

Soviet Union, January 1969– October 1970

Initial Contacts, January–April 22, 1969

1. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, January 2, 1969.

PARTICIPANTS

Boris Sedov, Counselor, Soviet Embassy
Henry A. Kissinger

Boris Sedov, officially counselor of the Soviet Embassy, but in fact a member of Soviet intelligence,² called on me today at his request. He had asked to see me during the previous week, but the meeting was delayed because of my trip to Key Biscayne.³

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 725, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Contacts With the Soviets Prior to January 20, 1969. Secret; Nodis. The meeting was held at the Pierre Hotel, headquarters for the Nixon transition team. On January 31 Kissinger sent Secretary of State Rogers copies of his memoranda of conversation with Sedov on January 2 and his earlier conversation on December 18, 1968, at the Soviet Embassy. Kissinger reminded Rogers that President Nixon asked that the copies be closely held. (Ibid.) Kissinger's memorandum to Nixon on his December 18, 1968, meeting with Sedov is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, volume XIV, Soviet Union, Document 335.

² Sedov's activities as an officer of the Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB) were closely monitored by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who provided Kissinger with periodic updates. On June 11, after learning that Sedov informed a Lebanese American citizen with ties to the KGB of his contact with the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, Kissinger informed Under Secretary of State Richardson that "In view of [Sedov's] continuing activity, I believe it would be appropriate, through discussions with the Soviet Ambassador, to request that Sedov be returned to the Soviet Union. If such action cannot be accomplished through this procedure, it would appear that persona non grata action against Sedov may have to be taken without further delay." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 1, Chronological File) Additional FBI information on Sedov is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 242, Agency Files, FBI, Vol. II.

³ On December 28, 1968, Kissinger met with Nixon's senior appointees at Key Biscayne, Florida.

Sedov began by saying that the Soviet Embassy had given a copy of their Middle East note to Ellsworth on December 30⁴ because I had warned Sedov against “surprises,” and because the Embassy wanted to deal with the President-elect on the basis of complete frankness.

Sedov then read the attached communication. I copied it and read it back to him (he made a few corrections).

I then asked Sedov about the meaning of the phrase: “The Soviet leadership would do their utmost . . . to ensure ratification by states of the non-proliferation treaty.”⁵ Did it mean that the USSR would try to create an atmosphere in which ratification of the treaty would be possible in the United States, or was it proposing joint action with the US to secure ratification by third parties. Sedov replied that both meanings were intended. I said we were studying the problem.

Sedov then asked about strategic arms talks. I repeated my observation of December 18, 1968, that we did not believe that political and strategic issues could be completely separated. The Nixon Administration wanted to see more progress in Vietnam and the Middle East before committing itself to strategic arms talks. *Sedov asked whether the Soviet overture on the Middle East could be seen as a sign of good faith along the lines of my communication of December 18.* I said we would have to study it.

Sedov then turned to Vietnam. He asked whether my mutual withdrawal proposal was the policy of the new Administration.⁶ I replied that we were studying all realistic options. Sedov then said that he considered the proposal the best way to solve the Vietnam war. Did he understand correctly that I required that there be no violent upheaval during the period of withdrawal? I said this was correct. He asked how long a time I had set—in my own mind—for withdrawal. I replied three–five years, although this was obviously subject to negotiation. I added

⁴ On December 30, 1968, Soviet Chargé Yuri Tcherniakov gave Robert Ellsworth, an assistant to President-elect Nixon, two notes outlining a Soviet plan for a political settlement in the Middle East. The documents given to Ellsworth were almost identical to those Tcherniakov handed to Secretary of State Dean Rusk the same day. A text of the Soviet notes given Rusk is in *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, volume XX, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1967–1968, Document 374. The memorandum of conversation between Ellsworth and Tcherniakov and the Soviet notes given Ellsworth are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 1, HAK Administrative and Staff Files—Transition, Robert Ellsworth.

⁵ Ellipses in the source text. On July 1, 1968, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was opened for signature in Washington, London, and Moscow. On March 5, 1970, after the United States and 81 other nations signed the treaty, it entered into force. (21 UST 483)

⁶ Sedov is referring to Kissinger’s views expressed in “The Viet Nam Negotiations,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (January 1969), 211–234. Kissinger later discussed the article in *White House Years*, pp. 234–235.

that as long as American soldiers continued to be killed in Vietnam with Soviet weapons it was difficult to speak of a real relaxation of tensions.

Sedov said that the Soviet Union was very interested that the inaugural speech contain some reference to open channels of communication to Moscow. I said that all this would be easier if Moscow showed some cooperativeness on Vietnam. Sedov replied that he would try to have an answer by January 10.

Tab A

Notes of a Conversation⁷

Washington, January 2, 1969.

Notes on Conversation with Boris Sedov, January 2, 1969

Tcherniakov (of the Soviet Embassy) delivered the memo on the Middle East to Ellsworth because of its official nature and my absence.

The following is the verbatim text of Sedov's statement to me:

1. Moscow has carefully watched the election campaign which, though a US internal affair, has world-wide significance.

2. Moscow does not have the pessimistic view expressed in many parts of the world in connection with the accession of the Republicans to power.

3. It is not true that Moscow makes its attitude dependent on which party is allegedly more to the right.

4. The key concern of Moscow is whether statements of great powers are animated by a sense of reality.

5. Moscow noted with satisfaction Mr. Nixon's cable to President Podgorny⁸ to the effect that the American and Soviet people work together in a spirit of mutual respect and on the basis of special responsibility for the peace of the world. This wish is considered an

⁷ Kissinger summarized his conversation with Sedov in a memorandum to Nixon on January 4 and made three recommendations: "1) that when next I see Sedov I repeat to him substantially what I told him at our first meeting; 2) that some reference to open communications be included in your inaugural address; 3) that we wait until January 17 to tell Sedov of the reference in the inaugural address so that we can see what further message he brings us first." Nixon initialed his approval of all three recommendations. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 66, Country Files, USSR, Soviet Contacts) In his inaugural address, Nixon stated, "Let all nations know that during this administration our lines of communication will be open." The address is in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, 1–4.

⁸ Not found.

encouraging sign of the interest of the American side to proceed further in the solution of those problems outlined in bilateral contacts.

6. On the other hand, Moscow is very worried by statements that there is a desire on the part of the US to operate from a “situation of strength.” If this theory dominates, and if a new round of armaments starts, the USSR is capable and willing to match the US effort. The world will be reduced to the worst days of the cold war.

7. Moscow realizes that there are theoretical and practical differences between our two countries. These should not interfere with gradual achievement of agreements on a number of problems. That of disarmament is in the first place.

8. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to develop mutual trust. On the part of Moscow, it is willing to make important steps in this direction, but it wishes that the new Administration act in the same spirit.

9. The Soviet leadership will do their utmost to find ways of solving at least some important problems of disarmament, and to ensure ratification by states of the non-proliferation treaty.

10. The US and USSR must find a way to disarmament, or the consequences will be extremely dangerous for in this connection one always has to keep in mind that disarmament is specifically a Soviet-US problem.

11. The Soviet leadership is determined to continue a policy of peaceful coexistence.

12. Mr. Nixon’s statement of November 11 to continue keeping open channels to the USSR did not pass unnoticed in Moscow. Great attention was paid to the part where Mr. Nixon, speaking of President Johnson’s foreign policy, confirms his desire to keep open channels of communication to Moscow.

13. It goes without saying that the future of Soviet-American relations would be favorably affected by settlement of Vietnam problem, a political solution of the situation in the Middle East, a realistic approach to the situation in Europe as a whole, and the German problem in particular. (Oral comment: The Soviet Union has special interests in Eastern Europe.)

14. Moscow hopes that even before the inauguration Nixon indicates interest in betterment of relations with the Soviet Union. (inaugural address)

2. Briefing Paper¹

Washington, January 14, 1969.

ISSUES IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS REQUIRING EARLY DECISION

A number of matters concerning either directly or indirectly our relations with the USSR will need prompt attention after January 20. They are of sufficient importance to the whole nature of this relationship that, ideally, it would be preferable for us to clarify our general purposes and interests before we take further action. However, as a practical matter a hiatus in US-Soviet relations will be hard to arrange and probably even undesirable because important events should not be permitted to unfold without our exerting influence upon them.

Consequently, pending a more thoroughgoing reexamination of our Soviet policy, we should get some general guidelines—relating perhaps more to style than substance—and take such early decisions as we must in conformity with them.

Without here engaging in extensive supporting argumentation, I suggest three broad guidelines:

1. Although for several reasons there are special, indeed unique features in the US-Soviet relationship, we should establish a scale of priorities in which relations with our allies normally take precedence.

2. We should take account of the obviously special position of the USSR in world affairs by maintaining diplomatic contact with it; but our approach should be one of aloofness. If we judge that there are issues on which our interests intersect, the Soviets will presumably discern them also. There is no automatic net advantage in our assuming the initiative or in our becoming deeply engaged with the Soviets in all such cases. Certainly, and in line with point 1 above, when important interests of other states are also at stake, US-Soviet bilateralism must be tempered by due regard to those interests. Moreover, commonly held views that certain problems can be coped with only through intimate US-Soviet collaboration require reexamination. In any event, great zeal in approaching the Soviets or in responding to their overtures should be avoided as a general rule, certainly at the outset of the Administration.

3. We have no interest in deliberately seeking crises with the USSR or even in striking out on policy paths that we judge would carry some substantial risk of crises. But we might encounter a Soviet attempt to

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Offices Files, Box 3, Transition Files, Staff Reports. Confidential. Drafted by Sonnenfeldt.

test the new Administration in some confrontation. In that case, we must stand our ground—or help an ally do so, if that should be the testing ground.

Apart from these general aspects of our approach, we should arrive at a more or less coherent posture with respect to the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia.² Such measures in the realms of contacts and protocol as we took to convey our indignation have now probably outlived their purpose (though we should not in any case return to some of the excessive comraderie that occasionally occurred in the past). But two general points should be conveyed clearly to the Soviets through the various channels available: (1) That any instance of direct and gross Soviet intervention in Czechoslovak internal affairs is bound to retard establishment of a business-like relationship with us; and (2) that while the US recognizes the special and sensitive nature of Soviet relations with countries that are immediately adjacent to it and part of its alliance system, we will not let the USSR control the character and pace of our relations with these countries. In our approach we should be guided by the proposition that we should not be reluctant to compartmentalize our affairs with the USSR if that suits our interests, but we should not cooperate in the obvious Soviet effort to make the outside world accept total Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe and to make the conduct of our policy toward Eastern Europe subject to Soviet sanction.

Middle East

The Soviets have lately given us a number of documents³ on an Arab-Israeli settlement; they involve essentially a phased scheme for implementing the November 1967 UN resolution⁴ and, in the latest (December 30) version, display some movement, evidently with UAR concurrence, in the direction of agreement between the parties and a package approach in which the first step occurs only after the scheme as a whole has been settled.

As always the reasons for the Soviet initiative are open to speculation. They may reflect genuine Soviet concern with the explosiveness of the present situation. In any case, the new Administration inherits

² On the night of August 20–21, 1968, 200,000 Warsaw Pact forces invaded Czechoslovakia; see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, volume XVII, Eastern Europe, Documents 80–97.

³ See footnote 4, Document 1.

⁴ Security Council Resolution 242, adopted on November 22, 1967, among other things, called upon the Secretary-General to designate a special representative to the Middle East “to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist the effort to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement.” (UN doc. S/RES/242 1967) The text is in *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, volume XIX, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967, Document 542.

an active US-Soviet exchange of communications in this area, rather than a state of acute US-Soviet crisis. In this respect, Soviet moves on the Middle East fit into other post-Czechoslovak, pre-January 20 efforts by the USSR to damp down open hostility toward us and, indeed, to engage us diplomatically.

Nevertheless, there remain fundamental issues in controversy between ourselves and the USSR in the Mediterranean and adjacent regions, not least a continuing Soviet effort to project power and influence there to our detriment.

Plainly, the US must remain in touch with the Soviets on the Middle East (1) because it may be one (though not the only) way of preventing renewed large-scale hostilities with a potential for a direct US-Soviet military clash, and (2) because the Soviets have great influence in the Arab country (UAR) that is the key to any tranquilization of Middle East tensions and dangers. Moreover, in the exchanges with us the Soviets have over time inched away from some of the most rigid Arab positions. But US-Soviet dialogue should not be the only means by which we seek to cope with the dangers of the region. Any settlement, partial, temporary or complete, requires the assent of the parties. So-called imposed settlements are not likely to be viable; moreover the implication of US-Soviet condominium (itself of questionable viability over any length of time) that an imposed solution would carry would gravely damage our alliance relationships elsewhere. It would involve, in addition, a basic restructuring of our relationship with Israel which cannot be lightly undertaken.

US-Soviet dialogue should therefore be largely refocused on the future of the Jarring mission⁵ and its function in dealing with the parties. The British and French—also recipients of parallel Soviet overtures—should be urged to channel matters in the same direction. Four-power roles at this stage should be largely confined to influencing or assisting the parties in narrowing differences. We should not let ourselves become Israel's negotiating agent, nor accept the USSR as the agent of the Arabs. Consequently, we should not rely solely or even chiefly on the Soviets as intermediaries between ourselves and the Arabs.

⁵ On November 23, 1967, UN Secretary-General U Thant informed the Security Council of the appointment of Gunnar Jarring, the Swedish Ambassador to the Soviet Union, as Special Representative to the Middle East as authorized under UN Resolution 242. (UN doc S/8259) Jarring's initial efforts were summarized in a report made by Secretary-General U Thant to the UN Security Council on January 5, 1971. (*Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations*, Vol. VIII: U Thant, 1968–1971, pp. 514–525) Extensive documentation on the Jarring Mission is in the National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 27 ARAB–ISR.

In considering resumption of diplomatic relations with the UAR, we will have to think about the implications of present Soviet use of Egyptian air base facilities for operations against the Sixth Fleet. At the very least we should probably tell both the Soviets and the UAR that we are aware of these operations and that they could be a source of future trouble.

Strategic Weapons Talks (Tactics)

The motivation and the interplay of political forces that went into Soviet agreement last year to opening the strategic arms talks⁶ were complex. Among the considerations that played a role was probably a desire to exert some influence against certain new weapons decisions by the US. If so, the Soviets may seek to get the talks underway soon after inauguration.

In the US, both inside the government and outside, much of the sense of urgency about getting these talks begun stemmed from a judgment that the present moment in time was unusually propitious, and also unusually crucial, in seeking to curb US-Soviet arms competition. There is no need to rehearse here the rationale for the US initiative; it has been well and amply presented and whatever one may think about some of it, the general case for US-Soviet talks in this field is persuasive.

Nevertheless, the incoming administration will wish to make its own assessment of the present and prospective strategic balance and set its own objections for any direct dealings with the USSR on this subject. Moreover, there is a real need to take our European allies more completely into our confidence about the direction in which we would like to see the strategic relationship develop. The Germans, in particular, need to be reassured that whatever we do—be it by some form of arrangement with the Russians or through unilateral decisions—will not ignore the strategic “threat” against Western Europe.

The process of internal US review and interallied consultation will take some time and dictate some delay in the opening of formal US-Soviet talks. The Soviets should be informed of these reasons for delay. Since the US has in the exchanges of the past two years already given the Soviets some indication of its approach (at least under the previous Administration) the Soviets should be encouraged to give

⁶ Shortly before the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union informed the United States that it was prepared to begin strategic missile talks between special representatives of their countries in Geneva on September 30, 1968. As a result of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the United States delayed the opening of talks but never formally answered the Soviet communication proposing the beginning of such negotiations on September 30.

some indication of theirs. Whatever the eventual changes of formal or explicit agreement, it will be desirable to draw the Soviets into conversation on strategic issues. If the opportunity arises (though we need not soon go out of our way to seek it) we should engage in such conversation. Our purpose, whatever the pros and cons or the practicality of specific agreements, should be to learn more about the processes of interaction that operate in the US-Soviet military relationship and to induce similar awareness on the part of the Soviets.

Berlin Bundesversammlung (March 5)⁷ and German Issues

The Soviets some time ago gave us, the British and the French a relatively mild complaint and warning about the Bundesversammlung. The tone and content of these oral *démarches* and subsequent Soviet talks with the Germans suggest that the Soviets have not yet reached a decision about their course of action. They have obviously set up a basis for harassment or worse; or they may also try to argue or bargain the Western powers and/or the Germans out of holding the meeting. There are several other possibilities or combinations. In any case, we are on record as approving the meeting if the Germans want to hold it. Consequently we should avoid extensive argument with the Soviets before the meeting date and we should delay a rejection of the Soviet *démarche* until shortly before March 5. Since our response will presumably be the first policy statement to the Soviets on German issues by the new Administration we should use the occasion not only to rebut the specific Soviet complaint but to set forth a more general affirmation of the legitimacy of the FRG's role in safeguarding West Berlin's viability and of the responsibility of the Western allies for ensuring that that role conforms to four power agreements as we interpret them. Because of difficulties with the French we can probably do no more than to affirm these principles in general. We do need to give fresh thought to the future of Berlin and some time after the Bundesversammlung hurdle has been crossed should look toward inter-allied consultations.

Meanwhile, we cannot ignore the danger of Soviet and East German harassment and the possibility that Berlin may become an early testing ground of the administration's conduct in a crisis. Contingency plans should be promptly examined and if necessary updated and revised.

There are signs that a Soviet-FRG dialogue on various matters, including non-use of force, is being reviewed. At the procedural level we should ensure promptly that the Germans keep us fully informed and consult on issues involving our interests. We must recognize, however,

⁷ See Document 3.

that consultations are a two-way street and that German candor will in some measure reflect our own readiness to engage in meaningful consultations.

Summitry

We may soon get Soviet soundings about an early top level meeting. Soviet reasons for seeking such encounters in the past have been varied (including inter alia, Khrushchev's hankering for the limelight, a general impulse to deal with the head of the other superpower sometimes on the assumption that he may be more "reasonable" than his subordinates, considerations of prestige relating to internal Soviet politics, hopes of generating concern among our allies or in Peking, expectations of settling some specific issue, etc. etc.). American Presidents have had their own impulses and objectives, some not wholly dissimilar from those animating the Soviet leaders.

A broad exchange of views in which the President sets forth his approach directly to one or more of the members of the Soviet collective has some virtue and should probably be considered some time during the first year of the Administration. (Experience with the specific agreements made at summits with the Soviets has been less than encouraging, however, and it is not advisable to look to this device for that purpose.) High-level meetings with our major allies and perhaps with one or two important neutrals should have precedence over a summit with the Soviets and any overtures from Moscow should be handled accordingly.

Romania, Yugoslavia

The outgoing Administration is on record with several public and private statements about the grave situation that would arise if the USSR invaded Romania or Yugoslavia. Contingency planning has been underway within the US government and at NATO for some time. Although tensions in the Balkans have subsided, the potential for Soviet moves against Romania and Yugoslavia continues to exist. Whatever we may or may not find it possible to do in the event, and whatever short and long-term problems the Soviets would create for themselves if they did move against these two countries, the US retains a basic interest in the preservation of their present status of independence (or relative autonomy in the case of Romania).

Both countries, though to different degree, have indicated that they regard their network of foreign relations and contacts as one form of insurance against possible Soviet attack. Given the limited and highly unpleasant options available to us in the event of a Soviet attack, we have a substantial interest in strengthening now such deterrents as may be operating on the Soviets. The new Administration should be responsive to overtures from Bucharest and Belgrade on the question of

economic relations and should be prepared to engage in political consultations with them. The Yugoslavs, who have greater freedom of maneuver than the Romanians, have already indicated their interest in regular consultations and we should agree.

3. Editorial Note

On January 22, 1969, Secretary of State William Rogers sent President Richard Nixon a memorandum recommending a U.S. reply to the Soviet protest over the holding of the West German Federal Assembly (Bundesversammlung) in Berlin on March 5 to elect the President of the Federal Republic of Germany. The United States, Great Britain, and France had given permission for the Bundesversammlung to meet in Berlin and agreed that it did not violate the status of Berlin under international agreements. Since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, three of the four Federal Assemblies had taken place in Berlin (1954, 1959, 1964) without incident. Rogers expressed concern about possible Soviet-East German interference with access to Berlin. He also stated “that prohibiting the Federal Assembly in Berlin if the FRG wanted to hold it there would have serious damaging consequences: it would undermine German confidence in the Allies, have a bad effect on Berlin morale, [and] encourage the Soviets to proceed further on the course of trying to sever the vital ties between the FRG and Berlin.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 681, Country Files, Europe, Germany, Vol. I)

Two days later, the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger forwarded Rogers’ memorandum to Nixon and recommended that the President approve the draft text of the reply to the Soviets but delay transmission of the note “for some three weeks to minimize the likelihood of a further exchange with the Soviets; but that if the Germans prefer early delivery we abide by their wish on this matter.” On January 28, 1969, Kissinger notified Rogers of Nixon’s approval. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 15–2 GER W)

4. National Security Study Memorandum 9¹

Washington, January 23, 1969.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Secretary of the Treasury
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT

Review of the International Situation

The President has directed the preparation of an “inventory” of the international situation as of January 20, 1969. He wishes the review to provide a current assessment of the political, economic and security situation and the major problems relevant to U.S. security interests and U.S. bilateral and multilateral relations. In order to put this review into effect he wishes to consider responses to the attached set of questions along with other material considered relevant. The review should include a discussion, where appropriate, of the data upon which judgments are based, uncertainties regarding the data, and alternative possible interpretations of the data.

The responses should be forwarded to the President by February 20, 1969.²

Henry A. Kissinger

Attachment

THE U.S.S.R.

I. General

1. How do the Soviets see their position in the world vis-à-vis the United States?

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-129, NSSMs, NSSM 9. Secret. Also *ibid.*, NSC Files, Box 364, NSSMs 1–42. Secret.

² The eight-volume response dated February 19, 1969, which was based on papers generated by multiple agencies and included 150 pages on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in volume I, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-129, NSSM 9. On March 6, Halperin sent Kissinger a memorandum outlining how NSSM 9 should be used. Halperin suggested having the NSC staff review the eight-volume response for the purposes of “NSSMs to the bureaucracy requesting additional policy and information studies” and

2. Is there a general trend toward greater assertiveness in Soviet foreign policy or toward more concentration on internal affairs?

3. What bearing does the military balance have on US/Soviet relations? What factors tend to promote Soviet efforts at cooperation with the US; what factors impel the Soviets toward confrontation with us?

4. Are there special factors operating one way or the other at the moment?

II. *Military*

A. *Strategic Forces*

1. What is the inventory of deployed Soviet strategic offensive and defensive forces as of January 1969? How are these forces likely to develop over the next 1–3–5–10 years in the absence of a US-Soviet limitation agreement? What technological changes seem likely over this time period? What is the extent and significance of increasing Soviet military presence far from the USSR?

2. How much do we know about current Soviet doctrines, plans, and procedures relating to the structure, basing and deployment, command and control, and use of strategic offensive and defensive forces? Which organizations control what particular offensive and defensive programs and forces? How do we get our information about Soviet strategic forces? What are the “hard” and “soft” areas of our information?

B. *General Purpose Forces*

1. How has the Czechoslovak crisis affected the pattern of deployment, state of readiness and supply, and numerical levels of Soviet General Purpose Forces? Have manning and equipping levels of ground forces changed? Are these short or long-term effects?

2. What is the Soviet capability to deploy and support ground, naval, and air forces (a) in the Mediterranean, (b) in the Middle East, (c) in Africa and Asia? What trends are likely in the next 1–3–5 years regarding each of these areas?

3. What are present Soviet doctrines, plans, inventory levels, and deployments for non-strategic nuclear weapons? What future trends may be discerned?

III. *Political*

1. What are the sources of our information and the basis for our assessment of Soviet intentions and objectives? What are the “hard” and “soft” areas of our information?

“a Presidential review of the international scene later this spring.” Kissinger initialed his approval to “HAK will outline at staff meeting.”

2. From the perspective of the Soviet leadership, what challenges does the US appear to present? What threats to Soviet interests or to Soviet security?

3. What do we know of Soviet desires for a Summit?

4. What is the status of US-Soviet negotiations on opening consulates? What is the status of negotiations on chancery sites, leased lines, fisheries? What is the status of cultural exchanges with the US?

5. Apart from the possible release of Ivanov,³ what possibilities are available for gestures toward the Soviets?

6. What is the role of “wars of national liberation” in current Soviet political-military doctrine and policy? Has this role been modified since Khrushchev’s famous speech of 1961?⁴

7. By what means does the USSR currently influence and/or control the policies of its East European allies? How are the relationships between Moscow and the several East European governments and communist parties likely to be modified as a result of the Czechoslovak crisis?

8. What is the extent and strength of the relationship between Moscow and the various Communist parties of the non-Communist world? Has the crisis affected relationships with Communist parties in other regions? To what extent is competition with Peking a factor?

9. What are the forces within the USSR tending to promote internal political and economic liberalization? What elements oppose liberation? How strong are these factors? How is their balance likely to be affected (a) by US actions or policies, (b) by other external sources? How is their balance likely to be reflected in Soviet foreign and military policies?

10. How do the Soviets see the future of their relations with principal West European countries? How do they see the future of NATO?

IV. Economic

1. How rapidly is the Soviet economy growing? What trends are likely over the next 1–3–5–10 years? What are the likely effects of these trends on Soviet foreign and military policies?

³ Igor Ivanov, a former employee of Amtorg, a Soviet trading cooperation in the United States, was serving a 20-year sentence for espionage. His appeal was under consideration by the Supreme Court. Before leaving office, President Lyndon Johnson reviewed his clemency appeal and decided it was inadvisable to intervene at that juncture in the judicial process. The Nixon administration was considering permanent deportation in lieu of Ivanov serving out his sentence.

⁴ On January 6, 1961, in a speech at the Moscow Meeting of World Communist Leaders, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev promised support for “wars of national liberation,” defined as those “which began as uprisings of colonial peoples against their oppressors [and] developed into guerrilla wars.”

2. How useful and how effective are existing Western controls on the export of strategic goods (a) to the USSR, (b) to other East European countries? In which areas do our COCOM partners disagree with the US positions and what is the basis of their disagreement? How useful, and how effective, are limitations on the extension of credit?

3. What is the existing pattern of trade between the USSR and (a) the West as a whole, (b) the US? What would be the economic and political effects on enlargement of this existing pattern of trade, or other significant modifications of it? Are there goods which, if traded between the US and USSR, would create a significant threat to US security? Noting Kосygin's remarks to McNamara about truck production, are there any initiatives in the trade field which the US should consider?

V. Foreign Military and Economic Assistance Programs

1. What are the principal objectives of the Soviet Government in providing military/economic aid to the LDCs?

2. What strains and burdens do these programs place upon the Soviet economy?

3. What are Soviet attitudes with regard to the provision of sophisticated weapons (surface-to-surface missiles, supersonic fighters, special radar, etc.) to the LDCs?

4. What degree of influence has the USSR acquired as a result of these programs?

5. What politico-military risks does the USSR incur as a result of its military assistance program? Is the Soviet leadership cognizant of these risks? What will be the pattern of resource allocation over the next 1–3–5 years?

5. Editorial Note

The National Security Council held its second meeting on January 25, 1969, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:20 p.m., and Vietnam was the primary topic. For the Vietnam portion of the meeting, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume VI, Vietnam, January 1969–July 1970, Document 10. Near the end of the meeting, a brief discussion of the Soviet Union's role in encouraging a peace settlement in Vietnam was raised in the context of "linkage":

"The President then asked where our contact with the Soviets is at present. Secretary Rogers said the Soviet Ambassador here in Washington but also the Soviet Ambassador in Paris. The President stated, 'I would like to get some recommendations on getting to the Soviets. In a tactical sense, we need a solution to bridge the gap but we

also need strategic help in making Hanoi change its policy, a sort of carrot and stick approach. These efforts should be centered here in Washington. Talking on the strategic arms issues is certainly the carrot. We should get planning started on this immediately.' " (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-109, NSC Meeting Minutes, Originals, 1969)

6. National Security Study Memorandum 10¹

Washington, January 27, 1969.

TO

The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT

East-West Relations

The President has directed that a study be prepared on the nature of US-Soviet relations, on US interests and objectives with respect to them and on the broad lines of appropriate US policies. The study should incorporate alternative views and interpretations of the issues involved. It should include summary statements of the conceptions and policy lines of the previous administration.

The study should include the following:

1. a characterization of US-Soviet relations in their broadest sense;
2. a discussion of Soviet perceptions of these relations and of Soviet interests and objectives as we understand them, including such indications as there are of differences, vacillations and uncertainties among Soviet decision-makers;
3. a discussion of US interests and objectives, short, medium and longer term;
4. a brief description of the broad lines of policy that we have hitherto pursued;
5. a recommended US approach to East-West relations.

The President has directed that the NSC Interdepartmental Group for Europe perform this study.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 316, NSSM Studies, March 1969–June 1970. Confidential. A copy was sent to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The paper should be forwarded to the NSC Review Group by February 6, 1969.²

Henry A. Kissinger

² The paper on “East-West Relations” is printed as Document 18 but was never discussed. A handwritten note on this NSSM reads: “Result: Overtaken by specific policy decisions.”

7. **Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**¹

Washington, January 28, 1969.

SUBJECT

Soviet Attitude toward New Administration

You may wish to show the President the attached Intelligence Note prepared by the State Department on reactions to the first days of the new administration.²

The report makes the following points.

1. The Soviet response to the new administration remains *cautiously optimistic*, and Soviet media obviously have been instructed to *avoid personal attacks on the President*.

2. By contrast, Soviet *comment on other administration figures such as Secretaries Rogers and Laird has been mixed*, indicating that editors are more free to criticize their public statements.

3. In an apparent effort to impress us with the seriousness of their desire for good relations, the Soviets have *invoked the sanction of Lenin on the need for friendly US-Soviet relations*.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 709, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. I. Confidential. Sent for information. Drafted by Donald R. Lesh, NSC staff officer responsible for Europe and sent through Eagleburger. On January 29, Lesh wrote a related memorandum to Kissinger on “Further Reports of Serious Kosygin Illness,” in which he explained that Premier Kosygin was seriously ill with a liver ailment. (Ibid.)

² Attached but not printed was a January 27 Intelligence Note from Hughes, entitled “Moscow’s Attitude Toward the New Administration—Cautious Optimism.”

4. The Zamyatin press conference on January 20³ indicating Soviet readiness to talk about strategic weapons limitation was probably designed to *pressure the new administration to agree to early negotiations*, and to indicate SALT as the preferred topic for opening the bilateral dialogue.

5. The total impression is that the Soviets are *eager to create the atmosphere of détente*; it is worthy of note that they fostered such a honeymoon in the early days of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations too. Only their subsequent performance will show how far the Soviets are prepared to go on substance.

Owing to the six to seven hour time differential, substantive comment in Soviet and East European media on the President's press conference yesterday⁴ did not begin until late last night (radio) and early this morning (press). FBIS summaries are only becoming available during this afternoon. The first Soviet report on TASS International Service was brief and factual; from Warsaw initial treatment was scanty but factual, with the comment that the President's remarks appeared to signal a harder line on Communist China than had been expected; from Budapest comment on the press conference also was restrained, brief, and factual. By tomorrow morning more authoritative analyses from both Western and Eastern Europe will no doubt be available.

Donald R. Lesh⁵

³ Not further identified.

⁴ President Nixon held a press conference on January 27; for text, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 15–23.

⁵ Lesh signed for Sonnenfeldt above Sonnenfeldt's typed signature.

8. Notes From Lunch Between the Assistant to the President (Ellsworth) and the Soviet Chargé (Tcherniakov)¹

Washington, January 29, 1969, 1–2:40 p.m.

NB: The following narrative is not a chronological account but is organized according to significant topics.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 709, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. I. No classification marking. In a January 29 covering memorandum to Kissinger, Ellsworth stated that he was "addressing it to you rather than the President because I do not want to introduce this material into the regular mechanism."

I. Ambassadors.

I asked when Ambassador Dobrynin would be returning to Washington. T. said Dobrynin had become ill after his arrival in Moscow and on January 7 had entered a sanitarium where the treatment takes 30 days. Therefore, T. expects Dobrynin to arrive back in Washington around February 10.

He stated that when Dobrynin arrives in Washington he will probably have visited personally with the leaders, Kosygin and Brezhnev. T. stressed that this is unusual—most Ambassadors on their home leaves do not even get to talk to Minister Gromyko, but Dobrynin almost always has personal conversations with Kosygin and Brezhnev. In addition, Brezhnev is in the same sanitarium as Dobrynin, so the two might have better-than-ordinary opportunities for private chats. The sanitarium is in a place whose name begins with a “B.” It is just outside Moscow.

T. asked when President Nixon might be selecting a man to go to Moscow as U.S. Ambassador, and I replied (in accordance with explicit instruction on this point by Kissinger) that Mr. Nixon would be selecting his Ambassador to Moscow within two weeks.

II. Missile Talks.

I opened the subject of missile talks early in the lunch, with the observation that both T. and Dobrynin had had conversations from time to time with me in the past on the general subject of talks between the two countries; that I had emphasized, in such past talks, Mr. Nixon’s awareness of the special responsibilities of the United States and the U.S.S.R.; that Mr. Nixon, in his acceptance speech at Miami and in his Inaugural address, had said we moved from an era of confrontation to an era of negotiation; that I had always stressed Mr. Nixon’s view that talks on various subjects are interrelated.

I stated further that President Nixon approaches the question of talks with the Soviet Union in the following spirit: that talks on complicated and important matters such as these must always be conducted in a precise, businesslike, and detailed manner; that Mr. Nixon’s background and life as a political man and lawyer in the United States, as well as his extensive international experience, have made it natural and imperative for him to place the greatest importance on semantic and substantive precision in international discussions; and that his news conference on Monday was only the most recent example of this attitude.

I stated that the President has reached no decision to have talks on missiles or any particular subject; that he is looking for evidence of general political movement in many areas. I stated that, while such a decision is under consideration, the President intends not to engage in any kind of arms escalation.

T.'s response to this will be embraced within the concluding section (VII) of this memorandum.

III. The Middle East.

With regard to the Middle East, and in response to my observation that the Middle East would be an area in which the President would look for political movement in connection with his overall consideration of a decision whether or not to commence talks, T. made the point that his own government has only limited influence over the principal Arab states involved, i.e., Egypt, Jordan and Syria (although Syria is not as significant a factor as Egypt and Jordan). In the case of Egypt, for example, he made the point that Egypt is a defeated nation and there is a limit to how far Colonel Nasser can be pushed without destroying him from the standpoint of the internal Egyptian situation.

IV. Non-Proliferation Treaty.

T. brought up the NPT, saying that he felt it was unfortunate the Johnson Administration had delayed the matter. In accordance with instructions from Kissinger, I stated the President would have a political problem with regard to ratification of the NPT if there should be further Soviet talk about Article 53 of the United Nations Charter or if the Soviet Union should make an issue of the West German meeting scheduled to be held in West Berlin on March 6.²

T.'s response to this will be embraced within the concluding section (VII) of this memorandum.

V. Vietnam.

I stated that it was President Nixon's intention to end the war in Vietnam, one way or another. I repeated this four times during the course of the lunch.

Each time I mentioned this point, I supplemented it with the observation that President Nixon could not end the war in Vietnam on a basis which would be interpreted as a disadvantageous conclusion from the point of view of the United States, after President Nixon's predecessor had fought and been eliminated from the political scene in America for his pains.

I mentioned also that the Administration is aware of the assistance the Soviet Union has put into the Paris negotiation situation, and

² Article 53, one of the "enemy states" clauses of the UN Charter, permitted the assertion of a unilateral right to intervene in West German affairs. The term "enemy state" applied to any state which during World War II had been an enemy of any signatory of the Charter. (*A Decade of American Foreign Policy*, pp. 117–139) For information on the West German Bundesversammlung meeting on March 6, see Document 3.

appreciates it; further, that it is hoped the Soviet Government will be able to continue its positive efforts in this area.

T. responded on this whole area at great length and with substantial sophistication. Essentially, his point is that the Saigon regime is a small minority regime, that the basic problem in Vietnam is an indigenous Vietnamese problem, that the Soviet Government has limited influence over the NLF, and that in the final analysis there was going to have to be some kind of temporary, provisional coalition set up in South Vietnam which will include the NLF in some way. I responded by referring to various statements in President Nixon's news conference of Monday, January 27, and in general said these were matters that T. and I could not dispose of at the lunch today.

I want to emphasize that T. expanded on these matters in great length and in detail.

VI. *Stalinism.*

T. spent a substantial portion of time, and great energy, being defensive about the Stalin era. He described how "upbeat" conditions were for Soviet citizenry in the middle and late '30's and how unrealistic are the current popular portrayals of that era by Western writers (as well as Solzhenitsyn's portrayal).

He particularly stressed that he had noticed in the press a report that President Nixon has on the table by his bed in the White House a book entitled "The Great Purge"³ or something to that effect, and he explicitly asked me to either throw the book away or tell the President it is not worth reading. (I said I doubted if the press knows what is on the table in the President's bedroom.)

In response to pressing questions by me, he was very explicit in stressing the importance of the proposition that:

- (1) such books do not accurately portray conditions in the Soviet Union in the 1930's or whenever they pretend to be set; and,
- (2) even if such books may be taken (*arguendo*) (within artistic license) as reflections of reality, such reality should not be perceived as a relevant guide or comparison to present conditions.

VII. *Talks.*

Toward the end of the luncheon period, T. said in passing that he could assure me quite officially that his government is prepared to commence talks on limiting offensive and defensive missiles, on Vietnam, on Europe, and on the Middle East. As soon as it was appropriate

³ Reference is to Robert Conquest's *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties* published in 1968.

to do so in the conversation, I went back to that statement, quoted it to him, cited to him a statement that had been made to me by Ambassador Dobrynin in my home on Sunday evening, November 24,⁴ to the same effect and asked T. if I was to understand his government is now prepared to start simultaneous talks on all these subjects immediately. T. sparred over the question of the meaning of the word “simultaneous”—did it mean simultaneous in place as well as time, and did it mean simultaneous in a sense which would imply an interrelationship to the extent that the substance of one subject would be a condition for talks on the substance of another?

I replied that, as I had said earlier, Mr. Nixon had always had the view that talks on various subjects are always interrelated and must be understood as taking place in context with each other.

T. emphasized that his government was always highly sensitive to any suggestion that one subject matter was being used to “blackmail” the Soviet Government on another subject—that Walt Rostow had been quite crude in his approach to the interrelationship of different subjects and that Dobrynin had received such severe backlash from the Kremlin when he reported one Rostow episode along this line that he, Dobrynin, had simply not reported other Rostow episodes. T. indicated that he would be unwilling to suggest any such proposal or idea to his government, but expressed the belief that his government would, in fact, agree to the simultaneous commencement of talks on all the listed subjects with the understanding that all should be considered within an interrelated context.

And then, I asked him if he would be willing to participate with me in preparing a memorandum which would more precisely describe the conditions that could surround such talks and an exact list of the topics for discussion in such talks.

He agreed that he would do that if I would give him three or four days. He will be back to me within three or four days for further conversation.⁵

⁴ No record of this conversation was found.

⁵ No record of a further conversation was found.

9. Editorial Note

On February 1, 1969, the National Security Council met to discuss the Middle East. President Richard Nixon listened to briefings by Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms and by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Earle Wheeler. According to minutes of the meeting, Helms described Soviet interests in the region as follows: "USSR has leapfrogged Northern Tier. Soviet naval expansion—steadier, more effective than Khrushchev's rather opportunistic move to put missiles in Cuba." Nixon asked, "You talk about USSR's 'measured, effective plan.' Does this emanate from military strategy or something that just happens? Do they have a meeting like ours here today, decide on policy and then execute it? Or do they just muddle along?" Helms replied, "Highest level decision. Considered policy."

General Wheeler's briefing on the significance of the Soviet fleet and U.S. contingency plans for conflict in the region generated the following comments and queries from Nixon: "I understand your contingency plan is based on intelligence estimate that local conflict [is] main possibility. I agree that US-USSR conflict remote, but what if one of Arab countries where Soviet fleet present is attacked?" Wheeler replied, "Possibilities we are examining: U.S. attack on Soviet bases in Siberia; sink one Soviet ship in Mediterranean; seize Soviet intelligence trawler."

Nixon then asked, "Could you consider what we could do indirectly through the Israelis? Seems to me Soviet naval presence is primarily political. Therefore, we must be prepared for a less-than-military contingency." Wheeler responded, "Primarily political. But Soviet presence in ports puts a Soviet umbrella over those ports. In a tenuous sense, fleet therefore does have military use." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-109, NSC Meeting Minutes, Originals, 1969)

On February 3, 1969, Kissinger sent Nixon a follow-up memorandum that summarized the policy recommendations made at the NSC meeting the day before. Kissinger urged that "we should particularly concentrate on U.S.-Soviet arrangements which could slow the pace of the Near Eastern arms race and serve as a restraining influence on the nations in the area—at least arrangements which would assure U.S.-U.S.S.R. disengagement if hostilities break out again." Kissinger then laid out the pros and cons of a two-power dialogue with the Soviets as opposed to the advantages and disadvantages of the four-power (Great Britain, France, United States, Soviet Union) approach recommended by the French:

"1. The *pros* are:

"a. This reflects the power realities in the Middle East, and the Russians have assured us that they consider this the primary channel,

even though they have accepted the four-power proposal. If there is to be a general settlement, only the USSR has the necessary leverage with Nasser to produce it, and only we come close to having the necessary influence with Israel.

“b. Each of us could consult directly with these parties while negotiating and yet retain the desirable UN umbrella by turning over our product to Jarring.

“c. It would be easier to position the Middle East on the U.S.–USSR agenda—particularly to establish the linkage to strategic arms talks—in a two-power context.

“d. It would also position the Middle East into the whole context of East-West relations with maximum control and linkage to other negotiations such as those on force limitations.

“2. The *cons* are:

“a. It might give the USSR credit for any settlement and enhance its position in the area to our detriment. The counters to this point are that all the Arabs know only the U.S. can move Israel; that settlement which has even a remote chance of Israeli acceptance would have enough elements unpalatable to the Arabs so that the Russians would not win popularity by pushing it; and that the U.S. can hold its own in peaceful competition with the USSR so should be willing to accept passing credit to the USSR, if any, for the sake of a settlement that would help us more than Moscow.

“b. We have no strong evidence that the Soviets want the kind of basic peace settlement we have been seeking. Although their intent is debatable, they seem to be aiming at a limited accommodation to reduce the possibility of a sudden crisis with dangerous and unforeseeable consequences. Limited accommodation would leave enough unsettled grievances for them to use in keeping the Arabs dependent on their support. If the Soviets are not sincere, we risk walking into a propaganda trap. The counters to this are that the Soviets are the ones who have persistently pushed this dialogue, that they have already moved toward our position and that we will never know their real position until we pin them down in negotiation.

“c. Israel will object to our negotiating their fate with anyone, though they are likely to react somewhat less sharply to the two-power than to the four-power approach. Agreement directly between them and the Arabs is fundamental to their position—and, they believe, to ours. They hold that a lasting settlement cannot result unless the parties themselves develop one they can live with. If we went down either the two-power or the four-power track, we would have to cope with vociferous Israeli charges that our position had weakened, that we had been taken in by Soviet blandishments and that, worst of all, we had undercut their position by compromising on the central point in that position.”

In telling the President where to go from here, Kissinger wrote: “If you chose to follow the two-power course—either by itself or with the four-power track as an adjunct—you would have a choice between waiting for the USSR to respond to the U.S. note of January 15 and framing our own proposal and taking it to them. The advantage of waiting would be to test their seriousness. The last U.S. note asked them to clarify some obvious ambiguities in their December 30 [1968] note. But if we are going to wait, we should probably find a way to let Moscow know we are awaiting their reply. The advantages of taking the initiative would be to get our own plan on the table, to seize the propaganda initiative and to give the Arabs the impression that you are serious about wanting a just settlement. Of course, we must consider this in connection with other initiatives we plan with Moscow.” (Ibid.)

On February 4, when the National Security Council met again to discuss the Middle East, Kissinger circulated his memorandum on policy recommendations. According to minutes of the meeting, Nixon asked Kissinger to “talk about how we meld 2-power and 4-power [talks].” Kissinger replied, “Intimate relationship among all these things. On overall settlement, I’ll concentrate on 4-power and 2-power approaches. Other two options have little support—let Jarring go by himself or US mediation.” Kissinger then outlined the pros and cons from his February 3 memorandum. President Nixon concluded the discussion about the various approaches to a Middle East settlement with the following remarks: “Don’t be in any hurry to have anything done on the four-power front. At UN go to the two-power forum. Start talking with Soviets. Harmful if we give impression that four-power forum [is] where things will be settled. Main value as umbrella.” (Ibid.)

During a February 6 news conference, Nixon announced a five-pronged U.S. approach toward a Middle East settlement: “We are going to continue to give our all-out support to the Jarring mission. We are going to have bilateral talks at the United Nations, preparatory to the talks between the four powers. We shall have four-power talks at the United Nations. We shall also have talks with the countries in the area, with the Israelis and their neighbors, and, in addition, we want to go forward on some of the long range plans, the Eisenhower–Strauss plan for relieving some of the very grave economic problems in that area.” (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pages 68–69)

10. Letter From President Nixon to Secretary of State Rogers¹

Washington, February 4, 1969.

Dear Bill:

I have been giving much thought to our relations with the Soviet Union and would like to give you, informally, my ideas on this central security problem. My purpose in doing so is not to prejudice the scheduled systematic review by the National Security Council of our policy options with respect to the USSR, but rather to set out the general approach which I believe should guide us in our conduct as we move from confrontation to negotiation.

1. I believe that the tone of our public and private discourse about and with the Soviet Union should be calm, courteous and non-polemical. This will not prevent us from stating our views clearly and, if need be, firmly; nor will it preclude us from candidly affirming our attitude—negatively if warranted—toward the policies and actions of the Soviet Union. But what I said in my Inaugural address concerning the tone and character of our domestic debates² should also govern the tone and character of our statements in the international arena, most especially in respect of the Soviet Union.

2. I believe that the basis for a viable settlement is a mutual recognition of our vital interests. We must recognize that the Soviet Union has interests; in the present circumstances we cannot but take account of them in defining our own. We should leave the Soviet leadership in no doubt that we expect them to adopt a similar approach toward us. This applies also to the concerns and interests of our allies and indeed of all nations. They too are entitled to the safeguarding of their legitimate interests. In the past, we have often attempted to settle things in a fit of enthusiasm, relying on personal diplomacy. But the “spirit” that permeated various meetings lacked a solid basis of mutual interest, and therefore, every summit was followed by a crisis in less than a year.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 215, “D” File. Secret. Kissinger sent this letter to the President on February 4 for his signature and reminded him that they had cleared the draft that morning. (Ibid.) An identical letter to Secretary of Defense Laird was included for Nixon’s signature. (Ibid.) The letter to Laird is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969–1972, Document 10.

² The passage in Nixon’s inaugural address reads: “In these difficult years, America has suffered from a fever of words; from inflated rhetoric that promises more than it can deliver; from angry rhetoric that fans discontents into hatreds; from bombastic rhetoric that postures instead of persuading. We cannot learn from one another until we stop shouting at one another—until we speak quietly enough so that our words can be heard as well as our voices.” (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 1–4)

3. I am convinced that the great issues are fundamentally interrelated. I do not mean by this to establish artificial linkages between specific elements of one or another issue or between tactical steps that we may elect to take. But I do believe that crisis or confrontation in one place and real cooperation in another cannot long be sustained simultaneously. I recognize that the previous Administration took the view that when we perceive a mutual interest on an issue with the USSR, we should pursue agreement and attempt to insulate it as much as possible from the ups and downs of conflicts elsewhere. This may well be sound on numerous bilateral and practical matters such as cultural or scientific exchanges. But, on the crucial issues of our day, I believe we must seek to advance on a front at least broad enough to make clear that we see some relationship between political and military issues. I believe that the Soviet leaders should be brought to understand that they cannot expect to reap the benefits of cooperation in one area while seeking to take advantage of tension or confrontation elsewhere. Such a course involves the danger that the Soviets will use talks on arms as a safety valve on intransigence elsewhere. I note for example that the invasion of Hungary was followed by abortive disarmament talks within nine months.³ The invasion of Czechoslovakia was preceded by the explorations of a summit conference (in fact, when Ambassador Dobrynin informed President Johnson of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, he received the appointment so quickly because the President thought his purpose was to fix the date of a summit meeting).⁴ Negotiation and the search for agreement carry their own burdens; the Soviets—no less than we—must be ready to bear them.

4. I recognize the problem of giving practical substance to the propositions set forth in the previous paragraph. Without attempting to lay down inflexible prescriptions about how various matters at issue between ourselves and the USSR should be connected, I would like to illustrate what I have in mind in one case of immediate and widespread interest—the proposed talks on strategic weapons. I believe our decision on when and how to proceed does not depend exclusively on our review of the purely military and technical issues, although these are of key importance. This decision should also be taken in the light of the prevailing political context and, in particular, in light of progress

³ Reference is to the Soviet use of force in Hungary on October 24, 1956. Disarmament negotiations between the Western powers and the Soviet Union began in London on March 18, 1957.

⁴ The evening of August 20, 1968, Dobrynin informed Johnson of Warsaw Pact military intervention in Czechoslovakia. The day before, Soviet leaders had invited Johnson to Leningrad, and on August 21, the White House had intended to announce the summit. A memorandum of Johnson's August 20 meeting with Dobrynin is in *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, volume XVII, Eastern Europe, Document 80.

toward stabilizing the explosive Middle East situation, and in light of the Paris talks. I believe I should retain the freedom to ensure, to the extent that we have control over it, that the timing of talks with the Soviet Union on strategic weapons is optimal. This may, in fact, mean delay beyond that required for our review of the technical issues. Indeed, it means that we should—at least in our public position—keep open the option that there may be no talks at all.

5. I am, of course, aware that the Soviets are seeking to press us to agree to talks and I know also of the strong views held by many in this country. But I think it is important to establish with the Soviets early in the Administration that our commitment to negotiation applies to a range of major issues so that the “structure of peace” to which I referred in the Inaugural will have a sound base.

Sincerely,

RN

11. Memorandum From the Ambassador to the Soviet Union (Thompson) to Secretary of State Rogers¹

Washington, February 7, 1969.

I had lunch with Henry Kissinger today. While there the President sent for both of us and chatted with us while having his lunch at his desk. The following are the highlights:

I urged that we proceed as rapidly as possible to set up arrangements for strategic missile talks with the Soviets although obviously not until he returned from his European trip.² I argued briefly with the President and at greater length earlier with Henry that we not attempt to tie the start of talks with political concessions from the Soviets. I thought that to do so might have the opposite effect than the one we intended. I got the impression that the President was inclined to agree. I also suggested that we drop the idea of agreeing to a set of principles before starting the talks.

I told the President I thought we should be careful not to feed Soviet suspicions about the possibility of our ganging up with Commu-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Office Files of William Rogers: Lot 73 D 443, Box 4, White House Correspondence, 1969. Secret.

² On February 23 Nixon left for an 8-day visit to Europe on his first foreign trip as President.

nist China against them. In reply to his question I said I was not referring to his public statements on this matter as the Soviets would understand that we would pursue our national interests. Rather I was thinking of any hints or actions that indicated something was going on under the table. As a specific example I mentioned the possible shifting of our talks with the Chinese in Prague from the present location which the Soviets have doubtless bugged to our respective Embassies. (I understand the Chinese have turned this down.)

The President referred to the importance of close understanding between you and Kissinger. I gathered that both he and Henry were disturbed by press reports of [friction] between the Department and the NSC staff.

The President said he was not fanatical about the idea of summit talks. Nevertheless he thought that summit talks with the Soviets would eventually take place and asked for my thoughts on timing. I said I thought it was important to proceed first with one or two important problems. Ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would be useful but I thought it would also be wise at least to have started the Missile talks. If they succeeded, this would create a favorable atmosphere—if they got stuck perhaps the President could resolve the difficulty on his level.

In this connection I said I thought some changes in the Soviet leadership were quite possible before the year was out.

The President asked if I would help in the planning of any eventual summit meeting with the Soviets and I said I would be happy to do so.

In my earlier talk with Henry I said that if Missile talks with the Soviets were set, I thought this would diminish the likelihood of the Soviets stirring up trouble in Berlin over the meeting there of the Bundesversammlung.³

The President said he had not met Ambassador Dobrynin. I said I thought the top Soviet leaders had confidence in his judgment and that he had never deceived me, unless he in fact knew about the missiles in Cuba, which I did not think was the case. The President asked if there was any reason why he should not see Dobrynin after the forthcoming European trip. I said I thought it was quite proper. He said he might ask him to an informal lunch.

The President referred to a talk we had in Moscow in 1967 when I told him the Soviets were prejudiced against him. He asked what their present attitude was. I said that they had been relatively correct in their attitude during the election campaign and since. They had

³ See Document 3.

been impressed by his conduct of the campaign and had referred favorably to his remarks about negotiations. They were, however, always suspicious and would be examining carefully his first moves in the field of foreign affairs.

L. W. Thompson⁴

⁴ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

12. Editorial Note

On February 13, 1969, at 2:45 p.m., Secretary of State Rogers met with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin at the Soviet Ambassador's request. Dobrynin was under instructions from his government to seek an appointment with President Nixon to express formally its views on U.S.-Soviet relations and receive the Nixon administration views of the relationship. When Rogers asked whether the Soviet suggestion for a meeting was urgent, Dobrynin responded that he hoped one could be arranged within the next couple of days. (Memorandum of conversation, February 13; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL US-USSR) A summary of Rogers' conversation with Dobrynin on February 13 was included with the President's evening reading and is printed as Tab B to Document 13.

On February 15, Haldeman described preparations for the President's first meeting with Dobrynin:

"Big item was meeting planned for Monday with the Soviet Ambassador. Problem arose because P wanted me to call Rogers and tell him of meeting, but that Ambassador and P would be alone. I did, Rogers objected, feeling P should never meet alone with an Ambassador, urged a State Department reporter sit in. Back and forth, K disturbed because Ambassador has something of great significance to tell P, but if done with State man there word will get out and P will lose control. Decided I should sit in, Rogers said OK, but ridiculous. Ended up State man and K both will sit in, but P will see Ambassador alone for a few minutes first, and will get the dope in written form. K determined P should get word on Soviet intentions direct so he knows he can act on it. May be a big break on the Middle East. K feels very important." (*Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*, February 15, 1969)

Kissinger's recollection, related in his *White House Years* (page 141), of the decision to exclude Rogers from the first meeting with Dobrynin is as follows: "Procedurally, Nixon wished to establish his dominance

over negotiations with the Soviet Union; in his mind, this required the exclusion of Rogers, who might be too anxious and who might claim credit for whatever progress might be made. Substantively, he wanted to begin the linkage approach at his own pace. Nixon sought to solve the Rogers problem in his customary fashion by letting Haldeman bear the onus (and no doubt Haldeman laid it off on me). Haldeman told the Secretary of State that the best guarantee for not raising expectations was for Rogers to be absent from the meeting. Attendance by Rogers would convey a sense of urgency contrary to our strategy; it might lead to an undue sense of urgency."

Also on February 15, Kissinger wrote Nixon a memorandum describing a message from Dobrynin that was conveyed to him through the head of the American section of the Institute of World Politics in Moscow during a reception the previous evening at the Soviet Embassy:

"1. While in Moscow he had stayed in the same sanatorium with Brezhnev, Podgorny, and Kosygin.

"2. He carried a message, personally approved by the top leadership, for you, which he would prefer to deliver to you without any diplomats present. He himself would come alone.

"3. The Soviet leaders were full of goodwill and eager to move forward on a broad front.

"4. Dobrynin would like to conduct his conversations in Washington with some person you designate who has your confidence, but who was not part of the diplomatic establishment.

"5. The Soviet leaders were reluctant to accept conditions on the ground that they had to show their good faith. However, if we wanted simultaneous progress on several fronts at once, they were ready to proceed on the basis of equality.

"6. They were especially prepared to proceed on a bilateral basis with discussions on the Middle East. They would prefer to do this, however, outside the UN framework. We could designate a trusted official at our Embassy in Moscow and they would designate a very high official in the Foreign Ministry. Alternatively, you could designate somebody you trusted here and Dobrynin would be prepared to conduct conversations.

"7. They were prepared to answer questions on other outstanding topics, such as Vietnam, and to talk on any other political problem on our mind." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 340, Subject Files, USSR Memcons Dobrynin/President 2/17/69)

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

Washington, February 15, 1969.

SUBJECT

Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin's Call on You

Dobrynin has just returned from Moscow after an absence of several weeks; he will presumably have a message from the Soviet leaders. *If it is a written message of any substance—he may provide a translation—I recommend that you not react on the spot, but tell him it will be studied and answered in due course.*

Whether written or oral, *Dobrynin's line* will probably be

(1) to assure you of Soviet desires to do business, especially on strategic weapons,

(2) to express concern that we are not sufficiently responsive to the conciliatory stance displayed by the Soviets since January 20,

(3) to leave an implication that we should not pass up the present opportunity, and

(4) to establish a direct channel between you and the Russian leaders.

I recommend that *your approach* should be

(1) to be polite, but aloof;

(2) to show willingness to be responsive when they have concrete propositions to make, but not to let the Soviets force the pace merely by offers to talk without indications of substance;

(3) to convey concern that a Berlin crisis could throw a shadow over our relations;²

(4) to make clear that we believe progress depends on specific settlements, not personal diplomacy. Summits should come at the end of careful preparation.³

You should be aware that Dobrynin is a friendly and outgoing individual who has long enjoyed close personal contact with leading American officials.

While he is a member of the Soviet Central Committee and has some access to the top Moscow leaders, he is not part of the in-group that makes decisions.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 340, Subject Files, USSR Memcons Dobrynin/President 2/17/69. Confidential; Nodis. Sent for action.

² See Document 3.

³ Nixon underlined most of this paragraph.

His reports probably do carry weight in Moscow, but his bosses also seem to run a check on his reporting through the sizeable KGB establishment in their Embassy here.

Dobrynin speaks English quite well, but his comprehension is imperfect; consequently, important points must be made in simple words and relatively slowly.

I attach:

- recommended talking points (Tab A)
- Secretary Rogers' account of his own conversation last Thursday (Tab B)

Tab A

Talking Points Prepared by the National Security Council Staff⁴

Washington, undated.

TALKING POINTS

I. Strategic Weapons Talks

1. We are reviewing the subject as part of our priority examination of all our major security problems.
2. We have noted Soviet expressions of readiness to begin talks.
3. We believe that negotiations that go to the very heart of our (and their) interests should bear a proper relationship to the crucial issues that endanger peace. Our reading of history indicates that almost all crises have been caused by political conditions, not by the arms race as such. We have no preconditions, but believe one cannot engage in mutually beneficial arms talks while major crises fester in which we and they might be pitted against each other.⁵ You are thinking especially of the Middle East and Vietnam. We think it would be dangerous if arms talks dulled our efforts to cope with threats to the peace.

⁴ On February 15, Rogers also sent Nixon a memorandum of talking points for his meeting with Dobrynin, which were similar but more detailed than those printed as Tab A. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 709, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. I)

⁵ Nixon underlined these sentences and also highlighted and checked this paragraph.

II. Berlin

1. Any crisis there now would be artificial; we see no justification for it and have no interest in confrontation.

2. We do have a vital interest in the integrity and viability of the city.⁶

3. We know of no infringement on Soviet interests by any actions in the Western sectors of the city on the part of any of our allies.

4. You are going to Berlin to affirm our interests and our responsibilities.⁷

5. (Optional if Conversation Warrants) A crisis⁸ now would place a heavy burden on our⁹ relations.

III. Middle East

1. We recognize that the Soviet Union has interests in the region. So have we. The legitimate interests of all deserve to be safeguarded. Efforts to promote one's own interests and ambitions at someone else's expense will lead to confrontation not settlement.

2. We have no desire to get drawn into the wars and conflicts of the area; we assume the Soviet Union has no such desire either.¹⁰

3. We are prepared to participate constructively in talks that give promise of leading somewhere.¹¹ Talks for talks' sake may simply embolden those who favor recourse to force.

4. We are convinced that there can be no progress, nor faith in the process of negotiation unless it is understood by all that all the parties in the Middle East acquire tangible guarantees of their security.

IV. Vietnam

1. We seek an honorable peace for all concerned; we have no wish to humiliate Hanoi and do not intend to see Saigon or ourselves humiliated.¹²

2. You will not be the first President to lose a war; therefore you intend to end the war one way or the other.¹³ (This is deliberately ambiguous.)

⁶ Nixon underlined this sentence.

⁷ Nixon visited West Berlin on February 27 as part of his 8-day trip to Europe. For his remarks on arrival at Tempelhof Airport in West Berlin, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 153–155.

⁸ Nixon underlined this word.

⁹ Nixon underlined this word.

¹⁰ Nixon underlined most of this sentence.

¹¹ Nixon underlined this sentence.

¹² Nixon underlined the second part of this sentence.

¹³ Nixon underlined the second half of this sentence and highlighted and checked this paragraph.

3. Vital interests of the United States and the Soviet Union are not in conflict in Vietnam. We do, between us, have a responsibility to keep it that way. Which is another way of saying we both have an interest in getting the war ended.¹⁴

4. We would like to see the Soviet Union exert its influence on its friends in Hanoi, who depend heavily on Soviet support, though we recognize, of course, the delicacy of its position. But if that fails, we do not exclude that others who have an interest could be enlisted to bring about progress toward a settlement.¹⁵

Tab B

Department of State Submission for the President's Evening Reading¹⁶

Washington, February 13, 1969.

SUBJECT

Call by Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin

In response to his request, I received Ambassador Dobrynin this afternoon.¹⁷ He came specifically to inform me that he was under instructions from his government to seek an appointment with you, at your convenience, but hopefully within the next day or two. He gave no indication that he was carrying a message but merely stated that he had been asked by his government to convey to you its current views on the most important international issues. He planned to tell you how the Soviet Government presently views U.S.-Soviet relations and how these relations might develop in the future. Your views on the questions raised, he said, would be appreciated. I said I would be in touch with him as soon as I had any information to pass on.

I took advantage of his call to express our concern over the possibility of another Tet offensive¹⁸ as well as our concern over developments involving Berlin. Ambassador Dobrynin seemed unaware of

¹⁴ Nixon underlined most of this paragraph.

¹⁵ Nixon underlined most of this sentence.

¹⁶ Confidential. Drafted by Adolph Dubs (EUR/SOV) on February 13.

¹⁷ February 13.

¹⁸ Reference is to the possibility of a 1969 North Vietnamese and Vietcong offensive in South Vietnam during the Tet lunar holidays in February 1968. Nixon underlined "Tet offensive" and "developments involving Berlin" in this sentence.

any danger signals in Viet-Nam. He simply repeated his government's position that the Soviet Union would continue to be helpful with respect to the negotiations on Viet-Nam, assuming that the U.S. accepted the equality of all participants in those negotiations.

On Berlin, he was at pains to underline that the U.S. should not misread developments there. The Soviet Union did not wish to do anything to jeopardize relations with the U.S. What was happening with respect to Berlin was merely a reaction to the FRG decision to convene the Bundesversammlung there. He added that the Soviet Union did not want Berlin and that it was not asking that the East Germans should get it. At the same time, the Soviet Union is not prepared to give West Berlin to the FRG. Ambassador Dobrynin also underlined that actions taken by East Germany were not in any way related to your planned visit to Berlin.

With respect to the Middle East, he indicated that the Soviet Government evidently does not intend to reply formally to the previous Administration's last communication on that subject. He said that the Soviets were prepared to discuss this matter in detail both bilaterally and in a Four-Power context. Discussions could take place in New York, Moscow and here.

Ambassador Dobrynin also said that the Soviet Union remained ready to initiate discussions on the limitation of offensive and defensive missile systems. He thought it unfortunate, however, if this matter were to be linked with progress on other issues.

I emphasized during the course of the conversation that we hoped the Soviet Union would be helpful with respect to Viet-Nam and that the Soviet Government should advise East Germany to play Berlin in a low key.

14. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 17, 1969, 11:45 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

Ambassador Dobrynin's Initial Call on the President

PARTICIPANTS

U.S. Side:

The President
 Mr. Henry A. Kissinger, Asst. to the
 President for National Security Aff.
 Mr. Malcolm Toon, Acting Deputy
 Assistant Secretary for European Affairs

Soviet Side:

H.E. Anatoliy F. Dobrynin,
 Soviet Ambassador

The President greeted Ambassador Dobrynin in the Fish Room and escorted him into his office for a brief private chat. Ambassador Dobrynin told the President privately that, before his departure from Moscow last week, he had spent two days at a government dacha outside Moscow with Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny and the message that he carried was based on his talks with the leadership. The President should understand, therefore, that what he had to say on substantive issues was an accurate reflection of the views of the leadership.

After Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Toon joined the President, the President gave the floor to Ambassador Dobrynin.

Dobrynin said that his government had noted with interest President Nixon's statement that his Administration looked forward to an era of negotiations, not confrontation. He could assure the President that the Soviet Government shared this view and was prepared to do its part to see to it that the period that lies ahead was truly one of negotiations and not confrontation. This was on the understanding, of course, that the issues to be negotiated and the subjects to be discussed would be by mutual agreement, that negotiations would not be pursued simply for their own sake but for the purpose of bringing about constructive results. Past experience indicated the importance of beginning negotiations as soon as possible. Delay could be harmful, and it was important therefore to recognize the desirability of moving ahead at an early date. The Ambassador had been instructed by his government to ascertain precisely what the President had in mind by negotiations—specifically what issues the President felt should be the subject of negotiations and when, where, and at what level these should

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 1 US–USSR. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Toon. The conversation was held in the Oval Office at the White House.

take place. So far as the Soviet Government was concerned, negotiations and an exchange of views on various subjects and at various levels could take place simultaneously. It was not excluded that at an appropriate time discussions could be carried on at the Summit level.

The President asked Ambassador Dobrynin what he meant by his statement that negotiations on various issues could be carried on simultaneously.

Dobrynin referred to the President's remarks at his first press conference concerning the Middle East situation and the arms race.² The Soviet Government was prepared to use its influence on parties directly involved in the Middle East situation to help arrive at a solution of the problem. Depending on the President's views, talks on the Middle East problem could take place in New York or Washington and also in Moscow, either with the American Embassy there or with a special emissary, if the President desired to send one. With regard to the so-called arms race, the Soviet Government was prepared to reach agreement on limitation and subsequent reduction of both offensive and defensive strategic missiles. As the President was aware, certain aspects of this question had already been discussed with the previous Administration. Both sides had agreed on the desirability of early initiation of talks on the missile problem, although there had not been full agreement on a procedural aspect, which Ambassador Dobrynin understood related to the level at which the talks should begin. In any case, he was instructed by his government to inform the President that the Soviet side was prepared to begin talks now and to ascertain from the President his ideas on where, when, and at what level talks might begin. The Soviet Government was not pressing for an early reply but, in its view, discussions of the arms control problem as well as the Middle East problem were worth pursuing and could be carried on simultaneously. Certainly, the Soviet Government was under no illusion that the solutions to either problem could be achieved overnight, but it felt that a beginning should be made. While other subjects might be discussed, and in this respect Ambassador Dobrynin was prepared to hear our own suggestions either through Mr. Kissinger or the State Department, it was his government's view that the two subjects he had

² During Nixon's first press conference on January 27, the President was asked where he stood on starting missile talks with the Soviets. He replied that he preferred "to steer a course between those two extremes" of waiting until there was "progress on political settlements" and moving forward without such political talks. "What I want to do is to see to it that we have strategic arms talks in a way and at a time that will promote, if possible, progress on outstanding political problems at the same time—for example, on the problem of the Mideast and on other outstanding problems in which the United States and the Soviet Union, acting together, can serve the cause of peace." A full text of the conference is in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 15–23.

mentioned—the Middle East and the arms control—were among the most important which should engage our early attention.

The President thanked Ambassador Dobrynin for his forthright statement of the Soviet Government's position. The President wished to make clear that his Administration began its tasks with a fresh viewpoint and with an eye to the future. Since Ambassador Dobrynin referred to a possible Summit meeting, the President wished to make clear that he shared the view that at some point a meeting of Heads of Government might be useful. The President felt, however, that such meetings must be based on a carefully prepared agenda and be preceded by adequate preparatory work on the issues to be discussed and possibly on which agreements might be reached. Without adequate preparations, Summit meetings could be harmful, since expectations of results might not be met. The President did not believe in a Summit meeting simply for the sake of bringing together the Heads of Government. Some specific purpose must be served, and the President felt strongly that we should now discuss at lower levels the principal issues before us so that ultimately when there should be a Summit meeting it would have constructive results.

Secondly, the President wished to set forth in a completely candid way his view of the relationship between the two super powers, as they are now commonly referred to. We must recognize that there are basic differences between us. This has been true historically of the relationship between great powers, and it is equally true now. We both have a responsibility to moderate these differences, to see to it that they do not result in a sharp confrontation, and in the President's view the most effective way of doing this was to keep the lines of communication open. This is the task of diplomacy—to recognize that great powers will differ and to insure that differences be resolved by peaceful means.

Finally, the President wished to stress the importance of eliminating those areas of friction where our own fundamental interests are not involved. We know from history that great powers can be drawn into a confrontation with each other as a result of actions by other nations. The President felt, for example, that it would be the height of folly to let the parties directly involved in the Middle East conflict bring about a confrontation between Moscow and Washington. It is particularly for this reason that the President attached great importance to an exchange of views, either bilaterally or in a multilateral forum on the Middle East situation.

The strategic arms problem involves primarily the United States and the Soviet Union, although both sides, of course, must consult, as necessary, with their Allies. The President wished to make clear his views on the relationship between strategic arms talks and progress on political issues. It was not his view that the initiation of such talks must

be conditioned on the settlement of larger political issues. We both recognize that the principal purpose of strategic arms talks is peace, but there is no guarantee that freezing strategic weapons at the present level alone would bring about peace. History makes clear that wars result from political differences and political problems. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, when we begin strategic arms talks to do what we can in a parallel way to de-fuse critical political situations such as the Middle East and Viet-Nam.

Ambassador Dobrynin asked if his understanding was correct that the President favored simultaneous discussion of the problems which the President had mentioned. The Ambassador recognized, of course, that it might not be possible to discuss all problems at the same time, and he was not pressing the President to set the exact time for beginning arms talks. He wanted simply to clarify his own understanding of the linkage between arms talks and negotiations on political issues. His government, of course, would be interested in having a more precise idea as to when the President would be prepared to begin an exchange of views on the missile problem, even if preliminary and at the level of experts.

The President replied that it was his hope that we would soon be able to decide the question of timing. First, of course, the Administration would wish thoroughly to examine the whole problem and our position on it. This would probably have to await his return from Europe. In any case, as Ambassador Dobrynin was aware, Mr. Gerard Smith had just recently been appointed Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency³ and he was now engaged in reviewing our entire position on arms control issues.

With regard to the Middle East situation, the President wished to review the question of modalities for our bilateral discussions with Ambassador Yost and others. The President is gratified to learn that the Soviets are prepared to do what they can to cool the situation, and certainly the President himself would do everything in his power to bring this about.

On Viet-Nam the President recognized that the Soviet position was somewhat more delicate than our own since the Soviets were not directly involved in the problem. The President knew, however, that the Soviet Government has an interest in terminating the conflict and had played a helpful role in getting the Paris talks started. For our part, we are prepared to go "the extra mile" in Paris, but the Soviets should understand clearly that the American public will not tolerate endless

³ Nixon submitted Smith's name to the Senate for confirmation on January 31; he was confirmed on February 7.

discussions there. The Administration's determination is to bring the conflict to an end, one way or another. We hope that the Soviets will do what they can to get the Paris talks off dead-center.

Dobrynin said he would like to speak briefly of the Soviet position on the Paris talks. The Soviet Government had welcomed their initiation and it was their view that if all participants in the Paris talks would face realities and treat each other on an equal basis, then the Soviets might be in a position to play a constructive role. Dobrynin said that he agreed generally with the President's statement that progress in one area is bound to affect progress in other areas. He thought, however, that it was useful to make a beginning and it would be wise not to begin with the most difficult issues. Often small steps can have influence.

The President said that he wished to make clear that it was not his view that agreement on one issue must be conditioned by settlement of other issues. The President wished to express his conviction, however, that progress in area is bound to have an influence on progress all other areas. The current situation in Berlin is a case in point. If the Berlin situation should deteriorate, Senate approval of the Non-proliferation Treaty would be much more difficult. The President wished to make clear that he favored early ratification of the treaty and he is optimistic that the Senate will act favorably in the near future. We should bear in mind, however, that just as the situation in Czechoslovakia had influenced the outlook for the treaty last fall, so would the situation in Berlin now have an important bearing on the Senate's attitude. Ambassador Dobrynin had mentioned the desirability of making progress on some issues, even if settlement of other issues should not be feasible. The Non-Proliferation Treaty is just such an issue. If we can move ahead on this it would be helpful in our efforts on other issues. The only cloud on the horizon is Berlin and the President hoped that the Soviets would make every effort to avoid trouble there.

Dobrynin said that the situation in Berlin did not stem from any action taken by the Soviets. The President would recall that a meeting was scheduled in Berlin last fall and the Secretary of State had discussed the problem with the Ambassador, urging him to persuade his government to avoid any action in connection with this meeting which might possibly result in unpleasantness in and around Berlin. The Ambassador said he would not wish his remarks to be recorded but he felt the President should know that his Government had used its influence to insure that the situation remained calm. There was no confrontation then, and Ambassador Dobrynin saw no need for a confrontation between us in the present situation.

The President hoped that there would be no trouble in Berlin and he welcomed Ambassador Dobrynin's assurances on this point. The

Soviets should understand that we are solidly behind the integrity of West Berlin, and we will do whatever is necessary to protect it. He had noted in the press references to the “provocative nature” of his visit to Berlin. The President wished to assure Ambassador Dobrynin that these stories were totally without foundation and that his visit to Berlin was a perfectly normal action for any United States President to take in connection with a visit to Europe.

The President concluded the discussion by pointing out to Dobrynin that the United States and the Soviet Union have all the power necessary to maintain peace in the world. If we play our role effectively, peace will be maintained. We do ourselves and others disservice, however, if we pretend that we agree on all the basic issues. We should rather insure that our differences do not lead to confrontation, that we are not drawn into confrontation by actions of others. We should recognize that diplomacy can play a vital role in insuring that this does not happen.

15. Note From Soviet Leaders to President Nixon¹

Moscow, February 17, 1969.

The attention has been paid in Moscow to President Nixon’s statements in which he set forth his views on questions of peace and international cooperation.

As is known, the Soviet Union pursues and will pursue the policy of peace. We are prepared to develop relations of peaceful cooperation with all states which on their part strive for the same end, and we think that if both the Soviet Union and the United States in their actions proceed from exactly that principle basis, thereby there will be created the widest opportunities for mutual agreement and Soviet-American cooperation in solving the urgent international problems. We would like to particularly stress here, that although the great powers

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 340, Subject Files, USSR Memcons Dobrynin/President 2/17/69. No classification marking. On January 31, Sedov told Kissinger that the Soviets were “considering putting out ‘something’ to indicate they will not use the NPT as an excuse for intervening in the domestic affairs of others” and that they “are also putting together a ‘package’ on their views re political settlement. Dobrynin may bring this back with him about February 15.” (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 1 USSR) This note was the “package” promised Kissinger and given him by Dobrynin on February 17. The date is handwritten on the note.

bear special responsibility for preserving peace, in their intentions and actions they—like all other participants of international intercourse—must respect the inherent rights of other states, big and small, for sovereign and independent development, they must proceed from the real situation existing in the world. If you agree with such understanding of major principles of our relations, we on our part can fully subscribe to your statement to the effect that “after a period of confrontation, we are entering an era of negotiation”.

That is what we would like to say to the President right now in order to exclude any misunderstanding on the American side of our approach to one or another question.

We do not see any other principle basis on which the Soviet-American relations could be built in the present world.

We are deeply convinced that if such approach be followed then despite all differences of views, social and political systems and of state interests there can be no such situation that would lead with fatal inevitability to direct confrontation between our countries.

All this, of course, presumes a certain level of confidence and mutual understanding that should also be present in searching ways to solving urgent world problems. It implies, of course, not only formal agreements but also opportunities provided by parallel or complementary actions including those based on the principle of “mutual example” and so on.

We are convinced that by their mutual efforts the USSR and the USA together with other states could achieve a situation when international negotiations would serve first of all the purpose of preventing conflicts rather than finding ways out of them after peace and international security had already been endangered. It is of particular significance also because there are a lot of temptations to set our countries against each other. It may cause additional complicating elements in the process of development of Soviet-American relations which is not simple even as it is.

At present there has accumulated a number of big international problems which are under discussion now, and the peoples have been waiting for a long time for their solution in the interests of consolidation of peace.

First. We believe that all possible efforts should be made to have the Treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons start effectively operating. This is a question of war and peace of the future. The Treaty that had been worked out to a considerable degree due to the joint efforts of the USSR and the USA has not been signed yet by a number of states and this, naturally, strengthens the positions of the opponents of the Treaty and casts doubts upon the possibility of solving the problem of non-proliferation. If, however, a number of nuclear states grow

the risk of new conflicts will increase with most dangerous consequences for universal peace.

In Moscow, there is readiness to continue consultations with the U.S. Government to work out coordinated measures on securing the signing of the Treaty by a maximum number of states and its earliest entering into force.

Second. It is believed in Moscow that the termination of the war in Vietnam providing the Vietnamese people with the opportunity to solve their internal affairs by themselves without any interference from outside will not only eliminate the most dangerous hotbed of war tension in the world, but also will serve as a convincing proof of a real possibility for settling even most acute and difficult problems. It is hardly doubtful that the political settlement of the Vietnam conflict on the basis of respect for legitimate national aspirations of the people of that country and the complete withdrawal of the American troops from the territory of Vietnam will affect in a most positive way the Soviet-American relations.

The Soviet Government welcomed the beginning of the Paris talks aimed at the political settlement of the Vietnam problem and it thinks that these talks should continue. We would like the talks to bring about positive results. This will be possible, of course, only if there is a realistic appraisal of the political forces acting in Vietnam and the recognition of their right for equal position in the negotiations. If the Paris negotiations develop in such a direction we shall render them all and every support.

Third. Great anxiety is caused by the tense and unsettled situation in the Middle East. We have already presented to President Nixon our views on the causes of the situation created there that may lead to most undesirable consequences not only for the states of this area but far away outside it. The Soviet Government seeking for durable peace and security in this area with due regard for legitimate rights and interests of the Arab states—victims of aggression, put forward a concrete plan for the settlement there which fully corresponds to the spirit and content of the resolution unanimously adopted by the Security Council on November 22, 1967.² President Nixon has been informed about this plan.

We proceed from the necessity, on the one hand, that the Arab territories occupied by Israeli troops be liberated, and, on the other hand, that the existence of Israel as an independent state be guaranteed. If the government of Israel considers these principles unacceptable for the political settlement of the conflict then it means that Israel continues to follow aggressive and expansionist aims and remains on an ad-

² See footnote 4, Document 2.

venturist position. Neither Israel nor anyone else can have any reason to expect that the Arab countries and the states supporting them will agree with such Israeli policy.

We are confident that if the Soviet Union and the United States combining their efforts with the efforts of other states concerned make full use of their possibilities and influence in order to find just and lasting settlement in the Middle East it will also greatly contribute to the general relaxation of international tensions. We are ready for the exchange of views on the bilateral basis with the U.S. Government on the problems of the Middle East with the aim of achieving the necessary agreement on the settlement of the conflict. We said that before. But for some reasons not depending on the Soviet side such exchange of views didn't get due development. We also declare our readiness for the exchange of views on the problems of the Middle East among the four powers—permanent members of the Security Council—the USSR, the USA, France and Great Britain.

Fourth. We are strongly convinced that the following premise has a first-rate importance for the character and prospects of the relations between the USSR and the USA: that is, whether both our countries are ready to proceed in their practical policies from the respect for the foundations of the post-war structure in Europe, formed as a result of the Second World War and the post-war development, and for the basic provisions, formulated by the Allied powers in the well-known Potsdam Agreements. There is no other way to peace in Europe but to take the reality into consideration and to prompt the others to do the same. It's impossible to regard the attempts to undermine the post-war structure in Europe otherwise than an encroachment on the vital interests of our country, of its friends and allies—the socialist countries.

At one time, and in particular in 1959–1963, when the Soviet and U.S. Governments were discussing the complex of German affairs, we were not far apart in understanding of that with regard to some important problems.³

The Soviet Union regards with particular watchfulness certain aspects of the development of the F.R.G. and its policy not only because the past German invasion cost us many millions of human lives. President Nixon also understands very well that revanchism begins not when the frontier marks start falling down. That's the finale, the way to which is leading through the attempts to gain an access to the nuclear weapons, through the rehabilitation of the past, through the provocations similar to those which the F.R.G. commits from time to time with regard to West Berlin.

³ Kissinger wrote "what?" in the margin of this paragraph.

It became almost a rule that the F.R.G. stirs up outbursts of tensions around West Berlin, which didn't and doesn't belong to it, involving the Soviet Union, the USA and other countries into complications. It's hardly in anyone's interests to give the F.R.G. such a possibility. Anyhow the Soviet Union can't let the F.R.G. make such provocations.

We would like the President to have complete clearness and confidence that the Soviet Union has no goals in Europe other than the establishment of the solid foundations of security in this part of the world, of the relations of détente between the states of East and West.

Fifth. If we agree that we should aim not at the collision between the USA and the USSR but on the contrary—at the elimination of the war threat, then the containment and curtailment of the arms race and first of all of the rocket—nuclear arms race is necessary. As you know, Mr. President, the stockpiles of nuclear weapons already at the disposal of the USSR and the USA, are more than enough to bring down a catastrophe upon the whole mankind, and this places special responsibility upon the USSR and the USA before all peoples of the world.

A significant step in the field of the containment of the arms race and the reduction of a war threat could be made as it is believed in Moscow through the achievement of an agreement between the USSR and the USA on the limitation and subsequent reduction of strategic arms, both offensive and defensive.

In the course of the exchange of views on this question which has already taken place between the Governments of the USA and the USSR we agreed with the proposal of the American side that the general objectives in this field should be primarily the achievement and maintenance of a stable U.S.-Soviet strategic deterrence by agreeing on limitations on the deployment of offensive and defensive strategic armaments and also the provision of mutual assurance to each of us that our security will be maintained, while at the same time avoiding the tensions, uncertainties and costs of an unrestrained continuation of the strategic arms race.

It was also agreed that the limitation and reduction of the strategic arms should be carried out in complex, including both the systems for delivering offensive strategic weapons and the defensive systems against ballistic missiles, and that the limitation and reduction of these arms should be balanced in such a way that neither side could obtain a military advantage and that the equal security for both sides be assured.

The Soviet Government confirms its readiness to continue the exchange of views with the U.S. Government on the questions of containment of the strategic arms race.

Sixth. It would seem that broad and full-scale relations between the USSR and the USA in the field of international policy should be

accompanied by an adequate scope of their bilateral relations. The mutually advantageous potentialities which exist in this area also speak for the development of connections and cooperation between our countries in most various fields, such as science, technology, economy, culture. The extent of the realization of these potentialities depends, of course, on the general political atmosphere in our relations.

If the U.S. Government is of the similar opinion then it could be possible to specifically look upon the opportunities existing now for the further development of the Soviet-American bilateral relations, to determine the succession of things to be done and to proceed with their implementation. As some of the examples, there could be mentioned possibilities for combined efforts in solving urgent problems of medicine, in space research in exploration and exploitation of the World ocean, in creation of the universal satellite communication system, etc.

As a whole, it is possible apparently to speak not only about usefulness but also about real feasibility of a constructive dialogue between the USSR and the USA on the wide range of questions. Indeed, it is in this sense that in Moscow there were taken President Nixon's statements about the vital importance of the relations between the USSR and the USA for the cause of peace and general security, about the necessity to eliminate a possibility of military conflict between our countries and about the preparedness for negotiations with the USSR at all levels.

The thoughts on the above mentioned questions as well as on other questions which President Nixon may wish to express will be considered in Moscow with full attention.

16. Memorandum From the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Toon) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, February 18, 1969.

You have asked for my personal assessment of the meeting today with Dobrynin.² The following views represent precisely that—my personal assessment—and I have not discussed them with any of my principals here.

1. What Dobrynin told the President privately is extremely important. What he had to say to the President was clearly the considered view of the collective leadership—not just Kosygin but Brezhnev and Podgorny as well.

2. His remarks indicated clearly that the leadership is anxious to press on with the missile talks. This may be because they are under considerable pressure to assign more resources to the military if in fact we go ahead with our ABM program. They may hope by an early start of the missile talks to delay decisions here and thus to cope with the pressures on them from their own military.

3. It is obvious that the leadership was intrigued with the President's reference to "negotiations, not confrontation" but is uneasy as to the real meaning of linkage between arms control talks and political issues. The Soviets may have suspected that the President, by his reference to linkage, was reverting to the posture of the early Eisenhower years when we attempted to condition progress in arms control on the German issue. I think as a result of the conversation today the Soviets now have a clearer understanding as to the President's view—i.e., that progress on Viet Nam and on the Middle East or lack of progress in these areas must inevitably influence what is possible in the arms control field.

4. On Viet Nam, it seems to me that Dobrynin was trying to make clear that we must deal with the NLF if there is to be any progress at Paris.

5. On Berlin, I think the President's remarks were useful in that they conveyed to Dobrynin our concern lest tough action by the East Germans result in a nasty situation and a confrontation with us. I am

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 1 US-USSR. Secret; Nodis. In a covering memorandum for the record, Toon wrote, "After consultation with Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Ziegler, I called Dobrynin to inform him that the White House would make a brief statement on his call on the President, identifying the participants in the meeting, and indicating that the meeting was a constructive one. I told Dobrynin that there would be no reference to the fact that Ambassador had met privately with the President."

² The meeting was on February 17; see Document 14.

not sure, however, that Dobrynin understands clearly that a blow-up in Berlin would seriously affect the outcome of NPT as well as our own decision to proceed with missile talks. Perhaps we should follow this up with a further meeting in the Department, probably toward the end of the President's tour when we may have a clear understanding as to the action contemplated by the other side. My own view is that there will not be serious problems around Berlin until the President departs that city but that we can probably expect unpleasantness immediately after his departure.

Since it is widely known that Dobrynin called on the President and because of the traditional suspicion on the part of our Allies as to what goes on between us, I think it important for us to get the President's permission to summarize the talk in the NAC or at least convey a summary to the more important of our Allies on a more restricted basis.³

Hastily

Mac

³ On February 22, the Department sent telegram 28290 to Harlan Cleveland, U.S. Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, authorizing Cleveland "to convey to NAC at earliest opportunity following highlights of conversation between President and Dobrynin." A summary of the meeting followed. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL US–USSR)

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

Washington, February 18, 1969.

SUBJECT

Analysis of Dobrynin Message

1. I am attaching the memorandum of conversation with Dobrynin (Tab A)² as well as the analysis of the note-taker and a member of my staff (Tab B).³ They did not see the note.⁴

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 340, Subject Files, USSR Memcons Dobrynin/President 2/17/69. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for information.

² Attached and printed as Document 14.

³ Attached and printed as Document 16.

⁴ Document 15.

2. My reaction to the note is as follows:

a. The tone of the document is extraordinarily forthcoming. The Soviet approach is, as far as I can see, totally non-ideological—even anti-ideological. The arguments are posed strictly in terms of national interests and mutually perceived threats, without even the usual ritual obeisance to Marxist-Leninist jargon.

b. The document advances the dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States beyond mere *détente* and into the realm of overt Soviet-American cooperation in the solution of outstanding international problems and the maintenance of peace.

3. The gist of the paper is that the Soviets are prepared to move forward on a whole range of topics: Middle East, Central Europe, Vietnam, Arms Control (strategic arms talks), cultural exchange. In other words, we have the “linkage.” Our problem is how to play it.

4. The document is vague about specific proposals. However, the following aspects deserve mention:

Vietnam. There is no reference to the usual Soviet claims of American aggression. They ask for “equal position” for all parties in the negotiating. We could probe what they mean.

Middle East. The document links Israeli withdrawal to a guaranteed existence for Israel. These are not posed as successive actions; rather they appear parts of a negotiated settlement, to be enforced by the sanctions of the Great Powers. Of course the Soviet statement leaves many loose ends, such as navigation rights in Suez, freedom of the Straits of Tiran, refugee problems, etc., but if one wishes to place the most generous possible construction on the Soviet statement, one could conclude that these points would follow agreement on the two basic tenets. Here, as in the case of Vietnam, there is great vagueness on specifics, but a positive tone of accommodation and mutual interest. It also offers specific negotiations.

European Settlement. Here the statement comes close to offering a deal recognizing the status quo. There is not the slightest mention of the Brezhnev doctrine of “Socialist sovereignty”⁵—presumably because the Soviets reason it applies only within their half of Europe, which we would agree must not be disturbed. They add a particularly clear expression of Soviet disinterest in further expansion in Europe and hope for *détente*. They add that we were close to agreement in 1959–63. We might probe what they have in mind.

⁵ A term applied in the West to the Soviet justification for its occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. In a speech on November 11, 1968, Brezhnev declared that a threat to Socialist rule in any state of the East European bloc constituted a threat to all and therefore “must engage the attention of all the Socialist states.”

SALT. The line of seeking limitation and subsequent reduction of strategic arms, both defensive and offensive, has been used before, but not, so far as I know, advanced so strongly in the context of “mutual assurance that our security will be maintained.” As they have repeated often before, the Soviets here reiterate their readiness to sit down to talk as soon as we wish.

5. The question then is what the Soviets are up to. There are two schools of thought.

The first is based on the notion that while the US-Soviet relationship is basically antagonistic and competitive, there are many areas where our interests overlap and where there is opportunity for at least tacit cooperation. The main common interest is in survival and, hence, in the prevention of war. This common interest, in turn, is held to make arms control a central issue in US-Soviet relations since the arms race is seen as a major source of potential conflict. Consequently, in this approach every effort should be made to engage the Soviets in negotiations wherever common interests occur, and especially on arms control. Moreover, every effort must be made to insulate these areas of common interests from those areas where our interests clash. It is argued, indeed, that arms control talks, even if they are not immediately successful, can serve as a firebreak to prevent confrontations from getting out of hand and spilling over into our whole relationship. It is fair to say that these are the principles on which the last Administration sought to operate, though it recognize, of course, there are limits beyond which a compartmentalization of our relations with the USSR became infeasible and counter-productive. (The invasion of Czechoslovakia was one of the limiting points.)

A rather different approach is one that holds that an excessively selective policy runs into the danger that the Soviets will use the bait of progress in one area in order to neutralize our resistance to pressure elsewhere. It holds that precisely because we remain in an antagonistic relationship the erection of firebreaks may encourage the Soviets to be more adventurous. Moreover, in this view, there is an essential connection between crises and confrontations; unless there is progress on a fairly broad front to mitigate confrontations, there is little prospect of real reduction in tensions. This view also holds that arms per se rarely cause wars (at least as long as they are kept in relative balance) and that the arms control agreements that have been reached have had singularly little effect in reducing areas of conflict and confrontation.

My own view tends toward the latter approach, and I might add that the Soviets, with their Marxist training, have little difficulty in grasping its meaning—although they have become quite skilled in conducting a policy of selective tension and selective accommodation.

I believe the current Soviet line of conciliation and interest in negotiations, especially on arms control but also on the Middle East, stems

in large measure from their uncertainty about the plans of this Administration. They are clearly concerned that you may elect to undertake new weapons programs which would require new and costly decisions in Moscow; they hope that early negotiations would at least counteract such tendencies in Washington. (I doubt that there is much division on this point in the Kremlin, though there may well be substantial ones over the actual terms of an agreement with us.) In a nutshell, I think that at this moment of uncertainty about our intentions (the Soviets see it as a moment of contention between “reasonable” and “adventurous” forces here), Moscow wants to engage us. Some would argue that regardless of motive, we should not let this moment of Soviet interest pass, lest Moscow swing back to total hostility. My own view is that we should seek to utilize this Soviet interest, stemming as I think it does from anxiety, to induce them to come to grips with the real sources of tension, notably in the Middle East, but also in Vietnam. This approach also would require continued firmness on our part in Berlin.

18. Paper Prepared for the National Security Council by the Interdepartmental Group for Europe¹

Washington, February 18, 1969.

EAST-WEST RELATIONS

I. U.S.-Soviet Relationships

Despite our intensive efforts to analyze and understand Soviet behavior, we are still far from a complete understanding of how major

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-020, NSC Meeting, Strategic Issues—East/West Relations 2/19/69. Confidential. Sent under a February 18 covering memorandum from Richard M. Moose of the National Security Council staff to the Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Director of OEP, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director of Central Intelligence, and the Under Secretary of State. The memorandum stated that “The NSC Meeting on Wednesday, February 19, will be devoted to continuation of a discussion of Strategic Issues and—time permitting—to a discussion of East-West Relations.” The minutes of the meeting do not include the latter topic. This paper on East-West Relations was a response to Document 6 and reflected revisions from the NSC Review Group. No record of a Review Group meeting discussing it has been found. A 3-page summary was also prepared for the NSC. (Ibid., Box H-109, NSC Meeting, Strategic Issues—East/West Relations 2/19/69)

foreign policy decisions are made in the Soviet Union or how our own behavior influences Soviet decisions. Moreover, in seeking to characterize the nature of the Soviet-American relationship, we are confronted with difficult problems of evaluating our own, as well as Soviet, interests in various parts of the world. Because of these uncertainties, a number of different views exist as to the most appropriate way to characterize Soviet-American relations as a guide to U.S. policy. There appear to be, however, three basic alternative views of the Soviet-American relation.

1. Mutual Antagonism with Minimal Cooperation

Those who take this approach emphasize the basic ideological hostility between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. They point to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Brezhnev Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty,² and the Soviet assertion of special rights to intervene in Germany,³ as evidence that no form of major accommodation with the Soviet Union is likely to be achievable. They believe that the Soviets are primarily interested in spreading their own influence and in undermining the influence and prestige of the United States.

Western military strength and the cohesion of the NATO alliance is emphasized by proponents of this view. They would view measures such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a Soviet effort to split the alliance and as a move that weakens NATO flexibility in nuclear arrangements. Proponents of this view would urge other nations in the world to refrain from diplomatic relations and trade and aid relationships with the Soviet Union. They would urge American military assistance programs where necessary to prevent (or, at least, parallel and thereby hope to counterbalance) Soviet involvement, for example, in India and Pakistan or Nigeria.

Those who hold this position accept the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union share an overriding concern with preventing a nuclear war. Some of them argue that this interest is essentially self-regulated in that both sides pull back before a nuclear confrontation. Others hold that the Soviets use mutual fear to make us flinch in face of pressure. However, they do not believe that meaningful agreements even on nuclear matters can be based on this common interest. Specifically they are highly suspicious of efforts to negotiate arms control arguing that the Soviets will use arms control negotiations as a cover for their aggressive political behavior and use arms control agreements as a way of catching up to the United States or even lulling it into accepting inferiority.

² See footnote 5, Document 17.

³ See footnote 2, Document 8.

2. *Détente*

Advocates of this position tend to emphasize common Soviet-American interests. They argue that despite Soviet rhetoric, ideology is no longer the basic motivating factor in Soviet external behavior and that both countries have an interest in maintaining the status quo in Central Europe. They believe that both have limited interests in the rest of the world, and emphasize the need to avoid a confrontation with each other.

Proponents of this view would emphasize efforts at Soviet-American accommodation. They would have pushed forward efforts at a Non-Proliferation Treaty with less regard than was shown for the concerns of our allies. They would seek to negotiate arrangements with the Russians in such areas as the Middle East and India and Pakistan even though such agreements might pave the way for increased Soviet involvement and influence in those areas.

While recognizing the need for a military deterrent against the Soviet Union, proponents of this view would urge a scaling down of our own efforts on the grounds that this could lead to Soviet reciprocation, and would not threaten our security.

In considering these two options, the Review Group believed that neither of them was an adequate basis for policy. The first option understates the possibilities for agreement with the Soviet Union and the extent to which there is a perception of at least certain limited common interests between the two countries. The Group, at the same time, felt that Soviet policy and behavior had not yet evolved—if it ever will—to the point that the second option could now be a basis for policy. Thus, the Group felt that the only realistic choice was a third option—which is essentially the one successive U.S. Administrations have taken—with the real differences of view arising within the scope of that approach. This middle option may be described as follows:

3. *Limited Adversary Relationship (Strong Deterrent with Flexible Approach)*

This view is based on the assumption that there will continue to be an underlying hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union. This hostility arises in part from the continuing Soviet commitment to an ideology which supports their wish to see the world evolve in a way radically different from our own preferences. The hostility also derives from clashes on political issues primarily involving clashes of interest in the Middle East and elsewhere.

At the same time there are elements of shared concerns which make possible certain kinds of accommodation. The dominant common interests is in avoiding a nuclear war. This requires active Soviet-American collaboration to damp down potentially explosive situations

in the Middle East, in the Indian sub-continent and elsewhere. Reduction of the likelihood of a nuclear clash would also be enhanced by arms control arrangements seeking to limit and then reduce strategic forces on both sides.

Proponents of this view agree that a strong U.S. nuclear deterrent and a continuing strong NATO are necessary in order not to tempt the Soviets into military or diplomatic adventures.

U.S.-Soviet interests and relations in the third world area seen as partly competitive and partly cooperative. In some cases, such as most of Africa, both Soviet and American interests are sufficiently modest that neither we nor they are fundamentally concerned about the role of the other. In other cases, as in the Middle East, we have competing interests, but these are mixed with a common desire not to permit others to drag us into a direct confrontation.

The Review Group noted that while there appears to be a consensus among officials working on Soviet-American problems on this broad view of U.S.-Soviet relations, there is a wide spectrum of differences both about specific issues and about general policy lines. Although views fall across the entire spectrum, it is possible to characterize two distinct policy emphases consistent with the limited adversary perspective of the U.S.-Soviet relationship.

II. Alternative Policy Approach Based on Limited Adversary Relationship

1. Emphasis on Accommodation While Maintaining the Deterrent

Advocates of this position would emphasize the search for accommodation with the Soviet Union while maintaining the U.S. deterrent.

They would argue that negotiation of a strategic arms control agreement with the Soviet Union is sufficiently important that a major effort should be made to insulate the search for such an agreement from other political issues, while acknowledging that major Soviet threats and acts of aggression such as the invasion of Czechoslovakia create a climate in which strategic talks could not go forward. They would argue that the current climate in which we are talking to the Russians about the Middle East and in which they appear to be cooperative about seeking a Vietnam settlement is a sufficient basis for proceeding with talks.

With regard to possible conflict between allied concerns and negotiations with the Soviet, advocates of this position would argue that although we would consult with our allies, we should not permit them to have a veto on our actions provided we ourselves are convinced they are consistent with allied interests. The U.S. posture during the Non-Proliferation Treaty negotiations, in essence, followed the pattern recommended by this Group in contrast to others who argued that we did not pay sufficient attention to allied concerns.

Those who take this approach view the third world as an area for substantially greater Soviet-American cooperation than has been the case. They would emphasize the virtual absence of vital Soviet or American interests in most, if not all, of the third world. According to this approach no effort would be made to discourage other countries from increasing their contacts, both political and economic, with the Soviets since such contacts would be viewed as largely inevitable and in many cases as potentially helpful. In the Middle East, for example, an effort would be made to work out a Soviet-American understanding even if this involved pressure by each on its allies and even if it appeared to sanction a major Soviet role in the area.

U.S. relations with Eastern Europe and with China would at least to some degree be subordinated to concerns about Soviet reaction. Thus, we would not seek to frighten the Soviets with the prospect of a Chinese-American rapprochement and would counsel our allies to be sensitive to Soviet concerns in their dealing with Eastern Europe.

2. Emphasis on Deterrence While Seeking Limited Accommodation

Advocates of this view would emphasize the continuing areas of hostility with the Soviets and the need to take these fully into account in designing possible measures of accommodation.

Following this approach we would insist upon greater progress in political areas before being prepared to move ahead with strategic talks and we would not proceed with such talks until our allies have been fully consulted and had given their agreement to proceeding even if this procedure should impose substantial delays.

Efforts to improve relations with the Soviet Union in general would proceed only after full allied consultation. We would be concerned not only with our perception of allied interests but their own perception of these interests as well. For example, proponents of this position would have taken much greater account of the German argument that the Non-Proliferation Treaty was essentially a Soviet effort aimed at obtaining concessions from Germany without reciprocal Soviet concessions to the Federal Republic.

In the third world this approach would emphasize continuing competition while not excluding areas of possible accommodation. Thus, in many areas of the world we would urge governments to reduce or at least not expand their contacts with the Soviets and warn against the dangers of accepting Soviet aid. Without ruling out joint efforts to damp down areas such as the Middle East we would keep conflicting Soviet-American interests in the area very much in mind and perhaps make an effort to devise settlements which reduce Soviet influence.

In the case of relations with China and Eastern Europe we would proceed with whatever actions seem justified on their own merits, with secondary consideration to the possibility that we would antagonize the Soviet Union. We might introduce deliberate ambiguity in our policies designed to increase Soviet apprehensions.

III. Specific Issues

Although a number of officials would quite consistently advocate one of these two policy approaches, most officials have views somewhere in between; and differences arise with regard to specific matters of style as well as specific policy issues. The Review Group felt that differences on several questions were particularly worthy of attention. These include:

(1) The question of whether useful political progress with the Soviets is made by increasing Soviet concerns or providing them with reassurance, e.g. with regard to China and Eastern Europe.

(2) The relative priority to be given to efforts at accommodation with the Soviets versus efforts at strengthening the NATO alliance and fully consulting with our allies.

(3) Policy toward countries in the third world.

(4) The advantages and disadvantages of relating arms control negotiations to other political issues.

1. Possibilities for Political Progress with the Soviet Union

The essential argument here is whether or not progress on political issues with the Soviet Union is more likely if we provide assurances to the Soviets, or if we seek to increase their sense of concern by raising the possibility that we will act in ways contrary to their interests unless they come to some agreement with us. The dispute arises in part from our imperfect understanding of Soviet decision-making and the forces which determine Soviet behavior.

In dealing with the Soviet Union should we generally emphasize reassurance about our intentions?

Arguments for:

(1) Such reassurance would accurately reflect our motives since we are not out to challenge basic Soviet national interests.

(2) Progress on major issues will be possible only through mutual understanding that in certain areas neither side will seek to undercut the other.

(3) Deliberately fostering Soviet concern about our intentions may increase the danger of misunderstandings and possible conflicts.

(4) U.S. pressures could play into the hands of the more hostile elements in the Soviet Union. We could generate counter-pressures that will be contrary to our objectives.

Arguments against:

(1) It is a bad negotiating tactic generally to reassure the other side. We could appear overeager for agreements and over-ready to make concessions.

(2) The Soviets are likely to make concessions only if they are confronted with alternatives which they perceive to be considerably worse.

This general issue arises in a number of specific forms. For example, some argue that Soviet cooperation on Far East matters, including Vietnam, depends on convincing the Russians that we are not seeking to a deal behind their backs with the Chinese. It is suggested that the Russians' primary concern is limiting Chinese influence in the area and that they are reluctant to deal with us as they fear that we may expose our contacts with them in an effort to seek an understanding with the Chinese. Others argue that only the fear of a Chinese-American rapprochement will lead the Russians to be cooperative in the Far East. European policy encounters the same difference of opinion. Will progress come from assuring the Russians that we have no inimical designs on Eastern Europe, or will it come from U.S. support of tendencies toward autonomy and liberalization in Eastern Europe? Another area where this general issue arises is arms negotiations. For example, should we proceed with deployment of an ABM system as a bargaining counter in order to induce the Soviets to negotiate in earnest? Or should we reassure the Soviets by holding up deployment?

2. Accommodation vs. Deterrence

All advocates of a limited adversary relationship favor a combination of deterrence and accommodation. They disagree on the relative emphasis to be put on each. There are two central issues: atmospherics and allied consultation.

a. Should we emphasize an atmosphere of accommodation with the Soviets?

Arguments for:

(1) Agreement to cultural exchanges with the Soviets and employment of a positive style and tone in our statements generally improves the political atmosphere and lessens tension.

(2) Such a framework makes it easier for the Soviets and our own public to accept political agreements which are in our mutual interest.

Arguments against:

(1) Atmospherics are essentially irrelevant; concrete actions are what count.

(2) Such atmospherics may be harmful since the Soviets will feel less need for agreements (as sanction for their actions) if they detect a general sense of détente.

(3) Excessive emphasis on an atmosphere of accommodation could generate false euphoria in the U.S. and allied countries, making it more difficult to obtain public acceptance in our country and among our allies of burdens of defense and alliance cohesion.

b. Should we have full allied consent before proceeding to major agreements with the Russians?

Arguments for:

(1) We should not jeopardize relations with our allies who may be suspicious of our motives and fear a U.S.-Soviet "condominium" at their expense.

(2) Failure to get our allies on board would make many agreements with the Soviets unstable at best.

(3) Complete cooperation in advance with our allies would make it much harder for the Soviets to drive wedges between us and our friends.

(4) Being forthcoming with our allies on our relations with the Soviets should encourage our allies to be more helpful to us on other issues.

Arguments against:

(1) Our allies are split, with some favoring an emphasis on accommodation and others opposing it. It is extremely difficult to reconcile the interests and opinions of fourteen diverse nations and achieve consensus.

(2) Attempting to obtain full consent of our allies will greatly complicate our negotiations with the Soviets and slow down progress.

(3) Our allies do not give us a veto on their own dealings with the Soviet Union on Eastern Europe. They really desire only a decent respect for their views, not a decisive voice in our own policies.

(4) While our allies will always complain and interpose objections if we ask them, they are prepared to see us go ahead with the Soviets, provided we do not ask them to share the onus for our actions.

3. Policy Towards Third World

All of those who accept the basic option of a limited adversary relationship believe that in some third world areas Soviet involvement is not sufficiently detrimental to U.S. interests that we should seek actively to combat it, and all agree that we should seek limited understandings with the Soviets in some cases.

There are, however, differences in regard to the general presumptions of U.S. policy.

Should we generally oppose Soviet involvement in the third world and advise other countries to avoid increased aid and trade relations?

Arguments for:

(1) Greater Soviet involvement will come at the expense of U.S. or allied influence and will erode support in the third world for our various policies.

(2) Larger Soviet influence in the third world could threaten specific U.S. interests such as treaty relationships, base arrangements, trade positions, investment prospects, etc.

(3) The larger the Soviet presence in the third world, the greater the chance for direct confrontation with us through conflict of interest or miscalculation.

(4) Soviet presence in, or assistance to, third world nations is self-serving and is unlikely to contribute to our general objective of the orderly political and economic development of the poor nations.

Arguments against:

(1) Increased Soviet involvement in the third world is natural and inevitable for a great power.

(2) In most cases there is little that we can do to counter greater Soviet involvement. Attempting to oppose it only causes strains both with the Soviet Union and with third world countries.

(3) The poorer nations need all the assistance they can get from industrialized nations. Soviet involvement serves to lessen our economic burdens.

(4) Cooperation with, rather than opposition to, the Soviets in the third world can prevent misunderstandings. Furthermore, it could help to improve our overall bilateral relationships, increase mutual trust, and make it easier to reach agreements on more fundamental questions such as Europe on security and arms control.

(5) Soviet influence can help to counter what we consider even more inimical influences in certain areas of the world, e.g., China in Asia or Cuba in Latin America.

We must weight these various considerations in choosing whether to: (a) generally oppose Soviet involvement in the third world; (b) generally welcome, or at least acquiesce in, such involvement; or (c) not adopt any general policy line and treat each issue on its merits.

4. *Arms Control and Political Matters*⁴

a. *Should we establish an explicit relationship between arms control matters and political matters?*

⁴ This section repeats the discussion previously included in the Strategic Balance Paper. The section is more extensive than those dealing with other issues because the subject has been more fully considered in the meetings of the Review Group. [Footnote

Arguments for:

(1) Strategic arms limitations, unlike previous arms control agreements, go to the very heart of our security interests. It is unrealistic to expect both sides to agree to and abide by an agreement while basic issues such as Berlin and the Middle East which could lead to a direct U.S.-Soviet confrontation continue to fester. The U.S. should not be prepared to cooperate with the Soviets on some matters while they are seeking to build their influence at our expense.

(2) Arms control agreements, at least in the past, have not led to détente and have on occasion preceded Soviet moves which increased tension (e.g., Test Ban followed by Soviet involvement in Vietnam). The Soviets may believe the arms control agreements take the risk out of lower level pressures and conflicts.

(3) Arms competition, on the other hand, does not preclude political cooperation and relative détente, and Soviet-American arms competition itself has not contributed markedly to the danger of war.

(4) The Soviets have in the past used arms talks as political and psychological regulators; we should not permit them to do so. The Soviets may be hoping that the talks on strategic arms will slow our programs while they proceed with their own buildup. If we want a satisfactory agreement and political cooperation, we should not appear too eager for negotiations.

(5) Unless the Soviets change their conduct, particularly in regard to Berlin and Germany, our allies will view arms control negotiations as an indication that we consider our relations with the Soviets paramount and are willing to sell out their interests.

Arguments against:

(1) Negotiations with the Soviet Union on limiting strategic weapons are matters of the highest political importance in contrast to previous arms control matters and can create the climate for successful negotiations on other political matters.

(2) The common Soviet-American interests in reducing the likelihood of nuclear war is so widely perceived and accepted not only in the United States and the Soviet Union but throughout the world that the necessary political consensus to effect such agreements can be obtained even in the absence of negotiations on other issues. Provided we consult with them in advance and obtain a limit on Soviet

in the source text. A 21-page paper on "Strategic Policy Issues" was prepared for the NSC meeting on February 19. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-020, NSC Meeting, Strategic Issues—East/West Relations 2/19/69)]

MR/IRBMs, our allies will not view the agreement as contrary to their interests.

(3) While the current Soviet leadership is clearly anxious for the talks to begin, there are many in the Soviet leadership who oppose the talks and who will take efforts by the U.S. to link the talks with other political matters as an effort at political blackmail. Even the majority group which favors the talks appears to believe that they are in the interest of both countries and they are unlikely to make political concessions to get the talks started.

(4) There is a significant possibility of negotiating an arms control agreement which both reduces the likelihood of general war and freezes the current relative strategic force postures. Because the Soviets believe that they will have to spend very large sums to prevent us from increasing our advantage, they may be prepared to accept a freeze. These two objectives—reducing the likelihood of general war and freezing our relative strategic force postures—are matters of the highest political importance which should be pursued immediately whether or not negotiations on other political matters are going forward.

b. If we decide to emphasize the connection between arms control and other issues, what form should it take?

There are several possibilities:

(1) Insist on only a very general linkage such that major aggressive acts rule out strategic talks. This was the policy of the previous administration in declining to go forward with the talks after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Soviet's willingness to proceed may also have depended on the halting of the bombing of Hanoi by the United States.

The arguments for this position are essentially the same as the arguments against establishing any linkage at all with the added point that certain very major events can so affect the domestic and foreign political climate as to make talks inadvisable.

(2) Insist that discussions on arms control and other political matters proceed in parallel. This would mean that we would have preliminary arms control talks as we have preliminary talks on other matters such as Vietnam and the Middle East; that we would proceed to serious negotiations about detailed substantive positions only if we proceeded to such negotiations on other political matters and that we would sign agreements only if Soviet behavior in regard to other issues was reasonably cooperative. Under this approach we would need to decide whether the current discussions with the Soviet Union on Vietnam and the Middle East were sufficient to justify corollary discussions on strategic talks or whether we would want to have discussions on other political matters underway or see changes in Soviet conduct.

The arguments for this position are essentially the arguments for a linkage listed above with the following added points:

—discussions proceeding in parallel are sufficient to create the necessary climate of negotiation rather than confrontation to permit arms control talks to go forward successfully.

—the successful negotiation of agreements on matters such as the Middle East and Vietnam depend largely on matters beyond the control of either the United States and the Soviet Union. Thus, the test should be our judgment that the Soviets are using their influence in a constructive way and not whether agreements can in fact be reached with all the parties.

(3) Insist upon concluding successful negotiations on other matters before opening arms control talks.

The arguments for this position are:

—Arms control agreements do not in themselves reduce the likelihood of war. In the absence of a political settlement, they are mere gimmickery.

—Following a political settlement, arms control agreements can and should be negotiated in an effort to reduce budgets.

19. Talking Points Prepared by the National Security Council Staff for President Nixon¹

Washington, February 19, 1969.

EAST-WEST RELATIONS

Opening

1. It is particularly timely to discuss this subject:

—my upcoming European trip.

—Middle East explorations with the Soviets.

—the possibility of strategic talks with the Soviets.

—possible heating up of the Berlin situation.

2. We might focus the discussion on:

—What is the most realistic characterization of the US-Soviet relationship?

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, CL 312, Meetings, National Security Council, February–March, 1969. Confidential. Similar talking points were also prepared for Kissinger. (Ibid.) Time did not permit discussion of East-West relations at the NSC meeting on February 19.

—What US policy emphases should flow from this characterization?

—What should I stress on my European trip?

—What are the implications of relating strategic talks to progress on other political issues?

3. You may wish to highlight your conversation with Ambassador Dobrynin.

Briefing

If time permits, Dick Helms is ready with a 15-minute briefing on trends in the Soviet leadership as they affect Soviet foreign policy.

Discussion

1. Call on Dr. Kissinger to lead off the discussion.
2. Secretary Rogers may wish to give his general views.

Conclusion

You may wish to conclude the meeting by presenting to the NSC your views on East-West relations based on the talking points on the next page.

Additional Studies

You may wish to direct additional studies on:

- A. Policy Toward Eastern Europe.
- B. East-West relations as an issue in NATO and in our relations with major allies.
- C. Policy guidelines, including difficulties, for implementing the approach of linking strategic talks to political matters.
- D. The U.S.-Soviet-Chinese triangular relationship.

Attachment²

Washington, undated.

MASTER TALKING PAPER ON EAST-WEST RELATIONS

(All the leaders you are meeting are interested in your view of East-West relations and in your plans for dealing with the USSR. Several have asked about our “conception.” Europeans have conflicting worries: on the one hand they fear our dealing with the Soviets behind their backs (“condominium”); on the other, they worry that we might

² Secret.

draw them into excessive risks and load on them responsibilities that they are not prepared to carry. Lately, they have wondered about the significance and implications of your public statements connecting missile talks with progress on other issues. Among some, who sense a big US push for across-the-board settlements with the USSR, these statements have raised the condominium spectre. The Europeans also want to know how we propose to consult with them on East-West matters generally, and on missile talks particularly. The French, especially, would like to engage in bilateral consultations rather than through NATO. The others want to consult through NATO but maintain bilateral channels as well. None of them want us to make formal proposals to the Soviets on arms control without having been consulted. The Germans and, to a lesser degree, the Italians have painful memories of the early NPT negotiations in which they feel, justifiably, that they were confronted with a *fait accompli*.)

I. Our Basic Approach.

A. We have said that we are entering an era of negotiation. We see this as a complex and extended process and recognize that there will remain substantial elements of confrontation.

B. By negotiation we mean a serious engagement of the issues, not simply meetings for meetings' sake. In general, we believe that high-level or other official conferences with the Soviets should be well prepared in advance and should offer promise of concrete progress.

C. We think the allies should attempt to concert their approaches as much as possible; Soviet incentive to negotiate seriously is reduced if they think they can maneuver among the allies and divide them.

D. In negotiating we want to proceed on a basis of a sense of military security. I have used the word "sufficiency": in its broadest sense, this means forces that are strong and varied enough to deter not only Soviet attack but also gross pressures which the Soviets might be tempted to try if they calculated that confidence in our capabilities and resolve was eroding. But neither in what we say nor what we do, would we want to force the pace of armaments.

II. Relationship Between Arms Talks and Political Issues.

A. Wars and crises generally result not from the level of arms—not, at least, when these levels are in relative balance—but from clashing interests, ambitions, and purposes. For this reason I am skeptical about singling out arms as an exclusive subject for negotiation.

B. Indeed, at various times in Western relations with the East, the Soviets have tended to use the bait of arms talks, or actual talks, as a means of regulating crises they themselves created. (Examples: abortive disarmament talks after Hungary, early exchanges on non-proliferation in the midst of the Cuban missile crisis, etc.)

C. Moreover, it is difficult to get public understanding for arms talks at moments of crisis (e.g., the invasion of Czechoslovakia had negative impact on NPT and on feasibility of opening SALT talks).

D. In addition, the problem of strategic weapons goes to the core of the security of ourselves and our allies (and, for that matter of the Soviets); it cannot therefore be isolated from the other great issues that impinge on security and peace.

E. We are not establishing rigid linkages between arms control and other issues. But we do believe that there has to be progress in coping with the volatile issues (notably the Middle East and Vietnam) before one can get very far on strategic weapons. We recognize that the Soviets are not controlling factors in these situations; but they do have influence and we know that at various times that influence has been exerted in directions away from, rather than toward, settlements. If that were to happen again it would not be compatible with progress on arms control.

III. Consultations with Allies.

A. We seek intimate concert with our allies on anything as crucial to the interests of all of us as the control of strategic weapons.

B. We have no rigid feelings about the means and the forum.

C. We know that different allies may approach the issues from different vantage points. We want to give these full weight.

D. We will make no proposal to the Soviets unless we have first discussed them with the allies.

E. If negotiations should get underway, there will be a practical problem of consultation. What suggestions do the Europeans have?

F. We assume the allies will take the same approach to consultation in connection with their own negotiations with the USSR.

20. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the Acting Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Walsh)¹

Washington, February 21, 1969.

SUBJECT

Circular Guidance to all Mission Chiefs on Administration's Approach to East-West Relations

Please circularize our Mission Chiefs abroad along the following lines:

1. The President plans to explain his general approach to East-West relations in the course of his conversations with European leaders.²

2. President will draw on following points, of which Mission Chiefs should be aware for their own guidance and conversations on this subject:

Basic Approach:

1. We have said that we are entering an era of negotiation. We see this as a complex and extended process and recognize that there will remain substantial elements of confrontation.

2. By negotiation, we mean a serious engagement of the issues, not simply meetings for meetings' sake. In general, we believe that high-level or other official conferences with the Soviets should be well prepared in advance and should offer promise of concrete progress.

3. We think the allies should attempt to concert their approaches as much as possible; Soviet incentive to negotiate seriously is reduced if they think that they can maneuver among the allies and divide them.

4. In negotiating, we want to proceed on a basis of sense of military security. We have used the word "sufficiency" in its broadest sense; this means forces that are strong and varied enough to deter not only Soviet attack but also gross pressures which the Soviets might be tempted to try if they calculated that confidence in our capabilities and resolve was eroding. But neither in what we say nor what we do, would we want to force the pace of armaments.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 340, Subject Files, USSR Memcons Dobrynin/President 2/17/69. Secret.

² On February 23 Nixon left for an 8-day visit to Europe; texts of remarks made on various occasions during his trip are in Department of State *Bulletin*, March 24, 1969, pp. 249–271.

Relationship between Arms Talks and Political Issues:

1. Wars and crises generally result not from the level of arms—not, at least, when these levels are in relative balance—but from clashing interests, ambitions, and purposes. For this reason, we are skeptical about singling out arms as an exclusive subject for negotiation.

2. Indeed, at various times in Western relations with the East, the Soviets have tended to use the bait of arms talks, or actual talks, as a means of regulating crises they themselves created. (Examples: abortive disarmament talks after Hungary, early exchanges on non-proliferation in the midst of the Cuban missile crisis, etc.)

3. Moreover, it is difficult to get public understanding for arms talks at moments of crisis (e.g., the invasion of Czechoslovakia had negative impact on NPT and on feasibility of opening SALT talks).

4. In addition, the problem of strategic weapons goes to the core of the security of ourselves and our allies (and, for that matter of the Soviets); it cannot therefore be isolated from the other great issues that impinge on security and peace.

5. We are not establishing rigid linkages between arms control and other issues. But we do believe there has to be progress in coping with the volatile issues (notably the Middle East and Vietnam) before one can get very far on strategic weapons.

6. We recognize the Soviets are not controlling factors in these situations; but they do have influence and we know that at various times that influence has been exerted in directions away from, rather than toward, settlements. If that were to happen again, it would not be compatible with progress on arms control.

Our policy on consultations with other governments, especially allies, is broadly as follows:

We will consult intimately on anything as crucial to the interests of other governments as the control of strategic weapons. More generally, we will consult on subjects that plainly affect the interests of other governments because we wish to give full weight to the points of view of other governments concerned. On major issues, we will make no proposal to the Soviets unless we have first discussed them with allies, especially those having direct concern. Consultations will be maintained during, as well as before, any negotiations. We are open to suggestions regarding means and forum for consultations. We assume that the allies will take a similar approach to consultation in connection with their own negotiation with the USSR.

21. National Intelligence Estimate¹

NIE 11–69

Washington, February 27, 1969.

BASIC FACTORS AND MAIN TENDENCIES IN CURRENT SOVIET POLICY

Note

This paper considers in broad perspective the principal factors which underlie the USSR's external policies at present and its aims and intentions with respect to certain key areas and issues. As such, while it suggests the limits within which Soviet policies are likely to operate, it does not estimate likely Soviet conduct and positions in detail. In view of the intimate interaction between Soviet and American policies, this could not be done in any case without specific assumptions about American policy and actions.

Principal Observations

A. Ideology in the Soviet Union is in a certain sense dead, yet it still plays a vital role. This paradox explains much about the nature of Soviet society and the USSR as a world power today. While the regime's doctrines now inhibit rather than promote needed change in the system, the leaders continue to guard them as an essential support to their rule. They also view developments at home and abroad mainly within the conceptual framework of the traditional ideology. This fact will continue to limit the possibilities of Soviet-American dialogue.

B. Changes in the system and the society have probably made collective leadership of the Party Politburo less vulnerable to new attempts to establish a personal dictatorship. This seems particularly true so long as the men who now comprise the leadership remain. Nevertheless, a crisis within the present leadership, accompanied by high domestic tensions and greater unpredictability of external policy, could occur at any time without warning. If stability of the leadership continues, a relatively deliberate, bureaucratically compromised manner of decisionmaking will also continue.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, NIC Files, Job 79–R1012A, NIEs and SNIes. Secret. Controlled Dissem. A note on a cover sheet indicates that the Central Intelligence Agency and 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 CIA submitted this estimate with the concurrence of all members of the USIB, except the Assistant General Manager of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who abstained because the subject was outside their jurisdiction.

C. The Soviet leaders face severe problems at home. A decline in the rate of economic growth is tightening the perennial squeeze on resource allocation. Dissidence and alienation in the professional classes is of growing concern to the Soviet leaders. Generally speaking, however, they are not at this time constrained by domestic problems from continuing the general line of foreign policy they have followed in recent years.

D. The leadership believes that the USSR's net power position in the world, as affected by both military and political factors, has improved in the years since the Cuban missile crisis. But this is qualified by instability in its main security sphere in Eastern Europe and by increased strains in the Soviet economy and society. This appraisal by the Soviet leaders probably argues for continuing an external policy of cautious opportunism and limited pressures, perhaps with some increased watchfulness against the development of uncontrolled risks.

E. There is a tendency in Soviet foreign policy to give increased weight to geopolitical considerations as against the traditional conception Moscow has had of itself as the directing center of a world revolutionary movement. This is evident in the concentration of diplomatic and aid efforts in recent years on countries around the southern periphery of particular strategic interest to the USSR. It is seen also in the guidance given to most Communist parties to pursue moderate tactics, which are now more compatible with Soviet foreign policy interests.

F. Soviet aims to bring about a European settlement which would secure the USSR's hegemony in Eastern Europe, obtain the withdrawal of US forces, and isolate West Germany have suffered a severe setback because of the action taken to suppress Czechoslovakia's attempt to follow an independent course. For the present, the Soviets are unlikely to be responsive to any new Western initiatives to promote a European settlement, unless the West seems willing to contemplate recognition of the Soviet sphere in Eastern Europe and of the division of Germany.

G. The Soviets have a double concern in the Middle East at present: to keep their risks under control and to do this in such a manner as to avoid diminishing the influence they have won with the Arab States. Should renewed hostilities occur, the USSR might be drawn into assisting the defense of the Arabs, but it would not want to run the political and military risks of joining in attacks on Israel or actually threatening its survival. At that stage, the Soviets would probably collaborate tacitly with the US to control the situation.

H. Beginning as an attempt to move into the vacuum left by the end of Western colonialism, Soviet policy in Asia in recent years has been geared increasingly to the containment of China. Nevertheless, the Soviets still act in particular situations, including Vietnam, basically on the premise that the Soviet-American relationship in Asia is

competitive. The major risks which may eventually arise from the growth of Chinese power, however, may persuade them to move toward some tacit collaboration.

I. Through the inducements to reach a strategic arms limitation agreement with the US are probably stronger at this time than ever before, Moscow's policy-bureaucratic argument over this issue is not resolved. The Soviets probably hope that talks themselves, even if no agreement is reached, will ease the pressures of the arms race by slowing US decisions on new programs.

J. Even though the Soviet system appears ripe for change because it is now poorly suited to managing a complex industrial society, its rulers remain tenacious in defending their monopoly of power and acutely fearful of adaptive change. The wider involvement of the USSR in world affairs and possible shifts in world power relations may eventually generate stronger pressures for change. Short of this, the outlook is for chronic tensions in Soviet-American relations, perhaps caused more frequently by events over which neither side has much control.

DISCUSSION

Basic Factors Underlying Soviet Policy

Ideology

1. Qualified observers are heard to say, "Ideology is dead in the USSR," while others equally qualified assert, "Ideology remains dominant in Soviet political and policy." Taken literally, neither statement is valid. But understood as half-truths, both not only say something important about Soviet reality but are also compatible with each other. The paradox that ideology is in some sense dead but still plays a vital role explains much about the nature of the USSR as a society and as a world power today.

2. Marxism-Leninism is a dead ideology in the sense that it has become a calcified scripture, is seen as boring or irrelevant by most of the Soviet population, is cynically manipulated by the political elite, and inhibits rather than promotes needed social change in the USSR. It remains a major factor, however, because in the main it continues to provide the conceptual framework within which Soviet internal and external policies are formulated. It is the semantical prism through which the Soviet leaders view the problems and development of their own system. More important, it conditions profoundly the way in which they interpret the aims and conduct of non-Communist societies. With respect to the US, in particular, it underlies the fearful and hostile "set" of Soviet attitudes which so greatly limits the flexibility needed for resolving conflicts of interest.

3. Some observers have thought at various times that all this was changing, that doctrinal politics was giving way inevitably to pragmatic politics. Such opinions have proved premature. The basic and often overlooked reason is that ideology performs a vital political function in the Soviet system: it serves as the regime's badge of legitimacy. Without the claim that it was the embodiment of a historically predestined process of revolutionary social advance, all the crimes and deprivations which this regime has inflicted on a long-suffering people might not have been borne. Force alone, without buttressing from doctrinal rationalizations which claimed high moral purpose, probably would not have been enough to give the Soviet regime the authority it needed. From the beginning, moreover, ideological rigor has been used as a weapon to preserve the unity of a fractious Party and to suppress nonconforming elements inside and outside it. In Russian conditions and against the background of Russian history, ideology has proved to be an important tool in making effective the rule by force and repression of the small political sect which seized power in 1917 and has held it by tyrannical methods since.

4. Today the Soviet leadership remains as sensitive as ever to any hint of challenge to its ideological pretensions. In fact, during the last several years it has grown more rigid and conservative in this respect. The reasons for this are complex. They begin simply with the temperament of the bureaucratic collective which now governs. Then, social change has produced a larger educated class and in particular a technical elite which is less disposed to think ideologically or to accept ritualistic formulas of the old kind. Further, the ideological as well as political authority of the Soviet leadership has been sharply challenged by the nationalist-inspired deviations which have appeared in China and Eastern Europe since Stalin's death. Finally, the effort to isolate the population and also Party members from alien influences, on which the preservation of the regime's ideological authority depends, has grown more difficult; there has been increased exposure to the outside world in a number of ways, partly as a consequence of the development of communications.

5. The consequence is that the men who now govern the USSR feel themselves on the ideological defensive. They believe that if they retreat on this front the whole structure of their power will crumble. This concern lies behind their intensified repression of dissidents in recent years and their cautious restoration of Stalin's reputation; it figured strongly in their use of force against the Czechoslovak reform movement. Short of the appearance of new leadership, and possibly not then, this mood of fearful conservatism is unlikely to change. It will affect adversely the tone of Soviet-American relations and thus the possibilities of the more constructive dialogue which must be the prelude to any significant improvement in those relations.

Stability and Stress in the Domestic System

6. *The Leadership.* To the surprise of some students of the Soviet system, collective leadership—the sharing of power by a dozen or so top leaders in the Politburo, the Party's supreme executive organ—has endured since the fall of Khrushchev in October 1964. While collectivity has always been the declared principle on which the system was supposed to operate, the dictatorship of one man has been the rule during much of the Soviet history. Some have concluded that the failure of Khrushchev to consolidate himself in such a role and the evident fact that Brezhnev, despite the prominence conferred by the title of General Secretary, does not have it now, means that the age of dictators has passed in the USSR.

7. Persuasive considerations argue for this view. The dynamics of other revolutions suggest that the heroic figures of the first generation give way to men of more limited capacity whose temper is more bureaucratic. The men who now comprise the top echelon, who have spent their entire lives in the apparatus, appear to be of this stripe. Moreover, the enormous growth of state and economic institutions, and the far greater complexity of the issues posed as Soviet society has developed, make the simplistic methods of an earlier time inapplicable. Collective, i.e., bureaucratic, decisionmaking seems the normal mode in the USSR today.

8. Yet tensions arising from the attempt of individual leaders to enlarge their power are evident from time to time, and it cannot be doubted that the classic form of power struggle seen in the past persists behind the façade of collectivity. The system remains one of men and not of laws. Therefore, it is impossible to rule out new attempts by individual leaders to establish themselves in the role of dictator, together with the arbitrary measures, increased social tensions, and unpredictability of policy which would inevitably accompany such attempts. At a minimum, there will be leaders who will strive to establish ascendancy over their colleagues, and thus, as Khrushchev appeared likely to do for a time, to reduce collectivity in effect to a mere form.

9. If such developments were to occur, they would probably result from some major setback at home or abroad, from a deadlock over some vital issue of policy whose resolution was urgent, or simply from an accumulation of unsolved problems. A new personal dictatorship would require the emergence of some commanding personality clearly superior to his colleagues in the skills of the power game, though the appearance of a man of such dimensions is entirely a matter of chance. On the whole, while it is not at all implausible to believe that attempts to displace collective leadership will be made, it appears unlikely that such attempts will be successful in the conditions that now obtain in the political system and the society. This seems particularly true so long as the men who now comprise the leadership remain.

10. A breakdown in the apparent stability of the present collective, even short of an attempt by one man to displace or dominate it, is always possible, however. The result might be a change in the composition of the leadership and a shift of direction on some major aspect of policy. It is impossible to say what circumstances might precipitate such a development or to predict the event itself. The principal members of the Politburo are old enough to be subject to sudden health hazards; sooner or later the need to coopt new members might unhinge the delicate balance of power within that group. Domestic issues which are always key ones and are now serious, combined with the kind of contentious problems now being encountered by Soviet policy abroad, most conspicuously the setback in Czechoslovakia, could bring a leadership crisis at any time.

11. This threat of instability overhanging the top leadership does not arise from a mere constitutional imbalance, like the weakness of the executive under the Fourth Republic in France, and the consequent instability of cabinets. It is due, despite the existence of a constitution on paper, to the disregard of constitutional restraints which could confer legitimacy on the system and its procedures. Thus the matter of succession to leadership has been on each occasion a struggle for raw power as in a gang. Similarly, the role of the Party in relation to society and its institutions, including government organs, is an arbitrary one, uncontrolled by law. The Party purports to be merely an instrument for political inspiration and guidance, but in fact Party men under direction from the top exercise a power of intervention at all levels and in every institution. The result is a sense throughout the society that power is wielded arbitrarily and unjustly. In this atmosphere, individuals withhold their voluntary cooperation and the ability of authority to deal efficiently with many problems is reduced.

12. If the collective leadership continues without major ructions, policy and decisionmaking will be of the cautious and deliberate kind seen in recent years. This does not mean that decisions do not get made or that policy is wholly without initiative. It does mean that significant moves are likely to come under the pressure of events, and normally will be less sweeping or erratic than they were under Khrushchev, for example.

13. *Sources of Strain.* The problems facing the Soviet leadership at present are severe. One of the major ones is the perennial dilemma of all modern governments: how to allocate inadequate resources among the primary goals of policy—military strength and security, economic development and growth, consumption and welfare. The Soviet system continues to be able to apply proportionately greater resources to public purposes than non-Communist industrial states can. But it is trying to sustain a world power competition with the US on an economic base half that of the US. While this has been managed by

reliance on a highly-centralized and inflexible command economy, the resulting strains are serious and have been increasing. In the USSR as elsewhere, decisions affecting the allocation of resources are made at the margin, and the margins have been narrowing.

14. Both a reflection and a source of increasing strain has been a decline in the economy's rate of growth. This decline was owing to a combination of factors: with growing technological complexity, growth rates per unit of investment have fallen off, particularly in industry; the resources drain of major military and space programs in this decade has been substantial; concessions to popular demands for material improvement, especially in food and housing, were thought necessary. The result has been a slow decline in the rate of growth of investment in industry. This, along with the drop in productivity of investment, has led to a significant decline in the rate of growth in industrial output.

15. The response of the Soviet leaders has been to introduce economic reforms aimed at raising the still low levels of productivity in industry and agriculture. The program laid down in 1965 and still being implemented seeks to do this by providing greater autonomy and incentives for enterprises. The measures were not only partial but were largely frustrated in practice and the gains so far have been insignificant. While much more radical departures, amounting in effect to a change in the nature of the system, would be necessary to get results, the resistance of the Party and the vast state bureaucracy precludes change of this magnitude. Moreover, the Soviet leaders fear, as was demonstrated most recently in Czechoslovakia, that moves to free the economy from central control give rise rapidly to demands for freedom in every aspect of society, including politics. This they seem less ready than ever to face, and so their economic dilemmas will remain and sharpen.

16. Social strains have led the leaders to give steady attention and increased resources to meeting expectations for an improved level of life, even at the cost of investment in other sectors traditionally of high priority. Thus a multiplicity of goals makes decisions harder, especially under collective leadership; perhaps there has also been some loss of will and ruthlessness on the part of the ruling elite. Yet the leadership does not appear to regard the material discontents of the masses as an actual threat, and it is probably right in this.

17. What it evidently does fear is the striking increase in recent years of manifestations of dissidence among intellectuals. It is easy enough to threaten and imprison a handful of activist writers and artists, and this is being done, but these brave few represent the leading edge of an alienation that is far broader, especially in the educated professional class. These people resent the frustration of hopes for

greater freedom which arose in the decade after Stalin's death, they fear the neo-Stalinist tendencies which are evident, and they are contemptuous of the narrowness and mediocrity of the present leaders.

18. No one can say for sure what the scope of such alienation really is, but that it is wider, deeper, and less passive than formerly seems clear. What the regime fears is the erosion of respect for its authority among leading elements of the society which might, in certain unforeseeable circumstances, combine with and activate the chronic discontents of the masses to produce a genuine challenge. While no such challenge seems imminent, occupants of the Kremlin probably always remind themselves that in Russia anarchy has usually lurked close beneath the surface of tyranny. In any case, barring a change of leaders, the outlook is for a careful but steady repression of liberalizing forces, and a continuing effort to wall out external sources of infection.

19. A threat to the political leadership stemming from the military establishment is sometimes predicted by Western analysts. Clearly the military leaders do have larger influence on decisions, partly because the leadership is a collective. Their role has also increased because the resources given to defense since World War II have grown greatly, and because decisions affecting defense are now more technically complex. Even though some military leaders might try to influence the outcome of a leadership crisis, the increased bureaucratic weight the military now enjoy is unlikely to persuade them that they could replace the Party in running the country. Probably most military men believe that the attempt would nowadays involve grave risks to national security. Should the Party regime be seriously weakened or collapse, however, the military leadership probably would intervene, but in such circumstances they would be acting primarily out of concern for national security. Such a development now seems remote.

20. *Implications for External Policy.* As in other states, there is a linkage in the USSR between internal and external policies. Since preoccupation with the regime's security at home is high, risks abroad are normally weighed carefully. It is worth noting, however, that in the years of Khrushchev's real ascendancy (1957–1962), when internal tensions were reduced and confidence in the domestic outlook was generally rising, there was a tendency toward more assertiveness and risk-taking abroad, though this was obviously due also to Khrushchev's own temperament.

21. The present leaders are evidently aware that successes on the international scene can help to ease internal stresses and that setbacks abroad are dangerous to them at home. While they are not inclined, therefore, to be adventurous in foreign policy, they have shown a will to advance opportunistically under conditions of controlled risk, with

a preference for moving into vacuums rather than for direct confrontations. The exception to this generally deliberate approach is their own security zone in Eastern Europe where, as in Czechoslovakia last summer, after some hesitation, they finally moved with brutal assertiveness. This action was primarily defensive, however, and the leading motive for it was precisely a fear for the eventual security of the Soviet regime itself.

22. Generally speaking, the present leadership conducts its foreign policies in such a manner as to impose no special handicaps on itself internally, and the domestic problems described above do not now prevent it from doing abroad what it wants to do. Apart from occasional grumbling over foreign aid expenditures, which are not in fact very heavy, on the whole the policies which have brought greater Soviet influence abroad, for example in the Middle East and South Asia, are probably a plus for the regime. But whenever Soviet policies encounter setbacks, and especially if they appear to heighten risks of war, as in the Arab-Israeli conflict of June 1967, stresses on the home front are sharply increased. This is one of the major reasons for a foreign policy of limited risks.

Soviet Perception of the Balance of Power

23. Intense preoccupation with the balance of power—what they call “the relation of forces”—is characteristic of the Soviet leaders. This springs from Marxism-Leninism itself, which is a doctrine concerned primarily with the analysis of power relations in society and the techniques for manipulating them. It also reflects the long years of “encirclement” when the Soviet leaders constantly perceived external threats aimed at the very existence of their regime.

24. In calculating power relationships the Soviets weigh a variety of factors. They give great weight to military power, perhaps as much for its political-psychological effects, i.e., its support to political warfare, as for its direct utility. In measuring the strength of other states, they also attach great importance to economic trends, to the degree of internal unity or division, and to the capacities of leaders and their will to confront risks. They are sensitive to the ebb and flow of opinion in other countries, not for reasons of sentiment, but because it may register shifts of attitude toward power relations and can thus actually affect those relations.

25. Viewed in such terms, the Soviet leaders evidently feel that their position has improved since the low point of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Nevertheless, not everything has come up roses. They have substantially bettered their relative strength in strategic weapons, and have acquired conventional capabilities which, in certain areas beyond the Bloc periphery, would permit them to intervene in a limited way. But in strategic weapons the US is now moving to new generation

systems which will demand further strenuous efforts—and added economic burdens—if the Soviets wish to keep pace. Meanwhile, the US has sustained improved rates of economic growth for some years as Soviet growth has declined, and visions of “overtaking and surpassing” have vanished, even from propaganda. On the positive side, the world influence of the US has suffered because of Vietnam, its alliances have been strained, and it has been wracked by internal discords at a time when Soviet influence and presence in Asia and the Middle East have grown. But then the USSR’s position in Eastern Europe has become more complicated, Czechoslovakia was a disaster in world opinion, the disarray in the Communist movement has deepened, and there have even been important setbacks to Soviet influence in the Third World, as in Indonesia and Ghana.

26. As the Soviet leaders look at the world scene today, they probably feel that they can allow themselves no more than a measured optimism, tinged with real concern for the long-term outlook in Eastern Europe and for the growing severity of their problems at home. This does not mean that the total relation of forces, as viewed from Moscow at present, results in a conclusion that the USSR is overextended and must retrench. On balance, it probably argues for continuing policies of cautious opportunism and limited pressures, perhaps with some increased watchfulness against the development of uncontrolled risks. The Soviet leaders feel able to assert, moreover, as they have for some years, that their relative power justifies their claim to a world role equal to that of the US.

Soviet Policies on Major Current Issues

Some General Tendencies

27. Despite what was said in the opening section of this paper about a retreat to ideological conservatism internally, the USSR’s foreign policy under the present leaders has been marked generally by a decline in ideological emphasis and by what appears to be a primary concern for geopolitical considerations, of the sort normal in any great power. This is seen most notably in the concentration of diplomatic and aid efforts on the USSR’s southern periphery and in the virtual abandonment of the appeals for revolutionary brotherhood which accompanied Soviet entry into the Third World in the 1950’s. A parallel shift has been discernible also in the Soviet approach to Europe, and even intermittently in a more business-like if still harsh tone in dealings with the US.

28. Whatever Soviet rhetoric may still say, Moscow tends to act more like world power than like the center of the world revolution. This has come about less by choice than by inadvertance and necessity. Possessed of global military strength in the nuclear age, the Soviet

leaders wish the USSR to be recognized as a responsible global power. They have come to understand that under modern conditions even their security may rest partly on their ability to influence rather than to overthrow non-Communist governments. Compared with the 1950's, the outlook for Communist revolutionary advance in the world as a whole seems far more complicated and much less promising. Finally, the transformation of China from ideological ally to great power enemy has evidently had a profound effect on the USSR's view of the world and thus on its policies.

29. The effort to preserve Moscow's leadership of the International Communist Movement goes on, but the motives have changed. Now this is desired primarily to preserve the Soviet security sphere in Eastern Europe and the party's domination at home, to counter Chinese action against Soviet interests everywhere, and to insure that Communist parties around the world serve rather than prejudice Soviet great power interests. The Soviet leaders may still believe that they are moving on the traditional double track—a state policy and a revolutionary policy—but their advice to Communist parties everywhere to moderate revolutionary tactics suggests otherwise.

30. One consequence of the more geopolitical emphasis in Soviet policy is the assignment of lesser priority to some areas. Latin America and Africa seem to be so regarded at present. Soviet diplomacy and propaganda are active and opportunities are taken in these areas, especially for trade and arms sales, but efforts and expectations are clearly reduced from what they were at the beginning of the 1960's. The troubled relationship with "socialist" Cuba and several disappointments in Africa and Asia have presumably brought about this change. Castro is probably carried today as a somewhat painful legacy of a more innocent phase, before the Soviets discovered their error in coopting as reliable Communists the often vigorous but "ideologically weak" revolutionaries they encounter in less developed countries.

31. The tendencies described here do not mean that the USSR is no longer a thrusting and ambitious power concerned to enlarge its world position. They do suggest that in practice the Soviets place somewhat less emphasis on their pretensions to be a revolutionary power with a universal mission. They are inclined to set priorities for their efforts in various areas in accordance with a more traditional view of Russian security interests and also with a more realistic view of the possibilities for expanding their influence. This does not ease US problems in coping with Soviet power; it may in some ways make the USSR a more formidable opponent. And, because the Soviet leaders are committed to a basically forward policy and have shown that they sometimes fail to appraise risks accurately, the possibility of crisis by miscalculation remains.

The Enduring Confrontation in Central Europe

32. However active they have been in other areas in recent years, the Soviets have always been clear that their security and their aspirations to a world role rest in the first instance on their position in Europe. This is based on holding Eastern Europe as an ideological and security buffer, and they have worked doggedly to consolidate, and to get international recognition for their hegemony there. With that went the long campaign to win final acceptance from the Western Powers of the division of Germany and the persistent effort to isolate and contain the Federal Republic, the revival of whose economic and political influence, the Soviets believe, would undermine their control of Eastern Europe. That nothing in this basic pattern has changed is shown clearly by their action in Czechoslovakia last summer.

33. A more forward kind of Soviet diplomacy in Europe, which gave a clue to long-range Soviet hopes for the area, had emerged in 1966–1967. Taking advantage of US involvement in Vietnam and the consequent strains in US relations with Europe, of de Gaulle's withdrawal from NATO, and of desires for détente in Western Europe, the Soviets tried to promote moves toward a European settlement without the US. At the time, they probably had in mind no more than a preliminary probe to stimulate West European interest in such an approach. But the outcome they look for eventually was made clear: dissolution of NATO and withdrawal of US forces, recognition of the status quo in Eastern Europe and in Germany, bilateral understandings between the USSR and Western European states which would in effect neutralize them, and general European support for the political isolation of West Germany. Fragmentation, not unity, in Europe is what the Soviets think serves their interests.

34. Czechoslovakia has buried such Soviet hopes, probably indefinitely, for what Moscow faces now is tantamount to a general crisis in its Eastern European sphere. Even if the Czechoslovaks are finally brought to heel and a responsive regime is restored, deep fissures in the Bloc system will remain. Nationalist frustration, resentment of economic dependence and stagnation, desire for renewed contact with the West will continue to plague all these regimes in one degree or another; serious instability is possible in several. Within their present premises, which include fear of radical change in Eastern Europe because it may generate pressures for the same in the USSR, the Soviets have no lasting solution. Sooner or later, they may be driven to use force again.

35. Against this background, the USSR is not likely for the present to be very responsive to new Western initiatives for a European settlement, whether these involve regional arms control, new security arrangements, or a revised approach to the German problem. Of course,

if the West seemed willing to contemplate recognition of the Soviet sphere in Eastern Europe and of the division of Germany, the Soviet attitude would be different. But assuming that the West would not abandon the principle of eventual self-determination in Germany in some form, and that the tendency of its proposals would be to promote freer East-West contacts in Europe, the Soviets would see only danger in them. In fact, such proposals might contribute to prolonging the USSR's present embarrassment over its relations with Eastern Europe.

The Middle East

36. When the Soviets, with their arms sales to Egypt in 1955, moved into the vacuum left in the Middle East by the collapse of the Western colonial system, they almost certainly did not anticipate the kind of situation in which they are now so heavily involved. Their aims were to diminish the Western presence, to increase strains in the Western Alliance, and ultimately to establish themselves as the pre-eminent power in the region. They hoped to do these things by developing the natural alliance they saw between themselves and "the progressive forces of national liberation," which they also imagined could be led under Soviet influence to take the "socialist road." They had no very profound understanding of the forces at work in the Arab world, nor of the depth of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Their opportunism in this case did win them great influence and a military presence in an area they clearly regard as of strategic importance to them, but it has also brought risks and burdens.

37. In the immediate situation in the Middle East, the USSR has a double concern: to contain risks and at the same time to avoid any undue prejudice to its influence with the Arabs. Even if it were possible for Soviet-Western collaboration to impose a stable settlement, the Soviets would probably believe that their influence with the Arabs would suffer, since it has been built largely on implicit support of radical Arab hostility to Israel. The more recent Soviet moves for diplomatic collaboration with the Western Powers probably reflect concern that eventually the risks could become less controllable, especially because of the increasing role of Arab terrorist organizations which the Arab States themselves cannot control. Soviet tactics evidently aim now at persuading the US to influence Israel toward moderating its claims sufficiently to permit diplomatic processes to work and some defusing of tensions to occur. But the Soviet leaders do seem to recognize that some pressure on their own clients, which could damage the USSR's standing with the Arabs, will also be needed. Perhaps awareness of the possibility of Israel's early acquisition of nuclear weapons gives the Soviets an added incentive to try to move the Arabs toward a reduction of tensions.

38. If a general settlement could be achieved, the Soviets would expect to gain certain advantages. Opening of the Suez Canal would shorten their shipping route to Asia and would facilitate Soviet maritime operations in the Indian Ocean. Their part in bringing about a settlement might constitute implicit acceptance by the Western Powers of their right to a decisive voice in the affairs of the area. But to achieve a general settlement, the Soviets would have to bring such great pressure to bear on the Arabs to make concessions that they would risk losing the position of influence they have won. This they are very unlikely to do. That is why their present diplomatic activity is probably undertaken only with a view to containing the risks in the present situation rather than in any expectation of actually bringing about a lasting settlement.

39. If violence mounts further and formal hostilities resume, the Soviets will face harder choices. They might then be drawn into assisting the defense of the Arab States; this could happen because Soviet ships and aircraft are present intermittently at UAR bases and large numbers of Soviet advisors serve with Egyptian combat units. But the Soviets would not want to run the political and military risks of joining in attacks on Israel itself or actually threatening its survival. While they may not rate the likelihood of a direct involvement with the US as very great at present, it does not appear that what is at stake for them in the area would justify risks of this magnitude. At that stage, they would probably move further toward tacit collaboration with the US to contain the situation.

Asia

40. The Soviets have pursued a variety of aims in the arc from Japan to the Indian subcontinent, though it is not clear that they have operated on the basis of any grand strategic conception for the area. They have sought, as elsewhere, to move into the vacuum left by the end of Western colonialism, using trade, the supply of arms, and their "anti-imperialist" credentials as principal instruments of influence. They have given priority to efforts to deny use of the area to US military power. They have tried to maintain their leadership of the Communist parties there and to guide them in ways compatible with Soviet foreign policy interests. And increasingly over the last several years, their policy has been geared to the containment of China as an ideological and great power competitor.

41. Soviet political and material support to North Vietnam since 1965 has also been intended to serve aims of policy. The Soviet leaders have wanted to see a setback for US power in Vietnam which would limit the future US role in Asia. But they also wanted this to be achieved by tactics which would limit political and military risks to themselves and maximize their own rather than Chinese credit for the success.

Thus, though they have had only modest leverage in Hanoi, they have evidently used it, not toward ending the war, but to influence the Vietnamese to rely more on the political element in their mix of political-military tactics. The Soviets brought propaganda and diplomatic pressure to bear on the US in order to promote negotiations under conditions Hanoi would accept. Now that negotiations are in train, the USSR will want to help them succeed, but not in ways which would prejudice its future relations with Hanoi. If the North Vietnamese accede to a settlement short of their original aims, however, the Soviets will not stand in the way and will adapt their policy accordingly.

42. The Vietnamese episode illustrates the basically competitive nature of the Soviet-American relationship in Asia. Where circumstances require, as in India, they will permit some tacit parallelism to operate, but they will not convert it into active collaboration. In Southeast Asia, they appear to be positioning themselves for continued competition whatever the outcome in Vietnam; they are unlikely to participate in the efforts for regional organization and development which the US has in view. Their attitudes on the Indonesian debt case and on the Asian Development Bank show their preference for unilateralism over cooperation. In Korea, they do not now encourage the North to adopt an adventurous course, but neither are they willing to pay any political price to restrain the North Koreans. As the Soviets see it, cooperation with the US in Asia would compromise their own aims; they will entertain moves in that direction only when it seems necessary to contain major risks to their security and interests.

43. If Chinese power becomes more menacing, this might provide the occasion for a change in this general Soviet stance in Asia. The Soviets probably do not anticipate a major threat to themselves in the near term, and may still have some slight hope for the revival of "healthy" forces in Chinese communism. But Moscow is clearly concerned for the longer future. The Soviet leaders have given signs, moreover, that they fear not only the growth of Chinese military power but the possibility of an eventual rapprochement between China and the US. This they would see as a major and unfavorable shift in the relation of forces which they should do all they could to prevent. In the long run, therefore, events may compel fundamental revisions of Soviet policy. The Chinese factor seems more calculated to bring this about than any other.

Arms Control

44. The Soviet leaders have reasons at this time, perhaps more than ever before, to entertain a serious approach to arms control. As indicated in earlier paragraphs, the burdens of the arms race have been substantial in recent years, and a change in priorities would contribute in some degree to forestalling economic and social strains which otherwise

are likely to become more serious, and in time, perhaps even critical. In the field of strategic nuclear weapons their buildup over the last several years has given the Soviets a better relative position than they have ever had. Even apart from the added economic pressures they would face, the Soviets may not be confident that as the US moves to more advanced systems, they will be able to maintain the pace technologically. They could think that stabilization in the near future would give them more security than they are otherwise likely to have. They might also reason that, to support the kind of competitive foreign policy they are pursuing in distant areas, greater emphasis on appropriate conventional forces would serve them better than additional strategic nuclear strength.

45. However persuasive such considerations might be to some elements of the regime, the reasons which others will find to oppose a genuine effort to obtain a strategic arms limitation agreement will also carry great weight. Grounds for mistrust of US intentions, fear of ideological compromise or penetration, concern about misunderstanding on the part of allies and clients will all be urged. The influence of the military establishment will generally work against a positive approach, though some elements might, in the interests of other force components, welcome a halt to the strategic weapons buildup. Given the climate of opinion ordinarily surrounding so highly charged an issue, the chances of a positive approach emerging would not be great, were it not for the serious dilemmas which prolongation of the arms race would invoke.

46. What signs there are indicate that the policy-bureaucratic struggle over this issue was not resolved by the decision to begin strategic arms talks with the US, but in fact seems to be continuing. It is likely that the decision was agreed to on the basis that the Soviet approach would be exploratory, and that even if no agreement was reached, some US decisions might be slowed down and time gained. The fact that the move was opposed earlier, however, suggests that some people in Moscow believe that, once the talks get started, they may acquire a momentum of their own which would propel the USSR into an unsound agreement.

47. Given the complexity of the issues, of course, the actual Soviet position will be precipitated, like that of the US, only in the process of negotiation. As usual, and perhaps more so because of disagreement in Moscow, the Soviets will leave the initiative for developing concrete proposals largely to the US. They will expect the negotiations to be prolonged, and will try to make them so if there are signs of domestic political pressures on the US side to postpone arms decisions or to make greater concessions to Soviet views. They will insist on an agreement which, whatever its actual content, registers at least implicitly their

right to equality in strategic power. Acknowledgment of this is, in fact, one of the principal political gains they would expect to get out of the talks.

Prospects for Change in the USSR

48. The Soviet system described in this paper is one which, in view of its situation at home and abroad, might be judged to be ripe for change. But it is also a system within which resistance to change is very strong. Even though the totalitarian Party regime is in many ways poorly suited to managing the complex industrial society which the USSR has become, it retains great tenacity and vigor in defending its monopoly of power. Its conservative instincts and fear of adaptive change are acute.

49. Nobody can foresee what will finally happen to a system as rigid as this as it comes under the increasing pressures generated by the further development and modernization of the society. The ruling group might succeed for a long time in simply containing such pressures, even at the price of some stagnation. Some Western observers assume that there will be change of a gradualist and relatively benign sort, because the holders of power will consent by a series of pragmatic steps to a diffusion of power to groups and institutions other than the Party. Others believe that, against the background of Russian political experience and the Party's own history, it is more plausible to expect that change in the system can come only under conditions of severe political instability and disorder, perhaps even accompanied by violence in one degree or another. In any case, the USSR's future role as a world power, and the degree of uncertainty and danger its policies cause, will be greatly affected by what happens to the internal system in the years ahead.

50. With the wider involvement of Soviet policy in many parts of the world where it was not active until recently, external forces may come to play a larger role in generating pressures for change inside the USSR. A more realistic view of the forces at work in other societies might replace the doctrinaire conceptions which have governed Soviet thinking. Further major setbacks to the USSR's position in Eastern Europe or developments affecting Chinese power and policy, especially if these involved a change in China's relations with the US, might compel radical shifts in Soviet policy which would have serious repercussions on the internal system. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine successes which Soviet power might have externally which would have any more than temporary effect in easing internal strains.

51. Without significant change in the nature of the internal system, the external policies which are so largely determined by it will not alter much either. There may be a further diminution of the ideological input to foreign policy in favor of greater concentration on the

USSR's great power interests, but this would not decrease competitiveness and hostility toward the US and might even increase them. And the US will continue to have very limited means for influencing these attitudes directly. Short of unexpected early change in the Soviet system, therefore, the outlook is for basic hostility and chronic tensions in Soviet-American relations for a considerable period. As in the past, such tensions will rise and fall depending on events, but more frequently than in the past, these may be events in one area or another over which neither side has much control.

22. Editorial Note

On March 3, 1969, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger sent President Nixon a memorandum covering recent intelligence information about a Sino-Soviet border clash of March 2:

"The Soviets have accused the Chinese of violating their border and killing border guards in an attack on a post on the Ussuri River. A protest note has been sent which states that any provocative actions on the border will be rebuffed and resolutely cut short by the USSR. The shooting incident was the first of its kind, although there have been previous instances of border provocations by the Chinese." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 3, President's Daily Briefs)

Over the next few weeks, Kissinger continued to inform the President about the Sino-Soviet border incidents. Although clashes had occurred periodically, this spate of border incidents revealed an intensity and frequency that worried U.S. policymakers. On March 12, Kissinger wrote the following "information item" to the President:

"Developments arising from the March 2 Sino-Soviet border incident in the Far East continue to be revealed [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. Both the Soviets and the Chinese have conducted border reconnaissance flights during this period with some evidence that the Soviets have violated the border on at least two occasions— [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] by a light attack bomber and [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] by a helicopter. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], a Chinese helicopter operating along the border drew a reaction from a Soviet fighter aircraft. No hostile intent was detected and both aircraft remained within their respective airspaces. In addition, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] the Soviets violated Chinese airspace in the Vladivostok area." (Ibid.)

On March 15, Kissinger wrote the following in a memorandum to Nixon:

“The Soviets today charged that Chinese troops tried to invade Soviet territory in the Far East yesterday and today, and had killed Soviet troops. The clashes took place on and near Damansky Island, scene of a clash on March 2.” (Ibid.)

The CIA’s Office of Current Intelligence prepared an extensive chronology of Sino-Soviet border incidents for the *CIA Bulletin*, which was disseminated widely to U.S. Government officials. An annex of the *CIA Bulletin*, released on March 18, 1969, provided a chronology of events from March 2–16 from both the Soviet and Chinese perspectives. (Central Intelligence Agency, Job 93–T01468R, Executive Registry Files, Box 3, Sino-Soviet Border January–July 1969)

On March 20, Richard Sneider, NSC Operations Staff officer for East Asia, sent Kissinger a Department of State Intelligence Note titled “Sino-Soviet Border: Has Peking Bitten Off More Than It Can Chew?” The covering memorandum summarized the note as follows:

“You may find the attached Intelligence Note of interest. Prepared by INR in the Secretary of State, it describes the decreasing bluster in Peking’s handling of the crisis, and suggests that the Chinese have realized that they are in a very bad ‘face’ situation. They cannot dislodge the Soviets from Chenpao Island without an unacceptable risk of escalation, and that they will have to eat their earlier threats of crushing retribution if the Soviets persisted in ‘armed provocation.’ The report concludes that, typically, the Chinese Communists are not likely to retreat and thus acknowledge defeat, nor are they likely to mount a real military challenge to the USSR. They will probably maintain enough activity to conceal the fact that their bluff has been called, as they have done by shelling Quemoy on alternate days for ten years after the subsidence of the offshore island crisis.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 709, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. 1)

23. **Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon**¹

Washington, March 6, 1969.

SUBJECT

Conversation with Ambassador Dobrynin, Lunch, March 3

Ambassador Dobrynin opened the conversation by saying that the Soviet Union noted the President's trip to Europe with interest. Except for some phrases in Berlin, it had found nothing objectionable. He asked whether these phrases indicated any new commitment to German unification. I replied that the purpose of the Berlin speech² was to emphasize existing American commitments, not to undertake new ones. I also told him that we viewed any harassment of Berlin with the utmost gravity. Dobrynin replied that the only concern of the Soviet Union was to prevent a change in the status quo in Berlin and elsewhere in Europe. The Bonn government had deliberately created a provocation. I replied that a clear precedent existed so that one could hardly talk of provocation.³

Dobrynin then said that Moscow had noted his conversation with the President as well as the lunch with me with "much satisfaction." Moscow was ready to engage in a "strictly confidential exchange on delicate and important matters" with the President using the Dobrynin–Kissinger channel. The exchange will be kept very secret. Moscow "welcomes an informal exchange."

Moscow had noted "with due attention" my comment at the previous meeting that the United States had no interest in undermining the Soviet position in Eastern Europe. He was authorized to assure me that in its turn, the Soviet Union had no intention of undermining the status quo in Western Europe. The Soviet Union was interested that the United States acted on the basis of the actual conditions in Europe.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 489, President's Trip File, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1969, Part 2. Secret; Nodis. The memorandum indicates the President saw it. This conversation, like most meetings between Kissinger and Dobrynin, was private and occurred without interpreters or secretaries.

² For the passages of Nixon's speech that concerned the Soviets, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XL, Germany and Berlin, 1969–1972. The text of the speech is in *Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 156–158.

³ On March 5, West German federal elections took place in West Berlin without harassment of access routes by either the Soviets or East Germans. This Bundesversammlung was the fourth to occur in Berlin without incident.

I asked whether that meant that the Soviet Union did not care about formal recognition of Eastern Germany. Dobrynin replied that this was correct. I added that for us it was essential to get the access procedures to Berlin regularized. Dobrynin suggested that there had been many positive developments in the negotiations of 1963 to 1969 crisis that might be re-examined. He refused to specify what those were but said he would go over the record and give me some indication later. He urged me to do the same, indicating that Moscow's attitude was "positive."

Turning to the Middle East, Dobrynin quoted Moscow as saying: "We are prepared to discuss with Mr. Kissinger how bilateral talks can be organized, when and how to start them and how to relate them to four power combination." Moscow had a slight preference for conducting the conversations in the Soviet capital; alternatively, it was willing to conduct them in Washington. New York was a definite third choice. Dobrynin stressed that the Soviet Union was very seriously concerned about the Middle East and willing to discuss *all* the elements of the UN Resolution.⁴ He asked whether the United States was willing to envisage Israeli troop withdrawal. I said if there were proper guarantees for the new frontiers, it would certainly have to be talked about. Speaking privately, I added that it seemed to me improbable that Israel would be prepared to withdraw to its pre-1967 frontiers. Dobrynin replied that Moscow understood this. The Soviet Union was willing to discuss every aspect of the Middle East, including guarantees. However, he added, this was one of the "important and delicate" subjects that should be discussed in the Dobrynin–Kissinger channel. He then repeated that the subjects Moscow was willing to discuss were frontiers, guarantees, communications, waterways and refugees. Dobrynin indicated that he thought that the real negotiation would have to be bilateral United States–Soviet Union and that he regarded the four-power meeting in New York as largely window-dressing. He added "we are willing to discuss *any* question including those that concern Israel."

Turning to Vietnam, Dobrynin said that Moscow had noted our previous conversation. He inquired whether I was aware of Zorin's call on Lodge,⁵ which indicated Soviet good will. However, the Vietnam issue was a delicate matter for the Soviet Union since it was not the only power involved. He thought the Soviet Union could be most

⁴ See footnote 4, Document 2.

⁵ The specific meeting is unclear. Between January 1 and the time of this meeting, Soviet Ambassador Valerian Zorin met several times with the Nixon administration's chief Vietnam Peace Talks negotiator in Paris, Henry Cabot Lodge.

helpful if we had a concrete proposition to make and not one in the abstract.

Dobrynin asked me about the German attitude toward the NPT and whether the Soviet reassurance was enough to get German ratification.⁶ I told him in my judgment, if the Soviet Union could give the Germans some reassurance on Article 2,⁷ either through us or directly, it would ease the problem of signature considerably.

I then explained to Dobrynin our decision on ABM,⁸ which he noted with intense interest and about which he asked a number of very intelligent questions. We agreed to meet again within a week.

(*Note:* The quotes were taken down during the conversation.)

⁶ The President underlined “the NPT” and “ratification” and highlighted the paragraph.

⁷ Article 2 of the NPT obligated non-nuclear-weapon states not to receive the transfer, either directly or indirectly, of nuclear weapons or devices and not to manufacture or seek assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or devices. (21 UST 483) On January 28, Kissinger sent Nixon a memorandum prepared by Spurgeon Keeny, Assistant Director of ACDA, that outlined the provisions and problems of the NPT. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Subject Files, Box 366, Non-Proliferation Treaty Through March 1969)

⁸ Nixon decided to move forward with the construction of an anti-ballistic missile defense system, which he believed was a crucial bargaining chip in forthcoming Soviet arms control talks. On March 14, the White House issued a press release; for text of the “Statement on Deployment of the Antibalistic Missile System” see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 216–219.

24. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 8, 1969, 10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador
The Secretary
Malcolm Toon, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, E 5405, Records of Joseph Sisco (Lot Files 74 D 131 and 76 D 251), Box 27. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Toon. The memorandum is part I of IV. A notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it.

The Secretary briefly described the President's trip to Europe² and told Dobrynin that the Middle East problem had been one of the principal subjects of discussion, particularly with the British and the French. In response to Dobrynin's specific inquiry, the Secretary said that the French position initially had been a piecemeal approach but it seemed now to be closer to our own position in the sense that the French now recognize the need for working out an overall settlement before Israeli withdrawal.

The Secretary said that we felt it would be desirable to have quiet bilateral talks with the Soviets, and it was his view that we should begin these talks in Washington and perhaps at a later date they could be continued in Moscow.

Dobrynin said that the Soviet preference, of course, would be Moscow, but he felt that his Government would agree with the Secretary's suggestion. After some discussion it was agreed that Mr. Sisco would meet with Ambassador Dobrynin on Friday, March 14.

The Secretary suggested that the talks might proceed on the basis of the Soviet December 30 plan³ as well as our own proposals which are now in the process of preparation. The Secretary pointed out that these private bilateral talks should not be considered a substitute for Four-Power talks in New York. It was his feeling that such talks among the Four Powers might begin the following week. As the Secretary saw it, the principal purpose of the Four-Power talks should be to provide support for the Jarring mission since there seemed to be general agreement among the Four Powers that it was essential that Ambassador Jarring continue his efforts to bring the parties directly involved together. The Secretary felt that Four-Power meetings in New York should be private, and this was also the view of the British and French. Dobrynin said that the Soviets also would favor private talks, and he felt that there would be no objection to the timetable set forth by the Secretary.

There was a brief discussion of the Soviet December 30 plan, with the Secretary pointing out that some points needed clarification. For example, it was not clear from the text of the plan that the Soviet position on freedom of navigation extended to the Suez Canal as well as the Gulf of Aquaba. Dobrynin said that he felt that paragraph 2 of the Soviet plan was a clear statement of the Soviet position, and the subsequent specific reference to the Gulf of Aquaba, did not mean that the Soviets did not favor freedom of navigation in Suez for all parties as well.

² See footnote 2, Document 11.

³ See footnote 4, Document 1.

The Secretary made clear that we cannot persuade Israel to enter into any agreement which would not provide the Israelis with the security that they seek. While it is true, as Dobrynin pointed out, that the Soviets stand for the continued existence of the State of Israel, the Arab position is much less clear. Arab leaders continue to state publicly their desire to destroy Israel, and so long as this attitude persists it is not likely that the Israelis would be prepared to withdraw their forces from areas they now occupy.

Dobrynin pointed out that there can be no peace in the Middle East so long as Israel insists rigidly on its own requirements. A peace settlement must respond to the interests of all parties. So far as Israel's security is concerned, this could be satisfied by a Security Council guarantee or a Four-Power guarantee. Dobrynin pointed out that the Soviet position is flexible on this question.

It was agreed that these and other points of substance could be explored more thoroughly in the private bilateral talks which would begin Friday, March 14.

25. Editorial Note

During their March 8, 1969, conversation (see Document 24), Secretary of State William Rogers and Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin also discussed recent developments in Vietnam, including the possibility of U.S. retaliation for North Vietnamese attacks on South Vietnamese cities. Rogers raised the option of engaging in private talks with North Vietnam and four-party talks among the United States, Republic of Vietnam, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and National Liberation Front on political issues. Dobrynin stated that he considered this an important change in U.S. policy and he would report it to Moscow. A memorandum of their conversation is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume VI, Vietnam, January 1969–July 1970, Document 32.

Later that evening, from 6:25 to 7:10 p.m., Henry Kissinger spoke on the telephone with President Nixon, who was in Key Biscayne, Florida, about a number of issues including Vietnam. Kissinger complained to President Nixon about Rogers' volunteering four-party talks to Dobrynin: "We weren't saying we didn't want to discuss political questions. I think, myself, we would have wound up, in this first testing period, in a weak position in a tough sequence of events. My concern is they will now feel free to press us along in these private talks." Nixon responded, "We can't be boxed in where we are at the

mercy of the fact that we can't hit the north and we can't have private talks. We will have no bargaining position." Kissinger stated that after 4 weeks of pressing publicly for military and political talks, the North Vietnamese had achieved that and "they can go to private talks and string them out." Nixon suggested that Kissinger "can cut that down by making clear to the Soviets and I will say so in my press conference, there will be no compromise on this coalition government [within South Vietnam]." Kissinger suggested that, "I don't believe it will be easy for you to attack Cambodia while private talks are going on and not much is being done in South Vietnam." Nixon replied that, "My point is if, while the private talks are going on and they are kicking us, we are going to do something." Nixon and Kissinger returned to the Rogers–Dobrynin conversation. Nixon stated that "There is not going to be any de-escalation. State has nothing to do with that. We are just going to keep giving word to Wheeler to knock hell out of them." Kissinger suggested that, "If they hit us again, we must refuse to have private talks for another week." The President stated: "We cannot tolerate one more of these without hitting back. We have already warned them. Presumably they have stopped. If they hit us again, we hit them with no warning. That is the way we are going to do it. I can't tolerate argument from Rogers on this. You warn once. However, if they don't hit us, we are screwed." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 359, Telephone Records, 1969–1976, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File, 3–13 March 1969)

On March 9, Haldeman described Kissinger's reaction to Rogers' conversation with Dobrynin:

"K called me early in great distress because Rogers had reversed United States policy in his talks with Dobrynin yesterday. K feels it is disastrous and is really upset, but will spend today developing recovery plan and come down tomorrow to see P. K feels the policy question is so serious that if continued he'll have to leave. Can't preside over destruction of Saigon government. Feels we have great chance to take hard line and Rogers gave it away. . . . K felt Rogers, (by alluding that we would stop the private talks with the North Vietnamese) had given Dobrynin the stance that the U.S. wasn't fully backing the Thieu government, K also felt this would lead to the destruction of Saigon, and was against current policy." (*Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) (Ellipsis in the source text)

On March 10, Kissinger sent Nixon a memorandum following up on their telephone conversation 2 days before and recommending remedial steps to counter the Dobrynin–Rogers discussion. This memorandum is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume VI, Vietnam, January 1969–July 1970, Document 35.

26. Memorandum From the Acting Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Walsh) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, March 15, 1969.

SUBJECT

The President's Meeting with Ambassador Beam on March 20, 3:00 p.m.²

Ambassador Beam is in Washington on consultation prior to assuming his duties as Ambassador to the Soviet Union.³ He plans to arrive in Moscow on March 31. The Ambassador will be taking up his new post at a time when several positive developments are in train in US-Soviet bilateral relations. Specifically:

(1) We are completing final arrangements with the Soviets on an exchange of chancery sites in Washington and Moscow and hope to reach formal agreement in the latter part of April.

(2) We hope to negotiate with the Soviets this summer on the reciprocal establishment of consulates in Leningrad and San Francisco.

(3) We expect to hold talks soon with the Soviets on peaceful uses of nuclear explosives.

Soon after his arrival in Moscow, Ambassador Beam will be calling upon a number of high Soviet officials, who will be anxious to learn what our latest position is on strategic arms limitations talks, the Middle East, Vietnam, and an eventual Summit meeting. The President may

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL 17 US–USSR. Confidential. Drafted by Gifford D. Malone (EUR/SOV) on March 14, and concurred in by Thompson Buchanan (EUR/SOV), Dubs, Toon, and Beam.

² According to the President's Daily Diary Nixon met with Beam and Kissinger on March 20 from 3:08–3:50 p.m. No substantive record of the meeting has been found. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) On March 18, Kissinger sent Nixon a memorandum of talking points with 6 tabs: a copy of Nixon's letter to Rogers and Laird of February 4 (see Document 10), a draft letter to Kosygin (see Document 28), supplementary explanatory oral instructions for Beam, press guidance for Ziegler and Beam, draft letters to the major West European allies, and instructions to USNATO for briefing the North Atlantic Council. Beam describes the meeting in *Multiple Exposure*, p. 218, as follows: "Kissinger was present at my farewell talk with the President when we went over the draft letter to Kosygin. I was told to treat our talk with great secrecy. Since Secretary of State Rogers was away, I naturally left a memorandum for him reporting on what I had been doing, a step which I understand caused great annoyance to the White House staff." No record of Beam's memorandum to Rogers has been found.

³ On March 13, the U.S. Senate confirmed Beam as Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

wish to discuss these subjects with Ambassador Beam with a view to the Ambassador's subsequent discussions with Soviet officials.

A biographic sketch of Ambassador Beam is enclosed.⁴

Robert L. Brown⁵

⁴ Attached but not printed.

⁵ Deputy Executive Secretary Robert L. Brown signed for Walsh.

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

Washington, March 19, 1969.

SUBJECT

Memorandum of Conversation with Ambassador Dobrynin, March 11, 1969

Dobrynin called me about 7:00 p.m. to ask whether I could see him that evening or the next morning. I agreed to drop by the Soviet Embassy about 9:00 p.m. Dobrynin was extremely cordial. He met me together with Mrs. Dobrynin and, after some social conversation about their daughter, they both mentioned that Mrs. Dobrynin was hoping to call on Mrs. Nixon soon.

Dobrynin then handed me a brief message² from Kosygin to the President acknowledging his good wishes on his birthday. He also handed me a copy of a note which the Soviet Union proposed to hand to the Germans the next day, designed to meet some of the German concerns about the NPT. Dobrynin said that the note had been influenced by some of our suggestions and was given to us simply for our information and as a token of their good faith. (An analysis of the note is attached at Tab A.)³

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 489, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1969, Part 2. Secret; Nodis.

² Not found.

³ Attached but not printed.

Dobrynin then told me that he had been extremely pleased by his conversation with the Secretary of State.⁴ There had been real progress toward four-power talks on Vietnam, including political topics. I told him that this was a little premature. The Secretary of State had described what would be the end result, but I was sure that our position was to continue to discuss withdrawals on a bilateral basis with the DRV. Political questions should be handled by Saigon and the NLF. Dobrynin said the NLF found it difficult to go into a forum with its mortal enemy. Hanoi told Moscow that they wanted a four-power meeting so that all the participants could work on the GVN in order to make it more adaptable. I said that I had correctly interpreted your thinking and I could not go beyond that. The initial contacts would have to be bilateral.

I then said the President was determined to end the war in Vietnam one way or the other. There was no intention to humiliate Hanoi. We recognized they had sacrificed a great deal and we would be generous. At the same time, we had certain conditions that had to be satisfied. I repeated that you were determined to end the war one way or the other. Dobrynin smiled and said you would find it difficult to escalate—there just were not very many things we could do militarily that would not cost us more than they were worth. I said, we shall see.

Dobrynin then asked me what I thought of the Sino-Soviet dispute, especially the fight along the Ussuri River.⁵ I said we regarded it primarily as a problem for China and the Soviet Union and we did not propose to get involved. Dobrynin became very emotional and said China was everybody's problem. He asked whether we would try to take advantage of the Soviet Union's difficulties. I said that he had probably seen enough of the President to recognize that the President was not playing for petty stakes. We had offered serious negotiations to the Soviet Union; we meant to pursue them. At the same time, if the Soviet Union tried to embarrass or humiliate, we would take appropriate countermeasures without much fanfare. However, my presence

⁴ See Document 25.

⁵ On March 11, at approximately 10 p.m., Kissinger spoke on the telephone with Nixon and summarized his earlier conversation with Dobrynin. Kissinger reported that "Dobrynin asked how we evaluated that Chinese clash. I told him we think it is their problem. We don't presume to give them advice. We won't play any little games. We try to settle things, but if threatened, we will do what we have to. Obviously, this is much on their minds." Nixon stated that "Sometimes events which we could not have foreseen may have some helpful effect—who knows." Kissinger responded, "If one evaluates accounts of events, we gained more from that clash than we lost through Saturday's conversation [between Rogers and Dobrynin]." Nixon then stated, "It must have shook the North Vietnamese." Kissinger agreed that "It must be a warning to Hanoi it can happen again." (Ibid.)

in his apartment in such informal circumstances indicated the seriousness with which the President took Soviet-American relations. Dobrynin then gave me a gory account of the atrocities committed by the Chinese. He spent about fifteen minutes describing the military situation. I listened politely but made no comment.

At the end, Dobrynin asked me whether I was willing to meet him on a purely social basis to see some color slides of the Soviet Union. I told him yes.

28. Letter From President Nixon to Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union Kosygin¹

Washington, March 26, 1969.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I should like to use the occasion of Ambassador Beam's assumption of his duties as my Ambassador in Moscow to share with you my thoughts on the future of relations between our two countries.

First of all, I should like to assure you that Ambassador Beam has my complete confidence and is fully familiar with my views. You may be certain that he will communicate to me promptly and in complete confidence any views that you and your colleagues may wish to convey to me at any time.

Because of the awesome power our two countries represent we, as heads of government, carry the gravest responsibilities for the peace and safety of the world. I am prepared to explore with you and your colleagues every available avenue for the settlement of international problems, particularly those that involve the danger of confrontation or conflict. I am determined to see us enter an era of negotiations and to leave behind the tensions and confrontations of the past.

I am encouraged by the contacts that have already been initiated by our two governments on the problems of the Middle East. It is essential that both our countries exert a calming influence on this situation which,

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 433, Backchannel Files/Backchannel Messages, Beam Instructions, 3/26/69 (Amb to Moscow). No classification marking. The date is handwritten. This letter was attached to a March 26 covering memorandum from Kissinger to Beam, which is not printed. Also attached but not printed were instructions from Nixon for Beam to use when he delivered the letter to Kosygin. On April 22, Beam presented the letter to Kosygin; see Document 40.

as the past has shown, is fraught with profound dangers for peace not only in the immediate area in question but for the rest of the world. I believe that no outside power must seek advantages in this area at the expense of any other; on the contrary it is, in my view, the duty of all outside powers, especially the great powers, to help create conditions in which the opposing sides can find a solution that protects their essential and legitimate interests, as foreseen in the Security Council resolution of November 1967. I believe that the willingness of our two countries to exert a responsible and beneficial influence in the Middle East is an essential element in building the confidence that must be the basis of serious and productive negotiations.

I am aware of the constructive role which your government has played at certain stages of the search for a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam conflict. I am aware also of the great influence which you possess in North Vietnam by virtue of your military support to that country. In the spirit of candor which I hope will mark communications between us, I would ask you to continue using that great influence in the direction of peace. For peace is what I am striving to achieve, patiently and in a spirit of conciliation. The effort toward peace cannot of course be confined exclusively to the conference table; it must be reflected in Vietnam itself. As Commander in Chief I am responsible for the safety of American troops and I must also meet solemn commitments to the Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. But my country has demonstrated its readiness for moderation that takes into account the legitimate concerns of the Government of North Vietnam. Moderation, however, must be mutual and I believe that you can be influential in that direction. In any event, it is my conviction that the era of negotiation which I believe we both wish to embark upon would be seriously burdened if the day of peace in Southeast Asia cannot be brought closer.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that our responsibilities also require the avoidance of crises and the removal of threats to peace in Europe. I was disturbed by the recent flare-up of tensions in Berlin. As I pointed out to your Ambassador, my country is committed to the integrity of West Berlin; it is committed also to fulfilling the obligations and exercising the rights stemming from four-power agreements. Here as elsewhere, unilateral attempts to change the existing situation to the advantage of one side would place obstacles on the road to peace. I believe that any change must be the result of agreement and should improve on the unsatisfactory aspects of the existing situation. If you have suggestions that would make the situation in Berlin mutually more satisfactory, I would, of course, be interested in hearing them.

More generally with regard to Europe, I would hope that there, too, negotiation rather than confrontation will mark our future relations. I am conscious of the great suffering endured by the Soviet people in the past because war was carried to your soil across your

Western frontier. It is undoubtedly the responsibility of the Soviet Government to ensure that such a disaster does not occur again. At the same time, I am bound to say that last year's events in Czechoslovakia produced a profound shock in American opinion. Our commitments to our European allies are solely for defense and for the production of their legitimate security interests. This should not be an issue between us.

As countries with the largest arsenals of modern weapons in the world, we carry a special responsibility for the control of armaments. The era of negotiation to which I have referred must clearly include efforts toward disarmament. I am confident that progress toward the solution of the great political problems that engage our interests can be matched by progress toward curbing competition in arms; for there can be no doubt that such competition, especially if unrestrained, is utterly wasteful and would not, ultimately, enhance anyone's security. I can assure you that my decisions in this area will be guided solely by the principle of "sufficiency," that is, by the principle that our military strength will be only that which is required to ensure the safety of this country and meet the commitments to our allies. We base this on the assumption that you will adhere to a similar policy for your country. Military requirements depend, among other things, on the crises and dangers that confront us in the world. As the dangers recede, I am convinced so can the levels of arms in our arsenals. These are the simple and, I believe, realistic principles that will guide me in negotiations on disarmament. It is my sincere hope that in the years of my Administration you and we can increasingly cooperate so that the burden of arms that our people bear can be lessened.

If I may sum up the approach to our relations that I have sought to convey to you in this message, it is simply that I intend to safeguard the interests of my country with due regard to the interests of yours; that in this spirit we should join together, wherever and whenever possible, to curb the dangers and eliminate the sources of conflict. I would like to remain in frequent and candid communication with you through our Ambassadors and otherwise; my representatives stand ready, and indeed have already begun, to explore with you the whole range of issues that confront us and the means to make our relations increasingly cooperative and constructive.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

29. **Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon**¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

Conversation Between Senator Percy and Ambassador Dobrynin

Senator Percy had a long conversation over lunch with Ambassador Dobrynin on March 27. The Senator provided us a copy of his account of the talk and asked that I inform you that he had followed up on your suggestion about seeing Dobrynin. I already have acknowledged Percy's letter.²

The Percy–Dobrynin conversation was wide-ranging and substantive; a full text of the Senator's memorandum is at Tab A.

I consider the following points of special interest:

1. *Estimate of You*. Dobrynin agreed that you were taking a firm, but not rigid, line on world problems, and that you were approaching their solution with a knowledgeable, open, and reasonable attitude.

2. *Consular Relations*. Dobrynin stated there was "every reason" to have consulates in each of our countries in addition to those planned for San Francisco and Leningrad, and said that the Soviets "would have no objection" to others being opened.

3. *Bilateral Trade*. In this area, according to Dobrynin, "America always puts politics ahead of good sound economics," and he was not optimistic about trading opportunities between the US and the USSR for that reason.

4. *Comments on Secretaries Rogers and Laird*. Dobrynin said he had followed the recent testimonies of Secretaries Rogers and Laird³ closely. He found the positions taken by Secretary Rogers "responsible," but

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 725, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Memcons, Dobrynin/Percy, March 1969. Confidential. Sent for information. Nixon wrote "Note page 2" on the memorandum.

² On April 3, Kissinger wrote Percy and acknowledged receipt of his memorandum of conversation. Kissinger informed Percy that "You covered a lot of ground, and we are studying your account of the talk with great interest. I will advise the President that you have taken his suggestion, as requested, and will give him a summary of the key points of your conversation." Kissinger provided a summary to Nixon in an undated memorandum drafted by Lesh on April 2. (Ibid., Box 709, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. II)

³ On March 27, Rogers testified before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Extracts of his testimony concerning U.S. preparations for Strategic Arms Limitation

objected strongly to Secretary Laird's assertion that the Soviet leadership was attempting to develop a pre-emptive first strike capability against the US. Dobrynin said that "even taking into account the fact that we know he is trying to sell the American people and the Congress on an ABM system that is not very popular, he is going to extremes."

In contrast, Dobrynin added, the Soviets had "not wanted to poison the Russian people against the Nixon Administration," and had not printed critical comments, "hoping for the best."⁴ But he said that "time may be running out" on that policy.

5. *Disarmament*. There is a growing feeling in Moscow, according to Dobrynin, that the United States is not really interested in disarmament talks with the Soviet Union. He commented that the Johnson Administration had been ready to sit down for strategic arms talks,⁵ and it was difficult to understand why—if the Nixon Administration were equally interested in such talks—it should take up to six months more to prepare the US position. He also warned that no preconditions could be set if disarmament talks were to be held. The Soviets, Dobrynin asserted, were ready to begin discussions with us tomorrow.⁶

6. *Vietnam*. A US decision to resume bombing of North Vietnam would be "very foolish," in Dobrynin's judgment, since it would only unite the North Vietnamese more solidly, and require both the Chinese and the Russians to step up their levels of assistance.

7. *Middle East*. Dobrynin saw no evidence that the situation would improve in the near future; "it is filled with danger and there can be more serious outbreaks." He pushed for successful four-power talks to lessen the dangers.

By way of comment, I would note that in the past few days Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov has *not* taken as hard a line as

Talks are in *Documents on Disarmament, 1969*, pp. 138–139. On March 20–21, in nationally televised hearings, Laird testified before the International Organization and Disarmament Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and declared that the Soviet Union had begun a nuclear forces build-up aimed at eliminating U.S. defenses in a single blow. Laird supported his assertion with information about the SS–9, a Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). He stated that the SS–9 threat could be countered only with an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system. Extracts of Laird's testimony are *ibid.*, pp. 125–131.

⁴ In an Intelligence Note of March 27 entitled "Soviet Style Honeymoon for President Nixon," Thomas L. Hughes, Director of Intelligence and Research, informed Rogers that US-Soviet relations have been "notably restrained in its public treatment of the new administration, and has maintained an almost complete moratorium on personal criticism of the President." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL US–USSR)

⁵ See footnote 6, Document 2.

⁶ Nixon highlighted this paragraph and wrote in the margin, "H.K.—maybe we are better off on this line than we thought."

Dobrynin did with Senator Percy on topics such as the ABM decision and strategic arms limitation talks.

Tab A

**Memorandum From Senator Charles Percy to the President's
Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**

Washington, March 27, 1969.

TO

William Rogers, Secretary of State
Melvin Laird, Secretary of Defense
Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence
J. Edgar Hoover, Director of Federal Bureau of Investigation
Henry Kissinger, Assistant to the President

On May 27, 1968, I had lunch alone with Ambassador Dobrynin at the Soviet Embassy, at his invitation, and there was a productive discussion. Last week I invited Ambassador Dobrynin to my home in Georgetown for luncheon. We met at 1:00 PM, Thursday, March 27, 1969, and talked until 3:30 PM. Following are summary statements that represent, to the best of my recollection, the position and attitude taken on various questions. Ambassador Dobrynin is extremely articulate. He is very skilled, however, in talking a great deal, seemingly in response to a question without ever directly answering the question. It was necessary on several occasions to repeat a question in a different way three or four times in order to get a more direct response.

President Nixon

Percy: Do you feel that the answer I gave to your question last May, "Is there a new Nixon?", was accurate and that he does appear to be a man who has a broad-gauged view of world problems and, though firm, is not what you consider rigid "hard line" and would approach the solution to problems with a knowledgeable, open and reasonable attitude?

Dobrynin: Yes, the description was not only accurate but coincided with my own feelings. But of course we have had no real opportunity to negotiate or work together yet.

Consular Treaty

Percy: I was pleased to see the Soviet suggestion that a consulate be opened in one Soviet and one American city. Do you envision others being opened?

Dobrynin: There is every reason to have additional consulates and we would have no objection to others being opened.⁷

Bilateral Trade

Dobrynin: What is the outlook for expanding trade between the Soviet Union and the United States? We would like to do more business with your country and it would benefit both economies. It is rather ridiculous for us to ship vodka to Denmark and have them rebottle it and sell it to the United States when we could sell it direct. When the Italians assured us that they could purchase \$30 million of machine tools for the Fiat factory being built in Russia from the United States, we were highly skeptical and we were proven right. America always puts politics ahead of good sound economics and I am not optimistic about trading opportunities between our two countries.

Percy: You have asked whether most favored nation treatment could be extended to the Soviet Union and indicated that you feel no real trade of significance compared with what went on for instance in 1930 could be carried on without such treatment. I would have to say the chances would not be good for extension of this position to the Soviet Union under the present circumstances. However, normalizing East-West relationships has to be approached step by step and I would suggest that it might be practical to consider extending MFN treatment to some other eastern European country such as Czechoslovakia, putting it on the same basis as Poland and Yugoslavia, which would at least be a step in this direction.

Dobrynin: This sounds logical though I cannot see why Americans are so afraid of trading with the Soviet Union.

Percy: It is directly related to the threats to American security and the security of other nations. For instance, if the Administration were to propose MFN being extended to the Soviet Union today, the first opposition would come from those who would talk about the amount of war materials being supplied to North Vietnam by the USSR to kill American boys in South Vietnam and that nothing can be done to just strengthen an economy with this the end result. You have mentioned automobile manufacture but you also have indicated that an agreement to manufacture trucks would be most interesting from your standpoint. The provision of technical assistance for the mass production of trucks would be directly related to the kind of military assistance that you would be providing to North Vietnam.

Dobrynin: We do not like to think we need technical assistance as we are capable of making anything we want to make. But it does stand

⁷ Nixon highlighted this paragraph.

to reason that we can benefit from mass production techniques. But if we do not make agreements with the United States we can always make agreements with European countries. The machine tools that the United States would not furnish for the Fiat factory are all obtainable in Western Europe and these countries sell freely to us and are glad to have the business.

Leadership Relationships

Percy: I sat in on part of Secretary William Rogers' testimony⁸ before the Foreign Relations Committee today and brought you a copy of the full text of his comments.

Dobrynin: Yes, I watched part of his testimony on television and his positions were responsible. However, I am concerned about the very strong reaction in Moscow among our leadership against statements made by your Defense Secretary Melvin Laird. I tried to picture the average American sitting in front of his television set watching Laird talk about the Soviet intention to make a first strike on the United States, thus depicting us as the worst kind of people. Even taking into account the fact that we know he is trying to sell the American people and the Congress on an ABM system that is not very popular, he is going to extremes.⁹ After all, the leadership in Moscow is only human and I am concerned about their reactions to this kind of talk. I spent thirty days back home in January and spent many days at a resort thirty miles from Moscow where Brezhnev, Kosygin, and Podgorniy came with their families and we all skied together cross country. I know their wives and their children and I know their reactions as human beings. They do not like to be put in the position of appearing to plot millions of deaths or used this way for the purpose of selling an American defense program. I am concerned about their reaction as they have not formulated their judgment on the Nixon Administration and have tried to hold back any judgments that might be premature. In fact, we have not wanted in any way to poison the Russian people against the Nixon Administration and have not printed critical comments, hoping for the best. But time may be running out on this.¹⁰

Disarmament

Percy: When in your judgment should talks get under way on disarmament, how long will they take do you think, and what do you foresee as the end result?

⁸ See footnote 3.

⁹ Nixon underlined and highlighted this sentence.

¹⁰ Nixon underlined and highlighted this sentence.

Dobrynin: There is a growing feeling in Moscow that the United States is really not interested in disarmament talks.¹¹ The Johnson Administration was ready to go ahead with these talks, in fact anxious to do so, and a set of principles had been laid down for such discussions. Then certain advisers to Johnson started to attach all sorts of conditions to these talks involving such issues as Vietnam. We said that we would be glad to talk about Vietnam or any other subject the United States wished to discuss, but would not make agreements in advance. We were not particularly anxious to have a summit meeting with an administration that had only a few months left in office but were willing to do so. But it never came about.

With the Nixon Administration we are ready to have talks on disarmament tomorrow. We would also be willing to discuss any other subject with the Administration, but as recently as two weeks ago we were told that such talks could be held within a period of “up to six months.” This did not reassure Moscow that the United States was serious about wanting talks. The Nixon Administration said that it needed time to prepare for such talks. But look at the amount of time it has been putting into appearing before Congress and on television to try to sell an ABM system. It has also put in a lot of time analyzing such a system and coming up with a program. This same amount of time could have been put into preparing for disarmament talks that certainly should not take six months if America considered them important. It is a matter of priorities and the United States may not think this is an important subject, at least that is the impression they give.

Percy: The President may consider disarmament talks less meaningful when we both possess the power to annihilate each other—even were production stopped at the present level—if we leave unresolved serious political difficulties that could bring about conflict.

Dobrynin: We are always willing to talk about the problems of Vietnam or the Middle East or any other subject the United States wishes to discuss, but preconditions cannot be established if disarmament talks are to be held.¹²

Percy: Does the USSR feel that it requires an ABM directed against China?

Dobrynin: Let me ask you how you regard China and what your relationships should be with China.

Percy: In my opinion it is dangerous to regard China as an “out-law” nation, and we should try to bring her within the community of

¹¹ Nixon underlined and highlighted this sentence.

¹² Nixon underlined the last clause of this sentence.

nations providing she will meet acceptable standards of conduct. But China has shown no inclination to act as a civilized member of society. She has steadily reduced her level of diplomatic contact with the rest of the world, and it will be interesting to see how long she lets Canada, where a good trading relationship could be built, cool its heels on its suggestion for diplomatic recognition. We have had one irrational ruler in our lifetime, Adolf Hitler, and it is always possible that we could have another.

Dobrynin: China's actions against us on the border have been an interesting case in point. They selected an unoccupied island which complicated our military options. Had we moved across the water to their side, they would have screamed that we were invading them, and yet they were able to raid, withdraw and be in a position of challenging and even embarrassing the mighty Russian Army.

Percy: Going back to disarmament, let me ask for your reaction to a purely personal suggestion. What would you think of a mutual moratorium by Russia and the United States on the emplacement of missiles and nuclear warheads? Acceptable verification means are available. Today there is a rough parity between the United States and the Soviet Union. We do not know how long disarmament talks would take to complete and, during the process of negotiation, an extensive build-up of missiles by one side or the other might upset the balance. This would seem, therefore, an excellent time for a joint moratorium. It might provide an improved atmosphere for the talks and the talks would have a better chance to succeed.

Dobrynin: Such a proposal could certainly be considered but to even consider it we would have to get talks under way and I see no real inclination to do this.

Percy: In his testimony this morning Secretary Rogers said that talks could begin within a few months.

Dobrynin: I do not know what your definition of "few" is. All I know is that I was told up to six months and that does not appear to me as though there is any real desire to get talks under way.

Percy: I am not a spokesman for the Administration and in fact regretfully find that I differ sometimes with its judgments. However, I will convey your impressions to the appropriate parties and it would be my own hope that talks could be gotten under way soon. However, the events in Czechoslovakia made it impossible to hold talks heretofore and talks could be set back again if there were other unfortunate happenings in that area.

Vietnam

Percy: I do believe it would be important to bring Vietnam into the context of our talks since one act of easing tensions should relate

to another. I am deeply disturbed by the lack of progress in the Paris talks. There are, of course, some in this country who would withdraw from South Vietnam regardless of the consequences, though I believe they are very few in number. There are many more who feel that the cessation of bombing by the United States has been used by the North Vietnamese only to build up their own forces and has enabled them to undertake another offensive which has cost many American lives. There would be a strong body of support for the President ordering a resumption of bombing in the North, particularly to cut off supply lines. There are many who would support very heavy bombing on the basis that representations to us have been betrayed and that the North Vietnamese are making no serious effort to find the basis for a negotiated political settlement.

Dobrynin: This would be very foolish, in my judgment. First of all, it would be ineffective as has been proved by all of the past bombing done by the United States in North Vietnam. It merely unifies the North Vietnamese and requires a greater level of support by both China and ourselves.¹³ As soon as you bomb near China, she intensifies her efforts. And were we called upon to provide a stepped-up level of aid to a Socialist country, we could not possibly fail to respond if we were to remain credible in the eyes of other Socialist countries.¹⁴ The bombing of concentrated urban areas in World War II failed to conquer a people or defeat them. That could only be done by land armies. Of course if you intend to invade North Vietnam with your land forces that would require a minimum of one million men and would call for an equal or greater response by the Chinese Army. Where would all of this get you? You already have a great problem with world opinion. It is difficult to convince people—the average person—that you are not a warlike nation. One of the greatest difficulties I have when I go home is with my father and his friends. I have been in the United States now going on my eighth year. My father is a plumber, he works with his hands, he is a simple man and so are his friends. But they are worried about the intentions of the United States.

There are many Russians who believe that the United States is going to wage war on the Soviet Union. All that our government would have to do is say that we are going to cut back on housing, on consumer goods and other forms of civilian production, and we are going to double our output of armaments. We can do anything that we feel we have to do and the Russian people will fully support us and back us up.

¹³ Nixon underlined this sentence.

¹⁴ Nixon underlined most of this sentence.

You must take into account that the military in the Soviet Union does not have anywhere near the power and influence that it has in the United States. Your Secretary of Defense sits in the Cabinet, and he consults with the President more than almost any other top official. Your military interests are strong in the Congress. This condition simply does not exist in the Soviet Union. The head of our military is not even a member of the Politburo and only infrequently sits in on major political discussions affecting national policies.

Percy: On the other side of the scale you must take into account, and the world should take into account, that the United States has not used its power for the expansion of its own territories, and our government must take into account in its planning the fact that the Soviet Union is building either five or 25 megaton ICBM's which do not enhance the peace. Why is such explosive power of this magnitude needed? There is talk that the Soviet Union is orbiting nuclear explosives, and this is understandably disconcerting to our average citizen.

Middle East

Percy: Before we finish we should at least have a word of the Mideast. It is important to find a basis for settlement not only because of the danger for the nations directly involved, but also because we must try to avoid situations which could bring our own two nations into dangerous confrontation.

Dobrynin: I cannot see the situation improving in the near future. It is filled with danger and there can be more serious outbreaks. We must do the best we can to lessen the danger through successful four-power talks which will be getting under way. I agree with you that the situation is dangerous and we must act positively to lessen this danger.

On departing, Ambassador Dobrynin suggested that we get together again after the Easter recess. The conversation was cordial and relaxed throughout. On his arrival he was greeted by Loraine and our children who were home from school on Easter vacation, and he was extremely gracious to them. I highly recommend an informal home atmosphere for relaxed discussions when an exchange of views, rather than hard negotiating, is the purpose of the meeting.

Charles H. Percy

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

Washington, March 30, 1969.

SUBJECT

The Mid-East Talks with the USSR So Far

What We Have Done So Far

Joe Sisco has seen Dobrynin four times now, three this past week.² The discussion has proceeded along three tracks: (1) attempts to clarify each other's position on the main issues listed in the November 1967 UN resolution; (2) Soviet answers to US requests for clarification of the Soviet plan laid out in Moscow's December 30 note;³ (3) clarification of our working paper distributed Monday for discussion among the four powers. The next session will be April 2.

Much of the discussion has taken place in highly liturgical language—"just and lasting peace," "secure and recognized boundaries," "agreement between/by the parties," "binding agreement." These are the words of the November 1967 UN resolution and of the argument since over its interpretation. They are the words in the working paper we have surfaced in the Four-Power talks. What follows is an effort to identify the real issues behind those words, which are hard to pin down without talking about concrete proposals—something we are not yet prepared to do, partly because of Israel's strong objection to that procedure.

Common Ground Established

We seem agreed on some of the more general principles:

1. The aim is a *real settlement* ("just and lasting peace"). Dobrynin has now said that Moscow does not want just another armistice. The test will come when we get down to details, but this point is worth establishing in view of Israel's concern that Nasser just wants to buy Israeli withdrawal at the cheapest price to get ready for the next round.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 653, Country Files, Middle East, Sisco Middle East Talks, April–June 1969. Secret; Nodis. The memorandum is not initialed by Kissinger. A copy was sent to Halperin on April 2. A virtually identical copy of this memorandum was sent to Kissinger on March 28 by Saunders, which indicates that he was the drafter. (Ibid., Box 649, Country Files, Middle East, Middle East Negotiations, March 27–May 31, 1969)

² Saunders summarizes these meetings in Document 38.

³ See footnote 4, Document 1.

While the Soviets may figure that even a reasonable settlement will leave them enough tension to exploit, their present position seems to leave us room to press for specific arrangements to make the terms of settlement as secure as possible.

2. The Near Eastern *parties must participate* (“agreement”). Dobrynin says Moscow is thinking of a settlement agreed to *by* the Arabs and Israelis. While big-power talks may constitute pressure, the “question of imposing a settlement does not arise.” This point is worth establishing because the Arabs believe that all we have to do is say the word and Israel will withdraw. Even de Gaulle’s thinking contains this theme. But the USSR seems to recognize the dilemma we share—we must move our clients by persuasion rather than by dictat.

3. A related point is that any US-Soviet views must go to the parties *through Jarring*, at least officially. Unlike de Gaulle who sees a possible role for the four powers independent of the UN, we and Moscow seem agreed on the desirability of keeping a formal UN buffer between us and the parties to avoid having to absorb all the shock of their reaction ourselves. This, of course, assumes continued exchanges between the parties and Jarring.

4. Agreement should be reached on all issues listed in the UN resolution *as a package*. While we are not yet clear on the exact sequence for implementing the elements in the package, Moscow recognizes the practical fact that the Israelis will not withdraw until its security and recognition are guaranteed. This is an important shift from the 1967 Soviet argument that Israel must withdraw *before* other issues could be negotiated.

5. *Israel has a right to exist* as an independent state. This is not new in the Soviet position, but it is important as the one major point on which it differs with Cairo.

Remaining Issues

While there are also differences on a number of secondary points, the important issues at this point are these:

1. *Peace*—What kind of relationship will exist between Arabs and Israelis after a settlement? Moscow has circulated (December 30) a specific sequence of agreements and implementing steps for arranging Israeli withdrawal. We have not, because we must try to meet some of Israel’s requirement that these specifics be worked out by the Arabs and Israelis themselves. Therefore, we have chosen to describe our position in terms of a set of carefully worded principles, though behind these we have in mind staff studies of each major element of a settlement.

The issue is this: The farther we can go now in defining precisely the obligations of each side, the more certain we can be of Soviet mo-

tives. It is easy for Dobrynin to say Moscow wants a real settlement. It is important for us to close as many loopholes for future exploitations as possible, though frankly this is difficult as long as we keep ourselves from talking specifics. So we keep pressing Dobrynin to define the relationship which will exist between Arabs and Israelis after a settlement.

The importance of the issue is that the long-run position of the US in the Middle East will thrive almost in proportion to the degree to which tensions are reduced. While Moscow profits from exploiting divisions—Arab-Israeli, radical-moderate—the US has interests in all these camps (friends and political interests in Jordan and Israel, oil in Iraq and Saudi Arabia) and can pursue a coherent policy only when tension is at a manageable level, as it was between the late 1950's and early 1967.

The practical elements of the issue are:

a. *Controlling fedayeen.* The US is concerned that the Arab governments—more UAR, Syria, Iraq than Jordan—will sign an agreement and then stand back while the fedayeen violate it. Dobrynin discounts this possibility; he says the fedayeen will dry up when Israel withdraws. We remember how mounting terrorist activity in 1966–67 started the sequence of events that led to war. We also recall that we (and apparently the USSR) were powerless to stop this activity. Convinced that no big-power guarantees can police this, we believe it is crucial that the governments on the ground—the only ones capable of rolling up the terrorists at the source—commit themselves to stop it, at least as an organized movement. We want to be as precise as we can because we have no reason to trust Nasser or the Syrians; after all it was our tacit 1957 understanding with Nasser that he renounced in closing the Straits of Tiran in 1967.

b. *Enforcing the peace.* The only practical measure of the intentions of the Arabs and Soviets is to determine what they will commit themselves to in the way of policing for demilitarized zones and guarantees for free navigation and any other rights which are part of the agreement. Again, we have done staff work on these issues, but it will be difficult to draw Dobrynin out further until we are prepared to get specific. Dobrynin is hard to disagree with when he says Moscow can go no further in defining “peace” than to point out that the collection of practical arrangements worked out on each of the major issues will define the Arab-Israeli relationship that will exist. We have said much the same to the Israelis ourselves.

We have two choices:

a. Continuing our efforts to persuade both the Soviets and French to define more precisely how they see the relationship between Arabs

and Israelis after a settlement. Both Dobrynin and the Quai⁴ have essentially told us this is no longer a fruitful exercise. They seem to have gone as far as they will until we are ready to talk in terms of the specific collection of arrangements that would define the situation after a settlement.

b. Surfacing our own specific views on the various elements of a settlement. We have numerous staff studies and a working-level document putting these together into an illustrative peace plan. We have carefully avoided getting specific for fear that the Israelis would refuse to go further with us. The time may have come for us to face the decision to begin surfacing specific proposals. This may be the difference between continuing a diplomatic holding action largely on Israel's behalf and trying to turn this exercise into one that could have a chance of producing results.

The *main risk* of surfacing our own plan now is that of Israeli refusal to cooperate. We are familiar with strong Israeli objection to the Four-Power talks. They are still with us because we have stopped short of breaching their basic principle that the Arabs and Israelis must reach the settlement themselves. It can be argued that they need us and in the end will come along. That may be true, but there is a large amount of go-it-alone thinking in the Israeli mood now.

The *advantage* would lie in the possibility of getting a real negotiating process started.

2. "*Secure and recognized boundaries*"—To what lines must Israel withdraw? In the working paper we have circulated we say that any changes in the pre-war lines should be confined to those required for mutual security and should not reflect the weight of conquest. But again, we have stopped short of expressing our views on where the lines might be drawn, and we are arguing principle.

The issue is this: Israel is determined to redraw Israel's boundaries to enhance its security. As Eban says, if this is to be the final map of Israel, Israel wants to draw it right this time. The Arabs, of course, regard any boundary change as Israeli conquest and Arab humiliation. We have frankly resisted all insistence for return to pre-war boundaries mainly because we knew we could not force Israel out of Jerusalem.

The importance of the issue: The basic fact is that we know that Israel is determined to change the lines and we cannot dissuade her. In a longer range vein, while we have no interest in supporting Israeli expansionism, the future stability of the area will depend on remov-

⁴ The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs is located at Quai d'Orsay in Paris.

ing as many points of friction and Israeli fear as possible. Israel's militancy is directly related to its sense of insecurity.

The practical elements of the issue are:

a. *The US* has no stake in where the lines are drawn. Our only real criteria are (a) that the parties be willing to live with them (that would allow for fair exchanges) and (b) that points of future frictions (such as the divided fields and haphazard lines under the old armistice regime) be minimized. We do not see topography as the sole guarantor of security, as many Israelis do, and we are ahead of others in thinking about alternative means of guaranteeing security. We are more concerned, for instance, about control of Sharm al-Shaikh, and we seem to have thought a lot harder about the practical problems involved in policing DMZ's.

b. *Positions of UK, France, USSR.* Our concept of what reasonable boundaries might look like does not differ greatly from British, Soviet and French views. The USSR talks of border rectifications in terms of a few kilometers, but they might be moved further if some reciprocal exchange could be arranged (e.g. Gaza to Jordan).

c. *Jerusalem.* One reason we have stuck so hard against "return to June 5 lines" is our conviction that no one could force Israel out of Jerusalem. The USSR has no stake of its own there but must support strong Arab claims. There is, therefore, a premium on working out some mixture of Jordanian and Israeli presence in the city.

d. *Israel's position* apart from Jerusalem, is furthest from ours on the West Bank and Sharm al-Shaikh. We have not come up yet with satisfactory alternatives to Israel's plans for these areas. We are ignoring the Golan Heights.

There seem to be *two ways of handling the issue:*

a. We could go on much as we have been and say to the Israelis: "If we could get such-and-such commitment on 'peace' from the Arabs, would you then reveal your territorial requirements to Jarring?" This is what Jarring has been trying to do, and the Israelis would probably continue to refuse unless that such-and-such included direct Arab-Israeli contact. However, one added wrinkle might be to try our hand at eliciting Soviet support in arranging some sort of *secret meeting* with the UAR to satisfy Israeli requirements.

b. We could go to the Israelis and say: "If we could get such-and-such practical arrangements from Nasser or Hussein (demilitarized zones, etc.) would you withdraw to these boundaries?" This would require US to *put a detailed US plan on the table* at least with the Israelis. So far we have refused to do this, arguing with Dobrynin and others that only the parties themselves can draw the proper lines (especially on the West Bank). That has been part realism (the parties do know the

terrain better than we) and partly defense (we know Israel will be tough to move especially without an Arab bargaining partner).

The *main obstacle* to the second course, again, is Israeli insistence on negotiating their own arrangements directly with the Arabs. A secondary problem is that the people on the ground really do have a better sense than we of what boundaries make sense.

3. "*Agreement between the parties*"—How much direct negotiation between the parties can we achieve? In the diplomatic shorthand, the argument is over whether there must be agreement "between" or "by" the parties. It is possible to achieve agreement of both sides without its being arrived at by contact between them, but again we have had to cope with Israeli insistence on direct negotiation. In our working paper we have actually supported indirect negotiations to start but have said that, as a practical matter, we believe direct contacts will be necessary at some point.

The issue is twofold: (a) The Israelis require some kind of direct negotiation for political purposes, and we think at some point it would be a lot more efficient for local experts to work out their own arrangements. (b) We were the middle-man in 1957, and we got badly burned. Therefore, we would like to see Nasser take greater responsibility for bailing himself out this time.

The importance of the issue is mainly tactical, partly substantive. The overriding point is that some degree of direct negotiation is necessary to bring Israel along. We have also argued that the arrangements are more likely to stick if the Arabs strike their bargain directly with Israel and accept responsibility for it. But if Israel were not insisting on direct contact, we probably would not.

The practical elements of the issue are:

a. *The Israelis* insist on a direct confrontation. We must take this into account, even if we do not wholly share their reasoning.

b. *The USSR and France* believe a direct meeting non-essential, if not impossible. Dobrynin says Jarring could do the whole job.

c. *The UAR* refuses in principle, but we have indications that Nasser might agree to some sort of meeting under Jarring toward the end of the process.

The only *way to handle this* is for us to go on insisting in the Four-Power forum that there must be a meeting under Jarring at some point. We judge that this is essential to bring the Israelis along, and we cannot really accept the Arab point that they absolutely cannot meet with Israel. The problem is to devise a formula which will permit direct contact as part of the phasing of implementation (see below). However, the problem might also be met by attempting to arrange secret UAR-Israeli contacts (as suggested above). In either case, we would have to develop more concrete suggestions.

4. “*Binding agreement*” or “*contractual agreement*”—How can the implementation of various elements of the agreement be phased and enforced so as to let each party feel he is giving up at each stage an advantage commensurate to what his adversary is giving up? We have staff studies on the possible legal forms of agreement and on the guarantees that might stiffen enforcement of the agreement, but we have not surfaced any of these.

The issue is (a) that Israel is being asked to give up something concrete in return for Arab promises on paper and (b) that the Arabs refuse to negotiate with the pistol of Israeli occupation at their heads. The question is how to assure Israel that the Arabs will make good if it withdraws all the way. The question is equally how to assure the Arabs that Israel will not just stop its withdrawal half-way on some pretext.

The importance of the issue is twofold: First is the question, again, of maximizing those elements in the agreement which will persuade Israel that the obligations the Arabs assume are binding—that the costs of not meeting them as defined in the settlement will be great enough to deter the Arabs from violation. *Second* is the tactical need to structure the implementation in such a way as to satisfy each side at each stage that it is getting as much as it is giving up.

The practical elements of the issue are:

a. *The nature of the agreement.* We hold no brief for a peace treaty, but we do want some international instrument we can point to in case of violation. In 1967, we had no written undertaking from Nasser which might justify US or international action to hold him to his agreement to leave the Straits of Tiran open to Israeli shipping.

b. *Phasing its implementation.* Dobrynin has suggested that an initial declaration of intent and then a set of agreed documents covering all elements of a settlement be deposited with the UN as Israeli withdrawal begins and that they go into effect on the last day of withdrawal. Dobrynin recognizes the practical requirement for achieving agreement on all issues before withdrawal. We have countered that the agreements must be binding—i.e. in effect—before withdrawal can begin. However, we recognize that some compromise formula is necessary here.

c. *Guarantees.* The Israelis want an Arab signature on a contract, and the Arabs may go as far as to sign a joint document of some sort, though not a peace treaty. But we feel that the self-enforcing provisions that are written into the agreement (e.g. automatic penalties for violation) and the international guarantees that may supplement it will contribute far more to making the agreement binding than signatures on a treaty, which have psychological value in Israel but little practical value.

The practical *way to handle this* is to concentrate discussion on (a) the forms an agreement might take and (b) the ways of phasing implementation. These are practical problems susceptible of practical solutions if other conditions can be met. But we have to be able to begin talking specifics to get to them.

One Issue Not Yet Addressed

Although we and Moscow agree that we should work through Jarring, we have not yet really worked out in detail how we will relate our bilateral conclusions, the Four-Power conclusions, Jarring and our bilateral contacts with Cairo, Amman and Jerusalem. In part, we have not done this because we needed to see first how much common ground we might find to work from. While we may wish to try one or two Four-Power meetings to get a similar feel for them, we now need to be more precise about how all these relate.

General Conclusions From the Soviet Talks So Far

1. We and the USSR are closer than we might have expected on the substance of a settlement. While we have yet to get specific enough to determine how far the Soviets are prepared to go, our greatest differences seem to grow more out of the positions of our respective clients than out of our own particular interest in one form of arrangement over another. Moscow may well have decided that even the best possible settlement will leave enough residual tension for it to exploit.

2. The main point of disagreement relates to how we get from here to there, and we are handicapped by our unwillingness so far to surface concrete ideas. We both recognize the need. Moscow is working hard to achieve for the Arabs a face-saving legal fiction which makes it appear that the Arabs have committed themselves to nothing until the Israelis have withdrawn. But the effort to achieve this fiction feeds natural suspicion that Moscow is trying to build escape hatches into the settlement for later Arab use. We are trying to argue Dobrynin toward our position without being able to surface practical suggestions of our own.

Operational Conclusions

1. The recurrent theme in this paper is (a) that we do not yet have a fully developed position and (b) that to the extent we have developed one, we have not surfaced it for tactical reasons. This suggests that we need:

- an agreed government position on the terms of a settlement;
- an agreed position on the tactics of presenting that position.

2. We also need a clearer position now on how to relate the Two-Power and Four-Power talks and on how to relate both to Jarring. The

Sisco–Dobrynin channel seems a useful one. Its usefulness suggests that we should use the four-power talks mainly to divert attention from the US–USSR channel. We can also use it to discipline the French and as an inducement to the Soviets, who may want to deal more with us than with the others.

3. While we have so far avoided the worst dangers of an unprepared position, the whole burden of the talks could still fall on us—for producing all the substantive proposals and for bringing the Israelis around. One essential aim for us in the Four-Power forum is to draw the others into sharing the practical problem of moving Israel. If we are expected to deliver Israel, we must make it clear that they are expected to deliver the Arabs.

4. A good definition of an equitable settlement is one that will make both sides unhappy. If so, we must have Soviet help, and the Soviets must share the blame for pushing an unpalatable solution.

Recommendation:

That you authorize NSC consideration of (1) a specific plan and set of objectives for relating the US-Soviet talks, the Four-Power talks and Jarring's continuing mission; (2) a paper considering the advantages and disadvantages of surfacing concrete proposals of our own on the elements of a settlement; (3) a detailed statement of what those proposals might be.⁵

Attached (Tab B)⁶ is a tabular presentation of the positions of the Four Powers on each of the major issues.

⁵ There is no indication that Nixon approved or disapproved any of the options.

⁶ Attached but not printed.

31. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 1, 1969, 3:40–4:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

General; U.S.-Soviet Relations

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.S.R. Participants

Vassily V. Kuznetsov, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the United States

Yuri N. Chernyakov, Minister-Counselor

Alexander I. Zinchuk, Deputy Chief of USA Division, MFA

U.S. Participants

William P. Rogers, Secretary of State

Martin J. Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs

Malcolm Toon, Deputy Assistant Secretary

Adolph Dubs, Acting Director of Soviet Union Affairs

William D. Krimer, Interpreter

Mr. Kuznetsov expressed his thanks to the Secretary for having given him the opportunity of visiting him in spite of the Secretary's very busy schedule. He first wanted to convey Foreign Minister Gromyko's best regards to the Secretary. Mr. Gromyko had not been very well recently, having fractured several bones in his wrist in an accident, but he was better now. For a period of three weeks he had been unable to carry out his functions.

The Secretary replied with a request to convey his best wishes to Mr. Gromyko, whom he had met in 1959 on the occasion of Mr. Khrushchev's visit to Camp David.² He said that he admired the Foreign Minister for having lasted in his office continuously since 1957.

Mr. Kuznetsov went on to express the condolences of his government on the sad occasion of the loss of such a great man as former President Eisenhower.³ The Soviet people had known him as a man

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 725, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Memcons, Kuznetsov/Dobrynin/Secretary Apr 69. Secret. Drafted by Krimer on April 2. The meeting was held in the Secretary's office. The memorandum is part I of III; parts II and III, brief discussions of the Middle East and the NPT respectively, are *ibid.* All three parts are attached to an April 2 covering memorandum from Acting Executive Secretary Walsh to Kissinger. On April 3, the Department sent telegram 50635 to Moscow, which summarized the three part-conversation. (*Ibid.*, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL US–USSR)

² Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev made an official visit to the United States, which included a trip to Camp David, Maryland, September 15–27, 1959. Rogers served as Attorney General under President Eisenhower.

³ Eisenhower died on March 28.

who had made great contributions to the common cause of achieving a victory over fascist Germany at the time when he had been the Allied Supreme Commander. The Soviet Government had therefore immediately decided to send a delegation to the funeral. In this connection Mr. Kuznetsov recalled that our two countries had been allies in those days, when the world situation had been extremely difficult. At that time we had managed to find a good understanding on very complex problems and resolve them in the interests of mankind. Today the situation was also difficult and today, too, it was most important to create understanding and confidence between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviet Government wanted to do everything in its power to create a situation in which a better understanding and confidence between the two countries would lead to a solution of important international problems in the interests of our peoples and all humanity. He emphasized that his government wanted to achieve this goal and said that therefore any initiative from the American side would be welcomed.

The Secretary thanked Mr. Kuznetsov for his remarks and for the fact that the Soviet Government had sent a high-ranking delegation to the funeral. General Eisenhower had always spoken in glowing terms of his wartime experiences with Soviet soldiers. It was a fact that there was a common bond between the Russian people and the American people, as well as great friendship between them. The Secretary referred to his brief conversation with Mr. Kuznetsov of the day before, when Mr. Kuznetsov had said that when he had dealt with American engineers only, his relations had been friendly indeed, and that his difficulties only started when he began to deal with diplomats. As the Foreign Minister knew, the Secretary had already informed Ambassador Dobrynin that we were anxious to proceed to establish better relations between our two countries. The best time to do so in his view, was the time when a new administration came to office. We wanted to talk to Soviet representatives with an open mind about many things. As the Minister knew, we were now already discussing problems of the Middle East on a bilateral basis; we would appreciate everything the Soviet Union could do to help us achieve a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam conflict; in the months ahead we wanted to go ahead with talks on arms limitation. Although we were not attaching any conditions to any of these subjects and were willing to deal with each of them separately, it is self-evident that a reduction of tensions in one area would also be helpful to produce results in others. The Secretary thought that the time had come to have far-reaching talks on the many problems facing us. Our two countries had a special responsibility with respect to maintaining the peace. It was clear that in the absence of good relations between our two countries we incur the possibility of a conflict which could destroy mankind. The Secretary was therefore looking forward

to working with Mr. Kuznetsov, with the Foreign Minister and with the excellent Ambassador in Washington.

Mr. Kuznetsov said that he was glad to hear this. He thought the present moment was one when we faced many important international problems awaiting solution. If we were to do nothing to improve the situation, it was quite natural that it would deteriorate. He shared the Secretary's views that there was no need to attach conditions to the efforts to reach agreement on any problem. He knew that some people took the position that it was first necessary to build up confidence so as to be able to proceed to a solution of problems. He did not agree with such a position, for how could there be any confidence without forward movement? He felt that confidence would improve as a result of progress in the solution of important problems. He referred to the time when he had worked with Ambassador Lodge, when it sometimes appeared that there was no progress on disarmament because of this same vicious circle. He therefore agreed with the Secretary that we should not place any conditions requiring progress on one problem before proceeding to another; this would unnecessarily complicate the situation. We should explore all possibilities and where we could proceed we should then find common language.

The Secretary pointed out that from a point of view of improving the relations between our two countries difficulties were often caused by polemics. Speaking for the new administration he said that the President and he were determined to be very careful and not say anything that could be interpreted as being belligerent, since this would not be conducive to good relations. He hoped that it would be possible within the framework of the Soviet system to respond in kind in their press and public statements.

Mr. Kuznetsov replied that as far as the Soviet leaders were concerned, they, too, had been careful not to say anything bad in their statements beyond the usual explanations of Soviet policy. But he was sorry that he could not say the same about some of the leaders of the United States. Last night he had had a brief but heated discussion with Defense Secretary Laird. He had brought up some of Secretary Laird's arguments in favor of going ahead with Safeguard, which had been presented during the Congressional hearings. Secretary Laird had said that the Soviet Union had the intention of attacking the United States with a first strike. This was, of course, not true. The Soviet Union was actively pursuing all possible ideas leading to disarmament, arms reduction and the stockpiling of explosive materials. The Soviet Union was striving for peace and was therefore willing to consider all suggestions to resolve international problems and to improve the world situation.

The Secretary replied that he did not think Secretary Laird had spoken of Soviet intentions, but rather of Soviet capabilities, bearing

the SS–9 in mind. Certainly he (Secretary Rogers) had given no such indication in his testimony.⁴

Ambassador Dobrynin remarked that within the context of Secretary Laird's testimony the impression had been created that he regarded the Soviet Union as the most aggressive nation in the world. The Ambassador did not know of a single article in the Soviet press which had attacked the President, although Secretary Laird was criticized because of the impression he had created.

The Secretary said that the less top officials said anything that could be interpreted by the public as being belligerent, the better it would be for the relations between our two countries. We now had the opportunity of making progress in these relations and the President and he were determined to be very careful in their statements so as not to impede this progress.

Mr. Kuznetsov noted with satisfaction that the President had told him last night that he appreciated the responsible attitude displayed by the Soviet leadership since he had taken office.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 29.

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

Washington, April 3, 1969.

SUBJECT

Memorandum of Conversation with Ambassador Dobrynin, April 3, 1969

Dobrynin called me about 3:30 p.m. to ask whether he might come by for fifteen minutes this afternoon. I received him at 4:30 p.m. and he stayed for an hour.

Dobrynin began the conversation by saying that he had been instructed by the highest level of the politburo to give me an advance indication of a note that was going to be presented at the State Department

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 489, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1969, Part 2. Secret; Nodis. The memorandum was not initialed by Kissinger.

tomorrow morning.² This note in effect presents the Budapest Declaration of the Warsaw Pact nations, and asks for a European Security Conference. (I am sending you a separate memorandum on this.)³ Dobrynin asked me for my views. I told him a European Security Conference which excluded the United States would meet with strong opposition. Dobrynin said that Moscow has no intention of prescribing the membership; if one of our allies proposed United States participation, Moscow would agree. (This represents a major change in Soviet policy.)

However, it soon became clear that the note was just a pretext. Dobrynin turned the conversation to Vietnam and asked me what I thought of developments. I said we were very relaxed, we knew what we were doing and would not be deflected by public protest. Dobrynin asked me whether we had “any intention of expanding the war.” I replied that I had always told him that the President was determined to end the war one way or the other. He could be sure that I did not speak idly and that I hoped Hanoi kept Moscow fully informed of everything that was going on. Dobrynin said: “You know we do not have any advisers at the headquarters in South Vietnam.” I replied: “Well, I hope they keep you informed of everything that goes on.”

Dobrynin then asked how I visualized the relationship between a military and political settlement. I decided to play fairly tough and said that we would probably want to discuss military issues first. (I did this to preserve the option of the Vance mission⁴ and to have our willing-

² On April 4, during a meeting from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., Dobrynin presented the Appeal on European Security issued by the Warsaw Pact countries at Budapest on March 17 to Under Secretary of State Elliot Richardson, who was accompanied by Special Assistant Morton Abramowitz, and Dubs. (Memorandum of conversation; *ibid.*, NSC Files, Box 725, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Memcons, Dobrynin/Richardson) Since 1968 Warsaw Pact members had urged the convening of a conference on European security. The proposed agenda included an agreement renouncing the use or the threat of force, and trade and technical exchanges.

³ See Document 33.

⁴ According to Kissinger’s memoirs, “the proposed mission involved linking the opening of SALT talks with an overall settlement in Vietnam.” Kissinger further recalls that on March 18, he met with Cyrus Vance, who served as Deputy Chief of the U.S. delegation to the Paris peace talks until February 19, to ask him whether he would go to Moscow to discuss strategic arms limitations and to meet secretly with a DRV negotiator. Vance would discuss a political and military settlement for Vietnam, including a cease-fire, mutual troop withdrawal, and guarantees for NLF non-violent participation in South Vietnam’s political life. Under the Vance proposals, South Vietnam would be free and independent, but after 5 years there would be negotiations for reunification with the North. No record of their meeting has been found.

In early April, Kissinger pressed Nixon to authorize the Vance mission. Although the President was lukewarm about its prospects for success, he permitted Kissinger to broach it with Dobrynin during this meeting. The Vance mission, however, never took off. Kissinger explains in his memoirs, “Yet no reply was ever received from Moscow—no rejection, no invitation, not even a temporizing acknowledgment.” (Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 266–268)

ness to discuss political matters within that framework serve as a concession.) I added that we could understand it, however, if after the military issues were settled, Hanoi would make their application dependent on progress towards a political settlement. Dobrynin pretended that this was a major concession and said it put a new complexion on things. He said we had to understand that the NLF was reluctant to risk itself in a forum with the GVN since it considered the GVN determined to destroy it. Dobrynin asked whether I saw any chance of replacing Thieu and Ky. I said no, but we were willing to consider safeguards for the NLF after a settlement. Dobrynin said this was all terribly complicated. The NLF did not insist on a coalition government. It would settle for a peace cabinet (without Thieu and Ky) which would safeguard its members.

Dobrynin then returned to the problem of escalation. I told him it would be too bad if we were driven in this direction because it was hard to think of a place where a confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States made less sense. I added that it seemed to me our interests in Vietnam were quite compatible. Dobrynin replied: "Our interests in Vietnam are practically identical. We might want a slightly more neutral South Vietnam than you, but it is not an issue of consequence."

Dobrynin then turned to China. He referred to a news story that I was in charge of a policy review of Communist China and asked what conclusions we had reached. I said we had reached no conclusions but the President's thinking was well expressed to Kuznetsov when he said the Soviet Union and the United States still had the power to order events but that they might not have that power much longer.⁵ Dobrynin said this was quite right. He added that he hopes things will get better after a while. I said that looking at the problem from a sheer political point of view, I thought China would be a major security concern of the Soviet Union no matter who governed it. Dobrynin then said that it seemed to many in the Soviet Union that Formosa could well be an independent state. I did not respond. Dobrynin said he might want to get together in two weeks to review the entire international situation.

Comment:

Dobrynin seemed very insecure when speaking about Vietnam. All of this suggests to me that maybe the Vance mission is our best hope.

⁵ For Nixon's view expressed to Kuznetsov by Rogers, see Document 31.

33. **Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon**¹

Washington, April 4, 1969.

SUBJECT

Soviet Initiative for a European Security Conference

The Soviets and East Europeans are currently pushing, diplomatically and through propaganda, an "appeal" adopted by the Warsaw Pact countries in Budapest on March 17 which proposes an early conference on European security. Ambassador Dobrynin today delivered a copy to Elliot Richardson.² (You will recall that Prime Minister Rumor³ raised the subject with you on April 1.)

The appeal has aroused interest in the West because it almost completely is devoid of the polemical attacks on the US and the Federal Republic which normally appear in Communist declarations of this sort. There are no really significant new substantive proposals on how to go about getting a European settlement in this document—its main concrete proposition is that officials from interested European states should meet to arrange a conference and its agenda. Its main theme is that if the present status quo is recognized in Europe, especially by the Federal Republic, there could then be extensive east-west cooperation on economic and technical matters and military alliances could be abolished.

On the face of it, the appeal excludes the United States from participation in the proposed conference. But in the past when this criticism was levelled against their European security proposals, the Soviets have indicated that they are prepared to see a US role. They have maintained this line privately in the present instance, too.

Soviet Objectives

There has been speculation about the reasons why this appeal should have been issued at this time. The timing may be connected with the impending NATO meeting: the Soviets may hope that the trend toward better cohesion in NATO after Czechoslovakia and as a result of your European visit can be halted or reversed by a conciliatory proposition from them. Beyond this tactical motivation, the Soviets may in fact be interested in restoring some of the east-west con-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 392, Subject Files, Soviet Affairs. Secret. Sent for information.

² See footnote 2, Document 32.

³ Marianno Rumor, Prime Minister of Italy.

tacts, including economic ones, that were disrupted by their invasion of Czechoslovakia. Since the document makes a number of demands on the FRG—including recognition of East Germany, the Oder-Neisse Line and the “special status” of West Berlin, as well as renunciation of nuclear weapons—the Soviets may have wanted to lay the groundwork for renewed political contacts with Bonn. The obverse side of that coin is, as it always has been, an effort to isolate the Federal Republic by picturing it as the main obstacle to a European settlement if it fails to meet Communist demands.

Another motivation that may have played a role relates to Soviet efforts to consolidate the Warsaw Pact: this is the first major document in some time that all the East Europeans, including Romania, have been willing to sign.

Our Attitude

Although I do not believe that in and of itself this “appeal” does anything to advance the prospects of a European settlement, I believe we should not give it a negative response. Rather, we might use it in our effort to impress on the Soviets the need to talk concretely about the issues that exist between us.

What we have said about the inutility and, indeed, dangers of holding grandiose conferences at this stage should hold true in this case also; but we need not rule out eventual meetings, after the necessary spadework has been done to ensure that they get somewhere.

I do not believe that we should make an issue of our attendance at such meetings. Anyone who is serious about making progress on European problems knows that we must be a party; we should not make the Soviets think that they are doing us a favor if they agree to such an obvious fact of life.

I do believe that in the context of a constructive response we should make clear that

- (1) in our view a real settlement in Europe is incompatible with gross intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries, and
- (2) cannot be based on discrimination against Germany, since this would undermine any settlement from the beginning.

All of this, of course, looks very far into the future. But I think it would be desirable for us to be in a positive if cautious posture on this range of issues. This, judging from discussions at NATO, is also the position of our allies in Europe.

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

Moscow, April 7, 1969, 1640Z.

1447. Subject: Initial Call on Gromyko.

Ref: State [*Moscow*] 1401 (Notal).²

1. Gromyko received me cordially this afternoon at Foreign Ministry for about 45 minutes. He said that Marshal Chuikov and Dep-FonMin Kuznetsov had conveyed report of their conversation with President Nixon at recent White House reception and that Soviets welcome and agree with President's thought that a "great deal depends on US and USSR." Soviets fully associate themselves with this view and believe there are grounds for optimism for future conversations and negotiations. I replied we earnestly hoped to carry on continuous and rational discussion of matters of mutual and world interest.

2. Principal substantive points of conversation were Middle East and NPT. With respect to former, Gromyko had little new to offer. He said that he was pleased that in four bilateral talks in Washington discussions had proceeded to get away from generalities and down to specifics. He also stressed that Soviets are in full agreement with us that understanding on a "package" settlement must be reached first; then it can be implemented in phases. He said that both Israelis and Arabs have too many suspicions and suggested we should both help to eliminate ill-founded ones.

3. I introduced subject of synchronized ratification of NPT along lines para 2 reftel.³ Gromyko indicated Soviets much preoccupied with this question and that final decision not yet taken. Trend of his observations was nevertheless rather negative. He argued that Socialist countries (for whom USSR implicitly responsible) had signed treaty but that position of FRG (for whom US implicitly responsible) far from clear.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL US-USSR. Confidential. Repeated to Bonn, London, Prague, USMISSION Geneva, USMISSION NATO, and USUN.

² In telegram 1401 from Moscow, April 14, the Embassy informed the Department that Beam planned to make his initial call on Gromyko on April 7 and intended "to make some mention of Czechoslovakia at least to extent of saying U.S. reaction to summer crisis is well known and that we are following current developments with concern." (*Ibid.*, POL CZECH)

³ The reference is an error. Beam is apparently referring to telegram 51269 to Moscow, April 3. (*Ibid.*)

He said USSR would face “intolerable” situation if it ratified agreement and FRG did not. I countered with arguments that our synchronized ratification would, on contrary, encourage action by FRG and other countries, and that Bonn faces delicate internal political situation vis-à-vis NPT which is only aggravated by Soviet anti-FRG propaganda and by Soviet statements such as that concerning alleged right of intervention under Articles 53 and 107 of UN Charter.⁴ With reference to statement by Gromyko that Charter provisions are a fact, I said important question was to devise tactics to promote FRG signature, Gromyko thought Bonn is looking for pretext to defer action but seemed somewhat impressed by argument that whole NPT may stand or fall on ratifications of nuclear powers.

4. (*Comment:* While high level here may already have taken fairly adamant preliminary stand against ratification of NPT before FRG acts, argument that we must ratify jointly to encourage signature of other countries in addition to FRG such as Japan and India may still carry some weight.)

5. I did not raise Czechoslovak question since believe more opportune occasion will occur shortly.

6. Other particulars in septels.

Beam

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 8.

35. Talking Points¹

Washington, undated.

TALKING POINTS ON VIETNAM FOR DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN

1. I plan to utilize the following points in discussing efforts to resolve the Vietnam conflict:

a. The President has just completed a thorough going review of the Vietnam situation in its fullest world-wide context.

b. The President is convinced that it is in no one's interest to have an outcome that would encourage Mainland China's aggressive drive.

c. The President has therefore decided that he will make a major effort to achieve a reasonable settlement.

d. The President views this point in history with the utmost gravity, especially since he is eager to move into an era of conciliation with the Soviet Union on a broad front. He is willing to begin talks on strategic arms limitations. He has agreed not to threaten the status quo in Europe. He is willing to consider meetings at the highest levels.

e. However, the President believes that an acceptable settlement to the Vietnamese conflict is the key to everything. Therefore, concurrently, the President proposes to designate a high-level representative to meet with a North Vietnamese negotiator at any location, including Moscow, designated by the Soviet Union to seek agreement with a designated North Vietnamese negotiator on a military as well as a political settlement. The President visualizes that this negotiation would be conducted distinct from the existing Paris framework in order to avoid the sluggish and heretofore cumbersome mechanisms that have evolved in Paris.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 489, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1969, Part 2, Vol. I. Top Secret; Sensitive. An April 12 covering memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon stated: "Attached are the talking points I propose to use in discussions with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin Monday evening. These points lay out the main thrust of our proposal together with the conditions that we would attach to a settlement in principle of the conflict." Nixon initialed his approval on the covering memorandum and added the following insertion: "Willing to discuss broad *relaxation of trade* restrictions." An earlier draft prepared for Kissinger contained the following sentences not in the final version presented for Nixon's approval: "He will not be the first American President to lose a war, and he is not prepared to give in to public pressures which would have that practical consequence. . . . These measures could not help but involve wider risks. U.S.-Soviet relations are therefore at a crossroad. The President views this point in history with the utmost gravity, especially since he is eager to move into an era of conciliation with the Soviet Union on a broad front." (Ibid., Box 340, Subject Files, USSR Memcons Dobrynin/Kissinger) (Ellipsis in the source text)

f. The President will give this peace effort just six weeks to succeed. (*Handwritten insert by RN: "perhaps 2 months is more realistic."*)

g. The President will ask nothing of the Soviet Union inconsistent with its position as a senior communist power. He expects that nothing will be asked of the U.S. inconsistent with its world-wide obligations.

h. If this negotiation is successful, the President will conclude that the major danger to war is being removed and he would expect progress in many areas.

i. The President is prepared to repeat this proposition to the Soviet Ambassador personally if there is any interest in the Kremlin.

j. Our proposal to Hanoi will be conciliatory embracing both political and military measures for ending hostilities.

2. The object of the Vietnam negotiations would be as follows:

a. *Definition of Objective:* To reach prompt agreement with the North Vietnamese on the general shape of a political-military settlement, specifically:

(1) *Military*—Agreement that there will be mutual withdrawal of all external forces, and a ceasefire based on a mutual withdrawal.

(2) *Political*—(a) Agreement that guarantees the NLF freedom from reprisals and the right to participate fully in the political and social life of the country in exchange for agreement by NLF and DRV to forego further attempts to achieve their political objectives by force and violence, and (b) agreement that there will be a separate and independent SVN for at least five years.

(*Handwritten note by RN: "a date for new elections."*)

(3) *Mechanism for supervising and verifying the carrying out of the settlement.* The agreement with the DRV should not attempt to spell out the manner in which the general principles agreed to will be implemented. That should be left for Paris.

3. If the special U.S. and North Vietnamese negotiators can achieve an agreement in principle, the negotiations would shift back to Paris for final implementation. The whole process should be completed before the end of August. If the special talks prove unsuccessful, it is difficult to visualize the progress which we both seek and the outlook for improved U.S.-Soviet relations would be seriously jeopardized.

4. The President realizes that this proposal represents a most complex and difficult choice for all parties concerned, but because we are at a most significant crossroad, he is convinced that extraordinary measures are called for. Because they are extraordinary, he would anticipate that Ambassador Dobrynin would wish to discuss them in detail with his government.²

² "RN" appears on the approve line.

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

Washington, April 15, 1969.

SUBJECT

Memorandum of Conversation with Dobrynin April 14, 1969

After an exchange of pleasantries and a somewhat lengthy discussion of the Middle East (reported separately),² the discussion turned to Vietnam. I asked Dobrynin whether he had had any reaction from Moscow to our last conversation.³ He said he had not, but that he was aware of a conversation Zorin had had with Lodge.

I then said that the President had wished me to convey his thoughts on Vietnam to Moscow. We had followed the discussions in Paris with great interest and considerable patience. As Lodge had already pointed out to Zorin, it was very difficult to negotiate when the other side constantly accused us of insincerity, when every private meeting so far had been initiated by us, and when every proposition was put forward on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. The President had therefore decided to make one more direct approach on the highest level before drawing the conclusion that the war could only be ended by unilateral means. The President's personal word should be a guarantee of sincerity. After showing Dobrynin the talking points and the President's initials, I read them to him.⁴ He took copious notes, stopping every once in a while to ask for an explanation. When I said we wanted to have the negotiations concluded within two months, Dobrynin said that if this proposal was feasible at all, we would be able to tell after the first week of negotiations whether they would lead anywhere.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 489, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1969, Part 2, Vol. I. Secret; Nodis. A handwritten notation on the first page reads, "Back from the President, 4/16/69." On April 10, Kissinger and Dobrynin set up their April 14 meeting for 8:30 p.m. at Kissinger's house. According to a transcript of the telephone conversation, "Dobrynin ventured the guess that HAK must be very busy these days and HAK said this is a hectic period. HAK said last time they met they talked about getting together next week and asked what his schedule was—Dobrynin said 'give me a time and and I'll tell you.'" After scheduling their meeting, "HAK mentioned that he lives alone so can't offer Dobrynin dinner. Later in conversation Dobrynin said he would be delighted to see how bachelors live." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 359, Telephone Records, 1969–1976, Telephone Conversations, 1969)

² See Document 37.

³ See Document 32.

⁴ See Document 35.

When I got through, Dobrynin asked whether I was saying that unless the Vietnam war was settled, we would not continue our discussions on the Middle East and not enter the talks on strategic arms. I replied that we were prepared to continue talking but that we would take measures which might create a complicated situation.

Dobrynin said that whatever happens in Vietnam, the Soviet leaders were eager to continue talking. He then asked whether these new measures might involve Soviet ships. I replied that many measures were under intensive study. In dealing with the President, it was well to remember that he always did more than he threatened and that he never threatened idly.

Dobrynin then said he hoped we understand the limitations of Soviet influence in Hanoi. We had to understand that while the Soviet Union might recommend certain steps, it would never threaten to cut off supplies. He could tell me that the Soviet Union had been instrumental in helping to get the talks started. Moreover, Communist China was constantly accusing the Soviet Union of betraying Hanoi. The Soviet Union could not afford to appear at a Communist meeting and find itself accused of having undermined a fellow Socialist country. On the other hand, the Soviet Union had no strategic interest in Southeast Asia. The chief reasons for its support of North Vietnam have been the appeals of a fellow Socialist country. I could be sure that the President's proposal would be transmitted to Hanoi within 24 hours. Dobrynin added that often Soviet messages were never answered by Hanoi so he could not guarantee what the reply would be or indeed if there would be a reply.

Dobrynin then said that the North Vietnamese were using the following agreement with Moscow and he stressed that Moscow did not necessarily agree with it: The Saigon Government was composed of individuals committed to the destruction of the NLF. The NLF would not enter a political confrontation in which the administrative apparatus was in the hands of people who sought to destroy them. The NLF would not insist on participating in the Government but it would insist that the Government be broadened and that Thieu and Ky be removed. Dobrynin repeated that he was simply stating Hanoi's arguments, not endorsing them.

I replied that I was familiar with Hanoi's arguments since they were being made to us as well. Nevertheless, the best policy for the NLF would be to work out guarantees for its political participation *after* a settlement of the war. They would certainly find us forthcoming.

Dobrynin reiterated Moscow's desire to stay in negotiations with us whatever happened in Vietnam. He told me many anecdotes of Stalin as well as of Molotov. He added that the Soviet Union had intended to send Marshal Zhukov to Eisenhower's funeral but Zhukov

had recently had two strokes and was partially paralyzed. He then asked whether we understood that Communist China was attempting to produce a clash between the Soviet Union and the United States. If the war in Vietnam escalates, it would only service Communist China's interest. I replied that this was the precise point the President had tried to make to Kuznetsov on the occasion of the Eisenhower funeral. It was, therefore, incumbent on the Soviet Union to help us remove this danger. We felt that in this period, the great nuclear powers still have the possibility of making peace.

As he was preparing to leave, Dobrynin asked me whether he could read over the talking points once more. I handed them to him and he read them slowly and carefully. He departed saying "this has been a very important conversation."

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

Washington, April 15, 1969.

SUBJECT

Memorandum of Conversation with Dobrynin April 14, 1969

After an exchange of pleasantries, Dobrynin said that Moscow had asked him to talk to me about the situation in the Middle East. Moscow was prepared to come to an understanding on the Middle East as rapidly as possible. On the other hand, Moscow's feeling was that we were proceeding too abstractly. The principles put forward by Joseph Sisco were all very well, but the key issue was the location of the frontiers and other matters. He felt that we should put forward a proposal which would be kept in strictest confidence and the Soviet Union would see whether they could turn it into a joint offer to both sides. I replied that we did not want to be in a position where we had to make all the proposals, deliver all the parties and take all the criticism. Dobrynin said

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 489, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1969, Part 2, Vol. I. Secret; Nodis. A handwritten notation on the first page reads: "Back from the President, 4/16/69."

that the Soviet Union would do a great deal to make an agreement but “you have to be specific.” For example, the U.S. constantly asked for a contractual agreement. However, it had never stated what it understood by a contractual agreement. “Why don’t you write out a paragraph that tells us exactly what you want Nasser to say and if we agree with it, we will try to get them to accept it.” Similarly, he said it was impossible for the Soviet Union to know what we had in mind about troop withdrawals. The U.S. spoke of border rectification but we had given no indication of where the frontier was to be. He added that “the Soviet Union did not care about Golan Heights or the Gaza Strip. Indeed, whether the borders were 30 miles east or west is of no difference to us as long as both sides agree.” I told him that Sisco was likely to produce a scheme within the next two weeks. If it presented any difficult problems, I suggested Dobrynin get in touch with me.

We then turned to discussions on Vietnam.²

² See Document 36.

38. Memorandum From Harold Saunders of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 18, 1969.

SUBJECT

The Dobrynin–Sisco Talks

You asked for a short summary of each of the Sisco–Dobrynin talks.

On March 4, Dobrynin suggested the US–Soviet talks to Sisco. (Tab A)² Initial arrangements were made on March 8 by Secretary Rogers and Dobrynin. (Tab B)³

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 725, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Sisco–Dobrynin Talks, Part I, April 1969. Secret; Nodis.

² Attached but not printed at Tab A is telegram 33865 to Moscow, March 5.

³ Attached but not printed at Tab B is telegram 36425 to Moscow, March 8.

*First Meeting—March 18 (Tab C)*⁴

The meeting dealt mainly with points on which the US and USSR already agreed such as working for a lasting peace, no imposition of a settlement, achieving a settlement through Jarring, a package settlement, and an agreed settlement. There was some disagreement on whether the settlement would be agreed *by* or *between* the parties and on the method of setting borders and ensuring an Arab commitment to peace.

*Second Meeting—March 24 (Tab D)*⁵

Sisco tried to draw out Dobrynin on a contractual peace and Dobrynin tried to draw out Sisco on withdrawal. Sisco presented the US working paper to Dobrynin.

*Third Meeting—March 25 (Tab E)*⁶

Sisco explained the US working paper in detail.

*Fourth Meeting—March 26 (Tab F)*⁷

Dobrynin discussed Soviet ideas on withdrawal and recognized the need for a package settlement. He suggested a system of declarations and phased withdrawal. He also asked some questions about the US working paper which he found somewhat one-sided.

⁴ Attached but not printed at Tab C is telegram 4215 to Moscow, March 19. On March 19, Sisco spoke twice on the telephone with Kissinger about his meeting the day before with Dobrynin. According to a transcript of the 12:45 p.m. conversation between Kissinger and Sisco, "K asked how meeting with Dobrynin had gone—S said it is a beginning and once K has seen cable, he would like his reactions." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 359, Telephone Records, 1969–1976, Telephone Conversations, 1969) At 3:50 p.m. the same afternoon, after Kissinger returned from seeing Dobrynin at a luncheon for the Czech Ambassador, Kissinger and Sisco spoke again on the telephone. According to a transcript of their conversation, "K said he had given Dobrynin no comfort at all but said whatever S did had his full backing." Kissinger and Sisco then discussed Middle Eastern issues in general terms. Before hanging up, "S said we have to keep telling Dobrynin what it is we want and in every meeting with him S will hit the same theme. S said it was a very interesting discussion but he doesn't expect any quick results." (Ibid.)

⁵ Attached but not printed at Tab D is telegram 46143 to Moscow, March 25.

⁶ Attached but not printed at Tab E is telegram 46317 to Moscow, March 26.

⁷ Attached but not printed at Tab F is telegram 47123 to Moscow, March 27. On March 26, at 5:45 p.m., Sisco and Kissinger spoke on the telephone about the former's session earlier that day with Dobrynin. According to a transcript of their conversation, "S said this procedure will go on another couple of weeks then we will have to face decision—do we really then try to develop a more detailed 'plan' which we would try out on Israelis and then try out on Russians. K asked what S thought. S said he did not want to make any judgments—told K to think about it." Sisco also told Kissinger that he hoped they could find at least 30 minutes each week to talk about the Middle East. Kissinger promised that he would have his secretary set aside the time. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 359, Telephone Records, 1969–1976, Telephone Conversations, 1969)

*Fifth Meeting—April 2 (Tab G)*⁸

In answer to Dobrynin's questions of the previous meeting, Sisco discussed US ideas on special arrangements for Sharm el Shaykh and Gaza, demilitarization, Jerusalem and a peace treaty.

*Sixth Meeting—April 3 (Tab H)*⁹

Dobrynin said the USSR wants a permanent peace, asked about the talks with Fawzi,¹⁰ agreed that Arab and Israeli positions are hardening, and said the USSR has no interest in giving guarantees as part of the peace settlement. Sisco—speaking personally—thought it might be possible to work out a practical US-Soviet plan.

*Seventh Meeting—April 11 (Tab I)*¹¹

Sisco, again speaking personally, suggested that the US-Soviet talks be directed towards working out a preliminary US-Soviet agreement to be given to Jarring for the parties. Dobrynin again pressed for a clear US statement on withdrawal. They met again yesterday. I will give you a more detailed report on that meeting when we have the full record. But Dobrynin did seem to commit himself to the idea of a single document—in contrast to the earlier idea of parallel documents—such as the Israelis want.

*Eighth Meeting—April 17 (Tab J)*¹²

Hal's memorandum reviewing this latest meeting is at Tab J.

*Ninth Meeting—April 22 (Tab K)*¹³

Memorandum reviewing this meeting is at Tab K.

⁸ Attached but not printed at Tab G is telegram 50983 to Moscow, April 3.

⁹ Attached but not printed at Tab H is telegram 51229 to Moscow, April 3.

¹⁰ The morning of April 3, Rogers met with Dr. Mahmoud Fawzi, Nasser's adviser on foreign affairs. According to telegram 51229 to Moscow, "Sisco said two principal topics [were] touched upon: (a) UAR desire to have Four Powers move ahead; and (b) indication that current UAR reaction to US working paper not as negative as public statement by Nasser on March 27."

¹¹ Attached but not printed at Tab I is telegram 56630 to Moscow, April 13.

¹² Tab J is telegram 59898 to Moscow, April 18, summarizing the eighth meeting. Also attached but not printed is telegram 59897 to Moscow, April 18, which lists U.S. questions about the Soviet note on the Middle East of December 30, 1968; Soviet replies of April 17, 1969, to those U.S. questions; and Soviet questions of April 17 about the U.S. interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967.

¹³ Attached at Tab K but not printed is telegram 62563 to Moscow, April 28, summarizing the ninth meeting. After this paragraph, Lawrence Eagleburger handwrote, "Tenth meeting being summarized. I'll bring it to K[ey] B[iscayne] on Friday." The summary of the meeting has not been found.

Tab J

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

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

Latest Sisco–Dobrynin Conversation (April 17)

Sisco's April 17 discussion with Dobrynin was a concrete step forward, in contrast to the more nebulous exchanges in the past few meetings.

Dobrynin dropped the general discussion of the main elements of the UN resolution and came in with written answers to some of our earlier questions, indicating that they represented a decision made at the highest level of the Soviet government. In return, Dobrynin presented five written Soviet questions to us.

An analysis of the Soviet answers suggests some shifts in the Soviet position:

1. More important, the Soviets seem to be talking for the first time about a *single document* as the instrument for recording the final agreement. [Holding this out to the Israelis would make our job a little easier with them.]¹⁴

2. They seem to recognize the need to address *such issues as boycotts and blockades* in defining obligations. [These are the sorts of issues Eban addresses when he spells out what would be required if belligerency were terminated.]

3. They state flatly that they are not talking of "some kind of truce but of a *complete cessation of the state of war* and the settlement of all questions connected therewith." [This is less than the commitment to "peace" Israel wants but it also looks like less than an effort to leave loopholes for later aggression against Israel.]

On the negative side, the Soviet answers specifically advise against raising the question of direct negotiations. We have been thinking that being able to provide a meeting under Jarring would make it easier for us to bring the Israelis along. They also envision smaller DMZ's than we do.

¹⁴ Brackets in this and following two paragraphs are in the source text.

The Soviet questions try to pin us down on how much negotiating room we plan to leave the Israelis on where the boundaries are drawn, on what kinds of international guarantees we have in mind and on our specific ideas about Gaza, Sharm al-Shaykh and refugees.

Conclusions: The Soviets continue to move in our direction on procedural issues. This helps because these are important to Israel. The Soviets may be a lot tougher when we try to enlarge their view of DMZ's or discuss what will amount to infringements or UAR sovereignty to police demilitarization or free navigation. In any case, we do seem now to be in a reasonable negotiation with the full engagement of the top echelons in the Kremlin.

Tab K

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

Washington, April 23, 1969.

SUBJECT

Sisco–Dobrynin Meeting on April 22

The latest Sisco–Dobrynin meeting was probably the least productive of the series, mainly because both were waiting for the decision on making our position more specific.

Joe opened the meeting by expressing concern at the firefights on the Suez Canal. He told Dobrynin we would discuss the matter with Israel and asked if the Soviets were prepared to talk to the Egyptians. Dobrynin hedged, but said he would take note of U.S. concern.

Most of the meeting was taken up by replies to questions Dobrynin had asked at the previous meeting. Before replying, Joe explained that his answers would not go beyond what we had said before but are not our last word. We were considering these questions in connection with a possible substantive document.

He made the following points, which you know by heart, in the answers:

1. We feel that the parties should accept the resolution and implement all its provisions. We put the emphasis on agreement between the parties.
2. We see two kinds of guarantees of a settlement. We feel that arrangements on the ground such as demilitarized zones are the most

important, and that outside guarantees should be supplementary and cannot take the place of agreements between the parties.

3. We have reached no definite conclusion about the future of Gaza.

4. A refugee settlement must respond to the requirements for justice for the refugees, but must also take into account Israeli security concerns. Each refugee should have a choice among (1) returning to Israel to live under Israeli law, (2) compensation and resettlement in the country where he now resides, and (3) compensation and resettlement in other countries. Refugees from the 1967 war would return home. We feel that not many refugees would choose to live in Israel. We have no definite conclusions on the machinery to implement this plan.

5. Sharm al-Shaykh is important because of its location and is a difficult problem because the Israelis are unwilling to trust anyone else with keeping the Straits of Tiran open, and the UAR will not accept an Israeli presence there. We feel this has to be worked out by the parties, but are not ruling out any solution.

Because neither side was ready to add anything more, the date of the next meeting was left open.

You should be aware that State has informed the British Embassy of the possibility of a joint Soviet-U.S. paper on the Near East. It was necessary to do so to lessen British pressure for raising the idea of a multilateral document soon in the four-power talks. The British feel that this knowledge will allow the Foreign Office to slow the pace in New York.

Comment: We have exhausted the Sisco–Dobrynin channel unless we can come up with something more specific to say to the Soviets.

39. Oral Statements by the Ambassador to the Soviet Union (Beam)¹

Moscow, April 22, 1969.

Oral Statements Made by Ambassador Jacob D. Beam to Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin April 22, 1969²

1. In handing over his written message the President has asked me to say that his purpose was to set forth his general approach to our relations. Explorations and negotiations on the specific issues should, he feels, be carried on through our Ambassadors and other representatives, as the case may be, rather than through formal written communications. He would like to keep our contacts as confidential as possible and feels that written messages may reduce our flexibility in dealing with complex and sensitive issues. This does not of course exclude our reducing to writing any understandings reached.

2. With regard to the Middle East, we share your assessment that our bilateral talks in Washington have brought our views somewhat closer. We see these talks as a vehicle for helping the parties to narrow the differences between them. We hope therefore that these talks as well as the wider discussions in New York will provide useful support to Ambassador Jarring in his further efforts with the parties. The President is mindful of the fact that Soviet flexibility is limited by your relations with the Arab countries, just as our own position must take into account the interests of the countries involved. However both of us

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL US–USSR. Secret; Nodis. These oral statements by Beam were an enclosure to airgram A–446 from Moscow, April 23. In transmitting his oral statements, Beam wrote: “It will be noted that since the question of a ‘summit meeting’ did not arise, I did not use the pertinent portion of the original instruction furnished me under cover of Mr. Henry Kissinger’s transmission slip of March 26.” For Kissinger’s memorandum, see footnote 1, Document 28.

² On April 21, the day before Beam’s meeting with Kosygin, Sonnenfeldt sent Kissinger a memorandum with the subject: “Ambassador Beam Requests Updating of Instructions for Use in Conversation with Kosygin.” Sonnenfeldt attached telegram 168 from Moscow in which Beam asked whether his instruction should be updated on the Middle East and NPT. Sonnenfeldt’s memorandum added the following: “In his conversation with Podgorny, Beam stated that ‘on the vital questions of disarmament we were undertaking a basic review which we hoped would enable us in a few weeks to make contact with the Soviets.’ I do not know of any basis for such a statement in any of the Ambassador’s instructions of which I have knowledge.” Kissinger handwrote the following at the bottom of this memorandum, which was later crossed out: “I never saw Podgorny cable. This is the sort of cable I should see. There is no basis for this statement.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 709, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. I) No record of Beam’s telegram reporting his conversation with Podgorny has been found.

must be prepared to accept certain burdens if negotiations are to succeed. The President continues to hope that progress toward a viable settlement will improve chances of placing restraints on outside military assistance to countries of the region; indeed, the President remains ready to discuss such restraints even under present circumstances.

3. With regard to Vietnam, the President recognizes the sensitivity of the Soviet position due to your relations with China and your position in the communist movement. We have no intention to exploit whatever constructive influence the Soviets may be able to exert on Hanoi for any other purpose than the establishment of peace.

4. The United States Government was appreciative of efforts by Soviet vessels in the Sea of Japan in searching for possible survivors of our aircraft which was shot down by the North Koreans.³ The shoot-down of our aircraft is only the most recent example of developments in the area which lead to increased tension and which must be a source of concern to the Soviet Government as well as to us. We hope the Soviet Union will do what it can to restrain the North Koreans from such irresponsible acts since we believe it to be in our mutual interest to avoid further exacerbation of tension in the area.

5. More specifically on China, we have been concerned by the deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations. We have no interest in seeing these two countries in conflict and certainly have no intention to exploit their present difficulties. We do hope over the long run to achieve some normalization in our relations with China and were disappointed by the aborting of the Warsaw talks. If these talks resume, or other contacts eventuate with the Chinese, we will continue, as did the previous Administration, to keep the Soviets informed.

6. As regards Berlin and Germany, we would welcome any improvement in Soviet-German relations. We think German signature of

³ On April 14, a North Korean aircraft shot down a U.S. Navy EC-121 of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron One over the Sea of Japan. The North Koreans claimed that the U.S. plane had violated its air space, had attempted to escape, and was then shot down approximately 80 miles at sea. On April 15, Rogers and Kissinger spoke on the telephone about registering some type of diplomatic protest over the EC-121 shootdown. According to a transcript of their conversation, "R said he was going to have Dobrynin in at 12:00. K said President does not want any protest to anyone. R said he was not going to protest—he wanted to talk to Dobrynin about helping to save the men." Kissinger added that he "thinks the President is inclined to play this in low key and to say nothing to anyone until we know where we are headed." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Telephone Records, Box 359, 1969–1976, Telephone Conversations, 1969)

On April 17, at 9:25 a.m., Nixon and Kissinger spoke on the telephone about the shootdown. According to a transcript of their conversation, "President and K discussed idea of formal protest—decided should not be done with Soviets." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 434, Korea, EC-121 shootdown, North Korea Reconnaissance, Vol. II, Haig)

the Non-Proliferation Treaty will assist this and we hope that the Soviets will be able to give Chancellor Kiesinger any help you may consider feasible to enable him to get the treaty adopted. Meanwhile as we have told Ambassador Dobrynin and Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov in Washington, we believe early completion of the ratification process by the major nuclear powers, including simultaneous deposit of instruments of ratification, would be helpful in bringing about the widest possible endorsement of the treaty which we both seek. On Berlin, we are prepared to examine any way to improve the present unsatisfactory situation, and the President believes from his recent talks with the Germans that they are prepared to do so too. But this cannot be done under pressure. Perhaps some quiet exchanges would show the way.

7. On strategic arms talks, it should be stressed that we are not deliberately stalling; we are seriously reviewing our position, something the President feels he is obligated to do as head of the new Administration. We are not setting pre-conditions. But we want the talks to succeed once they begin and for that reason we feel that prospects for progress will be better in the context of generally improved US-Soviet relations. If you have some substantive ideas to convey to the President through me, he would be interested.

8. The President has asked me to inform you that he has given instructions to the members of the Administration to avoid harsh words about the USSR. The President will, of course, state our views but he sees nothing gained by "shouting." At the same time the residue of suspicion of the USSR remains in the US and events like those in Czechoslovakia had a profound shock effect. We should cooperate to preserve the present low key in our discourse with and about each other.

9. We believe our relations will improve as we gain a better understanding of each others' aspirations, problems, and concerns. It is for this reason that the United States Government strongly supports a free flow of information and ideas between our two peoples. We would hope that we could work toward this objective by expanding by mutual agreement the exchange program which we have carried on for a number of years. Both sides should do what they can to remove existing barriers to the free flow of information and in this connection it is our hope that in due time the Soviet authorities will find it possible to cease jamming the Voice of America which was reimposed after the events of last summer.

10. The President has asked me to say that he fully understands your concern for your security and your desire to have friendly countries on your borders. We have no wish to complicate your relations with your neighbors, communist or otherwise. It is the President's judgment—he has been seeking to act on that judgment in our relations

with our allies—that the maintenance of a hegemonial relationship by a great power over less powerful countries is self-defeating. It is the President's feeling, without attempting to give you advice, that this judgment applies to your situation as well. We will applaud whatever you can do to achieve normal, friendly relations with all your neighbors.

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

Moscow, April 22, 1969, 1610Z.

1693. Subject: Delivery of President's Letter to Kosygin. Ref: State 061671.²

1. Accompanied by DCM Swank, I was received by Chairman Kosygin for a one hour forty minute talk this afternoon at three P.M. when I delivered to him the President's letter of March 26.³ In order to facilitate translation I had earlier in the day given Kornienko of Fon-Min who was present at the talk a copy of the President's letter as well as a full version of the President's instructions for my oral presentation.⁴ Kosygin said he had been unable to read the letter because of his preoccupation with current CEMA meeting. He was nevertheless probably acquainted with its contents since translations were on his desk. Wishing doubtless to reserve his considered reply he confined himself to stating the Soviet view which was particularly rough on the South Vietnamese Govt. I responded on a number of points with citations from the President's letter.

2. In welcoming me as Ambassador of "a great country" Kosygin noted that Soviet people are in general well disposed to American people, esteem their science and technology, and respect them. He observed that our relations have had their ups and downs but that despite accumulated and inherited difficulties he hoped for close cooperation with US and improved relations.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL US–USSR. Secret; Nodis. Beam's description of his meeting with Kosygin on April 22 is in *Multiple Exposure*, pp. 219–220.

² Telegram 61671 to Moscow, April 2, provided instructions for Beam's oral presentation to Kosygin. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1967–69, POL US–USSR)

³ Document 28.

⁴ See Document 39.

3. In concurring with these remarks, I noted that differences in our economic organization and social systems are likely to persist but that it is nevertheless in our mutual interest to limit dangers of world in which we live. I observed that President Nixon is a close student of international affairs and is especially interested in the USSR. I also noted that the President desires we engage in continuing and rational talks about bilateral and world problems through all feasible channels, including possibly reciprocal visits of important officials. I said that as stressed in President's letter we are interested in having productive and practical discussions on concrete problems and are hopeful that this approach to our relations will bring positive results.

4. Kosygin said that he would be preoccupied for several days with the CEMA summit meeting, which he described as a "search for ways to achieve improved economic cooperation" among Socialist countries. He also commented in passing that "contrary to reports in Western press" this meeting is totally unrelated to the "Chinese question."

5. Kosygin then stated that he hoped our two governments could find constructive solutions to outstanding problems in a businesslike atmosphere free of sensationalism. He said he thought it might be wise to identify problems to which we should seek solutions, and he then brought up in turn NPT, Middle East, Vietnam and Europe.

6. On NPT, Kosygin observed that treaty represents a joint effort which should now be brought to a conclusion. He suggested that we concert efforts to see that "certain countries" do not interfere with realization of objectives of treaty. I observed that if all three nuclear powers do not ratify treaty it may prove impossible to induce signature and ratification by other powers. Kosygin did not react to this remark nor did he indicate attitude of SovGov to our proposal for joint ratification.

7. On Middle East, Kosygin said vigorously that USSR desires "greatly" to cooperate with US in reaching a settlement. He commented that by "uniting our strengths" we could achieve such a settlement. He said that he would not go into detail on this subject but wished to observe that aggressors should be punished, not encouraged. He also referred to circles in United States who seek an "unbalanced" (that is, a pro-Israel) solution. In my answering remarks, I said that President Nixon believes both our countries must be willing to accept burdens of bringing peace to area. I also noted that we have been encouraged by talks now underway and hope they will eventually assist Jarring's mission.

8. Kosygin expressed himself at greater length and with most vehemence on subject of Vietnam. Emphasizing that he speaking for himself and not on behalf of Hanoi. His main target was the Thieu gov't, which he repeatedly characterized as a corrupt puppet regime lacking popular support, dictatorial in character and unrepresentative of

people of South Vietnam. He criticized lack of progress in Paris talks, comparing them to unfruitful US-Chinese talks in Warsaw and referring somewhat sardonically to “formal” proceedings which had not yet got to heart of matter. He said that Soviet policy is still directed to objective of stopping the war and added that he is convinced this is also objective of Vietnamese. He said he was also prepared accept judgment that US shares this objective. It was therefore imperative for progress to be made toward a settlement since another interested power, and he mentioned China by name, could potentially use its influence against a settlement and in manner to increase tensions throughout Southeast Asia. He stressed that those interested in reaching a settlement must seek some practical “informal” approach to problem but admitted that he could not now identify such an approach.

9. In my response I remarked that I regretted to note that our interpretations of situation in Vietnam were so far apart. I stated that the Republic of Vietnam has a democratic strong govt with substantial international recognition. I also read aloud to Kosygin portion of President’s letter stressing his desire to achieve peace and his hope that Soviet influence can be brought to bear to this end. (It is obvious that Kosygin’s remarks offer little new on subject of Vietnam, but is equally apparent that he is concerned that talks in Paris are not making progress and that he views Chinese role in area as both unpredictable and sinister.)

10. On Europe, Kosygin said he wished to confine himself to a brief restatement on Soviet position. He asserted that the USSR seeks to avoid tension in area, citing recent diminution of tensions in Berlin, but emphasized SovGov absolutely firm in position that it will not tolerate any revision of “results of World War II.” He called Soviet obligations in this respect “sacred.” I said that I would not address myself to European questions since I believed President’s letter covered subject adequately.

11. In conclusion, Kosygin asked me to transmit to President interim message that Soviet leaders wish to establish relations with United States on a basis of honesty and realism. He said that Soviet leaders believe it important that Soviet and American peoples achieve satisfaction of knowing that they are not threatened by the other. Each side possesses an enormous arsenal. In our approach to mutual relations there is no room for insincerity. He asked me to extend personal greetings to the President and to tell him that in due course he will answer his letter, which he would also of course share with Brezhnev, Podgorny and entire leadership. He said he regretted he had been unable to receive me immediately following my presentation of credentials but press of business had interfered.

12. Although I can hardly report that Kosygin has as yet made much movement away from standard Soviet positions, he was inter-

ested and serious in reciprocating the President's approach to negotiation. He was genial throughout and laughed when I told him I could have made his day brighter by describing at great length the South Vietnam Government's growing achievements.

13. We are informed that Soviet media will confine publicity of meeting to usual brief statement that I was received at my request and that conversation touched on questions of mutual interest. We do not plan to go beyond that in comments to press here.

Beam