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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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September 29, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT'S FILE
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*
SUBJECT: President Nixon's Meeting with USSR Foreign Minister Gromyko on September 29, 1971 from 3:00 p.m. to 4:40 p.m. in the Oval Office of the White House (List of participants is attached)

The President opened the conversation by noting that it had been one year since he had last met with the Foreign Minister. Since that time some progress had been achieved in a number of fields, notably in the Berlin problem and in some aspects of arms control. The President thought it would be very useful to get Mr. Gromyko's evaluation of where we stood and what needed to be done now. He would also give the Minister his ideas in order to see how we could get things moving.

Foreign Minister Gromyko suggested that the discussion follow the lines of their talk last year, i. e., that one question after another be taken up with each side expressing their respective views and positions on that question before going on to the next. President Nixon agreed to this procedure.

Mr. Gromyko said that first of all he wanted to carry out the pleasant task of conveying to the President the personal regards of the Soviet leadership, Mr. Brezhnev, Mr. Kosygin and Mr. Podgorny.

Bilateral Relations

The first question he proposed to touch upon was that of bilateral relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. Although the Soviet Government had repeatedly set forth its views and positions, Mr. Gromyko believed it would be useful to restate them at this time in a general manner. The Soviet Government understood that the relations between our two countries were of a very complex nature. There were a number of issues on which the two countries did not see eye to eye. These were related to bilateral relations proper, but also included many others which, in fact, could not be separated from bilateral relations. The main thing he wanted to emphasize in this talk was that the leadership of his country and the Soviet

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

- 2 -

Government were ready to seek for ways of overcoming these difficulties in our relations, wherever they could be overcome. His government was ready to build its relations with the United States on the basis of the principle of peaceful coexistence, at the same time being fully aware that on certain issues it would be very difficult indeed to find common language and an identity of views. However, even where this would prove to be impossible, the Soviet Government would like to avoid a collision between our countries or, as the President had frequently called it, a confrontation. Our relations should be conducted in such a way that the absence of agreement on certain issues not create obstacles for agreement on those issues which could be resolved between us. Referring to the present state of relations between our countries, Mr. Gromyko said that the President was surely aware that there were differences between our respective positions in regard to a number of problems. However, he could see that during the year since their last meeting certain signs of a softening in our relations had appeared and the Soviet Government considered this to be a positive factor, although this was true with respect to certain specific problems only. Speaking concretely on this score, he wanted to note the agreement between the four powers in regard to West Berlin. He well remembered his conversation with the President on this subject last year, when the President had expressed certain ideas on West Berlin. He wanted to say that the Soviet leadership was gratified to note that the United States, the U. S. Government and the President personally had made positive contributions to make it possible to reach agreement on this question. There were also certain signs, and some of them were perhaps only barely discernible, that the economic ties between our two countries were also developing favorably. On this topic, however, Gromyko preferred not to go into detail, except to state plainly that the position of the U. S. Government in this regard was not quite clear to the Soviet side. It would be a good thing if the President could make some comments on this subject, being aware, Mr. Gromyko hoped, of its full significance for the relations between our two countries.

In summary Mr. Gromyko said he wanted to restate on behalf of his leadership and his government that his country had been and was in favor of peace, including peace with the United States. The Soviet Union did not want a war since war was alien to its short-term and long-term interests and was incompatible with the basic principles on which the Soviet system was founded. They wanted relations with the United States to be peaceful relations and understood completely how important it was for world peace that the United States and the Soviet Union reach as many common positions on outstanding world problems as possible. This was a great responsibility which our two countries shared with each other and with other countries, but his government was resolute in advocating cooperation in the interests of a

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

more lasting peace. It would be good if the time were to come, and the sooner the better, when our two sides could truly say that the relations between our countries were friendly in the fullest meaning of this word. This would require, however, that both countries conduct a policy leading in this direction. Mr. Gromyko ended by saying that he would be pleased to hear the President's view on U. S. relations with the Soviet Union as he saw them, as well as his assessment of future prospects for these bilateral relations.

Referring to the specific matter of Berlin, the President said that this was perhaps the most significant development that had occurred, particularly in view of the fact that this was such a delicate and sensitive issue to both powers, to the other European countries and to the Germans themselves. He believed that the fact that this problem could be worked out was an indication that difficulties in other areas could also be reduced. Regarding the Foreign Minister's remarks on the need for peaceful relations between our two countries, we were always expected to say that and the President noted with great interest the statements on that subject made by Mr. Brezhnev. However, it was the reality of what we were doing that was important. On the importance of peace between our countries we could, by way of an example, say that we wanted peace with Bolivia, but whether or not our relations with Bolivia were peaceful would not affect world peace. We were not likely to say so outside of this room, but we did believe that world peace depended primarily upon the relations between our two countries. Therefore, the President would give the highest priority to conversations such as this and to others, with Ambassador Dobrynin for example, in which we tried to resolve differences between us. With reference to trade, the Foreign Minister would recall that last year the President had said this was an area where there were great possibilities for progress. Just this week he had approved the \$200 million Kama River project, a sum that brought the total up to \$400 million. It was his view that trade was in the interests of both our countries and when we made efforts to expand it, we were really acting in our own selfish interest. American businessmen were interested in greater trade between us and indeed, this was an area where reduced tensions between us would pay the greatest dividends. It was something that the Soviet side wanted and so did we. The Minister would find us receptive to any initiative in this respect.

SALT

Naturally, there were other outstanding problems between us. A matter coming to mind immediately was the SALT negotiation, where we had taken

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

- 4 -

a significant step which, however, did not represent the major resolution we were looking for. The President said that we believed that our joint announcement of May 20 had been received everywhere as a hopeful sign that the leadership of our two countries had resolved to reach agreement on a freeze of both offensive and defensive weapons. We recognized that this was a most important matter for both of us since the negotiations dealt with basic questions of our respective security. Without going into detail, the President wanted to say that it was our position on the defensive side that we had presented what we believed to be a fair proposition. Without going into intricacies, as we saw things, on the offensive side the Soviet Union would have an advantage of about 500 land-based missiles. Thus it could be seen that what we were proposing on the defensive side was a reasonable proposal. It would not be reasonable for the United States to agree that we freeze an offensive advantage for the Soviet Union while achieving equality only on the defensive side. This would be severely criticized by our public and in Congress. He did not expect the Foreign Minister to respond at this time, but he wanted to say that this was the very heart of the problem and he hoped that it could be explored. We still felt that progress at SALT was most important. The Soviet Union had continued to build up offensive armaments and we were not objecting to that, recognizing that we would do the same in a similar situation. On the other hand, if we could not work out an agreement, as Ambassador Dobrynin could confirm, there were many people in this country, many in the President's own party, who would advocate resuming a build-up of offensive armaments on our side. Thus it was in our interests and in the interests of the Soviet Union to seek an agreement that would not give a decisive advantage to either of us. Both of us should consider reaching an agreement that would provide sufficiency for each. These were the general comments he wanted to make in regard to this question.

Mr. Gromyko wanted to emphasize great importance that the Soviet Union attached to the negotiations on limitation of both offensive and defensive armaments. In this connection, he also wanted to note that the strategic arms limitation talks had provided the impetus for those agreements which were going to be signed tomorrow as a byproduct of SALT. Without SALT these agreements would not have been possible except at a much later date perhaps. On the real subject matter of the negotiations he wanted to emphasize the seriousness of the position and intentions of the Soviet side. Mr. Gromyko wanted to draw the President's attention to the last proposal on ABM's which had been tabled by the Soviet Government. He did not know whether it had been studied in great detail by the U. S. Government and by the President himself, but it seemed to him that it should provide a basis for agreement. The Soviet proposal was not bad as proposals go.

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

- 5 -

It provided for the defense of national capitals and one ICBM location for each side, with the proviso that the United States would choose its ICBM location to be defended and the Soviet Union would defend a commensurate number of ICBM silos in the Soviet Union. As for offensive strategic armaments, not only did the Soviet Union not oppose their limitation; the President had been right when he had said that we should proceed to consider certain steps towards their limitation, and at the next phase of SALT it will be necessary to enter upon concrete discussion of this problem. The Soviet Union wanted both sides to continue negotiations and the Soviet side was no less resolved now and would remain resolved to bring about their success to the extent possible. In this connection, Mr. Gromyko had noted the statement of Mr. Schumann, Foreign Minister of France, at the General Assembly yesterday. As he understood this statement, it meant that France would support the objectives pursued by our two countries in regard to limitation of strategic offensive and defensive armaments. It had sounded to him as if France would join in at least as to the substance of the tasks and objectives pursued at the negotiations.

Unless the President had something further on bilateral arrangements, Mr. Gromyko said he would like to say a few words regarding problems in Europe.

On the subject of SALT, the President wanted to add that what Mr. Gromyko had said demonstrated the reason why we must look at the whole package. If we were to separate out defensive armaments only, that would be fine if that were all we were talking about. However, if we found inequality on the offensive side, this would make the whole agreement difficult. The President emphasized that we needed to come up with a solution that could not be viewed as freezing inequality on one side and equality on the other.

Mr. Gromyko said he could only repeat that the Soviet Union was not making such a distinction. At the next phase of SALT we would be able to discuss both sides more completely in the interests of finding a solution in this field.

The President said that the interest of both our countries in reaching agreement on strategic armaments was demonstrated by the fact that the United States had frozen the number of its offensive weapons some time ago, yet hardly a day went by that we did not receive reports of an increasing build-up in the Soviet Union. He did not mean to raise objections in this regard since the Soviet actions were based upon evaluations of its own security, but it was necessary to realize that neither the Soviet Union nor the United States would let either side get an advantage. Thus the time now was ripe for reaching an appropriate agreement.

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

- 6 -

Secretary Rogers explained that one difficulty we had with the latest Soviet proposal was the fact that it provided for an additional build-up of armaments on each side. Since our objective was limitation, such a proposal would not be viewed as limitation in fact.

Ambassador Dobrynin pointed out that the last Soviet proposal was designed to provide a compromise acceptable to both sides. The Soviet Union was basically in favor of limiting ABM defenses to protection of national capitals, but since the United States had considered it important to defend ICBM's, the latest proposal had been designed to find a solution acceptable to both sides.

The President said we could not decide this issue here, but we believe that we have presented a position as forthcoming as we could be and, in view of the high stakes involved, we would continue negotiations.

Mr. Gromyko said that evidently both sides would have to take stock and analyze the results of the negotiations to date, and also map out their respective positions for the next phase of the negotiations. He repeated that it was his government's belief that at the next phase of SALT it would be necessary thoroughly to discuss the second aspect of limitation as well, in order to try and find mutually acceptable common language.

European Security Conference

On the subject of the situation in Europe, Mr. Gromyko said that he could speak a great deal and at great length. Above all he wanted to emphasize the utmost importance his government attached to the situation in Europe. The Soviet Union wanted conditions there to improve rather than deteriorate and wanted tensions reduced rather than increased. He believed that the agreement on Berlin signed recently created better conditions for such improvement. He stressed the need to convene an all-European conference on security. He recalled that last year when he and the President had exchanged views on this subject, the President's attitude had not been negative; however, he also recalled that the President and some other people had taken the point of view that progress on the West Berlin problem was what was needed as a first step. In this connection he had taken note of Secretary Rogers' remarks the other day that more favorable conditions had now appeared for convening an all-European security conference. He hoped that the Government of the United States would not take a more definite stand in favor of this conference, and just as he had done last year, he would like to emphasize again that in calling for such an all-European conference the Soviet Union was not looking for any unilateral advantage. His government believes that a conference of that type would be useful for all European countries as well as for the United States and Canada as prospective participants in this conference. He was saying this because the President, also, had repeatedly said that he advocated a relaxation

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

- 7 -

of tensions throughout the world in general and in Europe in particular. He would like to hear the President's views on this score.

The President said that the Foreign Minister had been correct in indicating that now that we had made progress on the Berlin problem, we could look more favorably upon consideration of other European questions on which we might make some progress. He believed that once the Berlin situation had been completely resolved, and he understood that there were still some actions that needed to be taken for that purpose, then exploration of a conference could proceed. He felt that on this subject it would be very important for the two major powers to have preliminary discussions before conferring with our respective friends in NATO and in the Warsaw Pact. By this he did not mean that we would not consult with our friends, but for the two powers to participate in a conference without knowing how we would come out of it would not be realistic. He believed that after the Berlin matter had been settled completely we should on a very confidential basis discuss between us what such a conference would mean and what we expected to come out of it. Of course, neither one of us should act without consulting and agreeing with our friends, but if we were simply to proceed to hold a big conference, it might turn out to be something like a United Nations gathering.

Secretary Rogers said that Mr. Gromyko had the other day suggested convening a preliminary meeting for the purpose of planning a conference on European security. The Secretary had replied that such a preliminary meeting was likely itself to take on the character of a conference. If we were to do any preliminary preparatory work, it would have to be done on a private basis between our two countries. As the President had said, we needed to have some idea of the possible outcome of such a conference.

Mr. Gromyko inquired whether he had understood correctly that what the President had in mind were bilateral consultations on a bloc basis between NATO and the Warsaw Pact powers. The Soviet Union was ready to enter upon consultations of some aspects of this conference, its preparation and its possible outcome. He asked whether upon his return to Moscow he could report to his government that the U. S. Government was, in principle, in favor of convening a European conference. If so, the Soviet Union would be ready to proceed to discuss the questions of procedures, agenda, place and time, and this could be done without any further delay. He had in mind that preliminary consultations would be held for these purposes in the immediate future and that the conference would be convened next year. He asked whether he could report this as being the President's view when he

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

returned to Moscow or whether the President would care to clarify the U. S. position further.

The President said that he would prefer for the Foreign Minister to report the following: The United States would be willing to discuss the setting up of a European security conference provided that our discussions would indicate that such a conference would serve a useful purpose which we would proceed to implement. When he had spoken of bilateral consultations, he was not referring to anything formal -- he had had in mind some private conversations between our two countries that would answer some questions in our mind and some in the mind of the Soviet side. He believed Mr. Gromyko could report to Moscow that now, that we had moved on Berlin, we should begin some preliminary discussions of this matter with the purpose of holding a conference that both sides would agree would serve a useful purpose. He was certain that neither side wanted to hold a conference just for the sake of the conference itself.

Secretary Rogers remarked that the discussions between the two Germanies were not as yet complete. The President noted that he had intended to qualify his remarks by saying "When the Berlin thing was wrapped up." Secretary Rogers expressed the hope that the German negotiations would proceed without difficulty.

Mr. Gromyko said that, in principle, he believed that the fewer conditions were set for convening the conference, the better. It was his feeling that if everything was lumped into one knot, this would complicate matters and lead us astray: Was he correct in understanding that the President had said that the United States would be ready to proceed to preliminary consultations without publicity and in the near future?

The President believed that in terms of preliminary private talks that was something we could do. However, he believed it important that in no circumstances any indication be given of a fait accompli. He did not want to create the impression that today, at this meeting, we had decided that such a conference would be convened. We should rather confine ourselves to saying that discussions could take place that would lead to a conference. As Secretary Rogers had said, getting the rest of the German question out of the way was most important before anything surfaced. It was this surfacing problem that was predominant. Mr. Gromyko inquired again whether the U. S. would be ready for a private exchange of views in the near future. The President said that would not concern him. After all, we had already had some private exchanges on this subject. He would emphasize that we were not trying to pressure the Soviet Union in regard

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

- 9 -

to the German treaty. We did have a problem while the German talks were in progress, but if preliminary talks were kept strictly private, this might be possible.

Middle East

Mr. Gromyko said that if the President had nothing further on this subject, he would like to touch upon the Middle East problem and briefly state the Soviet Government's views and position. The Soviet Government was concerned over the situation in the Middle East because from their point of view, all sorts of unexpected events could occur in that area, events that neither the Soviet Union or the United States would want to happen. The situation there was very complex as long as Israel was still occupying the Arab territories it had seized in 1967. He could not see any realistic possibility for settling this problem on the basis of Israeli demands or even on the basis of the U. S. proposal that had been submitted to the Arab Republic of Egypt. He did not want to enter into a detailed discussion of this situation, but would like to emphasize the basic fact that any proposal which bypassed the question of withdrawal of all Israeli troops from all occupied territories did not create favorable conditions for a settlement that would really meet the interests of peace. He believed that the interests of detente, the interests of peace and the interests of the United States, the Soviet Union and other powers in the area, large and small, would best be served by a settlement on the basis of complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied Arab territories. If this were done, all other questions could be resolved without any great difficulty and resolved at one and the same time. These included such questions as a guarantee for Israel, a guarantee for security, passage of Israeli ships through the Suez Canal and an end to the state of war, etc., etc. He would like to hear the President's views on how he saw the further development of this problem.

The President replied that the Foreign Minister must be aware of the fact that, while a proposal for total Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories might solve the problem, it was clear that Israel would not agree to such a solution. Proceeding from this fact, we were in a position of working very hard toward an acceptable solution for the problem. We realize as did the Soviet Union that this was an area where small countries could drag us into a confrontation that neither of us wanted. One factor in this danger was the arms build-up in the Middle East. Surely, the Foreign Minister was aware that there was a big drive on in the Congress, in the Senate, to send more arms to Israel because more arms had been sent to the UAR. We were exercising restraint and restraint was also needed on the other side. Having said this, we believe that it was best to approach

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

- 10 -

the problem now from the point of view of an interim settlement as had been proposed by Secretary Rogers. The President would be less than candid if he did not say that on both sides not as much progress had been achieved as we would like to see. What we could do from this point on would hinge on the following: first, we would have to keep the truce and that meant restraining our associates. Second, we would need to avoid an arms build-up, a build-up that cost a lot of money and entailed the risk of breaking the truce. Third, we would need to continue negotiations, bearing in mind that while substantial withdrawal of Israeli troops was possible, total withdrawal from all occupied territory was not possible.

Secretary Rogers noted that the 1967 UN resolution had been carefully drafted leaving out these words because of their complete unacceptability. We would be kidding ourselves if we continued speaking of total withdrawal from all territories. On the other hand, we could agree with a more moderate position.

The President pointed out that we were not taking an extreme Israeli position as guidance for our policy. We believed that our proposal was reasonable and, in fact, we were catching hell for it in some quarters.

Secretary Rogers pointed out that the idea of an interim agreement had initially been proposed by President Sadat. Today he had talked to UAR Foreign Minister Riad and had pointed out to him that the Arabs would be better off if a partial step was taken first which would eventually lead to final agreement. If such a partial step were not taken, the status quo would continue and that was fraught with trouble.

Mr. Gromyko said it would be one thing if this interim arrangement could be related to the overall task of reaching a final settlement as the next step. If this were not done, it would look like reinforcement of Israeli occupation plans. As far as he knew, this is where the Arabs saw the main difficulty.

Mr. Gromyko inquired why agreement could not be reached on the following basis: a temporary agreement which provided for implementation of certain measures, with the proviso that this interim agreement constituted part of a general plan to be carried out in stages -- a plan that would provide for withdrawal of Israeli forces by a specified time. It could also be agreed at the same time that if an Arab state, and here he meant Jordan and Jordan only, were to agree to an adjustment of its borders with Israel on a basis of free negotiations, it would be free to do so. Why would such a solution not be suitable for the United States? The Soviet Union believes that the United States was influential enough with Israel to convince the Israelis that this would serve their best interests. At the same time the strictest possible guarantees could be given at the first stage of the settlement, not having to wait until implementation of the overall agreement. These

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

- 11 -

guarantees could be specified and enter into force at the same time as an interim agreement was concluded.

The President said that we were open to any suggestions that would break the impasse in which we found ourselves. When Mr. Gromyko had said that we ought to be able to influence Israel, the President would remind him of an old Hebrew proverb which, in discussing the question of which sex was stronger, pointed out that God had created Adam out of soft earth and had then created Eve out of Adam's hard rib. If the Minister had ever met Golda Meir he would recognize the truth of this saying. In any case, we were as one in one respect and this had been proved during the Jordanian crisis last year, and that was that we must do all we can to avoid a build-up of tensions in the area.

India-Pakistan

The President raised one other subject which was of serious concern to us now. He believed that Mrs. Indira Gandhi was presently visiting Moscow and she would be visiting here later. He wanted to strongly emphasize his concern over the possibility that the situation involving East Pakistan, the refugees and Indians, could explode into a conflict. He believed it was in our mutual interest to discourage the Indian Government in every possible way from taking action that could explode into war in that area. Having said that, he would point out that he was aware of the fact that Pakistan was in no position to fight a successful war with India, because it was outnumbered. However, the situation in that area was so fraught with historical hatreds that if the Indians pushed too hard, the other nation might willingly commit suicide. He believed that the Soviet Union had played an important role in keeping the peace in that area in the past and hoped the Soviet Government would do all it could to prevent an outbreak of war in this crisis.

Mr. Gromyko said he had understood what the President had said in regard to American interests in the area and moreover he would say that he was gratified to learn the U. S. did not want to see a clash between India and Pakistan. He could assure the President that the Soviet Government also did not want the conflict to break out into war. Moreover, perhaps the President knew that the Soviet Union had taken steps in the present situation to rule out the possibility of a confrontation. Of course, Pakistan was by far the smaller country, but he would point out that to provoke a conflict one did not necessarily have to have superior size and strength. To do so it would be enough if there was a lack of restraint and insufficient understanding of one's responsibilities. For these reasons, it was Soviet policy to do

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

- 12 -

everything possible to prevent a confrontation and the Soviet Government had said so in its conversations with Mrs. Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister. Mrs. Gandhi had assured the Soviet Government that India would do nothing to precipitate a clash with Pakistan. It was true the Pakistani leaders were conveying the same thoughts to the Soviet Government, but here the Soviets did not have as much confidence as in the case of the Indian leadership. Once again, he was gratified to know that the U. S. was interested in averting a war between those two countries and that it stood on the position of counseling both sides to exercise restraint. If this was so, this was one policy that our two countries had in common. On the whole, he would sum it, that the country that should be restrained first of all was Pakistan, at least this was the conclusion the Soviet Government had come to on the basis of what they had observed. The President said he would need to keep in close touch with each other on this situation.

Economic Relations

Mr. Gromyko referred to the President's remarks concerning economic relations between our countries and the President's statement that he had some ideas to express in this regard. The Foreign Minister wanted to propose that the President send some representative he considers appropriate to Moscow for the purpose of exchanging views on this subject. The President replied that we did have this in mind, but he would want to discuss this possibility with Secretary Rogers. There were several men who wanted to go, but he would want to be sure to send the right man. He would further point out that one of the major obstacles to the possibility of expanding trade was, of course, the war in Southeast Asia. That was now winding down. As it ended, some of the technical and political objections to expanded trade with the Soviet Union which were being raised in this country would be removed. Once the war ended, all sorts of doors would be opened. He did not expect Mr. Gromyko to comment at this time, but wanted him to know the U. S. position.

SECRET/NODIS