “The question on certain launchers in connection with a possible agreement on certain measures with respect to strategic offensive weapons was presently under serious study in Moscow.” I noted the positive nature of this statement for SALT prospects.

He said his instructions were to try to finalize both agreements here for summit signing.

Semenov then probed about the authoritativeness of the Kishilov/Garthoff conversation of April 16th, USDEL SALT 1265.⁸ I stressed the informal and unofficial aspect of this exchange and asked Semenov if this approach was of interest to his side. He said categorically that it was. I told him that I, personally, thought it had a good deal of sense, but I still had to persuade my authorities and it would help if I had the specifics of his post-Moscow visit position. I hinted that I might return to Washington soon, and that it would be helpful promptly to have his new position.

Pleading need to study his voluminous Moscow record, he suggested deferral of substantive discussion between us until tomorrow at 4:30 p.m.

My three main impressions from this meeting are:

- 1) The USSR want to complete the two agreements at Helsinki for summit signature.
- 2) The USSR will on a general ABM approach involving one NCA and one ICBM defense site for each side, with ICBM deployment area expanded to 150 kilometers, and 75 or 100 launcher level per site.
- 3) Something is possible in SLBM freeze area.

Warm regards.

Gerry Smith

⁸ Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN (HE))

137. **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹**

April 21, 1972, 9:35 p.m.

H: I have a message from Henry finally. Some garble in it but it is fairly clear.² Here is what he said. [Reading]³—“Had 4½ hour meeting with Brezhnev. Atmosphere was extremely cordial, almost effusive. His protestations of eagerness to have the summit no matter what the circumstances was at times almost maudlin, certainly extremely strong. Brezhnev is very forceful, extremely nervous, highly unsubtle, quite intelligent but not in the class of other leaders we have met. His mood can best be summed up in the following concluding quote:”

P: Yeah.

H: “Before we end I would like very much for you to convey to President Nixon that I can confirm and reconfirm our views and the desire of our government to hold the Soviet-American summit meeting.”

P: That doesn’t mean a thing, all that is bullshit.

H: “We attach immense importance to it and we believe that it cannot only be historic but epoch-making. We believe it would serve the best interest of the US Government and Soviet people. We believe in this way both our sides can exert a beneficial influence on world affairs.

We believe the main issue is the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, our two countries.”

P: Right.

H: “% of the meeting dealt with Vietnam. I gave him just enough about the summit to whet his appetite but nothing concrete and refused to discuss any specifics. Brezhnev read me a telegram addressed

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President’s Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² The message was initially garbled in transmission. (Ibid., NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK’s Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File) In his conversation with the President, Haig apparently read from the message as retransmitted; substantive discrepancies between the text as read in the transcript and the text of the message itself are noted below. (Message WTE 006 from Kissinger to Haig; *ibid.*) Haig also forwarded a retyped version of the message to Nixon on April 22. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President’s Personal Files, Box 74, President’s Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

³ All brackets in the source text except the last one citing an omission.

to him from Hanoi which in effect restated the position Hanoi gave us on April 19.⁴ It rejected a meeting in Moscow in particularly insolent terms. Brezhnev indicated considerable readiness to help bring about a meeting. He seemed less sure about how to help in substance. I did not advance any substantive ideas nor even our formula on how to get talks started. This will be the first item of business tomorrow.”⁵

P: Yeah.

H: “It seems improbable that we can be back before Monday night. We have not yet discussed one substantive issue other than Vietnam. Tomorrow I shall submit our proposal and they said they had some concrete ideas about Vietnam to present tomorrow. I was brutal in explaining that a guaranteed deescalation for a year was the minimum we could settle for.”⁶

Brezhnev said that they are now doing everything to help the President get re-elected.”

P: Did you get to Henry my ideas about this?

H: I got them to him.

P: Good, just so he knows.

H: Fine, Mr. President.

P: We’ve really got to get Henry stiffened up. All that bullshit about gives us lunches and all that crap. Despite the fact that he is brutal—you get a message out to Henry and tell him I am rethinking this thing; that I have reached conclusion that it has to be absolutely concrete. I have ordered an urgent study [of strikes to be conducted in North].⁷ Under no circumstances is he to stay. He is to be back Sunday night. They asked him to stay but we are not going to have it. Tell him he has got to be back Sunday night!

H: [Reading again] “What about the Thanh Hoa operation? It is essential that it take place while I am here. The bombing last weekend was an absolute necessity. We certainly got their attention.”

P: What bombing?

H: Last weekend.

P: I understand all that. But Henry better understand that Brezhnev is playing the typical sickening game. He is being taken in. We

⁴ See footnote 7, Document 126.

⁵ According to the transcript, Haig did not read the following passage here from the message: “Brezhnev’s attitude can perhaps be summed up in two quotes about Vietnam: ‘We must remove all obstacles to the summit.’ ‘In finding a solution, let us try tomorrow to find the positive.’”

⁶ The message itself continues here with the section, as subsequently read by Haig, on the Thanh Hoa operation.

⁷ See Document 136.

have got to stiffen him up. He loves to sit back and philosophize for the history books. You tell him in cold turkey that he can not stay till Monday⁸ and bullshit about the summit. He can not stay till Monday for reasons I can not explain. Unless he gets absolute agreement tomorrow, strike is going Sunday night. Don't you think he needs this? The sound of it doesn't sound right to me. Henry is so easily taken in by flattery. He is great but—

H: He thinks the summit is more important to you than Vietnam.

P: It is not. We have got to give up the summit in order to get a settlement in Vietnam and he has got to have that tomorrow! He has got to come back Sunday night. He can not stay till Monday. If he says he can be there three days, they will keep him three days. That ploy that Rogers talked about is one they are pushing.

H: We got a message from Gerry Smith, which I sent to Henry, which pointed out your concern. That will just sweeten—

P: Sweeten the pot. You tell Henry, first, he has got to come back Sunday night. The extra day is so [omission in the source text]. You tell him in not subtle terms I have decided that Vietnam is ten times more important than the summit. Vietnam tomorrow; summit is not to be discussed further until Vietnam is settled. He should know that I have ordered a three-day strike period to begin Sunday night.

H: I have talked to Laird.⁹

P: Send that line to Henry. Shake him up hard! He's already started though, hasn't he? What time is it now?

H: 10:00.

P: They are 8 hours ahead so it's 6 o'clock there now. Reach him before his morning meeting and tell him no discussions of the summit before they settle Vietnam and that is an order!

⁸ April 24.

⁹ Haig talked to Laird via secure phone on April 21 at 6:30 p.m. According to a transcript, Haig began the conversation: "I know you have been trying to get Henry. I wouldn't try. This is all I can say." After an exchange on redeployment and cloud seeding, the conversation continued as follows: Haig: "Don't say anything about not being able to get Henry. And the President wants to be sure another strike for the Hanoi-Haiphong area—we will be ready." Laird: "We are ready—this weekend?" Haig: "No." Laird: "It is always better if we have 48 hours but we can do it in 24." Haig: "I don't foresee it over the weekend." Laird: "I think we should do it." Haig: "That was an interesting TDCS in Paris." Laird: "Yes. They must have miscalculated." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2]) For discussion of the TDCS report, which noted that the North Vietnamese were concerned about the impact of the U.S. bombing campaign, see Document 136.

138. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 21, 1972.

Sitto 22. We have just received your 007² and 006.³ 007 is readable. 006 was garbled but I believe we got bulk of it. Reference 007, Thanh Hoa target was struck on schedule by B-52s but with sharply reduced number of fighter bombers due to weather. All evidence indicates B-52 strike on target and effective.

There has been little change in military situation from morning of April 21 report.⁴ Situation in An Loc remains serious and there is evidence of deterioration within perimeter which is now under direct enemy fire. Thieu has ordered reinforcements: one airborne brigade from II Corps and Ranger Group from I Corps to the area. Intelligence indicates enemy will pay any price to take An Loc and situation there must be considered serious.

Situation in MR-1 remains stable with initiative still on friendly side. Situation in II Corps is still dicey with enemy attacks against fire bases in Dac Tho area.

I am sending more detailed report following this message.⁵ You should be aware that President is increasingly concerned by lack of communication from your aircraft. If situation continues any longer, it may be necessary for you to use General Scowcroft who is scheduled to leave today, or the backchannel [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] with cognizance of Ambassador Beam. Dangers here are obvious but this may become necessary.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash. No time of transmission or receipt appears on the message.

² In message WTE 007 to Haig, April 21, Kissinger reported: "1. I must have a detailed update of the military situation before my next meeting with Brezhnev at 1000 Moscow Time 0200 Washington Time. I must be sure I will not sound absurd when I ask for withdrawal. 2. The Thanh Hoa operation should take place before we deliver the note to the North Vietnamese. Please advise." (Ibid., [1 of 2])

³ See footnote 2, Document 137.

⁴ Sent as message Sitto 16 from Haig to Kissinger on April 21. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Trip to Moscow Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

⁵ Reference is presumably to a memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon on the Indochina military situation, which Haig forwarded in message Sitto 26 to Kissinger in Moscow on April 22. (Ibid.)

When I gave the President substance of your 006, he was very strong that you should return Sunday night.⁶ He also insists that no substance on summit be discussed until Vietnam situation has been fully explored. He states that from his perspective the settlement of Vietnam is in order of magnitude ten times more important than the Soviet summit and he is fully prepared to sacrifice summit if need be.

President has also ordered another 52 strike against North Vietnam hopefully to be executed before Sunday night. I have told Laird to prepare targets which can not be farther north than Thanh Hoa. Laird will clear with me and I will re-raise with President when target is selected tomorrow morning Washington time. Need your guidance on how to play this with President in the morning (eight hours from now).

Finally, President has ordered preparation of three-day strike in Hanoi-Haiphong area which he insists he will order if your talks prove to be unfruitful.

You should be aware that President has just received results of Sindlinger poll⁷ which indicates his popularity has risen sharply since escalation of fighting in Vietnam. Same poll indicated George Wallace's rating doubled in the same period and that Humphrey and Muskie slipped so badly that they are all but out of it. McGovern was rated as having appeal with about 20 per cent of electorate. More specifics are contained in Evening Notes.⁸ As you can see, President's starchy mood since this afternoon has increased immeasurably. Please keep this in mind in your reporting and in your most difficult tasks there. I will stay at this end around the clock. Please be sure that Win or Hal keep me fully abreast of your thinking even at expense of absence of one or other in your substantive sessions.

Also please be sure that aircraft is instructed and is adequately manned to guarantee immediate delivery of my communications to you and of yours to me.

Warm regards.

⁶ April 23.

⁷ Albert E. Sindlinger, a national telephone pollster. The results of the poll were reported in a release by United Press International (UPI-151) on April 21. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 117, Vietnam Subject Files, Vietnam Offensive (2 Apr 72), Permanent File)

⁸ Sent as message Sitto 19 from Haig to Kissinger on April 21. (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

139. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 22, 1972, 11 a.m.–4:05 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General-Secretary of Central Committee of CPSU
Andrei Gromyko, Foreign Minister
Anatoli Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA
A. Alexandrov-Agentov, Assistant to Mr. Brezhnev
Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter
Mr. Samoteykin, Assistant to Mr. Brezhnev
Mr. Henry A. Kissinger
Mr. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Senior Staff
Mr. Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
Mr. John Negroponte, NSC Staff
Mr. Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

Basic Principles; Vietnam; SALT; European Security; Bilateral Relations;
Announcement of Visit; Summit Arrangements; China

[When Dr. Kissinger's car arrived at 11:00 a.m. at the front door of the Guest House reserved for the meetings, the General-Secretary and the Foreign Minister came down the steps and welcomed him. Brezhnev was wearing a stylish dark blue suit, dark blue shirt, dark tie, gold watch chain and two Orders of Lenin. Before entering the building, Brezhnev led Mr. Kissinger on a walk around the building to the garden in the back, and onto a small covered platform overlooking the Moscow River. They exchanged informal pleasantries:]²

Brezhnev: They tell me you've been working on the draft of the Principles and strengthening it.³ That's what I had suggested. You're

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road. For his memoir account of the meeting, see Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1146–1150.

² All brackets in the source text.

³ A copy of the U.S. redraft of the Soviet draft on Basic Principles, including handwritten changes by Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt, and others, as well as a 15-page paper with parallel columns comparing the two drafts, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes. According to a list of notes exchanged during Kissinger's trip to Moscow, Kissinger handed the U.S. redraft to Dobrynin the morning of April 22. (*Ibid.*) Kissinger submitted further revisions of the text to Dobrynin on April 24; see footnote 4, Document 159.

a good man. If I were you and I were an evil man, I'd have just kept quiet about the draft as it was. But you are a generous man.

Kissinger: Now the General-Secretary is obligated to me to mention me in a speech of his—favorably.

Brezhnev: I will do so. You and I can accomplish much together between the two of us. Maybe we should just abolish our Foreign Offices.

Kissinger: We on our side have already taken steps in that direction. Now we need a reduction of Gromyko.

[The group then left the platform, walked through the garden and through a fence into the next compound. This was the Reception House (Dom Priyoma) which housed a tennis court, swimming pool, and many meeting rooms. The group went upstairs and out onto the balcony overlooking the river.]

Brezhnev: The President will see many things. Will he go up Ostankino Tower (the radio-TV tower)? We will make the ground soft for him, in case anything goes wrong. I may not go with him; I'll send Gromyko.

Kissinger: We're prepared for all contingencies.

[The group then returned to the guest house and convened at a long table in a room on the ground floor. The talks began at 11:40 a.m.]

Brezhnev: We meet once again. I would be pleased if you had a good rest, and if so, that you reported back to Washington that you did. If you did not, it's the Foreign Office's fault.

The meat pies had a beneficial effect on us yesterday. Have some more.

Kissinger: I haven't eaten for at least an hour.

Brezhnev: Impossible. I had my last cup of tea one hour and 20 minutes ago—this gives you an advantage over me. I feel I'm getting thin.

I have one request. If we conduct talks at this pace, you'd better ask the President to allow you one more week in Moscow. We're both so loquacious and like each other's company. Both of us have responsible instructions to solve all problems. My feeling is that you have such instructions, too.

So I think perhaps we come today to concrete issues. We do not rule out general issues but should concentrate on the concrete. Since I was the last speaker yesterday, it is fair if you speak first today. This is another piece of evidence that our country wants no advantage and no superiority. That is the truth.

[The General-Secretary then served some more food.]

Kissinger: That is your secret weapon.

Brezhnev: Yes.

Gromyko: A conventional weapon. [laughter]

Kissinger: I will make a few observations. First, I want to thank you again for the warmth with which we have been received. Secondly, the President is pleased and thinks this is a positive sign for the Summit.

Brezhnev: I am pleased to hear that.

Kissinger: After our discussions and the reception we have received, I have no doubt that our discussions will be extremely fruitful and of great benefit to our two countries and to the peace of the world.

Last night, Mr. General-Secretary, my colleagues and I studied the draft you handed us at the close of yesterday's meeting. Quite frankly, I haven't sent it to Washington because I do not consider it useful to have too many bureaucratic comments at this point. I'm sure I speak for the President when I say that in principle and in basic outline it will be acceptable to us. I think it was drafted by your side in a large and generous spirit, and it reflects the attitude that we too bring to our relationship.

Brezhnev: We did in drafting try to take all circumstances into account. We felt it should be a document in keeping with the general spirit of both ourselves and yourselves. We did not inject any bargaining points, but tried to do it in a balanced way.

Kissinger: That was our impression. We have redrafted it and it is being typed. It includes all of your points. I have taken seriously the General-Secretary's suggestion that we strengthen it, in the hope that he will mention me favorably in one of his speeches.

Brezhnev: I told you I would do that.

Kissinger: It will ruin you with your ally in the East.

Brezhnev: What ally is that?

Kissinger: I think the Foreign Minister has an idea.

Gromyko: I ask the same question.

Dobrynin: Try and guess.

Brezhnev: After that remark, I'm tempted to try to get to the bottom of this. There must be some catch there, perhaps a delayed-action mine or bomb (to use a popular American term).

Kissinger: A conventional bomb.

Brezhnev: If Dobrynin had an atomic bomb with him [in Washington] he wouldn't be here. He can stand conventional bombs, though.

Kissinger: We propose the following procedure: We are typing the draft now. At an appropriate moment today or tomorrow, or whenever it fits our program, we will show it. I really think we can come to an agreement while I'm here that is substantially complete.

[Mr. Samoteykin, an aide to Brezhnev, entered the room.]

Brezhnev: I've brought reinforcements, too. I had to because you did. I've been talking so much I didn't notice how many you have here today. When Americans bring reinforcements, they do it on the quiet, but when they withdraw they do it with big fanfare! [laughter]

I too feel it highly desirable if we can avoid additional detailed communications later on this document, and can reach agreement here.

Kissinger: I'm sure we can do this. I've explained to your Ambassador the somewhat Byzantine requirements of our bureaucracy. The President may have some comments, but I know his views. They will not be substantial because I know his views. We may have some details to discuss at the Summit, but then only minor suggestions. Our lawyers will have to look at it.

Brezhnev: If you have bureaucratic departments, they have to have something to do. One professor has proved that if you have a department of 1000 employees, they can do nothing except serve their own needs.

Gromyko: [in English] Busy, busy.

Brezhnev: Therefore I try my best to keep my departments down to 999! [laughter]

You'd certainly be mistaken to show it to lawyers. As soon as you ask the lawyers, then you are finished.

Kissinger: We will finish it here. We will keep it in the White House until we come to Moscow, and then give it to the lawyers here, for 24 hours to work on it.

Brezhnev: Twenty-four minutes.

Kissinger: There will be no leaks this way, and we can have it as final.

Brezhnev: There is in it a clause that protects both sides. It says "nothing in this is prejudicial to third countries or to the interests of third countries."

Kissinger: It is really a final document, with only some possible minor technical modifications. We can consider that a result of this visit.

Gromyko: [in English] Good, good.

Kissinger: We will show you our version as soon as it is typed. It is really very close to yours.

Brezhnev: I believe you. My colleagues will welcome this, too. If the basis we put forward turns out acceptable, that is good.

Kissinger: The basis is OK, just minor strengthening as you suggested. For example, where you spoke of "ensuring that their ties are on a firm and long-term basis," we added a line about joint commissions to give it more concreteness.

Brezhnev: I would say that would be acceptable.

Of course, it is important not to make errors in making these concrete specifications. There is an anecdote about the Tsar who had before him a case of an arrested man. The question was, would he be executed or pardoned? The Tsar wrote out a piece of paper with only three words on it (*kaznit' nyelzya pomilovat'*), but the commas were misplaced. He should have read it as "execution impossible, pardon." But he insisted read it as "execution, impossible [to] pardon." No, that wasn't quite it: actually the Tsar wrote it without commas and then the lawyers had to decide which he meant.

Kissinger: What happened to the man?

Brezhnev: I will tell you that at the end of our discussions, before you go. My answer will depend on how our talks go.

Gromyko: Maybe the answer should be given only at the Summit.

Brezhnev: No, Dr. Kissinger has to leave Moscow with clear answers to all his questions. Because you might want to tell the President this story. He will want to know the ending. If you don't know it, he will wonder what you were talking about here.

Kissinger: From my experience with bureaucracies, they probably did both.

Brezhnev: I have another story before we go on. There was a very poor man who wanted to get rich quick. He thought and thought of how to do it. He realized that many people like to drink and drink, and their noses get red. He thought he could exploit this. [To notetaker:] this is only a joke. You don't need to write it down. Don't write it. [Resuming:] So he put advertisements in the paper that all who wanted to get rid of red noses should send money to him for the remedy. He was flooded with letters and money. There were too many to answer, so he put an ad in the paper to reply to them all: "If you want to get rid of red noses, just keep drinking and your noses will turn blue." [laughter]

We'll be waiting for your draft.

Kissinger: Better to wait. It is close to yours. I am sure we can settle it. Our draft follows yours very closely.

Brezhnev: I think we're all very friendly here. If anyone wants to take his coat off, go ahead. (All did.) Now you see how constructive the Soviet side is.

Gromyko: When I was in the White House, no one asked me to take my coat off.

Vietnam

Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, if I can return to the subject we raised at the end of the day—which is the only one which could cause

problems for the Summit meeting. I promised you yesterday that I would present a concrete suggestion on how we might proceed, on Vietnam, if you are willing.

Brezhnev: Please. It is indeed a very complicated issue.

Kissinger: There are two parts of the issue: the procedural part and the substantive part. The first is how to get talks started. The second is what will happen when talks do get started. As you know, we proposed a private meeting first, to be followed by a plenary meeting; the DRV has proposed a plenary to be followed by a private meeting. They have told us it would take a week for Le Duc Tho to come to Paris after we have announced the plenary session. This is a rather absurd statement, but we will not play these children's games. So we are disposed to notify Hanoi privately tomorrow of the following proposition: If they agree to a private meeting on May 2, we will announce on April 25 (Tuesday afternoon) that we will attend the next plenary on Thursday, April 27.

We think this is a fair proposition.

Brezhnev: I think it is constructive. Particularly since they have said the U.S. can put forward its own date with regard to their proposal of May 6.

Kissinger: We've put forward a suggestion which is consistent with their messages to us. It is really the last practicable date that week for me—particularly in view of other decisions that will have to be made, as I have told your Ambassador.

I would think it would be very helpful if the DRV could restrain itself from its usual practice of claiming this is a tremendous victory. Because, if they do, it will have consequences for our future discussions. Also, in the spirit of my discussions here, until the meeting on May 2, we are disposed not to take any actions in the Hanoi–Haiphong area.

Now, the important issue is the meeting on May 2, because we are not interested in a meeting; we are interested in the result.

Brezhnev: Yes, in this situation, there is probably no sense in having an empty meeting.

Kissinger: Exactly. Therefore, as I said, I would like to tell the General-Secretary our ideas for what should be done.

Brezhnev: On substance? At the private talks?

Kissinger: Yes, at the private talks. The plenaries are a waste of time.

Brezhnev: I was just considering whether or not to ask that question. I wish to add; if you want to communicate this to us in strict confidence, we'll do whatever you wish in this respect and will not communicate it to them.

Kissinger: You can communicate it to them if you feel it useful, because we don't have too much time.

Brezhnev: Let's hear you out first, so we can tell.

Kissinger: The Plenary Session will be a waste of time, as I said. All we will learn then will be some new adjectives. But the private session should be constructive and productive.

Brezhnev: How do you do those? Just you, Le Duc Tho and interpreters?

Kissinger: Him and Xuan Thuy and two or three aides, and me and two or three on our side. But usually he and I do most of the talking.

What we will demand on May 2 is a return to the situation of March 29, that is, the situation before the beginning of the offensive. We shall propose a declaration that the two sides will make a serious effort this year to negotiate an end to the war in Vietnam. And in order to create favorable conditions for this, that both sides will reduce the level of violence. We shall ask that the North Vietnamese withdraw the divisions that entered South Vietnam after March 29, that is to say, the three divisions in Military Region 1 and the three divisions in Military Region 3. We will then withdraw the air and naval forces which we have introduced since March 29. We shall ask that the North Vietnamese respect the Demilitarized Zone. We shall then stop the bombing of North Vietnam completely.

Because of the suffering that has been caused, and as a symbol of progress, we shall propose that all prisoners who have been held more than four years be released immediately by both sides.

And we shall ask for guarantees that these conditions will be observed during the period of negotiations this year.

In other words, we are not asking for a unilateral advantage for us. We shall ask that both sides review their negotiating positions. And we shall promise that we shall review ours to see if both can be brought closer, in a generous spirit.

If I can add a personal observation. If the North Vietnamese would talk to us in the spirit of our discussions here, I believe we could settle this in a reasonable way, and fairly quickly.

I do not think you want to be involved in all the details of the political proposals, but I can tell you that our eight points of January 25⁴ are not presented as an ultimatum, and we are prepared to listen to counterproposals.

⁴ Reference is to the peace plan Nixon unveiled during a nationally televised address on January 25. (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 100–106)

In short, we envisage two stages: (1) an immediate reduction of the violence, which is guaranteed to last a reasonable period, for example, a year, and (2) a serious effort at negotiation.

This would end the threat of war, and of course would end the bombing of North Vietnam.

Brezhnev: One question which the Vietnamese are bound to ask, and probably will be bound to ask is, when will the U.S. withdraw all its troops? That is very important, within this complex of discussions.

Kissinger: We are prepared to withdraw all our forces and military installations within six months of a final settlement, and are prepared to begin this immediately once agreement in principle is reached, while the details are being worked out—which is a major concession.

Brezhnev: I of course do not want to raise any conditions or anything, because you know our general line on this matter and we are not changing it at all. But just by listening by ear, I wonder if, don't you think it would perhaps ease a solution and soften the situation if you perhaps exclude the condition about withdrawal of divisions and substitute that they should stop at their present lines and that there be no more acts of war? And then you don't have to withdraw your air and naval forces. That change should be of no consequence, because the important thing is to end the fighting. In your proposal, it sounds a bit tough, a bit much. The important thing is to get hostilities ended, to end the violence. The whole thing would sound more conciliatory.

Gromyko: You say you will withdraw your forces that you have deployed since March 29. But the bombing that has taken place cannot be removed. You cannot return what has been destroyed.

Brezhnev: Nothing would change if you could incorporate this in your proposals. The important thing is to end the war. But the flat demand to withdraw complicates matters a bit, in my opinion. The only condition should be that the fighting be stopped, and talks begin. Otherwise, they will say that you ask them to withdraw their forces and the aggressive forces would retake the land [they vacated].

At the outset we did agree to be very frank in our talks and to keep them confidential. I believe that, apart from practical matters, there are two permanent and really major issues. Certainly it is a fact that the Vietnamese are fighting for what they see as a just and sacred cause. Of course, it was not President Nixon who started the war. But of course it's up to the United States to extricate itself somehow from it. And I am sure President Nixon is aware of this. Of course, certain prestige considerations are brought to bear on the U.S. Administration, and are impeding a quick solution. But there is a need for the U.S. to rid itself of this shameful war. The U.S. will have to do it; whether it is President Nixon or someone else, is not for me to say, but the U.S. will have to do it. That is the only way. Otherwise, the fighting will go

on. You know their determination, and the support they are getting in public opinion throughout the world.

I cannot vouch for the Vietnamese, but perhaps some amendments to your proposal can be made. Of course, the Vietnamese have to negotiate themselves. But even the smallest unacceptable proposals will do harm to the general prospects, and you'll be farther away from a solution.

A halt to the bombing, withdrawals, and an end to bases, etc.—all these are constructive proposals. With regard to an end to fighting, this could happen even before a formal agreement has been arrived at. If this method is adopted, I see no harm being done to the interests of the U.S. On the contrary, a solution along these lines would be welcomed everywhere, and welcomed here as well, and be a good basis for our discussions here.

This is only my personal view. I'll discuss it with my colleagues and report to you any additional comments.

I have one more comment. Regardless of whatever method we choose for our subsequent actions—that is, whether you think we should communicate with them or not—the mere fact of these positive steps coming out of our talks here (it will probably leak eventually, probably in the American press), this tacitly elevates the significance of our discussions. At least to those in the know, this is a token of accord between us. Of course, I do not mean we are trying to reach agreement by us on behalf of the North Vietnamese side. I thought therefore I would suggest these amendments. We of course would want a radical solution to the entire problem. But I won't go into that, or into details, because time does not permit, and surely you know the details of our radical solution.

Now, if I might return to the question you yourself raised earlier, it is one thing to agree on dates for a meeting with the North Vietnamese—as regards the plenary, you said it is a waste of time. The question then arises, what happens if the private meeting yields no success and doesn't produce something constructive or useful? It's hard to foresee. But it is a question of war going on. It is easy to unleash a war, but it is hard to put out the flames. The second question is how all this will look in the context of the forthcoming Summit. Will it be possible, or not? There are two reasons why it might not be possible. One factor is the objective state of the public opinion background, and secondly, it may prove impossible from President Nixon's standpoint. We don't want this. But these are the negative possibilities.

Kissinger: Whose public opinion?

Brezhnev: The general world political climate. Because, if the war goes on, with the bombing going on or increasing in intensity, that would cause a generally unfavorable political climate throughout the world.

Of course, I omit to make another analysis. I know President Nixon and you, Dr. Kissinger, know what the state of American society is over this problem. You know it is split, into hundreds of various groups, as a result of constantly fluctuating policies. This is why President Nixon has to move forward, right, downwards, this way and that. That's why I think there is a need for radical solutions. That's why I know the President is now looking for such a solution. All these are very acute problems, and require drastic solutions. In any organization, the greater the laxity of discipline, the greater the need for order—especially in a war.

It is for the U.S. side to find the method to extricate itself. We discuss it here because we're having a free and frank discussion. This may require some thinking. Maybe not now, but later, I would welcome comments from you on what I have said here.

Kissinger: I know the President's views, and I can make some comments now. And I will reflect, and if I have additional comments, I will make them later.

Brezhnev: I'd be pleased to hear them.

Kissinger: First, in the spirit of personal confidence that I believe characterizes our discussions, I must tell you the determination the President has to bring about some solution, whatever price he has to pay. I tell you this because it is my duty to be sure you understand his frame of mind.

We had no intention two weeks ago to add any new element to the North Vietnamese problem. We were prepared to discuss it with you in a general way, but did not imagine it would reach these proportions. The situation was forced upon us.

We consider that what North Vietnam is now doing goes beyond Vietnam. It's an attack on the institution of the Presidency. And we cannot tolerate this.

Three weeks ago we would have eagerly accepted the proposal that hostilities be stopped or reduced. Indeed, we proposed it ourselves two years ago. We would have accepted it at any moment—until the offensive started—even a *de facto* ceasefire.

But now we have a situation where North Vietnam has violated the understanding we had with them in 1968.⁵ You know very well in this room that there was an understanding to respect the Demilitarized Zone. Therefore, it is imperative, if we are to stop the bombing, that they withdraw the divisions that crossed the DMZ, and that henceforth the DMZ be respected.

[General-Secretary offers cakes.]

⁵ See footnote 16, Document 126.

Kissinger: I can never refuse the General-Secretary.

Brezhnev: Delicious things.

Gromyko: Inspiring.]

Kissinger: With respect to other parts of the country, the problem is more complex, and we are prepared to discuss what exactly is meant by a reduction of military activity.

Another point that must be made is, if Hanoi in the interval between now and the private meeting increases its offensive activity, then of course the restraint I mentioned cannot be maintained. It cannot use the interval to seize even more territory.

Brezhnev: I think I can discern in the course of this conversation different approaches to these problems, though the final goal seems to be the same. You say, on the one hand, that the President is very anxious to find a positive way out and is willing to pay a price to find a solution. . . . The question then arises, how is that to be understood? It could mean flexibility or concessions, or it could mean the price of all-out war. Perhaps there is some error of logic. I think the goal [of ending the war] should be clear. But what is to be subordinated to what? The way you have put it forward, a solution may be very difficult.

[Dr. Kissinger interrupted the translation of the above paragraph at the point marked by the ellipsis. He said: I may not have explained it fully. The President is willing to take any risk, not to make any concession. I meant price in terms of risk.

[The Russians at the table conferred among themselves and agreed that Brezhnev had in fact understood Dr. Kissinger correctly, as the rest of the translation then made clear. At the end of the translation, Brezhnev resumed.]

Brezhnev: You say any risk? Meaning war. That means acting out of desperation.

Kissinger: Let me be precise. The President is prepared to be very flexible but he will not be pushed into negotiations by military action. And he must have assurance that military actions will now stop so that there can be a climate for negotiations. As I explained to your Ambassador. (He always leaves town when things get hot.)

Dobrynin: But this time I'm here with you.

Kissinger: The President would prefer a political solution, not a military solution. And his thinking is not too far from the position of the General-Secretary that first military activity should stop. Only there is a difference between us on how to interpret the stopping of military activity.

Brezhnev: The interpretation should be easy. Everybody stops shooting, stops where they are, and talks start.

Kissinger: We cannot accept that with respect to the forces that have crossed the Demilitarized Zone.

Brezhnev: That means war.

Kissinger: War between whom?

Brezhnev: It is just a statement of fact. It means continuation of war between you and the DRV. You want a political solution. And I believe that. What is needed is a complete stoppage, a ceasefire, without formal agreement, and then everything is placed on the table for negotiation.

Kissinger: For how long?

Brezhnev: That will be a subject for understanding between you and the DRV. It depends on how much time you think is necessary—one month, two months—and the two sides conduct negotiations on putting an end to the conflict as such. Then, let's say if there are five private meetings—or plenaries (that's a purely technical question)—this period can be used in an effort to do away with the problem and reach agreement.

Here there can be virtually dozens of ways of going about this. One can develop a whole timetable of measures by one side and by the other, to be done by one month, or by December, or by whatever period you want.

Kissinger: By when?

Brezhnev: By whatever period.

[The General-Secretary then launched into a long unrelated joke, which he forbade the notetakers to take down.]

Kissinger: The General-Secretary is so forceful a speaker that I think I understand him when he speaks even though I don't know a word he is saying.

Brezhnev: I am always forceful when I am sure of what I am saying. When I don't have conviction, I am silent or don't speak so forcefully.

Kissinger: I have not yet heard the General-Secretary on anything on which he does not speak with conviction.

Brezhnev: One thing surprises me. The U.S. cannot seem to understand that no bombing, on whatever scale, can end the conflict. The only result is to drag out the war for dozens of years more, and even worse consequences. Of course, really it's up to the President to find a way out. But it is an indubitable fact that if one side resorts to tough and harsh measures, this will only evoke equally harsh measures on the other side. And where is the way out?

I recall that deGaulle fought seven years in Algeria. After seven years he concluded he had to find a way out. It was the same thing with the French in Indochina. When I was recently in France, the French Minister of Industry (Cointin) accompanied me to Marseilles. He told

me he had spent twenty years in Vietnam. Doing what?, I asked. Fighting, he said. It was simply a waste of time and effort, he said. You face the same prospect.

And none of the countries neighboring Vietnam will agree to stop fighting against the U.S. They will continue to fight. This is the inexorable logic of the situation as things stand today.

This reminds me of another story. I want this off the record too. It is a poem I learned 35 years ago about the force of logic, about the wonders of science. A farmer had a son who had been to college. The family had two chickens, but the son tried to show that there were really three. There's one chicken here, one there, and really a third inside one of the first two. The father said to the son, "For that I sent you to college? I'll tell you what. We'll divide up the chickens—one for me, one for mother, and you can have the third!"

I learned the poem 35 years ago and declaimed it at school. This conversation just brought it back.

There is a lesson to be drawn from jokes. Maybe by logic you can make 3 out of 2. But it is not for me to prophesy what the outcome will be. The experience of the past is that the outcome of a war is often far from what the initiators had in mind who unleashed it. These are the hard facts of the case.

I certainly support President Nixon's idea of ending the war. Logic cannot lead to any other result. That is the end-goal of all of us. Certainly the Soviet Union has no axe to grind. Certainly we seek no advantage to us whatsoever.

Perhaps we can end the discussion of Vietnam at this point. You said you would give our comments some thought and perhaps come up with some variants. I would like to talk now about limitation of ABMs and the freeze of ICBMs.

Kissinger: I feel I have made sufficiently clear that our basic position on Vietnam is an extremely serious one. We are prepared to negotiate, and have sought since February 15 to start negotiations. We will negotiate in a generous spirit. But I cannot understate the seriousness and determination of the President not to be pushed by military action.

I will return to this briefly later. Could I ask now for a two-minute break?

I am prepared to see some of the concessions made de facto. But they should withdraw their divisions across the DMZ.

[It was 1:45 p.m. The meeting resumed at 1:50 p.m.]

SALT

Brezhnev: Now I would like to make some comments on ABM limitation and the freeze on ICBMs. This is an important measure, and we have been discussing it for two years now.

I want to show how the Soviet side solves problems in a constructive spirit. We have taken into account all the communications made to us by President Nixon. We have had quite a few over the past few months, and we have tried to take them all into account, particularly those in the most recent period.

[The General-Secretary then read the Soviet note on ABMs:]⁶

“It is recognized as expedient to limit ABM systems in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. to covering the capitals and to one area each for the location of land-based ICBM silo launchers.

“The location of ABM facilities for the covering of the capitals would be limited to an area in the form of a circle with a radius of 150 km whose center would be within the limits of the capital.”

This is a reflection of your proposal to us.

Kissinger: One member of our delegation is an adviser to your delegation.

Brezhnev: [resumes reading ABM note:] “The location of ABM facilities for covering land-based ICBM silo launchers would be limited to an area in the form of a circle with a radius of 150 km whose center for the United States would be in the area of location of ICBM launchers where the deployment of ABM facilities is most advanced.”

This also reflects your proposal.

“The quantity of ABMs and their launchers for each side should not exceed 100 units for covering the capitals and 100 units for covering land-based ICBM silo launchers.”

That, too, reflects your proposal.

So now you have something to take back, a proposal from your confidential channel.

Kissinger: The only one which does not reflect our official thinking, but that of a member of our delegation, is the 150 km radius.

Mr. General-Secretary, let me say this is a constructive approach. I will reserve comment until I hear what you say about submarines.

Brezhnev: Nothing.

Kissinger: Nothing?

Brezhnev: Be patient. What can I say about them? They travel under water, we can't see them, they're silent—

Gromyko: [in English] Puzzle, puzzle!

Kissinger: You do have something on submarines?

⁶ A copy of the Soviet note on anti-ballistic missiles, including the original Russian text, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes.

Gromyko: You can't read it before Sukhodrev!

[Sukhodrev then reads the text of the note on submarines:]⁷

"We have thoroughly considered the state of affairs at the strategic arms limitations talks taking into account the considerations expressed by the U.S. side through the confidential channel, relating to the freeze on ballistic-missile carrying submarines.

"In this connection we believe it appropriate to state the following:

"1. The question of the freeze on the number of modern ballistic-missile carrying submarines and the total number of launchers thereon is of very significant importance.

"Ballistic-missile carrying submarines occupy a special place in the composition of strategic offensive weapons and their consideration should not overlook differences in the geographies of the sides, the ballistic-missile carrying submarines at the disposal of the U.S. NATO allies and the U.S. forward submarine bases.

"As is known, that offers important strategic advantages to the American side, and under these conditions the number of submarines and ballistic missiles thereon at the disposal of the sides cannot be the same.

"2. In order to bring about relaxation of international tensions, normalization of relations between our two countries and cessation of the strategic arms race we agree to consider the question of including ballistic-missile carrying submarines in the suggested freeze agreement provided, naturally, that there should be established for the sides appropriate limits for such systems taking into account the considerations set forth above.

"The Soviet Union would agree that the U.S. and their NATO allies should have, for the period of the freeze agreement, up to 50 modern submarines with the total number of ballistic missile launchers thereon of up to 800, including 41 submarines with 656 ballistic missile launchers thereon at the disposal of the United States. Over that period the Soviet Union could have 62 modern submarines with the total number of ballistic missile launchers thereon of no more than 950.

"It is understood that over that period the sides will reduce the number of land-based ICBMs through dismantling older launchers. The sides would also be entitled to modernize and replace older submarines by new submarines but without increasing in the process the above-mentioned number of modern submarines and ballistic missile launchers thereon.

⁷ A copy of the Soviet note on submarines, including the original Russian text, is *ibid.*

“However, since the above proposal would only be a partial compensation for the strategic disbalance in the location of missile carrying nuclear submarines of the sides, the Soviet side proceeds from the premise that the whole of this problem—and primarily the issue of dismantling U.S. missile submarine bases outside the territory of the United States, should be appropriately resolved in the course of subsequent negotiations.

“If over the period of the Interim agreement the U.S. NATO allies increase the number of ballistic-missile carrying submarines to the excess of those operational or under construction, the Soviet Union reserves the right to the corresponding increase in such submarines.

“3. Taking into account the proposals of the U.S. side the Soviet Union could agree to include in the suggested freeze agreement the obligation not to start, in addition to ICBM silo launchers, new construction of fixed soft land-based ICBM launchers as well.

“4. Moscow believes it possible to have the period of the Interim freeze agreement—5 years.

“5. Given understanding in principle on such an approach we would be prepared to give necessary instructions to the Soviet delegation in Helsinki to discuss practical matters related to the final elaboration of the corresponding articles of the Interim Agreement on certain measures with respect to strategic offensive armaments having in mind that this Agreement together with the Treaty on the limitation of ABM systems would be signed during the forthcoming meeting in Moscow.”

Brezhnev: I think that is a very constructive proposal and it is in keeping with the spirit of all those communications you made through Ambassador Dobrynin. I would think President Nixon should think it very constructive. Apart from the constructive nature of our proposals, that paper is another sign of the spirit with which we approach the Summit meeting.

Kissinger: If the General-Secretary says as little on Vietnam as he said on submarines, we will make enormous progress today.

Brezhnev: I'd have been pleased to say less on Vietnam, but Dr. Kissinger took so much time.

Kissinger: That was meant as a compliment. You had said you'd say nothing on submarines.

It's a very constructive approach. I recognize that it incorporates many of the points we made in the confidential channel. It is a serious effort to address many of our concerns.

May I ask a practical question, simply for my understanding?

When you say, “Over the period the sides will reduce the number of land-based ICBMs,” does this mean you accept the obligation I

mentioned to Dobrynin to dismantle older land-based missiles once we grant you the right to build more submarines?

Brezhnev: That is what is implied. We have accepted that principle. We won't build new ones to replace the ones removed. We will build submarines according to the terms allowed, and we are prepared to inform you of the exact month and date we will dismantle the ICBM facilities.

Kissinger: We will have a problem in explaining to our Congress why you have a greater number of missiles in both categories. If we have an understanding that you will dismantle some of the older missiles, we will instruct our delegation to work out the precise numbers. Semenov can work this out with our delegation. We needn't do it here, at this level.

Gromyko: We will instruct accordingly.

Brezhnev: It is very easy. Of course we will be dismantling.

Kissinger: I only want to fix this so we can make this instruction to our delegation and make this part of the negotiation.

Brezhnev: We will give similar instructions.

Kissinger: No problem. But I have one other point. It is difficult for us to discuss limitations on British and French submarines. It would be easier if you make a unilateral declaration. We agree to 41, then if the British and French build more than 9 and if the total number reaches more than 50, then you can respond accordingly. This will be easier, because we have no right to tell the British and French what to do. You will make unilateral deal. We have no right to negotiate the total number.

Brezhnev: Of course. We shall certainly give thought to a unilateral declaration. But the figures are agreed.

Kissinger: The figures are agreed. There is no problem about figures. I will show you what a bad diplomat I am. Gromyko wouldn't do this, but I think the submarine matter is acceptable in principle.

Brezhnev: This shows what a strong diplomat you are. I agree our Foreign Ministry would never do that, but that's an example of how bad it is.

Gromyko: It's your advantage. I would never have said this outright. I would have waited at least three minutes.

Brezhnev: I don't want to raise the question at this time, but I do want to mention the serious matter of the U.S. military bases ringing the Soviet Union. This relates to your air force and intermediate range missiles.

Sonnenfeldt: We have no IRBMs.

Kissinger: We are going to ground Sonnenfeldt.

Brezhnev: We mean forward-based missiles. It doesn't make any difference what kind of rocket you die from.

Kissinger: Sonnenfeldt is right. We have no forward-based missiles that can reach the USSR, but I understand the General-Secretary's point.

Brezhnev: Of course it's useless to deploy intermediate range missiles in the U.S., so you deploy them abroad.

Kissinger: We have airplanes that can reach the USSR. As it happens, we have no missiles in Europe that can reach the USSR, but we have airplanes that can. But we understand the General-Secretary's point and we take it seriously.

Brezhnev: As we see it, this could be the start of an important future process. It could be the start of the strengthening of confidence; this should be followed by further measure of goodwill to strengthen normal relations between our two countries.

Kissinger: Agreed.

Brezhnev: . . . measures that would be in no way prejudicial to obligations each of us has to other countries, and would be at the same time encouraging to the Allies of us both. Therein lies the greatness and noble purpose of our two countries.

Kissinger: This attitude can be a principal result of the Summit.

Brezhnev: These are indeed problems of great importance. First, the statement of principles yesterday, then this,—all this carries great significance. It will last the commentators and analysts about 2 years, until the next Summit. I could write a good commentary. I could write a good article for the U.S. press. How much do you pay for a good article?

Kissinger: My only hope is that the next meeting is sooner than 2 years, and I hope the General-Secretary can visit us next year.

Brezhnev: I don't think I have an invitation or visa yet.

Kissinger: You will have an invitation when President Nixon comes here. We hope to have that in the final communiqué.

Brezhnev: Thank you. In the coming 4 years, the United States and Soviet Union should take even more important steps to increase the spirit of good will.

Kissinger: As for ABMs, Mr. General-Secretary, we have proposed using 2 ICBM fields, rather than Washington and 1 ICBM field, but I consider your proposal constructive.

Brezhnev: Then you said 2 and 2.

Kissinger: I will have to discuss this in Washington, but we will do so in very positive attitude.

Brezhnev: Mr. Kissinger—I would not want this on the record—this has the advantage for you, which your military are aware of, that yours covers more ICBMs than ours does.

Kissinger: I understand, but not necessarily if there are 150 km radius. It depends on where you put your fields.

Brezhnev: This won't be the case. The area will be clearly defined. It is a secret now, but not for long. Your military will photograph it anyway.

Kissinger: If you can give me informally some idea of the number of ICBMs you will put in this field, it would help persuade some of my people. You don't have to tell me the field, just an idea of the number, to tell the President.

Brezhnev: I will tell you that later.

Kissinger: It's just for the President.

Brezhnev: But I can say beforehand that we will have fewer than you have.

Kissinger: May I make a suggestion?

Brezhnev: It is not to be made public. Because it is really to your advantage and it would be bad if it came out.

Kissinger: I must be honest with you. Anything in the White House we can keep totally secret. Once it leaves the White House, as your Ambassador can tell you, I can't completely control it.

Brezhnev: That's why I say I should have invited Rogers in the first place!

Kissinger: You would have gotten more publicity. Therefore what you tell me here will not become public. Once agreement is completed, I can't guarantee that numbers won't become public, but what the General-Secretary says here will not.

Brezhnev: In nature of speculation, but not officially.

Kissinger: But once we have a treaty, our people will have to testify before Congressional committees. We will try to control it, but the testimony will only happen several months after an agreement.

Brezhnev: That's a procedural matter. If we agree on this principle, procedural matters won't be a problem.

Kissinger: The submarine matter is certainly acceptable. The ABM matter I will have to discuss in Washington but it is certainly in the direction. . . .

Brezhnev: I feel it incorporates your latest suggestion and incorporates the principle of equality, and I don't foresee changes.

Kissinger: I don't see any problems. Let me suggest the following procedure. I will take this up with the President as soon as I return Monday or Tuesday.⁸ We'll then call back our negotiator from Helsinki

⁸ April 24 or 25.

and simultaneously get together our military people. All of this will take about a week. We'll then instruct our negotiator. If you can send your Ambassador back. . . . If in the meantime Semenov can be kept under restraint so he doesn't reveal this, it would speed this matter.

Brezhnev: We have given him instructions. But if you think this is easier, we can send him a telegram to keep it back for a time.

Kissinger: Let me think about it.

Brezhnev: We have enough time to cable him to hold up.

Kissinger: When will he propose it? Monday?

Gromyko: At his discretion. He met with Smith yesterday and said nothing.⁹

Kissinger: He hinted at it.

Brezhnev: On submarines, Semenov knows nothing.

Kissinger: Let him propose it. Let me on second thought talk to the President. I'll tell Vorontsov.

Gromyko: We'll hold Semenov up.

Brezhnev: We have a closed phone link, so we will phone him immediately.

[Aide goes out to do so.]

Kissinger: How should we do it in Helsinki? Should they conclude the whole thing in Helsinki, or should we leave something for the Summit? We can settle certain things privately but not in Helsinki.

Brezhnev: The signing should be on a high level. The final decision and signing should be at the Summit level.

Kissinger: The signing and final decisions should be at the highest level, yes.

Gromyko: Since this matter relates to a text, it may be best for our delegations to finalize as much as is possible. Because it is a text, the lawyers should look at it. If all is done here, there is a risk of not having enough time. But the final decision and signing should be here.

Kissinger: I agree with the Foreign Minister that perhaps we should pick some issues, perhaps one or two—I don't want to take the time of the General-Secretary on this—on which the delegations should write the text, but then, the President and the General-Secretary can settle them here.

Gromyko: Deliberately you mean?

Kissinger: Yes.

Brezhnev: But to have reached confidential agreement beforehand?

⁹ See Document 136.

Kissinger: Confidentially.

Brezhnev: So there will be a special signing ceremony in the Kremlin.

Kissinger: We will have a SALT agreement, there is no question.

Brezhnev: I think so too.

Kissinger: I will let your Ambassador know by the end of the coming week when we can proceed in Helsinki, but it will be very soon.

Brezhnev: Good, because there is not so much time left.

Kissinger: Let them talk about radars this week. They have a lot to talk about.

Brezhnev: Yes. That's my view. I don't think they're in any hurry. They don't have much to talk about, but let them talk. Let them talk about the nature of the universe. The Delegations should be locked in a room for the final 3 days without food and told they must get an agreement or not get food for another 3 days.

Kissinger: We've reached the point where despite all the efforts of our delegations we will still reach an agreement.

Brezhnev: No matter how hard they try! That's our success.

Kissinger: Our delegation is so complex we don't understand them anymore.

Brezhnev: You want an example of how to make something very complex? I can pose one or two questions that neither you nor the President can solve for months. So we can consider this closed.

European Security

Brezhnev: I would like to say a few words on another important question, that is, the problem of Europe. I won't go over old ground on the importance of this issue not only for the Soviet Union, the FRG, the GDR, and France, but for all European nations generally, and I would say for world affairs and from the standpoint of our joint desire to direct matters toward a general détente in the world. As I see it, both your efforts and ours are directed at that goal.

I would like to ask you to tell President Nixon that we value highly the President's position on this matter, the support he is giving to ratification of the treaties and the agreement on Berlin. I would like you to bear in mind this is not [just] a compliment to the President, this is the truth. At the same time, I don't want to be too reticent or shy in speaking my mind on other aspects. I want to express the wish that at this decisive stage for Chancellor Brandt and the FRG the President should say a still more weighty word in favor of ratification. This would have a considerable significance and would be much appreciated in the Soviet Union and throughout the world. I would like to ask you Dr. Kissinger to draw President Nixon's attention to this.

Kissinger: You can be sure I will.

Brezhnev: President Nixon does have an unlimited capacity in this respect. It would be a very important step toward very successful negotiations.

Kissinger: In what respect “unlimited?”

Brezhnev: If I were elected President, I would show you. It would be good if I were elected President, but I don’t seek the nomination!

Kissinger: With respect to influencing the Germans?

Brezhnev: The President has unlimited capacity with respect to ratification. We do highly appreciate his position. The point I make is that we would appreciate any further efforts he could make in favor of it. Intuition is sometimes a good guide, and I have the impression President Nixon will respond favorably.

Kissinger: As you know, there are elections tomorrow in the German state of Baden-Württemberg.¹⁰ If these go badly, that is, if the Free Democrats get wiped out or get reduced substantially, or if the Social Democrats don’t do well, then I don’t think anything we do can make any difference. I think the Brandt Government will fall. I give you my honest judgment.

Brezhnev: Would that be to our advantage for the Brandt Government to fall?

Kissinger: No, we don’t want this, but I state it as an objective fact.

Brezhnev: The U.S. President still has 24 hours to act. I know you sometimes put out surprise press conferences. Well, the President knows better how to do it.

Kissinger: No, we cannot influence a State election in Germany. It is too difficult. I don’t think it will happen, but I wanted to say it would be difficult.

Brezhnev: You are a difficult man to come to terms with. We came to agreement immediately before, and we have already notified Semenov immediately.

Kissinger: But can you influence elections for us?

Brezhnev: Isn’t all this understanding we have reached in favor of that? On SALT, ABM, European issues, long-term credits, the whole radical improvement in the atmosphere of U.S.-Soviet relations?

[The Russians conferred among themselves briefly, at which Dr. Kissinger remarked: Everytime I say something, there is a brawl on the Russian side.]

¹⁰ See Document 159.

Brezhnev: Because, after all, the President is a politician, not a merchant. Politics cover all questions. The important thing is for us to reach agreement.

Kissinger: Realistically, what I would like to do is to claim credit when the elections go well tomorrow and then ask you for concessions.

Brezhnev: What concessions?

Kissinger: I'll think of one.

Brezhnev: I'll be prepared to give you credit if it goes well, but if things go badly, I'll say it was your fault.

Kissinger: You must have read in the Ambassador's cables that I am vain.

Brezhnev: I have never read that.

Dobrynin: I have told them you are modest.

Kissinger: I will have revolutions on my hands. Realistically, it is too late to do anything. If the elections go as expected without radical change in Bonn, we will see what can be done.

Brezhnev: What is your general forecast?

Kissinger: My forecast is that tomorrow's election will not affect the parliamentary situation in Bonn. Perhaps some minor parliamentary changes, but it will not affect the situation. Confidentially, we have attempted to be helpful. We invited Bahr to Washington¹¹ and let it be known, and we have not received anyone from the Opposition. This is a fairly clear signal in Germany. We have not seen Barzel since the ratification debate started.¹² He wanted to come in April and we did not receive him.

Brezhnev: I know you received Bahr.

Kissinger: And when Barzel came in January, your Ambassador in Bonn can confirm we did not encourage him.

I want to be honest with you. I had arranged with Bahr to send a memo that perhaps he could use confidentially in early April.¹³ But this became impossible because of the Vietnam situation. Our domestic situation became more complicated. We will review what can be done between now and May 4.

Brezhnev: This is a very important component of the general package of problems we will be having discussions on and hoping to resolve. We feel that on all the issues, agreements should be reached that will be worthy of our two countries.

¹¹ Bahr visited Washington in late-March; See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XL, Germany, 1969–1972, Document 348.

¹² Barzel visited Washington in late-January; see *ibid.*, Document 338.

¹³ On Kissinger's refusal to send a "memo," see *ibid.*, Documents 80, 86, and 87.

Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, we have invested so much in the Berlin agreement that we are in favor of ratification of these agreements. In light of these discussions, we will see what additional steps we can take to assist ratification.

Brezhnev: We know that, and that is why we said we value President Nixon's position regarding European matters very highly. I have said so publicly, too, in our Central Committee. My feeling is that European problems will be discussed in a favorable spirit.

Kissinger: We expect it too.

Brezhnev: We feel sure that when President Nixon hears what we have to say he will see that we are not trying to inject any "underwater rocks" in our European policy. We are not self-centered.

Kissinger: Will you be introducing new European matters at the Summit?

Brezhnev: We would like perhaps to have something to say on the European Conference. The general position and attitude of the U.S. Administration is known to us, that is to say, agreement in principle. What is needed is just a few specifics. By that time we may have ready in written form how to conclude a European Conference, that is to say the basic principles for a European Conference. Possibly even before the May meeting, we could agree on or discuss certain additional points bilaterally.

Kissinger: You will find it easier to discuss with President if there have been prior exchanges, so he's not confronted with entirely new matters when he gets here.

Brezhnev: We will follow the channel.

Kissinger: May I raise in this connection the problem of mutual force reductions? In your considerations regarding the European Security Conference, has your thinking reached the point where you would be willing to have parallel discussions on force reductions?

Brezhnev: Just to return to European affairs generally, there will be discussed the ratification of the treaties, the Berlin agreement, agreement on principles of convening a conference, and the relation of the GDR to the FRG. Then on a purely confidential basis we would certainly like to know the answers to such questions as when the U.S. would support the admission of both Germanies to the U.N.

With respect to force reductions, that question is one that we do not intend to withdraw from the agenda, but perhaps it is one that should not be linked too closely to the Summit so as not to impede matters of top priority. But at some stage we would be ready in the future to discuss it on a confidential basis bilaterally. Of course, the general portent of our proposals on this score is to have the least possible number of troops in Europe, reducing to a minimum the risk of war

in Europe. At some stage, we will certainly start to talk to you on this. Even if at first there is only a very slight reduction, the mere fact of a reduction will have a tremendous significance. It will be a token of our desire for a reduction of tensions and a token of goodwill and spirit of confidence. No one is implying that we will have 3 million and you will have 600. There can be no unacceptable proposals made in this field. Mutually acceptable principles will have to be found. There can be no unilateral advantage.

Kissinger: How about if side by side with preparations for a European Security Conference we begin discussions on reductions, directed at basic principles?

Brezhnev: In general, that would be a very good thing. But what we both have to bear in mind is that the merging of these 2 issues would divert attention from the main issues. Because it is to be foreseen that with respect to a European Security Conference hundreds of questions will come up. Luxemburg, Switzerland, Denmark can all raise questions.

Kissinger: You like chaos.

Brezhnev: On the contrary. So let's get this question out of the way first.

Kissinger: We do not think force reductions should be discussed at a European Security Conference, because a European Security Conference is a much larger forum. We think a force reduction should be discussed in a parallel body among the countries whose forces would be reduced.

Brezhnev: Mr. Kissinger, of course it is certainly possible that the Conference itself could say something favorable on approaching it. Perhaps the Conference could set up a special body or another organization with the necessary diplomatic and military personnel—naturally with the participation of countries concerned. On this question, we could use our bilateral channel to conduct quiet and steady discussions on this. But at the forthcoming meeting, we should register our general attitude and desire to advance to a European Security Conference.

Kissinger: Assuming that ratification goes through, which we expect, we are prepared to do this. But our attitude is that side by side, we would have discussions on this subject in a separate forum.

Brezhnev: We are certainly in agreement to start in the confidential channel. As soon as we feel we have come to a common approach, we can then involve more openly the others who are concerned. Because of course attitudes and positions of states in this are different. Brandt at the Crimea asked me, should we also discuss Luxemburg and its 94 policemen? Should this be covered?

Kissinger: That is consistent with his practice of always getting to the fundamentals of an issue.

Brezhnev: But as on the subject of the admission of the 2 German states to the U.N., you know when we signed the treaty with the FRG, there was a clause in the statement on efforts of the sides to secure the admission of the 2 Germanies. Since at the Summit we will be discussing important issues, it would not be understood by the public in the USSR or the GDR or also in the U.S. if nothing was said on that subject.

Kissinger: The Foreign Minister knows the sequence. It is possible that the treaties won't be ratified by the Summit. They may pass on May 4 and then be rejected by the Bundesrat, then go back to Parliament for a full majority in June.

If this is the sequence, then a successful Summit would be a guarantee of ratification. It would be impossible that a German Parliament could reject them after a successful U.S. and Soviet meeting. Secondly as regards the GDR, I don't want to raise the wrong expectations as regards what we can say at the meeting. I don't think we can go much beyond the Berlin Agreement. With respect to admission of the 2 Germanies to the U.N., we frankly have not yet taken a position. My informal view is that we will back whatever Chancellor Brandt wants to do. If he proposes it, we will be prepared to support these steps.

Brezhnev: Brandt did register in a document his readiness to support entry.

Kissinger: We will check with Brandt before the Summit.¹⁴ We will not be an obstacle. If he is willing, we have no American interest to oppose it.

Brezhnev: Good.

Bilateral Relations

Brezhnev: Yesterday after a meeting devoted to the memory of Lenin I briefly informed my colleagues of my meeting with you. Naturally I touched on the main points and general questions which came up, and the questions you are prepared to settle at the Summit: Europe, bilateral relations, (for example, MFN, credits, broad commercial cooperation, increased cultural ties, environmental, etc.) and I could see that generally my colleagues were favorably disposed. Of course, there is a lot to be specified here, with respect to MFN, the scale of credits, etc. As we see it, the specifics could be gone into through the

¹⁴ Kissinger later sent the following undated message to Bahr: "Brezhnev has approached us with a request to support UN membership for the GDR and the FRG. We have told him that we will be guided by the FRG's approach on this matter. I would greatly appreciate your suggestions on how we should handle this in Moscow." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 426, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, Europe, 1972)

channel, and then discussed finally at the Summit. As we understand it, broad prospects are opening up in the field of commerce. Your commercial circles are interested in it, for example, in Soviet natural gas. This could be done by a long-term contract, e.g. for 20–25 years. This could be good for both sides. I won't go into details, but perhaps at our next meeting you could agree on the broad outlines. I welcome at the next meeting your readiness to give your general views and your readiness to go into these matters.

Vietnam

I must add, in all frankness, that when I informed my colleagues, they did all voice concern over our discussion of Vietnam. That is only too natural, and you should currently understand. But we did come to an understanding today that we would discuss it again after you think things over.

Kissinger: After we both think things over.

Brezhnev: Certainly there is never any harm in thinking things over. It can get tiring sometimes, but I'm a man who is always thinking things over. Perhaps it is dictated by the post I hold. Like all of us, I get such a torrent of information every day, on problems both international and domestic, that are difficult to manage. With a planned economy, 15 Republics and autonomous regions, all of this has to be plugged into my computer [points to his head]. So by 1:00 a.m. when I get to sleep I still dream of these problems. Some are difficult; others aren't but are interesting. It's a question of logic again. One tries to bring them to some kind of useful resolution. Without being personal, just abstract, we Russians have different kinds of logic. One kind is horses' logic. It is difficult to face the prospect of that. We have a Proverb: A teacher asked a student a difficult question. The student did not know, and he said, "Let the horse answer it, he has a big head." That is an old story.

Gromyko: Horses should be put to the task of conducting foreign policy. I wonder what would happen then?

Brezhnev: The back page of our newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta* is called "Horns and Hoofs." It is devoted to jokes. My jokes of course are just meant to be a "lining," or a little respite from the seriousness of our discussions. There can be curious results from translations of jokes.

I have another story. This one is fact. Two years ago, we were appointing an able man to be Ambassador to a certain country. He was well known, positively, in the host country. Fortunately, its leader was on good terms with me, and could speak freely. He told me, "He's a fine man, but his name translated into our language sounds very rude and rather indecent. It would be okay in a male society but not in our country."

I hope my jokes aren't misunderstood. It is not consistent with my character. I know Americans like humor. If I see a glum look on President Nixon's face, I will tell him a couple of stories to cheer him up.

Kissinger: Your Foreign Minister looks a bit like the President.

Gromyko: The President said that to me himself. But I don't know whether he looks like me or I look like him. Next time in Washington I will pick a dark night and try to walk into the White House.

Kissinger: I will take you to dinner and we will go in together.

Brezhnev: If President Nixon will be like Gromyko, I am horror-stricken. It is impossible to talk to Gromyko. It will mean a lot of grief. The word "grief" reminds me of a joke. A foreign visitor to the Soviet Union wanted to buy flour for baking. But the word "flour" in Russian [muká] is the same as the word "grief" [múka], except that the stress is different. So after looking up the word quickly in a dictionary, she went into a shop and asked for two pounds of grief!

It has been a good day. Useful. Of course, the Vietnam issue is still there. It is complex, but we have agreed to think things over and return to it. You are now armed with sufficient material to report to President Nixon.

I have one request and wish: I would like to say something privately to you and directly for the President when we take a walk. That is the end for today. We will resume Monday morning. Time is an important factor in these matters. As for tomorrow, certain urgent matters have just come up—not related to these discussions. I think it is possible for you to stay until Monday. Perhaps you can meet tomorrow with Gromyko, at 10:00 a.m.

Kissinger: I will do my best. The President is getting restless in my absence and has expressed the hope that I will return tomorrow. I will suggest to him that we have unfinished business, but I think we will be able to do it.

Brezhnev: Okay.

Kissinger: I must in all events leave by 6:00 p.m. Monday.

Brezhnev: Okay.

Announcement of Visit

Kissinger: I have another point to raise, and it would be useful to communicate your view to Washington. I believe that after my return we should make a brief public announcement that I have been here. Otherwise it could leak out. If it leaks, it would look very mysterious. Hanoi already knows, probably, but would be confused. We could work out the text tomorrow with your Foreign Minister.

Brezhnev: I give my consent in advance, although I have not discussed it with my colleagues and they understand this as a confidential visit.

Kissinger: It will remain confidential while I am here.¹⁵

Brezhnev: I will discuss it with my colleagues, but I will not stand in the way.

I have another story, not related to anything. A man was seen carrying two TV sets over his shoulder, and he was asked why he needed two. He said, one is for myself. As for the other, my mother-in-law told me she would give her life for a TV set!

[The meeting then broke up, at 4:05 p.m. General-Secretary Brezhnev took Dr. Kissinger aside for a private conversation, standing, in a corner of the same room.]¹⁶

¹⁵ For text of Kissinger's message reporting Soviet agreement to announce his trip, see Document 145.

¹⁶ Although no verbatim account has been found, Kissinger later described his private conversation with Brezhnev; see Document 148.

140. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 22, 1972.

WTE 008. 1. I am astonished both by the tone and the substance of your communications. Please remember there is an eight-hour time differential. We have worked fifteen hours a day. The airport is one hour from our residence. We were unaware of communications failure and therefore lectures about how we should have acted are highly inappropriate. We need support, not constant strictures.

2. We have reported constantly. My 006² is being retransmitted. But if the President does not trust me there is not much that can be done.

3. What is all the excitement about? There is no chance of my trading talks for an end to bombing. No one has suggested it. I would not accept it. My 006 which is being retransmitted leaves no doubt of that.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 4:44 a.m.

² See footnote 2, Document 135.

I have been more brutal on Vietnam than in any talk with any leader of any country. Who after all has pushed the existing strategy against everybody?

4. The situation seems to me as follows: Brezhnev wants a summit at almost any cost. He has told me in effect that he would not cancel it under any circumstances. He swears that he knew nothing of the offensive. He told me they did not step up aid deliveries. Even though untrue, this gives us three opportunities:

- (A) We may get help in deescalating or ending the war.
- (B) If not, we can almost surely get his acquiescence in pushing NVN to the limit.
- (C) We can use the summit to control the uproar in the U.S.

We have got to this point by a judicious mixture of pressure and flexibility. But here we have shown no flexibility whatever. Why blow it now? And for what?

5. As for my staying till Monday,³ here is the situation: So far we have refused to discuss any summit subject including very favorable to us draft statement⁴ Brezhnev handed us at the end of the meeting yesterday. Today is again devoted to Vietnam. Brezhnev knows I was prepared to go to Paris on Monday and so do his colleagues. Refusal to stay is a slap in his face and it deprives us of opportunity to get reaction to tough presentation of first day which no doubt is in Hanoi now. However if I can finish today I will do so. Everything discussed here will be ad referendum. We get more out of their acquiescence in our bombing than out of a rupture which will throw the whole Communist world-wide propaganda apparatus against us and permits no possibility of a reply.

6. In sum I am not sure they are able to deliver on Vietnam. The tone of the message from Hanoi they read me was insolent to them in the extreme. But they will stand aside and they will have the summit. We can use this as cover for other actions. Why not play out the string?

7. I have demanded concrete progress at the May 2 meeting in the toughest possible terms. Today I shall give Brezhnev our program demanding the withdrawal across the DMZ, release of some prisoners, etc. They have all but promised to try to help.

It seems to me better to step up actions South of the 20th parallel this week, go to the private meeting, and then go all-out if it fails. The very people who are now screaming for blood will collapse when the going gets really tough. But you may assure the President that under no circumstances will I agree to an end of bombing here; nor have Soviets even asked for it. It is however essential that I play out the string and

³ April 24.

⁴ See the attachment to Document 134.

not be provocative. And above all he must trust me. I have not exactly let him down on other missions.

8. I am counting on you to help keep things in perspective. We are within sight of all our objectives. Let us keep steady on the home-stretch. You may also show this to the President.⁵

⁵ Haig later read excerpts from the message in a telephone conversation with the President; see Document 142.

141. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 22, 1972, 4:05–4:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of Central Committee of CPSU

Andrei A. Gromyko, Foreign Minister

Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA

Viktor Sukhodrev, Soviet Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

Summit Preparations; Vietnam; China; Economic Relations

[After the formal meeting broke up, General Secretary Brezhnev took Dr. Kissinger aside for a private conversation.² They stood by the window in the same room where the formal meeting had taken place.]³

Summit Preparations

Brezhnev: I want you to tell the President of our serious intention. He can count on an unlimited number of personal conversations with me, at any time. The program we have is a very good one. I have several additional pleasant suggestions, for example, a visit to the Ostankino TV tower. There will be the least possible attention to protocol. We could put aside all second-rank and petty matters.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

² Although no verbatim account has been found; see Document 148.

³ All brackets in the source text.

Everything will have been prepared, so that we do not burden ourselves with all the arguments. Of course, it will be impossible to pass over certain questions in silence. But we will be able to deal with them in a tranquil way. There should be nothing unexpected.

In the future, there should be further steps to reduce arms and reduce tensions and improve relations. In fact, it will be envisaged in the SALT agreement itself. In this connection, your bases with your air force will have to come up.

Kissinger: This was always foreseen.

Brezhnev: There are some enterprises we want to show President Nixon that are not far from Moscow. Your advance group⁴ has not given a definite answer; they fear overburdening the President. This is a restricted enterprise, which is the most modern we have.

Kissinger: Mr. General Secretary, if there is something you are particularly interested in and recommend, tell your Ambassador about it.

Brezhnev: This is a new satellite town we have recently built. We want with an open heart to show him the best we have.

Kissinger: I will take care of it. Our advance people are rather complicated.

Brezhnev: Our people have been instructed not to object to any reasonable request. We will generate an appropriate atmosphere for the correspondents. The program for Mrs. Nixon will also be suitable. There will be a visit to a chocolate factory—there will be women workers there; chocolate seems to be a female weakness. Also the Palace of the Pioneers, the Osipov Ensemble, and “Swan Lake.”

[The General Secretary then handed Dr. Kissinger the attached note on the Middle East.]⁵

⁴ Reference is to the U.S. advance team, headed by Dwight Chapin, the President's appointments secretary, which was in Moscow to handle arrangements for the summit.

⁵ Not attached. The unofficial translation of the note and the Russian original are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes. The Soviet note stated that a final settlement in the Middle East should “contain an obligation by Israel for a complete withdrawal of her troops from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and obligations by the sides in the conflict for a termination of the state of belligerency and the establishment of peace among them.” Once Israel withdrew its troops from the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, Egypt would take steps to ensure freedom of navigation through both the Suez Canal and the Strait of Tiran as well as in the Gulf of Aqaba. The Soviet proposal further suggested the establishment of demilitarized zones, possibly manned by troops and military observers from the United Nations, on both sides of the Israeli border. As part of the settlement, either the United Nations or the great powers should agree to assure the security of Israel and neighboring Arab states. Although it called for measures to resolve the plight of Palestinians, the Soviet note emphasized that “the final settlement in the Middle East shall not be delayed until translating into reality practical measures for solving the refugee problem.”

Kissinger: Do you want to discuss that subject [the Middle East] tomorrow?

Brezhnev: Monday is better.

Are your communications all right?

Kissinger: They broke down last night for a while. The President nearly had a heart attack.

Vietnam

Kissinger: I have to tell you frankly, Mr. General Secretary, that we will have a difficult four weeks coming up. The President genuinely believes that the dignity of America and the dignity of his office is involved.

Brezhnev: Every question has two sides, like a medallion. One side of a medallion has an image of a soldier or a general, etc., but if you look at the other side sometimes there is something like “rest in peace.”

Kissinger: When you and the President meet, I know the spirit in which I had the privilege of seeing you work and speak.

Brezhnev: There are times in negotiation when I feel compelled to raise acute matters. But in these forthcoming meetings there will be no such talk. We have now to overcome the forces in the world which are doing their level best to prevent our meeting. There is opposition in America. The way I see it, they are preparing to do battle. I don't know in what terms they can become your allies.

Kissinger: Let me give you my honest judgment, unofficially. If it had not been for the North Vietnamese offensive, the President could have mobilized the center and the moderate left, and he would have been certain to be reelected this way.

Brezhnev: I have said many things on this offensive. So I do not want to repeat myself. It has to be borne in mind that the next 3–4 weeks should generate a background conducive to the Summit. You still have time to generate this favorable background. We are doing what we can.

Kissinger: If the North Vietnamese do not stop this offensive, I can foresee only bad consequences.

Brezhnev: If you really do, there will be serious consequences. But the American bombers and the proposals you make are not in my hands. I did make the reservation at the outset that I am in no position to negotiate for the North Vietnamese. But I made a few suggestions which in my personal view could be useful, in order to help. If ever the Vietnamese found out that I was making these suggestions to you that could only worsen matters for you.

Kissinger: You can be sure we will not disclose it.

China

Brezhnev: I do not know how and in what way the Chinese could find out, but they would put a definite interpretation on all this. There

is a lot I do not know about the Chinese philosophy, just as the President does not.

Kissinger: Yes.

Brezhnev: I realize there are certain reasons and motives behind the President's visit to China, but I am certain he does not have the full picture.

Kissinger: One related point. There have been rumors spread by Soviet personnel that there were discussions between us and the Chinese on military matters. I don't care about your propaganda, but I want to assure you that there were no military discussions.

Brezhnev: There was only the one occasion when the Ambassador on instructions cited reports received from Chinese sources.⁶

Kissinger: Governmental sources?

Brezhnev: We don't want to be more specific.

Kissinger: It is a provocation anyway.

Brezhnev: It was related to that speech of the President's in Peking, when he made the remark that the U.S. and China were holding the fate of the world in their hands. This remark circled the world. It gave us concern.⁷

Kissinger: Let me give you our view. The People's Republic of China is very important in the Asian area, and in 10–15 years it will perhaps have a role in other regions. Peace in the world now depends on relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. We can settle things concretely; with others we can settle only theoretically.

Brezhnev: The Chinese general tendency for world hegemony is an obsession with them. It is something they will not give up. It is important not to encourage it, but to localize it.

Once they made an enormous effort to gain hegemony in the world Communist movement. I can give you an example. A Soviet diplomat was in Algeria on business, and he happened to visit an outlying district where there were oil refineries and a workers' settlement. Many tourists and delegations go there. Right there, in the middle of the desert, was a Chinese restaurant! The diplomat was interested in this. Anyone who came into the restaurant for a meal left with a bundle of free Chinese propaganda. This was the period when they tried to split

⁶ In a meeting with Kissinger on March 9, Dobrynin raised the question of whether the United States and the People's Republic of China had discussed the "dislocation" of Soviet forces along the Sino-Soviet border; see Document 56. Kissinger relayed Soviet concern on the matter in a meeting on March 14 with Huang Hua, the Chinese permanent representative to the United Nations.

⁷ See footnote 4, Document 134.

the world Communist movement. They would throw bundles of Chinese literature at the Peking–Moscow train. Well, when they lost in their attempt at hegemony over the movement and lost their foothold, they closed up this restaurant in Algeria.

This presents a very big question: What tendencies does one want to encourage? Although, as we have said, we believe it quite natural for two countries to improve relations, provided that it is not done in a way that is harmful to third countries. Short-run considerations do not always yield benefits in the long run. Do you understand me?

Kissinger: Yes I do.

Brezhnev: I am just philosophizing. It may help us both to delve deeper into this matter.

Kissinger: We have no interest in encouraging anti-Soviet policies on the part of the PRC.

Brezhnev: There is enough of that already without you. If I am shot 150 times and buried with a cross on my grave, what more can you do? I have resigned myself to my Chinese death, though not to my natural death.

Kissinger: You seem very much alive to me.

Brezhnev: My wife asked me at breakfast yesterday how I feel. About 40–45 years old, I said. Have you been feeling this way for long? she asked. For the last 5 years, I said. She understood my answer!

We have had fruitful talks, you and I. If we left it to Gromyko and Rogers, they would be talking for two months.

[The General Secretary and Dr. Kissinger then walked out of the meeting room together. Outside the door, before going down the few steps toward the lobby, the conversation resumed.]

Economic Relations

Brezhnev: Monday we will want to discuss trade, credits, exchanges, and so forth. There is a Presidential decision involved.

Kissinger: There are two different things. One involves a Presidential decision; the other involves a Congressional decision.⁸

Brezhnev: But you yourselves write the laws. It is for you to change them. It is to the U.S.'s advantage to extend us credits. Certainly something can be done. We have vast resources of gas. There will be a crisis in that respect in the U.S. in a few years' time. We could have said

⁸ As Kissinger explained to Gromyko in their meeting on April 23, the President could exercise executive discretion in the awarding of loans from the Export-Import Bank; but the Congress would have to pass legislation to establish Most Favored Nation trade relations with the Soviet Union; see Document 150.

to ourselves, to hell with them, let the Americans have a crisis. But instead we say, let us build a pipeline and let you have millions of barrels of gas.

That is the purport of our policy.

Kissinger: Mr. General Secretary, in principle we are prepared. We have concrete schemes. Your Minister is coming on May 7.⁹ I have instructed Secretary Peterson—who is a very intelligent man—to deal with him with a constructive approach.

Brezhnev: We once had an arrangement with the Japanese. We could revitalize that.

Kissinger: Our conception is that if our relations go during the Summit the way we hope, then during the Summit we can work out a complete project and make it concrete in the summer.

Brezhnev: As I see it as a politician, if business circles in the U.S. see government support for this they will support the President in the campaign.

Kissinger: It may be tactless for me to say this on Lenin's birthday, but frankly Lenin was wrong in one respect—when he said businessmen understand their political interests. Most businessmen I know are political idiots!

Brezhnev: I have no comment on that! You know the best!

[There were some closing pleasantries and handshakes all around, and Dr. Kissinger departed.]

⁹ Reference is to the meeting in Washington between Nixon and Soviet Trade Minister Patolichev, which was postponed until May 11; see Document 215.

142. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 22, 1972, 10:35 a.m.

AH: I have a message from Henry before he started today's meetings. We shook him up I am afraid.—(reads from Henry's wire)²

RN: Don't worry about Henry—Send over his original message so Rose can type it and I can read it.³

AH: (continues reading from wire) "the situation is as follows" . . . a, b, c.

RN: The point is that Henry has to keep today in front of the Soviets that we do not have to have the summit. We can continue our bombing—And another side to this—the Soviets can change their minds if they see the domestic side here is in an uproar. We can't assume they may be playing a double game—Vietnam and the summit. Henry has to be aware that this blabber doesn't mean anything.

AH: I sent him a message that this was one concern which he should be alerted to.⁴ But we don't have to face that until after May 2 meeting, Mr. President.

RN: The problem that I have with it—May 2 meeting at this point is whether we can agree or what is the condition for agreeing to Plenary meeting?

AH: The condition is that they will be there on May 2.

RN: And we agree to stop bombing?

AH: No.

RN: Even if we don't, once we go to the meeting, the pressure will be great.

AH: We can work that—

RN: You remember the pain of the bombing pauses—every bombing pause is helping the enemy—Don't want a bomb halt under conditions of agreeing to meeting. We must continue to hit them up to the 20th parallel.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² Document 140.

³ The retyped version of the message from the President has not been found.

⁴ Reference is evidently to Document 136.

AH: They will strike tomorrow—52's still have some good targets 50 miles south. Laird has just put the word out.

RN: for the 20th?

AH: Yes. We are getting some good BDA. I fighter bombers have raked that over.

RN: You mean BDA is the enemy—

AH: We hit a power plant.

RN: There is so much flying on this—he must realize that we can't play a game out here. I care about a lot of people who are really concerned now—not so much the colleges.

AH: I have a message from Sonnenfeldt⁵—rather doubled talked so Henry wouldn't see it—you know what a hawk he is. Very confident Henry is playing it tough.

RN: Henry must have finished the meeting by now.

AH: I think I will go back to him on this Monday meeting.

RN: Frankly, I think we should compress meeting on Vietnam—all day is good. I am confident that Brezhnev is trying to get Henry to slide meeting over to the summit. The summit thing worries me.

AH: Henry knows our concerns. (reads from Henry's memo) he has got some good advice—that they are soft in one line so firm on the other.

RN: The decision with regard to staying until Sunday only based on progress he has made today. Otherwise come back and start talking to Dobrynin again. How was the strike yesterday?

AH: Well handled.

RN: Didn't cause much reaction here.

AH: People don't much care.

RN: It wasn't Hanoi or Haiphong, people don't care. The press is really something—*Baltimore News* headlines say "U.S. loses eight planes in Viet—" then subhead reads, "Over the Month of April". Can you imagine?

AH: They are all bleeding over the Vice President's speech.⁶

⁵ In an undated message delivered to Haig on the morning of April 22, Sonnenfeldt reported: "Appreciate your worrying about my health. But so far really nothing to worry about. If things go on like this I am confident health will be better when we return than when we left. I think even Fritz [Kraemer] would agree." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File)

⁶ In a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington on April 21, Agnew charged that the Democratic Party, including such Presidential hopefuls as Senators Humphrey, Kennedy, McGovern, and Muskie, had staked its future on the failure of Nixon's policy in Vietnam. Agnew also argued that *The New York Times*, "an ardent advocate of getting into Vietnam," was doing "penance regularly by scourging the President who is getting us out." (*The New York Times*, April 22, 1972, p. 15)

RN: I am sorry to disturb him, but Henry is mesmerized by summitry. I don't want to lose the summit, but I have gone one step further—we can lose the summit and not the country—we must save the country not pay for the summit by jeopardizing the outcome of Vietnam—I want to come out of Vietnam with our heads high.

143. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 22, 1972, 11:08 a.m.

Sitto 29. Reference your 008.² There has been no effort to harass but rather to point out that we were totally out of communication with you from 1:00 p.m. yesterday until 9:00 last evening, and then the first message we received was unreadable. Furthermore, we had no way of knowing whether or not you had received our traffic. The President was, of course, extremely interested in outcome of your first substantive session which tended to spice up the situation here considerably. Your reply³ confirmed precisely what I feared, that is that you did not know of the communication breakdown. Apparently, the problem was at plane site and it has now been resolved.

I entered this situation somewhat behind the power curve not having been here when preparatory work was done for your trip. It was quite evident yesterday that the President was not completely comfortable with the book submitted to him prior to your departure.⁴ This generated his memo to you sent early yesterday.⁵ I used the same argumentation contained in your 008 in discussing the character of your visit with him yesterday. However, he has made the point to me that if we get no assist from the Soviets and then proceed with stringent action against the North, at the last minute, the Soviets might cancel the summit on their own thereby further complicating the domestic situ-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

² Document 140.

³ See footnote 2, Document 137.

⁴ See Document 125.

⁵ Document 127.

ation—all this at a time when domestic reaction against our actions in the North is running highest. His point is that if the summit is to be sacrificed, he wishes to be the one who cancels it on his own terms.

I will discuss your message with the President 30 minutes from now and am confident that he will agree with all points that you have made but with the lingering concerns noted above. I will emphasize to him that this concern does not have to be faced until after we have an opportunity to assess outcome of May 2 meeting.

Don't worry about concerns here. You, as has always been case, are the only one who can deliver the mail and we all know it. Naturally our other friend whom I briefed the night you left calls hourly to find out what is in train.⁶ I am also informed that hawkish injections are coming regularly from Treasury.⁷

⁶ Haig and Haldeman briefed Rogers on April 19; see footnote 2, Document 109. A transcript of a telephone conversation between Haig and Rogers, evidently at 9:25 a.m. on April 22 but misdated 9:25 a.m. on April 21, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2].

⁷ According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon called Connally on April 21 at 4:22 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) No other record of the conversation has been found.

144. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 22, 1972, 11:25 a.m.

RN: Occurred to me that we should send to Henry, via Sonnenfeldt, the Sindlinger poll—he should know that the people are very emotional about this also. If you could pass on the thing that the protests here were not successful, there has been strong editorial support and the Sindlinger sort of hawk support.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

GH: I gave him all the statistics in the poll.²

RN: You did, well that's fine. Colson talks with a lot of these politicians—he said that the President is taking the heat for what he is doing here. Don't want any sort of spirit of the Kissinger breastfeeding in Moscow to say that we must mute things. I think they want the summit but they lied to him. When do you think they got the tanks?

GH: The equipment that I saw was all brand new.

RN: We shouldn't talk about the hawk/dove sentiment. The cold fact is that we think Vietnam is more important than the summit. The Moscow trip may be helpful, sure. Candidly, part of the reason the I Corps thing and its magnitude was that for two weeks before we went to China and during and for two weeks after we were there, we were very muted. I can't have this happen at the Moscow summit.

GH: I agree.

RN: I don't need the warm opinions here about the summit—

GH: We have to be cautious that he is conscious of the college protestations.

RN: I don't care about them—we are going to see this thing through. You have a message to him—should be getting a message to him.³

GH: I am sending his first message to you⁴ along with the battle stuff.

RN: How is An Loc.

GH: Still hairy.

RN: Please submit to Abrams for a strike in that area like one of the B 3 things. Abrams to take all assets in there and pop it for the full effect.

GH: I have talked to Abrams about this and he agrees. 28 B-52's sortees right along An Loc yesterday.

RN: The B-3 had effect.

GH: He is confident that that is what did it.

GH: Ask him about An Loc—it is his decision.

² See Document 138.

³ At 11:29 a.m. Haig sent the following message, via the White House Situation Room to Kissinger, in Moscow: "Have discussed your 008 [Document 140] with President. He is in full accord and wants you to know there is no doubt whatsoever about his total confidence and trust in you. He merely wanted you to know that in terms of his priorities, an honorable conclusion to Vietnam conflict far exceeds importance of Soviet summit. He knows you also share this view. Concerning your stay over through Monday, he agrees completely that decision is up to you based on your assessment of progress on Vietnam question." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]) For the discussion between Haig and Nixon on Kissinger's message, see Document 142.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 142.

145. Editorial Note

As he waited for a report from his Assistant Henry Kissinger on April 22, 1972, the second day of secret talks in Moscow, President Nixon assessed the situation at Camp David with his Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman. According to Haldeman's diary entry for the day, Nixon began the 3-hour discussion at 11:30 a.m. by issuing instructions for Dwight Chapin, his appointments secretary, who was also in Moscow leading an advance team for the upcoming summit. "He gave me a lot of instructions for Chapin," Haldeman wrote, "on taking some very firm positions on the things that we want to do, such as using our car, using our plane, going to Leningrad on Saturday, not on Sunday. The P's convinced that the Soviets are pushing for Sunday in order to avoid the P getting a good crowd there, such and so on." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, page 444) On the basis of these instructions, Haldeman sent a backchannel message that afternoon in which he further admonished Chapin "not to lock any schedule or any arrangement commitments until you return and have the opportunity to review the entire trip." Deputy Assistant to the President Haig forwarded the text of the message to Kissinger "in case your hosts attempt an end-run on any of these subjects." (Telegram Sitto 33 from Haig to Kissinger, April 22; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Trip to Moscow Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

In addition to the instructions for Chapin, the President was preoccupied with Kissinger's trip, the military situation in Vietnam, and the impact both would have upon his plans to deliver a television address on April 26. Haldeman recorded Nixon's views in his diary on April 22.

"He's concerned about the effect of K's trip, whether the people in this country will think he's there because the Russians are pressing us and that this is a sign of weakness or not. He feels that we can't show any overt weakness and he called Haig several times during the meeting. Each time he emphasized the important of maintaining our bombing and other attack levels. He's especially concerned about the effect on our people, the hawks, who are now enthusiastic, but could be turned off pretty rapidly if, as a result of Henry's trip, we backed off." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

According to Haldeman's handwritten notes of the discussion at Camp David, the President saw Kissinger's private session with the North Vietnamese in Paris on May 2 as an important turning point. If the session was inconclusive, Nixon insisted, the United States would bomb Hanoi and Haiphong for 3 days. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I)

During his meeting with Haldeman, the President spoke twice by telephone with Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Although no other record of the first conversation has been found, Haig called Nixon at 12:34 p.m., presumably to report on Kissinger's latest message, which had arrived at the White House an hour earlier. In lieu of his forthcoming message on the second round of discussions, which had been "mostly devoted to Vietnam," Kissinger briefly reported that the Soviets had agreed in principle to a public announcement of his trip on April 25. "Believe announcement should be made at Tuesday noon by President," Kissinger maintained. "Given Soviet sensitivities, announcement of our willingness to return to Paris plenary should be held for Tuesday PM briefing. Point will be clear but it has benefit of dissociating the President from it." (Telegram WTE 009 from Kissinger to Haig, April 22; *ibid.*, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 1972, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2])

Nixon called Haig back at 1:06 p.m. to discuss Kissinger's message. According to a transcript, the two men had the following exchange:

"P: I want to keep some running room—whether I have to announce Henry's trip. You see there is a very strong argument having Ziegler do it. On the China trip I wasn't announcing Henry's trip, I was announcing I was going to Peking. I have already announced that I was going to Moscow. That I would spend three days in Moscow, it isn't right—what I have to do later. Is he committed to me to make the announcement.

"H: No he isn't committed. The message says he believes.

"P: I want the option to be made but I don't know if I want to make the announcement.

"H: You want to assess the announcement.

"P: Yes, I want to read it first. You haven't gotten his message yet.

"H: No." (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2])

Nixon then raised a report, issued the previous day by the Associated Press bureau in Moscow, stating that, "in apparent reprisal for resumption of American bombing of North Vietnam, the Soviet Union has downgraded the status of President Nixon's scheduled visit here next month." (Telegram Sitto 20 from Haig to Kissinger, April 21; *ibid.*, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Trip to Moscow Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]) On this point the President was adamant: "I have told Chapin we are not going to take this crap about downgrading the visit. If we are going to stay at the Kremlin it is going to be a State visit. We will not accept it otherwise and they have to clear it up." Nixon concluded his discussion with Haig by further outlining the hard-line adopted in his instructions for Chapin. (Transcript; *ibid.*, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2])

In the wake of the message from Kissinger, including the report on possibly downgrading the summit, Haldeman reflected the President's views as follows:

"Part of our problem here is K's unbelievable ego, in that he's really pushing to have the P announce this Moscow trip and make a big thing out of it. Also apparently he hasn't followed instructions from the P as to what he's to be negotiating. He's spending his time on the Soviet Summit agenda rather than on getting Vietnam settled. The P was clearly disturbed by the information he had received on Henry last night. He waited all day and into the evening for a message today, and then at the last hour it still hadn't come. It now appears that Henry won't come back until Monday, which is again the ego thing, because he was determined to have a three day meeting and he's managed to do it." (Entry for April 22; *The Haldeman Diaries*, page 444)

During his conversation with Haldeman, Nixon said he had opted for a televised address, arguing that he could explain the background of developments on Vietnam and the summit "in an uncluttered atmosphere of a speech rather than in a press conference." After an extended discussion of preparations for the speech, Nixon told Haldeman to relay the plan to Haig: the White House would announce Kissinger's trip to Moscow on April 25; the next day, the President would announce both the withdrawal of troops and the agreement with North Vietnam to hold a plenary session in Paris on April 27. (Entry for April 22; *The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

146. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 22, 1972, 3 p.m.

Sitto 32. Have received 009² and discussed with President who is very pleased with progress you have made. He asked that I pass the following to you: He hopes that announcement you work out with Gromyko will explicitly mention that Vietnam was discussed if at all possible. If not, it is then essential that the implication that Vietnam

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

² See Document 145.

was discussed is clear. He then added that he hoped that it will be mentioned that Vietnam will be top priority item on Soviet agenda. I told him that you had already raised doubts about the desirability of the latter and he understands your view so you can certainly feel free to play that one in accordance with your own judgement.

Without the benefit of having read your detailed report of today's discussion, the President also wishes that you make clear to the Soviets before departing that there will be no letup in U.S. air operations south of twenty degrees without a reciprocal deescalation by NVA forces in SVN from this point on. He also hopes that you can make clear to the Soviets that unless May 2 secret meeting results in conclusive progress toward settlement, U.S. will reserve the right among other things to renew strikes in the Hanoi–Haiphong area.

The President would also wish to reserve on the decision as to whether he or Ziegler should make noon announcement, depending on your assessment of the outcome of the talks and the text of the announcement which you and Gromyko arrive at.³

Finally, the President was disturbed by news stories to the effect that the Soviets had now downgraded his visit to summit status rather than State and summit status and has asked that you complain about these stories to Gromyko.⁴ He also told me that Soviets are pressuring Chapin to have President go to Leningrad on Sunday, not Saturday, and he has instructed Chapin to hold firm for Leningrad trip on Saturday because he wishes to be in Moscow on Sunday. He has also instructed Chapin to hold firm on the issue of using his own plane and his own car because of communications. He has, however, agreed to ride in the Soviet automobile if there is a State occasion involved. He has pointed out to Chapin that the China precedent does not apply in this instance and that he found that communications were unsatisfactory in China and that he cannot accept a similar arrangement during the Soviet trip.⁵

I thought you should know the foregoing in case Dobrynin or Gromyko raise these issues with you. As you can see from the foregoing, the President remains very strong both on the Vietnam issue and his attitude vis-à-vis the Soviets. I am passing this on to you so that you will be fully aware of climate here and not in an effort to badger you or to make your most difficult tasks more so.

³ For Kissinger's response on this point, see footnote 3, Document 149.

⁴ See Document 145.

⁵ See Document 145.

We have just received a report that a Soviet civil IL–18 is scheduled to depart Moscow on April 23 at 1025Z enroute to possibly Hanoi. The aircraft has in the past been associated with VIP movements. Warm regards.⁶

⁶ A copy of the report is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2].

147. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 22, 1972, 4:55 p.m.

Sitto 34. I have had long and frank discussion with President² and I believe he is completely satisfied with proposed concept of operations and with the superb manner in which you have conducted meetings thus far. He is, in fact, becoming increasingly optimistic that the delicate balancing act which you have established is getting us the best of all worlds by (1) inflicting maximum psychological and military pressure on Hanoi, (2) enabling him to reassure hawks here that punishment of Hanoi will continue while (3) totally disarming doves who will be completely puzzled by implications of Moscow visit and commencement of plenaries.

President wants very much to modify slightly the game plan to insure that the announcement of your visit to Moscow gets solo ride on Tuesday evening news cycle. In this way, broadcasters will speculate constructively about the implications of your talks in Moscow.

He would accomplish the foregoing by withholding the announcement of our decision to attend the plenary session on Thursday until 7:30 pm Washington time Tuesday evening. We could make changes in messages to our customer in Paris and to Bunker and Thieu and

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Nixon called Haig at 2:35 p.m. on April 22 and the two men spoke for 23 minutes. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) No further record of the conversation has been found.

others if you agree. If not, please advise by Flash message³ and I will urge President to return to original game plan. I do believe, however, that he has a good point. His main concern is that the Soviet visit get the major ride and appropriate speculation and that we use another news cycle to surface the plenary decision. He also plans to follow up immediately on Wednesday evening prime time (9:00 pm), with a brief ten minute television address in which he would explain the situation in Vietnam, what actions he has taken and the reasons therefor, refer to Tuesday's announcements on your meetings in Moscow and the decision on the plenary sessions and make specific mention of the fact that he will continue with strikes in the North against targets which are sustaining the massive invasion of the South and that these strikes will continue until the enemy desists. He would also, during his ten minute address, make his next troop withdrawal announcement.

Concerning the troop withdrawal announcement, General Abrams sent in a message⁴ which strongly recommends against any further withdrawals beyond the 1 May 69,000 level until the situation clarifies. Laird, in turn, has forwarded to the President a multi-page analysis⁵ which in general sustains Abrams' position but which recommends that the President announce a new force goal of 15,000 U.S. forces remaining in country by the end of the Calendar Year (31 December 1972). As you know, Abrams informed me he could probably live with 20,000 drawdown between 1 May and 1 July providing we hold at that level until at least September. Thieu is also comfortable with this order of magnitude. Laird's recommendation is a disaster in my view since it ignores the psychological impact that such a sweeping announcement would have on Saigon even though it is spread over a long period. Furthermore, I do not believe a 15,000-man force constitutes much, if any, leverage on Hanoi and on the POW issue at a time when we wish to be as threatening as possible while still maintaining an acceptable momentum for the President's withdrawal program. I have discussed this with the President and he is still firm on going with 20,000 between 1 May and 1 July. If you have any contrary views, please advise before he gets further set. This would certainly be my recommendation.

³ For Kissinger's response on this point, see Document 151.

⁴ Backchannel message 0071 from Bunker to Haig, April 21. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 414, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages 1972, From: AMB Bunker—Saigon)

⁵ Memorandum from Laird to Nixon, April 21, on force redeployment. (Ibid., Box 159, Vietnam Country Files, Vietnam April 1972)

Attached is a new back channel to you from Gerry Smith which further supports impressions you have gained there. Finally, Bob Haldeman called and asked that you be made aware of the strong position Chapin is taking on the administrative details of the trip so that you do not inadvertently sing from another sheet of music if Gromyko should approach you on these matters. Along with the strong guidance Chapin was given, as outlined in my earlier message, he was also told not make any final commitments while in Moscow but to wait until his return to Washington where these decisions will be made.⁶

Warm personal regards.

Attachment

Backchannel Message From the Head of the Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (Smith) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)⁷

Helsinki, April 22, 1972.

Dear Henry:

At today's Smith/Semenov meeting, he opened by repeating that SL issue was under serious consideration in Moscow.

He said never in his life had he seen such preparations as were being made for President's visit.

He presented OLPAR written formulation,⁸ which Nitze approves. Subject to our dropping prior consultation provision, Sovs would agree to smallest ABM radar as ceiling for OLPARS.

He also presented formula banning multiple ABM warheads, which is acceptable in substance.

Based on our telecon of April 10,⁹ I then probed on personal basis Soviet interest in ABM approach permitting one ICBM site plus

⁶ Reference is to Nixon's instructions for Chapin, see Document 145.

⁷ Another copy is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages SALT 1972.

⁸ In an April 24 memorandum to Kissinger, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt assessed the Semenov proposals, explaining that the formulation on Other Large Phased Array Radars (OLPARs) "essentially accepted our proposal," while the formula on multiple ABM interceptors "showed movement." (Ibid., Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXIA)

⁹ In an April 8 backchannel message to Kissinger, Smith asked for informal authority to probe Soviet interest in allowing an anti-ballistic missile defense for two sites, the national capital and an ICBM field. (Ibid., Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages SALT 1972) "This was authorized two days later," he later wrote, "on a 'highly tentative personal' basis." (Smith, *Doubletalk*, p. 363)

national capital defense for both sides. I suggested radius of circle of ICBM defense at 150 kilometers. Under this approach, we could agree to 6 MARCs for NCA. If there was defended only one ICBM site on each side, the MARC concept would be especially useful for ICBM defense. I indicated that we could double our present proposed number of MARCs. (You will recall that NSDM¹⁰ authorizes me to triple; we will in all likelihood need to go that far or slightly higher.)

Semenov indicated strong interest in his side's part in such an approach. I stressed that it was in the context of SLBM inclusion.

We have learned that Semenov's instructions are to respond to US initiative, but not to make a new Soviet proposal.

In light of these developments, it would be very helpful from our angle to have early Washington response to delegation recommendations in USDel SALT VII 1261.¹¹

If this unofficially floated ABM approach is not to be US position, damage limitation argues for early advice to Soviets. I trust that will not prove necessary.

Soviets, per Kishilov, are thinking of a 15 May Helsinki end, with both agreements wrapped up "to last comma."

Warm regards.

Gerry Smith

¹⁰ Reference is to NSDM 158, March 23, which set parameters for flexibility in the American position on Modern ABM Radar Complexes (MARC)s. The text is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XXXII, SALT I, 1969–1972.

¹¹ In telegram 1261 from Helsinki, April 14, the SALT delegation submitted its recommendations on SLBMs, ABM limitations, and provisions for the duration of and withdrawal from the proposed agreement on freezing offensive weapons. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN(HE))

148. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 22, 1972.

WTE 10. Just finished second meeting with Brezhnev lasting some 4 and $\frac{3}{4}$ hours followed by additional face-to-face meeting alone of 45 minutes. (See separate message.)²

Session, though again marked by moments of levity and personal warmth, was basically deadly serious and extremely substantive.³ First 2 and $\frac{1}{2}$ hours dealt exclusively and intensively with Vietnam which also repeatedly came up in remainder of session.

I went through our procedural proposal and substantive position on de-escalation and desired outcome of negotiations, interspersing this with blunt warning that President determined to settle Vietnam regardless of risk.

Vietnam

I exposed at length our position on the Vietnam question, first outlining the procedural course we would be prepared to follow in respect to public and private meetings. Brezhnev characterized our suggested procedural approach as "constructive."⁴

I emphasized that substance of private session would be what was important, and what we would demand of Hanoi is a return to the situation of March 29, e.g. the situation prior to the offensive. We would propose a declaration that both sides will make a serious effort this year to negotiate an end to the war and to this end both sides would reduce the level of violence. For its part the DRV would have to withdraw the divisions that entered SVN since March 29 and respect for

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 5:20 p.m. Haig forwarded the message to Camp David for Rose Mary Woods, who retyped it for the President. Nixon wrote "can reduce arms shipment"—an apparent reference to the Soviet role in Vietnam—at the top of the retyped version; additional notations by Nixon are noted below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

² Reference is presumably to telegram WTE 009 from Kissinger to Haig, April 22; see Document 145. For the two meetings on April 22, see Documents 139 and 141. The second was not a "face-to-face meeting alone," since Gromyko and Dobrynin as well as the U.S. notetaker and the Soviet interpreter were also in attendance.

³ The President underlined this sentence.

⁴ The President underlined this sentence.

the DMZ would have to be restored. We would then stop the bombing of the DRV, propose the immediate exchange of POWs held more than four years and insist on guarantees that the foregoing conditions be observed while negotiations toward a settlement were pursued. In short we would visualize two stages, an immediate reduction of the violence to last for a period, say a year, and a serious attempt to negotiate a settlement, thus ending the threat of war and the bombing of the DRV.⁵

Brezhnev's response was that the important thing was to end the fighting; if we insisted on withdrawal of NVA divisions now in SVN, it would mean continued warfare. He suggested we consider instead a de facto cease-fire with units stopping at the lines where they are presently situated. Under these circumstances we would not even have to draw down the air and naval deployments we had made since March 29.

In making these points Brezhnev on more than one occasion stressed themes that he could not vouch for DRV; and that we reflect on his suggestion adding that the mere fact of these positive steps following my trip to Moscow would be of tremendous significance.⁶

I replied by stressing in strongest possible terms the President's determination to bring about a Vietnam solution at no matter what risk⁷ we had no intention of injecting any new element in VN situation three weeks ago; but the situation had been forced upon us. We now consider what has developed as going beyond the issue of VN itself but an intolerable attack on our Presidency. Before the offensive we would have readily accepted the solution Brezhnev had advanced; we in fact had proposed it ourselves as long as two years ago; but now we are faced with a violation of the 1968 understandings which must be restored and the status of the DMZ respected.⁸

Brezhnev repeated his view that we should simply demand a stop to the fighting; then put everything on the table for negotiations over a period of time.

After covering other issues we returned to VN at end of meeting. Brezhnev said he had briefed his Politiburo colleagues on our meeting of the previous day. They had been generally pleased with tenor of our

⁵ The President underlined most of this paragraph and wrote a question mark in the margin by "immediate reduction of the violence to last for a period, say a year, and a serious attempt to negotiate a settlement."

⁶ The President underlined "the mere fact of these positive steps following my trip to Moscow would be of tremendous significance" and wrote "!! K not B!" in the margin.

⁷ The President underlined this sentence.

⁸ The President underlined the last clause of this sentence.

discussions but all had voiced concern over Vietnam. He closed on this subject by proposing that we both reflect on our positions and discuss the matter again on Monday.

After meeting Brezhnev took me aside to protest again that their deliveries had not been excessive. He argued that the enemies of the summit in Hanoi and Peking were trying to wreck the summit and we had to thwart them.⁹ He said he would do anything to deescalate the fighting but he could not ask North Vietnam to withdraw its troops. He made it clear that we would have to cancel the summit; he would not.

He next sent Dobrynin to ask what they should do. Dobrynin stressed that if we confined bombing to present limits there was no chance of cancelling summit and they were extremely anxious to have it.¹⁰ Dobrynin told me that the Politburo would meet tomorrow and we would hear something on Monday.

Please tell the President that Sonnenfeldt feels no one has talked to Brezhnev as I have on Vietnam and President's resolve. Dobrynin stressed that AP report¹¹ about being downgraded from State visit is rubbish.¹²

SALT

During extensive SALT discussions Brezhnev indicated new Politburo decision taken to include SLBMs in SALT and to accept a variant of our 2 for 2 ABM position as well as 5-year duration for offensive agreement. At my request they stopped Semenov from giving Smith new ABM position which he already had instructions to do in next few days.¹³ To fit in with our overall strategy I told Brezhnev we would react to any new proposals only after Presidential and Washington review. This gives President the proper credit. My impression is Soviets moving most of way to our SALT position, permitting rapid conclusion of agreement whenever we choose.

Length of Stay Here

Brezhnev has urged me to stay until Monday afternoon. I said I would have to check with the President who was restless for me to return. All arguments for staying here covered in my 008¹⁴ still apply. We have nothing to lose by staying and much to lose by leaving. They

⁹ The President underlined this sentence and wrote an exclamation point in the margin.

¹⁰ The President underlined this sentence.

¹¹ See Document 145.

¹² The President underlined this sentence.

¹³ The President marked this sentence and wrote "already done!" in the margin.

¹⁴ Document 140.

are keeping us from nothing and have been most conciliatory on all issues in their control and have promised to transmit our proposals to Hanoi. They are not using summit to keep us quiet; we are using the summit to impose restraints on them.¹⁵ In addition Brezhnev may wish to check with Hanoi on our procedural and substantive proposals—he promised to take up Vietnam again after “thinking things over.” I believe it essential to stay.

Comment

My approved instructions for this trip were to use stick of bombing and carrot of being forthcoming on summit-related matters in order to get mutual deescalation in Vietnam.

So far we have spent two-thirds of our time on Vietnam during which I have gone to the brink with repeated declarations that we will continue military operations. They in turn have approved our procedural compromise and floated ceasefire-in-place with follow-on negotiations. While latter is unacceptable because of North Vietnamese invasion across DMZ which must be rolled back, it is noteworthy that Brezhnev thrice repeated concept at a time when Communists have yet to seize a major town.

Thus we have given up absolutely no options on Vietnam and have made no concessions on any other issues. In turn we have obtained SALT proposals that exceed our best estimates; a statement of principles for US-Soviet relations that meets our concepts rather than loaded France-Russian political type. Brezhnev has also agreed to consider our concept of separate explorations on MBFR in parallel with explorations on a European security conference; and has been constantly effusive about prospects for summit.

Thus they, not we, have been forthcoming on summit-related issues while we have a stand-off on Vietnam with all our options open, Brezhnev has spent more time with me than with any other foreign visitor. To kick them in the teeth now would be an absurdity.

¹⁵ The President underlined this sentence.

149. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 22, 1972, 01133.

Sitto 36. I have given President gist of your 010.² He is delighted that you are holding very firm but he has also unfortunately drawn conclusion that Soviets are either not going to be helpful on Vietnam or worse have colluded with Hanoi in final steps of strategy designed to achieve a cease-fire in place, with bulk of North Vietnamese divisions in South Vietnamese territory.

Despite my best efforts, he tends to equate largess on summit with collusion with Hanoi on South Vietnam. This has been most difficult forty eight hours here, with Rogers insisting on seeing messages and President calling hourly for reports from you. He is at this point absolutely firm on not letting summit influence outcome of Vietnam in any way. He has just instructed me to inform you that he considers it most important that the joint announcement that you work out with Gromyko not portray your visit to Moscow as oriented primarily on pre-summit arrangements and suggests something along the following lines: "Dr. Kissinger visited Moscow to discuss urgent international problems, including Southeast Asia and (if absolutely necessary) pre-summit arrangements." The foregoing concerns of the President are based on both the substantive problem of being sure that hawks do not think we caved on plenary session and his fear that Rogers will have difficulty swallowing reference to summit preparations.

President is also increasingly restless in Camp David and has asked me to advise you that you must be at Camp David not later than 6:00 p.m. Washington time Monday evening. This means your departure from Moscow must have occurred by 1:00 p.m. Moscow time. As I completed this message, the President just called again and added that he views Soviet positions on South Vietnam as frenzied and frivolous and, therefore, is determined to go forward with additional strikes on Hanoi and Haiphong unless some major breakthrough occurs. I have insisted with him that twenty degree restriction must be maintained until

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Document 148. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon called Haig twice on the evening of April 22, from 6:19 to 6:42 p.m., and 7:23 to 7:27 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) No substantive record of either conversation has been found.

completion of May 2 meeting but President terminated conversation with the following: “It may or may not hold.”

As you can see from foregoing, situation here is almost as difficult as you have found it there. I am sharing the who-shot-Johns with you to be absolutely sure that you appreciate fully the President’s frame of mind so that your further discussions with your hosts are consistent with it.

I have just received your 011 and will implement provisions of paragraphs 1 through 7.³

Warm regards.

³ After issuing further instructions on prior notification, Kissinger addressed the official announcement of his trip to Moscow: “Just received your 32 [Document 146]. My own judgement is that a Ziegler announcement may be preferable, protect the President better and show less anxiety.” (Message WTE 011 from Kissinger to Haig, April 22; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK’s Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2])

150. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 23, 1972, 10:15 a.m.–1:12 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Soviet Foreign Minister
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to USA
Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

Basic Principles; Middle East; Economic Relations; Announcement of Kissinger Visit

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Guest House on Vorobyevski Road.

Basic Principles:

Dr. Kissinger: Our associates are going to work on the Principles. I would be interested in whether the Foreign Minister has any comments on our paper.²

Gromyko: Yesterday evening I looked through them. My first impression is that it is all right. But it was not yet translated. Therefore today I will read it more thoroughly and then report to Mr. Brezhnev.

Dr. Kissinger: It accepts 95% of your formulations and adds one or two points.

Gromyko: Maybe very small ones.

Dr. Kissinger: I will wait for your suggestions. If you find it generally acceptable, we can work it out.

Gromyko: Maybe strengthen it. If it is OK, stand up and cry "Eureka!"

Dr. Kissinger: As far as we are concerned, we're prepared to leave with it agreed.

Middle East:

Gromyko: Did you have a chance to read our note on Middle East [Tab A].³

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Gromyko: I just wanted to say in addition that we are proceeding from the assumption that this is a continuation of that scheme we discussed when I visited Washington and talked with the President and you.⁴ It is a continuation of that exchange of opinions. You will recall that we then discussed several aspects of the situation and several provisions, including the withdrawal of Soviet military personnel and withdrawal of Israeli forces. It goes without saying that what we said then remains in force.

Dr. Kissinger: Your Ambassador and I have had several discussions on the Middle East. As I have told him, the Middle East negotiations have taken a weird direction. There has always been a frenzy of activity, and great excitement, and nothing ever happened. Therefore I have discussed it with your Ambassador not just to produce a paper

² See footnote 3, Document 139.

³ All brackets in the source text. Regarding Tab A, see footnote 5, Document 141.

⁴ During his annual visit in late September for the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly, Gromyko also visited Washington, meeting Nixon at the White House on September 29 and Kissinger at the Soviet Embassy on September 30. The memoranda of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

but to get something done. This paper is just what the Ambassador has said to me.

To be honest, Joe Sisco may have been authorized, but there was no chance of anything happening. So I have had to inject realism into our discussion.

We cannot go to war with Israel. We cannot put someone else in the position to go to war with Israel and defeat it. Therefore we want to come to some understanding with you on measures we can persuade Israel to accept without war. Some pressures, financial and otherwise, we can exert without putting Israel in the position where it feels it has to go to war.

After our discussions, I told you I would see if there was any chance of coming up with a realistic conclusion, which I did. Then I told the Ambassador that I was prepared to start discussions.⁵ It had to be a practical, not a theoretical exercise.

Also, I have been talking to the Israelis, in more general terms: that this would be a topic of the Summit, that it was impossible to keep it off the Summit agenda, and I had to learn their views. In fact their Ambassador⁶ has a map for me, which I have not looked at because I did not want them to think I brought it here. It won't be acceptable.

Also, I have had enough discussion with the Israelis to know that this [the Soviet note] will not be do-able without war. I have tried to tell Anatol what I thought was do-able even with a great domestic crisis in Israel and great pressure from our side. We have to find a formula. . . .

It makes no difference to the U.S. whether they have one more or less airfield, nor to you.

This is the problem as I see it, Mr. Foreign Minister. It may turn out to be an insoluble problem. Within that framework, we are prepared to have discussions.

Gromyko: I should like to hear your views or comments on the major question which we feel predetermines all the rest, that is, the withdrawal of Israeli forces. You say you speak in terms of finding a realistic way of resolving the matter. I would like to know what you actually mean. We formed the impression last year that our views were a general basis for discussion, though not specific. You referred to certain difficulties in doing business with Israel. That is a subject we can

⁵ Kissinger and Dobrynin began "exploratory" discussions on the Middle East on October 15, 1971. After Nixon met Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir on December 2, Kissinger told Dobrynin on January 21, 1972, that talks on the subject could proceed; see Documents 4 and 41.

⁶ Yitzhak Rabin.

talk about without reaching a conclusion. Our feeling is, it is doubtful that the U.S. could not bring effective pressure on Israel. I would like to hear some more concrete considerations, so I can report back to Comrade Brezhnev before he meets with you tomorrow.

Dr. Kissinger: I did not mean to imply that the Arabs were an un-mixed joy.

Gromyko: I have two additional comments. First, we are not too clear in our minds on your views on the following question. We have felt all along—and were clear last year in Washington—we are interested in reaching a complex solution, that is, withdrawal from Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, in a complex. But one of your last conversations with our Ambassador [Dobrynin interjects: Third from the last]⁷ related only to Egypt; Jordan was touched upon, but not in a concrete way, and Syria was not touched upon at all. In our thinking, only a complex or package solution can help solve the problem.

My second comment is: You have already discussed with Comrade Brezhnev some questions with respect to a radical improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations. Let us assume the forthcoming meetings will open up great possibilities. What happens if the Middle East problem is still unresolved? Can we allow the situation in the Middle East to keep on shaking and enfevering relations between the Soviet Union and the United States?

In our view, it would serve the interests of both our countries to secure a lasting solution to this problem. Because while now the situation seems more favorable to reaching a solution, it is hard to predict what will happen tomorrow.

Dr. Kissinger: First, simply to clear my own mind, my impression is that this document contains nothing different from what Anatol has discussed with Sisco.

Dobrynin: Plus the addition that you and Gromyko discussed last year.

Dr. Kissinger: But they are not in the document.

Gromyko: Right. We can confirm it in written form if you wish.

Dr. Kissinger: We don't need that. We are serious people. The proposition you brought to Washington is one we are interested in, and

⁷ According to Kissinger: "After the start of Hanoi's Easter offensive on March 30, I interrupted the private Middle East talks with Dobrynin as a sign of displeasure with the Soviet arm shipments that had made the North Vietnamese offensive possible." (*White House Years*, p. 1291) Although they briefly discussed the subject on April 6 (see Document 84), no further evidence has been found that the two men continued their talks on the Middle East before Kissinger's trip to Moscow.

it reflects a serious effort on your part. We recognize you have made an attempt to find a solution.

There may be a slight misunderstanding. My impression was that while an ultimate global solution is what you wanted, you were prepared in the immediate discussions to confine the discussions to Egypt. We agree that an ultimate solution must be global.

Gromyko: Global in Mideast terms? Complex.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Gromyko: We can certainly discuss the question by phases, let's say, first take up for discussion the Egyptian angle, then the Syrian angle, then the Jordanian, but always having in mind that the general ultimate solution must be global.

Dr. Kissinger: You are saying that you won't withdraw all your troops until all the problems have been solved, or on the basis of an Egyptian solution?

Gromyko: We see the ultimate agreement as a global one.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, but in practice, does that mean that you won't withdraw until all three arguments have been signed? Or [will you withdraw] when the Egyptian one is signed, while maintaining the principle that the others have to be agreed?

Gromyko: We believe that the solution as such should be a global one. Not necessarily one piece of paper, but the agreement in principle, the solution, should be complex. Withdrawal is one integral part of this single complex solution. We know the feelings of the Arabs, and we feel it is the most realistic way.

I want to add one thing. We do not exclude the possibility that a certain part of the agreement may be carried out, fulfilled, before the elections. Maybe it can even be made public. We talked about this.

Dr. Kissinger: The interim part, the Suez Canal settlement.

Gromyko: You may call it "interim." That is a popular word, part of Sisco's lexicon. But this part will be an integral part of the general, and our governments will proceed on that basis.

Dr. Kissinger: I was under the impression that you maintained the principle of a general solution but were principally interested in settling the Egyptian part as the first step, and that Syria was not interested but the Jordanian part would follow.

Gromyko: "Settle" is not the word. Maybe it would not be carried out yet, but settlement includes agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: There are ways to approach it: A Canal settlement, an Egyptian settlement, and a general settlement.

Gromyko: The settlement is general, global. Then the question arises, how to fulfill it, carry it out, in life. Here we could build a scheme that a certain part could be carried out as a first stage.

Dr. Kissinger: The Canal settlement.

Gromyko: Maybe the Canal settlement. Maybe publicly.

Dr. Kissinger: That is a genuine misunderstanding. I understood you were prepared to have a settlement on the Suez Canal if it was linked organically to a settlement of the Egyptian-Israeli problem. I also thought the withdrawal of Soviet forces was related to that part. I didn't know you wanted a settlement concurrently with Jordan and Syria.

As I told your Ambassador, I have started preliminary talks with Hussein⁸ so that I do not get it all third hand. I did not do this to see where we could go, but to see whether Jordan could be settled first, or concurrently, or after. I wanted to consult with you to see how you would want to proceed. So in principle, Jordan is something we are thinking about. But Syria involves extraordinary difficulties.

The more comprehensive the agreement, the more difficult it will be to get the Israelis to go along with it. Therefore, I am afraid if Syria is brought in, it will be the same as the process we've seen. Purely theoretical. Any one of the volatile Arab states could destroy what we have agreed to.

Gromyko: I do not think you objected in Washington to what we called a complex settlement. We must be specific and precise in our propositions. We did not say a settlement could be reached with Egypt alone, leaving Syria and Jordan suspended, hanging in the air. All along we have been speaking in terms of a complex problem. But like any complex, it does contain component parts; they need not be carried out in a single time. They could be carried out in stages. We could take up and solve the Canal problem first. But if we were to attempt the entire Egyptian angle first while leaving aside Syria and Jordan, that would not be a viable approach.

Then again, if in discussions of this problem we do assume it is possible first to discuss matters relating to Egypt prior to signing an eventual agreement, of course it would be better to move forward on a broader front. But we are certainly aware of the difficulties the parties have even in sitting at one table. So discussions could proceed separately, having in mind an ultimate complex settlement.

Dr. Kissinger: There was a genuine misunderstanding on my part in September. I thought you were interested in an Egyptian settlement alone. Your Ambassador can confirm, I only talked with him on Egypt.

⁸ King Hussein of Jordan met Nixon and Kissinger at the White House on March 28. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) When Dobrynin asked about the King's visit on April 6, Kissinger replied that "there was some possibility of making progress there." See Document 84.

I informed him of the Jordan part only out of openness, but we never exchanged ideas on Jordan, and Syria was never discussed at all.

Gromyko: But with both you and the President, I was concerned only with a complex settlement.

Dr. Kissinger: I had the impression that you maintained the principle of a complex solution but were prepared to settle Egypt first. In all my discussions with Anatol, we discussed Egypt alone. There was a misunderstanding about the degree of linkage and the relation of Soviet withdrawal to the rest.

Gromyko: Then do you see a link between Egypt and the others, or do you wish to separate them?

Dr. Kissinger: I recognize linkage in theory. But the important practical question is to get Israel to withdraw without a war. My belief is that once a settlement is reached between Egypt and Israel, a Jordanian settlement, at least, will follow easily. I don't understand the Syrians.

Let me be concrete. On a Jordanian settlement, I frankly think that what you have here [in the note] is behind events, in the sense that an Israeli-Jordanian settlement can be brought about (with some pressure, e.g., on Jerusalem). And to make it too overt a U.S.-Soviet arrangement would slow it down. Maybe it could even be done without an Egyptian-Israeli settlement. I thought maybe we could use certain principles of the Jordan-Israeli settlement to facilitate the Egypt-Israel one. On Syria, I have no judgment. They don't want to make peace, and Israel will never give up the Golan Heights.

Gromyko: I think it is very bad that you haven't given thought to this [Syrian] part of a settlement. As we see the position of the Arabs, it would be impossible to seek a settlement leaving aside an entire country. I am sure you're well familiar with the Arab position. You said we were behind events with respect to Jordan. But last year, we did not exclude the possibility that the Jordanian King, for instance, might agree with Israel to have certain corrections in his boundary with Israel. This we would be free to do, provided it didn't look like a prize for Israel for war.

You mentioned the linkage of an Egyptian settlement with the general settlement. But how do you envisage it? We say we're in favor of linkage, and you say you are. Maybe we are talking of one and the same thing, maybe about different things.

Dr. Kissinger: I can see the same relation between the Egyptian and Syrian settlements as between the Canal settlement and the Egyptian settlement, that is, as steps toward a global solution. You would have a general formula in the Egyptian settlement that the solution is part of a more general approach. But I do not believe it is practical to negotiate all the details simultaneously, and I believe it will be more

difficult to impose it on the Israelis depending of course on what the settlement is.

Gromyko: You said negotiations. We certainly allow of the possibility that negotiations could be carried out by stages, and first there could be negotiations relating only to Egypt. But what if agreement has been reached (but not put into force) with Egypt, but Syria has not yet been discussed? Is Syria then completely lost from view? Do you presume that an Egyptian-Israeli agreement in principle should then be signed? Or do you believe, as we do, that there could be these negotiations with Egypt, and there could be prepared an agreement between Egypt and Israel, which could be discussed with the responsible leaders, but then—before it is signed or implemented—we should pass over to the next stage, i.e. Syria? As regards Jordan, perhaps a Jordan-Israel agreement could be negotiated or at least considered at the same time. And no one has conclusively proved that Syria could be discussed simultaneously. But as for their embodiment and implementation, we feel that the parts should be considered only as parts of a whole.

Dr. Kissinger: It is an interesting philosophical problem. You're saying, for example, first discuss an Egyptian settlement, then reach agreement, then talk to the leaders. But before it is carried out—your withdrawal and Israeli withdrawal—we then have to discuss Syria.

Gromyko: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: It is going to be a long effort. There are two catches to it—one favorable to you (you don't have to withdraw your troops) and one favorable to Israel (they do not have to do anything until they do everything). Since it is so hard to get them to do anything, this looks hard. We think Egypt and Jordan could be done. Then the pressures would perhaps be unavoidable for Syria to settle, too. It would be in your interest, I would think, to do it in stages.

We recognize in principle the need to include Syria. You overestimate what we can do with Israel. We can't do everything.

Gromyko: Let us differentiate between the negotiations for a settlement, and the settlement itself. As I said, the negotiations could be done in phases. But as for the eventual settlement itself, that we see only as a complex one and we believe any other approach would be most unrealistic. If Israel exploits that approach to frustrate a settlement, that only shows that Israel will use either a complex or a phased one to frustrate settlement. That raises a grave risk that neither of us would want to subject our relationship to.

Dr. Kissinger: What is your view of the timing of how to bring this to a conclusion?

Gromyko: It depends on what you mean—achievement of a general all-embracing settlement, or a time limit for implementation of an agreement. If the former, the sooner the better. We would feel it best

of all to discuss it before the Summit, so during the Summit we could reach a formalized understanding on all the issues and how they are to be resolved. And we could also reach an understanding on when it is to be discussed and agreed with the leaders in the countries concerned. The problem there is less on our side than on yours; you said there are delicate points on your side. I do not mean to say we don't have delicate points, too.

Dr. Kissinger: But you don't have to run for reelection this year.

Gromyko: We could make the Canal settlement public. If you meant a time limit for implementation, the part that is confidential could be implemented after the U.S. elections—but as soon as possible after the elections. Implementation should be completed at the very beginning of next year or at the end of this year. And all the countries of the Middle East heave a sigh of relief.

Dr. Kissinger: You're becoming more optimistic the longer I know you. My understanding was within the first six months of next year.

Gromyko: If we assume that agreement is reached in May, at the Summit, this means that, at least in some part, its implementation will begin. Implementation can begin after May. Do you mean it takes another six months next year?

Dr. Kissinger: I thought I made it clear that implementation could not begin until after the election.

Gromyko: That's not what we have in mind.

Dr. Kissinger: I know what you have in mind. I'm telling you what is possible.

Gromyko: The Canal?

Dr. Kissinger: The Canal can be done now, and published and implemented. As a practical matter, after the election, everyone will be exhausted for a few months. Then the government has to be reorganized, etc. It cannot begin until January.

If we reach agreement—and it is not yet demonstrated that we can—we will have to carry it out our way. When we reach agreement, we will keep our word. But we may need indirect methods.

I told you in September we could not begin until January. I do not want to mislead you.

If we drew a line halfway thru Sinai, Israel would carry it out right away. The more comprehensive we try to make it, the more painful.

Gromyko: Painful? For whom? It's Arab territory.

Certainly the time limits could be the subject of discussion. Our feeling is that it should be done to begin next year. In any case, we agree on the general principle that a part can be started as soon as agreement is in force.

Dr. Kissinger: If you want to start withdrawing troops, we wouldn't insist you wait until next year.

Gromyko: Israel's troops?

Dr. Kissinger: No, yours.

Gromyko: At the same time.

Dr. Kissinger: I have one other procedural question. I have my doubts, quite frankly, that the President and Mr. Brezhnev will be able to get into all the details of the Middle East settlement in a realistic way at the Summit. Secondly, we have the absolute necessity of the President being able to come back from Moscow and say no secret agreements were made—because there will be pressure from many in our country, especially Jewish groups. You and I will talk, and Anatol and I. General principles can then be addressed at the Summit. I suggest we then continue discussions during the summer. Conceivably, I could come back here in September, on which occasion we could reach agreement on an overall solution. We have four weeks, and I'm not sure the President—I don't know about Mr. Brezhnev—would want to be involved in all the complex issues of boundaries. This is just a suggestion. What do you think?

Gromyko: It depends on what you mean by principles. Some could be no more than the UN Security Council Resolutions,⁹ which would be of no use; other principles might be helpful for reaching a solution.

Dr. Kissinger: I would have in mind some concrete advance over the Security Council Resolutions. Otherwise there is no point.

Gromyko: Certainly let us lead matters so as to be as concrete as possible in our discussions. If it is not possible at this time to achieve and finalize a concrete agreement, at least let us agree on a basis for such an eventual agreement, or on some provisions that could be used as a basis.

Dr. Kissinger: That is possible.

Gromyko: It is useless to discuss only what's in the Security Council Resolution, because the Resolution is there and is not being carried out and each side is interpreting it in its own way. In our discussions, we should agree on something more concrete and more conclusive than the Security Council Resolution.

Dr. Kissinger: How do you think we should proceed, Mr. Foreign Minister?

⁹ Reference is to UNSC Resolution 242, adopted on November 22, 1967, which attempted to address the Arab-Israeli conflict in the wake of the Six-Day War. For text of the resolution, see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XIX, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967, Document 542.

Gromyko: Let us endeavor to do the maximum possible during the May Summit to reach agreement on an eventual basic accord—even if the accord is formalized on some later date, e.g. September. We might indeed after the Summit have another special meeting—now that you have found your way to Moscow. But to insure the success of this process, let’s do as much as we can even before the May summit, so the principles we are talking about won’t be meaningless. The principles should be as content-filled as possible, so they can be used as a basis for an eventual agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Gromyko: How do you envisage solution of the question of withdrawals? Because it is one thing to discuss in principle and another thing to get down to brass tacks.

Dr. Kissinger: In time, or ultimate destination?

Gromyko: The ultimate destination.

Dr. Kissinger: I have tried to formulate the issue to your Ambassador in what I take to be realistic terms. We have no differences on the issue of Egyptian sovereignty being restored back to the prewar border. The problem, as I have stated it frankly to your Ambassador, is that in order to persuade Israel to go along and to prevent a total explosion domestically, we have to show we can do better than the so-called Rogers Plan.¹⁰ I realize it is an unusual negotiating method to insist on more than we have offered.

Gromyko: Why “so-called” Rogers Plan? It is the Rogers Plan.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. It is called the Rogers Plan.

I have talked to the Israelis. We cannot go along with their proposal, but they consider presence—not sovereignty—as essential with respect to Sharm El-Sheikh and the airfield west of Eilat. If we could be ingenious on this and find a solution, we could face up to the domestic situation—our newspapers and Congress—and put pressure on Israel to return to the 1967 borders. This is what we have in mind on withdrawal. We also have some ideas on an interim settlement, but we both agree that is fairly easy.

Dobrynin: How far is the airfield from the border?

¹⁰ Reference is to the joint U.S.-Soviet working paper of October 28, 1969, to implement Security Council Resolution 242 for a “final and reciprocally binding accord” between Israel and Egypt. The text is scheduled for publication in *ibid.*, 1969–1976, volume XXIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969–1972, or William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*, (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1993), Appendix B, pp. 437–440. Rogers outlined the plan on December 9, 1969, in a speech at the Galaxy Conference on Adult Education at Washington, D.C.; see Department of State *Bulletin*, January 5, 1970, pp. 7–11.

Dr. Kissinger: A nominal distance, eight miles or so.

Dobrynin: How far is Eilat from Sharm El-Sheikh?

Dr. Kissinger: Seventy-five/one hundred kilometers. If we can find a formula for that, we can settle everything without difficulty.

Gromyko: How much is the area with respect to the air base?

Dr. Kissinger: I don't think it is much. And it needn't be annexed either. It could be. . . .

Gromyko: We think it is impossible to agree on this. It is a question of principle. It would give a reward to the Israelis. Presence won't be accepted by the Arabs. Another thing could be considered—some other foreign or UN personnel.

Dr. Kissinger: That is your plan. Can the UN personnel be Israeli?

Gromyko: No. A chicken can't be baptized a fish. (That is from a Dumas story.) The territory may not be large, but a principle is involved here. Probably Israel knows that a principle is involved here. It's their idea.

Dr. Kissinger: Well, how do you visualize the evolution if there is no agreement?

Gromyko: We do not think either you or we want to reach a situation where we cannot foresee what will happen. You yourself know full well what forces are operating in the Middle East and what moods are prevalent in the Arab world, and this should be borne in mind by both yourselves and ourselves.

How do we complete our discussions today?

Dr. Kissinger: I was going to ask you.

Gromyko: Our position briefly is this: We are in favor of a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territory. We cannot recognize any principle of Israel's being given any prize in the form of Arab territory. This applies to Egypt, to Syria, and to Jordan—although as I said earlier, last year, if the Jordanians want to make some corrections in their border with Israel, it's their business, it's their border.

Secondly, all the states of the Middle East are entitled to their independent sovereign existence and development, and that includes Israel.

Thirdly, there could be the most effective guarantees. The Soviet Union and the United States could place their signature under any guarantee, adopted in the Security Council or some other way. There certainly could be no stronger guarantee than that in the modern world.

And provided there is a solution of these fundamental issues, we do not see any problem with such issues as continuation of the cease-fire or passage of Israeli ships through the Canal.

The question touched on in our discussions last autumn, that there be some understanding on arms shipments, is something we are prepared to discuss, and that too should be part of an agreement. Then

also, some solution should be found with respect to the Palestinians. There is still a lack of absolute clarity on that score, and that has to be settled. With regard to Soviet military personnel, I have stated our position and I feel you now have complete clarity on that matter. As regards the nature of the agreement, I have nothing to add. We envisage it as complex or global in scale.

Dr. Kissinger: What level of forces do you envisage for yourselves?

Gromyko: We will leave behind only a certain quantity of advisors and military specialists. All the rest will be withdrawn, as I said in my discussions with you.

Dr. Kissinger: What number?

Gromyko: That is something we will tell you later, but I do not see any problem—in fact we think you will applaud us when we tell you and perhaps tell us to leave some more!

Dr. Kissinger: I would not bet on the last.

Gromyko: Of course, we are assuming you will take appropriate steps with Israel, too. For instance, the question of arms supplies should relate to Israel as well as the Arabs. Whether it is enough to agree between the U.S. and the Soviet Union is another matter. Maybe Britain and France should be included.

Dr. Kissinger: The same with Czechoslovakia.

Gromyko: You are right. The whole thing should be considered.

Dr. Kissinger: We have no intention of evading. Obviously, agreement should not be evaded by third countries.

Gromyko: On the principles, if we want to see to it that the May meeting approves the principles on the Middle East, they have to be elaborated on concretely as much as possible. Therefore, there should be intensive work through the channel.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me make sure it is clear. On Sharm El-Sheikh and the airfield, we are not talking about sovereignty or annexation, but some presence.

Gromyko: I would say, not only is there no difference, but it could be more of an irritant for the Arabs, because it will mean Israel getting a base on the territory of Arab states. We for our part will endeavor to draft these principles, and you should be too. It will be hard work.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree. I think we should have intensive discussions. In fact, it is the principal unsolved issue for the Summit. We have solved all the others. As for SALT, I frankly think we will settle it next week. I will have to browbeat our military, but it will take a week.

Gromyko: Are you a three-star general?

Dr. Kissinger: At least. We will call Smith back Tuesday,¹¹ and send him back Monday or Tuesday. They can spend the time drafting. So I agree, the Mideast is the big unsolved problem.

Gromyko: [In English] Big, big, twice big.

I tell you frankly, if it is not solved, it may poison the atmosphere.

Dr. Kissinger: After the Summit, or at the Summit?

Gromyko: At the Summit.

Economic Relations:

Gromyko: Would you like to say anything additional on economic matters?

We certainly attach importance to these economic matters, but we do not raise it implying that something is grabbing us by the throat or that it's do-or-die for us or that it's top urgency for us.

Dr. Kissinger: We do not look at it this way.

Gromyko: I would put it as follows. We believe that the development of economic relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union—progress would be conducive to better political relations. The specifics have been mentioned: Most Favored Nation treatment, credits, and certain other issues. If you would like to say something more specific, I would appreciate it.

Let me say, by the way, that in the course of the talks on Lend-Lease in Washington, not everything is proceeding smoothly. In particular, because the Americans have been asking for an elephant of a price.

Dr. Kissinger: That is a good method. We may catch you in a weak moment and you'll pay it.

Dobrynin: You asked for a billion.

Gromyko: We know you have inflation, but why should we suffer?

Dr. Kissinger: We do not think of it as a necessity for you. We see it as a natural result of your economic development. So it comes from equality, not necessity. We are two great industrial nations. We complement each other. As your Ambassador knows, if anything, we have looked at it in a political context, so that when our political relations reach a certain level, economic relations shouldn't lag behind. We will both have a stake in our political relations. It is a sign of confidence in our political relations. I tell you our philosophy. I have taken a personal interest, not because of the details—which don't interest me—but to see that it is done on a big scale.

¹¹ April 25.

As for Export-Import Bank facilities, which are a matter of Presidential discretion, if the evolution proceeds as we expect, a decision can be this year, possibly this Summit.

Most Favored Nation treatment is a matter for Congress. If our relations proceed along present lines (with nothing additional), we expect to ask for it this year. It cannot be implemented this year. Because of the elections, Congress will be occupied with the elections after August. We will ask for it before the elections, but I do not anticipate action on it this year. In any event, by this time next year we will have both Export-Import Bank and Most Favored Nation.

The Lend-Lease negotiations are now being handled entirely as a technical matter of repayment of debts in the present framework. I told Anatol not much would happen, and I keep my word! We are using these present negotiations to establish some framework. When Patolichev comes, Peterson—who is a good man, a thoughtful man—these will be brought into relation to the natural gas. The Lend-Lease can be used to finance the gas, and would solve some problems with regard to what currency is issued and so on. We will have a comprehensive scheme when Patolichev comes.

Peterson will have it.

Gromyko: And the volume of credits?

Dr. Kissinger: We have some idea, but I don't have the precise figures. I will give Anatol the figures, on an informal basis, with some idea of the order of magnitude. It will be adequate for a substantial development.

We are taking it very seriously. My office is taking a direct interest in it. At the Summit, we could decide on some commission for a permanent relationship. We will send Peterson in July, prepared to work out a concrete long-term substantial arrangement, including credits.

Gromyko: To what extent will it be capable of finalization at the Summit? Amounts and conditions?

Dr. Kissinger: There can be an agreement in principle, including the order of magnitude, before the Summit. The amounts and conditions will be left for Peterson.

Gromyko: Most Favored Nation will come after the elections?

Dr. Kissinger: On Most Favored Nation, we will ask for it before the elections.

Gromyko: When will there be a decision?

Dr. Kissinger: By, say, April 1. A little depends on the state of our relations. If they are tense, many Congressmen will drag their feet. If our relations proceed as I expect, I foresee no problem.

One consideration which will affect the situation in Congress is Vietnam. It is a little tough when the trucks carrying weapons in Vietnam are Russian. We will ask for it anyway, but this is a problem.

On agriculture, what you ask for is not possible on the credits. Ten years is not possible; we think in terms of, say, six years. We are looking for a reasonable compromise.

Gromyko: How do you envision the agreement on problems of the environment? In general terms or concretely?

Dr. Kissinger: We are somewhat flexible on this. We can either announce at the Summit that we are creating a commission, or we can do something concrete before the Summit. You have made a proposal to Train. We can create it at the Summit, or announce at the Summit that we are beginning negotiations.

Gromyko: We have not yet discussed this at the government level. We are still waiting for the outcome of the talks.

Dr. Kissinger: We will do whatever you prefer. As for the Commission on science, is it your thinking to set this up at the Summit, or after?

Dobrynin: I gave Dr. David a scheme five days before I left. He hasn't replied.

Dr. Kissinger: He won't reply until I approve. I want your preference.

Gromyko: To do it before the Summit.

Dr. Kissinger: We will announce it at the Summit, and then send David here.

At the Summit, if we announce everything at the end, the press will be insane in the meantime. Can we make partial agreements each day?

Gromyko: With most important ones at the end. That would be my opinion.

Dr. Kissinger: Otherwise the press will have nothing to do but keep looking at your facial expressions.

Gromyko: Right. I will look gloomy one day and you will look cheerful, and Dobrynin will be gloomy. And it will all depend on the state of the back!

Dr. Kissinger: Do you want a communiqué also, or just the Principles?

Gromyko: It is not enough just to have Principles. Though we believe the Principles are more important.

Dr. Kissinger: Do you have a draft of the communiqué?

Gromyko: Not for the time being.

Dr. Kissinger: You agree that we should have a communiqué substantially prepared before the Summit? There may be a bureaucratic problem for us about the drafting of it. I hope you will be patient.

Gromyko: As patient as possible.

Announcement of Kissinger Visit:

Dr. Kissinger: Have you had a chance to look at the draft of the announcement? [The U.S. draft, at Tab B,¹² read as follows:

“At the invitation of the Soviet Government, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was in Moscow from April 20 to April 24, 1972. While there he conferred with the General-Secretary of the CPSU, Mr. Brezhnev, Foreign Minister Gromyko and other Soviet officials. Their talks which were frank and friendly throughout dealt with the most important international questions of interest to both governments as well as with bilateral matters, preparatory to the discussions between President Nixon and the Soviet leaders in May.”]

Gromyko: Just briefly. It looks OK, except we prefer “by mutual agreement.” Suppose also that we say “frank, businesslike, and useful.” A three-story building.

Dr. Kissinger: If this is how you behave when you are businesslike, I don’t know how you will be when you are friendly. I don’t think I could endure it.

Dobrynin: When the President comes, we will escalate!

Sukhodrev: To “brotherly.”

Gromyko: “Brotherly and on the basis of proletarian solidarity and socialist internationalism”!

Dr. Kissinger: That would have been good if Rockefeller¹³ was President!

We don’t really need “businesslike.”

Gromyko: Everyone assumes he’s businesslike.

[Dobrynin: Reads the text again, with the above agreed changes.]

Gromyko: We don’t need “most” important, or “the.”

Dr. Kissinger: Do you think we need the last clause about it being preparatory to Summit?

Gromyko: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: All right. Do we need “mutual agreement” at the beginning? What’s wrong with “by invitation of Soviet Government?” That would be true.

¹² Not attached; the U.S. draft announcement, including Kissinger’s handwritten revisions, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons.

¹³ Nelson A. Rockefeller, the long-time Republican Governor of New York and Kissinger’s former patron.

Gromyko: You spoke in detail on the Vietnam issue on your side. There is another side to that issue. There are other forces that look at us from the other side. You too would have to take into account our position, just as we take into account your views.

Dr. Kissinger: Why not leave out the first phrase completely?

Gromyko: It is maybe a little bit angular. . . .

Dr. Kissinger: So we will say to the press that you invited us, and you will say to the press that I insisted on coming and you were just being polite!

Gromyko: No, we won't go beyond the text. It is not a question of polemics.

Dr. Kissinger: As Anatol knows, when this announcement is made, the press will go crazy. I would like to have a briefing—this may be tactless to say—a briefing something like what I had when I came back from my first trip to Peking. No substance, just to give the atmosphere, and it will calm them down.

Gromyko: Don't use superlatives, like "excellent". . . .

Dr. Kissinger: No, it is not in our interest either. They will ask what sort of man was Brezhnev. Can I say "warmhearted, energetic?" Frankly, I know that you do not want to leave the impression, when we are bombing North Vietnam, of great cordiality.

Gromyko: That's what I meant about superlatives.

Dr. Kissinger: If they ask about substantive matters, we will not discuss it.

Gromyko: Right.

Dr. Kissinger: If they ask about substance, I will say the communiqué speaks for itself. If I don't do it, they will all speculate. On-the-record. I will send a copy to Vorontsov.¹⁴ Nothing else, no inspired stories.

Gromyko: Good.

Dr. Kissinger: On SALT, when we reach agreement within our Government and send Smith back, can the President say when he sends Smith that on the basis of the discussions here he expects a settlement?

Gromyko: Through the channel we will have confirmation?

Dr. Kissinger: By next week.

¹⁴ In a letter to Vorontsov on April 25 Haig enclosed a copy of the transcript from Kissinger's press briefing that morning. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 992, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Chron April 22–30, 1972)

Gromyko: Then we should instruct our delegations to embody it in an agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: No, that's a separate question, an easy one. The purpose of the send-off is to move it to the Presidential level.

Gromyko: Yes.

[The meeting then broke up.]

151. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 23, 1972.

WTE 012. 1. I am reading your messages with mounting astonishment. I cannot share the theory on which Washington operates. I do not believe that Moscow is in direct collusion with Hanoi. At this time the leaders here seem extremely embarrassed and confused.² Their summit objectives go far beyond Vietnam³ and would be much more easily achievable without it. They may want to disintegrate NATO, ruin our other alliances, and soften us up by an era of seeming good will. But they do not need Vietnam for that. Indeed right now Vietnam is an obstacle to it.

2. Moreover what in God's name are they getting out of all this? They see me three days after we bomb Hanoi. Their agreeing to a public announcement must infuriate and discourage Hanoi. They are willing to see the President while he is bombing North Vietnam. For the first time in the war we have them engaged in trying to help in Vietnam.⁴ Sure their first offer is inadequate. What else do we expect? As you point out we can get the best of all worlds: (1) inflicting maximum

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 3:54 a.m. Haig transmitted the message to Camp David at 10:50 a.m. with instructions for Rose Mary Woods to deliver it in a sealed envelope to be opened only by the President. Nixon's handwritten notations on that copy are cited below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

² The President underlined the preceding two sentences.

³ The President underlined "summit objectives go far beyond Vietnam."

⁴ The President underlined "we have them engaged in trying to help Vietnam."

punishment on Hanoi, (2) appealing to hawks, (3) appealing to doves, (4) making historic progress on SALT, (5) getting a highly acceptable communiqué.⁵ I do not see how we can even consider blowing it all by the kind of attitudes which you describe.

3. Does the President understand that all concessions have so far been made by Moscow⁶ and that we have given nothing, including on Vietnam? Two months ago we would have been jubilant.

4. I agree with game plan on plenaries.⁷ Please change messages accordingly.

5. I agree with Abrams that withdrawal is ill-timed though I suppose beyond control. Laird's plan is totally unacceptable.⁸ Make sure it does not leak.

6. As for my return, 6:00 p.m. is out of the question. The Politburo is meeting today. Brezhnev will see me tomorrow at 10:00. There is no sense cutting the discussion off just when it is coming to a point. I shall leave right after the meeting—hopefully arriving in Washington by 2000. If earlier arrival seems possible I shall flash you.

7. Please keep everybody calm. We are approaching the successful culmination of our policies. Must we blow it in our eagerness to bomb targets which will not move and when the delay is only one week? You might remind doubters of who thought of last strike and pushed it through against everybody.⁹

⁵ The President underlined the second, fourth, and fifth points in this sentence.

⁶ The President underlined "repeat all concessions have so far been made by Moscow."

⁷ See Document 147.

⁸ See footnotes 4 and 5, Document 147.

⁹ Reference is presumably to the B-52 strike against fuel storage depots near Hanoi and Haiphong on April 15 and 16. Kissinger later wrote, however, that Nixon had approved his recommendation for the strike "over the opposition of Abrams but with the support of Laird." (*White House Years*, p. 1121) See also Document 102.

152. **Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹**

Moscow, April 23, 1972.

WTE 013.1. Had four hour meeting with Gromyko to discuss Middle East and bilateral issues. On Middle East Gromyko stuck to familiar Soviet position. I gave no ground, holding out just enough hope to keep them from setting on an irrevocable course before the summit. On bilateral issues I painted glowing picture of prospects making everything conditional on the end of Vietnam however.

2. If my memory is correct present bombing authority extends only to 19 degrees. We can and should extend it to twentieth parallel.

3. I despair of making position here clear to Washington. These people are tough and in a sense in a corner. So far they have made all the concessions; we have made none.² On Vietnam they have helped us by inviting me and by maintaining summit invitation;³ they are certainly not making Hanoi happy. What more they can do I do not know. But this visit as well as the imminence of the summit should put a ceiling on domestic opposition.⁴ Moreover friendliness here helps discipline Peking. Has anyone thought through the domestic and international implications if we kick Moscow in the teeth and all our diplomacy goes down the drain?

4. We shall leave right after the Brezhnev meeting tomorrow hopefully by 1500 local time but I cannot be sure.

5. Gromyko apologized today for story about downgrading President's trip.⁵ He said it came from Western sources and was totally untrue.

6. I have arranged for Presidential announcement of SALT breakthrough.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 10:12 a.m. and retransmitted to Camp David for the President. Nixon's handwritten notations on the retransmitted copy are cited below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal File, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

² The President underlined this sentence.

³ The President underlined this first part of this sentence and marked it in the margin.

⁴ The President underlined "should put a ceiling on domestic opposition."

⁵ For reports that the Soviets would downgrade the trip, see Document 145.

153. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 23, 1972, 10:25 a.m.

P: Hello. I'm dictating a message to Henry.² Observations on his talk with Brezhnev. Nothing new I haven't seen yet?

H: Just got another message—4 hour meeting with Gromyko.³

P: On the summit?

H: Middle East bilateral (reads message).

P: Good.

H: . . . extend bombing to 20th. I would agree with that.

P: All bombing authorities on the 20th. Would you do that please?

H: Yes sir. (continues reading) "Despair making my position clear here to Washington. So far they have made all the concessions. On Vietnam they have helped by inviting me . . . This visit should put ceiling on the domestic opposition."

P: That's not true. Go ahead.

H: (continues reading).

P: 1500. What do you mean?

H: 3:00 o'clock their time. That would get them back about 7:00 or 8:00.

P: He has already got your message.⁴ I thought the argument was whether they should leave at 12:00 their time or 3:00 their time.

H: He did not get my message. The message he has is to leave there at 1:00 o'clock.

P: So now we have told him he could leave at 3:00?

H: I haven't told him anything.

P: He could leave at 3:00 or 4:00 as far as I am concerned. Tell him to make it 4:00 o'clock their time if necessary. Don't have him extend beyond what they really want. Leave it flexible; 3:00 is fine, or 4:00. He isn't going to get in in time for us to go back by midnight.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological File, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² Document 157.

³ Document 152.

⁴ Document 149.

H: Gromyko apologized about downgrading. Said it came from western sources. I have a message from Bunker here.⁵

P: OK.

H: On the Abrams recommendations for troop levels.⁶ They don't draw any more down. Understand other considerations which President will have to take into account.

P: What do you feel?

H: Take the 20 out.

P: We had to do it takes them out anytime he wants. No 10 and 10. I think it should be 20 but tell him things are going over here. He could take all 20 out in the next week.

H: That would ease his problem.

P: That will be put out as guidance here—20 over two months.

H: Goes to new ceiling, 495 by 1 July.

P: 1 July is all right. 2 months is enough. If he needs more flexibility. Let's leave it. Let's say 20 over 2 months but we will indicate no bitching here. He has total flexibility as to when. He can balloon it at the end if he wants. He could take none out in June if he wants, or May. You and I know a few other things may have happened.

H: I am confident by this time this thing will be settled.

P: You will get a message to Abrams⁷ re assessment? Just like Cambodia, how many times has Phnom Penh been lost—about 30 in the past. . . . ?

H: Exactly right. It looks better around An Loc.

P: We will give him this.

H: Yes.

P: Apparently Henry didn't get the message. I thought we were going to send him. I told you to be sure to send message on Rogers' call to me Saturday with regard to Semenov talking to Smith.⁸

H: I did send it to him.

P: Why does Henry say at my request they stopped Semenov from going to Bush?⁹ Here's what Rogers said, Semenov had just come back from meeting in Moscow.

⁵ Backchannel message 0071 from Bunker to Haig, April 21. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 414, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages 1972, From: AMB Bunker—Saigon)

⁶ See footnote 4, Document 147.

⁷ See footnote 6, Document 155.

⁸ See Document 136.

⁹ The reference, presumably to Permanent Representative to the United Nations Bush, is in error. In his message regarding the meeting with Brezhnev on April 22,

Offered to include SLBMs to accept 2 ABMs. What has Henry got here, Semenov has not told Smith.

H: I think he is wrong.

P: Don't you remember that is what Rogers called and told me. Smith already knows that.

H: Smith knows it. Henry got a message telling him he accepted through departmental channels. Wasn't that far-reaching on the SLBM.¹⁰

P: Smith made it that. Said at my request that. . . .

H: He is wrong. They have lied to him.

P: I think they have. Unless as you say, maybe it's not quite as specific. But I don't know what they are talking about. Old Communist trick here—they will always sell you the same thing 15 times. I don't know what they stopped Semenov from getting done, do you?

H: No.

P: I am not questioning Henry. I am just wondering what Brezhnev told him.

H: The only difference is in the case of Smith they said they would consider SLBM and Henry got a firm commitment they would include them.

P: That's fine. Rogers said they are going to include. Of course, Rogers feels they got a victory. Only a small thing—just wanted to be sure that this note to Henry, the message did go to Henry—what Rogers told me about Smith.

H: Yes, I sent it immediately.

P: No clinker in this. Dobrynin stressed if we confine bombing to present limits there is no chance . . .¹¹

H: Yes.

P: I cannot agree to that. Don't you agree that we hit Hanoi and Haiphong? We have to have option to hit that.

H: I agree completely.

P: I know Henry's great concern. He believes the summit will cool the domestic critics but it isn't going to do it. Criticism isn't that bad. You did get Henry a little of that feel didn't you.

Kissinger reported: "At my request they stopped Semyonov from giving Smith new ABM position which he already had instructions to do in next few days." See Document 148.

¹⁰ Although it does not claim acceptance "through departmental channels," reference is evidently to backchannel message 0328 from Smith to Kissinger, April 21; see Document 136.

¹¹ Haig interrupted the sentence, which concludes as follows: "of cancelling summit and they were extremely anxious to have it." See Document 148.

H: Yes. I think on the bombing Haiphong and Hanoi that all Henry should do is to say that we will not be bound by any limitations. I put that in the message yesterday to him.¹²

P: Good, good. I remember you and I discussed it.

H: And I added other messages.

P: Including blockade.

H: Both these messages¹³ are on their way now, sir.

P: On the military front?

H: It looks better today than yesterday. I don't understand what the press is yacking about.

P: I don't think it's TV so much, but the press talks about cutting the country in half. Means cutting a road, or what? They can open a road again, can't they?

H: Surely. An Loc—sporadic artillery.

P: That was yesterday.

H: ARVN probes outside. Enemy's attacks around An Loc have decreased. I think they are running out of gas.

P: Why don't you message that channel to Bunker and ask him.¹⁴ I want it indirect form. Get Moorer to get it for you. Understand we don't want any snow jobs like on Laos. It will stir Pentagon to knock down a little of this stuff. What do you think?

H: I think it will be useful. It will help you to know what you will get on Wednesday.

P: Right. If you will do that I would appreciate it. Fine, fine.

H: All right sir.

¹² Document 146.

¹³ Also see Document 149.

¹⁴ In a backchannel message that afternoon, Haig asked Bunker to assist Abrams in drafting his appraisal of the military situation in Vietnam for the President's upcoming televised address. Haig also briefed Bunker on Kissinger's trip to Moscow: "Henry's discussions in Moscow suggest Soviets may wish to be helpful on Vietnam because of their concerns with other areas. They have been most adamant that they were not aware of the timing and scope of the enemy's offensive. They also have been extremely forthcoming in commitments for maintaining the summit at all costs and in achieving progress in bilateral and multilateral issues planned for the summit. There is of course a degree of healthy skepticism here but in any event the fact that they have received Kissinger to discuss the war at a time when we have been intensely bombing North Vietnam must be disconcerting to Hanoi. We are very hopeful that the revelation of Henry's meeting in Moscow will do much to add to the President's flexibility in continuing air operations in the North." (Backchannel message WHS2053 from Haig to Bunker, April 23; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 854, President's File—China Trip, Camp David, Vol. XIII)

154. Editorial Note

On April 23, 1972, President Nixon called Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman at 11:22 a.m. to assess the trip to Moscow of Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) According to Haldeman's handwritten notes, Nixon began by reviewing the conflicting requirements of secrecy and publicity for the trip. Kissinger's decision to remain in Moscow meant that Nixon could not return to Washington until late the next evening, since, under the agreed cover story, both men were supposed to be at Camp David. At least, Nixon told Haldeman, they had not gone to Key Biscayne, where—with public access heightening speculation—they would have been "dead ducks." If the press still questioned the whereabouts of his Assistant, the President concocted yet another cover story: Kissinger was in Paris (presumably for secret negotiations with the North Vietnamese). Looking beyond Kissinger's trip, Nixon continued to prepare for his upcoming televised address on Vietnam, directing Haldeman to arrange for someone on the National Security Council staff to draft a 500-word statement.

The principal subject of conversation, however, was linkage between the summit in the Soviet Union and a settlement in Vietnam. Nixon complained that Moscow had done nothing on Vietnam, except agree to deliver a message to Hanoi, and that Kissinger had been "completely taken in." To emphasize the point, Nixon read Kissinger's report on his second meeting with General Secretary Brezhnev (Document 148), including the assertion that, while the Soviets could not vouch for the North Vietnamese, "the mere fact of positive steps following my trip is good." To make matters worse, Kissinger was "effusive" on the prospects for the summit, writing that Brezhnev had spent more time with him than any other foreign leader. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I) As Haldeman noted in his diary, this claim drove Nixon "up the wall."

"P's problem is he just doesn't agree the trip itself will have a big effect. K justifies it as cooling the domestic furor here and sending huge shock waves in Hanoi, but the point is we've sent the shock waves to Hanoi for months. That's typical K gobbledegook, and we don't have a domestic furor here, at least to the degree that we have to worry about getting it back. P's worried about the effect in this country, especially amongst the hawks and our supporters, of his going back to talks in Paris." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

When Haldeman called him later that afternoon, Haig expressed concern about the way Nixon and Haldeman were "bludgeoning"

Kissinger. Haldeman noted in his diary: “[Haig] says Henry’s not getting snookered over there, and that we shouldn’t imply it to him. He thinks that P’s putting too much heat on Henry and he thinks Henry will overreact.” The President showed little sign of letting up, however, summoning Haldeman for an impromptu meeting at 2:30 p.m. As Haldeman summarized Nixon’s position: “Our real problem is that the Soviets want the Summit, but they won’t help us in Vietnam in order to get it. Which leaves us on a bad wicket, in that we will be meeting with them during a Soviet supported invasion of South Vietnam.” (Ibid.) According to Haldeman’s handwritten notes, Nixon took this argument one step further: that he could not “survive Moscow trip if VN doesn’t decelerate.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I)

155. Message From the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 23, 1972, 12:08 p.m.

Sitto 39. 1. Thank you for your 012 and 013² essence of which have been discussed with the President.³ President understands need for you to remain longer on Monday and leaves it to your best judgement as to precise departure time providing you are convinced that constructive discussions on Vietnam are taking place. He is insistent that you be in Washington Monday night since he does not believe cover will hold beyond that and he can not afford to remain at Camp David himself beyond that point. It is not yet firm whether you should go straight to Camp David or come here to the White House upon arrival.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK’s Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Documents 151 and 152.

³ For discussion between Nixon and Haig on the latter message, see Document 153. The two men probably discussed the former message during a telephone conversation from 9:30 to 9:59 a.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President’s Daily Diary) No substantive record of the discussion has been found.

2. We are extending air authorities to twenty (20) degrees, per your suggestion.

3. I had another long and very testy session with the President in an effort to hold to present course.⁴ His main concern appears to be that he believes our agreement to resume plenaries despite the announcement of your visit to Moscow will convey impression of US collapse. I told him that my reading was precisely the opposite and that what it will do when accompanied by intense bombing up to the twentieth parallel is suggested that Moscow has blinked and provide a firm base for further escalation if required.

4. President also seems to be concerned about the bureaucraties of announcing your trip especially if the announcement does not emphasize that trip was based on situation in Vietnam. He also questioned your report that you have prevailed upon Gromyko to prevent Semenov from presenting SALT proposal to Smith when facts are that Semenov did tell Smith of new Soviet position.⁵ Smith, of course, told Rogers, who informed the President. I told the President that Semenov was very hazy with Smith about possibility of SLBM agreement but that in the discussions with you in Moscow the Soviets indicated firmly that they would accept an SLBM agreement.

5. Another complication here has been doom and gloom newspaper reporting out of Vietnam which is not justified by situation on the ground. In any event, in order to help allay fears, I am requesting a direct personal appraisal from Abrams for the President.⁶

6. I am only too aware what additional strains my messages entail for you at this time but I cannot gloss over attitudes here which you must be aware of.

7. Warm regards.

⁴ According to the President's Daily Diary, Haig called Nixon at 12:20 p.m. on April 23; the two men spoke for 21 minutes. (Ibid.) No substantive record of the discussion has been found.

⁵ See Document 148.

⁶ The request for Abrams's personal appraisal and the appraisal itself are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 130, Vietnam Subject Files, HAK/Pres Memos (NVA), Situation in Vietnam (Apr 72).

156. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 23, 1972.

WTE 014. 1. Thank you for your 39.² All I can say is that if this is President's attitude he had no business approving the Moscow trip.

2. I do not know whether anything useful is going on with respect to Vietnam. All I know is that we got our message across, that they are studying it and that the announcement of the trip should help us.

3. I fail to see how we can panic at doom and gloom stories from Vietnam and yet refuse to consider political options.

4. With respect to SALT, the Washington view is nothing short of absurd. Semenov told Smith that he might have a new ABM proposal and hinted at its nature. He also said that Moscow was "reviewing" the SLBM position.³ We obtained a precise proposal on both. The SLBM proposal moveover is exactly the scheme we advanced in the special channel. In any event Semenov is now under instructions to make no further move until President acts. But if the President likes to run down his own accomplishments that is his business.

5. Please send me for return trip precise, detailed analysis of what I shall face when I return.⁴

6. I will be back Monday night without fail. Brezhnev meeting has been moved to 1100. I should be in Washington by 2100.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. No time of transmission or receipt appears on the message.

² Document 155.

³ Reference is evidently to Semenov's remarks as reported in the April 21 backchannel message from Smith to Kissinger; see Document 136.

⁴ See Document 162.

157. **Message From President Nixon to his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹**

Washington, April 23, 1972, 1945Z.

CPD–203–72. Memorandum for Henry Kissinger from the President.

I am dictating this message personally to you rather than transmitting through Haig so that you can directly sense my views with regard to the state of play in your historic journey.

First, there is no question whatever among any of us here about the skill, resourcefulness and determination you have displayed in conducting your talks to date. I have read each one of your messages carefully and have been enormously impressed with how you have had exactly the right combination of sweet and sour in dealing with them.

Second, as Haig has already indicated, I have no objection to your staying until 1500 Moscow time or even until 1700 or 1800 Moscow time, provided that you determine that your staying on may make some contribution on Vietnam. It is important for you to arrive at Camp David before midnight on Monday so that we can go back to Washington and thereby maintain our cover and have time to prepare the announcement for Tuesday noon and Tuesday evening, as well as getting your recommendations with regard to what I should say on Wednesday or Thursday. As I am sure it has occurred to you, your hosts have already gained one of their goals—that of having you stay longer in Moscow on your first visit than you stayed in Peking. Of course, this is of very little concern to us and a few more hours makes no difference on that score.

It was predictable that they would give no ground on Vietnam although it seems to me that their primary purpose of getting you to Moscow to discuss the summit has now been served while our purpose of getting some progress on Vietnam has not been served, except, of course, in the very important, intangible ways you have pointed out—the effect on Hanoi of Moscow receiving you three days after we

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972, Kissinger Trip to Moscow. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Rose Mary Woods presumably transcribed the text from Nixon's taped dictation; copies of the final version and of a draft with Nixon's handwritten revisions are *ibid.* Received in Moscow April 24 at 1:07 a.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, 1964–77, Box TS 41, Soviet Union, Trips, 1972, April, Cables) Kissinger later stated that the memorandum "did not in fact reach me until all the Moscow meetings were concluded and the communiqué announcing my visit was agreed." (*White House Years*, pp. 1161–1162)

bombed Hanoi–Haiphong, of course, the obvious result of keeping Peking balanced vis-à-vis Moscow.

As far as what they have agreed to—sending messages to Hanoi, I suppose that in the long run this might have some beneficial effect. At least it enlists them in the diplomatic game in a way that they have refused to become enlisted before. However, we cannot be oblivious to the fact that while they have agreed to send messages, secretly, they will be continuing to send arms, publicly, and the latter fact will be the one our critics at home on both the left and the right will eventually seize upon.

Whether your hosts were in collusion with Hanoi is, of course, a question none of us can answer without knowing their innermost thoughts. But as far as the observers who will be trying to appraise the success or failure of your trip and later the summit, if it comes off, there is one hard fact that stands out—anyone who gives a murder weapon to someone he knows is going to kill with it is equally responsible for the crime. You and I might have reason to believe that both Peking and Moscow would like to de-fuse the situation in Southeast Asia but cannot do so for reasons of which we are aware. On the other hand, in dealing with our own opinion at home, this sophisticated analysis makes no dent whatever.

On the domestic front, the way the scenario may develop is as follows:

(1) The announcement of your trip on Tuesday noon will be a bombshell. But the primary interest in it, unfortunately, except for a few sophisticates, will be whether anything was accomplished to bring the Vietnam war to an end.

(2) The announcement later in the day that we are going back to the conference table, unless it is handled very skillfully, could be extremely detrimental when coupled with the announcement of your Moscow trip. The demonstrators—and, as you have heard, the “uproar” we all feared is far less than anticipated, have all been calling for us to go back to the conference table. When we announce six hours after announcing your trip to Moscow that we are going back to the conference table, the doves who will never be with us will say that we finally have rectified a bad error that we made in ever leaving the conference table; and the hawks will be desperately disillusioned because they will think that Moscow twisted our arms to get us to make this move, particularly when we have said we wouldn’t be going back except with the understanding that we have a private meeting but this is going to pose a very serious public relations problem for us which I will have to tackle in any remarks which I make on either Wednesday or Thursday.

After the first shock of the announcement of your trip wears off—by the end of the week a chorus will arise from both the doves and the

hawks raising two questions: First, what did Kissinger discuss with the Russians? (and here there will be insistence that you inform the Foreign Relations Committee and all others on this score) and (2) what did the Kissinger trip accomplish in terms of getting progress on Vietnam?

You and I know that it has to have accomplished a considerable amount indirectly by the message it sends to Hanoi and also that it may open the door for future progress on Vietnam where the Soviet may play a more helpful role. On the other hand, we must batten down the hatches for what will be a rising chorus of criticism from our political opponents on the left and from our hawk friends on the right for going to Moscow and failing to get progress on the major issue.

I have deliberately painted this picture at its worst because, of course, we must prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Haig makes the point and I share it to an extent, that Hanoi will be under enormous heat to be more forthcoming in their private meeting with you on May 2nd. On the other hand, they may hold firm. It is then that we will have to make the really tough decision. It is my view that if they give no more than they have given on the twelve previous meetings they have had with you—and I believe those meetings were constructive of course but not on the decisive issue—then we will have to go all-out on the bombing front.

That is why it is vitally important that your hosts know that all options—as far as actions against the north are open in the event that the meeting of May 2 turns out to be as non-productive on the really critical issues as have the previous meetings you have had with the North Vietnamese.

Going back to our major goals, I could not agree with you more that the summit in terms of long term interests of the US is vitally important. However, no matter how good a deal we get out of the summit on SALT and on the other issues, we must realize that now the Soviet summit, far more than the Chinese summit, due to the fact that your trip directly dealt with Vietnam, will be judged as a success or failure depending upon whether we get some progress on Vietnam. My feeling about the necessity for resuming attacks on the Hanoi-Haiphong complex in the event that the May 2 meeting is a dud is as you can recognize quite different from the decision I made with regard to activities we would undertake prior to, during and after the China visit. For four weeks before we went to China, for the two weeks that we were there or on the way and for three weeks after we were there we made a decision, which I think was right, not to be provocative in our bombing of targets north of the DMZ even though we knew from all intelligence reports that an enemy build-up was going forward. I think that decision was right at that time.

However, I am convinced that we cannot pay that kind of price for the Soviet summit—much as I recognize that substantively that the Soviet summit is of course going to be infinitely more productive than the Chinese summit.

As Al may have already messaged you, any SALT announcement by me now presents a serious problem. Rogers called me Saturday² and told me that Semyonov had given Smith exactly the same offer that you set forth in your message of April 22.³

I realize that we can point out that there is a shade of difference since you now have apparently an agreement with the Soviet to include SLBMs whereas we could say that Smith only had an agreement to discuss the inclusion of SLBMs. On the other hand, I fear that we have the problem in making any Presidential announcement that Smith and his colleagues will simply say that I was trying to point to your trip and my upcoming visit as having been responsible for accomplishing a breakthrough in SALT which Smith had already accomplished at lower levels. Perhaps we can find a way to handle this problem but I think in view of the call I received from Rogers we will find it pretty difficult.

I realize that this trip even more than your China trip is a very trying one because it involves so much more substance. Be assured that there is absolutely no lack of confidence in your toughness, your negotiating skill nor in your judgment as to how to evaluate the talks you are having. Because the stakes are so high, however, I believe it is imperative that you be aware of what we confront on the domestic scene in the event that some progress on Vietnam does not become apparent as a direct result of your trip and, of course, as a direct result of the summit.

We have painted ourselves into this corner—quite deliberately—and I only hope that developments will justify the course we have followed.

In sum, we risked the summit by hitting Hanoi and Haiphong. After we have gone through your meeting of May 2, we may be faced with the hard decision to risk it again and probably damage it irreparably because we may have no other choice if that meeting turns out to be a failure.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that except for a few sophisticated foreign policy observers, interest in what we are able to get on a SALT agreement, trade, a better communiqué than the French got,⁴ etc., will

² See Documents 135 and 136.

³ Document 148.

⁴ See footnote 6, Document 125.

not save the summit unless one way or another we are able to point to some progress on Vietnam. Of course, I am aware of the fact that if your hosts still want to go forward with the summit, despite the actions we may have had to take after May 2, we will do so because we know that the substantive agreements that we will reach at the summit and in and of themselves substantively very important even without progress on Vietnam. What I am trying to emphasize is that we must face the hard fact that we have now convinced the country that Soviet arms and Soviet tanks have fueled this massive invasion of South Vietnam by the North. Having done so, it is only logical that our critics on both right and left will hammer us hard if we sit down and meet with the Soviets, drink toasts, sign communiqués, etc., without getting progress on Vietnam.

However, it all comes out, just remember we all know we couldn't have a better man in Moscow at this time than Kissinger. Rebozo⁵ joins us in sending our regards.

⁵ Reference is to Charles G. "Bebe" Rebozo, the President's personal friend, who accompanied Nixon to Camp David. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary). Kissinger complained in his memoirs that such company "did not usually make for the calmest reflection." (*White House Years*, p. 1155)

158. Editorial Note

On the evening of April 23, 1972, President Nixon met Deputy Assistant to the President Alexander Haig at Camp David to discuss Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger's trip to Moscow. Before Haig arrived, the President reviewed the situation, in particular, the linkage between summit preparations in Moscow and military developments in Vietnam, with White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman. In an effort to assure the "best possible news stories" before his upcoming televised address, Nixon suggested that Director of Central Intelligence Helms divulge how "things are bad in Hanoi" and that Ray Cline, Director of Intelligence and Research at the Department of State, "leak the intelligence (CIA) stuff" on North Vietnam. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, Staff Member and Office Files, H.R. Haldeman, Box 45, Notes, April–June 1972, Part I) Nixon then addressed his primary concern "that Henry must be controlled about any briefing of press or Senators or anyone else, on the basis that there's nothing in it for us to do any briefings on

the Summit, that we've got to keep the whole focus on Vietnam, and the problem is Henry doesn't have anything on Vietnam." The President insisted, however, that he was not discouraged. "We just have to wait," he explained. "We're on a sticky wicket at the moment about dealing with the Russians while they're supplying North Vietnam." (Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, page 445)

According to the President's Daily Diary Haig arrived at Camp David shortly before 8 p.m.; his meeting with Nixon, which Haldeman also attended, lasted until 9:15. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) The President began by emphasizing the importance of public relations: for the next several days, the White House would face a "very rough story" on Vietnam, as the press demanded to know "why we're going back to the conference table at the time that the Russians are pushing this invasion." Nixon would answer this question in his televised address on April 25; Kissinger meanwhile must play the "mystery line" by declining to brief the press. Haig suggested, however, that, even without a public relations strategy, "we would have had all these problems anyway." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) The North Vietnamese had agreed to hold a private meeting with Kissinger in Paris on May 2. If they still remained intransigent, he argued, then the President had the political basis for "leveling" Hanoi and Haiphong. Haig also rejected the proposition, advanced by Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin in Moscow, that the summit was assured if the United States did nothing to the two North Vietnamese cities. For Nixon to shake hands with men who had "blood on their hands won't look good here." Haig recommended a hard line instead: if the Russians wanted a summit, they could have it; but Nixon might want to give up the summit in order to save Vietnam. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I)

Haldeman recorded the conclusion of the meeting in his diary as follows:

"It was agreed that there should be no statement about SALT before the Summit, that we've got to keep Rogers and Smith locked up on this one. Also there must be no implication that we asked the Soviets for K to come, it was at their invitation that Henry went there. It's important for Haig to be sure that K doesn't blab on a background basis in any way on his trip. P seemed to feel better as we ended the meeting." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

159. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972, 11:15 a.m.–1:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General-Secretary of Central Committee of CPSU

Andrei Gromyko, Foreign Minister

Anatoli Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA

A. Alexandrov-Agentov, Assistant to Mr. Brezhnev

Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter

Mr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Council

Mr. Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

Vietnam; Middle East; Nuclear Non-Aggression Pact; Economic Relations; European Security; Summit Preparations; Announcement of Kissinger Visit

Dr. Kissinger: [Referring to the disparity of attendees on the two sides]² You trust more people than I do.

Brezhnev: I can send them out!

Let me say first, I think we have done most important work in the last few days. Let us be as constructive as possible.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Vietnam

Brezhnev: I would like to ask you if you have anything new to communicate to us.

Dr. Kissinger: No, Mr. General-Secretary, I don't really have anything new. I have summed up my impressions to your Ambassador which I will report to the President. I am convinced that the Soviet side is sincerely interested in making the Summit a major departure in U.S.-Soviet relations, that it is not just a tactical move, but affects every aspect of your behavior, even personal. We've made very great progress in this visit which practically guarantees the success of the Summit. What has before been a political concern has now become a human concern.

I have told you and your Ambassador our concerns on Vietnam; I don't believe a useful purpose is served by repeating myself. It is the only obstacle on our side in the way. If the Vietnamese deal with us

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

² All brackets in the source text.

seriously, we will deal with them seriously. But not while we are being put under military pressure.

Brezhnev: How did the President react to all the communications you were able to send him from here?

Dr. Kissinger: I haven't given every detail, because I did not want too many experts to analyze every proposal before I got back. I have communicated just the spirit of our talks.

Brezhnev: So as not to squander all the baggage you're bringing back.

Dr. Kissinger: You understand me better than I thought.

Brezhnev: No, it's natural. You did all the negotiating.

Dr. Kissinger: The President sent me a cable,³ part of which I have read to your Ambassador, that he thinks the Moscow Summit can be much more significant than the Peking Summit. This reflects his attitude.

I am sure the President will consider the principles⁴ we have agreed to an historic achievement, and I am convinced that except for minor modifications, the SALT proposal will be considered a constructive one. I will confirm it to your Ambassador Friday. But I'm certain that will be the reaction.

Brezhnev: Thank you for your communication. I guess that now we should be endeavoring to sum up the results of our discussions.

Dr. Kissinger: Exactly.

Brezhnev: Summing up the results, we have said many things on the significance of the forthcoming meeting. We have emphasized that the meeting may be not only useful but also historic and perhaps epochal. On the other hand, we have also talked of circumstances that make the Summit meeting impossible. This is not a way of attempting to bring pressure on you; understand me correctly on this point. The Summit after all was born not only with due regard for American wishes but also on the basis of reciprocity on our side. It is certainly understood on both sides that the possible results may prove to be important from the standpoint not only of our two countries but also world politics. If results are viewed from the point of view of what they can do to reduce international tensions, that would be a weighty

³ Document 157.

⁴ Before the final meeting with Brezhnev, Kissinger gave Dobrynin the latest U.S. redraft of the Soviet proposal for a joint document on "Basic Principles of Relations." The text, including Sonnenfeldt's handwritten revisions, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes. For the draft Nixon took to Moscow in May, which is nearly identical to the version Kissinger gave Dobrynin on April 24, see Document 233.

political asset for both, and would be welcomed everywhere in the world.

In addition to what we have already discussed on Vietnam, I would add a couple of words more. Now it is the most acute question which may reverse the entire course of events. Both agree this is indeed the case and we've discussed many constructive things in this place.

As we see it, you have still not received a reply from Hanoi on your latest proposals, and we have not either.

Dr. Kissinger: Have you transmitted our proposals?

Brezhnev: No, since there was no direct request from your side. We would be prepared to if you express the wish.

I want to voice a thought that is constantly in my head. According to your proposals to Vietnam, there is to be a plenary on April 27, followed by a private session on May 2. I have no knowledge of their position, but what if the Vietnamese suddenly suggest May 6, or May 1, or May 5? Are there any reasons why an alternative between May 2 and 6 couldn't be accepted? I see it as a purely procedural matter, not to be elevated into a principle.

Success always depends on one's approach. Even a slight break in the clouds can be covered again. I merely wish to mention this again, not for the sake of further discussion. I do not think a procedural question should be turned into an obstacle to success.

On the general points, I see no need to repeat ourselves; all our views have been set and I have nothing further to add. That's all I have to say on Vietnam. This is the one remaining problem. I am sure you will faithfully communicate to President Nixon not only our formal proposals but also the general spirit of give and take, and I am sure he will react perspicaciously to all you have been saying.

Dr. Kissinger: Could I say something on Vietnam now?

Brezhnev: Please.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, there are two things to be considered. First, the Vietnamese have now three times cancelled private meetings to which they have agreed. Considering our attitude to private meetings, this has to be considered. As your Ambassador can testify, for me to plan a trip is extremely complicated. It is a question of courtesy. It is also technically a problem. Secondly, substantively, we have made a major concession in agreeing to go to a plenary meeting, contrary to our public declarations, without assurances of progress or any stopping of the offensive. We agreed to this because as a great power we should not indulge in petty childish maneuvers. If we have a plenary on April 27, and a second is held on May 4, there will have been two plenaries without a private meeting. As I said, for technical

reasons, a meeting after May 2 is impossible. A date earlier than May 2 would be possible, but a date later than May 2, no.

As for our proposals, if you were prepared to communicate them to Hanoi, it would be considered a great courtesy.

I showed the note we received from the North Vietnamese⁵ to your Ambassador, who sees more of these than our Foreign Ministry.

Brezhnev: Maybe Rogers' post should be abolished.

Dr. Kissinger: Or may be Dobrynin should be given an official function.

Brezhnev: He has a second post—the channel.

Dr. Kissinger: Our policy is, anything that comes to the White House is never let out of the White House. All of your communications go only to President.

The North Vietnamese in their note said they could come to a private meeting one week after they were notified of a plenary. We gave them nine days. So we were accepting their proposal. I just wanted to explain to the General-Secretary that we were not giving an ultimatum.

Brezhnev: I was on no account speaking for the Vietnamese. I was just thinking what if, perhaps, they might suggest May 2nd, not May 4th. The point I was making was that this should not be a stumbling block to progress.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand.

Brezhnev: I was speaking merely from the point of view of, let's say, you wanted to come to Moscow on 21 April and we wanted 22 April. If you insisted, we would have agreed. We would not treat it as a matter of principle.

Let's turn to other matters.

Dr. Kissinger: I think we understand each other's positions.

Middle East

Brezhnev: I'd like to give you additional text by way of explanation on the Middle East.⁶ As we see it, the gist of the conversations

⁵ See footnote 11, Document 134.

⁶ The unofficial translation and the Russian original of the second Soviet note on the Middle East are both in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes. In addition to the "final settlement" outlined in their previous note (see footnote 5, Document 141), the Soviets suggested several provisions as the basis for a "confidential arrangement" between the superpowers. These provisions included the withdrawal of most Soviet military personnel from Egypt and the mutual limitation of arms deliveries throughout the region. Although they hoped to formalize

Gromyko had with the President and with Dr. Kissinger⁷ remains valid, and now the problem is to somehow formalize this in some kind of arrangement, without making public any of the provisions outlined in those conversations. I think we should formalize these provisions in some way.

Dr. Kissinger: Formalize where?

Brezhnev: In the form of some kind of closed agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: At the Summit, or can it wait until September?
[Alexandrov enters]

Brezhnev: I had meant at the Summit, but in as narrow a circle as the President wants it to be, without the presence of the entire delegation.

Nuclear Non-Aggression Pact

Brezhnev: I have one other matter to pass on confidentially to the President. The form is not important, we would be ready to accept any form suggested by the President. It would be of immense significance if we could formalize, if not in this document, maybe in some special document, an understanding that our two countries will not use nuclear weapons against one another.

I feel that would be a “peaceful bomb” whose explosion would have a very positive effect and would be aimed at improving the general international situation and at lessening international tensions. As to form, we would be prepared to do it in a treaty or an agreement. The form is not important, but the principle is important. It would be of great interest to the governments and peoples of the U.S. and Soviet Union. If the President for some reason feels that this question should be discussed for the time being in the confidential channel, we would agree to that too.

Economic Relations

Brezhnev: I’ll not now burden you with remarks on other matters such as commercial matters, such as Most Favored Nation treatment. I have been informed by my comrades, and we accept them with satisfaction. Trade is a question of importance to our two countries. There

the confidential arrangement at the summit, the Soviets recognized that its implementation “would begin immediately after the election in the USA and would be completed in the very beginning of 1973.”

⁷ During his annual visit in late September for the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly, Gromyko also visited Washington, meeting Nixon at the White House on September 29 and Kissinger at the Soviet Embassy on September 30. The memoranda of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

would be no problem also with cultural ties or environmental cooperation. I am sure solutions to these will be reachable by both sides and will be appreciated by both sides. On the economic side, I have spoken of large-scale joint ventures; we feel this would appeal not only to business circles but also to the people. It would be beneficial to both sides.

European Security

Brezhnev: I don't know if you have received the news of the Elections at Baden-Württemberg.⁸ [He has difficulty pronouncing the name.]

Dr. Kissinger: The Germans can make even the names of states sound like profound philosophical statements.

Brezhnev: Or make it sound as if one land is bigger than the Soviet Union! These elections have shown that no great sensations have taken place.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Brezhnev: I mention this just by way of information. Since that is the case, now is a decisive moment when our two countries should take the necessary steps to further ratification of the treaties and to sign a protocol on West Berlin. This is something we are duty bound to do. This is the way we see it. We've exchanged views. I would merely like you to point this out to the President. Also, we should, we feel, take the necessary steps for the preparation and convening of a European Security Conference. I am sure you understand well, and can convey this to the President.

Summit Preparations

Brezhnev: I would also like to recall our arrangement at the start that we would be frank, and to make one small comment. We can't understand why, and for what reason, in the period of the most intensive preparatory work for the Summit, a campaign of anti-Sovietism has been fanned in the U.S. We know anti-Sovietism has been around for a long time in the U.S., but the fanning and intensification now we do not understand. We could reply, but I just wanted to mention it. Convey this, and the tone of my remark, to the President. As we see it, this is an unnecessary business.

⁸ In a handwritten note to Kissinger, intended as preparation for the meeting with Brezhnev on April 24, Sonnenfeldt argued that the clear victory of the CDU in the Baden-Württemberg state election "will look *ominous* to Soviets." In view of Brezhnev's plea that Nixon intervene before the election (see Document 139), Sonnenfeldt offered the following advice: "[B]rezhnev] may believe *we* could have done something. *Let him believe it. You held out hope, indeed virtually promised to do something before May if Brandt survives.*" (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 230, Geopolitical File, 1964–78, Soviet Union, Trips, 1972, April, Notes)

Let me now finally sum up the results of our work. You and I have done a big job, a necessary and useful piece of work. I don't know about my colleagues, but I know that the President will be pleased with what you have done. I say that in all seriousness. But that isn't main note on which I would like to end. I have been thinking of our past, our present and our future.

I don't know in whose interests this is—in the interests of what circles this is being done—but it is clear to us that in the years since the war, everything in the U.S. has been geared to creating and spreading an impression among lending circles and among the American people, a spirit of mistrust of the Soviet Union, depicting the Soviet Union as a dangerous and menacing state bringing war and promoting Communism. That has been the general trend in the U.S. What it has yielded the U.S. and the Administration, I don't know. But it certainly does not promote good will, and it hurts relations between our two countries and world peace. No words can characterize the false nature of these ideas.

What we have achieved in preparation for the Summit has not been done for the movement. I want to state here what I have said publicly. Without forfeiting or sacrificing our principles, we are going forward to the Summit with an open mind. Our attitude is one of principle, and not dictated by any momentary considerations. We are interested. As a matter of principle in cooperation and in lessening tensions, and that will be our attitude in the future—not only in relations with the U.S. but on a global scale. With each passing year, we will be able to make step after step in improving peace, advancing to our great goal that the two greatest nations in the world should act in a way promoting peace, resolving all problems in the world by peaceful methods.

Tell the President that our actions are not and will not be dictated by momentary considerations, both in relations between us and in global policies.

That is the summary of the results. One very small comment on the nuclear question. I would like that part of our conversation not to be registered in a piece of paper but only in our oral conversation.

I have had a brief look at the announcement. Except for some minor alterations, it is generally acceptable, with the understanding, that the content of our talks will not be public either in the U.S. or the Soviet Union.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be absolutely certain.

Brezhnev: After this, I can shake your hand and wish you a safe return. I will hurry back to inform my colleagues, but you can be sure I won't go back on anything I have said here.

As regards further exchanges, I trust they will continue thru the Kissinger/Dobrynin channel. Such exchanges are necessary to bring all problems to the point where they are ripe for solution.

Though this is a secret visit, you have had a chance to see something of Moscow, and you will have seen that preparations for the Summit are under way not only in substance but also in other areas.

Dr. Kissinger: I have been very impressed.

Brezhnev: There is nothing artificial. This is the normal work of the day.

Dr. Kissinger: Even the most anti-Soviet person in the U.S. could not call the General-Secretary an artificial individual.

Brezhnev: There is nothing “synthetic” about me. I am living flesh.

Dr. Kissinger: That is obvious. Mr. General-Secretary, may I make a few observations on what you have said.

Vietnam

Dr. Kissinger: First, I cannot leave any misunderstanding on Vietnam. We have no flexibility on May 2. It can be earlier, but it cannot be later. But we have discussed that. It would be physically impossible. May 8 would be the next possible time.

European Security

Dr. Kissinger: As regards Germany, my analysis of the situation is the same as that of your Foreign Minister, if I understand him correctly. I have not seen our official analyses yet, but my personal analysis is that there has been a slight weakening of the Brandt Government but not a significant weakening of the Brandt Government.⁹ In my judgment—again I am only speaking personally—it means that the treaties will be rejected by the upper house and will therefore have to come back to Parliament to pass by an absolute majority in June. It is my judgment that they will still pass. We will use our influence where we can.

Brezhnev: America can certainly speak in a loud voice when it wants to.

Dr. Kissinger: As I told the General-Secretary, when I return I will discuss with the President what we can do. Having worked so long on the Berlin agreement, we want to see it achieved. It is one of the useful results of the exchanges between the President and the General-Secretary.

Brezhnev: I trust you will convey the general tenor and our tone to the President on our policy toward Europe, which contains nothing bad for Europe or for the U.S.

⁹ Later that evening, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group submitted a motion for a constructive vote of no confidence in the Chancellor, the first time the maneuver had been attempted in the history of the Federal Republic.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be sure. We will see what we can do, possibly a letter to the Chancellor, or something else.

Brezhnev: This requires looking at things thru realistic eyes, and perhaps everything will fall into place. I'm not in any way suggesting any concrete steps, because I am sure the President knows better. To help your own ally. I already told Chancellor Brandt in the Crimea¹⁰ that we had nothing whatsoever against the allied relationship between the FRG and the U.S. I am sure Chancellor Brandt told the President this but I wanted to reassure you.

Dr. Kissinger: We will approach it in a constructive spirit. I will communicate thru the special channel. I will see your Ambassador Friday, but I can tell you now we will approach it in a constructive spirit, and with a desire to get the Treaties ratified.

Brezhnev: Good, thank you. I like living examples. Now the time it will take to achieve the results we want—a true mutual understanding—will depend on the speed and size of the steps we take. There is a story of a traveller who wants to go from one place to another village. He does not know the distance; he knows only the road and his goal. He sees a man along the road chopping wood, and asks him, How much time does it take to get to that village? The woodsman says he doesn't know. The traveller is somewhat offended at woodsman, because he is from there and surely must know. So the traveller heads off down the road. After he had taken a few strides, the woodsman calls out, "Stop. It will take you 15 minutes." "Why didn't you tell me the first time I asked?" the traveller asked. "Because then I didn't know the length of your stride."

I think this example applies also to foreign policy.

Dr. Kissinger: That is a good story. Certainly our intention is to take big strides.

Brezhnev: Good. By the time we meet again, we will be able to tell whose stride is larger, the Soviet side or the American side.

Nuclear Non-Aggression Pact

Dr. Kissinger: On the renunciation of nuclear weapons, I agree with the General-Secretary that we should exchange further communications thru the special channel, so that we can decide what is possible and how to handle it. Let's not do anything in other channels, because that will lead to a stalemate.

¹⁰ Brandt met Brezhnev at Oreanda in the Crimea September 16–18, 1971. Kissinger's assessment of the meeting, is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XL, Germany and Berlin, 1969–1972, Document 331.

Middle East

Dr. Kissinger: As regards the Middle East, I have explained to the Foreign Minister yesterday and your Ambassador can confirm, the realities of what can be done in America with respect to any agreement that may be reached. As an objective reality, it will be impossible to complete any agreement before mid 1973. We cannot do it before the elections, and cannot do it immediately after the elections. November and December will be taken up with constituting a new government. And the agreement can be done only by the new government.

Brezhnev: I understand that. But I feel that an agreement in principle should be achieved and set down at the Summit.

Dr. Kissinger: Secondly, we have this problem. The President must be able to come back from the Summit and be able to say truthfully that no secret agreements were made. Therefore, I suggest we have a preliminary discussion at the Summit. Then when I come back in September, we could talk of completing an agreement. We will keep our word.

Brezhnev: We are not speaking in terms of a formal agreement at the Summit, but there has to be an understanding on the substance. Otherwise, it would go against what Gromyko and the President agreed in September.

Dr. Kissinger: Gromyko made a proposition. We listened to it. We agreed to discuss it; we did not accept it.

Gromyko: The President said we would seek agreement at Summit. It was said that if we reached understanding, the question would be solved.

Brezhnev: This is a question that requires complete clarity on our part. That is the way we responded to the report of the conversations Gromyko had with you. It is a difficult matter how to formalize what is agreed. I want to make one substantive point. There is in Egypt today a vast army, nearly 100,000 strong. I tell you this only confidentially.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be absolutely sure.

Brezhnev: It is also necessary to bear in mind that the general situation in Egypt may unfortunately come to the point where they can get out of control. You know we steadfastly seek a solution. But there are processes at work. The Army is becoming excited. In fact an Army as big as that cannot stay tranquil all the time, especially in these conditions. Conditions such that at some stage it may get out of control, and the entire situation may take a different character.

When we part, I have to attend some meetings with my colleagues. We will discuss other matters, but they'll certainly ask questions on this: What can be achieved at the Summit on this, and what do we have to leave for the September phase?

Dr. Kissinger: We can begin immediately a discussion of principles in the special channels. At the Summit, these principles can be elaborated on, and we can show a positive direction. And we are prepared to make a public arrangement on what the Foreign Minister calls an interim solution. So, it is hard to predict which part will be left open. We can certainly indicate a general direction at the Summit.

I have told your Foreign Minister about the aspects of your proposals which present major difficulties for us. For two years, there were considerable theoretical discussions which were divorced from reality. What we promise, we will do. But I want to make sure we promise what we can deliver. If we use the same ingenuity we showed in negotiating the Berlin accord, and given the ingenuity your Foreign Minister possesses, we should be able to have agreement at the Summit. It depends on how hard we work in the interval. We will do it with a good will and intention to have major progress at the Summit. There are really only one or two points which need clarification.

Brezhnev: I'll tell you honestly. I certainly cannot say that satisfies me. As Gromyko told me clearly,—I have complete confidence in him—concrete things were discussed in Washington in September. Implementation could not begin until after the elections, but a principled agreement could be achieved at the Summit. That is what I understood.

Dr. Kissinger: That is right.

Brezhnev: I had thought that this matter had been in principle agreed on, and that we were now beginning to think along the lines of how to speak to the Arab leaders without divulging the origins. But as things stand now, I do not know how to talk to Sadat, in particular. If I'm deprived of this weapon, that is the agreement with you, I don't know how we can approach the Arab leaders without causing an explosion.

I certainly appreciate the fact that Dr. Kissinger may have certain justified problems and difficulties in giving a lucid answer just now, but I would like to agree that exchanges should begin without delay in the channel to clarify matters as agreed in the conversations between the President and Gromyko.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me briefly review the situation. When your Foreign Minister was in Washington, we were talking hypothetically, about how to handle an agreement if there was one. Then we studied for two months whether there was a possibility of fruitful discussions between us. We then started discussions and decided there was a possibility. These discussions have not yet yielded concrete results. If there are concrete results by the Summit, of course we will carry it out. We are not opposed to an agreement; we don't have an agreement. We have kept our word. What is left for September is a purely optical problem.

[At this point, the General-Secretary left the room for a moment.]

Gromyko: Do you have a record of my conversation with you?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. I did not accept your proposal. I said your proposal of withdrawal was positive, and a major concession. I didn't accept the details, but said I would talk with Dobrynin to try to work it out.

What did the President say to you?

Gromyko: He said, "I do see a good basis for a possible agreement," and suggested I talk it over with you. And you said that a final agreement of substance should be taken at the Summit. If we agreed, there would be no problem and you would bring pressure. And we'd divide it in two parts, one public and one confidential.

Dr. Kissinger: That part is not the problem.

[The General-Secretary then returned.]

Brezhnev: The situation is made complicated by the fact that you are using diplomatic language and I am just a realist politician. Therefore, I have found a provisional way out. Don't look so glum.

Dr. Kissinger: No, no.

Brezhnev: To confirm what I said in my letter to the President.¹¹ Agreement should be reached in the spirit of the conversations with Gromyko, and the President said¹² he regarded with approval the ideas I put in the letter, and this I interpreted to mean we had an agreement. Since your thinking must be close if not identical to that of the President, the only way out is to have an agreement, leaving the details for the channel.

Dr. Kissinger: Your Foreign Minister has reported to you correctly. What he said here is correct. I think we are confusing two things—the substance of an agreement and the mechanics of carrying it out. On substance, if we can reach substantial agreement before the Summit, we can confirm principles at the Summit. The problem here is that we don't have an agreement. Therefore we should work on the substance and not on what happens when. My position is identical to the President's. In fact I have a certain role in drafting these letters.

Brezhnev: I certainly know the part you play.

Dr. Kissinger: I suggest we get to work to see what we can accomplish before the Summit. We certainly favor completing the maximum amount at the Summit, and perhaps all of it.

¹¹ Dated September 7, 1971. The letter is scheduled for publication in *ibid.*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

¹² See Document 6.

Announcement of Visit

Brezhnev: Can I say that I have certain doubts about the feasibility of announcing your visit? Because we did all we could to keep it confidential, and now the situation is that we will have to divulge the fact.

Do you think it is completely unavoidable in the United States?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Brezhnev: [Pause] OK [khorosho].

May I ask you to convey my best wishes to President Nixon and the hope that he will attentively and with a spirit of understanding attend to all we have discussed—Vietnam, Middle East, Soviet-American relations, and European matters. Tell him we will continue, as we have, our intensive work thru the channel, in which on our side all our important people will be taking part, and on your side mainly the President and Dr. Kissinger. Some of those asides I made to you when we were out walking.¹³ I hope you will recall and convey to President Nixon.

Dr. Kissinger: I will.

Brezhnev: I have to leave now, to chair an important internal meeting. We have discussed all substantive issues. May I wish you further success.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary. Let me thank you for your courtesies. I return to Washington with even greater determination to make the Summit a success. I know from the cables the President has sent me that he feels we have an historic opportunity, and this is the spirit in which he comes here.

Brezhnev: I am pleased.

[The formal meeting broke up at 1:45 p.m. After a short break, an informal meeting began with Foreign Minister Gromyko and Dr. Kissinger on the text of the announcement of the Kissinger visit.]

¹³ Reference is to the private remarks on Vietnam and the summit that Brezhnev made to Kissinger between meetings on April 22; see Document 148.

160. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972, 1:50–3 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Soviet Foreign Minister
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to USA
G. M. Kornienko, Chief of USA Division, Foreign Ministry
Viktor Sukhodrev, Soviet Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECT

Announcement of Kissinger Visit; Vietnam; SALT

[General-Secretary Brezhnev had commented in the morning meetings that “except for some minor alterations,” the U.S. draft announcement of Dr. Kissinger’s visit was “generally acceptable.” When he departed at 1:45 p.m., he left a new Soviet draft with the Foreign Minister, who handed it over to Dr. Kissinger. The Soviet draft consisted of handwritten changes on a copy of the U.S. text which Dr. Kissinger had discussed and agreed with the Foreign Minister Sunday morning (Tab A).² The Soviet text read as follows:

“By mutual agreement, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was in Moscow from April 20 to April 24, 1972. While there he conferred with the General-Secretary of the CPSU, Mr. Brezhnev, and Foreign Minister Gromyko. Their talks, which were in preparation for the discussions between President Nixon and the Soviet leaders in May, dealt with bilateral matters and with important international problems.”]

[What follows is a record of the highlights of the discussion.]³

Dr. Kissinger: Why have you deleted the phrase “frank and useful throughout?” Weren’t our talks frank and useful?

Gromyko: You know that in our lexicon “frank” implies disagreement. Everyone will read it that way.

Dr. Kissinger: [Referring to the second sentence of the Soviet draft.] We cannot accept it this way. Your Ambassador knows what our con-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

² A copy of the Soviet draft, including handwritten revisions, is *ibid.*

³ All brackets in the source text.

cerns are. The President prohibited me to come here for Summit preparations. For internal reasons, we have to say that other matters were discussed. And why are you reluctant to say that our talks were useful, when we settled SALT here?

Gromyko: I am not empowered to make any changes. It is his [Brezhnev's] decision.

It does no good to insist.

Dr. Kissinger: I am not insisting. I am pointing out that it is improper to do it without any discussion. If we had a discussion about it, that is something else. I have no authority to accept this. You know there are nuances important to our discussions here. We cannot have "bilateral" come first.

Gromyko: You prefer to have "international" first? Okay.

Dr. Kissinger: I will tell you quite honestly. It will make a bad impression on the President that you refuse to call useful a series of talks in which we settled SALT and the basic principles of our relations, and had useful talks on the Middle East.

More than this, I object to the method.

Gromyko: I will call the General-Secretary.

Dr. Kissinger: You still have "by mutual agreement" in here. I told Dobrynin why that is bad. He knows what my situation is. I will be under attack for coming in the first place. We will have internal problems in our Government. Yet you refuse to say that you invited me, even though it is true. And you refuse to say "useful." But the phrase "frank and useful" you agreed to yesterday.

[At that point, Ambassador Dobrynin and Mr. Kornienko entered the room.]

Anatol, I have been telling the Foreign Minister what the situation is. What conclusion is the President to draw? He will conclude that you maneuvered him into getting me over here, which you wanted for whatever reasons of your own, while reserving the right to suggest publicly that it wasn't very significant.

Gromyko: What do you suggest?

Dr. Kissinger: I made my suggestion. I am not rigid. We could discuss it. To attempt it this way is unacceptable.

For my purposes it is essential to put the phrases about bilateral issues and Summit preparations second.

Where is the new draft I gave your Ambassador?⁴

⁴ A copy of the U.S. draft, including subsequent handwritten revisions, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons.

[Dr. Kissinger took out a carbon of the most recent U.S. draft, which read: "Between April 20 and April 24, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger was in Moscow to confer with the General-Secretary of the CPSU, Mr. Brezhnev, Foreign Minister Gromyko and other Soviet officials. They discussed important international questions of interest to both governments as well as bilateral matters preparatory to the meeting between President Nixon and the Soviet leaders in May. The talks were frank and useful throughout."

This U.S. draft was used as the basis for the ensuing discussion, and some corrections and stylistic changes were made. The phrase "of Central Committee" was added to Brezhnev's title. The phrase "and other Soviet officials" was deleted. The phrase "[questions] of interest to both governments" was dropped.]

Gromyko: I will communicate this to the General-Secretary by phone.

Dr. Kissinger: It is up to you how you do it.

Gromyko: The President will attach importance to this?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, he will. Secondly, the President, you know, personally told Dobrynin he was opposed to my coming at all.⁵

Sukhodrev: Having "international issues" first is a matter of principle?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Sukhodrev: And "frank and useful"?

Dr. Kissinger: That part would be extremely useful.

Your Ambassador can tell of the extraordinary difficulties this will cause in Washington. Any demonstrations of coolness on your part would have serious consequences.

Gromyko: We would like to omit the phrase "frank and useful throughout."

Dr. Kissinger: I can live without it. But I can tell you it makes a very bad impression. It would be extremely useful to have it.

Gromyko: Please do not insist on the last line [of your draft].

Dr. Kissinger: I won't. But you are paying a hell of a price for nothing. You are losing goodwill for this. This would be the sort of thing that would mean a hell of a lot. You know, you have the habit that when someone drops a nickel you will do anything to get the nickel, even if you lose a million dollars of goodwill in the process.

There are many in Washington who oppose this. As a friend, I can tell you I have been telling Washington that you have made significant

⁵ See Document 62.

concessions. Now you are telling me that you have tricked me. You are weakening my arguments.

Gromyko: I will call the General-Secretary.

[He takes the working text and goes out to call the General-Secretary, at about 2:25 p.m. Ten minutes later he returns.]

Gromyko: Mr. Brezhnev regrets that he had to leave. He accepts the new draft, except for the last line, "The talks were frank and useful throughout."

Dr. Kissinger: All right. I have pointed out what the consequences will be.

Gromyko: You can point out, if somebody asks, that the talks were useful. We will be positive, too. On the invitation, we will take care of that.

Dr. Kissinger: We will deal with the situation. I know it's not your fault. You have to do what you're told. The President—and here I am speaking to you without authority—already believes, first, that you got me here so you could say you matched the Chinese, and had me stay longer than I did there, and secondly that all this is a maneuver to keep us from pursuing the course we have chosen in Vietnam by stringing us along.

Gromyko: That is a most impossible interpretation.

Dr. Kissinger: If it were mine, I would not be here. And I would not tell you.

Gromyko: On Vietnam, we will communicate your proposals to Hanoi.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. I believe it is not in your interest [to invite me here as a maneuver] because it would undermine what we have achieved. I will be telling the President when I return that I believe you have a major interest in a successful Summit, and that it governs all your actions.

SALT

There is also a small problem on SALT. Semenov unfortunately said a little too much. This is another problem. The President himself sent me a message personally.⁶ Let me read part of it to you:

"As AI may have already messaged you, any SALT announcement by me now presents a serious problem. Rogers called me Saturday and told me that Semenov had given Smith exactly the same offer that you set forth in your message of April 22.

⁶ Document 157.

“I realize that we can point out that there is a shade of difference since you now have apparently an agreement with the Soviet to include SLBM’s whereas we could say that Smith only had an agreement to discuss the inclusion of SLBM’s. On the other hand, I fear that we have the problem in making any Presidential announcement that Smith and his colleagues will simply say that I was trying to point to your trip and my upcoming visit as having been responsible for accomplishing a breakthrough in SALT which Smith had already accomplished at lower levels. Perhaps we can find a way to handle this problem but I think in view of the call I received from Rogers we will find it pretty difficult.”

And Anatol can tell you it is very very unusual for the President to write me at all.

Gromyko: This is a very improbable thing.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me propose this, Mr. Foreign Minister. The President can step out to the press when he sends Smith back to Helsinki and say that he had been in touch with Mr. Brezhnev and that a new proposal had been made to Dr. Kissinger here.

Gromyko: Certainly.

Dr. Kissinger: You should tell your number two guy to keep quiet. What is his name? Kishilev. He and Garthoff think they are running the negotiations themselves.

Could someone bring Ambassador Beam over here now?

[Kornienko goes out of the room to call Semenov in Helsinki. He returned a few minutes later, saying that Semenov was at the office and they would try again later.

[Dr. Kissinger and Foreign Minister Gromyko, who had been standing and walking back and forth through most of these discussions, then sat down in adjacent chairs by the table, and the discussion resumed.]

Dr. Kissinger: I want to thank you again for your courtesy. We will work to make the Summit a success. We know you have problems here domestically, and we do as well.

This is not meant as a bluff or a threat, but I cannot overestimate what Vietnam has now come to mean with this offensive, and the lengths the President is prepared to go. If we can do for the next three–four years as we have been doing here, our two countries can have a totally new relationship. I am talking to you man to man. It would be a great tragedy if this were lost.

If there had been no offensive, that would be one thing. But now it is such a direct challenge that it has become a tremendous issue for us.

Gromyko: A great issue.

Dr. Kissinger: On the other hand, we will work with great dedication on what we have done here. And the visit has been enormously useful from my point of view.

Gromyko: What do these dates of meetings mean, except prestige?

Dr. Kissinger: But they have changed the dates three times.

Gromyko: Small countries may be more sensitive.

Dr. Kissinger: I cannot come on May 3, 4, or 5. On the 4th I have to talk to some people from *Life* magazine about the Moscow Summit. You don't want me to cancel that. On the 5th, there is a big dinner for me with people coming from many parts of the country. The earliest I could do it is the 7th.

We cannot accept that they continue the offensive until the 7th and then present us with a *fait accompli*. In fact, if there is a big offensive this week—there is a new offensive already in the Central Highlands yesterday. . . . Let me say this: Do not encourage them that we will be flexible, because you will confuse them.

Gromyko: Why should we take on the responsibility? Because, what do we really know of their position?

Tell the President that the man he will meet has broad views, and means what he says.

Dr. Kissinger: I will tell the President what an impressive man the General-Secretary is, and that he is sincere. This will be an enormous opportunity.

Gromyko: It remains for me to convey my best wishes to you and to the President.

Dr. Kissinger: Thank you.

[The meeting broke up. Shortly thereafter, Ambassador Beam was brought in. Dr. Kissinger introduced him to everyone, told him that he had been in Moscow a few days, showed him the agreed draft announcement, and then took a walk with him around the garden.]⁷

⁷ Although no substantive record of the discussion has been found, Beam later wrote the following account: "Just before leaving, [Kissinger] called me to his Soviet villa to give me a fill-in on his discussions. At the end, he explained that while the president had confidence in me, I was not to report to the State Department about what he had told me, since the president could not rely on 'Rogers not to leak.' I told Kissinger I never had in mind telegraphing the State Department about what was obviously presidential business. Incidentally, we were then taking a stroll in the dark through the trees and bushes outside the villa when I heard the click of a rifle and yelled out to the guard that we were Americans (hopefully assuming that at least the guard had advance notice of Kissinger's visit)." (Beam, *Multiple Exposure*, pp. 263–264) see also Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1153.

161. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972.

Unnumbered. Thank you for your cable² which meant a great deal to me.

Let me make a few preliminary comments as I get ready for the final meeting with Brezhnev.

1. I agree completely with your strategy. If the plenary session and the May 2 private meeting fail to make major progress we must make, before the end of that week, a major onslaught on Haiphong. The question is whether we are in a much better position now. I have no doubt that Moscow is pressing Hanoi to be reasonable. I am certain that Moscow will try to avoid a confrontation with us over Vietnam though there is a limit where things will get dicey.³ We have used the summit ruthlessly as a means of pressure. And on the summit we have harvested concessions. The major issue is not what they promise but what they will do. I have no doubt they got the message. Indeed just to make sure I read major portions of the Vietnam part of your cable to Dobrynin.⁴ If we turn the screw too far and they decide all is lost they will jump us. Brezhnev is no softie.

2. With respect to the plenary I do not share your fear. First, after the Moscow trip announcement everybody will figure that more is going on than meets the eye. Second, we can strongly hint that this is tied to private meeting.⁵ Third, we can confine the plenary to a discussion of how to end the North Vietnamese invasion and make clear that we shall discuss no other subject till that is done.

3. With respect to the final communiqué we have a far stronger and more substantive document than Peking and we have avoided the danger of the nightmarish confrontations of Peking.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 6:22 a.m., retransmitted to Camp David, and received there at 7:16 a.m. The President's notations on the retransmitted copy and cited in footnotes below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972, Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

² Document 157.

³ The President underlined this sentence.

⁴ Since Nixon's memorandum arrived in Moscow at 1:07 a.m. (April 24), Kissinger must have read "major portions" of it to Dobrynin before meeting Brezhnev later that morning.

⁵ The President underlined this sentence and wrote "no" in the margin.

4. With respect to SALT, what was achieved is 100 percent due to the private channel and the meetings here. Let us get the sequence straight. Semenov was called back when my trip was settled. He left Saturday;⁶ my trip was agreed to Wednesday. He returned to Helsinki with two elliptical comments. First, he was prepared to respond to our ABM proposal. Second, Moscow was reconsidering its SLBM position. He has not made a specific proposal. He will not make one until I tell Moscow what to do. All the specifics have been worked out here. These represent an acceptance of what I proposed to Dobrynin on your behalf. Brezhnev told me that your brief conversation with Dobrynin in the Map Room⁷ for the first time made them address the substance of SLBM. In short, you can claim with justice to have broken the log-jam on SLBM.

5. As to substance, the Soviet SLBM proposal is totally new and will be so perceived by our bureaucracy. It is a direct result of what was said in the private channel, and here. In the first place, Soviet proposal to include a precise limit is precisely what I indicated should be done with stipulation that they dismantle old ICBM's as they build up to the SLBM limit. Brezhnev has categorically stated that they agree to phase out old ICBM's. This was never discussed by Smith who never gave Soviets any precise formula for calculating numbers in any event. Secondly, I had repeatedly told Dobrynin that you could not accept equal ABM concept if SLBM's were left out.

6. As regards ABM, Soviet proposal is indeed similar to what Smith discussed with Semenov. But there is one important addition obtained here: Brezhnev explicitly said that the ICBM area they will protect will contain fewer ICBM's than Grand Forks. Thus we have an advantage in the numbers of ICBM protected. We cannot of course confirm this until we know precisely what area they pick but the record of Brezhnev's statement is clear and his appeal that we not make too much of the disparity suggest that this was a sensitive issue in the Politburo. (Incidentally, I told him frankly that eventual Congressional testimony by us will bring this point to the surface.)

7. In short you can claim next week a major accomplishment and at a time just when you may have to go very hard on Vietnam.⁸ Rogers had as much to do with this as with the Berlin settlement.

8. I shall report on the Brezhnev meeting from the plane.⁹

⁶ April 15.

⁷ Reference is presumably to the meeting that Nixon briefly attended between Kissinger and Dobrynin on March 17; see Document 62.

⁸ The President underlined this sentence and wrote "Haig?" in the margin.

⁹ See Document 163.

162. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 24, 1972, 12:38 p.m.

Sitto 46. Bunker has concluded meeting with Thieu and Thieu agrees to plenary announcement at 7:30 pm Tuesday.² As I suspected, he was a little sticky on appearance of cave and I had told Bunker to hit strongly on the implication of your Moscow visit.³ Thieu was satisfied and will support action but does expect strong inference that visit to Moscow was directly related to Vietnam situation. Thieu also agreed with 20,000 withdrawal increment which he was told may be made as early as Wednesday this week.

Second shoe has apparently dropped in MR-2 where ARVN Twenty Second Division was badly mauled in Dak to area over preceding 48-hour period. ARVN have withdrawn forces from Rocket Ridge and Dak to area and situation is cloudy as of this report. Enemy again picked period of bad weather in which to launch his assault. Situation in An Loc has improved substantially and activity in MRS 1, 3 and 4 has dropped off substantially. In an interesting action off the coast of Cambodia, GVN naval units challenged an unmarked trawler which they had been trailing. Trawler dashed for high seas raising ChiCom flag. GVN Navy fired warning shots, then put one round into vessel which immediately generated massive secondaries which sunk vessel. All of crew were picked up except for captain. They were North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese personnel.

Guay just called and confirmed that North Vietnamese have agreed to make May 2 session.⁴

It was evident throughout yesterday afternoon and after sending his personal message to you⁵ that President and his entourage at Camp

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² April 25. This agreement was reported in backchannel message 0073 from Bunker to Haig, April 24. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 414, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages 1972, From: AMB Bunker—Saigon [Part 2])

³ Haig issued these instructions in backchannel messages WHS 2052 and WHS 2053 to Bunker, April 23. (Ibid., Backchannel Messages 1972, To: AMB Bunker—Saigon)

⁴ Guay confirmed this report in a backchannel message to Haig on April 24. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 1041, Files for the President, Vietnam, US–NVN Exchanges, January–October 5, 1972)

⁵ Document 157.

David were increasingly concerned about wisdom of Moscow trip. Consequently, I proceeded to Camp David at 7:30 pm last night and spent two intense hours with the President,⁶ during which I made the following points:

1. We are substantially better off as a result of your trip whether or not Moscow does anything to help on South Vietnamese situation.

2. President would have been faced with crunch on South Vietnam with or without trip and trip has added immeasurably to his flexibility by either garnering Soviet pressure on Hanoi or in worse case by establishing base of reasonableness on your part which would permit further escalation if required.

3. In PR sense, I attempted and I believe with some success, to dispel his concerns that trip combined with announcement of return to plenary would look like U.S. cave. I made point strongly that trip, combined with plenary, if appropriate mystery is maintained, will look to be a hopeful sign by most Americans and especially by vociferous critics who cannot but be disarmed.

4. I made point strongly that your consultations with the Soviets could not but add to the restraint that the Soviets would show as we move up the escalation ladder. On the other hand, I made it clear that this restraint could not be precisely measured and this question poses risks which cannot be taken lightly.

The attitude that I found was one which was closely related to the summit and the President–Kissinger–Rogers triangle. There was a nagging concern that you wanted to visit Moscow for summit purposes. I recalled statement made by Dobrynin to you that Soviets wanted to be helpful and that they had stated that the reduction of shipments by them to North Vietnam would not be felt for three months. I also explained forcefully the gamesmanship being played by Rogers on the SALT business. What he apparently did, with some help from Smith, was to convey to the President that the Soviets were prepared to meet fully our position on SALT. I believe Smith told this to Rogers on the telephone and, in fact, interpolated way beyond what Semenov had given to him. I pointed out to the President that what was accomplished here was purely a result of the discussions in the special channel between you and Dobrynin and the meeting between the President and Dobrynin.⁷ What really had the President concerned was his interpretation of your earlier message to the effect that you had worked out a preliminary progress statement with the Soviets which was planned to be released prior to the summit.⁸ I believe President thought that this would give credit to your visit for the progress rather than to hold in

⁶ See also Document 158.

⁷ Reference is to the meeting, which Nixon briefly attended, between Kissinger and Dobrynin on March 17; see Document 62.

⁸ See Document 145.

accordance with what has always been your game plan to getting the breakthrough when the President actually visits Moscow. You have again suggested this to him and should be aware of the problem that this poses for him personally. When I left Camp David at 9:30 pm last night, Haldeman said that discussion had been most helpful and that President felt much more sanguine about the situation. What we have really been confronted with back here is a period in which the President had begun to really appreciate the seriousness of the challenge which he faces on the Vietnam issue. He somehow linked this with the Soviet visit. I made it clear to him that this challenge developed with the North Vietnamese offensive and that with or without Moscow he was faced with some very difficult choices. The decision to proceed to Moscow merely flowed from the basic realities that Hanoi, with or without Moscow acquiescence, had chosen this time to throw down the gauntlet. What your visit accomplished even in the worst case was to garner additional flexibility and increased options for subsequent Presidential action. Even Haldeman seemed to be wedded to President's view and I believe it is essential that you maintain this perspective in your discussions upon arrival. The other hangup with which you will be faced is the President's concern that the announcement of the return to the plenary following the announcement of your visit will look like U.S. cave.

Like you, I am confident that this can be managed if Presidential statement planned for Wednesday at 7:00 pm brings all the actions taken into proper context. This should not be a difficult PR task.

We are proceeding with notification schedule.⁹ I have taken care of Cromer and spoken personally to Watson and, as outlined above, Thieu and Bunker are fully on board. Please advise as soon as possible on text of Tuesday's noon announcement which you worked out with Soviets Sunday.

If there is any physical stamina in your party after what must have been the most grueling physical and psychological experience of your incumbency, you will wish to have Win draft some remarks for the President's Wednesday presentation. He plans about a ten-minute television talk, limited to 500 words. I gave him a draft, worked up by Holdridge and myself over a two-hour period yesterday afternoon which is not much good.¹⁰ Speech should certainly tie in what has happened, the degree of restraint we have exercised, the military situation,

⁹ Reference is to plans to notify Allied leaders of Kissinger's secret trip.

¹⁰ The first two drafts of the speech, with handwritten revisions from Nixon and Haig, are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, Wednesday, April 26, 1972, Vietnam Report.

the diplomatic play over this last weekend, the troop withdrawal announcement and what we intend to do in the period ahead.

Please give us ETA as soon as it is firm. President will wish you to go directly to Camp David and return here with him.

Warm personal regards.

163. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972.

WTE 016. 1. Had four-hour plus rather stormy session with Brezhnev, Gromyko and Dobrynin, three of them attended by Brezhnev.

2. Brezhnev began with a long emotional statement about Vietnam stressing again that Moscow was not behind the offensive, that Hanoi had been hoarding Soviet weapons for two years. He said that it was the enemies of the summit especially the Chinese, but also Hanoi who were challenging America, that he was proceeding with the summit despite a formal request by Hanoi to cancel it.² He had not yet had a reply from Hanoi regarding the private session which Moscow had urged. If I agreed he would transmit our concrete proposal to Hanoi. I asked him to do so.

After Brezhnev left, Gromyko said that he had been authorized to tell me, first, that Moscow had not realized until ten days ago how very serious we were about ending Vietnam. We therefore had to give them some time to use their influence.³ Second, they were transmitting our substantive proposal to Hanoi with the attitude of bringing about a rapid solution of the war or at least a significant improvement in the situation.

Comment: It was significant that there was no reference to the end of bombing. Under present circumstances transmitting our proposals

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 12:57 p.m. and forwarded to Camp David for Rose Mary Woods, who retyped it for the President. Nixon's notations on the retyped version are cited in footnotes below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972, Kissinger's Trip to Moscow)

² The President underlined "despite a formal request by Hanoi to cancel it."

³ The President underlined this sentence.

even if they do not endorse them must be considered by Hanoi as an unfriendly act.⁴ After all we are asking for the withdrawal of all units introduced into SVN since March 29 or six divisions, respect of the DMZ, an end to rocket attack on cities, release of all U.S. prisoners held for four years or more just to end the bombing.

Whatever the outcome of their *démarche* to Hanoi my visit left no doubt about our determination. I told them that May 2 was the last possible date for a private meeting; that the private meeting had to bring rapid and concrete results; that if it failed the President would escalate and turn right at whatever risk;⁵ that this would make it impossible even for his opponents to pursue a major *détente* policy. If I have erred it is on the side of excessive toughness.

3. The announcement of my visit produced a real fracas. First Brezhnev withdrew his agreement to an announcement. When I put my foot down they engaged in the ploy of producing their version only after Brezhnev had left and then Gromyko claimed he had no flexibility. Their version left open the implication that I had sought the meeting and put it all in the context of the summit. I blew my top, Gromyko called Brezhnev and we finally agreed on following language: Between April 20 and April 24, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was in Moscow to confer with the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Gromyko. The discussions dealt with important international problems as well as with bilateral matters preparatory to the talks between President Nixon and Soviet leaders in May.

The implications are all there and it was in any event the best obtainable.

4. With respect to SALT, Gromyko confirmed that Smith could not have been given the SLBM proposal because Semenov did not yet have it. I think Semenov pulled the same stunt as before May 20 of claiming more than he knew.⁶ In any event it was agreed that the President can say next week that he had been in touch with Brezhnev regarding SALT, that based on his approach the Soviet leaders gave me a counterproposal while I was in Moscow substantially accepting our offer,

⁴ The President underlined this entire sentence except the initial clause.

⁵ Nixon underlined "President would escalate and turn right at whatever risk."

⁶ During a meeting with Smith in Vienna on May 3, 1971, Semenov floated a proposal that had been secretly developed in the Kissinger–Dobrynin channel. As Kissinger later explained: "Whatever the reason, Semenov's move, as well as raising doubts about Soviet good faith, in effect circumvented the Presidential Channel." (*White House Years*, pp. 817–818)

that this broke the deadlock and that the President was instructing Smith to work out the details before the summit.⁷

5. Other matters covered today were the Middle East with respect to which Brezhnev was very tough. I shall reserve this for my return.

6. To sum up these seem to me the pluses of the trip:

(A) Moscow's readiness to receive me three days after we bombed Hanoi and Haiphong and while we were bombing and shelling NVN.

(B) An announcement that when properly briefed makes plain Vietnam was discussed.⁸ The distinction between important international problems and bilateral matters related to the summit is a euphemism for Vietnam.

(C) Soviet willingness to transmit our procedural proposals to Hanoi and to urge private talks even while we continue bombing.

(D) Soviet willingness to transmit a very tough substantive proposal to Hanoi.

(E) Soviet recognition that we are deadly serious about Vietnam and that everything else is dependent on it.

(F) A SALT offer which culminates the private channel and accepts most of our proposals.

(G) Agreement on a declaration of principles to be published at the summit which includes most of our proposals and indeed involves a specific renunciation of the Brezhnev doctrine.⁹

(H) Agreement to begin exploring MBFR.

(I) Agreement not to go beyond the FRG in pushing GDR admission to UN.

(J) Enough holding actions on bilateral matters to give us a control over the implementation of the above.

For all this we give up the bombing of Haiphong for one week.

⁷ Nixon underlined "he had been in touch with Brezhnev regarding SALT, that based on his approach the Soviet leaders gave me a counterproposal" and "the President was instructing Smith to work out the details before the summit." He also circled the word "me," i.e. Kissinger, in the first phrase and wrote an exclamation point in the margin.

⁸ The President underlined this sentence, circled the words "properly briefed," and wrote an exclamation point in the margin.

⁹ In a speech at the Fifth Congress of the Polish Communist Party in Warsaw on November 12, 1968, Brezhnev justified Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia the previous August as a necessary step to prevent capitalist interference in the Socialist camp.

164. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 24, 1972, 3:35 p.m.

Sitto 48. Thanks for your 016² which has been reviewed in detail with the President.³ He is absolutely delighted with the manner in which you have conducted the most difficult of all missions. He further asked that I convey to you by Flash message his complete approval of the conduct of the talks which are totally responsive to his own thinking and which, more importantly, have accomplished far more than our best hopes would have visualized; the President was equally complimentary of the work which must have been done by Sonnenfeldt, Negroponte, Lord, Rodman, and two young ladies whose fingers must have kept a steady pattern on the keyboard for the past four days and nights.

To the foregoing, having been a transmission belt for most of what has transpired, I can only add that this mission in terms of sheer strain and difficulty far exceeds the accomplishments of the earlier trips to Peking. You can all view your voyage with the greatest of pride. No one else could have come near doing it. There are several problem areas which you will wish to consider on your flight home. The first is the matter of the announcement on the SALT breakthrough. I am confident that this is the single hang-up that the President has with your message. He believes in terms of substance that he would not wish to publicly announce a breakthrough while the heavy fighting is going on in Vietnam. Secondly, he is very concerned that the inference will be drawn that we have been talking SALT without having resolved the matter of Moscow's support for Hanoi. Thirdly, and perhaps the most binding concern is the President's fear that the announcement will trigger a bureaucratic brawl with Rogers and Smith which would force Smith or Rogers to leak the fact that Rogers notified the President of the breakthrough as a result of Smith's efforts in Helsinki. My own view is that you must not lose sight of the fact that the President feels he must have total credit for the SALT breakthrough and share it

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Document 163.

³ Haig called the President at 1:09 p.m. and they spoke for 23 minutes. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) No substantive record of the conversation has been found.

with absolutely no one. I pointed out to the President that should it be necessary to escalate air operations next week, it would be very helpful to indicate that even in the face of that, the Soviets had agreed to a major concession on SALT. His answer was that SALT really doesn't mean that much to the average American although it is a critical item of long-term national interest. I think you are going to run into a stiff problem on this matter and should consider carefully en route to Washington how to handle it.

Another problem is the purely bureaucratic task of when and how we should tell Rogers of the Tuesday noon announcement. I have been carefully posturing him over the past three days with the view toward making him fully cognizant of the need to have a public announcement which will justify our decision to return to the plenaries on Thursday. I believe we are postured as well as we can be on this with Rogers and would suggest that we tell him Tuesday morning about the noon announcement and make it clear that we have no control over it because certainly the Soviets would leak it in any event, and posture it in the direction of a meeting designed to discuss the summit.

I believe everything is ship-shape here in terms of implementing the scenario which you have so carefully worked out. Thieu, Bunker and the North Vietnamese are all aboard and, as I mentioned before, the North Vietnamese have agreed to meet with you on May 2. We should be prepared for a leak from them about the plenary, but this, too, will be completely manageable.

Again, accept our greatest admiration for what can only be termed your miraculous accomplishment.

Warm regards.

165. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972.

WTE 018. 1. Thank you for your 46.² There is no point reviewing my reaction to the support I have been receiving on the most difficult assignment of my incumbency. There are a few points you should make to the President simply so that the nation's business can be conducted with the minimum of mutual trust required in a Presidential entourage.

2. It is my firm conviction that without my trip to Moscow the summit would have collapsed and the delicate balance of our Vietnam policy would have disintegrated beyond repair. I believe the acceptance of the May 2 date so fast is the result of Soviet pressure. I also call the attention of the President to the noon note regarding Katushev's trip to Hanoi.³ Kutsnetsov told Sonnenfeldt that Katushev is one of Brezhnev's most trusted associates.

3. As for SALT, the tactical situation was as follows. There was no way the SLBM issue could be held for the summit. First, we have linked our ABM proposal to progress on SLBM. Thus the deadlock would have been total. Second, had Brezhnev held the proposal till the summit which was impossible it could not have been acted upon there because we would have had to get technical analysis and the credit for the culmination would have gone to Smith and Rogers. Third, the Soviets would surely have surfaced the proposal in Helsinki in which case the President would have received no credit at all for work done entirely in his special channel.

4. To protect the President I therefore took the following steps:

(A) I insisted that all further discussion at Helsinki be stopped. I did this so insistently that Gromyko interrupted the meeting to call Semonov.

(B) I arranged at no little difficulty for a Presidential announcement of the breakthrough basing it on a direct exchange between him

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. No time of transmission is on the message; it was received at 4:09 p.m.

² Document 162.

³ Transmitted in Sitto 47 from Haig to Kissinger, April 24. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]; Noon Note)

and Brezhnev. My own role in this, including the Moscow trip, can be easily eliminated. I have not exactly taken credit for May 20, Berlin and the whole plethora of secondary agreements in which I have had a major role.

(C) I arranged for some SALT issue to be left unresolved till the summit so that the President and Brezhnev can settle it there and still sign the agreement. I am not sure this will hold because the Soviets had a hell of a time understanding what I was after.

(D) In this manner the President can get double credit, for the breakthrough next week and for a solemn signing ceremony for a historic agreement at the summit.

5. The SALT game plan now is as follows:

(A) We should call Smith back for consultation.

(B) We should then show him the SLBM and ABM offers, this will keep him from claiming credit for himself.

(C) We should move the proposals through the Verification Panel this week.

(D) Smith should then be sent off with the Presidential statement outlined above.

6. In addition, I have brought back a statement of principles to be signed at the summit. No one knows about this, it does not sound like much now; I predict it will be hailed as as a major event at the end of May.

7. It is important to keep in mind that in order to obtain Soviet restraint in Vietnam we had to dangle the prospects of a successful summit. If sufficiently cornered, the Soviets could have turned violently against us.

8. Please show this message to the President after reviewing its content with him.

166. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972.

WTE 019. 1. Thank you for your 48.² For the hundredth time there no breakthrough in Helsinki. Kindly review the Smith letter³ to me and you will see that what he claims, which is exaggerated in any case, is a paltry fraction of what I am bringing back. If the President is worried about a Rogers or Smith leak let him ask them what the Soviet proposal is. This would flush out fast enough that they have nothing except vague generalities.

2. There is no chance whatever of holding the whole package for the summit. Any such proposal in the face of what the Soviets consider a major concession will convince them that we plan to torpedo the summit. Then they will surely go public. Moreover Helsinki would then have to be called off. The news stories would be that SALT has collapsed.

3. The President can get sole credit for SALT only by the route I outlined. My role can easily be eliminated. I want the result not the credit. At any rate we have no choice. Either we go the way I outlined or the Soviets will go public unilaterally. It was not easy to put it mildly to sell them the present course which helps only the President, not them. And after Smith goes back there will be a hundred issues which can be deadlocked and solved at the summit. Moreover if you leave too many details you will wind up with Smith at the summit.

4. As for the announcement tomorrow I hope Rogers believes that plenary and private session decision resulted from Moscow trip.

5. I do not understand concern that we have talked SALT while Moscow's support for Hanoi is unresolved. What else have we been doing in Helsinki? So let us stop playing games and use what we have accomplished.

6. Thank you for the expression of support which came 40 Sitto's too late.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. No time of transmission is on the message; a stamped notation indicates it was received at 4:57 p.m.

² Document 164.

³ See Documents 136 and 147.

167. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 24, 1972, 6:45 p.m.

Sitto 50. Thank you for your 018.² You should be aware that my 46³ and much of what I have sent you on my own represents my personal views of what may or may not be the atmosphere here. I am confident that the analyses have been reasonably accurate. As I pointed out earlier, they were presented to you with the conviction that to do less would be irresponsible and would deprive you of the factual data essential for you to carry out your mission successfully. I agree with you completely that your trip to Moscow was crucial in every respect and I am confident that the President feels likewise although for the reasons I explained earlier I am not sure he ever focussed on the true significance of events in Southeast Asia as they relate to your trip. This realization was compressed into the time frame following your departure.

On SALT, I will immediately outline for the President the valid considerations which dictated the actions you have taken. I will also review with him the substance of paragraph 2.⁴ I would prefer not, without further directive from you, to show him the full text of your message, especially paragraph one—not because it may not be warranted but because I cannot see any value in doing so at this juncture. I believe you will wish to consider the experiences we have all shared over the past four days in a most careful and deliberate way and then, and only then, take whatever action you consider appropriate. I look forward to discussing this overall problem with you in the frankest way after you return. I strongly recommend that you draw final conclusions only after we have discussed the problem.

As an unrelated matter, AP has just carried a report that the Christian Democrats will insist on a positive vote of no confidence for

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Document 165.

³ Document 162.

⁴ Haig called the President at 6:01 p.m. and the two men spoke for 12 minutes. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) No substantive record of the conversation has been found.

the Brandt coalition government on the issue of Brandt's economic policies.⁵

As another separate issue, Miss Kay called and stated that her friend would like to see Win at the usual location on a non-urgent basis to deliver a message. We have a response here prepared for their last note which can be delivered at the same time.⁶

On SALT, Smith has been driving for instructions for tomorrow's plenary.⁷ After consulting with Odeen, I told him to merely listen to what the Russians had to say and to report back here before officially coming down on the position he has taken in the informal discussions he has had with Semenov. The most recent message from Gerard Smith is attached.

I have just received and read your 019.⁸ There is no question that Rogers and Smith are working on vague generalities. Be that as it may, they planted the seed. With respect to paragraphs two and three, please keep in mind that I have been feeding you my personal appraisals. The President's message⁹ conveys his thinking to you. You should exercise caution in talking to him not to indicate that I have volunteered all that information to you.

Reference paragraph four of 019 Rogers is appropriately postured. He does believe this decision has emanated from your trip. Reference your paragraph five, this factor was touched upon by the President to me when I reviewed for him the contents of your 016.¹⁰ Reference paragraph 6, if that remark is directed to me personally, I am puzzled and concerned that you are as oblivious of what is going on here as I may appear to be of your problems.

Warm regards.

⁵ The CDU/CSU parliamentary group formally submitted its motion for a constructive vote of no confidence in the Bundestag late in the evening on April 24; under Article 67 of the West German Basic Law, which required a 3-day delay, the vote was scheduled for April 27.

⁶ Reference is presumably to the channel established in New York with Huang Hua, the Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Kissinger and Lord frequently used this channel to deliver messages to Beijing. In their stead, Haig met Huang on April 26 to exchange messages and report on Kissinger's secret trip to Moscow. A memorandum of conversation is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 849, President's File—China Trip, China Exchanges, March 1–June 24, 1972. The text is also in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume E–13, Documents on China, 1969–1972.

⁷ See Document 147.

⁸ Document 166.

⁹ Document 157.

¹⁰ Document 163.

Attachment

Backchannel Telegram From the Head of the Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (Smith) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹¹

Helsinki, April 24, 1972.

0330. Dear Henry:

Last Saturday afternoon Kishilov advised Garthoff that since a treaty with a complete deferral of the second sites would result in the Soviets having no defense of ICBMs in the initial phase, they would not want to propose such deferral. But Semenov's instructions call for a positive reply if the US proposes deferral—perhaps covering deferral in a side understanding rather than in treaty. They still have in mind three to five years.

An ABM treaty with a second site deferral would have some aspects of a freeze to existing ABM sites and thus would minimize somewhat the psychological difference between the treatment proposed for offensive and defensive limitations.

I stayed entirely away from the deferral question in recent talks with Semenov since I realize that it may be a controversial matter at home.

Warm regards.

Gerry Smith

¹¹ Another copy is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages SALT 1972.

168. Editorial Note

On April 24, 1972, as he waited for Kissinger to return from Moscow, President Nixon continued to assess the situation at Camp David with his Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman and with Deputy Assistant to the President Alexander Haig, who remained in Washington. Throughout the day Nixon received reports on Kissinger's trip from Haig by wire and telephone. After breakfast Nixon called Haig, and before lunch Haig called Nixon back; the two men talked for a total of more than half an hour. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Although no

substantive record of either conversation has been found, Haig probably briefed the President on two messages from Kissinger: see Documents 161 and 163.

At 10:30 a.m. Nixon and Haldeman met for several hours to review plans to notify both political allies and the press on Kissinger's trip and the Paris plenary meeting. The President, for instance, issued instructions for the handling of Secretary of Defense Laird and Secretary of State Rogers: the former should be told of the plenary meeting only after the evening news; and the latter should be allowed to brief some key Congressmen on Vietnam. Nixon, however, rejected Kissinger's suggestion (see Document 169) that the White House "strongly hint" that his trip to Moscow was tied to private talks in Paris. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I) He also expressed his continuing suspicion of Kissinger's motives. As Haldeman noted in his diary: "He [Nixon] concluded that Henry did mean to claim the SALT deal now, rather than waiting till the Summit, although Haig had said earlier that that's not what Henry had in mind. And the P feels we've got to drive K off at this point, that we shouldn't claim anything, until we get to the Summit, and the breakthrough should be tied to the P's meeting, not K's." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, page 446) Otherwise, Nixon told Haldeman, Rogers, and Gerard Smith, the chief of the U.S. SALT delegation, would "knock us out." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I)

When Kissinger arrived at Camp David that evening, Nixon was flanked by Haldeman and Haig; the meeting lasted 55 minutes. (Ibid. White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Haldeman wrote the following account in his diary:

"Henry finally arrived about 8:30, and he and Haig and I met with the P over at Birch. The P had us gather first and had me call and have him come over. He unfortunately had not zipped up his fly, so during the entire conversation it was noticeably open. We discussed the scenario for tomorrow, the plan for notification of the good guy Congressmen at 5:30. P backed down on the K briefing, agreed that Henry could do one to steer the direction on how the talks were arranged and how they went, so that no substance or content is disclosed. And also he backed down on the SALT thing and agreed that we would make the announcement. He's ordering Smith back right away to set up for that. The meeting went pretty well, although it was pretty tense at the beginning. The P was all primed to really whack Henry, but backed off when he actually got there. Henry obviously was very tense. Haig had called me earlier to say that Henry had sent some extremely bad ca-

bles because he felt we had not backed him, and he was very distressed that he had been sabotaged and undercut, and he greeted me very frostily, but the P broke that pretty quickly as the meeting started. We all came out in good spirits. P and Henry walked together over to the helipad and talked in loud voices all the way down, while Ed Cox sat listening avidly." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, pages 446–447)

169. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, April 24, 1972.

SUBJECT

My Trip to Moscow

I spent thirteen hours with Brezhnev and Gromyko and five more hours with Gromyko only. Dobrynin was present at all sessions and other Soviet officials attended the Brezhnev sessions. The central results and conclusions are as follows.

Vietnam

—The Soviets endorse and are transmitting to Hanoi our *procedural proposal* on resuming the private and plenary talks on Vietnam. This has already resulted in their acceptance of the May 2 date for a private meeting.

—The Soviets are also forwarding our *substantive proposal* to Hanoi, despite an undoubtedly negative reaction.

—Katushev, the Central Committee member in charge of relations with other Communist parties, left for Hanoi at 5:25 a.m. 23 April while I was in Moscow.

—Brezhnev countered with a proposal for a *standstill ceasefire*

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive, Exclusively Eyes Only. Although prepared on White House stationery, the memorandum was probably written on the airplane en route Andrews Air Force Base from Moscow. No evidence has been found to indicate whether Kissinger submitted it to Nixon at Camp David on April 24 or at the White House at a later date. The memorandum, however, indicates the President saw it; and, on April 29, Nixon wrote on the top: "K—Superb job!" Kissinger, who published excerpts from the memorandum in his memoirs, remarked that the President's commendation "might have reflected his real judgment, or his acceptance of a *fait accompli*." (*White House Years*, pp. 1162–1163)

which I made clear was unacceptable with the presence of invading North Vietnamese divisions. It is nevertheless noteworthy that he put forward any proposal; and a ceasefire-in-place would not be very attractive to Hanoi either, when its forces have failed to capture a single major town and would have to see their major psychological and military efforts frozen short of major objectives.

—The Soviets, on the other hand, gave *no actual promise that they would lean on their friends*, either for deescalation or a final settlement. They disavowed any responsibility for the North Vietnamese offensive. They hinted that they had not answered new requests but they also had the gall to maintain that they hadn't provided all that much offensive equipment in the first place.

—I made very clear that *we held Moscow to account* for the escalation just prior to the summit and that *we would prevent an allied defeat* no matter what the risk to our other policies, including U.S.-Soviet relations and the summit. I emphasized that there had to be a private meeting by May 2 and that if there were not significant progress at that session, we would resolutely pursue our unilateral course.

—Furthermore, *you would have to turn to the right domestically* and gain the support of precisely those elements who were not in favor of better U.S.-Soviet relations in any event. This would clearly inhibit your flexibility at a summit meeting, assuming there will be such a meeting.

—This all took place against the *background of our bombing of Haiphong* (and damage to Soviet ships) and Hanoi, continued bombing up to the 20th parallel during this period, and the clear option of bombing wherever we like after May 2 if there is no movement at the conference table.

—*In short, we did not achieve a breakthrough on Vietnam. On the other hand*, we got our message across; involved the Russians directly in transmitting our proposals to Hanoi; have certainly annoyed the North Vietnamese by just being in Moscow; will issue a joint announcement that, together with Le Duc Tho's return for a private session, will assuredly help us domestically by suggesting something is up; and have effectively positioned ourselves for whatever military actions we wish to pursue after first having once again demonstrated our reasonableness.

Other Issues

—Brezhnev made effusively and redundantly clear the *Soviet eagerness* for, and his personal political stake in, a *successful U.S.-Soviet summit meeting*. On every issue, whether substantive or cosmetic, his emphasis was on the most comprehensive and concrete achievements possible.

—He tabled a set of *principles in American-Russian relations* that closely followed the concepts we submitted through the private channel. His injunction was for us to strengthen it further if possible, and

they accepted our modifications almost without exception. The result is a statement of how relations between the two superpowers should be conducted that is solid and substantive without suggesting political cooperation (like the Franco-Russian document), or implying any condominium or negating any of our alliances or obligations. It should serve as a significant finale to the summit and should discipline the Chinese without alienating them. Moreover we can say that it rejects the Brezhnev doctrine.

—Brezhnev also gave us a *SALT proposal* that is considerably more favorable than we expected. Moscow agrees to include SLBMs at a time when it looked almost certain that we would have to drop this aspect in order to get an agreement by the summit. And the Soviet margin in submarines (21) is partly accounted for by their adding UK and French boats to our total and compensated for by their commitment to phase out their older land-based missiles, as well as the basing advantages we have. Their ABM proposal is a variant of our compromise solution and leaves us with more ICBMs protected than they. They bought our position that the offensive freeze last five years instead of three. They agreed to freeze soft ICBMs. *In short, if the summit meeting takes place, you will be able to sign the most important arms control agreement ever concluded.*

—Whether we would have gotten this SALT agreement without my trip is certainly a debatable question. They might have moved in Helsinki anyway, but the signs before my trip went in the opposite direction. What is not debatable is the fact that this agreement was produced by your intervention and use of the private channel, and that the specific commitments were delivered by the Soviets only in conjunction with my visit. Thus *you deserve personal credit for this breakthrough.*

—On *European issues* Brezhnev and his colleagues displayed obvious uneasiness over the outcome of the *German treaties* and made repeated pitches for our direct intervention. The results of Sunday's election and the FDP defection have heightened their concern, and the situation gives us leverage. I made no commitment to bail them out and indeed pointed out that we had been prepared to assist them through Bahr but had not done so because of the North Vietnamese offensive. We will see to it that we give them no help on this matter so long as they don't help on Vietnam.

—Brezhnev at least agreed to consider our concept of separate explorations on *MBFR* in parallel with those on a European Security Conference. We have no assurance he will actually carry this out, however.

—The Soviets are anxious on the *Middle East* (Sadat is due in Moscow momentarily) and Gromyko pushed hard on this the last two days. They tabled substantive proposals that represented nothing new and pressed for a timetable on negotiations that is considerably faster than what they outlined before. They went so far as to suggest that the

summit atmosphere would be marred by lack of progress on this issue. I gave them no substantive satisfaction, confining myself to willingness to discuss this issue over the coming weeks, while making clear the difficulties involved.

—On *bilateral issues* I sketched promising vistas, but always with the implied caveat of Vietnam's not getting in the way. Thus I indicated we would probably approve *Export-Import Bank* facilities during the summer and that you would consider asking Congress for *MFN* treatment, though implementation would be a year off and depend squarely on whether Soviet equipment was still killing our men in Vietnam. In such areas as science, the environment, and cultural exchange, they were in favor of the most concrete possible outcomes during and after the summit. Here too I indicated a reciprocal attitude, assuming that our overall relations developed favorably.

—In short, these meetings confirmed that *your Moscow summit*—if we go through with it and Vietnam is under control—*will dwarf all previous post-war summits* in terms of concrete accomplishments and have a major international and domestic impact.

—On these issues my instructions were to be forthcoming in order to get Russian help on Vietnam. Since I heard no assurance of their assistance, I primarily listened in these areas—after first confining the talks to Vietnam. The upshot was a standoff (at least for now) on Vietnam while they made a series of moves on summit-related matters.

—*We have accordingly gotten a better summit if we want it while giving up no options on Vietnam and positioning ourselves better for whatever options we do choose to employ.*

Brezhnev and the Soviet Dilemma

Brezhnev's performance suggests that he has much riding on the summit. He is tough, brutal, insecure, cunning and very pragmatic.² His almost reverential references to you and his claims that he wants to do everything to help your re-election—however disingenuous they may be—suggest that he sees his relationship with you as legitimizing and strengthening his own position at home. We may have an election in November; he acts as if he has one next week and every week thereafter.

He has undoubtedly had to sell his Western policy to doubters in the Politburo. I am sure he did so with a line of reasoning that has much that is inimical to our interests. But it has also given him a stake in a steady relationship with us. But now, with our forceful actions in Vietnam, all of this is in the balance (at the very time, incidentally, when

² The President underlined this sentence.

his German policy is under a big question mark too). We will never know for sure whether Moscow colluded with Hanoi's offensive or whether Hanoi, having been given the capability by the Soviets, decided to move on its own. In either event our actions must have come as an enormous shock. Not only have we again put a "fraternal" ally under the gun, we have hit Soviet ships and threatened to do more to Haiphong. And the DRV offensive so far is moving neither fast nor decisively.

The Soviet leaders always have the knives out for each other and the lines of attack against Brezhnev under present conditions can be numerous and diverse. He is more vulnerable than any past Soviet leader, even Khrushchev in 1960, to the charge that comes most easily to the Soviets—as Russians and Communists—that he has staked too much on the foreign capitalists.

Meanwhile, Soviet options in the present situation are beset with dilemmas. If they stay passive vis-à-vis Hanoi while the offensive continues, they must now assume you will go all out against the North. To go forward with the summit in those circumstances is for them psychologically and politically an agonizing prospect. To cancel the Summit may, in their view, lead to your defeat in November, but not without our having meanwhile pulverized the DRV and Brezhnev's Western policy having collapsed. Much the same would happen if you cancelled the Summit or if you came but were hobbled by right-wing pressures. But the alternative to all this—pressure on Hanoi to desist—means the betrayal of a socialist ally, the loss of influence in Hanoi and no assurance that Hanoi will stop the offensive and we our retaliation.

In sum, I would have to conclude that Brezhnev personally, and the Soviets collectively, are in one of their toughest political corners in years. They must want the Vietnamese situation to subside and I would judge that there is just a chance that of all the distasteful courses open to them they will pick that of pressure on Hanoi—not to help us but themselves. The dispatch of Brezhnev's confidant, Katushev, to Hanoi tends to bear this out.

The stick of your determination and the carrot of the productive summit with which I went to Moscow, which I used there and which we must now maintain, give us our best leverage in Kremlin politics as well as the best position in our own.

170. Letter From President Nixon to Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev¹

Washington, April 25, 1972.

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

I would like to express to you my appreciation for the courtesy and warm hospitality shown to Dr. Kissinger and his colleagues during his recent stay in Moscow. His reports to me while he was in Moscow had already indicated that the discussions were extremely useful. This impression has been strongly confirmed by the detailed oral report which Dr. Kissinger made to me immediately after his return.² I am convinced that the ground is being successfully prepared for our meetings in May to which I look forward with keen anticipation and I was pleased to hear that you share this view. We have a unique opportunity to open a new and promising chapter in the relations between our two countries. This reflects not only the desires of our two peoples but of peoples everywhere. As we make progress in constructing relations of peace and cooperation, all mankind will benefit.

As regards specific matters, I welcome the spirit of progress with which you spoke to Dr. Kissinger. As he told you, this is precisely the spirit in which I and my Administration approach these matters also. What has been achieved on Dr. Kissinger's trip gives great promise; I am sure our talks will bring it to completion.

I know that in the period left before our meetings, both sides will intensify their work to ensure the success both of us desire. My own preparations will benefit greatly from Dr. Kissinger's discussions in Moscow.

Richard Nixon

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 11. Top Secret. An unsigned handwritten note indicates the letter was delivered to Vorontsov by messenger at 4 p.m. on April 25. According to a typed note attached to another copy, the letter was "machine signed (in a matter of 5 minutes) at HAK's direction and hand carried to Minister Vorontsov." (Note from Muriel Hartley to Haig, April 25; *ibid.*) A draft with Kissinger's handwritten revisions including the sentence: "What has been achieved on Dr. Kissinger's trip gives great promise; I am sure our talks will bring it to completion," is *ibid.*

² See Document 168.

Summit in the Balance: U.S.-Soviet Relations and the Decision to Mine Haiphong, April 26–May 12, 1972

171. Editorial Note

At 10 p.m. on April 26, 1972, President Nixon addressed the nation in a televised speech on Vietnam. Nixon announced that withdrawals of American troops from Vietnam would continue, formal peace negotiations in Paris would resume, and air and naval attacks on North Vietnam would not cease while North Vietnamese forces remained engaged in offensive action in South Vietnam. Although written by his speechwriters, Nixon personally revised the text of the speech and included the following passage tying the North Vietnamese Spring Offensive to other global issues:

“Let us look at what the stakes are—not just for South Vietnam, but for the United States and for the cause of peace in the world. If one country, armed with the most modern weapons by major powers, can invade another nation and succeed in conquering it, other countries will be encouraged to do exactly the same thing—in the Mideast, in Europe, and in other international danger spots. If the Communists win militarily in Vietnam, the risk of war in other parts of the world would be enormously increased. But if, on the other hand, Communist aggression fails in Vietnam, it will be discouraged elsewhere, and the chance for peace will be increased.”

Towards the end of the speech, the President commented on the prospects for the Moscow summit:

“Earlier this year I traveled to Peking on an historic journey for peace. Next month I shall travel to Moscow on what I hope will also be a journey for peace. In the 18 countries I have visited as President I have found great respect for the Office of the President of the United States. I have reason to expect, based upon Dr. Kissinger’s report, that I shall find that same respect for the office I hold when I visit Moscow.”

The full text of the speech is in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pages 550–554. Drafts of earlier versions of the speech containing Nixon’s handwritten modifications are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President’s Personal Files, Box 74, President’s Speech File, Wednesday, April 26, 1972, Vietnam Report. In his memoirs Nixon described his address in the following manner: “It was a tough speech, and afterward I wished that I had made it even tougher.” See *RN: Memoirs*, page 593.

172. Editorial Note

On April 27, 1972, the Washington Special Actions Group, chaired by Deputy Assistant to the President Alexander Haig, met in the White House Situation Room from 11:30 a.m. to 12:26 p.m. to discuss the impact on East-West relations of the domestic political crisis in West Germany. Four hours earlier, Chancellor Willy Brandt narrowly fended off by two votes a motion of “no confidence” submitted by opposition leader Rainer Barzel. However, this margin had left the Brandt government in a precarious position in the Bundestag, particularly on the pending vote for ratification of the Moscow and Warsaw treaties. At their April 27 meeting, WSAG members assessed the prospects for mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR), a Conference of European Security, and the upcoming Moscow summit in light of these developments:

“Mr. Johnson: We haven’t had any time to get the reaction from abroad.

“Mr. Rush: The best news the President could have gotten was the vote in the Bundestag.

“Gen. Haig: In a sense, though, the vote could encourage the Soviets to get tougher.

“Mr. Rush: All this is part of the East-West fabric. The situation could have taken a serious turn for the worse if Brandt’s government had fallen. And that in turn would have serious implications on such things as CES and MBFR. It would all be reflected in the Summit, which would undoubtedly not turn out well.

“Gen. Haig: It’s a question of how you assess the Soviets’ confidence. Is it better that they be worried at the time of the Summit, or is it better that they be confident?

“Mr. Rush: The Soviets made major concessions in order to have the Brandt government stay in power and in order to get the treaties ratified. If things were to turn sour with a Barzel government, there would be no ratification. And there would be serious implications with other things, such as CES. In fact, there could very well be a serious revanchist attack on Germany. I’m sure the President’s trip to Moscow would be affected.

“Mr. Johnson: I agree.

“Mr. Sullivan: Murrey Marder of *The Washington Post* picked up the Katushev story in the late edition today. He says he got it from diplomatic sources. I wonder where.

“Gen. Haig: From the Soviets, perhaps?

“Mr. Sullivan: I don’t think so. Besides the U.S., who else knows about this? Marder was doing a story on Henry’s press conference. Citing this as a diplomatic straw in the wind, he said that Katushev left

Moscow at generally the same time as Henry did. I wonder where he got this information.

“Mr. Carver: We’ve had a very tight distribution.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

Assistant to the President Kissinger telephoned Dobrynin twice on April 29 regarding the German matter. The transcript of the first conversation at 11:55 a.m. included the following exchange:

“K: Anatoliy, we have the German problem I want to discuss. Our information is that the CDU may be looking for a way out of the German treaties.

“D: Barzel?

“K: If we can get the votes delayed a little bit. One way is by looking for a face-saving formula by which there can be a minor concession. They want language from us asking for the restoration of bipartisanship in Germany. We are asking Brandt if he wants us to do it. We are also asking you.

“D: I will have to check.

“K: We have not answered the communications from Barzel. He is proposing that we in some form write him and say we hope he restores the spirit of bipartisanship.

“D: Not any specific question mentioned, but bipartisanship on treaties?

“K: Then he would ask for some additional minor concession about ratification. Then he will make a very reasonable proposal and that enables the treaties to go through. On the other hand, we have not replied. If we reply now, it may delay the vote on May 4. When you are in direct communication with Brezhnev you can ask what he wants—say I have just gotten a message to check Gromyko or Brezhnev’s judgment in Moscow. We want to work cooperatively with you.

“D: It is very important now.

“K: None of this is known to our people. Keep this in mind. You understand the problem.

“D: I understand; it is clear. They will appreciate your call in Moscow.

“K: I would like Mr. Brezhnev to know that we sent yesterday a message to Brandt congratulating him on [avoiding passage of] a vote of “no confidence”. He can use that.

“D: From the President?

“K: Yes. Our people will recognize that as positive.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

At 12:15 p.m. on April 29, Kissinger telephoned Dobrynin again. According to the transcript, they again discussed Germany:

“K: You see, we are practically going to do . . .

“D: What?

“K: One other thing we want Gromyko’s judgment on. We were prepared to say something in general along lines we discussed yesterday, on Monday. Under these conditions it may precipitate a vote. Brandt may lose.

“D: You mean before?

“K: If he wants us to follow Barzel’s suggestion, this may mean delays in the vote. We will hold that with a statement until we hear reply from Brandt.

“D: You will ask him about statement from White House—Barzel—you are going to ask him too?

“K: No. I just want to explain to Gromyko the reason we are holding up on statement until we have the reply from Brandt [is] because practical consequences of our making statement might be to precipitate vote on Thursday and it may not be desirable. If we get reply from Brandt before Monday, we will make it Monday.

“D: I understand. You will just await the reply from Brandt. You will give this to Barzel. And second, you will make a statement.

“K: If we write this for Barzel, we wouldn’t make a public statement.

“D: Yes. If he says he doesn’t like Barzel, you will not make a public statement.

“K: We will not get into position that we are—in way of preliminary agreement—and we want it to go into effect—or something like that.

“D: Thank you. I will send a telegram.

“K: Good.” (Ibid.)

During a May 9 telephone conversation with Dobrynin, Kissinger stated: “I have just talked to Bahr and we’ve also been in touch with Barzel, and I think we can assure now that the treaty will be ratified by tomorrow evening.” (Ibid.) On May 9 representatives from both the West German Cabinet and the principal opposition party did submit a resolution on the Eastern treaties. The vote in the Bundestag was postponed until May 17, at which time the treaty was approved. For further documentation on U.S.-German relations during this period, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XL, Germany and Berlin, 1969–1972.

173. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 27, 1972.

SUBJECT

US-Soviet Bilateral Negotiations—Next Steps on 1) Science and Technology and 2) Environment

As I mentioned to you, we are now confronted with some urgent operational decisions on the science and technology and environmental negotiations with the Soviets if agreements are to be completed for the Moscow visit. We can always drag our feet later, if necessary.

Science and Technology. OST and its Soviet counterparts would appear to be ready to reach agreement on necessary language for an Agreement in Principle to be announced during the Summit on the US-Soviet decision to establish a Joint Commission on Science and Technology. The Soviets have given us a draft agreement; David's people have given the Soviet Embassy their technical comments; and David has a draft statement he is ready to negotiate with the Soviets.

David and his principal staffer on this issue depart tomorrow on a two-week swing through Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. Dobrynin has now suggested to them that they stop in Moscow on the way back to tie up loose ends on a science and technology agreement in principle.

It should be kept in mind that we are faced with the bureaucratic problem of State's non-involvement at this point. State's lawyers will have to look over any language before it is actually agreed to at the Summit. Perhaps the best way to handle this at this point would be to have David stop in Moscow, negotiate draft ad referendum language, and, upon his return to the US coordinate approval of the language with State and the White House.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, XXI-A, April 1972 (continued). Secret; Eyes Only; Outside the System. Sent for immediate action. Kissinger initialed approval of both decisions. Attached to an April 29 memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, was David's statement as approved on April 29 and text of a statement authorizing Science Adviser to the President Edward David to engage in discussion in Moscow. (Ibid.) Other bilateral issues are assessed in memoranda from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger of April 26 (on natural gas) and of April 29 (on Lend-Lease repayment). (Both *ibid.*) Attached to a memorandum from NSC staff secretary Jeanne Davis to Eliot, May 23, is an April 27 memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, on nuclear fuel supply policy. (Ibid., Box 719, Country File, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXII, May 1972)

Environment. As you know, Train² and State have worked together on an exchange of environmental draft agreements with the Soviets, and the Soviets have suggested that 3 or 4 technical people come to Moscow to work out a pre-Summit draft for approval and implementation at the Summit. (*Note:* The suggestion is that an environmental agreement—not agreement in principle—be signed at the Summit.) State and CEQ agree with the Soviet suggestion, and CEQ member Gordon MacDonald is ready to lead a US negotiating team. I understand that he has called you; he has called me at least three times asking for a decision. Again, since State and CEQ are agreed, perhaps MacDonald should be given the OK to go to Moscow.

² Russell Train, chairman, Council on Environmental Quality.

174. Editorial Note

From 1:10 to 2:45 p.m. on April 28, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger, met with Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin for lunch in the Map Room at the White House to discuss several issues, including the tentative verbal agreement on submarine-based launched missiles. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) No substantive record of the meeting has been found. Kissinger discussed the meeting in a telephone call later that day with Chief of Staff H.R. Halde- man. Kissinger suggested that the Soviets, through Dobrynin, had made a major move on the issue of submarine-launched ballistic mis- siles (SLBMs):

“HAK: The President is in the Bahamas and I am having a prob- lem. We have the SALT thing, and I had everybody in position. Every- one is for it. At the end of the Verification Panel meeting, Smith was opposing to come up with the Soviets. He comes out with a totally dif- ferent proposal which he works out with Rogers. If we surface this, the Soviets will know we are [bluffing] and the President called off the deadlock. This puts [Admiral] Moorer in a bad position because he has to go for the stronger position because he can’t be on the record as go- ing for the softer side. The President must get credit for it and we have to get this agreement. If there is some bleeding coming into Key Bis- cayne, I wanted to tell you why. This is exactly like the Berlin deal. This is a very good deal.

“BH: No question the President is sold on it, too.

“HAK: If you can keep Rogers from getting to him before I explain it to him.

“BH: If Bill calls, I will say that I have to get to him first and that the President said that we shouldn’t budge on it.” (Transcript of telephone conversation between Kissinger and Haldeman, April 28, 6:30 p.m.; *ibid.*, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Immediately following the conversation with Haldeman, Kissinger telephoned Ambassador Gerard Smith. As the response from the American side on the SLBM issue, Smith suggested: “We can agree in principle to a five-year SLBM freeze under which additional launchers could be built as replacements for SLBM’s and old ICBM’s.” (Transcript of telephone conversation between Kissinger and Smith, April 28, 6:40 p.m.; *ibid.*) The next morning Kissinger and Smith again discussed the issue and Kissinger promised to gain the support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the new position on SLBMs. (Transcript of telephone conversation between Kissinger and Smith, April 29, 11:20 a.m.; *ibid.*)

President Nixon was on holiday in Key Biscayne, Florida, and flew to Grand Cay, the Bahamas, the afternoon of April 28. He returned to Key Biscayne the next day. On April 30 he flew to Texas for a brief stay at the ranch of Secretary of the Treasury John Connally and arrived back in Washington on May 2. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President’s Daily Diary) On the morning of April 29 the President and Kissinger discussed SALT on the telephone. An excerpt of the conversation reads:

“RN: Did you get the message?

“HAK: Yes, and we sent one back. It is being implemented with one minor qualification. Should maintain a little effort in the other area so there isn’t a lot of bad coverage when we start up again. I gave Moorer it during the Verification Panel meeting.

“RN: How was your host?

“HAK: Bubbling. His boss is all out and all of that is on course. We got all that settled. There is one technical problem that I will discuss with you when you get back to Key Biscayne. Went very well and they are acting positively. (Transcript of telephone conversation between Kissinger and Nixon, April 29, 10:15 a.m.; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Notes of the meetings of the Verification Panel for April 28 and April 29 are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-108, Verification Panel Minutes, Originals. Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs Ronald Spiers prepared an assessment of the SLBM proposals and attached it to an April 27 memorandum to Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Johnson. (*Ibid.*, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–4 US–USSR)

175. Memorandum From President Nixon to his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 30, 1972.

I have some later views on the strike on Haiphong–Hanoi which you should have in mind prior to your meeting Tuesday.²

Looking at our long-range goal of giving the South Vietnamese a reasonable chance to meet attacks that may be launched next year or the year afterwards, as well as the subsidiary reasons of the possible effect in getting faster action on negotiation, as well as the effect on the American public opinion, I believe it is essential that a major strike for three days, rather than two, involving a minimum of 100 B–52s, as well as as much TAC Air as can be spared, should be planned starting Friday³ of this week.

The only factor that would change my decision on this is a definite conclusion after your meeting Tuesday that the North Vietnamese are ready to make a settlement now, prior to the Soviet Summit.

By settlement, I do not mean, of course, accepting all our eight points, but a very minimum, something like a cease fire, a withdrawal of all their forces to the pre-Easter lines and the return of all POWs.

We have to recognize the hard fact—unless we hit the Hanoi–Haiphong complex this weekend, we probably are not going to be able to hit it at all before the election. After this weekend, we will be too close to the Russian Summit. During the Summit and for a couple of weeks afterwards, our hands will be tied for the very same good reasons that they were tied during and after the Chinese Summit. Then we will be in the middle of June with the Democratic Convention only three to four weeks away and it would be a mistake to have the strike at that time. Another factor is that the more time that passes there is a possibility that the Congress will act to tie our hands. Finally, support for taking a hard line, while relatively strong now, will erode day by day, particularly as the news from the battle area is so viciously distorted by the press so that people get a sense of hopelessness, and then would assume that we were only striking out in desperation.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda from the President, Memos—April 1972. No classification marking. The memorandum is unsigned. A notation in Nixon's handwriting on a draft of this memorandum reads: "OK. Retype as modified & send to Kissinger today. RN." (Ibid.)

² Kissinger's scheduled meeting with Le Duc Tho on May 2; see Document 183.

³ May 5.

On Tuesday, the tactics of your host will be to try desperately to give us some hope that we are going to get a settlement in order to keep us from making a strike on the Hanoi–Haiphong complex. They will offer to discuss the eight points, they will offer to discuss the cease fire, they will offer to discuss POWs. All of this you must flatly reject. They may say that they have to report to the politburo. This you should also reject on the ground that they have had our eight points for seven months and our latest offer for three weeks. It is time for them to fish or cut bait on Tuesday with some very substantial action looking toward an immediate settlement.

Incidentally, as I have already told you, you ought to withdraw our proposal of release of only those POWs who have been held for four years or more on the ground that their stepped-up attacks now make it necessary for us to demand the total release of all POWs as a minimum condition. I am not suggesting that they will agree to this but that is the position you must go into the talks with.

Under no circumstances in talking with them is the term “reduction of the level of violence” to be used. I saw it in one of the papers which someone on your staff prepared prior to your trip to Moscow.⁴

This is the kind of gobbledygook that Johnson used at Manila and also that was talked about it at the time of the 1968 bombing halt.⁵ It means absolutely nothing at all and is too imprecise to give us a yard stick for enforcement.

What you must have in mind, is that if they get a delay as a result of their talk with you, we shall lose the best chance we will ever have to give them a very damaging blow where it hurts, not just now, but particularly for the future.

Forget the domestic reaction. Now is the best time to hit them. Every day we delay reduces support for such strong action.

Our desire to have the Soviet Summit, of course, enters into this, but you have prepared the way very well on that score, and, in any event we cannot let the Soviet Summit be the primary consideration in making this decision. As I told you on the phone this morning. I intend to cancel the Summit unless the situation militarily and diplomatically substantially improves by May 15 at the latest or unless we get a firm commitment from the Russians to announce a joint agreement at the Summit to use our influence to end the war.

⁴ Reference is to a memorandum on Vietnam by Negroponce, April 17, in the briefing book for Kissinger’s trip to Moscow; see footnote 2, Document 125.

⁵ Reference to language used in former President Lyndon Johnson’s declaration following the Manila Summit of October 1966 and during the Paris negotiations conducted by the Johnson administration in 1968. For the former, see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. IV, Vietnam, 1966, Document 281; for the latter, see *ibid.*, vol. VII.

In effect we have crossed the Rubicon and now we must win—not just a temporary respite from this battle, but if possible, tip the balance in favor of the South Vietnamese for battles to come when we no longer will be able to help them with major air strikes.

We know from experience, based on their record in 1968 that they will break every understanding. We know from their twelve secret talks with you that they talk in order to gain time. Another factor is that as we get closer to the Democratic Convention, the Democratic candidates and the supporters of Hanoi in the Congress, will increasingly give them an incentive to press on and not make a deal with us with the hope that they can make a deal with the Democrats after the election.

I will be talking with you about the statement you will make when you see them, but my present intuition is that you should be brutally frank from the beginning—particularly in tone. Naturally you should have a few conciliatory words in for the record because the record of this meeting will without question be put out at some time in the future and possibly in the very near future. In a nutshell you should tell them that they have violated all understandings, they stepped up the way, they have refused to negotiate seriously. As a result, the President has had enough and now you have only one message to give them—Settle or else!

176. Editorial Note

On April 30, 1972, President Nixon, who was on vacation in Key Biscayne, Florida, spoke by telephone to his Assistant Henry Kissinger in Washington from 10:39 a.m. to 11:04 a.m. to discuss the impact of the continuing North Vietnamese offensive upon the prospects for the upcoming summit in Moscow. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) A relevant excerpt of the transcript of this conversation reads:

"P: Wonder if you ought not to cancel your trip over there. I have decided to cancel the Summit unless we get a settlement. Can't go to Russians with our tails between our legs. We get a settlement or the Russians agree they are going to do something.

"K: We can't go if we are totally on the defensive as a result of Russian arms.

"P: No way. Wonder if I ought to do the SALT thing in light of all this.

"K: Think so. Could do it in low key way.

"P: The image of our putting our arms around the Russians at the time their equipment is knocking the hell out of Vietnam—

“K: It gives the Russians a stake. Here is the man of peace who has done everything—rather than be truculent to the Russians.

“P: On public relations it may be a very dangerous line.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Nixon and Kissinger spoke again from 1:23 p.m. to 1:32 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President’s Daily Diary) A transcript of this conversation reads:

“K: Moscow Summit is confusing people here.

“P: Agree. If by 15th of May we are where we are now. Time is on our side this time. If on the other hand we are in a very weak position, we are in a hell of a position to go to the Summit.

“K: Go only two days. Don’t say that we can take three days. Or we can go four or five days if Summit has gone.” (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons[–]1972 [2 of 2])

On May 1 President Nixon, who then traveled to the Texas ranch of Secretary of the Treasury Connally, called Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Haig at 8:37 a.m. to discuss the military situation in Vietnam, including the option of responding with intensive bombing strikes against North Vietnam. The President stated: “The problem is that he [Kissinger] is so desperate . . . anxious about the talks. He doesn’t want to hurt them. He doesn’t realize that what hurts us most is to appear like little puppy dogs when they are launching these attacks. What really gets to them is to hit in the Hanoi–Haiphong area. That gets at the heartland. I think we made a mistake not doing it sooner. We may have to update that strike. There’s a good reason to do it for American public opinion. I feel there is much to be said for hitting them now. You are to ride herd to see that we get all the positive things out of this we can.” Nixon later added: “And you tell Henry I think we have got to step these up and to hell with the negotiations, and he may have to reconsider going there at all.” (Ibid.)

According to his Daily Diary, the President called Haig 20 minutes later. (Ibid., White House Central Files) Haldeman recorded the following notation in his diary: “[Nixon] said he had just talked to Haig, and QuangTri, Vietnam, is still going to pieces, and that we should let it drop. Problem is that K is so interested in his talk in Paris that he’s delaying the plane raids, and keeps arguing that we need to set up public opinion in order to go ahead with the raids. The answer, of course, being that we’ll lose public opinion if we delay the raids; it’s the raids that they want, not the talks. He says he shook K about the Summit and made it clear that we won’t go into a Summit if we’re in a bad position on Vietnam at the time, so he’s got to get Vietnam worked out.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) The President arrived back in Washington at 1:06 p.m. that afternoon. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President’s Daily Diary)

177. Memorandum From Winston Lord of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 1, 1972.

SUBJECT

Haiphong & Hanoi

We may well face a watershed decision on May 3 whether or not to resume bombing of the Haiphong and Hanoi areas. Put more directly, it is essentially a decision whether to play summit chips in the Vietnam game. Obviously, you have thought through the implications ad nauseam, and I am fully aware of the tremendous pressures on you coming from various quarters. I believe I understand the strategic rationale for bombing in these areas and I acknowledge some valid arguments. But nevertheless the risks seem to me heavy and the possible benefits unlikely.

The decision revolves crucially around Moscow's reaction. The other factors are as follows:

—*Presidential credibility* with various audiences argues in favor of the bombing. He has said he would do whatever is required, and our position is in effect that all options are open, save nuclear weapons and the use of U.S. ground forces. Failure to hit the H–H areas could look like a deal with Moscow, a failure of Presidential determination, a nervousness about domestic political considerations, etc. *However*, the overall question of credibility is pegged to whether he will permit South Vietnam to “lose.” If that happens, the fact that he bombed Hanoi–Haiphong won’t help him very much, if at all. And my view is that if the South Vietnamese are destined to “lose,” bombing the H–H areas is not going to make a difference.

—*The military arguments* cut both ways. Raids could have some impact on operations a few months hence, but they take away assets from more urgent and lucrative targets in the battle zone. The longer the raids in the H–H areas, the greater the longer run impact, but past experience should convince us that it will not be decisive, and meanwhile this means longer run diversion from the pressing requirements further south.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 74, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Moscow Summit 1972 [2 of 2]. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for information. The city of Quang Tri, the capital of South Vietnam’s northernmost province by the same name, fell to the NVA on May 1. The deliberations on the ramifications of this defeat are in the minutes of the May 1 WSAG meeting. (Ibid., NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

—The *psychological impact* on our *South Vietnamese* friends would certainly be a plus. *However*, it cannot by itself make the difference in morale—the ground battles and the urban situations will do that.

—The *psychological impact* on the *North Vietnamese* is difficult to judge. There is some evidence that the one-day raids shook up the North Vietnamese. *However*, the past record certainly suggests that the net effect will be merely to rally the population, not discourage it.

—*Chinese reaction* does not seem a decisive factor. They have been restrained to date, are probably somewhat impressed by strong actions, and in any event, know that it is Moscow, not Peking, that is involved at this juncture. *However*, a certain risk persists. And certainly a souring of US–USSR relations cannot but hurt us in Peking.

—There is no question that there will be significant *civilian casualties*, an unalloyed argument against the bombing.

—The U.S. *domestic scene* has to be an argument against the bombing. The right might be given a temporary lift, and the left will be critical no matter what the President does. But the decisive weight of American opinion would shift against the President if the bombing did not bring rapid results on the ground or diplomatically. The negative shift would be even more pronounced if the bombing is seen to be the cause of sinking the Moscow summit and an historic SALT agreement. And since one can agree that bombing the H–H area won't directly affect the ground situation, we come back to the crucial diplomatic factor of Moscow's reaction.

The Moscow Role

Arguments for the bombing because of the impact in Moscow rest on two assumptions:

—That Moscow, getting the dangerous message, *will* choose to pressure Hanoi rather than scuttle the Summit, SALT, etc.

—That having chosen to pressure Hanoi, it *can* do so effectively and quickly.

Neither assumption looks very plausible to me. We know, from the Moscow trip, that the Soviets (or at least Brezhnev) are panting for the summit. But we have no assurance whatsoever that this takes such precedence that Moscow will really lean on its difficult ally. They may find Hanoi's timing awkward and hope to muddle through the summit period with the offensive and our reaction manageable as background music. *However*, if we press them to chose between the summit and their ally, we can have little confidence how Brezhnev will come out, and even less confidence how the Politburo as a whole will allow him to come out.

Furthermore, even assuming that Moscow does want to be helpful in order to salvage US–USSR relations, what precisely is it to do

over the next crucial several weeks? How does it go about blowing the whistle on Hanoi? The North Vietnamese have the equipment they need to carry on the current offensive and they have momentum going. Can the Russians really make them desist, particularly with the Chinese looking over their shoulders? I just don't see Hanoi—when it may think it has victory in its grasp—doing what big brother wants it to do.

Thus there are these two doubtful propositions that Moscow will choose, and that Moscow will be able, to pressure Hanoi. The more likely choice is for them to sacrifice the summit if that is the only alternative. We will then have the worst of both worlds—no help on Vietnam and all the setbacks of fractured U.S.-Soviet relations, including:

—The loss of an historic SALT agreement whose long range significance is momentous indeed. Instead of the most important arms control agreement ever, we will face a heightened arms race, in which the Soviets will have a decided edge, given our domestic mood on defense spending.

—The aborting of all the other specific areas of agreement with Moscow that have been ripening. The whole concept of interlocking interests preventing future confrontations would be lost—the loss of our major leverage on Peking. Our China initiative could well be jeopardized. Less likely, but conceivable, would be stirrings toward some improvement in Sino-Soviet relations.

—A strongly negative U.S. domestic reaction to the crumbling of the President's foreign policy achievements and vistas.

In short, I believe we are much better off refraining from bombing the H-H areas and using our military assets where they count, pocketing a SALT agreement that is in our interest irrespective of what happens in Vietnam, and muddling through the summit as best we can. It is not a particularly attractive prospect. But the alternative is almost certainly not going to be decisive in Vietnam and very likely will cost us heavily in other areas.²

This begs the question of what the Soviet Union will think of us as a partner (or adversary) when we have supposedly “flinched” on the bombing question. I know this is at the heart of your concern about the decision. It is, of course, a dilemma we have created for ourselves. But again whether we flinch or not is subordinate to whether or not

² In a May 1 memorandum on “short-term actions” to Kissinger, Haig wrote: “A range of options should be considered which run the gamut from doing nothing and proceeding with the Summit to a series of escalating military actions culminating with mobilization and threatened, if not actual, invasion of North Vietnam.” (Ibid., Box 993, Haig Chronological Files, May 1–20, 1972 [2 of 2])

we let South Vietnam “lose,” and again, I don’t think the bombing will be decisive diplomatically (i.e. Moscow wants to and can pressure Hanoi) or militarily.³

³ As cited in a May 1 memorandum from Laird to Nixon, Abrams reported that the situation in the northern part of South Vietnam would depend upon the ARVN will to halt the North Vietnamese offensive and thus to generate “lucrative targets” for aerial assault. “In summary of all that has happened here since 30 March 1972, I must report that as the pressure has mounted and the battle has become brutal, the senior leadership has begun to bend and in some areas to break,” Abrams concluded. “In adversity it is losing its will and cannot be depended on to take the measures necessary to stand and fight.” (Ibid., White House Special Files, President’s Personal Files, Box 75, President’s Speech File, Monday, May 8, 1972 Vietnam Speech [1 of 2]) A May 2 Intelligence Note reported on the apparently contradictory Soviet response to the events of the past month in light of the upcoming summit: “In the aftermath of the Communist offensive in Vietnam and the U.S. retaliatory bombing of the Haiphong environs, Moscow tried to have the best of both worlds. It publicly supported Hanoi and condemned the US while continuing preparations for the President’s visit and conducting business as usual in Soviet-US bilateral relations.” (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 1 USSR)

178. Editorial Note

The Department of State offered preparatory advice for the upcoming Moscow summit talks. In a memorandum to the President on May 1 Secretary of State William Rogers stressed the significance of the summit’s culminating communiqué, which he described as “the major vehicle for informing the world of the results of your Moscow meetings.” He described the Soviets as being intent upon demonstrating through the document their primacy in the world order and would explicitly avoid incorporating statements of disagreement within the formal communiqué. Rogers therefore recommended:

“The communiqué should set forth in a matter-of-fact way the concrete agreements reached at the summit. It should say that progress was made toward less tension and more cooperation in certain specific areas.

“Ideally, the document should be a concise, straightforward communiqué, not signed by the principals. If ancillary agreements are to be announced, for example, a joint space mission project, a new environmental agreement, or an agreement in the field of trade, they should be referred to in the communiqué in a brief paragraph. The communiqué need not attempt to cover all areas of the world, as the Soviets like to do. Unless we have something specific to announce, the communiqué need say nothing about any particular area.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR)

Attached to this memorandum was a draft communiqué and, for comparison, previous Soviet international communiqués on various issues and the Shanghai communiqué resulting from the President's trip to Peking 2 months earlier.

Also on May 1, Rogers sent to the President a 7-page memorandum entitled "The Middle East at the Summit." He noted that the "one principal short-run parallel interest" in the region shared by both the United States and the Soviet Union was "to discourage a renewal of Arab-Israeli hostilities." He then outlined objectives to be pursued at Moscow on this issue:

"Our task at the Summit, therefore, is to exploit the parallelism of US-USSR interests in the ceasefire, while at the same time insisting that the focus of negotiations must remain with the parties and not with the major powers. In this latter respect, this means in effect a standoff; that we and the Soviets continue to disagree not only on the substance of the overall settlement but even more fundamentally on ways to achieve it. Our counter to any Soviet pressure to renew bilateral or Four Power talks should be to keep the focus on the need for Egypt to face up to the necessity of negotiating a settlement with Israel instead of looking to others to do the job for it. The Arab, and specifically Egyptian inhibition about negotiating with Israel is their most vulnerable point, and we should use this to our advantage with the Soviets. We could make the point that, if the Egyptians remain unrealistically adamant about not negotiating directly, Jarring is there and we remain available if Egypt wants to pick up this diplomatic option in relation to an interim Suez Canal agreement. We will need to make these latter points in low key, however, given the fact that Israel itself is taking a very tough position in the Jarring talks and delayed for some months its agreement to enter Suez Canal talks at a time when Sadat was ready to do so.

"Finally, we must face the fact that a standoff on the Middle East in Moscow will leave a very unpredictable situation in the post-Summit period when all concerned will be reassessing their positions in the light of what does or does not happen there. The fact of your forthcoming Moscow trip has in itself had a somewhat calming effect. The Soviets can be expected to argue, however, that they cannot guarantee Sadat will go on being patient in the absence of negotiating progress. While this will be in part a Soviet pressure tactic, it could very well prove true. Egypt is the most unpredictable factor in the Middle East equation and will become increasingly so as time goes by. Sadat is frustrated at the lack of stronger Soviet military and political support, at United States failure to produce any softening of Israel's positions while strengthening Israel militarily, at his own military weakness and at his inability to mobilize the Arab world against Israel and the U.S. He could strike out, directly or indirectly (for example, through Libya) at American interests; he could initiate at least limited military action; or

he could be overthrown, with consequences in Egypt and the Arab world that are difficult to foresee. Any of these developments would complicate our position in the area generally. Additionally, a renewal of fighting would be a new complicating factor in U.S.-Soviet relations, and the Soviets may seek to raise this possibility as a means of persuading us to put pressure on Israel." (Ibid.)

179. Editorial Note

According to his Record of Schedule, from 12:15 p.m. to 12:40 p.m. on May 1, 1972, the Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger met with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin in the White House Map Room. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976) No substantive record of the meeting has been found. Kissinger passed to Dobrynin the following note at the meeting:

"While we cannot agree with certain considerations expressed in the paper given Henry Kissinger in Moscow, we can agree in principle to the general approach suggested in that paper. It is the understanding of the U.S. government that under the proposed SLBM freeze, additional SLBM launchers, beyond those existing on the freeze date, could be built in replacement for certain existing strategic launchers. Such a freeze would last five years if an agreement on more comprehensive limitations on strategic offensive arms was not reached in the meantime. We are prepared at Helsinki to negotiate equitable provisions to cover this kind of arrangement with the aim of concluding an offensive interim agreement, together with ABM Treaty, for signature during the forthcoming meeting in Moscow." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip File, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2)

At 12:50 p.m. the same day, Haig called Dobrynin to inform him of revisions to the note:

"H: Henry just rushed out to lunch. He asked me to call you and ask you to delete the first phrase before sending the note to Moscow—that phrase which starts 'While we can.'

"D: The whole phrase? Just wait a minute. Let me get it. Do you mean take out the whole first sentence?

"H: No. The note would begin 'We can agree.'

"D: So it is half the first phrase? Then we will translate this one and we will be in touch with you in 30 or 35 minutes.

"H: Fine, sir. Henry said with regard to the statement we have deleted that it should be transmitted as an oral phrase at the time it is delivered.

“D: I understand—yes.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) During a conversation with President Nixon in the Old Executive Office Building at 2:40 p.m., Kissinger reported on his meeting with Dobrynin, noting that he had told Dobrynin, “After tomorrow, all bets are off.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, May 1, 1972, 2:40–2:55 p.m., Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 335–3)

At 7:35 p.m. Kissinger informed Secretary of State Rogers of the oral message passed to Dobrynin. The transcript of the telephone conversation reads:

“R: I want to ask you whether you notified the Russians about the SALT thing. The impression Gerry [Smith] got from what you said—changes the position.

“K: I gave them the piece of paper Gerry gave me.

“R: In other words, he gave you a piece of paper to give to the Russians?

“K: Yes.

“R: He didn’t understand that.

“K: That’s what all the discussions were about.

“R: The same piece of paper?

“K: The same piece of paper. Only the part which referred to me being given a paper in Moscow—this was made oral instead of in writing. The first part which the President reacted to so sharply. Everything was the same except the first part which was a commentary.

“R: Can I get a copy of it?

“K: Certainly, but Gerry has it.

“R: When did you give it to him? Because you heard what he said, that it was just handed to him before the meeting.

“K: What was handed to him was the correct version. It was exactly the same as the piece of paper Gerry gave me only the reference to Henry Kissinger was made a comment by the President. This part was given to them as an oral comment but the whole document was given to them.

“R: Really, we’ve got to be a little careful on cooperation. Gerry has just about had it. It is just too ticklish a situation not to cooperate a little bit better.

“K: Alex Johnson was present at all the meetings where this was discussed.

“R: Did you deliver it to Dobrynin?

“K: I just sent it over to Dobrynin. That was the purpose of that paper. Smith was the one that wanted it so there would be something in writing that was handled in the Verification Group. That has been around since Friday [April 28].

“R: I wonder if I could straighten it out. If you could send me what you sent to Dobrynin—but if it has gone I couldn’t change that.

“K: Your suggestions can still be carried out because it goes to detail. The only minor point being that the first part was a commentary.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

In a May 2 memorandum to Rogers, to which he attached the text of the note, Kissinger wrote:

“Attached per our phone conversation is a copy of the text given to Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin yesterday.

“Subsequently, the President directed that the phrase, ‘While we cannot agree with certain considerations expressed in the paper given Henry Kissinger in Moscow,’ should be deleted from the formal text. Ambassador Dobrynin was told that the text less this phrase should be forwarded to Moscow and the foregoing phrase should be portrayed as an oral comment by the President at the time the formal note was delivered.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President’s Trip File, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2)

180. Conversation Among President Nixon, Secretary of State Rogers and the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 1, 1972.

[Omitted here is discussion on SALT, Germany, Vietnam, and the summit, and Secretary of State Rogers’ upcoming trip to Europe.]

Nixon: On this thing too, I would take every opportunity to level them hard on Vietnam. I’d hit the Vietnam issue extremely hard, and say that we’re prepared—that for emphasis this is actually true—as far as I’m concerned, we’ll do what’s necessary to carry it out, that their interests are deeply involved. And if they say well it risks the summit, say that we’re prepared to risk it. I think there should be no—our best bet, particularly when you talk to Brandt, it’ll get right back to them.

Rogers: What’s your—do you have your positions made on the next week or so? Are you going to play—I’m assuming—

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 716–2. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Rogers and Kissinger in the Oval Office from 4:11 to 5:29 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Nixon: Oh, while you're gone?

Rogers: Yeah.

Nixon: Well, as you know, Henry's going tomorrow, and I suppose that—

Kissinger: I'll get word to Berlin.

Nixon: He'll get word to you. My inclination—my—well, who's going to get what. My feeling is that we're going to get nothing out of it. And unless its very substantial, very substantial, we'll go with what we have in mind, is to hit, is to hit the Haiphong–Hanoi complex on Thursday and Friday—a 48-hour strike—en lieu of their offensive, not because of the failure of this. So that's where it stands. Now, actually where will you be those days? You see, it'll be Thursday or Friday, or Saturday or Sunday,² dependent upon weather—

Rogers: I'll be—

Nixon: But of course it won't be over. It's not going to be longer than 48 hours. But it'll be big. It'll be the biggest we've had. It'll be—Abrams has got it at a 100 minimum B-52s, and of course all of the naval gunfire we've got up there. The [U.S.S.] *Newport News* will be up there by the time with 8-inch guns. And, in addition to that, of course, about 400 TacAir. So, it'll be by far the biggest strike on the Hanoi–Haiphong area. It will be limited to military targets, of course, to the extent we can. It will hit some new things, like there's a big troop training area that Moorer and Abrams has selected; we'll try to clean it out. That's about where it stands. Now, that whole regime could change in the event—but only in the event there is something really done on this occasion. Henry's prepared to talk very directly. Is that right, Henry?

Rogers: Will you stay more than 1 day, Henry, or will you—

Nixon: Oh, no.

Kissinger: Well, you know, if they come with this spectacular proposal, conceivably—

Nixon: Oh sure, [unclear exchange] I think you might remember raising your earlier—I think this meeting will blow quickly. And I think, therefore, that upon his return, it should be announced that it has been held.

Rogers: Oh, sure. [unclear] Nobody knows about it.

Nixon: Well, the [unclear] would know. I don't think we should announce it in advance, because then all the press will be there and want comments by the two. But if you could meet without having to go out and face the television cameras. But I think immediately upon

² May 4, 5, 6, or 7.

your return we announce, so have it in mind. And I think you need to cable to Bill, of course—

Kissinger: Tomorrow night—

Nixon: Tomorrow night at 10 o'clock. Well, wait a minute, he'll be there. He's going to be in Europe the same time you are.

Kissinger: Yeah, but he'll be in England and—

Rogers: I'll be in England.

Kissinger: England. So I'll backchannel him tomorrow night.

Nixon: All right. So we will announce the meeting. And—

Rogers: I think the real question that I'm going to be faced with is, is the summit—

Nixon: Yeah, of course, they'll be—what'll they want to know?

Rogers: Well, they'll want to know what we think the chances are for a summit meeting. And the President said while you were out, Henry, that it was all right for me to say that it's possible the summit meeting might be canceled and he was prepared for that.

Nixon: But we don't think so.

Rogers: We don't think so?

Nixon: I'd play it in the terms that the plans for the summit are going on on-schedule; that nothing we have done so far has affected it detrimentally. And that is totally true. As a matter of fact, it's affected it positively. But on the other hand, that we cannot anticipate what the Soviet reaction will be in the event that the North Vietnamese continue their offensive and we react, as we will react with strong attacks on the North. And if strong attacks on the North bring a reaction from the Soviets, then it will happen that way. It is our judgment, I might say, it is my judgment, and you can say—and you can very well say that it is my judgment that the summit will move forward because I think that they—that they aren't going to like it—but I think they're going to go forward. But I don't want the Europeans to get the feeling any more than the American people to have the feeling that we will pay any price in order to sit down with the Russians. And, I would say also that if the situation in Vietnam is seriously deteriorating with no—nothing by the time we get closer to the summit, there isn't going to be any—we aren't going to go to the summit there. Because you can't put your arms around the Russians at a time when they're kicking the hell out of us in Vietnam. I don't think its going to happen, from all—did we get Abrams report today—

Kissinger: We haven't gotten that yet, but he, of course, he probably is—

Rogers: I think, Mr. President, the best thing for me to do is to stick with the position that I talked to you and you feel the summit will go ahead—

Nixon: Right.

Rogers: That there's always [unclear exchange]. You know it's a possibility, but you feel confident that it will go ahead on schedule.

Nixon: Well, I think so. What do you think, Henry?

Kissinger: I think, yes, of course—

Nixon: It depends on various people. Certainly the British, with Pompidou—Brandt is the key one, don't you think? Is there any difference there?

Kissinger: No. I think Brandt has to take advantage and he'll go right back to the Soviets.

Nixon: Yeah. That we expect it to go forward. And I think you might say this: We believe, and we think the Soviets also believe, based on things that have happened up to this point, that there are major concerns at the summit that completely override the Vietnam issue, and that Vietnam should not be an issue that should stop the summit. But that on the other hand, that as far as we're concerned, we have to take the actions necessary to defend our interests in Vietnam, and we'll do so with the thought that the Soviets will go forward with the summit. And we're prepared to if they don't react to it. With Brandt you can't talk nearly as frankly as you can with Heath, naturally.

Rogers: As for the SALT talks, I thought that on the SALT talks I would give them sort of a general path, but say that Gerry [Smith] would come and give them any specifics after the discussions he's had in Helsinki, because we don't want to get into this.

[Omitted here is further discussion on SALT and the enemy offensive in Vietnam.]

181. Letter From Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev to President Nixon¹

Moscow, undated.

Dear Mr. President,

I have learned with satisfaction from your letter of April 25 that you also evaluate positively the conversations in Moscow with Dr. Kissinger. The exchange of opinion that took place was, undoubtedly, useful both from the viewpoint of deeper understanding of our respective positions and for the practical preparations of the forthcoming summit meeting.

As a result of those conversations and taking into account also the other negotiations underway, it can be definitely said—quite a bit has been done to ensure the success of the Moscow meeting.

However—and I want to be equally frank here too—today both you and we cannot have 100-percent assurance that everything will go just the way it is desired.

The matter, as you, Mr. President, realize, is that of Vietnam. This question is, of course, not a simple one. As I already told Dr. Kissinger, on the turn that the developments in Vietnam will take, very much will depend, even irrespective of our wishes.

You are undoubtedly aware that a delegation headed by a Secretary of our Party's Central Committee has recently visited Hanoi.

In the talk with the DRV's leaders the delegation also touched upon the questions, related to the political settlement in Vietnam.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 485, President's Trip Files, Issues/Papers, USSR IV, (Part I)—The President. No classification marking. A notation on the letter reads: "Handed to Gen. Haig by Minister Voronstov, 4:15 p.m., 5/1/72." In his memoirs Nixon wrote: "On May 1, the day Kissinger was to leave for Paris, I received a letter from Brezhnev that increased my fear that we had failed to impress upon the Soviet leadership my unshakable determination to stand up in Vietnam. Brezhnev bluntly asked me to refrain from further actions there because they hurt the chances of a successful summit." See *RN: Memoirs*, p. 594. Kissinger also commented upon the message in his memoirs: "On May 1, Brezhnev wrote to Nixon suggesting that prospects for negotiations would improve if we exercised restraint. This was damaged merchandise, it was exactly the same argument used to obtain the bombing halt in 1968, but a bit shopworn after 147 fruitless plenary sessions. Brezhnev, trying a little linkage in reverse, suggested that such a course would also enhance the prospects for the summit. "Nixon saw in the letter a confirmation of all his suspicions that Hanoi and Moscow were in collusion. To me, however, Brezhnev's intervention seemed no more than standard rhetoric. His letter made no threat; it spoke of the impact of bombing on the 'atmosphere' of the summit; it made no hint at cancellation. Since I was leaving that evening for Paris, it was idle to speculate. Our course would have to turn on Le Duc Tho's attitude, not on what the Soviets said." (*White House Years*, pp. 1168–1169)

On the part of the DRV a readiness to solve the problems by negotiations was in principle confirmed. At the same time it is also clear that the U.S. military actions against the DRV only strengthen the determination of the Vietnamese to continue the struggle for their rights by every means. Therefore of decisive importance for the way, in which the situation in Vietnam would develop, will be the course of the U.S. conduct—whether they would be able to display a necessary restraint in their actions and a readiness to search at the negotiations for solutions really acceptable for both sides.

This, in our view, is the main thing now. To prevent a new aggravation of the situation around Vietnam with the ensuing consequences would be all the more important since on the whole, it seems, a genuine prospect emerges to achieve substantial results at the Moscow meeting which would have a major significance both for advancing the relations between our countries and for improving the entire international situation.

I would like in this connection to note specifically the importance of the emerging agreement on questions of strategic arms limitations.

By all appearances, a suitable basis is shaping up for concluding an appropriate agreement between the USSR and the U.S. at the May meeting.

True, we still have to receive from you a message in connection with our specific proposals transmitted for you several days back.

According to our understanding, we both have the same view that one of the tangible results of our meeting can be the adoption of a good political document regarding the basic principles of the relations between the USSR and the U.S. We hope to provide soon our additional considerations on certain wording that was proposed by the American side to the text of that document.

As for the Middle East, I would not conceal our concern over the general state of affairs with regard to this question. The ARE President Sadat has just visited us. The evaluation, that we got on the basis of the talks with him, is that due to Israel's position the number of uncertain moments in the situation there is greater today than before, and that is fraught with serious consequences. Preservation of those uncertain moments and dangers is hardly in the interests of our countries.

Some time ago it looked as if the USSR and the US were approaching a greater understanding on the ways which could ultimately lead to the Middle East settlement. Unfortunately, there is no certainty as yet in this question. In our conviction, it would be very useful if in the days and weeks to come an intensive exchange of opinion be held through the confidential channel to find a mutually acceptable approach toward the question of the Middle East settlement. This seems to correspond also to the idea expressed in your letter, that it is desir-

able to work toward *completion* of what has been started on those questions which will be discussed at the meeting.

In conclusion I would like to emphasize, Mr. President, that I and my colleagues intend, so far as we are concerned, to constructively continue the preparation for the Soviet-American summit meeting, in view of its significance from the point of view both of immediate results and of long-term perspectives. It seems all the more important to us that in the period left before the meeting, nothing be permitted to happen of the kind that would undermine its chances of success.

Sincerely,

L. Brezhnev²

² Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

182. Conversation Among President Nixon, Secretary of State Rogers, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and White House Chief of Staff (Haldeman)¹

Washington, May 1, 1972.

Kissinger: Got a letter from Brezhnev.²

Nixon: Another one? What is it this time? Is he raising hell?

Kissinger: Oh, he's thanking you for sending me, and as a result of these conversations—

Nixon: That's probably in response to my letter.

Kissinger: Yeah. And taking into account all of the other negotiations underway, it can be definitely said that quite a bit has been done [to] ensure the success of the meeting.

Nixon: Yeah.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 716-4. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Rogers, Kissinger, and Haldeman in the Oval Office from 6:01 to 6:47 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² See Document 181.

Kissinger: The matter as you—Then he goes into Vietnam. And he says: [At this point, Kissinger reads most of the passage on Vietnam from the letter. (Document 181)] And the rest is just garbage.

Nixon: Who did they say will undertake the military action? That we were?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Well, they're going to get it—they're going to find out. That's why we pop them. And Haiphong's going to be made.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Nixon: There's not going to be any of this business of who the hell is attacking.

Kissinger: On—and also, what Dobrynin told me, they're willing to agree to everything on the technical arrangements—

Nixon: Except the plane?

Kissinger: Except the plane.

Nixon: [unclear exchange]

Kissinger: They'll let you go on Saturday³ to Leningrad. They'll let you go live on television, although they've never done that before. The only thing they ask is if you go on live is to give them the text an hour in advance so that their interpreter can do a good job.

Nixon: Oh, we'll do it more than that.

Haldeman: We told them we'd give them the text well in advance.

Kissinger: All right. Well, I'm just telling you what their reply was. And, every other technical issue, I forget now what it was, I told him to get in touch with Chapin.

Nixon: He told you about church?

Kissinger: Church is okay. So Brezhnev—

Nixon: Really?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Well, don't tell anybody, though. I don't want—now, that's one thing I don't want Scali or any of those people to know a thing about. I want to go low-key—much the better way. I'll just go that day to church, not with a great big hullabaloo, because after all, I am a—I mean that's what I do on Sunday, not if I can help it.

Haldeman: [laughter]

Nixon: But that's what I'm going to do in Moscow. So, I go to church. And they'll be one hell of a play, right?

Kissinger: Absolutely.

³ May 27.

Nixon: And it will help us here with, you know, with the Billy Graham types.

Kissinger: It will be great symbolism. But—so they gave you a favorable answer on all of that.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: But on the [use in Soviet domestic airspace of an American] plane, they say—

Nixon: I understand—

Kissinger: —the humiliation to them that we—

Nixon: Yeah. I told Bob we're going to do it, so we're going to do it. Let me ask you something else.

Kissinger: So, if I may call him tonight and say the [Soviet] plane is okay.

Nixon: Yes. Yes.

Kissinger: Then they will call Chapin tomorrow and confirm it.

Haldeman: Is the plane for Leningrad and Kiev, or just Leningrad?

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: Leningrad and Kiev.

Haldeman: You sure? Because they said Kiev would—

Kissinger: No. That's what he mentioned to me.

Nixon: I don't really give a damn. It's perfectly all right. Go ahead. So then, on the other one, it's done now. I don't want to argue about the plane. This is a small thing. There are other things—I've ridden their planes many times before. If you could get the—they don't want to cancel this summit, Henry?

Kissinger: No.

Nixon: I think that's why the Hanoi–Haiphong things just got to be—

Kissinger: But they may have no choice.

Nixon: All right. Fine. So we—

Kissinger: But neither do we.

Nixon: I'd sure as hell rather cancel ourselves.

Kissinger: But you can't go to Moscow anyway if you've just being run out of Vietnam.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: So, it's —

Nixon: Well, get the point that if we're run out of Vietnam, we will then blockade North Vietnam to get our prisoners back. Let's face it. We're not going to run out on anything. That's further down the road. Hell, this battle has taken 4 weeks to get Quang Tri.

[Omitted here is additional discussion on the North Vietnamese Spring Offensive.]

Nixon: I wonder if we don't really have to go to the blockade, Henry. Not now, but I mean if this thing collapses [unclear] then you do.

Kissinger: If this thing collapses, we have no choice except to go to the blockade—say our prisoners must come back and blockade them.

Nixon: That would be the basis for it, wouldn't it?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: We get our prisoners back? But then we're defeated, aren't we?

Kissinger: Yeah. Then we have to tighten our belt.

Nixon: Tighten our belt?

Kissinger: Then we should make the goddamn Soviets—

Nixon: Huh?

Kissinger: Then we should make the Soviets pay for it.

Nixon: Yeah. Got much to do with it?

Kissinger: Oh, yes. They made it possible, Mr. President.

Nixon: [unclear] We wouldn't have any bargaining position with the Soviets.

Kissinger: No, no, no. Pay for it—I don't think you could go to the summit then.

Nixon: Oh, sure you could. Blockade cancels the summit.

Kissinger: That's what I mean.

[Omitted here is further discussion on the North Vietnamese offensive and SALT.]

Nixon: What you'll find out more from your meeting tomorrow is just how strong they are.

Kissinger: What I'll find out tomorrow—

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: They will certainly not make an acceptable proposition.

Nixon: Oh, I know that. But you're going to find out—if they think they've got the South Vietnamese by the balls. You know damn well they've got them heavily infiltrated. If they think they've got them by the balls—they're probably getting everything from a lot of our Americans over there as well—then, they'll just be as tough as hell, and tell us to go to hell. That is why we'll have to bomb Hanoi and Haiphong. If they are taking that attitude, you've got to get right to the heart of it. Right [unclear]. If, on the other hand, they're taking the attitude, which I have [unclear] of trying to buy time, bomb anyway, because we can't accept it.

Kissinger: Well, I think we can give them time as long as we bomb them.

Nixon: Oh, give them time. I meant that they must not by promising to discuss things, keep us from bombing.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Nixon: Now, the other thing is that I think that only bombing that really seems to affect these sons-of-bitches is the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong.

Kissinger: That's correct.

Nixon: You think that's true?

Kissinger: The only thing that will—

Nixon: Don't you think that's true? They don't think they're going to win the battle anyway.

Kissinger: The thing that I must warn you, in all fairness, is that it is very conceivable to me that the Russians will cancel the summit after your next bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. I'm still in favor of doing it. And then you will unleash—right now we are in the position—the reason we are doing not as badly in the press as we might is because the pro-Soviet guys are buffaloed by this, by the Moscow maneuver, and that will be then unleashed. I am still strongly in favor of bombing Hanoi and Haiphong, and really wrapping it up.

Nixon: If they cancel it, I only hope we can get a little advance information so we can cancel it first. Is there any way we can? How will they cancel?

Kissinger: I can say under these conditions.

Nixon: How will they cancel? I mean is there any way we can [find out]? Yeah, we can find out. You've got to keep in very close session with Dobrynin so you can sense one word, and if he ever raises the subject of cancellation, we'll just have to go out and say that the President has cancelled the summit. Not let those sons-of-bitches say that they did.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: See my point?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: We're not going to let them cancel first if we can possibly have helped it.

Kissinger: Well, if they—you know—they might start a press campaign, and if they do, we can cancel it. That would be a pretty good tip-off. And—

Nixon: We have a little problem [unclear].

Kissinger: Ah, we may bring it all off, Mr. President. We've gone through other periods before. We've sat in this office—

Nixon: Well this is [unclear], in a sense, because all the chips are on the line; they weren't in Cambodia, and they weren't in Laos.

Kissinger: And we are winning

Nixon: Now, it's win or lose. And frankly, it's better that way. It's better to get the son-of-a-bitch war over with.

Kissinger: In Cambodia, we were winning,

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: In Cambodia we were winning, and then Laos, we weren't losing.

Nixon: Well—

Kissinger: This time, it's got to be over now by summer.

Nixon: The war will be over?

Kissinger: By July–August. It's going to be one way or the other now. I mean, clearly, the South Vietnamese can't keep this up for another 3 months.

Nixon: And the North?

Kissinger: Well that's the question. I doubt it.

Nixon: Oh, I don't think they can at all.

[Omitted here is additional discussion on Vietnam and SALT.]

183. Editorial Note

On May 2, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger met privately with North Vietnamese delegation leaders Xuan Thuy and Le Duc Tho in Paris. In a memorandum to President Nixon that day, Kissinger reported that the meeting “was thoroughly unproductive on substance but served to bolster further our negotiating record. I laid out various approaches for discussion, all of which they rejected. They made very clear that they were not prepared either to deescalate the fighting or offer anything new concerning a settlement. In light of their intransigence, which is almost certainly keyed to the fluid military situation and possibly the expectation of further unilateral concessions on our part, I broke off the private talks until either side has something new to say or their offensive stops.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 854, Files for the President—Lord—Vietnam Negotiations, Sensitive—Camp David—Vol. XIII) A full transcript of Kissinger's meeting with the North Vietnamese is *ibid.* In his diary, the President recorded his reaction: “I have sent Henry a message indicating that I thought he should think seriously on the plane on the way back about our breaking off the summit before the Russians make that move.” (For this diary excerpt, see Nixon, *RN: Memoirs*, page 600)

En route to Washington from Paris on May 2, Kissinger received from his deputy, Alexander Haig, the following message:

"I have just had third meeting with the President this morning. He has asked me to set up a helicopter to meet you at Andrews [Air Force Base] and bring you to Navy Yard where he can discuss results of your meeting over dinner aboard the *Sequoia*. He has added Halde- man and myself to party. Unless he insists otherwise, I will be at Andrews upon your arrival to give you some personal insights on his at- titude as of the time of your arrival.

"During meeting which was just concluded (1:30 p.m. Washing- ton time), the President asked that you think carefully about where we stand on the way back. He is adamant that there must be a two-day strike starting Friday [May 5]. He insists this is necessary for the fol- lowing three reasons:

"(1) It is essential for public opinion here so that he and the ex- ecutive do not look like pitiful giants when all the news is recounting ARVN losses. He is also convinced as a result of polls that the Amer- ican people favor strong bombing actions against Hanoi/Haiphong.

"(2) He is convinced that the strongest message must be conveyed to Hanoi and the Soviet leadership, especially in the face of the in- transigence which you met in Paris.

"(3) He believes that our carrying the war to the North Vietnamese heartland cannot but help reassure what may become a sagging South Vietnamese morale.

"The President asked me to convey to you that the political ques- tion at this point is his growing conviction that we should move to cancel the summit now. He is beginning to believe that there will be no letup in the enemy offensive before the Moscow summit, and he stated that while he recognizes the argument that it keeps the critics off bal- ance to proceed with the summit, on the other hand, toasting Soviet leaders and arriving at agreements while Soviet tanks and wea- pons are fueling a massive offensive against our allies is ludicrous and unthinkable.

"I pointed out to him that while Vietnam remains a crucial issue, it is not an overriding one and that, above all, he must think in terms of assessing the weekend's activity together with your response from the North Vietnamese today. There is some logic to the view that to- day's rigid intransigence is more a reflection of weakness than of strength. I also pointed out that we need to carefully assess all options and not to proceed down a course which will cost us both the summit and not achieve what we are seeking with respect to Southeast Asia. I do not find that the President is rigid in his view as was the case dur- ing your trip to Moscow. He seems much more serious and calculat- ing in assessing the options. I am sure that the thesis which he has out- lined above is not a conviction but rather a 'devil's advocate' position which you will wish to consider most carefully between now and tonight's dinner." (Backchannel message TOHAK 2, May 2; National

Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 22, HAK Trip Files, HAK's Secret Paris Trip, 2 May 72—To/From)

Back in Washington, Kissinger drafted a memorandum to the President on May 2 entitled "Our Options with Moscow in Light of Vietnam." (Ibid., Box 74, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Moscow Summit 1972 (2 of 2)) This memorandum was not sent to Nixon, presumably because Kissinger discussed his recommendations regarding the summit during dinner that evening from 6:35 p.m. to 8:58 p.m. with the President and Haig on the Presidential yacht *Sequoia*. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Notes of the meeting have not been found, but it is described in Kissinger's memoirs. Kissinger noted the course of the discussion following his report on his meeting with the North Vietnamese:

"Nixon was still eager for B-52 strikes against Hanoi and Haiphong starting Friday, May 5. I did not believe a one-shot operation would meet our needs; I urged Nixon to wait until Monday and to give me forty-eight hours to develop some plans for sustained operations. In addition, I knew that General [Creighton] Abrams was opposed: As usual, he wanted to throw all B-52s into the ground battle in the South. How specifically to react was primarily a tactical question. But Nixon, Haig, and I were all agreed that a major military move was called for and that we would decide on its nature within forty-eight hours.

"What concerned Nixon most was the imminent Moscow summit. Haunted by the memory of [former President Dwight] Eisenhower's experience in 1960, he was determined that any cancellation or postponement should come at his initiative. My view was that we had no choice; we would have to run whatever risk was necessary. If Le Duc Tho was right and the collapse was at hand, we would not be able to go to Moscow anyway. We could not fraternize with Soviet leaders while Soviet-made tanks were rolling through the streets of South Vietnamese cities and when Soviet arms had been used decisively against our interests for the second time in six months. I had sought to give Hanoi every opportunity for compromise and the Soviets the maximum incentive to dissociate from Hanoi. That strategy would now have to be put to the test. We would have to break the back of Hanoi's offensive, to re-establish the psychological equilibrium in Indochina. Whether to pre-empt the expected cancellation or leave the decision to the Soviets seemed to me a matter for Nixon's political judgment.

"He was adamant that a cancellation by Moscow would be humiliating for him and politically disastrous; if it had to be, we must cancel the summit ourselves. He ordered preparation of a set of severe retaliatory military measures against the North Vietnamese; since I told him that these could well cause the Soviets to cancel, he instructed me to plan on the assumption that he would preempt Moscow. He would

address the nation early the following week to explain whatever military moves he finally decided on, and announce his cancellation of the summit. SALT would go forward, however; it could be signed in a low-key way at a lower level. And so the fateful *Sequoia* meeting ended.” (Kissinger, *White House Years*, page 1176)

In his diary entry for May 2, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman also noted a conversation he had had with Nixon that day: “We then got into the problem of the Summit. The P[resident] feeling that because of the Paris problem Henry got into yesterday and Henry’s recommendation now, which is that we cancel the Summit, that we’ve got to at least consider doing so.” (*The Haldeman Diaries*, page 451)

184. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Washington, May 2, 1972.

[Omitted here is discussion on Kissinger’s trip to Paris wherein Haig noted that Kissinger had described his meeting with North Vietnamese negotiators as “the least productive on record.” Haig noted that Kissinger would return by 6 p.m. that evening.]

Nixon: Looks like our views and my expectations are a bit different from his. Henry said he thought they’d kill the summit. Not when they’re on the offensive.

Haig: No. When they’re making—

Nixon: No. That’s shows that we’ve got the goddamn Russians—either didn’t try or have no interest. What do you think?

Haig: Well, my view is, sir, that—

Nixon: The Russians aren’t going to help?

Haig: They’re not going to help a goddamn bit.

Nixon: Is that what you felt all along?

Haig: All along.

Nixon: See, that’s been my view. That’s why I was so bearish on Henry’s trip to Moscow. Oh, Henry, despite what he really felt, we’ve

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 717–10. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Haig in the Oval Office from 11:27 a.m. to 12:08 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

got them coming now, they've got their attention, you know, and now, they're going to do something, and so forth.

Haig: I—why the hell should they?

Nixon: I think we've got to take a hard look against the summit right now. What do you think?

Haig: Well, I think we have to rack 'em, and rack 'em good. Then see what the reaction is after the 2-day strike. I don't think they'll cancel it based on this, especially when I—

Nixon: [unclear] wouldn't let them cancel it first?

Haig: No, and then I think if they don't, then we make an assessment in what it's going to take militarily to continue on more slaps up there.

Nixon: Why do you feel that we shouldn't really impose the blockade? [unclear]

Haig: Well, my view is, sir, is that I don't discount the blockade, but I think—

Nixon: You see, assume you've got to break it off with the Russians, Al. The blockade doesn't matter.

Haig: Oh, if you decide to cancel the summit—

Nixon: Yeah.

Haig: —and to go to the limit on this thing in terms of a confrontation, then that's fine, that's one thing. You can risk both at the same time.

Nixon: Yeah.

Haig: Or announce one and do the other concurrently. But I think there's a good chance with the kind of bombing that we're going to do in there, that we may get that port closed without that kind of direct confrontation with them. That you can only assess after we see what happens. We can't bomb their ships, obviously, but we can come pretty close to making that a scary place for them to be. And then see what they do. On the other hand, if after assessing that, we may want to mine it. We may even want to let the South Vietnamese do it. After all—

Nixon: Yeah.

Haig: —they're mining all over the Mekong River and every thing else, and there are U.S. ships and friendly ships that are being menaced by that kind of activity.

Nixon: It will be a big disappointment to Henry if this trip [is cancelled].

Haig: Yes, sir.

Nixon: It's so shocking. See, it really is. Al, I've always had the fear that the Russians would help us, you know, because of something, you know. I had the uneasy feeling, despite what he says, and I'm sure

he was pretty tough and everything, that they still come away with the feeling that, by God, they invite Henry to Moscow [unclear]. So that's why I was,—and I frankly didn't pick out half a loaf. I didn't want to go out and announce the SALT thing myself. I think I was very organized about it myself.

Haig: True.

Nixon: Don't you think so?

Haig: Yes, sir.

Nixon: And I just—it had to be played in a lower key way, as you know. We didn't say that all these things and so forth. We just sent him back with new instructions. But my point is that—my assessment of the Communists is different than Henry's. I do not believe that they will ever react to anything unless there's very, very powerful incentives. I don't think the incentives are powerful enough now. I think they see those sons-of-bitches succeeding.

Haig: That's right. And that's the incentive. And that incentive, in the short-term—

Nixon: That is why Henry was wrong in not wanting the strikes before he went. You don't agree with that? See my point? I think for Henry's meeting to be any success at all, we had to hit those sons-of-bitches before he went. I know what he would say. He'd say, "Well, then, that will risk the meeting." The point is he went there in the end.

Haig: Oh, he had no cards to play at all—

Nixon: He had no cards.

Haig: Short of a collapse.

Nixon: Huh?

Haig: Short of a collapse, and they didn't even give him a chance to do that.

[Omitted here is discussion on likely offensive actions in North Vietnam.]

185. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Chief of Staff (Haldeman)¹

Washington, May 2, 1972.

[Omitted here is discussion of press criticism and initial discussion of the Moscow summit.]

Nixon: Well, Henry got nothing out of them over there² as he expected. I expected it. I understand he's terribly disappointed.

Haldeman: I'm not surprised—

Nixon: Why would he—

Haldeman: —but I think poor old Henry, I think he really thought he was going to get something.

Nixon: Well, he found [unclear exchange] and this and that. I'm going to talk with Haig this afternoon.³ He's quite—

Haldeman: It really did do nothing?

Nixon: He said it was the most unproductive of all meetings he's had. I demanded we overthrow Thieu.

Haldeman: They didn't even serve warm tea.

Nixon: No. But the point is, Bob, we have got to realize that on this whole business of negotiating with North Vietnam, Henry has never been right. Now, I just can't help it, but just have to say that, just a straight out flat conclusion.

Haldeman: Well, Al never thought he was going to get anything.

Nixon: Well, I didn't either.

Haldeman: Al told me before Henry left, he said, "It's probably a good exercise, but I don't think he's—

Nixon: And he's not going to put it out this time, naturally, he—because it would raise hopes that things were going on. We don't want to raise any hopes. You know, that's the line, as I said, that the P.R. types around here. Thank God I talked to Al about it, but I didn't take that line in Dallas. I mean, in San Antonio.

Haldeman: Yeah.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 717–19. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Haldeman in the Oval Office from 12:08 to 12:42 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² Reference to Kissinger's meeting with Le Duc Tho in Paris that day; see Document 183.

³ See Document 186.

Nixon: Because we have, we have to take the hard line now [unclear]. That's all we can do. We have no other choice. And if you start indicating anything about ceasefire or coalition government or anything like that, we're not going to go down that course. Good God almighty, you realize what happens to your negotiating position, the peaceniks and all the rest. They'll be in there harder than anyone. But we'll just keep crackin' in there.

Haldeman: Go ahead with your big ones now?

Nixon: We'll have to. What the hell else do you do?

Haldeman: You've got to.

Nixon: What the hell else do you do? You've got to do it for American public opinion. You've got to do it for South Vietnamese, keep their morale from dropping. And you've got to do it in order to have some bargaining position with the enemy. And also, the thing [unclear] feel strongly about it, I think we better cancel the Russian summit. Now this is the one that just breaks Henry's heart, because—

Haldeman: What about postponing?

Nixon: Well, then they'd cancel.

Haldeman: You could make it look like you were—if you postpone indefinitely, just announce that you will not go to the summit under these conditions.

Nixon: Yeah, yeah.

Haldeman: Don't say, "I'm canceling it." Don't say, "I'll never go." But say, "Under the present conditions I will not go, and therefore I have canceled my plans for the May 27th departure, or whatever it is, May 20th departure, and what becomes of the summit depends on what happens in other places." Then they can come back and say, "We cancel the summit," but you've still taken the initiative.

Nixon: Oh, I have. You see, all of this is very painful, I know, to all of our people around here. It's terribly painful to Henry, because he sees basically our whole foreign thing in great jeopardy; I mean, all of our seeds, and this and that. But, on the other hand, we've got to look at what else we should do. And what else do you do is to, you know, continue to just to whack them out there and have the Russians cancel the summit—that's the worst of both worlds.

Haldeman: If you cancel the summit, you gain something from them. If they cancel it, it hurts you.

Nixon: If they cancel it, it looks like we—peace has suffered a great blow because of our failure in Vietnam, the President's stubbornness and smallness. If, on the other hand, I say I will not go to the summit so long as there is any—so long as we have a massive offensive being supported by the Soviet Union.

Haldeman: And the Shah [of Iran] and all of those other folks too.

Nixon: Well, that's [unclear]—

Haldeman: Yeah.

Nixon: Well, Henry has a point—and Al thinks there's something to this point, he sees more to it than I do—that maybe he's right that to a certain extent you keep the critics off balance as long as they think we may be up to something in the negotiating realm.

Haldeman: Right.

Nixon: He may be right.

Haldeman: Well, I think that's right. But I don't—it keeps that narrow fringe of critics off balance, and it's important to keep them off balance.

Nixon: Yeah.

Haldeman: But that doesn't buy you public support. Your general—

Nixon: I don't think so either.

Haldeman: Your general public support is so—of course, the public wants peace. And that's one problem you've got with canceling the summit—

Nixon: Yeah.

Haldeman: —is that they—

Nixon: Is that they want the Soviet summit.

Haldeman: Because they think that's a peace—not just Vietnam, but other areas. [unclear exchange]

Nixon: They want—they're mixed, they're ambivalent about it, they want peace on the one hand—

Haldeman: That's why postponing it rather than canceling it might put you in a better posture too. If they cancel it, it's they who've destroyed it as part of the peace thing. But you've taken a strong position in saying "I won't sit down with them under the present conditions." Well, the other side of that is what's happening on the military side.

Nixon: Well, I got [unclear]. It's, as usual, it's not—its hairy, but not nearly as frightening as the press indicates. You get the whole thing under Al's—Al, whose great business [unclear], he says just keep it up, that's all. Thieu's going to stand. See, the point of the military thing is this. What the hell else do you do? Get out? Overthrow Thieu? Jesus Christ, you can't do that.

Haldeman: We can't. He can.

Nixon: Oh, yes, as part of the South. But, you know if he just runs out now, suppose he goes off and says I resign, perhaps the whole thing collapses. Your men are in great, great danger to the remaining Americans. No, we'll just hold tight, don't get panicked, you know what I mean?

Haldeman: Yeah.

Nixon: Our people shouldn't be so panicky. These are the way wars are. They go up and down. It's tough; damn hard. And you can't make good news, whatever it is, on the other hand. But there's one thing I'm sure of we need: that strike on the Hanoi–Haiphong area. I think that just adds up on all scores. They don't negotiate now, Christ, how are you going to improve your negotiating position. How are you going to get the—So, we'll work on it.

Haldeman: [unclear]

Nixon: Well, it's my job. But look, we have to face it. Henry's judgment has not been good on this. His judgment has been terrific on most things. He thought he was going to get something out of the Russians when he went over, you know that.

Haldeman: And he didn't get a drop.

Nixon: You remember? And I kept—that's why I sent those god-damned cables. I knew he wasn't getting anything. I said, "For Christ sakes, don't give them what they want unless you get something that we want." Well, it was all right. So, second point, he's—and I told Al this morning, I said, "Al, aren't you glad I didn't make that SALT announcement?" And I sure am. Never wanted to anyway—making the SALT announcement.

Haldeman: Did Henry want you to make it—was he the one that was—

Nixon: Oh, yes.

Haldeman: Wanted you to go on—

Nixon: [unclear] he finally agreed yesterday morning.

Haldeman: [unclear]

Nixon: Yes. Oh, I hit him on the ground that—

Haldeman: Keep it away from Gerry Smith?

Nixon: Oh, also, yeah. I think here he was very personally involved because he wants to be sure that the White House gets the credit and so forth. My point is, Bob, that I don't think there's a hell of a lot of credit in it. I don't think people give much of a shit about SALT. Do you?

Haldeman: Well, it's a plus, but it isn't a—

Nixon: It didn't get any play last [unclear]—

Haldeman: Ron calls it a [unclear]. Nobody's going to change their votes because of it.

Nixon: Yeah, it didn't get much. Particularly when the enemy's not knocking ground over there. No, the press is a big deal here, they're just trying the usual thing, to divide the President from, you know, his hard-line soft-line. And also, they're trying another one to build Henry as the peacemaker if we get it, you see? [unclear] At any rate, it isn't going to come. And the reason they're selecting Henry to beat Bill now is that they've given up on Rogers. That's really what it gets down to.

They know that they can't go to him. They know that Henry isn't going to be able to come. They know that Henry's spoken. That's why—

Haldeman: Henry's so visible.

Nixon: Henry's got to be able to understand this, that when he was—he didn't I must say, to his credit, he didn't talk to the press he wasn't inciting them. But the purpose of raising Kissinger isn't to help us, it's to screw us. Right?

Haldeman: Absolutely.

Nixon: I'd keep Scali going on the other line—that the President's in charge.

[Omitted here is discussion of press criticism. Haldeman and Nixon then discussed draft wording for a statement that unless the offensive was discontinued, the President would delay opening of summit with Soviets. Nixon then suggested that while there was interest in the summit, the American people did not want their President to go to Moscow while South Vietnam was under assault by the North Vietnamese using Soviet supplied guns and tanks.]

Nixon: I can't see, I just can't see—it's just been hard for me to get this through to Henry—I just can't see myself being in Moscow toasting the goddamn Russians, signing the SALT Treaty in the Hall of St. Peter, when Vietnam is under serious attack. Do you agree or not?

Haldeman: I think I do. My basic—I very, totally do.

Nixon: [unclear exchange]

Haldeman: I'm just trying to raise the other side of this. I don't know how you argue the other side. I don't see how you can argue—

Nixon: Well, can you compose the question, or a quick 500-word—500-sample—that we can run with immediately. You can do that, can't you?

Haldeman: Yeah.

Nixon: What I'd like to do is to say is that "in view of the continued Communist invasion of South Vietnam, which is supported by massive Soviet aid and military equipment, some," and I'm not thinking how to word it, some, or do you believe the President should—no, as you know, the President is scheduled go to the Soviet Union for a summit meeting. So, did you get that—but should he postpone the—his—meeting with the Soviet leaders until after the offensive—unless the offensive is discontinued. In other words, try to get it in the way, unless the offensive is discontinued, there are some that say that unless the offensive is discontinued, the President should refuse—should cancel—don't say postpone or postponed, don't give them several, don't give them 18 questions, in other words make it one—his visit to the Soviet Union, or should not go forward with or should delay—to postpone his visit to the Soviet Union until the summit is—You're go-

ing to word those things—will you try to get some wording out like that? Let's just get a feeling of what kind of public opinion we're faced with on that, see? I have a feeling myself that despite their great interest in having a summit, the people still don't want their President to go there when we're under a hell of an assault from Soviet guns and tanks. See my point?

Haldeman: Yup.

Nixon: Now, you just put it very succinctly. Do you believe the President should cancel his—postpone—his meeting with the Soviets, cancel it until—

Haldeman: That's it. Cancel until the offensive—

Nixon: Cancel it until the offensive is discontinued. The summit meeting with the Soviet leaders—until the offensive in Vietnam is stopped or discontinued or something like that. Or, do you believe he should go forward with his meeting with the Soviet leaders, regardless of the fact that even as the offensive in Vietnam continues. We're going to be in the position, in my view—this is the second week, we don't get there until the 22nd—in other words, we've got 3 weeks; we're going to be in a position then when the offensive will have frankly run its course, and they will not have succeeded. I still think that's the case. When I say not succeeded, they will have succeeded in the public's mind in many ways, and part of the Second Corps. But any person that knows that a goddamn thing about the country knows that all that matters in Vietnam are Third and Fourth Corps. That's where the people are. Anyway, that's the way it is. You did get your poll off, didn't you—the poll up to the Congress, and so forth?

Haldeman: Yes, sure did. With a lot of background.

Nixon: [unclear]

Haldeman: I didn't see any. Well that's what I wanted. We got it out yesterday. [unclear] I did that.

Nixon: [unclear] The purpose of this is really to affect our own people's morale, and so forth. You see? I certainly would like to have some public record but I don't think we're going to get it. But everyone—Colson's group knows the importance of it. Now that's something that should be played, you understand? That's not Polyannish.

Haldeman: That's right. That's public opinion. That's what people—

Nixon: That's right. You see, putting out the polls, it's not taking the Pollyannaish line. It's should we kick these bastards or not.

Haldeman: That's right.

Nixon: So that's a pretty good one.

[Omitted here is a discussion of SALT and Vietnam.]

186. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Washington, May 2, 1972.

[Omitted here is discussion of Kissinger's impending return from meeting with the North Vietnamese in Paris and of the battle for the city of Hue in South Vietnam.]

Nixon: The thing that I'm—I think Al we've got to just awfully toughen up to, is this summit thing.

Haig: I see.

Nixon: You see we only have about 2 weeks before we have to leave, right?

Haig: And also, I, I don't share Henry's judgment that the Hue battle is going to be 10 days before it develops. I think it is going to develop very quickly.

Nixon: Um-hmm. You think we're going to have a battle for Hue?

Haig: Yes, sir.

Nixon: Do you think—Well, it may be held, don't you think? Or it may be lost, what do you think?

Haig: If they have the forces to do it—

Nixon: To hold it?

Haig: To hold—

Nixon: To hold it or to lose it, or both?

Haig: Well, to hold it. I don't know whether they have the will to hold it. That's the big question. If the enemy follows up very, very quickly, and puts a lot of pressure on them.

Nixon: Well, one thing about Hue, I know that it is a hell of a symbol because of being the old capital and all that sort of thing. But we have to remember, the damn place was half taken over in '68. In other words, it's been fought over before.

Haig: Oh, yes, it has.

Nixon: I'm not trying to be Pollyannaish about it—[unclear exchange]

Haig: No, it wouldn't be a strategic tragedy.

Nixon: That's about what I mean. What is really the place is the Third and Fourth Corps. But then you come to this. How can you

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 717–20. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Haig in the Oval Office from 12:42 to 1:20 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

possibly, how can you possibly go to the Soviet Union and toast to Brezhnev and Kosygin and sign a SALT agreement in the Great Hall of St. Peter when Russian tanks and guns are kicking the hell out of our allies in Vietnam? Now that's—I ask you, how in the hell can you do it?

Haig: It's impossible to do if there's that kind of a decisive battle still underway.

Nixon: Well, shouldn't we then—Frankly, I think we should tell Henry tonight that—I don't know, just mention the fact that I want him to think about this on the way back, that I have a view of the reaction he's had that we will of course go through, go forward with a strike. It will be a 2-day strike however, not—rather than, rather than one on Friday and rather than one on Monday. Second, that I think the strike is necessary for three reasons: they issued a memo a month earlier by the domestic opinion in the United States—to have to, at least, to have some bargaining position with the Vietnamese and to a lesser extent the Soviets. And also for the giving the South Vietnamese some—a shot in the arm at a time when their morale desperately needs it. However, the critical question that we must discuss tonight is my growing conviction—use those terms—that we should move to cancel the summit. Now, I do not anticipate that there will be any significant change at any level in the enemy's activities before going to Moscow. And I cannot—and while I recognize the argument that going to the summit keeps the, keeps our critics off balance, and that canceling it will give them ammunition, on the other side of the coin, going to the summit, toasting the Russians, having signed an agreement with them at a time that they are, that their tanks and weapons are fueling a massive offensive against our allies, our ally, I think is simply unthinkable. There's no good choice, I realize. But I just wonder what you think, Al. I mean, I think that what we have to realize is that Henry's judgment has been really fantastically good on so many things—I mean, the China initiative, playing of China against the Soviet Union, and so many other things—but I think we have to realize that his judgment with regard to negotiations with the North Vietnamese has been faulty. Throughout he's always been hopeful, and he's always read more into it than was there. A lot of people have been wrong about it. In any event, it's his folly. Now, I don't think we have any good choice, and I, and the only choice we've got is to frankly see it through on the military side. Now, of course, seeing it through on the military side assumes that if we are to be successful and that the South Vietnamese will not collapse. But also, in order that—so we agree. But on the other hand—what we do can perhaps make the difference in determining whether they do collapse or not, because the will—I really think they get a hell of a shot in the arm by our stronger position against the enemy, in the enemy's heartland. And that brings me to

the blockade thing. I mean, we'll blockade the sons-of-bitches, and that'll be—it's a terrible risk, I know.

Haig: It's a risk. It's a terrible risk in two senses. One is it's going to be a political price—

Nixon: Sure.

Haig: And two is, is it going to be decisive?

Nixon: Two—if it will work. If it's going to work, to hell with the political price. You know what I mean? That's all, that's all it is. If it isn't going to work, it isn't worth doing. We can huff and puff all we want, but goddamn it, if its going to fail, that's what I mean.

Haig: Well, that's what I'm afraid of. That's my major concern.

Nixon: What you mean is, your concern is that we'll fail not because we fail in our blockade or our air but because the South Vietnamese will go out from under us. Is that it?

Haig: Well, a combination of two things. One is, that they have enough supplies there to keep them going through a critical period. It may be necessary to get these [unclear]

Nixon: In the end. Right.

Haig: And that there are alternative means for them, if the Chinese want to step in.

Nixon: All right, that's the argument against the blockade. What is the argument against the bombing? Not the same, is it?

Haig: No, I—

Nixon: That should be—

Haig: I don't have one there. I think, I think the bombing is not going to be decisive. But it plays another card in terms of Soviet risks in involvement, which they must take seriously. And then we'll have to assess their reaction. It's quite obvious that they've had no luck with Hanoi, if they've tried, and I'm not sure that they did.

Nixon: You're really not sure that they did or not?

Haig: No.

Nixon: I, I've never—I think that they said, in that wire to Henry. I'll never forget what Brosio said to me 20 years ago, he said that the Russians are the biggest liars, the best actors.

Haig: It's a simple calculus to me. What is worth more to them? To humiliate the United States? To risk your re-election—a man that they know is tough and is not going to be taken in by them? Or to go on and quote "save Brezhnev's policies first in Europe"—the Berlin treaties and all that go with it? And—

Nixon: And the SALT agreement. [unclear exchange] And all that with China—that they, rather than China, have the—the China thing is in the background [unclear exchange]. But all of those are basically intangibles, aren't they, comparatively?

Haig: Well, they're not necessarily sacrificed as a result of going the route that they're going. They're all reconstructable within a 2- or 3-year period.

Nixon: Somebody else. And much easier.

Haig: And much easier. [pause] Well, quite frankly, if I were in Moscow, and I were driven by the convictions that I think they're driven by, I'd screw us. [pause] That tells you what [unclear] I think, but that's the inclination I have. I think we've seen nothing new to cause us to think otherwise. I think we have to—Then you've got another set of circumstances that follow that is do you, do we believe that the whole thing is that important to them that they'll stand up and break the summit and try to squeeze us in other places if we take this strong stand. That's even a cloudier picture.

Nixon: You mean like Berlin?

Haig: Yes, sir.

Nixon: Or Cuba?

Haig: Cuba, which they've already started.

Nixon: What are they doing there?

Haig: They've got a nuclear-capable submarine in Cuban waters now. So they've started there. Their [unclear]—

Nixon: Of course the other side of the coin which Henry will argue very strongly is that we shouldn't sink our whole foreign policy because of Vietnam.

Haig: That's right. And it's a good argument.

Nixon: It is a good argument.

Haig: It's an argument that oughtn't to be taken lightly.

Nixon: But how in the hell, how in the hell can you avoid it? How in the hell—

Haig: The question is—

Nixon: I don't see any way out.

Haig: The question is what will sink it more decisively.

Nixon: Yeah, but let's look at Vietnam for just a moment. How in the hell, how do you see any other way out? I mean, Christ, they've surrendered. We can't go in [unclear]. What did you have in mind on that?

Haig: I don't see any solution, unfortunately. If they hold the adamant position to overthrow Thieu, set a date, it just seems to me that that's something that would kill them here, domestically, internationally—

Nixon: Oh, internationally too. Forget the goddamn domestic thing. We'll handle that. I mean, that, that is the most important thing anyway. But internationally, Al, what the hell would the United States be if we overthrow Thieu and set a date? What in the hell would we be?

Haig: You know, they [unclear] about the dominoes. But Thailand would be gone in 6 months to a year, Cambodia, Laos.

Nixon: Indonesia.

Haig: Indonesia would be next.

Nixon: Yeah. No question. And Singapore, Malaysia, the [Taiwan] Straits, you're goddamn right it would go. It would strike terror in the hearts of the Koreans. And frankly, let's face it, in the Mid-East, things would heat up.

Haig: Well, I think that's liable to happen in any event. That's another thing we better keep our eye on. Then again, the kind of stand we take here is going to have an impact on that. It certainly requires, in the short term, a strong, solid crack.

Nixon: Yeah.

Haig: Which may or may not be enough.

Nixon: Yeah, which may—that's right, maybe not.

Haig: I think we'd be deluding ourselves if we think a 2-day strike on Hanoi and Haiphong is going to change their determination.

Nixon: I agree. I agree. On the other hand, it does, to a certain extent, help us in all of these three areas. But I think—

Haig: It does.

Nixon: And particularly on the bargaining position. You've got none now; you might have some later. I don't know. I don't know, but you might. That's the point, right?

Haig: That's exactly right. But you can't afford not to do it. It will help, but it's not going to be decisive. Now, it just might be, but my judgment would be no, especially if they continue to maintain momentum here and knock off Hue. If that happens, I'm more inclined to think they are going to keep trying to press at any cost while they've got the enemy—their enemy—reeling a bit.

Nixon: Right. Well, the thing—The difference between the two armies is quite clear. They're willing to do by whatever means to sacrifice every goddamned North Vietnamese, and the South Vietnamese just don't want to pay the price.

Haig: They don't want to pay the price. [long pause] See, I think that if they would just stand there and fight, and bring this air in, I know damn well they could hold.

Nixon: Sure.

Haig: I just know it.

[Omitted here is discussion regarding tactical operations and the bombing in Vietnam.]

Haig: We've got to have a greater sense of urgency to bolster these little guys up. They need that bolstering.

Nixon: Well, I still come back to the fact that this goddamn strike will help in that respect, too.

Haig: It will help.

Nixon: I mean, their morale [unclear] this massive strike on the North. [unclear] The first one did. Yeah.

Haig: It was very evident to me, every place I went, they were riding high. And it helped the central government, because Thieu must now be at the point where he is going to start unraveling.

Nixon: Sure.

[long pause]

Haig: I think Henry does have to think about this very, very carefully.

Nixon: The summit?

Haig: Yes, sir.

Nixon: Yeah, yeah.

Haig: I don't think we should do it precipitously, because—

Nixon: Oh no, no, no—

Haig: —I think we won't know for a few days.

Nixon: But I think we need to think about it because we can't—shit, we can't just—

Haig: If you do it, it ought to be in terms of just leveling Hanoi and Haiphong and not just stopping with 2 days.

Nixon: Just continue it?

Haig: No. Make an assessment of the 2 days and then start.

Nixon: Right.

Haig: And then just keep digging on. As long as they're keeping the heat on, we keep it on.

Nixon: Yeah. In other words, we continue to hammer that area.

Haig: And if you ever make that decision, I think you have to have a concurrent decision that the summit is off, because I don't think that they can take that head in terms of summitry.

[Omitted here is additional discussion on bombing in North Vietnam.]

Haig: So there is considerable Soviet restraint—fear of you; fear of what you might do.

Nixon: I think that may be so—that Henry may be right. It may be that Brezhnev does want the summit.

Haig: I think he does. I don't think that they meant leaving out one. They've done things there like—

[unclear exchange]

Nixon: They've taken a lot from us.

Haig: They really have in the last 3 months.

Nixon: We have hit them, hit their—the fact that they are supplying, and I hit them publicly in the Canadian Congress, and Parliament, and a hell of a lot of other places, you know. We did it in our speeches—Rogers, Laird, and all the rest.

Haig: And they've been extremely restrained about building up international opinion against the bombing of the North. They just haven't said very much. So there's no question that's where they're going, and that's the way they'd like to go, and we can't take that lightly. That's why I think we have to plan worst case/best case/medium case, having to go through it, assess it as we can very, very carefully, because they'll scream, and we may get some reaction there that will be indicative of what we should do next. [pause] In the final analysis, it's really to keep these little guys on the ground there standing and fighting—

Nixon: That's right. It always is; it's always that way. We know that. [unclear] somewhere or others, as they get to the wall—their backs to the wall, I just think that they're going to face a hell of a choice themselves. If they fight, they're going to be taken over, and there will be a hell of a bloodbath, correct?

Haig: Oh, I don't doubt that. It's started in every area they've taken over.

Nixon: Has it?

Haig: And it's [unclear]—the shooting of, you know, like public officials. I mean police RF/PF [Regional Forces/Provincial Forces] units just go. And that's the way they operate.

Nixon: Well, they operate through terror. All the Communists do, for Christ's sake. They've done it in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, East Germany, right? Goddamn it, how the hell do these bastards get in charge in the world, or the world they have? The Chinese have done it. It's brutality, fear—it's why so much is on the line.

Haig: Well, I don't know.

Nixon: Oh, Henry can make a powerful case. Well we just can't let Vietnam bring down a second President. But there are worse things, worse things.

Haig: Well, what you've got to do is what's needed, because there isn't very much worse, given the options.

Nixon: There is what?

Haig: There isn't much worse than that—in this country.

Nixon: Much worse, what do you mean?

Haig: Than the thought of your not being here.

Nixon: You mean that's worse?

Haig: That is. That, to me, is a vital national interest when you consider the alternative.

Nixon: So, you say that you'd find a graceful way to get out of Vietnam. Win the election. You'd do it? Is that what you'd say? And live to fight another day?

Haig: Mm-hmm.

Nixon: Well that's true. We can't find a graceful way out. That's the point.

Haig: [unclear exchange] the difference.

Nixon: Hell—

Haig: [unclear]

Nixon: [unclear exchange] this trip. Hell, Christ, after he went there, we should just tell them to kiss our ass—kiss their ass, right? [pause] After the Soviet [pause] Do you think Porter should walk out Thursday?² Is that the plan?

Haig: If he just walks out he makes a blast. He's got—Henry's given him talking points, we've sent him through the Department. He doesn't need too much urging anyhow. He's very good. He'll walk out, and then on Friday afternoon—it's good that we do it that way, otherwise it would look loaded if we had gone Thursday.

[Omitted here is further discussion on the enemy offensive inside Vietnam and the South Vietnamese response to it and Kissinger's return to Washington.]

² May 4.

187. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 3, 1972.

[Omitted here is a discussion between the President and Kissinger regarding what they perceived as Secretary of State Rogers' efforts to get credit for SALT, especially his effort to assert that there was a freeze on nuclear submarines. Both participants assessed that Rogers was trying possibly to derail the negotiations. Regarding the talks with the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 718–9. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 10:59 to 12:11 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

North Vietnamese, Kissinger recommended to the President a walk-out in protest. He contended that the North Vietnamese had given him a weak proposal in Paris the day before in order to prolong the negotiating process. Kissinger noted that he had told them to stop playing games and asserted the U.S. Government's right to defend its position. Kissinger concluded that continuing with the plenary meetings would be interpreted as "a very weak move."]

Nixon: Let me analyze this thing on the summit, and so forth, and particularly in view of the Porter thing. You're absolutely right that anything less than walking out is a weak move. What I would like to see is and we can say, which does not indicate the total breakdown and thereby lack of hope on the negotiating front. Now, you and I know there's no hope at all for tomorrow.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: On the other hand, we have a hell of a lot of people being used on this particular point. You've made this point often.

[Omitted here is further discussion where Nixon noted that such a walkout would be met with great enthusiasm by the hawks, but would turn loose critics in the Senate and other matters.]

Nixon: Now, what we have to realize is that in terms of the domestic front, that this kind of a move, and I want to put it in the context of the bombing and the summit thing, this kind of a move can have a good short-range effect—the walkout. In the long-range, we have to consider it in the context with what our plans are and what effect it'll have. Now let's look at the summit. As I see the summit, and of course I'm the strongest proponent of not making the summit hostage to Vietnam or Vietnam to the summit, anyway, the cancellation of the summit, and incidentally, there can't be any halfway. We can say that we are going to postpone or that we aren't going to go at this time or that we'll be glad to go at a later time when the offensive is stopped, or this, that, or the other thing, and so forth—I'm just trying to think of all of the language that we could work up. First, analyzing it from the foreign standpoint, it will have a beneficial impact, as you pointed out last night on Thieu. It will have a—certainly some shock effect on Hanoi. It will have some effect on the Russians, and more on that in a moment.

The question arises, what effect does it have here? The initial effect would be, in my opinion, extremely favorable. The greatest President puts everything on the line, stands up to the Russians, and so forth. However, in getting the domestic thing out of the way first, because it does have some bearing, we have to realize, that once we have canceled the summit, that then we will unleash without any question, not simply to cause, but we will unleash again particularly our attacks on Senators and Congressmen who are presently off-balance; one,

because the summit is coming, and two, because they think that something is going on, which you and I know is poppycock. And you are correct, certainly, in your suggestion to the Soviets, [that] if we cancel the summit, then we get turned around. Their reaction could be one of two things. It could present a problem. Their reaction, however, might be to say, "Well, the conference got thrown down, something was lost, in spite of the fact that the President said we'll negotiate on bilateral issues and so forth." That could come at a later time. They could unleash their rather massive propaganda efforts abroad and here in this country. And so, what would happen is that over a period of time, the time that this action were taken, that the immediate—I'm speaking now of the effect at home—the immediate effect at home would very substantially erode. It would be favorable, very favorable, at the beginning, and then it would erode, and it would erode for a variety of reasons. It would erode because of course the attack on our enemies which we must expect, which would be unleashed [unclear] would be off balance. It would erode because the hopes for, you know, peace and so forth, would be knocked down. And it would erode also because there would be—we would have to participate in massive attack [unclear] on the ground on the idea that the so-called Nixon foreign policy had collapsed and collapsed because of our insistence on seeing the Vietnam war through to an honorable conclusion. That would be the argument that they would make. And, we on our side, that of course it would be argued tremendously that what they were doing, as I found out last night, that we have to put them right into the arms of the Soviets, the Soviets responsible for this war, who continues to supply them arms and supplies at the present time.

Now, let's come to the other point. At the heart of the matter is what effect the cancellation of the summit would have on the outcome of the war itself. If the cancellation of the summit very substantially improves a chance for a favorable outcome in Vietnam, that is a decisive factor. If, on the other hand, the cancellation of the summit has only a marginal effect in that respect, and would of course [mean] the bombing has a marginal effect, then we have to look at it another way, and that way would be along this line. If we are looking at a situation here where over a period of three years we have built in a masterful way a new foreign policy. The China game, the Soviet game, its a very big game. You and I both know that it's a very difficult operation. The Soviets have been liars and bastards and thugs, and so forth and so on. We also know that at the present time we've got some American public opinion developing along that line.

However, if we put it in perspective, I think we have to realize that if we're looking at the effect, the effect on the Democratic Convention coming up July, and we're looking at the election coming up in November, at the effect on the election, I think that cold-bloodedly

we have to say this. First, the heart of the matter is Vietnam and how it comes out. If Vietnam comes out badly, the election is very seriously jeopardized anyway. However, if Vietnam comes out badly, then we also cancel the summit. In other words, if we cancel the summit and if it still comes out badly, the election would certainly be down the tube, something which Haig and yourself would say would be a very tragic thing. Because it would mean we would not live to fight another day. God knows it, we need to, there's so much that needs to be done. You hear this military briefing and you realize that our military has let us down—and that's just one. But you need a new foreign policy, and you need a new military policy, and so forth, and it's not going to be done by any successor, but so much for that.

If, on the other hand, canceling the summit is the only and critical factor, which may save the situation in Vietnam [unclear], because if the situation in Vietnam is saved, then canceling the summit will look good. I mean, [unclear] even though we will after our first [unclear] and then our erosion will come back up again. Now, there's one other equation to throw into this. If canceling of the summit, now if we see that the South Vietnamese situation is—if our cold-blooded analysis is, and we cannot make that now, I realize that you use the term "50-50", that's my guess. I mean it's half and half, maybe a little better than that, that they'll survive, because I think they're suffering a hell of a lot more than we have any reason to believe, but we shall see. If the South Vietnamese survive, then—I mean do not survive—then having the summit, even under very difficult circumstances, but having it where we say Vietnam will be at the top of the agenda, will have a bad effect.

Kissinger: That is not a possibility to put Vietnam on the top of the agenda. I mean, there'll be many issues we'll have to juggle.

Nixon: All right. But having a summit without Vietnam at least as a marginal, is a marginal plus, instead of being a very substantial thing in the long run. That's what we'll have to face—I'm speaking now of the domestic side. So that brings me back to the other option. The other option is to react as we had originally planned, with our 2-day strike, and see whether the Russians go forward, whether they stress—they may move to cancel, which they might. The 2-day strike thing certainly would have at first great support in this country. Again, it would give some encouragement to the South Vietnamese, give some pause to the Russians, and some pause to Hanoi. The argument you made last night is a very strong one, to the effect that, well, it would look like an act of desperation, to the effect that Hue is being threatened, and so forth and so on. Well, maybe so, maybe the first strike will look that way too. But we all know at the present time the public temper will support that kind of a strike we want to look at. So we have to weigh that. So it really comes down to this. Whether we really honestly feel that canceling the summit could have—could be—a decisive factor or even

a substantial factor in resolving the situation in Vietnam. On that point, I have grave doubts. And if that is true, then the case for it isn't as strong as we thought it was last night. As far as the strike in the North is concerned, I have serious doubts whether that will have great effect on the situation in Vietnam. It will have some. But we all know that we know it's a choice between one of two things: either we hit the North for 2 days or we cancel the summit. We have no other options. [unclear exchange]

Kissinger: And hitting the [unclear] of the North for 2 days may cancel the summit.

Nixon: Oh, I understand that.

Kissinger: And they may cancel it.

Nixon: I know, I know.

Kissinger: And then all of the crap that you mentioned, maybe even more—

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: Coming against you. I mean every argument that you made on canceling the summit wouldn't fly then even more because it would tie Vietnam even more intricately to it, and you wouldn't be able to get your story out.

Nixon: It's a risk, it's a risk.

Kissinger: That's right. And I think there'd be a slightly better than 50–50 chance that they would cancel the summit, which is why I moved to the point that we should postpone it now. Nobody can present any of these positions to you with the argument that they will save the situation in South Vietnam, because I can't say that they will. Nothing may. Canceling the summit may not, certainly may not. But in this situation, I'm thinking of the Presidency, thinking of your position in history, and of the position of the country in the long-term. If you go to Moscow without having done anything, it will be a total disaster. We can make it look good, we can put on an act, but all the things that will be needed to be put on, that the Russians will then despise us. We will have lost all credibility.

Nixon: Not doing anything. Will—[unclear]

Kissinger: No, I know. I just keep going up the ladder.

Nixon: Yeah. Fine. So that's out of the question?

Kissinger: That I don't see how we can do. And the cramming of all that machinery, after reading them your dispatches. But even without it—secondly, for the United States, I mean, what the Russians have done systematically since last October is put it to us. And they've said you can have your summit, and at the same time we're going to screw you. Now we go in on great principles of coexistence. And I think the feeling of uneasiness among—I'm not even worried now about Vietnam,

the fact that Russian arms have run us out of Vietnam and the President goes to Moscow and signs principles of coexistence, gives them credit, and agrees with them to screw one of his allies in the Middle East. Now, you know that I'm in favor, hell, we've got the principles all negotiated, and the trade is all done, and the Middle East one we can do, and in fact we're prepared to do that too. But suppose you do all these three things after India–Pakistan and Southeast Asia, and the fact that the bastards have not done one goddamn thing for us ever.

Nixon: They have not.

Kissinger: And I must say objectively that this is a sign of great weakness, which will encourage them. Your great strength in foreign policy is your toughness. And your great standing abroad is due to the fact that you've gone your way. Now you could say you could go to the summit, go through with it, don't sign these principles, don't give them credit, and don't make a deal on the Middle East. Well, then, we'll have a pretty lousy summit. Now to get out of the summit what you want, you have to come back and be able to talk about peace. And about having made tremendous strides towards peace, in other words, you give the Soviets a certificate of good conduct. Now, if we can limit South Vietnam while doing all of this that would be great. That'd be the best of all the worlds.

Nixon: But that you can't unfortunately know in time.

Kissinger: Well if you are in Russia miles away and everything is integrated, there's just no way of making it look good.

Nixon: Correct. Our problem, of course. I just wanted to be sure you considered all those.

Kissinger: I, Mr. President, I—God, we suffered and anguished to get to this point. So they may give us an answer that enables us to do it.

Nixon: Are you going to get an answer?

Kissinger: Oh, yeah, there'll be an answer. But they may give us a very threatening answer because in a way they're cornered too. This letter is couched in terms that suggests we're going to attack North Vietnam but there's no threat to the Soviet summit involved here. But they may figure that since that what we may do they may pre-empt us and cancel it.

Nixon: Okay. If we cancel the summit, then follow with massive attacks on the North occur.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Am I right?

Kissinger: That would be my view. And we'd have to go right to the country and we'd have to put it to the presses.

[Omitted here is discussion of press reaction and Kissinger's media contacts and briefings.]

Kissinger: As between whether we postpone the summit or do the 2-day strike, we don't have to decide that.

Nixon: Well, can we, I mean, have we got 24 hours for them to come back?

Kissinger: Oh, yes. We have more than that.

Nixon: Oh, that much? Oh, yes, yes. They won't pull the 2-day strike off until Saturday.²

Kissinger: I don't think—I have never had the same sense of urgency about the 2-day strike that others have had because Hanoi and Haiphong aren't going to go away. You—

Nixon: Then, in other words, we shouldn't do it over the weekend anyway.

Kissinger: Well, I think we should do it fairly soon if we're going to do it. There's something to be said for not doing it on Saturday, so that it doesn't catch the weekly news magazines. But we can do it Sunday, Sunday and Monday.

Nixon: Why don't you analyze for me what you think of it so that I get—just take a minute as to what you think, we've gone through the summit thing, what the 2-day strike thing does. First, I don't need to go in—I know, for instance the Soviets canceling the summit. Fine. Let's get that out of the way. What does it do in terms of the war? It has some benefits.

Kissinger: Well, the 2-day strike has a number of military benefits. They're not in themselves decisive but when a country, especially as thin as they are now, anything can impede—they have, for example, changed their whole pattern of unloading gasoline in Haiphong as a result of the other strikes. Secondly, it helps Hanoi that you may just go crazy and press too hard. Thirdly, it really puts it to the Russians in the sense that you are saying all right, you cancel the summit if you want to and leave the choice up to them. Now there's a certain—so, in other words, you shouldn't leave the decision of canceling the summit to them, which isn't easy for them. We had an intercept of a Brezhnev conversation with Gus Hall in which he praises to Hall that he admires you very much and in fact gives a pretty objective account of—but, I repeat how eager they are for the summit; that they are under a lot of pressure from other Communist parties to cancel it. Now they'd love to—the closer to your arrival in Moscow that you do the 2-day strike the tougher it is for them. And, you see, the thing that worries me so much about the visit is for you to give them credit while their trucks and guns—

Nixon: Never.

² May 6

Kissinger: But if you don't give them credit—

Nixon: [unclear] the summit.

Kissinger: They're going to go—

Nixon: And also let's face it, even signing the SALT agreement is goddamn tough in the light of this—or any agreement with them of—I don't understand it. I'm the one who had grave doubts about the summit—

Kissinger: And to sign the common principles—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: God. You know it's a tragedy. We had a tremendous breakthrough all along this front. We worked 3 years to get it. And next to you, I'm the one most reluctant to give it up. And to give us a month of relative peace and quiet. But—

Nixon: Which it would—

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: —add to the summit.

Kissinger: No question. Would do what—

Nixon: While we're there, and for a week afterwards or 2 weeks afterwards. And also it would calm me. I have to realize the end of the summit comes at a time when the fighting in South Vietnam, one way or another, it's going to be escalating. I mean weather or a lot of other factors. Well, can we take our 24 hours now?

Kissinger: That we can, but we don't have to make a decision.

[Omitted here is discussion relating to Vietnam and measures to counteract enemy offensive, as well as wording for a speech on Vietnam, summit cancellation and strikes in North Vietnam.]

Kissinger: See, these principles, and trade, and Middle East, from a strong President will be—China was great, because no one questioned that you were tough and strong.

Nixon: Correct.

Kissinger: But you weren't getting run out of Vietnam at that time. And not by Chinese equipment.

Nixon: Yeah. The other thing I was going to say. Look, Henry, that argument has sold me a thousand percent. I'm just trying to think of—I'm trying to think of this. I'm trying to think also that really the argument that is made that [unclear] the canceling of the summit in and of itself would be a good thing clearly apart from its effect on Vietnam. So, basically, what we have to realize is if we get run out of Vietnam, we're down the tubes. Let's face it. You understand?

Kissinger: With or without the summit?

Nixon: A chance to save it if we have the summit. A little marginal, but it's so marginal it doesn't make any difference to me. But my

point is, though, that the—with the summit, by canceling the summit, you could [unclear] effect on keeping the morale in Vietnam, which I gather you don't think it really has. Don't know it. But I think the main point—what you're really getting to—is that the summit in-and-of itself now isn't a good idea in view of the situation in Vietnam.

Kissinger: That's right. I think it's very dangerous.

Nixon: That's the point. That's the thing that's worried me. Like I've said, the tipping of glasses and that sort of thing, at this point, with Russian tanks in there.

Kissinger: It's not a strong sign, tipping of glasses, and I look at this hall, and all this while Russian tanks are running around in Vietnam. I would say that—

Nixon: Well, let's take a minute before you [unclear]. So the scenario goes like this. We cancel the summit. And then, Henry, we do these bombings on Hanoi and Haiphong.

Kissinger: Oh, yeah. That we do anyway.

Nixon: Right. And then Thieu still loses, and what happens? Well, it's just one of those things, isn't it?

Kissinger: We'll then we take it the other way. Supposing you bomb Hanoi and Haiphong and they cancel the summit.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: Then at least you've maintained your position and you just keep going anti-Communist and accuse your opponents of first having screwed up the peace talks.

Nixon: Yeah, I set that in motion with the [leadership] today. I said that the responsibility—

Kissinger: And they made it inevitable that the thing collapsed and now they want to sell out to the Russians. I mean, you'll probably lose—you may well lose the election then.

Nixon: But I might not.

Kissinger: But you might not.

Nixon: Well, I just think we have to see what we're up to. So you get back to Vietnam, again, don't you, and their—could I ask one other thing? The situation in the South—generally speaking, there is not a very substantial opposition to Thieu and [unclear]. Moorer says, said something about Big Minh.³

Kissinger: Oh, yeah, Big Minh is trying to organize and get himself into a reserve position. And they'll all begin to do it if the situation gets worse.

³ Duong Van Minh, retired ARVN General and former South Vietnamese leader.

Nixon: What does that do to us? Well—

Kissinger: Well, I consider—I tell you, if they had made any sort of proposition yesterday, I don't—I consider Thieu expendable.

Nixon: I agree.

Kissinger: That isn't the problem.

Nixon: No, what they're asking for is to—is to not just replace him. They want to impose conditions that would lead to a Communist government.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: I don't know.

Kissinger: That's the game plan they're playing.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: They want to—

Nixon: Can I ask this question on the timing of the cancellation of the summit. Is it worth considering risk taking and all that—to have him do this then have the bombing go forward—no, no, not have the bombing to go forward; I mean, I think it's contingent to fight the battle in the South, and we're very best to—and to have the summit cancellation at the end of next week rather than at the beginning. Just think of that.

Kissinger: What's the advantage of that?

Nixon: The advantage of it is it gives us more time to assess whether Vietnam might survive. Maybe we won't know any more than now. You see my point? I am greatly affected by—if we have some feelers.

Kissinger: The other problem though is supposing Hue has fallen by the end of next week, then it will look like especially a reaction to a defeat.

Nixon: I think it's going to look that way anyway. I mean, they have played the [unclear] so heavily, Henry, that I mean we didn't have any illusions about the perpetual reaction to a defeat. So, the fall of Hue I don't think is going to make much difference. Would you not agree?

Kissinger: I think, you know, it doesn't have to be Monday. It can be Tuesday. I think that if we're going to cancel that we better do it early rather than late. And we won't know a hell of a lot.

Nixon: Well, that's the answer then. We won't know a hell of a lot.

Kissinger: We know we'll lose Kontum. See, supposing it gets all unstuck, I don't see how you can go to Russia then, in my view. But I—

Nixon: I couldn't agree more.

Kissinger: But, you know, the other argument you could use it to divert attention from the defeat.

Nixon: You go to Russia then, what the hell can you agree on? That's the point. You can't agree to give credits; you can't agree to—

Kissinger: See, the whole idea, see, of agreeing, of having you sign health agreements, science agreements—what do the Russians want at the summit? They want to show that you and Brezhnev are ordering the world. Now, when you do it as equals, it's risky enough because it's going to hurt us enormously in Europe, it's going to hurt us with the Chinese. But the risk is worth taking under the assumption that you can recover from it in the next election—after the next election.

Nixon: By turning hard.

Kissinger: By turning hard. And that's how I'd justify it. But basically Shakespeare isn't wrong in his assessment of what this *détente* is doing to our allies. Now, there's strong sentiment that somebody to whom you can say look how you stood in all these crises. But its somebody who's been humiliated or at least can be challenged in South Asia by the Russians, and then the most vital area where we have 50,000—I mean vital from the point of view of national sensitivities, not about strategic interest—and he still does it.

Nixon: That's right. That's it.

Kissinger: That's something I think, Mr. President, that's going to be hard to recover from.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: And who is then going to be left to respect you? I mean, I shouldn't talk this way, but I mean, the hawks?

Nixon: Not likely.

Kissinger: The doves?

Nixon: Nah.

Kissinger: A strong President—the reason—

Nixon: The real heart of the question, and it's good to talk it out this way, the real heart of the question is what I'm getting at really isn't about Vietnam, because if it were, we'd have to realize—

Kissinger: It's about what you said at the end. It's about the Presidency.

Nixon: That's right. The real point here is that the canceling of the summit or the bombing—neither may prove to have too much of an effect on the outcome of Vietnam. So scrub both of those things. The real reason we have to cancel the summit, if we do cancel the summit, is that we cannot go to the summit while Russian tanks and guns are kicking the shit out of us in Vietnam.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: We cannot make an agreement with people that are doing that. We don't meet with a bunch of outlaws. It's like when Rockefeller

going to the prison at Attica to meet with those goddamn people.⁴ Right?

Kissinger: That's my sense, Mr. President, with great reluctance, and knowing how we may get a turn in the situation; we may get an answer from Brezhnev that we can live with. I doubt it.

Nixon: Well, our answer—our decision on the speech, and so forth, should be made, it seems to me.

Kissinger: You don't have to make it before Friday or Saturday.

Nixon: The decision to go on—let's get the speech ready.

Kissinger: I'll get the speech done.

Nixon: You get the speech ready, and I'll work on it, and I can make a decision as to whether to give it or not Monday, and then give it Monday night or Tuesday night.

Kissinger: Yeah. There's no—

Nixon: And have in mind the fact—and then we can have the strike, in the case I don't make the speech, we can have the strike go Tuesday or Wednesday or Thursday of next week.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: See my point?

Kissinger: There's no incentive

Nixon: I think in any event that we should tell Abrams—see this fits into the other point, that you can have these assets.

Kissinger: Don't worry about this Abrams baloney. I talked to Moorer. We can wait for that 'til tomorrow morning. He has got his execute order.

Nixon: Okay. What I'm getting at is this. I don't think we should do it over the weekend. Let's make the final decision with regard to canceling the summit really Monday.⁵ I want the speech, however. I'm going to prepare the speech, because getting the speech and writing it will help me get my own thinking and the right kind of thing.⁶ So I want the speech, a copy of it by—well, can they—when can they have it, Henry?

Kissinger: Tomorrow noon.

⁴ A reference to Attica State Prison in New York State where a hostage stand-off and riot occurred in 1969.

⁵ May 8.

⁶ Later, the President and Haldeman discussed the possible cancellation of the Soviet trip. The President noted that he could not "go to Moscow when Russian tanks were in the streets of Hue." He also added that the American people admired his courage on initiatives like the recent trip to China, and therefore he did not want to fail and appear to be helpless like his predecessor. "Keep in mind US is still a pretty damn strong country," he proclaimed. But the President added that cancellation was "almost a sure way to lose the election." However, he contended that even if canceling the summit had a marginal impact on the war in Vietnam, then it would have been worth it. Nixon had

Nixon: But that's too much for them.

Kissinger: Well, I think they can do it by tomorrow noon.

Nixon: Well, let's say, let's say, could we have a copy of the speech rather than tomorrow noon, could we have it tomorrow say, after dinner, 7 o'clock? That gives all day tomorrow. Fair enough?

Kissinger: Good.

Nixon: And you just put it there and we'll [unclear]. I'll say really one thing, [unclear] that the speech will be a real shocker, won't it? It will be one of the real surprises. Incidentally, there will be absolutely no agreement.

Kissinger: It will make you look very strong.

Nixon: For a moment. For a while. Grandstanding with a temper.

Kissinger: But—

Nixon: But on the other hand, on the other hand, we will definitely say, and frankly, that's the only choice that we have. See that's the way you have to look at it. If we had a better choice we'd make it, wouldn't we?

Kissinger: Well, you can do the 2-day strike. I think that if we wait for that too long—if we wait they'll think we're blinking. I mean, we can't—

Nixon: A 2-day strike could still go. It could land by Tuesday. We wouldn't be waiting too long, would it?

Kissinger: No, but, no, but that's the problem. By Tuesday we've got to go one way or the other

Nixon: That's what I meant. So that's why we've got to decide. We've got to decide to go on this thing.

Kissinger: If you cancel the summit, you can do without the 2-day strike for awhile.

Nixon: Well, why hold back?

Haldeman call Kissinger during this meeting, and Haldeman reported on Kissinger's comments. Kissinger noted his opposition against "cancellation outright" and instead argued for "postponement." Kissinger added that the President could not go to Russia under these circumstances, and thus was in a position where options were lacking. Haldeman noted that Kissinger had not wanted to bomb the Hanoi-Haiphong area before the Paris meeting. Kissinger also believed that the President could bomb and still retain a "50% chance of having the Summit." Haldeman described postponement as "rather intriguing." Kissinger added, "I am convinced that the President will not cancel the Summit." Haldeman told the President that he had to order the bombing, and that Kissinger said it would be over by June. However, the worst possible thing to happen would be if the Soviets canceled the summit first. If Nixon canceled it prior to that point, then it would put the blame on the Soviets for the Summit's failure to convene. (Conversation between Haldeman and Nixon, May 3, 1972; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, May 3, 1972, 2:50–3:35 p.m., Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 335–17)

Kissinger: Okay, I'll get that done. But in my view, you can hold up the decision until we get the thing.

Nixon: All right.

188. Editorial Note

In his diary entry of May 3, 1972, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman wrote accounts of several discussions on the possible cancellation of the Moscow summit:

“Principle discussion today was again on the Summit cancellation. The P was tied up all morning with leadership meeting, the briefing by Moorer, some other things of that sort. He had me over first thing in the morning to set those up, to make the point that he wanted to postpone Annapolis for a week, keep the weekend clear, because if he does cancel the Summit, he's going to do it Monday night on TV. Then he makes the point of whether there's a real question of what we get out of canceling the Summit, and whether that's the key to winning the war, and that's what he's got to weigh.

“Later in the morning he was going over the thing again. Made the point that the loss of the Summit would result in a massive Soviet propaganda war worldwide, the charges that we've crumbled Nixon foreign policy, and that the costs there are too high to pay for the short term gain that we get for taking the positive action.

“Then later in the afternoon I talked to Henry. He makes the point that there's no choice on the Summit, that we have to drop it, or else the Russians will, but we can't both bomb the North and have the Summit. That's Henry's strong feeling. And he feels it's essential that we bomb the North, now that we've told the Russians that we're going to take a hard line with them and with the Vietnamese. If we don't get any action in Paris—and we haven't gotten any action. We tried to develop the arguments, and the main thing is we have to get a message to the Soviets and to Hanoi, anything here will be marginal in its effect on the war, but still could be psychologically important. The real question is how can we have a Summit meeting and be drinking toasts to Brezhnev while Soviet tanks are crumbling Hue? How can you have the P signing agreements for trade, arms, toasting peace and friendship and all that? It would be a very bad picture, and will display great weakness after the warning.

“On the other side is, that canceling the Summit is going to shatter the Nixon foreign policy, people don't like to see the government helpless. P came up with the line that going to the Soviet Union in the cause of peace while they're waging war would not serve the cause of

peace. K makes the point that we have too weak a hand to go to Russia now, but on the other side the people want hope, not just blood, sweat, and tears all the time. So P told me to make the strongest case for going ahead, and to talk to Henry about it, that he'll make no decision till Monday, and make the speech Monday night. My argument was that we should go ahead and bomb and see what happens. That we don't have to cancel the Summit, we can take the chance that they won't cancel it even if we do bomb, and then we have the best of both worlds. Henry's argument is, that creates a terrible problem for us, because the worst possible thing would be for the Russians to cancel the Summit, blaming it on the Nixon bombings, which would make it look like we had really blown the chances for world peace.

"I had quite a long anguished talk with Henry, who is obviously deeply disturbed by this whole thing. He makes the point that we have done a number of things wrong in this thing and he feels that he handled the Moscow meeting and the Paris meeting wrong in the sense that he didn't leave any flexibility. He put the issue to them solidly as the P told him to, and they didn't back down, so now we're in a bad spot. He feels that because of that, we can't back down now, but it will leave the P in such a position of weakness that he wouldn't be able to govern even if he survived it. P feels on the other hand, that he can very well lose the election by what comes out of this and that it, therefore, becomes of vital importance. In any event, he decided not to make any decision today and continue to ponder the thing. It turns out that Henry has sent a very strong letter from the P to Brezhnev, and there should be a reply on that tomorrow or the next day, and that will show the Russian attitude, which will be another factor in deciding what we do.

"The other thing was our poll results last night showed that 60 percent of the people feel that the P should go ahead with the Summit in spite of the invasion of Vietnam. In other words, there's strong popular demand here for the Summit, and that makes it even harder to figure out how to cancel it." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

Kissinger's Record of Schedule for May 3 shows that he met with Haldeman three times: from 9:59 a.m. to 10:05 a.m., from 3:45 p.m. to 4:55 p.m., and for 5 minutes beginning at 5:40 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers) No other record of these meetings has been found.

Commenting on the possible cancellation of the summit in a meeting with Congressional leaders on May 3, Nixon stated: "Nobody makes a deal when the battle is at its height." (Memorandum for the President's Files by Patrick J. Buchanan, May 11; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 88, Memoranda for the President, Beginning April 30 1972)

189. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Chief of Staff (Haldeman)¹

Washington, May 3, 1972.

Nixon: Looking at the last point first,² because it could turn out to be the most important. He's certainly right in the short run. In the short run, if I go on television and say there's Soviet tanks and guns and they're shooting on civilians and the rest, people will say a damn courageous act.³ We need to mobilize our hawks.

Haldeman: Hell, Eisenhower gained points on the U-2 summit cancellation when they canceled out. [unclear exchange]

Nixon: In the long run, what we've got to look at is what happens. Now, if canceling the summit, and nothing's sure, would substantially increase the chances of bringing the Vietnam thing to a successful conclusion, I would do it in a minute. If, on the other hand, canceling the summit is only marginal in terms of bringing it to a successful conclusion, then—

Haldeman: Then you're losing a lot of long-range pluses.

Nixon: What?

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 718-4. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Haldeman in the Oval Office from 10:02 to 10:50 a.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² Reference is to a memorandum from Kissinger concerning options regarding the summit; see Document 183.

³ In a conversation earlier that day, Nixon told Haldeman that: "Kissinger has reached the conclusion, which we all knew, is to rather than to bomb is to announce that we are not going to this Summit. Now, that's a tentative conclusion at this point." Haldeman asked "And not bomb?" Nixon responded: "But not bomb after that. I tended to agree certainly with that last night. However, I wanted to see this poll. Here's the whole point. Why then if not going to the Summit is going to be a plus, it is worth doing? I mean, my point, is, if people still want you to go, in spite of things in South Vietnam. See what I mean? And with the accomplishment of it all, Henry is obviously very disappointed at what happened, in looking at things, he can't go. He's unhappy that he can't go. That's his position." Haldeman answered "There is a counter-argument which is that not going is going to be played as the collapse of the Nixon foreign policy." Nixon agreed: "Exactly. Well, that's the point—the point is, I'm sorry, I was noting last night, trying to get Kissinger, and the point is, what would we get for canceling? Canceling the Summit certainly looses the doves, it hardens the opposition on the war in Congress. Frankly, it's the hook that prepares the way for bombing. But the key is what happens then. I mean, if we lose—if canceling the Summit, then we go off and bomb, and then we win the war, then if that's the key winning the war, we'd do it in a minute. The key question is are there going to be—that canceling the Summit, of course, would have an immediate reaction, very courageous and would be the right thing to do, wouldn't—not playing around. On the other hand, in the final analysis, all that really matters is the failure or success of the policy." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, May 3, 1972, 7:58–8:09 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 718-1)

Haldeman: Then you're losing a lot of long-range pluses.

Nixon: Well, not too big pluses, except you're buying a lot of long-range negatives.

Haldeman: Okay.

Nixon: The long-range negatives being that—

Haldeman: A collapse of the Nixon foreign policy.

Nixon: A collapse in foreign policy, but also, a massive, when you cancel the summit, upgrading of some [unclear] and all those—the Soviet propaganda force I'm not referring to the shitasses that Henry talks to, but I'm referring to all over the world, demonstrations and so forth and so forth—would unleash enormous tensions. You'd have embassies and, well you know what I mean, they'd really start raising holy hell with us because they'd figure, "What the Christ? Nixon has drawn the sword; we have no interest in whatever." So we'd have meetings. That's the point that I think we have to have in mind.

Haldeman: Is a postponement of the summit not a possibility?

Nixon: A postponement or if you cancel it you fundamentally postpone it too. You can postpone the agreement.

Haldeman: Postpone it to June?

Nixon: You see? No. You could say I'm postponing the trip until after the offensive is over. So what would the Russians say—you don't want to come now, screw you. Do you see my point? Either you do it or—you can only postpone it to a degree.

Haldeman: So they say screw you. There's a chance that they don't.

Nixon: No. I think that if we cancel the summit or postpone the summit, which I think any way you call it, it's a dodge, it's going to lead to—

Haldeman: Massive Soviet propaganda.

Nixon: Massive propaganda. It also bears on the failure or success of our Nixon foreign policy. Now the whole policy comes down through channels as a result of his insistence on fighting this terrible war in Vietnam. Now—

Haldeman: That's the line.

Nixon: In a sense, that cost is too high to pay, in a sense. It's too high to pay, because you can confuse the Vietnam thing to an extent.

[Omitted here is discussion of personal items and Kissinger's analysis.]

Nixon: At first blush you make the announcement, you're going to have a hell of a lot of hawkish sentiment in this country. Say—

Haldeman: It won't last—that won't hold very long. That'll give you a blip.

Nixon: What the hell has happened to the Nixon foreign policy.

Haldeman: But you then get the erosion. The press will just, they're already trying to set it up that you gambled all the neat pieces that you were putting together are in grave danger coming apart. The cancellation of the summit would be the maximum signal that they have come apart, and they, to them, that would give them a rallying point to build that case on. And they are so—you know, they leap on anything they get; anything they can get their foot in at all.

Nixon: Sure.

Haldeman: That—so it would erode over—you'd get a good blip. I think you would get a hell of a bounce at first—a strong move by the President—

Nixon: Courageous.

Haldeman: Not going to kick us around and that kind of stuff. But then, you have to do that in early May.

Nixon: Second thoughts would be very, very difficult.

Haldeman: Would build up, and then the Democrats at the convention in July would say, "Here we are, a President who was going to go to Moscow and bring us a generation of peace has now bogged us down in an unwinnable, desperate war in Vietnam."

Nixon: See, Henry is, if I can analyze it correctly, he doesn't even know this, but put yourself in his position. He feels, and he says as well, and I've tried to explain this to Henry, that it's U.S. policy too; I think that he's, because he failed, I mean because they did not come true as he had hoped they would in both Moscow and Vietnam, he wants to say in effect "goddamn you, you can't do this to us," get my point? So it's a bravado act basically. So we say we're going to cancel the summit.

Haldeman: It's a good, short-term bravado act.

Nixon: Now, on the other hand, let's look at it this way. Assuming the situation in Vietnam, assuming if we don't go to the summit, we've got to hit the Hanoi-Haiphong area as sure as hell, then goddamn Laird is playing his usual games, saying we can't find targets and so forth. He is a miserable bastard, really.

190. Letter From President Nixon to Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev¹

Washington, May 3, 1972.

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

I wish to inform you promptly about the outcome of the private talks with the North Vietnamese. They were deeply disappointing, the more so since there had been reason to believe, as the result of Dr. Kissinger's exchanges with you and Foreign Minister Gromyko, that progress would occur not only on the procedure of the talks but on their substance.

In the private meeting of May 2,² the North Vietnamese adhered literally to their public position. They added nothing whatsoever to considerations they advanced months ago in the abortive plenary sessions. They displayed no interest in dealing with questions of ending hostilities or reducing the violence on both sides. Their sole proposal was their reiterated demand for what is in effect the overthrow of the Government of South Vietnam. They refused to discuss your suggestion to Dr. Kissinger that fighting cease as a first order of business and insisted on their right to continue the offensive. Based on your comments and those of Foreign Minister Gromyko to Dr. Kissinger, I had taken for granted that you had transmitted our proposals in this regard to Hanoi when your high-level delegation was there. So there was ample time for a considered reaction. But there was none—not even in the terms which you yourself outlined to Dr. Kissinger in Moscow. In the meantime, of course, and especially since Dr. Kissinger's meetings with you, the DRV's aggression has intensified, both in northern South Vietnam and in the center. Since Dr. Kissinger's visit to Moscow and our agreement to resume talks, the DRV has started offensive actions in Kontum, Quang Tri and in the direction of Hue.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2. Top Secret. The letter is unsigned. An attached covering note, May 25, reads: "Peter—Did the attached letter to Brezhnev from the President go in the attached form (as a double-spaced draft with no signature)? HAK met with Dobrynin from 9:45 to 9:57 a.m. on May 3, in the White House Map Room. [No Memcon]—Wilma." The word "yes" in an unknown hand is written on this covering note. An attached note at the top of the letter reads: "Handed to D. by K., 5-3-72, 9:45 a.m. Map Room." No other record of this meeting has been found. In his memoirs Kissinger noted: "Our first move was to warn the Soviet leaders that grave decisions were impending. On May 3 a Presidential letter, drafted by Sonnenfeldt, Lord, and me, was sent to Brezhnev informing him of my fruitless meeting with Le Duc Tho. It seemed to us, the letter told Brezhnev, that Hanoi was attempting to force us to accept terms tantamount to surrender. We would not permit this." (*White House Years*, p. 1176)

² See Document 183.

In sum, after the protracted delaying tactics employed by Hanoi in regard to secret talks, it now turns out that our acceptance of the procedural compromise that was discussed in Moscow has simply led to a total deadlock after only one private meeting and to intensified North Vietnamese military action. Hanoi obviously hopes that the pressure of its offensive will force us to accept terms tantamount to surrender.

But this, Mr. General Secretary, will not happen, and I must now decide on the next steps in the situation that has been created. In the light of recent events, there does not seem much promise in communicating to you additional substantive considerations; there is now no basis for believing that this will have a positive effect on the situation. As Mr. Le Duc Tho made clear, Hanoi is contemptuous of communications transmitted by a third party. The fact remains that Soviet military supplies provide the means for the DRV's actions and promised Soviet influence if it has been exercised at all has proved unavailing.

Mr. General Secretary, as I consider the decisions that have to be taken in the present context, I would welcome having on an urgent basis, your own assessment of the situation.³

³ Kissinger called Dobrynin 2 days later to rebut Dobrynin's charge made during the May 3 meeting that Nixon was "angry" when he sent the letter. "You ought to treat this letter as a cold deliberate one," Kissinger told Dobrynin. (Transcript of telephone conversation between Kissinger and Dobrynin, May 5, 4:53 p.m.; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

191. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and President Nixon¹

Washington, May 3, 1972, 6:25 p.m.

P: Well, you got to see Riland,² he told me.

K: That's right; yes.

P: Help out?

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² Dr. W. Kenneth Riland, Nixon's personal physician.

K: Oh, yeah; he's great. He's very good.

P: What is your schedule for dinner now? Are you going out?

K: I was going to give a talk at the Metropolitan Club for Gordon Gray³ [who] has been bugging me for months.

P: Fine, fine. Go ahead.

K: But I'm free until then.

P: When was that—what time?

K: About 7:30.

P: Well, listen—why don't you go ahead. That will go till?

K: About 9:30 or 10:00.

P: Well, why don't we get together tomorrow. I've got to get finished on this eulogy for Hoover tomorrow to deliver it at 11:00–11:45, looking at my schedule here.⁴ Well, anyway, what would be your thinking as to when the Brezhnev answer would come in?

K: Oh, Friday⁵ morning.

P: Um-humm. You think we'll get it that soon?

K: Yeah.

P: Because it required an answer.

K: Oh, it's got to have an answer.

P: Was it phrased that way?

K: Oh, yes; and it sort of said we're holding up action.

P: I see.

K: Of course, it was written based on the strategy that we'd cancel.

P: Yeah, I know.

K: And therefore it was trying to lead him to believe that we were going ahead.

P: Of course.

K: So he's probably going to give a tough reply.

P: Well, that gives us a—well, we can find out. That's a good way to test what he's going to do.

K: Actually, I think it's easier for him to acquiesce after we've done something than to put something in writing that we can use as an excuse. And then hang him with it.

P: Um-humm.

³ Former Assistant for National Security Affairs to President Dwight Eisenhower.

⁴ Nixon delivered the eulogy at funeral services for former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

⁵ May 5.

K: So what he says is apt to be tougher than what—not inevitably a clue to what he would have not otherwise.

P: Um-humm, Um-humm.

K: Otherwise their actions—you know, on Monday I called Dobrynin in and raised hell about a submarine tender and that missile-carrying submarine.⁶

P: Yeah.

K: Today he called me and said both ships will be pulled out on Saturday.⁷ From Cuba.

P: Yeah. That's one place we always seem to come out pretty well, don't we?

K: Well, because we have the horses.

P: Sure, sure.

K: But that's the shortest they've ever been there.

P: Well, I'll tell you, if you think you'll be back around 9:30, I may give you a call then.

K: Well, why don't I—it's just at the Metropolitan Club, why don't I come over—it may run until 10:00.

P: Oh, I see.

K: I'll come over here and see whether you're still up. And if you want to talk.

P: I'll be up—it's a question of whether I can—Let me think—You'll probably be till 10:00 though, won't you?

K: I would guess so, yeah.

P: Well, don't rush back. If you come back—I'll call around 10:00 and see if you're there, see. If I'm all finished with my other little—

K: Of course, Mr. President. And then, of course, we don't really need to make a decision—

P: No, no; I know that. It just sometimes helps to talk about it. Let me ask you, what is the late report today. I see another scary headline in the *Star* about losing in Hue.

K: Well, I've seen that story. We haven't gotten in our intelligence reports and it's probably partially true.

⁶ No record of a May 1 telephone conversation between Kissinger and Dobrynin has been found.

⁷ According to the transcript of a telephone conversation beginning at 5:32 p.m. on May 3, Kissinger and Dobrynin discussed the issue of the tender, a training ship for Soviet cadets that had put into port in Cuba. This vessel was at first thought to be a submarine. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

P: Uh-huh.

K: The thing that worries me—you know, you remember when I talked to you at Camp David, I said to you what worries me is not the loss of this or that time but the whole eyelet may come apart, where they lose enough units. That's the thing that worries me.

P: In that respect, I think that my feeling that we probably should have hit them before you went was probably right.

K: You know, you're right.

P: You would have been in a little stronger position over there. You know what I mean, they might have cancelled but on the other hand—

K: You mean, hit them over the weekend?

P: Yeah.

K: Well, I wasn't against it. What stopped it over—I was in favor of it after the Quang Tri attack started. What stopped it over the weekend was that Abrams was screaming for the planes for himself.

P: I know, I know. But we run into that everytime though, Henry.

K: Well, at that time with everything coming apart—

P: It would have been rather critical.

K: Since that guy is dying to find an alibi.

P: Well, he sure does on that one. None of us are going to second-guess on the alibi business now. We're going to do the best we can and keep our cool; that's the main thing.

K: I think the problem with Abrams was—the problem with Le Duc Tho yesterday was he wants to see how far this offensive goes and he wasn't going to settle in mid-stream and he wasn't going to give me something we were going to use domestically to give our people hope. So that was the basic problem and whether we hit over the weekend or not, I don't think made a hell of a lot of difference.

P: Right. Well, look, we didn't so that's that. The important thing now is to it seems to me that we have to set this up so we can—I mean the cancellation, which of course seems to me inevitable at this point. I'm thinking that we might have to move it up to Friday.

K: No, I think that would be a little early.

P: Do you?

K: The one thing we might consider, and I'd like to think about it, with your considered judgment, is whether one way of scaring the Russians with it is to say—you know, I'm having lunch with Dobrynin on Friday—I could say, "Now, look, Anatol, we're realists. There just can't be a summit with a President sitting in the Kremlin while Hue falls."

P: That's right.

K: Why don't we agree now on postponing it for two months.

P: Or one month.

K: Or one month.

P: There's some advantage, in my view, to have it one month.

K: That's right.

P: Obviously before the nominations. You could say we're just postponing it one month. We know damn well that the thing will have creamed out one way or another, won't it?

K: That's right.

P: And we could just say we're going to postpone it for one month. If we could get a mutual agreement, that would be the best of both worlds. But then on the other hand, of course,—Aren't you convinced that we do have to hit Hanoi/Haiphong once—

K: Mr. President, I believe that if—your real choice is between postponing and hitting—I mean, it's an immediate decision. If you postpone, you'll also want to hit afterwards.

P: Yeah.

K: But I do not see how you can do nothing.

P: Oh, Christ, my view is—I think that the [best option?] might be hitting and running the risk of their postponing.

K: That's right.

P: Which I think is a very real option.

K: That is a real option.

P: A real option.

K: But then it is better to do it earlier than later.

P: That would be this weekend.

K: If you're going to hit without and not postpone, it would be better to do that as early as you can but not before you have the Russian reply. There is no sense—

P: Yeah, yeah; I agree.

K: In playing that one without having the cards. But another option we can consider is my telling Dobrynin—first of all, that makes it look serious. If we are thinking about talking about postponing.

P: Yeah. We'll lay the foundation for it too.

K: Right.

P: No, I've concluded that we can't—I mean, we're probably inevitably—Well, we go in with one proposition—we have to hit; the sooner, the better. Right?

K: If we are not going to postpone, we have to hit. If you are going to play the hitting game, it's better to do it with as much time between it and the summit as possible.

P: The difficulty with however postponing and then waiting for a week to hit. I just don't think the postponing is going to have that much effect on the situation in the South. If we're going to have any marginal effect in the South—

K: Mr. President, the point may be that nothing is going to have any effect on the situation in the South.

P: I couldn't agree more.

K: That's the tragedy of this situation.

P: Right.

K: In fact, if we were confident, we could hold the situation. If Laird had been telling us the truth, we could play it very cool. You could go to Moscow in a very strong position and say, "All right, we are licking your sons-of-bitches." Then you could have the best of both worlds.

P: Um-humm, um-humm.

P: We're going to keep our cool and do what has to be done. We have to realize that there aren't any good choices but we'll make them. But you had no idea that anybody would consider doing nothing; good God, the only one that would do that would be Laird.

K: That's right.

P: Laird and Abrams. And I don't know why the hell they would be for that. Then they'd have no scapegoat at all. Anybody else suggesting that we do nothing?

K: Well, I guess Rogers probably would be in favor of doing it.

P: Well, we're not going to ask him.

K: Well, I think the choices are between hitting over this weekend and there is something about delaying the attack until Sunday.

P: Um-humm; I agree.

K: Well, I don't know with all these stories of disaster; they have plenty of unfavorable news with it.

P: I'm inclined to think that as far as weekly news magazines, I'd rather hit and have that in it.

K: On Saturday?

P: Yep. You've got to remember that's our story. You see, you change the story when you hit.

K: There's a lot to be said for that.

P: You change the story; you change the headline, Henry. You know, that's why I've been a very strong opponent. I guess Friday won't work; that's too soon but boy!

K: I don't think we can—we have to wait for the Russian answer unless the answer doesn't come on Friday. Then we can say we gave them 48 hours.

P: Um-humm. Well, I'm inclined to think we have to wait for the answer; I agree.

K: But I think if we don't have it by Friday noon; we should just order whatever we want to order.

P: Let me ask you this, what is your schedule tomorrow? Do you have another engagement tomorrow night or a dinner, I suppose, of some sort.

K: Well, I was going to go to New York actually to speak to a group about the Russian Summit.⁹

P: I wonder if you could cancel that. Do you think you could? Or put it off?

K: I suppose I could, yes.

P: Well, I think we ought to have—wait a minute, I don't think you need to. Say from about 3 o'clock on tomorrow—

K: Oh, that's easy.

P: You clear your schedule and what time would you have to leave to go to New York? 5:00?

K: 4:30.

P: Um-humm.

K: I could save from 2:30 on.

P: Um-humm; I'll see what I can do. Well, let's have a good talk tomorrow. Let me ask you to do this—

K: I'll cancel this thing too but I think there's an advantage in being cool.

P: Oh, no, no; I wouldn't cancel. Let me ask you to do this—why don't you in the thing—I'd like for you to run down in your own mind and sort of put it on paper what happens as we cancel the Russian Summit.¹⁰ Do you get my point?

K: Yeah.

P: I mean, so we can't pull the summit, then what are the consequences and so forth having in mind the fact that certainly as I pointed out that we have drawn the sword on them; they will have to respond.

K: Well, maybe not necessarily.

P: I agree; I know. Let's assume the worst. Do it like you do your usual thing, it could be this way or it could be the other thing; this would be very helpful to me in making the decisions, see.

⁹ In an address to the *Time-Life* dinner in New York City, May 4, Kissinger publicly discussed the scheduled summit with the Soviet Union. (Memorandum of conversation, May 4; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1026, HAK Memcons, Memcon—Henry Kissinger, *Time-Life* Dinner, May 4, 1972)

¹⁰ See Document 193.

K: Right.

P: And the idea is so—the way I look at it, you could cancel. And so the Russians gin up their opposition and, of course, the Democrats will go wild; the candidates, so forth and so on. I guess Bob told you about his poll; he brought it in to me tonight.

K: Yes, yes; we had a good talk this afternoon.

P: I told him to pass it over. I said it wasn't going to affect me but I'm glad he did it because—

K: Oh, I think it's important.

P: It tells you what we're up against; public opinion wise. I was rather surprised frankly that, you know, they would, despite the Hawks and so forth, that so many people—sort of like China in a way, you know, the damn China Summit, the people wanted it even though they knew—so they're sort of big news. I guess we've talked ourselves into this with the idea that talking is a good thing, Henry. That's our problem isn't it?

K: The last thing we did from a situation of strength.

P: I know—you and I know that the Russian thing, however, is one where we can't possibly be there in a position of weakness and I'm just not going to be there.

K: I'm wondering about so many things. If you're there when Hue falls—

P: It may fall before we get there.

K: Well, that's possible but supposing you're there while 10,000 Americans are captured in Binh Long? I mean this thing could turn into a horrible debacle. Under what conditions will you be there in general? After having made all these threats?

P: No way, no way. No, we've got to start the hitting of the North but let's—even the hitting of the North, what does that—we've got to do it in any event so let's be strength in whatever position we have and perhaps provide something—Incidentally, I was somewhat encouraged by the actions that Thieu had taken and changed the command and the rest. That seemed to be rather good.

K: They are good.

P: Then also they apparently have a pretty good order of battle up there in the Hue area, have they not?

K: They do if they fight. The problem, Mr. President, is—here I'm trying to be realistic and I was talking to Haig about it—there just isn't any ARVN offensive action, they are just not fighting.

P: Anyplace, huh?

K: Right.

P: Only defensive.

K: Only defensive and then only sporadically. And there is just too much unraveling in too many places.

P: Well, maybe we have to make a big play. Maybe we have to go to Thieu and say, "Look, here, boy." Get my point? You know, I don't believe in just letting what seems to be a disaster develop without going to the heart of the matter.

K: Before we do that, I think we ought to go to the North Vietnamese. Well, even then you shouldn't do that in Moscow.

P: Oh, hell, no. No, we go to the North Vietnamese first by hitting them. Hitting them goddamn hard!

K: Well, there's no sense in going to Thieu and asking him to resign unless you have a prior deal with the North Vietnamese.

P: Um-humm. Yeah, but look in any event, you've got to go first. You've got to go first, Henry, with a—you've got to have a damn good strike in the North. That is absolutely indispensable to our policy. Would you agree?

K: Right.

P: And soon, huh? Unless we cancel. Of course I agree the cancellation has a psychological effect but what more I don't know. And then you've got to look down the road to what is the Russian reaction; that's what I want to see if we cancel, what will they do. You see, that's the kind of thing I want to go over with you to see what you think we're going to do. We have to look down the road to see whether we basically want—what happens if they see McGovern and Humphrey are there to deal with them, what happens if we are there in a position of—I don't mean now at the summit but later—you see, you have the proposition where you cancel the summit—here's as I see it, you lose in Vietnam, all right. And [we?] survive the election, who knows; things are very strange at the present time in this country. But then where are you?

K: If you cancel the summit and survive the election?

P: Yeah.

K: Oh, then you are in a very strong position.

P: That's a very, very big risk but if you cancel the summit and lose in Vietnam, winning the election is going to be a hell of a tough thing to do unless we are able to lose in Vietnam and do something about the POWs and so forth.

K: Right.

P: And, of course, then we are going to have turn very hard on the critics and blame them for the failure of negotiations. As you well know, we can make a hell of a case.

K: Right.

P: So these are some of the things we should think about but let's look down the road as to how it's going to—put your mind to that, which you like to do anyway. And when you are in New York, over there at the Metropolitan Club—

K: I'll be very confident.

P: Be confident as hell. I mean, I think the way I did the Leaders today¹¹ was the right way. Look, this is a tough damn battle and you're up against enormous odds and they're fighting, you know. We all know they're not fighting too well in some places but they've got to be doing something, Henry, good God, unless Abrams has been lying to us.

K: He admits he has.

P: He admits he has, huh?

K: Yeah.

P: Well, they've done something, Henry. Good, God, at An Loc, don't you think they did something there?

K: They were encircled; they had no place to run to.

P: Um-humm. And Hue? Does Haig have any information on that? I'll call him and get it from him?

K: I've just reviewed it with him. About the looting, we don't have any information.

P: The looting and the—this and that. I have a sort of a feeling that that may be an exaggeration, you know what I mean? We've had that sort of thing before, haven't we?

K: Right. And that wouldn't be decisive in itself.

P: No.

K: But it's a tough situation.

P: I have a gut reaction that we've got to give them one good belt.

K: So do I.

P: Come hell or high water, you know.

K: There's no question about that.

P: And Laird is to the contrary. Not withstanding, it's got to be for two good solid days; just belt the hell out of them.

K: I agree.

P: That's one thing we've got to do. Because at least we have indicated—After all, I've built the whole thing on we're not going to go out there without doing our best, everything we can.

¹¹ Nixon met with the Congressional leadership from 8:09 to 10:01 a.m. that morning. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Notes of this meeting have not been found.

K: That's right.

P: If we do everything we can and they still can't make it, then it's not our fault.

K: And I'm going to have some contingency plans made here for that eventuality, Mr. President, because we can't have to do it in panic. I'll just get Haig and one other person working on that.

P: On what?

K: On what happens if the whole thing unravels.

P: Oh, hell, yes; hell, yes. You have to leave for New York tomorrow at what, 4:30?

K: Right, but I'll cancel that thing if necessary.

P: No, no, no.

K: But it may give an impression of a great crisis.

P: Well, to an extent it is, isn't it?

K: Oh, yeah; it would be clearly understood. Or I can set my remarks for later and go down on a later plane and tell them to do the dinner without me.

P: You might say that you have a meeting that will not finish till 5 o'clock. Could you do that?

K: Sure. And then take a plane and still get there by 8:00; we can do that.

P: Why don't we do that then? We will plan to meet between 3:00 and 5:00 and sit down and talk this thing over a little more.

K: Good.

P: In the meantime, do your thinking about the whole thing. And get off to your dinner tonight and as I say, By God, play it like I did with the Leaders today.

K: Absolutely, Mr. President.

P: Cold and tough. We haven't gotten anything—what about that poor Bunker, has he sent us anything in yet or any of his evaluations? I suppose he is probably just about dying, huh?

K: I'll ask him tonight for his evaluation.

P: Yeah. If you would get his evaluation. I don't think Abrams' evaluation is worth a tinker's damn.

K: I'll get his evaluation.

P: Particularly with regard to the South Vietnamese—will they survive; that's really what it boils down to.

K: Right, right.

P: If you could get that for us, that would be helpful.

K: I'll get that in the meantime.

P: Enjoy your dinner.

K: I'll be speaking.¹²

P: Uh-huh.

¹² According to a transcript, Kissinger called Nixon back at 10:20 p.m. that evening and reported on the strong defense he made of the administration's position on Vietnam during his speech at the Metropolitan Club Dinner. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

192. Editorial Note

White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman's diary entry for May 4, 1972, indicates that the issue of the possible cancellation of the Moscow summit in light of the deteriorating military situation in Vietnam continued to dominate President Nixon's thinking:

"Hoover funeral this morning. P did the eulogy and did an extremely good job. Rest of the day was devoted to the debate over the point of the Summit cancellation. P called me in first thing this morning, said he had just gone over things with Haig, he's concerned about the public information operation in Vietnam, feels we have to ride Laird harder on watching the news reports, that they're letting incorrect things get out and not correcting them. Then he said he wanted K and me to see Connally, give him a cold turkey briefing on the Summit situation, get his judgment, says the other possibility for conferring would be Mitchell. In any event I called Connally from his office and set up an appointment for right after the funeral, and then the P said he had added an extra ingredient in the whole thing that he had thought of last night, which is that if we cancel the Summit, we go for all the marbles, including a blockade. Then he deplored again the problem of the military being so completely unimaginative.

"He said that I should try to get Connally to stay till June 1, that he can't leave in the middle of the Soviet flap, and the war will also be in better shape by then. He's concerned that if we cancel the Soviet thing, we'll dash the hopes that we've created in the minds of people by the Soviet trip, that we'll get a very big bang against us with the Democrats on the warpath with Soviet support.

"He said he wanted me to run another poll, saying that the North Vietnamese hold 400 Americans as POW's, some for as long as five years, and they refuse to release them. Would you favor the P imposing a naval blockade on North Vietnam to be lifted only when all POW's are returned and there's a cease-fire obtained in South Vietnam? Then

to add, even though this would mean United States naval ships stopping Russian ships delivering arms to North Vietnam.

“Henry and I went over and had a one and a half hour meeting with Connally. Henry spent most of the time giving him the background and making the case that we were now faced with three alternatives: one, was to do nothing, and in effect back down on our bluff; second, would be to bomb the North, and Hanoi and Haiphong, with the attendant risks, including the great risk of the cancellation of the Summit; and the third, would be to cancel the Summit ourselves and then follow it up by bombing the North. Before I could make the case for the other side, Connally leaped in and said he felt very strongly that under no circumstances should we cancel and then bomb the North, that people want the Soviet Summit, and we should not be in the position to cancel it, if it’s going to be canceled we should let the Soviets cancel it. He says you’ve got to start with the basic premise, however, that the P cannot take a military defeat in Vietnam, it’s absolutely imperative that we not let this offensive succeed, so we have to do anything and everything necessary in order to deal with that. On that basis he also feels that the P is now in a very good position in this country in that he’s got to have the guts to meet this situation, and that we’ve got to make it clear to the Russians that we are not going to be defeated, and we are not going to surrender, as the P has said. In other words, the P has got to back up his public posture.

“I came back. Henry had to go on to the luncheon. I reported this to the P and he was inclined to agree with the Connally view, saying that’s basically the conclusion he had already come to and that this confirmed it, that he, therefore, wanted to meet with Henry and me at 3:00 and go over the thing, so we went over to the EOB then and P made the point that he had made up his mind, that he can’t lose the war, that the only real mistakes he had made in his Administration were the times when he had not followed his own instincts. On the EC-121 situation with North Korea, he knew we should move in and hit all their air bases but he let himself be talked out of it because Rogers and Laird both threatened to quit if he went ahead with it. After the November 3 speech, when he swung the nation behind him, we should’ve gone ahead and bombed the North at the time, although we didn’t. If we had moved on that kind of move then, we wouldn’t have these problems now. Same with Laos, that although Henry did basically follow his instincts on this thing, it worked as well as it could have. He said that he had been thinking it over, and that he’d decided that we can’t lose the war, that we’re going to hit hard, that we’re going to move in. The Summit is not important in this context, and that going to the Summit and paying the price of losing in Vietnam would not be satisfactory.

“He put it very toughly to Henry. He said he’s made up his mind, didn’t want to get into a discussion about it, didn’t want to be talked out of it. Henry kept trying to interrupt, but the P went on very strongly in this vein. He obviously sensed something of the drama of the moment and he was pushing his position very hard. When Henry finally did get to talk, he said that he, too, had been thinking about it, that the objectives that he came up with were the same as the P’s, that he agreed that we couldn’t lose the war and that we had to do something. His difference, however, was that we should not move ahead with the bombing, as the P thought we should, but rather should first move to blockade Haiphong. The point being that bombing was what they were expecting and it’s better to do the unexpected, first of all. Second, the blockade would in some ways be a less aggressive move than the bombing, although it would be a stronger signal to them and would do us more good. Henry’s opposed to just a symbolic bombing, he feels that if we bomb we should do it totally, and that it would be better to blockade first and then on a continuing basis. Also by blockading it gives us a little more time to keep the bombers in the South, where the military wants them during the current tough action.

“The more the P thought about it, the more he liked Henry’s ideas as long as it was followed up with continued bombing, so that became his conclusion.

“He then had Connally and Haig come over and join the meeting. When they got there he reviewed the history again about not following his instincts and so forth, the point that he can’t lose the war. He said that we won’t lose the country if we lose the Summit meeting, but we will lose the country if we lose the war. Then he said what he had decided was a blockade of Haiphong plus bombing. There was a question as to whether this would work, and there’s a greater risk to the Summit than just bombing, but those are problems we’re going to deal with.

“He then got Connally to agree with him, gave him strong support on it. He then got into the question of whether Abrams was to be replaced, and felt that he had to be, that he was not following orders, that he lost his steam and so on. The decision was to replace him by sending Haig to Vietnam. Then decided that it wasn’t such a good idea, that we’d lose Abrams there, but send Haig out for a couple of weeks as an observer for the P. Also decided to call Rogers back Sunday, since the P will announce this Monday night on television.

“After an hour and a half with that group we added Moorer, and the P very strongly put the thing to Moorer that this was his decision, that it was to be discussed with no one, especially not the Secretaries or anybody at State, or anybody over in Vietnam, but that Moorer was to put the blockade plan together, get everything ready to pull it into

motion so that it would take effect Tuesday morning after the P's address Monday night. He hit Moorer on that this is a chance to save the military's honor and to save the country. Moorer said he could do it; he also suggested that there ought to be some offensive action on the part of the South Vietnamese, and it was agreed they would try to mobilize enough troops, 2,000 or 3,000 for an amphibious landing north of the DMZ by South Vietnamese using all our support and troop capability.

"K had to leave for dinner. The P talked a few minutes more and then Moorer and Haig left and we kind of wrapped it up with Connally. Then the P talked with me a bit about the whole thing, feeling that he's done the right thing, that we justify the blockade as a means of keeping lethal weapons from the hands of murderers and international outlaws, and along that line. I think he feels good that he's made a decision and that he feels it's the right one. He also feels that it's quite a dramatic step, because it is a basic decision to go all out to win the war now, under, of course, totally different circumstances than Johnson was faced with, because we've got all our troops out, we've made the peace overtures, we've made the China trip and laid a lot of other groundwork that should make it possible for us to do this.

"My feeling is that the public reaction is not going to be so great on the blockade, even though it is a big move, because it's not aggressive, but the bombing that goes with it will, over a period of time, scare some people up. Some questions as to what the quid pro quo will be on this, probably something to the effect that the blockade will stay on until there's a cease-fire, all POW's released. When that takes place, we'll lift the blockade and we'll remove all of our troops from South Vietnam within some time period.

"Connally was absolutely astounded at the P's description of the problems he'd gone through and the other things, especially the lack of support and the lack of loyalty on the part of Laird and Rogers. I think he can't even understand why the P would even keep them around and thinks it's a sign of weakness that he hadn't fired them long ago, and that he doesn't fire them now. He also strongly feels that he should pull Abrams back. The P backed off on that, and I think rightly so. Haig called me later this evening and said he thought it was a very bad idea for him to go out to Vietnam for any extended period because with a tight crunch around here he's needed to keep Henry in tow, which I totally agree with." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

According to Kissinger's Record of Schedule for May 4, both he and Haldeman met with Connally from 12:05 to 1:20 p.m. They then met with the President from 3:05 to 5:25 p.m. (*Ibid.*) No other records of these meetings have been found.

193. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 4, 1972.

Henry:

Attached is Hal's Summit options paper. There are several other possibilities that are worth considering.

First, as the President mentioned last night, we might wish to consider a blockade of North Vietnamese ports without bombing the Hanoi/Haiphong complex, but by expanding our bombing efforts to include interdiction as far south as possible of the rail lines from China. We might inform the Soviets that this is the only way—given North Vietnamese intransigence—that a Summit would be possible and point out to them that our only other alternative would be the cancellation of the Summit, or a postponement of the Summit and the most stringent aerial activity.

If Hal's assumptions are right, it is conceivable that a deal of this kind could be worked out which the Soviets would live with, assuming, of course, they could make all the tough noises they wanted about continued support through land-lines.

The second would be a tougher version of the first option, but this would cost us the Summit. It would be premised on the theory that we want to apply maximum conceivable military pressure on Hanoi in an effort to break their back. This would involve announcement of the postponement of the Summit in softest terms, announcement of the establishment of a blockade while avoiding bombing the Hanoi/Haiphong area, but at the same time to extend our bombing to interdict to the degree possible the communication routes leading from China to North Vietnam.

AI

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1330, NSC Unfiled Material, 1972, 5 of 8. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

Attachment

Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)²

Washington, May 4, 1972.

SUBJECT

Summit Options

The attached paper, as you requested, examines probable Soviet reactions to a unilateral postponement by us of the summit as well as the considerations, pro and con, of an agreed postponement. I have set it up as a memorandum from you to the President,³ in case you want to forward it.

Meanwhile, I have also thought of some ways of going through with the summit. The underlying assumption for all options—postponement as well as going ahead—is that the trend in the fighting in the South has not been fundamentally reversed by the time of the summit and that we are engaged in major air and naval actions against the North, perhaps including strikes against Haiphong and Hanoi. *This last assumption is, in my view, crucial to all options, but especially to those that involve going through with the summit.*

All options carry the risk that the Soviets will pre-empt with a postponement or even cancellation of their own. It is hard to judge whether this risk is greater for the postponement options or for the going-ahead options. In the former cases, Brezhnev may want to grab the initiative to demonstrate his “control” of events to all his various audiences. In the latter cases, given heavy US attacks on the North, he may find the situation “morally” tolerable—again, partly for domestic reasons and partly for international communist and prestige reasons.

My *net judgment*, however, remains that Brezhnev has so much riding on the summit—and on the German treaties, which would almost certainly go down the drain with the summit—that he will *prefer* to keep the summit alive. From his side this argues for (1) accepting postponement, if proposed by us, or (2) going ahead, if we are prepared to do so.

² Sent for information.

³ Attached but not printed is a 6-page memorandum drafted for Kissinger to send to Nixon entitled “Soviet Reaction to the Postponement of the Summit.” This memorandum is unsigned and undated; presumably it was not sent to the President.

Analytically, we must distinguish in our minds between on the one hand the maneuvering in the pre-summit period and around a postponement effort and, on the other, the situation that exists if a summit is actually held.

I will now briefly discuss two ways of holding the summit, *assuming we get that far*. I repeat, the underlying assumption is that we are acting vigorously against the North. *That is the only way we can go to Moscow from strength.*

1. *A Stripped-Down Summit.*

Here we would cut down the length of the visit, say to three days; we would reduce all ceremony to an absolute minimum; we would make it a working visit, with the entourage stripped down accordingly (no wives, for example).

This would be a sort of deglamorized, crisis summit, where two great powers would work responsibly on those areas that are clearly of mutual interest (pre-eminently, SALT). At the same time, based on his strong military actions against the North, then in progress, the President would turn the heat on Brezhnev in regard to Vietnam. He would withhold affirmative action on economic concessions on the grounds that these would not be understood (or, in the case of MFN pass through Congress) while Soviet arms fuel the DRV offensive.

A stripped-down summit would lessen some of the elements of incongruity, indeed hypocrisy, of having the President cavort with the Soviet leaders, toast friendship, issue joint principles, etc. while the war goes on in Vietnam. These aspects might also make such a summit more appealing to the Soviets.

To have a determined, business-like President go to Moscow in the midst of crisis would make him look less like going there at any price. The fact that some important business had been transacted would act as a regulator of domestic US reactions to what is happening in Vietnam—perhaps more than a postponement which could become a cancellation. It may also act as a regulator on wild Soviet responses to our actions in Vietnam.

The major risk is that Brezhnev would try to humiliate the President (true under any going-ahead option). He could send the President packing after three or four days with no or only a few accomplishments, while the Vietnam situation deteriorates and the Soviets continue doing their “socialist duty” to the DRV.

Even if Brezhnev did not take this course, the difficulties could come later, as the situation deteriorates in Vietnam and we may find “compromises” (involving withdrawal and a coalition in Saigon) more attractive. At that point, the Moscow trip will look at best futile and at worst like a deal wherein we agreed to get out of Vietnam for the sake

of good US-Soviet relations. The Soviets would claim part of the credit for Communist victory in Vietnam and on top of it have the benefits of US-Soviet détente.

2. *A “Cynical” Summit.*

Here we would go ahead as planned. We would say that we accept the Soviet position that disturbances like Vietnam (and India–Pakistan) should not get in the way of better US-Soviet relations, which are fundamental to the peace of the world.

But we would still try to go from strength, accentuating this point by, in effect, having the President run the war against the DRV from Moscow for eight days. (A couple of generals in the entourage and a command-post aircraft at the airfield would underline the point.)

The image that we would project would be one of having cool nerves, of being reasonable in regard to anything bearing on US-Soviet relations but wild when it comes to Vietnam. The President would trade on his reputation of “unpredictability”: showing Saigon that he is not selling it out; implying to Hanoi that Moscow is colluding in our assault against the North; telling Moscow that we can play the same game of “compartmentalization” as the Soviets, when it suits our purposes.

The *risks* here are much as in the previous case. Moreover, the problem of the disparity between the symbolism of US-Soviet cooperation and the reality of proxy-war in Vietnam would be even greater than in the “stripped-down” case.

194. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 4, 1972.

[Omitted here is discussion between President Nixon and Kissinger about discussions he had with Secretary of the Treasury Connally concerning what to do about the Vietnam peace effort. The President noted that he thought Connally’s “first judgment” was rarely accurate but that if they “let him sleep on it” Connally then could offer useful commentary.]

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 719–4. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 9:35 to 9:59 a.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Kissinger: Well, I think, Mr. President, what we ought to consider is just, they have put it to us, that it's just no good way of losing it. Your first instinct was right. I asked myself, well, maybe I should have offered to Le Duc Tho to throw Thieu to the wolves. But it wouldn't have done us any good, because these guys—

Nixon: Well, then he'd say, open the prisons. I know. Henry, I told you your negotiating record was brilliant in the last meeting.² You asked all the questions and you got the son-of-a-bitch on the record.

Kissinger: That I did achieve, and we got—

Nixon: Now, can I run over a couple of things with you to think about before our noon meeting. I have a couple thoughts. Thinking back on the issues, the only backup position that you could take with the Soviets would be—I mean, I'm just thinking of something that the enemy certainly would do, I don't know whether it'll work—is to say that we have to have a—that we cannot have an enemy offensive between now and the end of summit. If they'll stop they're going to see we'll stop bombing in the North. Now, that's probably an unanswerable question for them. I'm not just thinking of the Soviets, but for the North Vietnamese. For us, it gives us what we would need—the idea that being that right after the summit we blast the shit out of them. And of course the weather's worse then.

Kissinger: Not in [Military] Region One. But—

Nixon: I don't care where. But I mean—and then we don't have to concentrate in other regions—we just throw it all into Region One.

Kissinger: Well, that's a possibility.

Nixon: You see my point? See, I look back to what I think Laird is setting us up for in terms of the recrimination. He's going to set us up for the fact that before China, and during China, and for 3 weeks after China, that we, the hawks, were insisting that we bomb these things, you know—

Kissinger: No, no. Mr. President, we have a good record on that because all he recommended was that we bomb the missile sites. The missile sites are a waste of effort. That was the basis of our rejecting it.

Nixon: Yeah, I know.

Kissinger: No, before China, he didn't recommend anything. After China, he recommended that we hit the missile sites. The missile sites don't affect the operations in the south. We wanted to hit the supply dumps.

Nixon: Yeah. I'm just telling you what I think he's going to do.

² See Document 183.

Kissinger: Oh, yeah. We have him on record that that isn't what he recommended.

[Omitted here is discussion whereby the President then argued, and Kissinger agreed, that Secretary of Defense Laird was allowing Nixon and Kissinger to be subject to "recrimination" for the bombings. Kissinger added that the U.S. Government should have bombed the supply depots in February and not the missile sites as Laird wanted. But the 3-day strike did not make any difference. Kissinger, in noting further bureaucratic interference, that the strikes did not harm Hanoi and Haiphong last weekend because Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Moorer said that air assets were needed to be held in reserve in defense of Quang Tri. A frustrated Nixon and Kissinger discussed support for a temporary South Vietnamese invasion of North Vietnam. Kissinger also mentioned his belief that the North Vietnamese would not negotiate until the offensive had run its course. In a related move, Nixon recommended deploying F-4 fighter aircraft to Israel in order to irritate the Soviets. Kissinger advised caution, as Israel was like North Vietnam in that it was an ally that a superpower could not control.]

Nixon: I had another point. I think you should get Rabin in.³ See what they could use. I have an idea that might kick the Russians pretty good—if we could get some more F-4s or something into there. I don't know if I understand, I'm just thinking.

Kissinger: Well, let's take it easy on that, because the Israelis are pretty wild and if they get it—I mean, they may be like Hanoi, as far as we're concerned. We may not be able to hold them. But—

Nixon: That bad?

Kissinger: No. But we should do it after the things get a little worse. The way to play the Russians is if we break the summit is to give—keep holding out a lot of the things they want from the summit as a possibility. In bilateral relationships, it's in our interests to avoid—to keep them from going ape, and only after they've gone ape should we play the Israeli card. I mean, it's not in our interests to have the Russians go ape against us. And if—I think if we cancel the summit it should be in a very gentle way—I mean, a very gentlemanly way—that says [unclear exchange] all of the leaders will meet when—that we cannot meet while Russian tanks and Russian guns are shooting and annihilating us.

Nixon: Sit down here. We're gonna—it seems to me that before canceling, the one you should inform is the Chinese.

³ See footnote 3, Document 198.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: I mean, let's make it a point to write direct letter, a message from me to Chou En-lai, saying [why we're] doing this; that the Russians have been—not—say not only in this but in other areas have proved to be not trustworthy. See what I mean? Actually, [unclear] in Vietnam. And what we do now in Vietnam is not directed against them but against the Russians. We can make some awful good points.

Kissinger: Oh, yes. Mr. President, we have come back from every crisis stronger, and I think we're going to become stronger because of this one.

Nixon: Well, we have to be quite aware of the fact, Henry, that there's one difference. In the other crisis, there was always beneath the surface a majority would be for us. This time, if they're canceling the Russian summit, there isn't any way that I can do it. I could make the greatest goddamn speech that has ever been made in the history of this office, and the people are going to be terribly, terribly put down because of this. So, let's face that. That is all right with me. I mean, I think in the long run what counts is what happens. I think we have to realize though in canceling that people are going to be disappointed, a few hawks will [unclear] that'll be hawk-wire, which is not a majority. In the meantime, it will unleash our political enemies on the Hill, who will have—will then pass probably resolutions that will just knock the hell out of us and make fund cut-offs and everything else. Got to figure that will happen. You've got to figure—this is what I mean, when you figure consequences, you've got to figure that the Russians, of course, will unleash their worldwide propaganda. They'll go all out in their propaganda here. If you think Joe Kraft has been bad to this point, if he gets orders from the Russian Embassy to beat Nixon, he will plant things, lie, steal, anything. I remember this in '60, you see? Perhaps you may not remember.

Kissinger: I remember that.

Nixon: Khrushchev very deliberately helped [John] Kennedy. He did it the last 2 weeks. And he helped him all the way. It's all right. And the Russians will do the same on me.

Kissinger: Well, they may or may not. It depends on—

Nixon: Well, they will for the reason that we will take a bad offing public opinion-wise. We're going to get squeals, and this and that and the other thing. And as they see then the possibility of a Democrat winning, they'll say, no, we'll push this son-of-a-bitch right down the tubes. I mean, I'm just looking at the worst of both worlds.

Kissinger: That's one of the things, in my judgment.

Nixon: And let's not have any illusions about that. I—you see, you and I talk—we talk about those things—the government—Hoover today, patriotism, loyalty, principle, and the rest, and that we say we hope

to God that there's enough of that in the country. Well, there certainly is enough to support the bombing in the North in order to avoid a disaster. Whether there is enough to support bombing of the North and then give up all hope of peace. You see, it's the hope thing.

Kissinger: Yeah, but I'm not sure—

Nixon: The hope thing. The China thing was important from one standpoint only—hope. The American people are suckers. Getting to know you—all that bullshit. They're for people to people.

Kissinger: Yeah, but it's for precisely that reason to go there under these circumstances and to cater to that group, it's just—

Nixon: It's not—it isn't that group—I don't mean [unclear] The gray, middle America—they're suckers.

Kissinger: But therefore, to bring it off, you would have to do it, not to bomb there, to have a plausible case—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: —that you brought peace, which means that you'll have to give credit and you have to sign the joint statement of principles, to which I've already agreed, more or less. I mean, such a correct—

Nixon: Well the joint statement, in fairness, and I'm just being the devil's advocate, the joint statement of principles might well be interpreted by some as leaning to the Russians, and we have agreed we're going to quit this kind of adventurism like Vietnam.

Kissinger: Only when we are strong. Not in the present context. If we go over to Vietnam, sure.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: That's—I think we will pay—

Nixon: When will you get your speech ready by?

Kissinger: My speech? Oh, the speech for you.

Nixon: Tomorrow?

Kissinger: No, no, by this afternoon. By noon.

Nixon: Okay. Don't say that, because you and I are going to meet at 3 o'clock, so give until this evening, 'til 7 o'clock.

Kissinger: I have a WSAG meeting.⁴

Nixon: Get that out of the way.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: Is there anything you can tell that you need help on?

⁴ The meeting was held on May 5 to discuss Vietnam. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

Kissinger: Just about Rogers, otherwise I'll get into that same situation.

Nixon: Remember, we're making a perception that—we've got a lot of possibilities to use.

Kissinger: No, I—

Nixon: Tell the Russians we'll only—that a minimum condition for a summit is basically, is that, as there was for the Chinese trip, there must not be an offensive while we're in Moscow, for 10 days before and during the period. After that, do what they damn please. It probably won't sell.

Kissinger: That's a good—that's a possibility. Of course, it [unclear] if they cancel the summit. But then so be it. We will have the record of having tried.

Nixon: Okay.

195. Editorial Note

From 3:04 to 5:35 p.m. on May 4, 1972, President Nixon, his Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger and Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman—joined by the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Haig a half hour after the conversation began—discussed the impact of the war in Vietnam upon the upcoming Moscow summit. Nixon contended that either side would cancel the summit in light of the air strikes being ordered against North Vietnamese Army units. He noted:

“That strike should have gone off last week. It didn't go. But it's got to go. Now I want to tell you what I have in mind; it is to go. I don't care what the Russian answer is, it is to go. Then it is to go for two days, but not for two days and then wait to see if they negotiate. It is to go for two days, and then we will wait a little, but we've got to get back to the battle [Hue]. I realize that. And then, if the Russians cancel, we'll blockade. We will blockade and continue to bomb. But we are now going to win the war, and that's my position . . . If it costs the election, I don't give a shit. But we are going to win the war.”

The President added that he could not allow the war to be lost. “We are going to cream those bastards, and we're going to cream them good,” he proclaimed.

The conversation then turned to the domestic and international impacts that a cancellation of the summit would wrought. Kissinger noted that the Soviets were out to destroy Nixon. He believed that the situation in Vietnam would bring this intended consequence about. The

discussion then turned to Kissinger's meeting with the North Vietnamese. "Their strategy is to deprive the American people of any hope," Kissinger stated. But Kissinger recommended that the administration first blockade, since, as he put it, "You can say that the Russians might accept the likelihood of a blockade." Being "leery" of an air strike, Kissinger added: "What I would do—What I am now, at least, putting to you for your consideration is do a blockade. That is at least something totally different . . . Then you still have to bomb." Nixon responded, "I know." Kissinger believed that with a blockade first the President would not run up against a "massive emotional reaction" that would be generated by the bombing.

Later in the conversation Nixon expressed regret that he did not follow his instincts and order extensive bombing in the past, but he did see some merit to the proposal of the blockade. "You see, Henry, this appeals to me so much more than breaking off the summit and then doing it," he related. "The reason is that, goddammit, we're just not using rhetoric this time." Kissinger replied: "My worry about the 2-day bombing strike was, whether you let—The first strike you did on Hanoi and Haiphong was to get their attention. You've given them 3 weeks to get their attention. They haven't delivered. If now we do a 2-day strike, and then they say, 'all right, you've got our attention again,' and sucker us through a summit, then we are in June and we are still in an inconclusive situation."

Nixon thought that the summit would inevitably be canceled, and thus the U.S. Government had to do it before the Soviets did. He contended that he could not go to the summit when the Communists were in positions of strength, especially in Vietnam. "I'm putting it quite bluntly now; I'm being quite precise," he remonstrated. "South Vietnam may lose, but the United States cannot lose. Which means that basically I have made the decision that whatever happens in South Vietnam, we are going to cream North Vietnam." Since the bombing was essential for taking out roads, rail lines into China, and petroleum stockpiles, a blockade would not work without consequent bombing. Nixon noted his position: "We know that we can lose the summit, and still not lose the country. But we cannot lose this war without losing the country. Now, I'm not thinking of myself but I'm thinking of the country. So I return, we cannot lose the war. Having started on that proposition, what do you have to do? For once, we've got to use the maximum power of this country against a shit-ass little country to win the war. We can't use the word 'win' though, though others can, but we're going to use it for the purpose." The blockade would be the key to a positive outcome. Noting that the North Vietnamese had consistently rejected "every offer of peace possible," Nixon related that there was little choice other than all-out bombing. He was aware of the results of the bombing, which included that "the Russians would cancel

the summit. [The] Russians could get very tough with Berlin,” and that “they might fart around in Cuba.”

In response to Kissinger’s prediction that the Soviets would cancel the summit at the inception of air strikes in Vietnam, the following discussion ensued:

Nixon: “Now you see the problem is, it is true we’re risking the summit for a blockade. But, on the other hand, on balance, I think if we have the blockade, we have a plan which we know militarily will accomplish our goal which is not losing this damn war.”

Kissinger: “Mr. President, I am not even sure—my Soviet expert thinks that a blockade is somewhat less risky than bombing because the Soviets don’t have to challenge it. But probably it risks certain—I would agree with my Soviet guys—that the trouble with the bombing and that sort of thing is that the North Vietnamese are practically asking us to bomb.”

Nixon: [unclear exchange] “The trouble’s with the bombing first and the blockade second, because you’re for bombing if we blockade.”

Kissinger: “Oh, yeah.”

Nixon: “The trouble’s with the bombing first, go ahead.”

Kissinger: “The trouble with the bombing first is that the North Vietnamese are practically asking us to bomb them. There must be some collusion between them and the Soviets at this—at this point, even if there wasn’t any earlier. They must have the whole propaganda machine revved up. But leaving that aside, you bomb for 2 days and then stop, or bomb for 3 days and then stop, then the North Vietnamese—then the Russians say all right, we’ve got the word and will discuss it with you at the summit. Then we’re again, if they don’t cancel, then we’re in the same box we were at the beginning.”

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: “You can’t bomb again until after the summit they launch another series of offensives. That’s the box I was in, in Moscow. What else? They say nothing, and then you keep bombing, and they’ll cancel the summit because of the bombing, which is the most neuralgic form of behavior. And on top of that—”

Nixon: “See, it was the bombing, you’ll recall, that brought Johnson down.”

Kissinger: “—So, I think that if you blockade first—I think the basic decision you have to make, which is also the one John Connally mentioned to us, is are you going to win this war and are you going to do whatever is necessary not to lose the war? Once you’ve made that decision, the rest is tactics, which works better. I think the blockade gives you a chance to state your case. It gives the Soviets a minor opportunity to back off it, if they want to. After all, they did back off

in Cuba when challenged with a blockade. It—And then you start bombing systematically, just running down their supplies, you don't have to do a horrendous strike because you can operate like a surgeon. We just put one aircraft carrier out there with no other job but to take out the POL first. If we mine the harbor and, say, arm the mines in such a way that they are set for 4 days from now, that forces the ships out of there, because if they are not they are going to be bottled up in the harbor now. Then we go after the docks. And—So we can reduce Haiphong to a shell and we can systematically destroy their war manufacturing capacity. The thing that killed Johnson was that they were pumping in stuff faster than he could destroy it, and that they were fighting a guerilla war, so they didn't have to keep large amounts of supplies flowing south, and because Sihanoukville was open, so they didn't have to—"

Nixon: "We've cut a lot of that out."

Kissinger: "With Sihanoukville closed, with all of their stuff having to come down the rails, or the roads, and with Haiphong closed, and with their reserves being systematically destroyed, something's got to give. Now, that's the argument for the blockade. And I think if we go tough, we've got to give the maximum shock effect and get it over with."

Nixon: "Now, just one question. What do the Chinese do?"

Kissinger: "Well, the blockade incidentally has the additional advantage that it forces Hanoi closer to the Chinese. And therefore, what will happen? The Chinese will scream. The Chinese may even open up their southern ports as a replacement for Haiphong and permit stuff to come in at that port. That will take months, however, to bring [unclear]. But there's a good chance that they would—"

Nixon: "You don't see the Chinese moving manpower in there? I didn't think so either."

Kissinger: "No, besides it wouldn't make any difference. They wouldn't get enough of them down. But I don't think they'd do manpower. They would open, in my judgment, one of their southern ports as a replacement for Haiphong." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Executive Office Building, Conversation No. 334–44)

196. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 5, 1972.

[Omitted here is a discussion of Kissinger's speech to the Asia Society in New York City the previous evening.]

Nixon: I was going to ask you to do something today that is very important. I want you to be rather cool, particularly outgoing with Dobrynin. I want you to play them like they play us, and be very, very nice. Act as if everything was going ahead on schedule. But act very, very nice. Say how gracious we are—how pleased Mrs. Nixon is with the graciousness of Mrs. Dobrynin, and all that. Because now that the die is cast, we are going to play this in the most vicious way that we can with those bastards.

[Omitted here is Kissinger's discussion of going ahead on all planning for military action in Vietnam, especially urging the President to be wary of "some leaks in the White House." H.R. Haldeman entered at 9:21 a.m. to join the discussion regarding the blockade in Vietnam and left at 9:30 a.m.]

Kissinger: Now I feel I must put before you this consideration, Mr. President. We must do something drastic, there's no question about it. The advantage of a blockade is that it commits us irrevocably, that after that we've crossed and there's no turning back. It's a great advantage. And the other side must then do something. The disadvantage is that it confronts the Soviets most directly.

Nixon: They might [unclear].

Kissinger: They can hardly step back from that. They may, but my Soviet expert thinks that it's more likely that they'll step back from a blockade than from a bombing, but—

Nixon: Well, the disadvantage of the bombing is, as you put it so effectively yesterday, is that they expect it, and therefore it's already been discounted.

Kissinger: The disadvantage of the bombing is that it will trigger every goddamn peace group in this country.

Nixon: So will a blockade.

Kissinger: And—

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 720–4. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 9:14 to 10:09 a.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Nixon: Either does that. It's the line—the major escalation—that they're all talking about. Either the blockade or the bombing—they're going to trigger the peace groups. So have no doubts about that.

Kissinger: But it's hard to turn off a blockade.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: I mean, for you to turn off—you can always stop bombing for a day or two or a week or—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: Or 2 weeks, and therefore—

Nixon: So that would be ineffective.

Kissinger: The bombing?

Nixon: We cannot have a stop and start things again. We've been around and around and around. I understand the problems with the blockade.

Kissinger: No, I just wanted to put it—

Nixon: Not only theirs—that problem confronts a lot of them in the Soviet Union, the Indians, and the Chinese.

Kissinger: Those are no problem. But the Chinese are a problem too.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: But in a way, of course, it's all a question of degree. A prolonged bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong—

Nixon: They have to react.

Kissinger: Will do the same thing. It will send the question—

Nixon: The other thing is that the bombing has been done before. It's the same old routine. We're back to bombing, bombing, bombing, stop the bombing, stop the bombing. So they're going to say lift the blockade, lift the blockade. On that point it isn't as strong a case for it. The blockade is not as good a target as the bombing in terms of riots.

Kissinger: You can, well, of course there's got to be bombing too with a blockade.

Nixon: Oh, I understand. But the people are going to look at the blockade. The blockade is going to be so overwhelming in terms of its public relations impact.

Kissinger: And you—

Nixon: I understand. Look, Henry, the main point is that when you raise these points which you've got to raise, there are no good choices.

Kissinger: No.

Nixon: There are no good choices. Sure, there's a choice of a 2-day pop, and then go back and then hope to Christ they'll want to negotiate about something. And it isn't going to happen.

Kissinger: That's right.

[Omitted here is further discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

Kissinger: Another advantage of the blockade is that you can go to the American people where you can't go to the American people—

Nixon: About bombing I've already presented that to the American people on April 26th.²

Kissinger: And you can rally the American people for a blockade while you cannot rally them—

Nixon: That's right. That's right.

Kissinger: And that's not an inconsiderable—

Nixon: It's a helluva considerable thing. The blockade has the advantage that it's—first, it's a total commitment; it's decisive. And in the end, let's face it, in the end, we've got to figure, Henry, we may lose the election, and so forth and so on. But in the end, the blockade will end the war.

Kissinger: Yup.

Nixon: And, by God—

Kissinger: Well, if you win the war you won't lose the election.

Nixon: If you win it soon enough. And see that's the problem. The blockade, we know damn well that in 8 months we'll have them at their knees.

Kissinger: Oh, I think that with bombing we'll have them quicker—with bombing, before they can get alternative routes organized.

Nixon: So, my view is that the blockade rallies the people; it puts it to the Russians. I mean, the only advantage, as I told you earlier, as I said earlier, is the line that Connally came up with is to start bombing again. And then, if the Russians still do not break off the summit—you see, the bombing-blockade thing has this possible advantage, which I ran by you yesterday. You bomb. After bombing, the Russians bitch but they do not break off the summit. Then we continue bombing. Then I suppose, we can go to the summit.

Kissinger: Well, if you bomb enough, they'll break off the summit. There's no question about it.

Nixon: Well then, that perhaps is the mess we're in because we can't bomb unless we bomb now. We can't bomb and then have—you can't bomb and then have them kicking us around while we're in Moscow. You see, that's the point Thieu made which is tremendously compelling. I cannot be in Moscow at a time when the North Vietnamese are rampaging through the streets of Hue or for that matter through the streets of Kontum.

² See Document 171.

[Omitted here is discussion of Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's opposing position on the blockade.]

Kissinger: We should go on this as if we were going all out on it, and I'm saying this to you—I am not saying it to Haig, or to Moorer, or to Connally, or to anyone else. I mean, we still have a few pieces that have got to come in. We still have got to get the Russian reply. If it doesn't come by the end of the day, it's too late. But I'm sure it will come today.

Nixon: Yes.

Kissinger: See, another problem you face is you bomb Hanoi and Haiphong, and then the Russians do to you what they did to me. They come and we'll talk about it. And then you've got to stop again. Of course, you could say fine, but "I won't stop it now until—"

Nixon: You could—well, putting that case at its best, you bomb Hanoi and Haiphong. And the Russians will say, "Look, you come and will have sort of a pause while we have the summit, as we did at the Chinese summit." And you remember, I said that it's a possibility; that's one thing that could happen.

Kissinger: Of course. We shouldn't look back to the Chinese summit. We weren't bombing the North then, Mr. President.

Nixon: Let's suppose—let's look at this, and leave that out of it.

Kissinger: Everything the—

Nixon: The Russians still might say, "Well, during this period of time we'll cool it." That'd be the condition of our going, and we go and we come back, and we start bombing again. The problem is will bombing Hanoi and Haiphong do the trick, Henry?

Kissinger: Well, Hanoi isn't so important except for these rail lines.

Nixon: I know. But Haiphong or the bombing of Hanoi—will it do the trick?

Kissinger: The great—the conclusive argument to me in favor of the blockade is that you cross the Rubicon.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: That what they're trying to do to you, it's obvious, they're trying to kill you now. And I'm not sure—I said this to this group last night, they said what are the Russians [unclear]? And I said, "There's nothing the Russians would rather do than to get rid of the President. He's the only thing that stands between them and dominating the world." I said, "Now—"

Nixon: Now that's quite true.

Kissinger: That is true. But I was amazed by that group because now—

Nixon: You said that's why they're shooting all of a sudden while we were [unclear].

Kissinger: So, I think the only thing now—I don't believe they started out trying to overthrow the President. But if he gets too vulnerable at home, then you people are—and whoever starts nagging at him—is responsible. But what I think the—

Nixon: Those people are sensible enough, for Christ's sake, to know that Humphrey or McGovern or Teddy would be pacifists with the Russians, aren't they?

Kissinger: Oh yeah.

Nixon: Aren't they?

Kissinger: Oh yeah.

Nixon: Okay.

Kissinger: It was—I must tell you, I had—these last two evenings have been amazing in this respect because usually I get nagged at.

Nixon: Oh, Connally's point, of course, he's from Texas, but Connally talks to other people, apart from the polls and everything, he thinks that we got—he says you've got support in the country now and now's the time to do something.

Kissinger: You see, I don't—I never actually—One question was, how do you defend escalation? I said I'm not going to defend escalation. I said—

Nixon: Who escalated it?

Kissinger: I said, that's not the issue. There are only two issues. One is does the United States put a Communist government into power and allow itself and its enemies to defeat its friends? The second issue is do we—can any President permit 60,000 Americans to be made hostages, and will be shame and indignity, not wreck our whole domestic structure. Those are the only two.

Nixon: Also, I think the issue that how can the United States stand by after offering peace in every quarter and do nothing in response to an enormous enemy escalation—we're only responding to an enemy escalation. That's the real point here.

Kissinger: See, I think what the North Vietnamese are saying to themselves is all right, they know we're going to bomb. I mean, they know. And they say to themselves, "All right, they're going to take it." And—

Nixon: I think they are prepared to take the bombing, Henry—

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: You see—look, Henry, there's nobody that's more aware, because I, like you, one of the reasons we're both in here, is that we both take a long view, which goddamn few Americans do. That's why I said that we put out a little game plan if we wanted to cancel the summit first and then going after them, which I think we're absolutely right in not doing that.

Kissinger: Now that is something—

Nixon: That's good advice, because it's something I've seen. I led you into that—I led you out of that, yes I did. Because I remember what Eisenhower did. But I had really forgotten it didn't hurt Eisenhower when the Russians canceled the summit. It didn't hurt him. Goddammit, the American people don't like to be kicked—It didn't hurt Eisenhower when the goddamn Japanese canceled his trip.³ Remember?

Kissinger: Absolutely.

Nixon: All right, now, it didn't hurt me, as Vice President. I'll never forget when I got stoned in Caracas.⁴ It helped me. People thought it was great. Now, it depends on how you react to it. Here's the problem. Looking at the long view, bombing might turn it around. It runs a better chance of keeping the summit alive. The Russians can live with the bombing or might be able to live with a blockade. All right, that's the advantage of that. But we constantly come back to the, basically, Henry, to the fundamental problem. And Connally, with his, you know, with his animal-like decisiveness, and which I also have, except I—

Kissinger: You're much more subtle.

Nixon: Through many years I've put much more layers of subtlety on it. But anyhow, Connally runs quickly to the point. He says, look, the summit is great; I hope you don't knock it off. I think you can do both. And I hope you can do both; I think you will do both. But, he says, even if you don't, if you're going to do the first things first, you've got to remember, you can do without the summit, but you cannot live with a defeat in Vietnam. You must win the war in Vietnam. Or, to put it another way, you must not lose in Vietnam. That's crystal clear. So, everything's got to be measured against what wins or loses in Vietnam. And here is the weakness of the bombing. Bombing might turn the war in Vietnam around. The blockade certainly will turn it around. Now, here, the blockade plus, you understand—what I'm really saying here is, I think, that's what'll convince me to, say, win the war.

Kissinger: The blockade gets you across the Rubicon. There's no way it can't be ended without the blockade.

Nixon: Well, everybody knows then, that I've thrown down the goddamn gauntlet, and there it is. Do you want to pick it up? And, you see, I'm going to lift the blockade as I've said. It's not over yet—the bombing's not over yet.

³ Reference is to President Eisenhower's official trip to Japan in 1960 that was canceled due to riots; see *Foreign Relations, 1958–1960*, vol. XVIII, pp. 329–356.

⁴ Reference is to Nixon's 1958 trip to South America; see *ibid.*, vol. V, pp. 477–483.

Kissinger: The bombing—they cannot do it. This is the argument for the blockade now. It heightens the chance of a confrontation with the Russians.

Nixon: That's correct.

Kissinger: It will start the Chinese screaming.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: And you'll be accused of having blown up everything of your foreign policy, which is on the other hand a disadvantage.

Nixon: A great sadness to me. A great sadness to me. We've had a damn good foreign policy.

Kissinger: You have—

Nixon: Even if it all goes down the tubes, we will be remembered as the ones who went to China. And in the future, that'll work out.

Kissinger: Mr. President, actually, if you get re-elected, it will make your foreign policy. It's the same as the Laos operation. Everyone said that you now have broken it with the Chinese, and 3 months later we were there. And a year later, you were there. So, I think it will—

Nixon: Henry, if you come back to the fundamental point, as I took you up on that map yesterday. I showed you that little place, and we looked at it, and we think that this whole big wide world, everything rides on it. If there were a way, believe me, if there were a way that we could flush Vietnam down, flush it, and get out of it in any way possible and conduct a sensible foreign policy with the Russians and with the Chinese—

Kissinger: We'd do it.

Nixon: We ought to do it. We ought to do it. Because there's so much at stake. There's nobody else in this country at the present time with the exception of Connally in the next 4 years that can handle the Russians and the Chinese and the big game in Europe and the big game in Southeast Asia. You know it and I know it. And the big game with the Japanese 5 years from now. Who could help us to do—all right? So that's the stakes. That's why I—the only reason I had any doubts earlier in the week was that I had to face up to the fact 'cause I saw the inevitability of McGovern, or Humphrey, or the only other possibility is Teddy,⁵ who might be the worst of the three.

Kissinger: Certainly. No, McGovern's the worst.

Nixon: But anyway, as I saw that—McGovern would be the worst of the three for sure, but Teddy would be so stop-and-start that he

⁵ Reference is to Senator George McGovern (D–South Dakota), former Vice President and Senator Hubert Humphrey (D–Minnesota), and Senator Edward Kennedy (D–Massachusetts).

might get us into worse trouble. Anyway, if you're going to go for peace, you might as well surrender right off the bat rather than cost it all and slaughter. But my point is, Henry, that I had to put that in to the equation. And therefore, I had to go down the line and say how in the hell can we save, how the hell can we save, you know, the Presidency, and frankly, the present occupant, and that meant saving the summit. All right, I'm considering going, and I don't think there's any way you can do it—I don't think there's any way you can do it and at the same time temporize in Vietnam. I've reached the conclusion that we're in the situation where Vietnam is here and I assured Rogers and Laird, [unclear] let's make another offer, and have we agreed to offer this, and well, I don't know if we have, and they're wining and bitching about it. Well, Henry, you know and I know this is not true.

Kissinger: Mr. President, you and I know, perhaps as the only ones, if they had given us a face-saving way out, I was prepared to take it.

Nixon: I told you before you left.

Kissinger: You told me—because you told me that. They want us out in a humiliating way. They want us to put a Communist government into power. Goddamnit, let's face it, if they had accepted our May 31st proposal last year, they would have taken over Vietnam within a year or two.

Nixon: Oh, I'll say. God, I know. I still wish they had, nevertheless.

Kissinger: Of course. But it isn't as if we've been intransigent in our offers. Not at all.

Nixon: See, if we can survive past the election, Henry, and then Vietnam goes down the tubes, it really doesn't make any difference.

Kissinger: I agree with you. That's seems the whole—

Nixon: But we have no way to survive past the election.

Kissinger: Right. I think—

Nixon: There's no other way to go, given their other argument for bombing. Maybe we could bomb but not blockade, and still have the summit, and might last the election.

Kissinger: But, Mr. President, I think they're going to kill you. They're going to put you into the Johnson position. This is the other argument for the blockade.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: They're going to have you as the bomber. The guy—when I looked at the DRV position, they wanted you to break off the peace talks, Mr. President.

Nixon: That's right. That's right.

Kissinger: So you're the guy who doesn't talk.

Nixon: Oh, I hope they know, the guy across from me helped to break them off—did you get that across?

Kissinger: Oh, yeah, that got across. But all of this is minor because the peace groups are going to keep backing—

Nixon: The headlines are that we broke off the talks.

Kissinger: So that 6 months from now, 3 months from now—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —it's forgotten that there was an invasion, and therefore—

Nixon: Henry, let me put it this way. I know that you've been thinking about this during the night as I have. But I come back to the fundamental point, leaving the president out and so forth. Who knows, something could happen—the Democrats could get smart and draft Connally and I could be defeated.

Kissinger: That's impossible; inconceivable.

Nixon: Well, if they did, it could save the country.

Kissinger: But Mr. President, they're more likely to draft you. They will not draft Connally.

Nixon: But anyway, my point is, we have to face this fact: leave me out and leave McGovern out and all others. The United States of America at this point cannot have a viable foreign policy if we are humiliated in Vietnam. We must not lose in Vietnam. It's as cold as that. Right?

Kissinger: I agree.

Nixon: And they have not given us any way to avoid being humiliated. And since they have not, we must draw the swords. So the blockade is on. And I must say, and incidentally, but I want one thing understood, you said bombing—Moorer is right, the surgical operation theory is all right—but I want that place, whenever the planes are available, bombed to smithereens during the blockade. If we draw the swords out, we're going to bomb those bastards all over the place.

Kissinger: No question.

Nixon: And let it fly. Let it fly.

Kissinger: The only point I disagree is we can do all of this without killing too many civilians. I said, no way.

Nixon: I don't want to kill civilians; you know that I don't want to. I don't try to kill any. But goddammit, don't be so careful that you don't knock out the oil for their tanks. See my point?

Kissinger: Oh, God no. God no. Those have to go.

[Omitted here is further discussion on the impact of intended military actions in Vietnam.]

197. Editorial Note

On May 5, 1972, President Nixon met with his Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board from 10:11 to 11:37 a.m. In attendance were Chairman of the Board Admiral George Anderson and board members William Baker, Gordon Gray, Franklin Lincoln, Frank Pace, Franklin Murphy, Nelson Rockefeller, and Gerald Burke, and National Security Council staff member Thomas Latimer. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) The meeting began as follows:

"The Chairman, Admiral Anderson, stated that the Board was grateful for the opportunity to meet with the President, especially during this very critical and busy period. The members hoped to be able to discuss certain matters that might be helpful to the President in preparing for his forthcoming trip to Moscow. The Board has followed closely the developments in Soviet strategic weaponry as a result of the President's specific charge upon it three years ago to monitor and assess the Soviet capabilities in this field. The Chairman said that the members were impressed with the continuing, across-the-board growth of Soviet forces in ICBMs, in SLBMs, in various defensive weapons, and, most recently, in the emphasis that the Soviets are placing on improving their command and control systems. This emphasis is illustrated by their efforts in hardening command and control facilities, in creating redundant communications, and in conducting live exercises of the system which involve direct participation by the top leaders of the Soviet Union. The Chairman went on to point out that it was not, however, the intention of the Board at this meeting to summarize intelligence on the Soviet strategic threat but rather to discuss the adequacy of the intelligence on the threat and to offer individual comments on related matters which could be useful to the President in the course of his visit to the Soviet Union.

"Admiral Anderson characterized U.S. intelligence on Soviet strategic capabilities as being generally good insofar as it pertains to field testing of new weapons systems and to strategic weapons deployment. He commented that the community has done a highly commendable job in improving the report formats in which this intelligence is presented. On the other hand, intelligence on laboratory research and development of Soviet weapons systems is inadequate, as is hard information on Soviet strategy, doctrine plans, and intentions. The Chairman reminded the President that last November he had directed the establishment of a Net Assessments group within the NSC staff. This staff, he said, is now being established under Andrew Marshall and, because of the importance of net assessments, warrants the President's strong support.

“The President expressed his appreciation for the Board’s continuing efforts in monitoring the adequacy of intelligence on the strategic threat and, in this connection, said that he hoped the Board would get together with John McCloy and the members of the President’s Advisory Board on Disarmament. But the President then enjoined the Board to begin to give equal emphasis to non-nuclear warfare capabilities. Citing the recent introduction into South Vietnam of additional Soviet tactical weapons, the President stated that he was concerned with the adequacy of U.S. conventional weapons, and more particularly with the quality of the weapons we have been providing to our allies. The success of the Nixon Doctrine is largely dependent upon our capability to supply these countries with proper military equipment. He directed the Board to examine very carefully the effectiveness of U.S. conventional weapons systems in comparison with Soviet weapons.”

Thereafter followed reports and discussion on reconnaissance collection capabilities, human clandestine intelligence, economic intelligence utilization, and relative U.S.-Soviet nuclear capabilities in the near-term future. The President concluded the meeting with the following remarks:

“The President commented at length upon the need for the leaders throughout American society to maintain their moral strength and courage in the face of the corrosive attitudes which seem to be pervading many segments of our culture. He made reference to this need in the business community, in the universities, in the communications media, and among those other elements of our society who, by virtue of education and other good fortune, have been given the opportunity to influence heavily the outlook and attitude of their fellow citizens. The President noted that the real strength of America inevitably resides in the average citizen; whether this strength, in turn, becomes greater or lesser is dependent to a critical degree on the ability and willingness of leaders of our society in discharging the moral obligations which have been placed upon their shoulders. The President expressed the hope that the members of the Board, who have such a unique vantage point from which to view the external threats of the United States, will seek in their daily contacts to remind American leaders in all walks of life of the enormous responsibilities they carry, especially in impressing youth on the need to preserve the nation’s strength and moral fiber.” (Memorandum for the record by Burke, May 12; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 277, Agency Files, PFIAB, Vol. VI, Jan.–June (1972)) In an attached May 12 memorandum to Haig that was forwarded to Kissinger, Latimer summarized the meeting. A recording of the meeting is *ibid*, White House Tapes, Cabinet Room, Conversation No. 100–1.

198. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

May 6, 1972, 12:13 p.m.

K: Mr. President.

P: You are not meeting with Dobrynin are you?

K: As it happened I have just been talking to him because there have been some clarifications on the SALT point to move into our direction.²

P: I just don't want you to do it too much right now Henry.

K: No, no he called me.

P: Well, I know I know. But—I think you have been gracious to them and everything but you understand what I mean. I don't give a damn about SALT. I just couldn't care less about it and I just think right now we better get all of our troops together and pull ourselves together—but have you finished with him—or are you still meeting.

K: No, I am not meeting with him. He called me on the telephone. It was just a three minute conversation.

P: Well, they said you were in the Map Room. I just . . .

K: Oh, no, no. I was in the Map Room because the Israeli Deputy Prime Minister.³

P: Oh, I see.

K: Who was a former student of mine.

P: Oh that is great. I hope he [likes?] the Israelis.

K: Oh no, I wasn't meeting with Dobrynin.

P: Not your office, but the operators thought you were. I said I suppose he is with the Ambassador—and he said yes.

K: No, no. I was with Yigal Alon who is Deputy Prime Minister and it was really 50 percent social—he was a former student of mine but also to take their temperature.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking. The President was at Camp David; Kissinger was in Washington.

² According to a transcript of a telephone conversation with Kissinger later that day, Dobrynin disclosed that the Soviet leadership had decided not to insist upon mention of certain intractable issues in any agreement arising out of Moscow. (Ibid.)

³ Kissinger met with Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Alon, Ambassador Rabin, Minister Idan, and Haig in the White House Map Room from 10:55 to 11:53 a.m. that day. (Ibid., Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule)

P: Do any of the Israelis except Mrs. Meir realize the importance of the United States not being humiliated in Vietnam?

K: Oh yes, he does. Absolutely.

P: None of the Jewish Community here that does except for you and Taft Schreiber.

K: I don't consider myself part of the Jewish community.

P: Oh, I know you don't. I am kidding. And I don't say that in anger or anything. It is just sad isn't it.

K: Well, he says that—I made that point to him—and he said—I said to him look, if McGovern becomes President and even if he gives you a hundred more phantoms, you are dead. Because America won't be strong enough to do anything.

P: We won't be prepared to seal it(?) Henry—you remember the big decision at the time of Jordan—it was not the Phantoms it was the ring. Who provided the ring?

K: And he said that he agreed with that and he claims that they are working to get you a much larger Jewish vote than you have ever had.

P: Well, not that I am impressed. But let me say this. I don't think you understood. Maybe they will go wild over us. Let me say that if the Soviet reaction is too tough—we will let them go. [Omission in the source text] the trouble in that part of the world. Don't you agree.

K: I agree.

P: Now the second point is, how are you going to handle, Henry, the briefing of Dobrynin? Are you just going to do it an hour before? How about the Chinese. I think that is terribly important.

K: We will send Haig or somebody up [to New York City].

P: Yes.

K: I think you should have a letter to Brezhnev and Chou En-lai. And they should both be very conciliatory.

P: Right. Now with Dobrynin, there is one point which I am sure you had in mind is that the President is taking this move—has thought a great deal about the summit and one of the reasons we did it this way was because we didn't want to risk hitting Soviet ships. Nice slick way to do it(?)

K: Right.

P: Can I say one other thing. I don't know whether you have done this when you talked to Dobrynin. You just said that the President is very interested in knowing what Brezhnev and Kosygin would like as gifts. Have you gone through that one with them? Did they ask us what we want.

K: No, I haven't asked him yet.

P: I think that—you can tell them that Mrs. Nixon is picking the gifts and that you know we have everything from green birds(?)—we can give them some beautiful [transistor?] radios, there are all sorts of things we can give them. I mean . . . I want to give them two or three different things. But say the President wants to know how generous they are and that we would like to know what they would like. And that the President and Mrs. Nixon would like to know what they would like—and also what the ladies would like.

K: Right.

P: You might call them that in a conciliatory way.

K: Right.

P: I had a real tragedy here. You just couldn't believe it. I just dictated this damn thing—and these son-of-a-bitch dictaphones—these fellows up here. The power had gone out and I put a whole damn tape on and there wasn't a thing on it.

K: Isn't that tragic?

P: Can you imagine it? You know it is like getting up and making a speech and the public address is not working. All of the people we got.

K: And it is hard to ever repeat it exactly the same way again.

P: I know. Well, anything I have redone it again now.

K: That is a God-damn tragedy.

P: Well don't worry about it. I am getting it in some sort of form and getting Andrews over here now. You can send up any of your ideas you would like. When do you and I meet again?

K: I am at your disposal this whole weekend.⁴

P: No. Listen the main thing is you see that that blockade goes well.

K: Well I would have done whatever needs to be done by late this afternoon. So I could come up in the evening or in the morning. Whichever you want.

P: Well, you don't need to come up again—unless I feel that I need to talk to you about something. But I do feel that probably you should come up when we get going on the speech.

[Omitted here is further discussion on military operations in Vietnam.]

⁴ Nixon was at Camp David May 5–7. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

199. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, May 6, 1972, 2:45–4:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Contingency Plan for Operations Against North Vietnam

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Major General Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
George C. Carver, Special Assistant for Vietnam Affairs, CIA
Helmut Sonnenfeldt
John Holdridge
Richard Kennedy
John Negroponte
Winston Lord
Jonathan T. Howe

Dr. Kissinger assembled a group of NSC staff members plus a CIA official, who had just completed a study of the impact of a blockade, to discuss the effects of and possible international reactions to various contingency actions which were under serious consideration by the President. These actions included mining of North Vietnamese ports and interdiction by air of rail lines and other logistics targets throughout North Vietnam.

The meeting began with a presentation by Mr. Carver on the impact of closing off supplies to the port of Haiphong. (A copy of the report is at Tab A.)² The paper did not consider the effects of parallel steps which might be taken to interdict the logistics flow. After intensive discussion of various aspects of the supply problem, including differences in the situation in 1969 from those at present, Dr. Kissinger asked various staff experts for their assessment.

Hal Sonnenfeldt expressed the view that it was probable that the Soviet Union would cancel the Summit. However, he did not believe that the contemplated action would lead to a war. A variety of possible Soviet reactions were discussed. Sonnenfeldt felt that a paper he had prepared in 1969 concerning possible contingency actions³ was still valid with the exception that the United States was now better postured in its relations with the Soviet Union.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Office Files, Box 146, 1972 Offensive—Misc. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

² Attached but not printed.

³ Not found.

John Negroponte stated that the actions would have a major impact on ARVN morale and thereby greatly increase their fighting effectiveness. He stressed that the Government of North Vietnam was in a fairly precarious position and that mining and all out bombing could result in a shakeup of the current power structure.

John Holdridge outlined various options for the PRC and indicated that they might feel obliged to provide some manpower, allow use of Chinese air fields as a safehaven for North Vietnamese planes and open ports in South China. He felt the actions would cool relations with the United States and that the emphasis in U.S./PRC relations would focus almost exclusively on people to people contacts for a while. However, he did not believe these actions would lead to a major confrontation with the PRC. Holdridge also pointed out that relations with China were much better and our understanding of them had increased since earlier years when there was great concern about the intervention of Chinese forces in Vietnam.

Dr. Kissinger made the point that if the decision were made to carry out these operations, they must be done brutally and could not be restricted to halfway measures. A discussion ensued as to whether it would be better to carry out these operations before or after the Summit and before or after the battle of Hue. Most present agreed that the time for the operations, if they were to be conducted at all, was then—before the battle of Hue commenced and before the Summit.

George Carver raised the possibility that the North Vietnamese might harm our prisoners but several in the group, including Dr. Kissinger, disagreed, believing that there would be a major upswelling of indignation in this country and that the enemy would not do such a foolish thing.

Dr. Kissinger then pointed out that in analyzing the supply situation, consideration should be given to the technical possibility and probability that the North Vietnamese would shift to other means of supply before resources in the South were entirely depleted. In other words, in order to protect their forces they would have to take action before they ran completely out of supplies. All emphasized the importance of the ground battle in South Vietnam to the success of the plan. It was essential that the South Vietnamese go all out and win some battles.

Dr. Kissinger then summed up some of the arguments which had been presented:

—The North Vietnamese have manpower constraints. This would be the most severe test that they had faced and would undoubtedly affect their morale and cause strains in their own fabric. There were limits to what they could ask their people to endure.

—In 1965 the North Vietnamese felt that time was on their side. Now it was eight years later and they were faced with a blockade and a stronger South Vietnamese army in the South. It was possible that the blockade might affect their calculations in their convulsive and all out effort in the South. (Mr. Carver indicated that he felt there would be a change in the people sitting around the table. By that he meant Le Duan would not survive and there would be a new leadership alignment.)

—Morale in the South would be favorably affected and the operation might result in silencing President Thieu's opposition. This would dispel any doubt that the United States had worked a deal behind the back of the South Vietnamese and indicate that President Thieu was the man who had delivered the Americans. It would strengthen Thieu's hand politically. We in turn could say to the South Vietnamese that it was essential that they make a maximum all out effort. (Carver pointed out that there was a tendency to let the Americans do the job for them and we would have to be careful to ensure that this feeling did not prevail.)

—It would give us something to bargain with for our prisoners which we would not have had otherwise.

—There was a small chance that the actions would produce, after a period of delay, a more rapid negotiation to the end of the war. In the first weeks following the announcement, the North Vietnamese would want to maintain a tough position in order to see how the battle went in South Vietnam and whether there was major domestic opposition in the United States to the bargain. They obviously would not go immediately to the bargaining table.

On the other hand there were a number of disadvantages:

—With the U.S. having further invested its prestige, the defeat would be greater if the operations failed.

—The loss of the Summit was almost a foregone conclusion and could have a very negative effect on SALT and other important negotiations with the Soviet Union.

—There was likely to be a cooling of relations with the PRC.

Mr. Carver pointed out that the North Vietnamese had been lucky in Tet of 1968 in bringing the U.S. Government around to their position even though the North Vietnamese had suffered a serious defeat. If the North Vietnamese were checked on the ground in the South, they would be in a serious situation when faced with renewed bombing and mining.

Dr. Kissinger then asked each person present whether he was for or against putting the contingency plans into effect:

—Mr. Carver said that he would do it but do it thoroughly and do it soon.

—Mr. Holdridge said that he would favor the operation if we had enough resources to carry the day. If there were sufficient military resources, his vote was yes.

—Mr. Negroponte said he felt that he was more optimistic about the chances for success of the operation than others present and that he favored it without reservation. He felt the result would be quicker and more decisive than others anticipated. The morale factor would be a key to the success of the ARVN.

—Mr. Sonnenfeldt said that he favored it and that we should do it soon and sustain it.

—Mr. Lord said that Dr. Kissinger knew that he was against it. First, he didn't think it would work. Second, he thought our losses would exceed our gains and third if it didn't work, it would be throwing good money after bad and would compound our losses.

—Mr. Kennedy said that he would favor doing it but with the same reservation expressed by Mr. Holdridge concerning resources. His second reservation would be with regard to the possible negative domestic reaction. If we started the operation, we must be willing to pay the price and recognize that the other side might simply wait out the President's tenure. On balance, however, he was in favor of it.

—Commander Howe said that he would favor the operation provided it was done thoroughly and intensively.

—General Haig indicated that it was a tough decision and his major concern was on the domestic front but that on balance he favored it.

Dr. Kissinger then thanked all those for attending the meeting and expressing their views frankly.

200. Letter From Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev to President Nixon¹

Moscow, May 6, 1972.

Dear Mr. President,

I received your letter of May 3² and I wish to say frankly that to my colleagues and myself the pessimism of your conclusions from the Paris meeting of Dr. Kissinger with the representatives of the DRV seems unjustified.

In our deep conviction—and the recent trip of the Soviet delegation to Hanoi made this conviction of ours still firmer—the DRV leadership is ready, if the same readiness is displayed by the American side, to seek mutually acceptable decisions for a political settlement of the conflict. The Vietnamese want to see South Vietnam as an independent, neutral state free of any influence and interference from the outside. To come to such a status of South Vietnam they believe possible through the creation of a true coalition government consisting of representatives of the three main political forces, the Saigon regime included. This political question is one of the key issues of the whole Vietnam problem; its solution requires display of realism also on your part, it requires giving up the attempts to keep at any cost the existing power structure in South Vietnam rejected by the people.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2. No classification marking. Translated by the Soviet Embassy from a Russian version, also attached but not printed. Also attached is a reworking of specific points in a redraft of the Basic Principles. Notations on both the letter and the attachment read: "Handed to Dr. Kissinger by Amb. D, 5/6/72, 5:30 p.m." Dobrynin called Kissinger at 4:05 p.m. that day to inform him of receipt of this letter and to schedule an appointment with Kissinger. (Transcript of telephone conversation between Kissinger and Dobrynin, May 6, 4:05 p.m.; Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) According to the transcript of a telephone conversation at 5:05 p.m. on May 6, Nixon instructed Kissinger to "be just cold turkey"; to simply receive the message and not engage in any discussion about it or related issues with Dobrynin. (Ibid.) As noted in his Record of Schedule, Kissinger met with Dobrynin in the Map Room of the White House from 5:20 to 5:45 p.m. (Ibid., Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976) According to the transcript of a telephone conversation between Kissinger and Nixon at 5:45 p.m. that evening, Kissinger made the following report on the meeting: "Now, I got that message from Dobrynin and it's nothing. It is a very friendly letter to you from Brezhnev." Kissinger further described this note from Brezhnev as being "a good reply" and "a soft reply." (Ibid., Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) In his memoirs Kissinger described the letter as "a letter distinguished by its near irrelevance to the real situation." He also noted that "Brezhnev's letter served only to reinforce our determination." (*White House Years*, p. 1182)

² Document 190.

We do not find any desire on the part of the Vietnamese leaders to “bring disgrace” to the U.S. or to “humiliate” the President. But it is quite clear that they still have great mistrust for the actions and intentions of the American side. And to be just, the history of the Vietnam conflict—including that known from American documents themselves—gives them ground for such mistrust. Any unbiased person who would place himself in their place, must recognize that.

Therefore it would be hard to expect that the talks resumed after a long interval will yield results immediately. Clearly, to find common language and to work out mutually acceptable solutions, some time, patience and self-restraint will be required.

The attempts to step up military pressure on the Vietnamese side, as we already told you, Mr. President, can only cause further aggravation of the situation and an increase, in return, of the military actions by the Vietnamese side. There should be no doubt about it—the Vietnamese have proved their determination and ability to withstand military pressure.

Military pressure on the DRV would not only complicate the search for a political settlement of the conflict, but it could—even irrespective of our wishes as was said in my previous letter—entail serious consequences for peace in Asia, for general peace and for the Soviet-American relations.

Another thing. In telling all this to you, Mr. President, I want that there be absolute clarity that both before and in this case, we set forth with all frankness our understanding of the situation and opinion about ways out of it. As regards settlement itself of the conflict in Vietnam, that question can and must be solved in the talks between the Vietnamese side and the U.S.

We would like to express the hope that the American side will display at this moment restraint and political courage in its approach to the present-day situation and will not miss the opportunities opening up for a political settlement of the conflict and for an end to the Vietnam war. Such an approach would, no doubt, be welcomed throughout the world and would in many ways clear the road for a serious progress in the relations between our countries.

Those are the considerations which I believed necessary to express in connection with your last letter.

Sincerely,

L. Brezhnev³

³ This translation bears Brezhnev’s typed signature.

201. Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, May 6, 1972.

SUBJECT

Soviet, Chinese, Free World Reactions to a US Attempt To Deny Sea Access to North Vietnam

Assumption: The measures that the US might take in an attempt to deny sea-borne imports to North Vietnam could include (a) mining the approaches to ports; (b) bombing of ports to destroy unloading and storage facilities; (c) naval blockade.

1. These measures vary in the sharpness of confrontation they would produce and therefore in the degree of tension and risk which might result. The reactions of the various parties would also vary accordingly.

2. For the Soviets and Chinese, the key questions posed would be the following:

(a) Would Hanoi's capacity to carry on its war effort be significantly reduced?

(b) Would the US actions be sustained for a considerable period?

(c) Would these portend other US escalatory steps?

(d) Would the countermeasures which might be envisioned carry tolerable risks and be sufficient to uphold the prestige of the Communist powers?

3. It is conceivable, but we judge extremely unlikely, that Moscow and Peking or one of them would respond to the US show of determination by moving to place Hanoi under genuine pressure to reach a compromise settlement. While neither of the Communist great powers has a vital interest in the success of Hanoi's campaign in South Vietnam, they almost certainly could not agree on this course and each would fear to act unilaterally because of reactions anticipated in other Communist states and parties. Moreover, neither would wish, because

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 160, Vietnam Country Files, Vietnam–May 1972. Top Secret. In a May 6 memorandum to Kissinger entitled "Planned Actions," Lord offered a scenario for and discussed a broad range of reactions that could unfold from the impending decisions on Vietnam, and posited: "No matter what we achieve we nevertheless certainly *will* suffer some of the losses suggested in the scenario: Summit, SALT, other agreements, at least some cooling with Peking, civilian casualties, etc. We *could* have other losses: a more serious break with Peking, some Moscow-Peking rapprochement, etc. *In short, even if we 'succeed,' would there be a net gain?*" (Ibid., Box 1330, NSC Unfiled Material, 1972, 5 of 8, Vietnam—Sensitive 1972 USSR Summit)

of concern for its own standing as a great power, to bear the onus of yielding obviously under US pressure.

4. Thus we believe that Moscow and Peking would respond initially by joint measures to increase supplies to Hanoi via China's land routes. The capacity of the land routes from China into North Vietnam is adequate to supply Hanoi's needs over an indefinite period, and we have no doubt that the Soviets and Chinese could agree to cooperate in carrying out supply by these routes if they judged that necessary to sustain Hanoi. Finally, the ability to keep Hanoi going by land supply would give time to consider other measures, and the broader costs and risks which might emerge more clearly as the crisis developed.

USSR Reactions

5. Having decided on these measures to continue support for Hanoi, the Soviets would be primarily concerned to contain the crisis, and to limit the costs to Soviet-American relations generally. Nevertheless, they would consider that their standing as a great power had been directly challenged and would want to act to uphold their prestige.

6. On the political level, Moscow would feel that it had no choice but to react sharply. The machinery of propaganda would be employed with high intensity in order to maximize the pressure of world and domestic US opinion against the US administration. Unless the US desisted and the crisis seemed on the way to resolution within a few days or so, the effect would be to make the May Summit impossible. The Soviets would almost certainly move to cancel it. This step might be delayed somewhat if the US measures were limited to mining, which would pose a less direct challenge to the USSR, but would come in any case if the US persisted.

7. The Soviets would be aware that the damage to the climate of Soviet-American relations generally—to the SALT agreement, to trade prospects, and to détente in Europe—would be severe. But we believe that the Kremlin consensus would come down on the side of paying this price rather than seeming to bow under US pressure. In doing so, there would probably be the intention to return to present lines of policy toward the US as soon as circumstances permitted.

8. There would remain in the question of what specific steps the USSR should take to counter the US moves. While considering these, the Soviets would probably order their ships out of North Vietnamese waters. If the US limited itself to mining North Vietnam's sea approaches, the Soviets would probably give Hanoi technical assistance in sweeping operations. To bombing attacks on ports they would reply with additional measures to strengthen North Vietnam's air defenses, but would probably not take overt measures such as sending Soviet aircraft and crews. (Sinking of Soviet ships during such attacks

would obviously place the Soviets under great pressure to react more sharply.) A blockade would pose a more direct challenge than bombing or mining. We believe that the Soviets would judge that the risks of an attempt to defy a blockade would be too great, and would avoid doing so. Before the world, they would make a virtue of their restraint and point to their continuing support to Hanoi in other ways.

9. Throughout, the Soviets would be concerned to *show* an adequate response in support of North Vietnam and in defense of their own prestige. They would be equally concerned to keep the crisis under control and to limit its damage to their wider interests, but would find this increasingly difficult if the crisis was prolonged. They would count heavily on mounting pressures on the US administration at home and abroad to deter further escalation and to force Washington to desist eventually. And they would be prepared at a suitable moment to sponsor a new formula for resumption of negotiations, though still not on terms which Hanoi would judge prejudicial to its interests.

[Omitted here is further discussion on Chinese and world-wide reaction to the blockading of North Vietnamese ports.]

202. Editorial Note

On May 7, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger spent much of the day at Camp David helping President Nixon prepare for his televised address on Vietnam the following evening. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) In his diary entry for this date, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman recalled:

“I went to Camp David from Williamsburg by chopper this morning. Met with the P and Henry at 4:00 over at Birch. Henry was analyzing things; says he thinks the Soviets will definitely cancel the Summit [omission in the source text]. There’s no question but that they will launch a venomous attack on Nixon on the basis that he sabotaged the last chance for peace in the world. The P agreed that this was the line he would undoubtedly take. We had considerable discussion about follow-up and planning on the speech. The P wanted me to spend a lot of time on the use of K[issinger] and his time.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

A sentence in Haldeman’s handwritten notes for this date on which his diary was based reads: “K thinks Sov[iets] will cancel summit &/or take adverse action—Cuba, MidEast.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, Staff Members and

Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972 [Part I])

In an extract from his diary for May 7 included in his memoirs, Nixon recorded:

“I discussed with Kissinger the necessity to prepare a contingency plan for summit cancellation. As of this morning, he had raised his 20 percent possibility of a noncancellation to 25 percent, although he still cannot see how the Russians can react otherwise. I constantly bring him back to the point that Connally had made when we reached the decision: we can lose the summit and a number of other battles but we cannot lose in Vietnam. Not only the election, but even more important, the country, requires that the United States not lose in Vietnam. Everything is to be concentrated toward the goal now of seeing that we do not lose now that we have crossed the Rubicon.

“The drafts we went through on the speech will tell the story of how it developed. Perhaps the most important section was that on the Soviet Union, and Henry was very impressed with what I finally came up with on my own. It had to be done with great subtlety and I think we have stated the case as well as we possibly can to give them a way out if they want to find one.” (RN: *Memoirs*, page 603)

At 6:05 p.m. that day, Kissinger’s deputy, Alexander Haig, called Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin to discuss summit-related issues. According to a transcript of the conversation, Dobrynin posed the following request: “This is not urgent. About question that I need an answer on the strategic talk. He [Kissinger] mentioned several points in addition to what he will give me on paper. In light of the conversation he had in Moscow it could really help.” Haig agreed to contact Kissinger and have him call Dobrynin early the next day. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) No record of a call from Kissinger to Dobrynin the next morning has been found.

Haig called the President at 6:10 p.m. to report on his conversation with Dobrynin. The transcript of the conversation reads:

“GH: I talked to Dobrynin. What he had was a response to the SALT piece and it was just a technical thing. He was very forthcoming.

“RN: There may be a chance—Henry is very bearish—the Russians may go to the summit with the blockade.

“GH: They may do it.

“RN: Is Lord starting on the speech? You might tell him to say, ‘Look, the President decided on the blockade because he didn’t want to risk hitting Soviet ships.’ The speech should be conciliatory. We don’t want to hit Soviet ships or any others that may be there.” (Ibid.)

203. Memorandum From President Nixon to Secretary of State Rogers¹

Washington, May 8, 1972.

In connection with my decisions concerning Vietnam, I request that you inform all United States representatives engaged in negotiations with the USSR as follows:

All U.S. negotiators should be aware that my purpose is to end the conflict in Vietnam so that its disruptive and diversionary effect on international relations will be ended.

All U.S. negotiators should proceed on the basis of existing instructions.

If their Soviet counterparts should comment on our actions with respect to Vietnam, our representatives should note them and not engage in debate but proceed with the business at hand.

If Soviet representatives should walk out of negotiations or otherwise attempt to disrupt them, American representatives should express regret and emphasize that as far as we are concerned we are ready to proceed with negotiations on their merit.

American representatives concerned with commercial matters should state that it has been my intention, in the context of broadly improving U.S.-Soviet relations, to authorize major steps designed greatly to increase the volume of trade and other types of mutually beneficial cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Richard Nixon

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis.

204. Memorandum for the President's Files¹

Washington, May 8, 1972, 9:00 a.m.–12:20 p.m.

SUBJECT

National Security Council Meeting

PARTICIPANTS

President Nixon
Vice President Agnew
Secretary of State Rogers
Secretary of Defense Laird
Secretary of Treasury Connally
Director of Central Intelligence Helms
Director of Office of Emergency Preparedness, Lincoln
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Kissinger
President's Press Secretary Ziegler
Mr. John Negroponte, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

President Nixon: As you are all aware we have an important decision to make today on Vietnam. The current situation which is certainly not as critical as portrayed by the press is nevertheless in the balance. There are serious questions as to Vietnam's equipment and will. General Abrams needs more assets. We've sent air primarily. The Soviet summit is jeopardized by each option open to us:

- Doing nothing
- Only bombing the North
- Blockading or mining and bombing

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-110, NSC Minutes, Originals. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. According to Nixon's Daily Diary, the meeting lasted from 9:10 a.m. to 12:07 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) That same morning, Kissinger sent the President a memorandum briefing him for this meeting and a proposed scenario for announcing the intended military actions. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 128, Subject Files, Vietnam, President's May 8, 1972 Speech) In his memoirs Nixon prints his diary entry, which reads: "Monday was a pretty tough day because the NSC meeting ran over three hours, with Laird opposing the decision and Rogers saying he would be for it if it worked. Connally and Agnew predictably took a very strong position for it. The record will speak for itself. Of course, in fairness to Laird and Rogers, both of their reputations are on the line, and I think they will have very serious doubts about whether the action will succeed. The real test, of course, will be whether they support once the decision is made and on that I have no doubt." (RN: *Memoirs*, pp. 603–604) In his memoirs Kissinger also described the meeting: "The NSC met next day, Monday, May 8, in the unreal atmosphere that Nixon's procedures generated. All present knew that he had almost certainly arrived at his final decision. They therefore had much less interest in considering the issues than in positioning themselves for the certain public uproar. Nixon, with his back to the wall, was at his best: direct, to the point, with none of the evasions that often characterized his style when facing opposition." (*White House Years*, p. 1184) A tape recording of the meeting is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Cabinet Room, Conversation No. 100–17.

Thus today we need a cold-blooded analysis.

Regardless of how we have helped the South Vietnamese, we have done reasonably well in some places and poorly in others. I am surprised at the fact that we have provided inferior equipment to that furnished by the Soviets. They have provided 13 new weapon systems, big tanks-big guns; this shows what the South Vietnamese are up against. The South Vietnamese fighting performance is a mixed bag. Even by the most optimistic assessment there is a substantial danger that South Vietnam may not be able to hold up particularly in Hue; but in Military Regions III and IV where most of the population lives they are doing quite well.

Hue is of symbolic importance and they may attack within the next few days.

Putting it in those terms the real question is not what will happen to South Vietnam but what we have to do to affect the situation. We could wait the situation out. This is a tempting course. If the South Vietnamese can't do the job on the ground it would be tempting for political reasons. We could blame the opposition for getting us into the war and then for not letting us out. Congress undermined us at the negotiating table and we could tell the U.S. people let's flush it because South Vietnam couldn't hack it. This is a tempting proposition. It could be sold. Our Democratic friends would buy it and a great number of Republican friends would buy it as well.

But there are problems. The major one is that, if in the future after all the effort in South Vietnam, a Soviet-supported opponent succeeds over a U.S.-supported opponent this could have considerable effect on our allies and on the United States. Our ability to conduct a credible foreign policy could be imperiled. This leaves out the domino theory; but if you talk to the Thai, the Cambodians, the Indonesians and the Filipinos, as I have, the fact of a U.S. failure and a Communist success would be considered a failure of U.S. policy.

Secondly, the diplomatic track is totally blocked. The public sessions have been unproductive. Henry was in Paris last week² and made every offer we had made previously and even more. They flatly refused and insisted on our getting rid of Thieu, releasing everybody from prison and so forth making a Communist takeover inevitable. The Communists now think they're winning and they're getting tougher at the bargaining table.

Thirdly, there is a considerable body of military opinion, not a majority, that we should put more air strikes into Hanoi and Haiphong. The difficulty with this course is, first the DRV will be better prepared,

² See Document 183.

second General Abrams needs assets for the battle in the South and third, there is the serious question of effectiveness of resuming bombings on a regular basis. This raises problems similar to those previously faced and the question of what would be accomplished.

The fourth and final course would be to adopt a program of cutting off the flow of supplies by sea and rail. The effect of cutting off supplies by sea can be conclusive but the question of rail is in doubt because of our experience from 1965–68.

Whatever we do it won't affect the battle immediately in the South except perhaps the psychological effect. The real effect will be three of four months from now for sure.

As regards the summit, this latter course might jeopardize the summit. I think we have to realize that if the situation in Vietnam is as it is today there can't be a summit. The summit is jeopardized by all these courses of action. That consideration we have to assume. There will be no summit.

There is no good choice. The bug-out choice is a good political one but I am not sure what this office would be worth after doing that. The other military choices would have grave foreign policy consequences and political consequences at home. Nothing we can say is sure and all have serious risks regarding the summit, public opinion and Congress.

Anyone who raises a question of risk must look at the choices. We face a situation where nothing is sure. There are grave political risks and risks to the country if we try one of these policies and fail.

I believe the first course of action is the least viable. It is the best politically, but it is the least viable for our foreign policy. Escalation in the bombing or a naval and air cutoff have questionable value. Neither will surely tip the balance to the side of success. It is only a question of degree. The only question in regard to increased bombing or a cutoff is whether this provides South Vietnam with a better chance of success.

[Omitted here is discussion on the mechanics of and logistical considerations inherent in mining Haiphong's harbor and bombing in other areas of North Vietnam.]

President Nixon: Suppose we are wrong? Suppose Vietnam fails? How do we handle it? You don't assess the risks for our policy?

Secretary Laird: We must hedge on equipment. We have given them everything they have asked for and will continue. If they don't have enough incentive, then all the equipment in the world won't save them.

Secretary Connally: Why do you use the argument that cost is too great? You aren't going to save any money.

Secretary Laird: The military equipment route is the cheaper route.

Secretary Connally: Explain that to me. Haven't all the assets already been sent there?

Secretary Laird: We are conducting a massive air campaign in the DRV and in South Vietnam. It runs up into tremendous amounts of money. Just to give you an example, one B-52 strike costs 40,000 dollars in ammunition.

Dr. Kissinger: What you are doing is arguing against the present scale of air effort.

Vice President Agnew: I don't think, if we just let things go, we can afford to let South Vietnam slide. When South Vietnam goes it will be utter collapse if something isn't done. It will be a complete loss of U.S. diplomatic credibility around the world. We must move the Soviets off center. We must move off gradualism. We should stop saying what we are not going to do. We are not in a confrontation with the Soviets. There is still the possibility of a face-saving solution in Paris. Before a confrontation with the Soviets they could go to the DRV and say let's find a solution. What will happen if we let South Vietnam slide into defeat?

President Nixon: These are all things we don't know.

Vice President Agnew: If there is a collapse, the Soviets will be encouraged in the Middle East, in the Indian Ocean. It will be a green flag for wars of national liberation anywhere. I personally believe in the domino theory.

President Nixon: We could do this and still fail. Mel (Laird) is aware of this. The South Vietnamese could still collapse. Then it would only be a chip for our Prisoners of War.

Vice President Agnew: By not doing anything more we would be giving testimony to our weakness. The Europeans have let us be out in front of every fight they have. If something happens with the Soviets then let the Soviets be nervous. Politically and domestically I think it will be vicious for the Administration but, Mr. President, if I were sitting where you are I would say we have got to do something. We're the greatest people in the world for handcuffing ourselves. We are compulsive talkers. I don't think you have any option. The effect could be great in South Vietnam. It could stop the erosion of the internal structure and beat DRV morale.

Mr. Lincoln: I believe the domino theory.

President Nixon: I think we all do. The real question is whether the Americans give a damn any more. Americans don't care about Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and the Philippines. No President could risk New York to save Tel Aviv or Bonn. We have to say it—our responsibility is to say it—because we must play a role of leadership. A lot of people say we shouldn't be a great power. That is all well and good if there were not another couple of predatory powers on the scene. The Soviets already have a tremendous capability and the Chinese are developing one.

If you follow *Time*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times* and the three networks, you could say that the U.S. has done enough. Let's get out; let's make a deal with the Russians and pull in our horns. The U.S. would cease to be a military and diplomatic power. If that happened, then the U.S. would look inward towards itself and would remove itself from the world. Every non-Communist nation in the world would live in terror. If the U.S. is strong enough and willing to use its strength, then the world will remain half-Communist rather than becoming entirely Communist.

Mr. Lincoln: We really have to hedge against a failure in South Vietnam even if the chance of failure is only ten percent. Those who criticize us will say why didn't we do it sooner. This action hedges against it. Four or five months from now it is likely to be of some help. It is a less inflammatory step than just actually bombing.

I have one technical concern and that is the question of availability of air power. In the short run can it be better used in support of our air mission in South Vietnam than in this interdiction?

President Nixon: I understand the problem. Hue is a little bit like Verdun. The Germans and the French decided it was important and fought for it. Three million men were killed as a result. Hue is a hell of a symbol. General Abrams is using as much as he can.

Secretary Laird: Abrams is dividing up his planes between MRs 1, 2 and 3.

President Nixon: Abrams has 35 B-52s which he does not allocate every day. They are used for targets of opportunity.

Admiral Moorer: He also has a call on the resources operating north of the DMZ.

President Nixon: One advantage of this operation as distinct from bombing more is that, if we bombed more, our credibility will be diminished. If we do this option it will be with the assumption that Abrams will have all the resources he needs. The main battle is in the South. The reason there was no second strike on Hanoi and Haiphong was because General Abrams did not want to divert the resources. I was much persuaded by the needs that he expressed and if the military commander says what he needs, we will support him.

Vice President Agnew: Whatever we do, we should do it all. First, we should free up the air. Second, we should surprise them and third, we should lessen the domestic impact. The docks are part of this. We should go the whole route.

Secretary Connally: I couldn't agree more. It is not only a question of Vietnam but Laos, Cambodia and all of Southeast Asia. Mr. President, you say United States people are sick of it. You said we will withdraw. If Vietnam is defeated, Mr. President, you won't have anything.

I agree it won't happen in three weeks but it is a mistake to tie our hands as we did in the mid-1960's. At that time many Americans thought we were doing this on a no-win basis. If we move we ought to blockade, we ought to bomb Hanoi and Haiphong. It is inconceivable to me that we have fought this war without inflicting damage on the aggressor. The aggressor has a sanctuary. If Russia gets away with it here like it did in Bangla Desh then it will be all of Southeast Asia. Where next? The Middle East? We must think about these things. The other problem is South Vietnam's ability to survive.

President Nixon: Then you would approve this operation.

Secretary Connally: Don't let them nibble you to death on this. You've got to make a conscious decision one way or another. What the people want is leadership.

President Nixon: There is no sure choice. I will have to decide before 2 o'clock. Everything you say will have to be weighed. Secretary Rogers will evaluate the world aspect. We see risks of confrontation. We must have in mind the fact that the USSR, with so much on the plate, might move to cool it rather than heat it up; so there is a question about the USSR there. I think we have to bear in mind that they expressed concern about the problem. They expressed an interest in getting Hanoi back to the conference table. I don't know whether they can influence Hanoi to do something. But as far as the USSR is concerned this course may be an incentive or disincentive.

Secretary Rogers: If there is a failure in South Vietnam that is disastrous for our policies.

President Nixon: Even if we try?

Secretary Rogers: Secondly, we shouldn't be carried away. I think the U.S. people think you have done enough and that you have done very well. The question, therefore, is whether there is something more you can do to be effective. I agree with Dick's (Helms) paper.³ It is a good one. We assume the effect will be good. LBJ said that it didn't work. Do we think it will work? It is clear that it won't have the effect militarily in the short term and maybe it won't have any effect at all. It could have a psychological effect on both South Vietnam and North Vietnam and, if so, that would be worthwhile.

³ Appended to this meeting record as Tab A, but not printed, is the prepared briefing by Helms, May 8, entitled "The Effect of a U.S. Policy to Interdict Land and Sea Imports to North Vietnam." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-110, NSC Minutes, Originals, 1972) The attached covering note from Negroponete to Haig, May 9, reads: "The attached should be appended to the draft minutes of the May 8 NSC meeting which I provided to you earlier this afternoon."

But it could have the opposite effect both on the battlefield and domestically. I think it's going to be a tough one with our people and with our allies. We will have some help from the British and a few others.

As for Congress and public opinion, I think they will charge that this will have no military effect. It looks from Dick's (Helms) paper that most supplies can come by rail. Maybe they can't but I'm assuming that the CIA paper is right on this.

If we do this and fail, I think that would be worse and more damaging to our prestige. I don't know whether it will be effective or not. We must rely on the military. If this will strengthen the military hand and the hand of the South Vietnamese, I think we should support it. Could we wait? Perhaps a week? Is there a time factor? I learned in my discussions from the Europeans that the DRV wants to destroy the summit.

Secretary Connally: This will put the summit in jeopardy but I don't think it is certain that they will cancel it.

Dr. Kissinger: I think that if we do this there is a better than even chance that the Soviets will cancel the summit.

President Nixon: I couldn't go to the summit if conditions in South Vietnam are the same as now or worse.

Secretary Connally: It is better for the Soviets to cancel the summit than us.

Secretary Rogers: The question is is it going to work or is it going to hurt us?

Vice President Agnew: I think we are better off if we do it even if we lose Hue.

Secretary Laird: Let's not make so much out of Hue. We lost it in 1968.

Vice President Agnew: The media are making a big thing out of Hue. That is something we cannot help.

Secretary Laird: The problem is one of assets.

Dr. Kissinger: The problem with all these figures is that one cannot construct a program analysis approach type model. The fact of the matter is that they would have to redirect 2.2 million tons of seaborne imports. At present they are only importing 300,000 tons by rail. We did not stop all of their rail transport in 1965–68.

President Nixon: It is very different now. Sihanoukville is cut. Now we will cut off the port.

Dr. Kissinger: They have a theoretical capacity but they can't use trains by day and if you analyze every segment of the railroad in China you will find that one segment of the railroad is apt to get overloaded. You can't throw these figures around without a better analysis. It is

easy to say that they have four months' capacity and could go all out and end the war but they would end with zero capacity. Another possibility is that they would try everything in one month or alternately cut way down on their activities. One thing is certain they will not draw their supplies down to zero.

President Nixon: The key point is if it is militarily effective. Looking to the future we have to think about whoever sits in this chair after the election. We must consider the long term advantages as well as the short term. If South Vietnam goes and we have done this, Bill's (Secretary Rogers) view is that we are worse off. John's (Secretary Connally) and the Vice President's view is different.

My view is that either way, if South Vietnam goes, as far as the political situation is concerned we are done. What is on the line is an election. The only effective thing is to decide now that, if South Vietnam isn't going to succeed, then we should withdraw before the debacle, blame it on the Senate and pull out. I could make the goddamnest speech to this effect and win the election, but I couldn't bring myself to do that because I know too much. I'm not sure that U.S. training is equal to Communist style training. This is no discredit to us. We are different and we believe in permissiveness. The North Vietnamese fight because they're afraid of what will happen to them if they don't.

My main point is that I will consider the possibility of simply chucking it now, blaming the doves for sabotaging the negotiating track and encouraging the enemy and telling the North Vietnamese we'll do everything they want to get back our prisoners of war.

The price they are demanding for our prisoners of war is not just a deadline for the withdrawal of our forces. We've tried that. They won't give back those prisoners of war until we get out of Southeast Asia totally. At least with this option we have something to bargain for POWs. We certainly can't pay the price that they have demanded.

Vice President Agnew: I disagree that this is a viable political alternative. I don't think we can sell it.

President Nixon: We have several choices. The first is a bug-out. The second is the choice of continuing to do what we're doing. The risk of this course is failure. In any event we are not going to Moscow. When I came back from Communist China I didn't get a damn thing on Vietnam.

We go to the Soviet Union, we agree on principles, credits, and we toast each other at a time when Soviet tanks are kicking hell out of our allies. If we act and then we have a summit, perhaps we can do that. The real proposition is, are we better off letting the dust settle or will more drastic action tip the balance in a decisive way? I will have to weigh these. All of you come down on these matters in varying degrees and shades. It comes down not to whether we lose in Vietnam

but first what can we do to prevent that and second what should we do to make the losses palatable if we do in fact lose.

Secretary Connally: One option was negotiations and last fall and spring there was hope for negotiations but that hope is down the drain. We have lost the negotiating option. At the moment our country's future is in the hands of the South Vietnamese and whether they stand and fight. We cannot allow this situation to continue.

Secretary Laird: I am limited to 2.4 billion dollars annually. I have put in 2.9 billion dollars already, hiding it under the table. I am taking it out of the hide of the Services.

Secretary Connally: You're already pregnant.

Secretary Laird: It's a question of where you are next year. If you are to have a viable policy, you can't break down your whole force posture. You've got to have the support of the people and the Congress.

Vice President Agnew: If we don't get anywhere on the Vietnam question, then we won't be anywhere anyway.

Secretary Connally: We can't make this decision on the basis of cost. You can't convince me that if you bomb the railroads, the ports of Haiphong and Hanoi, you can't persuade me that it won't affect the psychology both in South and North Vietnam.

Secretary Laird: I agree.

Secretary Connally: Maybe you can give the South Vietnamese the necessary will by doing this.

President Nixon: The U.S. way of training may not be the most effective.

[Omitted here is further discussion on the tactical military situation in South Vietnam.]

205. Editorial Note

From 12:13 to 1:15 p.m. on May 8, 1972, Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger, Secretary of the Treasury Connally, and President Nixon met in the Oval Office to discuss Vietnam and U.S.-Soviet relations. Connally entered the room as Nixon and Kissinger were discussing United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim's efforts to put a resolution on Vietnam before the Security Council. Kissinger speculated that actually the Soviets had put forward this resolution. "The Russians want it to keep you from acting, clearly, or to put the maximum obstacles against you," he noted. "Now, we can easily handle the Security Council today." Kissinger then added: "The only mar-

ginal utility of delaying 24 hours is to pull the teeth of your Cabinet members who were going against our plan. You know, the way your position is now that Rogers is saying he was for it if it succeeds and against it if it fails." He also noted that both Secretary of Defense Laird and Director of Central Intelligence Helms opposed the action.

The President then requested Connally's evaluation of the situation. Connally noted: "The safest thing is always to basically to let the status quo remain the status quo of whatever the hell develops. That's the safest thing. That's your basic bureaucratic approach that you never want to disturb that. That somewhat is reflected in both [Secretary of Defense] Mel[vin] [Laird] and [Secretary of State] Bill [Rogers]'s attitude. Secondly, I think you have to assume that Bill really would not like to see the summit come off, the Russian summit—he'd like to see it postponed, for whatever reason, but he'd just like to see it go by the boards. Third, I think there's some argument to be made on behalf of Mel's argument that it would cost us a hell of a lot. But, dear God, this doesn't make a lot of sense to me." Both Kissinger and Nixon agreed that this course of action would be less costly. Connally underscored that 90 percent of the matériel coming into North Vietnam actually came through the ports. Thus, bombing damage in fact was minimal and consequently a blockade just might work.

Connally noted that he could not support the continued degradation of the U.S. and GVN military position. Nixon then asked Connally whether it would have been better to enact the bombings even if "South Vietnam goes down anyway." In response, Connally said: "Well, the argument is that at least we send a message to other aggressor nations that they're going to suffer some damage." Kissinger agreed that it was better off to do it anyway, as it would prevent American troops from being caught by the North Vietnamese. Nixon added that the bombing would be a card to get back U.S. POWs. Kissinger, arguing for the importance of the blockade in addition to the bombing, noted: "Well, Mr. President, if you do the blockade and the ARVN still collapses, then you trade the blockade for the prisoners, and at least you've got a half-way reasonable negotiation." He added that the blockade may in fact mitigate a GVN collapse as it would be a "shot in the arm." The conversation continued:

Connally: "There's another advantage. This way, if Russia wants to help, and I really believe they want to help, I just believe that, this gives them an argument to say to Hanoi, now, we told you, we knew you, we just say you've got to come to grips with us now. And it seems to me it gives them a powerful argument to use with Hanoi."

Nixon: "It's a possibility. Now, let me put it this way. As far as the Russians helping, we know that given the course—the present course of events they aren't going to help."

Connally: "Of course they're not."

Nixon: "Now, our doing this may make them more difficult. But that's almost impossible for them to be much more difficult. If there's at least a chance that it does allow them to do something, would you agree, Henry?"

Kissinger: "That's right—what—they will cancel the summit, in my judgment, although it's not totally excluded."

Nixon: "That's 40–60, 30–70?"

Kissinger: "I would rate it higher—I'd rate it 80–20. But they may then say that now they've done their duty, that that's the only thing they're going to do to us, and continue bilateral relations with Hanoi."

Nixon: "You have here—you should have the contingency plan ready for what we say when they cancel the summit."

Kissinger: "I've got a statement already."

President: You should have a statement ready, and so forth."

Kissinger: "It's ready."

Nixon: "I should not have to make it."

Kissinger: "No. These literally are statements I can brief on it."

Nixon: "You should read from it, exactly. Exactly. Because I think John's smelled a rat pretty clearly, and Bill, he's not interested in that Soviet summit."

Kissinger: "Well, because he knows we've got it all settled and he doesn't want to be in the position of Peking. Because actually the fact is we've got—"

Nixon: "We've got a hell of a summit."

Kissinger: "We can announce two agreements every night."

Nixon then noted that there was in fact a 40–50 percent chance that the South Vietnamese would collapse in the absence of military action. However, on the diplomatic side, if the blockade was enacted, then he obtained some leverage with which to use to obtain POWs. Also, on the military side, a blockade would hamper Hanoi's military operations and be an immediate encouragement to the South Vietnamese. "Better off for having tried," he believed.

Connally said that the administration might be accused of ruining its new Soviet and Chinese policies, but that accusation was untrue. He believed that the American people wanted an end to the war, and especially to get out by November, and thus would support even the bombing. The Nixon administration could no longer look toward a peaceful resolution with Hanoi, as North Vietnam had virtually humiliated the United States. Only "military pressure" would work at this point, Connally asserted. He advised the President to inform the American people that he would not permit the humiliation and defeat of this nation, an action the public would then understand. Nixon thus

decided to render his speech at 9 p.m. that evening. He promised to show it to Rogers and Laird prior to its televised broadcast.

Connally left the meeting at 12:59, and Kissinger a few minutes later; Haldeman entered at 1 p.m. Nixon discussed Connally's views with Haldeman. Haldeman agreed that it was better to end up in a stronger position. He also complained about efforts by Rogers to forestall Kissinger getting credit for the summit, and even argued that Rogers would try to have it canceled on this basis. Nixon added that he thought that Laird opposed the summit as well. Nixon noted the advice of Kissinger not to go to the summit when the Soviets were aiding the enemy offensive in Vietnam. But Nixon thought that it might be okay to go and talk anyway, as Vietnam and the summit were inseparable. However, it was not apparent that South Vietnam would hold out through the opening of the summit. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, May 8, 1972, 12:13 –1:15 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 721–11)

206. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 8, 1972, 5:30 p.m.

K: Mr. President.

P: Henry, another point that I just wanted to mention briefly. Do you know where we say "throughout the war in Vietnam, the United States has exercised a degree of restraint unprecedented in the annals of war?"²

K: Yeah.

P: Cause it was right for us to exercise that restraint. I just wonder if we believe that. You know what I mean, I wonder in view of some of the things perhaps I have said in the past about gradual escalation.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² Drafts of the President's speech on Vietnam are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2; *ibid.*, Box 127, Vietnam Country File, President's May 8, 1972 Speech; and *ibid.*, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 75, President's Speech File, Monday, May 8, 1972 Vietnam Speech [1 of 2].

K: Yeah, let me find that. I remember very well.

P: Keeping escalation. I think what I'll do is just strike "it was right for us to exercise that restraint which . . ." and just say, "a degree of restraint unprecedented in the annals of war."

K: That was—

P: That was our responsibility as a great nation.

K: Right. I think that's better.

P: Then we don't stick it to the people that say, "You dumb—". You see what I mean?

K: Exactly.

P: Don't you think that's—

K: I think that's a great improvement.

P: It's a small one at least.

K: No, no; but it's important.

P: Small one, yeah. One other thing I was going to ask you about—POWs. I've got a copy like you've got—just a second. Oh, on page 8. Have you got page 8 of Draft #7?

K: Yeah.

P: Do you think I should take out the sentence "The actions I've ordered tonight would be justified if their purpose is to win the freedom of these men."? What I'm concerned about there is that they might come up with an offer.

K: Yeah, I'd take that sentence out.

P: Yeah. But I think it's strong enough just to say "over [4]³ years in violation and so on." I don't think we need that, don't you agree?

K: I'd take it out; I think that's sensitive.

P: Otherwise, good. We'd let other people say that, okay?

K: Right, Mr. President.

P: How are you coming on the other technical things?

K: They're all done.

P: Fine. Everybody on board?

K: Everyone is on salvo.

P: (laughter) Good, good.

K: I can't say they are all throwing their hat in the air but they are all disciplined. [Watson?] all with us.

P: Does he—Is he really with us?

K: Oh, yes, completely; totally.

³ All brackets in the source text.

P: Yeah. Do you think you can do anything about the Germans?

K: Well, I'm getting Rush to call Bahr⁴ as soon as your speech is finished and say they cannot use the argument that you need this for your trip to Moscow.

P: Who—the Germans?

K: Brandt is using the argument that the reason they must ratify it is because you need it for your trip to Moscow.

P: Um-humm. What is your view as to what that does then?

K: That may delay it.

P: Um-humm. Well, that'll put a little pressure on the Russians wouldn't it?

K: That's right.

P: Um-humm. Good, good. Okay. Well, I'll go ahead and get this done, thank you.

K: Right, Mr. President.

⁴ See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XL, Germany, 1969–1972, Document 366.

207. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 8, 1972, 8:20–8:55 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin

Henry A. Kissinger

When Dobrynin entered the office, I told him that I regretted taking him away from dinner. Dobrynin said that he knew my habits by now. He knew that when I called him before a speech it would not be

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Kissinger's Record of Schedule indicates that the meeting lasted until 9 p.m. but that Kissinger stepped out from 8:50 to 8:55 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976) According to Nixon's Daily Diary, the President and Kissinger met from 8:50 to 8:55 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) The meeting was held in Kissinger's office. Kissinger described both his meeting with Dobrynin and the brief exchange with Nixon in his memoirs. (*White House Years*, pp. 1187–1189) Dobrynin also discussed his meeting with Kissinger in his memoirs. (*In Confidence*, pp. 246–247)

good news. I said that the best way to handle the matter was for me to show him a copy of the letter which the President was writing to Brezhnev (attached).² He asked whether I had a text of the speech.³ I said no, I wouldn't have it, but I would send it to his office just before 9:00. He said it was odd that I didn't trust him to keep it secret for even 15 minutes.

Dobrynin then read the President's letter. He said there were many ambiguities in it; for example, what did we mean by stopping seaborne supplies? Did we really mean interference with Soviet ships? That, of course, would be an act of war. He said he could almost certainly predict what the reaction in Moscow would be and it would be very unfortunate. It had taken him years to get matters to the present point, and now all was being jeopardized. And what was worse, he said, once Soviet policy got set in a certain way it was likely to stay that way for quite a long time. He asked whether there really was no alternative.

I told him that if he read the records of my conversations with Brezhnev he would find that I had told them and told them that we were going to do something drastic. Dobrynin said he wasn't surprised, although the particular action was perhaps one that would not have occurred to him, but it would be much harder to understand in Moscow. He said that if he could explain American conditions in Moscow, it might be easier, but he was far away. He seemed very resigned to a drastic Soviet response.

He asked why we were turning against them when Hanoi was challenging us. I replied that he should put himself into our position. What would the Soviet Union do if we armed Israel two months before a Soviet Summit and encouraged an attack or at least tolerated an attack which would threaten the Soviet force in Egypt. Dobrynin became uncharacteristically vehement. He said, "First of all, we never put forces somewhere who can't defend themselves. Second, if the Israelis threaten us, we will wipe them out within two days. I can assure you our plans are made for this eventuality." He then relapsed into a more diplomatic attitude again, and said that now matters would take a rather bad turn.

At this point, we received a text of the President's speech and I showed it to Dobrynin. He read it through and asked for clarification, specifically on what we meant by stopping seaborne supplies. I told

² Similar letters were sent on the same date to French President Georges Pompidou, Premier Chou En-lai of the People's Republic of China, British Prime Minister Edward Heath, and German Chancellor Willy Brandt and are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2.

³ See Document 208.

him we would take all measures but that we would confine our actions initially to territorial waters. Dobrynin also pointed out that a phrase which was in the speech at that point, according to which I was sent to Paris to meet with Le Duc Tho on May 2nd⁴ based on Soviet assurances, was very strong and would be taken very ill in Moscow. I told him I would see whether I could still get it taken out and left him for a few minutes to go into the President's office. The President agreed to delete the phrase, and we also had it taken out of the press copy. Dobrynin said that, well, at least we had achieved a minor success, and we had come closer to getting somewhere than we had in the entire period that he had served as Ambassador in Washington.

At this point the meeting broke up.

Attachment

Letter From President Nixon to Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev⁵

Moscow, May 8, 1972.

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

Since my message to you of May 3,⁶ there has been no change in the grave situation in Vietnam. The North Vietnamese offensive is continuing and their preparations for new offensive actions, especially in the northern part of South Vietnam, are moving ahead intensively. Because of Hanoi's total intransigence, negotiations are blocked in all channels, private and plenary. Your message of May 6,⁷ which I have read with the greatest attention, unfortunately does not change this situation; it confirms it. The issue was not, as you suggest in your message, whether the resumed negotiations would "yield results immediately." The issue was whether there would be any indication, however minimal, of a North Vietnamese willingness to halt the offensive and to resume negotiations. In all respects, Hanoi has maintained its maximum demands and, as noted above, nothing has changed on the battlefield. It is clear that Hanoi wants the present government of South Vietnam overthrown and replaced by one subject to its own dictates. It is asking us to collude in this endeavor and, failing that, seeks to accomplish the same end by military action.

⁴ See Document 183.

⁵ Top Secret.

⁶ Document 190.

⁷ Document 200.

But, as I have made clear to you earlier, Mr. General Secretary, this will not happen.

In this situation, I have now determined upon a course of action. It is intended to end the aggression and to permit political processes to operate in South Vietnam so that its people can freely determine their own future.

To this end, I am today taking actions that will deprive the aggressor of the means to wage aggression, of the means to disrupt the peace of the world. I am announcing a series of measures which will effectively preclude further supplies of aggression from reaching North Vietnam. These measures include the mining of the approaches to North Vietnamese ports and action by U.S. naval forces to prevent seaborne delivery of supplies to North Vietnam. Additional action will be taken to interdict rail and other means of transportation in North Vietnam.

Since these measures are directed solely at the ability of the aggressor to continue his offensive actions and are in no way directed at third countries, special care has been taken that all foreign vessels currently in North Vietnamese ports will be able to depart in safety within three daylight periods. Thereafter, ships remaining in North Vietnamese ports or attempting to approach them will do so at their own risk. It is my hope, Mr. General Secretary, that incidents involving third countries will be avoided.

The actions that are being implemented will end as soon as an internationally supervised cease-fire is in effect throughout Indochina and prisoners held by both sides are released. In addition, when these steps have been taken, all U.S. military acts of force throughout Indochina will end and all U.S. forces will be withdrawn from South Vietnam within four months.

These are our terms for an end of the war. They would permit the United States to withdraw with honor. They would end the killing and bring prisoners home. They would not require surrender and humiliation on the part of anybody. They would permit all the nations which have suffered in this long war to turn at last to the urgent works of healing and peace. They deserve immediate acceptance by North Vietnam.

Mr. General Secretary, the actions of which I am informing you by this message are not taken to impose defeat upon North Vietnam but to end the conflict and thus permit a settlement through negotiations. I know that these are objectives which our two countries share, because, as they are reached, a cloud will be removed from our relations.

These relations have, by our joint efforts in recent months, reached the threshold of a new era, an era of cooperation for the benefit of our two peoples and for peoples everywhere. Mutually advantageous programs have been or are being worked out in a wide range of cooperative ventures; the prospect for greatly increased commercial relations,

including necessary credits, is bright. An unprecedented agreement to curb the competition in strategic arms is within reach as a result of the spirit of compromise displayed by both sides. A significant set of principles providing a positive and constructive framework for our relations has been worked out. Our forthcoming meeting will serve not only to complete successfully the efforts now in progress but to give impetus to even more far-reaching programs of cooperation in many areas and even more intensive efforts to bring about a peaceful world.

Let me repeat here what I am saying in my speech: Our two nations have made significant progress. Let us not slide back toward the dark shadows of a previous age. We do not ask you to sacrifice your principles or your friends. But neither should you permit Hanoi's intransigence to blot out the prospects we together have so patiently prepared. We can build a new relationship that can serve not only the interests of our two countries but the cause of world peace. Let us continue building it.

With these hopeful and broad vistas before us, I do not intend to let the situation forced upon us by the actions of the leaders in Hanoi divert us from the path upon which our two countries have embarked. And it is precisely for this reason that I am determined to end the disruptive and wasteful conflict in Vietnam.

In conclusion, Mr. General Secretary, let me say to you that this is a moment for statesmanship. It is a moment when, by joint efforts, we can end the malignant effects on our relations and on the peace of the world which the conflict in Vietnam has so long produced. I am ready to join with you at once to bring about a peace that humiliates neither side and serves the interests of all the people involved. I know that together we have the capacity to do this.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

208. Editorial Note

At 9 p.m. on May 8, 1972, President Nixon addressed the nation in a televised speech on the situation in Southeast Asia. Nixon noted the efforts his administration had taken to secure a peaceful resolution in Vietnam and included the following description of the Kissinger secret trip to Moscow the previous month:

“On April 20, I sent Dr. Kissinger to Moscow for 4 days of meetings with General Secretary Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders. I

instructed him to emphasize our desire for a rapid solution to the war and our willingness to look at all possible approaches. At that time, the Soviet leaders showed an interest in bringing the war to an end on a basis just to both sides. They urged resumption of negotiations in Paris, and they indicated they would use their constructive influence."

However, Nixon added, the North Vietnamese subsequently had refused to entertain any approach from the American side and in fact had launched three military offensives in South Vietnam within a 2-week period. Given that the only way to "stop the killing" was for the United States to act "to keep the weapons of war out of the hands of the international outlaws of North Vietnam," Nixon declared:

"I therefore concluded that Hanoi must be denied the weapons and supplies it needs to continue the aggression. In full coordination with the Republic of Vietnam, I have ordered the following measures which are being implemented as I am speaking with you.

"All entrances to North Vietnamese ports will be mined to prevent access to these ports and North Vietnamese naval operations from these ports. United States forces have been directed to take appropriate measures within the internal and claimed territorial waters of North Vietnam to interdict the delivery of any supplies. Rail and all other communications will be cut off to the maximum extent possible. Air and naval strikes against military targets in North Vietnam will continue.

"These actions are not directed against any other nation. Countries with ships presently in North Vietnamese ports have already been notified that their ships will have three daylight periods to leave in safety. After that time, the mines will become active and any ships attempting to leave or enter these ports will do so at their own risk."

Nixon also ensured that the implications of his actions especially bore significance for the Soviet Government:

"I particularly direct my comments tonight to the Soviet Union. We respect the Soviet Union as a great power. We recognize the right of the Soviet Union to defend its interests when they are threatened. The Soviet Union in turn must recognize our right to defend our interests.

"No Soviet soldiers are threatened in Vietnam. Sixty thousand Americans are threatened. We expect you to help your allies, and you cannot expect us to do other than to continue to help our allies. But let us, and let all great powers, help our allies only for the purpose of their defense, not for the purpose of launching invasions against their neighbors.

"Otherwise, the cause of peace, the cause in which we both have so great a stake, will be seriously jeopardized.

"Our two nations have made significant progress in our negotiations in recent months. We are near major agreements on nuclear arms limitation, on trade, on a host of other issues.

“Let us not slide back toward the dark shadows of a previous age. We do not ask you to sacrifice your principles, or your friends, but neither should you permit Hanoi’s intransigence to blot out the prospects we together have so patiently prepared.

“We, the United States and the Soviet Union, are on the threshold of a new relationship that can serve not only the interests of our two countries, but the cause of world peace. We are prepared to continue to build this relationship. The responsibility is yours if we fail to do so.”

The full text of the speech is in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pages 583–587. Earlier drafts of the speech containing Nixon’s handwritten revisions are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2; *ibid.*, Box 127, Country File, Vietnam, President’s May 8, 1972 Speech; and *ibid.*, White House Special Files, President’s Personal Files, Box 75, President’s Speech File, Monday, May 8, 1972 Vietnam Speech [1 of 2].

Nixon carefully cultivated the support of Congress on this move. Immediately prior to the speech, in a meeting with the Congressional leadership held in the Roosevelt Room of the White House that lasted from 8:11 to 8:28 p.m., Nixon discussed the actions he was embarking upon in Vietnam. (*Ibid.*, White House Central Files, President’s Daily Diary) According to notes of the meeting contained in a May 8 memorandum for the President’s files from speechwriter William Safire, Nixon stressed that he would “continue to pursue” diplomatic options and indicated “the Russians and North Vietnamese are aware of this, and they can choose to use it.” (*Ibid.*, White House Special Files, President’s Office Files, Box 88, Memoranda for the President, Beginning May 7, 1972) A May 8 memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs Kissinger to the President contained a briefing for this meeting and an attached decision-making sequence. “The Soviet Union has been completely unhelpful as an intermediary,” Kissinger asserted. He also made the following recommendation: “After the discussion is completed you will want to emphasize that you intend to stand absolutely firm and that we need the unified support of the Congress and American people in our resolve to end the conflict on an honorable basis.” (*Ibid.*, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 128, Vietnam, President’s May 8, 1972 Speech)

In a plan for the public framing of the speech outlined in a May 7 memorandum sent to Haldeman, Nixon noted that “the most important assignment you and every member of the staff have for the next two or three weeks is to go all out presenting and defending the line I will be taking on Monday night and attacking the attackers in an effective way.” (*Ibid.*, White House Special Files, President’s Personal Files, Box 75, President’s Speech File, Monday, May 8, 1972 Vietnam Speech [1 of 2]) Kissinger endeavored to explain the speech in a press

briefing on May 9. A paper entitled “Themes for HAK Presentation,” May 8, set guidelines for the “basic posture” of the briefing as “cool, firm, patience exhausted, determined, not at all defensive.” (Ibid., NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 127, Vietnam, President’s May 8, 1972, Speech) Kissinger described the press briefing in his memoirs:

“I briefed the press the next morning in the East room of the White House. Important though explanations to our public were, they also served a vital diplomatic function. Every statement was part of an effort to persuade Moscow and Peking to acquiesce in our course and thus to move Hanoi, by isolating it, to meaningful negotiations. Our most important concern, of course, was the summit, now less than two weeks away. I adopted a posture of ‘business as usual.’ I explained that we had not heard from Moscow—nor could we have—but that we were ‘proceeding with the summit preparations, and we see at this moment no reason from our side to postpone the summit meeting.’ We recognized that the Soviet leaders would face ‘some short-term difficulties’ in making their decision, but we, for our part, still believed that a new era in East-West relations was possible. Because I did not want to embarrass the Soviets I sidestepped a question about whether on my visit I had forewarned Brezhnev of our intended actions. I simply stated that after my visit the Soviet leaders could not have been ‘under any misapprehension of how seriously it would be viewed if this offensive continued.’” (*White House Years*, page 1190)

The full text of Kissinger’s press briefing is in Department of State *Bulletin*, May 29, 1972, pages 752–760.

209. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting¹

Washington, May 8, 1972, 8:55–9:44 p.m.

This was a day of intense activity and rife speculation throughout the White House. With the newspapers filled with ominous battlefield reports from Vietnam, Secretary Rogers had been hurriedly and

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President’s Office Files, Box 88, Memoranda for the President, Beginning May 7, 1972. Confidential. Drafted by R.K. Price, Jr., a Nixon speechwriter. The time is from the President’s Daily Diary, which indicates that the President met with Cabinet and White House officials only from 9:28 to 9:44 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) In his diary Haldeman provides a long account of the meeting. (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

publicly called back from Europe, and the NSC had been called into a session this morning which lasted three hours.² Late in the afternoon the President requested television time at 9 o'clock EST to address the Nation on Vietnam.³ The Cabinet was assembled for 8:55 p.m. in the Cabinet Room, to watch the address on two television sets especially set up for the purpose—one in the northeast corner and the other in the southwest corner, of the room. The President had indicated that he would join the meeting after the conclusion of his speech.

Before the speech, the members of the Cabinet and the senior staff present milled about, talking, joking, but with somewhat more of an air of apprehension than usual. Both sets were tuned to NBC, and if it was a precedent to have a Cabinet meeting with two TV sets in the Cabinet Room, it must have been even more so—in these few minutes before the President started—to have them tuned to “Laugh In.” Ollie Atkins,⁴ with a still camera, and another photographer with a movie camera, took pictures before and during the President’s address.

A moment before 9 o'clock, the Vice President suggested we all take our seats—and all promptly did so. A sort of invisible diagonal line drew itself across the Cabinet table, with those on one side watching the northeast set and those on the other side watching the southwest set. The President came on, and complete silence fell over all in the room as he spoke, with each face turned intently toward one of the screens. When the speech was over the mood loosened somewhat, but all continued to watch the NBC commentary that followed—including an unsuccessful effort by anchor man John Chancellor to make intelligible contact with NBC correspondent Ed Stevens who had been watching in Moscow.

After only a few minutes the President was announced—and he bounced into the room, still made up for television, looking cheerful and ebullient, and he was greeted by loud applause.

Seated in his chair, alternately smiling and serious, but looking quite at ease, he motioned silently for the TV sets to be turned off, and then expressed his regret that it had been impossible to fill all of the Cabinet members in on what he was going to say in advance. He noted that this was an occasion in which “everything was on the line—it was a close call.” But now the decision has been made, the action has been taken, and it is essential that we have a unanimity of support within the Administration—that we speak with one voice, and not indicate any turning away from the hard line that has been taken. He noted that this was a hard line with a *very* forthcoming peace offer—if the

² See Document 204.

³ See Document 208.

⁴ Oliver Atkins, the official White House photographer.

enemy will accept a cease-fire and return the POWs we'll stop *all* offensive action and get out in four months. The only thing we don't offer is to impose a Communist government on the South Vietnamese ("They phrase it differently, but it comes down to that.").

"There's one other thing I'd mention," he said, "in terms of the speculation about the Summit. We're aware of the risks. We also must realize that an American President couldn't be in Moscow when Soviet tanks were rumbling through the streets of Hue—unless he could do something about it."

He added that we have put the proposition to the Soviets very directly: we are prepared to go forward and to negotiate on SALT, etc., and even with the Summit—so the responsibility is their's as to whether it goes forward or is postponed. "There will be a Summit someday. We'll see."

He explained that like all important things, this was not easy. Also, we couldn't be sure. We had to weigh everything. It finally came down to a decision that this was the best course of action at this time—to protect our national interests, to get back the POWs, to have some leverage, and to prevent the imposition of a Communist government.⁵

At this point the Vice President broke in to say: "You can depend on the Cabinet for support absolutely. You have been careful to give adequate notice of every step that you contemplated. I thought your appeal to the Soviets was particularly brilliantly phrased."

The President seemed pleased at this comment, and noted: "I wrote every word of that in Camp David myself Saturday night."⁶

He also noted, referring back to a point he had made in the speech, that "when you stop to think of it, there are no Soviet soldiers in Vietnam—there are 60,000 Americans—so it's our ox that is being gored."

[Omitted here is further discussion of the speech.]

⁵ In his diary entry for May 8, Haldeman recorded: "At the Cabinet meeting, the P explained the background, said that as far as the speculation on the Summit was concerned, we were aware of the worst there, that an American P couldn't be in Moscow while the Soviet guns and tanks were in Hue and we should say we're prepared to go forward and negotiate or to continue with the Summit or whatever, and the responsibility now is with the Russians. The decision wasn't easy, you can never be sure. The case for bombing, or doing nothing at all, all had to be weighed, but this is the best course at this time. To defend our interests, to get the POW's and to put an end to the war." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, pp. 456–457) In a May 9 memorandum to Kissinger, Nixon wrote: "Now that I have made this very tough watershed decision I intend to stop at nothing to bring the enemy to his knees. I want you to get this spirit inculcated in all hands and particularly I want the military to get off its backside and give me some recommendations as to how we can accomplish this goal." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda from the President, Memos—May 1972)

⁶ May 6.

210. Editorial Note

President Nixon's May 8, 1972, speech generated a mixed response. "Initial reaction to the President's speech from the communist world has been fairly cautious, except for Hanoi which immediately and vigorously denounced it," Deputy Assistant to the President Alexander Haig noted in a May 9 memorandum to Vice President Agnew. "The Hanoi reaction was notable primarily for its hint that it wanted a strong and swift expression of support from both Moscow and Peking." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 127, Vietnam, President's May 8, 1972 Speech) In a May 17 intelligence memorandum, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research suggested: "In private, Hanoi is probably seriously concerned about the weak tone of statements issued in Moscow and Peking." (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27–14 VIET) In an undated memorandum (I–35473/72) to Secretary of Defense Laird, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs G. Warren Nutter assessed the areas of the world where the Soviet Union would react to the mining of North Vietnam. "In sum, the Soviets may decide that the only course to follow is confrontation because the costs of doing anything else are too great in terms of their world position," he concluded. "Or, they could try to have it both ways—reacting in a seemingly tough manner, but keeping that reaction within limits." (Attached to memorandum from Haig to Howe, May 23; *ibid.*, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 160, Vietnam Country Files, Vietnam, May 1972)

The Soviet Government adopted a mild if ambiguous response. In a note to Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger, May 9, 10:30 a.m., Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council staff wrote: "Soviet reactions thus far are quite inconclusive. The incidents at sea talks were postponed by the Soviets for two hours this morning but are now in progress at the Soviet Embassy; the maritime talks have been postponed by the Soviets for a day. The head of their delegation refused to tell State whether this was on instructions [or] are his own decision; SALT proceeded this morning; the commercial talks at Commerce are in progress this morning; [Soviet Minister of Defense] Grechko has left Moscow for Syria; Tass has briefly reported the President's speech in a Washington dispatch; it is nasty but not excessively so." (Ibid., Box 1086, Howe Vietnam Chronology, May 9, 1972) In a May 9 memorandum to Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Johnson entitled "Possible Soviet and Chinese Reactions to our Vietnam Program," William I. Cargo of the Policy Planning Council staff noted actions that the Soviets might take in Vietnam but also pointed out that "they could react in other areas of the world, including canceling Moscow summit, suspending SALT and other bilateral negotiations, blockading Berlin,

assuming an increased role in Cuba, and supporting of North Korean harassment and incursions across the demilitarized zone.” (Ibid., NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-088, WSAG Meeting) In his diary entry for May 9, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman recorded a more optimistic perception of the Soviet reaction from Nixon, who insisted on the position that “if the Russians cancel, we should say we expected it, we can’t endanger American lives and sacrifice America’s interests for the sake of the Summit with the Soviets,” but also recognized that the garnering of extensive domestic support for the military actions in Vietnam might help to convince the Soviets to avoid cancellation. (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

211. Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon¹

Washington, May 9, 1972.

SUBJECT

U.S.-Soviet Negotiations

There are distinct, though preliminary, signs that the Soviets have decided to continue negotiating the various matters on the pre-Summit agenda in businesslike fashion. The most striking indication came today in the talks Secretary Warner is conducting with Admiral Kasatonov on avoiding incidents at sea between our navies. Working group meetings were scheduled at 9:00 A.M. The Soviets requested a delay, but appeared at 11:00 and negotiated in straightforward fashion, without mentioning Vietnam. In the afternoon, the Soviet Embassy confirmed that Ambassador Dobrynin would host a dinner for Secretary Warner and the U.S. delegation on May 11, and invitations were issued for a reception hosted by Admiral Kasatonov on May 15. It thus

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR. Confidential. Drafted by Matlock and cleared by Davies and Springsteen. An attached covering note from Richardson to Rogers, May 9, reads: “Attached is a Memorandum for the President on today’s Soviet conduct at our various bilateral negotiations, which you asked EUR to prepare. It has been cleared by George Springsteen. Recommendation: that you sign the attached memorandum.” In a May 10 memorandum to Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt discussed successful U.S.-Soviet negotiations conducted in Moscow. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 719, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXII, May 1972) Kissinger also discussed various trade negotiations in an undated memorandum sent to the President on May 8. (Ibid.)

appears that Moscow has made an explicit decision to continue these negotiations as planned.

As you know, the SALT talks took place today as scheduled, though this may have occurred too soon after your announcement to allow for a possible Soviet reaction. Other talks scheduled for today, with one exception, also proceeded as scheduled. These include the meeting held by Secretary Peterson and Soviet Minister of Trade Patolichev, the exploratory talks at Commerce and Agriculture with members of Patolichev's party, and technical talks in Houston between NASA and Soviet representatives. The only exception to this pattern of normality was the postponement, at Soviet request, of a meeting scheduled on maritime matters today. This postponement could have been motivated to some extent by considerations having nothing to do with Vietnam, since a problem involving freight rates developed in the negotiations yesterday.

William P. Rogers

212. Conversation Among President Nixon, his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), and his Chief of Staff (Haldeman)¹

Washington, May 9, 1972.

[Omitted here is discussion on the political ramifications of blockading North Vietnam.]

Kissinger: The Russians apparently have ordered their ships to stay in port.

Nixon: In Hanoi?

Kissinger: In Haiphong.

Nixon: Why do you think they've done that?

Haldeman: So we can't blow up the docks.

Kissinger: So we can't blow up the docks. Well I've never been all that sure that we should blow up the docks, because if we do, we are really taking away an asset. As long as the harbor is mined, they can't go in anyway. So it doesn't make any difference.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 722-14. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger and Haldeman in the Oval Office from 5:57 to 6:13 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Nixon: They're not going to have anything to do—that's the main thing. I wouldn't blow up their docks when their ships are there anyway.

Kissinger: No, I'd leave it alone. We're going tonight after that railway bridge in Hanoi and after the—tonight we're taking out the POL around Hanoi and the railway bridge and the marshaling yards. They think they got about a thousand trucks in the strike the other day. And they're just going to grind them down now. Tomorrow they go after the Haiphong POL and other railways and marshaling yards.

[Omitted here is discussion of the domestic political impact of the blockade.]

Kissinger: I think the Soviet Union has one problem only, which is how can they maintain their Communist virginity in the face of this challenge. That's—they'd like to get out of it. They don't want to confront us over this.

[Omitted here is discussion of briefings by Secretary of State Rogers, Secretary of Defense Laird, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Moorer.]

Kissinger: Well our real trouble will start when the Russians cancel the summit.

Haldeman: You'll get another psychological—it isn't going to be as bad—that's not going to be as bad as you think 'cause it still will be discounted.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Well, when you say our real trouble starts, Henry, we have to realize, not only do we have it this time, but we thoroughly expected it. In other words, we had no doubts about the damn thing.

Kissinger: No. The North Vietnamese, they'll be getting [unclear] an attack on Hue. If we can knock that okay, if we can defeat that I think—

Haldeman: [unclear]

Nixon: They are.

Kissinger: Well, he's now—finally Abrams is doing what the President has been wanting. Because he's got 30 B-52s he's using like tactical air. He doesn't give them targets. He just keeps them and they can go in when something develops. They're now systematically leveling the area between on the north of Hue right on up to the DMZ. They threw in 10,000 rounds of artillery into it—our people—yesterday.

Nixon: That's great.

Kissinger: And 30 B-52 strikes. Now, if there's any living thing left in there, it's just hard to imagine.

Nixon: What is the—, looking at the situation with regard to the cancellation of the summit. Is there anything you think we can do, Bob, to handle that problem?

Haldeman: No, I think you just say that's—it's—you—that's the position he's knocked you out now. It's on the Russians' hands if they cancel the summit. You stated your position.

Kissinger: You stated it very well.

Haldeman: You moved for peace. I don't think you're going to have any problem with it. We'll give it a squeaker some more.

Kissinger: The goddamn Chinese put out a statement today saying that it's a challenge to Moscow, saying that—

Nixon: They're trying to break up the summit.

Haldeman: [unclear exchange]

Nixon: Well, they know, they can see the speech didn't mention them.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Haldeman: Yeah.

Kissinger: Well, what they put out was the speech didn't mention them because they know it doesn't do any good to appeal to them when we saw this in Moscow.

[Omitted here is discussion of a vote in the Senate regarding actions in Southeast Asia.]

Nixon: Should the Russians move on Thursday,² I then think that our best reaction to that, in addition to a statement, is for Abrams to divert a helluva strike the very next day. What do you think?

Kissinger: I think we should not gear anything particularly to that.

Nixon: Maybe not. Well—

Kissinger: Because they have a lot of options. They can cancel. At some point, if you're just canceling the summit it's a softer option if they keep everything else going. Supposing we get SALT and all the other things anyway. Hold the statement of principles for another occasion.

Nixon: They can cancel, then, or they can postpone.

Kissinger: They can cancel. They can postpone. They can cut all relations with us. I mean—

Nixon: Can they withdraw diplomatic recognition?

Kissinger: Oh, no, no, no. But they could just knock off all negotiations.

Nixon: It doesn't bother me a damn bit.

Kissinger: Mr. President.

Nixon: It doesn't bother me a damn bit.

² May 11.

Kissinger: They'll be back. They've got to be back. We've gone through these periods, up and down, and they'll be back. The next significant question is whether my June 21 visit to China is still on.

Nixon: Has that been announced?

Kissinger: No.

Nixon: You just let it play? Was that going to be public?

Kissinger: We were going to do that during [unclear] on Sunday.³

Nixon: Well, we'll just play it if it isn't. I'm sorry too. My own view is this. I think we have seen the issue clearly. I mean, we'd like to keep the Chinese game going; we'd like to keep the Russian game going. But if we get socked in Vietnam, both games will collapse at this point.

Kissinger: No question. Now, what would be sort of a good move is if the Russians postponed the summit and I wound up in Peking again.

Nixon: Oh, boy.

Kissinger: That would sort of put it to them. After this thing settles down in 2 or 3 weeks, we can ask the Chinese. Well, if the Russians aren't going through, then certainly Peking can go through. If the Russian summit gets postponed—

Nixon: Then the question is whether they'll—

Kissinger: Then I'll just ask whether there's still [unclear]

Nixon: I'd put it like the basis such that if they cancel, you're still willing to come. But if you don't want to cause any embarrassment to them, you know, you just might—a number of things we could talk about.

Kissinger: You know, we've got a lot of money in the bank with the Chinese. That was really a devilish statement. It was put out as a common [unclear] article. Of course, this makes Hanoi much more dependent on China. And a lot depends on whether Russia will accept the blockade. If Russia accepts the blockade, of course China will fulfill its duty and ship more supplies.

Nixon: Do they mean the Russians should try to run it?

Kissinger: Well, they can afford to be tough at Russia's expense.

Nixon: Yeah, of course they want to bust the summit.

Kissinger: Oh, yeah.

³ Apparently May 7.

213. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 10, 1972, 3:30–4 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Henry A. Kissinger

The meeting took place at Dobrynin's request.

Dobrynin opened the meeting by handing me a note which protested the bombing of Soviet shipping in the harbor of Cam Pha in North Vietnam.² I told Dobrynin that it was interesting that there had been a protest note in a private channel; could I interpret this as a desire to keep matters at low key? Dobrynin said that was not sure yet, because the decisions had been difficult due to the fact that May 9th was a national holiday, namely, V–E Day in the Soviet Union. However, he thought it was a somewhat encouraging sign as far as future relations were concerned. I said I hoped that Moscow took seriously what the President said about bilateral US-Soviet relations. The real problem was whether we were going to concentrate on a new era in

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The conversation was held in the Map Room at the White House. The closing time of the meeting is from the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule. In his diary entry for May 10 Haldeman recorded: "Henry reported to us on his meeting with Dobrynin. He had told me earlier that he had to see him at 3:00. He was quite excited but it turned out that all Dobrynin had was a protest on the ship we had sunk (accidentally in Haiphong Harbor) rather than any answer from the Russians on their reaction, particularly regarding the Summit." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 458) Nixon briefly mentions the meeting in *RN: Memoirs*, p. 607.

² In his memoirs Kissinger pointed out that the significance of the Soviet note was that it made no protest against the mining of North Vietnam. Instead, Kissinger recalled: "Dobrynin asked detailed questions about our cease-fire proposal. We both spoke delicately about the discussions that would take place 'if' the two leaders met. Dobrynin was a good chess player. At the end of the meeting, out of the blue, he asked whether the President had as yet decided on receiving Trade Minister Patolichev. I was not a little startled by the request; it could only mean that the Soviet leaders had decided to fall in with our approach of business as usual. Trying to match the Ambassador's studied casualness, I allowed that I probably would be able to arrange a meeting in the Oval Office. Playing a little chess myself, I mentioned that it was customary on these occasions to invite press photographers. Dobrynin thought this highly appropriate. In every crisis tension builds steadily, sometimes nearly unbearably, until some decisive turning point. The conversation with Dobrynin, if not yet the turning point, deflated the pressure. We knew that the summit was still on. Every day that passed without the cancellation made it more likely that it would take place. In that case Hanoi would be isolated; we would have won our gamble." (*White House Years*, p. 1193)

our relationship or whether we were going to permit an issue which was in any event on the way to a solution to cloud this.

Dobrynin began asking me questions about the ceasefire. How long did the ceasefire have to last? I said we, of course, were not putting a time limit on it, but we were hoping that it would be for the longest possible time, such as two years. Dobrynin said jokingly that I always raised my sights—at one point, I had mentioned 18 months to him. I said we would like to leave this for negotiations.

Dobrynin then said that if our leaders met, it would be helpful if the President could advance some precise propositions. I said if our leaders met, he would.

Dobrynin then asked about the meeting between the President and Patolichev that had been requested several weeks ago. I told him that if Patolichev still wanted a meeting, I could probably arrange it. Dobrynin said he thought it would be very good to have such a meeting. I told Dobrynin that we generally have press pictures on such occasions. Dobrynin thought that that would be highly appropriate now.

At this point, the meeting broke up.

Attachment

Note From the Soviet Leadership

Washington, May 10, 1972.

Information was just received in Moscow that today, on May 10, the Soviet motorship *Grisha Akopyan*, being in the North Vietnam port Kampha, was bombed and strafed by the American planes. There are killed and wounded among the crew of the motorship. A fire broke out on board of ship. Earlier, on May 9, the Soviet tanker *Pevek*, being in the port of Haiphong, was strafed by the American planes. There also are wounded among the crew of that ship.

It is felt necessary in Moscow to bring to the personal knowledge of the President our resolute protest against these criminal actions by American aviation which have caused death of the Soviet citizens. All this arouses lawful indignation in the Soviet people. The President must be aware of the consequences of such actions if they are left without punishment.

Moscow awaits from the President not only a prompt reply, but also a communication to the effect that the security of Soviet ships and life of the Soviet people will be guaranteed from hostile provocative actions by the US air and naval forces.

We do not touch now upon the qualification of the situation and actions of the United States in Vietnam in general. We have repeatedly told this to the President. And to this question we shall yet return in L.I. Brezhnev's reply to the last letter of the President.³

³ Document 207.

214. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 11, 1972, 1:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Henry A. Kissinger

The lunch had been arranged at Dobrynin's request as part of our regular series of meeting prior to the Summit. I had suggested to Dobrynin that perhaps this was not the best time, but Dobrynin felt that we should go ahead as if nothing were happening.

Vietnam

We began the meeting by reviewing the Vietnam situation. Dobrynin suggested that we were making too much of the Soviet role. No matter how many arms the Soviet Union had given, it was considerably less than the American arming of South Vietnam. The fact of the matter was that we were backing the wrong horse in South Vietnam and that if it weren't for American air power the North Vietnamese would have won long ago. He asked again about the specific terms. He wanted to know whether the ceasefire was in place or whether there were some additional aspects to it. I said that these were matters that we wanted to leave for negotiations, and that I was not prepared to discuss them now.

Dobrynin asked whether the North Vietnamese could maintain the territory they now had. I said the important thing was to make a prior determination whether we wanted to make peace. Specifically, we needed to get some perspective on the long-term evolution. We had no intention of maintaining a position in South Vietnam for all eternity.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

We did have the intention, however, to bring about conditions which permitted a fair political contest. There were only two roads to a solution. Either we would settle all military questions separately, or we would include the political issues—which, however, were too complex to permit a rapid conclusion. We were prepared to go either way, though our preference was the military route.

If Dobrynin looked at our formulation carefully, he would see that it incorporated exactly what Brezhnev had told us and therefore it was a fair and useful approach. As far as the great powers were concerned, it was essential for them not to permit their overriding interests to be submerged by the monomania of smaller countries.

Dobrynin said we had put their leaders into an extremely difficult position. He expected an answer fairly soon and perhaps if we waited together in the Map Room, it would arrive.

Bilateral Issues; SALT

We then reviewed a number of the bilateral issues, all of which were in rather good shape.

With respect to SALT, I told him we were opposed to deferral. He said if there were any new SALT proposals, they would be submitted to me first.²

Vietnam

At this point, his assistant brought the Soviet note [Brezhnev letter, attached]³ which was still in Russian, and his assistant translated it to me. I asked Dobrynin whether the phrase about damage to Soviet-

² In a May 11 memorandum to Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt summarized the current status of all of the outstanding bilateral issues. (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [1 of 2]) A May 6 memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger also lists a tentative schedule for the announcing of agreements of these various issues while at the Moscow summit. (Ibid.)

³ Brackets in the source text. A notation on the attached note reads: "Handed to Gen. Haig by 1st Secy. Sokolov, 4:45 p.m., May 11, 1972." In his memoirs Kissinger described the meeting and the note passed during it as removing "the last remaining uncertainty" over the summit: "Usually the Soviet Embassy supplied a written translation. In this case Dobrynin's assistant did the honors in a way which, had the meaning of the letter depended on precision, might well have defeated its purpose. But even a rough oral translation left no doubt that Brezhnev was avoiding any hint of confrontation, despite the letter's conventional bluster warning against the consequences of our actions. I asked innocently whether Brezhnev's warning referred to any new actions or to steps that had already been taken. Obviously, replied Dobrynin, his patience seemingly tried by my denseness, the General Secretary could only have meant *additional* measures to those announced on May 8. Since it clearly pleased Dobrynin to play the professor, I asked why the letter had not referred to the summit. Dobrynin answered that since we had not asked about it in our communication of May 8, the Politburo had seen no need for a response. (For anyone familiar with Soviet diplomatic tactics such delicacy was a novel experience.) I asked whether we should have asked a question about the summit. 'No,' said Dobrynin, 'you have handled a difficult situation uncommonly well.'" (*White House Years*, p. 1194)

American relations meant that new activities could threaten them or whether it meant that a continuation of the old ones would threaten them. If the latter, then I could tell him the existing activities would be continued; if the former, I thought I could assure him that there would be no new activities beyond those that were now being contemplated. Dobrynin said the former interpretation was the correct one. Dobrynin asked me whether he could report to his government that I had given him two assurances: (1) that the scale of operations would not escalate beyond the present level for the time being, (2) that we would not interfere with Soviet ships on the high seas, and (3) that we would take precautions against the bombing of Soviet ships in Vietnamese harbors. I told him he could give all these assurances, and I would confirm it with the President.

I then asked Dobrynin why the note had been silent on the question of the Summit. Dobrynin said that was because we had not asked any questions about the Summit, and therefore the Soviet Government saw no need to make a new decision. I asked whether we should have asked the question about the Summit. Dobrynin said, "No, you have handled a difficult situation uncommonly well." Dobrynin then said that, as the Summit was still continuing, could we accept some restrictions on our military operations while we were in the Soviet Union? I told Dobrynin I would let him know about those on Monday.⁴

At this point the meeting broke up.

Attachment

Letter From Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev to President Nixon

Moscow, May 11, 1972.

Dear. Mr. President:

We have carefully read your letter of May 8⁵ as well as the text of your statement made on the same day,⁶ in which you announce new measures of military escalation in Vietnam.

⁴ May 15; see Document 226. According to a transcript of a telephone conversation at 5 p.m. on May 11, Kissinger called Dobrynin "to officially confirm on behalf of the President what I told you about our actions" and added he would give to Dobrynin "on Monday certain limitations we will observe during the meeting." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

⁵ See the attachment to Document 207.

⁶ See Document 208.

The Soviet Government has expressed its attitude toward those steps in an official statement which is published. I must say frankly that possible consequences of the decision taken by you, the worst from our standpoint, cause our most serious concern.

I have already written to you that, in our conviction, the only possible way of solving the Vietnam problem is a peaceful political settlement reached at a negotiation table. To count on a military solution of the Vietnam conflict is without perspective. To continue this line means to deliberately lead to a still greater hardening of the armed fighting which will put away and reduce chances for attaining an acceptable settlement.

To stake on increasing the military pressure is only capable of producing opposite results as was the case in the past. It is to be assumed that in reply to that the Vietnamese inevitably will be forced to step up their resistance. As a result, the acuteness of the conflict not only does not diminish but, rather, increases.

It is especially important to dwell on such an action by the U.S. as mining the ports and the approaches to the ports of the DRV. It must be clear that this constitutes the most flagrant violation of the generally accepted norms of international law and the freedom of navigation. By this measure the U.S. considerably complicates the entire situation in connection with Vietnam. Directly jeopardised are the safety and the lives of crew members of the ships of third countries, including those of the Soviet Union. We have already addressed you on the two specific cases when as a result of the attack by U.S. air force one ship had been damaged while another completely destroyed and there is a loss of human lives among Soviet seamen. These acts subject Soviet-American relation to a severe test, and this you have to well understand.

It would be very dangerous, Mr. President, not to see the consequences which may entail this course of action by the U.S.

You say that the ships which are now in the DRV ports or en route there, will do so "on their own risk". I must emphasize that this risk is being made by the unlawful actions by the U.S., and the entire responsibility for attempts to prevent Soviet ships from exercising their right to freedom of navigation and anything that may occur in connection with this will, naturally, be borne by the American side and by it alone.

In your letter, Mr. President, you speak about the progress in Soviet-American relations and about the undesirability for these relations to be thrown back to the "dark shadows of the previous age." But, indeed, are those actions by the U.S. air force taken in the wake of that letter, not a denial of what had been said several hours ago? In any case, the one and the other are hard to reconcile.

My colleagues and I expect, Mr. President, that at this moment of responsibility for Soviet-American relations and for the world situation as a whole everything will be done on the American side so that an irrevocable damage not be done to the present and to the future of these relations and to the broad interests of international security.

Sincerely,

L. Brezhnev⁷

⁷ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

Memorandum for the President's Files From the President's Assistant and Director of the Council on International Economic Policy (Flanigan)¹

Washington, May 11, 1972, 10:08–11:01 a.m.

At 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 11, 1972, the President met in the Oval Office with Minister Patolichev and Ambassador Dobrynin of the Soviet Union and Messrs. Kissinger, Peterson and Flanigan.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 88, Memoranda for the President, Beginning May 7, 1972. Secret. The time of the meeting and the fact that members of the press and an unnamed White House photographer were present for short periods are in the President's Daily Diary. (Ibid., White House Central Files) An undated memorandum for the President's files outlines the key points for the President to make during his meeting. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 88, Memoranda for the President, Beginning May 7, 1972) Kissinger's May 11 memorandum to the President provided a background briefing for the meeting. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 719, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXII, May 1972) A May 11 memorandum from Peterson to Nixon contained talking points. (Ibid.) Kissinger briefly describes the meeting in his memoirs. (*White House Years*, p. 1194) A recording of this meeting is *ibid.*, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 723–5. Kissinger's comments to Nixon immediately following this meeting also appear on a tape recording. (Ibid., Conversation No. 723–7)

Minister Patolichev began by stating that he had had numerous discussions with Secretary Peterson over the preceding days.² The President indicated that Peterson had reported on these discussions and also noted that Dr. Kissinger had reported fully on his talk in Moscow with Brezhnev and Kosygin.

Patolichev said that Secretary Peterson's statement of the President's position, e.g. that (a) the President wanted an expansion of economic and trade relations, (b) that within the framework of political relations, trade relations should be expanded first, and (c) that a new era of U.S.–USSR relations might appear, was accepted by the Soviet Union and was the basis for discussions. He further indicated that the Peterson meetings and the earlier meetings with Stans in Moscow³ had been positive, covering a wide range of problems, and that he had established warm relations with both Stans and Peterson. The President responded that Peterson had his full confidence and affirmed that anything offered by Secretaries Stans, Peterson and Butz and by Dr. Kissinger had been done with full Presidential knowledge and approval.

On substance, Patolichev indicated that the Soviets foresaw the potential for broad economic relations, in excess of hundreds of millions of dollars, between the two powers. Though many hurdles remained, the Soviets saw favorable perspectives. Regarding specific problems, the Soviets felt MFN status of primary importance although they recognized the difficulties this posed for the U.S. Also specifically mentioned was the credit problem, which the Soviets hoped could be resolved on the basis of reciprocity.

Particularly mentioned were credits for the Kama River project, which an American firm is designing, with contracts for \$200 million

² According to a transcript of a telephone conversation between Kissinger and Flanigan, May 4, 2:38 p.m., they discussed the approach Peterson was taking in his talks with Patolichev. Kissinger argued that several tentative agreements on substantive trade issues should be put into place for the summit whereas Peterson wanted to limit what would be decided at Moscow. In these dealings with the Soviets, Kissinger offered Flanigan the following direction: "We're in a very tough position with them so what I'd like you to do is to dangle perhaps a fatter carrot in front of them than your commercial instincts would dictate but on the other hand, give them less than is attainable." This incentive involved "some rather dramatic prospects of trade if our general relationships were good," he added, and needed to be put forth "even if you lie a little bit." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) According to a transcript of a telephone conversation, Kissinger called Peterson at 4:49 p.m. on May 10 and advised him of the meeting: "Now I have arranged a meeting for Patolichev with the President for 10 o'clock tomorrow and we'd like you to be there but we don't want to announce it ahead of time in case the goddamn thing blows up. You know, the summit blows up before then." (Ibid.)

³ See Document 14.

due to be signed in May. If the U.S. extends a few hundred million dollars in credit, the Soviet Union will place orders in the U.S. Regarding the financing of a grain agreement, Patolichev indicated awareness that the credit terms required by the Soviets were not possible for the U.S. and understood our necessity to limit credit to three years and market interest rate. At the same time, since the Soviets export grain in some years, they thought favorable credit terms were necessary for a long-term purchase agreement. In any event, Patolichev said he would report to his government what terms are possible and stated his personal opinion that a "one-year deal", with the re-opening next year of the purchase agreement on a revised PL 480 basis, might be possible.

The President responded to the specific points by saying that the U.S. would be prepared to move in the direction of MFN subject to Congressional approval, and that Export-Import Bank credit would be possible along the lines discussed by Secretary Peterson. More broadly, however, the President observed that while these matters and those discussed by the Secretaries and Dr. Kissinger were important details, he thought it desirable to view these discussions in a larger framework. The U.S. and the USSR are, both militarily and economically, the two most powerful countries on earth. The differences in philosophy and on local problems throughout the world, though important, are not crucial; they should not distract the two nations' attentions from greater goals. As Allies in World War II, the two nations were able to look beyond smaller difficulties to solve overriding problems; the President expressed hope that the U.S. and USSR could transcend current problems and help the peoples of both countries through trade.

The President observed that a meeting between himself and Chairman Brezhnev was, by its nature, truly at the Summit, and that at such a meeting, "the mountains must not labor and produce a mouse". The President stated he will be prepared to consider large goals to serve long-range purposes and expressed the hope that Brezhnev would deal on this basis. Patolichev indicated that Brezhnev would be a partner on a large scale.

The meeting concluded at 11:05 a.m.

216. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, May 11, 1972, 11:21–11:59 a.m.

SUBJECT

Vietnam

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

U. Alexis Johnson

William Sullivan

Defense

Kenneth Rush

G. Warren Nutter

R/Adm. William Flanagan

JCS

Adm. Thomas Moorer

Capt. Kinniard McKee

CIA

George Carver

[*name not declassified*] (only for Mr. Carver's briefing)

NSC

Maj. Gen. Alexander Haig

Richard Kennedy

John Holdridge

Mark Wandler

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

—Concerning the Soviet statement,² our spokesmen should just say we are studying the statement with the care it deserves. The spokesmen should not make any comments about the on-going U.S.-Soviet negotiations in Washington or about the summit.

—The White House will see that the Soviets are again notified about the mines at Cam Pha.

—We will go ahead with the transfer of two additional squadrons of C-130s to Taiwan.

—The Defense Department should provide a plan on augmentation of fixed wing gunships. It should also provide the Vietnamese Air Force study by next Tuesday morning.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals. Sensitive. Transmitted to Kissinger under cover of an attached May 11 memorandum from Davis.

² Reference is to a public Soviet protest released that day by the official Soviet news agency. An assessment of the statement in CIA Intelligence Information Memorandum SC No. 00915/72, May 11, termed it "a relatively temperate document designed to preserve Moscow's freedom of maneuver." (Ibid., Box 1087, Howe Vietnam Chronology, 5-11-72) In a Spot Report, May 11, the DIA concurred with the CIA's assessment. (Ibid.)

—We will see what can be done to satisfy the ROK requests for more equipment and support.

—We will proceed with the leaflet drops and develop an active psywar campaign in both North and South Vietnam.

Mr. Kissinger: I'm sorry I'm late. I was in with the President and the Soviet Trade Minister.³

Mr. Johnson: Did the Soviet Minister deliver the message to you?

Mr. Kissinger: No. In fact, he talked about the great relations—especially in trade—we can have.

Mr. Johnson: Has the Soviet message been officially transmitted to you?

Mr. Kissinger: No.

Mr. Johnson: You haven't received any amplification of the message?

Mr. Kissinger: No. The Soviet note doesn't seem too tough to me. What do you people think?

Mr. Johnson: It isn't very tough. They talk about interference on the high seas and about the 1958 Law of the Sea convention.⁴ The question is why have they put up this windmill about the high seas?

Mr. Kissinger: So that they can claim they stopped us from doing something we never intended to do. Then they will be able to claim a tremendous victory. Have you seen the message from Poland?

Mr. Sullivan: You mean from the Vice Foreign Minister?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. He told us the Poles will put out a fairly moderate statement and that we should go ahead with planning the trip to Poland. I can't imagine that Moscow wouldn't know about this message.

Mr. Sullivan: There's been another interesting development, too. Neil Gallagher, the Congressman from New Jersey, called me last night and said that the Far East expert in the Soviet Embassy came to see him yesterday. The essence of the Russian's remarks, according to Gallagher, was that: (1) the Soviets have made their decision and are now implementing it, and (2) there will be an escalation of the rhetoric, but the professional people will be able to discern that this does not translate into escalated actions. I don't know how much credence we can put into this, but that's what Gallagher told me.

Mr. Kissinger: I have somewhat the same impression. The Soviets are putting forth a straw man so that they can condemn us for something which will not happen.

³ See Document 215.

⁴ Reference is to the Convention of the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization, entered into force March 17, 1958. (*United States Treaties and Other International Agreements*, vol. 9, 1958 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), pp. 621–646)

Mr. Johnson: This is a very deliberate action on their part. They could have cited the 1907 Hague Convention on Mining⁵—and raised some legal questions about our actions. Instead, they chose to refer to the 1958 convention.

Mr. Kissinger: The Soviets also said in their statement that they will continue to support North Vietnam, but they didn't say they would try to break the blockade.

Mr. Johnson: On the whole, it's a mild statement.

Mr. Sullivan: Should our spokesmen make any comment on it?

Mr. Kissinger: No. They should just say we will study the statement with the care it deserves.

Mr. Rush: It's interesting to note, too, that the statement made no attack on the President.

Mr. Kissinger: If asked, our spokesmen should just say we are studying the statement. I talked to the Secretary about another straw in the wind. Dobrynin called me and said that it was not helpful for us to call attention to the negotiations. He said we should keep quiet about them.

Mr. Sullivan: You mean the Paris negotiations?

Mr. Kissinger: No. He was referring to the negotiations being conducted here by the Soviet missions. We should say nothing about these negotiations. And we should also say we have nothing new to add about the summit. Let's just keep quiet about these things for the time being.

Mr. Johnson: (to Mr. Sullivan) Bill, will you make sure Bob [McCloskey]⁶ gets these instructions?

Gen. Haig: We've already spoken to Bob about this.

Mr. Johnson: Good.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Rush) The same thing goes for Defense. Can you instruct your people? We should play these things low-key.

Adm. Flanagan: I'll speak to Henkin⁷ when I get back to the office.

Gen. Haig: I've called Henkin, too.

Mr. Kissinger: It's important that we stay low-key. Let's not make any comments on these things.

⁵ Reference is to the Laying of Automatic Submarine Contact Mines, October 18, 1907. (*Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776–1949*, vol. I, Multilateral, 1776–1917 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1968), pp. 669–680)

⁶ Brackets in the source text.

⁷ Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Daniel Z. Henkin.

Mr. Rush: The next to the last paragraph of the Soviet statement is interesting. It in effect dilutes the action statement made higher up by saying that the Soviet views are shared by other peoples as well.

[Omitted here is discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

Mr. Kissinger: By next week, we should know where we stand with Moscow. The Democratic caucus will not take a harder line than the Soviets.

Gen. Haig: It's been suggested that Secretary Rogers should hold a press conference, but I don't think it is needed at this time.

Mr. Kissinger: You're right. We should hold off on that. If the summit is still on, that will be all to the good. If the summit is cancelled, that will be another matter.

Mr. Sullivan: How is the advance party making out?

Mr. Kissinger: I'm amazed that they are being treated so royally.

Mr. Nutter: Perhaps the Soviets are waiting for the summit to get a little closer before they cancel.

Mr. Carver: The Soviets may be waiting to see the outcome of vote on the German treaties, too.

Mr. Sullivan: When is the vote?

Mr. Rush: It's on May 17. The longer the Soviets wait to cancel the summit—if that is what they are doing—the more danger they run of being accused of deception.

Mr. Kissinger: In order to get the German treaties ratified, they have to act as though the summit is still on. But if they do that, it will have a bad effect on Hanoi.

Mr. Carver: Unless there are private communications we don't know about, Hanoi has to be uncomfortable with the rather mild Soviet and Chinese responses.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, I think so. The people who met Xuan Thuy in Moscow weren't even high-ranking officials.⁸

Mr. Carver: They were at the right level for Xuan Thuy. The Soviets did not bend over backwards to greet him.

Mr. Kissinger: That's what I mean. It's funny that Xuan Thuy is there.

Mr. Carver: Will we meet tomorrow?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes.

⁸ On May 11, Thuy met with Kosygin; see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, XXIV: 17, pp. 5, 10.

217. Conversation Among President Nixon, his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), White House Chief of Staff (Haldeman), and Secretary of State Rogers¹

Washington, May 11, 1972.

[Omitted here is unrelated discussion of the President's meeting that day with Soviet Minister Patolichev.]

Kissinger: He [Patolichev] came in for what was supposed to be a courtesy visit and he literally talked for 45 minutes.²

Nixon: Forty-five minutes about every little thing, that you know, he'd talked about, this fellow, with Peterson and Stans.

[Omitted here is further discussion about the same meeting.]

Nixon: The Russian response was not an official response yet, as I understand they have delivered through Patolichev.

Kissinger: It was an official response.

Rogers: It was a government—[unclear exchange]

Nixon: I think we should say, see, they took 3 days to respond to us, and I think we will take 3 days.

Rogers: I think really the question is whether we should give them a quick and sort of noncommittal response, which we can do. [unclear]. Or just delay. I think maybe a delay will make it look as if we are thinking of something. There isn't a hell of a lot to say, because their statement was fairly mild.

Nixon: Well, didn't you think it was?

Rogers: Yeah.

Nixon: As did all the people around here—Helms thought it was mild, too—the whole bunch.

Rogers: Well, I think what we ought to do, Mr. President, I'll have Atherton send over to you a response, which is quite appropriate, and

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 723–16. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger, Haldeman, and Rogers in the Oval Office from 3:51 to 4:44 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume. In his diary Haldeman recorded that Rogers asked for this meeting to show that he “is not cut out” of decisions in Vietnam. “We set up the Rogers meeting. The P had me sit in and we didn't really accomplish much. The P told Rogers not to have a press conference this week, emphasize that we have to turn off all of our PR apparatus on any comment on the Soviet answer or any interpretation of the Soviet attitude.” Haldeman continued: “The general feeling now, even on Henry's part, is that the Summit is going to be on rather than off, and so there's a level of optimism on that part.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

² See Document 215.

decide that issue. And then just have Ron hand it out, and Bob McCloskey hand it out, or wait 'til later.

Nixon: Your feeling is that it should not be—

Kissinger: It's the right level—

Nixon: Henry had the feeling that you should because [unclear]—

Rogers: I don't—

Nixon: They didn't do it at their high level. [unclear]

Rogers: Oh, they just made an announcement—a government announcement, that's all, and that appeared in TASS.

Nixon: I think that maybe you and Henry can work out the drill there as to what level and when.

Kissinger: I think we could wait until they hand it to us officially and then in a low-key way reply to that.

Rogers: Yeah. I don't understand why didn't they hand it to us before they published it. That's sort of interesting.

Kissinger: I think, frankly, they're not eager for a reply. I don't think they want a long debate with us on it.

Rogers: I don't know.

Kissinger: That's my impression.

Nixon: You think they may—

Rogers: I really just don't know. It's mild enough in one way. On the other hand, it would be a perfectly good way to delay if they're going to take some other action. In other words, they can play it both ways, so—

Kissinger: It's a holding action.

Nixon: They can't. We'll soon know. They have a—I will say this, my guess is they would consider it a rather risky business, I mean, in terms of their own interest, to wait until, say Tuesday³ or Wednesday of next week to cancel the summit. I think they're going to do it. I think they have to do it tomorrow or Saturday.

Rogers: Well, they could provoke something. They could send mine sweepers down, and challenge us. And I suppose, we challenge them. And they could call it off, or if they're committed to go ahead with the minesweepers, then we'll look as if we backed down. I think one of the things that we've got to be sure about—and I spoke to Henry about it earlier—if we're not going to answer, then I think we've got to get all our people to keep quiet because there's going to be a hell of a temptation to say, they blinked, this is the winner, or something like that.

³ May 16.

Nixon: We won't comment on it at all.

[Omitted here is further discussion of the media.]

Rogers: There are two or three specific things I'd like to talk to you about today. One is, the Security Council has turned off—that doesn't have a chance. It never did. And the Russians are against it. The Chinese are against it. And it doesn't make any sense to begin with. I think we shouldn't appear to be thinking negative on it. I mean, we've got to make it clear that somebody else has turned it down. But I don't think you have to worry about that as even a possibility.

On the Incidents at Sea negotiations,⁴ they've come to an impasse based on the Russian position that we've got to talk about fixed distances. This is something you decided some time back. The Defense Department has been against it for reasons I don't think are very good. The Russians say they've got to know by 6 o'clock whether we talked about it or not. My own recommendation is that we ought to talk about it. We have our own—

Nixon: Hasn't [Secretary of the Navy] John Warner?

Rogers: Yeah. We have our own. Mr. President, it's really a matter of what we—how close we can come to their ships with our planes and how close we can come to their ships with our ships. Now what we've suggested, the position of the State Department is that we had at least a discussion about that and not have any limitations that are not already imposed by ourselves on ourselves. In other words, we have limitations, I know, I think, on overflights.

Kissinger: The problem is that this was looked at very carefully, and the problem with it is that the intelligence people, for reasons which may or may not be good, are violently opposed to these—to fixed limitations, partly because of some penetrations of the waters which are, in any event, illegal. And, I mean—

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: Well, ah, it—

Nixon: You say by 6 o'clock tonight?

Rogers: Henry, my intelligence people say that that's exaggerated. In the first place, I think we have rules ourselves—you can't have planes that fly closer than within 300 feet to another ship—it's just dangerous as hell. And I thought it was that why not at least talk to them about the restrictions that we have on ourselves, not by disclosing anything? Well, if don't—don't have—

Nixon: Could we—

Kissinger: Could we get—

⁴ See Document 214.

Nixon: Could we talk about it? That's what I mean. Let's talk to them about it.

Kissinger: I think the view is, really, that if you talk to them about it you've already have given it in. Could we get a position within our government and get a good paper to you, which gives the arguments in a more systematic way because I'm not in detail up on it and I'm not sure whether Bill is.

Nixon: Well, what is that—intelligence, you mean military intelligence and so forth?

Kissinger: I think that they'll agree to extend it 24 hours.

Rogers: I think they would if we say we'd let them know tomorrow.

Kissinger: If we tell them we'll let them know by tomorrow.

Nixon: Let me just see if I—because my main problem is going to be keeping the military happy, the military intelligence people, and so get me something so that I can say that at least I put it there.

Rogers: I think that the Russians have a good point, because they say well, if we're not going to talk about it, then there's no point of having the rule of reason. Hell, that's what we have now. Why not have some limitation, at least talk about how many feet we should separate from each other. All right, let's do that.

[Omitted here is discussion of a possible cease-fire in Indochina, including a proposal for a "Geneva-like convention."]

Nixon: When would that convene?

Rogers: Well, it would be any time you wanted it to. I'm just thinking of form. Now, the British have already posed it. The Russians have resisted it. Although Alec Home has just made this proposal to the Russian Ambassador, who says he wants to think it over and get instructions from his government. The British are also talking to the Chinese about it. Now, I think, we don't have a problem publicly. I think the real problem is, is this something we would like to do to accomplish is this—

Nixon: Tell you what I'd like to do. I'd like to—I think a lot depends upon, in my view, as to what does happen, and we should know within 3 days certainly on the Russian thing—if the Russian thing goes forward, then I think we might have a few things which tentatively might be under consideration. I just have a feeling that we should not move over the next 3 or 4 days in any of those directions. I think, I think what I'd like to do, if we can, is to keep, at all, to keep a posture where we're taking a very strong position. We've made a very forthcoming offer for a negotiated settlement. And I would not try to spell it out too much at this point—like they say, well, what is a cease-fire? Is it in place; is a withdrawal, and all the rest? And that's why

it's so important from our point of view that we get them into this conference business, because I think they caught Mel on that a little.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Rogers: Yeah.

Nixon: Well, anyway, what we want to do, I'd rather just leave them, because that's going to be, if they do fight—

Rogers: Well, Mr. President, I wasn't really talking about making any public comments about it or anything of that kind. I'm really talking about whether it's a possibility even when you go to the Soviet Union. If, of course, if there's something else that you're working on, then—

Nixon: No. We don't even know if we're going.

Kissinger: There's nothing's going on that I know of.

Nixon: Out there. Out there.

Rogers: It seems to me that this is something we ought to think about is the possibility for you to discuss, it seems to me—

Nixon: At the summit?

Rogers: Yeah. At the summit. Or it might be that something will come out of the summit. You see, the conference in '54 dealt, in a sense, with the same issues. It dealt with the issue of cease-fire, and they discussed the matter for 4 or 5 months, and then there was a cease-fire. Then they add the problem of regrouping, and whether it would be in place or not, and that type of thing. Now, if we were looking for a device to gain some time, and somewhat of a face-saving device particularly for the Russians in lieu of your statement because that does put them on the spot—if they do anything now, it's going to appear that they did it as a result of your strong stance. Probably from this standpoint, it looks as if there'd be nothing down. If they're looking for some kind of a device to get a little time and go ahead with the acceptance of your proposal—which is certainly fair, I don't know how anybody could expect you to do more—then the Geneva-type conference, not necessarily exactly that, but the Geneva-type conference makes some sense. Furthermore, the Paris negotiations is a forum not very appropriate because Laos and Cambodia are not involved at all. So that a Geneva-type conference, which included both Laos and Cambodia, and in a sense turned out pretty well because they even permitted French troops to stay in Laos and Cambodia and South Vietnam.

Nixon: Mm-hmn.

Rogers: Small contingents, but still some troops, which—so that there's a lot of analogies which would be appropriate for this type of thing. And my suggestion merely is that we think about—not say anything about it—as far as the British, we'll be asked about that—I'm sure I'll be asked Monday about it—and there I just think we can say, "Well,

the President's made it clear that he's prepared to take part in a conference, and he said so in his speech." And not get tied down exactly to any—

Nixon: I actually haven't given it any thought. You've got any reactions to it? As I say, I'd look at any proposal.

Kissinger: I think we ought to think about it.

Nixon: I personally—there's only one reason I'd like to get a little thought because the British have been damn good, you know.

Kissinger: It's still different from '54, because the French, for example, at that time, they were a principal. Now they are sort of secondary as far as we are concerned. But I think we ought to study it, and have another opinion on it.

Nixon: On a total in-house basis. [unclear]

Rogers: Well, I think it's worth considering because if could let the British take the lead they could talk to the French. If we propose it to the French, they'll be negative, because they want to have the damn thing in Paris. But the British are quite—you know, we couldn't have a better ally. And if we indicated to them that this was something we thought was desirable.

Nixon: I would say that this, to a certain extent, would indicate that we're not thinking negatively. Start with that proposition. Second, that we have doubtless been negotiating for so long, and for so long that we've got blinkers on and might have missed something.

Kissinger: I think we ought to look at it.

Nixon: I'll look at it.

[Omitted here is discussion on the war in Vietnam, including strikes on POL and railroad targets in North Vietnam.]

Nixon: The main thing, it seems to me, is that we must use ultimate power at the time that we have most support because support erodes as time goes on, and before the Senate or somebody does cut us off. And, also, because the psychological impact on the North Vietnamese may be a hell of a lot greater if they think maybe we'll do it.

Rogers: What do you think about on Monday putting the bead on the Congress for endangering the summit in case they take some action. That's not a bad thing to say, "Look, why don't you lay off now that everything seems to be moving along all right." If Congress acts adversely, it may have some effect, not really low key it.

Nixon: Well, I think you can say, you know, the way I think about it is this. You can put it in a rather general sense. You can say that the President has gone to China under restrictions, he's attempted to—we're breaking our backs negotiating with the North Vietnamese, he's negotiating—this is the series of negotiations with Hanoi we prefer. But the Senate must think very, very carefully—or the Congress—before

taking any action which undercuts the President's ability to negotiate. We're willing to negotiate. And whenever the Congress acts, all it does is an incentive for the enemy not to negotiate, and therefore, about anything. And on the summit, it's just unconscionable for these people to be undercutting—the Russian thing is still not on.

[At this point, the President is interrupted and asked to sign a document by an aide.]

Kissinger: All the newsmen have their teeth practically dropping out of their mouths with the Russian bite. Next week, you, everyday, are more visibly preparing for the summit. Who in God's name is going to pass a resolution? I can't believe it.

[Omitted here is discussion in which Kissinger recommends that "next week I would hard-line it," because there were 10 days until Moscow and notes that Dobrynin told reporters that he didn't need to discuss the summit and there was no question that the summit was going ahead.]

Nixon: What about Bill's point about Dobrynin lying to Kennedy [in 1962]?

Kissinger: Mr. President, first of all, I'm not sure that—well, Dobrynin is perfectly capable of lying.

Nixon: Oh, sure. So am I.

Kissinger: And he's perfectly capable of saying if they want to cancel the summit. Now, you can say the German treaties are ransomed in that circumstance. If that's so, they can't cancel it before the 19th.

Nixon: It's too late.

Kissinger: Now, then, supposing they cancel you on the 20th, while you're on the way. What have they then gained by it? I think the whole American people, if you then turn around and come back and turn on them, you'll have everybody with you. It's one thing if they had turned on you this week, they could say Vietnam. But next week, when you have done nothing in additional, when you can tell them you can give them these assurances they've received it all, we've planned on it and are preparing it, for them to flush our whole policies down the drain and make you a hero in the process is almost inconceivable to me. This week they had a good possibility of doing it. Next week they would pay an additional price, which isn't worth it. Moreover, they—

Nixon: Well actually, Henry, I think they've got to cancel it and then move on it tomorrow or the next day.

Kissinger: If they haven't canceled it by Monday, and I don't see how they can now cancel it before Monday because they—we got the Brezhnev answer,⁵ which is a—he read it to them.

⁵ See attachment to Document 214.

Nixon: He doesn't know that.

Kissinger: No, he doesn't need to know there was a letter.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: So, we've got the Brezhnev answer. It's mild. I've worked out with Dobrynin three principles, which he's accepted: we won't do anything other than what we're already doing. We won't attack Soviet ships.

Nixon: Did he mark that down?

Kissinger: We won't attack Soviet ships and we won't interfere—in ports—and we won't interfere with Soviet ships on the high seas. I said to Dobrynin this letter can be interpreted in two ways. That we can't do anything, that we have to stop what we are doing or that we shouldn't do anything additional. The first we can't do, the second we can do. He said, "I interpret it the second way." Now this is a record of total treachery if they—

Nixon: But also being totally treacherous with me is a hell of a lot more dangerous than being totally treacherous with you.

Kissinger: Yes, but what's in it for them, Mr. President? With the case of Kennedy, they were sneaking missiles into Cuba. In this case, they're just cutting off a summit, and what do they gain by waiting 10 days? Well, you can say they are gaining the German treaty.

Haldeman: Getting the German treaty, and they could get propaganda from going to go to the maximum humiliation of the President, which would be to cut him off while he's en route. Actually—

Kissinger: But I think that would help. If, on Wednesday morning, the Russians had put out a statement saying we were preparing in good faith for the summit—

Haldeman: That would've hurt us.

Kissinger: The Vietnamese people are an oppressed people, that the Americans are bombing it and we will not receive the raper of American—of Vietnamese—you know.

Haldeman: [unclear]

Kissinger: They haven't done that. They have not started a press campaign against you. No meetings of indignation. And that's a—

Haldeman: That's another thing we knew was going to happen. They have stirred up demonstrations in this country.

Kissinger: Sure. You'd expect them to do that. Oh, no, you'd expect them.

Haldeman: You would have expected it, that's right, but they haven't been terribly effective in doing that. And that must have registered on them to—to attempt to see whether they could do it.

Kissinger: But they haven't done a big thing in Russia. They haven't attacked you in their press. And, in other words, they've been

in a very low gear. Now, you know, I expected them to cancel the summit, so I'm not—but I expected them to do it in direct relation to your actions.

[Omitted here is discussion of the day's press reports, leaks to the media, and Secretary of the Treasury Connally's position.]

Kissinger: It is not inconceivable, Mr. President, that next Friday they're going to cancel the summit. But it would be such a mean, petty move. So inconsistent. Another thing Dobrynin says, he says, "of course you didn't ask us the question, so we saw no reason to give you the answer." So I said, "well, Anatoly, we'll be glad to ask the question." He said, "No, why make us make a formal decision in response. You have said publicly you are continuing your preparation for the summit. Our leaders know you have said this, our leaders haven't canceled it—why raise the issue?" And I think that's right.

Haldeman: And their guys, for sure at the bureaucratic level, are going ahead, because our advance—we have an advance team in Moscow. They've been there for a week now. And they're going over every kind of minute [detail.] They're arguing over where the car can drive, going through what rooms are going to be assigned to who, and where the security can set up. We can set up—we've got complete—we got a hotline right now in the White House boardroom to Moscow—I can get them faster than I can get my office.

Kissinger: It's conceivable that they will cancel you on Monday. I would say, after Monday, the chances go from 70 percent by 5 to 10 percent every day.

Nixon: Anyway, we're not going to worry about it. In the meantime, the strategy over the weekend will be for everybody to pipe down if they can.

Haldeman: Yeah.

Nixon: And you, incidentally, you can go over and—you've got to have your talk with Connally. But other than that—

Haldeman: Sure.

Nixon: Just so you can have my analysis. And, I think in the meantime, both you and Henry keep the lid on everybody here. I'd also suggest that with congressional people, that Henry spend some time tomorrow with [Senator John] Stennis.

Kissinger: I'll call Stennis. I'll talk to him. I'll meet him.

Nixon: And just say, say, "Senator, let me just tell you right now that there's a lot going on and it would be terribly helpful if you would just pipe down."

[Omitted here is further discussion on the situation in Vietnam.]

218. Editorial Note

In three telephone conversations on May 12, 1972, President Nixon and his assistant Henry Kissinger discussed the possibility of Soviet cancellation of the summit as well as Kissinger's scheduled meeting with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin that day. An excerpt from the first conversation at 8:40 a.m. reads:

"K: I think it's slightly better than 50–50 now that they won't.

"P: Yes.

"K: And in fact with every passing day it's more probable that they won't.

"P: Well, we have to remember that it poses awfully serious problems for them to cancel it at this point.

"K: Not just immediate problems, but also long-term problems. If they cancel this it will take them 18 months under the best conditions to get back to this position.

"P: With us?

"K: With us, yes.

"P: If they cancel this they're gambling on somebody else winning the election. And that's a helluva tough gamble right now because they know that we're going to put it to them. If they cancel, then they know we are then going to play it much harder militarily with the Vietnamese too.

"K: Right. I don't believe they'll cancel, Mr. President, for the reasons I gave you yesterday. If they were going to cancel this was the week to do it. There's almost no percentage in it for them to cancel it next week." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

In the second conversation at 3:50 p.m., Kissinger informed Nixon that he would be meeting with Dobrynin at 4:30 p.m. that afternoon. Kissinger noted that during the meeting Dobrynin would probably deliver a message from the Soviet leadership. Kissinger also speculated that the message would refer to plans and agenda items for the summit conference. (Ibid.) The third conversation took place at 4 p.m. when Nixon and Kissinger talked briefly on the telephone.

"K: Mr. President.

"P: Oh, Henry, one thing I just wanted to be sure that we have on the line. In the unlikely event that they move in the other direction, I think it's extremely important to be awfully cold about it.

"K: Oh yes.

"P: I don't think they're going to, but, I mean, I don't think he would have approached it this way. He probably knows what the message is already.

“K: He may not—well, he certainly has some idea of the content. There may have been a change of mind but it’s just unlikely.

“P: Yes. He has to deliver it to you personally, eh?

“K: Yes, but that’s normal. All of the messages for you get delivered to me personally.

“P: Right. I see. But my point is that that isn’t the way they would do it if they were going to bust it off. I think they wouldn’t have let it go along so long.

“P: I would be amazed, but they might have had a change, but it’s unlikely.” (Ibid.)

219. Editorial Note

On May 12, 1972, the Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG), chaired by Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger and including Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William Sullivan, Deputy Secretary of Defense Kenneth Rush, and Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, met from 10:05 to 10:30 a.m. in the White House Situation Room to discuss the U.S. response to a published Soviet statement on Vietnam:

“Mr. Kissinger: The President and the Secretary were talking about a reply to the Soviet statement. They want to keep it low-key, and they were thinking about saying something Monday [May 14] or Tuesday. Has the statement been officially transmitted to the Department?

“Mr. Johnson: No. The Secretary told me that he didn’t think it was necessary to reply—as long as we haven’t officially received it. In my mind, the issue was still open.

“Mr. Sullivan: The Secretary is testifying on the Hill on Monday. Perhaps he can say something about the statement.

“Mr. Kissinger: If it isn’t actually handed to us, is there a need to reply?

“Mr. Johnson: No, not unless we think it would be useful.

“Mr. Kissinger: We could send the Soviets a reply if the whole situation becomes more active. At the moment, though, I agree with the Secretary’s view.

“Mr. Johnson: In any case, we have prepared a draft reply.

“Mr. Rush: As long as the Soviets have not given us a copy of the statement, they may be implying that they don’t expect a reply.

“Mr. Johnson: That’s not necessarily the case. We and the Soviets very often do business in strange ways. During the Cuban missile crisis, for example, there were a few statements like this.

“Mr. Rush: But if they haven’t given us a copy, they may not want a reply. If they desired a reply, I think they would have given us the statement.

“Mr. Kissinger: We will have to say something, though.

“Mr. Johnson: The Secretary could do that during his appearance on the Hill on Monday.

“Mr. Kissinger: Okay. But let us see the text first.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files) Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals) For Rogers’ testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on May 16, see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 5, 1972, pages 790–792.

220. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Soviet Ambassador (Dobrynin)¹

Washington, May 12, 1972, 11:15 a.m.

K: Hello.

D: Hello, Henry.

K: Anatol.

D: What was the result of yesterday’s game?²

K: Oh, New York lost 3–0.

D: Were you there?

K: Yeah, I went there.

D: So you didn’t really support them very much. I watched you on the television.

K: Was I on television?

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² At 8:30 p.m. the previous evening, Kissinger attended a professional hockey game between the New York Rangers and the Boston Bruins. (Ibid., Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule).

D: Of course, you were. And you were sitting rather passively without running out and so on. Usually, the fans jump out and show their emotions. But even on the game, you don't want to show any emotions.

K: Well, not at the game—afterwards.

D: Well, I think during the game radio fans show their emotions.

K: Well, I really didn't have a team, I was vaguely for New York but not wildly so.

D: Oh, if was vaguely, then I understand. So you were just looking for the winner.

K: Besides, my team was losing, so there wasn't much occasion to show emotion.

D: So, you are looking for winners is my impression.

K: Yeah, well, it's always better to win than to lose.

D: Yes, exactly. Well, Henry, I received this telegram from Moscow.³ Very shortly we will give you some drafts of papers, so to speak, on certain question of Summit.

K: Like what?

D: I don't have it here yet. I would like you to know today or Saturday;⁴ otherwise, you will go somewhere very far.

K: Are they substantive or technical?

D: No, I think they are on substance.

K: On substance.

D: It says here in the telegram to tell you that what we will send draft on certain questions or problems. Problems which are really on agenda.

K: Oh, I see, okay. Good.

D: This is the point. The only thing I would like you to know—one additional point, we would like and expect that you will not really use it as a publicity stunt. Just in a serious way for preparation for the Summit.

K: Use what as a publicity stunt.

D: Well, the very fact that I will give you some drafts and so on.

K: Yeah, but, Anatoliy, I have never discussed anything you discuss with me.

D: No, no, no—I know but this really is from Moscow. It does not come from me. You understand what I mean.

³ See footnote 4, Document 221.

⁴ May 13.

K: You can be absolutely sure, Anatol, I don't think anybody even knows . . .

D: You see, this was sent straight to me. I do understand that, but . . .

K: I have told nobody that we have had a response from Brezhnev.⁵

D: I think that this is a point.

K: Because I then have to explain, if there is a response, whether . . . that it isn't strong or it is strong.

D: Sometimes the White House has [omission in the source text]

K: But, Anatol, in our relationship I have never made the slightest leak.

D: Agreed. This is really what I am telling because they sent it to me from Moscow.

K: You tell your people in Moscow that anything that comes through your channel we need no special admonition on. We have never . . . there will never be the slightest hint that something is coming. In fact, no one even knows what I get or that I get anything.

D: I understand. But I am telling you what they asked me to tell. I don't need any specific assurances but they asked me to do so. They want me to do it, so I'm telling you.

K: All right. You give them the assurance, but you tell them it was an unnecessary admonition.

D: No, no. I did what I was told, but they would like me just to mention that this is coming; it's not yet come here, but I want you to know beforehand. They don't say anything about the document itself, on this they absolutely do not worry, but the general effect . . .

K: Look how we handled the SALT announcement.⁶ You would have thought there was practically nothing going on.

D: Henry, I repeat it's not—

K: All right, I understand. At any rate, neither the fact of the communication nor the contents will be revealed to anybody except the President.

D: Yes, this is it . . . the effect of the communication not the substance because on this they are sure from Moscow definitely.

K: Yeah, but they can also be sure about the facts.

D: Okay. I will mention . . . I have your assurances. I do not need myself but—

⁵ Document 214.

⁶ Reference is to Nixon's May 20, 1971, public announcement of a breakthrough in the SALT negotiations; see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 7, 1971, pp. 741–742.

K: You give them immediate assurances and tell them that no communication through your channel is ever revealed to anybody.

D: Okay, Henry. Will you be tomorrow or day after tomorrow just for me where I could reach you?

K: I'll be here in Washington.

D: In Washington. You won't go anywhere?

K: No.

D: Through your telephone.

K: But you can reach me through my telephone anyway even if I were away but I will be here.

D: Within the Washington area.

K: In Washington itself.

D: Itself, fine.

K: But that message will come today, won't it?

D: Maybe today, maybe tomorrow. They didn't say—they used a Russian word which could be translated either today or tomorrow.

K: Right.

D: This is so confusing . . . it could be today or tomorrow.

K: Yeah. And what it is is concerning some substantive or other aspects of the Summit?

D: Yes. This is only on our drafts on certain problems . . . Summit.

K: Oh, fine, good.

D: You understand that's your message in general. (laughter)

K: Oh, Anatol, I'm not totally stupid.

D: No, you are not. This is a well-known fact not only to me it was long ago known but I speak about the general public.

K: Two other things, Anatol, the first is we are—this is a minor thing—you remember we talked about press announcements of the various agreements?

D: Yes.

K: I gave you that schedule yesterday.

D: Yes. I already sent it to Moscow.

K: No, no; fine. I just want you to know what I forgot to tell you yesterday. We agreed to joint briefings.

D: Oh, to the joint briefings. Yes, I will put this on.

K: So that we could do it jointly and the way we do it, except for the very important ones,—

D: Yes.

K: Ziegler would brief on our side and whoever on your side—

D: I don't know yet.

K: But at any rate, the way we should do that, Anatol, is for you and me to get together.

D: Okay.

K: And we will then agree. Ziegler will say exactly what we tell him.

D: Okay, I understand.

K: So you and I can work it out and there will be no problem.

D: Okay.

K: On SALT and on the final principles, I would do the briefing.

D: Okay. I think it is most important.

K: Those two, on the principles and on the communiqué⁷ and on SALT, I will do the briefing.

D: So I will say either Ziegler or you on most important items.

K: Right. And in any event, if it's Ziegler, you and I will work out ahead of time what he will say. He never deviates from it.

D: Okay.

K: Now one more thing, Anatol, on this. We are thinking now very seriously of a public statement on Monday.

D: On what?

K: On the German thing.

D: Oh, I think it's—

K: That will have the maximum effect.

D: Oh, I think it's very [omission in the source text]. Could I send this or are you just thinking? Better not to make disappointment. Sorry I really ask you blunt question. If you are really so, I will send them but if you change your mind—

K: Let me say, you know, if there is no, which I don't anticipate, no stop aggravation of this situation.

D: Oh, I don't think—I think for our part could say this, whether you do or not. Don't you think so?

K: What?

D: About whether it will be an aggravation or not.

K: What do you mean we can say?

D: No, I think we could judge—I think you and me could fairly say whether there would be aggravation or will not be before Monday.

K: Yeah. My impression is there will not be.

⁷ In a May 10 memorandum to Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt assessed specific changes on the Basic Principles statement desired by the Soviets. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 67, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Sonnenfeldt Papers [1 of 2])

D: You mean about [Israel]⁸ and Bonn?

K: No, no; I mean in the overall world situation.

D: Oh, well, this is what I think is my impression. . . . So if your impression is the same, so I think we are on the same ground.

K: Right. So I just wanted to tell you that. In that framework I think you are pretty safe in assuming it.

D: Yeah. It would be White House statement?

K: A White House statement.

D: A special statement.

K: Well, we've planned it in answer to a question.

D: Okay, an answer to a question.

K: And I will work that out and give it to you Monday morning.

D: Okay. I think it's fair enough and good enough.

K: Okay.

D: Okay, I'll be in touch with you. Please don't go too far.

K: No, I'll be here.

D: (laughter)

K: Anatol, how can you and I be separated?

D: No, no, no. This is my impression too; it's unbelievable.

K: You and I, when this thing is over, we are going to have one purely social evening with not one word of business.

D: Okay, I'll get prepared.

K: We have earned it.

D: You see, only one of your respectable newspaper men after you—when you come back here. You remember on this [omission in the source text] when we worked together. After this, on those [omission in the source text].

K: Oh, yes.

D: He asked me, "Well, Mr. Ambassador, you heard Johnson speak with Kennedy all night so what you are talking about?" I said, "We went to sleep." And he couldn't believe it really; that an Ambassador didn't even have time with such a man and not to talk with him all the whole night.

K: (laughter)

D: He couldn't really believe it. So you see even in this case, not everything is believable but on this occasion I agree, not a word.

K: No.

D: No politics.

⁸ Brackets in the source text.

K: Exactly. We will do it.
D: Okay. I'll be in touch with you.
K: Good, Anatol.
D: Bye, bye.

221. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 12, 1972, 4:22–5:05 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to the United States
Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

The meeting was at Dobrynin's request. Dobrynin brought a proposed text (attached) of a U.S.-Soviet treaty renouncing nuclear weapons,² which seemed to take into account some of the points I had made to him at previous meetings. He said that this would be considered an enormously important step by his government and we should take it extremely seriously.

I told Dobrynin we would study it carefully, though it was a matter of the gravest consequence which could not be easily taken. I said this was a matter, for example, that we had to discuss with our allies. Dobrynin said that we could just have Rogers discuss it at the NATO meeting³ after we had agreed to it. I said that I doubted that this would do, but that we would study it carefully and would let him have a tentative reply.

Dobrynin said that if I thought about it carefully, I could see that their submitting such a text to us was really an answer to the questions I had put the day before about whether the Summit would continue. I said I understood this.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Kissinger and Dobrynin met in the White House Map Room. The closing time of the meeting is from Kissinger's Record of Schedule. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976)

² Attached but not printed. A notation on the attachment reads: "Handed K by D, 4:00 p.m., May 12, 1972." Also attached was the Soviet note described in footnote 4.

³ Reference is to the planned NATO ministerial meeting at Bonn May 30–31; Rogers headed the U.S. delegation. The text of the communiqué released at the end of this meeting, which makes no mention of this Soviet proposal, is printed in full in Department of State *Bulletin*, July 3, 1972, pp. 21–22.

There was some desultory talk about the Summit, and the meeting broke up.⁴

⁴ A copy of the Soviet note on May 12 is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, vol. II. In his memoirs, Kissinger wrote: "Unbelievably by the standards of our fevered domestic debate, Vietnam disappeared entirely as a point of contention in our dialogue with the Soviet Union. On May 12 Dobrynin handed me a note—in the private Channel—that grudgingly accepted the President's expression of regret at the harm to Soviet ships and seamen and his assurance that care would be taken to avoid such incidents in the future. Nothing was said about the blockade of North Vietnam." (*White House Years*, p. 1196) In his diary entry for May 12 Haldeman wrote: "There was a lot of concern during the day about speculation on the Soviet Summit and the P and Henry both pushed very hard to have everybody kept quiet on any kind of speculation. Henry met with Dobrynin in the afternoon, and the discussion was so strongly substantive that both Henry and the P[resident] both believe now that there's no chance of the Summit being canceled. They even got to the question of the exchange of gifts. The Soviets want to give the P a hydrofoil to play with in Key Biscayne and in return want a hot sports car from us." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 459) In handwritten notes taken that day at a briefing by Haig, Haldeman also recorded: "We're fracturing the Hanoi-Moscow linkage & have China pushed away." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, Staff Memoranda and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April-June 1972, Part II)

**222. Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the
Department of State (Eliot) to the President's Assistant for
National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹**

Washington, May 12, 1972.

SUBJECT

President's USSR Trip: Negotiating with the Soviets

There follow a number of conclusions about negotiating with the Soviets which may be useful in connection with the President's forthcoming trip to the USSR. These have been selected from the writings of various American officials who have dealt with the Soviets over the years and of academicians who have studied U.S.-Soviet negotiations—

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 7 US/NIXON. Confidential. Drafted by Herbert Okun and Wayne Smith (EUR/SOV) on May 11, and cleared by Matlock and Deputy Assistant Secretaries for European Affairs Richard Davies and George Springsteen.

Llewellyn Thompson, Philip Moseley, General John R. Deane, Fred C. Ikle, Urie Bronfenbrenner.²

(1) The word “compromise” is not native to the Russian language and has unfavorable connotations; in Soviet usage, it is frequently preceded by the adjective “rotten.” Soviet negotiators can be persuaded to alter their negotiating positions, but success is more likely if the results are not referred to as a “compromise.”

(2) Agreements with the Soviet Union should be on a quid-pro-quo basis with the quid running concurrently with the quo. When the Soviets are paid in advance, the incentive is low for them to deliver on their part of the obligation.

(3) Soviet positions are not immutable, nor should the non-Soviet negotiator fail to make proposals simply because the Soviets have in the past refused to consider them. Conditions—and Soviet positions—change. What was not acceptable yesterday may be today. The Austrian State Treaty is prime evidence. By the same token, the bases of our own positions should be constantly reviewed. Our proposals should not be put forward simply on the grounds that they have been put forward previously. The original rationale may no longer be valid or cogent.

(4) Minute analyses of Soviet rhetoric are neither necessary nor fruitful. When the Soviets have a major point to make or a significant shift in their negotiating position to signal, they usually go about it in a straightforward way. When they were ready to lift the Berlin blockade, they said so.

(5) It is not productive to be too clever in putting forward positions. We should state our case in a straightforward manner and with as much candor as possible.

(6) Communication with Russians has proven most successful when the negotiators for the other side speak in the name of ideals and feelings, rather than invoking evidence and logic. The lofty principle should come first; then, facts can be introduced, preferably as inevitable deductive necessities, rather than as empirically independent observations. This deductive approach clashes with the pragmatic and legalistic approach common in the West.

(7) Recognition of Soviet sensitivities and values, where this does not jeopardize American interests, can play a significant role in

² Thompson was former Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Moseley was a former Harvard University professor of international relations, Deane was formerly an administrator of the lend-lease program of assistance to the Soviet Union, Ikle was a Department of State consultant on arms control issues, and Bronfenbrenner was a professor of psychology at Cornell University.

breaking down Soviet rigidity, opening up channels of communication, enabling previously dissonant information to be understood, and enhancing the possibility of arriving at mutually advantageous agreements.

(8) At the negotiating table, it is even more important in dealing with Russians than with representatives of other countries to avoid arousing national fears and sensitivities. To do so is to risk activating a characteristic pattern of response involving constricted perspective, distortion of reality, intransigence, and emotional rather than rational reaction. Once such a pattern is mobilized, it is counterproductive to attempt to cope with it directly.

(9) We should be prepared for Soviet attempts at psychological one-upmanship. The Soviet penchant for claiming at the outset of negotiations that they are more sinned against than sinning has sometimes succeeded in putting their negotiating partners on the defensive.

(10) Soviet negotiators usually operate under rigid instructions and must refer back to their superiors for changes in those instructions. Even in negotiations at the highest level, it is sometimes necessary for the Soviet negotiator to ensure that a change in position is acceptable to his colleagues in the collective leadership. When new negotiating initiatives are put forward, time must be allowed for the Soviet negotiator to receive new instructions or to conduct consultations with his colleagues.

James Carson³

³ James L. Carson signed for Eliot above Eliot's typed signature.

223. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 12, 1972, 5:21 p.m.

K: Mr. President.

P: Hi Henry.

K: I just spent about 45 minutes with Dobrynin.² He's just busily working away at the summit. He brought me a text of another agreement they want to sign on renouncing nuclear weapons. We can't do it but I'm just diddling him along on it. He wanted to know if you would accept a hydrofoil. They want to give you a hydrofoil for Key Biscayne to ride around in. They're pioneers in hydrofoil.

P: Sure. Did you ask him about the gifts for their . . . ?

K: Yes, what he mentioned was that Mr. Brezhnev loved automobiles. Can we give them a . . . ?

P: Hell, yes. Particularly if they're going to give us a hydrofoil, we can give them an automobile.

K: Well, if I could tell him on Monday³ or Tuesday that we can give him an automobile . . .

P: What kind would he like? Give him one of the American automobiles.

K: It's got to be an American one.

P: Yes, but if he's going to give us a hydrofoil that'll have to be the understanding that we can't accept that unless we can give something that we make.

K: The French gave him a [omission in the source text] and he likes fast cars.

P: We could talk to some of our people here—Ford or—no let's get one of the real sports car people. We'll get GM, probably they're the best. Actually that's an expensive gift that we could have the company go along on it. The hydrofoil sounds great.

K: OK.

P: But as far as messages are concerned it didn't have anything . . .

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² See Document 221.

³ May 15; for the meeting on this date between Kissinger and Dobrynin, see Document 226.

K: No, it was just plans for the summit. Then he brought me little bits again about the mining. One, that they took note with pleasure that we were not going to have any more incidents. Secondly, they said that they want to make sure that their ships can go in and out of Vietnamese ports. I said if you mean by that that you can go in there without hitting a mine, that's totally out of the question. The mining will continue. I think we've got to be tough.

P: Oh, God. We give in on that and the summit is not worth it.

K: Exactly. And he said no, we don't mean that.

P: It'll come at a later time. When we settle the damn war we'll let them go any place they want.

K: Right. At any rate I think we can now count on the summit. He just pleaded with us not to keep putting out these speculative stories. George Sherman has another one in the *Star*.

P: Oh, he gets his stuff from the State Department.

K: Exactly. All of this stuff is State.

P: What does it say?

K: Well, that they blame . . .

P: Who the poop—that the Russians do?

K: Yes.

P: Now who the hell would put that out? That can't be anybody from the White House can it?

K: No, and no one over here speaks to Sherman. Kalb no one over here speaks too.

P: Can't Haldeman get after that?

K: Yes, I'll talk to Haldeman.

P: Well, I don't blame the Russians. Of course you can assure them that we aren't talking to Sherman or Kalb or any of these people.

K: I told him that you might go to Key Biscayne for a few days next week to prepare for the summit and he said that's a good idea. Then I said to him maybe he wants to come down for a day of talks with me and he said absolutely.

P: Good. Well, at this point, Henry, I think that it's too late for them to . . .

K: Mr. President, it's 99%.

P: Because you see they wouldn't be sending a message. This message will be from whom?

K: From Brezhnev to you.

P: As of this date. Well, what the hell, then, if he's talking that way . . .

K: They're paying too high a price, Mr. President. Hanoi must be beside itself.

P: The point is though I think Dobrynin is absolutely right. They do not want to have a positive act reassuring the summit. That would be too much, but on the other hand they can go along if it doesn't require a decision. I can see that point.

K: Of course.

P: That's the way our people ought to play it and quit their god-damn talking.

K: Exactly.

P: Why don't you just tell Haldeman he's going to have to call . . . Who can Haldeman call over there?

K: I think they are now going to shut up over the weekend and I'll go after them again on Monday.

P: The idea is that tell Haldeman that he is to enforce it with the whole White House crowd. Don't say boo about the summit.

K: That's right. Just say we are proceeding, we don't know what the Russians are doing.

P: Let Ziegler say that all summit questions are referred to Ziegler. Why don't we do it that way.

K: Exactly.

P: And that way we know what he'll say and nobody else—you know Scali, or Moorer or these other people that they just won't know anything.

K: Right.

P: And I really think that's the way—that all summit things should be referred to Ziegler and in fact that's what I think State ought to say. They don't have anything to do with it.

K: Well, I'll send you now some briefing books, Mr. President.

P: I think under these circumstances . . .

K: I wouldn't give it any more thought.

P: We've got to assume it. I must say though that when you stop to think where we were. I just was thinking that one week ago I was sitting here working on my speech.⁴ If we thought then that we could be sitting here this way at this point what would you have thought. There were two things—the summit, but second was the enormous public support. The public support is bigger than I thought, Henry. In one sense because it's so emotional.

K: Right it's more . . . specific action.

⁴ See Document 208.

P: That's right. November 3rd⁵ they were just standing up against the demonstrators but now they say thank God we're doing something.

K: Well, Le Duc Tho has also in his press conference said he's willing to resume private talks.

P: He has.

K: Yes. We've got everybody totally confused.

P: That's good, isn't it?

K: Of course.

P: That's really an answer to your message, isn't it?

K: Yes, but we'll get another answer too.

P: But what I meant is that he said he's willing to resume private talks. Now if he says that at the time we're mining . . .

K: That's a sign of unbelievable weakness.

P: For Christ's sake, normally he would say we will not talk. Remember they said before they would not talk until we quit bombing.

K: Exactly.

P: That was the way it was with [former President Lyndon] Johnson wasn't it?

K: Exactly.

P: And now when we're mining—and bombing. Dobrynin understands himself that we have nothing to do with these damn statements?

K: Oh, yes.

P: I don't know how we can control it, Henry.

K: Well, I'll talk to Haldeman.

P: It's hard for him to do it, but Rogers said you know that he had everybody set up, but I think, I don't think he controls them, do you?

K: No.

P: You know damn well we don't talk at the White House to the Kalbs because we know that they're out to job us.

K: No question.

P: Nobody's talking to George Sherman, you know that. The leaks are all from the State Department.

K: Mr. President, Murray Marder—no one here talks to him. He had another dove story today.

P: Which way does he say—on or off?

⁵ Reference is to Nixon's November 3, 1969, speech on Vietnam; see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 901–909.

K: Well, he says on but in such a way—still high officials remain profoundly worried about having challenged the Russians. You know everything is wrong in there.

P: I think I'll call Haldeman and get it started.

K: OK.

P: Well, it's been a hard day, but from now on don't worry about their messages. We're just assuming that we're going to go ahead.

K: There's no question about it now.

P: Because Brezhnev wouldn't have sent such a message—this was a message from Brezhnev to me.

K: Yes.

P: Well if he does this and then pulls off . . .

K: I don't see how he can do it because . . .

P: Because it's been sent as of yesterday, I presume.

K: As of this afternoon.

P: Oh, their time, yes. So what the hell and after we'd seen the—and they had received probably an account of my meeting with that little Trade Minister which might have made them drool a little too.

K: If it didn't I don't know what the English language can do.

P: OK.

K: Goodbye, Mr. President.⁶

⁶In a May 13 telephone conversation, Kissinger told Nixon that Dobrynin had called him and said he wanted the President to know that Moscow was sending him some substantive plans for the summit, but didn't want him to tell this to the press. Kissinger added that he thought this was the Soviets' way of letting them know that they were continuing the summit, but that they didn't want a public statement. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File)

Nixon at the Summit, May 13–May 31, 1972

224. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 14, 1972, 10:30 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Henry A. Kissinger

SALT

Dobrynin came in in order to carry out, as he said, the priority of the confidential channel on SALT matters, and submitted a whole series of texts (Tab A)² which were going to be given to our delegation in the next few days in Helsinki. He asked for my quick reaction.

On their proposed Article III on inclusion of SLBMs, and on their proposed "Definition of ICBM," I made no comment.

On their proposed language that "it is not expedient to set geographic limits to the location of areas of ABM deployment for covering ICBM silos," I told him this would be completely unacceptable. He left the impression that our objection would be manageable.

On their "Draft Exchange Letter" on SLBMs, I reminded Dobrynin that to reach their totals the Soviets must dismantle G- and H-Class submarines. Dobrynin said Moscow understood that we had mentioned this as our position. I expressed no opinion on the draft "Annex: Statement of the Soviet Side" except to say that the last sentence could not be drafted in any way that implied that the "premise" referred to was one that we accept. Dobrynin indicated this was a manageable point.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 11. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. Kissinger returned to his office at 11:30 a.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) On May 14 Kissinger sent Smith a backchannel message that transmitted the text of the first 5 paragraphs of this memorandum. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, SALT, 1972)

² Attached but not printed. Also attached but not printed was the text of an oral note that Dobrynin gave Kissinger at this meeting. The oral note stated that the President understood the Soviet concern expressed in a note handed to Kissinger by Dobrynin on May 12 about damages to Soviet ships in North Vietnamese harbors; see footnote 4, Document 221. U.S. military commanders had been given strict instructions not to attack Soviet ships. The note also stated that U.S. air operations against Hanoi would be suspended during Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union.

On the final item, on ABM radars, I made no comment.

Summit Preparations

Dobrynin then turned the conversation to the forthcoming Summit. He asked again what gifts the President might want. I told him that some piece of art, as long as it wasn't modern, would be very appropriate. I then asked him what Brezhnev might want. Dobrynin said he liked cars, which should be black. I mentioned something like the Mustang. He said, no, he thought it would be some sort of Cadillac, and he would call me later about what sort of Cadillac Brezhnev might have in mind.

Vietnam

Later in the day, Dobrynin called me and delivered a message on Vietnam, attached at Tab B.³

³ Attached but not printed. No record of this telephone conversation has been found. The Soviet note, given by Sokolov to Haig at 2 p.m. on May 14, suggested that the U.S. and Vietnamese sides resume their negotiations in Paris in early June and announce their intention to resume before the Moscow summit. The note also suggested that neither side should make preconditions. As for private negotiations, the note stated that they were not precluded, but warned that this was the view of the Soviet leadership and not that of the North Vietnamese.

225. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and His Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 14, 1972, 11:40 a.m.

K: Sorry; I was with Dobrynin.² It's highly complex, but nothing you want to bother with. It's how many radars should be at an ICBM defense site.

P: As you and I both know, it doesn't make a hell of a lot of difference. Just so we can defend it.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, President Nixon placed the call. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files)

² See Document 224.

K: No, no; I agree with you, Mr. President. The only point is they are playing the game keeping it a Brezhnev/Nixon [issue?]. And therefore before they submit anything in Helsinki, they clear it with me. And therefore, it's time-consuming. I am just trying to explain to you why I'm seeing him.

P: No, no; I'm in no hurry. I just had one other thought. I wanted to pass it on to you. Were you able to get into the gift field?

K: Yeah, they [Brezhnev] want a car in the worst way. They are already looking through catalogs. Now their mind, however, is in the direction of a small Cadillac.

P: Fine.

K: I told him to call me back later today so that we can get on it. It must be black.

P: Yeah, I know. But we'll give them what they want.

K: And I said, "Now listen, . . ."

P: I can give him a sports car, if he prefers.

K: No, he doesn't want a sports car. He wants a medium-size Cadillac.

P: Well, that's a damn good car, incidentally. In other words, he doesn't [want] one with the jump seats, but just a medium-size, good-looking Cadillac.

K: That's right. I guess . . . In fact that's what he means is a hard-top Cadillac.

P: Right.

K: I think that's what he has in mind.

P: You tell him we picked the hydro-foil?

K: Yes.

P: Well, that'll be an interesting trade.

K: And they're going to give you a picture. Oh, God, he's just drooling.

P: You told him I didn't want modern art.

K: There's absolutely no danger of that . . . I've told him that, but they are against modern art.

P: Oh, are they?

K: Oh, yeah.

P: Well, they weren't a few years ago. Khrushchev was against it but . . .

K: No, there's no danger of that at all, but I told him that.

P: It doesn't mean that much to have modern art.

K: No, they won't give you modern art. They have three things in mind. They want to give you a painting; they want to give you a

[silver?] coffee service; and then they've got a third thing—I think a table or something.

P: Did the matter come up of those passports that are on the way or anything?

K: Well I talked to him. I talked to him first of the stories of the mines being deactivated. I said, "Anatol, that's total nonsense, and don't you base any policies on this. They cannot be deactivated except after many months when they deactivate themselves. The President cannot do it if he wanted to, and he wouldn't want, but he cannot." Secondly, I said, "I read all these stories." He said, "Look, if we want to challenge you; we won't have it put out by the Ministry of Merchant Marines." Thirdly, I said, "I hope you are not planning to cause any embarrassment to the President." He said, "I give you my word." He said, "We want to start an epoch; we don't want to . . . this is a minor incident," he said, "Two years from now people won't remember it."

P: He wouldn't have said that unless he was in touch with them would he?

K: Mr. President he is in daily, frequent touch with them. And therefore I just do not believe—after they sign common principles with us how the hell are they going to challenge us then. Even an attempt—if they wanted to challenge us they should have done it last week.

P: Let me ask you this, two things. I am sitting here starting to read two books. I must say it is hard going but if you got a minute I would like to ask you which one you think is the best one.

K: Which books are you reading?

P: Well this is the book—background reading for the President on the Soviet Union and there are so many different theories. There is the Danelle Bell(?) piece on *Ten Theories in Search of Reality*.³ I am plowing through that—that's probably worthwhile isn't it?

K: That is worth reading.

P: But I am not going to read Ezie(?) Stone.⁴

K: No, no. I just put that in.

P: And I don't know I never had much confidence in Brezensky(?).⁵

K: Well he is sort of—he is slightly. [. . .]

P: Forty-three pages on this. And the *First Circle*⁶ I think that is too historical to get into. Robert Conquest⁷ that might be good.

³ Reference is to the article "Ten Theories in Search of Reality" by Daniel Bell.

⁴ Reference is presumably to *Polemics and Prophecies* by Isidor F. Stone.

⁵ Reference is presumably to Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*.

⁶ Reference is to *The First Circle* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

⁷ Reference is presumably to *Russia After Khrushchev* by Robert Conquest.

K: That is good. That I would read.

P: All right. On foreign relations Richard Pipes(?)⁸

K: I would read that.

P: And Melvin Chrono(?)⁹ on troops in Europe. No, there is nothing on troops that we are going to discuss with them.

K: No, it will come up, but I wouldn't bother.

P: But what the hell—whatever you have in your briefing papers is going to be better than what these idiots write.

K: Absolutely.

P: But you would recommend Beezensky(?)

K: Well, I just sort of . . . Conquest and Pipes(?) by all means.—

P: Good. Alright. Now the other thing I will read, I will read your subject by subject with Brezhnev and if you will in preparing your own papers . . . You know what I mean when I finally get down to it I only have a few minutes to get it all in my head at the last.

K: And I will also have the Dobrynin—anything I said to Dobrynin on any of these subjects put in.

P: The one I will do—we will play more to you in this case than we did in China. There it was important that they know me but here they all know we are talking—and he will be playing to. You know what I mean.

K: Well he knows who he is dealing with by your actions last week. By what you have done in September.

P: Yes. I don't have to carry the whole monologue.

K: No.

P: One other thing. As you know there is a vote on Tuesday.¹⁰ I spoke to Haig about it. You are going to see some of the Republican doves to try to keep them in line. The point Colson made to me is that somebody between now and Tuesday to get across the fact that first it has a good chance to work. The people who criticize it are all going back to that CIA study in 1968 where they said it wouldn't work.¹¹ Well pointing out as I told Haig three solid differences—if not more than that. First Cambodia is cut off. Second that this is now a mechanized army requiring oil [and lubricants?]. Third as distinguished from the bombing we are allowing a hell of a lot more targets—you know what we mean in terms of what

⁸ Reference is presumably to *Formation of the Soviet Union* by Richard Pipes.

⁹ Melvin Croan, Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin Madison.

¹⁰ On May 16 the U.S. Senate adopted, by a vote of 47 to 43, an amendment to a Department of State appropriations bill cutting off all funds for U.S. military operations in Vietnam 4 months after reaching an agreement with North Vietnam on release of prisoners of war and on an internationally supervised cease-fire.

¹¹ Not found.

we are getting at. And fourth of course a total cut off from the sea. My point is—doesn't this make sense. The only one who had written on it—I have looked at a few columns—got at it a bit was Alsop.¹² [*omission in the source text*] I wonder if you shouldn't tell him that and also wondering if you should get about ten of our most influential columnists for a background. Or do you think it is not worth it.

K: My strong conviction on the news Mr. President is that the events are going to speak for us.

P: Well in other words. We will probably lose this vote.

K: No.

P: You don't think this is the wrong signal to the Russians(?)

K: No I think the Russians, I think understand that you have defeated these guys before. I mean this is the sense of the Senate. It is almost our program, it is a lousy thing to cut off funds. I would much rather win the vote and I will bleed my heart out to these liberal Senators and I think[—]

P: Then in other words as far as the effect of the actions just let them speak for themselves.

K: I would just absolutely act cold bloodedly confident.

P: True, we are, we are.

K: That is my impression. Because I think Mr. President they have got one more [*omission in the source text*] around Hue. And we may actually win this goddamn thing now.

P: Well that is what we are going to try to do now—I mean do now.

K: Xuan Thuy saw Chou En-lai yesterday—no one has said yet what they are going to do.

P: Where did he see him in Peking.

K: In Peking on the way back to Hanoi.

P: With the Chinese—I know you are going to tell them—remember I told them and you told them too we will make absolutely no deal with the Russians that we are not prepared to make with them. So in my letter to him will you make that point.¹³ There will be some agreements—agreements that have been going on for a long time and are absolutely bilateral. They are not related to anything else. We are ready to do any that you are interested or any others that we have discussed. I think it is very important that they know—for trade for example, we are going to give them the same things we are going to give the Russians. Don't you think this is important.

K: Absolutely, it is crucial.

¹² Reference is to columnist Joseph Alsop.

¹³ No copy of this letter has been found.

P: And we don't want our Russian things to be misinterpreted in anyway. That he can be sure—oh one other thing. Have one of the fel-las that was there at the meeting, you know Lord. You may remember at one point Chou En-lai spent thirty or forty minutes telling me things he wanted me to tell the Russians. Do you remember? If you could refer specifically in the letter that I give to him that I have noted that in the conversation I will cover that. He can be sure that we will stand firm with regard—you know.

K: Absolutely. Excellent.

P: You remember that don't you.

K: I remember it very well.

P: Something about [conflict?] on the borders thing and the rest. But also putting it in a very hard line in a sense. He was doing that, I think, for the record.

K: Absolutely. He doesn't want you to talk about their problems to the Russians.

P: Right, right. And that he can be sure that I will not disclose to the Russians any part of the conversation I had with him. He has my personal assurance of that.

K: Absolutely.

P: And then you can proceed to disclose the part of the Russians to him.

K: Right. I think we can handle it, Mr. President.

P: Let me ask you one final thing. I was thinking a week ago when we were discussing this . . . You remember, you said you expect all of your staff were unanimous in their agreement that the Summit would be cancelled. Helms was of that opinion. And Rogers and Laird. And you thought it was 80 per cent. What changed your mind—not your mind—why did our intelligence prove to be so inaccurate?

K: Our assessment was that they would . . . Let me give you my assessment. I thought they would have to do something. The reason I thought they would cancel the Summit but do nothing else is because that would look dramatic but wouldn't mean anything. I thought they would postpone it to a fixed date later on. We had underestimated how badly they want the Summit. I don't think intelligence could possibly help one on that.¹⁴ But it also has an ominous character to it. I think they are determined to hit China next year.

¹⁴ In a May 15 memorandum to Haldeman, Nixon noted the "rather ironic situation that after initially reacting to the Monday announcement with almost hysterical predictions that we had blown the Russian summit and our whole 'Generation of Peace' foreign policy, the columnists and commentators—with a considerable amount of egg on their faces—now have the gall to say that the Monday decision was wrong

P: You do?

K: Yeah. That's the real explanation for this. They want to get their rear cleared and then they are going to jump China.

P: In other words, in going over this—and this is what your experts and Helms and the rest take adequately into account—is their morbid concern about China and their recognition that if they did . . . one of the things they would have to assume was that we would turn very hard toward China.

K: That's right.

P: Do you think that might have something to do with it.

K: That may have something to do with it. I thought they'd cancel it; but cancel nothing else. But I must say, I thought the chances were 80 per cent that they would cancel it.

P: It may be that a number of factors may have entered in—who knows: (1) that it was mining rather than a blockade; (2) that it was put so carefully in both the speech and your backgrounder; (3) they're just plain taking the contract—I think that's important.

K: Oh, I think so, and also I think that the fact that these meetings we've had with Dobrynin and also with Brezhnev personally gave them the confidence that, on the one hand, they could do business with us but, on the other hand, we were very tough to monkey with.

P: Yeah. Well, in any event, we'll continue to pitch this stuff. All right, then don't bother with any press people. Do the Senators and try to keep them from pole-jumping the traces. Tell them for their own good they should do it and put in a little about—this damn malarkey about the decision being made out of pique and anger and all that crap. You are the only one who can knock that down.

K: That I'll be glad to do. That I think should be knocked down. That hasn't been written. What I might do if you think well of it—I could meet perhaps with some of the senior people, not so much to say that this blockade will work, although I can work that in.

P: But how it's different from the situation of 1968.

and reckless but that the Soviet Union is showing great restraint in continuing the summit nevertheless." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda from the President, Memos—May 1972) In telegram 4666 from Moscow, May 16, Ambassador Beam reported that although he had received reports that the Soviet leadership had not yet made a final decision on the summit, Hedrik Smith of *The New York Times*, who had earlier reported a Politburo split on whether to cancel, said that the same sources now were saying that the summit was definitely on. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 7 US/NIXON)

K: And also where are we pre-Summit—say Wednesday¹⁵—including Vietnam, of course.

P: Yeah. Well, it might get us out on a limb, though, if something should happen. It's too Pollyannaish.

K: Well, I think on the whole . . .

P: Let the damn thing go.

K: The best posture is to say nothing.

P: Because basically let's face it. They'll give us another pop, we'll say "well, that's what we expected."

K: And we have so much news coming in the next two weeks, Mr. President, that—this mining will be drowned in it.

P: Haig looks at these reports very carefully. He says these guys are fighting a lot better.

K: Much better now.

P: Do you agree with him on this?

K: I agree with him, yes.

P: He says he notes the various places where they've really done a hell of a job. You never know, the main effect of what we've done, Henry, may have been the psychological.

K: Not the main result but this was one of the big results.

P: On the South Vietnamese. Well, they weren't doing a damn thing before—let's face it.

K: Well, they weren't doing as much as they are doing now.

P: Well, they were sitting in their holes.

K: Because they were petrified that they were going to be sold down the drain.

P: Okay, fine. We'll let that other thing go. Also, I don't think you ought to take the time off talking to the press. There are more important fish to fry. Okay, we'll leave it that way.

K: Right, Mr. President.

¹⁵ May 17.

226. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 15, 1972, 5 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Henry A. Kissinger*Vietnam*

The meeting was held at my request to give Dobrynin our answer [Tab A]² to the proposal to resume plenary sessions.

Dobrynin suggested that we omit the paragraph (then included as the next to last paragraph) which seemed to him to imply preconditions by threatening military escalations. I told him that it should be passed as an oral note because I did not want either Hanoi or Moscow to have any misapprehensions about the serious consequences of a new offensive. Dobrynin asked whether this statement meant that we would not accept the Moscow solution, that is to say, a plenary session prior to a private session. I said that was correct; we would not accept a plenary session under those conditions. He asked whether we would accept automatically a plenary session after a private session. I said no—there was no point in any more sessions unless we knew that they were going to lead to some rapid result. We had been burned once and we were not going to do it again. Dobrynin said he just asked these questions in order not to waste time back and forth. Dobrynin said that the North Vietnamese were enormously suspicious and thought that I had behaved arrogantly the last time we met. I said, well, that meant the feeling now was clearly mutual.

Dobrynin asked whether we insisted on publishing the fact of the meeting. I said no, we were putting this into the note in order to meet the Soviet concern that there be some indication of talks prior to the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 12, Part 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. Accordingly to Kissinger's Record of Schedule, the meeting, which was held in General Scowcroft's office, ended at 6:15 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellaneous, 1968–1976)

² All brackets in the source text. Attached but not printed. Tab A was a note handed to Dobrynin on May 15 stating that the United States agreed in principle to reopen the plenary sessions in Paris, but before the public sessions could be resumed there must be a private meeting in Paris between Kissinger and Special Adviser Le Duc Tho on May 21, followed by a public announcement of their meeting. A text of the announcement of the meeting was attached. In addition, the text of an oral message from Kissinger to Dobrynin was attached which stated: "It goes without saying that further military escalation during this period would be incompatible with the purpose of the talks and could not but have the most serious consequences."

Summit. Dobrynin asked whether it meant that we were prepared to keep the meeting secret if the other side requested it. I told him we would do so. Dobrynin said that in any event we would have means of letting the fact of the meeting get out. I said it would probably get out if I was absent from the lunch with Chancellor Kreisky.³

Bilateral Issues

Dobrynin and I then reviewed the scheduled list of announcements of signing ceremonies [Tab B].⁴ He was a little puzzled how Laird and Grechko could sign simultaneously. I said probably there would have to be a member of the respective embassies present at each place. He said he doubted whether Grechko, who was very rank-conscious, would sign unless we produced somebody of equivalent rank. I said I would study that question and give him an answer soon.

Dobrynin asked whether we insisted that Gromyko sign for the Soviet side on all agreements, such as health and others. I said no. He said it would help them bureaucratically if their Minister of Health could sign the health agreement, and other Ministers the space agreement and so forth. I said that who signed for the Soviet side was entirely a matter for the Soviets to decide.

We then turned to the incidents-at-sea talks. I said that it was impossible to get our military people to agree to fixed distances and I therefore proposed a compromise. Could we agree to general formulations and then agree also to a committee to study the issue during the year and reopen it at the end of the year? Dobrynin said that this sounded like a reasonable proposal. [In the event the Soviets made exactly that proposal at 9:00 that evening.]

Conclusion

We then reminisced about the styles of various national leaders. Dobrynin said that Stalin was a really overwhelming personality who would sometimes sit for hours simply looking out of the window and thinking. He told me an incident when on the day that World War II broke out⁵ the Chief of the Russian General Staff called Stalin and was told that Stalin had just gone to bed. The Chief of the General Staff told the Chief of the Security Forces to get Stalin to the telephone whatever it cost. The Chief of the Security Forces said he hoped that these people knew the risks they were taking. When the Chief of the General Staff got Stalin on the phone, he said, "Comrade Stalin, the Germans

³ Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky.

⁴ Attached but not printed.

⁵ Reference is to Operation Barbarossa on June 22, 1941, when Nazi Germany launched a massive invasion of the Soviet Union.

are attacking.” Stalin said, “Are you sure this is not a provocation?” The Chief of the General Staff said, “I’m quite sure.” Stalin was silent for all of three minutes and at the end, he said, “I will meet you at the Kremlin in half an hour.”

Dobrynin said that Stalin had absolutely refused to believe that an attack was coming. I asked, what could he have done about it if he had believed it? He said he could have prevented the Soviet army being caught in the middle of shifting from one defensive line to another and changing its equipment. On the other hand, he said, once Stalin got a grip on the war, he was absolutely brutal in pursuing it. He recalled the incident of a Lieutenant General, who had commanded some forces in the Crimea who had been defeated, calling on Stalin to report. When he was introduced as Lieutenant General so and so, Stalin replied what is this Lieutenant doing in my presence—in other words, demoting him on the spot to the lowest rank in the army. On the other hand, Dobrynin said Stalin generally never raised his voice in meetings and, indeed, one could never tell whether he was agreeing or disagreeing, but he would take violent action on the sly behind people’s backs.

I told Dobrynin that the matter of Markelov was being settled and that he would be released before the end of this week. He said that this was a very positive development and the Soviet Government would know what to do on its side.

227. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, May 15, 1972.

SUBJECT

Moscow Visit—Announcement of Bilateral Agreements

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 478, President’s Trip Files, The President, Bilateral Agreements. Secret; Exclusively Eyes Only. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. According to a May 16 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, this was part of the fifth briefing book for the summit delivered to the President before books one to four. (Ibid., RG 59, S/P Files: Lot 77 D D112, Box 335, Lord Chronology, 1972)

The following bilateral agreements should be ready for announcement during the Moscow Visit:

- Space Cooperation Agreement
- Environmental Agreement
- Health Agreement
- Science and Technology Agreement
- Maritime Agreement
- Incidents at Sea Agreement
- Joint Commercial Commission Agreement

You will probably want to sign the space cooperation agreement. All other bilateral agreements will either be signed by Secretary Rogers and Foreign Minister Gromyko or by US and Soviet counterparts in Washington and Moscow. All agreements will be announced during the Moscow visit, and reference to them will be included in the Final Communiqué.² The new US-Soviet Exchanges Agreement for 1972–1973 was signed in Moscow on April 11, 1972, and will also be referred to in the Communiqué.

The proposed scenario for announcement of the agreements is at Tab A³ of this book. Issues papers on each of the agreements are at Tabs B–I. Except for the commercial matters, you will probably not want to take much time with the Soviet leaders on any of these.

In brief, for your information, the bilateral agreements embody the following understandings:

Space Cooperation. The US and USSR agree to enhance cooperation in outer space by utilizing the capabilities of both countries for joint projects of mutual benefit. NASA and the Soviet Academy of Sciences will oversee implementation of the agreement. The rendezvous and docking systems of US and Soviet spacecraft will be made compatible so as to provide for joint missions and rescue operations. The US and USSR agree to a joint, manned space flight in 1975 using Apollo-type

² In his memoirs, Kissinger wrote that “the prospect of the May summit was used to prod our two bureaucracies to work out detailed agreements on various technical subjects suitable for bilateral cooperation. These accords were not politically significant, but they would demonstrate that the United States and the Soviet Union as major industrial powers had common interests in a variety of fields.” “The biggest problem was still the unending rivalry between the White House and the various departments as to who would get credit.” “A compromise was finally reached between the departments’ desire for recognition for having done the negotiating and Nixon’s insistence on a share of the glory. The signing of most of the bilateral agreements was postponed until the summit. There they would be signed by the Cabinet members whose staffs had negotiated them, in the presence of a beaming Nixon and Brezhnev.” (*White House Years*, p. 1133)

³ The tabs are attached but not printed.

and Soyuz-type spacecraft. The two spacecraft will rendezvous and dock in space, and the cosmonauts and astronauts will visit the respective spacecraft. (See Tab B)

Environmental Agreement. The US and USSR agree to establish closer and longer-term cooperation between interested organizations in the environmental field. A new US–USSR Joint Committee on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection is established to approve bilateral measures and programs of cooperation and make recommendations to the two Governments. Each country will designate a principal coordinator—Russell E. Train, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, will take the lead for the US. It is planned that Train will make a post-Summit trip to Moscow to work out the details of the agreement. (See Tab C)

Health Agreement. The US and USSR undertake to develop and deepen mutual cooperation in the field of medical science and public health. They agree to do so through the Joint Committee for Health Cooperation which was established by the February 11 exchange of letters between HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson and Soviet Minister of Health Petrovsky. As agreed in that exchange of letters, initial research efforts will be focused on cancer, heart diseases and the environmental health sciences. (See Tab D)

Science and Technology Agreement. It is recognized that increased scientific and technical cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit is in the interests of both countries and can contribute to an improvement in over-all bilateral relations. A US–Soviet Joint Commission on Scientific and Technical Cooperation is established to explore, identify and establish appropriate joint programs. Your Science Adviser, Dr. Edward E. David, will chair the US side and will make a post-Summit visit to Moscow to negotiate the detailed arrangements for the establishment of the new commission. (See Tab E)

Maritime Agreement. The US and USSR agree to understandings on maritime and related matters which should facilitate an expansion of commerce between the two countries. The understandings include provisions relating to port access, entry and treatment of ships of one country in the ports of the other and equal participation in cargo carriage. (See Tab F)

Incidents at Sea Agreement. The US and USSR agree to understandings designed to prevent incidents at sea between units of the US and Soviet Navies operating on the high seas. Provisions of the understandings deal with such issues as observation of the letter and spirit of the international rules of the road, avoidance of specified types of harassment and simulated attacks; measures to be taken so as not to hinder maneuvers such as carrier operations; general distances to be observed in aircraft-to-aircraft approaches and aircraft-to-ship

approaches. Secretary Laird will sign for the US, Defense Minister Grechko for the USSR. (See Tab G)⁴

Joint Commercial Commission. The US and USSR agree to establish a Joint Commercial Commission to translate bilateral commercial objectives agreed to during your visit into specific agreements and actions. The Commission would negotiate a bilateral trade agreement, work to resolve outstanding commercial and financial issues and monitor the US-Soviet trade relationship over time. The Secretary of Commerce will chair the US side. (See Tab H)

⁴ A May 15 memorandum from Hillenbrand to Kissinger stated that the second round of U.S.-Soviet talks on preventing incidents at sea had begun in Washington on May 4 and proceeded in a businesslike and cordial manner. The memorandum noted that a number of incidents remaining from the first round of talks had been resolved, but that no solution had been found to the disagreement over how to regulate the distances separating between ships and aircraft and aircraft and aircraft. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 719, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXII, May 1972) An undated briefing paper for the President on Incidents at Sea explained that the Soviets were asking the United States to agree to precise standoff distances governing the approach of ships to ships, aircraft to ships, and aircraft to aircraft, whereas the U.S. position called for understandings on standoff distances that would be formulated in general wording, such as "approaches should be made with prudence and caution and in a manner that will not endanger the ship or aircraft." (Ibid., Box 478, President's Trip Files, The President, Bilateral Agreements)

228. Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 15, 1972

[Omitted here is the opening of the conversation during which Nixon and Kissinger discussed how shocked they both were at the assassination attempt on Presidential candidate George Wallace. Nixon asked Kissinger how this had affected the Russians.]

Kissinger: Well, you know. Anything that indicates domestic unrest in this country weakens us.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, White House, Conversation No. 24–126. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger from 9:29 to 9:35 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume. According to the President's Daily Diary, President Nixon placed the call. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I think that one is, the Russian thing, is in good shape now. I had another meeting this evening—

Nixon: How'd it go?

Kissinger: —with Dobrynin. Well, he was very appreciative of the, that spy case as it looks.

Nixon: Good.

Kissinger: The President—

Nixon: Personally did it.

Kissinger: —personally did it. There was violent opposition. But he said—well, he said he'll now release this fellow in Berlin and I said, "You do what you want. The President isn't trading human beings."—

Nixon: Good.

Kissinger: —"He did this on his own."

Nixon: Good.

Kissinger: And—

Nixon: He appreciated that? Good.

Kissinger: Oh yes.

Nixon: And everything's on, on the summit, right?

Kissinger: Oh, everything is on. On SALT, they've already agreed to—these are all highly technical things.

Nixon: Well, you take care of that. I'm not worried about that. Just don't submit it to Rogers.

Kissinger: In a cooperative spirit.

Nixon: Yeah. Don't submit it to Rogers, if you don't mind.

Kissinger: No. Oh God. I mean Smith—well I'll tell you about it some other time.

Nixon: Smith is horrible, I know.

Kissinger: But after all his great talk, he's now in the process of giving the store away.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: But that's in good shape. We've handled that incident at sea negotiations which was—

Nixon: Good.

Kissinger: —which Rogers came to you about.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: We came up with a good compromise because the Navy was really adamant about not accepting the Rogers position and I didn't think that you wanted to order something on the military so that the hawks can't yell at you.

Nixon: All right.

Kissinger: At any rate, we got a good solution to that—

Nixon: Now, with regard to Vietnam, you're sure that Abrams is continuing to pound the hell out of them. Now I don't want any letup. I want 1,100 to 1,200 sorties a day, all right?

Kissinger: Absolutely.

Nixon: Are they doing that?

Kissinger: That's really—I must say I've read the evening report.

Nixon: What is it?

Kissinger: Well they've now opened the road between [Fire Base] Birmingham and [Fire Base] Bastogne. It isn't just that they took Bastogne, which they took by helicopter assault. So they've now opened the road. And that thing was closed for about—immediately after the assault started for 3 weeks.

Nixon: That's a good ending.

Kissinger: And you know, you saw the headline in the *Star* tonight?

Nixon: What did it say? No, I haven't because I've been over here working on this damn thing.

Kissinger: "Saigon forces take base near Hue."

Nixon: Huh.

Kissinger: And—

Nixon: This shakes up our, your liberal friends.

Kissinger: I gave him the note on Vietnam. I mean on the—

Nixon: Oh, how'd he take that?

Kissinger: Well, he said they'd transmit it immediately. He said he just wanted to check, if there's any chance that we'd go to a plenary session this Thursday [May 18]. I said none.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: He said is there any chance that we'd agree to a plenary session without a prior private one. I said no.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: He said they'd transmit it. Well, of course, now if they turn it down we're in good shape.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: We're not dying after dark over there.

Nixon: Now you told him that he was, he's to come up to Camp David.

Kissinger: Yeah. He would like to sleep there. So we're coming up Wednesday [May 17] night.

Nixon: Great.

Kissinger: I'm, we're going on, on that dinner. I'm—Stuart Alsop has a birthday party.

Nixon: I know. I'm for that.

Kissinger: And it's likely to be his last because his leukemia has come back.

Nixon: Right. Right.

Kissinger: And then I'll come up with him around midnight.

Nixon: Right. Good.

Kissinger: And spend the morning with him.

Nixon: And then I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll put breakfast on for three of us. How's that?

Kissinger: Oh, that'd be great.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: That'd be very nice.

Nixon: About 8:30, 9 o'clock. So—

Kissinger: That'd be very good.

Nixon: Fine. You tell him.

Kissinger: I'll tell him that. He'd be very pleased.

Nixon: You give him a ring and say he's going to have—the President has invited him to breakfast at 8:30 tomorrow—

Kissinger: On Thursday morning.

Nixon: Thursday morning. Right.

Kissinger: Right. But he's there, planning away, what little things you want. And he said it'd be nice if we could give a rifle each to Podgorny and Kosygin, they're great hunters.

Nixon: Give what?

Kissinger: A rifle. He wants for Podgorny and Kosygin.

Nixon: A rival?

Kissinger: A rifle.

Nixon: Good God, yes. Tell—Call them and get—

Kissinger: I've already told them.

Nixon: —get good rifles. We'll give 'em to them.

Kissinger: And [laughs]

Nixon: Tell 'em not to shoot any Americans—

Kissinger: I felt bashful, you know, when they asked me what would you like. I said anything that's appropriate. But some old art, but I didn't specify it, but no—

Nixon: Don't get me a rifle, though.

Kissinger: No, no, they won't get you a rifle.

Nixon: [laughter]

Kissinger: No, no, they won't give you—

Nixon: [laughs] I know that. Sure.

Kissinger: But—And then he started reflecting about Stalin and how they couldn't start again. I really think if this thing stays on course now, it's, it is 99 percent certain we'll have pulled off an unbelievable coup.

Nixon: You know actually, if the Senate tomorrow votes this silly damn thing, I don't care. Do you?

Kissinger: No. No. It's irrelevant.

Nixon: Give 'em nothing.

Kissinger: I'm meeting with the Senators in the morning but I really think we shouldn't give them—

Nixon: A cold tough line. "Look, for God's sake, don't torpedo the President before he goes to Moscow." That's the line. OK?

Kissinger: Exactly.

Nixon: All right, Henry.

Kissinger: Goodbye, Mr. President.

229. Telegram From the Department of State to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Delegation in Helsinki¹

Washington, May 16, 1972, 2234Z.

85952. SALT/ACDA Only. For Ambassador Smith from Farley.

1. Al Haig called me after having discussed with Kissinger two matters taken up in your earlier secure phone conversation with him.²

2. As for summit attendance, Haig confirmed that it would not be feasible for the whole delegation to go to Moscow. A group of this size for one subject could not be considered. If you wanted to take one fellow with you, that could be considered, but Haig understood you would not want to try to select one and leave out the rest.

3. Haig then said he had reported to Henry your concern over the sharp Semenov reaction to your statement today on SLBM inclusion.³ Henry was also baffled, since the US approach accorded so closely with what the Soviets appear to want. Haig said he had not understood

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN (HE). Secret; Nodis. Drafted and approved by Philip J. Farley, Deputy Director of ACDA.

² No record of these telephone conversations has been found.

³ In SALT VII telegram 1329 from Helsinki, May 16, Smith reported that he had that day presented a new SLBM proposal to the Soviet delegation that suggested that during the period of the interim agreement the United States would have no more than 656 SLBM launchers on submarines operational and under construction, and the Soviet

what explanation you saw for Semenov's reaction, and I outlined your speculation that Semenov might have argued strongly with Moscow for omission of the specific number of 62 boats and felt that the rug was pulled out from under him when we specified that number. I added that Garthoff had also been struck by the chill in the Soviet attitude in discussing other issues today, and mentioned my personal speculation that this hard line might be an effort in the middle of the final week before the summit to put as much pressure on us as possible to warm things up and move in their direction.

4. Haig said Henry had asked that I pass on to you that this Semenov reaction should not be any cause for you to feel concerned that you might have gone too far or taken too hard a line.⁴ He sees no reason to depart in any way from today's position.⁵

Rogers

Union would have no more than 740 SLBM launchers on submarines operational and under construction, except that each party could have additional SLBM launchers as replacements for ICBM launchers of types first deployed before 1964. The United States would be permitted no more than 44 modern SLBM submarines operational and under construction and the Soviet Union could have no more than 62. Smith noted that Semenov's initial reaction had been negative. Semenov said he would transmit the proposal to Moscow, but expressed "personal astonishment" that a side's position on such a major issue could so easily be changed at this stage of the negotiations, and commented that this would hardly produce a "good impression" in Moscow. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 883, SALT Files, SALT (Helsinki), May–Aug. 1972, Vol. 18)

⁴ In his description of this phase of the negotiations in his memoirs, Smith wrote that after being unsuccessful in persuading the White House that the delegation's approach of limiting only launchers was better, he made a new proposal on May 16 that the freeze be on both submarines and missile launchers. The U.S. proposal added another new element—to require immediate replacement and to neutralize the Soviet claim to 48 modern submarines, the delegation devised and incorporated in the proposal replacement thresholds for SLBM launchers beyond which new launchers would be replacements and require dismantling of older launchers. Smith explained that the threshold figure of 740 Soviet launchers was based on an estimate that the Soviets had 640 launchers on 42 (not 48) modern submarines as well as 100 launchers on older G- and H-class submarines. After Semenov expressed his "astonishment," Smith pointed out that they were now proposing what Brezhnev had originally wanted—a limit on submarines as well as on launchers. (*Doubletalk*, pp. 394–395)

⁵ Telegram 87207 to Helsinki, May 17, transmitted the text of NSDM 167 and instructed the delegation to continue to press as long as possible for the U.S. position on limiting OLPARs. However, if the Soviets continued their insistence on an OLPAR ceiling of no less than 10 million watt-meters squared, it should withdraw the U.S. proposal and Smith should make a formal statement that the United States would view with "serious concern" future deployments of OLPARS with a potential greater than the MSR, except for purposes of space-tracking or national technical means. The delegation should also continue to press for the inclusion of mobile ICBMs in the interim agreement, and if unsuccessful, should withdraw the proposal and make a formal statement that the United States agreed to defer the question of specific limitations on mobile ICBM launchers, but would consider the deployment of operational mobile ICBM launchers during the period of the interim agreement as inconsistent with its objectives and as jeopardizing its continued validity. If the Soviets continued to reject inclusion of covered facilities for submarines, the delegation should withdraw the U.S. proposal and make a formal statement along the lines of the current proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN (HE))

230. Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, undated.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

For the Soviets, increased trade with us is a priority objective and they intend to stress it at the summit. There have already been intensive negotiations in recent months. *The elements of a deal have been established:*

They want:

- US credits to finance extensive imports of high-quality US manufactured goods and machinery;
- MFN to enable them to earn some of the dollars needed to pay for imports from the US;
- the end of various kinds of “discrimination” which they find politically and psychologically obnoxious;
- in the longer run “joint ventures” under which we would provide capital for the exploitation of Soviet raw materials, like natural gas, and the Soviets would earn dollars by selling these materials to the US market.²

We want:

- access to the Soviet market for US goods;
- a grain deal, preferably for three years at a time;
- a lend-lease settlement.³

At the summit, Soviet eagerness for significant progress on economic issues provides you with leverage on other issues.

In brief, *Soviet objectives* in the economic area involved a mixture of practical and political considerations.

—On the *practical* side, the Soviets obviously want access to our high quality manufactured goods and advanced technology and they need our credits to achieve this since even with MFN they are unlikely to sell enough in our market soon to finance large purchases.

—*Politically*, the Soviets want to see our “discriminatory” trade practices (i.e., export controls, no MFN and no government credits)

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President’s Trip Files, For the President’s Personal Briefcase, May 1972, Part 1. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. According to a May 16 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, this was part of the fifth briefing book for the summit delivered to the President before books one to four. (Ibid., RG 59, S/P Files: Lot 77 D 112, Box 335, Lord Chronology, May, 1972)

² The President underlined these four points.

³ The President underlined these three points.

dismantled to emphasize their equality as a superpower. Beyond that they probably feel that the lure of substantial business with them may in future inhibit our political freedom of maneuver vis-à-vis the USSR.

—Finally, the Soviets expect that once US barriers to extensive trade with them fall, there will be even greater intra-Western competition than already exists for the Soviet market and this will work to Soviet economic advantage.

Our objective, in brief, is to turn the Soviet interest in increased economic relations with us to *political advantage*. This obviously requires subtlety since the Soviets resist direct linkage. But they already understand well enough that major US concessions with respect to credits and tariffs depend on a generally stable political situation. This is not to say that the Soviets will be wholly deterred from political or other actions inimical to our interests. But once we have begun to turn on the tap we will have a certain leverage not available in the past.⁴

—In addition, we do of course stand to gain *economically* ourselves from increased access to the Soviet market. Business with the East is of considerable appeal to important US economic interest groups who judge the performance of the Administration in part by the degree to which it responds to their desires for increased business with the USSR.

Recent Developments

Over the past several months there have been intensive exchanges with the Soviets on the elements of a new economic relationship.

—In these we have sought to get the old lend-lease debt settled⁵ as a first order of business since without this the political acceptability in this country of extending new credits and other benefits to the USSR is highly questionable.

—We have also sought to get the Soviets committed to a substantial grain deal which is of direct interest to an important segment of our economic community.

—We have also sought to negotiate a commercial shipping agreement to ensure that cargoes can actually move. This requires terms that will prove acceptable to the unions so that they will work ships.⁶

—In response to the Soviet priority interest in credits and MFN, we have held out hope that there will be favorable US action if there is a satisfactory lend-lease settlement and if the political climate is right.

—We have also stressed the desirability of setting up a joint US-Soviet Commercial Commission at the summit which would thereafter

⁴ The President underlined the first and last sentences of this paragraph.

⁵ The President underlined "sought to get the old lend-lease debt settled."

⁶ The President underlined this paragraph.

serve as the venue for detailed follow-up negotiations.⁷ The Soviets, who themselves have a penchant for setting up institutions of this kind, have accepted this, though their goal has been, and in Moscow will undoubtedly be, to end up with more than simply a procedural step.

There have been a number of *exchanges* on these matters *in the confidential channel*, including in the discussions with Brezhnev in April.

—Our strategy in these has been to be forthcoming in general, without making specific commitments.

—The Soviets have been told that if our relations before and during the summit go as we hope, the various elements of our new economic relationship can be worked out at the summit, with more concrete negotiations on specifics taking place in the summer. (The idea would be to have Secretary Peterson go to Moscow for the first meeting of the new Commercial Commission in July.)

Your Strategy and Moves in Moscow

At the summit, the schedule has been structured in such a way as to hold completion of any economic agreements until near the end of the period of your visit.⁸ This will enable you to use economic issues implicitly as a carrot in the political discussions scheduled for the earlier phase of the meetings. You will therefore be in a position to fine-tune your actions in accordance with the general progress of the talks.

Early in the talks you should lay out what you believe can realistically be accomplished during the visit. This would include:

(1) Agreement on a lend-lease settlement,⁹ including terms of Soviet payment.

(2) A three-year grain deal under which the Soviets would commit themselves to buy \$750 million, with some \$200 the first year. We would provide CCC credits as provided by our laws of three years duration at market rates of interest.¹⁰

(3) A commitment by you to find the Soviets eligible for the facilities of the Export-Import Bank in the near future and to make available up to half a billion dollars worth of credit; the Soviets would likewise make credit available for US imports from the USSR.

(4) A commitment by you to seek MFN legislation in the Congress at an early date, with the Soviets passing similar legislation beneficial to us.¹¹

(5) The establishment at the summit of a Joint Commercial Commission, which would be the venue for concrete follow-on negotiations

⁷ The President underlined this sentence.

⁸ The President underlined this sentence.

⁹ The President underlined "lend-lease settlement."

¹⁰ The President underlined "market rates of interest."

¹¹ The President underlined the two previous sentences.

on commercial issues, specifically on a formal trade agreement which would embody MFN provisions, and on “joint ventures.”¹²

In addition, you should propose signature of the commercial shipping agreement which has been under negotiation, but with the understanding that the Soviets would not send their bulk carriers to US East Coast or Gulf Ports until the US Government has made satisfactory arrangements for getting these ships worked.¹³ (As you know, the problem is that our unions will not work Soviet ships unless US ships get a fair part of the business. But since US bulk carriers are not able to meet world prices at present, the Soviets would not use them. Hence to get the unions to load and unload ships in the Soviet trade we must find ways to subsidize US carriers¹⁴ or to get the Soviets to use only third-country shipping.)

If the summit goes well, you could toward the end of the week, make a more liberal set of propositions, as follows:

(1) As regards the grain deal, you could offer one of *shorter* duration than three years, i.e., \$400 million for two years, or even \$200 million for one year beginning this summer. (Credit terms would still be for three year repayment.)¹⁵

(2) Instead of only committing yourself to find the Soviets eligible for EX-IM facilities, you could actually find them eligible in Moscow; negotiations for an initial \$150 million credit (which the Soviets want for their Kama River truck project) could then begin quite soon.¹⁶

(3) The Soviets could stop their payments on their lend-lease debt if Congress had not authorized MFN by the end of 1973.¹⁷ If necessary to agreement you can go one step further: the Soviets could delay their first lend-lease payment until MFN is actually granted.

Separate papers, prepared with Peter Flanigan, provide details on the status and content of our commercial negotiations with the Soviets up to this point. There is also an annex containing all exchanges in the confidential channel.¹⁸

¹² In a May 20 memorandum the President’s Assistant for International Economic Policy Peter Flanigan informed the President that Secretary of Commerce Peter Peterson recommended that at the summit there be announced only the establishment of the Joint U.S.-Soviet Commercial Commission and, if possible, a Soviet agreement to purchase \$750 million worth of grain over 3 years. The Secretary advised that no further commercial agreements be signed at the summit unless there were overriding political or security issues. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, 1972 Summit, Economic Commission)

¹³ The President underlined this sentence.

¹⁴ The President underlined “subsidize U.S. carriers.”

¹⁵ The President wrote “or better” in the margin next to this paragraph.

¹⁶ The President underlined this sentence.

¹⁷ The President underlined this sentence.

¹⁸ Not attached. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President’s Trip Files, For the President’s Personal Briefcase, May 1972, Part 1)

231. Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, May 16, 1972.

MIDDLE EAST

I. *The Soviet Perception*

A. *The Soviet Perception of Where We Stand*

When Gromyko visited Washington and met with you privately on September 29, 1971,² he indicated that—as part of a settlement—the Soviet Union was prepared to (1) agree to a *ban on arms supplies* to the Middle East, (2) *withdraw all Soviet military forces* from the Middle East, and (3) participate in and *guarantee the settlement* arrangements. These steps could take effect as part of an interim solution, provided this was linked closely to a final settlement within a year. Gromyko urged that talks begin in the special channel aimed at reaching a specific U.S.-Soviet understanding by the time of the Summit. You told Gromyko that this was a constructive proposal, and that you were willing to have exploratory talks begin to test the feasibility of reaching such an understanding.

This Soviet offer of September 29, 1971, still stands. It, and our expression of interest in it, are the basis of their continuing appeals to us to finalize a bilateral agreement.

The issues were discussed in a tentative way in the special channel last October and November. We indicated positive but very general interest in their propositions. On October 19, for example, you wrote Brezhnev that their proposals were “very constructive” and that exploratory secret talks were “desirable.”³ But not until January 21, 1972,⁴ did we indicate to the Soviets that intensive U.S.-Soviet discussions could proceed. It has been made clear repeatedly to Dobrynin that there were extraordinary difficulties involved, and we could not count on easily duplicating the success we had achieved on Berlin in

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 484, President's Trip Files, The President, Issues Papers—USSR, III, [Part 1]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. A notation on the paper indicates the President saw it. According to a May 16 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, this was the full content of the third briefing book for the summit sent to the President. (Ibid., RG 59, S/P Files, Lot 77 D 112, Box 335, Lord Chronology, May, 1972)

² A memorandum of this conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

³ Document 6.

⁴ Document 39.

the special Nixon–Brezhnev channel. On Berlin, all or most of the parties genuinely wanted an agreement, and we had able Ambassadors to do the negotiating and leak-proof procedures to protect the special channel. On the Middle East, Dobrynin was reminded, the substantive positions were much harder to reconcile, and the danger of leaks, particularly on the Egyptian side, was considerable.

The Soviets have shown impatience throughout, even to the point of sending us a note⁵ while we were in China urging that intensive efforts begin on the Middle East once we returned. They have stressed the importance to U.S.-Soviet relations of making progress on the Middle East. They see their own offer as generous; they say they will be flexible on everything else except on the demand for return to the 1967 frontiers; and they say they have resisted Sadat's pleas for offensive weapons⁶ in the interests of Brezhnev's new "positive" approach to U.S.-Soviet relations.

The basic issue, of course, is what concessions we and Israel have to make in return for the proposed Soviet concessions.

The Soviet offer is indeed positive but of course it is hardly selfless. An agreement on that basis would extricate them from a difficult situation. Their client cannot win a war with the Israelis. Therefore a continuation of the present simmering crisis can only lead to one of two situations: either a conviction on the part of the Arabs that their alliance with the Soviet Union is inadequate to produce a settlement, or a war by the Egyptians which would face the Soviets with a decision on military support and a risk out of all proportion to anything that could be achieved. Thus, in our view, the Soviet offer—while positive—does not eliminate the continuing need for realism and flexibility on *both* sides.

We have tried to make clear to the Soviets throughout that, in view of the difficulties involved, progress was possible only if we first achieved a partial or interim solution, e.g., a reopening of (and partial Israeli withdrawal from) the Suez Canal. The Soviets have no objection to an interim settlement, provided it is tied tightly to a comprehensive settlement. The key to a final settlement, we then suggested, might be to find some formula for a continuing Israeli presence, without sovereignty, at Sharm el-Sheikh, in order to provide some security for Israel after an overall Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. The Soviets informed us

⁵ Reference is possibly to the Soviet note sent to Washington while Nixon and Kissinger were in China; Document 53. This message does not mention the Middle East, but no other Soviet message dated during the period of the trip to China has been found.

⁶ Following his April 27–29 trip to Moscow, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made a speech on May 1 stating that the Soviet Union would "within a reasonable period of time" supply Egypt with the "offensive power to liberate our lands."

in February that they would consider any suggestions for such a formula.⁷ (It was easier for them to react to U.S. proposals on this, Dobrynin explained, than to make proposals of their own.) In mid-March we suggested some kind of multilateral arrangement among the riparian states on the Gulf of Aqaba, as a possible figleaf to cover an Israeli presence (without sovereignty) at Sharm el-Sheikh.⁸

In Moscow in April, Brezhnev and Gromyko raised the Middle East again and pushed hard:

—They tried to imply that we were renegeing on a promise since we had agreed in September to reach an understanding by the Summit. I made clear that you had agreed in September to *seek* a general understanding by the Summit; the problem was that we did not yet have one. They had to bear in mind the complexities, and that any U.S. pressure on Israel would have to wait until after the election in any case. Further talks were advisable in the special channel in advance of your Moscow visit; they agreed.

—Brezhnev repeatedly stressed the danger of events in the Middle East getting out of control. An army as big as the Egyptian Army, he pointed out, was not easy to keep tranquil, especially in present conditions.

—Brezhnev presented two notes [attached]⁹ outlining a detailed Soviet position for a final settlement. They represented nothing different from what the Soviets had been discussing with State, aside from reiterating the offer Gromyko had made to you.

—Dobrynin had stated explicitly in November that, while they had to insist in principle that the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian settlements were all interconnected, they were prepared to proceed de facto with the Egyptian settlement separately. In Moscow in April, Gromyko and Brezhnev hardened the Soviet position. Gromyko now stressed that a final settlement had to be a “complex” or “global” one, i.e., embracing Syria and Jordan as well as Egypt. Different segments of it could be negotiated in different stages (e.g., an overall Egyptian settlement, or an interim accord on the Canal), but the obligations were interdependent and had to go into force simultaneously.

—The one specific proposal we had made for a final settlement (the concept of Israeli presence without sovereignty) Gromyko indicated was unacceptable. (In November, Dobrynin had said the Soviets were willing to explore any proposals on this.)

⁷ See Document 46.

⁸ See Document 62.

⁹ Brackets in the source text. The tabs are not attached.

In sum, in April the Soviets were still extremely eager for some kind of general bilateral understanding by the time of the Summit. They were clearly worried about an explosion in the Middle East—but they were not so worried that they were prepared to soften their terms. The U.S. side agreed to try in the special channel to work out some general principles, which could then be elaborated on at the Summit. At the very least, the two sides could set a direction at the Summit.¹⁰

Since then, Sadat has visited Moscow again¹¹ and Brezhnev has written you again (on May 1)¹² with yet another appeal for intensive bilateral talks looking to an accord at the Summit. Brezhnev wrote you that “due to Israel’s position the number of uncertain moments in the situation there is greater than before, and that it is fraught with serious consequences.”

The Vietnam crisis, of course, intervened since then to make impossible any further substantive progress in the special channel.

B. The Soviet Strategy

The Soviets have three inter-related interests¹³ in raising the Middle East at the Summit:

First, they have an interest in using the opportunity to seek movement toward an Arab-Israeli settlement, although probably not at major cost to Cairo. They feel the heat of increasing Egyptian disillusionment over their inability to help Egypt recover its occupied territory.¹⁴ Sadat has repeatedly pressed Moscow for either the means to regain his territory militarily or Soviet pressure on the U.S. to help bring about a diplomatic settlement. The Soviets, while providing substantial quantities of air defense and ground equipment, must know that offensive military action by Sadat now would be defeated. But Sadat may feel the need to break the ceasefire long before he is militarily ready, with the possibility of forcing the Soviets to come to his aid. The appearance of movement toward a diplomatic solution helps the Soviets restrain his actions and resist his demands for offensive weaponry.

Secondly, the Soviets have an interest in enhancing an improved relationship with the U.S. as well as in avoiding a confrontation which would threaten it.¹⁵ Pressing for a Mideast settlement at the Summit is

¹⁰ See Documents 141, 150, 152, and 159 for discussions of the Middle East during Kissinger’s secret trip to Moscow.

¹¹ Sadat visited Moscow February 2–4 and April 27–29.

¹² See Nixon and Kissinger’s comments on Brezhnev’s May 1 message in their memoirs. Nixon, *RN: Memoirs*, pp. 594–595; Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1168–1169.

¹³ The President underlined “Soviets have three inter-related interests.”

¹⁴ The President underlined these two sentences.

¹⁵ The President underlined this sentence.

an opportunity for them to portray themselves as constructive on a major concrete issue. They also have genuine reason to worry that Sadat might break the ceasefire this summer if he feels that the Summit has produced no promise of diplomatic progress. The Soviets have probably done what they can do to remind Sadat that he cannot achieve a significant military victory; to us they will probably exaggerate the likelihood of his breaking the ceasefire in order to increase our concern. But the Soviets cannot reasonably rule out Sadat's capacity for a foolish step, and they must prefer not to face the choices and risks that would be posed for them if a war erupted and Sadat was taking a beating.

Thirdly, the Soviets have a general interest in enhancing their position in the Middle East vis-à-vis the U.S. To begin with, this manifests itself in their desire to play an equal role in any settlement that is achieved.¹⁶ They feel the need to be seen as a power that can affect the course of events in this area; for this they want to be cut into the peace-making process again. They have been extremely sensitive ever since the middle of 1970 about unilateral U.S. initiatives—first our initiative for a standstill ceasefire and then our attempt to negotiate an interim settlement on the Suez Canal. You will probably feel this sensitivity in your discussions. Beyond their focus on the central Arab-Israeli situation, the Soviets are of course continuing to push to strengthen their position in the Middle East overall, including the Persian Gulf and eastern Mediterranean. They have signed a Friendship Treaty with the Iraqis,¹⁷ and they are trying for one with Syria. In doing this they have continued to snipe at our position in the area, leveling propaganda at our homeporting arrangements in Greece and in Bahrain.

This interest in enhancing their own position¹⁸ probably *reduces* their willingness to pay any high cost to pressure the Arabs to make the concessions necessary for achievement of a settlement. And the longer the crisis festers, the greater the strain on U.S. relations with the Arab world and the pressures on pro-Western Arab governments. On the other hand, progress on the diplomatic front also serves the Soviets' interest by reducing the risks to them in long-term expansion and consolidation of their gains.¹⁹

The Soviet strategy thus seems to be:

—To reiterate their proposals for a Soviet troop withdrawal, arms ban, and guarantee, in order to appear forthcoming in a way which obviates their need to press the *Arabs* for concessions.

¹⁶ The President underlined these two sentences.

¹⁷ The Iraqi Government signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union on April 9.

¹⁸ The President underlined "interest in enhancing their own position."

¹⁹ The President underlined this sentence.

—To press Sadat to preserve the ceasefire for an extended period, in order to head off an explosion.

—To press us for active negotiations and concessions (stressing the danger of an explosion), in order to champion the Arab cause²⁰ and hold out to the Arabs some prospect of recovery of the territories through diplomacy.

At the Summit, the Soviets will reiterate their offer and assign to us the responsibility for making the next move. They will press again for formalizing a bilateral “confidential arrangement” as soon as possible, even at the Summit itself. We should not expect any further loosening of their positions on the substantive terms (although it is not inconceivable that, in light of our failure so far to be forthcoming and their recent session with Sadat, they might come up with something new).

The Soviet positions on the principal issues continue to be as follows (as reflected in the two notes Brezhnev delivered in Moscow, at Tabs A and B):

—*Withdrawal of Israeli Forces*: “The major question which pre-determines all the rest,” as Gromyko put it in Moscow, is the withdrawal of Israeli forces. The Soviets claim to have no doubt that we are capable of putting “effective pressure” on Israel to bring this about. This means withdrawal of *all* Israeli troops from *all* the occupied territories, back to the pre-June 1967 borders. Gromyko flatly rejected any possible formulas for a continuing Israeli military or quasi-military (police) presence, even under UN auspices and with a full recognition of Egyptian sovereignty. Temporary stationing of UN personnel at Sharm el-Sheikh would be acceptable, however.

—*Global Settlement*: The final settlement has to embrace Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. No particular settlement (e.g., an Israeli-Egyptian accord) can go into force until the other components are present, though the Soviets concede that the separate settlements need not all be negotiated simultaneously. *Thus the withdrawal of Soviet troops would not begin to be implemented until after agreement was reached on full settlements with Egypt, Jordan and Syria.* Gromyko insisted on this interdependence of the settlements, even though I pointed out that it had the disadvantage (for them) of delaying Israel’s withdrawal, too.

—*Interim Settlement*: The Soviets also allow the possibility of, e.g., a Canal settlement with Egypt, provided it is treated as a stage in the implementation of a pre-agreed “complex” or comprehensive solution. In this context, “we could take up and solve the Canal problem first,” Gromyko told me, and this part of any private U.S.-Soviet accord could

²⁰ The President underlined “in order to champion the Arab cause.”

also be made public and implementation could begin as soon as it is reached. The Soviets nevertheless will be unhappy with the interim approach to the extent that it stretches out the time frame of the implementation process, and to the extent that the Israelis are reluctant to make any follow-up commitments in advance of *prior* implementation of the interim settlement.

—*Other Aspects of a Settlement*: The Soviets insist on a return to the pre-1967 situation in *Gaza* and also in *Jerusalem*, i.e., Jordanian sovereignty over East Jerusalem, with the addition of demilitarization of the whole city and UN-enforced freedom of access to all holy places. They believe a solution to their *Palestinians'* problem must be an integral part of a settlement. The Soviets also accept the ideas of *demilitarized zones* on both sides of all borders; *freedom of navigation* for Israel in the Suez Canal, Gulf of Aqaba, and Straits of Tiran; a *ceasefire* (though limited to the period during which Israeli troops are withdrawing) *international guarantees* by the UN or the great powers; and (as Gromyko offered to you) *Soviet troop withdrawal* as part of a settlement, and willingness to agree to *arms limitation* once a settlement is reached.

II. Our Interests and Strategy

A. U.S. Interests

Israel now finds itself in an advantageous military position and will not trade away what it sees as essential to its security simply to secure a formal diplomatic peace. The United States is committed to Israel's survival. At the same time, we have always felt a strong interest in securing a settlement that would end the perpetual crisis. As a superpower we have felt a special responsibility to help restore stability, as well as a special awareness of the danger of U.S.-Soviet military confrontation in another eruption of Middle East war. As long as the crisis festers, moreover, our remaining political ties with the 50 million people of the Arab world, which were once substantial, are further and further attenuated, and our economic ties—which continue to be substantial—are increasingly jeopardized. The permanent state of tension means continuing and intensifying internal pressures over the long term on the remaining moderate Arab regimes.

We continue to believe that the terms of a settlement inevitably must be negotiated between the parties themselves. This is the only process that the Israelis will accept, and our ability to move the Israelis depends in part on our ability to establish such a process.

Nevertheless, this Administration has involved itself actively in Middle East diplomacy in various forums, in the effort to help provide a framework for a peace settlement. From 1969 to early 1971 we conducted talks bilaterally with the USSR, and in the Four-Power forum, to develop the November 1967 UN Security Council Resolution into a

framework for negotiation. In June 1970 the U.S. took the initiative unilaterally to propose a ceasefire and military standstill to try to establish conditions for Egyptian-Israeli talks.

In May 1971 the U.S. took up the idea (which both Egyptian and Israeli officials had broached) of seeking an interim settlement to reopen the Suez Canal and pull troops part way back.

B. Our Strategy

The principal issue for us at the Summit is the degree to which we want to join the Soviets now in a joint “confidential arrangement” committing both of us to press certain concrete proposals on our respective clients. Gromyko’s offer to you last September, our willingness then to try to reach some general understanding by the Summit, and their continued pressure to finalize an agreement, have now made this a major issue in U.S.-Soviet relations.

We have always made clear to the Soviets that there are severe limits on what the United States can deliver. You have to be able to return from Moscow and truthfully say there were no “secret deals” at the Summit. You also do not want to engage in intensive technical negotiation in the heated atmosphere of a Summit and without the meticulous preparations that gives us a good idea in advance of how we will come out. More substantively, this whole question puts us up against one of the crucial difficulties of the Middle East problem: The Israelis will not yield easily, and on some points they will not yield without a war. If we are not careful we could end up with a new eruption in the Middle East and linked with the Soviets against the Israelis. This is out of the question.

Our objective in a Middle East negotiation is to induce Israeli cooperation but in a way that does not exacerbate fears or create temptations and invite a war. The problem is to come up with proposals which the Israelis—under pressure—may accept.

The State Department recommends that we resist any Soviet proposals for cooperative diplomacy, and that we continue to insist that the regional parties must be the focal point of negotiations. State argues that Israel is unlikely to accept either the substance or the procedure of a U.S.-Soviet deal, though State recognizes that a Mideast stand-off in Moscow would leave a very unpredictable situation in the post-Summit period. My view is that the Mideast has become too big an issue in U.S.-Soviet relations for us to simply stonewall at the Summit.

Our task then at the Summit is to find ways to be forthcoming and positive to the Soviets but without committing ourselves to anything which we cannot accomplish or which is in fact dangerous.

Since the Vietnam crisis deprived us of any chance to prepare adequately for a consummated agreement at the Summit, even on

general principles, our positive thrust at the Summit now should have two elements:

—suggesting an intensive *work program*, looking toward an agreement later this year, and

—urging again that we concentrate on the *interim approach*, as the only realistic way to make any progress toward a final settlement.

The *work program* could be a modification of what was already suggested to Brezhnev and Gromyko in April: you and Brezhnev could *discuss* general principles at the Summit, and hopefully set a general positive direction. Intensive follow-up discussions could then continue through the special channel over the summer, and I could come back to Moscow in September. The two sides could reach agreement then or soon after on an overall solution, and also proceed immediately to publication and implementation of an interim agreement.

We might also try to persuade the Soviets that a boost to realistic movement toward a settlement would be the establishment of some sort of contact—perhaps secret—between Egypt and Israel, in which both would signify willingness to discuss all possible solutions.

On the substance, the most positive contribution we can make at the Summit is to focus the U.S.-Soviet discussion on the partial or *interim approach*. For two years there has been a frenzy of activity without substance on our side, and substantive proposals without realism on their side.²¹ The whole point of direct Presidential involvement at this stage is to cut through all this, and to concentrate our energies and skills on something that can actually be achieved.

The U.S. turned to the idea of an interim settlement in 1971 (a) because it seemed unlikely that an overall settlement could be achieved in one step, (b) because both the Israelis and the Egyptians seemed to show some interest in the idea, and (c) because it seemed a way of showing movement while stretching out the settlement process and pushing the most difficult issues out into the future. To persuade the Soviets to accept this kind of approach would require that they also accept the idea that the period for a settlement would be longer than they had previously anticipated and the fact that they might not be able to get commitments on the ultimate settlement in the early part of this process.

You wrote Brezhnev on October 19, 1971, that a “lasting settlement,” in your view, “will come about only if a start is made on a more limited or ‘interim’ basis.” The rationale is that a partial Israeli withdrawal as a first step is the only feasible prospect at the moment, and it could be made to establish the principle and process of Israeli with-

²¹ The President underlined this sentence.

drawal. A modest first step has the best chance of acceptance by the Israelis, and also the advantage for the Egyptians that it is clearly only partial and therefore necessarily implies that more withdrawal has to come. The more ambitious the first partial withdrawal, the harder it would be to persuade the Israelis and the more “permanent” it might become after being carried out. It should be in the Soviet interest, too, to get the withdrawal process started and in a way that makes further withdrawal look likely.

The Israelis have indicated to us their willingness to agree to an interim Suez Canal settlement along the following lines, and we have presented this to the Soviets in order to be able to deal with the issue at the Summit concretely and with preparation:

—Israel will withdraw its forces from the Suez Canal to the west side of the Sinai passes.

—This withdrawal, and Egyptian presence on the east bank, will commence when the Canal is opened and functioning.

—There can be some civilian Egyptian presence (including police) on the east bank once the Canal is opened and functioning, but no Egyptian military crossing or presence.

—There must be a maximum period for a ceasefire, at least until the beginning of Calendar Year 1974.

—Israel will postpone its own use of the Canal until a later phase following the opening and functioning of the Canal.

The Israelis have offered these concessions in the special channel on the assumption that the U.S. will not re-commit itself to the Rogers Plan for an overall settlement, specifically the Rogers Plan’s provision for withdrawal of all Israeli forces to the former international boundary with Egypt. Israel will agree to a reference to the fact that the interim settlement represents a move toward an ultimate settlement but with the details to be worked out as outlined in UN Security Council Resolution 242.²² (That resolution provides that the details of an overall settlement are to be worked out between the parties under the auspices of Ambassador Jarring.)

C. *Your Talking Points*

1. *The Soviet proposal* which Gromyko presented to you in September 1971 (for Soviet troop withdrawal, arms ban, and guarantees) is constructive and positive. It is evidence of the General-Secretary’s genuine belief that we two superpowers have a special responsibility for peace and an overriding interest in a constructive relationship between us.

²² For text of UN Security Council Resolution 242, November 22, 1967; see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XIX, Document 542.

—You agreed with Gromyko in September that we should try to reach a substantive accord by the time of *the Summit*. Unfortunately, in spite of good-faith efforts on both sides, we have not reached one. The task now is to look ahead, not back, and to set a positive direction at the Summit which can guide intensive talks this year to a successful conclusion.

—You had a full report on *Dr. Kissinger's talks in Moscow*,²³ and you had agreed, as Dr. Kissinger had suggested to the General-Secretary, that we should make a new effort before the Summit. The *Vietnam crisis* intervened, however, to make this impossible. This is yet another example of how Vietnam has stood in the way of realizing the full potential of U.S.-Soviet cooperation. An early Vietnam peace would protect against a recurrence in the future.

2. The Middle East problem is *extraordinarily difficult*. It will not be as easy for us to resolve this in our special channel as it was to reach the Berlin agreement.

—The parties involved are more volatile, and the danger of leaks much greater. The root conflict is much more bitter, and the two sides' positions may even be irreconcilable in many respects.

—Realism and flexibility are needed on both sides. We cannot allow the settlement process itself to exacerbate fears or create temptations in the area and ignite a war.

—However, the U.S. and USSR are both determined to contain the danger to world peace, and this in itself affords great hope.²⁴

3. The United States proposes that the two leaders seek at this Summit meeting to set a firm positive direction and to agree on an intensive *work program*.

—This is the intent of the proposal which Dr. Kissinger has just presented in the special channel—it is a basis for concrete discussion for the two sides to fill in. Intensive follow-up talks can begin immediately afterward in the special channel to flesh out what is agreed here.

—We can aim at a substantive understanding by September, at which time Dr. Kissinger could travel again to Moscow to firm it up.

—This understanding would have to be kept confidential through this year, and the Soviet Government must understand—as we have indicated to them many times—that implementation could not realistically begin until mid-1973. (After the election it will take time for a new government to be constituted and to establish itself. For many reasons, only a new government will be capable of carrying out the con-

²³ See Document 169.

²⁴ The President underlined these three points.

fidential arrangements.) When Dr. Kissinger visits again in September, however, we are prepared for announcement and implementation of an interim agreement immediately.

4. As you wrote to the General-Secretary on October 19, 1971, an *interim approach* is the only realistic and practical approach. The most positive contribution the two leaders can make at the Summit is to agree to concentrate on this. This approach offers important advantages:

—It offers the only realistic prospect of achieving movement *soon*, perhaps even this year. It has the best chance of acceptance by Israel, and the best chance of avoiding getting bogged down in all the major issues which have blocked a comprehensive settlement.

—Even a modest Israeli withdrawal would establish the principle (and process) of Israeli withdrawal.

—The more modest the initial arrangement, the more obvious and inevitable it is that further withdrawal will have to follow.

5. To facilitate the whole process of settlement, it would be valuable if the U.S. and USSR could find some way to bring about *secret direct Egyptian-Israeli talks* in which both would signify willingness to discuss all possible solutions.

6. We continue to seek a *final settlement*. We understand that the Soviet Union attaches the highest importance to this, and therefore we see the interim solution as an integral part of a final settlement. There are many possible ways to tie these together, and Dr. Kissinger and Ambassador Dobrynin should work this out.

7. We understand that the Soviet Union now seeks a “complex” or comprehensive settlement embracing *Egypt, Jordan, and Syria*. This of course is most ambitious, and will postpone for a long time the day when Israeli troops withdraw.

—The talks in the special channel have so far concentrated on the Egyptian phase. The Jordanian phase has been touched upon, and in any case we believe the Jordanian part would be easy to achieve at about the same time. The Syrian part, however, will be quite difficult. Perhaps it will be easier to bring the Syrians along once we are close to concluding the Egyptian and Jordanian phases.

—We understand the interrelationships. Kissinger and Dobrynin should be able to work out a practical solution.

232. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

The Soviet Leaders

This memorandum seeks to capture the flavor and style of the principal Soviet leaders with whom you will be dealing, Brezhnev in particular, as well as Kosygin and Gromyko, based largely on personal encounters. Your background book already contains much useful biographic and historical information on these men and their colleagues.

Brezhnev

For Brezhnev, the meeting with you is a long-sought goal, both politically and psychologically. Even since Stalin, Soviet leaders have seen an encounter with the American President as a boost to their authority and a recognition of their stature. Brezhnev, like his predecessor Khrushchev, finds this useful in terms of the never-ending power struggle within the leadership. And whether he admits it to himself or not, to be seen in your company fills a deepseated personal need to be accepted as an equal.²

In Brezhnev's case, other impulses have lately come to the surface. He resents his image as a brutal, unrefined person; he is trying to live down his long history of drunkenness. He has come to enjoy the perquisites of office—he enjoys fancy cars, natty clothes and a certain elevated lifestyle. He is self-conscious of his looks, heavy eyebrows, for example, and has made an effort to look after his grooming. In short, he has some of the characteristics of the parvenue and the nouveau-riche. Yet he is proud, as Khrushchev was, of his proletarian background and of his successful march up the ladder of power.³

Like many Russians, Brezhnev is a mixture of crudeness and warmth. Yet, self-conscious about his background and his past, he eschews Khrushchevian excursions into profanity. His anecdotes and im-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, For the President's Personal Briefcase, May 1972, Part 2. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. According to a May 16 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, this was part of the first briefing book for the summit. (Ibid., RG 59, S/P Files: Lot 77 D 112, Box 335, Lord Chronology, May, 1972)

² The President underlined "a deepseated personal need to be accepted as an equal."

³ The President underlined most of this paragraph.

agery, to which he resorts frequently, avoid the languages of the barnyard. His humor is heavy, sometimes cynical, frequently earthy,⁴ but—in your presence at least—not obscene. His impulses are elemental, but he tries to keep his demeanor and his words within the decorous limits of a middle-class drawing room.

He is nervous, partly because of his personal insecurity, partly for physiological reasons traced to his consumption of alcohol and tobacco, his history of heart disease and the pressures of his job. You will find his hands perpetually in motion, twirling his watch chain (gold), flicking ashes from his ever-present cigarette, clanging his cigarette-holder against an ash tray. From time to time, he may stand up behind his chair or walk about. He is likely to interrupt himself or you by offering food and drink. His colleagues obviously humor him in these somewhat irritating habits.

Brezhnev is obviously intelligent and shrewd but probably not as acute in these respects as Khrushchev. Like the latter he is alert to any real or imagined polemical thrust and, though less combative than Khrushchev, is not likely to let it pass. For example, when I said (in not uncomplimentary fashion) that we noticed that when he moved, he moved massively, he immediately took this as a thrust at his Czechoslovakian invasion and felt compelled to comment.⁵

Brezhnev's reputation was one of laziness and impatience with details. We know [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that in years past he liked to sneak off to soccer games or other diversions,⁶ and in Khrushchev's day would get other Politburo members to cover up for him. But he clearly masters the significant issues and understands Soviet interests. He has stopped his earlier practice of bringing copious notes to meetings, except for formal documents he plans to hand over. Although these are obviously drafted by his staff, he is familiar with their contents, presumably having participated in Politburo discussions of them.

Although top dog, Brezhnev still gives the impression of being on a relatively short leash.⁷ He is free to expound an agreed position of the collective, perhaps adding some nuances and emphases of his own, but once he has exhausted his guidance he evidently is required to go back for more, as well as for any changes necessitated by the course of negotiations. He also seems to be under some obligation to report back.

⁴ The President underlined "His humor is heavy, sometimes cynical, frequently earthy" as well as the previous two sentences.

⁵ See Document 134 for a record of this conversation.

⁶ The President underlined "in years past he liked to sneak off to soccer games and other diversions."

⁷ The President underlined this sentence.

At the same time, if Brezhnev believes a particular change in position is necessary, it appears he has the authority to persuade the Politburo to agree to it. In any case, situations could well arise where Brezhnev will say that he must check back with his colleagues. This may be a tactic, but it may also reflect the actual situation.

Typically Russian, when Brezhnev wants something, he will resort to the bearhug.⁸ He will be voluble in explaining how much in your own interest a certain position is; he may intimate that it took a great deal of effort to get his colleagues to agree to a concession; he may even brag that he overruled this or that bureaucratic interest group—he likes to poke fun at his Foreign Ministry, although in fact Gromyko and several of its members do a great deal of Brezhnev's backstopping. He will invite you to "improve" on his own efforts and tell you how much the history books will praise you for the effort. This was the ploy he tried on me when he handed over their draft of principles in U.S.-Soviet relations. He urged me to "strengthen" it, assuring me plaudits if I did so; on the other hand, historians would censure me if I weakened his draft.⁹

Again, typically Russian, when Brezhnev thinks he has made a major concession or breakthrough, he will get impatient to get the matter wrapped up.¹⁰ He may stall for days, but once he moves he will want things settled at once so as to take up the next subject. He almost certainly will not want to get involved in drafting exercises or the shaping of precise formulations himself, preferring to delegate this to his associates, probably Gromyko. (Brezhnev, the politician/party bureaucrat, has little in common with Gromyko, the expert/diplomat. He likes to tease him, à la Khrushchev, but like the latter, he obviously respects the durable Foreign Minister's talents and relies on him.)

Brezhnev will probably remind you of a tough and shrewd union boss, conscious of his position and his interests, alert to slights. He will be polite sometimes to the point of excessive warmth, including physical contact. He may lapse into orations, sometimes standing up to deliver them. He will be knowledgeable, but uninterested in detail (though his underlings will be extremely careful with fine print.) He may try to test you at some point with a vigorous and ideologically-

⁸ The President underlined this sentence.

⁹ See Document 134 for a record of this conversation. For the final text of the "Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" issued on May 29, 1972, at the summit, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 633–635.

¹⁰ The President underlined "when Brezhnev thinks he has made a major concession or breakthrough, he will get impatient to get the matter wrapped up."

tinged statement of his position, but he will let you do the same, though perhaps trying to get you off-stride by offering you tea and sandwiches when you break for interpretation.

He will try to flatter you, usually when he wants you to be “statesmanlike” and “generous”, and in fact he sometimes betrays an almost reverential view of “the President.” He will tell you that he wants you re-elected.

As he has gotten older, he has permitted himself to wonder aloud about his reputation. He wants a “good” image, although he probably does not mind in some respects the older image of a brutal man, and he wants to be seen as good for Russia in the history books.¹¹ He will talk about his family, being especially proud and fond of his granddaughter (married while I was in Moscow) who grew up in his house.

As with other Russians, the War remains an earthshaking experience for him. He has lately taken to having his role inflated in publicity. He is proud of his service, of having been a general, of being a veteran.¹² He knows something of the human disaster of war—one should credit him with genuine abhorrence of it, though, of course, he uses fear of war in others to obtain political ends.

He clearly enjoys power, telling me that in recent years he feels like he’s forty years old.¹³ He revels in the role of leading a great power and believes that great powers have certain privileges. Though he will never admit to the legitimacy of what we do in Vietnam, he is not without some sympathy for it. He certainly has no conscience pangs about what *he* did in Czechoslovakia.

One final aspect of the man; he deeply resents the Chinese. There is an ethnic element, a deepseated folk-suspicion and contempt of another people. He evidently finds them baffling and enigmatic. In private, at least he may appeal to the similarities that Russians and Americans have, compared to the Orientals. Some of the things he will say are, of course, intended to stir up one’s own resentments. As a political leader, he will do business with Peking when it suits his purposes. But the antagonism runs deep, fed no doubt by the knowledge that the Chinese regard him as a crude thug who has no right to claim Lenin’s or even Stalin’s inheritance.¹⁴

¹¹ The President underlined “he wants to be seen as good for Russia in the history books.”

¹² The President underlined “the War remains an earthshaking experience for him” as well as this sentence.

¹³ The President underlined “in recent years he feels like he’s forty years old” and wrote in the margin: “told his wife for the last five years [he] felt forty.”

¹⁴ The President underlined this sentence.

Chou and Brezhnev

The Chinese and Russian styles, as exemplified by Chou En-lai and Leonid Brezhnev, make for a fascinating contrast.

Chou is Mandarin—cool; Brezhnev is Slavic—warm. Chou is subtle, refined and indirect. Brezhnev is obvious, elemental and head-on. The Chinese has an intellect at home in universities and drawing rooms.¹⁵ The Russian has the ruthless intelligence of a labor leader earned from brawls on the docks. Chou's mind and body are elegant and disciplined, a coiled spring. Brezhnev is stocky and spontaneous, restless and fidgety.

Both men have been brutal when necessary, but Chou's charm makes you forget this quality, while Brezhnev's heavy-handedness constantly recalls it. The one is sophisticated and proper; the other gruff and gregarious. Chou masks his cunning with his polished demeanor. Brezhnev doesn't mind reminding you of his shrewdness. Chou, while charismatic and cordial, keeps his distance, stays cool and hides his emotions. Brezhnev with his own animal magnetism, crowds you, easily changes temperature, and wears his emotions openly.

Indeed, one can say that the contrasting styles of Chou and Brezhnev are reflected in Chinese and Russian food. Chinese cuisine is delicate, meticulous and infinitely varied. Russian meals are heavy, straight forward, predictable. You eat Chinese food gracefully with chopsticks; you could eat most Russian food with your hands. One walks away from a Chinese meal satisfied but not satiated, and looking forward to your next experience. After a Russian meal one is stuffed, if not logy.¹⁶

All of this suggests that dealing with the Russians is less pleasurable than with the Chinese, depending on one's taste. *It should not suggest, however, that it is any less challenging.*

Brezhnev and his colleagues will not have the place in history that Mao and Chou are assured. But they have survived their own long marches through savage infighting that takes place among Soviet leaders.¹⁷ They have clawed their way to the top and pushed aside (and put away) formidable men in the process. If the Chinese Communist leaders have been sustained in their struggles by their vision of the future, the Russian leaders have prevailed through tough jockeying and canny maneuvering. Mao and Chou may have matchless strategic vision; Brezhnev and his cohorts have clearly displayed great tactical skills.

¹⁵ The President underlined the previous three sentences.

¹⁶ The President marked this paragraph.

¹⁷ The President underlined this sentence.

Furthermore, Brezhnev and company lead a superpower, one equal in many respects to our own nation.¹⁸ They speak with the weight of current strategic equality, while the Chinese strength derives from a combination of their long past and their inevitable future.

Brezhnev has important business to do with you now. He cannot afford to show patience on some issues, like Chou can. On the West, he has put his personal stamp on détente efforts; the sinking of the German Treaties and a souring of U.S.-Soviet relations would almost certainly invite internal challenges to his leadership position. On the East, he faces deep historical and personal antagonism, the spectre of 800 million talented and dedicated people, a growing nuclear arsenal, ideological rivalry, and territorial disputes. Moscow has to get a grip on the Teutonic past so it can deal with a Mongolian future.

Given the stage of our bilateral relations and personal inclination, Chou could spend time with us on history and philosophy. Brezhnev will want to talk about concrete issues—the format of a European Security Conference, the major elements of a SALT agreement, the mines in Haiphong Harbor, the drawing of lines in the Middle East. Although he obviously won't know all the details like Gromyko, he will be well briefed and in command of his material, prepared to press you on specific questions. He will want results and agreements, and he will not hesitate to do some tactical elbowing in the process.

Finally, while Chou must invoke Mao's authority and on major issues actually consult, he is at present in complete operational command. Brezhnev, on the other hand, while the dominant leader, still must lean on his colleagues for assistance. For your visit, the two most important will probably be Kosygin and Gromyko. Some brief comments on them therefore are in order.

Kosygin

Kosygin is clearly subordinate to Brezhnev in power and authority; he will not be charged with conducting conclusive talks on sensitive issues, but he will speak on them. His forte is in the economic area, though he is fully informed on all other questions. Indeed he almost certainly masters the details more completely than Brezhnev.

Kosygin has the reputation of being more liberal than Brezhnev. This is a superficial judgment. He is a manager-type and therefore tends to be pragmatic on operational questions. He wants to get things done and gets impatient with interference from party watchdogs and bureaucrats. He is fascinated by technology and economic issues and for that reason favors trade and other exchanges with the West. But in

¹⁸ The President underlined this sentence.

other respects, Kosygin is rigid and orthodox. It is almost as though he compensates for his managerial pragmatism with an almost theological orthodoxy on ideological matters. Moreover, on questions such as Vietnam, Kosygin has often been far more polemical than Brezhnev.

In connection with Kosygin's greater polish, it is worth keeping in mind that he has been accustomed to function at the upper reaches of power for more than thirty years and has been exposed to many outside contacts. Brezhnev was still clawing his way to the top when Kosygin was among the top twenty or so leaders.

One of Kosygin's strengths has been that he probably never aspired to the very summit of power. (In any event he has never had the power base within the Party machine.) Successive leaders beginning with Stalin have valued his competence. This does not, of course, mean that he has not participated in Kremlin politics. Obviously, he played a role in the coup that overthrew Khrushchev and he probably would not hesitate to participate in one against Brezhnev, but not out of personal ambition. His past friction with Brezhnev was probably due in part to temperament, but more likely to Kosygin's impatience with clumsy Party interference in management of the country and to Brezhnev's irritation about Kosygin's circumvention of Party apparatchiks, including himself.

Kosygin is a very hard worker, despite various health problems. He is almost puritanical in his personal life and conservative in personal habits. His commitment to duty was illustrated when his wife was near death some years ago. Kosygin went ahead with his day's chores, standing on the tomb to review a Red Square parade. The message of her death reached him there. Since being widowed, he has, if anything, spent even more time at work.

Kosygin is shrewd in his perception of other people's character. While Brezhnev can instinctively play to people's weaknesses, hopes and ambitions, Kosygin does it with skillful calculation. He knew, for example, that Secretary Stans was greatly interested in certain commercial deals and Kosygin managed their conversations with that interest in mind. When Kosygin met Harriman in 1965, he shrewdly played on the latter's interest in various arms control agreements, holding out lush prospects if only we were reasonable on Vietnam. He sees innumerable American businessmen and has them salivating for the prospect of huge contracts, knowing that they will return to the U.S. to put the heat on the Administration to grant credits and export licenses.

Kosygin has the reputation of being dour. In fact, he can smile engagingly, where Brezhnev tends to leer.¹⁹ Where Brezhnev fidgets,

¹⁹ The President underlined the two previous sentences.

Kosygin is composed. Where Brezhnev may gesticulate expansively, Kosygin seems more contained. Where Brezhnev can be effusively friendly and crudely intimate, Kosygin is more reserved. But he is capable of warmth and occasionally unbends to make personal remarks. When he does so, it is with far more grace than Brezhnev.

Kosygin speaks with precision (his Russian is the purest, as is typical of Leningraders) although he can of course be ambiguous if the situation demands.²⁰ He has the respect of his colleagues; his subordinates, in particular, speak of him with considerable admiration.

Although Brezhnev's temperament is more voluble, Kosygin probably has more deepseated convictions. Kosygin is imbued with his ideology. He will mince no words when he states a position. And when he thinks and feels that justice is on his side he will speak with great vigor and bluntness. On foreign policy, this applies especially to Vietnam and Germany. However, he is unlikely to personalize such issues the way Brezhnev tends to do. And he will put his case in rational and concrete terms, where Brezhnev will let more subjective prejudices show through.

Gromyko

You have known Gromyko for many years. He is, of course, not on a par with Brezhnev or Kosygin in terms of power, responsibilities and stature. In their presence he will defer to them, though not with the kind of servility that lesser Soviet leaders often display to their senior comrades.

Above all, Gromyko is a skilled and knowledgeable foreign affairs expert. He is on top of the issues and knows them backward. Although the butt of their jokes—he often acts as straight man—he undoubtedly has the respect of the top leaders, Brezhnev especially.

He has no power to make decisions, but he frequently knows fall-backs already decided on by the top leaders (in contrast to other Soviet negotiators who know only the day's instructions) and hence can display a good deal of flexibility in negotiations.

Gromyko is very intelligent and a smart debater. He has a satirical humor, sometimes biting, though he can be as heavy-handed as any of the leaders if that happens to be the style of the moment.

If Brezhnev has the choice of an advisor in his meetings with you, he may well pick Gromyko as the man who not only has known you the longest but has known every President since Roosevelt and every Secretary of State since Hull.

²⁰ The President underlined this sentence.

233. Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, undated.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS

Background

For almost twenty years, the Soviets have been eager to get us to agree to some kind of a document codifying a relationship of “peaceful coexistence.” In 1956, they actually proposed a friendship treaty. They have approached many Western countries on this score and have also pressed for a NATO-Warsaw Pact non-aggression pact.

Among Soviet motives has figured Moscow’s desire to undermine the political and psychological basis of Western defense arrangements. They have also seen in these agreements a means of obtaining acceptance of the East European status quo. Their approaches to us over the years have undoubtedly reflected their desire to get us to recognize their status as a co-equal great power. Finally, the Russians are ritualistic; they like solemn declarations as visible results of meetings.

In the past, we fended off Soviet overtures precisely because we suspected Soviet motives and because we feared the very effects we thought the Soviets were trying to create.

Developments in the last two years have created new conditions which make some formal declaration on US-Soviet relations more feasible:

—When Dobrynin first raised this, you instructed me to insist that we would not consider anything that smacked of condominium or could be used by the Soviets against third powers.

—They have taken account of these admonitions and have agreed generally on a document that meets your concerns.

—Second, the Soviets have signed similar documents with other Western powers, notably a long and effusive Declaration of Principles with Pompidou, a protocol on consultation with Canada, a declaration with Turkey, and, of course, the German-Soviet treaties and accompanying memoranda.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President’s Trip Files, For the President’s Personal Briefcase, May 1972, Part 2. Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. No drafting information appears on the paper. A notation on the paper indicates the President saw it. According to a May 16 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, this was part of the first briefing book for the summit sent to the President. (Ibid., RG 59, S/P Files: Lot 77 D 112, Box 335, Lord Chronology, May, 1972)

—Third, we agreed to a communiqué with the Chinese² that incorporated principles of Sino-American relations; and this has intensified Soviet interest in equal treatment. Our tentative agreement on principles with Moscow, of course, is more concrete and reflects the more extensive development of bilateral relations.

Recent Developments

Earlier this year, we gave Dobrynin some paragraphs for inclusion in the summit communiqué³ wherein we would jointly state our desire for improved relations, agree to seek peaceful solutions to outstanding problems and to respect the independence and integrity of third countries, jointly undertake to exercise restraint in crises and to respect each other's interest and agree to promote practical cooperation. The Soviets pressed harder than ever for a formal and somewhat more extensive document after they saw the communiqué at the end of your China trip, especially its references to peaceful coexistence.

In Moscow, Brezhnev gave us a draft and urged us to "strengthen" it.⁴ He was told that in general the document seemed sound but that we would propose some improvements. This was done before leaving Moscow. We made a counterproposal that introduced language (now points 2 and 3) that emphasizes the principle of mutual restraint and avoiding attempts to achieve unilateral advantages, and the principle of responsibility to discourage conflicts from arising. This may inhibit the Soviets somewhat, and at least we can claim this interpretation. And the principles may refute the Brezhnev doctrine. The resulting text is at Tab A.

The Soviets have a few changes they still wish to incorporate, in particular one which would refer to the responsibilities of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. Our approaches to the entire document have been that it could deal only with bilateral U.S.-Soviet relations and should in no way be used, even implicitly, to lecture or make invidious comments about others. (We obviously have to watch the Chinese angle.)

The Text

As you will note, the document now has a general preamble and twelve points. (The Soviets had wanted a thirteenth about ensuring the ability of our respective diplomatic establishments to function—a reference to harassments here. We rejected this as not consistent with the

² For text of the joint communiqué issued at Shanghai on February 27, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 20, 1972, pp. 435–438.

³ See Document 62.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 139 and footnote 4, Document 159.

forward-looking content and general spirit of the document and the Soviets readily dropped the point.)

The *first* points deal with peaceful coexistence in the nuclear age and the fact that ideological differences should be no obstacle to normal relations.

The *second* point deals with preventing dangerous situations, the need for mutual restraint and for avoiding attempts to obtain unilateral advantages; the need to recognize each other's security interests on the basis of equality, renunciation of force and the desirability of conducting negotiations in a spirit of reciprocity.

The *third* point—the only one still open—deals with out international responsibilities as UN members and includes language about the right of all countries to be free from external interference.

The *fourth and fifth points* indicate intent to widen the juridical basis of our relations and to consult including at the summit level.

The *sixth* point is a general one about promoting arms control agreements.

The *seventh* point is about increased commercial relations.

Points *eight, nine and ten* deal with improving various other bilateral relations.

The *eleventh* point renounces claims to special rights and advantages and reaffirms the sovereign equality of all states. (Here, the Soviets wanted language that implied that China had made such claims but I insisted on broader language without invidious connotations.) This point also affirms that the development of U.S.-Soviet relations are not directed against third countries.

The *final* point is the saving clause: the principles in the document do not affect any obligations with respect to other countries which we or the Soviets previously assumed.

The Implications

Thus, the document avoids all connotations of condominium⁵ or aspersions against others. It embodies points you have repeatedly made about restraint and recognition of interests. They are all desirable points from our standpoint to get the Soviets to agree to, even on paper; and they are a considerable improvement over documents signed by France and Canada.

The Soviets, for their part, would achieve their objective of having a document. They will no doubt make unilateral interpretations—

⁵ The President underlined the previous five words and wrote a question mark in the margin next to this sentence.

as we can also—and at some time or other accuse us of violating the terms. But this does not materially change the existing situation, since the Soviets already allege periodically that we are violating the UN Charter or the “norms” of international law. The Soviets no doubt will also derive the satisfaction of being recognized as a co-equal power, but this is hardly a concession by us, given the power balance and the conceptual basis of our foreign policy.⁶

Finally, we can plausibly argue that given the significant progress that has occurred and is projected in U.S.-Soviet relations in many specific areas, this document now is not simply verbiage and generalities: it provides a framework for an increasingly concrete and productive set of relationships and it provides a set of standards against which to measure our respective conduct in international affairs.

Talking Points

—you should confirm to Brezhnev that this document is consistent with the present stage of our relations and you therefore welcome it;

—we recognize that inevitably there will arise differing interpretations—it is in the nature of such an agreement—but in the spirit of the document we should try to minimize these;

—we should both view the document as embodying a set of standards by which we should measure our conduct; if over time we find that it should be revised or refined, we should do so;⁷

—if Brezhnev raises their version of the third point (assuming it still to be open at the time), you should take the position that we prefer not to make statements about the responsibilities of other countries but only about those of our two countries.⁸ (Brezhnev claims that the China communiqué mentioned “hegemony” and therefore was directed against the USSR and he may therefore claim you are being inconsistent. The problem can probably be resolved by a compromise draft and should not prove an obstacle.)

(*Note:* Brezhnev may propose that you and he *sign* the document. I have made no commitment on this because it would carry implications that this is some sort of a treaty. This creates problems with the

⁶ On the back of the previous page, the President wrote: “SALT = *Temporary Dangers* Condominium?—Sold out our allies?—Agreed to inferiority frozen. Agreed to permanent Soviet control of E. Europe (Brezhnev doctrine?) We must have a single standard. We can’t agree to free hand for Soviets in *our* background & no interference in theirs.”

⁷ The President underlined the previous two points.

⁸ The President underlined “you should take the position that we prefer not to make statements about the responsibilities of other countries but only about those of our two countries.”

allies and perhaps the Senate. But if Brezhnev presses, you could acquiesce and the consequences will be manageable.)⁹

Tab A¹⁰

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONS BETWEEN
THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS AND
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America,

Guided by their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and by a desire to strengthen peaceful relations with each other and to place these relations on the firmest possible basis,

Aware of the need to make every effort to remove the threat of nuclear war and to create conditions which promote the reduction of tensions in the world and the strengthening of universal security and international cooperation,

Believing that the improvement of Soviet-American relations and their mutually advantageous development in such areas as economic, science and culture, will meet these objectives and contribute to better mutual understanding and business-like cooperation, without in any way prejudicing the interests of third countries,

Conscious that these objectives reflect the interests of the peoples of both countries,

Have agreed as follows:

First. They will proceed from the common determination that in the nuclear age there is no alternative to conducting their mutual relations on the basis of peaceful coexistence. Differences in ideology and in the political¹¹ systems of the USSR and the USA are not obstacles to the bilateral development of normal relations based on the principles of sovereignty, equality, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual advantage.

Second. The USSR and the USA attach major importance to preventing the development of situations capable of causing a dangerous

⁹ The President wrote a question mark in the margin by this paragraph.

¹⁰ The text of this attachment is almost identical to the text of Basic Principles agreed to at the summit. There are only a few minor textual changes, such as putting the United States of America first, i.e., the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or U.S.-Soviet rather than Soviet-American. For the final text of the "Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" issued on May 29, 1972, at the summit, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 633–635.

¹¹ The summit text reads "social" rather than "political."

exacerbation of their relations. Therefore they will do their utmost to avoid military confrontations,¹² will always exercise restraint in their mutual relations, and will be prepared to negotiate and settle differences by peaceful means. Discussions and negotiations on outstanding issues will be conducted in a spirit of reciprocity, mutual accommodation, and mutual benefit.

Both sides recognize that efforts to obtain unilateral advantage at the expense of the other, directly or indirectly, are inconsistent with these objectives. The prerequisites for maintaining and strengthening peaceful relations between the USSR and the USA are the recognition of the security interests of the Parties, based on the principle of equality and the renunciation of the use or threat of force.

Third. As permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations, the United States and the USSR have special responsibilities to discourage conflicts from arising in any part of the world, to prevent the development of situations which could increase international tension, and to use their influence to promote the peaceful settlement of conflicts and of international issues generally. They believe that no country should be subjected to aggression and interference in its internal affairs.¹³

New Soviet Version

Third. On the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as on other countries that are permanent members of the UN Security Council rests the responsibility to do everything that depends on them so that there do not arise conflicts or situations which would serve to increase international tensions. In accordance with the above (this) they will make their contribution so that all countries will live in conditions of peace and security and will not be subject to interference (intervention) from outside in their internal affairs.¹⁴

Fourth. The USSR and the USA intend to widen the juridical basis of their mutual relations and to exert the necessary efforts so that bilateral agreements which they have concluded and multilateral treaties and agreements to which they are¹⁵ parties are faithfully implemented.

¹² The summit text here inserts: "and to prevent outbreak of nuclear war. They."

¹³ The President underlined this sentence.

¹⁴ The President wrote a question mark in the margin by this paragraph. The third point in the final text agreed to at the summit reads: "The USA and the USSR have a special responsibility, as do other countries which are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, to do everything in their power so that conflicts or situations will not arise which would serve to increase international tensions. Accordingly, they will seek to promote conditions in which all countries will live in peace and security and will not be subject to outside interference in their internal affairs."

¹⁵ The summit text here inserts "jointly."

Fifth. The USSR and the USA reaffirm their readiness to continue the practice of exchanging views on problems of mutual interest and, when necessary, to conduct such exchanges at the highest level, including meetings between leaders of the two countries.¹⁶

Sixth. The Parties will continue their efforts to limit armaments on a bilateral as well as on a multilateral basis. They will continue to make special efforts to limit strategic armaments. Whenever possible, they will conclude concrete agreements aimed at achieving these purposes.

The USSR and the USA regard as the ultimate objective of their efforts the achievement of general and complete disarmament and the establishment of an effective system of international security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.¹⁷

Seventh. The USSR and the USA regard commercial and economic ties as an important and necessary element in the strengthening of their bilateral relations and thus will actively promote the growth of such ties. They will facilitate cooperation between the relevant organizations and enterprises of the two countries and the conclusion of appropriate agreements and contracts, including long-term ones.

The two countries will contribute to the improvement of maritime and air communications between them.

Eighth. The two sides consider it timely and useful to develop mutual contacts and cooperation in the fields of science and technology. Where suitable, the USSR and the USA will conclude appropriate agreements dealing with concrete cooperation in these fields.

Ninth. The two sides reaffirm their intention to deepen cultural ties with one another and to encourage fuller familiarization with each other's cultural values. They will promote improved conditions for cultural exchanges and tourism.

Tenth. The USSR and the USA will seek to ensure that their ties and cooperation in all the above-mentioned fields and in any others in their mutual interest, are built on a firm and long-term basis. To give a permanent character to these efforts, they will establish in all fields where this is feasible joint commissions or other joint bodies.

Eleventh. The USSR and the USA make no claim for themselves and would not recognize the claims of anyone else to any special rights or advantages in world affairs. They recognize the sovereign equality of all states.

¹⁶ The summit text here inserts: "The two governments welcome and will facilitate an increase in productive contacts between representatives of the legislative bodies of the two countries."

¹⁷ The President wrote a question mark in the margin by this paragraph.

The development of Soviet-American relations is not directed against third countries and their interests.

Twelfth. The basic principles set forth herein¹⁸ . . . do not affect any obligations with respect to other countries earlier assumed by the USSR and the USA.

¹⁸ The summit text substitutes “in this document” for “herein.”

234. Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, undated.

SALT BACKGROUND

We are now close to final agreement on almost all the major SALT issues. Some issues may be kept open for ostensible resolution in Moscow, but as discussed with Brezhnev, they will be settled in the confidential channel before hand, so that the final outcome will be arranged by the time you arrive in Moscow. The basic agreements are along the lines explored with Dobrynin and are essentially the proposals made by Brezhnev to you.

Brezhnev indicated strongly that he desired these agreements to be signed during your stay in the USSR, and we are planning on a signing ceremony on Friday, May 26 in the Kremlin.

This paper includes highlights of the agreements, background on the negotiations and unresolved issues which will be cleared up this week.

I. The Current Agreements

We will conclude an ABM treaty and an Interim Agreement on Limiting Offensive Weapons. The following are the highlights:

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, For the President's Personal Briefcase, May 1972, Part 1. Secret; Exclusively Eyes Only. No drafting information appears on the paper. A notation on the paper indicates the President saw it. According to a May 16 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, this was part of the second briefing book for the summit sent to the President. (Ibid., RG 59, S/P Files: Lot 77 D 112, Box 335, Lord Chronology, May, 1972) The other part of the second briefing book, “Nuclear Non-Aggression Treaty,” is *ibid.*, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, For the President's Personal Briefcase, May 1972, Part 1.

A. The ABM Treaty

—Limits each side to one ABM site for defense of Moscow and Washington and one site for each side for the defense of an ICBM field.

—There will be a total of 200 ABM interceptors, 100 at each site.

—Radars will be limited to Modern ABM Radar Complexes (called MARCs) six for each side within a circle of 150 km radius around the national capitals; (MARCs are a circle of 3 km diameter, in which radars can be deployed; in practice they can accommodate about one large radar or a few smaller ones).

—For the ICBM defense fields there will be a total of twenty radars permitted; two of them will be the size of our two large radars deployed at Grand Forks; the other eighteen radars will be much smaller.

—The Soviet ICBM protection site will be East of the Urals. (The Soviets are balking at specifying this location, but Brezhnev told me they would inform us of where it would be.) It is important that their site not be in the populated area of European Russia. Our comparable site will be at Grand Forks.

—Other non-ABM radars that may be built in the future will be restricted, so as not to create a clandestine ABM potential but the precise limits are still under discussion.

—The treaty will be of unlimited duration with withdrawal rights if supreme interests are jeopardized, and on six months notice.

B. The Interim Offensive Agreement

—Limits ICBMs to those under construction or deployed at the time of signing the treaty or July 1. This will mean 1618 ICBMs for the USSR and 1054 for us. The USSR will field 313 large SS-9s, but they will be prohibited from converting other ICBM silos to accommodate the large SS-9 types. Other silos can be modified but not to a significant degree. Modernization is permitted.

—Submarine launched ballistic missiles will be limited along the lines of Brezhnev's proposal to me. For the Soviets there will be a ceiling of 950 submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) on "modern submarines." This means about 62 submarines. We will be limited to our current 41 submarines.²

—The further construction of submarines on the Soviet side, however, will be compensated in part by their dismantling of older land-based ICBMs; in this way they reach their ceiling of 950 but their level of ICBMs goes down.

² The President wrote a question mark in the margin next to this sentence.

—The Soviets will justify the unequal levels by counting 9 British and French submarines along with our 41, and reserving the right to increase their own level if this total is exceeded on the NATO side.

—We cannot acknowledge in any agreement that the British and French boats are relevant to SALT; nor can we accept the Soviet contention that the SLBM matter is only temporarily resolved because of our forward bases.³

—The Interim Agreement will run for five years (compared to the original Soviet proposal of 18 months), and both sides are committed to replacing it with a permanent and more comprehensive agreement.

—Both sides will abide by the obligations of the agreement once it is signed, though formally the implementation will await ratification of the ABM treaty.

II. *Pre-Summit Background*

We arrived at the present agreement in two stages: in the May 20 agreement,⁴ which broke the deadlock over a separate ABM treaty versus an offense-defense package, and the most recent private discussions which resolved the ABM level and achieved the inclusion of submarine limitations.

A. *The May 20 Understanding*

By late 1970 the negotiations were grinding to a halt over two issues: (1) the Soviets wanted a separate agreement on ABMs only, which would mean leaving aside their most dangerous and dynamic programs; (2) if offensive weapons were to be included, however, the Soviets insisted on a strict definition of “strategic” that would include all our aircraft based abroad and on carriers.

In these circumstances, if we were to resume progress, there had to be some compromise. The explorations with Dobrynin and your exchanges with Brezhnev gradually developed a new basis for discussions. On May 20 you announced the breakthrough that we would concentrate on an ABM agreement, but also, in parallel, negotiate for limitations on certain offensive weapons. This permitted the USSR to back away from its separate ABM proposals and drop the inclusion of forward based systems since the offensive agreements would be limited and temporary.

³ The President highlighted this paragraph.

⁴ On May 20, 1971, the President announced that the United States and Soviet Union had agreed to negotiate an agreement for the limitation of ABM systems and also an agreement limiting certain strategic offensive weapons. For text of the announcement, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1971*, p. 648.

B. The New Impasse May 1971–April 1972

The May 20 Agreement did not resolve the details of either the level of ABM or the scope of offensive controls. During the private discussions, however, the Soviets were put on notice that we would not be restricted to one ABM site in Washington. This would mean tearing down our site under construction in Grand Forks, while the Soviets merely kept their existing site in Moscow. In the confidential channel the likelihood that our proposals would include both ICBM limits and limits on submarine launched missiles had been signaled. The Soviets emphasized a freeze on ICBMs rather than limits on both ICBMs and submarines.

The negotiations began to deadlock. The Soviets insisted that if we protected our ICBM fields, then they should have an equal right to do so. Indeed, they went on to make a principle out of the question of strict equality (meaning identical ABM systems). Since we had no site for our national capital, working out pure symmetry became a tedious exercise. In any case, we ultimately came to the position that either side could choose between having 2 ICBM protection sites, or 1 ICBM site plus defense of the national capital (NCA). The Soviets countered with several proposals, all of which gave them an advantage. They claimed that since we could protect more ICBMs in one single field (about 150) than they could (their ICBM fields are smaller), they needed 2 or 3 ABM sites for ICBM defense, while we retained only one. Their reasoning that the number of ICBMs protected was the criterion was, of course, specious. The number of ABM interceptors and radars determine the capacity of the defense, not the area of protection.

The second impasse was over whether to include a limit on submarine launched ballistic missiles. At first, the Soviets claimed that this was outside the May 20 understanding, but they backed away from a confrontation on this. They argued instead that SLBMs required compensation because we could base them in forward areas and they could not. They also pointed out that we were initiating a new program of ULMs, while proposing to freeze the Soviet program.

To accommodate their concerns about freezing the number of submarines, we shifted to a limit on the number of missiles tubes, so that they could scrap older submarines and replace them with newer ones.⁵

With the summit in mind, and your trip to Peking approaching, Dobrynin began to explore in January two approaches: either the issue of SLBMs be set aside and resolved after the initial agreements, or that the limit be placed on the total number of missiles for submarines, with

⁵ The President highlighted this paragraph.

freedom to dismantle older land-based ICBMs and replace them with submarine launched missiles. (This was originally an American idea introduced in our early proposal in 1970, but not pursued in the context of a limited agreement.)⁶

As you instructed, it was emphasized to Dobrynin that our proposals were not subject to modification, and that our ABM position would ultimately depend on the resolution of the SLBM question. When negotiations resumed in March of this year, we tied the resolution of the ABM and SLBM issues together.

Dobrynin was told that we could introduce some flexibility in our ABM position if it appeared that the USSR could agree to the inclusion of SLBMs. Contrary to the general skepticism in Washington whether this linkage would work, Brezhnev in his letter in late March⁷ indicated that they would study our SLBM position. In the formal negotiations, however, they continued to balk.

On the ABM impasse, it was clear that we either had to concede more Soviet sites for ICBM protection or reconsider deploying our own defense of Washington. On a purely personal basis, Gerard Smith discussed the latter with his counterpart, and there was an indication of a willingness to move in this direction, but without commitment on the SLBM package. The Soviets obviously hoped to achieve the compromise on ABMs without making a concession on SLBMs.

C. *The Brezhnev Proposal*

The Soviets had indicated through the confidential channel that they were anxious to sign a SALT agreement in Moscow during your visit. Thus, in my meetings with Brezhnev,⁸ he made two new proposals that reflected discussions with Dobrynin and moved close to our basic positions.

—First he proposed that we each have two ABM sites; one for defense of the national capital, and the other for ICBM defense; Brezhnev emphasized he had retreated from the proposition that they had to defend an equal number of ICBMs and needed more ABM sites than we did.

—Second, they proposed a numerical ceiling on SLBMs at our present level for the US, and 950 SLBMs on “modern submarines” for the USSR. This would involve continuing construction of Soviet submarines up to about 62 for the USSR. He justified the differential by

⁶ See Document 39. Kissinger describes his January 21 meeting with Dobrynin in *White House Years*, pp. 1126–1127.

⁷ See Document 72.

⁸ See Documents 139 and 160. Kissinger discusses the SALT proposals put forth by Brezhnev during his trip to Moscow in *White House Years*, pp. 1148–1150.

pointing out that the US, Britain and France combined would have a combined total of 50 submarines. He implied the differential between our 50 and their 62 would be achieved by dismantling older land-based ICBMs.

As you instructed, Brezhnev was told that these proposals were generally constructive, but the ABM issue would be reviewed, and that we had problems with the differential in submarines. The concept of replacing old land-based with new submarine launched missiles was clarified, and it was left that our delegation would work out the numbers. On the introduction of the British and French that while they could make such a justification unilaterally, our position was that we had no right to tell our Allies what to do; we could negotiate the numbers but not accept the Soviets rationale. We left it that the figures were agreed.

These were the proposals discussed at the NSC meeting,⁹ and are the underlying positions that constitute the current agreements.

III. *Unresolved Issues*

A. *Limits on Other Large Phased-Array Radars (OLPARs)*

The US has consistently sought some controls over OLPARs since enough of these large radars scattered throughout the Soviet Union could be clandestine base for a territorial defense ABM system. The Soviets agreed to general but vague provisions which prohibit giving these radars ABM capabilities or testing them in an ABM mode.

The US further sought some control over future construction of these radars. *The latest US proposal was that, except for verification or space tracking purposes, neither side could build an OLPAR larger than our Safeguard missile site radar (MSR).*

—This is a highly technical problem. The measurement criteria used is the product of the area of the radar's antenna (i.e., the aperture) and the radar's power. The power-aperture of our MSR is just less than 3 million (3×10^6) watt-meters squared.

—The two exceptions—verification or space tracking—are because radars are needed in small numbers for such purposes and because radars for these purposes are the easiest to distinguish from ABM radars.

The Soviets apparently accepted this proposal on April 22.¹⁰ There was an ambiguity in their language, but there were indications that this would not be a problem.

⁹ For a record of the May 8 NSC meeting, see Document 204. For Kissinger's recollection of the meeting, see *White House Years*, pp. 1184–1185.

¹⁰ See Document 139.

About a week later, the Soviets discovered that there was a “small problem” of defining power-aperture levels. The Soviets claimed that they thought the MSR had a power-aperture of 50 million (5×10^7) watt-meters squared, or about 15–20 times larger than it is. In fact, at least two Soviets had been told the MSR’s correct size in January.

It is unclear whether the Soviets have changed their mind on accepting our proposal, or whether they had all the time intended to look conciliatory initially and then to claim a significant misunderstanding over levels.

We cannot accept the Soviet standard since it is so high as to be almost meaningless. Moreover, it implicitly accepts radars of a “smaller” size. If we are unable to achieve an acceptable compromise, we may drop the disputed provision on definitions and rely on the more general exclusion of large radars except for agreed purposes.

B. Location of the ICBM Defense Area

There is some dispute, however, over where the Soviets can deploy their ICBM defense area. (The US site will obviously be at Grand Forks, where construction is already well along.)

The Soviets have ICBM fields scattered throughout much of their country. *We have strongly insisted the ICBM defense area be somewhat east of the Urals, since this is a relatively unpopulated area, thereby reducing concern over the system providing extensive population defense. This is an altogether reasonable request since all six of the Soviet SS-9 fields are east of the Urals.*

The Soviets have balked at specifying now where their ICBM defense would be. We will withhold final agreement on radars until we are certain of the Soviet location.

C. SLBM Limitation

The remaining issues with the language of the SLBM provisions are:

1. *Whether each additional SLBM which is constructed must replace on a one-for-one basis old ICBM or SLBMs.* Our current position at Helsinki requires this; it keeps the aggregate total of missile launchers constant. The Brezhnev proposal was vague. Now the Soviets more or less agree, but are fuzzing the question of their starting base, i.e., how many “modern” SLBMs they have at this point. They are saying 48 (which we think means their current 37 plus 9) to compensate for Britain and France.

2. *How the British and French boats will be handled.* The Brezhnev proposal specifically referred to the Allies as one reason for the Soviets getting a numerical edge. Further, the Soviets claimed the right to build one more submarine (beyond 62) for each additional one the Allies built.

We resist any reference to our NATO Allies in the Interim Agreement. The Allies would be upset if they were unknowingly made a part of the bilateral agreement.

D. Including Mobile ICBMs

We seek to include all ICBM launchers in the interim freeze, including mobile ICBMs. Since neither side has deployed mobile systems, this would effectively ban their deployment. In contrast, the Soviets argue that mobile ICBMs should be negotiated in the follow-on talks. This is important but not crucial in the short term.

If we are unable to include mobiles in the interim freeze (i.e., effectively ban them), we may:

(1) Agree that there is no decision one way or another on banning mobiles, but obtain a parallel understanding that the Soviets would not deploy mobiles for a few years.

(2) Allow replacement of old ICBMs by mobile ICBMs. This would allow deployment, but halt an increase in the overall number of Soviet ICBMs.

(3) A unilateral statement by the US that we would expect both sides to consult on the number of mobiles, etc., before either side started deployments.

E. Definition of "Light" versus "Heavy" ICBMs

While the Soviets have agreed not to convert "light" ICBMs to "heavy" ICBMs, they have balked at agreeing to a definition of the dividing line between the two. We proposed that the line be: no larger than the Soviet SS-11, or no larger than 70 cubic meters.

—The SS-11 is about 67 cubic meters and the SS-9 is about 220 m³. Some definition is likely in the next few days.

Attachment

SALT

I. The Soviet Perspective

With the signing of initial SALT agreements, the ABM treaty and the interim offensive agreement, the Soviet leaders may feel they have accomplished their minimal *strategic objective*. They have conceded limits on their most dynamic offensive force, ICBMs and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) as the price for forestalling a round of competition in defensive systems. Regardless of how the Safeguard ABM looked to critics in this country, to the Soviets it loomed as the potential for a heavy defense of the US territory. It was a possible fore-runner, together with our MIRVs and improvement of our missile accuracies, of a threat of a US first strike capability. This has been their driving strategic concern in SALT.

SALT also has a definite political character for the Soviets. It marks, in their view, a definitive achievement of equal status with the US. Beyond this symbolism SALT can be exploited, along with other political developments in Europe to advance the Soviet effort to create a more stable relationship with their Western adversaries at a time when China is becoming their most urgent, intractable problem. Indeed, the demonstration of a Superpower relationship exploitable against *China*, was an underlying Soviet motive in the past negotiations, and *is an incentive for keeping the dialogue alive in the future.*

Indeed, the Soviets will now look to the second phase of SALT, and in Moscow will probably want to explore at least timing and some of their principal concerns.

—It is evident from their conduct of the negotiations that they intend *to make our forward bases a key issue.* Brezhnev indicated this. Though they set this aside in the May 20 understanding, they are free to raise it in the next SALT phase.

—Moreover, since the offensive agreement is for five years, the Soviets claim that it will have to be replaced with a permanent agreement that will deal with the entire strategic equation. In their interpretation, this means dealing with all weapons capable of striking the USSR (our aircraft abroad and our carrier aircraft).

A second issue in the Soviet view is translating the implied strategic stability of the SALT agreements into more political terms. Brezhnev has privately proposed *a nuclear non-aggression treaty.*¹¹ Though not directly related to the second phase of SALT, or proposed in that context, it would appear that this will be a priority Soviet aim.

There are two Soviet motives in such an agreement:

—It could undermine NATO strategy and doctrine if the principal Western nuclear power seemed committed to refrain from any use of nuclear weapons.

—As designed by the Soviets, the agreement could be turned against third countries (China) by implying a commitment to joint US-Soviet action to prevent the use of nuclear weapons by third powers.

Brezhnev has not gone into detail on either the second phase of SALT or the nuclear non-aggression treaty. But by raising our forward

¹¹ See Document 159. In his memoirs, Kissinger described Brezhnev “in an expansive mood,” asking to see him alone and suddenly introducing the idea of an “understanding” not to use nuclear weapons against each other, calling this a step of “immense significance” and a “peaceful bomb.” Kissinger commented that it would most certainly have been the latter, producing explosions in the NATO alliance, in China, and throughout the world, since it would have seemed either a US-Soviet condominium or an American abdication. He wrote that he “politely” turned the idea aside. In June 1973 the two sides agreed on what Kissinger called “a bland set of principles that had been systematically stripped of all implications harmful to our interests.” (*White House Years*, p. 1152)

bases in the Moscow discussions and submitting a draft non-aggression pact, it is clear that *he will use the summit to explore new US commitments* that could prove highly disruptive to the Western Alliance and be exploited by the Soviets against China.

Your Position

We have consistently warned the Soviets that we will not deal behind the backs of our Allies on strategic issues, nor bargain with their weapons systems or our own commitments to the Alliance. Moreover, we cannot accept the notion that our forward-based aircraft are “strategic” while the large Soviet arsenal of intermediate-range missiles are beyond the scope of SALT.

Yet it is inevitable that we will have to confront these questions.

Our objectives in the next phase of SALT, however, are quite different.

—The current agreements on offensive weapons limit numbers of submarines and ICBMs, but qualitative improvements such as MIRV-ing can proceed. Even though the large Soviet SS-9s are limited to 313, in time the Soviets can develop the combination of MIRVs, accuracy and warhead yields that will threaten our Minuteman ICBMs.

—With ABM systems now limited to low levels, we have no clear options to protect our land-based systems, other than transferring missile launchers to sea.

—*Our aim in the next phase of SALT, therefore, is to raise the question of reductions of the most threatening offensive forces* (the Soviet SS-9s). This was part of our original comprehensive proposal and the Soviets, early in SALT, acknowledged that reductions should be an ultimate goal.

In addition, we have the question of a *more permanent resolution of the level of offensive forces in all systems*.

—We have conceded in both ICBM and SLBM unequal numbers in the Soviet favor; since we had no active offensive programs stopping the current Soviet buildup was a key objective.

—Now, with some underlying stability created, we should deal with the disparity in numbers.

—But in arriving at new, preferably equal ceilings our concern will be to retain flexibility to build new submarines, especially if the threat to our land-based missiles grows.

We also have to face the question of *qualitative controls*.

—Both sides agreed to lay aside controls on MIRVs in the initial agreements. The Soviets had no interest in being frozen in a position of inferiority, since their MIRV program lagged far behind ours. However, we also had diametrically opposing approaches to limitations. Our analysis indicated that only by stopping all testing of MIRVs could we have confidence in a ban. The Soviets proposed to stop production, which we could not verify, but to allow testing to proceed.

—MIRVs thus may become a critical issue.

Finally, *there is the question of ABMs.*

—With ABMs limited to two sites, there will be pressures in this country for a total ban.

—The Soviets apparently will not give up their Moscow system in any case, but might want to reduce our deployments to one site in the follow-on talks. Judging from the remarks of their SALT delegation, they do not consider the ABM question entirely settled.

In sum, we have an interest in trying to build on the current agreements to establish some more permanent and viable limitations that reduce the threat of our forces. The Soviets may not share this interest. Indeed, they may see the next phase as an opportunity for exploitation.

Your general position in Moscow should be

—to emphasize the importance of what has been accomplished already in terms of creating a more stable strategic balance and in terms of contributing to a better political relationship;¹²

—to indicate that *the tasks are not complete*, and the second round could be more important because we need to translate current gains into more permanent arrangements;

—to *leave open commitments to any particular substantive approach* in the next phase;

—to indicate that we will be examining the questions of the *overall ceiling on offensive forces, and some reductions*;¹³

—to suggest that for the time being *ABMs are settled* and the next phase should concentrate on offensive limits.

As for the timing, we do not regard it as urgent, since both governments need to ensure the ratification of the treaty and other agreements, and to set up the mechanism for implementation.

—we contemplate the fall as the time for resuming negotiations;

—this permits time to consider new comprehensive plans;

—the confidential channels will be open however if the Soviets wish to pursue SALT in the interim.¹⁴

Interpretations of the Current Agreements

Both of the current agreements provide the standard clause for withdrawal if supreme interests are jeopardized. Such circumstances of course, cannot be precisely defined in advance, but it is clear that *if the Soviets were now to embark on a concerted program that would jeopardize the survivability of our strategic retaliatory forces, we would have to invoke this clause.*

In Moscow, at an appropriate point in the private discussions you may want to clarify our position so that the Soviets will be on notice;

¹² The President highlighted this point.

¹³ The President highlighted this point.

¹⁴ The President highlighted the previous three points.

moreover, our interpretation may play a role in the Congressional debates on the treaty ratification.¹⁵

You might say:

—In reaching these agreements both sides expect to contribute to strategic stability;

—If these expectations are not fulfilled and the threat to the strategic retaliatory forces of the US substantially increases, you would consider this jeopardizing our supreme interests;¹⁶

—In such a case, we could withdraw from the current agreements under the supreme interests clause;

—You wanted this to be clearly understood, since this interpretation will be given to the Congress as the question arises during Congressional hearings.¹⁷

¹⁵ The President highlighted this point.

¹⁶ The President highlighted the previous two points.

¹⁷ The President highlighted this point.

235. Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, undated.

VIETNAM

I. The Soviet Perception

The April conversations with Brezhnev in Moscow, subsequent developments in Paris, and the Soviet reactions to your May 8 decisions, all provide considerable evidence on how they see their interests affected by Vietnam and about the influence they have, or do not have, in Hanoi. Their conduct in recent weeks has been ambivalent and contradictory, reflecting the predicament that they have largely caused for themselves.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, For the President's Personal Briefcase, May 1972, Part 1. Secret; Exclusively Eyes Only. A notation on the paper indicates the President saw it. According to a May 16 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, this was part of the fourth briefing book for the summit sent to the President. (Ibid., RG 59, S/P Files: Lot 77 D 112, Box 335, Lord Chronology, May, 1972)

Moscow has played a generally irresponsible game on Indochina throughout the years of the conflict. The Soviets clearly have seen Vietnam as a tremendous drain on our resources and our attention. At relatively little cost to them, they have helped to fuel a war that for years preoccupied us while they could pursue their strategic buildup and global influence.

The Soviets have supported Hanoi for other reasons over the past seven years. They have been engaged in a contest with Peking to reestablish Soviet credentials as the steadfast supporters of national liberation. Brezhnev accused China of wanting to use Vietnam to disrupt the Summit in Moscow, and he implied the Chinese had this kind of influence in Hanoi. And to Moscow a Hanoi-dominated Indochina with influence in Southeast Asia would be a counter to China in the Asian power balance.

Yet, the Soviets almost from the start have also seen the potential dangers of the Vietnam war. The war always carried the potential of direct US-Soviet confrontation. And, short of that, there was the threat that the conflict would dominate their relations with the US and become linked to other issues. To preserve some of their own freedom of action and limit the risks of confrontation, they may have preferred negotiated solutions as long as the outcome met Hanoi's minimal terms and held promise of an eventual takeover by Communist forces.² They have played an occasional marginal role in the negotiating process, mostly on procedural issues and obviously never willing to really squeeze their ally. At the same time, in order to compete with China and to keep us tied down, the Soviets have provided arms that enabled the North Vietnamese to continue the struggle and to escalate it.

There was always an inherent incompatibility in these Soviet objectives. Soviet attempts to play both sides of the issues finally brought them to the crisis of the last month. *They are dangling from the horns of their self-made dilemma:*

—On the one hand, the Soviets were acutely aware that the North Vietnamese offensive might jeopardize the summit. Brezhnev's letters in April reflected this concern.³ Their request for me to come to Moscow was an attempt to guarantee the summit by arranging new private talks with Le Duc Tho.⁴ The North Vietnamese rejection of the suggestion that I meet with Le Duc Tho in Moscow, however, was a rebuff to Soviet intervention (in rather insolent language), and Brezhnev spent considerable time with me trying to solve the procedural problems.

² The President underlined this sentence.

³ See Documents 107 and 110.

⁴ The President underlined this sentence.

—Brezhnev obviously hoped that the resumption of private meetings would inhibit us from further action and have a correspondingly debilitating effect on the GVN anti-communist fabric.

—The effort to move back onto a negotiating track was reinforced by Brezhnev's attempt to disclaim any responsibility for DRV war planning and to minimize the impact of Soviet supplies. He claimed that they had never been asked to participate in planning DRV strategy and that Soviet supplies were limited in types of weapons.⁵ He offered to show me a recent list of Soviet equipment, but then withheld the document.

—The Soviet blame China for their dilemma. In private, Brezhnev asserted that Chou En-lai visited Hanoi to call off the offensive before your trip to China and then, afterward, returned to Hanoi to ensure that the offensive would disrupt the Moscow summit. (This is reminiscent of Dobrynin's claim last January that Chou En-lai, in effect, broke up the private talks with Le Duc Tho last year.)⁶

—Brezhnev recommended—as a Soviet suggestion only—a standstill ceasefire as the most feasible, immediate solution. This was before the North Vietnamese had captured Quang Tri, and the battle took a turn for the worse for the GVN at the end of April and early May.

—As reported to you after the April trip,⁷ the Soviets did not commit themselves to put pressures on Hanoi either for deescalation or a final settlement. They did transmit our procedural proposal to resume the plenaries and private talks and said they would also convey our substantive approach at the secret meeting, i.e., deescalation and a return to the status quo ante March 30.

—On May 2, as you know, we met with complete stonewalling from Le Duc Tho.⁸

The upshot of the meetings in Moscow and Paris strongly suggests that the Soviet influence in Hanoi has been limited, or at least they have been unwilling to apply full leverage to date. There is probably some bitterness over the Soviet role, as the arrogant tone of Hanoi's April message to Brezhnev turning down a US–NVN meeting in Moscow and Le Duc Tho on May 2 made clear. As for the timing of the North Vietnamese offensive, Moscow clearly is not happy with it and would not have wanted it to jeopardize the summit. However, their massive supplies to Hanoi still makes them accountable.

⁵ The President underlined this sentence and heavily underlined most of the rest of the paper.

⁶ See Document 39.

⁷ See Document 169.

⁸ See Document 183.

Reaction to the Mining

Your decisive actions of May 8, coupled in your speech⁹ with the promising vistas for US-Soviet relations, have so far produced two principal reactions from Moscow: restraint concerning our military moves and an apparent willingness to get involved in the negotiating process.

The background of Soviet frustration with Hanoi and profound suspicion that China was exploiting Vietnam to destroy our relations with Moscow, helped to shape the Soviet reaction to the mining.

As a result of the April conversations in Moscow, the Soviets were on notice that we would not engage in fruitless discussions with Le Duc Tho, but would move massively to protect our interests. I made clear that if there were no progress at the May 2 meeting, you would have to move decisively and also turn to the right for domestic support. At one point Brezhnev seemed to understand this and he did not contest the principle that Great Powers must protect their interests.

Your letter to Brezhnev in the wake of the failure of the Paris talks reinforced this point, and his reply,¹⁰ though more testy about accepting any responsibility, indicated that Moscow's first concern was the effect on the summit.

When finally confronted with your actions of May 8 and the choice you posed both in your speech and in your private letter to Brezhnev, the Politburo faced an agonizing decision. By accepting me in Moscow and publicizing the fact, and by continuing the dialogue with you on the summit and Vietnam, Brezhnev reinforced his personal commitment to a successful meeting. As he said in Moscow in April, only China would gain from a failure of the Moscow meetings. Moreover, the turn of events in Bonn—with the treaty ratification suspended—must have added weight to the arguments for a restrained Soviet reaction.

The Soviets had to make a basic choice between preserving at least some semblance of a great power relationship with us, or sacrificing their Western policy to secure their position in Hanoi. They must have been greatly concerned that, given the effect of the mining and the consequent dependence on China for rail access, their position in Hanoi would be gradually undermined in any case.

As of now the Soviets have chosen to give priority to their Western policy. They have accepted certain humiliations: refusal to challenge our mining by military means, refusal to take the initiative in

⁹ See Document 208.

¹⁰ Documents 190 and 200.

postponing or cancelling your visit, and refusal to give Hanoi a clear commitment to maintain their supplies.

Moreover, after an ambiguous history in the negotiations, Moscow has now apparently been prompted by the threats posed by the North Vietnamese offensive and your mining decisions to take a more active diplomatic role.

Since your May 8 speech, the scenario has been as follows:

—*Concerning our military actions*, you are familiar with the relatively restrained TASS statements;¹¹ the Patolichev meeting; the ongoing technical and substantive preparations for the summit; and the private messages which, though tougher, have not laid your visit on the line.

—*Their May 11 and 12 private notes*,¹² however, could have certain ominous implications. While leaving the summit on, they reserve the option to disrupt it and US-Soviet relations generally. Both communications carry the implication that the test to be applied by Moscow is not only whether we attack Soviet ships in Haiphong but whether we somehow guarantee Soviet ships safe passage into and out of the port. They can pick their time on this second test, and it will most probably not be before your trip. They could press you hard on this in Moscow, however.¹³

—*Our private responses* have been that our orders are to prevent attacks against Soviet vessels and we will do our best to avoid damage to them. We have also pledged not to attack Hanoi or its vicinity during your visit abroad. However, major North Vietnamese escalation during this period would be viewed with the “utmost gravity.”

—*Concerning the negotiations, the Soviet May 14 note* proposing the unconditional resumption of plenary sessions in early June and parallel private talks,¹⁴ puts Moscow into the negotiating process. They claimed not to have talked to Hanoi on this ploy, but this seems doubtful since Xuan Thuy was in Moscow on May 13 and Le Duc Tho a couple of days earlier in Paris said the North Vietnamese were willing to resume public and private talks.¹⁵

—*Our May 15 response* stressed the need for a private meeting first (we proposed May 21) to make sure there would be progress before agreeing to resumption of the plenaries. We suggested a public announce-

¹¹ The President underlined “TASS statements”.

¹² See the attachment to Document 214 and footnote 4, Document 221.

¹³ The President wrote a checkmark in the margin next to the last two sentences.

¹⁴ See footnote 3, Document 224.

¹⁵ The President wrote “Talks—no unless guarantee of progress” in the margin next to this paragraph.

ment after the meeting to meet the Soviet need for public evidence of US–DRV negotiations prior to your own talks with the Soviet leaders.¹⁶

The current situation could change, of course, and the Soviets may see developments on the battlefield as weakening your position in Moscow. But on balance one must conclude that the Soviets in their reaction have put themselves in a weaker position by clearly signaling that Western policy is predominant and inserting themselves into the negotiating exchanges.

One brief note as regards the DRV perception. If the battle in the South proceeds inconclusively for the next three weeks, as it has thus far, then Hanoi will perceive your visit to Moscow as a severe political and psychological setback and very difficult to explain to the DRV people and cadre. Assuming no further Soviet or PRC measures to counter the actions you have taken, and taking into account the less than fully supportive official statements they have made thus far in response to Hanoi's May 11 appeal to its allies to "act resolutely," the fact of your visit could severely exacerbate already existing fears in Hanoi that DRV interests will be compromised by great power collusion.

II. Issues and Talking Points

A. Basic Approach

The Soviet line is likely to be acrimonious:

—They will have to protest bitterly against the mining and the dangers to Soviet life and ships. Although their chief concern is that bombing will result in Soviet casualties, they may also press the suggestion of our escorting Soviet ships through the mine fields.¹⁷

—They will strongly urge you—if not squeeze you—to lift the mining, without any concessions, perhaps with a vague indication that Hanoi might then negotiate your terms of May 8. Brezhnev has argued we did not give the private talks a chance.

—Brezhnev may also bear down on his idea of a simple ceasefire as the best approach—it should look more appealing to him on the ground now than in late April, but the mines in Haiphong obviously complicate the issue.

Your basic strategy is to keep Moscow enmeshed in the Vietnam problem by giving the impression that your actions are all but uncontrollable unless the war is brought to an early and honorable end. A measured approach would only lead the Soviet leaders to believe that they can continue their unhelpful course and still enjoy non-Vietnam fruits. You must

¹⁶ For information on the U.S. response on May 15, see footnote 2, Document 226.

¹⁷ The President underlined this clause and wrote a checkmark in the margin next to it.

convince them that you will see this crisis through, with determination on the military front and flexibility on the negotiating front.

Thus, your essential objectives are:

—Persuade the Soviet leadership that you are determined to keep the military pressures on until your May 8 conditions are met.

—Thereby engage Moscow—because of its concern over its other, broader interests—in helping to bring about a settlement.

—Specifically, to engender Soviet help in the separation of military issues (i.e. ceasefire, withdrawal, POWs) from political questions; and failing that, in finding a political solution within the framework of our January proposals (i.e. no overthrow of Thieu but rather a competitive process).¹⁸

—In short, to interweave the themes that: (1) you will not be deterred from your course until the conflict is ended, (2) you are willing to do business with Moscow on a wide range of issues, and (3) the major threat to these promising bilateral prospects is the war that continues only because of the unreasonable demands of their ally.

Your position with regard to negotiations will have to be tailored to whether there is a May 21 secret meeting in Paris and what transpires at it. In any event, *you should convey the following:*

—Your position of May 8 is firm and you are determined to persevere in this course.

—As for the Soviet role, we hope they can work for a positive resolution of the Vietnam problem, preferably by settling military issues alone, or alternatively with a reasonable political solution.

—Great Powers must move decisively when their interests are challenged, and the Soviets apparently have understood this.

—The Soviet Union must assume a responsibility, whenever they supply massive armaments, and they must be prepared to deal with the consequences when they fail to exercise such responsibility.¹⁹

—You could have easily linked Vietnam to all aspects of Soviet-American relations, and there is no doubt that the failure to achieve an honorable settlement clouds our relations with the USSR.

—But you have not sacrificed Soviet-American relations and the prospects for a new era, and the fact that you are in Moscow indicates the Soviets have analyzed the situation in the same way.²⁰

¹⁸ The President wrote a question mark in the margin next to this paragraph.

¹⁹ The President wrote “S Korea” in the margin next to this sentence.

²⁰ The President underlined this sentence and wrote an “X” in the margin next to it.

—The most productive course is to move on to those areas of continuing interest to Soviet-American relations because our course in Vietnam is set.

—The North Vietnamese offensive has clearly served to threaten the interests of major powers over issues that can no longer concern them.

—We should not let another small country—whose own legitimate interests can be met if it would leave something to history—destroy all the progress in US–Soviet relations that we have made and can make.

B. Specific Aspects

The Soviets are certain to raise the specific question of mining and will have explicit views of their own. On other Indochina issues they will likely be more general and simply echo support for the DRV negotiating position. For the purposes of this paper, therefore, except in the case of the mining, we outline the DRV position on specific negotiating issues rather than the Soviet.

1. The Interdiction of the Flow of Supplies to the DRV, Including the Mining of DRV Ports

a. Legality

Soviet Position: They will certainly attack the mining of the approaches to DRV ports as illegal, jeopardizing freedom of navigation and the high seas and endangering the security of Soviet and other vessels navigating on the shores of the DRV. They will insist that it be lifted without condition, and point to the dangerous consequences.

U.S. Position: The mining in which we have engaged is not illegal and none of the actions we have taken are designed to restrict freedom of navigation on the high seas. You will want to make the following points:

—Mining is not illegal and both sides have previously used it in the present conflict.

—The actions you have taken are entirely within the internal or territorial waters of North Vietnam. Their purpose is to interdict the delivery of supplies within such waters and you intend to take actions to prevent the landing of cargo.

—These actions were not directed against any third country nor have they in any way been designed to impede freedom of navigation on the high seas.

—There is no intention to threaten the security of foreign vessels and they were given ample time to vacate DRV ports before activation of the mines; they now leave or enter DRV ports at their own risk.

b. Interference with Civilian Cargoes, Foodstuffs, Medicines, etc.

Soviet Position: The Soviets argue that our measures deprive the DRV of the opportunity to receive aid for its people, foodstuffs and other supplies for its peaceful population.

U.S. Position: There is no way to differentiate between various types of cargo without taking measures interfering with third country shipping beyond North Vietnam's claimed territorial waters. *Your talking points on this issue are:*

—There was no other way of interdicting the delivery of supplies without taking measures interfering with third country shipping beyond North Vietnam's claimed territorial waters.

—Our purpose is not to subjugate or starve the DRV people but to stop the flow of military supplies and products essential to the pursuit of their aggression such as petroleum. Hanoi imported 390,000 tons of POL in 1971 and an estimated 152,000 tons in the first quarter of 1972, a jump of 50% from the 1971 rate.)

—If these actions bring some suffering to the DRV people, this flows directly as a consequence of the suffering they have chosen to inflict on South Vietnam. Since the beginning of their current invasion alone, they have caused more than 20,000 civilian casualties, rendered 700,000 people homeless and begun the systematic execution of GVN officials in areas temporarily under their control.

—All this hardship could end if Hanoi were to accept our reasonable peace terms.

2. *Negotiations* (Subject to modification if there is a May 21, 1972 secret meeting in Paris.)

a. *Cessation of Current U.S. Actions Against the DRV*

DRV Position: These actions must stop immediately and unconditionally. They are in violation of the 1954 Geneva Accords and the U.S. pledge in 1968 to unconditionally stop all acts of war against the DRV.

U.S. Position: When we stopped the bombing in 1968 it was made repeatedly and unmistakably clear to the DRV that in order for the bombing halt to continue, the following circumstances would have to obtain: (a) complete respect for the DMZ; (b) no rocket or shelling attacks against major South Vietnamese cities and (c) prompt and productive negotiations to include participation of the Republic of Vietnam. Our response to their invasion has been in self-defense against their violation of these understandings and the 1954 Accords.²¹ *Your talking points are:*

—You do not want to get into a sterile debate about circumstances leading to the current situation, except to say that their invasion is a flagrant violation of the Geneva Accords and the 1968 understandings and we are responding to that situation.²²

²¹ For information on the July 1954 Geneva Accords which ended the hostilities in Indochina and provided for a temporary partition of Vietnam pending a nationwide election in the summer of 1956, see *Foreign Relations, 1952–1954*, vol. XIII, Part 2, pp. 1859–1861 and *ibid.*, vol. XVI, pp. 1505–1546.

²² For the understanding that brought about the complete cessation of bombing on October 31, 1968, see *ibid.*, 1964–1968, vol. VII, Documents 161, 165, and 169.

—In view of their role as an occasional intermediary at that time, Soviet diplomats themselves can attest that the DRV understood perfectly well under what circumstances the 1968 bombing halt would continue.

—The actions you have ordered against the DRV will cease once all American prisoners of war held throughout Indochina are returned and an internationally supervised Indochina-wide ceasefire has begun.

b. *Withdrawals*

DRV Position: The U.S. must unconditionally set a specific terminal date for the withdrawal of all U.S. and allied troops, advisors, military personnel, weapons and war materials and those of other countries allied with the U.S. and dismantle all U.S. bases.

U.S. Position: The U.S. is prepared to withdraw all of its remaining forces in South Vietnam within four months from the implementation of an Indochina-wide ceasefire and the return of all U.S. prisoners. *Your talking points are:*

—We are prepared to withdraw our forces from South Vietnam and cease all acts of force throughout Indochina four months from the implementation of an Indochina-wide ceasefire and the return of all U.S. prisoners.

—We will not retain any U.S. or allied bases, but we will not dismantle any GVN basis.

—[The Soviets could conceivably raise the question of U.S. forces stationed outside of South Vietnam, e.g. Thailand and the 7th Fleet. We wish to retain maximum flexibility here for the purposes of keeping a retaliatory capability against ceasefire violations and because some of these forces serve a dual purpose related to our general force posture in Asia and other commitments there as well. If asked about this matter, *your talking points* would be:]²³

—We will not negotiate with Hanoi about our forces stationed outside South Vietnam. Obviously the activities of such forces against Communist military activities in Indochina will be halted as part of an internationally supervised ceasefire.

—Some of these forces could eventually be withdrawn once effective and viable guarantees have been established to ensure the status of Indochina.

c. *Internal South Vietnamese Political Matters*

DRV Position: The DRV demands as a precondition for talks with the Saigon administration (a) the resignation of President Thieu, (b) a change in Saigon's "war-like" policy, (c) setting free those persons arrested on "political" grounds, (d) disbanding Saigon's machine of "oppression and constraint," (e) an end to pacification, and (f) disbanding of "concentration camps."²⁴

²³ All brackets in the source text.

²⁴ The President wrote "What about Hanoi's warlike policy?" in the margin next to this paragraph.

After this has been accomplished, and before there is an end to the fighting, the Provisional Revolutionary Government will immediately discuss with the Saigon administration the formation of three segment government of National Concord to organize elections, elect a Constituent Assembly, work out a Constitution and set up a definitive government of South Vietnam.²⁵

U.S. Position: Given the other side's unreasonable political demands we believe a military settlement alone is the most practical course now. This would leave political matters to the Vietnamese themselves. As for the political issues, we believe in a solution which reflects the true balance of indigenous political forces in South Vietnam and our January 25 proposal was designed to provide the basis for achieving this. We are prepared to listen to reasonable counterproposals and will abide by any outcome of any political process agreed to by the GVN and other Vietnamese. We will not accept the dismemberment of the present GVN led by Thieu as a precondition of such discussions. *Your talking points are:*

—The DRV/PRG position poses unacceptable demands by insisting on the dismemberment of the present GVN as a precondition for talks leading to the settlement of internal political problems.

—In effect, the other side is asking that the organized anti-Communist structure be dismantled and the PRG be left as the only organized political force before internal political talks have begun or there is a ceasefire.

—We will not accept these preconditions; but we are prepared to listen to constructive counterproposals and we will abide by and endorse any political arrangement the GVN and PRG can work out between themselves.

—We believe the most rapid way to end the war is to settle military issues alone and leave the political questions to the Vietnamese themselves.

d. *Foreign Policy*

DRV Position: South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos should be neutral. [They exclude the DRV itself from this prescription.]

U.S. Position: All countries of Indochina should adopt a foreign policy consistent with the military provisions of the 1954 Geneva Accords. *Your talking points:*

—Once the fighting is settled, we are prepared to see a nonaligned Indochina. We are prepared to discuss these concepts concretely, e.g., no foreign bases or troops or alliances.

²⁵ The President wrote "North too?" in the margin next to this paragraph.

—This could include great power involvement. We could provide guarantees for whatever accords are reached including noninterference, and international supervision and restraint or limitation on arms shipments and resupply.

e. *International Supervision and Guarantees*

DRV Position: The DRV position simply states that there should be international supervision without further qualification. It also states that there should be an international guarantee for the fundamental national rights of the Indochinese peoples, the neutrality of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and lasting peace in the area. It is quite evident, however, both from the sequence of the DRV's negotiating points and its rather deeply entrenched view that the war must in the first instance be settled between the parties directly involved in the conflict, that they do not visualize a strong external supervisory or guarantee mechanism. Their clearly preferred course is to simply accomplish their objectives, perhaps then allowing an international body to exercise perfunctory supervisory and guarantee functions.

U.S. Position: Our position is that there should be international guarantees of the military aspects of whatever agreement is reached, including the cease-fire and its provisions, the release of prisoners of war, the withdrawal of outside forces from Indochina and the implementation of the principle that all armed forces of the countries of Indochina must remain within their national frontiers. We also take the position that there will be an international guarantee for the status of all the countries in Indochina and we are prepared to participate in an international conference for this and other appropriate purposes.

The Soviets may raise the question of an international conference since, as Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference, they have been approached by the UK, the other Co-Chairman, on this subject. It is doubtful at this stage that any useful purpose could be served by pressing for an international conference since the *DRV* is so likely to *reject* the concept at least until we are much closer to a settlement. They have been consistent in their insistence that the war must be settled directly with us. Moreover, until the *DRV* demonstrates to us that it has something positive and concrete to offer, agreement with the Soviets to hold a broader conference would simply open the prospect of another inconclusive negotiating forum. *Your talking points are:*

—We will insist on international supervision of any military settlement, particularly the cease-fire provisions and the return of POW's. We believe that in the first instance ceasefire modalities must be negotiated directly with the *DRV*, leaving the international aspects for later resolution.

—As regards a reconvening of the Geneva Conference, we are not opposed in principle but do not believe it would serve any useful purpose at this time and doubt the DRV would agree to one at this juncture.

—Eventually, we would favor a conference of this type to arrange for international guarantees for the status of Indochina.

236. Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, undated.

CHINA

I. The Soviet Perspective

The Chinese spectre and your initiative toward the PRC haunt Moscow and its foreign policy. Such elements as the USSR's European moves, its bilateral relations with us, and its attitude toward Indochina are inextricably bound up with the bitter Sino-Soviet rivalry. Thus, a brief look at this feud is in order.

The Sino-Soviet Dispute. Moscow's dispute with Peking began over differing *ideological interpretations* of Marxist-Leninist dogma. The major issues have included:

—whether there could be “different roads to Socialism” (the Chinese position) or only a single road through Moscow (the Russian position);

—whether there had to be revolutionary bloodshed in achieving the “victory of socialism” (the Chinese position) or a “peaceful transition” (the Russian position); and

—whether there could be relatively peaceful state-to-state relations with the “imperialists,” particularly the U.S., pending the “victory of socialism.” (The Russians said there could be, while, ironically, the original Chinese stand on relations with the U.S. was that a “firm line must be drawn between the enemy and ourselves.”)

This ideological dispute turned into something far more complex, and with distinct *nationalistic overtones*, when Khrushchev attempted

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, For the President's Personal Briefcase, May 1972, Part 1. Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. A notation on the paper indicates the President saw it. According to a May 16 memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, this was part of the fourth briefing book for the summit sent to the President. (Ibid., RG 59, S/P Files: Lot 77 D 112, Box 335, Lord Chronology, May, 1972)

to force the Chinese back onto the “correct” Soviet ideological line by imposing sanctions. In 1959 he tore up an agreement on Soviet help to China in developing nuclear weapons; in 1960 he withdrew all Soviet technical advisers from China and abrogated all Soviet economic aid agreements. The Chinese, as you know, neither forgot nor forgave.

Infusing the other elements in the dispute have been the *personal antipathies* between the top Soviet leaders and Mao Tse-tung. Khrushchev greatly offended Mao in February 1956 by denigrating Stalin without informing Mao first; the latter regarded himself as being more senior in the Communist movement than Khrushchev, and as someone who certainly should have been consulted on such a major move.² Khrushchev’s 1959 and 1960 termination of aid, noted above, deepened the personal split. The intense Sino-Soviet polemic which developed in 1963 following the Partial Test Ban Treaty had many elements of a personal Khrushchev–Mao Tse-tung diatribe.

The replacement of Khrushchev in 1964 by the present Soviet leadership brought no change in Peking’s attitude. After waiting a while to see what would happen, the Chinese (probably Mao in particular) took the line that these leaders were actually worse than Khrushchev in terms of ideological deviationism although they were much more clever.³

From 1963 to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1968 the Chinese set out to undermine Soviet pretensions to leadership of the world Communist movement by supporting anti-Soviet factions, leaders, and splinter parties everywhere. In addition, they challenged the Soviets for influence in many non-Communist areas of the world, e.g., in the Middle East and Africa. Sino-Soviet rivalry literally extended worldwide.

As China went through the Cultural Revolution period, the attention of its leaders shifted away somewhat from the dispute with the USSR towards internal political matters. Just as China was emerging from the Cultural Revolution, however, the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia, bringing about a renewed Chinese ideological onslaught on Moscow. The Chinese saw in the Soviet moves against a deviationist state to restore it to orthodoxy the makings of a dress rehearsal. The Soviets were no longer merely “modern revisionists” in Chinese eyes; they also became “social imperialists” and the “new Tsars”—people who were certainly no better than the “imperialists,” and perhaps a whole lot worse.⁴

² The President underlined “denigrating Stalin” and “Mao” as well as the second half of this sentence.

³ The President underlined the portion beginning with “the Chinese” in the last sentence.

⁴ The President underlined “the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia” as well as the last sentence in this paragraph.

Other major developments also stemmed from the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia: the heating up of the Sino-Soviet border dispute,⁵ including outright military clashes; and the subsequent Chinese indications of receptivity to improved Sino-US relations.

These developments clearly weigh very heavily on the Soviet leaders. There has been an extensive Soviet military build-up in Mongolia and on the Sino-Soviet frontier. Since 1965 they have tripled their ground forces opposite China and the build-up is continuing. The pattern suggests that they intend eventually to have 42 to 48 divisions and close to 1,100 aircraft opposite China, or some 700,000 troops. Moscow may have even contemplated a surgical strike against Chinese nuclear centers in the fall of 1969. And, Soviet paranoia over the possibility of Sino-US "collusion" constantly has been very much in evidence.

It is therefore evident that the Soviets believe they have an intractable, long-term problem in dealing with China, an ideological quarrel, a competition for influence in various parts of the world, and a nationalistic territorial dispute with distinct military overtones. The possibility of US-Chinese collaboration against the USSR makes the problem all the more serious. Emotionalism regarding China runs very high privately in Moscow; the Soviets might be said to have something of a "yellow peril" psychosis.⁶

Moscow's present course for handling China is to try to cool the most pressing source of tension, the border dispute, and to wait for the death of Mao Tse-tung. The Soviet theory is that there are many Chinese who would favor a rapprochement with the USSR but are terrorized by Mao.⁷ Once Mao dies, the theory goes, these people can come into positions of authority and bring about a favorable change in Chinese policy. In the meantime, great tension remains and the chances of the U.S. in some way trying to capitalize on developments cannot be discounted.

(Incidentally, the Soviet role, if any, remains obscure in the alleged plot against Mao by his former heir-apparent Lin Piao.⁸ The fact that the aircraft carrying the fleeing plotters out of China was headed for the USSR, inevitably injected the USSR into this obscure episode. But there is no evidence either way that Moscow was actually involved in the plot.)

Thus, in agreeing to and carrying through with the Moscow meeting with you, the Soviets are in part seeking to assure themselves that

⁵ The President underlined "Sino-Soviet border dispute."

⁶ The President underlined the second part of this compound sentence.

⁷ The President underlined the previous two sentences.

⁸ The President underlined this sentence.

we are not trying to take advantage of the Sino-Soviet dispute for anti-Soviet purposes. They are also clearly anxious to try to isolate China. (This is reflected as well in their support of India, their budding flirtation with Japan, their heavy arming of North Vietnam.)⁹ The Russian leaders also want to show the world and us that it is in Moscow, not Peking, that one reaches concrete bilateral agreements and transacts major substantive business. And they have continually sought—and will seek in Moscow—to engage us in agreements that have an anti-Chinese coloration. This lay behind their attempt to negotiate an agreement against unprovoked attacks from third countries and is one of their motives in pushing a nuclear nonaggression pact now.

We, in turn, have successfully countered this ploy by refusing agreements that could be aimed at third countries, keeping the Chinese fully informed, and promising them equal treatment.

Our Opening with China. Against this background of the Sino-Soviet dispute, many experts, in the government and outside, warned us that a dramatic move toward China would jeopardize our relations with Russia. To date, just the opposite has happened, thanks in part to our meticulous handling of the triangular relationship.

In the first half of your Administration, while we were taking limited steps toward the PRC in our public rhetoric and trade/travel regulations, our relations with Moscow fluctuated. There was general progress until the summer of 1970, and then we went through the crunchy phase—the violations of the Mideast ceasefire, the Jordanian crisis, Cienfuegos, some Berlin harassments, and Soviet attempts at differentiated détente in Europe. Our firm responses, the choices you posed to Moscow in your United Nations speech¹⁰ and elsewhere, and your private initiatives with Brezhnev at the beginning of 1971 began to move us ahead. We began to shape a possible summit and there was the May 20 breakthrough on SALT (which came a month after Chou invited our table tennis team to the PRC).¹¹

The July 15, 1971 announcement of your trip to Peking, rather than setting back this gathering momentum with Moscow, had instead a very positive and rapid impact. In short order, we achieved a Berlin accord, agreements on accidental war/hot line, the productive Gromyko visit

⁹ The President underlined this sentence.

¹⁰ For text of Nixon's address to the UN General Assembly on October 23, 1970, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 926–932.

¹¹ On May 20, 1971, the President announced that the United States and Soviet Union had agreed to negotiate agreements for the limitation of ABM systems and limiting certain strategic offensive weapons. For text of the announcement, see *ibid.*, 1971, p. 648. The President underlined the last two sentences of this paragraph.

here, and the October announcement of the Moscow summit.¹² Ever since then, the South Asian crisis notwithstanding, our various negotiations with Moscow have moved forward in parallel with the preparations and execution of your trip to the PRC.

Clearly, the Soviets have been motivated by the potential threat of a US–PRC partnership against them. We, in turn, have trod a careful line: reassurance that we were not out to inflame Sino-Soviet relations, that we would not practice collusion, that we wanted better relations with both communist giants—but not overwhelming reassurance, and the steady broadening of our contacts with the Chinese. Our aim has been not to provoke the Russians and to reflect the objective situation that we have much more business to do with Moscow in the near term than in Peking. On the other hand, our actions speak for themselves.

II. Issues and Talking Points

A. The Soviet Position

Brezhnev may not raise China directly, but on the basis of his previous remarks and positions, he is bound to be preoccupied with the question.

—For example, when I started to respond to his remarks about your visit to the PRC, he waved me off, claiming that he did not want to discuss China.¹³ However, he kept coming back to the subject in one way or another, especially in connection with Vietnam. And he finally talked openly about your visit and his feelings about the Chinese.

—His chief concern is over the implications of US-Chinese rapprochement on the Soviet power position. Though Brezhnev did not refer to secret agreements, the Soviet leaders apparently suspect that there must have been a bargain struck in Peking. He was told that military matters were not discussed, but he probably was not reassured.¹⁴

—Indeed, he finally mentioned your remarks in Shanghai to the effect that we and the Chinese hold the future of the world in our hands. He said this was not the crux of the matter, that peace should be our aim, etc. But his other comments made clear his meaning: he is concerned about collusion or, as the Soviets say, “combinations” against them. He stressed that China was intent on disrupting the Summit, and that only China would benefit from a failure of your meetings in Moscow.¹⁵

¹² For text of Nixon’s announcement of his trip to Peking, see *ibid.*, pp. 819–820. The President underlined the first two sentences of this paragraph.

¹³ The President underlined this sentence.

¹⁴ The President underlined the first and last sentences of this paragraph.

¹⁵ The President wrote “number of people” in the margin next to this paragraph.

—His attitude was that events would reveal the meaning of your trip to Peking. This was almost exactly what he said in his letter to you September 7 and he repeated it almost verbatim in his speech of March 20. His view has been that the outcome of his meetings with you would be the criterion for judging our China policy.

Thus, despite the complications over Vietnam, Brezhnev almost certainly regards this summit encounter as the opportunity to demonstrate a closer, more substantively-grounded relationship with the US than Peking can command.¹⁶ This is why the Soviets have been so anxious to line up so many bilateral agreements as well as statement of principles in our relations at the Summit.

He will be seeking both information about your policies toward Peking, perhaps some highlights of your talks there, and some signs of reassurance that we are not colluding with Mao against him.¹⁷ On this latter point, whatever you say in the private talks, you can be fairly certain that Brezhnev will exploit it inside the Politburo, where he may be under some pressures for his alleged mishandling of the triangular relationship. Moreover, we have to assume that the Soviets might leak distorted versions of your remarks and the discussions.

A word about atmospherics. With some exasperation Brezhnev exclaimed that understanding the Chinese was beyond his “European mind.” Racism, of course, is a strong element of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Brezhnev claimed the Chinese planned to shoot him, hang Kosygin, and boil Mikoyan alive.¹⁸ And the Russians are a match for the Chinese in chauvinistic arrogance and pride. During your visit they will pull out all stops to contrast Western culture with the Oriental. (They will certainly relish the inevitable comparisons between the Bolshoi’s “Swan Lake” and the “Red Detachment of Women.”)

In sum, your policies and trip have put enormous pressure on the Soviets, and on Brezhnev personally, and in this regard you have an edge on him.

B. Your Position

After the visit is well-launched, and the Soviets have a feel for the outcome of the talks, you might volunteer your views on China policy, preferably in strict privacy to Brezhnev.

Your objective should be to make clear that we have important concerns both in Moscow and Peking which we intend to pursue. Neither country will be allowed to dictate our policy toward the other. You should not to go any great lengths to reassure Brezhnev, though he will

¹⁶ The President underlined this clause.

¹⁷ The President underlined this sentence.

¹⁸ The President underlined the previous two sentences.

try to elicit that. Rather, you should emphasize the importance of your PRC visit in establishing contact at the highest levels and initiating a dialogue. And you should state that this in no way need distract us from the major substantive business in US–USSR relations.¹⁹

You could stress the following points:

—The long term prospects for world peace obviously require contacts among the great powers, particularly the nuclear powers. This meant that at some point the US and China would have to begin talking, lest there be a confrontation.

—Your trip to Peking was a result of certain unique circumstances. China was emerging from self-imposed isolation and resuming an active foreign policy. You were the only President in recent times in a political position to make the necessary changes in US policy.

—Given the 20-year gap in communications, a new dialogue with Peking could be launched only at the highest levels.

—You are well aware that there is considerable speculation—almost entirely unfounded—about what happened during your visit. The fact is that the substance was accurately reflected in the final communiqué. Military matters, for example, were not touched on. On many issues there was profound disagreement which neither side attempted to hide.

—The overall results were constructive. Contacts have been established and a dialogue is proceeding.

—We do not intend to allow our relations with China to dictate our relations with other countries, including the Soviet Union.

—As Brezhnev knows better than you, we could not bring pressures to bear on the USSR even if we wanted to. In any event, it is clearly in our interest not to try.²⁰

—Now, and for the near term, the major concrete negotiations are between Moscow and us. We recognize that world peace today depends heavily on US–Soviet relations. We do not see our opening with China as incompatible with these objectives.

—Over the long term, you think that the Soviet leaders, despite their problems with China, will see that a positive US–Chinese relationship is in the interest of a more peaceful world order, and, therefore, in Moscow’s interest as well.²¹

¹⁹ The President underlined most of this paragraph and wrote “Pacific powers—fought in Korea” in the margin next to it.

²⁰ The President underlined the two previous paragraphs.

²¹ The President underlined this paragraph.

[—If asked about what the Chinese told you about the USSR, you should probably limit yourself to saying that:

- The Chinese view of recent history obviously differs from the Soviet view.
- The Chinese profess their willingness to be reasonable on Sino-Soviet issues if Moscow shows a reciprocal attitude.]²²

²² Brackets in the source text. The President underlined the two bulleted sentences.

237. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

May 17, 1972, 9:52 a.m.

P: Hello.

K: Mr. President.

P: Hi Henry, how are you?

K: I'm fine.

P: Been plowing through these books.² My God you gave me enough work for two months here.

K: Well I thought I'd . . . we'd make them a little full.

P: Yeah. No, no, it's an excellent job.

K: To give you the flavor of it because contrary to the Chinese, as you discerned yourself when you read the conversations, this fellow [Brezhnev] isn't really a very conceptual guy so he will be learning a lot of positions.

P: That's right.

K: And he won't necessarily know where he's going in the way Chou En-lai did.

P: Right, right. I understand.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, President Nixon placed the call at 9:52 a.m. from Camp David, Maryland, to Kissinger in Washington. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files)

² Reference is to the summit briefing books, Documents 230–236.

K: So where the Chou En-lai meetings were very philosophical here I thought you needed to know . . . you don't have to touch on it, just if he raises an issue so that you have a feel for some of the details.

P: Sure, sure. Incidentally, one small thing I wanted to mention. Be sure you warn Gromyko and obviously Brezhnev that they've got to be very careful not to talk about the special channel where Rogers is involved.

K: Right.

P: See what I mean? Because then we'd have to explain what the hell it is to him.

K: I think they understand it but I'll make absolutely sure.

P: You can see why.

K: Oh yeah.

P: So when you talk to Dobrynin, you just say now look . . . talk about the communication that Brezhnev and I have but let's not be . . . let's just be, you know, it's just one of those things. Somebody might drop a hint with regard to "we'll do this in the special channel" and then Rogers will want to know what the hell it is and we just can't get this thing involved in that. We're coming along. Well, you getting all prepared for yourself.

K: Oh yes, I saw the Chinese yesterday and gave them a rundown of what was . . .³

P: Oh did you. Good.

K: And on your behalf went through the thing. And we will send them a letter later this week just before we go;⁴ I didn't want them to have it so they could show it around just before you're in Moscow.

P: Right, right. Well that's good; that's good. They're probably appreciative . . .

K: Oh very much.

P: Yeah, yeah.

K: They were mumbling around about Vietnam, just repeating their formal governmental statement.

P: Yeah. But you mumbled back I presume.

K: Oh yeah. I just said . . . they didn't say . . . even mention mining as such. They were just talking about American military activities.

³ Information regarding Kissinger's May 16 meeting with China's UN Ambassador Huang Hua in New York is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XVII, China, 1969–1972, Document 227.

⁴ No copy of this letter has been found.

P: Yeah. Well anyway, one thing we can be sure of Henry—there's no decision that's been made in the post-War period that's been more difficult or more necessary.

K: And more courageous.

P: Yeah. But we had to do it.

K: Because now it all looks, you know, as if we can have the best of all worlds, but the fact is we did this . . . you did this . . . assuming that the summit would be cancelled. For all you knew it would ruin any chance of reelection and you were doing it for the sake of the Presidency.

P: Well anyway . . .

K: Against total domestic opposition.

P: You know I think perhaps the major by-product of this is . . . well there are two or three. One, the morale of our own country, I mean the fact that you know by two to one people approve it—you know, they're a little proud again.

K: That's right.

P: And second, the morale of the South Vietnamese. I think their morale is stepping up some, don't you think so?

K: Absolutely.

[Omitted here is discussion of the military situation in Vietnam.]

K: But we've got all the negotiations in good shape now Mr. President; I mean they're all concluded except the maritime agreement. Smith is unbelievable on SALT, incredible.

P: Yeah?

K: After screaming about 62 boats, he wasn't satisfied with accepting the Brezhnev formula; he's now come up with one of his own, that would enable the Russians to get up to 70 boats.

P: Jesus Christ.

K: For mere self-will, just to have proved another gimmick.

P: Well, just pin it down.

K: Well, we've pulled it back. He'd already offered it to the Russians; now of course the Russians like his offer better than theirs. Why not! Well, I'm going to get it pulled back, but it's an absurdity. But I think we'll have that done by Sunday.

P: And so you're still planning the little trip from Salzburg.

K: Well, I haven't had an answer yet. I think the chances are 50–50 that it won't come off. But then we can say we offered it.

P: Oh sure, sure. Well the point is we say we offered that and that we . . . doing anything else with the Russians before we go. We're not going to agree to any damned plenary session though.

K: No, I think Mr. President, I've just rewritten one of the pages on Vietnam. The strategy with Brezhnev has to be the only way we will get them involved is not by protesting our good faith but by telling them one way or the other we are not going to end it.

P: Yeah.

K: By giving them the sense . . .

P: Oh hell, I'm not going to protest good faith you know. That's the wrong way to do it.

K: The only interest the Russians have is the feeling that they will be confronted with one miserable choice after another for nothing.

P: Right.

K: If they get that sense then they'll settle.

P: Right, right. If you keep talking about withdrawal and we're ready to negotiate and withdraw . . .

K: That we can throw in too, but the major thing . . . the first thing to establish and this is where you were so wise when I was there in making me take that hard line, is to make clear that we are utterly determined, and by this time they believe things you say, threats you make. Then you can give them flexible possibilities. Another thing that's come up is that apparently State is again talking to the Russians and the Germans about signing the Berlin agreement while we are in Moscow. And I just think that's a mistake.

P: Just . . . sit . . . and we'll put out a . . .

K: I'll take care of it.

P: Just say that from me, I do not want any agreements . . . I don't want anything done except by ourselves, I don't want anybody else there.

K: Yeah, well the present plan is for Rogers and Gromyko to come back to Berlin, but it would . . . I don't see why we should do that. We can do it later. Of course the treaties may not pass in time. There's another chance now to pull another little wrinkle which we've discovered which is that the German upper house we thought it had automatically to vote on it on Friday but we found that if there's one German state that wishes a delay in the debate they can delay it. So now we're looking around whether we can find a state that can ask for a delay without our getting caught at it. Because that's the best insurance you have for good Soviet behavior.

P: You will come with Dobrynin tonight after the dinner with Stewart Alsop?

K: Yeah, it's Stewart Alsop's birthday party; Joe is giving it for him. And I'll come up around midnight.

P: With Dobrynin.

K: With Dobrynin.

P: Fine. We'll have a . . . we'll put you in Dogwood, the two of you.

K: Good. I think that's very nice.

P: And you're coming up late; we'll have breakfast say at 8:30 in the morning.

K: Good, Mr. President. 8:30. We'll come over to Aspen.⁵

P: Fine, fine. We'll just keep the way things going and the . . . I don't think there's any reason . . . I know there are all these problems of trying to prove that the Commitment in '68 is not relevant to the situation today and all that sort of thing. I just don't think it all matters any more.

K: I don't think so. I'll be glad to meet with any group of people that you think . . .

P: Oh, but I think that the point we made that we don't need . . . with anybody. Just let it through.

K: I think after the summit, Mr. President, if you want to, there's about a two or three week period in which I could with good effect get the word around how you orchestrated all of this. And I think that might . . .

P: But I don't think before the summit because that might jeopardize us.

K: After the summit; after the summit.

P: What do you think?

K: I think after the summit.

P: Because all these, these. I would think these damned [liberal?] writers are climbing the wall anyway, aren't they.

K: Oh they're going out of their minds.

P: Are they?

K: Oh yeah.

P: Yeah. They don't know how to judge this. They say the President was very rash and the Russians saved the summit, Jesus Christ, that's a great line isn't it.

K: Well, but even that . . . that is the sort of thing I can knock down, but it's better to do it after the summit.

P: Right, give the Russians all the credit in the world at this point. Afterwards we don't have to worry about them.

K: Right, right.

P: Right. Okay.

⁵ Dogwood and Aspen are the names of cabins at Camp David.

K: I've been working with the speech writers this morning to make sure they get the right tone into your speeches.

P: Who you . . .

K: Safire, Andrews, and Price.⁶

P: All three of them work hard. It will come out; it will come out.

K: Oh sure.

P: I just . . . the one I hacked up . . . of course particularly is that damned television thing. As I said, not a word over 1800 to 2000 words. 2000 absolute maximum; preferable 1800 so that you don't go more than 30 minutes.

K: I couldn't agree more.

P: And that's what it's going to be.

K: Right.

P: And everything else short, as short as possible. They can just not give me great long, I mean the toast should be 150 words, things like that. And that way it will force them to think more precisely and they don't say too much and yet they say enough.

K: Exactly.

P: Right. Okay, fine. Brevity is the thing. But I don't want any supplemental notes or anything of that sort because most of these things I'm going to read anyway because of the translation problems. I'm going to read the toasts and so forth and so on cause Brezhnev will read this, won't he?

K: Almost certainly, I would say certainly.

P: Well, if that's the case—you can discuss that with Dobrynin, say if Brezhnev and the Russians are going to read their toasts the President will read his so they don't think we're one-upping them. But then tell our people the main thing is Henry they gotta keep them short. Like for example, a toast or statement, so forth has got to be, since you've got to read it and then have the translation—you've got to figure what we're talking about basically, 450 words maximum. Because 250 words means that it will take six minutes with translation and that's long enough, don't you agree?

K: I agree.

P: All right.

K: Good Mr. President.

P: All right, bye.

⁶ Reference is to speechwriters William Safire, John Andrews, and Ray Price.

238. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

May 17, 1972, 11:12 a.m.

P: Hello.

K: Hello Mr. President.

P: Henry I . . . I just had a chance—just got here—to read the first draft by Price. Let me make three or four suggestions. One, I don't think we ought to go into Vietnam on this speech.²

K: Absolutely.

P: Second, I think that it's important not to go on and on about liberty and freedom and all that sort of . . .

K: I said exactly . . .

P: No use to throw that to them.

K: I just saw it this minute and I said exactly the same thing to them.

P: The other thing is I think we should talk about our . . . something about our alliance in World War II, the great suffering of the Russian people in war. I think something about that should be thrown in.

K: Right.

P: I think some of the other things the words are fine. But the point being that they don't know America, we wish that they did and I just want to tell them that I speak for the American people, I know our people, I know what they want in the world. We like our system and, you know, something about but on the other hand we're not trying to impose it on anybody else. But we . . . and we want peace in the world, that that means that great powers have a particular responsibility to use their influence to preserve peace and not to break it and that . . .

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, President Nixon placed the call from Camp David, Maryland, to Kissinger in Washington. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files)

² Reference is to a draft of the President's planned radio and TV address to the Russian people on May 28. During a May 14 telephone conversation, Nixon told Kissinger that he just couldn't go through "the agony of trying to do a speech in Moscow," and said: "I want this done so I can just get up and read the son-of-a-bitch." He added, "It doesn't make any difference how I look to the Russian people," to which Kissinger replied that he agreed completely. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File) See Document 294 for discussion of the President's speech that day.

so we would like to have that kind of relationship with . . . that I respect the Russian people as a great people and . . . sort of along those lines.

K: I don't think it is proper for you to start lecturing them about freedom of speech.

P: Oh no, no, no, no, no, no

K: And all that USIA stuff.

P: No, this is not for that purpose and it should be . . . The other thing is, and this always a weakness of the speechwriters, the Russians not only love but have to have some anecdotal material. They just got to have a story or two, you see?

K: Yeah, I'm not sure on Russian television Mr. President.

P: Well no, what I mean is, if it related to something that I've seen while I'm there. In other words, if you've read my speech when I was at . . . when I spoke in 1959, the most effective parts of it was when I referred to the Russian children as . . . you know, when they threw flowers in the car.

K: Oh, that sort of thing. I thought you meant stories.

P: No, no, no, I meant examples . . .

K: Oh yes, absolutely.

P: So that it relates them rather than just cool tough logic, you see.

K: Right.

P: Our people just don't know how to . . .

K: No, that is a definite sentimental streak.

P: There needs to be that, that as I . . . as I saw . . . in Samarkan in '67 a Soviet citizen who was . . . you know with one leg gone; he had lost it in World War II and he said we want to be friends with America. Something like that; that's what Win (?) [Lord?] wants; that's the kind of thing that he ought to put in but . . . Well, I don't want to spend too much time on it, but if you can get them . . . It's not his fault because he was flying blind and he says so, but if you could sort of give him the feeling of what we're doing, not too much substance, not too much . . . I don't think we ought to go into the rigamarole about we have an agreement on arms control, an agreement on trade, an agreement . . .

K: They'll read that in the newspapers anyway.

P: That's right. It's more in terms of saying, look, I'm an American, the first one on an official visit to this great country. I wouldn't slobber over them too much; I'd be very proud of what we stand for, but on the other hand I would say that we respect you, we want you to respect us and we can assure you on peace but peace is not something that we have simply by being for it, that we have to act respon-

sibly through the world, you know in our relations with small nations and others and respect all other peoples in the world. We say something to China at the same time.

K: And we can say this can be the beginning of a new era; we have started it . . . something like that.

P: Yeah, the first steps, but I would say that it means that the great nations, you know what I mean, . . . Well, that's sort of the [gist?] of the thing but you could get Ray back on that track that will be fine.

K: Right, I'll do that immediately.

P: And you may have told him most of it already but those are my reactions and I just didn't want him to get bogged down in some of the things that we know we don't want to . . . we can't use.

K: The German vote has come out very well.³

P: Oh.

K: They fell short of an absolute majority by one, but they have a relative majority so now it has to go to the upper house. They were going to vote on it Friday, but two German states have . . . it has to lie before that house for six days unless they unanimously vote to accept the consideration immediately.

P: And they didn't?

K: They refused . . . they couldn't get a unanimous vote so now they will vote next on the 24th, next Wednesday, and then it won't get signed until the following Friday. So that will cover most of your visit there. That removes even the one percent chance that they might kick over the traces.

P: Yeah, they . . . they'd be playing a damn dangerous game.

K: That's right.

P: That's right. Well they're not anyway . . . they can't now anyway Henry; it's too late.

K: No, exactly.

P: Well, they can but they're . . . then they're proving that they're utterly stupid, and if they're utterly stupid we should be smart.

K: But it also means that we have a pretty clear run for the better part of that week while we are there. I mean we would have it anyway, but this gives us a little insurance.

P: Incidentally, with regard to these talks, it would be helpful when you're talking to Dobrynin if we worked it out that we did it sort of in line and subject by subject. What I meant is that I don't have to

³ The West German treaties with Poland and the Soviet Union were ratified by the Bundestag on May 17, and by both houses with a joint resolution on May 19.

prepare each one. See, then I can brush up on a certain subject rather than read all three . . . You got four books up here on issues now.

K: Absolutely, Mr. President.

P: And you know, I can't read four books before each meeting.

K: No, we will have a subject or two and maybe we can get that even worked out before we get there.

P: That's right. And what I was going to say is that what you might do then, you and Sonnenfeldt, and he's obviously done a lot of this work—you tell him it's just a brilliant job; it's an excellent job—but the point is that whoever worked on it . . .

K: Right, Sonnenfeldt and Lord.

P: . . . and Lord, I would think that if we did that then before each meeting you could have one of them go through the talking points there and even boil it down more, say these are the things when they'll bring up things you should emphasize.

K: Absolutely.

P: So that I . . . because the mental . . . I can retain most of this and I can fly blind pretty well but it would help very much to have it done that way.

K: No, that's exactly what we'll do. The purpose of these is to give you the general feel, then before each meeting we'll give you two pages . . .

P: Good. Have you told Dobrynin to call on Rogers?

K: Yes, and that's set for tomorrow afternoon.⁴

P: Oh, he's going to come back and then call on him.

K: Right.

P: And you've told him so. Good.

K: Well, that's perfectly normal. Then he's made all his calls in one day.

P: Right, right, right, right.

K: And I suggested today, but for some reason they prefer to do it tomorrow.

P: Um-hm. Going to see us first.

K: It may have been State wanting to do it.

P: Well, whatever it was, fine. At least he's going to do it.

K: Right. Oh yes, that's all done.

P: Now with regard to that . . . when you're talking to Dobrynin you do work out like, you've got to let Gromyko and Rogers haggle

⁴ No record of Rogers' meeting with Dobrynin on May 18 has been found.

around about the Mid East and European Security and all these other things.

K: Oh, that's all done.

P: Now, the statement of principles⁵ of course is, as you issued it will be one that they'll try to nit-pick like hell and I don't know quite how we're going to be able to handle it. I know Rogers will be smart enough to know that Brezhnev and I didn't sit down and concoct the whole thing. How do we explain that to him or . . . ?

K: Well, we can say that you asked Dobrynin and me to work it out.

P: Or we can say that they submitted some things and I said well we'll, let me submit some things and you're working on it.

K: I think as a face-saver he'll accept this. I mean he knows it won't be true, but he won't want . . . the alternative put out.

P: Yeah, that he had nothing to do with it. Right, right.

K: We'll have one horrible day, there's no question about it.

P: Well, it can't be for me cause I'm not going to take it again.

K: No, I'll take it. But the point is if we don't have one we'll have five. We have never . . . we played for example the SALT thing absolutely straight and we gave it to him the second I came back to America. And that didn't ease the attacks on it.

P: No. It sure didn't. Well, we won't borrow trouble if I . . . if you could find something to call him about today or tomorrow I hope you will do so.

K: I've called him every day and I'll call him . . .

P: What I meant is to say that we're working on it; I'm reading the book.

K: I don't think he's in too belligerent a mood.

P: No, I don't think so either. I'm just trying to set him up for what he's going to do there. Now he's going to apparently going to go to NATO and then come back to Poland.

K: Mr. President, it's childish, really nuts . . .

P: I don't know what the hell he wants to come to Poland for . . .

K: Oh because there are going to be . . . he thinks there are going to be crowds in the streets.

P: Oh what the hell. But the point is even if there weren't, does he want to go to Iran?

K: No.

P: Well, that's my point. Why to Christ does he go to Poland and not to Iran? You see I think that's an affront to the Iranians.

⁵ See Document 233.

K: Well, and it's a childish move because there isn't anything to talk about. But he's made such an issue of it; he's called me three times; he called Haldeman three times. . . .

P: All right; all right, do it.

K: It doesn't make any sense; there's no good reason except that he'll be moping around for two weeks if he doesn't. Then that way he can come back with you; I think that has something to do with it.

P: No problem. We're arranging the schedules you know in such a way that when I go to Leningrad and what's the other city, Kiev now or . . . ?

K: Kiev I think he won't be with you.

P: Do I go to Kiev?

K: Yes.

P: Yes. Well, anyway when we go to these cities, these other places you know, I'm being really brutal. Haldeman is arranging that all the party, all the party goes in Leningrad and Moscow and others, when we do go out, goes separately from me. They go see some things; I go see other things.

K: I think that's right.

P: Rather than having them all tag along with me because I have seen most of the things in these places where we're going to be.

K: I think that's much better.

P: They want to call it . . . that's too bad if people don't like it. That's just it.

K: Mr. President, I think it's a lot better.

P: One thing we've certainly got to do is . . . in briefing this . . . I think we have to recognize we have totally different, I mean relationships with Brezhnev and Gromyko and myself and Rogers. Brezhnev does rely on Gromyko and the main reason is Gromyko does not try and upstage; he does what he's told.

K: Right.

P: And does a hell of a lot and so I hope Dobrynin understands the difference in the relationships.

K: Totally, Mr. President, totally. And Gromyko understands that he's got to keep Rogers occupied.

P: Uh-huh. Right. And have them agree on some things that they can.

K: And he's a pro, I mean Gromyko is really good.

P: Oh, yeah, yeah. Oh God, I wish he were working for us.

K: He is outstanding. Actually he is the sort of Secretary of State you would want.

P: He's exactly that because he's . . . carries out things meticulously; he works his tail off; he has some ideas of his own; he never

tries to upstage . . . and as a result of course Gromyko has become a very great figure in the world.

K: That's right.

P: That's the way to do it, you know, rather than trying to do it in your own right. Well, that's another problem. I just have a feeling of this, that is was just a mistake. If I ever do any more foreign travelling I don't think any Cabinet people should go along, none, none at all.

K: "I think in your second term, Mr. President, you should set these things up the way you are comfortable with them. You've been babying and carrying your associates now for four years and in your second term you ought to do it the way it's best for you.

P: Yeah. We have to . . .

K: You shouldn't have to worry about someone's morale.

P: . . . the people who are going along; who's not going along. Nobody's going to go with me.

K: To fly people back from Bonn to Warsaw for a 22-hour day is really nuts, but if he wants it, fine.

P: Well it's . . . we have to pay that price.

K: Yeah, but I just mean the second term you ought to . . .

P: Oh well, don't worry, don't worry.

K: . . . do these things the way you are comfortable.

P: I shouldn't be even worrying about these things and I'm not going to now that I've mentioned it to you. It's all done now and Haldeman understands and that's the way it is going to be. And you're going to set up two plenary sessions I understand.

K: That's right.

P: And, have you told Bill that?

K: Uh, yes.

P: He knows that.

K: Right.

P: I'm not sure that you ought to set up the separate meeting. Haldeman told me something about and I don't think you ought to set up the private meeting between him and Brezhnev.

K: Well, I think . . .

P: I just don't think we ought to do that.

K: You do that and you're going to get publicity that makes it sound as if it were all done there.

P: That's right. And, so I hope you haven't mentioned that.

K: No, no.

P: Has [Brezhnev] suggested it?

K: No, I suppose they'll do it if we ask for it.

P: No, no, no. Well, but there's no reason for it, damn it. Brezhnev talks to me, right.

K: That's right.

P: And basically I think this thing should be that Gromyko and Rogers meet and sometimes Gromyko, Rogers, Brezhnev and I will meet. But I'll be damned if I think we ought to have a situation where I ask Brezhnev to meet with Rogers.

K: Well, I don't see any . . .

P: Let's not do it. Because you have the plenaries, I see there's no reason to now. How does Kosygin fit into this whole thing?

K: Well, when there is a plenary, Kosygin will be there.

P: Oh I understand that.

K: And my guess is that Kosygin may be there once or twice when . . .

P: Yeah, now is Kosygin going to . . . is he going to see Rogers separately?

K: Well actually, Mr. President, I think they have the same problem we have without an ability to resolve it.

P: Yeah.

K: I think they want to keep it open until you get there.

P: Yeah. What I think we ought to do. I think you ought to tell Dobrynin that the best thing to do is opposite number-opposite number, period. In other words, Rogers and Gromyko should meet, either together or in the plenary and as far as the others are concerned it should be exactly the same way. I'll meet with Brezhnev . . . do they plan me to meet with Kosygin alone at all?

K: No. I think you will either meet with Brezhnev alone or with Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny together.

P: Podgorny. And sometimes Gromyko.

K: And sometimes Gromyko. But then that would make it a plenary. Because then Rogers would have to be there. Also, Brezhnev wants you at his country place one evening or two.

P: Now I don't want . . . I don't want . . . I don't want . . . under no circumstances, you make it clear, I don't want Rogers to go to that now.

K: Right.

P: Isn't that right?

K: That's right.

P: And I think that is basically a personal visit.

K: And there, of course, it doesn't make any difference . . . you know, he can have anyone he wants; that wouldn't be public.

P: That's right.

K: Except that you were there.

P: Right. And I would simply say that . . . Incidentally Rogers doesn't have to be sensitive about that Henry because God damn it when I'm here, I don't have the Foreign Secretary along with Heath when I see him.

K: Exactly. No, you don't.

P: Of course not. I think particularly since we're having the plenaries . . .

K: That's right.

P: Yeah, and I'd put it all on the Russians; that's the way they want it.

K: Exactly. No, we . . . that part of it is well worked out I think. And in any event I'm going to see Gromyko and Dobrynin privately as soon as we get in and then nail it down.

P: Good. All right.

K: Right Mr. President.

239. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 17, 1972, noon.

PARTICIPANTS

Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Henry A. Kissinger

Dobrynin and I met to review the state of the summit.

Summit Preparations

I delivered a number of messages from the President. First, I said there should be no reference to the special channel in the presence of State Department personnel. Dobrynin said that was clearly understood in Moscow and that the only reason they mentioned the word "channel" was because it had become a term of art in the Soviet Union among the Politburo members; they understood the situation that made it necessary and would respect it. Second, I said that the President did

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 12, Part 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House.

not wish the Berlin agreement² signed during the visit in Moscow because he did not want to get Four Power activities mixed up with the summit. Dobrynin agreed that this was so, but said the initiative did not come from them; it came from the State Department.

I asked Dobrynin about whether the Soviet leaders were in the habit of reading their toasts or speaking extemporaneously. Dobrynin replied that the toast on the first evening would be a rather substantial statement of Soviet policy; that it would almost certainly be read and that he was certain that it would be advanced in a positive spirit.

I asked Dobrynin whether it was possible to have the President broadcast from the Kremlin. Dobrynin agreed that he would transmit this request to Moscow. I did not use the argument that the advance people had given me, namely, that I should say the President would work on his speech until shortly before, primarily because the Soviets had asked me to give them the speech an hour or two hours before so that they could get their interpreter ready.

Dobrynin raised the issue that the State Department was making a lot of technical objections to the scientific agreement and wondered whether I could expedite it. I told him I would do my best.

Dobrynin raised the problem of using Soviet cars in Leningrad and Kiev, since it would be rather humiliating to Soviet leaders for the President to ride in his own car. However, he told me that the Soviet leaders would yield if the President insisted. It would make a much better impression, however, if this could be avoided. I told him I would look into it.

Middle East

We then turned to the Middle East. I handed Dobrynin the unsigned attached paper on security arrangements in Sinai (Tab A).³ Dobrynin said that on first reading it seemed hopelessly complex and was not really responsive to the Soviet paper. He wondered whether it might not be a better procedure for us to take their paper point by point and respond to it. I said I would do what I could and we could have a discussion of it at Camp David.

He said that the Soviet leaders had now given up the idea of concluding an agreement at the summit. They still thought it useful, however, if we could agree on some principles. It could point in the direc-

² Secretary Rogers and the British, French, and Soviet Foreign Ministers signed the final protocol of the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin in Berlin on June 3—the same day as the exchange of instruments of ratification of the treaties between Western Germany and the Soviet Union and Poland. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XL, Germany and Berlin, 1969–1972, for information on the Four-Power negotiations leading to the September 1971 Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin.

³ Attached but not printed.

tion of an agreement that one would work on over the next few months. I said perhaps the method he proposed of my commenting on his paper would give us an opening.

Vietnam

We then turned to Vietnam. I told him that it was clear we were determined to bring the war to a conclusion and that I hoped the Soviet Union would not complicate matters. Dobrynin said that he could assure me that the Soviet leaders were bringing great pressure on the Vietnamese to agree to a private meeting on Sunday. He had seen the cable to Hanoi and it was the toughest cable that they had sent to Hanoi.

Dobrynin asked whether I really thought the blockade would work. I said I was certain that over a period of months it would have a major impact.⁴

We then discussed meeting to go to Camp David in the evening, and the meeting broke up.

⁴ On May 18 the President sent a memorandum to Haig stating that while he was in Moscow, it was "vitally important" that U.S. bombing activity continue, at least at its present level and if possible above the present level. He said it was particularly important that strikes in North Vietnam and around the area of Hanoi and Haiphong, except for the small area of Hanoi itself, be kept up at their present levels so that the enemy would not get any impression that the United States was letting up because of the Moscow trip. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda From the President, Memos—May 1972)

240. Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, undated.

SOVIET OBJECTIVES AT THE SUMMIT

Summitry occupied a prominent place in Soviet wartime and post-war diplomacy. In part this was because of the peculiar personalities of the Soviet leaders, both Stalin and Khrushchev, who preferred to deal at the highest level and had considerable confidence in their ability to prevail in personal encounters.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, For the President's Personal Briefcase, May 1972, Part 2. Secret. A notation on the paper indicates the President saw it. This is a separate briefing paper for the summit sent to the President after the summit briefing books.

After the fall of Khrushchev, however, Soviet interest in high-level diplomacy lessened, perhaps because the structure of the leadership did not lend itself easily to head-to-head talks. While Brezhnev was clearly the most powerful of the Soviet troika in the 1960s, he was not a specialist in foreign affairs, and Kosygin was left with much of the higher level contacts with foreigners.

More recently, Brezhnev, for various political and personal reasons, has taken charge of foreign policy, and his visit to France marked his public emergence on the world stage. More fundamental, however, events in the last 18 months or so have made a summit not only more desirable but in a sense a necessity. The Soviets have been willing to accept our thesis that a summit should not occur until a certain substantive foundation had been laid. While they have played the Berlin negotiations, SALT and other bilateral talks on their merits, the Soviets have also been influenced by the prospect of a summit as a result of a series of successful negotiations.

The real turning point was your trip to Peking. This put the visit of the American President to Moscow in a different light. A successful meeting in Moscow became more urgent and perhaps an end in itself.

A second factor in shaping the Soviet approach to the meeting is the development of Moscow's German policy. Assuming that the treaties are ratified (and this is a major uncertainty hanging over the Moscow meetings), the Soviets will have achieved a long standing goal, and will be moving into the next phase of building a European *détente* on their terms. The US role in Europe, they realize can be crucial. Thus, the summit is an opportunity to explore the US attitude on the shape of East-West relations in Europe. The Soviets probably recognize by now that "selective *détente*" can be a useful tactic but is difficult to maintain over an extended period.

Finally, of course, the USSR has an interest in many of the bilateral negotiations. Taken together these agreements (scientific exchanges, maritime regulations, space cooperation, etc.) establish a matrix of arrangements that tend to "normalize" Soviet-American relations and create the impression of unique areas of common interest between the superpowers. In addition, specific benefits will accrue, particularly in gaining access to American scientific techniques and technology and in facilitating an expansion of economic relations, if the political issues of MFN and credit are resolved.

The Soviets thus have several major objectives at the summit:

—to arrange a visible demonstration by your presence in Moscow that the USSR enjoys a more intimate and substantive relationship with Washington than Peking can command;

—to buttress this general demonstration with a specific accomplishment that underscores the unique superpower relationship, i.e., signing a SALT agreement during the summit;

—to further the evolution of a European détente by gaining US endorsement of a European Conference on Cooperation and Security, and, if necessary, breaking the deadlock over negotiation on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions;

—to suggest, perhaps only by indirection, that a US-Soviet dialogue may be initiated on the Middle East, and that the prospect for a settlement is somewhat more favorable as a result of your conversations;

—to sign or agree in principle to a series of bilateral accords, already under negotiation; both in number and content these agreements will create an impression of progress even if major international issues remain deadlocked;

—to establish some institutional and political basis for a more permanent relationship through statements of principles or agreements on periodic consultations.

China

One Soviet objective at the summit will be to probe the US about the state of its relations with China and its further intentions there. Brezhnev's keen interest showed through in public in his speech on March 20, when he said of Sino-US relations that "the future, perhaps the near future, will show us how matters stand." Privately, he displayed a good deal of nervousness. This will be a delicate matter, in which the Soviets will not want to appear overanxious, but they will surely listen attentively to anything you may volunteer about what transpired in Peking. If they receive little satisfaction, they may pose direct questions. Beyond that, their concern is so great that it is not impossible that they will take occasion to warn their visitors about the dangers of closer dealings with China. They have already tried to persuade various Americans of the frustrations in store for anyone expecting reasonable behavior from Peking, citing their own experience. And Brezhnev has warned that only China will gain from a failure of US-Soviet détente—a reflection of his anxieties.

Western Europe

Europe will be an area of priority concern to the Soviet leaders during their talks with you. Their most immediate and pressing objective is to secure West German ratification of the Soviet-West German treaty, and the Soviet mood in late May will be influenced in large degree by the outlook for ratification at that time. This is particularly true because of Brezhnev's close personal association with the treaty. The Soviets can be expected to try to use the summit to influence internal debate on the treaty within West Germany if this is still an issue, and gain your personal endorsement of the treaty.

One likely topic will be a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Moscow will press to obtain a clear US commitment to early actions to convene a CSCE. Moscow holds the US largely responsible for the delay in movement toward such a conference. They

may offer limited concessions and clarifications on other issues—quite possibly a gesture with regard to starting talks on force reductions, or a specific understanding on the relationship between CSCE and force reductions—in order to obtain a definite US commitment to beginning CSCE. (Brezhnev has indicated as much privately to me.)

We know from intelligence reports that Brezhnev has expressed a preference for a particular CSCE format. In the sequence envisioned by Brezhnev, multilateral preparations would be followed by a conference of foreign ministers that would establish various commissions and working groups. In the final stage the CSCE would be reconvened “at the highest accepted level.” The Soviets also hope that a CSCE would establish permanent bodies to continue its work. These Soviet concepts are calculated to complement French positions—part of the “special relationship” Brezhnev feels he has established with France.²

The only remaining formal obstacle to beginning CSCE preparations is NATO’s insistence that a Berlin agreement, interpreted to include signature of the Final Quadripartite Protocol, comes first. This will present no problem to the Soviets if their treaty with Bonn seems likely to be ratified. If ratification looks like a sure thing after the Bundestag vote, the Soviets may even begin to probe the US on the possibility of signing the Protocol in a ceremony which could be linked to your visit.³

The Soviets have shown no enthusiasm for the subject of mutual balanced force reductions (MBFR), which they view primarily as a Western precondition for other détente moves. Initially they will probably take the line that MBFR is something for “us” to settle. To date, Soviet thinking on procedures for conducting talks on MBFR has been even less clear than on CSCE. Their preference appears to be for MBFR to be handled by one of the working groups to be set up by the CSCE—and therefore to be subordinate to CSCE—but their attitude on this is probably not rigid.

At present, MBFR is at a procedural stalemate because of Soviet unwillingness to receive Brosio, NATO’s designated “explorer.”⁴ In return for concessions in other areas, such as CSCE, the Soviets may offer a way out of this impasse. In a sense, you will be replacing Brosio as explorer; the Soviets may make some sort of commitment that will enable MBFR to get on the track.

² In October 1971 Brezhnev paid an official visit to France, where he and President Pompidou issued a joint declaration and signed a statement entitled “The Principles of Cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and France” on October 30.

³ For information on the signing of the final protocol of the Berlin agreement, see Document 239, footnote 2.

⁴ For information on Soviet rejection of a proposal for exploratory talks on MBFR in Moscow with a delegation led by Manlio Brosio, former Secretary-General of NATO, see Document 45, footnote 3.

The Middle East

The Soviets do not expect that the long deadlock over a Middle East settlement can be broken at the summit. They will want to keep this problem subordinate to their interests in bilateral relations, China, and Europe. They see no profit in pushing their Arab clients to make further concessions. While making a record of fidelity to the Arab cause, however, they may propose some way of giving new impetus to the negotiating process, intimating in the process that without this it may be difficult to prevent new warfare.

The USSR [is] concerned that the Egyptians might conclude that only the US is capable of inducing some flexibility in the Israeli position and that Cairo must therefore turn to Washington for a settlement. The Soviets have been sensitive to US efforts to facilitate an interim settlement and proximity talks, and they are suspicious of the implications of renewed dialogue between Cairo and Washington. It is important for Moscow to have—and to be seen to have—a major role in deliberations affecting the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hence the Soviets may try to use the summit to return to bilateral discussions on the Middle East, seeking to foster the impression among the Arabs that some new diplomatic momentum has begun. They may put some scheme of this kind in the context of a proposal for regular US-Soviet consultations.

The Soviet leaders will be prepared to deal with any US suggestion on mutual restraint on arms shipments to the Arabs and Israelis. They will probably consider themselves in a rather good tactical position on this issue in view of the overall decline in Soviet military deliveries to Egypt over the past several months.

Moscow can be expected to call attention to this and to stress the defensive nature of the weaponry provided to the Arabs. The Soviets may point out, for example, that Egypt's bomber inventory remains smaller than it was prior to the war in 1967. In fact, the Soviets have at this point delivered, broadly speaking, all the arms Egypt can absorb and more, while withholding advanced offensive weapons that might touch off a new round of major fighting.

The Soviets would probably not be willing, however, to agree to any proposal for a formal, explicit, Soviet-US agreement on curbing arms deliveries to the Middle East. Moscow would expect a vitriolic Arab reaction to such an arrangement as long as Israel is occupying Arab territory. The USSR would be afraid that such a move could endanger the advances that it has made in the area over the past several years—gains made largely by virtue of its role as arms supplier. It will therefore not want to go beyond, at most, a general understanding that would stop well short of verifiable commitments. As an inducement to us, Brezhnev will hold out hopes of an agreement on arms shipments and of a reduction in Soviet military presence *after* a settlement.

Vietnam

Brezhnev and his colleagues got involved in Vietnam in early 1965. They originally increased Soviet support for the North Vietnamese in an effort to place themselves in a better position to compete with China for the allegiance of foreign Communists and other “progressives,” and to refute Chinese charges that Moscow had sold out to “imperialism.” Since last summer, however, Peking’s own overtures toward the US have dissipated the sting of Chinese charges of “Soviet-US collusion,” and it is now less important for the Soviets to be able to disprove Chinese allegations. Thus Moscow’s priorities are no longer what they were when it became involved in Vietnam seven years ago, although the Soviets’ basic commitment to Hanoi remains in force and cannot be easily abandoned.

Developments in Vietnam obviously are a cloud over the entire visit, and it cannot be foreseen how the interaction of our measures and the NVN offensive will affect the content and tone of the summit.

The Soviets have to balance their own national interests in such areas as strategic relationships and European security against the effect of Vietnam on their position in the Communist world, their competition with China and their interests in Southeast Asia and the future development of Asian politics in the wake of Vietnam. In pure power terms Vietnam is not vital to the USSR, but in political terms developments there can directly affect the standing of the USSR in the Communist world.

The various Soviet dilemmas over Vietnam have led them to support a political settlement at different times, and the burden of their advice to Hanoi probably has been that they could achieve a political takeover once the US was totally disengaged. At the same time, the Soviets see benefits in prolonged fighting in terms of what it does to the US political fabric and the ability of the US to conduct a comprehensive foreign and defense policy.

If by late May the Vietnam situation is escalating, the Soviets’ first order of business will be to try to wring some concessions from the US on the terms of a cease-fire or a political settlement. Only if they can demonstrate that the US has yielded something significant, is the USSR likely to exercise effective influence in Hanoi. Even then, it will be limited unless accompanied by the reduction of Soviet military support. And even then its effectiveness will depend on the balance of forces in the North Vietnamese Politburo.

Whether the Soviets would make this one move—to restrain the shipment of supplies—remains a question. The Soviets would assume that the Chinese would in this event increase their supplies, and the USSR would be exposed to the charges of perfidy. Of course, US measures may produce the objective effect of reducing Soviet support.

On balance the Soviets may hope that the summit can be insulated from Vietnam, at least as long as US actions do not directly challenge the USSR. But the situation is sufficiently fluid and dangerous that the Soviet leaders must be increasingly concerned that they will face an abortive, or less than successful meeting.

The Consequences

There are palpable risks to the USSR in the summit. A number of Soviet officials have indicated that a combination of failure of the German treaties and escalation in Vietnam may lead to an unproductive meeting. If so, the Soviets would have to begin reassessing their own position. Brezhnev, in particular, might find his power position weakened. He, and others, would be in the painful position of having to acknowledge the failure of the USSR's "general line" over the past year. Pressures on the Soviet leadership as the summit approaches are no doubt growing because, unlike previous summits, the Soviets not only want the atmospherics but certain tangible benefits in bilateral relations and in their international posture.

In short, despite the uncertainties over Vietnam, we have certain elements of strength in dealing with the Soviet leaders, not the least of which is the fact of your trip to Peking and Brezhnev's personal investment in the concept that a better relationship with us is feasible.

241. Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon¹

Washington, May 18, 1972.

SUBJECT

Moscow Talks: Opening Presentation

In your meetings with Brezhnev and Kosygin, I think your opening remarks will go far toward establishing the possibilities for enduring changes in our relations with the Soviet Union. We will have enough agreements in hand before your arrival to ensure that an acceptable summit will ensue. Beyond that, you have an opportunity to get deeply into the prospects for U.S.–USSR relations, not in terms of

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Matlock on May 17 and cleared by Davies.

meaningless generalities, as the Soviets might prefer, but by testing Soviet intentions case by case, issue by issue.

The first substantive session, however, is scheduled as a plenary. Since Russians generally find deduction from principles more persuasive than a purely pragmatic approach, I believe you should take that tack in your initial presentation, reserving discussion of the more difficult issues for the restricted sessions with Brezhnev or Kosygin and the details for the parallel talks which I will have with Gromyko. In addition to impressing the assembled Soviet leaders with our strength and confidence, you will also want to convey our commitment to negotiating differences with a reasonable regard for Soviet interests.

We know from experience that the Soviet leaders maintain close contact among themselves in dealing with foreigners. What a visitor says in the morning to Kosygin may be alluded to by Brezhnev or Gromyko in the afternoon. It might be useful, therefore, for us to meet with Henry Kissinger and Martin Hillenbrand for a few minutes each day to compare notes and to discuss the next day's meetings.

None of your principal interlocutors in Moscow understands English and this will make it imperative to have an accurate, properly-nuanced interpretation of all your presentations. Although Soviet interpreters may be skilled in translating the substance of remarks, they understandably are more concerned with conveying the force of the statements made by their principals, and less intent upon giving full effect to the points expressed by the non-Soviet participants. I would therefore urge you to use an American interpreter throughout to make sure that your message is conveyed accurately in tone as well as substance. To ensure the utmost precision, I would also suggest that your interpreter be briefed in advance regarding the topics under discussion and the impression you wish to convey.

William P. Rogers

242. Memorandum for the President's File From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Camp David, May 18, 1972, 8:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Breakfast Conversation between The President, Ambassador Dobrynin and Mr. Kissinger

The meeting concerned mostly personal matters.

Ambassador Dobrynin brought the President the personal good wishes of Brezhnev, who said he was looking forward to a constructive and pleasant meeting. Any special visits that the President wanted would be available to him. The Kremlin would be closed to the public and to all Soviet personnel except the Politburo, and the President could therefore move freely and without any fear of interference within the walls of the Kremlin. Dobrynin thought that the total area of the Kremlin was probably as large as Camp David.

The President then told Dobrynin that it was important to take special care not to mention the special channel, and Dobrynin said this was well understood among his leaders. The President also said that he wanted the meetings with Brezhnev to be confined to the smallest number possible. Specifically, he thought it would be better if Gromyko were not present because that would raise the issue of having Rogers present. He said, "Gromyko, of course, is being relied on by Brezhnev but I do not rely on Rogers." Dobrynin was noncommittal but said that he thought the matter could be handled. Dobrynin then proposed that Brezhnev and the President meet shortly after his arrival to work out what might happen at the plenary session the next day. Dobrynin said that this should be confined to just a very few people; perhaps himself on the Soviet side and Kissinger on the American side. The President agreed but again made the point that perhaps Gromyko should be either not announced or not come so that there would be no question of having Rogers present.

There was then discussion of a few substantive issues. Dobrynin said that his leaders wanted to have the Middle East discussed on the basis now where perhaps some basic principles could be agreed to that would be filled in in negotiations over a period of months. The President said that a lot depended on Vietnam. We were now determined

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 12, Part 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. According to the President's Daily Diary, this breakfast meeting took place from 8:44 to 9:50 a.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

to end the war; we had diddled along for three and a half years, and we had been kicked in the teeth the whole time. It now was time to end it. Once the war in Vietnam was over, it was much easier for us to move in the Middle East. Dobrynin said every side had trouble with its allies, and he didn't mind saying that the Soviet Union had major difficulty with its allies.

The President, Dobrynin and Dr. Kissinger then walked through Camp David to look at the new facility, with the President pointing out the places to which he would invite Brezhnev when Brezhnev visited the United States.

243. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Camp David, May 18, 1972.

PARTICIPANTS

Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

I met with Dobrynin after the conclusion of the meeting with the President for an extended review.

Vietnam

Dobrynin said that it was a pity that the possibility of a big public reception had been effectively destroyed by our actions in Vietnam; he was certain that what had been planned was the biggest public welcome ever received by a Western statesman. But in every other respect the visit would be met with great cordiality.

SALT

Dobrynin then asked me about a number of questions from the SALT negotiations, specifically, a sub-limit on the conversion of old missiles to new ones and the conversion of Titans to submarines that had been raised by our Delegation in Helsinki.² I told him that the for-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 12, Part 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. According to the President's Daily Diary, the President was present for the first 10 minutes of this meeting, from 9:50 to 10 a.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² At their noon meeting on May 17, Dobrynin handed Kissinger the text of two instructions being sent to the Soviet delegation in Helsinki. The first read: "Additional

mer issue was important; the second issue was marginal. Dobrynin said it was a pity I had not raised both issues five days earlier, since they probably could have been resolved in our sense. I told him to make an effort anyway.

Communiqué

We then went over a Draft Communiqué that he had handed to me (Tab A).³ We went over it point by point and I indicated where we are likely to object. I told him we would do a re-draft which I would hand to them when we arrived in Moscow.

Middle East

We next went over the Middle East paper that he had handed to me and I made all the points from the Saunders draft (Tab B).⁴ Dobrynin said the best step would be for us to re-draft the paper as we wanted it, incorporating as many of the principles of theirs that we wanted but adding as many as possible of ours, and then perhaps we could make progress.

He said it was clear that it was now time for serious bargaining and that Egypt could not achieve its maximum positions. Perhaps something could be done by making a distinction between security needs and sovereignty. I said I would try and have a paper with me when we arrived in Moscow.

launchers on submarines—in excess of the 48 modern submarines operational and under construction—will be put in commission in the Soviet Union in lieu of older-type ICBM launchers built before 1964 and in lieu of launchers on older-type submarines.” The second stated that the Soviet side was proceeding on the premise that this whole problem would find an appropriate solution in the course of subsequent negotiations. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 494, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 12, Part 2) Kissinger does not mention this note in his record of the May 17 meeting; see Document 239. In backchannel message WH 1351, May 17, he transmitted the text to Smith in Helsinki, noting that Smith should be aware that the term “premise” was not acceptable to the United States if it carried any implication that it was a shared premise. (Ibid., Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, 1972, SALT)

³ Attached but not printed.

⁴ Not attached.

244. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Camp David, May 18, 1972.

Kissinger: Mr. President

Nixon: Hi, Henry.

Kissinger: I just wanted quickly to—

Nixon: Right [unclear]

Kissinger: They were sending up another book today.

Nixon: That's all right. I've got enough books.

Kissinger: It's on bilateral things—

Nixon: I've got that.

Kissinger: —and I've got something coming on SALT and that nuclear agreement. Well, I spent the morning now going over the communications and it's 15 pages. And they threw in a few curve balls, of course. But it's in better shape than we were in China. I think in a day or two, we're there. We can settle it. It'll be a very significant communiqué, in addition to the principles. But it's been a tremendous leap. And for the first time, people are going to see in one document everything that's been done.

Nixon: Yeah. I was looking at the—I mean I was looking here at the schedule that you laid out and you suggested that I sign the space cooperation agreement which I have is good. I noticed that Train thinks I should also sign the environmental agreement. I see no reason—I think—

Kissinger: I think space and SALT and the principles—

Nixon: Space, SALT, principles, though—and I have plenty of signings to do.

Kissinger: You want—anything you want to sign we can—

Nixon: I see no damn reason why I shouldn't be up front and center. Now they'll say that the environment thing was worked up before we got here. The hell with it, though.

Kissinger: Well, Mr. President, the fact of the matter is that—I mean, for example, on the science agreement—I don't bother you with these things because I know what you want.

Nixon: I—

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Camp David, Conversation No. 191–18. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger from 12:25 to 12:45 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Kissinger: No, but I just want to give you as an example. That thing has been kicking around for years. I got David [Dr. Edward David, the President's Science Adviser] and I said: "let's go over these points and you're going to settle it in 3 days," so he did. Then—then—we gave it to State to do some drafting. The total deadlock developed immediately because they came up with 30 nitpicks, so we settled that yesterday afternoon. On the incidents—

Nixon: State doesn't know that we settled it.

Kissinger: No. On the incidents at sea, for example, you remember the issue about the draft that came to you, six distances and so forth. I knew this would drive the military up the wall. We didn't want the military yelling at it since we need them on SALT. So I went to Dobrynin and I said—and I suggested a formula to him by which they accept our terms this year and we agreed to review it at the end of next year. We all agreed then that so on—and I had breakfast with Laird on Monday morning and with Moorer and told him we'd do what we could. And that evening at 9 o'clock the Russians yielded and accepted our position. Laird called me up and said he couldn't believe it. He said in 18 hours we'd settled something that they had negotiated 4 months over. So your influence, whether you physically have done it all, and—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: We can demonstrate that of these agreements not one could have been done without your personal channel to Brezhnev.

Nixon: Now we will have some of the requirements. Peterson will try to claim that he did—

Kissinger: He can't. He can't argue that.

Nixon: Naturally Smith will say he did SALT. And—

Kissinger: Mr. President, I think what I ought to do when we get back—

Nixon: You gotta to have a—

Kissinger: I ought to get in some of the leading journalists and maybe go on television.

Nixon: You may have to do more than that. You may just have to—you've got—we've got to really set it in. It just can't be in three or four columns. Get my point? It's got to be something that has national impact where they know—

Kissinger: Well, I have no great desire to do it but the way I'm doing it would be—

Nixon: We're not going to let the State's boys get away with everything this time.

Kissinger: Because the way to do it would be instead of arguing who did what, would be just to have somebody ask me on the biggest forum that you see consider as suitable.

Nixon: How will it be done?

Kissinger: You could say the President has been exchanging correspondence with Brezhnev. This is how their replies came back. This is how we handled it. This is how we—At that point, we don't give a damn because they're all done. I mean to bring these agreements all to a head all at the same time—

Nixon: Now with regard to the signing, there are two different ways. Maybe it's not as well for us, but to be in on all sorts of signing things. It's as well to hold back and do SALT and principles.

Kissinger: Oh, you should do it with the space because that's got so much imagination to it—and I—

Nixon: Also in my 1959 speech,² remember I said: "let us go to the moon together." And, that's a good point—

Kissinger: He told me that that evening—your first evening—there'll be a very positive speech and the toast. It will be a short speech, they said, so—

Nixon: I told Haldeman that mine had to be 200 words.

Kissinger: Not the first evening, Mr. President. You have to give a substantive speech—about 15–10 minutes.

Nixon: 10 minutes of copy or 10 minutes translated?

Kissinger: 10 minutes copy because they're going to give at least 15.

Nixon: 15–30 minutes? You see what we're talking about is the translation.

Kissinger: At Spaso House, you can wing it.

Nixon: I'm not going to wing anything. I'm going to—

Kissinger: No, no, I mean at Spaso House, you could read—

Nixon: Yeah, yeah. My point is I want to find out what the length of their speech is—

Kissinger: I just found out.

Nixon: —in words. Well, if it's 15 minutes in Russian, that's 30 minutes.

Kissinger: They told us 15 minutes. They said a short speech. Now I asked him what does that mean and he said that means between 10 and 15 minutes in Russian. And it will close with a toast to you. But it will—

Nixon: Who the hell's working on that?

Kissinger: I've got Andrews and Safire working on it with one of my people.

² For text of Vice President Nixon's speech to the people of the Soviet Union on August 1, 1959, see *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1959*, pp. 887–894.

Nixon: And we have Price working on the television?

Kissinger: And Price is working on the television one. We spent an hour and a half together yesterday in the light of your [unclear]. We spent some in the morning but then after you called me, I got them all together again. And—

Nixon: They'll come around.

Kissinger: I think the television speech; actually, we have plenty of time for.

Nixon: Yeah. But the first speech—

Kissinger: The first speech is very important

Nixon: I've got to have the damn thing on the plane.

Kissinger: That is very important. That's got to—that should be rather sober. And—

Nixon: And rather meaty.

Kissinger: And rather meaty.

Nixon: All right. And on the signing of agreements, what is your view? Should we be up there signing agreements over there? Does that take too much away—well, the space one. The environment I don't have to sign. I don't care much about the environment—Do you want Rogers to sign the environment?

Kissinger: The goddamn [unclear] doesn't know anything about it.

Nixon: The point is there's no reason for him to.

Kissinger: Is it put in the schedule?

Nixon: Yeah, it's on the second page. Here, I'll get it for you.

[pause]

Kissinger: Well, if you did environment and space, then you'd do one each day. Except Thursday or Friday.

Nixon: Might as well start out with a bang. Environment's a big thing in this country. Might as well do it, environment and space. And then you get the feeling that's another way to get it across that a lot is being done—environment and space, SALT. On the statement of principles I noticed that you had—well, we can talk about this later—some doubts as to whether I should sign it because—

Kissinger: [unclear exchange] I've changed my mind. You should sign it.

Nixon: What the hell, why not? It isn't a treaty.

Kissinger: Yeah, I've changed my mind.

Nixon: If it is a treaty. If they want it, let's do it. Big deal.

Kissinger: I think you should sign it. It should be jointly signed by Brezhnev and you. And the combination of this really—

Nixon: It's a hell of a thing.

Kissinger: —a meaty communiqué, which is really—

Nixon: A communiqué, a statement of principles, and these agreements. Kennedy, Kennedy could never get even that, that space thing, something people have been talking about for years—

Kissinger: Now, what I would recommend though, Mr. President, is that you're very low key with the Congressional people. I wouldn't say that this is going to be the most significant—

Nixon: No, sir. No, sir.

Kissinger: I'd just say there're a number of things we're going to try to advance or—

Nixon: Or you give us some talking points as to what number, what they say are. I've got to say all these people have been working on SALT.

Kissinger: I think that is—I think the lower key we are, the more impressive—I mean nobody has any idea. They all think it's—I mean the newsmen that I see all think it's going to be like Peking—nothing. And then at the end a communiqué.

Nixon: Each one of these—well, space is a major story. Environment is a major story. Health is not. Science and technology's not. Maritime is not. Incidents at sea is not. The joint commercial commission is and SALT is. So you got—you got four major stories.

Kissinger: The joint commercial agreement might be good. But, also, incidentally there is a good chance that we'll get an agricultural agreement for 3 years worth a billion dollars. I haven't put that on there yet. The [unclear]

Nixon: Well, I think we've got Dobrynin—I—well positioned—

Kissinger: Oh, that was beautiful.

Nixon: —[unclear exchange] Rogers thing—

Kissinger: And the way you handled Vietnam was beautiful. And the way you put the Middle East after. And then another thing I did with him, I went over his paper with him on the Middle East and we—For the first time, the Soviets are willing to talk sense now. In addition to the withdrawal of their forces—well you said there're some things you can't ask Israel to do. He said, all right now. Just put down concretely—I think the best position for you is to come out of this meeting without an agreement on the Middle East because it sure as hell that, with a—with a plan by which to move it ahead.

Nixon: What do we say about the Middle East, that we discussed it?

Kissinger: [unclear] that Jarring should redouble his efforts or something like that. Maybe—The trouble with pressing too hard on the interim agreement, which we may get, is that it may raise more questions about the final agreement than it's worth. Because we don't need any more agreements after this, I don't think.

Nixon: Except there's going to be great interest in the Mid-East. I don't give a damn about it except—Well, we can do that later.

Kissinger: Well, we can get that before November.

Nixon: We might do it in September.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: Now Vietnam, though—But I think it's well we now agree we bring Vietnam up. No use to bring it up at an early point 'cause we're not going to give a goddamn inch and neither are they.

Kissinger: No.

Nixon: This idea that we're going to—

Kissinger: Well, I wouldn't say to them—The one thing I'd—can I perhaps suggest, Mr. President, don't say they won't give an inch because I think they're beginning to give an inch.

Nixon: No, I mean I'm telling you that. I'm not going to tell them that.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Moscow summit.]

Kissinger: You're going to kill them next week, Mr. President. No one has any idea what you're—

Nixon: The main problems we've got, Henry, I think, as you're quite aware, is not with the left but with the right. This is great with the left. It's terribly difficult for the right. Particularly SALT and the statement of principles and that's—we've just got to be sure that on SALT that we're not freaked. They'll do two [*three*] things: One, that we let down our allies: Two, that we put our arms around our enemies; And three, that we froze ourselves into inferiority. Those are the things we've got to answer—

Kissinger: That last one they just can't make. I'm going to get—MacGregor's getting them together for me tomorrow morning—

Nixon: Wonderful. Good.

Kissinger: —and I'm going to brief them, together with Moorer.

Nixon: Moorer?

Kissinger: Yeah, and—

Nixon: That'll pull the rug out before Rogers and his people get a chance to piss on it. How can Rogers' people piss on it now though? I mean, Smith is going to be for it.

Kissinger: Of course, oh, yeah. He's giving us more trouble than the Russians right now. Every day—again if it weren't for your channel, this thing would never have—Well, every breakthrough that was done by you—the May 20th, the submarines, every solution was worked out in the Brezhnev channel. And every detail this last week—I just don't bother you because I don't believe you give a damn whether it's 18 radars or 16 radars but—

Nixon: I haven't got the time to look at them.

Kissinger: Well—

Nixon: Experts have to determine.

Kissinger: But there's—

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Moscow summit.]

Nixon: Incidentally, Dobrynin will call on Rogers this afternoon?³

Kissinger: At 4 o'clock.

Nixon: And give him a little song and dance.

Kissinger: Oh, yeah.

Nixon: Because we, we're not just going to have this Rogers thing [unclear]. We're not going to have any pissy-ass stuff anymore. It's too, too late now.

Kissinger: It's too late. And you've gone through too much and you've carried this—

Nixon: And, you know, goddamn it. If he doesn't like this, it's too bad. He tells me for my own good, this is what he did about the Shanghai Communiqué, and all the things he worried about didn't amount to a damn. We know there're problems. There're problems in all this—the SALT agreement and so forth. The point is: how could he have done better? The point is he couldn't. This, this sort of ideal that you've got to do this ideal and you've got to do that. He never comes up with anything that just [unclear]. Here's something we oughta do. I mean—except signing the Berlin agreement. Thank God that's no problem, is it?

Kissinger: No

Nixon: Because the German treaty won't be done.

Kissinger: But signing it—we negotiated it and when it was done, he pissed on that. He gave, gave Rush nearly a nervous breakdown by thwarting something we had worked 6 months to bring about.

Nixon: You see, the point is that we're not going to—we're not going to—

Kissinger: He'll piss on the principles too, I'll guarantee you. If you take the negative, it's always possible to—

Nixon: That's right. He didn't show us, for example, what their first—their first paragraph, for example, paragraph 3, was the much tougher than what they finally agreed on. Goddamn it, we've got it down to a few things.

Kissinger: And we've got them, in effect, to put in a renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine. I'll have lunch with Dobrynin and then we'll go back.

Nixon: Well, he's—

³ No record of Dobrynin's conversation with Rogers on May 18 has been found.

Kissinger: Well, he is delighted. And I think you have—This is going to be a tremendous [unclear]—

Nixon: We've also got them on the mountaintop, too, in terms of—

Kissinger: Well, I like the way you handled the Brezhnev visit here.

Nixon: Show him this and stay here. You know, like they told you, what you were doing, so this is only reciprocity.

Nixon: Oh yeah. And hell, they'll love it.

Kissinger: You'll probably see this guy so insecure if you feel—if the thing is going well, you could even dangle perhaps before him that when he's here you might take a trip out to California to greet a [unclear]. I'd play that.

Nixon: Well, there's no—nothing—give me brief, brief, brief talking points for [unclear].⁴

⁴ The tape ends at this point.

245. Editorial Note

When White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman met with President Nixon in the Oval Office at 11:45 a.m. on May 19, 1972, he informed the President that Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Press Relations Robert J. McCloskey had called and requested that Secretary of State Rogers go down to his 12:30 press briefing to set the tone for the forthcoming summit. Nixon responded angrily that he was going to see the press at 5 o'clock and said "The Secretary does not go down . . . I'm not going to have him do this . . . He doesn't know the first thing about what is going on." After Ziegler entered, Nixon complained: "What do they want me to do, cancel my meeting with the press at 5 o'clock? That's my purpose." Nixon asked if McCloskey knew he was going to meet the press that afternoon. Haldeman replied that he did and said he had told McCloskey: "Don't let the Secretary move until I get back to you." He noted that Rogers was now calling him.

While they waited for Kissinger to join them, Nixon continued his diatribe against Rogers, saying: "Goddamn, now he says he's going to bring his wife to Poland. Fine. Tell him he can bring his wife to Poland. What the hell else does he want to do, go to the Lenin tomb? Well, he can go there. I've seen the goddamn tomb. But you know what I mean. This is getting ridiculous. It's getting ridiculous. I'll see the press at 5. . . I've got to set the tone for these talks." Responding to Haldeman's

concern that Rogers might object to having Kissinger brief the press in Salzburg, if the Secretary didn't brief here, Nixon said: "If Henry wants to brief, he'll brief . . . You know, why would we have to say, well Henry can't unless Rogers did it? Bullshit. Rogers is not running this summit. It covers a lot of things far beyond State Department."

When Kissinger entered the office at 11:55 a.m., Nixon informed him that Rogers wanted to talk to the press at 12:30 on what to expect at the summit and mentioned Haldeman's concern that unless they allowed this, Rogers would object to him doing a backgrounder during the stop at Salzburg. Nixon exclaimed: "The point is I'm going to be talking to the press at 5:30 about the background to the summit and I can't have the two of them. He's—Why does he want to do it? Can you tell me?"

Kissinger responded that Rogers was doing this because "he wants to be able to say that he ran the Moscow summit" and pointed to a press report that day by Marvin Kalb saying that "the White House was gloomy about the summit. State always said the summit would go on and would be a great success. Another example of the White House not listening to State." Nixon reminded them that at the NSC meeting Rogers had warned that the President's decision to bomb Hanoi and mine Haiphong "would sink the summit." He reiterated: "The answer is no. The answer is the President is going to do that at 5:30 this afternoon," adding that Rogers was "not to be invited."

Nixon then switched the subject to SALT, saying "I haven't been so goddamn mad since I've been in this office. Agnew came in here whining around about the fact that, you know, the usual hawk line. . . ." He added: "I read last night the whole SALT thing and I think it's going to be a tough titty son of a bitch. Henry, you're always thinking of the Gerard Smith types. Listen, they would suck around anybody. You understand the hawks think we're already too weak and now they think we're going to freeze America in a position of inferiority." Kissinger responded: "But the point is we can show . . ." Nixon interrupted: "I know. We can show them that we're going to be inferior, more inferior if we didn't have this. That's an awful weak case. You see freezing them is one thing but if we're going to be more inferior, it's worse."

Haldeman returned and informed Nixon that McCloskey said he'd already announced and couldn't call it off now, adding "He wants to talk to you." Nixon replied: "No, tell him I'm in a meeting and . . . cannot be interrupted." He instructed Haldeman to tell McCloskey that "as far as the summit is concerned, plans are going forward, and the President is going to be speaking to the . . . press tonight, those who are going, on that subject. . . ." Nixon agreed with Haldeman's statement that Rogers should defer comment on the summit, and said:

“That’s what he should do. He doesn’t know anything about it. He doesn’t know what’s going to happen at the summit. He doesn’t have the slightest idea.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, May 19, 1972, 11:45 a.m.–12:19 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 726–4)

For text of Secretary Rogers’ press conference on May 19, see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 5, 1972, pages 779–784; President Nixon’s May 19 statement to the press about his forthcoming trip to the Soviet Union is *ibid.*, June 12, 1972, pages 803–807, and in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pages 602–608.

246. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 19, 1972.

Nixon: Henry, regarding the press, I don’t have any talking points. Can I use the same talking points that I used with the bipartisan leaders?

Kissinger: Let me—I’ll get to you within a half an hour.

Nixon: Now, let me—Bob [Haldeman], I don’t mean to [unclear] let me go over this with Henry. Point two. I don’t know whether we want to tell the leaders this much, do we?

Kissinger: This is already cut down by half.

Nixon: This says there will be—no, no, I’m not talking about the length. But do we want to say that there will probably be agreements on scientific exchanges, on environmental controls, on all these understandings—

Kissinger: No, no, that was supposed to be taken out.

Nixon: All right, fine. I’ll just say that we’ve had discussions. We don’t know what’s going to happen on these things but we hope for the best.

Kissinger: Good.

Nixon: And I’ll say SALT, we, we—I think we can speak with some confidence on SALT.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 726–11. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 1:08 to 1:27 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Kissinger: Well, not actually yet. I had a personal message from Gromyko—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —saying that they had the impression that Smith was dragging his feet, which was also my impression. And I'm just sending a scorcher to Smith.² He's suddenly—

Nixon: You think he wants to kill it?

Kissinger: Well if he—not kill it, but he's now suddenly the hard-liner in this operation. I mean after driving us for two and a half years the issues have become so abstruse—I could explain them to you but—

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: He's throwing in a lot of hedges, which are not in themselves that bad. It's just his attitude has changed from being the soft guy to being the hard guy. But we'll get it done.

Nixon: [unclear exchange]

Kissinger: That's Haig's suspicion.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: That is exactly Haig's suspicion.

Nixon: Yes, that we're still having some rough go on ABM.

Kissinger: And we are on the final stage of SALT, we are hopeful but not yet certain.

Nixon: That's right. Proceeding with Europe, Vietnam, and the Middle East will be covered. Shall I say that?

Kissinger: No. The Middle East may be cut out.

Nixon: Shall I say Vietnam? I've got to say that.

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: That will be on the agenda. Europe? Oh, European Security—I mean the European Security Conference.

Kissinger: Well, European issues.

Nixon: European issues. But obviously not without the permission of our allies. In other words, I [unclear] The more important ones are not these assholes, but—

Kissinger: The press.

Nixon: Trying to set the press in a proper frame. I—let me just say, I don't know what to say. Should we tell them that they're going to be briefed twice a day?

Kissinger: Are they going to be briefed twice a day?

² For a summary of Gromyko's message, and Kissinger's instructions to Smith, see Document 247.

Nixon: [unclear] That's what you told him.

Kissinger: No, I didn't read him anything of the sort.

Nixon: I'll just say there will be a daily briefing.

Kissinger: I'd say a daily briefing.

Nixon: There'll be a daily briefing.

Kissinger: I think it's a mistake to commit ourselves to twice a day.

Nixon: Okay. Just talk off the top of your head as to what you want me to say to the press.

Kissinger: I would say, I would say—

Nixon: I'm not going to have a chance to prepare, or the time, if you think about it.

Kissinger: I would say to the press that we have—that this summit is the culmination of 2 years—

Nixon: Here's what I was going to start, I was going to start along those same lines. I was going to say we have, we—our countries—that, that I have noted—and I think the very justifiable criticism of summitry by many of you ladies and gentlemen of the press. I am one of the critics of summitry. We had the spirit of Vienna, the spirit of Camp David, the spirit of Geneva, the spirit of Glassboro That's one of the reasons why we have not up to this point had a top meeting. We thought we had to have something concrete come out of it, not just a spirit. As a result of this, I would say that this is the best prepared we have been for a meeting with Soviet leaders. [unclear exchange] Now, having said that, I would not want to leave—I would not want to raise your hopes too high, because basically there are a number of unresolved issues. I have been in correspondence with Mr. Brezhnev, very extensive correspondence—

Kissinger: I'd say I've made extensive "contact" with Mr. Brezhnev.

Nixon: Yeah, plenty of contact—

Kissinger: Cause correspondence, then they'll say where is the correspondence?

Nixon: Yeah, yeah, extended contact with Mr. Brezhnev, and messages as well. Uh-huh. And we—and we—and under the circumstances we now, however, come to the point that we have to make decisions, decisions that affect both countries, affect their vital interests. And they can only be made at the highest level.

Kissinger: And the future peace of the world.

Nixon: And I think we should say we have nothing against third countries. That is, we consulted with our allies.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: And others. [unclear] I won't mention that. The Chinese, they don't need to hear it.

Kissinger: No, they know what we've done.

Nixon: And we will of course submit to the Senate in the only area where we expect a treaty is in the area of SALT. Is that correct?

Kissinger: No, there are a lot of treaties.

Nixon: Several of these will be treaties?

Kissinger: Yeah. Most of the others will be treaties. Say, "of course any treaty will be submitted to the Senate. And I'll give the full report to the American people."

Nixon: You want me to report when we return?

Kissinger: I think on this one you might consider a brief television speech.

Nixon: And not do the Q and As? Just leave it out? Vietnam and everything? Why don't we just forget Q and As? Christ just—

Kissinger: Today? Oh I'd give a speech when you come back. Why let them nitpick you?

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I'd do what you did on arrival last time. I'd do this time on television. I think—

Nixon: You don't want to do it on arrival this time?

Kissinger: No, I think it'd be—you can have a nice arrival ceremony.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: But I think there's something to be said for having the American people see you—

Nixon: Moral support?

Kissinger: —not talk about Vietnam.

Nixon: That's right. Oh, can I tell them, if it's all right with you, that I will be making—tell the press that there will be, that we will have the usual number of toasts and arrival statements and so forth. The first one at the first banquet will be a substantive one.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: The first one we agreed would be substantive.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: And also that I am making a speech to the Russian people on television.

Kissinger: Right. From the Kremlin.

Nixon: Huh?

Kissinger: From the Kremlin.

Nixon: From the Kremlin.

Kissinger: They've now agreed to that. And you can say you hope that you can turn a new page or start a new period. Or maybe you'll say that at the end. Better—

Nixon: No, no, no. I'm not going to get into any rhetoric. I'm just going to tell them [unclear]. In the meantime, I must say—Henry, remember I told you, I told you time and again, watch these damn second guesses. Those people are only looking out for their own asses. And first of all—I mean, I know you think that I've been bugging you too much on this psychological warfare.

Kissinger: No, no, no, Mr., President—

Nixon: I mean I had—

Kissinger: You were one thousand percent right. I had to be naïve. I thought there was a Presidential order. They had all agreed to it in my presence. So I thought it was being done. So when you went after Haig this week, I thought his answers that he would get was this was in full swing. I was shocked and outraged that they had done nothing. So I then went after Rush. I said how could that happen? Well, it turns out that Laird and Abrams had been in collusion. Similarly, for 5 weeks you've been bugging us all, and correctly, to pour equipment into South Vietnam, partly for psychological reasons.

Nixon: That's right. Not done.

Kissinger: It had not been done. And now Rush, to his enormous credit, why wasn't it done? Because Laird had given orders to all the service Secretaries to keep it away from Rush. Well Rush this week, to his credit, he's now come in with a good program. And if you'd authorize it today before Laird comes back we'll get it done.

Nixon: All right. I'll authorize it.

Kissinger: Everybody's agreed on it now. So what we have is a government, which is unbelievable. We have a negotiator sitting in Helsinki who instead of throwing his hat in the air, we're doing his work for him. We're not taking credit for it.

Nixon: He should resign.

Kissinger: He's—Well, no. He's just dragging his feet so that he can prove he was the tough guy. Instead of—well, so we have just a massive series of problems.

Nixon: You know it might be better to have Rogers and you come to this thing tonight, come to think about it. What do you think?

Kissinger: Whatever you want, Mr. President. I think he can come.

Nixon: If there's a chance. Otherwise, I think he's going to feel—

Kissinger: He'll be over here anyway for the Congressional leaders.

Nixon: He'll feel affronted that he wasn't there.

Kissinger: And he'll expect I was.

Nixon: Yeah. I think he should come. And I'm going to get the hell out of there. Let him—he's going to gas with these guys anyway. But then you can do there too, you understand?

Kissinger: But I'll—

Nixon: I'll tell you, I'm—you know Henry, I don't know how the hell we've done this thing with the kind of son of a bitch that sabotaged. Like this thing that Abrams got. Abrams, of course, is always whining. Why didn't he—you know, he's just a whiner. But goddamn it, Henry, we have given the military *carte blanche* practically. Now what the Christ is the matter with the goddamn—

Kissinger: They are covering their asses in case anything goes wrong out there. But we are having—I'm having Haig put together for you—We are getting massive reports now. The Indonesian Ambassador has now reported from Hanoi the debt, the threat of riots, that the population is extremely disturbed. Now I cannot believe that when the Indonesian Ambassador, the French Ambassador, the Polish Ambassador separately report to their governments these things that there isn't something going on.

[Omitted here is discussion of the military situation in Vietnam].

247. Backchannel Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the Head of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Delegation in Helsinki (Smith)¹

Washington, May 19, 1972, 1934Z.

WH 21372. We have just received strong *démarche* through the President's special channel with Moscow alleging that U.S. delegation is moving too slowly on number of residual issues. The President is most anxious to expedite your talks in every reasonable way, with the view toward having a final agreement not later than Wednesday, May 24th. The Soviets have assured the President that they are providing similar instructions to their delegation. The President hopes that within existing guidance, you will be able to move promptly to resolve remaining obstacles.

For your information, the Soviets listed such remaining items as their base figure of 48 submarines, the issue of mobile ICBM's, definition of heavy missiles and the geographic location of ABM defense of ICBM field. We cannot, of course, yield on the latter item.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, 1972, SALT. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

Just received your 408.²

You should make continued effort to determine meaning of 48 number.³ Free ride for Soviets on H's would indeed be problem.

Re Titan conversion, this can be handled as you suggest.

Re precision for "light" and "heavy", I would appreciate your urgent recommendation. For example, could we say that neither side should replace current light missiles with new ones significantly larger than largest light missile that either side currently has. We could reach side understanding that significant means 10 percent larger.⁴

I would appreciate your urgent response to this message.

Warm regards.

² In backchannel message 408 to Kissinger, May 19, Smith reported on the continuing Soviet refusal to precisely define "heavy" or "light" missiles. (Ibid.)

³ In backchannel message WH 21375 to Smith, May 19, Kissinger stated that there should be absolutely no doubt in Soviet minds concerning the U.S. SLBM position, and noting that the number 48 certainly did not originate from anyone on the U.S. side. (Ibid.)

⁴ In his memoirs Smith recalled that as the summit approached, the U.S. delegation continued to press for a definition of heavy missiles. The Soviets contended that this was unnecessary because the obligation not to convert land-based launchers for light ICBMs into launchers for heavy ICBMs taken together with the commitment not to increase substantially the external dimensions of ICBM silo launchers dealt with the whole problem. The U.S. delegation insisted that although the silo launcher provision was important, it was no substitute for a definition of a heavy missile, which was necessary not for current missiles but for future missiles. On May 20 the Soviets said they could not agree to a definition of heavy missiles as those having a volume greater than 70 cubic meters or larger than the SS-11, the largest light missile either side deployed.

248. Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 19, 1972.

Kissinger: I had to do a little missionary work with Stennis,² who didn't understand the substance. That's what he was referring to. [unclear] They're willing to keep the offensive weapons out of the deal.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 726–15. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 5:25 to 5:35 p.m. The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

² Senator John Stennis (D–Mississippi). Nixon and Kissinger met with the bipartisan Congressional leadership from 4:13 to 5:23 p.m. A record of this meeting is in a Memorandum for the President's File, May 19, 1972. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Office Files, Box 88, Memoranda for the President, Beginning May 14, [1972].)

Nixon: Well, we can't do that.

Kissinger: Look, the first impact of this—Scoop Jackson³ went through the roof because he said [unclear]. He's more worried about the ABM. He doesn't care about the offensive ones. What is your take on the individual initial talks I've made with these guys? I have Scoop in my office. Down there, he went through the roof. He said: "I'm through with you all." When I was in my office, he said—

Nixon: He doesn't want ABM?

Kissinger: No. He thinks we've screwed it. But I explained to him how it came about. I showed him the military recommendations. So he said: "All right, I won't—of course I won't oppose you." But before I handle the bill again, I wanted to talk to you.

Nixon: Goddamn, get Moorer down there.

Kissinger: I had Moorer with me.

Nixon: Okay.

Kissinger: Then Stennis—I've gotten aboard now. But it will take some selling. You're quite right. Your instinct was right; we'll have problems with the hawks on this. Partly because they're so dumb, most of them, that they don't understand what we're doing.

Nixon: Goddamn it. If Smith and Rogers would understand it.

Kissinger: Well, Smith and Rogers don't want to understand it. Smith understands—doesn't want to understand—

Nixon: [unclear] Of course he understands it. Rogers [unclear].

Kissinger: Now with the press, Mr. President, I'd be very careful about saying something that can be quoted. That we, two great powers have a special responsibility because—

Nixon: Oh, yes.

Kissinger: That will drive the Chinese crazy.

Nixon: I won't change it.

Kissinger: And I wouldn't give them quite as much as you gave the Congress; What you did with Congress was very skillful, but I wouldn't—

Nixon: We have to give them—

Kissinger: Oh, no, no. Because you can—

Nixon: Congress is going to be just pissed off as hell if we don't know.

Kissinger: Oh, no.

Nixon: What part would you want to leave out to the press?

Kissinger: I would go a little easier on space, environment, and so forth.

³ Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson (D-Washington).

Nixon: Don't even mention it?

Kissinger: Just—I'd make one or two statements. For example—

Nixon: Which is the best one, space or environment?

Kissinger: I imagine one or the other. But—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I'd mention maybe space and then I'd say you already know about the commercial—

Nixon: Well they all know about commercial, they all know about SALT. How about space, those three?

Kissinger: Yeah, I'd mention those three.

Nixon: Fine. Of course I've put these guys to the point where they don't think much is going to come out.

Kissinger: Oh, I thought this meeting was handled masterfully.

Nixon: They know it's going to be tough.

Kissinger: But we had a piece. One thing we've done is we've got Stennis all steamed up now about putting Helms through.

Nixon: Do we need him? Well, on the other hand, did you—well, it was good that you had your meeting now, wasn't it?

Kissinger: Essential.

Nixon: Yeah. You don't think there's any more you have to do before you leave?

Kissinger: No. I'm booked up through the evening. I mean with meetings here. I have to work with Price on this speech. The toast for the first evening is coming along in pretty good shape.

Nixon: Who's doing that?

Kissinger: Safire. But really, I'm beginning to think more and more that these big-shot writers aren't worth it. Andrews is, you know, it's just too much of a struggle with Safire. He's got too many ideas of his own.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: You were absolutely right. It's just—

Nixon: Price is a man who really senses what you want and he writes it.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: Safire comes in with something that's totally different from what you ever came up with.

Kissinger: That's right. And then he gets committed to it and then he finally changes it after 15 minutes of argument but it's terribly time-consuming.

Nixon: We'll get it out of the way and from there on the big speech.

Kissinger: Price has done a pretty good job.

Nixon: Price has done a great—Look, that should be one that has sort of a good feel to it.

Kissinger: And that has a good feel to it.

Nixon: Toasts, I don't know. Do you want to put Andrews to work on the toast?

Kissinger: Well, I think—

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: It's coming along—it's coming along fine. But I think except for being too specific about the various areas, I think you're in very good shape.

Nixon: You would say SALT.

Kissinger: I'd say we're hopeful about SALT because—

Nixon: I'll say there's an awful lot still left to be worked out.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Nixon: And there's some—and then the commercial side—

Kissinger: Actually, the way it stands now, unintentionally, you will have to break some deadlocks in Moscow on SALT, the way it's working now.

Nixon: All right. We are certainly going to have—we just can't have a situation of coming back and having the hawks as enemies, screw the country.

Kissinger: Well—

Nixon: Maybe we don't want a deal?

Kissinger: No, Mr. President, I really think, the one we really screwed ourselves is on the ABM because we just gave over a period of years because we got driven back too much. I told Scoop goddamnit—

Nixon: How were we going to get it through the Senate?

Kissinger: That was the problem. Every year we had a bigger fight in the Senate. So that part of it is—I think the ABM is going to give more heartburn. The offensive one, once it is explained—John Tower⁴ is aboard now. I talked to him. Stennis is aboard and—

Nixon: And you emphasized, of course, we've still got MIRV, we've still got ULMS, they're giving up the old ICBMs—

Kissinger: Oh, yeah.

Nixon: —we've still got our aircraft, you know. That's the thing to do.

Kissinger: Mr. President, we'll go through a couple of days in my judgment, very similar to what we did in the China communiqué and

⁴ Senator John Tower (R-Texas).

then we'll pull it around and it doesn't hurt to have a little screaming. It will help us with the Russians.

Nixon: Yeah, I don't know. I don't want, though, having taken a strong stand in Vietnam, to throw it all, to piss it all down simply by—

Kissinger: The only problem is how we're going to do the selling back here.

Nixon: When you're there?

Kissinger: When I'm there.

Nixon: Well, I'll tell you what's going to happen. I think Laird and Moorer are going to [unclear] That's what I think. I don't know but they—

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: You can't come back and [unclear].

Kissinger: Of course, I'll be working on the communiqué and five principles and—

Nixon: Of course, I don't agree with Scoop on the ABM. He never got a goddamn thing that we could do for him. We couldn't get any more ABM sites if it were flying. And we still are keeping the system. Right?

Kissinger: Right. No, I think it's a good treaty, Mr. President. You also are going to get very widespread acclaim so that's not—no, you have idiots like Dominick⁵ who went up like a rocket but he's so dumb that it's almost a—

Nixon: What'd he go off on, ABM? He doesn't understand ABM.

Kissinger: No, no, he said that you won't get any money out of Congress if you make any SALT agreement because he said therefore when we freeze ourselves, we ruin ourselves. But that has nothing to do with the specific provisions. That's just among the ones there. The argument they were making—that Buckley⁶ and Dominick were making—was once you freeze—they all agreed that it's a good deal if we are pushing ULMS. But they—

Nixon: Are we?

Kissinger: Yeah, but what they were saying was Congress wouldn't vote money for ULMS.

Nixon: Oh, we'll insist on it.

Kissinger: Well, that's right. So I think we are in a tolerable shape about it. And the alternative was not to have the SALT agreement. There was no other alternative. If you didn't have the submarines in there, you would face the other argument—that their continuing to build nine a year—the was one the chiefs were making. And at the end of the freeze, they'd have 90. This is, this is why the chiefs—the chiefs

⁵ Senator Peter Dominick (R-Colorado).

⁶ Senator James Buckley (R-New York).

are delighted with it. And they will resound their arguments for it, and Moorer supported us very strongly down there.

Nixon: Interesting they didn't press us on Vietnam.

Kissinger: Fulbright was very positive.

Nixon: Shit.

Kissinger: I think, Mr. President, that this summit is going to be an enormous success.

249. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, May 19, 1972, 6:50 p.m.

RN: I had an idea that I think is very important—why not get Haig and Moorer and Rush together and tell them that I think that their priority assignment between now and the time we get back is to talk to the hawks.

HAK: Right, I have already talked to Haig about that—

RN: Why don't you bring Rush in on that—he is a terrific salesman and he can do it and do it piece of [by] piece so we don't have the blowups.

HAK: We have a few snags in that SALT agreement and I think that has to be on the first agenda item on Tuesday.² So we have to wait till we get it.

RN: The point is, apart from the fact we are not going to—let's just start preparing people of the fact that it is going to be a hell of an agreement however it turns out, you know. Because it is. You and I know—

HAK: I think Mr. President that Jackson is generally frustrated by his fate this year—I took him into the office and he lowered his opposition by 80% right there. And I got Stennis—

RN: The main thing is we don't have to wait for you to do it. Haig is very impressive in this sort of thing. Haig, Moorer and Rush

HAK: On the submarines we ought to get Zumwalt on it—

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 372, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, President Nixon placed the call. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files)

² May 23.

RN: Yes, he is a good salesman. Tell [them] that is an order, they're to carry it out.

HAK: I think that went well with the press.³

RN: They can't complain, they got a nice little story and as you may have noticed, I limited it to a three-item—

HAK: One suggestion, Brezhnev isn't that quite pre-eminent in that in the Soviet Union and he will get into trouble if we give him quite that much—as if he could decide things—he is the first but not the only one. It may weaken his position at home—that is the only—

RN: I wouldn't worry about that because the main thing is that whoever is in charge if they want to throw him out, they can get somebody else.

HAK: Right, okay.

³ Nixon's statement to the press on May 19. (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 602–608)

250. Memorandum From President Nixon to His Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Washington, May 20, 1972.

I have covered the points I will be making in this memorandum for the most part in conversations with Henry and with you, but I simply want to put them in writing so that you will have guidance for the period that we are gone on our trip to Moscow.²

With regard to Vietnam, it is vitally important that there be no abatement whatever in our air and naval strikes while we are gone. It is particularly important that any stories in the press indicating that we are letting up during this period be knocked down instantly, preferably in Saigon, if necessary at the Pentagon and if necessary even by you at the White House. There is nothing that could hurt us more in the minds of public opinion than some suggestion that we made a deal

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 3, Memoranda From the President. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The memorandum is unsigned. A copy was sent to Kissinger for information.

² In his memoirs Kissinger described Nixon's memorandum to Haig as the end of a "blizzard of paper," noting that Nixon wanted no basis for press stories that the administration was "letting up" during the summit. (*White House Years*, p. 1200)

with the Russians to cool it in Vietnam while trying to negotiate agreements with them in Moscow.

Just to be sure that there is absolutely no misunderstanding with regard to my orders they include the following:

1. There should be a minimum of 1200 air sorties a day and with the *Saratoga* on station this might be increased to 1300. What I am saying is that the number of sorties should be at maximum level during the entire period we are gone, unless you receive orders to the contrary from me directly.

2. At least 200 of these sorties should be on targets in the Hanoi–Haiphong area. With the *Saratoga* on station that number might well go up to 250 or 300. In fact, it would be well to increase it just slightly in that period so that there can be no implication at all to the effect that we are letting up because of our trip to Moscow. The only restrictions to the air sorties in that area are the 15-mile area around Hanoi proper and the belt of 15 miles or whatever we have previously ordered next to the Chinese border. But otherwise I want a relentless air attack on our targets in North Vietnam during this period—particularly on rail lines, POL and power plants. Concentrate on those targets which will have major impact on civilian morale as well as accomplishing our primary objective of reducing the enemy's ability to conduct the war.

3. On the propaganda front, I expect not only implementation of the orders I have previously given, some of which were covered in the memorandum you prepared for me, but I want some new ideas developed and implemented as quickly as possible. The entire effort should be to create pessimism in the North among the civilian population and pessimism in the South among the North Vietnamese forces there. What disturbs me is the routine way that CIA and USIA simply report the news of my speech rather than putting out reports with regard to more planes landing expected, riots in the streets of Hanoi and desertions in the troops in the South. This patty-cake method of handling the propaganda is typical of our conduct of the war on the military side, and I want it changed instantly to conform with my thinking as to how we are to act militarily from now on. As I have pointed out on several previous occasions, we shall have to admit that this is one of our major failures—not having an adequate propaganda and public relations effort going along-side what I believe is a superb foreign policy in most respects. When I get back I have some other ideas as to how we can correct this and we will probably set up a new office in the White House directly under Haldeman, similar to the one C.D. Jackson had under Eisenhower, so that we can finally begin to get the benefit we deserve from our foreign policy initiatives.

4. I want you to direct Abrams and Bunker to get out more information with regard to morale in the South. This certainly is something we should be able to do because it is true and also because it will

help at home. If they say they don't want to get out on a limb ask them what they think I have done. I also believe that the French report or any other reports that you have through secret channels of morale problems in North Vietnam must be leaked into the press—not in a column which is read by a few hundred people, but some way in to wire service or television stories. Colson will know what to do if you give him the material. Follow up.

On another subject we face a critical problem in terms of avoiding a massive right-wing revolt on the SALT agreement. All of us who have worked on this problem know that the deal we are making is in our best interest, but for a very practical reason that the right-wing will never understand—that we simply can't get from the Congress the additional funds needed to continue the arms race with the Soviet in either the defensive or offensive missile category. I want you to develop a team, consisting of yourself, Moorer, Rush and Laird when he returns, to pick off individual Senators and very important opinion makers who are on the right to try to mute their criticism when the announcement comes in from Moscow. Barry Goldwater, John Tower, Peter Dominick, Scoop Jackson, Eddie Hebert are among those who should be contacted. It is particularly important that Moorer and Rush have a talk with Agnew and get him aboard. Also, it would be very helpful to get Teller³ to come back and get him aboard so that he can lobby for us. This should be done on a person-to-person basis and should be done in a very hard-headed way. The most important point to make is that the President is not being taken in and that the military totally supports what we are doing and in fact strongly recommended the inclusion of SLBMs on the basis that we included them.

The most convincing argument you can make to this group is that the President is determined that we must go forward at the fastest pace possible with ULMS, MIRV, B-1 and any new weapon systems not covered by the agreement.

I think our case can be sold to some of the more sensible hawks, but it must be done on an individual basis before they get the announcement from Moscow and make up their minds and dig in against us.

It is no comfort that the liberals will praise the agreement, whatever it is. But let us always remember that the liberals will never support us—the hawks are our hard-core, and we must do everything that we can to keep them from jumping ship after getting their enthusiasm restored as a result of our mining operation in the North.

³ Nuclear weapon scientist Dr. Edward Teller.

251. Editorial Note

In his memoirs President Nixon wrote: "On Saturday, May 20, [1972] *Air Force One* left Washington for Salzburg, Austria, en route to Moscow. After we were airborne, Kissinger came into my cabin and exuberantly said, 'This has to be one of the greatest diplomatic coups of all times! Three weeks ago everyone predicted it would be called off, and today we're on our way!'" (*RN: Memoirs*, page 609) Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger recalled in his memoirs, "When against all expectation we took off for Moscow in *Air Force One* on Saturday morning, May 20, the mood was one of optimism, even elation, untinged by excessive humility. Despite the assaults by both Hanoi and our critics we had stood our ground; we were going to Moscow with dignity. We had behind us a rare public consensus produced by the stunning events of the preceding month. Conservatives reveled in the mining of North Vietnam; they interpreted the summit as a Soviet retreat. Liberals were relieved that the summit was taking place at all." (*White House Years*, page 1202)

In his May 20 diary entry, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman described his discussion of various issues with the President during the trip to Salzburg. Nixon referred to Kissinger's advice that he make a TV report to the country immediately after his return because they would need to do "some hard selling" on the results of the summit, and said he wanted speechwriter John Andrews to start work on it immediately, with a 2,000-word maximum, and have it in his hands when they left the Soviet Union. The President also said he needed "just one moving anecdote" to use in his TV address to the Russian people. The two men discussed the depth of the problem they were going to have with the hawks after SALT. Nixon said he wanted to be sure that Buchanan helped them with the hawks. They also discussed how to handle Secretary of State Rogers. Nixon told Haldeman to handle the Secretary in Salzburg. He himself would see Rogers on the plane to Moscow and tell him about the announcements and how they were being spaced throughout the week (which Nixon, Kissinger, and Haldeman worked out on the plane to Salzburg). (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

According to the President's Daily Diary, the Presidential party arrived in Salzburg on May 20 at 10:43 p.m. (Austrian time) and in Moscow at 3:57 p.m. (Soviet time) on May 22. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files)

252. Backchannel Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the Head of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Delegation in Helsinki (Smith)¹

Salzburg White House, May 21, 1972, 1630Z.

WTE 16. Subject: SLBM.

1. We cannot accept 48 modern submarines as Soviet base point, if they insist that this includes only Y class or newer. It is imperative for Congressional reasons that there must be some retirement of H and G classes involved in Soviet reaching level of 62. For this reason, Soviet base point should be about 41–43, which corresponds to real situation.

2. It is also imperative that total of 950 for Soviets includes modern missiles no matter on what submarine they are deployed.

3. Phrasing in our proposals on procedures for dismantling and replacement must be amended to permit us to lay keels of ULMS without having to destroy Polaris.

4. You should act on these points immediately; these instructions will also follow through normal channels.²

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Box 427, NSC Files, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, 1972, SALT. Top Secret; Eyes Only; Flash.

² In telegram 89509, May 21, the Department transmitted these "supplementary SALT instructions" to the delegation in Helsinki, noting that point 3 was consistent with NSDM 167 which did not require the start of destruction or dismantling of old launchers until the launch of the new submarine. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN (HE))

253. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Salzburg, Austria, May 21, 1972.

SUBJECT

Your Moscow Discussions, Tuesday, May 23, 1972

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it.

This memorandum summarizes the issues that will come up in the first set of your discussions on Tuesday and provides talking points.

I. Europe

1. *German Treaties.* These treaties have now completed parliamentary action in Bonn and await formalities of signature and deposit. Passage of the treaties is a significant success for Brezhnev who has staked considerable personal prestige on his German policy, apparently in the face of considerable skepticism among the CPSU leaders. (The reputed leader of the opposition, Ukrainian Party boss Shelest has been given a Government job over the weekend, suggesting his demotion.)²

Brezhnev may not, under the circumstances, have much to say about the treaties. He might possibly make some critical remarks about our not having exerted enough influence on the Germans during the weeks of acrimonious debate and close votes in Bonn. In my talks last month he urged intervention by us in the German local elections in Baden Wuerttemberg and subsequently there were a number of pleas through Dobrynin that we make a statement.

Early last week we did publicly indicate our interest in treaty passage by implication: We noted the linkage to the Berlin agreement in which we are interested and we welcomed the bipartisan efforts in Bonn to achieve a common policy on the treaties. But we stressed that basically the treaties were a national question for the Germans themselves to resolve since their own future was at stake.

Key Points to Emphasize

If Brezhnev should raise the treaties, *you should:*

—Point out that our interest in ratification was always clear, especially since all concerned knew that the Berlin agreement, which we had worked so hard with the USSR to achieve, depended on it;

—We felt that direct intervention might be counter-productive in provoking a nationalist response in Germany;

—We did make a careful, favorable public statement³ during the last, crucial week, responding to Soviet suggestions in the confidential channel;

² Kissinger wrote in his memoirs that by removing influential hard-liner Ukrainian Party chief Pyotr Shelest from the Politburo and demoting him to Deputy Prime Minister at the same time that the Soviet Party Central Committee gave its formal approval to his decision to proceed with the summit, Brezhnev was demonstrating that he was in charge. (*White House Years*, pp. 1204–1205)

³ Secretary of State Rogers made a statement supporting ratification of the West German treaties with Poland and the Soviet Union at the beginning of his news conference on May 19. (Department of State *Bulletin*, June 5, 1972, p. 779)

—In any event, we, like the Soviets, welcome the fact that the treaties are now ratified, awaiting only routine formalities for their final entry into force.

2. *Berlin*. The Soviets had made the final step that completes last year's four power Berlin agreement (the so-called Final Quadripartite Protocol) dependent on Bonn's ratification of the treaties.⁴

We had taken the position that the Berlin agreement should be handled on its merits and implemented independently, but we had no alternative to acquiescing in Soviet refusal to take this action.

Brezhnev may now press for early completion of the Berlin agreement since we and NATO, in turn, had made the beginning of multi-lateral preparations for the Soviet-proposed European Security Conference (CSCE) dependent on the Berlin agreement. Moscow is eager to get this process started.

Looked at cold-bloodedly, we could now take our time on the Berlin agreement; the Soviets are not likely to start a Berlin crisis under current conditions and we have little interest in rapid progress toward a European conference. There certainly is no reason for *us* to take the initiative for a hasty signature of the Berlin agreement.

Key Points to Emphasize

In the discussions with Brezhnev, and if he should press for rapid signature, *you should*:

—Note that we of course consider the Berlin agreement a good one, both intrinsically and because it illustrates that progress can be made on difficult problems when the US and USSR cooperate to that end;

—Point out that we have always been ready to sign the Berlin agreement, but understood the reasons why this has not so far been possible;

—Agree that signature should now take place as promptly as feasible;

—Suggest that the procedural aspects of signature (e.g. time, place and level) should be taken up at the foreign ministers level to ensure that all the participants find the arrangements mutually convenient and suitable.

⁴ Secretary Rogers and the British, French, and Soviet Foreign Ministers signed the final protocol of the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin in Berlin on June 3—the same day as the exchange of instruments of ratification of the treaties between Western Germany and the Soviet Union and Poland; see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XL, Germany, 1969–1972, for information on the Four-Power negotiations leading to the September 1971 Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin.

Note: We should not face the British and French with a fait accompli.

3. *Admission of the two Germanies into the UN.* As part of Moscow's priority objective of achieving full-scale recognition for the GDR, Brezhnev has been pressing for joint US-Soviet endorsement of early admission of the FRG and GDR to the UN.

Brandt, and even more his opposition, regard the GDR's admission to the UN as the most important symbolic step in the GDR's quest for recognition as a separate state. They wish to accede to it only as the last step of a general normalization of FRG–GDR relations which is to be embodied in a general treaty now being negotiated. (By normalization the FRG means, *inter alia*, increased freedom of movement between the GDR and the FRG, as well as other measures that would highlight the fact that the two German states have a special relationship reflecting their still being "one nation.") Thus Bonn does not object in principle, but wants to use eventual UN admission for bargaining purposes to achieve its other objectives.

Key Points to Emphasize

We have long been committed to Brandt to support his position. In responding to Brezhnev on this issue, *you should:*

—State that we support our German ally on this question;

—State that we believe that the admission of the two German states to the UN should be considered when *both* of them agree that the time has come; at that time we would endorse it.

Note: We retain rights, along with the UK, France and the USSR, for Germany as a whole, rights stemming from World War II. Our position in Berlin derives from these retained rights. Consequently, we must ensure that GDR admission to the UN and its consequent virtual recognition as a sovereign state by us does not undermine our rights with respect to all of Germany. The West Germans, British and French—and probably the Soviets too—are extremely sensitive on this point. It will require clarification and agreement prior to the actual admission of the two Germanies to the UN.

Additional Point

To show your readiness in principle to endorse German UN membership at the right time, *you could tell Brezhnev that:*

—We should in the near future contact our other two World War II allies, the UK and France, to discuss the manner in which quadripartite rights with respect to Germany as a whole and Berlin will be safeguarded upon the admission of the FRG and the GDR to the UN.

4. *European Security Conference.* (Our title: Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe—CSCE)

This is Brezhnev's major European initiative and he intends to get your commitment to prompt beginning of preparations and to the holding of the actual conference as early as this year.

We have long been on record as agreeing to a properly prepared and substantive conference (though, in fact, the problems of getting a mutually agreed agenda for a substantive conference are considerable). Our reservations have stemmed from our concerns that the conference will be a propaganda circus, produce false euphoria and open up differences among NATO allies. We and the NATO allies have been working intensively on more substantive positions to present at a conference, especially proposals that would stimulate freedom of movement and undercut Soviet pretensions to hegemony in Eastern Europe (Brezhnev Doctrine).

Although Brezhnev has frequently suggested through the private channel that we jointly develop a position, and you have indicated a willingness to explore the objectives of a meaningful conference, little of substance has in fact occurred.

We and the Allies are committed to begin "multilateral" explorations on a conference once the Berlin agreement is in effect. Nevertheless, you should use our agreement on the timing of these preparatory explorations to get Brezhnev's agreement to early explorations on European troop reductions (MBFR), in which we are interested. You should also take into account the sensitivities of our Allies to anything that smacks of US-Soviet collusion against them.

Key Points to Emphasize

In response to Brezhnev's urgings for early preparations and a conference this year, *you should*:

—Agree to the beginning of multilateral preparations later this year, subject to agreement among all countries concerned;

—Note that you cannot visualize preparations for a truly meaningful conference to be completed rapidly and you believe that it would be soundest to consider holding a conference some time in 1973.

As regards substance, *you should indicate that*:

—We would agree that a conference should deal with the *principles* of relations among European states; such principles would include:

- sovereign equality, political independence and territorial integrity;
- non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs;
- the right of people in each country to shape their own destiny.

—There could be certain agreed measures to improve *physical security*, such as restraints on movements of armed forces, exchanges of observers, notification of maneuvers. (Note: We want to keep MBFR as

such out of a conference because we would only want countries concerned to be involved in negotiations.)

—There should be expanded cultural exchange and concrete arrangements for increased economic and technological cooperation.

The Soviets advocate some sort of permanent machinery to come out of the conference. *You should:*

—Stress that if new institutions are to be created they should have carefully worked out terms of reference;

—Note that military questions are highly complex and delicate and could best be dealt with directly by the countries concerned.

Finally, if Brezhnev stalls on MBFR and suggests that this subject should only be dealt with after a conference has met, *you should:*

—Press our desire to move ahead in parallel on a conference and MBFR.

5. *MBFR*. Your discussion of this topic, on which the Soviets have remained reluctant, should be largely procedural. We have a need, for Congressional reasons, to have a process of negotiations underway; but we are less certain that early positive results are achievable. The Soviets, apart from showing reluctance to begin talks (e.g. their refusal to receive Brosio, the NATO explorer), have so far given little evidence that they have done any substantive homework comparable to the massive studies undertaken by NATO and ourselves.

The Soviets are aware that geography confers advantages on them. On the other hand, their forces in Eastern Europe have internal security functions. Consequently, while the Soviets might be interested in reductions that would enable them to shift forces eastward, they have displayed much hesitation. They may of course hope that they will be spared “mutual” cuts by growing pressures in the West for unilateral ones. In addition, the Soviets have shown great sensitivity to the term “balanced,” the *B* in MBFR, because they see in it a Western effort to obtain larger Soviet reductions as a compensation for our geographic disadvantage.

It is possible that in Moscow, as a “concession,” Brezhnev might propose quick and symbolic equal reductions and try to get a joint US-Soviet agreement to this effect. Our studies have shown this to be of questionable desirability (it would not be verifiable and would tend to accentuate present Soviet military advantages); moreover, a US-Soviet *fait accompli* on this subject would damage our Alliance relationship.

Key Points to Emphasize

In these circumstances *you should:*

—Seek Brezhnev’s agreement to MBFR explorations by countries concerned in parallel with the preparatory work on the CSCE;

—Agree that there can be private US-Soviet contact on this, but that the specific exploratory work should not be purely bilateral.

On *substance*, you should indicate that:

—Reductions should involve both foreign and local forces in Central Europe, although an initial phase could concentrate on foreign (ie, US and Soviet) forces;

—It would be best to concentrate in the first instance on ground forces;

—Nuclear weapons may present too complex a problem in the first stage of talks.

—There should be verification so that an agreement will not lead to misunderstandings and bickering (this could involve inspection, or, as in SALT, measures that are arranged in a way that each side can observe them by its unilateral means).

Note: As regards the European questions you could refer to the fact that the final communiqué on which there has already been considerable work by both sides will, of course, deal at some length with European questions.

One matter, not covered above, relates to frontiers in Europe. The Soviets are anxious to have us recognize their “inviolability.” But since they interpret this word as meaning “unchangeable” even by negotiation there is a problem for us in accepting it. We have no intention ourselves to see frontiers changed but because we maintain that the ultimate frontiers of a united Germany should be set in a peace treaty we have to maintain flexibility. Consequently, when Brezhnev raises this matter, *you should:*

—State that we are quite willing to recognize the principle of “territorial integrity,” but do not wish to infringe on the right of sovereign states to seek peaceful arrangements concerning their frontiers.

II. SALT

There are two ABM and two offensive issues that you may have to address in Moscow, subject to last minute changes in the negotiations. Some could be resolved by Tuesday,⁵ but you may want to familiarize yourself with the basic points.

There is a section on the follow-on phase of SALT, and some remarks concluding your SALT presentation.

A. *Unresolved ABM Issues.* The two remaining issues are:

—The specific location of the second Soviet ABM site (for ICBM defense): For Congressional reasons and to avoid any later misunderstandings, we need a firm assurance that it will *not* be in the populated

⁵ May 23.

areas of European Russia. We insist that it be East of the Urals, so there is no capability for linking it to the Moscow system as a population defense. Brezhnev hinted he would disclose the location, but for some reason the Soviets at Helsinki are refusing to specify the location.

- *They now propose that we declare our understanding that the second Soviet site is to be East of the Urals, and they will not contest our statement.*
- *This is an acceptable resolution.*

—Other Large Phased Array Radars. In addition to ABM radars, large radars also exist or could be built for other purposes, i.e., space tracking, for monitoring the SALT agreement, and for early warning. The last named has been settled, but there is a disagreement on how to limit the size of other large phased array radars, known by the acronym, OLPARS.

We propose the size be no greater than our smaller radar at Grand Forks. The Soviets propose a size limit that is more than three times our limit. This would be highly dangerous. Radars are the longest lead-time item; interceptors, small radar and other equipment can be quickly added if the large radars exist.

A possible compromise is: No specific treaty limitations, but agreement that each side will consult regarding construction of large (undefined) phased array radars, other than those designated for space-tracking or for national means of detection (for SALT or follow on agreements).

Your Talking Points

1. ABM Location:

—You believe it important there be no ambiguities or misunderstandings in the treaty;

—We have had reason to believe the second Soviet site would be East of the Urals;

—We will make a statement to that effect; if not contested by the Soviet side, the matter can be considered settled.

2. Large Radars

—Our two delegations cannot agree on definitions for large non-ABM radars;

—It is too technical to discuss at this level;

—*Could we settle it by relying on the treaty provisions that prohibit territorial defense, and by agreeing to consult each other before building these large radars, other than for space-tracking or national detector systems;*

—*If agreed, our negotiators can find suitable language.*

B. Offensive Issues. There are two issues still outstanding:

—The base point for the current Soviet level of SLBMs.

- The Soviets have proposed that they be allowed to build up to 62 “modern submarines,” with up to 950 launchers.

- This is acceptable, *but*,
- *The Soviets claim they have 48 “modern submarines” operational or under construction, and they define “modern” to exclude all older classes.*
- We seriously doubt this figure as they define it; it is an attempt to gain 6–7 submarines over their real level.
- We insist on the real base line of about 41–42, so that in building up to 62 (and 950 launchers) they have to retire some of their land-based ICBMs and older submarines.
- Otherwise, the Soviets would actually have 62 plus 30 older boats, and about 1150 launchers.

It is important for Congressional reasons, that the Soviets retire some of their older submarines and ICBMs.

If this is not resolved at Helsinki a compromise would be to count, at least, the newer class (H-Class) which are nuclear powered in their totals of submarines and launchers.

—*Light and Heavy ICBMs.* We have long insisted that light ICBMs not be converted to heavy ones, such as the SS–9. The Soviets agree, but there is a stalemate in defining the terms.

We propose that the dividing line be no larger than the existing Soviet SS–11 ICBM, about 70 cm³ in volume. They say no strict definition is needed. In fact, it now appears that the Soviets intend to replace or modernize the smaller SS–11 with a somewhat bigger missile. Our definition would exclude this.

A possible compromise is to agree that a heavy ICBM would be a missile significantly greater in volume than the existing “light” missiles deployed on each side, and leave it to the monitoring mechanism to work out any problems.

Your Talking Points

1. SLBM Limits

—We believe that the Soviet proposal of a ceiling of 62 modern submarines and 950 launchers is acceptable;

—However, we could not exclude from this any submarines that carry ballistic missiles, regardless of their age;

—There [*These*] submarines should be counted in the starting point of Soviet submarines operational and under construction;

—They can be replaced in achieving the Soviet goal of 62 boats and 950 launchers;

—You hope this problem will be given serious study by the Soviet leaders.

2. Light Versus Heavy ICBMs

—The Soviet side is aware of our concern over the heavy ICBMs in the Soviet arsenal;

—We need some clear dividing line between heavy and light;

—We can be flexible in resolving the problem, but some agreed definition is required.

C. *Interpretations of the Current Agreements.* Both of the current agreements provide the standard clause for withdrawal if supreme interests are jeopardized. Such circumstances, of course, cannot be precisely defined in advance, but it is clear that *if the Soviets were now to embark on a concerted program that would jeopardize the survivability of our strategic retaliatory forces, we would have to invoke this clause.*

In Moscow you may want to clarify our position so that the Soviets will be on notice. Our interpretation may play a role in the Congressional debates on the treaty ratification.

Your Talking Points

—In reaching these agreements both sides expect to contribute to strategic stability;

—If these expectations are not fulfilled and the threat to the strategic retaliatory forces of the US substantially increases, you would consider this jeopardizing our supreme interests;

—In such a case, we could withdraw from the current agreements under the supreme interests clause;

—You would expect the USSR to do the same;

—You wanted this to be clearly understood, since this interpretation will be given to the Congress as the question arises during Congressional hearings.

D. *Phase Two of SALT.* The outlines of the next phase are undefined, but we can be sure that the Soviets want to raise our aircraft at bases abroad and on carriers, and our submarine bases abroad.

Your Talking Points

We will want to go into questions of:

—A more permanent resolution of the level of offensive forces for all systems; i.e., equal aggregates of land and sea based missiles and bombers;

—Reductions of the most threatening offensive systems;

—An exploration of qualitative controls on missiles, for example controlling their accuracy, size, and possibly a limit on MIRVs, i.e., no more than certain number of specified ICBMs;

—As for ABMs, we regard this as settled;

—As for timing, we want to push for an early ratification this summer and resume SALT in the late fall if this is agreeable;

—In the interim you will be open to any Soviet thoughts in the confidential channels.

E. *Concluding Remarks*

—The Soviet leaders and the Soviet delegation are to be congratulated on their contribution to the agreements.

—Your negotiators are instructed to complete their work for signature of the final agreements in Moscow.

—These agreements can mark a turning point in our relations.

—Never before have nations limited the weapons on which their survival depends.

—This is a commitment to a new concept of *mutual* security.

—It is a profound statement of intention.

—We both have a significant stake in preserving what has been accomplished, and every incentive to build on them in the future.

254. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Salzburg, Austria, May 22, 1972.

SUBJECT

Your First Talk with Brezhnev, May 22, 1972

Brezhnev's Intentions.

This is a get-acquainted, sizing-up meeting. We know [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that Brezhnev intended, as of three days ago, to say little of substance but to put you at your ease including with a joke or two. He apparently wants to put you in a mood of expectancy, banking on your authority to make decisions on the spot. He apparently plans immediately to give Podgorny and Kosygin a debrief to show how well he has done. Despite his apparent intention to be agreeable, he could get carried away a bit and lapse into an oration on Vietnam, though probably more in sorrow than anger.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it.

Basically, Brezhnev will want a successful Summit, including not only SALT, the various bilateral agreements and improved trade but progress toward his goals in Europe and the Middle East. He probably wants Vietnam talks started again and claim credit, if possible, for any de-escalation of our actions against the North. He will want to demoralize the Chinese, who he hates, by trying to make your Peking trip appear as hollow compared to this one.

Undoubtedly he will try to sell his success to his colleagues as meaning he got the better of you. But he cannot do this unless he gets agreements, and these he cannot get unless *we* accept the terms, too. So, your leverage is ample.

Your Posture.

Since the first session is partly a psychological exercise, you should show that you know what you want and have a systematic approach to the week's work. He will try to get you off-stride with jokes and interruptions. You should return to the point you wanted to make when he is through.

In your remarks you should stress:

—The unique *character* of this meeting in our relations—long preparation, relative equality of power, concrete issues;

—The unique *opportunity* of this meeting to speak frankly about our responsibilities as great powers, to demonstrate that the benefits of peace and practical cooperation transcend differences in philosophy and systems;

—The importance you put on discussing not only the very specific and important subjects on which we want to try to agree but also *how we go beyond* these agreements to the “traffic rules” of the nuclear age—restraint, respect for interests, resisting temptations to accumulate tactical advantages, greater contact among peoples;

—The fact that we have an open society where debate is vigorous, especially in an election year, but the essential unity of the American people in supporting the quest for a stable world order on which you are embarked;

—The importance of personal contact of top leaders but the recognition that what we want to build should endure regardless of personalities.

Caution: Do not initiate any reminiscence of your talks with Khrushchev. Brezhnev may do so by mentioning again that he met you in 1959. If the subject does come up, *simply note* that we are 13 years further along and that the nature of our discussions has changed with the times.

You should avoid:

—The impression that you are under pressure to settle everything at these meetings this week.

—Lengthy justification of what we are doing in Vietnam; a crisp explanation that we are doing what we must to protect our interests and will continue it will impress Brezhnev even if he can't endorse it.

255. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Salzburg, Austria, May 22, 1972.

SUBJECT

Moscow Politics and Brezhnev's Position

Very recent developments in Moscow indicates that Brezhnev has encountered certain problems regarding his foreign policy, but he has apparently maneuvered successfully to overcome them for the moment.

—The full Central Committee was called into special plenary to hear a report by Brezhnev. The list of speakers in the debate contained mostly his cronies and Marshal Grechko. There is a suggestion in a sensitive intercept that Brezhnev used his friend Grechko to justify his military policies, including SALT.

—A Brezhnev associate who is in charge of foreign policy in the Party machine, Ponomarev, was elevated to the Politburo as a "candidate" member.

—The man reputedly the chief critic of Brezhnev's Western policies has been given the job of deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers (deputy premier, one of several). This man, Shelest, is currently the powerful party boss of the Ukraine, and it is highly doubtful that he will retain that position. He may even lose his seat on the Politburo since no deputy premier has such a seat.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it.

Thus, there has clearly been last-minute maneuvering in Moscow, in which Brezhnev has succeeded in bolstering his position. This will not mean that he is a free agent. But he currently seems stronger than ever. Passage of the German treaty undoubtedly also helped him. Almost certainly, he views his encounters with you, in which he will be the dominant Soviet participant, as a further boost. He should be quite self-confident and act very much the boss.

256. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Moscow, May 22, 1972.

SUBJECT

Sadat Letter to Brezhnev

[1 paragraph (5½ lines of source text) not declassified]

[1 line of source text not declassified] The letter is another reflection of Sadat's frustration with a situation in which the openings for movement seem virtually nil. It is also an expression of his concern that the Soviet leaders at the summit talks may tacitly or otherwise agree to leave the Arab-Israeli situation as it now stands.

Although Sadat did not refer directly to the possibility of an agreement to limit the quality or quantity of arms supplies to Egypt and Israel, he clearly is concerned that such an agreement might be discussed at the summit. The thrust of his argument is that the balance of power between the Arabs and Israel can only be shifted if Egypt is provided with the means to develop an offensive capability in the air. Failing this, he claims, the Israelis and the United States will be able to freeze the present situation indefinitely. He cites a variety of evidence to support his belief that this is, in fact, Israeli and U.S. policy now.

Sadat pointed to King Hussein's proposal for an eventual Palestine entity as an especially dangerous example of the way in which the U.S. and Israel are working. He also included an implied complaint about the willingness of the Soviets to allow Jews of military age and

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 638, Country Files, Middle East, Arab Republic of Egypt, 1972, Vol. VIII. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it.

technical qualifications to emigrate to Israel. Sadat's language indicates that he remains deeply worried that world attention will turn away from the Middle East, leaving him with what he calls "a border dispute" which would lack international support and which would lead to direct negotiations and "defeat."

Here too, Sadat is subtly reminding the Soviets that in talking to the United States, they should not be led into any arrangement that provides for direct negotiations. For his part, he tried to reassure Brezhnev, that he will stick to his "firm decision" to reject negotiations with Israel, if the Soviets will stand firm against U.S. blandishments or pressures. In other words, he will not undercut Moscow by again using the U.S. as an intermediary. He also asserted, however, that if the Soviets continue to fail to change the terms of power between Egypt and Israel, Soviet objectives and even the existence of the "progressive" Arab regimes may be threatened.

On the whole, Sadat's is not a strong letter. It does not offer anything new. It is defensive in tone and very much the plea of a worried client to his patron rather than an argument presented by one partner to another in whom he has real confidence. The Soviet leaders may agree up to a point with Sadat's reasoning but they will hardly welcome his implicit suggestions that their present policy is a failure.

It is still doubtful that under present circumstances, the Soviets will run the risks involved in providing Egypt with the kind of effective, offensive air power Sadat wants. There are indications, however, in the Soviet-Egyptian communiqué following Sadat's Moscow visit last week that the Soviets are now willing to give at least some rhetorical support to the line Sadat took in this letter. The communiqué omitted the usual stress on the defensive character of Soviet military support for Egypt and supported the view that, in the absence of a settlement, the Arabs have "every reason to use other means" than negotiations to regain territory lost to Israel. Despite that language, there is nothing in Sadat's letter or the communiqué to point to any new diplomatic initiative by the Soviets or the Egyptians.

257. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 22, 1972, 6:15–8:10 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU
The President
Viktor Sukhodrev, Soviet Interpreter (notetaker)

General Secretary Brezhnev: I should like first of all to greet you, Mr. President, on the occasion of this visit to our country and to express gratification that as a result of protracted preparatory work the summit talks between our two countries have begun.²

Before setting out several considerations on the substance of the questions that we will be discussing with you, I should like to ask you how you feel. Are you tired?

The President: I am fine. The hardest thing in these trips is the time difference. The first says you simply don't know when to get up and when to go to bed.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I certainly know what that feeling is. I have experienced it on many occasions too. For that matter, I don't even have to leave the Soviet Union to experience it. After all the time difference between say Moscow and Khabarovsk is seven hours.

The President: We experience that in our own country when we fly from Washington to California, though there the time difference is only five hours.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I should like to observe that I have known you for a long time, Mr. President, ever since your visit to the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the General Secretary's Office in the Kremlin. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting was from 6:18 to 8:18 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² Haldeman's diary recorded that the Presidential party's first surprise after arriving in Moscow was the same kind that they had in China. "As soon as we got into the Kremlin and settled down, P was whisked off to meet with Brezhnev in his office." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 462) Nixon described this first meeting in his memoirs, saying that he and Brezhnev sat down on opposite sides of a long table with the Soviet translator Viktor Sukhodrev at the end. The President recalled: "There had been concern expressed that I should have a State Department translator present also. But I knew that Sukhodrev was a superb linguist who spoke English as well as he did Russian, and I felt Brezhnev would speak more freely if only one other person was present." He noted that Brezhnev had "warmed perceptibly" during the meeting as he had begun to talk about the advantages of developing a personal relationship between the two of them. (*RN: Memoirs*, p. 610)

Soviet Union in connection with the U.S. exhibit. There is even a photograph that shows me among others during your conversation with Khrushchev.

The President: I have seen that photograph. I must say the General Secretary has not changed at all since then. But on that occasion you didn't have a chance to speak.

General Secretary Brezhnev: That's right. On that occasion I took no part in the conversation at all. But of course even apart from that meeting you and I know one another as politicians. And politicians usually know one another through the policies they pursue.

Let me now tell you, Mr. President, that we attach great importance to our talks with you and we intend to conduct these talks regardless of the questions that come up for discussion in a spirit of complete frankness, of an open and honest expression of our position and our views. We are hoping that you for your part will respond in kind. Only this, only such mutual frankness can create the necessary prerequisites for mutual understanding and a favorable atmosphere for the development of our cooperation.

As regards the substance of our talks, I believe we should bring to the fore those questions which would serve the cause of improving relations between our countries. I believe that it is this that both the American and the Soviet peoples are expecting of us. Moreover, the achievement between us of agreements which would promote the improvement of Soviet-American relations would undoubtedly be welcomed not only by your own peoples but also by the peoples of other countries.

I should like further to say the following. Obviously, Mr. President, you know as well as we do that there is in the world no small number of opponents of the strengthening of cooperation between the USSR and the USA. There is no need for me to name them—this is easily understood even without that. They are acting under various guises and pretexts—but they are acting vigorously. The fact that we are conducting negotiations with you and the very fact of our meeting is a worthy rebuff to such circles.

We attach great importance to our discussions also by virtue of the fact that objectively the Soviet Union and the United States hold a very prominent place in the world. We proceed from the assumption that the achievement of a certain measure of accord between us in the case of these negotiations would have a most serious significance for the shaping of the international situation and for determining the direction which the development of international relations will take toward a lasting peace or toward a new war. I should like to say outright (and you probably know this perfectly well yourself) that the organizing of such a meeting as the one that has now commenced between us was not an easy thing.

I do not wish to be insincere: For us, the organizing of such a meeting was greatly complicated by the actions of the United States in Vietnam. The war which the United States has for many years now been waging in Vietnam has left a deep imprint in the soul of our people and in the hearts of all Soviet people. To take in these circumstances serious steps to develop Soviet-American relations was for us not at all an easy thing.

However, I do not intend, at this time especially, to dwell on the Vietnam issue. We will probably have some more time for this later.

A great deal of complexity is also brought in by the situation in the Middle East in connection with the Israeli aggression against the Arab countries, the unwillingness of Israel to carry out the decisions of the United Nations and to vacate the captured Arab territory, and in connection with the extensive assistance rendered to Israel by the United States in the form of supplies of offensive weapons and through other means.

But this question also has another side to it. The preliminary contacts and discussions that we have had on this problem give certain grounds to believe that we can reach some kind of common approach and even now to formalize some kind of understanding relating to the Middle East.

And it is necessary to achieve such understanding, for the situation in the Middle East is an explosive one. If we let the events run their course war may start anew. And all of the good work that we want to do with you may turn out to be thrown far back. Do you or we need that? Obviously we don't. That means we have to reach agreement.

But this question too is not one on which I should like at this time to dwell in a concrete manner. For this too we shall probably have some time later.

At this moment we can state with gratification that in spite of everything, thanks to the constructive efforts made by both sides—the Soviet and the American—and thanks to the certain restraint and realism in these situations (and there have been such situations) we have succeeded in preparing this meeting and the Soviet-American summit talks have begun.

On the whole, summarizing the above, I should like to tell you, Mr. President, that without cancelling our sharply critical attitude to several points in the present American policy, we do see nonetheless in our talks with you a possibility to exert fruitful influence on the entire international situation, a possibility to clear a road leading to the settlement of several complex problems and to strengthen the peace that all nations require so much.

Turning now to the concrete content and probable results of our talks as they appear to us at this time, I should like first of all to say

how highly we value the great, many-sided, and fruitful work that has been done by both sides and the course of a long period of time in order to elaborate and reach agreement on Soviet-American relations in many important questions.

Rarely has it been the case in the past that summit talks of this kind have been so carefully prepared in advance.

And here I want first of all to say that a very great achievement has been the elaboration of the document on "The Basic Principles of Relations Between the USSR and the USA."³ This is a principled and fundamental document. If it is treated not as a formal piece of paper but as the basic document regulating the development of our relations (and we conceive of no other approach) this document can become, as it were, a foundation of a new era in relations between the USSR and the USA.

In my conversations with Dr. Kissinger I have already said, and I should like to repeat this to you, that the name of President Roosevelt who was linked with the normalization of relations between the United States and the Soviet state in 1934 and with the fighting collaboration of our peoples in the struggle against the Nazi aggressors in World War II is warmly cherished in the memory of Soviet people. I believe that no less appreciation among the peoples would be enjoyed also by statesmen who in the present complex situation mustered sufficient courage, realism and good will to lead Soviet-American relations into the channel of broad and many-sided cooperation to the good of the Soviet and the American peoples, to the good of all peoples, to the good of universal peace.

It is not to be ruled out that in the future when we shall have passed on to the practical implementation of the good principles and good intentions set out in our joint document on "The Basic Principles of Relations" there may arise a need for more frequent and regular contacts and exchanges of views on one level or another—particularly in the event of some acute or crisis-like situations. Maybe it would be worthwhile thinking over the form that such regular contacts could assume.

Out of the remaining and quite impressive list of elaborated bilateral agreements, I think we should emphasize the agreements relating to the limitation of strategic arms. We are both fully aware, Mr. President, of the immense effort that was required in order to prepare these agreements. I am sure that we are both fully aware of how useful it has been from the standpoint of the direct national interests of

³ See Document 233.

our two states and in terms of their influence on the general international climate.

I have received a report to the effect that two or three specific points now remain unresolved. Our delegates in Helsinki have not succeeded in keeping with them. I should like to express confidence that you and we will be able to bring this matter to a logical and successful outcome.

The President: This is something that you and I have to do, Mr. General Secretary. It is we who should settle the really difficult questions.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I believe that perhaps it is simply a case of some misunderstanding arising between our representatives in Helsinki. All that has already been done should enable us to successfully complete the job. Perhaps indeed you and we should look into the matter.

The President: The positions seem to be very close right now. As for those two or three points that remain outstanding, we should try and see whether we can find a way of breaking the deadlock.

I have studied the history of the relationships between Stalin and Roosevelt, and also to a lesser extent, between Stalin and Churchill, and I have found that during the war differences would arise between their subordinates, but then at top level these differences were usually overcome. It is that kind of relationship that I should like to establish with the General Secretary.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I would be only too happy and I am perfectly ready on my side.

The President: If we leave all the decisions to the bureaucrats we will never achieve any progress.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Then we would simply perish.

The President: They would simply bury us in paper.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I should now like, so to say, in a particularly confidential way, to express one thought. Despite all the positive significance of the agreements achieved on ABM systems and on offensive types of arms, we have to admit that by themselves such agreements do not lessen the danger of the outbreak of nuclear war. And such a danger cannot fail to cause concern in the minds of many millions of people both in your country and in ours. In the agreements that have now been elaborated by us jointly and will be signed people will not find an answer to this question which is causing them concern. I am now giving you these observations so to say as food for thought, and not for public discussion.

The President: Even with those limitations that we are assuming we still have enough arms to kill one another many times over.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Exactly. That is why when we looked into the meaning of all that we have already done, we came to the conclusion that although all this is very useful we ought to raise before you the question of achieving agreement on the non-use against one another of nuclear arms. We placed this question before you in a preliminary way hoping that you would give us your view on this matter. I should like to hope for a positive attitude on your part. I believe that an obligation of this kind could serve as a good example for others and promote the invigoration of the international situation.

You may of course say that the situation is complicated by the fact that you and we have our allies. But I believe that all this can be settled for the sake of delivering our peoples from the threat of nuclear war. An agreement of this kind would have an important and indeed an epoch-making significance. Naturally, I am not asking you to reply to my question right now. I merely wanted to emphasize the importance of an agreement of this kind. Such an agreement would provide an impetus for the further advance along the road on the physical reduction of the volumes of armaments. I trust you will agree Mr. President that only a radical solution of the problem—the destruction of nuclear weapons—can really rid the peoples of the threat of nuclear war. This would be a tremendous achievement. Our position is that this is what we should strive for.

The President: I think you told Kissinger that this would be a peaceful bomb.⁴ As you admit, there does exist a very serious problem concerning consultations with our allies. But after recently receiving a personal message from you at Camp David, I asked Kissinger quietly to work on this problem with some of my White House staff so that a little later we could discuss the matter to see where we could go. For the time being we do not want to put this question into the hands of our bureaucracy who would immediately find lots of difficulties and obstacles in it. In the early stages we would like to study the matter quietly. I would like to take up this matter a little later but not at a plenary meeting.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Very well. We have almost a full week at our disposal. During the forthcoming negotiations which I trust will proceed normally and in a good way we shall certainly be able to come back to this matter.

The President: I do not mean that you and I should waste our time on various words and phrases; that is something that Kissinger, Dobrynin and Gromyko can do. We could give them some general ideas to work on. This applies both to this particular matter and to others.

⁴ See footnote 11, Document 234.

General Secretary Brezhnev: We shall seek to achieve agreement in principle and then we could entrust the concrete formulations to others.

I should like further to say a few words about Europe. I would very much like you to be very clear in your mind, Mr. President, that the Europe policy of the Soviet Union pursues the most honest and constructive goals and is devoid of any subterfuges—even though there is certainly no lack in the wide world of people who want to muddy the water and propound all sorts of pernicious fabrications. The Russian people and all the other peoples of the Soviet Union have suffered quite enough from wars that have originated on the European soil. We do not want this to be repeated anew. We want to rule out such a possibility. That is the objective of our Europe policy. I believe that the United States too cannot be interested in a repetition of all that has happened in the past. We believe that the United States is in sympathy with the achievement of *détente* in Europe and the strengthening of European peace. If that is so then you and we have before us a vast scope for cooperation to these ends. And we are hoping that it will be carried into effect under the hallmark of good will and a constructive approach. This hope of ours rests on a certain degree of practical experience. We do genuinely value the cooperation that we had with you at the time of the preparation of the agreement on West Berlin. We also value the steps taken by the American side to promote the ratification of the treaties signed by the Federal Republic of Germany with the Soviet Union and Poland. Permit me to express the hope that you and we will continue that good practice in matters including the preparation of the all-Europe conference.

As regards that conference I should like to say the following. This question too we seek to approach as realists. It is obvious that it will not prove possible to solve all the complex problems existing in Europe at one go. But we would think that such a conference if it passes successfully can lay a good foundation for cooperation between all European states.

I believe there is nothing in this that could be opposed by the United States or Canada.

We have on many occasions spoke publicly on this matter and I should not like to take up your time with a repetition of what has already been said. I believe we could discuss this matter in greater detail later and find mutual understanding.

I believe it would be a good thing to register our common positive attitude to the conference in the joint communiqué which will reflect the results of our talks. Such mutual understanding would have great meaning and significance.

The President: This is more a matter of form than substance. I was discussing this question on my way to Moscow with Kissinger and

Rogers. I think we could reach understanding and that includes the question of timing. The other European countries will certainly be expecting us to mention this subject in our communiqué so we have to find a way of doing it.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I believe they will certainly be expecting us to do so. I also feel that we could agree without any public announcement to begin consultations on matters relating to the all-Europe conference on a bilateral basis.

I will not now go into the details of other matters of interest to us. There are many of them and of course they all have great significance for the development of cooperation between us. I want to say that I highly appreciate the fact that the President has agreed personally to sign many of the bilateral agreements that have been prepared. This will be of very great significance.

The President: I think the most important agreements are the ones relating to SALT. I feel they should be signed by the two of us. Also important will be the agreements on space, the environment and trade. I would be prepared to sign all of them. But I understand that you may want some of them to be signed by Kosygin or Podgorny.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I would say that the most important document will be "The Basic Principles of Relations between the USSR and the USA."

The President: Yes, of course. And that's a document that should also be signed by us both. As for the SALT agreements, as I see it, you have the same responsibility in your country for military matters as I have in mine as Commander-in-Chief.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Some agreements on our side will be signed by Comrade Podgorny and Comrade Kosygin.

Permit me in conclusion to say a few words on the procedure of our further talks. On our side the plenary meetings will be conducted by myself, Podgorny and Kosygin. Naturally, if the President should wish to meet separately with Podgorny, Kosygin, or myself, such meetings can be arranged.

The President: I feel it would be important for me to have an early meeting with the General Secretary to consider unresolved issues such as, for instance, the outstanding points relating to the SALT agreements and also to have a confidential talk on the Vietnam problem. That question is one that you and I should discuss between the two of us. But on the whole, I am ready to follow your advice.

We would not like the question of "The Basic Principles" to be brought up at a plenary meeting because many of our side have simply not been informed of it. I trust we can make to appear as if this question arose and was settled in the course of the discussions during this week. I hope you will help us play this out in this way. We would

not like to say openly tomorrow that you and we have arranged everything in advance.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Then perhaps tomorrow we could mention the questions of limiting strategic armaments and several others. As regards the question of “The Basic Principles” it would be a bit awkward for me to discuss it without Podgorny and Kosygin.

The President: No, you can certainly feel free to discuss it with your colleagues any time. I was merely mentioning the difficulties on your side. We’ve not said anything yet to our Secretary of State for instance.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Maybe we could then start out by saying that it would be a good thing to find some form of registering our common desire to achieve an improvement in our relations. In other words, we could sort of raise the matter in general terms.

The President: I agree. On the whole, I would say that where we face the most difficult questions it’s best to have a discussion between two people and where the questions are easy to take in a broader group. I would suggest that kind of division of labor.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I will consult with my comrades and give you a reply tomorrow.

I would now like to express the hope that your visit to Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev will be interesting, pleasant and useful.

The President: We appreciate very much the wonderful welcome and the beautiful quarters we have been given.⁵

Like you, Mr. General Secretary, I have met with the leaders of many states. But like you I too am aware that this meeting is of the greatest importance because you and I represent the two most powerful nations of the world. Of course, we have our differences, but the important thing in terms of the future of our two peoples and the future of the world is for the leaders of the two most powerful nations to be able to meet one another face to face. If we achieve a situation where such meetings become possible we shall be able to move forward toward mutual understanding on important issues. And then even if we still have differences on some other matters they will not lead to violence. This will be a great achievement. I believe it is true that peace is at least as important as war, and if the leaders of our two

⁵ After describing the President’s “grandiose” suite in the palace of the Tsars’ Apartments in his memoirs, Kissinger wrote: “Alas, the splendid Presidential apartment proved unsuited to the conduct of business. Our security experts were certain it was bugged by sophisticated equipment, Nixon refused to use the babblar; its noise drove him crazy. Thus, the President and I were reduced to using his American limousine parked outside for really private conversations, hoping that its bulletproof windows would inhibit any electronic equipment aimed at it.” (*White House Years*, p. 1207)

countries could cooperate in time of war it is surely even more important for us to cooperate in time of peace.

General Secretary Brezhnev: We must not only cooperate, we must act in such a way as to prevent the possibility of war breaking out anywhere and not just between us.

The President: I believe the greatest danger is not in a war directly between our two countries, but in a situation where we would be dragged against our will into wars breaking out in completely different areas of the world. That is what we should try to avoid.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I think we should try and avoid all that is linked with war.

[The meeting then adjourned.]⁶

⁶ Brackets in the source text. Haldeman's diary recorded that the dinner, which the meeting delayed for 2 hours, went very well, although the "toasts were mediocre." He wrote that after he got back from the dinner, the President called him to his room at about 11:30 and reviewed the day, especially the meeting with Brezhnev and the way it was set up. Nixon told him that they had "to carry the line on these, there's no problem by this kind of thing and not [to] let Rogers create one." Haldeman complained that they had a terrible time getting the American press to the right place at the right time—for instance, they had not gotten to the "Brezhnev thing" in time to get a photo. He noted that the Soviets were not cooperative in these areas and apparently did not understand "the problem we have in dealing with our press." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 462)

258. Editorial Note

At 3:30 a.m. on May 23, 1972, President Nixon scrawled notes in preparation for what he wanted to say at his next meeting with General Secretary Brezhnev. He began: "Let us talk frankly: We have had a familiar rivalry. We are great powers—We are rivals—We have different goals—philosophies. Historically this means war—We have never fought a war—Neither will win a war—. Our interests will not be served—Our people do not want war." Nixon wrote that they were at the summit because their national interests would be served. Regarding arms, each side had an advantage in some areas, but neither could or would let the other get one. An arms race was one "no one wins except those who have [the] good sense to stay out of it. Let us protect our security. . . . Let us reduce [the] chances of being dragged into war—when our direct interests are not involved." He noted the history of great powers being dragged into wars they should have avoided.

The President wrote that the United States would end the Vietnam war with the “least embarrassment” to the Soviet Union. It should put itself in the place of the United States with 50,000 dead, 250,000 wounded, and 1,500 missing in action. It might say get out, but this would not happen “when we could finish [the war] in an afternoon.” Nixon wrote that the United States sought no bases, but did seek honor—a cease-fire, return of POWs, and the war would stop. It would not go further at the peace conference, but it would go further on the battlefield. He noted that a Vietnam settlement would open up cooperation on all other issues. The two sides “must think big” by reducing arms, doubling trade, and respecting neutrality. “Let’s win a great victory for both [sides].” The President wrote that sentiment about peace and friendship wouldn’t settle their differences, but respectful discussion about those differences was the way to a settlement which could build a new world. He had come to the summit because “peace is in our interest.” They must be strong and negotiate—no unilateral disarmament. “We must have faith in ourselves—our country and our future. . . . To withdraw means an unsafe world.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President’s Personal Files, Box 75, President’s Speech File, May 22–29, 1972, Russia)

259. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 23, 1972, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

FIRST PLENARY SESSION

PARTICIPANTS

US

The President
The Secretary of State
Ambassador Beam
Dr. Kissinger
Mr. Flanigan
Mr. Hillenbrand
Mr. Ziegler

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President Trip Files, The President’s Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Krimer. The meeting was held in St. Catherine’s Hall, Grand Kremlin Palace. According to the President’s Daily Diary, the meeting was from 11:04 a.m. to 1:04 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

Mr. Sonnenfeldt
Mr. Hyland
Mr. Matlock
Mr. Krimer, interpreter

USSR

Leonid T. Brezhnev, Secretary General, Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Nikolai V. Podgorny, Chairman, Presidium of USSR Supreme Soviet
Aleksei N. Kosygin, Chairman, USSR Council of Ministers
Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Vasily V. Kuznetsov, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Anatoly F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the US
Leonid M. Zamyatin, Director General, TASS
Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, Aide to Brezhnev
Georgy M. Korniyenko, Chief, USA Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter
German Gventsadze, Note taker

Brezhnev welcomed the President and his colleagues to the Kremlin for the first plenary meeting and expressed the hope that the talks, which he had begun with the President the day before,² would be successful.

The range of questions for discussion during the President's official visit to the Soviet Union had been set forth generally in the President's and Podgorny's speeches at dinner the evening before,³ and also during the private talk he had with the President. Brezhnev wished to emphasize again that the Soviet Union attaches great importance to this meeting and is deeply aware of the responsibility both sides bear. The meeting is being held under very complicated circumstances, at a time when many issues between us have not been resolved. This imposes a very great responsibility on all participants. Bilateral relations will be an important, even dominant, part of the talks. The preparatory work has been well done. However, he wished to emphasize that we cannot conduct the talks without regard for the present international situation, and indeed have no right to do so. The whole world, and above all the peoples of the two countries, expect tangible results from these talks, results which will produce not increased tension but a real *détente*, not only between our nations, but also throughout the world. Both sides are duty-bound to take this into account.

In touching upon the international situation, Brezhnev recalled his conversation with the President the day before, in which he had emphasized that in the present situation, which had been particularly complicated in recent weeks, it had not been easy for the Soviet Union to make the decision to proceed with the summit meeting. However, proceeding from its desire to settle all matters by negotiation rather than

² See Document 257.

³ For text of the speeches, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 619–623.

by confrontation, the Soviet Union had decided to go ahead with the summit meeting and is prepared to engage in businesslike discussions leading to successful results.

Podgorny's speech at the May 22 dinner in the President's honor and also the President's response provide grounds for hope—and indeed for confidence—that the talks will be constructive and will result in mutually acceptable decisions. The Soviet Union is approaching these talks prepared to discuss all problems—even the most acute ones—in a frank and honest way in order to achieve a better understanding and move ahead to appropriate solutions. He hopes the President will follow the same approach.

The Soviet Union values highly the cooperation of the two countries exhibited recently in a number of fields, which has enabled us to settle several important issues. He believes this provides a good example for our future relations. He has in mind the cooperation of the two countries in working out an agreement on West Berlin. He appreciates the help rendered in support of West German ratification of its treaties with the Soviet Union and Poland. These are indeed good examples of cooperation between us. Brezhnev also emphasized that this kind of cooperation was greatly appreciated not only by his colleagues present at the table, but also by his Party and by the Soviet people.

In addition, he paid tribute to the President and to those on both sides who have taken part in preparing this meeting. A great deal of work has already been done to bring our positions closer to final agreement on such important matters as strategic arms limitations, which have been the subject of negotiations for more than two years, and also on other questions which will probably be completed at these talks. Finally, he again urged an effort to find satisfactory solutions to outstanding problems in order to justify the hopes for this meeting held by the Soviet people, the American people, and the people of the whole world. The eyes of the whole world are on these discussions.

Proceeding to practical matters, Brezhnev suggested that he and the President each agree to instruct a representative to draw up a working plan for the rest of the discussions, indicating the questions to be discussed each day, and thus providing a schedule for each meeting. There are many questions to be discussed, some of which are already at a final stage, while others require additional discussion and clarification. Therefore, he proposed that a representative of each side meet to draw up a working plan. Brezhnev had in mind not simply an agenda, but also such matters as scheduling the signing of documents.

Brezhnev then asked the President for his views on the forthcoming talks and the questions he had raised.

The President said he first wished to express appreciation for the hospitality we have received, and for the cooperative spirit of the peo-

ple on both sides in preparing for the present meeting. The President approved the idea of breaking into smaller groups, since some problems require a great deal of additional discussion and finally hard decisions. As he had told the General Secretary the day before, it will be much easier for two or three or four people to hold these discussions and arrive at decisions, than for a group of, say, twenty. The President added that both Brezhnev and he would doubtless wish to consult with their colleagues before making decisions.

Regarding procedure, the President suggested that Dr. Kissinger meet with whomever the General Secretary selected to set up an agenda for the talks and then submit it for final approval to the General Secretary and himself.

Brezhnev said that he would appoint Foreign Minister Gromyko to meet with Dr. Kissinger.

The President said that he considered it a good idea to get the various proposals ready for signing or announcement. We can proceed to sign those agreements which have been reached and announce them day by day as they are concluded.

Brezhnev agreed that it would be good to take these matters in turn.

The President said they might then be able to announce at the end of each day that the sides had met and had completed certain agreements. This could be reported in the morning papers here and would also fit the press situation in our country.

Brezhnev said he agreed in principle to this procedure.

The President said that if the General Secretary could designate appropriate persons for signing the various documents, he would also do the same for the U.S.

Brezhnev agreed, saying that this can be worked out in the meetings as they proceed.

The President said that he would sign some agreements and some would be appropriate for Secretary Rogers to sign. As he had told the General Secretary, he was particularly interested in signing some of the agreements himself.

The President reviewed where we stand. As the General Secretary had indicated yesterday and had said again today, we are fortunate in that a great deal of progress has been made in a number of fields. There are still some questions, however, requiring discussion, and that will take time. Sometimes these final decisions are the most time consuming. Therefore, the idea of dividing into smaller groups is a good one. Then in another full session we can sum up for all concerned what has been discussed in the smaller groups.

The President thought it worth noting that in most meetings between heads of government or heads of state it was difficult to get

enough substance to agree on and to announce at the conclusion. That is why those who work on communiqués have difficulty finding enough words to say nothing. But, in our case here, we are fortunate to have matters of great substance not only to discuss but also to decide. That is as it should be between Great Powers.

If it is possible at the summit meeting to work out and announce agreements on cooperation in space, cooperation in improving the environment, a commercial agreement, and one on arms limitation, these alone will make the meeting quite successful. We have the possibility of reaching all of these agreements and more, provided it is possible to work out differences in some other areas.

The President recalled the point made by the General Secretary during their talk the previous day that this meeting is only a beginning, a beginning of reaching agreements on important matters, but still only a beginning. Important as these agreements are, they are only a foundation. Are we to build a great room like the one we are sitting in, or only a foundation? For example, as he and the General Secretary had agreed yesterday, an arms limitation agreement between our two countries will be of historic significance for the entire world, because it will be the first time in history that the two strongest nations in the world have made an agreement limiting their arms. However, even after an arms limitation agreement each of us would still have enough weapons left to destroy each other many times over.

Brezhnev remarked that yesterday the President had said seven or ten times over.

The President then mentioned a field in which Kosygin is particularly expert. We are talking about trade between our countries amounting to several hundred million dollars. But the GNP's of our countries total one and a half trillion dollars. Our trade should be in the billions. The President urged that we not think only in limited terms of what we may negotiate here this week, but also in terms of where we go from here to build on the foundation we have laid.

The President wished to put in a proper framework the reason he believes we have come together and the reason he sees real chances of progress. First, he believes we are fortunate that our representatives have established good personal relations. For example, Ambassador Dobrynin and Foreign Minister Gromyko, Secretary Rogers and Dr. Kissinger all know each other well and have a friendly relationship. Even though the President does not know the three major leaders of the Soviet Union as well, he believes he has friendly and respectful relations with each of them. In addition, other people in our government, such as the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Science Advisor and the Director of NASA have established a good working relationship with their Soviet counterparts. This is good and

will help us work out our problems, even though it is not the heart of the matter.

The second important factor is that whatever agreements we work out will be of much greater importance than agreements with smaller countries. Without meaning in any way to disparage smaller countries, he would point out that we have good relations with the leaders of, say, Bolivia. Yet the agreements we work out with that country will not make much difference to the peoples of the world. What brings us here is the fact that we are both strong, have mutual respect, and recognize on both sides that neither will allow the other to get an advantage in terms of military power. There will be times when one country will move ahead of the other in a particular field, when one will make a breakthrough before the other does. But two peoples as strong and large as ours are destined to deal with each other on an equal basis in the years to come.

The President said he would like to think that each person at the table is a sentimental man to a certain degree, but we are meeting here not because of sentiment, but because we are pragmatic men. As practical and honest men we recognize that our systems are different and that in many parts of the world our interests conflict. But as practical men, we have learned the lessons of history and will not allow ourselves to be dragged into conflict in areas peripheral to our interests. These problems may seem important at the time, but cannot compare in importance with the need to have good relations between the two most powerful countries in the world.

So we see that the time has come when our two nations have an opportunity which perhaps has not come to nations in history up to this point. That time means that we must find ways to work together to limit arms, to expand our economic relations for our mutual benefit and also to work together in other fields such as improvement of the environment, cooperation in outer space and others. We would continue to compete, but it can be a friendly competition in which each side would gain rather than lose, and we can both work for the mutual good.

This does not mean that settlement of differences will always be easy. Differences are settled easily only under the dictation of the strong to the weak. We had reached the stage in our relations—and the President believes this was fortunate—where we consider ourselves to be equally strong. Therefore, we feel this opportunity is one which is unique, not only because of what we do here on these agreements which are important in themselves, but even more so because of the way we view the future.

Good relations between the Soviet Union and the United States can have an enormous effect for the good of the people of the whole

world and above all for the good of the people of our two countries. It is his hope that this week the personal relationships between us will become better. We can begin the process of exploring future progress which could make these agreements seem small in terms of what can be accomplished in the future.

The President said he wished to close his remarks by saying what his Soviet friends may be too polite to say. He said his reputation is of being very hard-line and cold-war oriented.⁴

Kosygin remarked that he had heard this sometime back.

The President said that he has a strong belief in our system but at the same time he respects those who believe just as strongly in their system. There must be room in this world for two great nations with different systems to live together and work together. We cannot do this however, by mushy sentimentality or by glossing over differences which exist. We can do it only by working out real problems in a concrete fashion, determined to place our common interests above our differences.

For example, the President wished to see the discussions on trade produce some options for the future. The results of the talks should not be limited to what he would call nit-picking agreements with limited objectives. They should look ahead to long-range goals.

Brezhnev said that in general on all the questions that would be discussed here, he anticipates far-reaching decisions worthy of the stature of our two nations, and not just short-term arrangements. He hopes that we will be able to sign some agreements here that would be tangible and really be felt by the peoples of our two countries. For example, if we can talk in terms of a 3–4 billion dollar credit for 25 years at 2 percent per annum, things will move along very rapidly indeed. This will also make it possible to solve major problems for the US in terms of large supplies of gas and oil, timber and other products.

Kosygin interjected “not to mention vodka.”

Brezhnev concluded by saying that an agreement for 20–25 years on gas, for example, would really constitute a major long-term step.

Podgorny took up the vodka theme, remarking that as for vodka, the US produces an ersatz product. Smirnoff may have been a Russian vodka years ago, but now it is an imitation.

⁴ In his memoirs Nixon quotes this sentence, saying that he had decided to establish the “straight-forward tone” he planned to adopt during the entire summit. He commented that the Soviets probably “would have much preferred a continuation of the mushy sentimentality that had characterized so much of our approach to the Soviets in the past.” (*RN: Memoirs*, p. 611)

Brezhnev remarked that America is indeed backward in vodka. Perhaps someone in America could be given a monopoly right to sell Russian vodka and suggested that perhaps he and Dr. Kissinger could found a company for that purpose.

The President said Dr. Kissinger already makes enough money at his job.

The President then raised a matter on which he wished Secretary Rogers to comment since he meets with Congress a great deal. The President said, in regard to commercial relations, there must be a beginning and such questions as interest rates and credit terms must be discussed. But this is a matter for specialists. The SALT negotiations going on for more than two years have shown how hard it is to negotiate. However, the very reputation to which he had alluded earlier—and which Kosygin had confirmed—would help him get support of Congress for mutually beneficial matters, assuming there is progress in other areas.

The President added that the reputation which Kosygin had confirmed had certainly no basis in fact since he became President.

Kosygin said that each agreement, particularly an economic agreement, is just a frame for the canvas on which the painting would have to be filled in subsequently. This would require mutual trust and an unswerving desire to implement the provisions of these agreements. He would emphasize that everyone here and especially himself, Brezhnev, and Podgorny, adhered to the firm policy of always strictly observing the terms of any agreement signed by the Soviet Union. This is an important factor in the relations between our countries and this is also why it is at the same time difficult and very easy to negotiate with the USSR.

The President said that he knows that and respects the Soviet leaders for it.

Brezhnev said that the fact that our countries do not trade with each other represents an enormous loss for each of us and he cannot understand why this waste has been permitted to continue. In terms of commerce, the Soviet Union is not a country like Norway or Sweden or Finland or Holland or even Bolivia. It is the Soviet Union, a country with a vast territory and enormous economic wealth, a stable market and a steadily developing economy. It always has something to buy and sell. It is hard to say why we have wasted opportunities and not traded with each other more. He is gratified to hear what the President said on these matters and thinks that we should discuss the subject further.

Podgorny referred to the President's remark that in two years of SALT we had learned how difficult it is to negotiate. He believes there is no comparison between SALT and the other matters under discussion. SALT deals with a very special set of problems which are considerably more complicated and of greater importance for the US and the Soviet

Union, and for other countries, than the problems involved in working out agreements on cooperation in space or on improving the environment or on trade. For this reason these questions can be resolved more easily. Yet at the same time, they too are issues of importance and he mentions this only to put SALT into proper perspective.

Brezhnev remarked that while they are less important than the security issues involved in SALT, they are very close to the hearts of our people.

Podgorny repeated that SALT involved questions of national security and therefore it is more difficult to deal with.

The President agreed that any matter which involves national survival must come first. That is why SALT must be approached with care.

Secretary Rogers referred to Podgorny's suggestion that trade is an easy problem. Actually trade is not such an easy matter since the approval of Congress is necessary. Here, a general improvement of the political climate is necessary. In some ways an increase in trade in large amounts is almost as difficult as arms limitation. If, as a result of this meeting, the political climate could change in such a way that the US people and the Congress understood this, the Congress would follow the President's leadership and act. In the absence of political improvement, this would be difficult.

Podgorny agreed with the Secretary that increasing trade is also an important problem and will not be easy. However, trade is a bilateral matter of mutual benefit. It promises advantages to both countries. It is not as vital and important as the issues involved in SALT, which affect not just our two countries but all countries.

Kosygin said that on the question of limiting strategic arms and more generally, nuclear arms, he felt that we are under an obligation to resolve the issues between us. It is easier to do so now rather than later, for the simple reason that so far our two countries have a practical monopoly in the nuclear field. Also, there is really no other alternative to a positive and radical solution of this problem. If we cannot find it now, it is inevitable that others after us will find the solution. If, however, our two countries dump in the ocean the results of the enormous efforts of our peoples—and this is what would be involved in another spurt of the arms race—history and our peoples will never forgive us. On the other hand, if we do find the right solution, this will be a great achievement for our countries and indeed for the whole world. Therefore, no matter what difficulties we are facing, we must and can overcome them. If both sides genuinely desire, we can overcome these difficulties and it is imperative to do so now while our two countries have a monopoly on nuclear weapons for all practical purposes. Imagine the situation in the future if dozens of countries have nuclear weapons in their arsenals.

The President observed that there are potential great powers who, if they decide to produce nuclear weapons, can do so. Within 20 or 25 years they could make such advances in nuclear weaponry as to be a threat to both the US and the Soviet Union. He has in mind powers in the East, particularly China and Japan. When we view this prospect, the importance of reaching agreement now becomes even more obvious.

There are those in our country—as well as some critics in the world—who say that the US should renounce its Mutual Defense Treaty with Japan in the interests of peace. This is a fashionable argument. But let us be realistic. If we consider what Japan would do in the absence of a defense commitment from the US, we come to a different conclusion. If Japan, a country with the third largest economy in the world, with all its frustrations, with the memory of defeat and with its drive, is left alone, it is unlikely to go neutral—it would go nuclear. This is a practical consideration we must bear in mind, although what we say in public has to be different.

The President raised another issue, which so far neither he nor the General Secretary had mentioned as a subject for our agenda: European questions generally, and particularly European security. He suggested that Secretary Rogers and Gromyko discuss these matters, possibly with some others. Mr. Gromyko touched on this subject when he talked with the President in Washington, and, incidentally, Chancellor Kreisky of Austria also raised it.

Brezhnev said that at this beginning stage of the talks it has become quite clear what great and important questions required discussion in the next few days, and how this could change the political climate for the better in the entire world. It therefore seems to him that the instructions to Dr. Kissinger and Minister Gromyko be reiterated to start promptly working out some of the things we had agreed on, to complete the work on the Freeze Agreement and the Treaty on the Limitation of ABM Systems. It would also be necessary to give some thought to the general principles which should lie at the basis of the relations between our two countries. All this would contribute to changing the political climate for the better. As the President has quite correctly said, much in the future depends upon such a change.

Brezhnev pointed out that in addition we already have a number of agreed positions on several questions which will also serve to improve the general climate. There is the agreement on improving the environment. This is an issue very close to the hearts of people everywhere. People in Europe, in the US, in Latin America and elsewhere have devoted a great deal of attention and attached importance to this issue. The same could be said about cooperation in medical sciences and public health—joint efforts to combat such diseases as cancer—this, too, is close to the people and well understood by them. The same

applies to cooperation in space. Perhaps even though Gromyko and Kissinger have not yet prepared the agenda, we can proceed to signing agreements on these matters. If we can begin by signing these agreements, it will gladden the hearts of the public in the Soviet Union, in the US and in fact the world over. Something can be signed today, something else tomorrow, and announcing these agreements in the press will provide additional impetus to get on to larger issues.

The President concurred and repeated that there were some agreements which he wishes to sign personally, like the agreement on the environment and that some others, such as the agreements on public health and maritime matters, will be signed by the Secretary of State.

Brezhnev welcomed the President's desire to sign the environmental agreement personally. Turning to another matter, he said it appears that our colleagues in Helsinki are unable to reach agreement on two or three points. Perhaps he and the President should take up these matters here, then possibly call in their colleagues from Helsinki to resolve the difficulties.

The President said that he would prefer to discuss this in a very small forum, directly with the General Secretary and with anyone he would designate. It must be the kind of an agreement that not only preserves security, but also can be justified to Congress. Thus this is not only a question of security, but a political question as well. Brezhnev agreed.

The President said that he had not meant that he and Brezhnev would actually write the agreement. Specialists must do the drafting since the subject is highly technical and in such an agreement even the position of commas are important. He recalled Brezhnev's story about the King who intended to pardon a condemned man. He wrote the words "Execution Impossible Pardon" on a slip of paper and handed it to his Aide. The Aide, however, placed the comma between Execution and Impossible rather than between Impossible and Pardon, and the man was executed.

Brezhnev said it was clear that the leaders should agree on principles and leave drafting to the specialists. Kissinger and Gromyko will arrange the program.

The President asked which day the signing of the SALT agreements has been scheduled.

Gromyko said that SALT is scheduled tentatively for Friday.⁵

Kosygin said that there had been so much talk about SALT all over the world that if a final settlement is not achieved during this visit, people everywhere will have an unfavorable impression.

⁵ May 26.

The President suggested that this question be discussed this afternoon or tomorrow morning. Kosygin thought it should be today. Brezhnev suggested that he and the President meet at 4:00 p.m. and then arrange a signing ceremony for the health and environment agreements for 6:00 p.m. The President agreed and thought it would be good if photographers were admitted to the signing ceremony. Brezhnev assured him that there would be full media coverage.

The meeting ended about 1:00 p.m.

260. Editorial Note

In his diary entry for May 23, 1972, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman writes: “(Rogers heard that Henry [Kissinger] would be working on the communiqué and) [at] this point, of course, went up the wall. After the [plenary] meeting broke, Rogers went up to Henry and said: ‘You obviously cooked up this deal,’ and was furious. He then went to the P and said he might as well go home. He later talked to Ziegler and said, ‘if I’m not going to be in on writing the communiqué and doing these things, then I’m not going to go to NATO.’ In other words, he’s stomping around with all kinds of threats.” Haldeman writes that Nixon met with him at 1:30. “He wanted me to talk with Rogers, make the point that the P just delegated K to develop a work schedule and to make some announcements of agreements, and that anything that happens this afternoon will be on this kind of thing.” Haldeman records that Kissinger suggested that he “should get Rogers to assign Herrinbran [*Hillenbrand?*] to work with [him] on the communiqué, then have it come to Rogers after they’ve developed it. Then we agreed that the only way I could get off this was to hit Rogers on a personal basis, and tell him you just can’t do this, and throw the China communiqué back at him, that he tried to botch that up, all for no reason, because the things he raised were not of any importance. I’m not sure I’ll be able to work anything out with Rogers. I didn’t do anything following that meeting.” Haldeman recalls that he sat with Nixon and Kissinger at dinner that night following the evening session “while we reviewed the whole thing, dwelling primarily on the problem with Rogers, and the P’s great concern on how to handle it. We didn’t come up with any answers, still, and I’m not sure there are any that we can come up with.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*. The words in italics at the beginning of this paragraph are printed in *The Haldeman Diaries*, page 462, but not in the *Multimedia Edition*)

261. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Moscow, May 23, 1972.

SUBJECT

SALT Status

Following has been tentatively agreed at Helsinki:

1. The Soviets will accept *an agreed interpretive statement* on Other Large Phased Array Radars (OLPARS) at our proposed cut off of three million (3×10 to the 6th power);

2. We will accept *an agreed interpretive statement* that destruction or dismantling of old launchers must proceed when sea trials of the new submarine begins and should be done expeditiously;

3. Both sides have shifted to accept *an agreed interpretive statement* that there will be no significant increase in external silo dimensions;²

4. The U.S. reserved the right to make a unilateral statement on the definition of heavy ICBMs (after the Soviets indicated that they would not accept an agreed statement).³

This represents considerable movement by the Soviets and resolves many of the remaining issues.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 74, Kissinger Office Files, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Moscow Summit 1972 [1 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The memorandum is not initialed.

² In telegram SALT VII 1364 to Washington and Moscow, May 22, Smith reported that in two negotiating sessions that day, the Soviets maintained a firm position against an agreed definition of heavy ICBMs but were prepared to accept an interpretative statement reading: "The parties understand that in the process of modernizing and replacement there would be no significant increase in the dimensions of land-based ICBM silo launchers." (Ibid., Box 883, SALT, SALT Talks (Helsinki), May–Aug. 1972, Vol. #18)

³ In telegram SALT VII 1367 to Washington and Moscow, May 23, Smith reported that the U.S. delegation planned to make the following unilateral statement: "The US delegation regrets that the Soviet delegation has not been willing to agree on a common definition of a heavy missile. Under these circumstances, the US delegation believes it necessary to state the following: The United States would consider any ICBM having a volume significantly greater than that of the largest light ICBM now operational on either side to be a heavy ICBM. The US proceeds on the premise that the Soviets will give due account to this consideration." (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 74, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Moscow Summit 1972 [1 of 2])

The SLBM issues and the location of the second Soviet ICBM defense site remain unresolved.⁴

SLBMS

Following is current U.S. position already presented to the Soviets in Helsinki. It includes both G and H Classes.

Article III

The parties undertake to limit submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers and modern ballistic missile submarines to the numbers operational and under construction on the date of signature of this Interim Agreement, except that under agreed procedures the parties may construct additional SLBM launchers on additional modern ballistic missile submarines as replacements for ICBM launchers of older types constructed prior to 1964 or for SLBM launchers.

Protocol to the Interim Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Certain Measures with Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms:

The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, hereinafter referred to as the Parties,

Having agreed on certain limitations relating to submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers and modern ballistic missile submarines, and to replacement procedures, in the Interim Agreement,

Have agreed as follows:

1. The Parties understand that, under Article III of the Interim Agreement, for the period during which that agreement remains in force:

A. Subject to the provisions of subparagraph (B.) of paragraph 1 of this Protocol, the U.S. shall have no more than seven hundred ten SLBM launchers on submarines operational and under construction and no more than forty-four modern ballistic missile submarines operational and under construction, and the USSR shall have no more than nine hundred fifty SLBM launchers on submarines operational and under construction and no more than sixty-two modern ballistic missile submarines operational and under construction.

B. The U.S. and the USSR shall not exceed the above-mentioned limitations, except that in the process of modernization or replacement they may, under agreed procedures, have under construction additional SLBM launchers on additional modern ballistic missile submarines for

⁴ SALT VII telegram 1367 also reported that the U.S. delegation was continuing to press for an agreed interpretative statement on the location of ABM defenses for ICBMs, and in conjunction with Article III on SLBM limitation was seeking an agreed interpretation of SLBM launchers "operational" and "under construction."

replacement of equal numbers of ICBM launchers of older types constructed prior to 1964 or equal numbers of SLBM launchers.

2. This protocol shall be considered an integral part of the Interim Agreement.

Done at _____ on _____, 1972, in two copies, each in the English and Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic.

For the United States of America

For the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Comment: This protocol specifies only ceilings and *leaves aside what numbers are operational or under construction*. Numbers operational or under construction would thus have to be handled by agreed definitions.

—Definition of “operational” would have to be framed to include only those that have completed fitting out trials and “under construction” would have to be defined to include only those submarines actually in sheds. Such a definition would mean about 41–42 Y-Class submarines.

—Since we can make a good estimate of those submarines already launched, *no definition of “operational” is necessary, if we can agree on the numbers “under construction.”* We would need a definition that excluded any boat not already in the sheds. Otherwise the Soviets will expand their base number to count parts of boats not yet in actual assembly halls.

—This route of defining “operational” or “under construction” would force the Soviet hand on how they calculated the 48 they claimed are operational or under construction.

Ceilings

Specified ceilings for the Soviets (62 boats and 950 missiles) would be temporarily exceeded in our proposal, because both sides can have under construction extra boats as eventual replacements for older launchers and dismantling would not start until completion of sea trials. This allows U.S. to start ULMs without dismantling or replacement.

Numbers

Assuming for the Soviets 41 Y-Class boats and about 624 SLBMs as of now, (36 Y-Class and 4 New Class) the dismantling of SS-7 and 8s ICBMs would allow an additional 17 submarines and 209 missiles. At least half of G and H would *then* have to be converted to reach 62 boats.

Soviet Objections To Our Proposal:

—Modern submarines do not by definition include G and H Class, because “modern” means built after 1965.

—Soviets claim they now have operational and under construction 48 modern submarines. (Seven above our present estimate.)

—This would mean an additional 14 boats could be constructed, requiring only dismantling of 168 older ICBMs (assuming each new boat has only 12 submarines). This would still leave Soviets short of total of 950 launchers (i.e. a level of about 876).

Possible Compromise

1. To count as “modern” only H Class (i.e. only nuclear powered and with ballistic missiles).

2. And to count G Class if replaced with “modern” launchers.

Our Objectives

1. To include in agreement some provision or definition so that Soviets cannot have at least H Class fleet in current total.

2. To include provision or understanding that *if* G and H fitted with “modern” missile (SS-N-6 or 8) that this will count in 950 total launchers.

262. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 23, 1972, 4–6 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU

Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, Assistant to the General Secretary

Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter

The President

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT

SALT

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. Transcribed from Kissinger's notes. The meeting was held in St. Catherine's Hall, Grand Kremlin Palace. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting was from 4:05 to 5:39 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

Gen Secy Brezhnev: What do you consider to be the outstanding issues?

Dr. Kissinger: There are four areas: (1) the location of the second Soviet ABM site, (2) the definition of “heavy” ICBM, (3) the SLBM limits, and (4) mobile land-based ICBMs.

Gen Secy Brezhnev: Then Dr. Kissinger is behind events. They have already been settled.

Dr. Kissinger: Only on the external dimensions of the silos, not what is inside.

Gen Secy Brezhnev: [very irritably].² You cannot put large missiles into small holes.

Dr. Kissinger: It is more complicated than that. It is nevertheless possible.

Gen Secy Brezhnev: No. Any change does not involve modification of the size of the silos. Thickening the walls may look like a change of the character of the missile but isn’t. All the changes are within existing procedures. Why do you raise this issue?

Dr. Kissinger: With new launch procedures it is possible to increase the size of the missile inside the existing silos.

Gen Secy Brezhnev: [drawing diagrams] This is impossible. There are no prospects in the foreseeable future that we will engage in activities of this kind. We will not change the diameter of the missile. But we change the weight/yield ratio.³

We are prepared to drop the word “significant” from the phrase “no significant increase” [in the interpretive statement on Article II].⁴

² All brackets in the source text.

³ In his memoirs Kissinger commented that the Moscow meetings on SALT demonstrated that heads of government should not negotiate complex subjects, and that neither Nixon nor Brezhnev had mastered the technical details. This meeting took the leaders into “the bog of seeking to define ‘heavy’ missiles.” Kissinger wrote: “To my amazement, Brezhnev adopted a view constantly rejected by the Soviet delegation, to the effect that there was no need to change the dimensions of Soviet silos and that the Soviets had no intention of increasing the diameter of their missiles; this implied that they would accept a freeze on silo dimensions as well as on missile volume. In other words, he seemed to lean to our original proposal of months earlier, heretofore adamantly rejected by the Soviet SALT delegation. Moreover, Brezhnev seemed to be favoring a proposal incompatible with the weapons the Soviets were actually building. His disclaimer of Soviet intentions to increase the diameter of Soviet missiles also turned out to be contrary to the facts.” (*White House Years*, p. 1220)

⁴ In backchannel message Hakto 20 to Smith in Helsinki, May 23, Kissinger reported that the President had talked to Brezhnev about SALT that afternoon and that this cable was being sent during a break in the talks. Brezhnev had said that regarding the light/heavy missile definition issue, the Soviets were prepared to drop the “significant” between “no” and “increase” in the interpretative statement relating to Article II. He asserted that the Soviets had no intention of increasing the size of their missiles. Kissinger asked Smith to comment by Flash reply regarding the acceptability of Brezh-

The President: Our concern is not the provision of silos but modernization leading to a change in the volume of these missiles. Anyway, a change in volume cannot be verified.

Gen Secy Brezhnev: If we are trying to trick one another, why do we need a piece of paper? We are playing clean.⁵ Of course, any modification involves improvement. Therefore, why do you raise the issue? The approach of “catching each other out” is quite inadmissible. The best they can do is improve the efficiency of existing missiles.

I will make another proposal. We will accept the 1500-kilometer distance provision [the requirement that the second Soviet ABM site be at least 1500 kilometers from the national capital]. We will have the same number of sites. But ours will cover few ICBMs. We can also move it elsewhere. We had wanted to move it to European Russia. We have the same kind of ICBM centers as you have.

On submarines, because of the territorial differences between the two sides, we have asked for a larger figure. If you promise not to build new submarines, we accept your right to do so [right to convert Titans to SLBMs].

Dr. Kissinger: I propose counting at least the number of H-Class submarines in the Soviet figure. [He recites the figures.]

Gen Secy Brezhnev: [irritated] So you have the information on the number of submarines we have. The U.S. proposal means that you can build submarines to replace your old ones. You want complete freedom to reconstruct your entire fleet, and substitute Poseidons for Polaris. But we cannot accept replacement of your entire fleet.

I would agree to the following version: not to name 48 in the agreement but to agree that the replacement figure *is* 48. It is hard to explain to our military men if we don't get a 7-number advantage. If you want me to say our military men are very pleased by this method, then we can only say that they are not.

nev's proposal. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, The Situation Room—President's USSR, Iran, Austria, Poland Trip, May–June 1972, HAKTO File) In his memoirs Kissinger called Brezhnev's suggestion “a gesture of good faith” which would have prevented *any* silo increase. (*White House Years*, p. 1220) In his memoirs Smith called it “a rather confusing concession” and said “it appeared that the Moscow negotiators were mixing up the silo dimensions and the missile volume issues.” Smith wrote that he replied to Kissinger that the missile volume issue was related to but separate from the silo dimensions issue, and that a solution on the latter in the form of an agreed interpretative statement had been reached in a package arrangement previously reported to the Moscow White House. (*Doubletalk*, p. 413) See footnote 2, Document 261.

⁵ In his memoirs Nixon recalled this exchange somewhat differently. He wrote: “When I said we felt that specific provisions for verifying that each side was fulfilling its obligations would give necessary reassurance to both sides, [Brezhnev] turned to me and in an injured tone of voice said, ‘If we are trying to trick one another, why do we need a piece of paper? We are playing clean on our side.’” (*RN: Memoirs*, p. 611)

Speaking man to man, since we know the implications of these armaments and since we are both civilized men, we know these weapons must never be used. Perhaps we shall not be able to achieve agreement here on the non-use of nuclear weapons; we can reach accord when Dr. Kissinger comes back to Moscow in September. This would overlap all other considerations. How can I contemplate it [the use of nuclear weapons]? We are now conducting negotiations with the present as well as the future President of the United States.⁶

⁶ Kissinger recalled that by the end of this session their minds were “boggling at all the numbers on the table” so both sides agreed to a recess of an hour—time which he used to cable Smith “an account of the surprising turn of events.” (*White House Years*, p. 1221) Commenting on this session in his memoirs, Smith wrote: “that the President of the United States would get into such technicalities, important though they were, struck me as peculiar, if not dangerous. These first discussions of SALT appeared based on unawareness by our boss of the Helsinki record. Evidently one or both sides did not understand the differences in substance and status between the heavy missile and the silo dimension issues. The ‘no significant increase’ interpretative statement was for silo dimensions, not missile volume.” He noted that the SALT delegation in Helsinki had sent three cables reporting the status of the silo dimension and the heavy missile definition issue, but said that “the President and Kissinger perhaps had been too busy to read these reports.” Smith concluded: “This fumbling start did not bode well for the summit.” (*Doubletalk*, p. 414)

263. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 23, 1972, 7:20–9:55 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU

Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, Assistant to the General Secretary

Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter

The President

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Senior NSC Staff Member (Notetaker)

SUBJECT

SALT; Vietnam (briefly at end)

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President’s Trip Files, The President’s Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the General Secretary’s office in the Kremlin. According to the President’s Daily Diary, the meeting was from 7:20 to 10 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

[The meeting began with some light exchanges between Brezhnev and the President concerning Dr. Kissinger's previous visit to Moscow and the conversations at that time. The President also mentioned that he had shown Ambassador Dobrynin where Brezhnev would stay when he comes to the United States. The President said that Camp David was not as nice as the Kremlin. He went on to say that Franklin Roosevelt, who was crippled, fished in a pond sitting on a carved-out log, and they would put fish in this pond for Mr. Brezhnev. Mr. Brezhnev thanked the President and said that the Ambassador had spoken warmly about the conversation on that subject. Brezhnev said he was grateful for the President's consideration.]²

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: I was held up because I had to consult with a small group of my colleagues. Mr. Kissinger should sit and be quiet and the President and I will finalize all the outstanding points. On the other hand, on his last visit Dr. Kissinger was very nice and we had nice talks. But that must have been because he spent three days in Moscow and benefited from its good atmosphere. Then after he returned to America he was contaminated.

The President: The trouble was that he gave everything away to the General Secretary and now I will have to take it back again.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: That reminds me of the proverb about the crayfish walking backwards—but we, of course, are only joking.

The President: The general principles that were worked out when Dr. Kissinger was here are very important.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: I and my colleagues agree. It is an important and useful document.

The President: Let us clearly understand, because of our bureaucratic problems, that we worked this out while I was here in Moscow.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: You heard how I put it this morning. I was just "initiating" something; I took account of our talk yesterday, but I had to say something so it would not come out of thin air. But now we will follow the script.

As regards the ABM question, this now appears to be cleared up. Twelve hundred is OK with us.

The President: Fifteen hundred kilometers.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: You mean we should put it in China?

The President: Well, as the General Secretary will find out, I never nitpick.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Fifteen hundred kilometers is all right. The most important point is not the mileage. You wanted us to move

² All brackets in the source text.

eastward and so now we agree. It would be easier for us to accept twelve hundred but fifteen hundred is all right too, and we won't speak of it anymore.³

As regards land-based missiles, how do you view the agreement yesterday in Helsinki?

Dr. Kissinger: On what issue?

Sukhodrev: He is referring to the formula I read out [in the earlier meeting].⁴

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: I had just read the cable a half hour before.

The President: I have no doubt about the General Secretary's attitude about the use of implements of destruction. As long as we are around I have no fear. But there are two matters of importance. One, we have to deal not only with present but future leaders. I hope they are practical men and will not engage in acts of madness. But madmen do come to power; the best example is Hitler. We don't expect one in our country or in your country, but it is still best to have an agreement that is as balanced as possible. Second, I realize the General Secretary has to sell his position to his military. We have a similar problem but I can control ours. But the Representatives and Senators in our Armed Services Committees will watch every line of the agreement to see if we were placed at a disadvantage or who gained an advantage. I would like to make the agreement as balanced as possible to avoid that kind of problem. And it has been raised already. In fact, I was on the phone at 4:00 a.m. this morning to Washington to arrange steps to quiet the opposition if we should sign on Friday.

This is not a matter of lack of trust but a problem of dealing with an opposition. What really would solve the problem for us would be the recognition of the right of modernization, no increase in the size of silos, as already discussed, but where we would unilaterally point out that modernization would not be used significantly to increase the payload size.

Dr. Kissinger: The missile size.

The President: We would spell out "significantly" to be 15%. Otherwise a critic could say on the floor of the Senate that through mod-

³ In his memoirs Kissinger wrote of this exchange: "Brezhnev opened the meeting by accepting our proposed distance 1,500 kilometers between ABM sites. Unfortunately, unknown to either leader, the American delegation in Helsinki had already settled for the Soviet proposal of 1,300 kilometers that morning. Brezhnev had offered us a better deal than our negotiators had already accepted. It made no difference; we were finally stuck with the version negotiated at Helsinki; the difference was marginal anyway." (*White House Years*, pp. 1221–1222)

⁴ The U.S. memorandum of conversation (Document 262) does not record any statement by Sukhodrev.

ernization one could double the size of the missile. Whether this would really be so I don't know, but it would still have to be answered.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Mr. President, if you have completed your thought I should like to say this. We would agree that under the agreement both sides would be entitled to modernization without replacing small missiles with bigger ones, that is to say converting them. Also this would be on the understanding that in the process of modernization of every type there should be no significant increase of either silo or missile. Then there would be no need for a unilateral statement. Because if there are going to be questions, they would also be asked in the Soviet Union: "What kind of an agreement is this if unilateral statements have to be made about it?" You should have a freeze; no new missiles; lesser ones cannot be changed into big ones; and modernization permitted only with insignificant increases in the size of the silos. Of course, the word "insignificant" is very vague, and I don't mind seeing it refined. It is relative. For example, what is insignificant in the case of a big missile? Perhaps we should define it in terms of a percentage. In short, we could reach an understanding to avoid doubts by Senators and legislators in either country. So we would have an agreement to avoid doubts. As for what Mr. Kissinger suggested at the outset, I don't understand it and I don't think we should revert to it.

Now the experts in Helsinki are very literate and competent people, and we should have trust in them. I am sure they know more of the finer points than I because they have studied them more than I. We should agree to accept their formula even without "significant." The sides could modify missiles without changing dimensions of silos or missiles so both sides would be in the same position. But if you want to keep "significant," that would be all right too because we are very flexible.⁵

I would like to add that there is also another political aspect to the question of land-based missiles, and that is that we commit ourselves not only to freezing but to reducing strategic arms. We are ready to

⁵ Kissinger recalled that Brezhnev, "having offered a total freeze on silo size in the earlier meeting, seemed a little baffled that we would not go along with what had been our position months earlier and would take care of our fear of an upgrading of Soviet missiles." Kissinger himself could still not understand what Brezhnev thought he was doing. He speculated that possibly Brezhnev was simply confused by the technical details and thus unable to grasp the distinction between silo dimensions and missile volume, but he noted that this was the last time they encountered Brezhnev in a SALT negotiation without advisers. (*White House Years*, p. 1222) Nixon, on the other hand, wrote in his memoirs: "Despite the impatience he affected with the details and numbers, Brezhnev was obviously very well briefed on the subject. He used a red pencil to sketch missiles on the notepad in front of him as we discussed the timing and techniques of control and limitation." (*RN: Memoirs*, p. 611)

proceed to bilateral consultations with you and to continue the arduous work so that by an important date in the history of the United States [presumably the Bicentennial Anniversary], or even earlier, we could solve this problem of reducing. So I suggest we stick to the formula worked out in Helsinki. I would not like to see a unilateral statement. It would look like one kind of an agreement in Moscow and another in Washington. What kind of an agreement would it be if it leads to interpretations? The obligation should be reciprocal and the President and I should be responsible for what was signed.

The President: I agree. We prefer a joint agreement. That is, modernization is permitted but the size of the silo and of the missiles could not be significantly increased. With the details to be worked out by professors.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: [pause] As I see it, this is almost the same wording as in Helsinki but the wording includes missile modernization.

Dr. Kissinger: We would add that the size of the volume of the missile and the silo would not be increased significantly. Other modernization would be permitted.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: You would allow "insignificant" modernization.

The President: Modernization would be permitted according to what the scientists develop and design, but there could be no increase in silo or missile size beyond the insignificant. Otherwise, it is not a limitation.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: We can agree on this if we elaborate the meaning of the word. What is it—5%? 10%? What percentage?

The President: We had better work out a figure—10%, 15%. It can't be too big or it won't be a limitation. We must keep it in the realm of 15%. And, of course, this works for both sides.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: In short, I would sum up then. There is the first part of the agreement that states that both sides freeze the number of missiles. Then there is the second part that says they are not allowed to increase significantly the size of silos and missiles. Then "significantly" could be worked out to say it means not more than X%. But on the exact number of this percentage I would like to consult with my colleagues. So the first part is agreed, but "significant" I have to think over until tomorrow. Also, we have the question of whether this is in the agreement or on the way.

The President: The smaller the percentage the better. The people would understand 10% but not 30%. We are prepared to negotiate. The General Secretary should consult and we will do the same.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Another question has arisen in my mind in the course of our discussion today. As I look at the formula we received from Helsinki I notice two words: "modernization" and "replacement."

Modernization is one thing but replacement is another. It appears that both sides are permitted to replace one type of missile for another, and it would have greater volume. It would be better for public opinion if we restrained this, if we had both sides should be permitted to improve existing types of missiles and have insignificant increases in sizes. Our experts say you are replacing Poseidon with God knows what—it was a good thing I am not on our delegation! When we agree to replacement, this entails the possibility that military men will say we should replace one missile with a more powerful one and then the factories would work full blast. But if we say “modernization and perfection” this would not happen. If we say “replacement” we could mean new types and this would just mean the continuation of the arms race. We really should endeavor to take a drastic step.

The President: This only involves land-based missiles. You can't increase the volume simply by replacing the missile. But this was a Soviet proposal anyway.

Dr. Kissinger: The replacement language has existed since January of 1971. It has long since been agreed.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: OK. I will leave it at that.

The President: I think we have covered it. Now let me see if I can understand the submarine question correctly. We have 950 SLBMs and 62 boats for you and 44 boats and 710 SLBMs for us. But, of course, we actually have only 41 boats and 656 missiles. That's where we start.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: If I might just sum up that both sides expect that in the process of modernization and replacement, there will be no significant increase in the size of silos and missiles. The remaining task is to find a reasonable interpretation of “significant.”

The President: We will be reasonable. I agree.

What we were discussing earlier was the H- and G-Class submarines. How many are there?

Dr. Kissinger: I won't tell the General Secretary or he will get angry again.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: On the figures of the submarines: As I said earlier, we have a certain group of submarines dating back to before 1964 with only three missiles each. They have all sorts of defects in their engines and so on. We have agreed to scrap them and replace them with new ones. They are no good to us.

Then we also have a considerable territorial disadvantage. The President was fair enough to say that we could have seven submarines more than the United States. We wanted more but we agreed to 48. That means we build 48 under the agreement and you 44 so the difference is really only four. I want to inject complete clarity. Forty-eight need not be mentioned in the main agreement but in the additional

agreement it would state that we are entitled to 48. And then whatever else we build would be simultaneous with the removal of old ICBMs and old submarines. So, if for reasons of your own, for example Congress, you think you would not want to mention this in the agreement we can put it into the additional agreement.

Now you say you have no intention to build the three submarines. We have no problem about this. But I have here a report from the *Washington Post* quoting your Secretary of Defense Laird that the United States is planning to build 10 big new submarines and that \$10 billion have already been appropriated and that each is to carry 24 missiles and will become operational by the end of the '70s. Now, this is incompatible with our agreement, so how are we to understand it? We accepted the 44/710 and the 62/950. But now we are confronted with a new issue. Because by the end of the period the United States will have 10 new submarines with 24 missiles and much more modern than now. This is not an evening out, but on the contrary, the United States will get an advantage.

Dr. Kissinger: First, we had always told your Ambassador when discussing these programs about the new submarine; he had always known that it was going on. Secondly, it won't be operational until the late 70's. The first, as I understand it, will be in 1979; two in 1980, and then it won't be till 1982 or '83 that we will have 10. If we have a permanent agreement it would apply at that point. If the new ones come in during the freeze, we would retire the same number of tubes—for every two ULMs, three Polaris. The ceiling would apply.

The President: If you get a permanent agreement this becomes moot; this is the main point. The alternative is that both—and this shows why the agreement is so important—will pour billions more into submarines.

Dr. Kissinger: [To the President] You had intended a big speed-up of our submarine program but then cancelled it because of the SALT agreement.

The President: Yes. Because of the Soviet speed-up I had tentatively ordered the Navy to speed up the submarines, but I stopped it. But if we can get permanent agreement, we wouldn't pour money into the program. Of course, they would only be replacements under the numbers you are giving here, or lower numbers if we later agree on them.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: I think that approach makes it more difficult for me to take a decision. I now understand why the President won't build the three submarines since you have initiated a new program. I would have done the same thing. This changes the whole principle. We discussed the principle of evening out. But now you have a new program for new submarines of new size and with new range. You could even shoot rockets from territorial waters or from your home base. This requires earnest thinking on my part. It would be one thing if you

built just one pilot boat. Or if it involves withdrawal of two or one-and-a-half boats for every new one. That would make sense and then our figure—950—would make sense. In fact, I am not even sure that we can build this figure in the present Five-Year Plan. It may be beyond our economic capacity. But in the meantime, you will make a leap forward in range and capacity. I don't know what you told our Ambassador; I may have forgotten it. But this creates a serious problem.

I do want to reach understanding and bring this matter to completion, but to be frank and speaking with all the respect I have for you, if this program is carried out, you will have a significant superiority.

The President: You have to look at it in two time frames. First, there is no program during the freeze. We would not put any new submarines into the fleet. The first one would be in 1979 and then two in 1980. Now, secondly, if in this period we have a new agreement on the same number, or a lower number, these submarines would be substituted for older ones and the numbers would not be affected. It would mean retiring old submarines with an equivalent number of missiles. There is no advantage intended and none certainly that affects this agreement.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: You mean if we agree to 950?

The President: Yes, we would be frozen. You have the same right.

One argument we hear—and we had many discussions over the months—is that the Soviet Union's missiles are much larger than ours. So you have a significant advantage there. But we are here as reasonable men to work out a balanced program and that requires some give and take on both sides.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: With all the missiles and all the secrecy you think our missiles are bigger and we think yours are, and a lot of propaganda is raised.

The President: I wish you were right, but I am afraid I am. Actually, they are all too big. That's my view.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: I am sure you have probably either attended or seen demonstrations and know that the smallest missile is enough to destroy a city. Even a small bomb can paralyze and destroy everything—water, electricity, gas and the rest. And then, of course, there is the pollution.

The President: That's why agreement is so important.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: What do you think about the idea of converting the submarine agreement into a permanent one, I mean the figures? And you and we would be entitled to modernize.

The President: Not now. I would have to go back to consult and that would take some months. It can be considered later, but not now. People can count: 950—710—the United States is behind. No, not now.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: But your productive capacity is much greater. It makes no difference if the earliest date for you is 1979; the main thing is the pilot boat and then they go through the assembly line like pancakes.

The President: We must recognize that we each have great capabilities and if there is a race both lose. Now, for example, you talk about the size of the U.S. economy. In 1960, when Khrushchev was in the United States, we had an advantage in missiles of 10 to 1. Today, it's even. We respect your power. We are both strong now and neither will leave the other an advantage. That is why we need an agreement or we will bankrupt each other in the arms race.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: I value your frankness, but doesn't that testify that by 1979, at the end of the agreement, the U.S. wants superiority? But frankly, we won't let you.

The President: We would be labeled fools if we don't reach agreement by then.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: It's not a question of labels.

The President: I would consider this agreement a great achievement for us and all the world. I want to reach a permanent agreement but my time is limited—less than five years. After then, I am out—swimming in the Pacific. Maybe even before.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Don't go out before that, Mr. President.

The President: I want the General Secretary and myself to meet again, perhaps in the U.S. or here.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: I have no objection to more than one meeting. In fact, they should become routine events in the natural course of developments.

The President: This agreement is the *hors d'oeuvre*. Next comes the main course.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: If I might just throw in another idea. Make the agreement last 10, not five, years. In fact, why have we chosen five years?

Dr. Kissinger: You started at 18 months.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: No, first it was three years, then we suggested five.

Dr. Kissinger: No, I think you started with 18 months.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Now we are bolder, more venturesome. But I am saying things that have not even been discussed in my own circle. I am just thinking aloud.

The President: We should do that—thinking aloud. I may do it too in the next few days. It took a long time to get this far. I know the General Secretary had to sell this agreement to his people, as I had to sell it to mine.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: On the basis of what has already been achieved, we are growing bolder. If at first it seemed to involve great risk, now it looks feasible.

The President: I make this commitment to the General Secretary: Once we make this agreement we will move aggressively to the next phase. Dr. Kissinger will tell you I generally do more than I say.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: I would like to see three examples.

The President: Well, for example, next spring in Washington might be a good time to take the next step.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: It would make no sense leaving Washington empty-handed. You will carry much baggage from Moscow.

The President: I will give him a golf cart if he likes it.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: But I don't play.

The President: You don't have to. You can use it on the sidewalk. Anyway, let's get a good agreement.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: To sum up: I cannot give you a final answer this morning, but I will endeavor to do it tomorrow morning. You get 41 plus three and 710. But you give us the private assurance not to build three. We get 62 and 950. This is all logical. It's also agreed we get 48 submarines which we build to compensate for our territorial disadvantage. Whatever other submarines we build will be only to replace older missiles.

But we have to report to my colleagues that you have this other program. They all read this story from the *Washington Post* too—this program with one submarine operational by 1979, two by 1980 and all ten by 1983. You have indicated that if any of them become operational before 1979 it would only be as replacement for older submarines with an equivalent number of missiles. And if it is after the end of the freeze, you will make no change in the numbers.

The President: That depends on the agreement. It should also be said that if you put modern missiles on your older submarines, they count in your 950, just as we have a limit of 710.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Even in the event of your new subs becoming operational.

The President: That is a moot question. None will become operational in five years—no chance. Also, as our technology goes forward, so will yours. So it is important to get a permanent agreement.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: I understand the situation and will report to my colleagues. You do confirm 48, on which we agreed?

The President: Forty-eight new ones; actually 62.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Any built above it will require dismantling of old missiles.

The President: The top is 950. Our own number is really 41.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: We accept what you say, though in the final analysis an extra three won't make any difference.

The President: But we won't do it.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: But you will have a good statement to make. The number 48 need not be mentioned in the main agreement, but in the supplemental one.

The President: Fine.

Dr. Kissinger: So—no figures in the main agreement, but figures in the supplement.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Therefore, it is correct to say we have no other issues on strategic arms. Right?

The President: On the mobiles. We had raised this but since we worked out the situation with regard to the size of missiles, let's throw it out. Of course, some of our people think you have them.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: We've got plenty, haven't you seen them rolling around the Kremlin? Mr. President, then I'll consult with my colleagues. I do believe we have reached an understanding, and I will give you an answer in the morning. We could then give instructions to Helsinki or have them come here.

The President: Well, it is better to give them to Helsinki so we can get on with the other things we have here.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: We ought to agree on common instructions.

Dr. Kissinger: How about the first item?

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Which one is that?

Dr. Kissinger: Well, the definition of heavy missiles. Can we send instruction that the size of the silo and the size of the missile cannot be changed?

The President: We will check the notes and take it from the notes.

[Brezhnev gets up to make phone call which goes on for about four minutes.]

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Maybe we should leave it till morning because I can only reach one. For now we should leave it as it was in the message received from Helsinki, the one that deals with silos only. In the morning I can give you a package deal.

Dr. Kissinger: So we won't send instructions.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: You and I have agreed in principle, but we can leave the situation as it is as far as Helsinki is concerned.

[Brezhnev reads brief announcement:

“On 23 May a meeting took place in the Kremlin between General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, L.I. Brezhnev, and President of the USA, Richard M. Nixon. The talks continued between L.I. Brezhnev and R. Nixon on questions of Soviet-American relations.”]

Anyway the 950 and 710 will last until 1978, the end of this agreement. Incidentally, I would like to ask how do you see the end of the limitation agreement?

Dr. Kissinger: Five years after ratification.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: When do you contemplate ratification?

Dr. Kissinger: The plan is to put the offensive agreement to Congress but we expect no problem.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: You have no doubts.

The President: Unless you drive too hard a bargain.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: This is not a point of principle. The important thing is to get ratification.

The President: That is why I met with the leaders of Congress and this morning called them on the phone. We are working on the Congressional business already.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: We have reached an understanding on almost all questions and will give you an answer in the morning.⁶ One more point. I just got a TASS report from Paris saying that today the delegation of the PRG of Vietnam sent a message to the U.S. and South Vietnamese to resume the work of the conference—the 150th session on May 25. And there is also a similar message from the DRV.

The President: We will have an opportunity to discuss this later. We have had 149 sessions and no progress. When we have concrete assurance of progress then we can consider this.

Gen Sec'y Brezhnev: Well, I was just thinking along the line that while you are here there might be significance in your making a response—a positive response. But I am just thinking out loud.

[After closing pleasantries, the meeting adjourned.]⁷

⁶ In his memoirs Kissinger wrote that “when the two leaders turned to SLBMs, they simply repeated the argument of the earlier session. It was left that Gromyko and I would meet the next morning to see whether we could formulate joint instructions to the delegations.” (*White House Years*, p. 1222)

⁷ In backchannel message Hakto 21 to Helsinki, early in the morning of May 24, Kissinger sent Smith—exclusively for his personal information and to be confirmed after a further meeting that day—the results of the negotiations at that point. The Soviets would accept 1,500 kilometers separation of the second area site from the national capital, and the Politburo was considering a statement that during the process of modernization and replacement of ICBMs, there could be no significant increase in size of silo or volume of missile with “significant” further defined to be no more than 10–15 percent. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, 1972, SALT)

264. Editorial Note

On May 24, 1972, White House Chief of Staff Haldeman recorded in his diary that President Nixon had called him in before the first head-to-head meeting and told him that he and Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger were pleased because they thought that they had gotten SALT “pretty well wrapped up” the previous evening. The President was worried, however, that they “were going to have a hell of a problem with the conservatives at home.” Haldeman noted that Nixon was “pushing hard for the Joint Chiefs, Defense people and other military to work on selling the hawks.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) During the May 24 Washington Special Actions Group meeting, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Haig announced that he had asked the Verification Panel Working Group to meet at 11:30 that morning to start preparing a detailed rationale for SALT in light of the reaction of the Senate hawks to recent briefings. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Thomas Moorer said, “Without exception, the hawks feel we will have a problem with the public accepting the SALT agreements. And the net result of this will be a decrease in support for the DOD budget.” Deputy Secretary of Defense Kenneth Rush said that most of the hawks in the Senate were very disturbed at the idea of freezing the ICBMs at a ratio of one to one and a half. He suggested that they stress that the United States had asked for the offensive agreement in order “to stop the Soviet momentum” and point out that “we are going ahead with Hard-Site Defense, ULMS and Trident.” Moorer agreed, pointing out that “we would be in this position even if there were no SALT” because “our ICBM curve is straight while the Soviet ICBM curve rises sharply.” He added that “the public doesn’t know the nuances of SALT. The only thing it knows is that 1,500 is one and a half times 1,000.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

265. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 24, 1972, 11:40 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU
Nikolai V. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

Aleksei N. Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR

Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the USA

Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, Assistant to the General Secretary

Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter

Leonid Zamyatin, Director of TASS

The President

William P. Rogers, Secretary of State

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Martin Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs

Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Senior Staff Member

Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger

SUBJECTS

Economic Relations; Europe

[In informal conversation before the meeting began, the Soviet leaders, in particular Kosygin, emphasized the importance of Most-Favored-Nation treatment for the Soviet Union, citing the very high U.S. tariff rates for many Soviet products. The President essentially listened without committing himself.

[The Soviet side then said that the meeting would take up European issues. The U.S. side had thought that SALT would be the principal item, and when he heard that Europe would be discussed the President said that he wanted Secretary Rogers and Assistant Secretary Hillenbrand present. He pointed out to the Soviet leaders that Secretary Rogers would have to describe the discussions to the European countries and at home. Dr. Kissinger left the room to call Secretary Rogers.]²

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in St. Catherine's Hall, Grand Kremlin Palace. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting was from 11:34 a.m. to 1:31 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² All brackets in the source text.

Economic Relations

The President: I was talking to Prime Minister Kosygin on MFN. As I told the General Secretary yesterday, I will handle that. I already indicated this to Ambassador Dobrynin at Camp David. I have to get this through the Congress. I have already discussed it with the leaders; if we can get Congressional agreement I will take responsibility.

Chairman Kosygin: That would be a very good thing. I can see that then we will really have a solid basis for the development of our economic ties, because otherwise there can be nothing but talk on this subject and nothing concrete. In fact, we can sell commodities 40% dearer in European markets. So why should we sell to the United States if we can get 40% more in Europe?

The President: That makes sense.

Chairman Kosygin: While we are waiting I can give you some comparable examples: all sorts of heavy equipment, like machine tools and parts of metal cutting machines, power stations, diesels, in short most of the products of the engineering industry that we could sell to the United States would be taxed up to 40%.

Chairman Podgorny: There are some that are even higher.

Chairman Kosygin: Compared to that the general tax [tariff] on goods in other nations is 5% or 7% compared to that of 40% in the United States. There are other examples. On optical equipment, for example, the tax is 50%. On electrical measuring devices and instruments it goes as high as 90%. Can anyone do trade on that sort of basis?

For example, with Canada recently we had a sale of turbines and generators and it was a normal situation where the delegation came over and crossed Siberia and saw our equipment at work and bought very important machinery in the electrical power field, and the tax rates were quite normal.

The President: On the whole economic matter, Patolichev, Rogers and Flanigan had discussions yesterday. We have no problem so far as Export-Import Bank credits are concerned. I can do that unilaterally as President. On MFN I have to go to Congress.³

³ On May 23 Peter Flanigan sent the President a memorandum reporting on this meeting and saying that he and Rogers had clarified the U.S. position on the various possible commercial agreements. He noted that Soviet eligibility for U.S. export credits and the granting of MFN depended on agreement on lend-lease, and that the only unsettled lend-lease item was the amount, with the Soviets offering \$300 million and the United States asking for \$800 million. Agreement on this could be reached eventually, parallel to the work of the Joint US-USSR Commercial Commission—the establishment of which was to be announced that week—unless the President and Secretary wanted to make a major step by compromising the amount and terms during the summit. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, 1972 Summit, Economic Commission)

It would be helpful, Mr. General Secretary, if whomever you designate, perhaps Prime Minister Kosygin, could talk to Rogers about this so he can sell it to Congress when he gets there. Don't you agree, Mr. Ambassador (Dobrynin)?

Ambassador Dobrynin: [gestures to Kosygin]

General Secretary Brezhnev: Very well.

Chairman Kosygin: Well, of course, the solution of the question of Export-Import Bank credits will provide the opportunity to achieve some progress, but ways must be found to get over the MFN problem and seek ways to increase trade.

I have already put this to some American representatives. When we really get trade going it will be quite useful for us to have a bank of our own in the United States, as we do in various countries, such as France, Great Britain, Iran and Turkey, like in many parts of the world. We should either have a bank of our own, or it could take the form of a joint U.S.-Soviet venture.

General Secretary Brezhnev: One specific matter. I think on two occasions an important delegation of American businessmen visited this country. Among the questions discussed was a possible large scale agreement on a joint venture in gas, building in the northern areas of our country special liquid gas plants. This could be a very important project for U.S.-Soviet cooperation. Are you familiar with this, Mr. President, and if so how do you view this matter? Because this would be a question involving both vast quantities and also it would be on a long term basis.

[Secretary Rogers and Assistant Secretary Hillenbrand arrived.]

Chairman Kosygin: The situation right now is this. The representatives of American business circles are suggesting where some of these could be built. We reached preliminary agreement on a gas pipeline in Siberia from Tyumen. The initial duration will be for a period of twenty years and the cost would be somewhere close to \$5 billion. The Americans who came here were quite confident that they had almost agreed on this matter with their authorities in the U.S. I don't know if it has come to your attention. They are quite sure that the total amounts of gas involved would be 25 billion cubic meters, or liquid gas would be 25 million tons. They gave us preliminary projections, a preliminary plan of action which they elaborated for our experts. I made a suggestion to have not just one pipeline but two parallel pipes. Then they made their own additional suggestions. They seemed quite sure a bargain could be struck.

To sum up, I am quite sure there is a basis to study this matter. We are also quite sure that there are enough gas deposits in this area to arrange for a business deal. There is a very important project that could be carried into effect. On account of the credit that would be extended by the American side to us to carry the project into effect, we

could place very significant orders, for example for 3 million tons of sheet steel and important orders in the field of compressors. We would thereby, contribute to a fuller scale of operations important to American industry. We would contribute to a lower American unemployment rate. If correctly presented to the Congress it would be welcomed.

The President: [to Secretary Rogers] Would you say a word on the gas project?

Secretary Rogers: This is a very large project, and we have to consider carefully its feasibility. We as a government have not taken a position as yet. We recognize the point that Premier Kosygin has made. We talked to private parties, and we indicated that we would want to consider any proposals that they make. Up to this time we haven't taken a position as a government on it.

Chairman Kosygin: That is exactly what the American businessmen said. But they are interested and confirmed what you said, that the U.S. Government has not taken a position yet.

The President: [to Secretary Rogers] Before you came I said that I thought it would be helpful if you could meet with Mr. Kosygin and discuss the specifics on this. They also raised the points of MFN which I said we were prepared to move on with the Congress. Would you like to say a word about that?

Secretary Rogers: I would be happy to meet with Mr. Kosygin and Mr. Flanigan at your convenience. As you know, Mr. President, this involves huge amounts of credits and we have to consider it carefully. Concerning natural gas, actually if we were to extend that amount of credit, we would have to work out the lend-lease settlement. Natural gas involves a very substantial amount of credit, about one-third of what the Export-Import Bank has available.

The President: It also involves MFN?

Secretary Rogers: Credit.

The President: That doesn't mean that it isn't possible.

Chairman Kosygin: But this is not just something in our interest alone. It is something of a mutual advantage to both sides.

The President: Oh no.

Chairman Kosygin: This should reflect a mutual desire on our part to develop a cooperation in this field; it is not something that is unilaterally to our advantage.

The President: We would like to work it out altogether, including lend lease, the resolution of that problem. I can move on Export-Import Bank matters, but in regard to MFN I have to go back to the Congress on that. I believe that Kosygin/Rogers discussions would be useful because we get the side of the businessmen, and I would like to hear directly what you have in mind.

Secretary Rogers: I have talked to the businessmen. I will be very happy to talk to Premier Kosygin.

Chairman Kosygin: Well, just adding to what has been said now, we have large agreements on the sale of gas with Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany and all the Socialist countries and Italy. In short, we have almost potential consumers of our gas than we need. This should be in the nature of a serious business deal between our two countries.

On the question of lend lease, we think we should set aside a time to discuss that so we know where we are. We should not just float in air so that we can come to a concrete solution on the basis of your proposal and the ones that we have. Certainly that issue is long overdue.

The President: That certainly would help the political climate that we need to get Most-Favored-Nation.

Chairman Kosygin: And here, of course, we must both take a really realistic view of things and remember that after all more than 25 years have passed since the end of the war. None of us can expect very great figures or sums to be involved in solving this matter. On the other hand many in this world want to exploit this matter in their own selfish interest.

Secretary Rogers: The President suggested I say a word about MFN. If we have a satisfactory outcome of the lend lease negotiations and the general relations between the Soviet Union and the United States improve as a result of this visit, and the President supports MFN, then Congress, I think, will follow the President's lead. It is not an easy matter, but I think whatever the President recommends to the Congress under these circumstances, I think that they should do.

Europe

General Secretary Brezhnev: Shall we now turn to the subject that has been suggested we discuss this morning, Europe? If you have no objections, I would like to make a few opening remarks on that question. A discussion of the problems relating to Europe is a very important one indeed, and I believe the reasons for that are understood perfectly well on both sides. Europe is indeed an area which is one of the most densely populated ones in the world. It is an area of enormous economic potential; an area of ancient culture and science. All of these are important matters.

On the other hand, it is also an area where in the past many large-scale wars originated. I need only to mention two world wars and especially the last one which the U.S. was dragged into also. And those wars, particularly the last one, involved very much human suffering and sacrifice. It had a very bad aftermath and had a long term effect on the situation in Europe generally.

The question therefore is how to make this area an area of peace and tranquility so that all the peoples of Europe can live in conditions of security, so that we too, and both of us, can be confident that the situation in Europe would not deteriorate. This is certainly not an easy thing to achieve, but it is something that should be the focus of our attention.

In Europe, we have sufficient and quite rich experience of cooperation on various matters. There has been the fighting cooperation of our two nations during the Second World War. There was the fruitful cooperation at the time of the Potsdam Agreement. There has been comparable experience in the post-war period. We regard particularly highly the cooperation of our two nations in the talks on the Berlin agreement and in the matters of the Soviet Union–Federal Republic of Germany and Poland–Federal Republic of Germany Treaties.

However much we value the cooperation in the past, we should not belittle the importance of our role in ensuring the future of Europe, because there are still in Europe the unresolved problems. Very much in the policies of the United States and Soviet Union about Europe would favor not only the interests of Europeans, but also the interests of your country and ours. I should like to say quite frankly that if the U.S. is prepared to take measures to remove the survivals of the past policies of the cold war, the outcome would be an improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. That, too, is a very important aspect of this problem.

And I would like at this point to emphasize again the significance of the concerted policies we both pursued with regard to the problems of West Berlin and the ratification of the treaty. At the same time I wish to state firmly that our line with regard to the Federal Republic of Germany would not be anti-American in character. This is something we said in all frankness to Chancellor Brandt, and this is something we will abide by very strictly. And as a practical step let me say that on May 31 our Supreme Soviet will be ratifying the treaty with the Federal Republic of Germany. As we pointed out in the past, immediately after that we will sign the final protocol on West Berlin so that can be put into effect too. In our view that will not only serve to improve the legal relations between the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic and Poland. It will also have a beneficial effect on the general atmosphere in Europe.

Secretary Rogers: I suggested to Mr. Gromyko that we make the signing on June 3.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I think that seems to be a very acceptable date. We have promised to sign it immediately after ratifying; that is something expected by the Federal Republic of Germany.

Secretary Rogers: There is some suggestion that we delay until June 16, but June 3 is better for us.

General Secretary Brezhnev: We feel the sooner the better. We promised they would come into force at the same time, so it seems logical to do it on June 3.

Secretary Rogers: We will try to work it out with the others.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Good, the British and the French.

General Secretary Brezhnev: That would be a very good thing indeed. In our common policy in Europe it will also be most important to continue to pursue a firm line and not even conceive of the possibility of the violation of boundaries of Europe as they have taken shape in the post-war period. That also is one of the paramount tasks of current foreign policies.

And I would now like to tell you frankly, Mr. President, there have been erroneous, fallacious interpretations of our policy with respect to Europe. Sometimes this is a lack of true knowledge, but more frequently it is deliberate rumors spread to the effect that the goal of our policies is to break the ties that the U.S. has developed with European states. We wish to state in these negotiations that this is very far from the truth. The initiatives that we are taking in Europe, and particularly on the question of European security, pursue a goal that is totally different. We pursue our objective in the interest of not only the European states; we pursue it also with the goal of maintaining and protecting the interest of the Soviet Union and the United States in Europe, if of course, like ourselves, the United States seeks to make Europe tranquil and secure.

In confirmation with what I have said with regard to the goal of the Soviet policy in Europe, we will take into account the role played by the U.S. and U.S.-Soviet cooperation both during World War II and the post-war period, particularly in the earlier talks on the problem of West Berlin and the matter of the ratification of the treaties. We believe it quite normal that in all matters relating to the European Conference and the solution of all serious problems relating to Europe, the United States should participate on an equal footing, even though the United States is not an European nation. This review is confirmation of our views and attitude to the U.S. and to the U.S. being able to defend its own interests in Europe.

Another question to which we attach great importance is the question of preparing and convening an all-European Security Conference. The reasons why we attach importance to this is as follows: We do not see the Conference as an aim in itself. We regard it as one of the possible means that can help bring to fruition the turn that has been discernible toward the normalization of the situation and strengthening of the prospects of securing lasting peace in the continent.

I should like to add the following. Despite the different approaches taken by the U.S. and the Soviet Union to several matters affecting

European politics, the strengthening of security in Europe does in our view correspond to the long-term interests of both the Soviet Union and the United States. And if we both act in that direction—in a direction of building up the guarantee of security of European states—that will insure that there will be no more nuclear war and there will be tranquility in Europe to a far greater extent than attempts to insure that tranquility through the use or threat of nuclear weapons.

We believe that a turn for the better has become discernible in Europe today, and it will be in our view useful if we could take advantage of that fact in order to strengthen that feeling of security and begin a joint effort to prepare for the convening of a European Security Conference. We should therefore endeavor to begin preliminary bilateral consultations on those matters and in a preliminary way we might say a few words about that at this meeting. And we are counting on the positive attitude of the United States toward this matter. We have expressed our views publicly on this question on many occasions and so have quite a few other European states.

As you know, we have spoken in favor of convening this conference even as early as the end of this year. It is quite clear that in one blow it may certainly not prove possible to resolve all the complex problems of Europe, but the important thing is to launch the conference, to get the conference going. It might prove expedient to prolong its work. The important thing is to begin the work, to begin the preparations for the conference.

As in any question such preparations can assume a different form, but as a first suggestion perhaps we could discuss the following: we first begin multilateral consultations in Helsinki. Then, in the first stage of the conference itself the Foreign Ministers of the European states and the United States and Canada could meet to work out an agenda of the conference, to create the necessary bodies, commissions, secretariat and so forth. And then those bodies could get to work in order to elaborate and submit various specific proposals for the consideration of the governments of the European states and the United States and Canada.

Certainly this is not the one and only possible form of addressing ourselves to this problem. Other forms can also be discussed. We are just submitting our own view. This form has in it nothing that can be construed as running against any participants in the conference. Whatever conversations we have on this topic, we should certainly like to emphasize the significance for future developments of our two sides publicly saying something in principle on the problem relating to the European Conference at the conclusion of our meeting here. And you have in principle given your consent to that first meeting. I wish to emphasize that it would be very important indeed to say something at

the conclusion on these subjects because if we don't there might be all sorts of wrong opinions and misunderstandings in Europe. People would start saying that the U.S. or the Soviet Union was changing their policy. Even if so, by making public reference we would be doing a very good thing and therefore justify the hopes the people in Europe have placed in these talks and in the people of our countries.

And now we have through joint cooperation settled the matter of the ratification of the treaties and the question of West Berlin, another important matter arises and that is a simultaneous admission of the two German states, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, to the United Nations. The possible solution to this question would certainly remove much tension in Europe and the sources of friction between us on those grounds. This is a major issue, and we feel we should be entitled to count on the positive attitude of your part on this also.

Although it is an international problem, it also relates to bilateral relations between our two countries. It would help to create a better climate for the relations between us. And that is something to which you made frequent reference during this visit, Mr. President.

Another major issue which concerns not only improving the general climate and relations between our two countries and the relations of our two countries with the states of Europe, but also in line with the interest of generally improving the situation in the world, is the question of the military/political groupings in Europe. You are, I trust, familiar with our position on these matters. We are prepared, together with our allies, to disband military/political groupings in Europe towards a first step to really disbanding military organizations, and we are prepared to initiate consultations with you on this subject.

Those, Mr. President, are in our view just the basic issues we could discuss and talk about with relation to Europe.

The President: Mr. General Secretary, you correctly pointed out our position of agreeing in principle to a European Security Conference, or a European Security and Cooperation Conference. As you know, we have, and you have, the problem of not deciding at this meeting the future of Europe. It is very important, while we agree in principle, that we consult with our allies, you with yours and we with ours. Therefore it is very important that whatever we state here, we will follow through with consultations with our allies.

General Secretary Brezhnev: That's quite natural.

Chairman Kosygin: Do you think the time will come when there are no allies on your part or on ours, that we are common allies?

The President: Surely. It will take time.

Chairman Kosygin: That's what we want to achieve. As long as you have your allies and we ours, we are at loggerheads.

The President: It is very important we recognize that smaller nations are very sensitive about the relations between the two great powers. Small nations object to having their fate decided by larger ones.

General Secretary Brezhnev: It should not offend them.

Chairman Kosygin: That in fact is why we are so categorically opposed to allegations, these Chinese allegations, about the two superpowers combining to settle all the questions of the world, the affairs of smaller countries. We, for our part, have the immutable position that we respect other countries. And that is our attitude.

[There was a brief discussion about Kosygin and a Deputy Prime Minister for Science.]

The President: He is making a private deal with Mr. Kosygin. As the first nation to send a manned mission to Mars, I will go along.

Chairman Kosygin: I can stand it, can you?

The President: It will take nine months. We will get to know each other very well.

Chairman Kosygin: We will take cognac.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: How could you go without the Foreign Ministers?

Chairman Podgorny: This is not a private deal. We have to give honest thought to who flies.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Perhaps first there should be a preliminary flight of foreign ministers.

The President: If the foreign ministers don't come back, we won't go.

General Secretary Brezhnev: We call Dr. Kissinger to order—keep him away from submarines.

Chairman Kosygin: If we don't come back, everything will be clear.

The President: Getting to the practical points, as I know the General Secretary likes to do, stated frankly, I see these problems. First to have a meeting this year, 1972, the first meeting of the European Security Conference, would not be possible. It poses for us rather considerable problems. We have elections and the aftermath, and it also poses the problem of participation. We can talk in terms of a meeting in 1973. We can have preliminary discussions take place in the fall of this year. That is realistic. One of the reasons that this meeting we are having now is producing such solid results is because it was well prepared. In a meeting involving all the countries of Europe, the preparations, of course, would be very important. Whereas we two might agree on an agenda, smaller nations have various ideas, and it will take time. 1973 is the time for the meeting to aim for rather than trying to compress it and get it done in 1972.

Secretary Rogers: Our allies agree with this. Some of them have elections this fall, like Canada.

The President: You have to know whether you are dealing with a government that will survive or one that's gone. Preliminary discussions at the proper level, the exploratory discussions, could go forward at the times the European nations and all of us agree.

It's your thought that these should take place at Helsinki?

General Secretary Brezhnev: That's where the idea of a conference came to life. Some work has already begun. Since Finland was the initiator we feel that Helsinki should be the city. That seems the general trend of public opinion, that it should be held in Helsinki.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: In fact practically all the countries concerned have indicated their preference for Helsinki, and the U.S. has not in fact registered a negative attitude.

Secretary Rogers: We are talking about preliminary talks, not the conference itself.

General Secretary Brezhnev: That's exactly our understanding.

The President: The second point, with regard to UN representation of East Germany, this is a problem where we, of course, will have to be guided by the attitude of the Federal Republic. And when the Federal Republic has discussed this matter and indicated it is ready to move forward, we will, of course, cooperate. We will be prepared to discuss it with the British and the French. There is the very sensitive problem of four-power rights that might be affected by this action.

The situation with regard to what the General Secretary was referring to concerning military forces and military blocs is of course much more difficult and is going to require a great deal of time. As the General Secretary and all the representatives here of the Soviet Government are aware, there have been considerable discussions in the NATO community in regard to the possibility of mutual balanced force reductions. This is naturally a matter that cannot be decided in a large conference involving a number of nations that do not have forces. That is why we are suggesting, I know this is a matter of previous discussion. . . .

General Secretary Brezhnev: Of course, there are such states as Luxembourg, with 90 policemen.

The President: . . . we have suggested that there should be parallel discussions on the problem of force reductions, parallel discussions at the time going forward with discussions on the European Conference.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Well, how do you visualize that in practice? Let us assume that we have the procedure on the conference that I have suggested, the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Helsinki to discuss matters on the agenda, working bodies, the secretariat, etc. In your view they would also discuss the question of force reductions in parallel? Is that your thinking generally?

The President: No. That was the point I was making. We thought that is too large a body for that. Let the countries involved, with forces involved, have discussions; that is the point Dr. Kissinger made in discussions with the General Secretary before.

Chairman Kosygin: But they should proceed in parallel.

General Secretary Brezhnev: In parallel, but different bodies discussing the two different subjects.

Secretary Rogers: We might have the subjects on the agenda and agree to discuss maybe simultaneously, maybe shortly thereafter.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Or perhaps we really need not have them in parallel, perhaps first agree to getting the question of the European Conference out of the way, and then force reductions. But if we discuss the two very important matters of the European Security Conference and force reductions in parallel, perhaps they would get in the way of each other.

The President: If we wait until a multilateral conference, we may never get to parallel discussions.

General Secretary Brezhnev: That matter could be dealt with in parallel but different bodies altogether. We support the earliest possible discussion of that but without hinging these questions together. The crux lies in not tying up these two problems as far as substance is concerned.

Secretary Rogers: I think that as a matter of logic if you are going to have a conference dealing with security certainly one of the most important aspects is forces. Certainly any conference that didn't cover forces would be lacking something.

The President: Let me suggest, Mr. General Secretary, a procedure for your consideration. I would like to do some thinking on how we do this tactically, the date and so forth. If we could have Rogers and Gromyko have a discussion also and then report back to us, maybe Friday, and by Friday then we can consider this question. They could give us some options.

[General Secretary Brezhnev stands up.]

Chairman Kosygin/General Secretary Brezhnev: Okay.

Chairman Kosygin: Because indeed it would be a very good thing if Secretary Rogers and Gromyko could work on this for our consideration, a kind of program for both of us working toward a European Conference. This would indeed help us remove many questions that otherwise would take months of time.

The President: This is too big a group for technical matters.

Chairman Kosygin: Although certainly there are many people in Europe who live under the impression, perhaps false, that we are holding back preparations for the Conference. If we come to an agreement on this, it would be very useful to remove this impression.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Many people in Europe think you oppose the Conference.

The President: Let me emphasize again that although we come to agreement, we must be careful not to irritate our friends—all our friends, we consider all Europe our friends. For example, we wouldn't want to anger Albania. (laughter) We don't want to anger them.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: That is a very noble intention.

Secretary Rogers: We don't want to make Luxembourg mad.

Chairman Kosygin: We heed the words of Luxembourg too.

If, for example, we tell Albania that you regard them as best friend, they will be very glad.

Chairman Podgorny: We are prepared to heed the voice of Luxembourg but Albania takes a different view.

Chairman Kosygin: No exceptions. If they don't want to take part, what can we do?

The President: Take a country like Austria. It is very important. It is small but in the heart of Europe. We should heed its voice.

General Secretary Brezhnev: The voice of every country should be heeded.

I think we can accept as a basis the view by the President to make Secretary Rogers and Comrade Gromyko get to work, perhaps throughout the night. While we enjoy our sleep they will do work. We have to cherish our time.

The President: They will not see the ballet.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I am sure he's seen "Swan Lake."

Secretary Rogers: Not here. I am looking forward to it.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Well, Mr. President, that I feel completes the discussion.

The President: I think we have a direction set. Also on the trade side there will be further discussions with Flanigan and Kosygin.

General Secretary Brezhnev: At nighttime too.

Chairman Kosygin: How shall we divide it? Half the time for me and half the time for Gromyko?

[The Soviet side then suggested that an announcement for both sides be made concerning this meeting. It contained the facts of the date of the meeting, the participants, the atmosphere and that there were signatures of the space and science and technology agreements. President Nixon suggested that the topic for discussion for the meeting be termed "European matters" rather than "European security." The Soviet side accepted this, and the text of the announcement was agreed to. The meeting then concluded.]

266. Backchannel Message From the Head of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Delegation (Smith) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Helsinki, May 24, 1972, 0930Z.

Tohak 113. Deliver immediately even if Dr. Kissinger is in meeting.

Dear Henry:

Sonnenfeldt telcon² suggests that root of possible misunderstanding between us lies in Soviet formula use simply of the word "missiles" rather than the words (which we have tried to negotiate and which we were planning to make in a unilateral statement) "the largest light ICBM now operational on either side."³

If at Moscow you can get agreement that there will be no significant increase (a) in the size of ICBM silo launchers, or (b) in the volume of ICBMs beyond that of the largest light ICBM currently deployed by ei-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1088, Howe Vietnam Chronological File, May 24, 1972. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

² No record of this telcon has been found.

³ In his memoirs Smith writes that at 9 a.m. on May 24 he learned that the negotiations in Moscow on possible constraints on ICBM modernization now included defining "significant" as no more than 10 to 15 percent. (See footnote 7, Document 263.) He said that although he had been advised not to share this information with anyone until he heard from Kissinger, he passed its substance to the other delegates. He noted that it was just as well that he had because General Allison immediately pointed out that under the proposed formula the United States would have to halt its Minuteman III program, in which 550 single-warhead Minuteman I missiles were being replaced with MIRVed Minuteman III missiles which had "significantly" larger volume than the Minuteman I. Smith wrote that he immediately rushed a message to Kissinger headed "Deliver immediately even if Dr. Kissinger is in meeting" warning him of this danger, and pointing out that the delegation's earlier proposal to define a heavy missile as one having greater volume than "the largest light ICBM now operational on either side" (the Soviet SS-11) would still permit significant increases in U.S. ICBMs while stopping the Soviet ICBM buildup. (*Doubletalk*, p. 415)

ther side, and you can get the word “significant” further defined to be no more than 10 to 15 per cent, that would be great improvement.⁴

Warm regards.

Gerry Smith

⁴ Not knowing how quickly his message would be delivered, Smith also telephoned the Moscow White House and talked to Mossbacher, explaining the effect the provision under consideration would have on the U.S. MIRV program. He said Mossbacher must have been impressed by his urgency, because a Kissinger aide called back, saying they couldn’t understand his message and had thought they were trying to get the definitions precisely as Smith had recommended. Over an open line (to which he assumed Soviet intelligence agents were listening), he advised against using the specific number (10 to 15 percent) to define “significant” as it applied to *missile volume*. No record of these phone conversations has been found. Smith recalled that he then sent another cable to Kissinger, explaining how the formula under consideration would affect Minuteman III and suggesting one with “no significant increase (a) in the size of ICBM silo launchers or (b) in the volume of missiles *beyond that of the largest light ICBM currently deployed by either side*, and then define ‘significant’ as no more than 10 to 15 per cent . . . ” (*Doubletalk*, pp. 415–416)

267. Telegram From the Head of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Delegation (Smith) to the Department of State¹

Helsinki, May 24, 1972, 1320Z.

SALT VII 1368. Subj: Smith–Semenov Post Mini-plenary Conversation May 24.

1. In post meeting conversation today, Semenov remarked to Smith “off the record” that he had no information about the discussions of SALT taking place in Moscow. He said that he had tried unsuccessfully to reach Gromyko as late as midnight, and the foreign ministry knew nothing. He hoped to have further instructions some time in the afternoon. Smith said he was in a similar situation. Semenov said that it was a good thing that our leaders were discussing these matters. Semenov stated that he had instructions to conclude agreement here in Helsinki on all points. Smith said that he had the same guidance.

2. Semenov also indicated that he had no new instructions on the SLBM question. He did repeat that the Soviet side considered the number 48 important, that this figure did not place in doubt national

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 883, SALT, SALT Talks (Helsinki), May–Aug 1972, Vol. #18. Secret; Immediate; Nodis/SALT. Repeated to Moscow for Rogers and Kissinger.

technical means of verification, and that the Soviet position is that putting into service additional SLBM launchers on modern submarines in the USSR would, beginning with the 49th submarine, be replacements for older types of ICBM or SLBM launchers. He also noted the Soviet proposal concerning details of SLBM limitation calling for a different form than the American proposal. He said the US proposals were being studied.

3. Smith noted that Soviets clearly knew US position on substance. As to matter of form, Smith expressed strictly personal and uninstructed view that it might be possible to change the form of the detailed SLBM presentation.

4. Semenov agreed with Smith on developing agreed positions on establishment of the standing consultative commission upon resumption of follow-on SALT talks. (Exchange on this subject reported septel.) Smith also read and handed Semenov "statement of the US side" denying validity of "earlier statement of the Soviet side," concerning compensation for forward SLBM basing and allied submarines, using text provided in State 89456² (this statement and brief exchange is also reported septel).³

Smith

² Telegram 89456 from the Department of State to the U.S. SALT delegation in Helsinki, May 20. (Ibid.)

³ In telegram SALT VII 1369 from Helsinki to Kissinger and Rogers, May 24, Smith reported that during his post-meeting conversation with Semenov, he read and handed over the text of the following U.S. statement: "The United States side has studied 'the statement of the Soviet side' of May 17 concerning compensation for submarine basing and SLBM submarines belonging to third countries. The United States does not accept the validity of the considerations in that statement." He said that Semenov replied that he understood the U.S. position and noted that the United States could consider the Soviet statement as a unilateral one. Smith reiterated that the Soviet statement was not acceptable. Semenov said that if there had been agreement, the statement would have been bilateral and he was sorry they could not reach agreement. (Ibid.)

268. Telegram From Secretary of State Rogers to the Department of State¹

Moscow, May 24, 1972, 1515Z.

Secto 15.

1. Following is cleared memcon between Secretary and Soviet Minister of Foreign Trade Patolichev May 23.

2. *Begin text.*

Subject: US-Soviet Trade and Economic Relations.

PARTICIPANTS:

SOVIET:

Foreign Trade Minister N.S. Patolichev
Deputy Foreign Trade Minister A. Manzhulo
Deputy Foreign Trade Minister V.S. Alkhimov
Chief, American Countries Division, N.V. Zinov'yev
U.S. Desk Officer, Mft, Mrs. Ye. A. Voronkov
Deputy Chief of Protocol, V.A. Rakhmanin

U.S.:

Secretary of State Rogers
Mr. Peter Flanigan
Mr. Dean Hinton
Mr. Lewis Bowden

Date and place: May 23, 1972, Ministry of Foreign Trade, Moscow, USSR

The Secretary led off by saying our respective leaders had in their morning discussions today emphasized the desire for a substantial increase in trade between our two countries. He had come to see Minister Patolichev with a view to examining concrete ways to solving the main problems standing in the way of such expansion.

The Secretary mentioned possible feed grain purchases by the USSR from the US, indicating that Mr. Flanigan had already talked to Patolichev in Washington about that and the whole range of problems in the trade field between us. We had come to know the Soviet positions on these matters quite well. Some of the problems doubtless would take a longer time but we hoped some could be successfully dealt with this week. The Secretary then reminded Patolichev that Secretary Peterson had made a grain purchase proposal to him while he was in Washington. He would be interested in knowing their response.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 719, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXII, May 1972. Confidential; Exdis.

Patolichev replied they had studied the proposal thoroughly and in a positive spirit, but they were not yet in a position to give us a definitive answer. He said he simply didn't have the money. Moreover, measures were being taken in Soviet agriculture which would have a positive effect on the situation. (By this he clearly meant the Soviet grain output this year.) He said that people in Washington had told him there was a drought in the Rostov area but he had been informed on returning from the US that it was raining there, so things didn't look so bad. He thought perhaps this whole subject would be touched on by our leaders.

Minister Patolichev then expressed the belief that one day of meetings should be set aside this week to economic matters and it was decided that mutually convenient times would be found.

Mr. Flanigan said he had understood from this morning's summit meeting that working groups were supposed to be formed in the various fields and examine the possibility of some agreements. The Secretary concurred that our leaders had indeed said it would be good to find some agreements of an economic nature. He added that if we could get rid of some of the main political problems then we could move to some large deals. Meanwhile, we should concentrate on what was possible at this time.

Patolichev said he understood our proposal in Washington on feed grains to be our last offer. He was forced to point out that the Soviet Union had never bought grain abroad at such a high rate of interest and that he had so indicated in Washington to Secretary Peterson. Then the Minister summarized the thoughts he had expressed in Washington about a shorter term feed grains agreement now to cover the period until PL 480 expires, at which time perhaps a longer term agreement could be worked out. He pointed to the advantages a long-term commitment from the USSR would have for the US, since it would involve buying a certain amount per year regardless of the grain crop in the USSR. He specified a commitment over three years to buy \$750 million worth of feed grains—\$200 million the first year but with the outstanding debt at any one time not to be more than \$500 million. He concluded that he had reported our conditions of sale to his superiors but it was obvious that our two positions were not close. He also stated that he had reported that a grain deal at this time would create a good atmosphere among the public and in Congress, as well as facilitate the solution of other problems between us.

Mr. Flanigan observed that as of now the only credits available for such purchases was from the CCC and that the Soviets were aware of this.

Patolichev said he hoped we could revert to this subject later in the week. He would recommend that we come up with some more

agreeable proposals. The Secretary replied that our briefcases were empty.

Minister Patolichev returned to the question of this year's harvest. He said that the year had started out looking very bad but that things were getting better fast. In the Volga and North Caucasus areas the winter grain had been badly hit but now after considerable efforts, things had been put into good shape. Mr. Flanigan said we were happy to learn that the grain situation was improving but as everyone knew demand for grain was also rising. The Soviets agreed, saying they eat enough bread to feed two billion people in other countries.

Secretary Rogers then asked what about the Joint Trade Commission. Mr. Flanigan noted that Secretary Peterson had given Patolichev a paper outlining the goals and functioning of such a commission. He suggested we work up language about setting up such a commission which could be put into a communiqué. Patolichev agreed and designated Mr. Manzhulo from his side for drafting.

Mr. Flanigan then shifted to lend lease, observing that we each understood the other's point of view. He noted that the only big problem remaining is the total figure. He thought that we would keep trying to find a solution to that problem at the same time the Joint Trade Commission was carrying out its assigned functions. He said our leaders might find some acceptable middle ground on the total figure. Patolichev agreed, saying it was obviously in the interests of both countries to end the lend lease business so that the US could grant credits and export more machinery and equipment to the USSR.²

The Secretary suggested they consult with their principals on our feed grains proposal and promised we would consult ours about the US position on the total lend lease figure.

Rogers

² Telegram Secto 23 from Moscow, May 25, transmitted a message from Flanigan to Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Willis C. Armstrong stating that the Soviets were insisting on lend-lease repayment terms equivalent to those given to the British in 1947. Flanigan asked Armstrong to compute what annual debt service payment would retire the debt and accrued interest, plus interest on the unpaid portion at 2 percent, in 30 years—assuming that the Soviets had agreed in 1947 to a debt of \$500 million with interest at 2 percent compounded. He also asked for the equivalent interest rate of a new \$500 million, 30-year loan with payments starting in the first year. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73 DEF 19–8 US–USSR) In telegram 92887 to Moscow, May 25, Armstrong replied that assuming terms equivalent to those accepted by the British with no Soviet payments between July 1, 1946, and July 1, 1971, and assuming that the Soviets now agreed to begin payments as of July 1, 1972, with 2 percent interest on the unpaid balance—which included both the stated principal of \$500 million and accumulated simple interest on the missed payments, he calculated a total sum of \$795 million. The true interest rate on the stated principal of \$500 million over the next 30 years would be 5¼ percent. (Ibid.)

269. Editorial Note

In his May 24, 1972, diary entry, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman recorded that immediately after the signing ceremony that afternoon, General Secretary Brezhnev and President Nixon “started down the hall with our advance party meeting them. And we thought they were going across to go into the Residence and down to get in his car, when all of a sudden the P and Brezhnev disappeared down a corridor, zipped into an elevator, shot downstairs, came out into the driveway, popped into Brezhnev’s car and roared off with Duncan [Secret Service man] just barely catching up.”

Nixon commented in his memoirs that “surprise is another favorite technique of Communist negotiators” and recalled that after the May 24 signing of the agreement on cooperation in space exploration, he and Brezhnev had walked out of the room together. Brezhnev had begun talking about the dinner planned for them at one of the government dachas outside Moscow that evening and suggested that they go to the country right away so that he could see it in the daylight. Nixon wrote that Brezhnev propelled him into an elevator that took them to the ground floor, where they climbed into one of his limousines and drove away while the Secret Service and the others rushed around trying to find cars and drivers to follow them. (*RN: Memoirs*, page 612)

Haldeman wrote that “K had been waiting over at the Residence, planning to ride with the P out to the dacha to get a chance to talk with him, and the motorcade left without him. K missed the whole thing and was, of course, furious, but got in the P’s car with Brennan and shot on out. They didn’t get back until well after midnight.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) In his version of this event Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger recalled that when Brezhnev proposed going to the dacha immediately, “Nixon accepted—there was little else he could do, since Brezhnev was physically propelling him into his car.” He wrote that “Presidential Assistants learn rather quickly to stay close to their chiefs, especially on foreign trips” so he jumped into a Soviet follow-up car. Kissinger described the “small motorcade containing Nixon and Brezhnev in one car and me in another [speeding] out of Moscow . . . followed by Nixon’s own car, full of Secret Service agents beside themselves that the President of the United States had been abducted in front of their very eyes by the Soviet Union’s Number One Communist.” He added that “the evening was to be marked by sudden unpredictable changes. Having successfully ‘kidnapped’ the president once, Brezhnev, in high good spirits on our arrival at the dacha, then whisked him down to the boat landing for a hydrofoil ride.” (*White House Years*, pages 1223–1224)

270. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Moscow, May 24, 1972.

SUBJECT

Vietnam: Talking Points for Your Meeting on May 24

I. The Great Power Relationship

—We cannot allow localized situations to threaten Soviet-American relations and the prospects for a new era. Great powers must exercise their influence and restraint to prevent such situations from getting out of hand and undermining the very bilateral principles which we have been working on.

—When nations directly challenge the interests of major powers, the latter must move decisively. We both understand this.

—The Soviet Union must assume a responsibility, whenever they supply massive armaments, and they must be prepared to deal with the consequences when they fail to exercise such a responsibility.

II. The Reasons Underlying Our May 8 Decision

—While continuing our course of unilateral disengagement from Vietnam, we pursued every conceivable avenue of negotiation. And we exercised the utmost restraint over a period of months while North Vietnam prepared for its massive conventional invasion of South Vietnam. Hanoi's answer to every peace offer we have made has been to escalate the war.

—I have repeatedly warned of the potential consequences of Hanoi's negotiating intransigence, its continued insistence on imposing its political will on South Vietnam through the use of force, and the resultant threat to U.S. forces remaining in South Vietnam. This point was made especially clear to the Soviet leaders in Dr. Kissinger's April meetings in Moscow² and our subsequent exchanges through private channels.

—Despite professions to the contrary, Hanoi refused to negotiate seriously. It continued to abandon all restraint, throwing its whole army into battle in the territory of its neighbor.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A notation on the paper indicates the President saw it.

² For Kissinger's discussions of Vietnam during his secret trip to Moscow, see Documents 134, 139, and 159.

—We were thus faced with an entirely new situation. As a result, on May 8 I announced my decision to take the steps necessary to deny Hanoi the weapons and supplies it needs to continue the aggression. These measures were not directed at any third country and designed in such a way as not to interfere with freedom of navigation on the high seas.³

—We will persist in these and other measures against North Vietnam until our prisoners of war are returned and an internationally supervised ceasefire has begun. However, as evidence of our good will, we have restricted bombardments in the Hanoi area for the duration of my trip. I have also given American commanders strict instructions to ensure that no attacks will be directed against foreign vessels remaining within North Vietnamese harbors. We will do everything possible to avoid involving your ships.

—I want to emphasize that the U.S. is not seeking to impose its will or to humiliate North Vietnam. We took these actions because they were forced upon us.

—We are willing to conclude a settlement that meets the legitimate concerns of all parties including North Vietnam.

III. *Specific Negotiating Issues*

A. *Legality of the May 8 Actions and Delivery of Civilian Cargoes.*

[*This is an issue you will not wish to raise yourself, but the Soviets probably will, attacking the mining of approaches to DRV ports as illegal and depriving the DRV civilian cargoes for its people. If they raise these questions, suggested talking points are:*]⁴

—Mining is not illegal and both sides have previously used it in the present conflict. The actions we have taken are entirely within the internal or territorial waters of North Vietnam and carefully designed to uphold our legal obligations with respect to freedom of navigation on the high seas.

—For these same legal considerations, there is no way to differentiate between various types of cargo without taking measures interfering with third country shipping beyond North Vietnam's claimed territorial waters.

—If these actions bring some suffering to the North Vietnamese people, this flows directly as a consequence of the suffering they have chosen to inflict on South Vietnam.

³ See Document 208 for Nixon's speech on the mining of Haiphong harbor.

⁴ All brackets in the source text.

B. Internationally Supervised Ceasefire and Prisoners of War.

[The Soviets have evidenced some interest in what kind of ceasefire we have in mind. Brezhnev mentioned an in-place ceasefire at my meetings with him in April. After your May 8 speech Dobrynin asked what type of ceasefire we had in mind—whether it could be in-place or whether there were other conditions, i.e. withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces. You do not want to restrict our flexibility on this since the Soviets have probably just been probing our position and it has become quite apparent they can't speak for Hanoi. Your *talking points*:]

—We are prepared to discuss the modalities of an internationally supervised ceasefire with the DRV. Thus far we have had no indication they are prepared to enter into such negotiations.

—By prisoners of war we mean all American military men [and innocent civilians] held prisoner throughout Indochina, namely North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. Concurrent with their release we will insist on a complete accounting of all those missing in action.

—We are prepared to discuss the modalities of prisoner returns immediately with the DRV.

—We urge the Soviet Union, as a humanitarian matter, to use its influence with its allies to secure humane treatment for Americans held captive throughout Indochina and the immediate release of those who are sick, wounded and have been held for more than four years.

C. Withdrawals

—No one can claim that we seek a permanent presence in South Vietnam when we have already withdrawn 500,000 men.

—Once prisoners of war are released and the internationally supervised ceasefire has begun, we will proceed with a complete withdrawal of all American forces from South Vietnam within four months. There would be no American residual force.

—We will not retain any U.S. or allied bases, but we will not dismantle any GVN bases.

[The Soviets could raise the question of *U.S. forces* stationed *outside of South Vietnam*, e.g., Thailand and the 7th Fleet. Again, we want to retain our freedom of maneuver. *If raised, your talking points*:]

—We will not negotiate with Hanoi about our forces stationed *outside of South Vietnam*. Obviously, the activities of such forces against communist military activities in Indochina will be halted as part of an internationally supervised cease-fire.

—Some of these forces could eventually be withdrawn once effective and viable guarantees have been established to ensure the status of Indochina.

D. Political Questions.

—The North Vietnamese pose unacceptable demands by insisting on the dismemberment of the present GVN as a precondition for talks leading to the settlement of internal political problems.

—We and the GVN have made extremely generous offers. We are prepared to listen to constructive counter-proposals. We will endorse and abide by any political arrangement that South Vietnamese political forces can work out peacefully between themselves.

—We believe, however, that the political issue is stalemated. The most rapid way to end the war is to settle military issues alone and leave the political questions to the Vietnamese themselves. This is the fundamental approach embodied in my May 8 speech.

—If Hanoi is holding up progress on the negotiating front in the hope of further political concessions by the U.S., then the Soviet Union could serve a useful role and perhaps help speed the negotiating process by disabusing the DRV of any such expectation.

E. Resumption of Talks, Public and Private.

—We always remain prepared to hold serious negotiations and have always believed that the best forum for progress is through private meetings. We offered through you to meet privately with the North Vietnamese on May 21⁵ but we never received a reply.

—We are opposed to resuming plenaries prior to secret negotiations because they have proven an even more sterile forum than private sessions. Their resumption without private meetings would raise false hopes and mislead public opinion.

[The Soviets may apply great pressure for the resumption of plenaries and, depending on the tenor of the conversations, they may press for such meetings as a minimum they must accomplish on behalf of the North Vietnamese, or even a fig-leaf for not doing more. If their approach appears to fit the above-described pattern, *you could say:*]

—We will agree to resume plenary meetings with the understanding that private talks will resume as well.

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 226.

271. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 24, 1972, 7:50–11 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU
Nikolai V. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet
Aleksei N. Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR
Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, Assistant to the General Secretary
Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter
A Second Soviet Interpreter/Notetaker

The President

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger

John Negroponce, NSC Staff Member

SUBJECT

Vietnam

General Secretary Brezhnev: We can continue our discussion. What is the plan for tonight?

The President: Of course, there is some unfinished business on SALT which I hope can be resolved at the working level. If not, we will have to finish it in the morning.

General Secretary Brezhnev: After our discussion of yesterday I believe we agreed in the main on some acceptable points on SALT.² Gromyko and Smirnov on our side will talk to Dr. Kissinger, and both sides agree to instruct our delegation in Helsinki.

I did learn that Gromyko was not able to meet with Kissinger because Kissinger was busy, so perhaps after tonight's meeting they can get together, unless, of course, Dr. Kissinger thinks up something more to complicate matters.³

The President: That discussion, of course, has been very difficult because on both sides it involves our vital interests. We have to be very careful and you have to be very careful to make an agreement we can both live with. I think we have a basic understanding, but it is

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in General Secretary Brezhnev's dacha, Zarech'ye, Moscow. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting was from 7:55 to 11:00 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² See Documents 262 and 263.

³ See Document 273.

important to get it cleared up so that we can proceed with the signing on Friday.⁴

General Secretary Brezhnev: That is how it looks.

The President: I think we have made a good start on European matters and we should be able to discuss it further at one of our meetings, probably Friday. Then tomorrow we should have further discussions on trade. If we could get that wrapped up we could have some announcement on Saturday. We could at least announce the Commission tomorrow and whatever else we can agree to on Saturday.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Of course it is quite true we must bring to a conclusion all that we have been discussing. Of course, in the international field there is the Middle East and Vietnam. These are acute questions but nevertheless it is necessary to discuss them.

The President: I think it is important to discuss both these subjects in this small forum because these are issues where we have some basic disagreements. It is important to discuss where we disagree and where we can find agreement.⁵

Several times during the course of our meetings, General Secretary Brezhnev has mentioned that Vietnam is a difficult issue and that because of developments that have occurred there the possibility of constructive progress at this meeting might have been jeopardized. I know it was very difficult for the Soviet leaders to look at the situation in Vietnam and make a decision nevertheless to continue our discussion as we have continued it at the highest level on other matters.

On the other hand, I believe one of the rules that both our countries must bear in mind in the future is that we must at all costs avoid what may be very important but what is essentially a collateral issue preventing progress on other issues that are overriding in our relations. We certainly did not choose this particular time to have the Vietnam situation flare up. The choice was by the North Vietnamese. Under the

⁴ May 26.

⁵ Kissinger recalled that "Nixon decided to put Vietnam squarely on the table. If he had not, the Soviet leaders surely would have; they were loaded for bear." He wrote that once the subject was Vietnam, "the easy camaraderie vanished; the atmosphere clouded suddenly from one second to the other. Each of the three Soviet leaders in turn unleashed a diatribe against Nixon, who, except for two one-sentence interruptions, endured it in dignified silence." Kissinger commented that he suddenly thought that "for all the bombast and rudeness, we were participants in a charade. While the tone was bellicose and the manner extremely rough, none of the Soviet statements had any operational content. The leaders stayed well clear of threats. . . . The Soviet leaders were not pressing us except with words. They were speaking for the record, and when they had said enough to have a transcript to send to Hanoi, they would stop. . . . The fact is that except for their bullying tone in this session the Soviet leaders treated Vietnam as a subsidiary issue during the summit." (*White House Years*, pp. 1225–1228)

circumstances I was left with no choice but to react as we did react. I realized this posed a very difficult problem for the Soviet leadership.

We were faced with a situation where 60,000 U.S. troops would have been endangered had not strong action been taken. We were also faced with the continuing problem where as many as 1,000 or more are missing in action and not accounted for, most or many of whom are known to be prisoners of war. And despite the withdrawal of 500,000 United States soldiers since I took office and after offer after offer in the negotiations, 149 public meetings in Paris and 13 private meetings which Dr. Kissinger conducted produced absolutely nothing from the North Vietnamese except for an ultimatum for us to get out under conditions which we will not accept.

Our position now is very forthcoming. We believe it is fair. As a matter of fact, the General Secretary in his conversations with Dr. Kissinger in his visit a few weeks ago suggested the consideration of a ceasefire. All we ask now is a return of and an accounting for our prisoners of war and a ceasefire. Once that is agreed to, we will withdraw all Americans within four months and cease military actions. We cannot go any further than that. Nothing further is negotiable on that point.

We could talk at great length about the wisdom of the American position in Vietnam. I know the views of the Soviet leaders. You know ours. No useful purpose would be served by going over past history. We now confront the fact that we have taken every step to bring an end to what is the only major international issue which clouds relations between the United States and the USSR. It is our intention to end the war by negotiations; but negotiations must be fair to both sides. There cannot be an ultimatum to us to impose on the South Vietnamese a government the North Vietnamese cannot impose by themselves. If the North Vietnamese are unwilling to end the war that way [by negotiations],⁶ then I will do whatever I must to bring the war to an end. Anything we do we will have in mind our desire not to exacerbate the relations between us. To this end we rejected the idea of a blockade which would have involved Soviet ships. During this meeting, for example, we stopped bombing the Hanoi area because of our desire to avoid any incidents embarrassing these talks. We have now reached the point where we see no way to deal with the North Vietnamese except the course I have chosen. Now the choice is theirs. They can have a peace which respects their independence and ends the conflict throughout Southeast Asia. Or we will have to use the military means available to us to bring the war to an end.

⁶ All brackets in the source text.

Let me be very frank. I am aware of the fact that the Soviet Union has an alliance with North Vietnam. I am aware that the Soviet Union supports the ideological views of the North Vietnamese. Of course, I am also aware that the Soviet Union has supplied military equipment to North Vietnam. All of this I understand as an international fact of life. We happen to disagree about that area. On the other hand, as two great powers which have at present so many positive considerations moving in the right direction, it seems to me that the mutual interest of both the United States and the USSR would be served by our doing what we can to bring the war to an end. Candidly, I realize that the Soviet Union, because it does have an alliance with North Vietnam and because it supplies military equipment, might be able to influence them to negotiate reasonably. But up to this point, looking at the evidence, I would have to say we have run into a blank wall on the negotiations front. So the situation is one where we have to continue our military actions until we get some assurance that going back to the negotiating table would produce some negotiating progress. If we can get that, then we might reconsider our present policy.

Let me conclude that I don't suggest the Soviet Union is responsible for the fact that the offensive took place at this time. I only say that it did take place and we had to react the way we did. So we can see how this kind of situation can be very embarrassing to our relations in the future where the irresponsible acts of an ally could be supplied with arms and get out of control at some future time. I want you to know that I'm very frank on this subject because I know that our Soviet friends disagree with me, but I know they'd want me to express myself very frankly and I have.

We could, of course, welcome any suggestions, but we would respectfully suggest that each of us in such a situation must put ourselves in the position of the other one. There may have been other times when the Soviet Union has felt it had to act decisively to protect what it believed were its interests. We may not have approved with the action, but we have not allowed incidents to mar our relationship. Now in this instance, we ought to get this out of the way as quickly as possible so we can have progress in other fields. That progress will go forward anyway, but it will go forward faster if Vietnam is not clouding our relationship.

In the final analysis we must recognize that when people say stop the war, we don't want to continue the war. They do. We want the war to stop now if they stop. It takes two to stop a war. We have been ready for three years. Now they must decide whether they want to stop the war or to take the consequences of not stopping it.

I have finished.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Well, Mr. President, we have indeed touched upon a very very acute and serious problem, because this is

a problem of war. More especially it is a problem of a war which is poisoning the general international situation as a whole and because it is having an effect on relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. I wish to emphasize it is particularly important to note this at this precise moment when cruel bombing has been resumed and where once again very cruel military actions have been taken against North Vietnam. I had occasion to talk about this with Dr. Kissinger, but we want to take this opportunity now to emphasize that not only we but most of the nations of the world are calling this a shameful war and quite rightly calling it aggression.⁷

There is perhaps indeed no need for us to go into all the details of the past, but there is one point that we should like to emphasize and that is the new escalation of the war, particularly the bombing of North Vietnam started by you at the very time when the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, our Prime Minister, was in Hanoi [1965]. At that time, North Vietnam wasn't doing anything.

You have just given your own assessment of this war and your own explanation for the war. We must most resolutely and forthrightly tell you, Mr. President, that our assessment is of a fundamentally different nature. You have heard on more than one occasion our assessment of this war in the statement of all the leaders of the Soviet Union. Perhaps we do not wish at this time to engage in polemics here on this subject, but we must say that we shall not depart from our assessment because we are profoundly convinced that it is right.

I agree, as I have said before, that we should not delve deep into the past; but certainly the fact is that the Geneva Accords⁸ which established the basis for peace in Indochina were grossly violated. And it would be appropriate to mention where these agreements were violated. It is a fact that the elections in South Vietnam envisaged by the Geneva Accords were not held, and it is no secret why this was not done. It was quite clear at that time who would win the election and on which side lay the support of the Vietnamese people.

⁷ In his memoirs Nixon wrote that everyone had been in a good humor when they got back to the dacha and Brezhnev had suggested they have a meeting before dinner, which had been scheduled for 8. "For the next three hours the Soviet leaders pounded me bitterly and emotionally about Vietnam." He recalled that he "momentarily thought of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde when Brezhnev, who had just been laughing and slapping me on the back, started shouting angrily that instead of honestly working to end the war, I was trying to use the Chinese as a means of bringing pressure on the Soviets to intervene with the North Vietnamese." (*RN: Memoirs*, p. 613)

⁸ The July 1954 Geneva accords which ended the hostilities in Indochina and provided for a temporary partition of Vietnam pending a nationwide election in the summer of 1956.

The question arises why shouldn't the Vietnamese and not someone else determine who leads the government of South Vietnam? Why is it that recipes for a solution of the question in Vietnam do not come from the Vietnamese themselves but instead come from Washington? Now that is certainly rather strange logic. After all, no one invited the U.S. into Vietnam; you went into Vietnam with an enormous army and then the Americans started saying they were defending themselves. Actually the fact is they went into a country not belonging to them and then said it was self-defense. That is very strange. On what laws was this based? There are no such laws. And this can be qualified as nothing short of pure aggression.

Now you say you want to end this war and quite calmly put forward the idea. But this is at a time when you are carrying out cruel bombing raids not only in the direct theater of battle but also against the peaceful civilian population. All this you say is your method of ending the war. Surely there is nothing in common between these actions and ending the war. They can only amount to a deliberate effort to destroy a country and kill off thousands, millions of innocent people. For what sake is this, by what right is this being done? It would certainly be interesting to hear for the sake of what the U.S. invaded Vietnam. Why is it waging the longest war in the history of the United States? It is a war against a very small country far from the U.S. which does not threaten the U.S. in any way whatsoever. What country could justify such actions? I am sure no nation could find any just explanation for what is being done. And that is probably why all countries call the U.S. the aggressor and probably rightly so. I don't want to hurl more epithets on you. There have been quite enough epithets heaped on you as it is. But how can the methods you use now be called a method of ending the war in Vietnam? Today is not the time for such acts.

All of this is not to mention the fact that your actions affect some of our interests directly.

Chairman Kosygin: Just today I contacted the Minister of Merchant Marine, and I received a report around 2:00 p.m. that one American bomb fell 120 meters away from one Soviet vessel, in another case 350 meters away and another no more than 500 meters away from Soviet ships. In fact, your planes are blatantly buzzing and bombing near Soviet ships, and all of this at a time when you are here in Moscow conducting negotiations with us.

General Secretary Brezhnev: If underlying your explanation in which you try to show us your desire to end the war was a genuine intent on the part of the U.S., we are sure that a power of the stature of the U.S. with a big and able diplomatic apparatus could find a way to come to terms with the Vietnamese to end the war. But if we now

look into the process of negotiations to date we see that you have emphasized one idea: that Vietnam must accept your conditions for settlement. Why? Why should the Vietnamese accept American ideas for a settlement? After all, they are not demanding part of American territory as part of a settlement and they are not demanding any other benefit as a price for a settlement. They suggest the war be ended and a coalition government with the participation of all three forces be established in the area and that be followed by the free expression of the will of the South Vietnamese people. But all that has not been accepted.

Just recently, I saw a proposal on the Vietnamese side that the Paris negotiations be continued, but the U.S. together with Saigon rejected the idea of further negotiations on a settlement in Vietnam. Surely this doesn't reflect the desire of seriously trying to end the war. It is manifest of the new aggressive aspirations on the part of the U.S. in Vietnam and that is done in the way that all nations in the world reject the positions taken by the U.S. But, of course, if the U.S. and the President of the United States is willing to be branded everywhere in the world as an aggressor, then of course there is practically no way the matter can be discussed.

Then again on the other hand you are here and we conduct discussions on many issues to try to reach agreements. You yourself admitted how difficult it was for us to decide to hold these talks in such conditions. It is certainly true we are allies of the DRV and we are meeting our international duty and that is something we will continue to do to the hilt. Here I want to emphasize that no bombing can ever resolve the war in Vietnam.

It does seem to appear the U.S. is upholding some interests of its own in Vietnam. Because I certainly don't think if the U.S. earnestly desired negotiations on the basis of realistic conditions, if the conditions were right for negotiations, I don't believe the Vietnamese would not agree to return the prisoners of war. It is certainly a fact in the normal course of things that prisoners of war are returned after the end of a war. That's the way we acted at the end of World War II. When the war ended we returned the prisoners we had on our hands.

Surely Vietnam is a heavy burden on the hearts of all people, and perhaps particularly so the Soviet people who went through a sad period and lost 20 million in World War II. Of course, the U.S. had an easier time in World War II. I believe if the U.S. had suffered the way the Soviet people had, then perhaps you would look at matters about Vietnam differently than at present, but of course God forbid that you ever have to suffer what the Soviet people suffered in World War II.

You were quite right; it was certainly difficult for us to agree to hold this meeting under present circumstances. And yet we did agree to hold it. I want to explain why. We felt that preliminary work prior

to the meeting warranted the hope that two powers with such economic might and such a high level of civilization and all the other necessary prerequisites could come together to promote better relations between our two nations. And we could also use our beneficial influence to lessen tensions everywhere in the world, to counteract crisis situations in the world in the future and ones that may already exist. This is why we are holding our meetings and we felt this could also apply to problems such as Vietnam. At first we felt the latest measures taken by you in Vietnam were by accident or in irritation. But after hearing your explanation we feel our views beginning to change because it seems to us on the one hand the U.S. wants to improve relations with us and improve the international climate generally, but while continuing the cruel conflict in Vietnam. Surely these two things are quite incompatible.

Now what I would like to say now is this. I don't think it is realistic to believe we could register in our joint document that the two sides set out their respective views on Vietnam because that would not be understood by many countries. Countries would think either you registered your own views to continue the war of aggression endlessly or people would think we acquiesced. I know you did this in China in the communiqué, and you wrote the clause that "the two sides set forth their views." It certainly is a fact that China does not have a principled foreign policy of its own. It wants to set various countries at loggerheads. It acts in its own interests and does not really pursue a principled foreign policy. I'm sure you understand that as we do. But the fact is that we are not China.

We have said on many occasions, and notably in our exchange of letters, that the war in Vietnam can never bring any laurels to the United States—never. If you personally, Mr. President, did want earnestly to end the war I have no doubt that without any assistance on our part you could come to terms with the other side without any loss of prestige. You could reach a peaceful settlement.

This is how matters stand at the present time. We want to sign important documents with you in which we say we want to solve all differences through negotiation, not war, and advise others to follow that path. At the same time you will be continuing the war in Vietnam, continuing to kill innocent people, killing women and children. Now could that be understood? All this is when we continue a policy to lessen tensions in the world and ensure peaceful conditions. In order to achieve these goals, we want to extend a hand to you and accept your hand offered in cooperation. How can we advise other countries to follow a policy along these lines when you are doing what you do in Vietnam? Why are all the peaceful civilians being killed in Vietnam? Both our governments condemned Hitler when we fought together as allies.

Now 29 years since the end of that war there is another war. One is simply hard pressed to fathom this.

It's surely doubtful that all of the American people are unanimously supporting the war in Vietnam. Certainly I doubt the families of those who were killed or those who were maimed and remain crippled support the war. In the name of what is that being done? Could the prestige of the U.S. fall if the U.S. imposed a peaceful settlement on Vietnam? Certainly not. The prestige of the U.S. would rise if you took this course. And I believe that line would be earnestly welcomed and saluted by the whole world.

I am sure if the U.S. Government, the U.S. President, applied what I call a true spirit of genius and if you could impose peace on the area, I repeat emphatically that U.S. prestige would soar. Look at the situation of DeGaulle when he ended the war in Algeria. When he came to power the war had been going on for seven years without giving France any laurels. When he extricated France from the war he immediately became a national hero.

We are speaking quite frankly because we are politicians and must be frank. We don't put forward any conditions. We only ask that the war be ended. We have no proposals of our own regarding a government in Vietnam. We feel that's for the Vietnamese to decide. They have proposed a coalition government. We believe it is entirely their own business, not ours. So we make no demands on you on this matter. We don't say there has to be a communist government in Vietnam. Whether their government is communist or non-communist, that is their business.

Dr. Kissinger told me that if there was a peaceful settlement in Vietnam you would be agreeable to the Vietnamese doing whatever they want, having whatever they want after a period of time, say 18 months. If that is indeed true, and if the Vietnamese knew this, and it was true, they would be sympathetic on that basis. Even from the point of view of the election in the United States I submit that the end of the war at this particular time would play a positive role whereas escalation will not. As for sending in new waves of bombers against Vietnam, they cannot solve the problem and never can.

Another factor to take account of is that outside of Vietnam there are other states, some small, some big, which will not accept the defeat of Vietnam. That too is something that should be foreseen. We are after all mere human beings and cannot vouch at all times for the situation. We cannot foresee in detail everything that will happen tomorrow. Our heads are not electronic computers, which will always be absolutely precise in calculations to the smallest degree. Who can guarantee that we can foresee all the twists and turns of policy a thousand years ahead? Certain things are perhaps eternal. Who will decide personally who will kill whom? After all, Hitler started the war for

living space but ended up with no space at all. I told Dr. Kissinger that logic was a science and asked him to convey this thought to President Nixon. And in these discussions of the situation, logic too must have a part to play.

Chairman Kosygin: Mr. President, I fully associate myself with what Comrade Brezhnev said on the most important question of Vietnam. Some six years or so ago our present interpreter translated my conversation with President Johnson at Glassboro, and I must say I am reminded of my conversation there by today's meeting. President Johnson also told me he wanted to end the war in Vietnam and he too advanced many conditions for ending the war. After two days of discussion at Glassboro I remember telling him my opinion, "You don't want to end the war; you want to do more fighting. Well, try it," I said. "Let's see what it comes to." He said he would strangle Vietnam and see what happens. In short, he spoke from a position of strength. I am sad to say that I must point out today you are also conducting the war from a position of strength, speaking from a position of strength.

Well as I say, six years have passed since that meeting with President Johnson. Since then something in the vicinity of one million Vietnamese have been killed in that war. Perhaps you have lost one hundred thousand of your own men and spent hundreds of billions of dollars. What has all that led to? What have you achieved? And here we are again around a table with a U.S. President and the conversation is very similar as it was with President Johnson six years ago. To be very frank, you are acting even more cruelly than was Johnson. But this certainly won't result in any success.

The North Vietnamese could have easily invited other nations to come to their help. There were many proposals from various quarters to help the Vietnamese militarily. The Chinese were very anxious to go into Vietnam to fight against the U.S. Despite all the problems, despite their predicaments, the Vietnamese have never agreed to let others intervene in the war. That surely should be analyzed from the point of view of its historical significance. If the U.S. went in at the request of no one but mercenaries as head of that country, North Vietnam, despite the insistence of China to send in troops and other countries to send in volunteers—both socialist and non-socialist countries—never gave consent to that. Now that is a very significant fact and should be analyzed. It is certainly in favor of Vietnam.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Their attitude is motivated by a desire to lead matters to a peaceful settlement and their unwillingness to let the situation develop into a major war, to let themselves be led into a major war.

Chairman Kosygin: Mr. President, I believe you overestimate the possibility in present circumstances of resolving problems from a

position of strength. There may come a critical moment for the Vietnamese when they will not refuse to let in forces of other countries to act on their own side.

The President: That threat doesn't frighten us a bit, but go ahead and make it.

Chairman Kosygin: Don't think you are right in thinking what we say is a threat and what you say is not a threat. This is a question of a major war, and we say this, we don't say it as a threat. This is an analysis of what may happen and that is much more serious than a threat.

Mr. President, when you came to office we were of the opinion you as a politician of long-standing would take advantage of the possibilities, and we think the possibility is still there since you were not a party to unleashing the war. We still think there is something you can do in order to end the war and to bring peace to that area. And if an attempt is made to resolve the matter as you explained, that is to say if they do not agree and you do use strength, in short you would simply destroy Vietnam; that is something quite frankly that would entail no glory either for the United States or yourself, Mr. President.

Now wherein lies the basic issue? You say you are prepared to withdraw your troops and this the Vietnamese are now welcoming. Now you say you want to secure the return of American prisoners of war. Quite recently, Premier Pham Van Dong made a statement that as soon as the war is over the Vietnamese are quite ready to release all prisoners. So there is a solution to that problem too.

The third question is that of a government. They say they are willing to set up a government of three elements. Dr. Kissinger knows just several days ago Pham Van Dong's statement was made public, and that is what he told me when I spoke to him. So one thing remains. You still need to retain the so-called President in South Vietnam, someone you call President, who has not been chosen by anyone.

The President: Who chose the President of North Vietnam?

Chairman Kosygin: The entire people.

The President: Go ahead.

Chairman Podgorny: As for the President in North Vietnam, the late President Ho Chi Minh of North Vietnam was even admired by the South Vietnamese and regarded as their President.

Chairman Kosygin: For the sake of him [Thieu], you want to send under the axe hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese, maybe even a million, and your own soldiers, simply to save the skin of a mercenary President, so-called. We have known the Vietnamese leaders for many years very well—Ho Chi Minh, Pham Van Dong, Le Duan. They are all very serious-minded and dedicated and with great experience in the struggle and devotion to their people.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Of all the proposals, of every point put forward by the Vietnamese, in none of them did the PRG or DRV pose as a condition that they want to secure the reunification of North and South Vietnam; never have they said so. In fact they are ready to formalize this in an appropriate agreement and give a pledge to this effect. If this is so, for what sake are they still being killed?

Chairman Kosygin: Mr. President, perhaps just to conclude this subject, you demand that they give their constructive proposals and they expect your constructive proposals. That's where the difficulty is created. Why not try while in Moscow to formulate some constructive proposals we could pass on to the Vietnamese.

[The President offers cigarillos to the Soviet leaders who politely decline. There is some light banter.]

If instead of continuing to support the so-called President, you could formulate proposals which would really enable to bring the war to an end, would that not be a veritable triumph for you on your return to your country from this visit? Think how much both of us would contribute to mankind. We proceed on the assumption that you have another four years ahead of you as President. We believe that you do have another four years. From the point of view of history this is a brief period, but if you could find a constructive solution you would go down in history as a man who succeeded in cutting through this knot which so many American Presidents have been unable to disentangle. Then think of the prospects opened up for our two countries, our joint ventures in many areas of the world? Isn't it worth achieving this by sacrificing the rot that is the present government in Saigon?

Chairman Podgorny: If I might just take a few minutes. Today we have had very frank discussions, but perhaps they have been more acute than others.

The President: That's good.

Chairman Podgorny: But it is always better to hear directly from a statesman his views on the world rather than hearing what radio and TV have to say on what he has to say. Of all my colleagues here I am the one who has been in Vietnam most recently. While there I discussed a variety of subjects, both international and bilateral. It was at that time the news came of your forthcoming visit to China. It was only from me that the Vietnamese learned about our understanding on your present visit to Moscow and when they heard you were coming to Moscow they were very favorably inclined because they felt the Soviet leaders could have a completely frank talk with the President and they thought that perhaps the two sides could find some ways to promote a solution to the Vietnam problem although there was no thought that just we two could jointly solve the entire problem. But it was felt something might come out of these discussions which could

in some ways be helpful and conducive to finding a solution at the Paris talks.

Now I don't want to repeat what my colleagues said. It is certainly true that Pham Van Dong and Le Duan, the present leaders of North Vietnam, are men of common sense. They lay no claims, and said so to me, to unification with South Vietnam. They only want the freedom and the independence of South Vietnam, the freedom of the Vietnamese people themselves, to settle all their own problems. As they put it, they felt it would be good to set up a three-element government there and prepare conditions for free elections in South Vietnam.

There is certainly no need for me to say that although it is a small nation the Vietnamese are a heroic people, and I trust that you also recognize that they are a freedom-loving and heroic people. Regardless of the number of your planes and naval forces which have been brought to their shores, they will never give up their fight for independence. They have in fact been fighting throughout their lifetime and throughout history for freedom and independence. For a long time they fought China. For many years they fought France. At long last in 1954 after the Geneva Accords the dream appeared that they could enjoy freedom and independence and decide how to live by themselves and what form of government to choose. It is sad that their dream did not come true.

The most recent measures taken by the United States against Vietnam, of course, are as Comrades Brezhnev and Kosygin have already said—they are unlawful. They constitute nothing but aggression, as they are considered everywhere. It's hard to find any country in the world which supports these measures. What's more, these measures are not only against Vietnam but also against other countries which have friendly relations with Vietnam and these countries cannot react calmly to what goes on. The new escalation of the United States cannot resolve the issue, the bringing in of new air and naval forces. So surely some other methods must be sought to end the war, methods based on negotiations aimed at solving the problem and ending the war going on.

I don't think anyone could really believe that these new drastic measures in North Vietnam can be aimed at protecting 60,000 Americans in Vietnam or to secure the freedom of prisoners of war in Vietnam. I don't think many people are convinced that these are indeed the true reasons for these measures.

Mr. President, you explained your position and motives for taking these measures in Vietnam. We have set out our own position and attitudes on this question. I am afraid we have not convinced you we are right. You may rest assured you have not convinced us you were right in taking those measures. But since your visit is taking place in

circumstances when all questions are taken up with a desire to soften the situation in all areas, perhaps it would be worthwhile for you to give more thought to possible measures the United States could take to end the situation in Vietnam, a situation which at the present time becomes more grave and intolerable daily. In the context of these talks the events of Vietnam certainly place us in a very awkward position.

In conclusion may I just say we don't doubt that if instead the United States really took resolute measures to end this war and bring about a peaceful solution, no country would ever think, and that includes the Vietnamese, the United States had capitulated in Vietnam.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Mr. President, I feel perhaps it is a good thing to end the discussion for today. We have probably on both sides spoken out our views on the substance.

I for one want to close with the following thought. You are quite familiar, Mr. President, with the wrath of our people in connection with Vietnam and the demands of socialist countries. You are familiar with their indignation at your aggression and the war in Vietnam. They demand that the bombing end and a peaceful solution be found. I must say frankly that wrath is still in the hearts of the Soviet people, and no order given to the people eradicate this sentiment. We certainly have on both sides taken this into account in our discussions at such a high level, and we cannot abstract this from all other questions because after all we agreed prior to the meeting not simply to discuss bilateral matters but also international problems. Now the other day you yourself said the most difficult problem between us were Vietnam and the Middle East, and I feel today we have said some sharp things to one another. And that is natural because the subject itself is very acute. Also a lot of things said were useful and reasonable.

Man is a creature endowed by nature with a wonderful quality of intelligence. If a man approaches a matter not from a selfish point of view, but objectively looks at all that has been discussed between two statesmen, he can find a reasonable way out of any predicament. I think we can both agree that today we cannot say we have completed discussion of this problem or found a solution for it. Therefore perhaps it would be expedient to end this discussion now and have dinner. I shall say the night brings counsel. Perhaps we can return to this subject tomorrow or the day after. We should try to make a new effort to find a solution.

Chairman Kosygin: At least we should try to engage in a constructive search for a solution.

The President: Let me add I think our discussions have been very helpful in setting forth our points of view. I appreciate the fact that our hosts have been so direct and honest and candid about what they don't like about our policy and why. Because that's the kind of discussions

we should have at this level. Even after Vietnam is settled—and I trust it will be settled soon—we will perhaps have to have discussions like this about other subjects, either we or our successors. I can assure you on our part we will continue our search for a negotiated end to the war as we have been searching in the past three and one-half years.

As you know we were somewhat disappointed after Dr. Kissinger visited here in April and the Soviet leaders were instrumental in getting North Vietnam to meet with him privately. But rather than being more reasonable, the North Vietnamese were more intransigent than ever before. We find that hard to understand. As a matter of fact, to show our own position, the General Secretary will note I picked up directly his suggestion of a ceasefire and proposed that we would withdraw all forces within four months and discontinue all military actions in exchange for a simple ceasefire. They rejected this out of hand. I think, however, the General Secretary's suggestion was a good one and we will continue to pursue it.

I would just like to leave one thought regarding what our motive really is. I know I won't impress our hosts with any sentimental diplomatic doubletalk, and I never indulge in that. But as men who have come up the hard way, as I have, as practical men and honest men, you will have to take into account the record. As President Podgorny pointed out, I didn't send 550,000 men to Vietnam. They were sent by President Johnson and President Kennedy. I have withdrawn over 500,000 men from Vietnam. That is certainly not an act of war. It is an act of moving toward peace. By Easter of this year I had cut out air sorties in Vietnam by 40% despite evidence of a very big buildup which I know did threaten our forces, many of which are stationed in the northern part of the country. Because I didn't want an incident to occur before the meeting with Soviet leaders, I used total restraint and did not react strongly on the military front.

Then the North Vietnamese on Easter weekend, in violation of the 1954 Accords, to which reference was made, and the 1968 understanding on the bombing halt,⁹ massively moved across the DMZ, and under those circumstances I had to take the actions I considered necessary as Commander-in-Chief to stop the invading forces. I would simply emphasize the point suggested earlier of the possibility that the action I took was because of irritation; if that were the case, I would be a very dangerous man in the position I am in. The decision was taken in cold objectivity. That is the way I always act, having in mind the consequences, the risks politically.

⁹ For the October 31, 1968, understanding that ended the bombardment of North Vietnam in exchange for the convening of four-part talks on Vietnam and certain other guarantees, see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. VII, Documents 161, 165, and 169.

Our people want peace. I want it too. I want the Soviet leaders to know how seriously I view this threat of new North Vietnamese escalation. One of our great Civil War generals, General Sherman, said "War is hell." No people know this better than the Soviet people. We are deeply aware of the bitter tragedy visited upon the Soviet nation in World Wars I and II. By those standards this is just a small war. But it has cost the U.S. 50,000 dead and 200,000 wounded. And since this offensive began, 30,000 South Vietnamese civilians, men, women and children have been killed by the North Vietnamese, using Soviet equipment.

I would not for one moment suggest that the leaders of the Soviet Union wanted that to happen. What I am simply suggesting at this high level and very critical time in history, our goal is the same as yours. We are not trying to impose a settlement, government, on anybody. We are trying by a simple ceasefire to end the war, in other words, to impose a peace.

I would say finally that Prime Minister Kosygin's suggestion that we think matters over is one we will take under consideration. I think we might well discuss it again, perhaps Thursday or Friday.¹⁰ But the main consideration must be this: We cannot—and I don't think the Soviet leaders seriously recommend we do so—send Dr. Kissinger to Paris for a private meeting with the knowledge that nothing is going to happen. We have to have an indication that they will talk, something they have never done with us. We don't mean they have to come to surrender. We just want them to come and talk, as we are doing. They have never done that in any meetings with Dr. Kissinger, let alone the public meetings. If we can break that impasse, then we will end the war quickly at the negotiating table. That's the problem.

We don't ask the Soviet leaders to find a formula for bringing the war to an end, but your influence with your allies could be considerable. I am trying to indicate we will be reasonable at the negotiating table, but we cannot go there and be dictated to by the other side. That's all we've had so far. But we will think it over, and maybe Dr. Kissinger out of his brain will come up with a new proposal.

Chairman Kosygin: He's got to find one. Given the desire, it can be done.

The President: Maybe you can help us.

Chairman Kosygin: What kind of brain is it that does not produce a new proposal?

The President: I think we have held up our hosts too long with this discussion.

¹⁰ May 25 or 26.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Well, we have certainly had a most serious discussion on a problem of world importance. I wish to reemphasize that what's been said is useful, taking into account the level of our discussion and the frankness of both sides. I do believe it is correct that this will not end our discussion of this topic; think things over in an endeavor to find a solution. After all there is more than one solution to any problem. One must find the most reasonable solution. We understand by your last remark that you are prepared to look at this and we understand you are prepared to do this.

The President: No question.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Mr. President, on the eve of coming to this country we did note that you had decided not to harden your position on bombing during your visit here. But unfortunately that has not been the case and I hope you can appreciate our attitude toward this and its significance.

Dr. Kissinger: To what does the General Secretary refer?

General Secretary Brezhnev: Haiphong and Hanoi.

Dr. Kissinger: We told your Ambassador we would not bomb in a certain radius of Hanoi, a certain number of miles from Hanoi. And I am not aware that this has been done, and if so you should tell us about it.

The President: We made a commitment.

General Secretary Brezhnev: It has been in the TASS communication.

Chairman Kosygin: I refer once again to the Minister of Marines' report on our ships being buzzed and bombs being dropped near them and American aircraft imitating bombing dives against our ships.

The President: We will check. That's against our orders.¹¹

General Secretary Brezhnev: You can appreciate our feeling on this matter, because when one of our ships was damaged and some people were wounded before your visit we lodged a protest with you, but we didn't say one word about this in the Soviet press. The entire world knew about it.

¹¹ Following the meeting Kissinger cabled Haig in Washington, and reported Kosygin's accusation that U.S. bombing activities had been taking place close to Soviet vessels berthed in DRV ports (presumably Haiphong). He said that Nixon had assured the Soviet leaders that such activities, if true, were not authorized and that he would check into these allegations. Kissinger asked Haig to send them any relevant information and noted that it went without saying that "every effort must be made to avoid incidents while we are in Moscow." (Telegram HAKTO 28, May 24; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, The Situation Room—President's Trip, USSR, Iran, Austria, Poland, May–Jun 1972, HAKTO File) In telegram HAKTO 35, May 25, Kissinger ordered: "All bombing within a five mile radius from the center of Haiphong is prohibited until the President returns to the United States." (Ibid., Howe Vietnam Chronological File, Box 1089, May 25, 1972)

Chairman Kosygin: Another thing, there is not a single ship on the way to Vietnam now carrying military equipment—not one shell—only flour and foodstuffs, no armaments whatever.

[The meeting ended at 11:00 p.m. and the party went upstairs to dinner, where the conversation was devoted entirely to non-substantive matters.]¹²

¹² Haldeman's diary records that the President had him in the next morning (May 25) to review the previous night's meeting and said that "he had been very tough on Vietnam and that this was the first time K had seen him operate like this." Later Nixon told Kissinger to give Haldeman a report on the session. Kissinger said that "the P had been very tough and did a magnificent job, and that he was very, very cold after they blasted us on Vietnam, and he just sat there and let them run out their strength, and had done it superbly." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 464)

272. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Moscow, May 24, 1972.

SUBJECT

Talking Points on the Middle East for Your Meeting This Afternoon²

The Soviet Position: Recent Developments

A month ago in Moscow the Soviets raised the Mideast issue repeatedly and stressed the danger of an explosion—but they did not show signs of flexibility on the concrete terms of a settlement. Encouraging signs of realism on their part seem to slip away whenever we press them for concreteness.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it.

² Discussion of the Middle East was postponed until May 26. In his memoirs Kissinger wrote that when Brezhnev first invited Nixon to dinner with the top Soviet leadership on May 24 to take up "outstanding issues," they were told that Brezhnev meant to discuss the Middle East. That afternoon, however, Dobrynin told him that the most likely subject on the General Secretary's mind was Vietnam. (*White House Years*, pp. 1222–1223) For Nixon and Brezhnev's discussion of the Middle East, see Document 284.

Gromyko's offer to you of September 29 (Soviet troop withdrawal, arms ban, and guarantee, as part of a settlement)³ was of course positive, but it did not address the issues at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The paper they gave us in Moscow on April 22⁴ on the terms of a settlement simply reiterated the Egyptian position—a position which Secretary Rogers rejected in June 1970.

This Soviet/Egyptian maximum position calls for complete Israeli withdrawal and makes everything dependent on it. It pushes for restoration of the pre-1967-war status quo in Gaza and Jerusalem, a short time-limit on continuation of the ceasefire, demilitarized zones on the Israeli as well as Egyptian sides, and a global settlement embracing Syria and Jordan at the same time as Egypt.

In our view this is unrealistic:

—The parties themselves must negotiate the extent and timing of Israeli withdrawal, and the US and USSR should not predetermine the result.

—The ceasefire must continue in order to provide favorable conditions for a settlement.

—The more comprehensive the proposed scheme, geographically or otherwise, the harder it will be to achieve.

—Pressures on Israel which ignore its security needs will either be futile or will exacerbate tensions and risk a new war.

Within the past week, the Soviets indicated to us—encouragingly—that they believe that now is the time for serious bargaining and that Egypt cannot achieve its maximum positions. They are also resigned to the fact that a finalized agreement is not possible at the summit. There was even a brief hint of Soviet interest in distinguishing between security arrangements and sovereignty, as we have been suggesting since October—but Gromyko rejected this again on Monday.

Both sides are agreed that we should aim at reaching an agreement later this year. We are agreed that an initial phase—an interim agreement—should be announced and implemented as soon as an overall agreement is reached.

In short, the Soviets are still pressing hard for a bilateral agreement on the Mideast, but the divergences on the major issues are still wide. At the Summit they still hope for an accord on "general principles." We still want to be forthcoming but without committing ourselves to anything impractical or dangerous.

³ Information on Gromyko's offer is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

⁴ For a review of U.S.-Soviet pre-summit negotiations of the Middle East, see Document 231.

In order to be constructive, we in the past week offered a proposal of our own on Sinai security arrangements and a point-by-point analysis of their April 22 proposal for a final settlement. *In addition we have with us now a counterproposal for a final settlement which you can hand to Brezhnev when you meet.*⁵

Your Talking Points

1. *The Soviet offer* which Gromyko presented in September is constructive and positive. It is tangible evidence of the General Secretary's sincere belief that we two superpowers have a special responsibility for peace and a special interest in our mutual relationship.

—You agreed with Gromyko in September that you hoped for a substantive agreement by the time of the Summit. However, in spite of good-faith efforts by both sides, the issues at the heart of the conflict proved difficult.

—In the last month, the *Vietnam crisis* intervened to make impossible an intensified effort before the Summit. This is yet another example of how the absence of a Vietnam peace has stood in the way of realizing the full potential of U.S.-Soviet cooperation.

2. The basic issues are *extraordinarily difficult*. They will not be as amenable to a solution as was the Berlin problem, because the parties do not seem ready for a settlement.

—We have now prepared a *U.S. counterproposal* on the basic issues, which we would like to hand over.

—Realism is needed on both sides. The whole point of our special head-to-head involvement is to cut through the posturing and to face up candidly to what is really possible. We cannot allow the settlement process itself to create new tensions, fears, and temptations in the area which could erupt in a new war.

—Total Israeli withdrawal without special security provisions is simply unworkable.

3. Both sides have now shown a serious interest in reaching a bilateral understanding. At this Summit meeting, we should agree on an intensive *work program* and set a firm positive direction leading to an agreement later this year.

—At this meeting we should define the areas of agreement, and isolate and discuss the issues of disagreement. Our new proposals are meant to start this process.

—We propose that Gromyko and Kissinger work now at reconciling the two sides' proposals. Intensive follow-up talks can resume immediately afterward in the special channel.

⁵ The U.S. counterproposal, "Basic Provisions for a Final Settlement in the Middle East," handed to Brezhnev by the President on May 26, is attached to Document 284 as Tab A, but is not printed.

—Implementation cannot realistically begin until mid-1973, although we are prepared for immediate announcement and implementation of an *interim* agreement.

4. As you wrote the General Secretary on October 19, 1971, an *interim solution*—e.g., a Suez Canal settlement—is the most realistic and practical approach to the overall problem.⁶

—It offers the best chance of achieving movement soon, perhaps even this year.

—It would establish the principle, process, and momentum of Israeli withdrawal.

5. We see the interim solution as linked to a *final settlement*, and we understand the interrelationships between the *Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian* aspects of the problem.

—But again, the more ambitious we are, the longer it will take—and the longer Israeli withdrawal will be delayed.

—There are many ways to handle this linkage. We should be able to find a practical formula through negotiation in our special channel.

⁶ Document 6.

273. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 25, 1972, 1:15–3:45 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid V. Smirnov, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR
Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA
Soviet Interpreter

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger's Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Mr. Kissinger's Conversations in Moscow, May 1972. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Conference Room of the Foreign Minister's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow. Kissinger recalled in his memoirs that when Brezhnev told him at the dacha that Gromyko and another senior Soviet official were waiting for him in Moscow to resume SALT negotiations, he was "not eager, after the motorcade, the hydrofoil ride, the brutal Vietnam discussion, and the heavy meal, to meet a fresh Soviet team headed by the indefatigable Gromyko." He recalled that he made up his mind to stall during the session unless the Soviets unexpectedly accepted the U.S. terms. (*White House Years*, pp. 1228–1229)

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Senior Staff Member
William G. Hyland, NSC Staff Member

Mr. Gromyko: The President and General Secretary Brezhnev discussed a number of SALT questions yesterday. There are still a number of questions to resolve and we have some formulas to hand over. The first formula is a joint statement on Article III [of the ABM treaty].² [Hands over to Dr. Kissinger an English and Russian text—Tab A.]³

Dr. Kissinger: [After looking at the document] I thought that we had agreed [with Brezhnev] on 1500 kilometers, not 1300.

Mr. Gromyko: Let us give you all of the formulas first before you attack. Next we have a joint statement on the problem of conversion of light and heavy missiles [hands over a document—Tab B]. Next is a text of the joint statement on dismantling in connection with replacement of submarine launchers [hands over document—Tab C]. Next is the text of Article III of the Interim Agreement, and the text of the Protocol to this Article [hands over documents—Tabs D and E].

Dr. Kissinger: Let us take them one by one, although we did not discuss dismantling with Brezhnev.

Mr. Gromyko: You should have your way—let us proceed.

Dr. Kissinger: The best way to proceed is for you to submit documents to our delegation and they can accept them if we agree.

Mr. Gromyko: If we reach agreement here they can finalize it and we will call Helsinki.

Dr. Kissinger: (Referring to the dismantling proposal) It is best to do it in Helsinki, if this is the proposal of our delegation.

Mr. Gromyko: And we will instruct our delegation accordingly.

Mr. Smirnov: The original Soviet position was dismantling would begin when submarines become operational but we have now changed this to when submarines begin sea-going trials, as you proposed.

Dr. Kissinger: I would want our delegation to take a look at it. You should get Semyonov to submit it to them. On the ABM article I thought we had agreed yesterday on 1500 kilometers, but now you propose 1300 kilometers.

Mr. Smirnov: In the working group in Helsinki—the Soviet-American working group—yesterday we reached agreement on 1300 kilometers.

² All brackets in the source text.

³ The tabs are attached but not printed.

Dr. Kissinger: You should resubmit it in Helsinki and they will solve the problem. It looks all right for now.

Mr. Gromyko: We accepted what the American delegation proposed in Helsinki.

Dr. Kissinger: We can regard these two—dismantling and ABM—as settled. But now we come to the proposal concerning silo launchers. I don't understand the Soviet position. It deals with silo dimensions only. The discussions yesterday between the President and Brezhnev dealt with missile volumes as well.⁴

Mr. Smirnov (interrupting): But this is the accepted formula.

Dr. Kissinger: But you dropped out the word "significantly" from the agreement in Helsinki.

Mr. Smirnov: Yes we did that.

Dr. Kissinger: There were two discussions at the highest level—one on the size of the silo launchers, and the other on the volume of the missiles. My impression of that conversation was there was agreement that neither should be increased or at least agreement that the silo launcher size should not be increased. My impression was that Brezhnev had agreed to deal with both subjects.

Mr. Smirnov: Comrade Brezhnev has informed me of the substance of these talks. He said that in these discussions he had said the Soviet side would not depart from what had been proposed (in Helsinki) not to increase the size of silo launchers.

Dr. Kissinger: Our understanding was he would discuss the issue with the Politburo—he mentioned it was too late to discuss it last evening, but this proposal you have given me tonight represents no change. This is not my understanding of what had been agreed.

Mr. Gromyko: Today we discussed it and came to the conclusion that we should accept your proposal on no increase (in silo dimensions).

Dr. Kissinger: This has already been agreed. There was no reason to call a meeting for this purpose. What is the new point here?

Mr. Gromyko: We had to weigh all the considerations and come to a final conclusion.

Dr. Kissinger: So what you are saying is that after full consideration you came to the conclusion that regardless of what had been discussed between General Secretary Brezhnev and President Nixon you decided to return to the original dropping the word "significantly." Otherwise there is no change on the question of missile volume.

Mr. Smirnov: I would like it plain from the outset we proposed a limit only on the silos. We never proposed anything on limitation of

⁴ See Documents 262 and 263.

the size of the missiles. It was the U.S. side that made various proposals, for example, 70 cubic meters or 10 to 15 percent. And the latest information from Helsinki is that the substance concerns only silo launchers. This is the information we got the 22nd of May. And in view of the previous discussions here and in Helsinki we proceeded from the former position.

Dr. Kissinger: But we want to combine the two issues, the restrictions on silo launchers and the restrictions on missile size.

Mr. Smirnov (interrupting): But this is the latest from Helsinki.

Dr. Kissinger: Nevertheless our delegation will take its ideas from the President. We have to go by what the President said to Brezhnev and what was discussed at that level. We are not satisfied with what you have given us this evening. Despite the fact that the leaders spent over three hours on this subject you do not seem to be bound by these discussions.

Mr. Gromyko: I would like to say that we will take into account what has been said, but that we attach significance to this issue and want an understanding. It goes without saying that we will gain no unilateral advantage.

Dr. Kissinger: You will gain a unilateral advantage if you put a bigger missile into the silos. If you are not planning to do so you would agree to our proposal for a separate limit on missile volume.

Mr. Smirnov: The question arises whether we have the right to modernize. From what has been agreed in the past, both sides agree that there is the right of modernization. But now you raise a question. What about your replacing the Minuteman I with the Minuteman III? Up to now we have not questioned this. And then there is the other question of not converting light to heavy missiles. The question is how to be certain that light missiles will not be turned into heavy missiles and it seems that we have agreed on May 22 in Helsinki not to increase the size of silos. This is a good enough criteria. But if you go back to the question of what missile can be put in a silo then many items already agreed will drop out. Your right to convert Minuteman I to Minuteman III would be in question. We would have the right to go back on this understanding. So far you have the right to replace Minuteman I with Minuteman III and Polaris with Poseidon. If this is justifiable why are you now raising the question of a limit on the increase of missile volume?

Dr. Kissinger: Our problem is not with modernization but with the limitation on the increase in missile volumes.

Mr. Smirnov (interrupting): I know quite well the sections.

Dr. Kissinger (continuing): We have discussed with Brezhnev . . .

Mr. Smirnov (interrupting): He told you that we had agreed in Helsinki as far as the substance of the issue is concerned. You will

be able to know if silo launchers are changed or not. It is good enough to . . .

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Deputy Minister, you are a scientist and you know well it is possible to put a heavier missile in an existing silo. Since you know this is possible the question is whether we are going to establish some control over this process.

Mr. Smirnov: The question you are addressing is what criteria to set for establishing that light missiles not become heavy ones. You have the Titan and the Minuteman and we have discussed this in Helsinki and we have agreed on how to proceed. If you take up now the question of putting what missile in the silo you are then putting a limit on modernization.

Dr. Kissinger: No, we are making the right to modernization an even more effective provision by defining it precisely.

Mr. Gromyko: I have one question. Do you think we are trying to gain a unilateral advantage? You can do the same as we.

Dr. Kissinger: But there is a big difference. We have no intention of putting a heavy missile into our silos and we suspect that you are going to.

Mr. Gromyko: But the same could be said of many items in the agreements.

Dr. Kissinger: I do not want to waste any more time on this because I have far more important items to raise. I do not yield easily and never gracefully [motioning to Dobrynin] and particularly when I think that there has already been an agreement. You know that the SS-11 is bigger than the Minuteman III so your approach to the issue is more useful to your side. The Minuteman III is already a further modification and this is limited in terms of what can be done in the future. So in this regard, you can gain a unilateral advantage. We are trying to solve the SALT issues. We are not dealing with you frivolously and the President was not wasting the General Secretary's time when he raised this issue.

Mr. Smirnov: We do not think it worthwhile discussing this issue in detail and in specifics it is one that should be solved by scientists. We have an agreement in principle and there is no limit on modernization. You already used this right when you converted Minuteman I to Minuteman III and now we want the same right for our side to put in the kind of missiles they (meaning the scientists) want. You already have this right. Do you now propose to stop Minuteman III conversion?

Dr. Kissinger: Let me put your proposal to the President, but let me say this first. I am not sure whether to drop the word "significantly" or not and I will check this with the President. If we decide to retain

the phrase “not significantly increased” then what Brezhnev said is that we need to define it as meaning about 10%–15% as discussed with Brezhnev.

Mr. Smirnov: You want to call attention to your concern that light ICBMs not become heavy ICBMs. On the other hand, because the word “significantly” has no meaning we suggest dropping it as agreed in Helsinki.

Dr. Kissinger: You cannot invoke Helsinki when it serves your purposes and disregard Helsinki when it does not. I frankly do not know whether we intend to make some small changes in our missiles. I will need technical advice on this. If we decide to go back to the previous statement which includes “significantly” in the text then we would want to define it as being between 10% and 15% as was discussed with Brezhnev. We want to have the right to think this over. We will either accept it as written or add the word “significantly” and then define “significantly” to mean between 10% and 15% but we cannot decide this without technical advice.

Mr. Gromyko: Will you give the answer here or through your delegation? They (the delegation) would need to know at 10 o'clock tomorrow.

Dr. Kissinger: Will you accept either formula?

Mr. Gromyko: As I said we discussed this today and we have only this conclusion (pointing to text).

Dr. Kissinger: Are you then withdrawing the old proposal?

Mr. Gromyko: No, no, no. But we have expressed our position here today.

Dr. Kissinger: You are giving up the prior agreement in Helsinki and the agreement between Brezhnev and the President.

Mr. Smirnov: There is some misunderstanding. I discussed this with Comrade Brezhnev but there was no agreement to change our position.

Dr. Kissinger: Our impression was not the same. Are you now withdrawing from the agreement of the day before?

Mr. Gromyko: Our position is that our proposal of today goes even further. This is now happening so you should not check for ulterior motives. We both have the same position.

Dr. Kissinger: This would be extremely difficult for me to explain this point. I have to explain something that was discussed and agreed between the President and Brezhnev yet is not reflected in your proposal and second why you have dropped the word “significantly.” If we do not accept what you have now proposed then we should go back to the agreement already made. It seems as if we would have been better off had the discussion with Brezhnev never taken place.

Mr. Smirnov: What is your understanding of the discussion?

Dr. Kissinger: My understanding is the following: First, it was agreed that there would be no significant increase in the silo dimensions and second there would be no significant increase in the volume of the largest light missile on either side. Brezhnev said he wanted to wait to discuss these issues and others with the Politburo but it was too late to do so that evening. Therefore, if for whatever reason we decide to drop the issue of missile volume we still must decide how to define what is meant by the word significantly.

Mr. Smirnov: I understand. Let me clarify our position. Brezhnev told me that he responded to questions put by you on both the silo size and the missile volume but as a result of those discussions he did not agree to make any limitations as regards missiles because that would entail certain problems for modernization on our side. Therefore our position is if you consider it necessary to make proposals on limitations on silo launchers we could consider them, but not the missiles themselves and then we could go back to the delegations in Helsinki with our agreement. But they have already decided in Helsinki.

Dr. Kissinger: It makes no sense to quote subordinates against the President. The President was not satisfied or he would not have raised the issue with General Secretary Brezhnev. We are now at this point that we either accept this formula you have given us which drops the word "significantly" or we add "significantly" and provide a figure to explain what it means. In this case we would make a unilateral statement about silo volume.

Mr. Gromyko: So you will take the initiative?

Dr. Kissinger: Now that we have settled the easy work, we will not be so accommodating. We can go on to the next problem.

Mr. Gromyko: Submarines? Meeting our position?

Dr. Kissinger: I will tell you frankly what our problem is. We have no interest nor would it make any sense, in making a treaty it takes two years to ratify. We have had major consultations in Washington in the Congress and in the Defense Department with our military leaders and with those academic figures who would be likely to testify on these agreements. We have their reactions to our propositions. Let me read to you some cables so you will know what the reaction is. This cable is from my Deputy who has been making calls on my behalf, an unusual procedure. He has just received a call from Admiral Moorer, the Chairman of our Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Admiral said the Joint Chiefs could not support an agreement that would not require some replacement of older submarines.⁵ Secretary Laird and the academic

⁵ In telegram Tohak 127 to Kissinger, May 24, Haig reported that Moorer and JCS would not support an offensive agreement including SLBMs unless the Soviets were

figures he mentioned take the same position. Now under your present proposal our estimate is that you do not have 48 modern submarines. Under your proposal you would not have to begin destroying older missiles a year from now (goes back to cable). Senator Goldwater has said the treaty could be a disaster and he will fight it. Representative Wayne Hayes said that he would be opposed. Senator Jackson said that he will go into all-out opposition. What we are trying to do is avoid a situation similar to the one that confronted you in Germany with your treaty. As you know, the ABM Treaty requires a two-thirds vote in the Senate so we are facing a difficult and serious problem.

Mr. Gromyko: (Makes a long presentation in English and Russian combined and not fully translated.) What would be Goldwater's position? We showed them our position. The position which really exists which must be taken into account is the overall position. How would that make Goldwater feel? You must evaluate it but it is inadmissible. You allow differences to strike out three years of painstaking efforts. All factors must be calculated. You have your overseas bases. Goldwater cannot close his eyes to them.

Dr. Kissinger: You must understand that the internal position inside the Administration is the important one.

Mr. Gromyko: But we have interests that are unchecked. You must take into account our interests because there is the geographical factor and your bases so there is no equal footing. Nevertheless we are prepared to sign during the President's visit.

Ambassador Dobrynin: The figures involved were not the ones we proposed. We did not mention 48 submarines in our proposal. You remember how this was derived in my conversations with you.

Dr. Kissinger: At any rate there is no question of 950 missiles and 62 modern submarines. This has been accepted. What we are talking about is the base point of 48 submarines.

Mr. Gromyko: Could you sum up your position?

Dr. Kissinger: In terms of deriving 48 we understood at that time that you had about 41–43 Y-Class submarines plus some H-Class submarines. You would raise yours to 48 and then you could add 14 more to reach 62 but you would have to replace ICBMs to do this.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Do you have a proposal to make?

required to replace older SLBMs in order to reach their ceiling. Haig added that his talks with "key hawks" confirmed that "any arrangement that lets the Soviets build some numbers of additional submarines without replacement would be very hard to explain." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, President's Moscow, Iran, Poland, Austria Trip, The Situation Room, May–Jun 72, TOHAK (File No. 1) [Part 2])

Dr. Kissinger: You should accept our delegation's proposal of a base line of 740 SLBMs. On the other hand you could count the H-Class submarines. So I have two proposals. First to forget the base line of 48 modern submarines and use the 740 missile base line our delegation proposed. My second proposal is to keep the number 48, if you prefer, but to define it as including H-Class submarines, say 6 H-Class since there are some test submarines in this category and to reach the 950 ceiling you will then have to replace the H-Class. In the United States we could sell such a position as formal equivalence otherwise it is going to be difficult to convince the Congress that you do not have an advantage.⁶

Mr. Smirnov: We agreed to the proposal that really is the President's proposal. You said to compensate for geographic factors you would concede 6–7 submarines to us.

Dr. Kissinger: I admire the Deputy Minister's ingenuity in taking two separate proposals and combining them into one. The first proposal was that you must convert all H-Class into modern. This would explain the 48. We thought you had 90 or so missiles on G and H-Class which you could convert into Y-Class equivalents and add to the 42 or 43 you may have. In this way we came to a figure of 48.

Ambassador Dobrynin (interrupting): But you remember when I asked you why you were giving us an advantage in 48 you said it was to compensate for geography.

⁶ On May 25 Haig telephoned Moorer and Rush, telling them that the Soviets had come up with a "compromise"—suggesting that they return to the 740 limit and include Y and H class submarines (but not G class) at the starting point. At Kissinger's request he asked Moorer whether the U.S. position taken that morning could be modified. Rush said he thought they had already reached the limit of what they could compromise. (Haig–Rush telcon, May 25, 1:45 p.m. and Haig–Moorer telcon, May 25, 1:50 p.m.; *ibid.*; Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons, 1972 [2 of 2]) In his memoirs Kissinger described the SLBM proposal he put before Nixon during the trip back to the Kremlin on May 24, which was to establish the baseline at 740 "modern" SLBMs, beyond which the Soviets would have to start trading in old missiles and destroy all of their older ICBMs if they wanted to reach the agreed SLBM total of 950. Kissinger also described receiving news of a conservative revolt back home against conceding "numerical inequality" to the Soviets. He noted that this argument was false, and that the administration was in a bind in early 1970s with an inequality stemming from decisions made by its predecessors. Thus, DOD had first proposed an offensive weapon freeze in 1970 to keep the existing numerical gap from growing; without SALT, the gap would widen. Nixon, consulted on a message table, took what Kissinger called "a heroic position from a decidedly unheroic posture" and ordered him to proceed along the lines he had previously outlined. (*White House Years*, pp. 1232–1233) In Nixon's account of this incident, he recalled that he said: "The hell with the political consequences. We are going to make an agreement on *our* terms regardless of the political consequences if the Pentagon won't go along." Nixon wrote that he had been determined not to allow either the Pentagon on the right or the Soviets on the left to drive him away from the position he believed was in the best interests of the United States. (*RN: Memoirs*, p. 615)

Dr. Kissinger: I do not recall answering in that way. I said if in addition you convert land-based missiles you could reach the level of 62 but you have taken the numbers 48 and 62 together and dropped both the G and H-Class missiles. My present suggestion would be somewhat more favorable to you because it includes only the H-Class missiles.

Mr. Gromyko: We may have some questions but I suggest a 4 or 5 minute break.

(The meeting broke for a brief period and resumed at 3:12.)

Mr. Gromyko: We cannot go on much longer. It is either too early or too late. I have a question to put to you. If you are prepared to accept our remaining proposals without reservations we could consider favorably your proposal for 740 missiles.

Dr. Kissinger: We have already made concessions in dropping the question of limitations in volume of light missiles. I would be prepared to confirm that except for our SLBM proposal.⁷ Even though I don't trust the intentions of the Deputy Minister (jocularly). My second point is with respect to the silos. We will need to take technical advice to determine whether it is acceptable. If it is not, I would return to the formula that includes "significantly" and define it as 10%–15% which should be more favorable to your position since such a definition is closer to zero. We could drop the reservation about volume and make a unilateral statement.

Ambassador Dobrynin: When will you give an answer on the silos?

Dr. Kissinger: We are not bargaining. We need technical advice.

Mr. Gromyko: On the first one—dismantling?

Dr. Kissinger: I am practically certain my answer will be positive. We will give you an answer on the 1300 km. We can accept what the

⁷ In his memoirs Smith wrote that by the afternoon of May 24, the only SALT issue left at Moscow involved the SLBM freeze details—when would decommissioning begin and would older Soviet submarines be included in the freeze. Smith said that he had previously expressed concern to the Verification Panel and to the President in the NSC regarding the SLBM terms Kissinger had brought back from Moscow—not because their implementation would affect the military balance significantly, but because it seemed unwise to formally recognize such a large potential submarine numbers differential in the Soviets' favor. He added that he gathered that his views had not been welcomed by the President, but noted that as the summit approached, he had continued to urge Kissinger to consider a less formal way than an agreement to try to get some restraint on the Soviet SLBM program. (*Doubletalk*, p. 419) Kissinger wrote that his major concern during the SLBM negotiations had been to get the Soviets to dismantle the largest possible number of launchers as part of the SLBM freeze. Kissinger noted that Brezhnev, "much more than Nixon, who had achieved his triumph simply by arriving in Moscow, needed a success." He himself was armed by Nixon's comment—provided he really meant it—that he was prepared to leave Moscow without a SALT agreement. (*White House Years*, p. 1235)

delegation agreed to. On the 1300 we accept. On the second issue we may drop our reservation. On the third we need to get an answer. I think we may be able to accept.

Mr. Gromyko: And the fourth one, Article III?

Dr. Kissinger: This is no problem especially since it is our delegation's text, I believe, but it depends on your answer on the numbers. Article III is meaningless without a definition of the procedure.

Mr. Gromyko: And on the next? (Confusion and simultaneous talking. It appeared that Gromyko had in front of him another piece of paper which he was referring to. Dr. Kissinger said that these documents were all he had been given. Gromyko said "No, you have another," but looking at his papers, Gromyko realized that he had not handed one document over. He then handed it to Dr. Kissinger.)

Mr. Gromyko: I will read it out to you. It says there will be no definition of ballistic missile launches on submarines under construction given in the document. (Tab F)

Mr. Smirnov: This is only connected with the mentioning of 48 submarines and 768 launchers.

(Dr. Kissinger asked when we would meet next. Gromyko suggested 10 o'clock.)⁸

⁸ Immediately following this meeting (at 3:45 a.m.), in backchannel telegram HAKTO 29, May 25, Kissinger wired Smith in Helsinki asking for an immediate reply. He listed the Soviet proposals: 1) The second ABM site would be located no less than 1300 kilometers from national capital defense site. He noted that this was acceptable if the delegation agreed. 2) The Soviets would also table a text in Helsinki on dismantling or destruction of older ICBMs. Kissinger said to answer them there. 3) The United States could choose between an interpretative statement on article III stating that during the process of modernization and replacement, the size of land-based ICBM silo launchers would not be increased, and the previously agreed formula including the word "significant," which would be defined as 10–15 percent. Kissinger said Nixon needed the delegation's immediate comment on this for a 10:00 a.m. meeting. 4) There had been no give on missile volume and it was left that United States would make a unilateral statement. Finally, he told Smith he had promised the Soviets an answer by 10 a.m. on the figure of 740 SLBMs which the delegation had given them as a base, and asked for an immediate response as to how the 740 figure achieved immediate replacement. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, USSR, Iran, Austria, Poland, May–June 1972, HAKTO File) Smith wrote in his memoirs that he had replied at 6:45 a.m. that morning, stating that the U.S. delegation endorsed the figure of 1300, and regarding allowed increases in silo dimensions, chose the version which did not include "significantly." He advised Kissinger that the delegation now planned to make the unilateral statement about heavy missiles previously forwarded to the Moscow White House. Finally, he explained that in view of the already agreed ceiling of 950 launchers, a 740 launcher threshold would require the Soviets to decommission all 209 older ICBMs as well as all older submarines if they were to build up to the 950 ceiling. (*Doubletalk*, pp. 422–423) In his memoirs Kissinger recalled that Gromyko did not appear as scheduled to negotiate SALT at 10 a.m. that morning, and that Dobrynin had informed them that the Soviet leadership was reviewing its SALT position once again. (*White House Years*, p. 1236)

274. Memorandum From John D. Negroponte of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Policy (Kissinger)¹

Moscow, May 25, 1972.

SUBJECT

Vietnam Meeting—May 24, and Where We Might go from Here

Part I of this paper attempts to analyse what transpired on Vietnam last night;² Part II discusses where we might go from here.

Despite the filibustering tone of our meeting last night and the for the record quality to which you yourself have referred, the session gave us some interesting insights into just how mildly the Soviets are playing the Vietnam issue. To me at least it seemed that the overall tenor of their comments was in some respects even less vigorous than the public protests they have made.

Looking back at the session, a few elements of major significance stand out:

Part I: May 24 Meeting

1. *No Explicit Mention Was Made of the Mining:* This is hard to explain except if you postulate that they couldn't mention the mining unless they were ready to really do something about it. One might thus infer that they have no ace up their sleeve as regards mining and, of course, the more time goes by the less likely that they will find one.

2. *No Concrete Retaliatory Course of Action Was Seriously Intimated:* The Soviet leaders made some vague observations about the possibility of third country intervention if things continued to go badly for the DRV; but the most serious explicit consequence they could point to of continuing on our present course was the opprobrium it would bring upon President Nixon and the U.S. from U.S., Soviet and world opinion.

[They alluded to the unpredictable reaction of the PRC and other countries, even non-Socialist ones, to the course of events, although presumably they must be aware of the mounting number of reports we have that rail traffic is now backing up at the PRC/DRV border, there may be a shortage of PRC rolling stock, and the Chinese are re-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 74, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Moscow Summit, 1972 [1 of 2]. Top Secret; Eyes Only.

² Document 271.

portedly not permitting Soviet vessels with cargoes for the DRV to call at PRC ports.]³

3. *They Stressed Past Theme That Vietnam War Essentially a Matter Between U.S. and DRV:* Brezhnev did this in his talks with you in April and it was essentially the theme of yesterday's meeting. The war is between us and the DRV even though Brezhnev acknowledged they were an ally and the USSR would "back them to the hilt."

The Soviets made no new proposal of their own; they did not even repeat the de facto ceasefire suggestion Brezhnev made in April;⁴ and the rather circumscribed role they seem willing to play was characterized by limiting themselves to acting as a transmission belt for *any new proposal we might wish to make*.

Based on the conversations last night, therefore, the Soviets seem to be indicating that they plan to confine themselves to an essentially procedural role.

4. *They Supported the DRV Negotiating Position:* They fully supported the DRV negotiating stand. By issue:

A. *POWs:* They said we would get them back when the war was over.

B. *Political Settlement:* They fully supported the DRV/PRG proposals for a three-segment government of national concord, repeating what is now a familiar DRV/PRG theme that whether the resultant regime in the South is communist or non-communist is not at issue.

They said that nowhere in the DRV/PRG position is there a demand for reunification and that the DRV/PRG were willing to make a pledge to this effect.

This contention in itself is inaccurate, as Point 4 of the PRG 7 Points refers to reunification [although the DRV 9 points do not]; but this can only be viewed as a debater's point, just like the question of whether the emerging regime would be communist, since acceptance of the communist political proposals would result in a communist takeover in the South and reunification with the North in very short order.

C. *Ceasefire:* They made no mention of this aspect, unlike at your April meetings. It is unlikely that this was an oversight and I can think of only two explanations: (1) their April suggestion was unilateral and they subsequently found the DRV not amenable; (2) the military picture has changed sufficiently to make such a proposal appear inexpedient at this time.

³ All brackets in the source text.

⁴ See Documents 134 and 139.

5. *Safety of Soviet Shipping*: Even though Kosygin was forceful, as noted above, no explicit reference was made to the mining and Brezhnev took the opportunity to point out that damage to Soviet vessels and wounding of crewmen had been kept out of the Soviet press.

On balance, they appeared more concerned about accidental damage to Soviet ships by our bombing than by the overall implications of our actions which they repeatedly brushed away as likely to be ineffectual against the DRV in the long run anyway.

Part II: Where We Go From Here

The Soviets have asked us to put our minds to a new proposal which they would be willing to convey to the DRV. It has also been suggested to you that Gromyko will have something new for you on Vietnam.

1. *Substantive Proposal Unlikely*: It is doubtful that either we or the Soviets would come up with a mutually acceptable substantive proposal in the remaining time available, let alone one that could form the basis for further talks.

2. *Appearance of High Ranking DRV Official in Moscow*: This is improbable but not inconceivable. Were Le Duan or Pham Van Dong to appear, you would meet them and we would hear them out.

In reflecting on this possibility, I come down hard against the President seeing either of these two men for the obvious reasons—there's a shooting war going on with an ally and the President has never met Thieu, at least not while in office. This is not to mention the military, political and psychological reverberations of such a meeting on what we are trying to accomplish in the South.

3. *New Procedural Initiative Most Likely*: The Soviets may come up with another request to get the Paris sessions going again. If they could get a pledge from us to have the plenaries resumed, they could at least show they had delivered something for their DRV friends and it might grease the skids somewhat for any other problem areas you are having. It could also provide a fig leaf for the Soviets continuing to take their lumps on the more substantive Vietnam issues, as they have been doing so far.

On balance, I think a proposal to resume plenaries at this stage might even be a useful initiative on our part. It costs us nothing, provided it is unconditional and does not inhibit our military options. It would also be a minimum achievement which both sides could point to in the absence of any greater Vietnam breakthrough. We could then use the plenary forum to table the President's May 8 speech⁵ and if we agreed to resume the meetings say two weeks from now—June 8—I suspect the military situation will be well enough in hand to press the ceasefire theme in all earnest.

⁵ See Document 208.

275. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Moscow, May 25, 1972.

SUBJECT

New Negotiations Proposal for Vietnam

Background

Your May 24 meeting with Soviet leaders² brought no changes to the Vietnam negotiating picture:

—The Soviets supported the DRV negotiating position and advanced no proposals of their own.

—They stressed their past theme that the war is essentially a matter to be settled between us and the DRV, although the Soviets were prepared to play a procedural role in transmitting any proposal we have to the DRV.

—They did not intimate any retaliatory course of action of their own to the steps you announced May 8³ and made no explicit mention of the mining, probably because they are not prepared to do anything about it.

—They appeared more concerned about accidental damage to Soviet ships by our bombing than by the overall implications of our actions which they repeatedly brushed away as likely to be ineffectual against the DRV in the long run anyway.

Soviets suggest we table a new negotiating proposal

The Soviets, like the DRV, had nothing new to offer themselves but asked that we give thought to making a new proposal which they would be prepared to convey to the DRV.

Clearly we cannot make any more concessions to the other side. It may even be tactically unwise to try and come up with a repackaging of our past proposals, which might encourage the other side to believe we have not yet reached our rock-bottom position. The earlier they are convinced of this latter fact, the better the chance that they might show some give of their own.

We nevertheless told the Soviets on May 24, in response to their request, that we would take another look at our negotiating proposals to see if there was anything new we could offer.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, TS Box 41, Geopolitical File, Soviet Union, Summits, 1972, May. Top Secret; Eyes Only. The memorandum is not initialed by Kissinger and there is no indication that the President saw it.

² See Document 271.

³ See Document 208.

We have, therefore, on a contingency basis prepared the following proposal which introduces no new substantive elements, emphasizes cease-fire and POW's and could serve the dual purpose of giving the Soviets something to show their DRV allies and providing a fig-leaf for the Soviets continuing to take their lumps on the more substantive Vietnam issues, as they have been doing so far.

Our Proposal

We would propose that plenary sessions be resumed on June 8, 1972, in Paris and we would pose no objection if the Soviet Union informed its DRV allies that resumption of these sessions resulted from their intervention. We would, nonetheless, follow our usual practice of also informing the DRV side directly ourselves.

The resumption of these talks would be unconditional (e.g. we would not in any way restrain our actions against the DRV); and the U.S. side would expect to emphasize the military aspects of a settlement. [We would, in fact, use the June 8 plenary to formally table the negotiating proposals contained in your May 8 speech.]⁴

We would tell the Soviets that in returning to the plenaries we would be prepared to engage in prompt and serious discussions with the DRV of the modalities of prisoner returns and an internationally-supervised ceasefire. These would be our two most strongly preferred agenda items, although as always we are prepared to listen to serious counterproposals by their side.

⁴ Brackets in the source text.

276. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 25, 1972, 2:10–3:50 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Nikolai V. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in St. Catherine's Hall at the Grand Kremlin Palace. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting was from 2:08 to 3:54 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

Aleksei N. Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR
Nikolai K. Baibakov, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and
Chairman of the State Planning Commission
Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Nikolai S. Patolichev, Minister of Foreign Trade
Georgi M. Korniyenko, Chief of USA Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the USA
Mr. Ivanov, Chairman of the Foreign Trade Bank
Leonid Zamyatin, Director of TASS
Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter
Notetaker
The President
William P. Rogers, Secretary of State
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Peter M. Flanigan, Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Senior NSC Staff Member
Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
Ronald L. Ziegler, Press Secretary to the President

SUBJECT

Economic Relations

Chairman Kosygin: Mr. President, Secretary Rogers and your Assistant for Economic Affairs were not able to finalize anything because they just did not have enough time. So, Mr. President, do you have any views or plans as to what we should take up for discussion now? After all, the general range of economic problems is very broad.

The President: I think it would be very well if we could get some agreement on Lend-Lease and get that out of the way, and then go on to other matters.

Chairman Kosygin: Certainly.

The President: We've been haggling over the amount. It has been hanging around for many years. There comes a time when you have to break the impasse and decide what a fair solution is. As I understand it, the difference is very substantial, \$300 million on your side and \$800 million on our side.

Chairman Kosygin: You actually named a figure of \$751 million as the debt itself and you also named another \$200 million interest on something we don't know. Before we do begin the actual discussion of this perhaps we might reach some understanding on this basis. If we delve into prior history and start digging up all of the past deliberations we will never reach a final settlement. Of course, it is true that we have all the material on Lend-Lease from beginning to end. I am quite sure the same goes for you, even up to the point that we have all the bills, checks that you gave us at the time, just as you have all the bills of lading and receipts which we handed to you. And since at the time the Lend-Lease Agreement was effected I occupied the post of Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, I was closely

associated with this personally, so I am deeply aware of these problems. Therefore it is very easy to flounder on all these questions and perhaps it is not so easy to rise to the surface from underwater.

I already said to Secretary Rogers that we cannot recognize the \$200 million named by your side as interest. Because we feel this is a completely artificial figure that you arrived at, taking the original sum of \$750 million which in any case we never recognized, and calculated the interest starting from 1960, 12 years. And that's where you get the \$200 million from. We would nonetheless like to reach an understanding and the final resolution of all questions concerning Lend-Lease.

The President: As I understand the problem really is \$750 million plus \$200 million, or \$950 million.

Chairman Kosygin: \$951 million. That is what I have in my brief.

The President: But your figure is \$300 million.

Chairman Kosygin: That is right, \$300 million. How you distribute [justify]² that figure, \$300 million, notably in relation to the Congressional situation, is certainly up to you. But also another thing which we have to determine is the duration of the repayment period. As regards the British, I know you reached a settlement after the war on the basis of the duration of repayment of 50 years at an interest rate of 2% per annum. Generally speaking, you named a small, in effect a symbolic sum, and you said 2001. I guess they are still doing that.

The President: We'll all be dead by then.

Chairman Kosygin/Chairman Podgorny: Who knows?

Chairman Podgorny: There will be some people around to pay.

The President: We will go to Mars together. Stick around.

Chairman Kosygin: Maybe. But you know that even today we have a man—Petrov—an old Bolshevik, now 98 years old, and still very much alive and working on the Encyclopedia. He is a very educated man, respected by all of us. He is a professor, an historian and scientist, very industrious. As soon as a man gets the title "professor," he gets the responsibility of living a long life.

The President: He doesn't have to work.

Chairman Kosygin: That's your system, is it? That's not true in our case. In this country, as soon as a man becomes an Academician then life becomes easy for him, because then he gets paid a large sum whether he works or not.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: A vacation.

² All brackets in the source text.

The President: That's why he [Dr. Kissinger] wants to come here.

Chairman Kosygin: It is hard to become an Academician in the United States?

Dr. Kissinger: We don't have that title at all. We don't have an equivalent position.

Chairman Kosygin: It's a tough situation for scientists then. I think that one might want to organize an Academy in the United States.

The President: What is needed now, particularly at this high level, is a reasonable attitude on both sides. You cannot accept \$950 million. We cannot accept \$300 million. So under the circumstances we should negotiate something in between.

Chairman Kosygin: Name your figure.

The President: Why do we not go half-way?

Chairman Kosygin: \$450 million.

The President: That's not the way I learned mathematics.

Chairman Kosygin: Yes, you learned American math. Our mathematics is different.

The President: New mathematics. The new math.

Chairman Kosygin: No.

The President: Why don't we say one-half between, and that would be \$600 million?

Chairman Podgorny: That doesn't seem to me to be a very acceptable kind of mathematics, even if it is half-way.

Chairman Kosygin: Why not approach it this way? The figure \$750 million named by you, why not halve that? And then we'd get our arithmetic right. Because then we could certainly agree with that basis and reach a final settlement of this entire matter. I believe it is a figure that can be justified, and then we consider the matter finally closed.

Mr. President, if I were at this point to go into the story of what we suffered in the war I am sure you probably might even give up the whole figure altogether if we reached an understanding on that basis. If it were put to Congress in this fashion and you provided relevant documents, I think that would be enough to induce any legislative body. We did set up a special commission in 1941 during the war headed by Shvernik. The task of the commission was to collect all the documents, all the dossiers concerning human and material losses caused by the war. We have all the documents but haven't even published them in full to this date. If we did so you would then see the full scale of the damage caused to this country.

The President: We don't want to haggle on this. After all, we are dealing at a high level and we both want to reach a reasonable settlement. You object to interest and of course our people disagree. Let's

take \$750 million as our figure—without the interest—and take the figure \$300 million as your figure and then split the difference and that would be \$525 million. That is half-way between the two figures without interest on either side. [Foreign Minister Gromyko corrects the interpreter and Premier Kosygin does figures on a pad.]

Chairman Kosygin: \$525 million would be something we couldn't give. Well, let's indeed endeavor to meet each other half-way. I fully agree we are not rug merchants. Let me suggest a constructive figure of \$450 million and end the matter in that way. That would be the final settlement and we believe a fair one.

The President: You've come up \$150 million to \$450 million. We've come down \$300 million. That would be very hard for us to justify.

Chairman Kosygin: We raised 50 percent.

The President: We came down 150 percent.

Chairman Kosygin: You lowered your figure by 30 percent; we raised ours by 50 percent. You know we simply don't have any other possible approach to a solution to this matter. We simply won't be able to. You could say to Congress 30 years after the end of the war you have made us pay you for Lend-Lease. We have to say 30 years after the war we have to pay out a sum that you agree to. We would be in a very difficult position with our people.

The President: What we are talking about is a spirit, a climate in which both sides are forthcoming on an agreement. It seems to me we are so close together. The problem is that you've come from \$300 to \$450. We have come from \$750 to \$450. We have come two times as far as you have. It doesn't sound as if we did very well.

Chairman Kosygin: I don't see really where you have had to come so much further than us. Let me say very frankly we simply do not have the possibility of going further. We do not have either the power to negotiate a larger figure or the physical possibility. Even with this figure it would still be very hard to justify.

The President: Have you discussed \$33 million on merchant ships?

Chairman Kosygin: No, we didn't discuss that. They are included in the \$750 million.

Secretary Rogers/Mr. Flanigan: Not in ours.

Secretary Rogers: We always considered that a separate item. You agreed to pay that before.

Mr. Ivanov: Well, with regard to the figure of \$750. It is broken down like this. 580 is compensation for goods at the end of the war. 100 is for use of naval vessels. Another 30 million is for use of small naval vessels. 33 for merchant ships. Another 7 million for minor floating facilities, barges and cranes makes a \$750 million total.

The President: Is the pipeline included?

Mr. Ivanov: That is a separate question because of the credit agreement at the end of the war. There is no question up to now because during the negotiations this was settled in Washington.

Secretary Rogers: [to the President] They paid on the pipeline for account.

Mr. Ivanov: You have an understanding to add the rest of our debts to the total and to pay during the repayment period specified for the total time.

The President: Let me suggest a solution. If you agree to \$450 million on Lend-Lease—that is the figure you suggest, and then the pipeline is \$46 million. . . .

Chairman Kosygin: Yes, we suggested that.

Mr. Ivanov: You are quite right, Mr. President, the sum of \$450 million is on the same basis as the \$750 million sum. It includes no pipeline.

The President: Or ships?

Mr. Ivanov: Ships are included in the \$750 million sum.

The President: Why not get the round figure, 450 + 46 (pipeline)?

Mr. Ivanov: Right.

The President: Take 450 plus 46 which is approximately 500 and that covers everything.

Chairman Kosygin: Mr. President, we just don't have the possibility of doing that. We have given you all our possibilities in this matter, all that we have in our soul.

Chairman Podgorny: Up to now we have been very firm in putting forward the figure 300. Now we take it upon ourselves to increase the sum of 450 in the hope that when we present the matter to our government we will get approval.

The President: 450 plus 46 when adding the pipeline.

Mr. Ivanov: Yes, you mean it is better to include the pipeline in order to reach 500?

The President: Yes, it is better to have a round figure.

[There followed a discussion among Messrs. Ivanov, Podgorny and Kosygin.]

Chairman Kosygin: Mr. President, don't take us by the throat. We think the best thing is to include the pipeline in the \$450 million. Agree?

The President: No.

Chairman Kosygin: I'd much rather you'd said okay, instead of no.

The President: It seems to me that's fair. You have 450. Certainly that is the lowest figure possible. With the pipeline already 46, I think if we'd just get a round figure of 500 that would be a good settlement. We have come down a lot more than you've come up.

Chairman Kosygin: All Americans are like that.

The President: It's a good deal. It's a good round figure and includes everything.

Chairman Kosygin: Mr. President, if you just think what other benefits you could offer us to get this 30-year-old problem out of the way. I am sure you will get your figures. You have gained here or something there. Especially when trade gets going between the two countries, there are lots of chances to compensate for this figure.

The President: Since we can't agree, let's talk about the grain deal.

Chairman Kosygin: I'd like to get this question settled, nonetheless, particularly since our positions are very close.

Chairman Podgorny: We are close.

The President: We are only \$40 million dollars apart.

Chairman Kosygin: No, \$50 million.

The President: \$40 million.

Chairman Kosygin: 50. We are \$50 million apart because you want to consider the two figures apart and I want to consider them together. We accept your proposal on the condition we agree on the duration of the payment. We proceed from a duration of payment of 50 years. That's the period you gave the British, to all these countries to which you extended Lend-Lease you gave a period of repayment of 50 years. Why discriminate against us?

The President: Not 100?

Chairman Kosygin: That's what you gave the British [50 years].

Secretary Rogers: I explained to the Prime Minister that would be totally out of the question. The conditions have totally changed since the end of the war.

Chairman Podgorny: But they have changed for everyone, for you and for us. You gave all other countries 50 years.

The President: You are much richer now.

Chairman Podgorny: You are too.

Chairman Kosygin: The ratio that existed at that time has changed in your favor and not ours, unfortunately.

The President [to Mr. Flanigan]: You want to discuss the interest rate now?

Mr. Flanigan: We haven't yet, but we can, Mr. President.

The President: You have not discussed yet?

Mr. Flanigan: No.

Chairman Kosygin: Two percent is the normal rate.

The President: It is best to have discussion among the experts.

Chairman Kosygin: Certainly there is no objection to the experts discussing it but we should give them very precise instructions.

The President: We'll make the decision.

Chairman Kosygin: Because I think we should really reach agreement on this. Otherwise the experts drag it out to another year of discussions.

The President: I have a suggestion, Mr. Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is an expert in this field and I am not. The Prime Minister is a banker and I am not. He has me at a disadvantage. It would be helpful if the Prime Minister could discuss with Mr. Flanigan and Mr. Rogers and make recommendations and you and I decide. We want to be fair.

Chairman Kosygin: I have no objections.

The President: We want to be fair. It is too complicated to talk about the rate and the length of the terms.

Chairman Kosygin: On one understanding. I agree to meet anybody designated. But I cannot accept any percentage higher than the one you gave to all the other countries. But we certainly have no objection to discussing this with the experts you designate, Secretary Rogers and Mr. Flanigan.

I want to add that we really have gone to the limit of what we can offer. It would be entirely to your advantage to accept this. You leave after the visit having received money from us, while we are giving. That will be difficult to explain.

The President: As far as the figure is concerned, what have we agreed on?

Chairman Kosygin: \$500 million including the pipeline, and that we agreed to on the condition that the duration of repayment is 50 years at two percent per annum. Even so we have to pay a very large amount of money annually because that alone will involve us paying \$10 million the first year, that is, the percentage. That, Mr. President, will be in our own lifetime. Fifty years hence is a matter of conjecture—whether we will still be around. We have to pay now.

Secretary Rogers: From our standpoint it doesn't make sense. You are paying us over \$11 million on the pipeline, so we are reducing the payments. You are paying us less than now.

Chairman Kosygin: But that's just interest. But on this basis there will be principal, so the sum is double. We are paying no less than \$20 million all told. We have to pay about \$25 million annually on the basic sum, principal. So all told it will amount to about \$25 million per year, which is a big sum of money, no laughing matter.

The President: Then we can have further discussion of the technical things tomorrow. We will see where we stand.

Chairman Kosygin: We agree. Let's do that.

The President: Could we have a report on where we stand on grain?

Chairman Kosygin: Certainly. Just one point. I have asked Mr. Patolichev, our Foreign Trade Minister, to come here. Before he comes perhaps we can turn to other matters. What else is on your list?

The President: The next thing on the list is the Joint Economic Commission.

Chairman Kosygin: We discussed that matter with “Comrade” Rogers and your assistant.

Secretary Rogers: Alright.

The President: Is it acceptable if it is announced Saturday?

Chairman Kosygin: Yes.

The President: Mr. Peterson will come over in July.

Chairman Kosygin: Yes, we are quite willing. The chairmanship question we can decide later. You decide yours, and we decide ours. But I will give you a document on the principles of setting up the commission for your consideration.

The President: The announcement will be Saturday.³

Chairman Kosygin: Certainly. We agree. We will give you our draft on this.

Secretary Rogers: We have been working on it. It’s all right. At noon. We will have it corrected.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It has been corrected. The Prime Minister can read it out to you.

Secretary Rogers: We have it. When should we announce it on Saturday?

Chairman Kosygin: We can hand it to the press in the morning.

Dr. Kissinger: We plan our press briefing at 7:00 in the morning. Right, Ron? Because they are going to Leningrad. Because of the papers.

Chairman Kosygin: That means only in Sunday’s morning papers and the evening papers Saturday and on radio.

The President: Saturday night on TV.

Chairman Kosygin: There is also the question of credits. We can take that up before Mr. Patolichev comes, that is, the credits extended by the United States to us.

Secretary Rogers: Export-Import Bank credits.

Chairman Kosygin: Yes, Export-Import Bank credits.

[Mr. Ivanov explains the question of Presidential authority to his colleagues.]

³ May 27.

Chairman Kosygin: So on the matter of credits by the Export-Import Bank—as our “Comrade” was telling us—for the Export-Import Bank to extend credits requires a Presidential order to the effect that it is in line with the interest of the U.S. So we would like you to issue the order so we could begin using the credits. Unless that is done, as you know, there can be no real trade between us.

The President: I am prepared to take that action but the action should be taken concurrently with the settlement of Lend-Lease. It is easier that way. That is why it is important to discuss these two together. Since we have made progress on Lend-Lease this should be possible.

Chairman Kosygin: On the matter of Lend-Lease, how do you think we should go about having a public statement? Or should we just include something at the end of the visit?

The President: It seems to me—I haven’t thought this through—but we ought to have Lend-Lease included in Saturday’s announcement.

Chairman Kosygin: I am thinking perhaps if it is better if we included in the final communiqué.

The President: That is alright, if you prefer that.

Chairman Kosygin: I think we best indicate it in the communiqué along the following lines: The two sides have achieved agreement on the issue of Lend-Lease, without going into the details in the communiqué. So Mr. President we could then suggest the following procedures.

[Mr. Patolichev arrives.]

In the final communiqué, in that section dealing with all agreements and economic questions, we could have a line that the two sides reached agreement on the question of Lend-Lease without spelling out the details of the question. It is difficult for us.

The President: The important thing is to have Lend-Lease. We want to be forthcoming on credit because it is essential to increase trade in both countries. But we have promised the Congressional leaders that Lend-Lease would be settled first. They don’t have to be in the same document necessarily, but it should be mentioned.

Chairman Kosygin: So then we proceed from this understanding. Following the final elaboration and settlement of Lend-Lease issue, you are prepared to issue the order to the Export-Import Bank to extend credits to us which we can then begin using. [President Nixon nods yes.]

Good. Agreed.

Now Minister Patolichev is here. I would like first to say that we do agree to buy American grain and for a long-term period. But for this we will need credit and we will need to have long-term credit—

longer term credit than the three-year credit to which you are so far referring. A three-year credit is not of interest to us.

If this is difficult for your side, we could perhaps circumvent the issue in the following way. We could put forth the following proposal. You would instruct the Export-Import Bank to extend to us a certain limit of credit, and we would make use of that credit to purchase grains from the United States. So we could then reach an understanding on this formulation? We could have an exchange of letters or simply an agreement among ourselves. Then we could simply bypass the question of what might be difficult for you.

On the question of transportation, well, what we can carry ourselves we will and what we cannot carry, for that we will charter ships at the prevailing rates for freighters existing in the world. And then we could have longer-term prospects regarding purchases. Let's say that there could be an agreement extended to five years.

The President: The problem we have is with the authority. Your idea of a long-term arrangement of course is appealing. But we do not have the legislative authority to make that kind of arrangement.

Chairman Kosygin: You have no legislative authority in what particular aspect?

Mr. Flanigan: May I, Mr. President? The Grains Financing Authority prohibits credits in excess of three years to developed countries. The Export-Import Bank credits prohibits long-term credits for consumables, such as grain.

Chairman Kosygin: The Export-Import Bank does not generally extend money for grain?

Mr. Flanigan: That is correct.

Chairman Kosygin: Then perhaps we should let this question filter through the experts once again. Let them look into it and maybe they can come up with ideas. I will certainly instruct our banking authorities to look into possibilities for entering into some arrangement with your banks and to see how the purchase of grains could be financed for a longer period. Maybe we might find some solution along these lines. We are certainly prepared to look into this most carefully. Maybe some arrangement could be made for some kind of banking operation involving one of your banks and one of our banks in one of the countries in Europe and arrange purchasing that way. Comrade Ivanov is chairman of the Foreign Trade Bank. We will instruct him to look into this most carefully. Perhaps you can look into it together with him to see if there is some possible arrangement for some kind of financial backing of a deal.

Mr. Flanigan: Fine. We will do it with pleasure.

The President: Secretary Rogers will sit in too and discuss this and give a legal view.

Chairman Kosygin: Certainly. Mr. Patolichev and Mr. Ivanov from our side.

The President: Four on each side. And they will put their heads together and look into this matter.

Chairman Podgorny: A very authoritative group.

Chairman Kosygin: If they don't come up with a solution acceptable to us it will be bad for them.

The President: Did Secretary Rogers and Mr. Flanigan and Mr. Kosygin have a chance to meet on the other question?

Chairman Kosygin: No, we didn't have time yet.

The President: On natural gas.

Chairman Kosygin: No. We didn't discuss that with the Secretary, but we want to find the time, perhaps tomorrow with the Secretary.

The President: I think it would be good if Flanigan is also on our side. You can have anyone else you want.

Chairman Kosygin: Certainly. We will have Comrade Baibakov, the Chairman of State Planning Commission. He could sit in for me. He is my deputy at the same time; he is deputy Prime Minister. He can handle this.

The President: I am not sure we can solve it now but we will look into it. It is a massive deal. It involves one-third of all the Export-Import Bank's credit authority.

Chairman Kosygin: I am quite sure we will not be able to reach a final settlement. As the President said, it is a very complex problem. I think what is required now, Mr. President, is your consent to release the companies in the United States for going ahead on planning this elaborate project. In fact, they have already given us a preliminary project. We met with them. If you give the go-ahead to get the work going, they could go ahead. It requires very careful work to identify with your side where your interests lie and where our interests lie.

Mr. Flanigan: We have instructed the consortia that they are free to go ahead with studies and calculations. We have received some studies, but they are not approved on the credit aspects. With regard to studies and calculation they are entirely free to make those. As the President has already said, they have the right to make those studies.

Chairman Kosygin: That is very good. It is a step forward, but, of course, without finally settling the financial aspects nothing can come of this consortium. That I am sure you are fully aware of. I am sure they are already working on this project. They told me, when I received them, they would put it in the hands of the White House. At the same time they continue to work on this project. They were eager when they talked to me. That is a very good system in your country: any responsibility anyone has can be easily shifted to the White House and that is that.

The last thing I would like to mention is the fact, of course, that a very great positive sign of the development of economic relations between our two countries generally would be a solution of the problem of Most-Favored-Nation treatment. Let me say that we do not look at this from the standpoint of some kind of exception being made for us. Because if after the visit such as this we put out a communiqué and announce all sorts of agreements in the economic field and at the same time discriminating practices against us continue, it would sow doubt that this would be misunderstood by the public. All the more so since this [MFN] is quite common throughout the world. After all we don't discriminate against the U.S. and had it [MFN] once. As I said yesterday, because of the present tariffs the trade between our two countries is quite negligible. We can be sure that if they remain, there will be no trade at all.

The President: As I pointed out to the Prime Minister, this is a matter in which we have to have Congressional approval. I think Congressional approval can be brought about, provided we can make significant progress in other matters being discussed today. But I am keenly aware of the fact that this is essential if we are going to develop a healthy relationship in the future in the field of trade.

Chairman Kosygin: Not even healthy, but simply for normal relations, this is necessary.

The President: We understand the Soviet Union has a special interest. But anytime Congressional action is required it does also entail the necessity of getting votes from the Congress and the Senate. That is why what we are able to accomplish—if we can make significant accords during the visit—it would be helpful to move on that as well.

Chairman Kosygin: Because under the existing situation it is more to our advantage, more profitable, to sell to the British and have them resell to you, and we get a higher profit than if we sold directly to you. Why should we have an intermediary on what we intended to sell to you?

The President: We are aware of this.

Chairman Kosygin: Maybe some situation in the U.S. will change, and it will not be Congress but someone else that decides these matters. I am not making any formal proposal. You wouldn't accept it anyway.

The President: What I am suggesting and I want to be frank—I want to be candid on what I can do myself—is that we can move on an Export-Import credit—I have the authority. On MFN, I have to get Congressional approval. I believe I can get it if I go back. I am just pointing out that I do not want to leave the impression I can do that right now. It still takes Congressional action.

Chairman Kosygin: This we are keenly aware of, too.

The President: I can indicate it as my goal. I cannot indicate it as a reality until I can deliver.

Chairman Kosygin: Well, both of us have to act within limits on certain things. That applies to both of us.

The President: We have made progress today. We will continue to make progress that will help do the job, when I return, with Congress.

Chairman Podgorny: Well, with your persistent efforts I feel that this will become a realistic possibility.

Chairman Kosygin: In the field of trade generally I think we still have many untapped possibilities. Perhaps we don't have the skill or you don't have the interest. We ought to have the skill of selling commodities. Perhaps in others we have no real interest with the other side.

Let me just give a few examples. I have looked into this. I have been given a brief on the structure of your imports. I see you are buying very many items from abroad. I am surprised to see you get half your footwear from abroad; radios about one third; motorcycles 90%; and many bicycles.

At first glance these are very small items. We could especially adapt several plants and factories in this country for the requirements of the American market. For this, what we need is that American companies give us the specifications required. Certain component parts are needed for the equipment. These could be supplied by the U.S. and turned out as finished products. We could look at this in a serious way and could sign contracts totalling billions of rubles. Then we could extend trade to a broader range of items. Not just primary goods like we have so far. That would require no credits.

In short, there are great opportunities ahead.

The President: I think the plan we develop for the Commission is to explore all the possibilities, what we can do. It is difficult, as the Prime Minister knows, to arrange for trade between two economies based on different financial systems and other significant differences. On the other hand this only means that we need to think more creatively, more imaginatively, so that our two economies complement each other.

Mr. Peterson is a very able man. He will have a broad charter to discuss this whole range of matters with whomever is designated on your side. He will make recommendations on how the trade of the two sides can be expanded. I hope before he comes your experts will come up with suggestions, and we will have some. From that we can generate new vistas of trade—new horizons—that we have not had before.

In addition, some of our businessmen have considerable expertise in dealing with socialist countries in setting up various schemes resulting in beneficial trade to both countries. They will be encouraged to come up with ideas as well.

I will simply say that as far as my position is concerned, I believe that more trade between the Soviet Union and the United States is good for both countries. I think it is good economically. I also think there are definite benefits in terms of creating better relations in other fields. I am prepared to give every encouragement and support that we can on the government's side for new initiatives in the field of trade.

Chairman Kosygin: What you said about differences in the systems of financing, I don't think that should present any great problems. We are not complex as regards banking systems or things like that. You will recall long ago with American assistance we built the Gorky Auto Plant and the Volgograd Tractor Plant. And you know, about three years ago we entered into a contract with the Italian Fiat Company which built a very big project in this country. It is safe to say that there was not the slightest difficulty or hitch in cooperating with them in this venture. You know that certain American companies also took part in building that plant.

And I just recently visited the Volgograd Plant which is now producing over a thousand cars a day and it is still going up. I saw with my own eyes U.S. equipment sold to us by the Italians. It is an enormous plant. There was never the slightest hitch. Everything went off very smoothly, without a hitch. The President of Fiat who is now dead, Signor Vellati, was a very able man. I knew him very well. He was very able.

[Chairman Kosygin then read a suggested announcement on the meeting of the day. The two sides discussed that there would be the theater that night and that they would let other officials sign agreements.]

The Soviet Side: Okay?

American Side: Okay.

277. Memorandum of Conversations¹

Moscow, May 25, 1972, 5:20–6:35 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.–12:32 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid V. Smirnov, Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers of the USSR
Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the USA
Georgi M. Korniyenko, Chief of USA Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Mr. Kissinger's Conversations in Moscow. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in St. Catherine's Hall at the Grand Kremlin Palace.

Eduard Zaitsev, Interpreter (afternoon)
Mr. Bratchikov, Interpreter (late evening)

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Senior Staff Member, NSC
William G. Hyland, NSC Staff Member
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff (notetaker)

SUBJECT

SALT²

Dr. Kissinger: On the subjects we discussed yesterday [Tab A],³ to get them out of the way, let me give you our answers:

Point #1, The “Text of a Joint Statement on Article III of the Treaty on the Limitation of ABM Systems,” is accepted in your formulation.

Point #2, “The Parties understand that in the process of modernization and replacement the size of land-based ICBM silo launchers will not be increased,” is accepted in your formulation.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I would like to say on this point that we are ready to make a concession in your favor.

Dr. Kissinger: No, we don’t want your concession.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: But it is in your favor.

Dr. Kissinger: What is the concession?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: “The Parties understand that in the process of modernization and replacement the size of land-based ICBM silo launchers will not be substantially increased.”

Dr. Kissinger: What is the concession?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We accept your formulation.

Dr. Kissinger: Look, we can’t do this every eight hours, after getting agreement in our government. Yesterday, you said “significantly.” Today we got agreement with everybody in our government and informed you only this morning. You’re not making a concession, you are withdrawing from an agreed position.

Are you prepared to say 10–15%?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: In general, we are.

² Kissinger wrote in his memoirs that when the SALT discussions resumed at 5:20 p.m. (with, as usual, only a half hour’s warning), they were prepared and so were the Soviets. Kissinger described how before the meeting, he and his staff were “frantically analyzing various combinations of figures; the permutations seemed endless, but [they] had to ensure that the Soviets dismantled the maximum number of missiles. The numbers game of submarine baselines—how many could be traded in, and when they would reach different levels by various combinations of twelve-tube and sixteen-tube boats—forced us into numerous computations on long yellow pads, drawn up between sessions and then quickly scratched up and consumed during meetings.” (*White House Years*, p. 1236)

³ All brackets in the source text. The tabs are attached but not printed. See Document 273 for the previous day’s discussion of SALT.

Dr. Kissinger: In other words, we have wasted three hours of conversation with Mr. Brezhnev and two hours with you.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: We would prefer the formula you suggested and which was accepted in Helsinki.

Dr. Kissinger: If we are going to do this, we can give it all to Helsinki. To summarize: The President was unsatisfied with what was done in Helsinki. He therefore raised it with Mr. Brezhnev.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Yesterday we discussed one possibility, and another possibility. Yesterday we decided to convince you of ours. But the Americans were reluctant to accept ours. Our experts said it made little difference, and we put it to Mr. Brezhnev and he agreed.

Dr. Kissinger: But Mr. Brezhnev said the word “significantly” is meaningless and that we should go back to 10–15%.

[Smirnov spoke in Russian and was not translated.]

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We have only changed three words—“not substantially increased.”

Dr. Kissinger: But that’s what we . . . Let’s see what else we’ve got because we may not have an agreement. I am not accepting this, any way, since if we don’t settle the submarine point it doesn’t make any difference what we do here.

Should I mention the other two points? [Points #3 and #4 at Tab A] The other two points are agreed to, except for minor editorial points, which they can do in Helsinki.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: On submarines, yesterday we agreed that our position on 48 was discussed, and we also spoke about replacements. We are in agreement on that because we had an exchange on that in March. But if you want to determine this level through the total number of launchers, then we agree with this. If you are more satisfied with translating it into the number of launchers, if you multiply 48 boats by 16 launchers, then you have 768. That would be a figure that we would specify, that we would write down. This is not because we insist on 28 starts but because we would have an even number for each of the submarines. What is your opinion?

Your proposal is 740. We subdivide it by the number of launchers.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand the arithmetic. The arithmetic is not hard, the politics is hard. Policy decisions are hard.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Yes, we are for taking that political decision.

Dr. Kissinger: What I tried to explain last night is the following. The problem, Mr. Deputy Minister, is as follows: First of all, I totally reject the proposition by which you arrive at 48. The figure 48, to repeat for the record, is the figure 41–43 which we think you have, plus G- and H-class which you will convert to Y to 48, plus the SS–7s and SS–8s converted

to submarines, which gives you 62. This is how the 62 originated with us. It makes no difference to us how *you* arrived at 62.

Then when Mr. Brezhnev gave me a paper which listed 62 boats and 950 launchers, I thought we were operating on the basis of the figures I gave to your Ambassador.

Our problem is this, I repeat: We can accept 62 and 950. We can accept it, although it will present us with enormous difficulties in explaining to the American public why the Soviet Union should have more submarines than we.

What has become apparent over the past few weeks, particularly over the last week is, if we let you build over the next few years without any obligation of retiring anything, then the treaty cannot be ratified. Because we don't believe you have 48 Y-class boats.

So, there are a number of practical solutions. The only way the treaty can be defended in the U.S. is this: We start at an equal base, but we allow the Soviet Union to transform old missiles and old submarine-launched missiles into modern submarines and modern submarine-launched missiles, up to a figure of 62.

Therefore there are only two practical solutions to the problem, in my view: Solution one, is that we don't say anything about the number of submarines you now have. If you like to say you have 48, that's your privilege. But we only say that the next submarine you build after this agreement is signed will lead to the retirement of old missiles, either submarine- or land-based.

Actually there are three possible solutions. The second possibility is: That we accept the figure of 48 but include in it all your nuclear-powered submarines which have missiles on them. A third possibility is that we take the figure 740, or maybe even 768, and include in it 100 missiles you have on G- and H-class submarines. In either event, you will end up with 62 subs and 950 missiles. And since the Deputy Minister is so enamored of our delegation in Helsinki, I will show him the latest formula of our delegation in Helsinki which omits all numbers, which takes the first possibility.

I would merely like to add the following. I sent a cable to Washington today because you asked me if we could drop submarines altogether.

Ambassador Dobrynin: It was my private question.

Dr. Kissinger: Private but nonetheless. [Shows cable Hako 32 and Tohak 147, at Tab B, to Dobrynin.]⁴ You will know we can't possibly

⁴ In telegram Hako 32, May 25, Kissinger asked Haig whether, given the present state of SLBM discussions, Laird, Rush, Helms, and Moorer would prefer that the offensive agreement not include submarines. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential

pass the treaty through the Senate with all these people opposing it. The Defense Department has come up with an even tougher request, which I won't even show you.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: What is your conclusion?

Dr. Kissinger: The conclusion I make, Mr. Foreign Minister, is that we should find a solution which includes one of the three possibilities, otherwise we'll have a treaty that won't be ratified.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: We've got to come to some conclusion finally. As far as I could gather from the previous conversations, I could understand that the formula with the numbers 740 was most convenient for you.

Dr. Kissinger: If it included G- and H-class submarine missiles.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Yesterday that wasn't the question.

Dr. Kissinger: It wasn't discussed.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: I want to specify the term. By H-class you mean the old atom submarines?

Dr. Kissinger: With three missiles each.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: And by G-class you mean the old diesel-powered submarines.

Dr. Kissinger: With three missiles each. It's as old as Polaris.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: I don't think it's worthwhile. I take it as a joke.

Dr. Kissinger: Of course, Polaris is a better weapon. I agree with you.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Yesterday we did discuss the figure 740 but yesterday we did not include these in the figure; we discussed only modern submarines.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Mr. Kissinger, this element is a new one. It has never been introduced in Helsinki or Vienna. They spoke about the modern submarines, never about the old ones. We cannot accept this.

Dr. Kissinger: But the protocol I was working from, which was the protocol of May 19, doesn't have the word "nuclear." If you drop the

Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Mr. Kissinger's Conversations in Moscow, May 1972) In telegram Tohak 147, May 25, Haig informed Kissinger that all four men agreed that an agreement that limited the Soviets to not more than 950 SLBM launchers of any type on any submarine (including G, H and Y class) was essential. If such provisions were not acceptable to the Soviets, they recommended a delay in reaching any agreement and continuing negotiations until the issue was resolved. The cable repeated that the alternatives of an ABM agreement alone, an agreement limited to ABM and ICBM, or an agreement permitting more than 950 launchers were not acceptable. (Ibid.)

word “nuclear,” we’re in business. You added the word “nuclear” to our May 19th protocol. We submitted it to your delegation. We didn’t mislead you.

I have always said with the 48 we included G- H-class.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Not with me. With 740 yes, but not with the 48.

Dr. Kissinger: Our problem is: We have no difficulty about where we will conclude: 950 and 62. What we have problems with is with the interim. We absolutely require domestically that we be able to say that new boats are replacements and that we did not give you a unilateral advantage.

I am not bargaining with you. We have a massive problem. Our military people in the Department of Defense—we’ll take care of this; we haven’t even shown this to them—propose that we replace SS-9s with subs.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Repeat that last idea about SS-9s.

Dr. Kissinger: [laughs] It’s not a serious proposal. I showed your Ambassador the telegram I sent to Washington this morning. I said this, so that you know what we’re up against. I said, “Given the present state of SLBM discussions and Smith cable, would Laird, Rush, Helms and Moorer prefer that offensive agreement not include submarines? . . . Under what conditions should we proceed?”

[Dobrynin at this point gets up and leaves.]

Dr. Kissinger: We’ve driven your Ambassador away?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: According to protocol, the Ambassador has to escort the President to the theater. This is our concern for the President.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand. Your hospitality has been excellent. We are all grateful. We thank you.

[Reads second cable:] “Have discussed your message with Rush, Helms, and Moorer. All agree that an agreement which limits Soviets to not more than 950 SLBM launchers of any type on any submarine (including G-, H- and Y-class) is essential.

“If such provisions are not acceptable to the Soviets, we recommend a delay in reaching any agreement.

“The alternatives of an ABM agreement alone, an agreement limited to ABM and ICBM, or allowing more than 950 SLBM launchers, is not acceptable.”

Then the military have an even more exalted position, but I won’t bother with them. They want you to trade in modern missiles . . .

We cannot pass this treaty in the Senate with the opposition of all these people.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: If we start considering the opinions of individual persons, even from very high positions, then we are bound to return to the very start of the negotiations. I can tell you the opinion of our military, that your position—both geography and the availability of forward bases—gives you a very big advantage. Therefore, our navy people tell us our figures are extremely small, given your advantages. That question has already been discussed.

We received information March 17⁵ that your President was agreeable to the proposal of 48, without including diesel or other submarines. Yesterday you said we should calculate missiles or submarines equally. You mentioned 48, that's your proposal.

But I can assure you that we are more criticized by our military than you are by yours. If you start citing the opinions of the military, citing pluses and minuses of the positions we find ourselves in, we'll have to go back to the beginning of the negotiations.

Dr. Kissinger: But that is what we are facing now.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I have to say, Mr. Kissinger, that what you say today introduces something new into our conversation. We seem to come to agreement that we are receiving certain partial inequalities, certain advantages with respect to number, but we did have a different understanding of the situation. We understood we were dealing with modern submarines and modern launchers. Now it seems we have toys that produce certain sounds and we are stuck with them.

Dr. Kissinger: If you accept our proposal you'll have 62 submarines—that's 50% more than we have—and 300 more missiles. That is a compensation for geographic inequality.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: That is the quantitative side.

Dr. Kissinger: That's right. On the qualitative side, those 62 submarines and 950 missiles can all be modern. All we ask you to do is to destroy old toy submarines you have in order to reach this total of 950. The Deputy Prime Minister knows very well that the missiles on those submarines are antiquated and aren't very useful. We are giving you a margin of 50% in both missiles and boats. And in ICBMs we're giving you a margin of 40%. This will be a very difficult agreement to present to Congress even in the form we are proposing, and impossible in the form you are proposing.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Your argument may be convincing to your military people but it cannot be satisfactory to us. If you are in-

⁵ For Kissinger's meeting with Dobrynin on March 17 see Document 62. Nixon joined the conversation briefly at the beginning.

cluding there all the forms we are dealing with, then we would have to start speaking about bases and aircraft and all other initial conditions. It is clear today you are trying to include obsolete units even though those obsolete units have been excluded from the parities long ago. We have been following the negotiations a long time, and today's formulation is a surprise to us. You know our possibilities; what you propose today puts us in a difficult situation. If we were asked to put forward a list of what is demanded by our military, that list is longer than what you have.

We should come to a decision without crossing out what we did before and the political decisions taken in the past by our leaders and your leaders.

Dr. Kissinger: We are not asking you to keep obsolete systems. You can replace the old systems with new ones. We want you to replace them, not keep them. That is the point.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Whether it's worthwhile, we will decide ourselves.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, we are just trying to explain our proposal. We are not trying to tell you what to do.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: It seems we are deviating from the specific question that was on the agenda yesterday. The essence of the agreement was that you have 41 submarines plus three according to the letter—plus three you would not use; for us, 950 starts and 62 submarines. Yesterday, no problem was raised with this; nor today. It is known that the number of submarines and ICBMs was determined, as well as the number of replacements. Yesterday, only one question was raised: What is the initial point from which to start counting? It was also raised in Helsinki. The figure was 48 modern submarines.

[The clock chime rang at 6:30 p.m.]

Dr. Kissinger: We have to go.

[Gromyko leaves the room.]

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Yesterday we came to the following results: You told us it was more convenient for you not to fix any number of submarines, that is omit the 48. You considered it more convenient to calculate the number of launchers, and you put forward 740. This is what we should discuss, not the evaluations of your military.

[Gromyko returns.]

Dr. Kissinger: I have a problem. I have to go with the President to the ballet. Could we meet after the ballet?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Good. Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: May I ask for an explanation here? You said [in your Protocol draft, Tab C] "in excess of 740 nuclear submarine-launched

ballistic missiles." Strictly, that would include H-class.⁶ If this were true, it would give us a certain symmetry with the 710 we have, and would permit me to talk to the President.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Did you ask whether the 740 includes all nuclear submarines?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: On all atomic submarines.

Dr. Kissinger: Including H-class?

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me talk to the President. I think we have a possible . . .

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: That was always our position. That is why your new position about the diesel submarines surprises us.⁷

Dr. Kissinger: I understand. That is why I think we may have a solution . . . Let me talk to the President.

[The meeting broke up at 6:35 p.m. for the Bolshoi performance of "Swan Lake."⁸ The meeting then reconvened at 11:30 p.m. after the ballet.]

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Where have you been?

Dr. Kissinger: I was looking for the ballerina.

⁶ The relevant paragraph of the Protocol reads: "Additional submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers (up to the above mentioned levels) for the U.S.A.—in excess of 656 nuclear submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers and for the U.S.S.R.—in excess of 740 nuclear submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers, operational and under construction, may become operational as replacements for equal numbers of launchers for ICBMs of older types constructed before 1964 or of ballistic missile launchers of older submarines."

⁷ Kissinger's version of this exchange in his memoirs reads: "Finally, as the clock chimed six-thirty, Smirnov asked me exactly what I meant by H-class submarines since it was an American, not a Soviet term. I told him that we gave this designation to the older nuclear-powered submarines carrying three missiles each. Smirnov innocently stated that he had always meant those to be counted in the baseline—a point that had hitherto eluded both me and our negotiators in Helsinki. Thus were the H-class submarines included in the total. The Soviets would now have to dismantle a total of 240 older missiles to reach the agreed level of 950 modern SLBMs, including dismantling *all* of the older heavy-throwweight ICBMs. (Or else they could keep the thirty H-class missiles, in which case they would have only 920 modern SLBMs; this is in fact what they did.)" (*White House Years*, p. 1237)

⁸ Kissinger recalled that as they adjourned for the ballet, only two issues stood between them and agreement—how to deal with the missiles on the G-class submarines and silo modernization. After the performance, he told Nixon that they were within sight of an agreement if they could reconcile the issue of the 60 old missiles on G-class boats. He and his colleagues had come up with a possible compromise. The United States would not count those missiles unless they were modernized, but existing missiles could not be "traded in" for missiles on new submarines. He said this served two purposes—to stay below 950, the Soviets would have to dismantle ICBMs on nuclear-powered submarines, and they could not put modern missiles on diesel-powered submarines unless they counted them. (*Ibid.*, pp. 1237–1238)

Foreign Minister Gromyko: You needed a helping hand?

Dr. Kissinger: A helping hand is no good if I don't have the time.

I spent the time talking to the President, and also to Washington. I hope General Antonov reports promptly to you the substance of my conversations!

Ambassador Dobrynin: We want to hear from you personally!

Dr. Kissinger: Let me sum up my understanding of what this protocol means.

The number of 740 ballistic-missiles includes the number of missiles on any nuclear submarine no matter when it was built. You said this in your proposal.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Any nuclear submarine.

Dr. Kissinger: Including H-class submarines.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: If you classify our appropriate submarines as H.

Dr. Kissinger: We know what we're talking about. This is clear enough.

So, what divides us is 70 missiles on G-class submarines. Is that correct? You don't have to confirm the figure, just the number of missiles on G-class.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: This is right. They have never been included.

Dr. Kissinger: This is the issue that divides us. I included it in my arithmetic with your Ambassador and our delegation had it in its May 19 proposal.⁹

Ambassador Dobrynin: But you didn't mention the G-class.

Dr. Kissinger: [to Dobrynin] I mentioned the G and H together, five submarines—but you didn't pretend to know all the details.

We understand each other. Does the Minister have any possible compromise in mind?

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Yesterday you made this proposal and we decided to assess the situation to make everything clear. We accepted your proposal to include all nuclear submarines.

⁹ In telegram SALT VII 1356 from Helsinki, May 20, Smith reported that on May 19 he had told Semenov that his problem was that the United States did not have the word "modern" before "submarines" in its text. 740 was the approximate total of SLBMs on Soviet Y-, H-, and G-class submarines. The United States was saying that if the Soviet Union wanted to build 950 launchers on 62 modern boats, it could do so, provided it converted from H- and G-class submarines and from SS-7 and SS-8 ICBMs. When these ICBM launchers were added to 740, the result was 950. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 883, SALT Files, SALT Talks (Helsinki), May–Aug. 1972, Vol. #18)

Foreign Minister Gromyko: There is no room for additional compromise.

Dr. Kissinger: Then this makes it impossible to reach agreement.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We should put everything in its right place. Yesterday we finished by saying we won't mention 48 submarines and we will restrict ourselves to launchers, numbering 740.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: The question was put by your side and we promised to answer today. We moved to meet your position today, and we gave you a positive answer. That is, we accepted 740, including all atomic submarines, including older submarines.

Dr. Kissinger: May I offer a compromise? As follows: We can accept this figure if you will meet one of our concerns, namely putting modern missiles on your G-class submarines. Therefore add a sentence to the protocol: If any modern missiles are put on any nuclear submarines, we will count them against the 950.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Only G-class submarines?

Dr. Kissinger: What I propose is this. You of course have the right to convert G-class to Y-class under this agreement—into modern subs. That's part of the protocol. But secondly, those that you don't convert, if you put modern missiles on them, they will count in the 950 modern missiles you are permitted.

[Smirnov has trouble understanding; Korniyenko repeats Dr. Kissinger's suggestion.]

Dr. Kissinger: This would be added to the protocol. I have it written here. [Hands over text Tab D.]¹⁰

Foreign Minister Gromyko: You don't mention G-type in this paper, but actually you mean G-type?

Dr. Kissinger: If you put it on another submarine, naturally it counts too—but I don't think you have any other. What we are saying is that neither side should be able to evade the agreement by putting modern missiles on another submarine.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: In fact it means G.

Dr. Kissinger: In fact it means G.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Don't you have a Russian text?

Dr. Kissinger: I don't have a Russian expert on my staff!

[Gromyko and Smirnov confer.]

Ambassador Dobrynin: [to HAK] Really, personally, do you think there is a possibility to put modern missiles on G-class?

¹⁰ The text in Tab D read: "Deployment of modern submarine-launched ballistic missiles on any submarine, regardless of type, will be counted against the total submarine-launched missiles permitted for the U.S. and the USSR."

Dr. Kissinger: I don't think it's worthwhile, but it's technically possible. Really, you should know we need this for our concerns. You're making the same mistake as in Germany, you'll end up making the concessions and making them to the wrong people. The Navy won't accept any agreement unless it eliminates the G-class entirely.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: What else do you have?

Dr. Kissinger: That would take care of the submarine issue—with the proviso that we have to let the delegations work out the language more elegantly. But the substance we accept.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Do you have the other consideration?

Dr. Kissinger: On the other point I have raised with the Foreign Minister, it is of some sensitivity, because the President believes he was given some assurances on silo dimensions. I would suggest a compromise as I suggested last night. That you accept the word "significantly" and that you say that this means 10–15%.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Where would that be said?

Dr. Kissinger: We could have an agreed interpretive statement. We can say 15%.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It is extremely complicated.

Dr. Kissinger: For the same reason, on our side.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: In such a big document, being over-specific will not be too appropriate. It is already accepted that we won't turn light missiles into heavy ones and there will be no expansion of silos. And if we have, say 15½%, what do we do about that? Do we have to be that specific? Different variants were proposed. You used those cables: I also can use our cables.

Dr. Kissinger: That would be a good beginning to our mutual cooperation. I hope your cables are written in better Russian than ours are in English.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: This time unfortunately I have fewer cables than you do, but next time I will bring more.

You will recall that up to recently the position of the Soviet delegation in Helsinki, where the principal talks were held, was "not to increase significantly." The American side proposed several variants, including figures, in terms both of cubic metres and of percentages. I won't enumerate all the variants; they are well known. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that beginning May 20¹¹ our positions

¹¹ In telegram SALT VII 1367 from Helsinki, May 23, Smith reported agreement on an interpretative statement relating to Article II of the Interim Agreement that read: "The parties understand that in the process of modernization and replacement there would be no significant increase in the dimensions of land-based ICBM silo launchers." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 74, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Moscow Summit, 1972 [1 of 2])

began to come closer. On May 20, Vorontsov said that General Haig told him that on Sunday Presidential instructions would be sent to Helsinki. As we understand it, on the basis of those instructions, on May 22 in Helsinki there was a meeting of the Working Group (Grinevsky, Kishilev, Garthoff and Parsons) which arrived at a formula. This was only the Working Group's formula . . .

Dr. Kissinger: I know the formula.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: Today, May 25, we received confirmation that the proposal of the four had been considered by the delegations as approved, and presented as a formal proposal of American side. It seems we now have an agreed text.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me explain why Haig talked to Vorontsov. I was traveling; normally I and your Ambassador handle this. General Haig was not familiar with all the details. He wanted only to fill the gap of one day while I was en route here. In our first formal meeting with Mr. Brezhnev we raised the issue.¹² We would not have raised it if we were satisfied with what the delegation had done. So it does no good to tell me how many times our delegation approved it. We are not satisfied with it.

And we have not insisted on the volume limitation [only the dimension of silos], even though that too was discussed. We are willing to go back to the word "significantly," if we can have some specification.

That really is my last proposal.

[There was a break from 12:12–12:26 a.m.]

Foreign Minister Gromyko: The situation, in general, is very complicated. If there are no additional considerations, I think we can stop for the time being. We could continue tomorrow, but let's not fix a time.

I think it will depend on the meeting at the highest level. If there is a high-level meeting tomorrow morning, we could meet tomorrow afternoon.

Dr. Kissinger: So I can inform the President, [can you tell me] which provision is the obstacle?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It is becoming discernible that, first, the provision on launchers, and second, the question that was raised in that last formula that was given us.

Ambassador Dobrynin: To think it over.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: On the other issues we discussed yesterday, you have given us a reply and we think it as settled.

¹² See Document 262.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. No signing tomorrow then.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Right.

Dr. Kissinger: When could there be a signing. It has to be Sunday.¹³

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I think we won't be able to sign before Sunday, but we won't have to interrupt the Saturday schedule, because the President is going to Leningrad and Sunday is free.

Dr. Kissinger: Fine. We can do it Sunday.

We will meet tomorrow.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: At a time to be specified tomorrow.

Dr. Kissinger: You owe us an answer on the two propositions. We have no other considerations. If you accept those, it will be completed as far as we are concerned. We will raise no other issues.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: After the ballet, have nice dreams. Swans, not evil forces.

[The meeting then ended at 12:32 a.m.]¹⁴

¹³ May 28.

¹⁴ In his memoirs Kissinger wrote that following this meeting, he reported to Nixon that they were at "an impasse that only the Soviets could break. We could make no further concessions. There could be no signing ceremony on Friday night; it would take place, if at all, on Sunday. Nixon was disappointed but raised no objections." Kissinger added that it was "important to keep this sequence in mind because critics later argued that a self-imposed deadline made for hasty negotiation. But the fact was that we used Brezhnev's own deadline to bring pressure on the Soviets. . . . When the meeting broke up on Thursday night, the outcome of the negotiation depended on a Soviet decision; I had left on doubt that we had reached the limit of our concessions." He noted that he had been "fairly confident" that the Soviets would accept the "final" U.S. proposal. "They could not permit a negotiation that lasted nearly three years to go down the drain over the issues of silo dimension (on which their own vacillation demonstrated that it was a close call), and the replacement of missiles on G-class diesel submarines (which any analysis indicated it made no sense to modernize anyway)." (*White House Years*, pp. 1239–1240)

278. Backchannel Message From the Head of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Delegation (Smith) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Helsinki, May 25, 1972, 2055Z.

Tohak 162. Please deliver immediately.

Dear Henry:

Re your telecon² tonight:

1. I do not feel sufficiently clued in to Moscow exchanges to give categorical advice regarding your telephone inquiry.

2. I do not understand reason for apparent switch from this morning's reported position that Soviets would accept Article III with its "immediate replacement" formula.

3. In these circumstances, I can only advise President to hold to present U.S. position tonight. I would add parenthetically that difference between U.S. and USSR positions appears to me to be 60 old launchers on 20 diesel boats (plus 2 additional G-class test beds with 10 modern launchers on them).

4. If, subsequently, President finds it necessary to adjust U.S. position, he might consider following line. If:

(A) Soviet position is that 60 old launchers on 20 diesel boats would make the difference between a major strategic arms limitation agreement or no agreement, and if our position therefore is that these diesel boats need not be included in the freeze;

(B) The Soviets will agree to have not more than these 20 diesel SL subs (plus the 2 test beds) during the freeze and not to place modern SLBM launchers on them;

(C) They agree that any modern replacements for these diesel boats must be counted under the 950–62 ceilings; the U.S. could agree.

5. However, such adjustment should be based on the understanding that any additional modern SLBM submarine started after the date of the signature of the agreement will count as a replacement sub-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, President's Moscow, Iran, Poland, Austria Trip, May–Jun. 72, Tohak (File No. 2), The Situation Room [Part 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² No record of this telephone conversation has been found.

marine, and must be accompanied by dismantling of appropriate number of H-class subs and/or SS-7's and SS-8's.

6. It is easier to state these conditions than to spell out a formulation for an agreement that could be explained logically, but in view of short time in which you wanted answer, this is best I can suggest.³

Warm regards.

Gerard Smith

³ In telegram Hako 37 to Smith, May 25, Kissinger replied that meetings in Moscow were occurring sporadically between the President's meetings with Soviet leaders, and that Smith's latest views had been very helpful in the late evening session. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, President's Trip Files, Box 480, President's Trip, USSR, Iran, Austria, Poland, May–Jun. 1972, Hako File) In his memoirs Smith wrote that on rereading his message (Tohak 162), he began to have doubts and wired Kissinger again advocating a harder position, noting the "U.S. need for a rational explanation of an agreed replacement formula that would not be a clear admission of a free ride for the Soviets." Smith recalled that his advice on the G-class launchers obviously angered the Moscow White House. (*Doubletalk*, p. 426) In Kissinger's account of this incident, he wrote that "Smith, having first accepted my G-class formula, changed his mind and called it a 'free ride' for the Soviets to maintain these boats." He said that he thought Smith would never have taken this position "but for the frustration of being so far from the conclusion of what he had every reason to consider his own negotiation." Salving bruised feelings would have to wait, however, and Kissinger sent "a sharp reply." (*White House Years*, p. 1240) In telegram Hako 39, May 25, Kissinger responded to Smith that his previous cable had seemed much better, and asked: "1. Can you explain how 60 missiles of 300–700 mile range, barred from modernization, in diesel submarines that have to surface to fire, representing less than 3 per cent of the total Soviet force, could represent a free ride. What are we giving up that we were going to do? The Soviets in turn get a ceiling on their SLBM's, a ban on modernization of the G-class, and lose 240 launchers. If the Soviets refuse to accept the compromise, I want someone to explain how our security is enhanced when we then confront the G's, the H's, 240 more launchers, and a larger number of SLBM's." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, President's Trip, USSR, Iran, Austria, Poland, May–Jun. 1972, Hako File)

279. Backchannel Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, May 25, 1972, 2144Z.

WH 21631/Tohak 163. Reference your telephone conversation of 4:15 p.m. Washington time.² It may be that our difficulty here is in ascertaining exactly where the situation stands there and what precise difficulties you are confronted with. On each step along the way over the past 48 hours, we have been presented with very cryptic requirements which complicated our ability to ease the load at your end. Certain realities exist here with which you should be cognizant.

As you weigh the option of compromise, it is quite important that you consider the point of departure from which that compromise will be assessed here. For better or worse, ACDA briefed extensively on the Hill to the effect that 62/950 would be ultimate outcome of the SLBM freeze. Those figures are now imbedded in the Congressional mental computers. These figures have been the major source of the opposition which has surfaced thus far. Therefore, a compromise which worsens these figures will be more difficult to sell. Jackson and Goldwater are already attacking these figures and will have little trouble exploiting a worsened picture.

As I informed you yesterday, the Chairman, on his own, and Secretary Laird, suspecting a compromise was in the wind, put us on notice that we should avoid this step. In the case of the Chairman, he was adamant that he could not obtain JCS support for such a position. Secretary Laird was equally negative but did not make such a threat. This was the point of departure from which the questions you asked this morning were addressed.³ The subsequent compromise which would have included the H-class submarines in the freeze were merely an extension of that attitude.

The way the Chairman described the compromise is as follows. The compromise would be tantamount to giving the Soviets 84 boats and 1,020 SLBM's, thereby shattering the argument that we have frozen the overall numbers of missiles to current levels. Any additional Y-class

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, President's Moscow, Iran, Poland, Austria Trip, May–Jun. 72, (File No. 2), The Situation Room [Part 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only.

² No record of this telephone conversation has been found.

³ See footnote 4, Document 277.

submarines or any additional SLBM's are merely replacements for old ICBM's and old SLBM's.⁴

My concern is not so much the strategic effect of the compromise as it is the connotation that the President while in Moscow accepted a position less satisfactory than the one which had allegedly been worked out prior to his departure. This single issue will dominate subsequent public debate. Nevertheless, I think I can assure you that bureaucratically Defense, CIA, State, ACDA and all involved would support the compromise. I am less sure of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, even though I am certain that with adequate briefing they would at least keep quiet and probably even support.

The real problem to me is not the strategic implications of the compromise but rather the problem of the President's public image and credibility. This is certainly not my business. Since I sense you want my personal appraisal of the situation, it is as follows.

I believe the strategic implication of the compromise is minor and that we can live with it for we will certainly be better off with it than without it. I also believe that there will be a problem of bureaucratic discipline which is nevertheless manageable. I also believe the President will have some real difficulties with the right wing of the Republican Party. But in a pragmatic sense, they have nowhere else to go, and he can weather that storm without fatal consequences.

I believe the Congressional problem is manageable and that in the final analysis, there will be a substantial majority in favor of any SALT agreement. I would be more concerned about the Soviets who have obviously played a role of duplicity with us in recent weeks. If not, I wonder why we pushed so hard to promulgate the figures 62/950. This is something which only you have been involved in and only you can accurately judge.

On balance, were I making the decision, I would accept the compromise, with the realization that other issues involved are far more important and with my personal acceptance of the fact that we have

⁴ In telegram Hakto 38, May 25, Kissinger replied to Haig, asking: "1. Can you give me one rational explanation why 60 missiles of 300–700 mile range, in diesel submarines that have to surface to fire, representing less than 3 per cent of the total Soviet force, can present a realistic threat? What are we giving up that we were going to do? The Soviets in turn get a ceiling on their SLBM's, a ban on modernization of the G-class, and lose 240 launchers. 2. If the Soviets refuse to accept the compromise, I want someone to explain how our security is enhanced when we then confront the G's, the H's, 240 more launchers, and a larger number of SLBM's. Anyone able to answer these questions can criticize. The rest should for once support their President." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, President's Moscow, Iran, Poland, Austria Trip, May–Jun. 72, Hakto File) This telegram is almost identical to the one sent to Smith in Helsinki the same day; see footnote 3, Document 278.

to get over a difficult period which will be rectified by the re-election of a President who, in the final analysis, will gain more from a SALT agreement that is less than satisfactory than he would from a principled rejection at this stage.

I have talked to Moorer and Rush and both are consulting intensively. I know my men and both will come along. If you feel you have gone as far as the traffic will possibly bear with your hosts, I would take the compromise, especially with the provision on modernization of G-class submarines. In doing so, I would urge you, however, to get Sonnenfeldt and Hyland to sit down now and prepare the best conceivable rationale which will be made available to us here in conjunction with the transcript of your briefing. This is the major problem. I would also consider having the President film a brief clip commenting on the agreement and taking the high-road which can be used back here to counter the negative clips that will come from the Goldwaters, the Jacksons, etc.

Recognizing the fatigue and strain that you must be experiencing, I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this one final effort.

Finally, you may be sure that everyone here will concentrate all of their energies in supporting whatever course of action the President takes.

Warm regards.

280. Backchannel Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, May 25, 1972, 2200Z.

Hakto 36 1. SLBM compromise now on table here after hours of talk. Best we can possibly obtain is base number of 740 nuclear-submarine launched ballistic missile launchers, including launcher on H class boats. In addition, we have proposed to add clause that deployment of modern SLBMs on any submarine, regardless of type will be counted against total of SLBMs permitted US and USSR. Soviets will take this to Brezhnev and presumably Politburo tomorrow.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, President's Moscow, Iran, Poland, Austria Trip, May–Jun. 72, HAKTO File. Top Secret; Eyes Only. Flash.

2. Effect of forgoing is to force Soviets to begin retiring either H class boats or SS-7s and 8s for next boat under construction and to oblige them to count missile modernization on G class boats against 950 total.

3. President is unwilling to see some 60 300-mile SLBMs stand in the way of an agreement that will clearly impose ceilings on Soviets in regard to ICBMs and SLBMs which they could readily exceed in five-year period without freeze not to mention the retirement of 240 launchers this agreement would bring about.

4. It should also be understood that base figure now formulated gets Soviets down to 710 on Y class boats. Thus the Soviets will have to retire some 240 launchers including all of H class subs to reach permitted total.

5. President wishes all senior officials to be fully aware of these considerations and expects all of them to give full support to compromise if Soviets accept. Please get Chiefs aboard immediately.

6. This information must of course be extremely closely held until we receive reply from Soviets.²

² In telegram Tohak 170, at 0141Z (4:41 a.m. in Moscow) on May 26, Haig responded that "thanks to yeoman work by Admiral Moorer, the JCS 'in accord' with proposed SALT package with provision that U.S. strategic programs be accelerated." Haig added that the crucial factor with the JCS had been the modernization proviso which had "never been surfaced here until your telephone call to me." (Ibid.) In follow-up telegram Tohak 183, May 26, Haig transmitted the formal, detailed JCS position on the SALT package, stating that if this was the best agreement the President could reach, rather than scuttling the treaty, the JCS were in accord—provided that the administration took the "action necessary to ensure the acceleration of our ongoing offensive programs as well as improvements to existing systems." (Ibid.) Calling this reply "a classic of Pentagon politics," Kissinger said that they were determined to do this anyhow. He noted, however, that the JCS argument was not without logical flaws. "Their insistence on an acceleration of our strategic programs was grounded not on a Soviet buildup extending over a decade, but on sixty antiquated Soviet missiles of minimal range on diesel submarines." (*White House Years*, p. 1240)

281. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 26, 1972, 11:15 a.m.–12:25 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid V. Smirnov, Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers of the USSR
Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA
Georgi M. Korniyenko, Chief of USA Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Bratchikov, Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Senior Staff Member, NSC
William G. Hyland, NSC Staff Member
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff (notetaker)

SUBJECTS

SALT; Communiqué

SALT

Foreign Minister Gromyko: The Ambassador must have informed you that we have proposed a top-level meeting for 3 o'clock today.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, that's accepted.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Now we are to continue with yesterday's talks. Let us try, both of us, to be still more concrete, without all the cables. There are two questions left open from yesterday on which I would like to comment.

First is your formula, "Deployment of modern submarine-launched ballistic missiles on any submarine, regardless of type, will be counted against the total submarine-launched ballistic missiles permitted for the U.S. and the USSR." That is accepted. Hooray!

Ambassador Dobrynin: Hooray!

Dr. Kissinger: We are finished then with this section.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Second, on the wording of the joint statement, "The parties understand that in the process of modernization and replacement, the size of land-based ICBM silo launchers will not be substantially increased," we accept your proposal on 10–15%.²

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Mr. Kissinger's Conversations in Moscow. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in St. Catherine's Hall at the Grand Kremlin Palace.

² Kissinger recalled that the Soviet SALT decision "came with stunning suddenness. Around 10:00 a.m. Dobrynin came to my room in the Kremlin to tell me that the Politburo had been in session since 8:00; there was no telling how long it would last. At

Dr. Kissinger: Good.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: What should be the exact wording? Do you have a text?

Dr. Kissinger: We use the word “significantly,” not “substantially,” but it’s not important.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It’s the same word in Russian [znachitel’no].³

Dr. Kissinger: We’ll have a sentence for you in a minute.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We are prepared and believe it advisable to proceed to signature of the treaty and agreement today, that is, this evening—as it was scheduled.⁴

Dr. Kissinger: Today? We will have to call Smith.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: If for any reason you believe it advisable to meet your delegation first, you can call Smith and bring him here. We can do the same with Semenov.⁵

11:00 a.m. we were informed that Gromyko and Smirnov wanted to meet me urgently in St. Catherine’s Hall. We assembled at 11:15. Without further ado Gromyko *accepted* not only our position on the G-class and silo dimension problem; he also agreed to our formulation of it. The Soviets would go along with a common definition of ‘significant.’” (*White House Years*, p. 1241) Nixon recalled that he and Kissinger were meeting in his apartment when “Dobrynin arrived with the news that the Politburo had held a special session and agreed to accept our final position.” (*RN: Memoirs*, p. 616) Smith recalled Kissinger as agreeing to the “Gromyko provisions” that day, and wrote: “Perhaps Kissinger was right in saying later that every concession at Moscow was made by the Soviets. But the report given to us hardly supports that conclusion.” (*Doubletalk*, pp. 430–431)

³ All brackets in the source text.

⁴ Kissinger wrote that “Gromyko then stunned us even more by insisting on a signing ceremony that very evening as originally scheduled.” He added that he still did not understand the reason for this Soviet haste. “It may have been due to the characteristic of Soviet negotiators that no matter how much they may have haggled, once an agreement is in sight they seem panicked that the results of their labors might be hazarded by some last-minute accident or trick of the inscrutable capitalists . . . Probably the Soviets simply wanted to humor Brezhnev, who earlier in the week had staked his prestige on a Friday ceremony.” (*White House Years*, p. 1241)

⁵ In his memoirs Kissinger recalled that after he and Gromyko agreed on joint instructions, he had Sonnenfeldt call Smith on an open line to inform him that instructions were on their way. He said they thought that the delegations could conclude their work and come to Moscow on the U.S. plane in time for a signing ceremony at 8:30 that night, but didn’t realize that the plane with its piston engines would take 2½ hours nor did they calculate the delay in transmission due to routing the instructions through the White House Situation Room. Thus the Soviet delegation received its instructions in 40 minutes, but the U.S. delegation had received nothing 2 hours later. “Smith, now thoroughly aroused, rightly refused to work from the Soviet text, though assured by Sonnenfeldt that the instructions were joint. Nevertheless, after repeated phone conversations . . . and the final unsnarling of communications, the two delegations set to work and completed a joint document on the American delegation’s plane to Moscow. It was a Herculean effort crowning years of dedicated labor.” (*Ibid.*, p. 1242)

Dr. Kissinger: No, we have to get the delegations to get the final text. We don't have the facilities here. But that's not a problem. We had proceeded on the assumption of Sunday, and we will have to . . .

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Sunday is not very convenient for us.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me talk to the President first. We have to have a press briefing on this.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We thought of 7:00, but if it can't be at 7:00, we can do it at 8:00 or 8:30. You can postpone your dinner.

Dr. Kissinger: I will first talk to the President, then call Smith. How will we get them here? Do you have a plane there?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: There is an American plane there.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Foreign Minister, why don't we do this? First, I will talk to the President. I am sure he will agree. Second, we have to decide whether they should finish the paper work in Helsinki or here. I recommend that they finish the paper work there, not here. I am tired of hearing complaints from experts.

[Dr. Kissinger leaves the room, at 11:30 a.m., and returns at 11:47.]

Dr. Kissinger: The President agrees. He is delaying the dinner for an hour to allow more time. Dinner will be at 8:30, the signing at around 8:00, 7:30 to 8:00.

You will instruct your delegation immediately and we will instruct our delegation immediately.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Immediately.

Dr. Kissinger: On the protocol, we are accepting this in substance but we want the two delegations to work out the precise language and editorial language.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: But we proceed on the basis that only language is involved.

Dr. Kissinger: We agree on the substance.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I think we are going to instruct our delegations in the same manner. We will cable the texts to our delegations with the understanding that the texts are agreed and only language is to be considered. I think there should be a time limit. What time limit do you propose? Will you call Smith?

Dr. Kissinger: I have called Smith. He is crying bitterly, but he will do what he is told.⁶

⁶ Smith's version of this exchange stated that Kissinger reported about noon that "tentative agreement had been reached on outstanding issues, subject to editing by the delegations in Helsinki" and that he should arrive in Moscow by 6:30 p.m. "If any substantive points still deeply concerned him, he was to contact Kissinger at once." Smith commented: "I wonder what would have happened if, with about seven hours left to

Foreign Minister Gromyko: About what is he crying?

Dr. Kissinger: About all the work he has to do and about other things. But we will take care of it.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: What time should it be?

Dr. Kissinger: Tell them to be here at 6:30 with a completed text.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Two texts, in English and Russian.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I would like to draw your attention that there should be a statement on your part on the three submarines [that you will not build].

Dr. Kissinger: I was going to raise this with you. I want to make two points. First, we have no plans to build these submarines. Second, if we make this a part of the agreement, even as a separate statement, it will present us with major . . . it will compound our difficulties of selling this in Congress. I am therefore suggesting that the President write a letter to the General Secretary outside of the agreement and not as part of the negotiations. And this is the proposed text. We would keep a copy of it in the White House. [Hands over draft at Tab A (identical to letter as sent May 28).]⁷

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I will report this to Mr. Brezhnev, since it involves his conversations with the President.

Dr. Kissinger: We will instruct our delegation to forget about this assurance, and we will handle it here.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I think all will go well.

Dr. Kissinger: And tell your delegation not to press for it.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Let us just review what we have to communicate to our delegations, so there will be no misunderstanding.

We will communicate to them your Protocol and Article III, the Protocol with the addition of the sentence we gave you yesterday on

do the editing, hold a final meeting of the delegates, and make the flight to Moscow, I had taken up this suggestion and proposed substantive changes. The expression 'You must be kidding' came to mind when I read this contrived record of how Kissinger valued the delegation's judgment. And after two and a half years of SALT, this unreasonable speed was made necessary because the Soviet leadership was now insisting that the agreements had to be signed that day." (*Doubletalk*, pp. 429–430)

⁷ The tabs are attached but not printed. Reference is a signed letter from Nixon to Brezhnev stating that he would like to confirm what he had already told the General Secretary: that the United States had no plans during the period of the 5-year freeze to add to its present fleet of ballistic missile submarines. The President said he was referring specifically to the U.S. right under the agreement to replace its old Titan ICBMs with SLBM submarines.

the modern ballistic missiles. We will accept your definition of your phrase on silo launchers, plus the word “significantly,” plus this agreed interpretation of the word “significantly.” [Hands over text at Tab B.]⁸

Is that all right?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: All right.

Dr. Kissinger: We will prepare the letter, but not at the ceremony.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Right.

Dr. Kissinger: At the risk of being pedantic, let me check with you all the texts we are sending to Helsinki [Tab C]. It will save us trouble later.

First is the Joint Statement on Article III of the Treaty on Limitation of ABM Systems, containing the 1300 kilometers—always subject to editorial changes.

Number two, the statement that was in effect agreed upon by the delegations on the dimensions of silo launchers, plus the joint interpretive statement we have here (“will not be significantly increased”).

Number three, your text on dismantling, which you gave me the other day.

Number four, your Article III plus the Protocol with the addition of the sentence we agreed last night. Could I delete in your Protocol the last paragraph which speaks of our agreement not to build the three submarines? I don’t want the delegations to discuss it.

[The Russian side indicates no objection.]

I have only one other thing I want to raise. As I told you before, we will have a very difficult time selling this in the U.S., and it is therefore absolutely essential that I give a press briefing this evening, either before or after the signing.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Afterwards.

Dr. Kissinger: I think it will be better to do it just before, with an embargo.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We have no objections. Preferably afterwards, though, and Zamyatin or Korniyenko will do it too.

Dr. Kissinger: We should do it before, because otherwise the press will be so impatient they won’t wait for the briefing.

[Foreign Minister Gromyko goes out at 12:07.]

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: It is up to Minister Gromyko to decide.

⁸ See Document 277.

[Foreign Minister Gromyko returns at 12:12.]

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Can our delegation return here in your plane?

Dr. Kissinger: Oh yes, I should have offered it to you. Certainly.

Ambassador Dobrynin: A concession!

Dr. Kissinger: If the plane is not big enough, we'll leave Smith in Helsinki.

Now, I have to ask your understanding. When I give this briefing, I have to give arguments that make it look like a good agreement for us, arguments that will appeal to our conservatives, hard-headed and unsentimental.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: No comments.

Dr. Kissinger: I just want your leaders to understand.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We approach this with understanding.

Dr. Kissinger: That's all I ask.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: There should be no definitions in the document of modern SLBM launchers.

Dr. Kissinger: Your proposal was withdrawn.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Yes, that's right.

Deputy Chairman Smirnov: There are so many cables, sometimes I don't keep up.

Dr. Kissinger: It is a good conclusion.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I don't know about Smith, but Semenov sends five-to-ten cables a day. I think they're spending all their time writing instead of thinking.

Dr. Kissinger: On the signature, should there be remarks, or no remarks like the other signings? When the President, and I assume Mr. Brezhnev sign it, should there be remarks?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It was not provided.

Dr. Kissinger: All right, no remarks.

I do want to say I think this is a very important milestone in the relations between our two countries, and I am very proud to have had the opportunity to work with you gentlemen on it.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We are satisfied with the manner in which business was conducted on your part, and we tried to reciprocate. They were really difficult and delicate matters we were working on; specialist delegations have spent almost three years, as of this August, on it. It is really a good end, a real milestone. [In English:] We are substantially satisfied, even more than 15%!

Dr. Kissinger: [laughs] A really important milestone in international relations, and in relations between our two countries.

Communiqué

Dr. Kissinger: On the communiqué, we have two new formulations, one on Europe and one on world disarmament; we have tried to meet your concerns.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Can we meet this afternoon on this, before 3 o'clock?

Dr. Kissinger: Let's say 2:15, or 2:00.

Here is your formulation on Europe. [Tab D]

Foreign Minister Gromyko: "Among the states of East and West in Europe"? Better to say "among the European states."

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. I am free all day tomorrow to work on the communiqué. I will have Hillenbrand here with me tomorrow.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Good.

[Everyone gets up and shakes hands.]

Dr. Kissinger: When I get run out of Washington, I will want to know whether I can get an advisory position in your Foreign Ministry.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: In our government? Of course!

Ambassador Dobrynin: He can be our American specialist!

282. Backchannel Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the Head of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks Delegation in Helsinki (Smith)¹

Moscow, May 26, 1972, 1000Z.

Hakto 40. 1. Tentative agreement reached on outstanding issues. President and Brezhnev hope very much to sign agreement no later than 8 p.m. tonight. You should arrive in Moscow by 1830. Semenov is welcome to ride in your plane.

2. Following are agreed in principle subject to editing by you in Helsinki. If any substantive point still deeply concerns you, please contact us at once.²

¹ National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Messages, 1972, SALT. Top Secret; Sensitive; Flash; Exclusively Eyes Only. Also sent to Haig.

² For Smith's reaction, see footnote 6, Document 281.

3. "Text of joint statement on Article III of the Treaty on the Limitations of ABM Systems: The parties understand that the center of ABM system deployment area centered on the national capital, and the center of the ABM system deployment area wherein ICBM silo launchers are located shall for each party be at a distance of no less than 1300 kilometres.

The American side will also make a unilateral statement to the effect that the center of the ABM system deployment area for ICBM silo launchers in the USA will be located in the ICBM silo launchers deployment area at Grand Forks, North Dakota."

4. Following text agreed on silo-dimension:

"Text of the Joint Statement on the Prohibition of the Conversion of Light ICBMs Into Heavy ICBMs:

The parties understand that in the process of modernization and replacement the size of land based ICBM silo launchers will not be significantly increased."

5. In addition, following is agreed interpretive statement:

"The parties agree that the term 'significantly increased' means that the increase will not be greater than 10–15 percent of the present size of land-based ICBM silo launchers."

6. Following is text of statement on dismantling:

"Text of the Joint Statement on Procedures for the Dismantling or Destruction of Launchers for Older ICBM and Launchers of Older Submarines: The dismantling or destruction of launchers for ICBMs of older types constructed before 1964 and launchers for ballistic missiles of older submarines being replaced by new launchers of modern submarines shall start simultaneously with the beginning of sea-going tests of a submarine intended as replacement and shall be completed within the shortest possible agreed period of time. Such dismantling or destruction, as well as timely notification thereof, shall be carried out in accordance with procedures to be agreed in the standing consultative commission."

7. On SLBMs, Soviet draft text of Article III follows, but already sent you earlier.

"Text of Article III of the Interim Agreement on Certain Measures With Respect To the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms:

The parties undertake to limit submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers and modern submarines with ballistic missiles to the number operational and under construction on the date of signature of this agreement, and also to launchers and submarines constructed additionally, provided that their construction will be carried out in a manner prescribed for the sides as replacements for equal numbers of launchers for ICBMs of older types constructed before 1964, or launchers of older submarines."

8. Protocol to interim agreement will be Soviet text sent you late last night plus US additional sentence.

Note: Titan replacement question will not be included in protocol and will be handled in other channels. Will explain later.

Text follows:

“The parties understand that in accordance with Article III of the interim agreement, for the period during which this agreement remains in force:

The USA may have not more than 710 submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers and not more than 44 modern submarines with ballistic missile launchers. The Soviet Union may have not more than 950 submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers and not more than 62 modern submarines with ballistic missiles.

Additional submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers up to the above mentioned levels for the U.S.A. 7 in excess of 656 nuclear submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers and for the U.S.S.R.—in excess of 740 nuclear submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers, operational and under construction, may become operational as replacements for equal numbers of launchers for ICBMs of older types constructed before 1964 or of ballistic missile launchers of older submarines.

Deployment of modern submarine-launched ballistic missiles on any submarine, regardless of type, will be counted against the total submarine-launched ballistic missiles permitted for the U.S. and the USSR.

This protocol shall be regarded as an integral part of the interim agreement.”

9. Believe these are all relevant texts available to us. Call on open line if you have problems.

10. This entire package accepted by Gromyko this morning. Semoyov will have Russian texts which we have not checked here.

11. Your help is much appreciated. President is very proud of accomplishment and your contribution.³

³ In backchannel message Hakto 42 to Helsinki, May 26, Kissinger informed Smith that the President and Brezhnev had definitely agreed to sign the SALT agreement that night at 8 p.m. and wrote: “Don’t be bashful about making suggestions to the other side because our impression is that they will accept anything reasonable within basic framework of agreement.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, 1972, SALT)

283. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 26, 1972, 2:24–2:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA
Georgi M. Korniyenko, Chief of USA Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Bratchikov, Interpreter
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Senior Staff Member
Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff (notetaker)

SUBJECT

Communiqué

Foreign Minister Gromyko: You had a second formulation?

Dr. Kissinger: I gave them both to you.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: No, you didn't.

Dr. Kissinger: I wanted to keep you in suspense. [Hands over sentence on world disarmament, Tab A]² How many submarines do I get for this?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: What does "this process" refer to?

Dr. Kissinger: It goes at the end of disarmament section.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Generally it is all right.

On some matters, for example, Vietnam, the Middle East, what is your idea? Perhaps we should say something in the line of unilateral expositions. We will take this up tomorrow.

Dr. Kissinger: Tomorrow. The other evening your leaders made some references about not being able to say something joint, but they didn't know whether the technique we used in China was suitable. We are prepared to say "The U.S. position is . . .," "The Soviet position is . . ."

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Probably. But briefly.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Mr. Kissinger's Conversations in Moscow, May 1972. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in St. Catherine's Hall at the Grand Kremlin Palace.

² All brackets in the source text. The tabs are attached but not printed. Tab A reads: "A World Disarmament Conference could play a role in this process at an appropriate time."

Dr. Kissinger: Tomorrow, since there may be other discussions. On SALT we need something. How will we handle it?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Maybe you prepare something.

Dr. Kissinger: All right, tomorrow we will have something.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We changed the phraseology. In the paragraphs at the end, "Both sides emphasized . . .," we suggest making a sentence, "Both sides proceed from the recognition of the role, the responsibility and the prerogatives of other interested states, etc." So the first sentence of the last paragraph is covered. Now we go to the last part.

Dr. Kissinger: "Both sides proceed from the recognition . . ." That was a good change.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Suppose we say, in the second phrase of this paragraph, "These results show that in spite of differences between social systems in ideology, and in spite of differences in policy, there are possibilities for development of mutually advantageous cooperation in the interests of both countries, in the interests of strengthening international peace and security." You have instead "a process has begun that can affect not only the substance but the spirit of Soviet-American relations."

Maybe ours is more solemn but we would prefer ours. A little more prosaic.

Dr. Kissinger: It surprises me in a devotee of Tchaikovsky.

It's not a matter of principle.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Add it after the phrase "differences in their policy."

Dr. Kissinger: The only point I would make is that the way you have it written it suggests that one of our policies is principled and the other isn't.

Ambassador Dobrynin: We accept yours; it stands. We just want to add this in place of the phrase about "spirit."

Dr. Kissinger: All right.

Ambassador Dobrynin: So we already accept 50%.

Dr. Kissinger: We will clean up the English. We will be giving you a new text that has, I hope, only editorial changes.

We have again a purely stylistic change in the next paragraph about regular consultations. We suggest "useful" or "desirable" instead of "expedient," because "expedient" has other connotations. "Useful" is better.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: OK, "useful."

Did you send everything needed to your delegation?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We did too.

Dr. Kissinger: They're working when they're not rebelling. What if they don't finish today?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It is not convenient [to have the signing] Sunday.

Dr. Kissinger: What about after Leningrad Saturday?³

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It is not convenient.

Dr. Kissinger: All right. I will give a briefing tonight. You won't be the same afterward.

The only other change is "The Soviet leaders accepted the invitation." It sounds less abstract.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I will look through it, and if I see any problem we will take it up tomorrow.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Foreign Minister, we have put the communiqué into better English. We have not made any substantive—at least it wasn't intended to make any substantive changes. [Hands over text at Tab B.]

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Does it have today's changes?

Dr. Kissinger: No.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Give it to us later [hands it back].

Dr. Kissinger: You'll have it in the course of the afternoon, 4:00, 4:30. We'll send it to your office before 5:00 p.m.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: All right. I will see Mr. Brezhnev now.

Dr. Kissinger: We will meet tomorrow and go over the communiqué and principles.

Ambassador Dobrynin: You omitted one paragraph of the principles.

Dr. Kissinger: Not intentionally. Show me.

Well, we will have Hillenbrand here tomorrow. I think it's better to have State comments on the communiqué and principles.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Hm?

Dr. Kissinger: All right? In case he has any questions.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: All right. All right.

Dr. Kissinger: You let me know tomorrow when we will meet.

Ambassador Dobrynin: If I'm not mistaken, the sentence omitted dealt with exchange of contacts, etc.

Dr. Kissinger: I assure you it's a typing error.

[The meeting then adjourned.]

³ On Saturday, May 27, Nixon was scheduled to visit Leningrad.

284. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 26, 1972, 3:10–5:40 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU
Nikolai V. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

Aleksey N. Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR

Andrey A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to the USA

Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, Assistant to the General Secretary

Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter

Mr. Gavilov, Notetaker

The President

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff, Notetaker

SUBJECT

The Middle East

Secretary Brezhnev: Did your wife enjoy the ballet?²

The President: Oh, everybody is raving about it. It was so good it almost spoils everything else. We both like the theater, and classical theater much better than modern.

Secy. Brezhnev: Was that your first visit to the Bolshoi?

The President: Yes.

Secy. Brezhnev: It's cozy and impressive. And how is Dr. Kissinger? Has he been thinking, as usual?

The President: I don't know, I never see him.

Secy. Brezhnev: He should be kept under constant surveillance.

Dr. Kissinger: Your Foreign Minister is watching me all the time.

The President: He hasn't been sleeping much.

Secy. Brezhnev: And nobody knows where he really spends his time.

The President: I haven't asked his secretary.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in General Secretary Brezhnev's Office in the Kremlin. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting was from 3:15 to 5:40 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² The evening of May 25 the Presidential party attended a gala performance of *Swan Lake* at the Bolshoi Theatre as the guests of Kosygin and Podgorny.

Chairman Podgorny: He has a secretary? She is the one to ask.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: I must speak in defense of Kissinger.

Secy. Brezhnev: [to Gromyko]:³ You and Kissinger have had a long and dubious record of contacts. [to the President]: And how are you generally? Do you get time for rest?

The President: I'm fine. There is not much time for rest. Like the General Secretary and his colleagues, this takes priority. I have to call Washington about programs—the welfare program, the tax program, all domestic programs. This takes up the morning.

Secy. Brezhnev: Since that is so, we must all take care to save our time. Let us now begin on substantive matters. We should proceed as closely as possible to the program worked out by Kissinger and Gromyko. On the list of fairly acute problems we should take up, we have the Middle East. And perhaps we can say a few words on Korea and Cuba. At the dinner we had, I said that the Middle East is a difficult problem for us both.⁴ We proceed from the assumption that regardless of the complexity of problems we must make efforts to find solutions to the problems. It is not worthy of states simply to make reference to the complexity of problems. I think we should note at the outset, and perhaps take as a basis, that both you and we as Permanent Members of the UN Security Council adopted in concert the well-known Resolution of November 22, 1967,⁵ that calls for the Israeli invaders to vacate Arab territory they have occupied. You are aware that our attitude toward the UN and the Security Council is one of respect. If we allow anyone on the outside to feel we are in any measure ignoring that important world organization and aren't doing our utmost to defend the organization, that means we would be discrediting that organization. And particularly during this summit, even the slightest lack of clarity about our position on the UN would have a most serious negative effect on the world.

But the fact is that though much time has elapsed, Israel is still not showing any signs of implementing the Security Council Resolution. As of this moment, we might appear to some people to be taking an indifferent stand toward this attitude of Israel toward the Security Council Resolution. Whatever words or speeches we make or letters we exchange or statements we make, reasoning through the science of logic, I feel that is the way things look. There are, of course, and quite

³ All brackets in the source text.

⁴ Brezhnev's comments on the "explosive" situation in the Middle East are in Document 257.

⁵ For text of UN Security Council Resolution 242, November 22, 1967, see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XIX, Document 542.

naturally, different attitudes on the part of Israel and the Arabs to the position taken by us both. Israel is very pleased with the situation; the Arabs are evincing legitimate indignation. It is impossible not to say that practically all of the states of the world are taking a negative not a positive view of the existing situation.

We are quite sure you are familiar with the situation in that part of the world. We should both proceed from the fact that the situation is explosive [opasno]. If you take the Arab World and Israel as an area, you will see that in this comparatively small part of the world there are now concentrated over a million troops. If we add to that the feelings of wrath, and other moral factors of no small importance, we would be right in taking a serious view of this in our discussion. Unless some joint efforts are made, it is hard to visualize what direction developments may take. No one can really foresee, unless such efforts are made, how the situation will end.

We would suggest that we should place at the very basis of our discussion all these factors, and proceeding from them we should try to find a solution capable of bringing a settlement in the interests of all countries in the area, without privileges or advantages for any country. One can easily imagine how highly our efforts would be valued all over the world if that solution could guarantee peace and tranquility in the region. Our prestige would certainly grow.

If you agree with me, Mr. President, we could begin discussions on this basis, which in our view is the only correct one. There has been a copious exchange of communications between us on this, official and confidential, and we would welcome any observations you may have.

The President: The difficulty is to find a permanent solution, which we can sell to both sides. It is there that we need to find some different formula from what we've considered up to date. The UN Resolution, which we also support, would seem to offer such a formula, but in view of the difficulties that have occurred, the Israelis insist on some guarantee for their own defense. They will not agree to total withdrawal [as required by the Resolution]⁶ unless there are guarantees for their defense.

Another problem: As arms are poured into that area by both sides, the chances for conflict are increased. I know the Soviet Union has shown restraint in this respect, and we've tried to show some restraint, despite congressional pressures. Foreign Minister Gromyko discussed this with us and displayed the Soviet interest in trying to cut the arms flow in this area.

⁶ The bracketed phrase was, for some reason, omitted in Sukhodrev's translation into Russian. [Footnote in the source text.]

As I pointed out to Prime Minister Kosygin last night, the Middle East, while not in the immediate sense as urgent a problem as Vietnam, in the long term is much more serious because it involves a potential conflict of our vital interests, those of the US, the USSR and other nations in the Mediterranean.⁷

I know there is an assumption that it's impossible for any American President to be reasonable about the Middle East because of the political situation in the US. I emphasized that that is not a consideration which will influence me in my decision in this matter. But we face here a very difficult practical problem. You may believe you have difficulties with some of your friends in the area; our ability to influence the Israelis, particularly since they've been so successful in their wars up to this point, is very limited. And I would further point out that, looking at it in a practical sense, if the US is tied totally to Israel and the Soviet Union has its relations with most of Israel's neighbors better than the US, this is certainly not in our interest.

I say these things only to indicate that it is our desire—because we believe it is in our interest and because I believe it is in the long-term interests of Israel itself—to use our influence to bring about a permanent settlement. The problem is to find a formula which both sides will accept. Up to now we haven't been able to find that formula.

We had thought at one time that the specific wording of the UN Resolution—which requires not total withdrawal but withdrawal to secure and recognized borders—might provide a formula, but neither side has been willing to be reasonable to find a formula.

I think the attitude of the Soviet Union has been very constructive. When Mr. Gromyko reported to me that if the other circumstances worked out the Soviet Union would be willing to withdraw its military forces—as distinct from advisers—(I haven't worked out the whole details) that was very constructive. But that requires something from Israel that they simply have not done.

To put it very simply, our ties with Israel poison our relations with Israel's major neighbors—with the UAR, Syria and many others in the Moslem world who side against Israel.

Now we have prepared a paper on this matter which I will submit to the General Secretary and his colleagues, in response to one that you have prepared. I would not suggest that this is a paper that will solve the problem, but it does indicate our thinking at this point.

⁷ No record of a conversation between Nixon and Kosygin on the Middle East the previous evening has been found. The two men may have exchanged views informally during the Bolshoi Ballet that evening.

I simply want to close by saying that I have determined that the interests of the United States are being very seriously damaged by the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. I favor action in any form to—not to end it, but to cool it. The only question really open to us for tactics is how and when can we move to act. If we can discuss these tactics and find a formula, we may be able to make a breakthrough.

I had thought that one approach might be to try an interim measure at this time, to make some progress. But I've been reading Dr. Kissinger's conversations with the General Secretary and Foreign Minister in Moscow,⁸ and as I understand the Soviet position, you must have a total understanding on the final settlement before an interim step. To reach a total understanding at this time, for example, on this day, would be extremely difficult.

Secy. Brezhnev: Mr. President, to make myself absolutely clear, you are correct in recalling our conversations with Dr. Kissinger, we did not rule out all interim arrangements altogether, namely the clearing of the Suez Canal, the crossing of Egyptian forces to the other side, etc. But the agreement is in the final package. Certainly if you have a final settlement all at once, you don't need an interim solution at all. So I said we should reach some understanding on the final settlement and could then proceed to an interim solution, having in mind the final goal.

The President: There is another problem. I will be asked on my return what, if anything, was decided secretly on the Arab-Israeli problem. There will be questions from many sides, the Congress, etc. But I believe we could discuss where we feel we should come out; on that point, as I said, we have prepared our principles here which respond to yours.

I suggest we hand you this. It's in reply to the paper you gave to us. You could study it, we could come back to it Sunday or Monday. Obviously if we don't finish it now, we could finish it in the special channel.

I simply want to assure all concerned that I feel very strongly that the issue has to be settled. We are not in a position to settle it today because frankly we're not in a position to deliver the Israelis on anything so far proposed. But we simply cannot allow that festering sore to continue. It is dangerous to us both—frankly it is more dangerous to us than to you.

⁸ Discussions of the Middle East during Kissinger's secret trip to Moscow are in Documents 141, 150, 152, and 159.

Henry, is there anything you want to add? [The President then hands over the US draft of “Basic Provisions for a Final Settlement in the Middle East,” at Tab A.]⁹

Dr. Kissinger: The paper covers exactly the same points in your paper [the Soviet proposal of April 22 in Moscow],¹⁰ and states our position on those points. We propose to see to what extent they can be reconciled in further discussions over the summer.

Secy. Brezhnev: The difficulty, of course, Mr. President, is that we don’t know the content of this because it is in English. So I suggest some break before we can return to the matter. But that is not the crux of the matter. By the gist of your remarks, I see a certain element of hopelessness in your judgment. I don’t think we should be so pessimistic and balk at taking active steps. As I see it, you are saying we are up against a blank wall. Both should see it as an explosive situation.

Chairman Kosygin: Mr. President, I have just one question. However much we discuss this matter, we still come back to the basic point, which is the question, Will Israel vacate the territories it has occupied or not? With full guarantees that the old frontiers will not be violated and that Israel as a state will be recognized by all Arab nations. This means under all conditions, Israel will come out from this conflict with advantages not disadvantages. Because Israel will then have come out of the conflict having achieved the goals it set before the conflict. Its goals will be met. Unless both sides take steps to prevent this conflict, matters can get out of hand, despite our best efforts.

The President: I don’t want to leave the impression I consider the situation hopeless. As a matter of fact, I am only raising a problem of timing, which is now difficult for us, if we are to affect the Israelis. As Dr. Kissinger will tell you, I have emphasized on occasion after occasion that I will not allow political considerations to influence our decision. We are interested in the survival of Israel and so forth, but we are also interested in developing good ties with Israel’s neighbors. We want a fair settlement, a fast settlement. The Prime Minister is correct to describe withdrawal to secure and recognized borders as the main issue. The question is how to make it happen when. That is what this discussion is aimed at trying to find.

Chairman Kosygin: But where do you see the possibility for us both to join our efforts to achieve the settlement?

The President: I think both of us would have a great problem if we were to join in any kind of arrangement that was not approved by

⁹ The U.S. counterproposal, “Basic Provisions for a Final Settlement in the Middle East,” handed to Brezhnev by the President on May 26, is attached as Tab A, but not printed.

¹⁰ Not printed; see Document 141.

those we represent on both sides. While the two great nations, the Soviet Union and the United States, can and must play a major role in pressing the parties to reach a settlement and having discussions, and have a role in guaranteeing a settlement, there is a problem if we were to try to determine what this settlement should be. For us to attempt at this time to impose a settlement on Israel would be an insurmountable problem.

For example, before we came here we talked to representatives of the Israel government just as you talked to the UAR. Perhaps Dr. Kissinger can give you a rundown of what we find, of what is practical and what is not practical.

Secy. Brezhnev: We would not object to that, but if I might make a few observations first.

The President: Sure

Secy. Brezhnev: We want you to understand, Mr. President, we are not imagining that we are meeting here to write out the text of an agreement between the Arab states and Israel, a text we can hand to them and say "There's the text, now you have to sign." That is not what we mean. We feel we can cooperate to act on the basis of the Security Council Resolution and work out the principles that could be achieved. We are not saying something has to be done today, or tomorrow, or the day after. But as important major powers, we can make an effort so that both sides can reach tranquillity on the basis of guaranteeing the interests of all states. We can talk about a peaceful settlement in the region on the basis of the Security Council Resolution and can act in accord with one another. This doesn't mean we want to impede the ties of the US to any of the states in the region. Of course, we cannot deprive you of the right to have good and normal relations with countries like Syria, Egypt and Iraq just as you can't deprive us of the right. Each state in the region is entitled to have good and normal relations with any state.

What we want is to put an end to the hot bed, to get the respect of all.

Chairman Kosygin: It is also wrong to say you are representing one side and we another. We seek to find a solution fair to all parties.

Secy. Brezhnev: We're not assuming we can inscribe into some joint document, for example, a joint communiqué, that "On Friday we can do something on the Middle East, on Saturday this, or Sunday that, etc." But we can endeavor to find ways to act in accord, in order to secure an agreed settlement. If we start injecting irrelevant elements into our thinking, we won't get very far. Because on both sides we could talk about US military aid to Israel and ours to the Arabs. It would get us nowhere. What we must do is act on the basis of the Security Council Resolution, in full accord with the parties concerned.

Chairman Kosygin: If we acted as representatives of the two sides, we would quickly find between ourselves the same problems that now divide the Arabs and Israel. What we want, as Comrade Brezhnev has correctly put it, is to bring about a solution to this problem, which has in many ways been artificially created and to which we think there is a basis for solution, a solution to this festering sore.

Secy. Brezhnev: It is well known that your ties with these countries in the economic and other fields are of longer standing than ours. We don't buy oil, or have concessions, or important business interests. The only thing we lay claim to is the establishment of peace in the Middle East and we certainly don't wish to deprive you of your ties. It is wrong of you to be under that misapprehension. We should conduct our discussions on this topic as on others—in a frank and open spirit. We should discuss one underlying topic—how to bring peace with justice for all the parties, naturally including Israel. We supported the founding of Israel and voted for it. We stand by that.

The President: [interrupting the translation]: And many Israel leaders are proud of their Russian background.

Secy. Brezhnev: But even that wasn't our main consideration. We favored Israel as an independent state. If we severed diplomatic relations, it was only as a token of our indignation at Israel's aggression. We are certainly in favor of Israel's being secure as a state, and of joining in giving guarantees.

Chairman Podgorny: Even when the Arabs were overcome by beligerence, when there were utterances that Israel should be liquidated as a state, we said plainly to Nasser that this stand ran counter to our position and our ideology. We told him we favored the constitution of Israel as a state. Nasser withdrew the slogan of the destruction of Israel as a state, and he went on to say he accepted the existence of Israel as a state.

Secy. Brezhnev: You are right in believing we would participate in providing Israel with guarantees of its secure existence. But at the same time, the other states in the region should have equally strong guarantees against a repetition of aggression.

Both of us have the necessary strength and rights to reach an understanding. We could reach an understanding on what could be our final goals, on what we could come out and say openly. We could reach an understanding on the timing of what could be done. But if we both say we have one general goal but don't want to talk of methods, then the entire thing is placed in doubt.

We made a good agreement at the start to talk in a frank, forthright and honest way. This was a wonderful agreement; it makes for better mutual understanding. In this context, our discussion on this subject has a particular importance. There are in the world today many

who are eager to depict the confrontation as not between Israel and Arabs but between the Soviet Union and the US. I'm sure you understand our words. Israel is the aggressor, not the US or USSR. But many seek to depict it as a war between us. If we gloss over this, Israel will stay in the shade, and the whole question of the Security Council Resolution will be clouded over, but there will be a cold war and confrontation between our two nations.

On the position of the Soviet Government, let me say a couple of words. Comrade Podgorny signed a treaty with Egypt.¹¹ It was not a military treaty but a treaty of friendship and collaboration. There is no clause calling for military intervention. This is the best reflection of the true position of the Soviet Union.

We should talk with frankness and forthrightness. We should talk about where we want to go. The physical registering [of our accord], of course, is another matter. The political position in the US is clear, and we are perfectly willing to take electoral circumstances in the US into account.

Our position in the Middle East is not offensive. As you know, the [formal] time limits of the ceasefire have long since passed without any firing. That was not without our influence.

Chairman Podgorny: We're urged restraint on all countries.

Chairman Kosygin: The restraining position taken by the Soviet Union is the basis of the whole peace.

The President: Let me remind you frankly of the method I think we ought to follow. It is okay to write this down, but it could be very embarrassing to others in our government.

Secy. Brezhnev: We won't write it.

The President: It is okay to write it; it is important in order to understand it.

First, the ceasefire was a public operation. But actions since then in the public forum have been a miserable flop. I don't mean that our Secretary of State and Assistant Secretary of State Sisco haven't worked hard, but this issue is so inflamed, it will not be settled by debating it in the UN and by each side's firing verbal broadsides at each other and exchanging papers. What we must do is continue to have these public movements, to cool the situation as much as possible, and to avoid the breaking of the ceasefire.

But, to be very frank, the way the issue will be settled—and that's why we have this meeting, is for the US and Soviet Union privately

¹¹ Reference is to the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed on May 27, 1971.

and with discretion to use their influence to bring the parties together to make a settlement. We must be careful because both sides, Israel and the Arabs, are very sensitive if they feel the big powers are seeking to impose a settlement.

But putting it cold turkey, if you continue to help the UAR and we continue to help Israel, there won't be a settlement; there will be a war. And we know that while we aren't directly involved, it will involve us. In 1967 it required Mr. Kosygin to come to the UN.¹²

What I am prepared to do is this: I am prepared to have Kissinger as my special representative. He knows more about it than anyone else. Let me be very candid. We talk about religion. Kissinger is supposed to be Jewish—but he's an American. I'm a Quaker, but I know you think I am warlike. As an aside, between our friends on the Soviet side, I'm a Quaker first, like my mother. The point is that Kissinger has the total confidence of the Israeli government and the Israeli Ambassador who Dobrynin knows is very influential with the Israeli government. I propose that Kissinger and Dobrynin talk in the special channel on the basis of your paper and our paper, to see if we can set a time. By September, after the conventions are over—at the latest by September—we can try to get to the nutcutting part of the problem. (I don't know if that will translate!)¹³

Dr. Kissinger: The question is whose are being cut.

The President: By then, if we have something, Kissinger can come here, or Gromyko can come to the U.S. I think the achievement of a settlement is of the highest importance.

It may be necessary to take two bites of the apple—one in September, one afterward. The important thing is to get a general understanding in principle on where we want to go.

Let me add one other thing. I consider the matter so important that if the General Secretary and his colleagues want to send a message to me, I will discuss it directly with Dobrynin—if it's a matter that requires my attention.

Candidly, we can't settle it before the election, but after that we can make progress, in a fair way.

Secy. Brezhnev: Mr. President, I and my colleagues have listened with great attention to all you have said. We agree it is important to reach an understanding on time limits on when we can reach certain

¹² For an excerpt from Kosygin's speech on the Middle East crisis before the UN General Assembly on June 19, 1967, see *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1967*, pp. 534–537.

¹³ Sukhodrev translated it literally (do raskalivaniya orekhov). [Footnote in the source text.]

things and do certain things. The questions of form and methods too are important. It is also important that you are prepared to look personally into it whenever it is required.

But there is another important matter. You say we should make efforts to bring both sides together. That is correct in general. But we should have clear in our minds what are the principles on which there shall be a solution. If we don't, we won't know where we want to go. If we do have agreed principles, then it doesn't matter if we have to wait several months before taking certain steps. We can wait some months, then act vigorously. Also, of course, whatever we do, the bedrock foundation of what we do should be the decision of the Security Council. Otherwise the sides might never agree.

Chairman Podgorny: This is especially necessary in view of the tense situation in the area, where tensions may some times get out of hand.

Secy. Brezhnev: Of course, apart from the basic principles, it is necessary also to meet the concern of both the Israelis and Arab states for their security; that is we should also look at some point into the way the security of all states can be guaranteed. This can all be overcome. We can consider demilitarized zones, UN personnel, guarantees secured by the Security Council or the great powers. So if we succeed in giving guarantees as strong as that . . . But these are all details we shouldn't talk about now, not until we reach agreement on basic principles.

[Dr. Kissinger is called out of the room.]

The President: The best procedure is this. We can't decide it now. We will work on the problem through the Kissinger–Dobrynin channel, and contacts directly to the extent they are desired, and try to find a solution.

Secy. Brezhnev: Mr. President, can you tell us three—we can kick the others out to smoke outside—what are the basic principles of a settlement? To secure complete confidence, we can put the interpreter in prison for a year in a comfortable cell!

Dr. Kissinger: [returning] May I interrupt? It is a problem about SALT about the signature. [The President and Dr. Kissinger confer.]

Secy. Brezhnev: Kissinger always has to throw another complicated problem into your lap.

Dr. Kissinger: It is a problem about the signature of the Treaty.

Secy. Brezhnev: Dr. Kissinger agreed with us to have the signing tomorrow.

Dr. Kissinger: Our problem is that the delegation may not get here until 8:00 p.m. Mr. Gromyko was wondering whether to have the signing after the dinner.

Chairman Kosygin: They haven't left Helsinki yet?

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Gromyko is checking now.¹⁴

Chairman Kosygin: Part of the problem is TV coverage.

The President: No. The damn delegation has a piston plane, which takes 2½ hours. Television is all the same. It is not prime time in any event.

The President: I have an idea to suggest to the General Secretary. You know we had moved the dinner back an hour. If convenient, we should move the dinner to where it was in the first instance, 7:30, and then immediately after dinner, drive back here for the signing.

Chairman Podgorny: Right.

Secy. Brezhnev: Agreed.

For. Min. Gromyko: So far it's not the text that's being handed over to the Press, just the announcement.

Secy. Brezhnev: Then in the toasts we make, we could say that agreement has been reached.

The President: We could say that because of that we are making the toasts very brief.

Chairman Kosygin: Will you be reading your toast?

The President: No. We'd better go. Could we meet again Monday?¹⁵

Secy. Brezhnev: Yes. We have our draft of today's announcement of these meetings.

Sukhodrev: [reading] "On May 26, talks continued in the Kremlin between L.I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CC CPSU; N.V. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR; A.N. Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR; and Richard Nixon, President of the USA. They concluded the discussion of the question of strategic arms limitation and agreed to sign the agreement on that question. There was also an exchange of views on certain international problems. As at previous meetings and discussions, the exchange of views proceeded in a constructive businesslike atmosphere."

The President: Fine.

¹⁴ In his memoirs Smith described those last hectic hours in Helsinki. He wrote: "Before we left Helsinki, Garthoff, Grinevsky and Kishilov beavered away for several hours putting the Moscow texts into final form. It was well into the afternoon before the delegations were ready for the Helsinki closing session, a miniplenary at which Semenov and I read into the record various agreed and unilateral interpretations of the two agreements. . . . Then it was decided that the formal portion of the meeting would be resumed on the flight to Moscow for the purpose of initialing the interpretative statements and the session was recessed to permit a hasty departure." After initialing the agreed interpretations on the flight, the two delegations celebrated with glasses of beer. Smith wrote: "Beer or no beer, this was an exuberant group of flying negotiators. The climax of three years of hard work overcame any specific reservations the Americans might have about the interim freeze." (*Doubletalk*, pp. 433–434)

¹⁵ May 29.

285. Memorandum of Conversation¹

May 26, 1972, 7:15–7:20 p.m.

SUBJECT

Conversation Between the President and Chairman Kosygin

In a brief conversation with Kosygin just before dinner, Kosygin told the President that both sides had reached complete agreement on the lend-lease matter, including a schedule of payments and the principal amount, but that the United States insistence on 5½% per annum would increase the total amount of repayment from \$500 million to \$914 million, almost \$1 billion.² He said that he could not in good faith report to his Council of Ministers (of whom there were about 90) and justify such a high figure. He stressed that he would not want to pressure the President, that if this problem was not settled during the current meeting, the Soviet Union would not be the loser. In fact, it might be possible that this loan would continue to be carried on the books of the US for some ten more years but eventually it would be written off just like the debts of the Czarist Russian Government had been written off. The President said he would discuss this matter with his advisors and that we would do what we could.³

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by William D. Krimer, Interpreter (ACDA) on May 27. The meeting was held in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

² In telegram Secto 32 from Moscow, May 26, Secretary Rogers transmitted a message to Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Willis C. Armstrong in Washington describing the respective U.S. and Soviet positions on a lend-lease settlement following a 2-hour meeting with Kosygin that day. Rogers stated that the basic difference between the two sides was obviously the wide-spread between the interest rate the United States wanted and that which the Soviets were willing to pay. He said Kosygin had stressed his lack of flexibility on this point but said he would consult his colleagues and suggested that they consult with the President. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Moscow Summit, Economic Commission)

³ In telegram Tosec 135 to Moscow, May 27, Armstrong responded that a settlement along the lines of \$500 million with interest at 2 to 3 percent was the sort envisaged by those in charge of lend-lease at the end of the war, and wrote: "To drive a harder bargain now than we would have sought at the end of the war is not reasonable for the United States and acceptance is not feasible for the USSR." Armstrong pointed out that the fact that they did not reach agreement promptly at the end of the war was something for which both governments shared responsibility. (Ibid., Country Files, Box 719, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXII, May 1972) The same day, in telegram Tohak 204 from the Situation Room, Secretary of Commerce Peter G. Peterson advised Kissinger to remember the important domestic point that the first lend-lease payment must start either before or at the same time as credits were actually granted to the Soviet Union to meet the obvious question of why grant new credits when the Soviets were not paying their old debts. (Ibid., Box 480, President's Trip Files, President's Moscow, Iran, Poland, Austria Trip. May–Jun 72, TOHAK (File No. 2), Situation Room [Part 2])

286. Editorial Note

On the evening of May 26, 1972, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., General Secretary Brezhnev was President Nixon's guest for dinner at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. The two briefly discussed a number of issues, the most important of which was China. The President asked Brezhnev what he thought of Mao, and Brezhnev replied that Mao had assumed the stature of a living god and completely removed himself from public view. Referring to himself and Nixon as Europeans, Brezhnev said that it was very difficult for Europeans to really know what was going on in the minds of the Chinese leaders. Nixon noted that China was a factor that both of their countries would have to continue to deal with because of its large population and potential. Brezhnev said that the Soviet Union was maintaining some sort of relations with China. Trade had increased recently and economic delegations were visiting each other's countries, but overall relations were not what they should be.

The President commented that the Vietnam problem would have disappeared by the middle of next year, and that U.S.-Soviet relations would undoubtedly have improved as a result of the accords reached at this summit. He said it would be good if Brezhnev could visit the United States sometime during May or early June of next year. Brezhnev said he would very much like to visit the United States and see as much of it as possible. Nixon said that he was sure Brezhnev would have a good reception. He noted that the Great Alliance during World War II had been particularly effective because of the direct contacts maintained between Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin and said he thought he and Brezhnev should also keep in touch with each other by using a private channel. Brezhnev agreed.

The President and Brezhnev both expressed great satisfaction that agreement on SALT had been reached and that the treaty and agreement would be signed at 11:00 p.m. that evening. Nixon noted that this was just a first step and said that by the time Brezhnev visited the United States next year, there might be a follow-up agreement to sign. (Memorandum of conversation; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 2)

In his diary entry for May 26, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman also recorded the events of that historic evening: "Shoved the dinner along as fast as possible, and ended up getting it over by just a little after 10:30. So the P wasn't in too bad shape in getting back for the [SALT] signing ceremony, and it was held just a few minutes after 11:00, with everybody getting a great feeling of the historic

nature of the occasion. The problem, however, was Ziegler caught me on the way into the signing, said we had real trouble because things had gone astray at the presigning briefing, with K and Gerry Smith, and that was the thing that had him concerned. Turns out that Smith came into the briefing, sort of took over from K and blew the answers on several of the items, creating totally the wrong impression, and had K right up the wall as a result. I got over to K during the signing ceremony, and under great strain, convinced him, sort of, that he ought to go back and do another briefing right after the signing. But we had the problem of him refusing to do it with Gerry Smith on the platform. . . .

“After the signing, while we were waiting for Henry to go over, I spent about 45 minutes pacing up and down the halls of our quarters, trying to calm Henry down, as he was ranting, raving, and cursing Rogers and Smith. He had learned from [the President’s Assistant for International Economic Policy] Pete Flanigan that Rogers had ordered Smith and (*negotiator* Paul) Nitze to stay on Henry’s heels at all times, and under no circumstances allow Henry to have a press conference of any kind out of their presence. So that’s why Smith had come into the thing. The more Henry and I talked, the more it became apparent to me that the problem was more psychological than real. . . . As we were waiting, the P called Henry and asked him to come in. Henry told me that he was so mad that he didn’t think he should see the P, and would I please go in and handle the thing, so I did, told the P what the problem was. He, of course, was quite disturbed too. . . . The more he thought about it, the madder he got, and in the middle of that discussion, Henry walked in, reviewed the thing in more livid detail for the P, and the P told me to call Bill Rogers. Tell him that Ziegler was outraged by Smith’s conduct at the briefing, that he was an utter disaster, that you’re to shut him up, he’s to do no more briefings without the express permission of the P, or he’s fired. I said, ‘You know what good will that accomplish,’ the P said, ‘I guess you’re right, it won’t accomplish anything, so forget it.’ Then he brooded for a few minutes, picked up the phone himself asked for Rogers, said ‘I’ll call him’ and hung it up. Then he said when he calls back, you take it, and tell him what I just said. . . . In any event, I talked to Rogers, who was quite surprised by the whole thing, but did make the point to him that only Henry was to do the briefing, and that’s the way it was to go. So that night, as far as I was concerned, ended at about 1:00 or a little after. I went back to bed. P went to bed, but said Henry is to wake him when he got back, which was, apparently, at about 2:00, and fill him in on how the briefing went. Apparently it went extremely well, so things got back on the track later on.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

In his memoirs Kissinger described Smith arriving that night at the Embassy “enraged to the point of incoherence—and not without

reason” after suffering the indignity of having no American car pick him up (because Soviet officials had denied them entry) and having no American greet him. Kissinger wrote that “there [was] no question but that Smith deserved better,” but added: “Wounded pride and rage were so ill-concealed that he nearly turned the briefing into a shambles.” Kissinger recalled interrupting his presentation to take Smith into an ante-room to try to calm him down after Smith had grumbled that he did not know exactly what the treaty contained. He wrote that Smith followed his [Kissinger’s] explanation of the general principles of the agreement with “a brief analysis of its provisions that made up in detailed precision what it lacked in passionate advocacy.” (*White House Years*, page 1243) Smith recalled that after Kissinger introduced him as the one who had conducted the SALT negotiations and was in the best position to go through the details of the agreement, he set out its provisions in general terms, following which the press questions focused on the submarine limitations. He recorded that later, back at the Kremlin, Kissinger whispered, “What were you trying to do, cause a panic?” Smith wrote that he didn’t know what Kissinger was talking about since his “press conference statements did not warrant any such histrionics.” He put it down to Kissinger’s fatigue, but noted that Kissinger did not want any more help with the press from him. (*Doubletalk*, pages 435–438)

In his memoirs Nixon wrote: “The major achievement of Summit I was the agreement covering the limitation of strategic arms. The ABM treaty stopped what inevitably would have become a defensive arms race, with untold billions of dollars being spent on each side for more and more ABM coverage. The other major effect of the ABM treaty was to make permanent the concept of deterrence through ‘mutual terror’: by giving up missile defenses, each side was leaving its population and territory hostage to a strategic missile attack. Each side therefore had an ultimate interest in preventing a war that could only be mutually destructive.” He added: “The Interim Agreement froze the levels of strategic missiles to those then actually existing or under construction. Under this agreement, the United States gave up nothing, because we had no programs that were affected by the freeze. The Soviets, however, had a substantial missile deployment program under way. . . . had it continued, it would have put us increasingly at a disadvantage in numbers of missiles and would almost certainly have forced us into a costly building program just to maintain the then-current ratios.” (*RN: Memoirs*, pages 617–618) In his final evaluation of SALT I, Smith wrote: “In spite of our having been kept away from Moscow and the fact that our views, when solicited, had been only partially accepted, we felt that the agreements—especially the ABM Treaty—were solid accomplishments. . . . Could a better settlement have been reached? The only significant issue in my judgment that was considered at Moscow was

the definition of a heavy missile. Any definition that the United States would have agreed to would have stopped several important Soviet ICBM/MIRV programs. I now believe now that there was no chance that the Soviets would have agreed to stop those programs in order to get an interim freeze under which U.S. MIRV programs would proceed. When the President did not succeed in this aim, he had the implicit choice to end SALT (including abandoning the ABM Treaty) or to make the best of it by accepting a freeze that left the heavy military definition unresolved. I think he made the right choice. In fact, this was so clearly indicated that I doubt he even thought of any other course." (*Doubletalk*, page 432) Kissinger wrote of the Moscow summit in his memoirs: "But the fundamental achievement was to sketch the outline on which coexistence between the democracies and the Soviet system must be based. SALT embodied our conviction that a wildly spiraling nuclear arms race was in no country's interest and enhanced no one's security; the 'Basic Principles' gave at least verbal expression to the necessity of responsible political conduct. The two elements reinforced each other; they symbolized our conviction that a relaxation of tensions could not be based exclusively on arms control; the ultimate test would be restrained international behavior." (*White House Years*, pages 1253–1254)

287. Editorial Note

In his diary entry for May 27, 1972, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman described President Nixon's trip to Leningrad on Saturday, May 27. He wrote: "The crowds in Leningrad were huge, but they were totally restrained by the police, one or two blocks back from the motorcade. It was absolutely an eerie feeling to drive through the main part of the city with absolutely no one on the street except police and soldiers. A guard at the doorway to every apartment, the gate to every courtyard, with people all kept inside, they were behind the gates. On the cross-streets, they were kept at least one, sometimes two, blocks away, often with the streets blocked with a couple of dump trucks or buses, so that there was no chance of people getting across, but always with huge numbers of troops. Still, great crowds of people at all these places, and actually along the main boulevard, but kept way, way back behind ropes and troops. They responded very warmly when we waved to them, although they didn't seem to wave of their own accord. It was obvious that they wanted to see us and were not going to be given that opportunity by the Russians.

“At the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, we had a very impressive and solemn ceremony. The P was quite impressed by the mass graves, 20,000 people in each of them, and the fact that there are half a million Leningraders buried in that cemetery. He was very touched by the story of a twelve year-old girl Tanya who kept a diary that’s in the little pavilion there, and he told Ron and me about it afterwards at the guest house, then later used it in his toast at the luncheon, and later on in the day said that he wanted Ray [Price] to use it in the speech tomorrow night on Soviet TV.” (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) In his memoirs Nixon wrote: “I was deeply moved when she [the young girl acting as their guide] showed me the diary of Tanya, a twelve-year-old girl buried in the cemetery. She translated from the entries describing how one after another the members of Tanya’s family died; the final sad entry read: ‘All are dead. Only Tanya is left.’ The girl’s voice choked with emotion as she read these words. ‘Tanya died too,’ she said as she brushed tears from her eyes. I was asked to sign the visitor’s book before we left. I wrote: ‘To Tanya and all the heroes of Leningrad.’ As I walked away, I said, ‘I hope it will never be repeated in all the world.’” (*RN: Memoirs*, page 616)

288. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 27, 1972, 2:10–4:10 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR
Georgi M. Korniyenko, Chief of USA Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Leonid M. Shevchenko, Aide to Chairman Podgorny
Mr. Bratchikov, Interpreter
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Martin Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Senior Staff Member
Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Mr. Kissinger’s Conversations in Moscow, May 1972. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in St. Catherine’s Hall at the Grand Kremlin Palace.

SUBJECT

Communiqué;² SALT (briefly at beginning and end)

Foreign Minister Gromyko: You have already announced our agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: Somebody leaked it?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: The SALT treaty was published in the *New York Times*. Who will be crucified for this? If necessary we can crucify him solemnly, with music.

Dr. Kissinger: That's a new refinement, with music.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: At end of the visit we were going to publish the texts. We had a schedule.

Dr. Kissinger: I thought there was an understanding. Someone gave the texts to the press. We have no interest in breaking an understanding. I thought all the announcements were joint between Ziegler and Gromyko.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: No, they were made unilaterally.

Dr. Kissinger: I'm terribly sorry.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: OK, you will submit tomorrow the name of the person who will be crucified.

Dr. Kissinger: At the departure ceremony.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: No, it will interfere. The ceremony is solemn enough.

The Communiqué

Dr. Kissinger: I suggest we go over it page by page. [Working draft is at Tab A.]³

Foreign Minister Gromyko: First page, "By agreement between the two sides . . ."

Dr. Kissinger: How about "by mutual agreement?" I hate the phrase "two sides." It is a sort of stylistic point. If you say "mutual," you don't need "the two sides." How about leaving out the leaders, and saying "By agreement between the USSR+USA"?

Do we need this? Because we couldn't have come here without your agreement and we wouldn't have come here without our agreement. "Mutual" is redundant in English, but if you need it in Russian, OK.

We add "mutual" and leave out "leaders of."

² For text of the U.S.-Soviet joint communiqué issued on May 29, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 635–642.

³ All brackets in the source text. The tabs are attached but not printed.

By the way, we can add the date. May 29 is the date.

In the second paragraph, the President and who conducted the meetings?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: General Secretary L.I. Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, N/V. Podgorny, and Chairman of the Council of Ministers A.N. Kosygin.

Dr. Kissinger: "Also taking part on the American side were"—we will list everyone in our official party. We will get this list typed up.

"Frank and thorough"—Didn't we take those out? That's what you wanted.

For. Min. Gromyko: On page 2, section 2—I suggest deleting the subtitle "II. Bilateral Agreements."

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Mr. Korniyenko: Then you have Bilateral and International Issues.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, I agree.

For. Min. Gromyko: I suggest instead of "prior negotiations," that we say "the negotiations which preceded the Summit and in the course of discussions at the meeting itself," and so on.

At the end of this, after the words "interests of the international community," make it "the cause of peace and cooperation."

Dr. Kissinger: Can we make it two sentences? There are too many dependent clauses in English.

Can we say "relevant to the cause of peace and international cooperation"? Let me . . . I hate to be so pedantic, but I want to get it straight. [Reads the text over.]

For. Min. Gromyko: In the next subtitle (SALT), we have a new first paragraph.

Dr. Kissinger: We have a new paragraph.

For. Min. Gromyko: We would like to insert this thing. [Hands over Soviet draft at Tab B.]

Dr. Kissinger: We would like to insert this thing. [Hands over U.S. draft at Tab B.] [Both sides read.]

Let's work from your draft. I think there are no major differences.

The first paragraph [in the draft of the full communiqué] we don't need. Just one sentence from it: "The two sides gave priority attention to the problem of reducing the danger of nuclear war." Is anyone writing this down? I would then say, using your paragraph, "They attach great importance to the treaty on ABMs and the interim agreement concluded between them."

For. Min. Gromyko: You omit "in this connection?"

Dr. Kissinger: In English it isn't necessary.

For. Min. Gromyko: I think it will be better to preserve it, and have it in one paragraph.

Dr. Kissinger: The Foreign Minister is a great believer in linkage. Come to think of it, could I take back what I said? I believe the two sentences we had in the [original] first paragraph are quite good. Then, “in this connection, the two sides attach . . .”

Instead of “should make a significant contribution,” make it “can make.” Or “will make,” that’s stronger.

For. Min. Gromyko: All right, “will make.”

Dr. Kissinger: We would probably prefer “major step” instead of “great step.”

For. Min. Gromyko: In Russian, *vazhnii* or *krupnii*, it doesn’t make a difference.

Dr. Kissinger: Now I have a pet phobia of the President’s, which I put to you frankly.

First, why don’t we say “towards curbing and *ultimately* ending the arms race?”

Why don’t we say “These agreements, which were completed as a result of the negotiations in Moscow”? We don’t need “the preparation of which.”

For. Min. Gromyko: Can we say “reached in Moscow”?

Dr. Kissinger: We don’t want our delegations to feel . . . Semenov may be different from Smith.

For. Min. Gromyko: Suppose we say “concluded in Moscow”?

Dr. Kissinger: “Concluded” is fine.

Now, we are not challenging Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty,⁴ but the President does not feel we are doing it because of some obligation in the NPT but because we want it. The President when he read it in the briefing . . .

For. Min. Gromyko: But for the sake of consistency.

Dr. Kissinger: No, no, we’re not questioning it.

For. Min. Gromyko: You remember, in the UN some countries complained.

Dr. Kissinger: Can I change the order? “Strengthening confidence between states, as well as to carry out the obligation assumed by them under the NPT.”

⁴ For text of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of July 1, 1968, see Department of State *Bulletin*, Vol. LIX, July 1–Dec. 30, 1968, pp. 8–11. Article VI of the Treaty reads: “Each of the parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”

For. Min. Gromyko: How about to leave out the reference to Article VI?

Dr. Kissinger: If we mention the Treaty, we might as well mention the Article. It's not the reference to the Article the President objects to but the reference to the Treaty.

Why don't we reverse the order? The meaning is the same, but it makes a difference.

For. Min. Gromyko: Why don't we take psychology into account?

Dr. Kissinger: Can we say "confidence" instead of "trust"?

For. Min. Gromyko: You may. In Russian, it is the same.

Dr. Kissinger: We don't need "assumed by them in accordance with." Just say "the obligation in Article VI" just to save space.

In the second sentence of that paragraph, why not make it two sentences? With the changes. "Accordingly, it corresponds both to the vital interests . . ." "Accordingly" must be the favorite word of the Soviet Foreign Office.

For. Min. Gromyko: No, my favorite word is "appropriate." The Americans use it more than the Russians do.

Dr. Kissinger: We reserve the right to fiddle with the English a little bit in order to improve it.

For. Min. Gromyko: All right.

Dr. Kissinger: Take out "of the world" [in your sentence].

For. Min. Gromyko: All right. Down with the world, long live the peoples!

Dr. Kissinger: All right. We will retype it and give it to you.

For. Min. Gromyko: Next, in the last paragraph of SALT [on the Sept. 30, 1971 agreement], insert "also."

Dr. Kissinger: We have "also."

For. Min. Gromyko: Good. In the Russian, we added it. And at the end of this paragraph, omit "vital" because it's in the previous paragraph. It is better to use it in reference to SALT.

Dr. Kissinger: You're right.

For. Min. Gromyko: On Commercial and Economic Relations, we have no changes.

Dr. Kissinger: But no maritime agreement. We have not yet straightened out with our unions. Until the unions are squared away, it will be difficult to implement the agreement. Therefore, it is up to your side if you want to sign the agreement in this situation. That was the situation at noon today.

For. Min. Gromyko: No progress.

Dr. Kissinger: We have not yet obtained expressions of willingness from our unions to operate under the terms of the agreement. It is our

fault. But the question is whether you want to sign the agreement under these uncertain conditions. We could conclude the agreement conditionally, if you prefer.

For. Min. Gromyko: Then at this moment . . . I will consult with the Minister. If it is not concluded, we will be disappointed. It is an old question. I remember I discussed it with Rogers a year ago. On Science and Technology, suppose we omit “as a new instrument.” There is no old instrument.

Dr. Kissinger: “Created” implies new. On Space, I suggest the past tense, “emphasized.” Where it says “scheduled,” because Congress hasn’t appropriated the money it is better for us to say “contemplated.” We have no money to schedule it, only to plan it.

For. Min. Gromyko: It would not affect our text. Health. In the last phrase, instead of “Soviet leaders and the President of the U.S.,” let us use my favorite word “sides.”

Dr. Kissinger: “The two sides pledge full support”? O.K.

For. Min. Gromyko: Europe. Instead of “arena,” try “hotbed.”

Dr. Kissinger: I don’t like “hotbed.”

For. Min. Gromyko: Suppose we say “Where both world wars began.” [Mr. Lord and Dr. Kissinger confer.]

Dr. Kissinger: My colleague says you don’t do justice to the Napoleonic wars if you say only world wars. How about the Schleswig-Holstein question? O.K.

For. Min. Gromyko: In the last phrase of the paragraph, why not say “inviolability”?

Dr. Kissinger: I thought we could slip it out without your noticing. Our problem is that “inviolability” implies not even the possibility of raising a territorial question in peaceful terms.

Is that right, Marty?

Mr. Hillenbrand: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: We prefer to stay with this phrase.

For. Min. Gromyko: [Thinks for a moment.] Maybe there is another English phrase.

Dr. Kissinger: How would you phrase this “inviolability” point? Give me a sentence.

For. Min. Gromyko: I would say like this: “They consider that the inviolability of borders of the states of Europe must be observed.”

Dr. Kissinger: How about “They agree that the territorial integrity of all states must be inviolable.”

For. Min. Gromyko: It omits borders. Your previous governments—Johnson, Kennedy—always said borders should be inviolable.

There was no difference between us. The previous U.S. Government was far ahead of the German Government in this respect.

Dr. Kissinger: Do you have the exact [German–Soviet] treaty? What is the exact phrase the Germans use?

[Gromyko tells Bratchikov to go out to get it.]

Dr. Kissinger: [Points jokingly to the chandelier over the table]: There is a camera in it. Ivan the Terrible invented it.

For. Min. Gromyko: No, Ivan the Terrible invented the air conditioning in this room!

Mr. Bratchikov: [Enters with the Treaty language, and reads]: “The sides consider as inviolable now and in the future the borders between all states in Europe.” There is another clause, “The sides confirm the obligation to unswervingly observe the territorial integrity of all the states of Europe in their present borders.”

For. Min. Gromyko: We quoted the Treaty language.

[There followed a long conference on the U.S. side.]

Dr. Kissinger: We will let you know this evening. We will try to find some way of accommodating your thinking.

For. Min. Gromyko: Good, it will be very good.

Dr. Kissinger: No previous Administration has put it into a joint document with the Soviet Union. It is one thing to do it this way, and another thing to do it in private statements. And not at the highest level.

For. Min. Gromyko: President Kennedy told me

Dr. Kissinger: We are not contesting the inviolability of frontiers. Our concern is that we don’t want to get involved in the debate. You know, in the German Bundestag, the debate over the permanence of the borders. Hillenbrand will check at the Hotel the English text of the Soviet-German treaty. We will try to find a paraphrase.

We are also checking the Berlin treaty to see how Berlin is mentioned.

[There was a short break.]

Mr. Korniyenko: And on the reduction of forces, you still don’t want “foreign and national”?

Dr. Kissinger: No.

Mr. Korniyenko: Why not?

Dr. Kissinger: Because we want to leave open which forces will be reduced.

For. Min. Gromyko: You are against the admission of the Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic into the UN?

Dr. Kissinger: No.

For. Min. Gromyko: At the appropriate time?

Dr. Kissinger: It isn't in here.

For. Min. Gromyko: It is in our text.

Dr. Kissinger: Our position is that we will not oppose it if the Germans propose it. But we don't want to get ahead of the Germans. You will have no difficulty with us if the Federal Republic of Germany proposes it.

For. Min. Gromyko: About Berlin, we will do it the same.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

For. Min. Gromyko: [On CSCE]: "Concrete preparations should begin."

Dr. Kissinger: We would prefer to omit "in the near future." Just, "after the signature."

For. Min. Gromyko: That makes it still sooner.

Dr. Kissinger: I know what you are saying. As the President said in the meeting, we don't think these conversations can begin until the fall.

For. Min. Gromyko: Can't we mention "national and foreign" forces?

Dr. Kissinger: No, we took it out.

For. Min. Gromyko: And just "armed forces," not armaments?

Dr. Kissinger: Armaments is OK.

For. Min. Gromyko: What does "reciprocal" mean?

Dr. Kissinger: Both sides. Would you prefer "mutual and balanced"?!

For. Min. Gromyko: Reciprocal means "by agreement." All right, keep this word.

On the Mideast, we would prefer to state two sides' different positions, but we don't have a text here. One paragraph.

Dr. Kissinger: Well, something of this content, but we will have to work over something. I think we can settle that one paragraph.

For. Min. Gromyko: Then Indochina. For the time being we don't have a text.

Dr. Kissinger: What is your view? That we will state different points of view?

For. Min. Gromyko: We would prefer a joint text. It would be very good.

Dr. Kissinger: Do you have a proposed text?

For. Min. Gromyko: Not yet.

Dr. Kissinger: I have a conciliatory page of our position. [Hands over draft at Tab C.] It could be shortened by us.

For. Min. Gromyko: This is joint, or one-sided?

Dr. Kissinger: This is our position.

[The Soviets read it.]

We would be prepared to shorten it; we don't need to spell out our conditions. The third paragraph could be shortened substantially. It is not in our interest to have in the middle of this document two pages of disagreement.

[At 3:55, General Antonov came in, saying "Forgive the interruption," and accompanied by a girl carrying pieces of Dr. Kissinger's birthday cake for Dr. Kissinger and the Foreign Minister.]

General Antonov: And on behalf of our girls, for the American delegation, she will kiss you. [Laughter. She kisses Dr. Kissinger, and blushes.] And not on orders! [Laughter]

[General Antonov and his girl leave.]

Dr. Kissinger: On Vietnam, Mr. Foreign Minister, we would be prepared—if you can come up with a short formulation—to shorten ours to be consistent with yours.

For. Min. Gromyko: Our preference is not to have a long one.

Dr. Kissinger: May I suggest you submit what you are prepared to say, and we will follow your length.

For. Min. Gromyko: We would prefer a joint statement. It would be the best solution. But we will come back.

Should we say [in section on Disarmament Issues] "arms control" or "arms limitation"?

Dr. Kissinger: That's all right. "Limitation."

Mr. Korniyenko: And again, "sides" instead of "leaders."

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Mr. Korniyenko: We don't need "respective," so as not to imply divergence.

Dr. Kissinger: You are right.

Mr. Korniyenko: On chemicals, you agreed to have something.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, we changed it. "The USSR and USA will continue their efforts to reach an international agreement regarding the problem of chemical weapons." We don't need "the problem of."

On the next page, we will add "including nuclear disarmament" [in the sentence on general and complete disarmament].

For. Min. Gromyko: You agree.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

For. Min. Gromyko: On the United Nations, you are in favor of the preservation of colonialism?

Dr. Kissinger: We are in favor of avoiding a statement on this in this document.

For. Min. Gromyko: Suppose we add one phrase to this paragraph: "Accordingly they will do their best to support UN activities in the interests of international peace."

Dr. Kissinger: You sneaked another “accordingly” into the document. I want you to know we appreciate the skill with which it was done.

For. Min. Gromyko: Let us go to the last section.

Dr. Kissinger: May I make one very minor proposal? We can say “cooperation between peoples” instead of “in the interests of peoples.” This is just stylistic. And “possibilities exist” should be “it is possible to develop.”

For. Min. Gromyko: All right. The title is most solemn. Why don’t we say “Joint Soviet-American Communiqué”?

Dr. Kissinger: Joint Soviet-U.S. Communiqué. In fact we’ll go further than that: Joint U.S.-Soviet Communiqué.

When we are finished, we will give Mr. Korniyenko our English text. You will make sure that TASS publishes our English version. If we have any reason to use the Russian, we will use yours. This is agreed?

Mr. Korniyenko: Yes.

For. Min. Gromyko: I will show it to Mr. Brezhnev.

SALT

Dr. Kissinger: Do you object if we submit to the Congress the agreed interpretive statements? We would like to submit the statements also, such as that “significantly” means 10–15%.

For. Min. Gromyko: If you consider for you it is all right.

Dr. Kissinger: That makes it public.

For. Min. Gromyko: It is up to you.

[The meeting then ended.]

289. Backchannel Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, May 27, 1972, 1115Z.

Hakto 44. Ref: Tohak 188.² The following are points that should be elaborated for use in response to Jackson statements.

(1) It is absurd to say that agreement freezes us at 4 to 1 disadvantage in payload when no-agreement situation would have permitted dynamic race in which Soviet payload advantage would increase further. We have now stopped SS-9 deployment which could have run free indefinitely. While Soviets can improve on SS-11 with new missile, they are constrained by silo size limitation (a point not yet public but of course part of the agreement) and they are on notice by our unilateral statement that significant increase in volume of follow on to SS-11 missile could jeopardize continuance of agreement. Moreover we had no program that would have done a thing to improve our payloads in next five years. Hence agreement stops nothing on our side that we had planned. Not aware of any program that Jackson had and that had any prospect of Congressional approval that would have changed payload situation.

(2) On numbers of missiles the point is that no agreement situation would have guaranteed massive widening of Soviet advantage. This agreement puts lid on this trend for precisely the period at the end of which, barring a follow-on agreement, we can begin adding to our numbers by Trident. Had Jackson supported accelerated submarine program? Had he worked on JCS to support it? Did he have any program with chance of adoption that would have affected arithmetic in next five years?

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 480, President's Trip Files, President's Trip, USSR, Iran, Austria, Poland, May–Jun. 72, (HAKTO File). Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

² Telegram Tohak 188 to Moscow, May 26, reported that the groups briefed on SALT were generally supportive, but that the real problem, as expected, lay with Senator Henry Jackson, whose statement was attached. Jackson stated that "far from curbing the arms race, the present agreements are likely to lead to an accelerated technological arms race with great uncertainties, profound instabilities and considerable costs." He argued that the Moscow agreements froze the United States at a 4 to 1 overall missile payload disadvantage. The SALT agreement not only protected that Soviet advantage, but authorized them to increase it. The United States now had more warheads than the Soviets, but under this agreement the Soviets were free to multiply their warheads and authorized to expand greatly their overall missile capability. Jackson also complained that the agreement prohibited the United States from increasing its numbers of submarines, but authorized the Soviets to continue building them until they first equaled and then greatly surpassed us. (Ibid., Box 993, Haig Chronological File—May 21–31, 1972 [1 of 2])

(3) On payload of particular Soviet missiles nothing in this agreement authorizes Soviets to do a thing that they could not have done even more dynamically without it. And nothing prevents US from improving payloads if had a program to do so. Trident is fully protected. What possible leverage did we have to negotiate a freeze on or diminution of Soviet payloads?

(4) On warhead numbers, we again should compare agreement with no-agreement. Under no-agreement SS-9 would have been unconstrained and hence so would warhead multiplication. Now at least SS-9 number is fixed. But we can proceed unconstrained with the only new offensive program 7 ULMS—we had. We do have a problem about Soviet potential for increasing warheads. But there was never a chance to solve this in SALT I without MIRV ban, which was unobtainable. What we have done is to make this problem less severe than it would otherwise have been.

(5) On submarines, we have limited Soviets to numbers some 25 below what they could have built without agreement and are forcing them to pay for any new submarines by reducing their numbers and payloads in land-based missiles plus in some 30 on H-class boats. Moreover, Y-class boats they can build in next 5 years are qualitatively inferior to our latest boats and, even more, to ULMs boats.

(6) On ABMs, only way we could have gotten “effective ABM defense of missile sites” would have been to give Soviets the same, creating horrendous uncertainties re radar base for potential area defense. We have in fact gotten improved radar base for more effective defense at Grand Forks. Moreover, we already have major advantage in high acceleration interceptors and further development in this respect is in no way constrained.

As regards Moscow defense, Soviets can add 36 interceptors. This has no practical effect on our capacity to hold Moscow hostage, nor, indeed, on UK capacity to do likewise. To suggest Soviets can “expand” Moscow system in any meaningful way because of this agreement is absurd. With radar constraints, area limitation and interceptor ceiling, we are obviously better off than if Soviets had been free to do as they please.

(7) We should have overall posture of welcoming full and exhaustive Congressional and indeed national debate. We have nothing to hide. The constant repetition that agreement “confers advantage” on Soviets is sheer demagoguery. It confers nothing that the Soviets could not have done. What it does do is to slow dramatically the process of acquiring advantage while enabling us to gear up for a major new program, provided, of course, people like Jackson devote their energy to supporting our defense programs rather than fighting an agreement that brakes the momentum of Soviet programs.

290. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 27, 1972, 4:30–6 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Georgi M. Korniyenko, Chief of USA Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Shevchenko (Interpreter)
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
John Negroponte, NSC Staff Member

SUBJECT

Vietnam

Dr. Kissinger: I wanted to ask a question. Are you under the impression that perhaps we could make a joint statement on Vietnam?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We would prefer it that way.

Dr. Kissinger: How would you visualize it?

For. Min. Gromyko: I don't have any idea yet. Today I spoke on the phone with the General Secretary and he said it would be very good if in the continuation of the talks with the President you could express any additional considerations. He said it would be very good to have something joint in the Communiqué and that we should express thoughts common to both sides. Well, if we don't succeed in getting a joint statement in the Communiqué then certainly each side will have to make a unilateral statement on substance because we will have no other way out.

Well, could you perhaps clarify whether you could make something that would facilitate a political solution of the question, taking into account the complexities in light of the real situation on the ground in Vietnam? Do you have any possibilities to make political steps which might facilitate the situation? We have the impression, especially as a result of contacts with the Vietnamese, that the most acute question for them now is the political question, the question of power in South Vietnam. And we came to the conclusion that they agree now—at least it's our conviction—that during a certain period there should be a coalition government. Secondly—as you are well aware—they also agree to the neutrality of South Vietnam as a result and after the settlement of the question of the withdrawal of American forces.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Mr. Kissinger's Conversations in Moscow, May 1972. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in St. Catherine's Hall at the Grand Kremlin Palace.

All these ideas are probably known to you, and I think they contain great potentialities.

Dr. Kissinger: Why?

For. Min. Gromyko: Well, I think it's because it's not a matter of indifference to you what the political and international status of South Vietnam will be—that is, whether it will be neutral or not. Of course, if you are indifferent then that is another matter, but it is my opinion that it should be of interest to you. But, of course, you know better.

Everything you are going to tell me, if you are prepared, I will report immediately to Comrade Brezhnev, because he said he would be most attentive to your considerations.

Dr. Kissinger: First, with respect to the last point, the neutrality of South Vietnam is in principle acceptable to us, and we have some ideas as to how it can be brought about. So that is not an issue between us and North Vietnam. That is a positive idea.

Secondly, with respect to the political problem, I believe your leaders are under a misapprehension about what North Vietnam has asked from us. Your leaders seem to be under the impression that it is only the matter of the personality of Thieu. That is not the case. What North Vietnam proposes is this. Thieu has to resign; what they call his machine of repression has to be dismantled and Vietnamization must stop, which means American economic and military aid must cease. In other words, the U.S. would side with North Vietnam in forming a three-segment government of peace, independence and neutrality. But only they know who meets these criteria. They won't tell us. So the objective consequence of their proposal would first be that the government resigns, the political machinery is disbanded, outside support ceases. Under these conditions, the only organized political force in South Vietnam has to be the PRG. We interpret their proposal as a demand that we turn power over to them. I am being very candid.

The big problem is that the North Vietnamese are heroic people and personally very attractive people. On the other hand, they will not rely at all on the historical process. They want everything written down and today. In our relations between the Soviet Union and U.S. the most significant thing is that we started. We've signed some agreements. I think the evolution is even more important than the agreements. If North Vietnam were wise—I'm being candid—it would make an agreement with us now and not haggle about every detail, because one year after the agreement there would be a new condition, a new reality.

For example, last year, on May 31, 1971,² we proposed in a private meeting withdrawal of American troops over a nine-month period in

² Scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume VII, Vietnam, July 1970–January 1972.

exchange for a ceasefire and prisoners of war. They said, no, we must overthrow Thieu too. Suppose they had accepted our withdrawal then. Don't you think they might be better off today? Do you believe we can go back in after U.S. forces are withdrawn?

So they never look at the political dimension created. They ask us what as a great power we cannot do. We cannot overthrow the people we have worked with over eight years. You wouldn't do this. We won't do it. We are prepared to start a political process, without a guaranteed outcome, but which has possible outcomes. Why should we invest all American foreign policy in one little corner of Asia, out of which we are withdrawing anyway?

When I saw Le Duc Tho on May 2,³ he had no new proposals, he had nothing at all. They brought upon themselves these consequences. We have no interest in defeating them. From a long-term historical view we have an interest similar to yours. We want a strong Southeast Asia strong enough to stand on its own feet and not a vacuum there. That is our interest. Therefore the major problem is to get the war ended without all the conditions written out in every last detail. This is my analysis of the situation.

If you analyze our political proposal of January 25th⁴—and I know what the North Vietnamese said—but it involves the U.S. withdrawal of American forces in a short period of time and President Thieu would withdraw one month before the election. He also said publicly on three occasions that once peace is achieved he would withdraw from public life altogether.

For. Min. Gromyko: Who said that?

Dr. Kissinger: President Thieu said it publicly. The last time was three weeks ago.

Mr. Korniyenko: But after a settlement.

Dr. Kissinger: After a settlement. But he would resign before the election. So it's at least theoretically possible to put these two proposals together. Speaking aloud—this is not a formal idea—the primary thing now is to get the war ended so that will create a new political reality.

For. Min. Gromyko: So you have no new considerations?

Dr. Kissinger: I don't have anything very specific this evening to propose except to call to your attention some features of our old proposals on which we can build.

³ See Document 183.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 40.

For example, the electoral commission would have all parties represented including the PRG. We are prepared to listen to new political proposals from the DRV except the one they have made, which is too one-sided.

For. Min. Gromyko: Well, I presume that so far today you have no new proposals which could be brought to the attention of the Vietnamese.

Dr. Kissinger: That is correct. I have no specific proposals.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: The situation is rather strange, I should say. You would like, as the President and yourself said, to end the war and withdraw American troops, but on the other hand, you resolutely oppose a political solution under the conditions that the situation will be settled not under the presence of American troops but by the Vietnamese themselves. So you don't want such a situation. Your idea on Thieu and the machinery under his control is to have them preserved for an indefinite period of time. You know our position on Thieu. I will not use strong language. The Vietnamese oppose a situation where this regime would be maintained through foreign assistance and foreign troops. If your position is to settle the situation, your military steps don't correspond. I think there is a certain inconsistency on that point. If the President and the American government decide to leave Vietnam do you not have enough resolution to see that this is done? Why should every effort be made to preserve the Thieu regime? That is the question.

Dr. Kissinger: Are you finished?

For. Min. Gromyko: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: The situation is even more curious because we do want to leave but the North Vietnamese are trying to keep us there to blackmail us into overthrowing the Saigon government. If the issue were only withdrawal of American forces, it could be settled very quickly. It is their position on political conditions that makes it difficult.

After we withdraw, a number of conditions exist. First of all, we would be prepared to limit military aid to South Vietnam after our withdrawal in proportion to the aid the North Vietnamese receive from their allies. Or if they are not prepared, we would be glad to agree directly with you about limiting aid to the area so North Vietnam does not have to put themselves on the same level as Saigon under the conditions of peace. I have difficulty understanding, if North Vietnam is so self-confident, why it insists that we overthrow the political structure of South Vietnam for them. Why must *we* do it?

For. Min. Gromyko: That is not quite correct, I think. You say they would like to make you overthrow the South Vietnamese government. But we believe their position is not like that. They would like you not to support the regime and not to take any steps for the artificial con-

tinuation of its acts, [a government]⁵ which has no popular support. That is our opinion.

Dr. Kissinger: There is no sense in debating. I would point out that they have armed one million of their own people, and if there were no support at all this would be a very dangerous course.

For. Min. Gromyko: Well, I don't think so and you have hardly convinced me that the Vietnamese wholeheartedly fight for Thieu. Why is Thieu so necessary for the U.S. that the U.S. is prepared to continue the war in order to preserve his regime? Of course, it is for not only a question of Thieu himself, but rather the regime he represents. Is it for his reason that you like to have the war continued, you keep troops in Vietnam to shed blood? Don't think I'm talking you into something. We are seeking an objective analysis and conclusions from that analysis, and since we are now engaged in negotiations, it is advisable to share our views.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Foreign Minister, the issue to us is not the preservation of any particular government. The issue is that we cannot cooperate with those whom we have fought for eight years to help them achieve their objective against people with whom we have cooperated. We are prepared to adopt a position of neutrality toward political life in South Vietnam. We are not prepared to move from a position of support for one side to, in effect, a position of support for the other side. This is the dilemma. We are willing to withdraw military forces; we are willing to stop military operations. And we are prepared to reduce aid if the war stops; we are prepared to reduce aid if our opponents are willing to reduce aid. This would then leave the struggle to the Vietnamese. If North Vietnam had accepted our proposal of last year they would objectively be in a much better position today.

For. Min. Gromyko: Could you tell in a nutshell your point of view? Your program? How do you see an end to the war, taking into account the present circumstances?

Dr. Kissinger: I can see two approaches. One, the overall approach we made in January, which I want to interpret to you from our point of view. It is this. We would agree to a ceasefire and withdrawal—

For. Min. Gromyko: Of your troops?

Dr. Kissinger: All our forces. Simultaneously, we would agree to certain principles of a political settlement—the neutrality of South Vietnam, abiding by whatever political process the Vietnamese themselves agree upon. While these details are being worked out, we would already start withdrawing our forces from the time of the agreement in principle. One month before the elections, Thieu would resign.

⁵ All brackets in the source text.

Now, North Vietnam says in this proposal we tried to separate military and political issues. We are trying to keep Saigon from having a veto on our withdrawals. We are prepared to support no candidate. We will abide by the outcome of the political process, and we are prepared to see a South Vietnam with a policy of neutrality.

That is that program. I personally believe if the DRV were creative it would have great possibilities.

But if they don't want a political settlement on this basis, a comprehensive settlement, then let us agree on a ceasefire, let us agree to exchange prisoners of war, and we would withdraw all our forces, and let them work out a political solution with the South Vietnamese. We would then guarantee, except for economic and military aid, to keep our hands out of it; we would be neutral in the political process. We would be prepared to go either road. We are prepared to hear reasonable proposals from the other side.

If I could say a personal note, Mr. Minister, you have dealt with me for several years. I believe we are difficult negotiators, but we are honest and have always kept our word. We have never tricked you, or anyone else. We would not trick North Vietnam. If we would, then the fighting would start again. That is not in our interest.

All we ask is a degree of time so as to leave Vietnam for Americans in a better perspective. They want everything simultaneously. This is the dilemma that faces us. I believe they have worsened their situation as a result of their actions. We had no intention of increasing our forces; we had every intention of pulling out this year more and more. We had no intention of such massive operations. They are worse off now objectively in our view. Had they accepted terms last year, they could have had a good chance to prevail now.

Least of all do we wish to trick you. We have an interest in dealing honestly over a long period with you. We do not want to embarrass you.

For. Min. Gromyko: It is clear that the Paris talks have produced no results. We sympathize with success and would do everything necessary for it and are doing so now, but when you come to the political aspects you Americans tried to make everything possible to support and maintain the present regime. Well, suppose you are right. The Vietnamese don't want such a government but prefer, as they say, a more progressive government, one which was left of center, which would ensure political neutrality for the country as far as foreign policy is concerned. But why should there be such a solution in the presence of U.S. forces and why should it involve the presence of the existing regime and even personally President Thieu. Last year, you hinted in Washington . . .

Dr. Kissinger: When we talked.

For. Min. Gromyko: that there could be a suitable solution and you expressed certain thoughts regarding Thieu and the transitory period . . .

Dr. Kissinger: [interrupting] that he would resign in a transitory period.

For. Min. Gromyko: Well, the term “resign” was not used. You admitted he wouldn’t be in power during a certain transitory period.

Mr. Korniyenko: There would be some kind of interim government, not just a commission.

Dr. Kissinger: I was thinking of our proposal that he resign one month before the election and an interim government takes his place. That was what I had in mind.

For. Min. Gromyko: [continues interpretation from interruption.] But the way you put the question now I don’t think is acceptable to the Vietnamese. Is it worth, in order to achieve political aims, continuing the war, maintaining troops in Vietnam and destroying cities? Perhaps some plans could be advanced on your part. I don’t know. I think your side has ample political resources not put into operation yet. Maybe you know better. We don’t know if you are going to bring this into the open.

Dr. Kissinger: Of course.

For. Min. Gromyko: Our wish . . . if you have any ideas for political steps which could facilitate a political solution, that acute and serious matter. If there is anything for the USSR to do, at least you should not prevent us from making any positive steps to bring about an end to the war. If during your stay in Moscow there are any additional steps, any proposals at any time, I will transmit them to the General Secretary. I don’t know if President Nixon and the General Secretary will have an opportunity to discuss the matter again. If you have any ideas, I would be glad to meet you anytime.

Dr. Kissinger: I can assure you we are not interested in new military bases in South Vietnam or any particular government in South Vietnam. That is not our principal objective. We will honor whatever political change that comes about as a result of the South Vietnamese political process and not as a result of our direct actions.

We have therefore tried to get the North Vietnamese to understand they should work with us in developing a political process of this kind. We believe if we, together with them, declare that our common objective is a neutral South Vietnam, that the U.S. will remain completely neutral in the political contest in South Vietnam, that the U.S. accepts the outcome of any election, that the U.S. is prepared to limit its economic and military aid, and is prepared as part of an agreement to accept whatever political process emerges, we believe that this creates a new political reality in South Vietnam by the simple fact of these declarations.

I must tell you that their dealings with us are impossible. They have wasted 13 meetings with me. I am not sure all our ideas are the best ones. You remember our dealings on Berlin and we made efforts. They never do. Even this week on SALT, a much easier problem, we had many differences and advanced various solutions before a settlement. We never had serious negotiations with them. There are two problems. One is procedural, how to talk seriously, and the other is what we are trying to accomplish. We have two objectives: first, withdrawal; second to develop a political process which gives every political force a chance to express itself, and let the political process shape the future, whatever happens.

Now the North Vietnamese say this was done in 1954 and they were tricked. They are probably right. On the other hand, if you and we can guarantee a settlement. . . . We are a different government and any possible [U.S.] government's attitude would be different. We are not like Dulles. We are not looking for an excuse to go in. We are attempting to establish an important relationship with you. We are not looking to trick you. For what purpose? We are stuck now because the North Vietnamese are too unimaginative or inflexible to solve the political problem. That's the dilemma. They cannot win by their present offensive. In the process the whole international atmosphere is being poisoned. If you and we are going to quarrel about something it shouldn't be about our area where we are withdrawing anyway.

For. Min. Gromyko: Have you any contacts along any channel?

Dr. Kissinger: We told you we were ready to meet on the 21st. I don't know if you got an answer. I think the best procedure is for Le Duc Tho and me to meet honestly for once, without any papers, and just talk about how to work out a program for settlement. I would work seriously and honestly with him. As long as there is progress in the private channel, then we can assemble plenaries again.

For. Min. Gromyko: Suppose we say . . . The first question I anticipate from the North Vietnamese is, if there is a private meeting, what is Mr. Kissinger going to tell us? Just what he already said in Paris? What should we [the Soviets] say? "Their [the U.S.] position is known. They will probably say one thing or another. We don't know if they have something new to say." It is not so easy for us just to convey this to the North Vietnamese. Of course, we may, but that is up to you . . . for example, if we could say we were told such and such things and there are better prospects.

Dr. Kissinger: If they would once be prepared to consider that I am not coming to these negotiations to maintain any particular government. Maybe we don't have the right imagination. I come there to develop a fair political process. I am not saying our proposal is the fairest. It is a strange area for us. I know their proposal is very one-

sided. The question is why can't they be patient for awhile and let things develop a little more slowly. Their impatience to get everything at once has the objective consequence of getting nothing. Counting on our domestic collapse won't happen. You met the President. He won't yield to political pressure. Where will they be next year?

For. Min. Gromyko: If you met Le Duc Tho, what would happen?

Dr. Kissinger: I will make a serious effort to see if we can find a new approach. If they said to me, all right, we will try to find a political process for everybody, then there would be a chance for talking seriously, to look at various possibilities. Our proposal is not an ultimatum. If we talk, I will talk with them in a forthcoming spirit and with the attitude of finding a fair and rapid conclusion. That would be my intention. They are a great people and we have no interest in humiliating them.

For. Min. Gromyko: They may ask us, well, how about the official negotiations?

Dr. Kissinger: It is not in our mutual interest unless there is some understanding as to what will happen. We could go and make an announcement here. If after two or three meetings the plenaries break down, then we will be accused of having been tricked by you, and the situation would worsen. We see no sense in official meetings until there is a framework.

For. Min. Gromyko: Suppose there is an unofficial meeting. Will you tell them something new, or just what you told them before? Maybe it's not right to ask; it's just for our orientation.

Dr. Kissinger: The trouble is I would try to come up with some new approach to the same objective. The difficulty is that we have already made so many proposals with no response.

For. Min. Gromyko: There are no limits to good things.

Dr. Kissinger: If you sat opposite us and we said you had not been concrete because you had not accepted our eight points, there would be little discussion. Something must be put in by the other side for meaningful negotiations. For example, suppose we met last November or January about our eight points. If we went over our proposals point by point, there would have been many possibilities—in any negotiation you get a qualitative change by accumulating a series of nuances. It is not a good negotiating technique to demand a qualitative change as a first step. They keep making demands. Unilaterally, it is very hard to do anything enormous.

We will certainly look at your program with the attitude of seeing what could be done to bring about a rapid conclusion.

For. Min. Gromyko: The first question is if we can inform them that if they met with you what will you tell them? Or perhaps even a

more modest question: would you have anything new at all or not? If we could say as far as we know there was nothing new, but we don't exclude the possibility that there is grounds for talking. We think it would be best if we could say that we have grounds for believing that there is something new. Of course, we would not negotiate this, we would say this is to be discussed between you and the Americans.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me ask you this. Is it totally excluded that you could explain your negotiating experience with us to them? You must have formed some opinion about their attitude toward us and tactics. Is it totally excluded you could tell them that you have had this experience with the Americans? Why not try our system for awhile. It is a very un-Leninist approach to insist they must have everything right away. You had some difficulty in trusting me at first, which is natural.

For. Min. Gromyko: How would you formulate your thoughts which in your opinion we would convey to them with reference to our conversation?

Dr. Kissinger: Let me think about it overnight to be precise.

For. Min. Gromyko: Every word has a certain significance.

Dr. Kissinger: How did we settle the Berlin question? We decided among ourselves to try to settle within a certain time frame. Then we decided on this approach: You do something on access and we will do something on Federal presence. I have a difficult problem trying to tell you about precise proposals. Once the approach was settled, we could think concretely Le Duc Tho and I, if we follow this process, would have enough to talk about. We should make a work program. What do we have to have? What do they have to have? We have never done this. We gave them proposals and they gave us proposals.

For. Min. Gromyko: An exchange of speeches.

Dr. Kissinger: If they say here is something we must have, we would do all we could; it's better than giving you proposals.

For. Min. Gromyko: You never analyzed the points with them in detail?

Dr. Kissinger: Not really in this way. Last summer we were close. I gave them some points, very abstract and always somewhat theoretical.

For. Min. Gromyko: May I ask you about Thieu? When are you ready to withdraw Thieu in relation to the withdrawal of your troops?

Dr. Kissinger: We have never said we are ready to secure his withdrawal from the political picture. He has said he would resign one month before the election. In addition, he has said publicly that once a peace settlement is attained, he would withdraw altogether. Whether these two positions could be put together in one realistic formula would remain to be seen. It's at least theoretical.

For. Min. Gromyko: What about timing? There is a distance between now and complete withdrawal of U.S. troops. Somewhere in that time there is the removal of President Thieu. At what point will this happen in terms of your proposal?

Dr. Kissinger: In terms of the proposal we have made this could occur as early as five months after signature of a statement of principles, depending on how quickly they agree on a political process.

For. Min. Gromyko: The duration of the withdrawal of your troops?

Dr. Kissinger: It was six months. Now it is four months.

For. Min. Gromyko: That means Thieu would resign one month after your withdrawal.

Dr. Kissinger: Those were the terms of the January proposal; it was in their context of our comprehensive proposal, their agreeing to an election.

For. Min. Gromyko: Before the election.

Dr. Kissinger: He would withdraw.

For. Min. Gromyko: But what is the period between the election and his withdrawal?

Dr. Kissinger: Our proposal said one month before the election but that is negotiable.

For. Min. Gromyko: What about the composition of the government between his withdrawal and the election, in concrete terms, as far as this is possible?

Dr. Kissinger: Under our proposal, as the South Vietnamese constitution provides, the caretaker government would be headed by the President of the Senate.

For. Min. Gromyko: It would be a working government?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

For. Min. Gromyko: Formed by whom? There would still be the presence of Thieu. This is an important point.

For. Min. Gromyko: Who would prepare the elections?

Dr. Kissinger: An electoral commission in which the PRG, Saigon Administration, and other forces in the country would have equal representation. And the election commission is very close to a government of national concord proposed by the PRG. Therefore, one possibility is to give more power to the electoral commission and therefore give a de facto status in some areas to the national concord idea. It is a complex system but both sides have to adjust to existing realities.

For. Min. Gromyko: My impression sometimes from the President and Dr. Kissinger, the official position of the United States is that it is impossible to leave Vietnam to some kind of Communist or Socialist

government. This by itself throws a shadow on statements. Is your main preoccupation the character of the government?

Dr. Kissinger: That is a good question when it is posed by reasonable people. What we mean is that we will not leave in such a way that a Communist victory is guaranteed. However, we are prepared to leave so that a Communist victory is not excluded, though not guaranteed. I don't know if this distinction is meaningful to you.

For. Min. Gromyko: Until now our view is that your main preoccupation is to prevent the establishment of a regime you don't like politically. Later maybe you could face this.

Dr. Kissinger: There is no question that is true. Our position is we want a political solution which does not guarantee a Communist victory, but also, we emphasize, that does not exclude it.

For. Min. Gromyko: That is official?

Dr. Kissinger: You can communicate this to the North Vietnamese.

For. Min. Gromyko: On the basis of official American statements, the U.S. main preoccupation is to do all in order to preclude the possibility of a government not liked by the United States. That makes it more difficult.

Dr. Kissinger: It is an absurdity to pretend we would not prefer it if Communists would not win in South Vietnam.

For. Min. Gromyko: That is another matter.

Dr. Kissinger: But you have faced many situations in the world where Communist parties would not prevail and you put limits on your intervention. This is the issue we are talking about. In case of the solution of the war, the policy would be to encourage whatever political process is agreed upon but not to exclude North Vietnamese or a Communist or Socialist forces from having a measure of power.

For. Min. Gromyko: If you think there is anything new, let us talk again.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me think. We will meet again tomorrow anyway on the communiqué.

For. Min. Gromyko: If there is a need, probably we can discuss the Middle East and Vietnam. Anyway on the Middle East we would like to talk briefly.

Dr. Kissinger: Tomorrow.

For. Min. Gromyko: Tomorrow. On the Middle East we are, frankly speaking, discouraged.

[At this point Mr. Gromyko left the meeting for about five minutes to take a phone call.]

For. Min. Gromyko: You have already published the treaty and the agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: I am very embarrassed. I will have to look into it.

For. Min. Gromyko: I just talked to Comrade Brezhnev. He asked my opinion. I said we would have to publish the treaty. I don't know about the protocol. I'll let you know.

Dr. Kissinger: We will let Mr. Korniyenko know, I am embarrassed. I didn't know there was an agreement not to publish.

Mr. Korniyenko: You suggested that we publish everything at once all at the end, as an enclosure to the Communiqué.

Dr. Kissinger: We could still in any event publish them all together. There was a confusion. I don't know how it happened.

For. Min. Gromyko: Tomorrow we will discuss the Middle East and Vietnam.

Dr. Kissinger: We will see if there is anything more concrete. You contact me and let me know when you are ready.

For. Min. Gromyko: Maybe we should set it now.

Dr. Kissinger: Suppose we meet at 11:00 on the Middle East and Vietnam? What about Monday⁶—will there be a plenary?

For. Min. Gromyko: It depends on concluding the negotiation. There will be a plenary unless you wish to have a more narrow meeting.

Dr. Kissinger: Good. I shall miss the Foreign Minister when we leave Moscow.

⁶ May 29.

291. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Moscow, May 28, 1972.

SUBJECT

Gromyko's Performance on Vietnam

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 74, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Moscow Summit 1972 [1 of 2]. Secret; Sensitive.

There can be little doubt from Gromyko's close attention to what you said² that he wants to transmit a detailed rendition of our position to Hanoi. I think the Soviets believe that our current terms are ones that Hanoi ought to at least talk about, if not in fact accept, because they think that if implemented they will before long produce if not a Communist government in Saigon, then one that leans in that direction. I believe the Soviets accept that we want to get the war over with.

The Soviets obviously feel that the war gets in their way (which is not to say that as long as it goes on they do not also see certain benefits in it). They are probably quite frustrated by Hanoi's pathological unwillingness to take the slightest risk in negotiations. While they have to be careful not to make themselves our advocate, Gromyko's detailed notes—unusual for him—and precise questions were undoubtedly intended to enable him to present our position in a way that, in the Soviet view, might mitigate Hanoi's suspicions. In any case, it seems a virtual certainty that your presentation will be transmitted in some form.

Gromyko also seems to think that once the Paris talks start again there will be pressure on Hanoi to make them more productive. The Soviets themselves may plan to exert such pressure; but beyond that they may believe that the fear of our breaking off again and perhaps taking some further drastic military action might induce Hanoi to display somewhat more flexibility. Moreover, the Soviets know as well as we do that when negotiations are in progress, we too are subject to pressures, especially this season, to be flexible.

It does not seem probable that the Soviets will again try to get Hanoi to agree to a private session in conjunction with a formal one. But Gromyko's formulations suggest that they will try to get Hanoi to make less intransigent noises about the whole negotiating process.

One general comment. I found it interesting that unlike the senior leaders Gromyko did not find it obligatory to protest fraternal friendship for Hanoi. He seemed much more clinical in his comments about the North Vietnamese—admittedly because he was trying to persuade you to change your approach, but there was still a certain patronizing tone in his remarks about Hanoi's penchant for prestige and propaganda. In any event, Gromyko quite evidently saw his role as at least an honest post office. But he was also trying to establish his credibility with us as a fair transmission belt. Even more than that, he mentioned several times that the Soviets expect to make recommendations to Hanoi. While this has happened in the past, Gromyko seemed at pains to indicate that it would definitely happen this time.

² See Document 290.

292. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 28, 1972, 10:45 a.m.–1 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA
Georgi M. Korniyenko, Chief of USA Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Bratchikov, Interpreter
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Senior Staff Member
Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
John D. Negroponte, NSC Staff Member
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff Member (notetaker)

SUBJECTS

Communiqué (briefly at beginning); Vietnam

The Communiqué

Dr. Kissinger: We thought we would have a quick run through of the communiqué.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Soon the communiqué will shine like a diamond. Polishing and polishing. . . .

Dr. Kissinger: We agree to put into the European section, unless you object, the phrase “inviolability of frontiers.”

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Good, very good.

Dr. Kissinger: Here is the retyped version [Tab A].² But we recommend writing in on page 10 to make it “principles of territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers.” I was just talking to the President. This is why I was delayed. In view of the importance you attach to it. We thought it was the right thing to do.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: I will tell Mr. Brezhnev. He will appreciate it.

Dr. Kissinger: For the agreed portion of the Middle East, we recommend this, which is a slight adaptation of yours. It is written into the text, but here is what we have. [He hands over draft at Tab B.]

Mr. Korniyenko: You are changing what was agreed before.

Dr. Kissinger: What we had in the text was your version.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: We will study it more carefully.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 12. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Conference Room of the Foreign Minister's Office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

² All brackets in the source text. The tabs are attached but not printed.

Mr. Korniyenko: Your idea is, this will be all on the Middle East?

Dr. Kissinger: We would prefer not to have a disagreed statement on the Middle East. But if you prefer. . . .

Fon. Min. Gromyko: This is intended as joint. Probably it will be difficult to avoid a one-sided statement.

Dr. Kissinger: We prefer a joint statement.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: We too would prefer that.

Dr. Kissinger: On Indochina, perhaps we should talk afterwards. We have a few sentences of a possible joint statement, rather ambiguously phrased, for your consideration. [Hands over the draft at Tab C.]

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Probably it will not be possible to avoid one-sided statements.

Dr. Kissinger: It may not be possible. I have two papers for you. The President has re-signed the protocol. There were a few technical problems. It is coming back through normal channels. Here is the President's letter, signed. It is exactly the text you had the other day. [Tab D]³ Compare it. If anything is wrong it will be redone. This afternoon. May I mention a few other minor changes?

On our page 5, on Commercial and Economic Relations, we would like to say "it was agreed that a lend-lease settlement will be negotiated concurrently with a trade agreement." [See Tab A.] Not an integral part, but negotiated concurrently.

What is your information on the maritime problem?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Nothing new. We are awaiting your answer.

Dr. Kissinger: As I understand, it isn't done yet.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Is anything likely to happen that will change that?

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: No.

Dr. Kissinger: The holdout is the unions. What the hell is Gibson doing here? What can he do here about the unions?

Amb. Dobrynin: I thought Gibson brought something.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: We accepted this lend-lease provision.

Dr. Kissinger: I will have to check on the maritime problem. I will talk to Gibson again. I understand Flanigan and the Secretary of State are seeing Kosygin this morning.

³ At Tab D is a signed letter from Nixon to Brezhnev stating that he would like to confirm what he had already told the General Secretary: that the United States had no plans during the period of the 5-year freeze to add to its present fleet of ballistic missile submarines. The President said he was referring specifically to the U.S. right under the agreement to replace its old Titan ICBMs with SLBM submarines.

The other problem is, with respect to Europe, we should follow the same procedure as in the Berlin agreement. In the Russian text, "Berlin (West)"; in the English and French versions it says "Western sectors of Berlin." If you check you'll see. I think we should do it the same way. [Gromyko sends Bratchikov out to get a Berlin text.]

Fon. Min. Gromyko: We will check. We will say either "Berlin (West)" or the same as you, "Western sectors of Berlin." We will check.

Dr. Kissinger: That would be fine. We would be pleased if you said the same.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: All right. This is up to us.

Dr. Kissinger: On page 10, we dropped out the phrase "on Berlin" in reference to the September 3 agreement because it is on the previous page.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: It is possible.

Dr. Kissinger: Just to reduce the number of references. The Middle East I have given you. I would still like you to consider our Indochina section on page 12 [a blank page]. It would attract attention. It would be new.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: It is brief and to the point!

Mr. Korniyenko: On page 10, why do we need "non-interference and non-intervention"? In Russian it is the same.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: You have both.

Dr. Kissinger: In other words you want to interfere? You won't intervene but you will interfere? No, you are right, we'll drop one. We'll drop "non-intervention."

Fon. Min. Gromyko: In the Charter it says "non-interference."

Dr. Kissinger: I just want the record to show that we did not approve. Could we have an agreed interpretive statement that it includes non-interference?

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: "No significant interference."

Dr. Kissinger: Is it possible for us to have a Russian text of the communiqué, so our experts can check it?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: I have to show Mr. Brezhnev.

Dr. Kissinger: When? Could we have a tentative draft from you?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Only with the understanding that Mr. Brezhnev still has to check it.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. With the understanding that Mr. Brezhnev has not approved it.

On the publication of the SALT agreement, there seems to be a genuine misunderstanding. Our press office has been publishing texts all along, as they have been reached.

Amb. Dobrynin: Probably a misunderstanding. In Washington you said we would publish all at the end, attached to the final communiqué.

Dr. Kissinger: Did I say that? I did not mean that.

Mr. Korniyenko: We will publish them all at once. See that the communiqué says the texts will be annexed. Ambassador Dobrynin's understanding was that the texts would be given with embargo.

Dr. Kissinger: So you think we should attach them?

Amb. Dobrynin: No reason.

Mr. Korniyenko: Also, it is not our terminology to say "the Soviet leaders" at the end. We should have the names.

Dr. Kissinger: Will they all come?

Mr. Korniyenko: Yes, all accept. They may not all come.

Dr. Kissinger: In what order?

Mr. Korniyenko: Brezhnev, Podgorny, Kosygin.

Dr. Kissinger: We will use the titles from the front.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Yes, it would be more dignified to have names, and not say leaders.

Dr. Kissinger: It would be a little complex if the whole Politburo came at once.

We accept your proposal. "The President of the US invited General Secretary Brezhnev, Chairman Podgorny, and Chairman Kosygin to visit the US at a mutually convenient time. This invitation was accepted."

Fon. Min. Gromyko: It is a diamond.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we say "with pleasure"?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: It is not dignified.

Dr. Kissinger: If we are asked by the press, can we say on a background basis that we are thinking in terms of the spring of next year?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: We shouldn't say. Not possible to specify.

Dr. Kissinger: Can you check with Mr. Brezhnev? If asked by the press.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: For the time being it is to be worked out. Because we would have to check again.

[Pieces of bread with huge portions of caviar are brought in.]

Don't you think it looks fine?

Dr. Kissinger: True. I haven't eaten since 9:30.

I have two other matters. Vietnam we can discuss with the whole group, and then another with just Mr. Lord and Mr. Rodman.

You will give us an informal Russian text?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Could we also have a Russian text of the principles?

You've understood, Mr. Korniyenko, we have reversed "military confrontation and nuclear war."

Mr. Korniyenko: Yes.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: On Berlin, we will say "Western sectors of Berlin."

Dr. Kissinger: Good, we prefer it.

Again, in what form should we get this typed up for signing tomorrow?

Mr. Korniyenko: The principles?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Mr. Korniyenko: In the most solemn way, like a treaty.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. At what time?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: We need not set a time. Just after the last conclusion of the meeting. In the same hall, in the presence of photographers, etc.

Dr. Kissinger: Our problem is only how to brief the press.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: It is your problem. A rather one-sided problem.

Amb. Dobrynin: What is the problem?

Dr. Kissinger: We would like to brief before the signing, so that they can move an explanation along with the text. If we don't, they will run out with the text and send it around the world with the wildest speculation of what it means. Therefore we would like to leave one hour or two after the plenary and before the signing. I will brief the press before, under an embargo. I can guarantee it will not be published.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: We accept your guarantee. Anyway, it must be signed before the reception.

Dr. Kissinger: If the reception is at 3:00, then have the signing at 2:45.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: For safety, let's have the signing at 2:00, then clear the room for the reception. The press is not our problem, we have a more advanced social system. We don't have problems with the press.

Dr. Kissinger: You are making it more attractive. Your ambassador is getting very good at handling the press. We will brief the press at 1:00 and embargo it until 2:30.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: I will inform Mr. Brezhnev. If there is any change I will inform you.

Dr. Kissinger: It will be the same as with SALT, no speeches.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: On the embargo, you say 2:30? Suppose we embargo until 5:00 p.m.?

Dr. Kissinger: Our press will be traveling at 5:00 p.m. It is early morning. As a practical matter it couldn't appear anywhere until afternoon. How about 3:00 p.m.?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Okay, 3:00 p.m. Our afternoon paper is *Izvestia*.

Dr. Kissinger: I notice *Pravda* has clipped me out of the picture twice. I'm very angry. My father will be angry.

Mr. Korniyenko: You should try to get more to the center.

Ambassador Dobrynin: You stand too far to the right!

Dr. Kissinger: Always.

Ambassador Dobrynin: You are too modest.

Mr. Lord: An unlikely hypothesis.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Lord will enjoy unemployment this summer. He will meet his family.

So, the communiqué will be unsigned and the principles will be signed. They will be released at the same time.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Right.

Vietnam

Dr. Kissinger: So now let us take the easy matters.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: We have a Russian proverb: Morning is wiser than evening.

Dr. Kissinger: When I came here once in 1967 for a scientific conference, I told what I thought was a Russian proverb. Someone came running for help: "Vladimir is stuck in the mud up to his ankles!" He was asked why is that so alarming? The answer was, "He dived in head first." Is that Russian?

Ambassador Dobrynin: No, it's just an anecdote.

Dr. Kissinger: Now we discuss . . .

Fon. Min. Gromyko: How to end the war.

Dr. Kissinger: Exactly. That is the principal question.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: I would like to hear as far as possible to go. [*sic*] Full progress—what should be done first, then second, and the interconnection. Please be as specific as possible. A matter of prestige should not be as important for the US, a big country. For us in such matters we discount this aspect. It should be the same with you.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand this point about prestige. But let me pick up the discussion.

First we believe that a useful first step would be if North Vietnam and we on a private basis could have the sort of discussion we have never had. As I told you before, we would be prepared to have it in Moscow. That is if we could say honestly to each other what we must have immediately and what we could have over a period of time. Then we could work out concrete progress.

The overwhelming problem is to distinguish matters which can be settled immediately and some to be left to an historical process. Some problems solve themselves if you don't force them to a resolution. You

can create objective conditions. If you analyze our specific proposals in terms of precise present conditions, they have one meaning, and they mean another thing, in terms of other conditions. It is possible to interpret our political proposal as meaning we want to preserve the present government at all costs. It is also possible to interpret them as meaning we want a military solution alone. And once we have gone, there are new objective conditions.

We are not committed to maintaining a particular government in South Vietnam at all costs for all eternity, as the President said. We do not exclude that other political forces will play a large role. For this reason, while we are prepared to discuss a political solution, this will take a longer period. Therefore our basic idea as expressed by the President on May 8,⁴ to concentrate first on a ceasefire, is the best solution. I know the North Vietnamese are not interested. But we would be prepared as part of a ceasefire to state with the North Vietnamese some point principles for the political future of South Vietnam, for example:

- that ultimately South Vietnam should be neutral.
- that the US will remain neutral with respect to the political process.
- that the US is prepared to define certain limits to its military and economic assistance as part of an overall settlement.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Please repeat the last one.

Dr. Kissinger: The US is prepared to define certain limits to its military and economic assistance as part of an overall settlement. In other words, we are prepared to set some limits.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: What does military assistance involve?

Dr. Kissinger: To us, military assistance means delivery of supplies, not military operations. In other words we believe the best way to proceed is to have a ceasefire, an exchange of prisoners, and withdrawal of American forces—together with a statement of principles on the objectives of a settlement.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: And the sequence with respect to the ceasefire and exchange of prisoners?

Dr. Kissinger: They should be simultaneous.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: So the exchange first.

Dr. Kissinger: Well, we could relate the exchange to the withdrawal of forces.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: At the completion of withdrawal.

Dr. Kissinger: Well, I would have to check. There is some flexibility.

⁴ See Document 208 for Nixon's May 8 speech on the mining of Haiphong harbor.

Our judgment is that such a procedure would create new political realities. It would remove our military forces, it would commit us to a certain political evolution without being specific as to the composition, and it leaves the South Vietnamese to settle the political issue. We would be prepared to participate in the solution on the basis of these principles, but if we want to bring a rapid end to the war, this is the way to do it. If we talk about the political composition, we will talk until the end of the year.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Could you be more specific with respect to the present President and government machinery? And elections?

Dr. Kissinger: This approach I have given here is not specific. If we wanted a more comprehensive settlement, we could have elections, say, six months after the signature of the final document. President Thieu would resign one month before the elections. The elections would be run not by the government but by the electoral commissions. The electoral commissions would begin functioning on the day the agreement is signed, or immediately thereafter.

On these commissions each of the parties will be represented. It will have a three-part character, with the PRG, other elements, and the government.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: So, one-third for each.

Dr. Kissinger: Well, we would like to leave open the exact composition because we have not studied it. But the three-part part is established. These commissions will have responsibility for ensuring free elections, and should be given those functions necessary to ensure the freedom of the elections.

One month before the elections, Thieu and his Vice President will resign. This is our idea. In addition we are prepared to bring about an international guarantee to ensure that these commissions have the ability to assure freedom. We are prepared to join with you and other countries to ensure this. So the electoral commission is not dependent totally on the existing structure.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: What kind of international supervision?

Dr. Kissinger: Suppose we agree on an international commission. We are prepared to have an international presence in Vietnam to ensure that the commission can operate freely.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: In what form?

Dr. Kissinger: Composed of countries to which both sides agree. We are prepared to discuss it with you; we do not exclude a significant role for the socialist countries.

We believe that the combination of our withdrawal, the public declaration of principles, plus the imminent resignation of Thieu all combine to produce new political conditions to ensure a freer evolution of

political life in South Vietnam—and the more rapidly it is done the more this is true.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: About your latest measures. The mines, etc. Is it correct to suppose that the abolition of all this will be first, before a ceasefire?

Dr. Kissinger: It will be simultaneous with the ceasefire. As soon as all these are agreed, we will stop military operations.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Not before.

Dr. Kissinger: Not before. The first step after a ceasefire. And we are prepared, as soon as a ceasefire is signed, to help sweep the mines or at least give advice on how to do it.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: In a ceasefire, do you provide for the possibility of no formal agreement or an “in-fact”? Must it be solemn and formal?

Dr. Kissinger: At the moment, we are thinking of a formal one. I am thinking out loud: we cannot accept delphic assurances of the ambiguous type the North Vietnamese specialize in—but if we received a formal assurance from you, that is something we would take extremely seriously. It depends on the form, but we do not exclude it.

We prefer a formal agreement. It is easier for us, and we think that is what we should aim for.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: What is the place for a transitory [*sic*] coalition government?

Dr. Kissinger: Of course, in some respect the electoral commission represents a form of coalition.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Of course it is limited to the election.

Dr. Kissinger: But for a month before the election, there is only a caretaker government. We do not exclude a coalition emerging from the election.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Before the election, it is a commission.

Dr. Kissinger: But before the election, we do not exclude giving the electoral commission a somewhat greater role. It would be better if left somewhat vague. But that is a subject for more precise negotiation. I am giving you only a perspective now.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: The international status of the government, neutrality. At what point would it be expressed?

Dr. Kissinger: I repeat, at the ceasefire, the US is prepared to state certain principles. One is that the government that emerges from the process will be neutral.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Only the US Government? That is one-sided.

Dr. Kissinger: We are prepared to say it can be agreed by all parties. The way we are phrasing it is “a foreign policy in accordance with the 1954 Geneva Accords.”⁵ As we said,

(1) The US will support no candidate and remain completely neutral in the election.

(2) The US will abide by the outcome of the election and of any other political process the South Vietnamese device by themselves. We will state this unilaterally.

(3) The US is prepared to define its military and economic relations with any government that exists in South Vietnam as part of an overall settlement.

We are prepared, together with these unilateral principles, to propose that South Vietnam and the other countries of Indochina should adopt a foreign policy consistent with the 1954 Geneva Accords, and secondly, that reunification should be decided by North and South Vietnam without outside interference. This is from Madame Binh’s 7 points.⁶ I think they will accept their own point.

I repeat, Mr. Foreign Minister, they will of course be suspicious.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: The Vietnamese?

Dr. Kissinger: The North Vietnamese. I sometimes say they are more afraid of being deceived than of being defeated. I can only say that if we gave you these assurances, we would face the consequences of not only deceiving them but of deceiving you, with whom we are trying to start a new relationship.

Secondly, any observer of the American scene will confirm that the US is not looking for excuses to reenter Indochina. Therefore the problem is to find ways to create new political conditions.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Which elements of what you have said are unknown to the Vietnamese?

Dr. Kissinger: The explanation is unknown, the rationale of what we are trying to do, is unknown to them. They know only the formal points. Secondly, we have never related our political proposals to our May 8 proposal. We have never related the ceasefire to the political process of May 8 before.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Separately, but not in interdependent form.

Dr. Kissinger: Another new element: we are prepared to have the release of POWs related to the withdrawal.

⁵ Reference is to the July 1954 Geneva accords that ended the hostilities in Indochina and provided for a temporary partition of Vietnam pending a nationwide election in the summer of 1956.

⁶ Reference is to point 4 of the National Liberation Front’s Peace Proposal, July 1, 1971. For text, see Stebbins and Adam, eds., *American Foreign Relations, 1971: A Documentary Record*, pp. 295–298.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Now, release and troops, completion of one and completion of the other.

Dr. Kissinger: Right. But the beginning of the process should be simultaneous.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: From the movement of the signing of the agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: Right.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: On the calendar, say, June to October.

Dr. Kissinger: By the end of October, all our forces would be out, and all our prisoners would be released. Of course, if we begin in June, it all slips by a month.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: May I ask, is it possible for you to meet officially? Maybe it is a matter of prestige. They are a small country. Suppose they are reluctant for an informal meeting, why not make this officially first? If official, then it is made easier.

Dr. Kissinger: First, the North Vietnamese have a tendency to give the impression they are doing us a great favor to meet privately.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Maybe you are right. But it is only a part of this matter of prestige.

Dr. Kissinger: They always say they are meeting with a spirit of goodwill. I ask how this is manifest; they say by coming here. Therefore I don't consider it a concession.

Secondly, if there is a public meeting without any assurances of what will happen, it is exactly foreseeable what will happen: after two or three, we will walk out again.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: You miss one thing. You cannot negotiate that way. It is almost unpalatable for your *vis-à-vis* to agree beforehand what the outcome will be. They are a small country. Even a small country cannot accept preconditions for a meeting. The Ivory Coast, Guatemala.

Dr. Kissinger: Our condition is not that they accept what we propose but that they discuss what we propose. They put forward 7 or 9 points and refuse to discuss anything else. It is they who impose conditions. They say, be more concrete. What does "more concrete" mean? It means to accept their 7 points.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Suppose we tell the Vietnamese of our discussion here in Moscow, and we decide both sides' proposals will be discussed. Suppose we say the only precondition of the Americans is that their proposals should not be excluded from the discussion. If they are told both sides are free to submit. . . .

Dr. Kissinger: They never refuse our right to submit them, they refuse to discuss them. They say the only correct solution is the 7 points of the PRG and the two amendments of February.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: But you did it the same way, perhaps, but without the gestures?

Dr. Kissinger: No, there are some of theirs we can accept. The way to negotiate seriously is to put ours next to theirs and see what can be reconciled.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: But what matters is the outcome of the meeting. Suppose they are polite and the form is good.

Dr. Kissinger: May I make a counterproposal? Let them be impolite and be willing to discuss our 8 points! There should be a real negotiation.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: What if they reject discussing your proposals but out of the discussion something emerges that reaches an understanding? It should be discussed, but the matter of prestige and form is disproportionate.

Dr. Kissinger: That isn't the issue. In 149 meetings, nothing serious has happened, neither procedure nor substance. I understand their strategy—which has now failed. They are trying to bring such a sense of hopelessness in the US that it will undermine the President in the US. They want to use the plenaries to create the impression of total deadlock and to generate tremendous pressures on us to yield. But it is too late for that now.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: For 27 years the US and USSR exchanged notes and messages with plenty of "eagles" [hawks?] and with West Germany. But suddenly the treaty is reached. Each note had plenty of "eagles." Why do you exclude that?

Dr. Kissinger: But the big difference is that there is a war going on. If we have a ceasefire, we would be delighted to negotiate for 27 years on the political future.

We cannot tolerate any longer that they are directing their entire policy against the domestic structure of the United States. It is not prestige but substance.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: You exaggerate, to say it is directed against the Presidency as an institution and the domestic structure.

Dr. Kissinger: If there is a possibility of serious negotiations, if you said to us that on the basis of these considerations—not that they accept every detail—but that this framework is of interest to them, then we are prepared to resume.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: What if at the meetings both sides are free to submit proposals? Don't take every statement they take seriously.

Dr. Kissinger: When we were in Moscow in April, we accepted your proposal not to make this a question of prestige. There were two plenaries and a private meeting. They used the plenary—after pressing for six weeks—to make a statement they could make unilaterally

but which the plenary gives them a forum for. Then at the private meeting, they only read the published text of the two points. I asked if there was anything new. They insisted on them in the private meeting in the form of an ultimatum. I would have preferred—I will tell you my strategy—that they had something new. They didn't think we would take strong military measures. They wanted to create the impression of deadlock, to create pressures in the US, to repeat 1968. You know, if you want to keep negotiations going it is easy to offer something to create the right impression—you can always say you have something to explore. They were determined to break up the meeting on May 2.⁷

Fon. Min. Gromyko: This is all in the past. What if we could tell them the Americans are ready to take part in the full meeting but only if both sides' proposals can be discussed?

Dr. Kissinger: If they want to settle quickly, the private sessions are the best. The White House is in the best position to do it. We are the party to talk to. We give Porter his instructions. It is not just more authority, but we are more flexible than the bureaucracy can possibly be, and I hope more farsighted.

I am not looking for an excuse to break up the private meetings but to keep them going.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: If official meetings take place, it is much easier then to have a private meeting.

Dr. Kissinger: Why?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: It is a matter of prestige. It is easier for you to give way.

Dr. Kissinger: No, you are wrong. Right now the meetings are suspended. We are in a defensible position. If we meet again and nothing happens, we will be under fire. We will be criticized in the US for having missed an opportunity, etc. Last year, we were attacked for six months. We are in a good position. It is a matter of protecting our public position, not just prestige. We will negotiate if they give us some perspective.

If they are serious, why don't they say they are ready to talk privately? We will go immediately to the plenary sessions.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: It stops on the same spot. We cannot understand that: "Tell us in advance that you are serious." To us it is tantamount to saying they have to accept your position first.

Dr. Kissinger: We are not asking that. We are asking for a private meeting to discuss what the plenaries will discuss.

⁷ See Document 183.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: I hope you don't mean in advance of the meetings.

Dr. Kissinger: They don't have to agree to our proposal. Just an approximate agenda should be agreed to, and an approximate procedure. Then we would go to a plenary.

What is your opinion?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Formalization creates additional difficulties. I would say to them, first, of what you said yesterday and today. With respect to official meetings, the Americans are ready having in mind that the two sides are free to submit suggestions and both sides' suggestions will be considered and discussed. Under such conditions the US agrees. This is what we would say. In our opinion, we think if you have an official meeting—it is difficult to imagine it is not possible—a more favorable opportunity would be created for the closed meeting as well.

Dr. Kissinger: I absolutely reject the proposition that we have to pay any price for a private meeting.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: It is not a price.

Dr. Kissinger: It is more of a sacrifice for me. If they are interested in settling the war quickly, the most efficient method is to discuss with me privately.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Let us not talk about the unofficial, only the official.

Dr. Kissinger: What do you think their position is?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: On the basis of their statements, we have the impression that they consider that their proposals will be the basis of discussion. The idea of both sides having equal status has not entered their ideas. This would be something important. There will be light.

Dr. Kissinger: Last time, after my visit to Moscow and after our agreement to resume the plenaries, there was a great statement from Hanoi that this was a great victory for the progressive forces, and defeat for the US.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Suppose you were "defeated"? A "great victory" undermining the US!

Dr. Kissinger: This is an impossible procedure. If we accepted this framework—could we agree that neither side will claim a victory and both sides will say publicly that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the positions of each side?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: To agree on this.

Dr. Kissinger: I am just pessimistic. It is impossible for them to win militarily, it is impossible for them to accomplish their domestic objectives in the US, it is impossible for them to succeed in this negoti-

ating strategy. Moreover, they will be worse off in November, after the election. What we are asking is no ultimatum. We ask only that we discuss it with them in the most efficient forum, in the only forum where we can talk and rapidly and where we are alone with them. It is hard to discuss the replacement of the Government in a forum with that government.

With respect to the plenaries, we ask first that they stop using them for propaganda and second, that they seriously examine our proposals and we will seriously examine theirs.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Whose position is propaganda is a matter of opinion. Who is the judge?

Dr. Kissinger: You will presumably communicate our proposal to them.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: But we want a ray of light.

Dr. Kissinger: Obviously if there is any chance, we are eager to negotiate. We want to negotiate seriously in an efficient forum.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Can we say we have agreed with the Americans that they will consider the plenaries if both sides can freely submit proposals and both will be discussed?

Dr. Kissinger: Can you explain to me. Why are they so eager for the official meetings?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: I can't say with 100% certainty.

Dr. Kissinger: But you must have an idea. You must have thought about it. For three and a half years there have been plenary meetings and not one issue has been settled.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Why is it so important? Why do you insist on this?

Dr. Kissinger: Because the breakup of the meetings will be a serious political fact.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: But it is you who break up the meetings.

Dr. Kissinger: They will barrage us with ambiguous statements. Last year I saw Le Duc Tho on June 26 and he had 9 points. Four days later they published their 7 points. All summer long they kept attacking us publicly for not responding to their proposals, five of which we had already accepted. We had constantly to defend ourselves before Congress and the newspapers. You never did this when we negotiated on Berlin or anything else.

Fon. Min. Gromyko: Suppose we contact them, in a positive form, that if you agree to attend the official meetings, they would agree that each side's proposals will be discussed. If both sides' ideas are discussed in the meeting, the problem of strings attached is taken care of.

Dr. Kissinger: How can we avoid the problem we went through before?

Fon. Min. Gromyko: They will answer in the course of the meeting. This interval is being used for thinking, by them and by you. How can you say in advance what will happen?

Dr. Kissinger: It is one thing if they said to us, we want to settle quickly; then it is only a question of efficiency—how to do it most effectively. That's one way. But if they make out of the fact of the meetings itself another political confrontation, that is another matter. Frankly, their strategy has failed. They cannot win militarily. They cannot defeat us politically, and we will be in a stronger position after November. That is our assessment. We want to settle the war. We have no interest in its continuation. We have no permanent interests [involved], and it hampers our relations with you and other countries.

One aspect of the plenaries—if we resume them and fail, we will be attacked in America for having been fooled again by you. As your Ambassador knows, this happened last time. I don't believe we were fooled, but it is one of the criticisms that were made. I believe you were sincere. Why would you have an interest in doing something that will be found out in two weeks?

[The President called Dr. Kissinger and there was a ten minute break, from 12:45–12:55 p.m.]

Dr. Kissinger: We have now solved the problem of how to mention Mr. Brezhnev in the speech.

We believe the war must be ended rapidly. And therefore we have no interest in delaying the negotiations. But we have had a difficult experience. Vietnam is more difficult for us than Berlin is for you because Vietnam is an active major concern to many Americans day in and day out. I can assure you that as soon as North Vietnam indicates it is willing to settle, we will move—the Ambassador tells me “generously” is a bad word in Russian—in a forthcoming spirit.

Let me repeat my view, which I have to check with the President: If the other side confirms that both sides' programs will be discussed—and if they do so in a way that gives us confidence, we don't exclude a return to the plenaries. There are provisos. If they are determined to make propaganda statements, I tell you frankly—they must choose between dealing with our public domestic situation, with our opponents, or dealing with the Government. If the former, it is unacceptable. If the latter, we are prepared. If they attempt to create pressures, we will deal with the pressures. If they keep quiet for a few weeks, a return to the plenaries is not excluded—especially if the assurances come through a government we take very seriously, such as yours. Another thing—last time, as soon as we agreed to a plenary, they started three offensives. This would not be helpful. But we do not exclude the plenaries in the framework we discussed.

[At 1:00 p.m., Mr. Sonnenfeldt, Mr. Negroponce, and Mr. Korniyenko left. After a break, discussion resumed on the Middle East.]

293. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 28, 1972, 1–2:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the USA
Mr. Bratchikov, Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff Member (notetaker)

SUBJECTS

Basic Principles (briefly at beginning); Middle East

[This conversation was a continuation, in a more restricted group, of the meeting which had begun at 10:45 a.m.]²

Basic Principles

Foreign Minister Gromyko: [Sampling the food on the table]:
Down with cheese, long live caviar!

Dr. Kissinger: We should put that into the Principles.

I received more presents from the Soviet Foreign Ministry for my birthday than from the US State Department.

Mr. Gromyko: I will say nothing on the US Foreign Office because non-interference is one of our principles.

Dr. Kissinger: Concretely, how do we proceed now on the communiqué?

Mr. Gromyko: Verification should take place. Meanwhile, I will show it to Mr. Brezhnev.

Dr. Kissinger: The Principles are essentially agreed.

Mr. Gromyko: I have some comments on your document on the Middle East. [The US draft, "Basic Provisions for a Final Settlement," handed to Brezhnev by the President, May 26, at Tab A.]³

Dr. Kissinger: Before we get to the Middle East, there is one point I meant to make. On the first page of the Principles it says, "to make

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Mr. Kissinger's Conversations in Moscow, May 1972. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Conference Room of the Foreign Minister's Office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

² All brackets in the source text. See Document 292.

³ Tab A is attached but not printed.

every effort to remove the threat of nuclear war.” Why only nuclear war? Why not “war”? We have put nuclear war into the second Principle. I recommend we eliminate “nuclear” here.

Mr. Gromyko: The idea is different. They should correspond. It is not repetition.

Dr. Kissinger: But we want to remove the threat of war altogether.

Mr. Gromyko: You said it was a good bridge to the next part.

Dr. Kissinger: Right, that’s why we put it into the second Principle. You want to have a conventional war?

Mr. Gromyko: It seems to me it is all right as it now stands.

Dr. Kissinger: I’ll talk again to the President. He called my attention to it. If it’s a problem I will get in touch with you through your Foreign Office.

Mr. Gromyko: In the second Principle it is your suggestion; maybe remove it there.

Dr. Kissinger: Maybe. Let me check with the President.

Mr. Gromyko: You would prefer to remove it from the Preamble?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Mr. Gromyko: Let’s do it tentatively, and I will check.

*Middle East*⁴

Mr. Gromyko: Now, may I ask some questions?

Dr. Kissinger: Sure.

Mr. Gromyko: How do you visualize the matter of the sequence of different steps relative to a settlement? We always stressed the importance to approach this in such a way that any final settlement should embrace all matters, and should be interdependent. Frankly, we don’t see the possibility of another approach. It is very unrealistic to separate out. It is not just us, but the Arabs feel this way.

⁴ In his memoirs Kissinger stated that after SALT was settled, no serious effort was made to resolve any outstanding international problem. He wrote: “Significantly, the only discussion on the Middle East between Nixon and the Soviet troika took place during the afternoon that preceded the signing of the SALT treaty, guaranteeing that the Soviets would not rock the boat and that we would stick to our strategy of keeping the Middle East on ice until the Soviets were willing to talk compromise.” After noting that the Soviets were in a more difficult position than the United States realized with Egypt becoming restive at Moscow’s failure to deliver any progress towards a settlement, Kissinger wrote: “But the Kremlin’s pedantic negotiating style and rigid adherence to extreme positions prevented it from formulating proposals that we could have any incentive to support. . . . So long as they endorsed the radical Arab program we could have no reason for joint action with them. . . . So far as we were concerned, our objectives were served if the status quo was maintained until either the Soviets modified their stand or moderate Arab states turned to us for a solution based on progress through attainable stages.” (*White House Years*, pp. 1246–1247)

The other question, the crucial one, is Israeli withdrawal. You gave a formula, a little more flexible than before, but charged with the same content as before. What do you mean by this? When we speak, we mean withdrawal from all occupied territory. But if, for example, Jordan wants to make small corrections, that is another matter.

The third question relates to the personnel of Israel, observers, presence—Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza are the two points mentioned specifically. It creates troubles. The security of Israel is not secured by the presence of troops. I think this proposal is meant—not intentions but objectively—it would create obstacles. We think we should take a more objective position on this. In Gaza, specifically, the suggestion is that Israel should take part in the observers; Sharm el-Sheikh is the same.

Jerusalem in fact is excluded from the general settlement because it is said that it is to be negotiated bilaterally between Jordan and Israel. How long will it take? It is not only a matter of interest to Jordan but to all Arab countries. We are not interested in that from the point of view of religion.

Dr. Kissinger: That accusation has not even been made by the Israelis!

Mr. Gromyko: Demilitarized zones can be established by mutual acceptance, on both sides of the border in each case. To be specific, I would like to put a question with respect to the Golan Heights.

Observers of the UN at Sharm el-Sheikh would be all right, preferably limited to a certain period according to a decision of the UN Security Council.

International guarantees: We stand for the most effective that could be imagined.

The refugees problem must be solved. It may be hard, but if the principal questions are solved, I don't think this will be a bottleneck.

The ceasefire is not a problem as part of the settlement, if an understanding is reached.

The process of negotiations between the sides—it seems to be meant as bilaterally—we don't think this will work.

On the last point, the vote of the Soviet Union and the US, when I was in Washington we had a certain idea of working out a basic understanding on principles. We spoke of withdrawal from all territories; no one told me it was unacceptable. To divide all into parts, confidential and public, to take into account your internal situation, including elections—When I came back and told Mr. Brezhnev, he said it was a good idea to work out. The President here at his last meeting here in Moscow said it is OK to work out, then he made the remark that it will not work.

Dr. Kissinger: To answer the last question first: If we are to proceed on this basis, we have to be scrupulously honest with each other or else it is a complete mess.

I have always told your Ambassador of our contacts with the Israelis. I spoke with the Israelis on the general ideas of a settlement, not about specifics. I did it this way: I said, we are going to the Summit. Each side is free to state whatever problems it wishes. It is probable that the Middle East will be raised. In order to prepare the President, I needed their views. I did not tell them of any specific proposals or negotiations. I just said, if Brezhnev or Gromyko raised a proposal, we would want to know the Israeli attitude. They do not know this proposal, and it would be an enormous embarrassment, to put it mildly, if they found out. I want to make some very special precautions.

The second purpose I have is to elicit from them some specific propositions. The President has to know what they really want in Sinai—this doesn't mean we will support them—it probably would be less than they now have. That is, if they say they want half of Sinai, we don't have to start at the Canal. The Israelis have confidence in me, but this does not have Israel's approval.

What is our general conception? This is more important than Israeli approval. You have my complete assurance we won't discuss it with the Israelis unless it is with your advance approval. We may discuss general ideas, with respect to Rogers, etc., but nothing concrete. If they find we are talking concretely with you, they will start a tremendous publicity campaign.

Let me give you our analysis. Candidly, the previous negotiations between you and Rogers and Sisco failed because they dealt with theories, not with what concretely could happen. We expended all our capital debating theory with Israel. Therefore it is better to be as concrete as possible, and relate to events that could in fact occur. In addition to their theoretical nature, the difficulty with previous proposals was that they involved propositions we know Israel would never accept.

Our paper [at Tab A] represents our judgment of what it is possible to impel Israel to accept—with pressure, but without war. Your paper Israel could be made to accept only with war. The Arabs cannot defeat Israel. Maybe you could. (The Israelis don't accept that.) Therefore we are trying to find a position which—it would be very difficult—but which could be possibly made by a cutoff of military aid and other pressures. We will not give Israel a veto over our actions, but we will keep in mind those things that would make them so desperate that they would accept only with a war.

My judgment is they only want to keep about half of Sinai, a good part of the West Bank, and all—most of the Golan Heights. So this paper, difficult as it may be for you, is very difficult for Israel.

[More caviar was served.]

Mr. Gromyko: My questions are, how to understand.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me continue my analysis for a moment. I understand that it practically will not be possible to separate the problem into parts, but it is intellectually possible to look at it in different ways. I have the impression—it may turn out to be wrong—that perhaps the Jordan-Israel part could be settled, even directly. We have not exploited all the possibilities we think we have to promote it, because of our discussions. I have the impression from our discussions that you prefer the Jordan-Israel part to come second or concurrently.

Mr. Gromyko: Very preferable.

Dr. Kissinger: So I put that aside.

The problem of Egypt is more difficult, because of the very strong Israeli security interest. Probably Golan Heights is the most difficult of the three.

Egypt. As I understand the real Israeli position, not the formal one, Israel probably wants about two-fifths of the peninsula and in the form of annexation. This has been made pretty clear to me now. They believe they must have the military possibilities this gives them for their defense. We don't agree to the principle of annexation at all—except for some minor things, if to make negotiation easier. To them, the position of Sharm el-Sheikh and other territory is quite central. After five months, they finally showed me a map. It was not unambitious.

Our general strategy is to find a possibility perhaps of avoiding the formal territorial issue by dividing the problem into several components: first [dividing] the principle of where Egyptian sovereignty should be legally from where it is exercised, and using some ideas we have, for example the interim settlement as a first step, to be followed by other steps over a long period of time, therefore the idea of security zones.

I recognize the obstacle of this somewhat unilateral definition of security. But once sovereignty is defined, the evolution will be set, and one can visualize the retreat of the Israeli presence across Sinai—whereas today one sees Israel permanently on the Suez Canal. I see no possibility now of Egypt, even with your equipment, driving Israel back. Should we not therefore try to promote a gradual withdrawal across Sinai?

Mr. Gromyko: Gradually, as provided in a possible eventual settlement.

Dr. Kissinger: Exactly. With provisions with respect to security zones that would last longer than other provisions.

In regard to the Golan Heights, we must be honest. Perhaps we can use ideas from the Egyptian-Israeli settlement, but I know the Israelis won't allow Syria to come up without war.

We would be prepared to work with you to go through these two papers point by point to see what we could agree on, to see if it is possible to work out a process of getting something started and to give it concrete definition.

Mr. Gromyko: Something started in the sense of an agreement, or physical action?

Dr. Kissinger: Both.

Mr. Gromyko: Agreement should take place first.

Dr. Kissinger: Agreement between all parties, or between us?

Mr. Gromyko: Between us, then to convince the parties.

Dr. Kissinger: Total Israeli withdrawal in the sense of an ultimate objective is one thing, but it is not a practical thing without war in the immediate future, in my judgment. This has been my position consistently with your Ambassador since the beginning. We are looking for a way for the Arabs to get in the interim period three-quarters of what they want, and leave one-quarter for later.

Of these points here, many are soluble. Withdrawal and security are tough ones. Refugees, the Canal, demilitarized zones, end to the state of belligerency—all these are soluble.

Mr. Gromyko: If the Golan Heights are left aside, I don't see how . . .

Dr. Kissinger: Perhaps the principle of security zones could be adapted to the Golan Heights, in the sense of dividing the issue of sovereignty from some form of military reassurance to Israel.

Mr. Gromyko: Demilitarized zones?

Dr. Kissinger: The Israelis have three or four nahals, they call them, semi-military settlements.

Amb. Dobrynin: How do you visualize this paper? The Minister was in Washington; we would like to work out an agreement with you. But this is more detailed than we talked. Now you split in two parts—first, you begin to recognize the principle of total withdrawal, and second, you try to divide sovereignty from presence. The second part does or does not imply total withdrawal? Will our agreement be an overall settlement, or an interim settlement that does not include the principle of overall withdrawal? If the latter, it will not be acceptable, you understand. Do you have an idea of the timing? Three to four years? Just to give us some idea.

Dr. Kissinger: I want a stupid Russian Ambassador—and Minister too. Those are very good questions, Anatol. As for the time frame, I would like to think about it a little more. I can see you cannot go to the Arabs without extraordinary difficulty and say, "You can only get three-quarters." Therefore we have thought of the possible solution of separating sovereignty from security in special areas—with the expect-

tation that continuation of the discussion of security is almost inherent in the definition of sovereignty.

It is easier to accept the principle of total withdrawal if it is coupled with the security concept in some of the more disputed areas. What the Arabs would get in the immediate future is a very favorable change in the existing situation.

Ambassador Dobrynin: You have no timetable in your own mind?

Dr. Kissinger: I was thinking of withdrawal over the next year or two in the security zones, then in the next years . . .

Amb. Dobrynin: Security zones is a completely new issue.

Dr. Kissinger: I recognize that.

Mr. Gromyko: Let's approach the matter as follows: we think the separation of one question—Syria, Jordan—will not work. The Arabs will not agree; the Soviet Union will not agree. We think it won't work. Second, we think it is difficult and impossible to separate the question of sovereignty from security. It is impossible to agree to the presence of Israeli personnel on any Arab territory. International personnel is a different matter. In your paper, there are two places, Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza.

On withdrawal, now you use language that is more flexible.

We don't think presence is really a matter of security for Israel. They want a prize. The Arabs and we share this view. A principle is involved.

We are not just a distant observer. We—and you—have an interest in principles; that is why we had an agreement on Principles. So it is not just a matter of acceptability or unacceptability to the Arabs. It is intolerable to us to accept the principle of territorial aggrandizement, annexation.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me ask you this. Suppose we do not agree. What do you imagine will happen.

Mr. Gromyko: I don't know, but to a great extent, without its being under control from a distant influence, by the US and USSR, our leaders will go to bed not knowing what the next day will bring. All good things produced from the President's visit will be weakened to a great extent by the course of events, and our relations may be thrown back if war results. I informed Mr. Brezhnev of my conversations in Washington; he said it would be extremely good if we could agree.

Dr. Kissinger: That is our position.

Mr. Gromyko: The President said, "If we two agree, there will be an agreement."

Dr. Kissinger: Of course, I don't believe the President ever agreed to any specific solution. That is why we want to find a solution that can be implemented.

Mr. Gromyko: He said very strongly that, if the United States and the Soviet Union agree, then we will solve it.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, but that didn't mean he was going to agree to total withdrawal as the only possible solution.

But what I am wondering is if it isn't possible for us to start a process that continues. Why is it desirable to the Arabs to have Israel stay everywhere until an agreement is reached for total withdrawal? Why is it not better to start?

Mr. Gromyko: But what will be the end? It is one thing to start from concrete things; it is a different thing to start from the idea that the start should be part of the whole. It may be hard, physically, to take all the steps at the same time. It is quite possible to take one step first, for instance the Canal settlement.

Dr. Kissinger: Over what period?

Mr. Gromyko: That is the subject of the agreement. The question of the duration of the interim settlement is another matter to discuss. The Suez Canal could be one of the first matters to be taken up physically, in practice. But each step should have its place in a worked-out schedule.

Dr. Kissinger: You have any approximate idea?

Mr. Gromyko: It depends on when we can start. Anyway it should be limited to a number of months. Not days, of course, maybe not weeks. We cannot understand Israel one iota. If they say security, security lies through understanding, a political decision. That is security.

Dr. Kissinger: It depends on both.

Amb. Dobrynin: What is our timetable? When the Minister was in Washington, the timetable was the beginning of next year. Then it was the first half of next year.

Dr. Kissinger: If we reach an understanding that we believe can be sold to the Israelis with great pressure—then it doesn't make a great difference. We would have to allow a certain number of months; it is a question of months, not a matter of principle. But if one concludes that there are some issues that can't be resolved immediately but have to be left for later, then it will take a more extended period.

Amb. Dobrynin: With the President, we had an understanding with respect to the first approach, not two approaches.

Dr. Kissinger: I discussed with the Minister only hypothetically how an agreement would be implemented. I did not agree to his proposal so that then the only thing left was implementation. In fact, we then had a long discussion of whether the problem was soluble. I understand what the Minister has in mind—early 1973. If it is not possible on that basis, we could reach a substantial accomplishment in 1973 but leave some part for a longer period.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: You mean on the basis of an agreement? The last half of 1973?

Dr. Kissinger: I mean to answer Anatol's question about how long would the security zones exist. I gave one possible answer.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: How would you summarize, trying to be as specific as possible?

Dr. Kissinger: There is some disagreement on the subject of withdrawal, partly on the issue of principle but largely on the issue of practicality. One way to proceed would be to go through these two papers provision-by-provision over the next weeks and months, and when that is completed, to see what is left. Another approach is to recognize that there are differences on that point. Do we then have to decide that nothing can be done? But a substantial part of the withdrawal issue we are agreed upon. We could get that done. To change the legal basis of what remains would be a major change in the situation.

That is the way it looks to me at this moment.

I do not think war is the solution. It will just exacerbate the situation and leave it unresolved.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Tension too is undesirable.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, it is undesirable, also because it will hurt our relations. Though the Israelis will probably not attack, because they have what they want.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Can you exclude war?

Dr. Kissinger: No. War is possible in the Middle East. I agree with you.

We believe that on the great majority of the issues we and you agree. We do not care where the Israeli border is; frankly, Soviet security isn't affected by where the Egyptian border is. But we can go up to a certain point in the pressures we could put. I can assure you this paper would create an explosion in Jerusalem.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: If submitted in Israel?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. When we are thinking of a security zone in Sinai, we are thinking only of two bases; they are thinking of a line.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: On what can we agree here?

Dr. Kissinger: May I recommend this? That we work together on both these papers and see how much we can make joint. I think four or five can be. On what remains, we can make a great effort. Maybe our leaders can be in contact, or when I come in September, or when you come at the end of September or both, we can make this the principal item on the agenda.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It looks like we cannot sign here a limited number of principles on which we agree?

Dr. Kissinger: For example?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Withdrawal from all occupied territories.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't think in the time remaining. It is unlikely.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: That each part of the settlement is considered part of the whole.

Dr. Kissinger: That we could possibly agree to. It is not excluded.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Third, we don't exclude the possibility of UN personnel at Sharm el-Sheikh and demilitarized zones. Could we say withdrawal from all occupied territories between Jordan and Israel according to mutual agreement?

Dr. Kissinger: In what form do you mean agreement here? In the communiqué?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Maybe in the communiqué, maybe outside, two, three, four—five is better—principles which would facilitate further discussion, including the possible September meeting you mentioned.

Dr. Kissinger: We have no trouble about many of these things. The interrelationships between these, it depends on how you interpret them. If Jordan and Israel came to a separate agreement, how would you interpret the application of this principle?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We think it is difficult for Jordan. You are right that [it can be] either at the same time or otherwise, but as part of the whole. The agreement should include parts but as parts of a whole. The order of carrying them out is another matter. Jordan should be a part.

About withdrawal, suppose it was a principle on which we agreed? Even in general. Annexation, as you said. As grounds for further discussion.

Dr. Kissinger: We have stated our position in here [in the paper].

What form do you envision? A paper to be signed?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It could be formal, informal. It would be the best kind of paper to sign.

Dr. Kissinger: That is impossible.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: As some basis for further conversation. Something that could be squeezed from our paper and your paper.

Amb. Dobrynin: For example, that both sides agree no annexation.

Dr. Kissinger: I know. But it depends on what annexation means. It is agreed that annexation would not be acceptable. We have said we are in favor of withdrawal and that boundary changes should be by mutual agreement.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Would you say minor changes, and mention the inadmissibility of annexation? Or the principle of parts of a whole?

Dr. Kissinger: The only thing is, we, again, have done nothing to promote a settlement between Israel and Jordan, even though we had possibilities. What if they agreed? Would it be precluded by our understanding? I want to understand what you mean by these principles.

If it is a work program, saying what we will work on, that is one thing. But if we are to undertake an obligation, it is another. We have not promoted an Israeli-Jordanian settlement, but it is something else to oblige us to prevent it.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Say an agreement, to be signed.

Dr. Kissinger: I can assure you it won't be signed.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: An understanding that the two sides agree on the inadmissibility of annexation.

Dr. Kissinger: What if they [Israel and Jordan] agree?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: The second principle, if the two sides want to make minor adjustments. . . . We may have Jordan in mind, but may not mention particular parties.

Third, settlements among the parties—Israel and Egypt, Israel and Jordan, Israel and Syria—should be considered in context, and a settlement between any two should be considered part of a whole. At the same time, concrete actions to carry out the agreement could take place according to a specially-worked-out schedule. This should be worked out in a settlement.

Duration: If we agree on this, it's still better. We do not mention the time now. It should be filled out. The subjects are of course linked. I think this is better for the American side. All the parts need not be implemented at the same time, on the first day. First a Suez Canal opening, then some security arrangement, demilitarized zones, UN personnel, to be decided on a mutually acceptable basis, on an equal basis.

Dr. Kissinger: If you have 100 kilometers on each side, all of Israel will be demilitarized!

Foreign Minister Gromyko: It will be subject to future specification.

Dr. Kissinger: What would be the status of such principles? Something we have agreed to work with, you and us, or something we are obliged to work with on the parties?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Something for us to work with. Then, the Soviet-American team would work. From your side, one brilliant person; from our side, we will have what we have!

Dr. Kissinger: You don't commit yourself to producing a brilliant person!

Foreign Minister Gromyko: We are modest people.

Dr. Kissinger: I would like to think about this. Can we meet after dinner, 8:30, 9:00?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: 8:30 better.

Dr. Kissinger: I should listen to the President's speech. The speech is at 8:30. We will meet at 9:15. Here?

Foreign Minister Gromyko: Here.

Dr. Kissinger: All right.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: St. Catherine's is too big.

Dr. Kissinger: I like the architecture. I'm going to rebuild the Situation Room.

Foreign Minister Gromyko: If anyone in Moscow now tried to build something like that [St. Catherine's], he would be severely reprimanded by our Central Committee!

Dr. Kissinger: I brought Anatol to the Situation Room. Our security people had a heart attack.

At 9:15 here, we can finish up the communiqué and see where we stand on this. It gives me a chance to talk to the President.

[The meeting then adjourned.]

294. Editorial Note

In his diary entry for May 28, 1972, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman recorded that President Nixon "got into some discussion of plans during the day—of his plans for the TV tonight, seems to have that in pretty good shape. And then back again to the return statement. He's still thinking, or he was still thinking about the two options of either the Congress or the White House lawn. Then it occurred to him that he could do the thing in the East Room, with the Congressional leaders, and invite the rest of Congressional, Cabinet, Joint Chiefs, and so on, and drum up all the advantages of Congress, without the attendant disadvantages, so that's the basis on which we're working at this point. He's spending most of the day holed up in his own quarters, presumably working on the speech for tonight, it's now 4:00 in the afternoon, and that's it at this point. . . . At 6:30 [Nixon] had Henry and me in, and we went into the question of the schedule for tomorrow. . . . P went into a discussion of his reporting speech, he wants it to be a brief recitation of what was accomplished. Wants a paragraph on his long, frank talks with the Soviet leaders, shouldn't mention Viet-

nam directly, but make the point that we have the responsibility as great powers to avoid problems, and one of the long range results is, as great powers, we can use our influence more effectively to avoid crises. And on the point of where we go in the future, it's easy to have a state of euphoria, these are significant steps, but only a beginning. We have to continue to maintain our strength. The Soviets left no doubt that they'll continue to maintain theirs. Any reduction must not be done unilaterally. This whole Summit meeting demonstrates that it can be done mutually, and that's the way it must be done for our interest and for everybody's.

"He gave his speech this evening at 8:30 to the people of the Soviet Union, and it went very well, although we had a flap at the last minute because the Soviets wouldn't let our 16mm camera in, so we have no film coverage of it, only the video tape. The reaction afterwards was that everybody thought it was great, even E[hrlichman] thought it was so good that we ought to try to get it replayed in prime time—thought the picture was great, great setting, another historic event, big build up, and so on. P especially was anxious to get the Tanya segment replayed, because he thinks that's the most important part. He worked on some follow-up plans along that line. I think we're in good shape." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

For text of Nixon's May 28 television and radio broadcast to the people of the Soviet Union, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pages 629–632. In his memoirs Nixon wrote: "As in 1959, I felt this would be a very important opportunity for me to present the American viewpoint to the Russian people without any editing or control by the Soviet Government." He said that in the speech he "discussed the dangers of an unchecked arms race, and I underlined America's sincere desire for peace." At the end of his speech, he described his previous day's experience at the Piskaryev Cemetery and museum in Leningrad and said:

"As we work toward a more peaceful world, let us think of Tanya and of the other Tanyas and their brothers and sisters everywhere. Let us do all that we can to ensure that no other children will have to endure what Tanya did and that your children and ours, all the children of the world, can live their full lives together in friendship and in peace."

Nixon wrote that Brezhnev told him after the broadcast that his conclusion brought tears to his eyes. (*RN: Memoirs*, pages 616–617)

295. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 28, 1972, 9:35–11:55 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA
Georgi M. Korniyenko, Chief of USA Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Bratchikov, Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President
Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff Member (notetaker)

SUBJECTS

Communiqué; Middle East

The Communiqué

[The Foreign Minister first took Dr. Kissinger aside for about eight minutes of private conversation in the Foreign Minister's private office. They began on the subject of the phrase "inviolability of frontiers," as proposed by the Soviets for the communiqué section on Europe. They then joined the rest of the group in the conference room, resuming on the same subject.]² [The working text of the communiqué is at Tab A.]³

Dr. Kissinger: There is one possible compromise suggested by Korniyenko: "inviolability of *their* frontiers."

For. Min. Gromyko: It is obvious whose are referred to.

Dr. Kissinger: Are we finished with the communiqué? Sonnenfeldt and Korniyenko are running the whole affair.

Mr. Korniyenko: We will omit the parts about the maritime matters.

Dr. Kissinger: You want to say "agreed to continue the negotiations aimed at reaching an agreement on maritime and related matters. They believe that such an agreement would make a positive step. . . . ?" All right.

You want to say [in the commercial/economic section] "encouraging the conclusion of long-term contracts?"

Amb. Dobrynin: We supported your position and now you take it out.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Mr. Kissinger's Conversations in Moscow, May 1972. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Conference Room of the Foreign Minister's Office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

² All brackets in the source text.

³ The tabs are attached but not printed.

Dr. Kissinger: Our economic expert Flanigan says the U.S. Government has no right to encourage contracts among private firms.

Amb. Dobrynin: Do you always listen to the experts?

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Foreign Minister, Dobrynin was always under control until the last few meetings! Oh hell, I'll accept yours.

Amb. Dobrynin: I think you're splitting the hair.

Dr. Kissinger: No, I am accepting it. I will have trouble with Flanigan.

I have suggested that the English text use the phrase, "encouraging the conclusion of long-term contracts" and the Russian text refer to "the importance of long-term contracts"—exactly the opposite of what is expected!

Are we all set on the communiqué? Anyone who has the ability to settle anything in one hour with Mr. Sonnenfeldt has my admiration.

Is the Middle East section set?

For. Min. Gromyko: On the Mideast, I sent it to Mr. Brezhnev. When he reads it I will communicate with you. Probably tomorrow morning.

Amb. Dobrynin: Before 10 o'clock.

Dr. Kissinger: We won't have much time tomorrow.

For. Min. Gromyko: On Indochina, probably there will be separate statements.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

For. Min. Gromyko: On the Mideast, it may be joint.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. Foreign Minister, I will miss dealing with you. You are always precise.

All right, on Indochina, which will we use for our text if there are separate statements?

For. Min. Gromyko: Since it's one-sided, it's up to the sides to decide.

Dr. Kissinger: I have only one experience with two-sided communiqués.

For. Min. Gromyko: In Peking.⁴ What was your experience?

Dr. Kissinger: It is more time-consuming. What we did was use the formula that each side was free to say what it wanted but each was free to comment on the other's and each would take the other's comments seriously.

It is not in anybody's interest to have sections which give the impression of cosmic confrontation. Here too, particularly in view of the spirit of our conversations this morning.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 54.

For. Min. Gromyko: We will do this after we hear your formulation.

Dr. Kissinger: All right.

[Sausage is brought in.]

For. Min. Gromyko: A change.

Dr. Kissinger: I like sausage too, but I just ate.

On the principles, I have one change. You want to change “social systems” to “political systems.” That’s all right.

Mr. Lord: We’ll say “political.”

Dr. Kissinger: On the fourth principle, our experts tell us that the language implies that the Warsaw Pact is obligated to assure NATO’s compliance with its obligations and vice versa. We should say, “agreements to which they are *jointly* parties.”

For. Min. Gromyko: In Russian, there is no need.

Dr. Kissinger: In English, it could refer to multilateral agreements to which one but not the other is a party.

Amb. Dobrynin: Do you need this?

Dr. Kissinger: This is the one contribution the State Department has made to this document, literally.

For. Min. Gromyko: You are right in your interpretation, but in Russian it is not necessary.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand, Mr. Korniyenko, that you and our people will get together tomorrow to conform the texts.

Mr. Korniyenko: Yes.

For. Min. Gromyko: You may say “jointly.”

Dr. Kissinger: I have no complaint about the Russian text. I must say my contribution on this is not what I have accomplished with you but what I have accomplished with our own people.

Mr. Korniyenko: Should I meet with State tomorrow?

Dr. Kissinger: But with Sonnenfeldt present.

Mr. Korniyenko: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we keep the plenary very general and brief?

For. Min. Gromyko: We are moving in that direction. It will be very brief.

Dr. Kissinger: The Indochina paper you have of ours is a long one.

For. Min. Gromyko: A separate statement is more probable.

Dr. Kissinger: It would be sensational if we had a joint statement on that.

Middle East

For. Min. Gromyko: Have you thought about the principles [as we discussed this morning]?

Dr. Kissinger: I have written an outline for possible future discussion. [He hands the paper over at Tab B.⁵ Gromyko and Dobrynin read it. Gromyko takes out a pen.]

Dr. Kissinger: Are you signing it?

Mr. Foreign Minister, this is not a document every word of which has been fully weighed. I talked to the President after our conversation, and these are more “thinking points.”

For. Min. Gromyko: In the first point, the phrase “on a priority basis”—I think this does reflect . . .

Dr. Kissinger: It was an attempt to reflect your thinking.

For. Min. Gromyko: In the second principle,⁶ you need “the” Arab territories. You don’t need “Arab;” it’s not Indian or Japanese territories.

Amb. Dobrynin: We’ll trade you “Arab” for “the.”

For. Min. Gromyko: Why not “Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian territories”?

Dr. Kissinger: I don’t mind saying that. I would like to avoid the article at this point.

Amb. Dobrynin: What do you mean “at this point?”

Dr. Kissinger: Frankly, it is an issue on which we’re not fully agreed. But substantially agreed. I tried to phrase it in a way that allows both.

For. Min. Gromyko: If I were you, I would accept “the” and would try to explain it, and then reflect your point in the third point.

Dr. Kissinger: If I were you I’d try to have two ways of arguing, one in the second point and one in the third.

I must say I understand your point very clearly, very precisely.

For. Min. Gromyko: I have no doubt you understand, but you don’t accept it.

Dr. Kissinger: I don’t exclude it.

For. Min. Gromyko: Your third point⁷ covers it.

⁵ The attachment at Tab B is entitled “Working Outline for Future Discussions.” Tab C is entitled “General Working Principles” and a handwritten notation reading: “Confirmed text—evening of 28 May 1972” indicates that the paper was confirmed following this meeting.

⁶ The second point in the “Working Outline” reads: “The agreement should contain provisions for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories occupied in 1967.”

⁷ Point 3 reads: “Border changes should not be based on the principle of annexation but of security. They should result from agreement among the parties.”

Amb. Dobrynin: It mentions border changes.

Dr. Kissinger: Let's reserve on the second and go to the third.

For. Min. Gromyko: In English is there a difference between "changes" and "rectification?" "Rectification" is more flexible.

Dr. Kissinger: No, it's less flexible.

For. Min. Gromyko: How about "minor rectifications are not excluded relative to some of the parties but, even if they take place, they should result from voluntary agreement—" but without saying "between the parties."

Dr. Kissinger: Suppose we say "border rectifications are not excluded between the parties but should be by voluntary agreement."

For. Min. Gromyko: You are against "minor."

Dr. Kissinger: Because "rectification" implies "minor."

For. Min. Gromyko: In Russian, "rectification" is *utochnit'*. I remember even the Israelis speak of "minor." Suppose we say "minor rectifications."

Dr. Kissinger: How about "minor changes"?

For. Min. Gromyko: In Russian, *nyebol' shiye izmenyeniya*. Or "some rectifications are not excluded."

Mr. Korniyenko: "Any rectifications, which are not excluded, should be the result of voluntary agreement."

For. Min. Gromyko: "Any border rectifications, which are not excluded. . . ."

Dr. Kissinger: No, it has to be stated positively.

For. Min. Gromyko: "Which may take place, should result from voluntary agreement among the parties."

Dr. Kissinger: Are you considering this accepted on your side?

For. Min. Gromyko: More or less.

Dr. Kissinger: Tentatively let's use it as a working hypothesis.

For. Min. Gromyko: Fourth, you would like "Arrangements for security should include demilitarized zones and the most effective international guarantees."⁸

Dr. Kissinger: Or "could include."

For. Min. Gromyko: Or rather, "Mutual arrangements for security could include demilitarized zones and the most effective international guarantees." We could say "with the participation of the Soviet Union and U.S." We would prefer this if you don't mind.

⁸ Point 4 reads: "Arrangements for security should include demilitarized zones and the most effective international guarantees."

Dr. Kissinger: This is a working paper for us alone, not to show to anyone. What about “if appropriate, with the participation of the Soviet Union and the U.S.?” Or “as appropriate?” “As” is not so conditional.

For. Min. Gromyko: “With appropriate participation by.”

Dr. Kissinger: All right. “Could” is a saving clause.

For. Min. Gromyko: Maybe we should mention here the special phrase “it may be provided that the UN Security Council should take part as a component of the security arrangements.”

Dr. Kissinger: We’re getting too detailed. Since this is between us, any side can raise this at any point. I was not too impressed by the Security Council last December.

For. Min. Gromyko: [Reading point 5]: “The agreements should lead to an end of a state of belligerency and the establishment of peace.” Unquestionably . . . [Reading point 6:] “Freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran and the Suez Canal should be assured. Unquestionably . . . One thing I could say here, which would give matter [substance] to the principles is, “This would not be detrimental to Egyptian sovereignty over the Canal.”⁹

Dr. Kissinger: I don’t mind that. You want to put it in? Can we put it another way, so as not to be implying that in case of conflict sovereignty prevails? “This can be assured without impairing Egyptian sovereignty over the Canal.”

For. Min. Gromyko: [Reads point 7:] “Completion of the agreements should at some stage involve negotiations among the signatories.”¹⁰ This is politically unpalatable to us.

Dr. Kissinger: Why? Why can’t you say “at some point?”

Amb. Dobrynin: Is it so important now?

Dr. Kissinger: It seems to me difficult on the part of the Arabs to say they are willing to live in peace with Israel and not be willing to talk to Israel about that peace. We’re not saying “from the beginning.”

For. Min. Gromyko: But Jarring will be shuttling back and forth.

Dr. Kissinger: With the energy for which he is known. [Gromyko laughs] This does not exclude indirect negotiations.

All we are saying is that before the agreements are finally concluded it will happen, that we can’t complete the negotiations.

⁹ The revised version of point 6 in Tab C adds the sentence: “This is fully consistent with Egyptian sovereignty over the Canal.”

¹⁰ The revised paper at Tab C has a sentence reading: “The US position is that completion of the agreements should at some stage involve negotiations among the signatories.” as an addendum.

For. Min. Gromyko: I'm not sure it would be realistic. If the parties should at some point be willing to have contacts, it will be okay.

The UN General Assembly once had a list of recommended disarmament measures. It said the countries could do this, would do that, and then do this. It then had one line at the end: "if everything is all right!"

We'd prefer to cross this out. It would just harm it. It can hang in the air.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we say it another way? "It is recognized that the two sides cannot impose a solution."

For. Min. Gromyko: Not just in theory but in practice it is impossible to settle without direct contact. If it depended on us, there would be no question—only the substance would matter.

Dr. Kissinger: Is it your view that the Arabs would never talk to Israel? How can they get the document signed? How can they say they're willing to talk peace but not talk to each other?

For. Min. Gromyko: Again, it is prestige. This is reality, part of life. "If the parties should consider it possible to be in touch before signing, it should not be precluded."

Amb. Dobrynin: [To Gromyko:] Put "could" instead of "should."

For. Min. Gromyko: "If the parties concerned find it possible to be directly in touch with one another before the signing of the agreement(s), it should not be excluded." Maybe it is clumsy. There could be different combinations of contacts.

Dr. Kissinger: We don't have to leave the impression that we can impose a settlement. Our principle says "negotiations;" we're not saying "direct negotiations." In a way, exchanges through Jarring are a form of negotiation. We are trying to find some role for the parties concerned. If the parties won't talk in any form, then these principles will have to be imposed.

Amb. Dobrynin: They will sign together.

Dr. Kissinger: Then what will they do? Who would exclude it? You won't and we won't.

For. Min. Gromyko: It reflects our general mood. You and we are not against something. We cannot say to the Arabs that we agreed with you on this point. They would blame us at once. They may crucify us.

Dr. Kissinger: With music?

Amb. Dobrynin: Let's drop it for the time being.

For. Min. Gromyko: Can we say something about the possibility of including among the security arrangements the presence of UN Security Council personnel?

Dr. Kissinger: Where?

Amb. Dobrynin: In point 4.

For. Min. Gromyko: At Sharm el-Sheikh.

Dr. Kissinger: I have no objections.

For. Min. Gromyko: Just insert after “demilitarized zones,” the phrase “placing UN Security Council personnel at Sharm el-Sheikh.” The Arabs will not like it, but I think we and you can do this. I think it would add something material to this.¹¹

[Pause] Do you have doubts?

Dr. Kissinger: No. I want to be candid. When we say “demilitarized zones,” we don’t exclude other things. I wanted to be sure you understood.

For. Min. Gromyko: “The temporary stationing of UN personnel at Sharm el-Sheikh”—temporary, not until the Second Coming of the Christ!

Dr. Kissinger: An interesting formulation to put to the Jews and the Arabs: “These forces will stay until the Second Coming of the Christ!”—signed by a Socialist country and the U.S., and put to the Jews and Arabs! [Reads:] “Mutual arrangements for security could include demilitarized zones, the temporary stationing of UN personnel at Sharm el-Sheikh and the most effective international guarantees, with appropriate participation by the Soviet Union and the United States.”

For. Min. Gromyko: “A limited number of UN personnel.”

How about the Palestinians? I wonder who in the world could give a precise solution to this problem.

Dr. Kissinger: The way the Foreign Minister is going we will reach agreement tonight. [He picks up and reads the U.S. draft of “Basic Provisions for a Final Settlement in the Middle East.”]

What would you like to say about the Palestinians?

For. Min. Gromyko: “The problem of the Palestinian refugees should be solved on the basis of the restitution of their legitimate rights and appropriate (or corresponding) UN decisions.”—as a principle.¹²

Dr. Kissinger: But here we’re describing very general principles. I don’t mind saying “a settlement should include provision for the Palestinians.” Frankly I would like to study the UN resolutions closely to see what your proposition means.

¹¹ Point 4 in the revised text reads: “Mutual arrangements for security could include demilitarized zones, the temporary stationing of UN personnel at Sharm el-Sheikh, and the most effective international guarantees with the appropriate participation of the Soviet Union and the United States.”

¹² The revised paper includes as Point 8: “The problem of the Palestinian refugees should be solved on a just basis and in accordance with the appropriate UN decisions. (Reserved by the US side).”

Amb. Dobrynin: You mean the UN resolutions for which the U.S. voted?

Dr. Kissinger: I have no difficulty in saying in any working program for us that there must be an appropriate section on the refugees. Our concern now is whether we want to expand on this and how.

For. Min. Gromyko: Would you not want to mention specifically the region of Gaza and say that one possible solution to its status would be to have a plebiscite?

Dr. Kissinger: I am reluctant, not because I disagree but because it's difficult to do this here at this table. It is not like SALT, in which I had the benefit of years of preparation and study.

What are we trying to do? We are just telling each other what we are prepared to do. On Gaza, I don't exclude the possibility of a plebiscite; in fact it may be useful.

For. Min. Gromyko: Suppose one more principle is added, maybe at the end. "Both the U.S. and Soviet Union recognize as one of the main principles relating to the situation in the Middle East that all states of the Middle East, including Israel, have the right to exist as sovereign independent states."¹³

Dr. Kissinger: A very good principle, a very positive principle.

For. Min. Gromyko: We took this consistent principle ever since the creation of Israel as a state in 1947. "The U.S. and Soviet Union recognize that one of the most important principles relating to the situation in the Middle East is recognition of the right of all states, including Israel, to exist as sovereign independent states."

Dr. Kissinger: Read it back. "The U.S. and Soviet Union agree . . ." Just a stylistic point.

For. Min. Gromyko: Can you imagine if we showed this now to the Syrians, what they would do?

Dr. Kissinger: Both of us are terrified of what our allies would do. This is the best guarantee of secrecy.

We don't have to say "agree," because the whole statement is joint.

For. Min. Gromyko: "Recognition of the independence and sovereignty of all states in the Middle East, including Israel, is one of the basic principles on which the settlement has to be based."

Dr. Kissinger: "One of the main principles of a stable peace."

For. Min. Gromyko: "On which the settlement must be based." This is the eighth point, then.

¹³ Point 7 in the revised paper reads: "Recognition of the independence and sovereignty of all states in the Middle East, including Israeli, is one of the basic principles on which the settlement must be based."

Dr. Kissinger: The ninth. Since we won't finish here, why not leave it for Anatol and me to finish?

For. Min. Gromyko: But we should have a rough agreement on principles here.

Dr. Kissinger: What was that principle again? [Bratchikov reads it again.] We accept that.

For. Min. Gromyko: On the Palestinians, do we have a formulation? Our suggestion was "the problem of the Palestinian refugees should be solved on the basis of the restitution of their legitimate rights and appropriate UN decisions."

Dr. Kissinger: What does "restitution of their legitimate rights" mean? Your proposal in the paper is more flexible and easier to deal with than a general principle.

For. Min. Gromyko: What would you prefer?

Dr. Kissinger: "Should be settled on an equitable basis?" "On a just basis?"

For. Min. Gromyko: Let us say, "on a just basis in accordance with the decisions of the UN."

Dr. Kissinger: My problem is I don't remember what the UN decisions were.

"On a just basis and in accordance . . ." Is it possible for me to say that for tonight it is all right and get back to Anatol within a few days? I want to study the UN resolutions. You can't hold me to something we don't want to carry out. If you left out the UN, we would accept it immediately.

For. Min. Gromyko: Leave it subject to your confirmation. The U.S. not only supported these resolutions but prepared them.

Dr. Kissinger: From my present knowledge, it's all right. But I want to confirm. When will the Ambassador return?

Amb. Dobrynin: Sunday,¹⁴ if my Minister will permit it.

Dr. Kissinger: I won't be back from Key Biscayne until Monday night.

For. Min. Gromyko: Not later than Sunday he will return.

Dr. Kissinger: I won't be available until Tuesday. We return Thursday afternoon. I brief on Friday, then go to Key Biscayne or New York on the weekend—I haven't decided.

Amb. Dobrynin: He missed Japan.

For. Min. Gromyko: You missed Japan twice!

¹⁴ June 4.

Dr. Kissinger: If you get your allies to restrain themselves, I may get to Japan.

For. Min. Gromyko: It was a pleasure to visit Japan.

Dr. Kissinger: A pleasure? You were there.

For. Min. Gromyko: It was very interesting.

Dr. Kissinger: I've not been there in an official capacity. They have a very complex way of thinking. Can you tell what is in their minds?

For. Min. Gromyko: Like the Chinese.

Dr. Kissinger: It is not easy with the Chinese either, but they're not as formal as the Japanese.

For. Min. Gromyko: For example, with us and in the West, the sooner something is done, the better. It is a sign of effectiveness. For the Chinese, it is a sign of inefficiency.

Amb. Dobrynin: Or weakness.

For. Min. Gromyko: Of a not-serious approach to a problem. If an answer is given the same day, they would be surprised.

Dr. Kissinger: Then they think they have made a bad proposal.

You're right. They have a much more complex way of thinking than the Western.

For. Min. Gromyko: It is because for centuries and centuries their general pace of life was too slow, as far as social phenomena, in terms of technique. Slowness became the norm. It can be explained, as a subject of social philosophy.

Dr. Kissinger: We have found that almost everything the Chinese say to us in any context, even social, has some meaning. We may not know it, but looking back it has some meaning they're trying to convey. It may not be immediately apparent, but three weeks later it all fits into a mosaic. Nothing is totally spontaneous.

For. Min. Gromyko: I think you're right. It is our deeply implanted impression.

Dr. Kissinger: You have much longer experience with them.

For. Min. Gromyko: Suppose they stay longer and verify the text.

Dr. Kissinger: You think we've finished with this? All except the one on negotiations.

For. Min. Gromyko: Number 7: "Completion of the agreements should at some stage involve negotiations among the signatories."

Dr. Kissinger: My problem is, it is a tautology. Why would we object, if they wanted to be in touch? It is not a useful statement. May I say this? Why don't we, the U.S., say it unilaterally as an interpretive statement? I would rather state a meaningful statement.

For. Min. Gromyko: Draw a line on the paper then and have your interpretive statement.

Dr. Kissinger: "The U.S. believes that . . ."

For. Min. Gromyko: What is the title of this document? "A Basis for Principles?" "Basic Working Principles?"

Dr. Kissinger: All right.

For. Min. Gromyko: Basic in the sense of limited to the most important points.

Dr. Kissinger: Why don't we copy out what we have, with the changes? [Dr. Kissinger asks Mr. Rodman to copy out the agreed language, and to coordinate with Mr. Korniyenko at the end of the meeting to conform the two sides' texts.]

Dr. Kissinger: How about "General Working Principles?"

For. Min. Gromyko: All right.

Dr. Kissinger: How do we handle this?

For. Min. Gromyko: We are at your disposal. We prefer to handle it in a general way. It would be without formalizing it, and [the document] would be at your disposal and our disposal.

Dr. Kissinger: As far as we are concerned, it will stay in the White House.

For. Min. Gromyko: We will guard it on our side as well.

Dr. Kissinger: We do not care what you do, but it will stay in Moscow at the highest level?

For. Min. Gromyko: Yes.

Amb. Dobrynin: And in the Embassy in Washington, too.

For. Min. Gromyko: If the Minister sends it to the Embassy.

Dr. Kissinger: You put your interpretation in and we will not challenge it.

For. Min. Gromyko: Oral interpretation.

Dr. Kissinger: We are putting down point seven as our interpretation and you put this down. We will not dispute it. We will not say we disagree.

Mr. Korniyenko: Putting such a sentence means that we do not agree.

Dr. Kissinger: You gave your consideration with respect to security zone; it is incorrect for us. Withdrawal from Arab territories [point 2] does not exclude all territories. It does not imply it, but it does not exclude it.

Amb. Dobrynin: We should add the word "the." This would underline the different interpretation.

For. Min. Gromyko: Orally you accept our interpretation and orally you do not dispute it.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand the subtle point. You say that paragraph 2 means, that the Soviet side interprets this to mean withdrawals

from *the* Arab territories subject to considering it in context with paragraph 3. We do not dispute that this is your interpretation and we leave it open.

For. Min. Gromyko: This is the difference: we dispute the interpretation but are not disputing the context.

Dr. Kissinger: This is a terribly important point that I would like to fully discuss with the President.

There is one other point which I will confirm to the Ambassador at the first meeting; as soon as I get back to Washington I will confirm it to him. We will try to do what you propose on point 2; you are willing to leave the phrase as it is. You orally make your interpretation. There will be no written record.

For. Min. Gromyko: Right.

Dr. Kissinger: Orally, I say that I do not question your interpretation of the context. I would like to check this with the President and confirm with your Ambassador in a week.

For. Min. Gromyko: We will leave it as it is.

Dr. Kissinger: If I don't confirm to your Ambassador, you are not bound by number 2.

Amb. Dobrynin: Or number 3 in this context.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand.

For. Min. Gromyko: We believe that your reservation is met by paragraph 3.

Dr. Kissinger: When I am back in Washington I would like to review previous exchanges on this subject, so when we do say something we can say it with confidence. I believe the combination of 2 and 3 should be satisfactory, and I consider the way you are handling paragraph 2 to be a fair way of meeting our concerns. But because it is so important, there is no sense in agreeing to it now. I would mean more to you if we accept it a week from now.

Mr. Korniyenko: The Foreign Minister is saying that the content of this phrase means *the* Arab territories.

For. Min. Gromyko: "All."

Dr. Kissinger: "The." I understand the content the Foreign Minister is giving this principle, and I do not contest it.

For. Min. Gromyko: Meanwhile we will leave the second and third points as they are without any revisions.

Dr. Kissinger: Plus this oral exchange.

For. Min. Gromyko: The third is as agreed. Yes. We will have further discussion.

[Dr. Kissinger reads through the principles.]

When I go back I will say that there are no secret agreements.

For. Min. Gromyko: We agree.

Dr. Kissinger: You will keep it as we discussed. You will not discuss it with Egypt.

For. Min. Gromyko: Right.

[The Foreign Minister and Dr. Kissinger then adjourned to the Foreign Minister's private office for an extended discussion. It was 11:55 p.m.]

[In the meantime, Mr. Korniyenko, the Ambassador, and Mr. Rodman went over the "general working principles" to produce an agreed text. There was a dispute over point 6: Dr. Kissinger in the meeting had added, "This [freedom of navigation] can be achieved without impairing Egyptian sovereignty over the Canal." Mr. Korniyenko suggested, "Should be achieved." Mr. Rodman argued that this changed the meaning. Mr. Korniyenko and the Ambassador claimed that it did not. Mr. Rodman suggested they raise it with Dr. Kissinger and the Foreign Minister.]

[When Dr. Kissinger and Mr. Gromyko emerged, Dr. Kissinger insisted that Mr. Korniyenko's suggestion changed the meaning completely. The sentence was meant as a statement of fact, not as a statement of an objective. When Dr. Kissinger finished, the Foreign Minister—rather quickly—suggested "This is fully consistent with Egyptian sovereignty over the Canal." This was immediately agreed.]

[The "conformed [*confirmed?*] text" of the "general working principles" as finally agreed upon is at Tab C.]

296. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Moscow, May 28, 1972.

SUBJECT

Your May 29, 1972 Private Meeting with Brezhnev

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 1. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The President scrawled handwritten notations across the text of the memorandum that read: "Gifts—Established Personal Understanding—Key—['Chi' crossed out] (Trust Chicom)—Must keep in touch in private channel on [illegible]—Legacy—positive footing—Nuclear ['non' crossed out] Recognition—Economics (re N[ew] York et al)—Mideast—V—Nam."

General Approach

In your final private meeting with Brezhnev you will want to strike a positive note. You should stress the general theme that solid achievements have been made this week and that continued progress will depend on both sides taking a broad view in our relations. You should make the following points:

—You believe that a great deal of confidence has been established this past week. The frankness of the discussions between you and Brezhnev was as significant as the various agreements that have been signed.

—It is important to keep in close personal touch in the future. If either side has a major concern it should tell the other. In this way many problems can be handled before they turn into major issues.

—Both nations will continue to face the choice between pressing for narrow tactical gains at the other's expense and taking a larger perspective on relations between the world's two most powerful nations.

—You think it is essential that we both conduct our policies in a generous spirit. This approach will guide your actions.

—If we can both move ahead on this basis, the things we have in common will increasingly outweigh those that divide us. We can thus place US-Soviet relations on a fresh, positive footing.

Nuclear Renunciation

The Soviets have been very interested in a declaration on nuclear weapons. We have turned this troublesome concept toward the safer grounds of changing their treaty draft into an understanding. At Tab A is a draft understanding on this subject that should strike a positive note without getting us into trouble with either our allies or the Chinese. *You can say:*

—You know of the Soviets' interest in the subject of a treaty renouncing nuclear weapons.

—You have given a great deal of thought to this issue and wish to give them a draft for their consideration. (Hand over Tab A.)²

Economics

—We should not look at economic issues in a strictly business deal fashion but rather in larger scope, as an important contribution to overall US-Soviet relations.

—You favor a comprehensive package including:

- The extension of Export-Import Bank financing.
- MFN treatment for the USSR (requires Congressional approval).
- Settlement of lend-lease.

² Attached but not printed.

—We will look hard at the natural gas project to find ways to encourage financing for a major arrangement that will benefit both countries.

—You are instructing all our negotiators to approach economic/commercial issues in a generous spirit with particular emphasis on the political aspect.

Middle East

—You and the General Secretary and Kissinger–Gromyko have held useful talks on this subject.

—You hope we can make progress on this over the coming weeks.

Your Visit to the Soviet Union

—You and Mrs. Nixon want to thank the Soviet leaders for the warm hospitality and courtesies extended to you during this memorable visit.

297. Editorial Note

Handwritten notes by President Nixon dated May 29, 1972, 3 a.m., indicate his intention to report to Congress because some of his actions required Congressional approval, but also because they were building “not for a summit of one summer—but of many years” and this was bigger than one man or one party. In his speech, he intended to say that he did not bring the “certainty of peace” but did bring the “greatest opportunity for peace.” “[The] two most powerful nations in the world—with great conflicting issues—had reached agreement on some issues.” More important was that they had agreed on “principles of conduct to turn away from war to peace.” Nixon also planned to say that “our talks were ‘no holds barred’ on content but civilized in tone.” The two sides had not papered over differences and had not decided everything, but they had begun on the most important issue. “After unleashing nuclear weapons, we agreed to begin to limit their production.”

Nixon noted that although the Soviet leaders had made it clear that they would abide by the agreement and were willing to discuss new agreements, they would continue to maintain the strength they needed to protect their interests. He wrote that America got agreement because it had negotiated from a basis of strength and of equality. To make new agreements, it must continue to maintain its strength. Unilateral disarmament would offer the greatest risk of war.

The President wrote that the USSR and the US must seek good relations with all nations. Both recognized the danger that “disputes between third countries constitute [the] greatest danger of dragging us into conflict.” Following the summit, “we must redouble efforts to remove every possible trouble spot which might draw us into conflict.” Most important, we must not have any more Vietnams or Koreas. He noted that “all Americans want more than anything else a world of peace—progress for all.” Americans had demonstrated their willingness to achieve this through \$150 billion in aid and sacrifice in two wars—Korea and Vietnam—without designs on any territory or conquest. As America entered a new age, there was a new challenge to its leadership. Nixon wrote: “Let us meet it—not to satisfy any jingoistic feelings of superiority—but because a great people owes it to itself and to [the] world to do its best . . . not for our benefit but for [the] benefit of all mankind.” He concluded: “No peaceful nation fears America—all nations respect us. Let us be worthy of this trust. . . . What impresses me every time I return is what a great and good country this is. . . . We beat our breasts about problems, but there is [*sic*] the wonderful refreshing winds of freedom that make America unique.” He would urge Americans to show their devotion by “faith, hard work, reform, making America better—so that it continues to be [the] hope of the world. . . .” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President’s Personal File, President’s Speech File, Box 76, Thursday, June 1, Report to the Congress)

298. Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State¹

Moscow, May 29, 1972, 0811Z.

Secto 53. Subject: Memorandum of Conversation Between Secretary and Gromyko.

1. Following is cleared memcon between Secretary and Gromyko, May 25.
2. Memorandum of conversation

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Country Files, Box 719, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXII, May 1972. Secret; Nodis.

Date: May 25, 1972

Time: 4:15–4:55 pm

Place: St. Catherine's Hall, Grand Kremlin Palace, Moscow

Subject: Middle East and Bilateral Issues

Participants:

US

Secretary Rogers
Mr. Hillenbrand
Mr. Matlock

USSR

Andrei Gromyko, USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs
Anatoly Dobrynin, Ambassador of USSR in US
G.M. Korniyenko, Chief, USA, Division, MFA
Eduard Zaitsev, Interpreter

Middle East

The Secretary asked whether Gromyko desired a discussion of the Middle East. Gromyko indicated that unless we have new proposals, a discussion of the Middle East probably would not be necessary. As for the Soviet Union, it still favors Ambassador Jarring's mission. The Secretary said we are still looking for a "Gromyko plan." Gromyko merely commented that he had informed the Secretary last fall that he doubted the workability of U.S. proposals.

Soviet Jewry

While on the subject of the Middle East, the Secretary expressed our gratification for the increased emigration from the Soviet Union to Israel and said that we hope this emigration will be allowed to continue and increase. Gromyko asked rhetorically if such comments do not constitute interference in Soviet internal affairs.

Representation List

The Secretary then presented Gromyko with a list of 70 persons who wish to join relatives in the United States, as a supplement to the list presented to Ambassador Dobrynin in April. Gromyko accepted the list, but stated that he did so without obligation, since the Soviet Government will be guided by USSR law. As the meeting ended, Gromyko handed the list to Korniyenko.

Rogers

299. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 29, 1972, 10:20 a.m.–12:20 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU
Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, Assistant to the General Secretary

The President
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

SUBJECTS

Middle East; Vietnam; Nuclear Understanding; Economic Relations; Cuba; Korea

General Secretary Brezhnev: I saw you on TV last night and I have heard about your visit to Leningrad. Henry Kissinger is the only one who is resting. The trouble with him is that even when you give him a job he finds a way of avoiding it. [The General Secretary then told an anecdote about the sex life of older men.]²

The President: I very much appreciate the opportunity of talking to you heart-to-heart. With respect to the communiqué³ and statement of principles,⁴ Kissinger and Gromyko have done very well. As you know, there are only two main points of difference remaining: the Mideast and Vietnam. I am willing to give on one: that is, the reference to maintaining the ceasefire in the Middle East section. It is important to maintain our channel of communication; the rhetoric in the statement does not mean so much. I will do my best to bring about a reasonable solution, and if the General Secretary does his best perhaps our experts can find a solution. I want the General Secretary's consideration of our problem. We know our positions are different. And we have done useful work in the private channel to make progress. If you say it is a question of principle then there is no hope for solution.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the General Secretary's Office in the Kremlin. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting was from 10:15 a.m. to 12:16 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) A note on the memorandum indicates it was transcribed from Kissinger's notes.

² All brackets in the source text.

³ For text of the joint communiqué issued on May 29, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 635–642.

⁴ For text of the "Basic Principles of Relations Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" issued on May 29, 1972, see *ibid.*, pp. 633–634.

On Vietnam, in the same vein, we would want to drop out the phrase “unconditionally.” The Soviet statement is very strong. And I understand why it must be strong. And as the General Secretary knows, our position is also strong, as he found at the dacha the other day.⁵ Neither side publicly can be expected to change its position. As Dr. Kissinger in his long talk with Gromyko indicated, we are trying to bring our positions closer together.⁶ It would be counterproductive to suggest that these are all issues of principle. It is essential that we agree. These are the only points I have to make. Otherwise, I have no suggestion to make. It would certainly be helpful for our common goal if you can agree.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I would like to put one question to you. You, Mr. President, then Dr. Kissinger, have communicated to us that the U.S. would be willing to go back to the open meetings provided that the DRV affirms a constructive attitude towards negotiations and is willing to consider your positions as well as theirs as a basis for discussion. I would like to set out one consideration. How would you see it if we sent one of our highest leaders to talk to the Vietnamese? The visit of any responsible leader might make a difference.⁷ But you should stop the bombing first. We know—and this is in confidence—quite for sure that of late Vietnam has been visited by delegation after delegation from China. We don’t know what they will discuss with you at the talks. We cannot absolutely guarantee complete success. But we would like to take this step to find the best solution. We do believe the President really wants to end the war. The Vietnamese attach greater importance to their fear of being tricked in a settlement.

Perhaps it would help if Thieu was willing to resign two months before election. I think this should be.

The President: If a top Soviet official goes there, you can be sure there will be no bombing of the Hanoi/Haiphong area. Unless he stays there for three months.

General Secretary Brezhnev: People like you and I and Kissinger can’t stay there for three months.

The President: It would be very constructive to stop all the killing right now.

Dr. Kissinger: Up to now, of course, all we have agreed to is only one month for the resignation of Thieu.

⁵ See Document 271.

⁶ See Document 292.

⁷ In his memoirs Nixon called Brezhnev’s offer “the greatest surprise of the summit.” (RN: *Memoirs*, p. 617)

General Secretary Brezhnev: We want to do the maximum of what is possible, and two months would help us. We will not try to make a unilateral benefit from this. We will send our top leader as quickly as possible. Then the Paris meetings can start as quickly as possible. It is, of course, important to bear in mind another fact. According to their thinking a solution must be found between you and them directly.

The President: The procedure of a visit as you suggest is very constructive. After our meeting there may be a measure of progress. This is very important.

General Secretary Brezhnev: First, we must be clear about the assurances: we must have an assurance about the bombing and two months about Thieu.

The President: I will use my influence about the two months. But it must be kept absolutely secret.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Without going into the argument, I have already told my comrades that two months is possible. I don't want the whole matter to be swamped by a difference of one month.

Dr. Kissinger: If we can settle all the other issues and the only obstacle remaining is one or two months, we will not find it insuperable.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Can I tell my comrades two months? This is crucial.

The President: If you keep it in this room, as part of settlement, I can agree to two months.

General Secretary Brezhnev: On the communiqué, we can accept the two deletions.

The President: Here is a paper I want to give you on the matter of non-use of nuclear weapons. [Hands over U.S. draft at Tab A.]⁸ It is a response to your paper. I know of your interest in this matter. In April you said it would be a "peaceful bomb." I have given a great deal of thought to it, and we have this draft for your consideration. It should be discussed further in our confidential channel.

General Secretary Brezhnev: In principle I agree it will be a peaceful bomb. We will hold it strictly confidential. We should handle it in our special Washington–Moscow Kissinger–Dobrynin channel.

The President: I appreciate this personal contact we have had. It is very important.

⁸ Tab A is attached but not printed. For Kissinger's discussion of his reaction to Brezhnev's "peaceful bomb"—his proposal during their Moscow pre-summit talks in April of a U.S.-Soviet "understanding" not to use nuclear weapon against each other, see footnote 11, Document 234.

Now, on economic matters, Peterson is coming here in July. He will have full authority.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Thank you. I too value very highly the work we have done here together. I want to reaffirm our cooperation. Now that we have established personal contact we can say it with greater confidence.

I would like to raise a few specific issues. First, there is the issue of Lend-Lease and MFN. We are prepared to continue consultation, though you must understand we must have MFN. As for Cuba, a matter of concern to you, we abide strictly by our understanding on Cuba. Even when there are submarine visits, we will strictly abide by the understanding.

On the subject of Korea, Kim Il-Sung has assured me. They have said that North Korea is in favor of peaceful unification. They are not interested in military field. They are prepared to establish good relations with you. Some thought should be given to how South Korea can take advantage of this. Of course, the question of the presence of U.S. troops in South Korea also arises. We want you to know our concern about resolving this. Let's continue our contacts on this.

Mr. President, this week you and I have signed an important document on strategic arms limitation. But France, the UK, and Peking haven't signed it. Therefore, we must closely follow their development to prevent any unfavorable developments.

I want to leave you with one thought about Peking. We really are not clear about what its policies and intentions are. This places on us an obligation for us to follow these policies and consult with each other.

In general, I must stress the importance of restraint in propaganda on both sides. Let us promote the atmosphere of this week.

The President: I will do the best I can about propaganda. Of course, I cannot control our right wing in the Senate and among some newsmen. But I agree. Let's keep the rhetoric cool.

General Secretary Brezhnev: Yes, we must keep the propaganda in line with the reality of foreign policy.

The President: We must keep in touch. I plan to keep the General Secretary informed on any major development.

General Secretary Brezhnev: I will certainly respond.

The President: I want to reiterate. You have my commitment that privately or publicly I shall take no steps directed against the interests of the Soviet Union. But the General Secretary should rely on what I say in the private channel, not on what anyone else tells him. There are not only certain forces in the world but also representatives of the press who are not interested in better relations between us.

[There were closing pleasantries. The President thanked the General Secretary and his colleagues for the warm hospitality and courtesies that were extended to him and Mrs. Nixon during their stay in Moscow. The General Secretary bade the President farewell and wished him and Mrs. Nixon a pleasant journey.]

300. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, May 29, 1972, 12:55 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU
Nikolai V. Podgorny, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet
Aleksei N. Kosygin, Chairman, Council of Ministers of the USSR
Nikolai K. Baibakov, Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers, and Chairman of the State Planning Commission
Andrei A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Nikolai S. Patolichev, Minister of Foreign Trade
Vasily V. Kuznetsov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the USA
Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, Assistant to Mr. Brezhnev
Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter

The President
William P. Rogers, Secretary of State
Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Peter M. Flanigan, Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs
Martin J. Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary of State
Jacob D. Beam, U.S. Ambassador to the USSR
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Senior NSC Staff Member
William G. Hyland, NSC Staff Member
Jack F. Matlock, Department of State

Brezhnev: This is our last formal meeting. We are all entitled to point out and emphasize not only that much work was done in preparing for these meetings, but also by both sides during this visit. We have endeavored to give our work a worthy spirit and to give worthy con-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 487, President's Trip Files, The President's Conversations in Salzburg, Moscow, Tehran, and Warsaw, May 1972, Part 2. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in St. Catherine's Hall at the Grand Kremlin Palace.

siderations to the meetings. This is reflected in the documents signed and to be signed. The same spirit was shown on your side, and this enabled us mutually to make decisions on several subjects. The subjects and decisions were primarily political and this lends them a particular weight. All the decisions were of prime importance. The peoples on both sides expect action to implement these decisions and this imposes on us a responsibility to implement them to the letter. Also it must be noted that a very important fact is the spirit of the agreements is aimed at détente and not at a heightening of tension. I feel sure that the American and Soviet people will take note of this aspect and will be closely following our actions in the future.

It is also important to note that none of the documents are aimed against any third country. This is of fundamental importance. This also imposes a great responsibility on us for our future behavior and policy.

We attach no small importance to economic and technological cooperation, and this is one of the most important aspects of our relations. Therefore, all the discussions on economics, technical cooperation and trade are very important.

It will be very important to preserve in the future the spirit that guided us in these last days. I would like to note that we talked frankly. We told each other straightforwardly all that needed to be said. I would also note the great work of Henry Kissinger, Secretary Rogers and others during these talks.

We accept with gratification the desire to continue consultations on both bilateral and international matters that are not resolved, and I refer here to the situation in the Middle East and the ending of the war in Vietnam. The desire to bring about solutions imposes responsibilities. Finally, we feel that the summit has been successful.

Podgorny: Mr. President, at the beginning of our talks, several days ago, I already pointed out the great hopes pinned on these meetings. It can now be said that the discussions and decisions have not deluded the hopes of the people, especially if we consider that this is the first meeting after 25 years of abnormal relations. The documents signed will lead to fuller progress in bilateral relations and relations on an international scale. Not all of the questions have been resolved fully, but even the documents signed require future efforts to implement them, and a great deal depends on how we go forward. But for a first meeting it is believed to be a success. Moreover, there are grounds for hope that other questions, including trade, will be resolved. We have a responsibility for future moves. Relations will be built on principles and continue to improve without detriment to the other side. In short, we are gratified by the work of the last few days. Quite decent steps have been taken and I am referring here to

your story (in the President's television speech)² about measuring the length of our stride.

Kosygin: Our meetings were not fortuitous. The entire structure of our political and economic relations required these meetings. If there had not been meetings, additional great problems and difficulties might have occurred. All the people hold out great hope for these meetings. The preparations were done in a skillful way. It can be noted that on both sides we have justified hopes placed in these meetings.

Important political problems have been resolved. Now we are faced with the major task of giving practical implementation to the documents signed. We can say that this meeting will be continuing, even when we do not see each other. Because, if not, we will not have met our goal that we have set. I feel sure that it is the view of my colleagues, Comrades Podgorny and Brezhnev, that we want to ensure the result of these meetings.

There are, of course, questions that must eventually be resolved to give further hopes and beneficial results. In the first instance, we must do away with the hotbeds of war that exist. We must do our utmost that in areas where there is no hot war, but where tensions are growing, to ensure that the situation will be normalized. Then we will have justified the hopes of world public opinion.

In conclusion, we on our side will make every effort to increase contacts and relations with the US in the interest of all people. And we should not like history to be repeated. There were productive meetings at Yalta between FDR and Stalin, and then practical ties came to an end. We feel that these meetings will ensure better results.

The President said he was grateful for the boundless hospitality of his hosts, and, more important, that he was grateful for the frank talks. The results were significant because of the preparatory work by the experts both in Moscow and in the United States. We recognized at the outset that most summit conferences had been failures; since the end of World War II they had raised hopes and then failed. These meetings, on the other hand, had been successful because they were well prepared, and also because—and this was important but quite difficult to measure—because of an acceptance of mutual responsibility to respect the other side's viewpoint, and its right to disagree strongly, and, while respecting the equal strength of each side, finally to find a way to reach agreement on fundamental matters.

The President continued by noting that superficial observers, sometimes in the press, would judge the meeting only by the agree-

² For text of Nixon's May 28 television and radio broadcast to the people of the Soviet Union, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 629–632.

ments signed. These are important, but as pointed out by the Soviet side the results will be determined more by how the agreements are implemented. By establishing a process for progress in all areas, this enabled us to reach agreement.

The President said that on the part of the United States he could assure the Soviet leaders that on all levels of the US Government there would be an intention to take a forthcoming attitude in working out problems that might arise. For example, there is the question of trade. The President noted that he had pointed out the great possibilities in this field. Even though we had not made the progress we would have liked, our differences were narrowed and we could be confident that we would see a blossoming of trade and a new relationship of enormous benefit to our peoples. The key to this, as well as other difficult issues, will be the continuation of frank contacts at all levels, including ambassadors and ministers, and, of course, at the summit level where that is the best way to break an impasse.

The President said he wanted to conclude his remarks by saying that history had been made by what had been signed, but the real test is what happens in the future. Now that we all know and respect each other, we have an opportunity to make even greater history for future generations.

(The President asked Secretary Rogers if he wanted to make any remarks.)

Secretary Rogers noted the excellent statements by the President and the Soviet leaders. All were very fortunate to take part in this historic event. It was made possible by thorough preparations and arrangements, and he wanted to thank his Soviet hosts for this, and for the spirit and atmosphere in which the meetings had been conducted.

The President added that he had only one complaint: The communiqué to be issued would be inviting the Soviet leaders to visit the United States at a mutually agreeable time in the future; but in the United States there were no rooms as grand as St. Catherine's Hall.

Kosygin interjected that it would be difficult to wrap up the room and ship it to the United States.

The President replied that he would not ask, because Mr. Kosygin might well do just that. In any case, the President said, we will make your stay a memorable one.

Brezhnev replied that he had omitted one important point in his remarks. He wanted to express his gratification for the invitation, and to say that we accept this kind invitation and the dates will be arranged.

The President said that he would add one point. He had read that when Premier Kosygin was recently abroad there were demonstrations. The President had experienced much more and worse, and if this occurred while Mr. Kosygin was in the United States, the demonstrations would be against the President, not against Mr. Kosygin.

Kosygin said that at the Glassboro meeting the entire route had been lined with people, but they had signs for peace. The strength of this meeting in Moscow was that peace had been our prime goal.

The President replied that we will set that as our goal. Our next meeting will come at a time when there is peace in the world. This does not mean ten years or even ten months which would be too long. Peace is more urgent than that.

Brezhnev said he agreed. (At the President's prompting he said "OK" and the President said "khorosho.")

Podgorny said this was a good goal.

Sukhodrev (the interpreter) read the Soviet announcement of the meeting and it was agreed.

The President added that Secretary Rogers would be leaving to attend a NATO meeting in Bonn, and he would be reporting on the Moscow meetings but would keep confidential the high-level talks.

Kosygin asked whether Secretary Rogers would be going there to do away with NATO.

The President answered that maybe in about ten years, and Kosygin commented that was a long time.

The meeting adjourned.

301. Editorial Note

In his diary entry on May 29, 1972, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman described their "uneventful departure from Moscow, except that the Soviet plane had one engine that wouldn't function. So after we were all aboard and settled down, we had to get up and move to the backup plane, which was incredibly embarrassing to the Soviets. . . . In Kiev, we had great crowds on arrival, but they were kept back several blocks, and so it was hard for them to see the P, but they waved and hollered anyway. Hard to see the way the Russians treat the people, because they ran the motorcade pretty fast, and there were great opportunities if they had just given the people the chance to see the P, but obviously they don't want to." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

In his May 30 diary entry the following morning, Haldeman recorded: "Nothing special in Kiev this morning. P went through a lot of trivia on the plane on the way to Iran. It was great to get back on Air Force One, where we could settle down and talk." At this point, the editor's note in the *Multimedia Edition* of Haldeman's diaries reads:

“While in the USSR, the Americans were constantly afraid that they might be overheard by listening devices. That was why Haldeman recorded parts of his journal in the car.” (Ibid.) In his memoirs Kissinger wrote: “Alas, the splendid Presidential apartment proved unsuited to the conduct of business. Our security experts were certain it was bugged by sophisticated equipment, Nixon refused to use the babbler; its noise drove him crazy. Thus, the President and I were reduced to using his American limousine parked outside for really private conversations, hoping that its bulletproof windows would inhibit any electronic equipment aimed at it.” (*White House Years*, page 1207) Nixon recalled in his memoirs: “Because of the pervasive bugging, I did not dictate any diary entries while we were in the Soviet Union.” He noted that “the Soviets were curiously unsubtle in this regard. A member of my staff reported having casually told his secretary that he would like an apple, and ten minutes later a maid came in and put a bowl of apples on the table.” Nixon wrote that he had, however, kept extensive notes during the trip and made several long dictations from them after he returned. (*RN: Memoirs*, pages 618–619)

302. Editorial Note

In his diary entry on May 30, 1972, White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman recorded that after they reached Iran, he “got into the question of trying to arrive at a final decision on what to do for a report to the people on the homecoming, to discuss the options with Colson and E[hrlichman], and have Larry [?] talk to Connally and [White House Counsel Clark] MacGregor. Quite a divided thing. Connally and MacGregor both feel you should go to the Hill, Connally thinks he should go on Friday, but Thursday night would be OK, MacGregor feels he should go on Thursday night. Then Colson feels strongly that he should do that, on the basis that the nature of the agreements are [*sic*] so momentous that he should go direct to Congress. The risks are minimal. He likes the historical contrast of Wilson who came back, he warned Congress and lost his treaty. He thinks that Congress would feel flattered. It would heighten the comparison with the quibbling Democrats—gives it more magnitude, fits the public viewpoint and the media viewpoint. He thinks that we can do it more on the basis of pleading our case, but sharing a great moment in history with the Congress, bringing them in on it, that it would be good for the country, and a great contrast.”

“E[hrlichman], on the other hand, is concerned about the problem of keeping the good feeling alive. He thinks that we’re in a position

with such monumental and unassailable triumph now, that the opposition's strategy is going to have to be to try to divert attention, that's the only thing they can do, so we need to work out ways of sustaining this, for six to eight weeks. For that reason, he thinks that we should do a straight report to the people, like the one to the Soviet people, on return and then go to Congress when the treaty goes up—with a press conference or some other formal Q&A in between. We went round and round on this, I talked with the P briefly about it, and his decision was to wait till tomorrow morning to decide, but probably to go ahead and go to Congress, particularly on the basis of strong recommendation." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

Colson, Ehrlichman, Connally, and MacGregor were in Washington so presumably these discussions took place over long-distance telephone. The President's Daily Diary records that Nixon talked with Colson on the telephone from 12:45 a.m. to 1:14 a.m. on May 30 and that President Nixon placed the call. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files)

In his diary entry for June 1, Haldeman recorded: "Everything worked out fine. We locked up the plans yesterday morning for going to Congress to speak and that's going ahead on plan. The discussion earlier this morning before the meetings was on those arrangements, and there are still some more ideas on the speech. He did quite a bit of rewriting. He's concerned because they're aren't [*sic*] any cheer lines and things aren't put together right. He gave me a lot of corrections to go over with Andrews and wants Price to work on something with spirit, lift and upbeat for the close. . . . We got back, with the helicopter. Flew that to Congress, and he made his speech in very good shape, although I was concerned because he was so tired that he might have trouble. Didn't turn out that way at all." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

The President spoke at 9:40 p.m. on June 1 to a joint session of Congress in the House Chamber at the Capitol. The address was broadcast live on radio and television. (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pages 660–666) Kissinger wrote that Nixon spoke "with a blend of hope (occasionally flirting with exultation) and caution." The President declared that the "foundation has been laid for a new relationship between the two most powerful nations in the world," although he cautioned that "concrete results, not atmospherics" would be the administration's criterion for high-level meetings. He decided the SALT accords as "the first step toward a new era of mutually agreed restraint and arms limitations between the two principal nuclear powers" but also emphasized the need for a strong national defense. Nixon said that free world alliances were the foundation on which all U.S. initiatives for peace and security must rest and pledged: "As we seek better relations with those who have been our adversaries, we will not let down our friends and allies around the world." (*White House Years*, pages 1252–1253)

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