

Dear Mr. President,

I received your letter of August 5 and would like to express, as you have done, my point of view on certain questions of Soviet-American relations. I agree with you as to the usefulness and importance of the personal exchange of opinion and I feel it natural that such exchange should bear upon basic, principal questions of relations between the USSR and the USA, with due regard, of course, to the impact the state of these relations makes upon the situation in the world.

If one should speak in such a broad and direct manner - and in my view this is the only way to be followed - it is necessary, above all, to have a clear understanding as to whether we perceive the basic question the same way: how should the policies of states, especially of the ones that play a large role in world affairs, be constructed. To conduct the affairs in dealing with foreign policy problems in such a way as to contribute to maintaining and strengthening peace, or guided by some other considerations, to allow the course of events push the mankind toward new disasters, immeasurably more terrible than anything that we have lived through so far?

Our answer is simple, it manifests itself in the general line followed by our state in international affairs. The foreign policy course that might lead to a growing threat of war would be organically alien to the very nature of our social system. We firmly proceed from the belief that settlement of world problems should not be sought by crossing swords.

His Excellency  
RICHARD M. NIXON  
President of the United States  
of America  
The White House, Washington

The recent Congress of our party, as you undoubtedly are aware, reaffirmed both the general foreign policy course of the Soviet Union and our readiness to develop Soviet-American relations. We are certain that, given a mutual desire, those relations could become an important factor in strengthening peace and ensuring greater security for all states.

I am well aware that you, Mr. President, have also expressed your belief in the possibility of improving relations between the United States and the USSR, the belief, as you write in your letter, that "we of this generation will be able to pass on to our children a better and safer world". I would add to the above that it would be good to give the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of such world not only to the coming but also to the present generation of people.

In defining our policy with regard to the relations with the United States, as with the other countries, we do not ignore either the differences in social and political systems, or divergence in the interests on specific questions conditioned by objective, among them historical, circumstances. We constantly take into view also the interests of our allies and friends. All of this is absolutely necessary in seeking such kind of mutual understanding between our two countries on appropriate international problems, such kind of resolution thereof, which would be of really effective and lasting nature. And we on our part want and actively pursue precisely that. And the experience shows that when both sides are guided by the desire to find mutually acceptable solutions, that proves to be possible.

It is a matter of satisfaction that over the past year and a half or two years negotiations were started between our countries on a number of major questions, as you also note in your letter.

In this connection I would like to say that we duly appreciate what has been done personally by you, Mr. President, to contribute to the success of the negotiations on West Berlin. That is a vivid

example of how our two countries co-related at the highest level their aims regarding a particular question, elicited common points of their interests, came to understanding in principle, after which the representatives of our countries applied their efforts to put what had been achieved in a concrete form. A good and useful job has been done.

I share your appraisal of the business-like nature of the strategic arms limitation talks under way between our Governments. Important in itself here is the very fact that both you and ourselves have come to the conclusion that agreement in that field is possible if both sides display caution in those matters which concern the interests of their security, and do not strive to achieve unilateral advantages. There exists now a common understanding on what the talks must concentrate first of all, and that may become the proper foundation for attaining practical decisions. We continue to believe it desirable to agree on a limitation of anti-ballistic missile systems, but only on the basis of the principle of complete equivalence.

The first concrete results achieved at those negotiations - completion of the agreement on measures of reducing the danger of outbreak of nuclear war between the USSR and the U.S. - represent, without doubt, a positive factor in Soviet-American relations. On the assets side can also be entered the fact that our countries coordinated their positions in the Geneva Committee on Disarmament on banning and destruction of biological weapons.

I should frankly say, however, that although encouraging signs have now appeared in our relations, their state as a whole causes mixed feelings, to say the least, on our side. Much leaves to be desired while certain things in the American position puzzle us.

I would like in this connection to dwell on two questions which take a special place in international affairs and in relations between our countries. Those are Indochina and the Middle East.

The principle thing here for our country, for the entire Soviet people, for our Party which expresses their will, is that in both cases the peoples of those areas were subject to direct attack from the outside. The annihilation of many thousands of people, destruction of homes, occupation of territories - these are actions against which we have always resolutely come out and will continue to do so. The consequences of what has already been committed and still continues to be done in both those areas, the consequences of the intrusions should be eliminated. Without this a settlement will be impossible. That is what constitutes the principal and determining part of our position with regard to the developments both in Indochina and in the Middle East. This is the gist of the matter, besides, our interest in such a settlement is particularly great because for us the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is a brotherly Socialist country while the Middle East is a region where states friendly to us are located, a region directly adjoining the borders of the Soviet Union.

At the same time we are far from seeking to infringe upon someone's interests in Indochina or in the Middle East, or to undermine someone's international prestige. We want peace established in accord with the lawful interests of the peoples of these areas.

What is here that does not suit the United States of America? Does any of this affect her national interests?

I see the meaning of the contact, which is now setting up between us, not in getting into polemics. I think you also agree that there would be no use in doing that. But there is one question which I still have to dwell upon.

As you know, over a rather long period of time we maintained a dialogue concerning the ways and means of overcoming the Middle East conflict. More than a year ago, to be exact at the beginning of June, 1970, that dialogue approached a stage when it began to appear that we perhaps regard basic aspects of the settlement,

including withdrawal of Israeli troops and conditions for peace between the Arab states and Israel, not from positions that would mutually exclude each other. Yet at precisely that moment the American side, judging by her actions, lost interest in seeking agreed decisions and assumed a completely different line of policy. Can this leave Soviet-American relations unaffected? Obviously, not.

It would be extremely sad if the developments in the Middle East led to another aggravation in that area and, still more, to an explosion which you, I believe, as ourselves, would like to avoid.

Concerning the war in Indochina you note yourself that it is making a negative impact on the relations between our countries. This indeed is so. Honestly speaking, we sometimes do not know which is closer to reality - statements about a desire to bring about an end to the Indochina war, for which, it would seem, speaks a partial withdrawal of American troops, or preoccupation with how to prolong it.

If the United States has embarked on the course of withdrawing its troops from Indochina, then, it seems to us, there should be no obstacles to setting a final date for their complete withdrawal. And if the United States really strive to turn the page in the history of their policy in Indochina, then why not accept the idea of establishing in South Vietnam a government of national accord, which would be in full measure capable of taking in its hands the solution of problems involving the Vietnamese themselves; after all Vietnam is their home.

You express the wish that the Soviet Union exercise its influence to achieve peace in that area. Well, when some time ago the American side displayed realism, and expressed readiness to stop military operations directly against the DRV territory as well as to start negotiations for a peaceful settlement, we did help to

overcome barriers between the sides. Now you have direct contacts with the Vietnamese side and that in itself is a positive factor. We of course are in on those contacts. It seems to us that the main directions of the solution which should be taken for ending the war in Indochina are in fact being crystallized, and not a small role in this belongs to the latest proposals of the Vietnamese side.

Therefore we would like to hope that the American side will make a step in the near future which everybody expects from it and which will in fact open the way toward a settlement. Should one mention what a positive impact that would make upon the state of Soviet-American relations?

You mention your forthcoming trip to Peking. I and my colleagues take note of your comments. We cannot, of course, have any objections in principle against a normalization of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. The whole question is on what basis will this normalization proceed. The answer to this question will obviously be provided by the not-too-distant future. I can only add that history taught us long ago to tell a natural process of establishing normal peaceful relations between states from development of all sorts of combinations of one against the others.

As to your comments on the U.S. policy with regard to the Socialist countries in general, in this sphere of principal importance to us is <sup>to</sup> ensure that nobody threaten their security, or try to encroach upon the social and state system in these countries.

The importance of the questions of bilateral relations between our countries which you refer to in your letter, is clear. We, on our part, are prepared for wider and good-willed development of Soviet-American relations, including trade and cooperation in the fields of outer space research, studies of the World ocean, preservation of environment, and public health. These spheres of

human activity are of growing importance in the life of the peoples.

It is also true, however, that if the present rate of wasting on arms drive the material values created by the labor and talent of the peoples is not stopped, if we do not first succeed at least in slackening and afterwards in turning back this process, then whatever loud pronouncements about the necessity of cooperation of states in solving vital problems of progress of modern civilization are made from the rostrums of international conferences - that cooperation would be unstable, and its results limited.

This means that more dependable ways should be sought to solve the problems of disarmament, including the question of the prohibition of nuclear weapons. And here the responsibility - let us be frank, the decisive responsibility - is to be shouldered first of all by our two states, although, of course, others as well can and should make their contribution to that great cause - particularly those also possessing nuclear weapons.

Sometimes it is said, Mr. President, that communists despite their materialistic philosophy act as idealists advancing broad programs of disarmament. But we really believe that questions of disarmament are solvable, and what has already been done as a result of the known treaties concluded, substantiates this confidence. Consequently, efforts should be multiplied, and we are ready for that.

If we can succeed in reaching genuine understanding with you as to the general courses of policy of both our states in their relations with each other, then it will be much easier to solve practical matters, there will be fewer uncertainties, reservations and understatements when it concerns urgent, concrete questions on which depend the security of our countries as well as international peace and security.

For us that general course means peaceful coexistence. When we declare this principle in the highest forums in our country and on the world arena, we do it in earnest. We are guided not by calculations connected with this or that current event which may seem significant today while tomorrow is completely forgotten, and not by narrow considerations designed to achieve tactical advantage - that would not be serious or reliable, but by the fundamental interests of peace.

These are some thoughts that come to my mind when I contemplate in connection with your letter, the state of Soviet-American relations. On the whole, I believe that despite remaining difficulties, prospects for developing these relations for the better do objectively exist.

We look forward to meeting you in Moscow. That may become a significant event - the more significant, the more favorable is the situation in which the meeting will take place. And that depends on joint efforts of both sides.

Sincerely,

L. BREZHNEV

7 September, 1971