

Kissinger's Secret Trip to Moscow, April 19–25, 1972

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

Washington, April 19, 1972.

SUBJECT

Moscow Trip

This book contains the basic papers relevant to my trip including:

- the text of my opening statement
- a summary of the issues
- a Vietnam strategy paper²
- a discussion of SALT choices³
- a discussion of European problems⁴

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

² Attached but not printed are two papers on Vietnam. In the first, entitled "What Do We Demand of Moscow and Hanoi?," drafted on April 17, Negroponte and Lord developed a strategy for negotiating a settlement in Vietnam, including immediate steps on the ground, a sequence for subsequent negotiations, and ways to secure Soviet support throughout the process. They suggested a two-sided approach to encourage the Soviets to use their leverage to force the withdrawal of North Vietnamese divisions behind the demilitarized zone. "Our *stick*," they explained, "is our bombing of the North, and our naval deployments, with specific reference to Haiphong." "Our *carrot* is a conciliatory posture on summit-related topics." The second paper, entitled "Possible Flexibility in Our 8-Point Plan," unsigned and undated, addressed the possible "appearance of flexibility" in the 8-point negotiating plan offered by the United States and South Vietnam on January 25—specifically in the provisions for troop withdrawals and a political settlement.

³ Attached but not printed is an undated memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, discussing, in particular, the inclusion of submarine-launched ballistic missiles in the interim agreement to freeze offensive weapons, and the level of anti-ballistic missile coverage in the proposed treaty. The memorandum is summarized in the attached memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger, printed below.

⁴ Attached but not printed is an undated memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, discussing the ongoing talks for mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) as well as a conference on security and cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The memorandum is summarized in the attached memorandum from Sonnenfeldt to Kissinger.

—a summary of current bilateral US-Soviet negotiations⁵
—a paper on a possible “Declaration of Principles” to be issued at the summit.⁶

Although my proposed opening statement is on the whole a conciliatory one, you will note from the issues paper that the strategy I would follow would involve a tough opening position on Vietnam. I would impress on Brezhnev that you are prepared to do what is necessary to turn back the DRV offensive and that you expect the Soviets, who must share responsibility for the offensive, to use their influence to bring about de-escalation. After laying this groundwork, I would then indicate the substantial areas where we and they can cooperate and improve relations. I would seek to structure the talks in such a way that discussion of Vietnam will precede any detailed discussion of other questions, such as SALT, Europe and bilateral matters.

The most important points apart from the Vietnam issues I would like to discuss with you relate to the question of excluding SLBM’s in a SALT agreement and to maintaining some margin of advantage in ABM’s if we have to agree to SLBM exclusion. Both these issues will require early settlement in order to complete an agreement by the time of the summit.

The Soviets will probably press for trade concessions but while giving them some general encouragement, I believe we should not go beyond that for a few weeks until we can see how they perform on Vietnam.

I would also like to discuss the general nature of the final communiqué to be issued at the summit.

⁵ Attached but not printed is an undated paper briefly discussing the current status of all significant U.S.–USSR bilateral negotiations.

⁶ Attached but not printed is an undated and unsigned paper, discussing the proposed U.S.–Soviet declaration of principles, including copies of the following: the draft joint communiqué Dobrynin gave Kissinger on March 17 (see Document 62); the principles of cooperation signed by Brezhnev and Pompidou in Paris on October 30, 1971 (see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, vol. XXIII, No. 44, November 30, 1971, pp. 7–8); and the joint statement released on September 27, 1959, following discussions between Eisenhower and Khrushchev at Camp David (see *Public Papers: Eisenhower, 1959*, pp. 692–693).

Attachment

Draft Opening Statement⁷

April 18, 1972.

OPENING STATEMENT

1. *Our relations in context of present international situation*

a. Since the war three summits (K 59, K 61, LBJ–Kos 67). They occurred when major issue was war or peace between US and SU. Specific crises in which we both involved (Berlin, Middle East). Whether rightly or not each of us was seen as a leader of hostile coalition and relationship between these two camps was seen as major determinant of international politics.

b. We now have a different situation. It was wise of both leaderships to let contours of new situation emerge more clearly before agreeing to new summit. We think Soviets now do not see Western camp as monolithic and US guiding hand. We for our part do not see Communist world as monolithic—not because we have deliberately set ourselves task of disrupting Soviet-led coalition, but because we recognize differentiation and play of autonomous forces.⁸

c. Present and foreseeable situation characterized by play of several major actors, on one hand, and continued disparity in power as between US and SU and rest of countries. Each of us is still the dominant power in its coalition. Problem now not so much prevention of direct conflict (though still not wholly solved) but cooperation between us so that our power and influence can be used to stabilize international situation as a whole.

d. This is neither “condominium” nor ignoring of continuing major differences—in systems, in outlook, in history. It means recognizing that we have role to play in containing the dangers of diversity while capitalizing on its assets.

⁷ This is the fourth and final draft of Kissinger’s proposed opening statement; excerpts from the same draft were first published in Safire, *Before the Fall*, pp. 433–436. On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “We are the 2 that matter now—But others (Japan & China *could*). We are equal—neither can push other around—neither will allow other to get advantage.” Nixon also wrote and circled the words: “sick POWs.”

⁸ On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “*Single Standard*. ‘Liberation’ of their camp? But we can’t tolerate forceful ‘liberation’ in ours.”

2. *How we view each other*

a. Evolution of new relationship between us faces many obstacles, some real but some more “subjective” than “objective”. In past 25 years we have probably never really tried to sort these out but now have opportunity to start this process.

b. We understand Soviet sense of “encirclement”, though we believe some of this is due to the way the Soviet Union entered the world scene after its revolution which challenged not only domestic values but also international ones. We perceived Stalinist Russia, after WW II as outward-thrusting and aggressive and responded accordingly. We recognize that in responding we may have conveyed a purpose that to Soviets looked like a design to maintain USSR in a permanently disadvantageous position. We were perhaps less conscious of Soviet concerns stemming from experience of WW II than we should have been. We were perhaps insufficiently conscious that security requirements of continental power differed from one, like ourselves, surrounded by oceans. Our history of no foreign invasion since 1812 made us less sensitive to problems of nation invaded many times in same time span.⁹ At the same time, a more sympathetic comprehension of Soviet outlook was complicated by nature of Stalinist regime and by universalist claims which Soviets advanced in regard to their doctrines and domestic values.

c. We recognize that Soviets may have viewed us as having similar universalist pretensions.

d. We think both of us are approaching point where we understand each has legitimate security interests, especially in adjacent areas; and each has broader world-wide interests.¹⁰ In any case, we think both of us now know that this is the only basis for a sound relationship between us. We know that great powers cannot be induced, or persuaded, or pressured or flattered into sacrificing important interests.¹¹ We know that any agreement reached on such a basis cannot last because no great power—nor indeed any power in a relationship of essentially equality with another—will long abide by a disadvantageous agreement. In fact we know from history that agreements or arrangements that may have been made at a moment of disadvantage will become the source of new instability and conflict as soon as the affected party gains or regains its strength. You and we have many problems but we do have the advantage, at the present time, of being able to deal

⁹ The President wrote a question mark in the margin next to this sentence.

¹⁰ The President underlined most of this sentence.

¹¹ The President underlined most of this sentence. Nixon also wrote on the back of the previous page: “RN respects B[rezhnev] or strong man (also respects Mao).”

with each other from positions of essential equality. And that provides us with a unique moment in our histories to reach everlasting agreements. In fact, the opportunities for broad cooperation open to the leaders of our two countries at present have never been greater and may decline again if they are not grasped.

e. You have known President Nixon for more than a decade and he is aware that you have raised questions about his attitudes, orientation and predictability. Some of your public statements have tried to analyze his behavior in terms of “forces” influencing him. The President combines concern for long-term evolution with detailed interest in concrete day-to-day decisions. The evolution he sees—and wants to contribute to—is one of a world of several interacting major powers, competitive but respectful of each other’s interests. Within this basic framework, he sees an opportunity for all countries to develop their own identity. This view of the world corresponds to the President’s personal background and up-bringing.

At the same time, he can be tough and even ruthless in dealing with specific problems. You probably recognize that the President is bound to see the present situation in Vietnam not only in its local context but as a renewed effort by outside powers to intervene in our domestic political processes. Moreover, as President he is bound to be keenly sensitive to the fact that our last President was forced to vacate his office because of the effects of the Vietnam war. President Nixon will not permit three Presidents in a row to leave office under abnormal circumstances. It may seem that what he is doing to prevent this from occurring is “unpredictable”. It is in fact quite consistent with his fighting instincts when issues of principle and vital interest are at stake. His reaction should have been expected.

But I have also found that once a matter is settled, the President is prepared to proceed with matters that are in the common interest with those who were on the opposite side in a dispute. This is true in his domestic as well as foreign policies.¹² We would say that he “does not bear grudges.” The President can look beyond the issues of the moment to the broader evolution and the wider interests. He is conciliatory because he recognizes that only those agreements are kept which nations wish to keep.

Let me make this more specific and relate it directly to you. The President has a reputation from his past as an anti-Communist. You may think that this is a basic prejudice which sooner or later will assert itself. (Actually, I would not find such a view on your side

¹² On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “President has decided politics be damned, fatalistic. He can deliver the right.”

surprising. I would have thought that you would only regard it as normal that a “capitalist” should be anti-Communist and that you would not respect him if he were not.)

But as a practical matter the President understands that whether he likes your system or not will not affect its existence; just as your likes and dislikes do not affect our existence. He will enter a contest with you when you challenge him and he will do and say things that you may regard as challenging you. But he will not lose sight of the special role that our two countries must play if there is to be peace in the world. That, rather than anti-communism, is the point that will again and again reassert itself—whatever the turbulences of the moment.

Of course, it is also characteristic of the President to be patient and tenacious. His political biography testifies to that. He will accept a setback or a detour—and wait until he can rechart his course. When he has done this, he has shown unusual consistency, even when he makes the most radical moves—which his position enables him to do.

f. Let me in this context mention China. We understand that nothing we can say to you will persuade you to judge our relations with the PRC other than by actual events. But since this is so, we also know that no purpose will be served—except to create new *misunderstandings*—if we tried to mislead you. We have understood you to say that you favor a normalization of US–PRC relations; but you have expressed reservations about the *timing* of our actions over the past three years, arguing that they coincided with a deterioration of your relations with Peking. But this is an objective fact, not a matter of arbitrary choice by us.

However, the fact that the state of Sino-Soviet relations in a sense contributed to the development of contacts between ourselves and Peking does not mean that that is the basis of the American relationship with China. The fact is that you are too powerful and influential for our relations with China or any country to be based on hostility toward you. Objectively, there cannot be American-Chinese collusion against the USSR in the world of today.

In addition, while we attach great importance to the opening of a dialogue with the PRC, we recognize that with the Chinese we are at the beginning of a process. Major concrete agreements are not likely in the near future.

With you—given the objective facts of the world situation—we have several important matters on our agenda that can be resolved if there is a mutual respect for each other’s interests.

g. As regards our internal systems, we should not gloss over the differences; but difference is not synonymous with incompatibility. We are content to let history judge which system ultimately produces the

most productive and contented society. We welcome a certain spirit of competitiveness—this is part of our make-up and we think it is part of theirs too.

3. *Our Tasks*

a. Cooperate to eliminate or at least contain crises over which we both have influence;¹³

b. Cooperate where we can to help bring about solutions to problems that have a potential for becoming dangerous crises;

c. Develop bilateral cooperation (including in arms control) so that US-Soviet relationship becomes a force for international stability. In this respect, our relationship is unique because the US-Soviet relationship affects the nature of international relationships generally.

d. In particular, this means developing, either explicitly or by practice, some “rules of conduct”:

—recognize that each of us has certain areas of special sensitivity which should be respected;

—subordinate short-term tactical advantages to longer-term stability; neither side will permit the other an accumulation of short-term gains and the effort to make such gains will merely produce counteractions;

—exercise restraint in crises in which, given our continued competitive relationship, we find ourselves on opposing sides; indeed avoid letting situations get to crisis stage;

—use our influence, if necessary by regulating aid and arms supplies, to induce parties to a crisis or conflict to moderate their behavior.

4. *The Summit*

Although it comes after some three years of preparation and in that sense is a sort of culmination of our efforts, it is also a beginning. It will engage the leaders of both countries; it will establish a pattern of contact; it will provide dramatic impetus to our future endeavors for a peaceful international order (though of course only if there are concrete accomplishments).

a. HAK has been sent to Moscow because the President wanted to assure the most comprehensive and meticulous preparations of the Summit. He understood you to have the same motivation.

b. We had not of course anticipated that our Summit would coincide with the renewed intense fighting in Vietnam. It is a tough problem and we must take account of your assistance to the DRV's effort

¹³ On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “Spirit of C[amp] D[avid]—Spirit of Vienna—Spirit of Glassboro—We need spirit of Moscow! 2 hard-headed strong men can do it.”

to win the war and drive the President out of office. While leaving a more detailed discussion until later, I can say now that this affects not only the climate of the Summit but the specific accomplishments that will flow from the Summit.¹⁴ For this reason, both of us have an interest in getting the escalation of the fighting stopped and to have negotiations resumed. In our own country, the Congress and the public will measure the achievements of the Summit to an important extent by whether the trend of the last three years toward a winding down of the war will be resumed. In the Soviet Union a similar test may be applied. We do not want the Summit to be merely an episode—another meeting of no particular historical significance—we want it to be a new beginning that sets us on a new path. Our energies should be concentrated on the task of constructing peace, not diverted to those of fighting war. We think you see it the same way. Inevitably, at this moment, this problem has to be uppermost in our mind and on our agenda.

c. If it were not for the acute problem of Vietnam, strategic arms limitation would engage most of our attention. We recognize that the agreement we are now talking about may disappoint some and it will indeed only be a starting point. Yet for that very reason—a starting point opening the way for more to come—this first agreement must be such that both of us can be satisfied that our interests are protected. And it must be such that we have a real platform from which to proceed to the next step. The subject is intricate and technical but both of us understand that we are dealing now with political decisions serving political ends as well.

d. The viability of any agreement in so central an area as that of strategic arms depends heavily on the general political relationship between us. The President strongly feels that arms control agreements serve little purpose if existing arms are used for aggression or pressure.

e. As regards Europe, so long the center of our concerns and the source of tension and danger, we want now to find ways of building on what has been achieved. We in the US are prepared to play our role, recognizing that some aspects involve Europeans more directly than ourselves.

f. Middle East.

g. Bilateral relations and trade. Here we have broad long-term opportunities to develop cooperative relations. We are currently engaged in a whole series of negotiations ranging from trade issues, to scientific and outer space cooperation. Both of us stand to gain. But we must

¹⁴ On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “successful summit—indispensable to have progress on V. Nam.”

be realistic: a lasting and productive set of relationships, with perhaps hundreds or thousands of our people working with each other and perhaps billions of dollars of business activity, can only be achieved in a healthy political environment. The past history of our relations has clearly shown the connection between the political aspects and others, like the economic. The President wants to be candid with you: he cannot make commitments, say for credits or tariff concessions, if these measures do not command wide support among our public and in the Congress.¹⁵ And this depends critically on the state of our political relations. Moreover, we must make sure that once commitments have been entered into they will not soon be undermined by renewed crises and deterioration of our relations. I say this not because we want you to “pay a price” for economic and other relations with us or because we expect you to sacrifice important political and security interests for the sake of trade relations. I say it as an objective fact of political life.

h. The final communiqué—public framework for our relations.

SOVIET INTEREST IN A VIETNAM SETTLEMENT

Talking Points:

1. We go on the assumption that you have an interest in bringing the Vietnam war to an end. We do not assume this because we think you have an obligation or a desire “to help us” but because we think you have more direct interests.

2. In the first place, as long as the fighting goes on you apparently are under obligation to supply military material to the DRV. This is not only a drain on your resources, but more important, puts the DRV in a position to use military means you supplied at times and for purposes over which you may not have full control. This means that Hanoi has the ability to determine the international climate in which you conduct your policy.

3. More specifically than that, you run a certain risk that your supply operations could become involved in the fighting. This is of course not a matter of design on our part but simply inherent in the situation.

4. Even if Hanoi were to win the war with the means you supplied (which we will do what we can to prevent for our own reasons), this will not mean that your interests in the area of Southeast Asia will subsequently be protected. Geopolitics argues against it.

5. On the other hand, a negotiated settlement can hardly be made without your support. You will be far more likely to be able to protect your interests in the area with a guaranteed settlement that assures the

¹⁵ On the back of the previous page in the briefing book, the President wrote: “Congress won’t approve credits—if political tensions exist.”

status of all Indochinese nations rather than under conditions of continued conflict.

6. Historically, US-Soviet relations have been inhibited by the Vietnam war. Objectively, both of us can survive when our relations are poor and distant. But both of us, and the rest of the world, are better off when there can be a measure of cooperation between us.

—Intensified fighting, or even a continuation of lower levels of fighting, inevitably puts us on opposite sides; this makes it more likely that we will be on opposite sides in other conflict situations; this increases the overall danger of conflict between us and diverts resources.

—All forms of cooperation, particularly those in the areas of trade and technology, are inhibited.

—A deterioration of American-Soviet relations is likely to spill over to your relations with other industrialized nations—again not by our design but because of the operation of objective factors inherent in the present international structure. (“Selective détente” can work as a temporary tactic but not as an extended policy.)

7. I do not mean by all this that you have a greater interest than we in getting the war stopped. Many of the factors mentioned apply to us as well as you. It does mean that we have a *joint* interest in getting the war stopped and this is the basis of our approach to you.

Attachment

Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹⁶

Washington, April 19, 1972.

SUBJECT

Issues for My Moscow Trip

The first issue is one of *strategy*: how do we relate what happens in Vietnam, and the Soviet role with respect to it, to the summit and the substantive issues we are in process of negotiating with the Soviets? I believe it has become clear to the Soviets that you intend to do what is necessary militarily to stop the Communist offensive and in that sense are prepared to subordinate your relationship with the USSR to the immediate requirements of the Vietnam situation. To judge from Soviet behavior—including, of course, their urgent desire to have me come to Moscow—Brezhnev does not wish to sacrifice his “Western”

¹⁶ Sent for action.

policy to Hanoi's purposes. Consequently, we should have some flexibility in insisting on a constructive Soviet role regarding Vietnam before we turn to the summit-related substantive issues of US-Soviet relations.

Vietnam

As regards Vietnam, the following set of propositions would be put to the Soviets:

—We want the Soviets to use their influence to get the North Vietnamese to desist from their invasion across the DMZ; to pull back to North Vietnam the three NVA divisions, accompanying armor, artillery and anti-aircraft equipment involved in that invasion; and to fully restore the 1968 understandings, including complete respect for the DMZ and no shelling attacks on major South Vietnamese cities.

—If this is agreed and, as it is being implemented, we will correspondingly reduce our air and naval bombardments against the DRV and cease them completely when the foregoing has been accomplished.

—If this is agreed we are also ready to resume public and private talks towards a settlement which could take place as implementation of the above is underway.

—It would be made clear to the Soviets that we would expect the Soviets to use their material aid to the DRV as leverage.

The Soviets must bear considerable responsibility for the Communist offensive in Vietnam and we should therefore not be expected to "reward" them for using their influence to bring about deescalation. Nevertheless, the most promising *tactic* for implementing the general strategy will probably be to hold out to Brezhnev the *prospect* of a broad improvement in relations with us.

In sum, our approach would be to indicate that we will not shy away from the military actions necessary to beat back the Communist offensive in Vietnam; but that if our proposed scenario for deescalation is followed, there will be an opportunity for substantial progress in US-Soviet relations.

SALT

The major substantive subject being negotiated prior to the summit is SALT. It is at the moment stalled on two major issues and several minor, largely technical ones.

The major issues are (1) whether to include SLBMs in the offensive agreement and (2) where each side can deploy its ABMs. We have related these two by taking the position that an offensive agreement excluding SLBMs would confer such numerical advantages to the Soviet Union that it would be impossible for us to accept equality in the defensive agreement. The Soviets argue that the defensive agreement is permanent and therefore should be equal, while the offensive one is merely interim and any imbalances can be worked out in the follow-on talks for a permanent offensive agreement.

We have not yet exhausted all possible fallbacks on the *SLBM* question. These would involve schemes whereby the Soviets could continue construction of SLBMs in exchange for dismantling older SLBMs and ICBMs. Present evidence, however, suggests that the Soviets are unwilling to include an SLBM even if, as under the above schemes, they could in fact continue their present rate of construction for several years. Thus, we must confront a decision as to whether to accept a SALT agreement without SLBMs and perhaps with only an understanding that submarines will be the first subject of follow-on negotiations. If there is to be a SALT agreement in the next several weeks, we would probably have to take this step.

As regards *ABMs* we can probably expect only a slight advantage, even if we concede on SLBMs. I would not propose in Moscow to accept equality even if the Soviets remain adamant in insisting on it. A number of variants involving certain advantages for us have been examined within our Government. But one special issue needs to be faced: are we prepared to give up our second ABM site at the Malmstrom ICBM field in exchange for an ABM site in Washington? Secretary Laird and Gerry Smith have both recommended this,¹⁷ and there is some evidence that the Soviets might accept a deal whereby each side would have one ABM site in an ICBM field (Grand Forks for us) and one around the national capital. Such a scheme would still permit us to defend a larger number of ICBMs since our ICBM fields contain more launchers than do Soviet fields. If the Soviets continued to make an issue of this “inequality” we would have to consider the matter between my trip and the time of the summit.

A further SALT issue relates to the *duration* of the offensive agreement. We have argued for an indefinite duration, the Soviets for three years. (If the agreement lapsed after a fixed period we would end up with an ABM-only agreement, which we oppose.) But we can probably accept some fixed duration, e.g. four years, on the understanding that if by that time there was no permanent offensive agreement, we might abrogate the ABM treaty.

European Security

The next major subject—of particular interest to the Soviets—is Europe. As you know, they have been eager to engage us in bilateral talks about their conference proposal but so far they have not shown much interest in *MBFR*. Our own interest in *MBFR* has been largely

¹⁷ Smith recommended this position in a backchannel message to Kissinger on April 8. (Backchannel message 0924 from Smith to Kissinger, April 8; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, SALT 1972) Also see Smith, *Doubletalk*, pp. 363–364.

the result of our need to counter Senator Mansfield¹⁸ with a positive position. While at the moment our domestic pressures for troop reductions are manageable they could of course arise again, and we would probably be in a stronger position to meet them if we had some sort of MBFR negotiation in prospect with the Soviets.

We have already in various ways agreed in principle to preparations for a *European conference* once the Berlin agreement takes effect. Although the conference idea remains nebulous, we could try to use our agreement to proceed with conference preparations as a means to get the Russians to agree to MBFR preparations. As part of this latter process we could attempt to develop certain principles. As you know, however, we have had little success in coming up with any substantive MBFR position that is both negotiable and in our security interest. Consequently, our main interest will continue to be to use MBFR *talks* to prevent the unraveling of NATO through unilateral troop cuts.

Trade and Technical Cooperation

One of the major Soviet interests in seeking détente with us is to stimulate trade and access to our technology. We have more than a half dozen separate negotiations currently under way that relate in one way or another to these Soviet interests. The Soviets understand that progress here is related to our political relations, though they resent any explicit linkage.

The key decisions that will have to be made on our side in the next several weeks relate to making available EXIM Bank facilities to the USSR and to seeking MFN legislation. Both are essential if there is to be any sizeable volume of US exports to the Soviet Union. You already have legislative authority to move on EXIM Bank facilities; MFN authorizing legislation could probably not be obtained before 1973 although the act of asking for it this year would be read by the Soviets as a move favorable to them.

I would propose in Moscow only to indicate that, assuming a generally favorable trend in our relations, these important political/economic steps will be positively considered in the coming weeks. (Pete Peterson is to meet with his Soviet counterpart in early May. This will afford a chance to try to work out many of the detailed issues involved in an improved overall trade relationship.)

As regards science and technology, the Soviets are eager to have early institutional arrangements for cooperation. As a tactical matter, I

¹⁸ Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Montana), Senate Majority Leader. In addition to his efforts to legislate withdrawal from Vietnam, Mansfield repeatedly sought to pass legislation requiring a significant reduction in the number of American troops stationed in Europe.

would propose to indicate that we will proceed on the merits with each program. In fact, we can easily regulate the pace in accordance with the political situation.

Communiqué

A final issue to face is the Soviet desire to have a formal US-Soviet declaration of principles promulgated at the summit. They have done this with France and Canada, and they will have even more formal treaty arrangements with the FRG. The principles themselves essentially repeat the basic terms of the UN Charter and they involve a commitment to consult regularly. Historically, since the Eisenhower Administration, we have avoided this kind of declaration because we felt it could be used to undermine our alliance relationships even though the actual terms largely repeated the Charter.

I have given Dobrynin informally a watered-down set of very general principles (dealing with the need for negotiation of disputes, the desirability of restraint and of cooperation and a general clause to consult) to be embodied in the final summit communiqué.¹⁹ In view of the French precedent it may be difficult to avoid a more elaborate document. If we accepted this, we would have to inform our allies and to include language that made clear that no existing alliances or other commitments were affected.

Recommendation:

That you approve this approach to my Moscow meetings.²⁰

Attachment

Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)²¹

Washington, April 17, 1972.

SUBJECT

Issues for Presidential Decision

¹⁹ Kissinger gave Dobrynin the U.S. draft for a joint communiqué on March 17; see Document 62.

²⁰ The President initialed his approval with the following handwritten caveat: "OK—as modified by RN's oral instructions." For Nixon's oral instructions, see Document 126.

²¹ The memorandum is not initialed.

1. A fundamental strategic and tactical decision revolves around the *relationship between Vietnam and the rest of US-Soviet negotiations*. There are two aspects to this:

—On the one hand, we need to be clear about the extent to which we wish to make what happens in Vietnam, and the Soviet role with regard to it, a determinant of what happens next in US-Soviet relations.

—On the other, we need to be clear about the extent to which our substantive positions on other issues should be influenced by whatever the Soviets may do for us regarding Vietnam.

a. As regards the first question, do we require a return to the status quo ante (however defined) in Vietnam and a visible Soviet role in bringing this about *before* we proceed with further preparations of the Summit? The answer is presumably *negative*, given the present state of the battle. The next question is do we require a Soviet *commitment to take steps with Hanoi* to bring about a return to the status quo ante before we proceed further?

—A *tough position* would be to answer “yes”, on the hypothesis that Brezhnev has so much riding on his relationship with us and the Summit that he is prepared to move on Vietnam. (This is not the old illusion that Moscow will help us for the sake of some undefined benefits later. The assumption here is that the whole Brezhnev policy line, and perhaps his political future, is today more dependent on relations with us than was true 4–5 years ago.)

—A *more cautious answer* to this question would be to say that we lay out a more or less complete negotiating scenario beginning with Vietnam but comprising all major issues currently in play. That is, we lay out in relatively specific terms a vista of what will happen in US-Soviet relations *if* the Soviets agree to play ball on Vietnam.

—A *different approach* would be for us to talk about Vietnam in Moscow but to make clear that we, for our part, are prepared to continue with other issues irrespective of what happens in Vietnam. This would leave the initiative for establishing a linkage to the Soviets.

—A *more subtle variant* would be for us to proceed with other issues but to imply that (a) we will continue to do what is necessary against the North to defeat the offensive and (b) that at some unspecified point the Vietnam situation may make it difficult for us to proceed with other negotiations including the Summit.

b. The next question is whether we should calibrate our substantive flexibility on other issues according to what the Soviets may do constructively on Vietnam.

—With respect to *SALT*, we should probably draw no such precise connection. Vietnam with all its anguish and dilemmas is now a short-range problem; *SALT* involves a long-term strategic relationship and

any agreement we make this year should stand on its own feet. Moreover, it will have to be defended in Congress, before the country and with the allies on those terms.

—The same general philosophy applies to *Europe* where a longer-term relationship is involved. (It may, however, be reasonable to assume that if the US-Soviet relationship should deteriorate because of Vietnam, progress in Europe will be slowed and the German eastern treaties would suffer.

Conversely, a general impetus to US-Soviet relations at this moment, would probably intensify interest in progress on European issues and ease Brandt's task with regard to the eastern treaties. These processes are essentially self-regulating and require no specific decision by us, *unless we wish to play some explicit positive* role in behalf of the Brandt government on treaty ratification.)

—Bilateral issues lend themselves more readily to carefully calibrated concessions or rigidity. A logical connection can be made between Vietnam and our ability to move on MFN and EXIM facilities. The decision required is whether we should foreshadow early positive action on one or both in return for Soviet movement on Vietnam.

—We also have flexibility on environmental cooperation and science cooperation. On both, we are now proceeding deliberately. The Soviets want more speed so that specific agreements could be signed at the Summit. This is not a major decision but it could be made on a contingency basis for discretionary use.

2. *SALT* (See also the more detailed paper).²²

Presidential decisions are required on the interrelated issues of SLBMs and ABMs. The interrelationship here is not organic to the proposed agreement; it is largely psychological and political: how the agreement appears to the US and world publics. The manner in which the SLBM question is handled also bears on where we stand in the follow-on negotiations.

a. As regards *SLBMs*, the President must decide whether ultimately he can accept an agreement without their inclusion. Such a decision should represent an *ultimate fallback* which would not be used until other possibilities have been exhausted. These include:

- (1) replacement of G & H subs (8 subs, 100 SLBMs);
- (2) plus slipping freeze date to ratification date (plus 2 new subs, 24 SLBMs);
- (3) plus replacement of OLD Silo ICBMs (plus 6 new subs, 75 SLBMs);
- (4) plus replacement of soft Pad ICBMs (plus 11 new subs, 134 SLBMs).

²² See footnote 3 above.

Cumulatively, this could give the Soviet up to 70 new subs and as many as 985 SLBMs even with an agreement. Under less generous variants (i.e., permitting only *some* of the above substitutions), the Soviets could get up to 51 subs and 752 SLBMs at the lowest end of the spectrum. Although all these variants give the Soviets more subs and SLBMs than we have, those involving substitutions do require the Soviets to scratch other weapons, which so far they have shown no inclination to do. We would thus gain (1) an upper limit, (albeit quite high), to Soviet SLBMs and (2) the reduction of certain existing Soviet strategic forces (albeit of older vintage, though of use to the Soviets against our allies and in a first strike.) If any of these variants were accepted, we would have to scratch existing Polaris boats and possibly Titans as ULMS boats came in. We probably would be prepared to do this in any case in the time frame involved.

A *fallback* just short of total exclusion of SLBMs would involve incorporation in the interim freeze a commitment to negotiate on SLBMs either separately or as the first order of business in the follow-on negotiations. This may have the advantage of postponing any early renewed focus on FBS. It could have the disadvantage of having SLBM negotiations at a time when Congress focuses on ULMS funding. It might also make it difficult to obtain Soviet concessions on other SALT issues because of the non-inclusion of SLBMs.

b. *ABMs*. Here the President must focus on the essentially political decision whether to go for a US “advantage” if SLBMs are excluded or merely mentioned as a topic for follow-on negotiations; or whether to accept the Soviet point that this is a treaty which should stand on its own, and must therefore be “equal”.

—If the decision is for an “*advantage*”, the most logical variants are those that provide a US “advantage” as long as SLBMs are excluded but involve equalization as and when they are included. This argues for the deferral options.

—If the decision is for “*equality*”, we should probably go for Grand Forks and Washington vs. Moscow and *one* Soviet ICBM site. *Note*: The Soviets might object because of the lower number of ICBMs at their ICBM sites. Numbers of interceptors would be equal, however.

To repeat, however, the basic Presidential decisions are: (1) “advantage” vs “equality” and (2) whether under any variant we take Washington. Once these decisions are made, the variants can be juggled.

c. *Duration*. The basic Presidential decision here is whether there is to be any fixed time limit on the offensive freeze. Since the Soviets have proposed three years and we are prepared to go to five years, the logical decision is four years. We, of course, prefer an unlimited duration to avoid ending up with only an ABM treaty but we are protected, to a degree, by the supreme national interest clause.

d. *Radars*. This is highly technical and it is difficult to see a specific Presidential decision. As regards the NCA radar setup, we are relatively close to agreement. (MARCS) For ICBM sites we may have to fall back to a combination of quantitative and qualitative restraints since the Soviets are unlikely to accept the MARC concept. This should be settled between the two Moscow trips.

—On OLPARS, we now have the first signs of Soviet movement. The SALT delegation is probing further. The only Presidential decision now, if any, would be to insist that there must be *some agreed* restraint on OLPARS.

3. *Europe* (Note: See separate longer paper).²³

The decision here is, first, for authority to talk bilaterally to the Soviets. This follows logically from previous confidential exchanges, though these related to Europe generally (ESC) rather than to MBFR. This is a delicate problem because of European sensitivities. Moreover, we are committed not to talk specifically about ESC until after the Berlin agreement takes effect. No such restriction exists on MBFR.

The major current hangup relates to the *interrelationship between ESC and MBFR*. We have always wanted to keep them separate, largely for Congressional reasons but also because it makes no sense to have large numbers of European governments involved in MBFR negotiations that affect only a few countries.

If the German treaties are ratified and Berlin is settled, ESC preparations should begin next fall. The old imperative (Congressional) of holding open the possibility of MBFR while hanging back on ESC will no longer be valid then. We already have a USG decision to establish a tenuous link between MBFR and ESC, that is, to use the occasion of ESC preparations to try to get MBFR talks started also. This is worth trying out on the Soviets.

We also have a set of MBFR principles developed by the Verification Panel and generally consistent with what NATO has been doing. Brosio would have made an effort to probe the Soviets on some of these.

On balance, it seems wisest to confine preparatory work with the Soviets to the procedural issues.

ESC is a Soviet desideratum. We should stick to the NATO approach on timing. A Presidential decision might be made (1) that we can assure the Soviets we will cooperate with ESC preparations after Berlin, and (2) that we are prepared to maintain contact with them to help structure the conference most usefully.

²³ See footnote 4 above.

4. *Bilateral Issues.*

The basic Presidential decision is on trade issues. How far can you go to assure favorable action on EXIM facilities. What assurances can you give that we will seek MFN legislation (probably not obtainable this year.) Even a basic Presidential decision on EXIM still leaves us flexibility as to implementation. In any case, any public disclosure should be at the Summit.

Lesser decisions relate to the pace with which we move on environmental and scientific cooperation—before the Summit, at the Summit, after the Summit. Our present tack on both is an agreement in principle at the Summit with broad terms worked out before and details to be nailed down afterwards.

5. *Final Communiqué.*

The basic decision here is whether we want a separate declaration of principles (you have already given the Soviets a set, but as part of a final communiqué); and whether we want to point toward setting up a permanent consultative mechanism. This latter is mostly optical, since we can do all the consulting we want anyway and already have adequate top-level channels. The Soviets would want both principles and consultative mechanism; the trap for us is alliance reactions even though several allies (France, Canada) have already done the same. In-between solutions (probably preferable) are: a set of principles in the communiqué; a general agreement to consult but no special mechanism.

Note: Nothing included on Middle East.

126. **Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹**

Washington, April 19, 1972.

[The recording began while the meeting was in progress. Omitted here is discussion of domestic support for bombing Vietnam.]

Nixon: We have got to play it out. We must not now disappoint—

Kissinger: I could not—

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Oval Office, Conversation No. 713–1. No classification marking. According to his Daily Diary, Nixon met with Kissinger in the Oval Office from 3:27 to 5:01 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.

Nixon: You see. That is why if you come back and we've say we've agreed to resume our talks and stop the bombing—

Kissinger: Oh no. No, no.

Nixon: That's why I—

Kissinger: No, no, no. But, Mr. President, the point is the talks resume while the bombing goes on. Oh no, we won't stop the bombing. Absolutely not.

Nixon: We indicated that we might.

Kissinger: Oh—

Nixon: Retrogressively, but—

Kissinger: No, no. We will retrogressive, if they pull their troops out of South Vietnam.

Nixon: Well—

Kissinger: That's the proposition—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: First let me make one other—

Nixon: Understand, I'm not criticizing. I'm just trying to state, when you come back, I'd like to be able to say something in my press conference about—Oh, did you talk to him about the time of announcement?²

Kissinger: No. I'll do that there, but I've told him that we—because I don't want—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —to get them thinking that there will be an announcement 'til—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: —'til my last day there.

Nixon: That's right. Now look, presently though, Henry, for my own planning, you will be back Sunday night.³

Kissinger: Yes.

Nixon: Because you're going to see the son-of-a-bitch⁴ Friday.

Kissinger: And then Gromyko wants to spend all of Saturday with me.

Nixon: On the details of other things?

Kissinger: Well, I don't know, he—

² Kissinger met Dobrynin in Scowcroft's office on April 19 from 2:35 to 3:17 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) No other record of the meeting has been found.

³ April 23.

⁴ Brezhnev.

Nixon: Well, we'll see.

Kissinger: I have to admit, Mr. President, I would never say to anyone who comes into your office: "Don't spring any surprises on him, because he may not be able to handle it," which is in effect what they told me.

Nixon: Uh-huh.

Kissinger: Now—

Nixon: Oh, I see. That's what you mean.

Kissinger: That's what—

Nixon: Do you think you might see Brezhnev alone?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Or do think you'll have Gromyko there?

Kissinger: They said—

Nixon: —or whatever they want.

Kissinger: I have to be there. I don't know.

Nixon: The point is, if, if—Let me say this. There's one, there's another way this could be played. I'm trying to think of the minimum we need. Let me, let me figure out a way, and then we'll come back to you, to what you were saying. As we were saying over there early this morning, earlier this morning,⁵ what we must not assume, which is what we have been assuming to an extent, and I'm willing to do this in the event they, in the event they cancel the summit or we have to cancel the summit, you know, which we of course are prepared to do. Totally—

Kissinger: Not going to happen.

Nixon: They're not going to do that. We know that. Hell, they wouldn't be having you, if they—Look—

Kissinger: May I—

Nixon: These guys would be crazy to have you over there—

Kissinger: May I make two—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —other points, because you need that for your own thinking—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —before you [unclear]. One is, I told him again, I said "Anatol, I want you to know this. We will continue to bomb while

⁵ Nixon met Kissinger twice in his office in the Executive Office Building that morning, 9:20–9:55 a.m. and 11:20–11:47 a.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Tape recordings of the conversations are *ibid.*, White House Tapes, Recordings of Conversations between Nixon and Kissinger, Executive Office Building, Conversation Nos. EOB 331–13 and EOB 331–16.

I am in Moscow. I don't want Mr. Brezhnev to feel that while he's seeing me and his ally's being bombed that you didn't know that."

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: "Don't consider that a surprise." He said, "I understand." He said, "But you promised me no escalation." I said, "No, I promised you no attacks on Hanoi-Haiphong."

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: He said, "That's no escalation."

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: So now, Mr.—you know that's not a sign of strength.

Nixon: Ha!

Kissinger: The second point I'd like to make to you, Mr. President, is there is this port⁶ about 60 miles south of Haiphong—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —which is just snuggling up on the 20th Parallel.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: Now, our bombing line is the 19th for this week.

Nixon: So you might take that out this week?

Kissinger: But, if I might suggest, Mr. President—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —we ought to try to take that port tomorrow night.

Nixon: All right.

Kissinger: Because a) it's a good signal to the Russians.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: As long, as I've said, no Hanoi-Haiphong. Secondly, they've given us another holding reply out of Hanoi. Every time they give us an unfavorable reply, they get another back.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: And—

Nixon: Good, take it tomorrow night.

[Omitted here is discussion of recommendations of bombing Vietnam.]

Kissinger: Now, another, what I think we can have next week, Mr. President—

Nixon: Yeah.

⁶ Thanh Hoa.

Kissinger: —assuming I have to look at that message from the god-damn North Vietnamese—⁷

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —is—

Nixon: What do I announce, for example, on Wednesday?

Kissinger: Well, you can announce—⁸

Nixon: Or do you want me to go Monday? I can go Monday.

Kissinger: Well, you might well consider Monday. But I can cable you from Moscow. Or let's see what that message is.

Nixon: I see. Do you have adequate communications in Moscow?

Kissinger: Yeah. That's why we took one of your backup planes.

Nixon: Oh, you communicate through the plane?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Good. You don't have to use Beam?

Kissinger: No.

Nixon: Good.

Kissinger: Ah—

Nixon: Great, great. Go ahead.

Kissinger: Well, but we could announce, you could—you see if you could announce that I've been in Moscow, that tomorrow morning we're going to ask for a plenary session, you don't have to say any more.

Nixon: I should do it Monday. You see, Monday's a better day for the Congress.

Kissinger: And—

Nixon: Isn't that your point?

Kissinger: That's my point. I think that's enough. I mean that would shut up everybody—

Nixon: And then I'll make the troop announcement too.

Kissinger: Why not wait with that 'til later in the week?

Nixon: Just say I'll have an announcement on that later in the week.

[Omitted here is further discussion of the announcement on troop withdrawals.]

⁷ Reference is to a North Vietnamese proposal on talks, which Colonel Guay in Paris forwarded in a backchannel message to Colonel Kennedy in Washington on April 19. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1041, Files for the President, Vietnam Negotiations, US–NVN Exchanges, January–October 5, 1972)

⁸ During his address to the nation on April 26, Nixon announced the withdrawal of further U.S. troops from Vietnam by July 1; see Document 171.

Kissinger: And, you see, next week the mere fact, Mr. President—
Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: —that the Soviets discuss Vietnam with me—

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: —in the week that we bombed Hanoi and Haiphong, which these sons-of-bitches are condemning—

Nixon: Now they will ask, “Whose initiative is this meeting taking place?” I think we, and that I’ve got—and that’s another thing. We’ve got to say that it was at their initiative. I don’t want to hear that we went hat in hand to Moscow.

Kissinger: Mr. President, I—

Nixon: Or we can just say mutually.

Kissinger: I’d say it was mutual. These things always are mutual. We have, it’s important—What they are doing is really screwing Hanoi.

Nixon: That’s right.

Kissinger: I mean, imagine if they were bombing Iran and then you received Gromyko here at the White House the same week that they’re bombing one of our allies, what impression that would make on the Shah. There is no possible—

Nixon: Yeah. [unclear] Let me go over a few of the items now.⁹

Kissinger: [unclear]

Nixon: Take some notes. One thing that on the very limit of what we want to get out of these bastards. We’ve got to get something symbolic on the POW thing. Now what I would say is that if we could get the POW’s that have been there 5 years or something like that or sick POW’s. In other words, we release so many and they release, something along that. The second point is that we’ve got to and—

Kissinger: That I must include in the proposal.

Nixon: Huh? Just include that in the proposal.

Kissinger: Yes.

Nixon: Yeah. We just need something. Just a human, a humanitarian gesture. You understand?

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: Don’t you think we can include it?

Kissinger: Essential.

Nixon: I don’t think you’re going to get it.

Kissinger: No, I’ll, I think we must hold out—

Nixon: Yes.

⁹ See Document 125.

Kissinger: Mr. President, we've got some sweating on our—

Nixon: Well, we'll do this.

Kissinger: I'm not—The risk, with your permission—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —but because it's your risk—

Nixon: Yeah, yeah.

Kissinger: If I fail there, it may be because I'm turning the screw too much rather than not enough. Now—

Nixon: No, no. If you turn it too much—There's no greater pleasure frankly that I would have than to leave this office to anybody after having destroyed North Vietnam's capability. Now let me tell you, I feel exactly that way and I'll go out with a clean conscience. But if I leave this office without any use of power, I'm the last President—frankly I'm the only President, the only man with the exception of Connally, believe me, who had the guts to do what we're doing. You know it and I know it. The only man who had the possibility to be President, and Connally's the only other one who could do what I'm doing. Reagan never could make President to begin with and he couldn't handle it.

Kissinger: Connally would do it without your finesse though.

Nixon: Well, Agnew, Agnew would—

Kissinger: Agnew. Well, Agnew would have a—Agnew would be in a worse position than Johnson was.

Nixon: But you know what I mean. The point is, as you know, considering electability, I'm the only person who can do it. Now, Henry, we must not miss this chance. We're going to do it. I'm going to destroy the goddamn country, believe me, I mean destroy it if necessary. And let me say, even the nuclear weapon if necessary. It isn't necessary. But, you know, what I mean is, that shows you the extent to which I'm willing to go. By a nuclear weapon, I mean that we will bomb the living bejessus out of North Vietnam and then if anybody interferes we will threaten the nuclear weapon.

[Omitted here is discussion of domestic opposition to bombing in Vietnam and of the U.S. Presidential election.]

Nixon: So, all we really need out of this at the present time is enough momentum, enough of this situation where it appears, frankly where we go forward with the Soviet summit because that's a big plus for us and where we cool Vietnam enough through the summer that after November we can kill them. Make any kind of a promise at all that we'll do everything to get it past November and then do it. I don't care whether it's a year, 8 months, 6 months, whatever the case is.

Kissinger: The only problem is—

Nixon: You see what I'm getting at. Now within that context, however, let me say that if we cannot get that kind of situation, if there is a risk that somebody else will be here after November who will sell out the country, then, by God, I'll do it. I'll throw, I'm willing to throw myself on the sword. We are not going to let this country be defeated by this little shit-ass country.

Kissinger: We shall not—

Nixon: It's not going to happen.

Kissinger: We'll never have these guys more scared than now.

Nixon: You think so?

Kissinger: The Russians. In November, you'll be in a good position too, but I agree with you in principle.

Nixon: I see.

Kissinger: My judgment, what we ought to get out of this, if we can get the offensive stopped, Mr. President, if we can get back to the levels of March 29th say—

Nixon: Yes.

Kissinger: —before this started—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: —get talks started which the Soviets guarantee, have the Soviets engaged—

Nixon: Right. All right.

Kissinger: —then we will have won this—

Nixon: Then, yes, talks are started—But now wait a minute. Talks are started but are we, but we're going to insist that they be held back over the DMZ?

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: They won't do that. But, on the other hand, on the other hand, that's what you've got to insist on. I think we've got to get that, they get back from the DMZ and so forth. What I'm getting at—

Kissinger: You see, but—

Nixon: But it mustn't appear that we gave up the bombing for talks. That's the thing.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: If we give up bombing for talks, we do what Johnson did.

Kissinger: No, no, but Mr. President, we will continue bombing during the talks. That's the difference. Now I believe, Mr. President, if the Soviets deliver this package that the North Vietnamese will settle during the summit. They'll settle because they will have to figure, having thrown their Sunday punch and having been in effect not supported by the Chinese, not supported by the Russians, in fact squeezed

by the Russians, and bombed by us. Why would they be better off next year at this time than this year?

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: Therefore I would bet, if we can get this—

Nixon: They misjudge American public opinion.

Kissinger: Mr. President.

Nixon: You don't see these people—

Kissinger: No, no. But I will bet that American public opinion—If on Monday night, if everything works well, you can announce this trip, what are the goddamn peaceniks in this country going to say? That a week after, and the talks start again while we are bombing, what are they going to say about bombing then? And if Haig's report is correct—Haig is back, Mr. President.

Nixon: I'm going to talk to him tonight. I thought that you had to go to dinner and—

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: And I want to be sure Haig—I want to take him out on the *Sequoia* and brief me a little.¹⁰

Kissinger: Oh good. Wonderful.

[Omitted here is discussion of the President's schedule, including the announcement of Kissinger's trip.]

Kissinger: I sort of hinted it to Dobrynin but I'm afraid that if we tell them we want to do it—

Nixon: They may want to leak it.

Kissinger: —then they'll start leaking it to their allies ahead of time.

Nixon: That's right. I think what you should do is tell Dobrynin that we will announce this.

Kissinger: Well we may tell him after. Let me see what—

Nixon: Tell him, you can even put it this way: look, we can't keep it secret. And, that's the way I'd do it. We drag it into—

Kissinger: Oh, no, they'll agree to announcing it; that won't be the problem. The problem is—

Nixon: Whether it gets out before—

Kissinger: Well, we would have to keep them—We don't want to encourage them to leak it before. And therefore the later they know

¹⁰ Nixon met Haig and Haldeman that evening aboard the Presidential yacht *Sequoia* on the Potomac River. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) According to Haldeman, "the *Sequoia* dinner with Haig was partly a report on Vietnam and partly the P blasting the press and our enemies in Vietnam." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, p. 442) No other record of the meeting has been found. Regarding Haig's trip to Vietnam, see Document 111.

we're to announce it. The sons-of-bitches always score cheap little points.

Nixon: Well, let's see. That's all right, Henry. Don't worry too much about the leaking. Just so we don't leak it. I mean, if it just leaks a little, we'll then, that will build up the press conference a little. We'll just maintain total dead silence here about everything, where you are and everything. We'll going to play it cold as ice.

Kissinger: I'm with—I'm in Camp David.¹¹

Nixon: That's correct.

Kissinger: What I thought I would do, Mr. President, to take care of the problem, is when I arrive I'll chopper up to Camp David—

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: —then come back with you.

Nixon: Good. Sunday night. What time will you arrive back?

Kissinger: Well, I'll have to let you know. I won't know my schedule 'til I get there.

Nixon: Well, right. But you'll arrive sometime during Sunday afternoon, won't you?

Kissinger: On present plans, yes. By 6 o'clock, I think.

Nixon: Sure.

Kissinger: If I leave Moscow by 2 I'll be there at 6. And so—I think, I think that the North Vietnamese will settle this summer if we can get them to call off their offensive now. That's the main thing.

Nixon: Call it off. I'd punish them a hell of a lot more before [unclear]. But we'll get a lot of [unclear] won't we?

Kissinger: Well, this thing won't end—You see, if out of this meeting, just to war-game it. The best we can get out of this meeting is your announcement on Monday night that I was in Moscow, the strong indication on Vietnam and announcing that we are going back to a plenary on Thursday. It won't fool anybody.

Nixon: Right.

¹¹ In an April 18 memorandum to Kissinger, Jon Howe described the cover story for his trip as follows: "If pressed to explain your absence and that of other members of the staff, it will be acknowledged that you, Sonnenfeldt, Lord, Rodman, Derus, Pineau have gone to Camp David for intensive preparations for the Moscow summit. The President will go to Camp David on Thursday afternoon [April 20] and remain there until your return. He will be reviewing the international situation with you, after meeting with you in Washington on Thursday morning." "Due to the high probability of leaks for this mission," Howe added, "it is important that you bring a hat and not wear your glasses when in exposed areas." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2])

Kissinger: Then they will say about secret talks, say we never comment on secret talks.

Nixon: Right. That's right.

Kissinger: But once we have already—We can finesse that so that everyone will—

Nixon: —know there're secret talks. That's right.

Kissinger: You could just say Le Duc Tho will come back, as you know. Besides the less you say the better—

Nixon: Or I can say so damn little that it doesn't mean much. You know I—

Kissinger: All right.

Nixon: I have no problem with that.

Kissinger: So that's what will happen on Monday if we're lucky. On—then there's a private meeting with Le Duc Tho on Friday. We bomb the living bejeezus out of them all week long if everything goes well.

Nixon: Including this one tomorrow night, right?

Kissinger: Including that one tomorrow night. Then shortly after that we get the de-escalation thing done. So that would give us 2 more weeks of military action, it would, and then if that happens I would guarantee a settlement this summer because they have literally no place to go. Especially—

Nixon: The bombing tomorrow night, do you think, will help [unclear] to understand how we started the diplomatic line?

Kissinger: Yes. Mr. President, I'll bet—

Nixon: I think it will. But what do you think?

Kissinger: Right. What I think is that it's, we'll have some anxious moments. It's a gamble, one of these wild things. No other man in this country would have bombed Hanoi and Haiphong having an invitation to Moscow in his pocket—or in the pocket of his assistant. Now here we're bombing a port while I'm in Moscow. What we are saying—

Nixon: But we, but we're not breaking the deal with Dobrynin.

Kissinger: No, it's right up at the—it will be just what I told him.

Nixon: Right. Not in the Hanoi–Haiphong area.

Kissinger: That's right. And I'll tell Gromyko, you say, tomorrow night, I'll say that, listen, that this is—The more we do now the better. The more reckless we appear, because after all, Mr. President, what we're trying to convince them of is that we are ready to go all the way. The only way we are able to convince them is to do reckless things. For example, all Soviet ships on the way to Haiphong have been stopped—I don't know whether I've had a chance to tell you this—not just the ones from Vladivostok, from everywhere. And they are backing off, or at least they want to avoid them.

Nixon: Well, they don't want to be in the harbor while it's mined.

Kissinger: So, I must tell you, maybe they'll tell me Friday morning, "You son-of-a-bitch. You've just bombed Dong Hua while you are here. There is a limit. Go back on the next plane." That's the risk we are running. But it's precisely, I don't think, that isn't the way Dobrynin talks to me.

Nixon: Well, we're just, we're just going—You told him today that we would continue bombing.

Kissinger: I told him that the only things we will not bomb is Hanoi and Haiphong. My instinct is—

Nixon: That's enough to give them.

Kissinger: My instinct is the more we—After we've taken out Dong Hua then I'd go back to the 19th Parallel and stay there. That still gives us 140 miles to bomb.

Nixon: That's pretty good. With regard to your points here.¹²

Kissinger: Excuse me.

Nixon: I think I would say that, in talking about our relations, I think you could say that you've often heard the President discuss this matter, and he's aware that there are a number of important countries in the world these days, but he says there are only two countries that really matter in terms of power, as of now—the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Others, for example the PRC and Japan, could matter very much in the future. And we have to therefore make our plans accordingly. But today the Soviet Union and everything depends on us. Secondly, that this summit, as distinguished from other summits, comes at a time when the President agrees that we are equal. I would say that. When neither can push the other around. And also at a time where neither can or will allow the other to get an edge militarily. In other words, that is one of the reasons why they are [unclear] arms negotiations with us and the whole purpose of that is to tell them I am not going to allow them to get an advantage. See? That is they're escalating. So we're, this is how it differs from '59, '61 and '67. The other thing, in terms of cosmetics, is to say the President, as a student of history, knows that there have been spirits that have been raised and then dashed. We had the spirit of Vienna. We had the spirit of Camp David. We had the spirit of Glassboro. He does not want this to be that kind of a spirit. He thinks we should think incidentally of a place to meet outside of Moscow or find a different name than Moscow. In other words, that's why I think where we might have a meeting and then we could have the spirit of Dacha or Yasnaya Polynana or something like that. And that this,

¹² See the draft opening statement, attached to Document 125.

however, will be the real thing. Because Brezhnev has talked about the spirit of Yalta, you know, remember when the Agricultural Minister said it would be better to go back to that. Well, we're not going to go back to the goddamn spirit of Yalta. But nevertheless it shows that he's thinking in those terms. So this is in your soft-sell in the beginning.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: The President says let's don't have the spirit of Camp David; that failed. Let's don't have the spirit of Vienna; that was a failure. Let's don't have the spirit of Glassboro; that was a failure. I mean you're reflecting of course on, you're conceding that but it was a goddamn foolish thing. But this is the real thing. Here we're not only going to have the spirit, we're going to have the substance. And that's why this summit is by far the most important meeting in this century. Right? Lay it right out there, you know, in those terms. The President considered the Chinese meeting enormously important because of the future. But we're talking now about the present here in Russia. And he's aware of power. He's aware that China is potentially a great future power. He's also aware of the fact that the Soviet Union is a great present power. And for that reason we have things that bring us together. So—now, one thing I want you to be extremely hard on is, they have a single standard. We can't have this crap in effect that they can support liberation in the non-Communist world but that we, the Brezhnev doctrine must apply in their world.

Kissinger: That's a strong—

Nixon: Let me put it this way. Tell them the President doesn't know the particulars of the Brezhnev doctrine. Now, and the President realizes that the world has changed since 1959 when all over Russia he was harassed by directors of Khrushchev about the Captive Nations resolution.¹³ The President has no illusions about what we can do about liberating Eastern European countries. I'd just put it that way—by arms, force of arms. But the Soviet Union should have no illusions that it can directly or indirectly use force of arms to liberate non-Communist countries. I think you've got to say there's got to be a single standard on that. Now what we're really saying to them in effect, look we'll divide up the world, but by God you're going to respect our side or we won't respect your side. Don't you think that point should be made?

Kissinger: Absolutely. I'll—The one thing, Mr. President. They'll undoubtedly tape what I say.

¹³ Reference is to the resolution passed by Congress annually during the 1950s requiring the President to proclaim a week of prayer for the "captive nations" of Eastern Europe. President Eisenhower issued the proclamation several days before Vice President Nixon left on his trip to the Soviet Union in July 1959. For his account of the Soviet complaints about the resolution during the trip, see Nixon, *RN: Memoirs*, pp. 205–207.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I shouldn't say this is the most important meeting of this century because if they play it for the Chinese—

Nixon: I know.

Kissinger: But I—the thought—

Nixon: In terms of substance, you can say—

Kissinger: Oh, oh, oh. Its immediate impact or something.

Nixon: In terms of its immediate impact on substantive matters it could be, it could be you say, the most important, depending upon what we agree upon in terms of substance. The other was enormously important in terms of changing the whole world, because, you know—All we mean about that is the President thinks his China initiative is the most important thing he's done so far. I'd say that. Because we have to look to the future.

Kissinger: Right.

Nixon: Have to look to the future. But we're talking now about the present. And, we might say, it's very different from when Mr. Kosygin and Mr. Johnson talked about their grandchildren [unclear] at Glassboro. Say that President Nixon wants to talk to Chairman Brezhnev about ourselves and our children. Right now. It's not grandchildren. Children. They like that. The Russians like to use that kind of business [unclear]. Point out, give them a little bullshit to the effect that the President has great respect for Mr. Brezhnev—he's a strong man, a determined man.

Kissinger: I should start with it.

Nixon: He is not, the President is a, the President is a deeply believing ideologue just as Brezhnev is. He has no respect for weak men. He thinks, he thinks Brezhnev's strong. As a matter of fact, and I'd throw in, that's one of the reasons the President respects Mr. Chou En-lai and Mr. Mao Tse-tung, because they are strong men. If you want. Just stick in a little needle there. He respects them. He totally disagreed with them, but we found mutual respect. And the President, however, he sees Mr. Brezhnev, he believes he's a strong man, he deeply believes in his system, but that, and he's not going to do anything that will be detrimental to the security of the Soviet Union, he doesn't expect him to, but the President isn't going to do anything detrimental to the security of the United States. There can't be any winner. No winner in this contest. We both have to win or it will not be successful. In other words, unless the agreement is one that both have a vested interest in preserving, the agreement isn't going to be worth the paper it's written on. And he believes, that this, that you believe, having met, knowing the President, studied Mr. Brezhnev, that they will, that they are the kind of, they are two men who despite their differences in

backgrounds and the rest, could make very great progress, because they're direct men, they're strong men, but they're honest men. I'd put that crack in there. You see? Hey look, you might as well use flattery. You know the Russians use flattery. They're horrible that way. And also they're susceptible to it.

Kissinger: Okay.

Nixon: Now, say, on the other hand, that you're not using flattery. You know, you've got all that [unclear]. The other point is that you ought to get in a very strong line that you've heard, the President is very fatalistic about his position. You know he differs, tell them, you knew and respected President Johnson, you did some missions for him, and President Kennedy, you did some missions for him. But this President, each of them had his strong points, this President differs from them in one important fact. All three were politicians or otherwise they never would have been elected President. But President Nixon is one that you have heard say to the top officials when he decided to go forward on the Haiphong–Hanoi, he said politics be damned. That every one of his advisers have said to you, you can say, Mr. President, Mr. Chairman, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense were not suggesting, every one of them, Rogers—well you would say didn't oppose it, but point out the political risks. Say it that way. That the Presidents said politics be damned we're going to do what's right. And the President is going to take that line right down to the election. I don't want them to have any impression that I was affected one iota by public opinion, by polls, by anything of that sort. Don't you think that's a good point to make?

Kissinger: I think it's crucial.

Nixon: The other point that you've often made to the Chinese. The President is in a rather unique position. He can deliver what the so-called liberals promise because he has the confidence of the right in our country. And there's no President who could go to Moscow at this time, at a time Moscow is fueling a war that has cost 50,000 Americans. No President could go at this time and come back with an arms control agreement and so forth and sell it to the American people except this President. He would have a riot in the streets of the right wing. Now, tell them, now there are still a lot of McCarthyites in this country, Mr. Chairman. You know, tell them that. You know, Mr. Wallace.¹⁴ Scare them with Wallace. You see my point? But this President can deliver. He'll never promise a thing that he doesn't deliver on and he will deliver. In other words, what we have here is two hard-edged, strong

¹⁴ George C. Wallace, the Governor of Alabama, was then seeking the Democratic nomination for President.

men who can, can make this deal. [unclear] But to have a successful summit it's indispensable, not just necessary, but indispensable, to have some progress in Vietnam. That's all.

Kissinger: But some significant progress.

Nixon: Oh yeah. Fine. You know what I mean. You're going to sell them on it. I would point out on the trade. I don't think they care much about trade any more than the others.

Kissinger: Oh yeah. Oh, no, no, no, no.

Nixon: They do? But on the trade, you could say the President has looked this over. You could say, "Do you realize, Mr. Chairman, that there isn't a chance that the Congress would approve favored nation treatment, which has to be passed by our Congress, with the present state of Soviet-American relations, particularly in view of the Soviet support of North Vietnam? Not a chance. Now the President can get it through and he will. But that's why a cooling in Vietnam is essential. And then if we do that more is to come, favored nation, credits," all as I told Gromyko,¹⁵ a whole new world opens up. And I'll sell it to the Congress and I can do it. I think you need a little of that in the talks. Don't you agree?

Kissinger: Absolutely.

Nixon: Congress won't approve credits, won't approve favored nation treatment, if political tensions exist at the present level. [Nixon appears to be talking to someone else.]

Kissinger: On SALT, Mr. President.

Nixon: Yeah, let's go through some of those.

Kissinger: You don't have to make a decision on these various options except, are you prepared—

Nixon: I might with these things. I didn't mean that.

Kissinger: —are you prepared to give up on the submarines?

Nixon: Am I? Of course. I'm prepared to give up on it—I think we can sell it, can we?

Kissinger: Well, I think I'm going to tell that son-of-a—I'm going to tell Moorer the President has just said, your bloody honor, that you are going do it.

Nixon: But on that, let's give it up provided we have a hard-line that we immediately send our negotiators back to work on the SLBMs, you know, [unclear].

Kissinger: Right.

¹⁵ Nixon met Gromyko at the White House on September 29, 1971; see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

Nixon: But on that, I don't know, get what you can, but I must say that, you know—Let me put it—that we get everything we can, recognizing that we cannot have an arms control agreement that looks as if we got took. They're going to analyze that son-of-a-bitch right down to the wire teeth. So do the best you can. That's all I can say. And the same is true about whether we have a Washington and a Malmstrom, and all the rest. You know. Do the best you can.

Kissinger: All right.

Nixon: You're a hard worker. Do the best you can.

Kissinger: All right.

Nixon: Fair enough?

Kissinger: All right.

Nixon: I've looked at all these things. But if I were to start to say well take this, don't take that and so forth, this is a matter that will have to be determined—

Kissinger: Frankly, Mr. President, whether we get a 150 more interceptors or not is just of no consequence.

Nixon: Yeah. Listen, I don't think it makes a hell of a lot of difference. On the SLBMs, actually I think, I think it's to our advantage, if they don't settle, to continue to build some. Maybe not. Maybe we—You know we've got a hell of a budget problem. We've got to cut it down, we've got to cut 5 billion dollars off next year's defense budget. So, I don't want to [unclear] unless we've got some settlement with the Russians.

[Omitted here is further discussion of the budget and of the President's schedule.]

Nixon: On SALT, I know [unclear] but—Of course, Gerry Smith would give it all away, wouldn't he? What's he say about SLBMs? Does he want to give them away?

Kissinger: Well, what—Gerry would settle for—

Nixon: [chuckles] Right.

Kissinger: —for one—

Nixon: Zero ABMs. Right?

Kissinger: —for one site each. Plus giving up SLBMs. But we cannot—

Nixon: No.

Kissinger: Now, the only trouble is that we face two sites and one of them could be Washington. That puts them into the—If we say each side can complete what it's building, that's a reasonable proposition.

Nixon: All right. Let's do that.

Kissinger: But if we say we will scrap Malmstrom and go to Washington—

Nixon: I don't want to do that. I don't want Washington. I don't like the feel of Washington. I don't like that goddamn command airplane or any of this. I don't believe in all that crap. I really don't.

Kissinger: But we may be—

Nixon: Do the best you can not to add Washington. I think the idea of building a new system around Washington is stupid. Now that's my view. Very stupid. I do feel strongly about that.

Kissinger: Well, let me—

Nixon: I'd even rather build one-on-one than build Washington.

Kissinger: No, no. One-on-one is morally wrong for us.

Nixon: All right.

Kissinger: Because we'd just be getting a [unclear].

Nixon: All right. Good. Now my point is, I just don't see what's in it for us to do Washington. I just don't see what's in it for us to do Washington. I think we should complete what we've done. Both of us. Then maybe, and then maybe we'll give on SLBMs.

Kissinger: Laird has recommended Washington. Gerry Smith has recommended Washington. Now—

Nixon: Well. Why?

Kissinger: I think anything we get so that we can say we got a better deal on ABM.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: We have to get an advantage on ABM, a little bit. Not that it makes a hell of a lot of difference. But—

Nixon: I know you didn't want to accept it if it doesn't look all right to the folks.

Kissinger: Well, that was in—probably do. As you say—

Nixon: I don't know. I—It's hard for me to figure it out from the stuff I read here. [unclear].

Kissinger: Well, it is a terribly complicated thing. Basically we'd be better off with a two—with a simple formula that each side can complete what they've got. However, that runs into some problems with Laird. Therefore, if they'd let us have Washington and Grand Forks—what screwed us on Malmstrom was the strike. If that strike hadn't happened there'd be no issue; it would be two-thirds finished now.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: If we can have Washington, Grand Forks, and they finesse it somewhat so that we can say we got one, somewhat more than they did on the ABM, it would help us domestically. It would also help us in our position vis-à-vis them.

Nixon: All right.

Kissinger: But, you see, the problem is to make that plausible, we'd have to crash on submarines. And say that we're doing more submarine building.

Nixon: [turning pages] European security concerns me. I think we're getting sucked in there.

Kissinger: But there we're pretty well sucked in.

Nixon: Now, what are you going to do? Have European security without any linkage with MBFR?

Kissinger: Well, that's what most of our allies want. And that's what—

Nixon: I know. Let me tell you, when you have European security you can damn near forget NATO. It's going to be very—

Kissinger: That I'm convinced of too.

Nixon: But I am also rather convinced that NATO is done anyway so that's—just between you and me. That's nothing to—

Kissinger: I think European security won't hurt it as much as MF—MBFR will.

Nixon: Well, maybe then we'll just take European security and talk about peace and good will and exchange. Is that what you mean?

Kissinger: That would have a slight advantage. But that is not a decision, which we now need to take.

Nixon: No, I know.

Kissinger: Because—

Nixon: On the other hand, they'll want to announce a European security conference.

Kissinger: At the summit.

Nixon: That's right. But you've got to be in position to tell them we're willing. Bilateral issues—just don't give anything, you know, we won't [unclear] a goddamn thing—unless we get something on Vietnam. It's cold turkey. And I mean not a goddamn thing. [unclear] They know that—they know that Vietnam is an indispensable ingredient of anything we do in the other area. Don't you agree?

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: You see, the understandings of '68¹⁶ being in historical perspective. Jesus Christ. We've been having the understandings of '68 for 4 years and killed thousands of Americans in that period. I know. I

¹⁶ Reference is to the understanding announced by President Johnson on October 31, 1968, that the United States would no longer bomb North Vietnam, and that North Vietnam, in return, would no longer violate the demilitarized zone. See *Public Papers: Johnson, 1968–69*, vol. II, pp. 1099–1103. Also see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. VII, Vietnam, September 1968–January 1969, Document 169.

don't think many Americans are going to like that. Well, I guess you're just saying we're going to continue the bombing.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: But the understandings of '68 must be implemented with positive negotiating. That's the difference. That's what has not happened. We've had the understandings of '68, but not to go back to the talk-talk phase. We're going back to the negotiate-negotiate phase now.

Kissinger: Also—Mr. President, I think, leaving aside whatever we agree on, I think if they force them to call off their offensive, particularly since this camp had been for another 2 to 3 weeks where they suffer some more horrendous casualties—

Nixon: Yeah, yeah.

Kissinger: —so that the visible outcome of this was an offensive that failed—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —through a massive demonstration of U.S. power—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —that Moscow talked about Vietnam with us while we were bombing Hanoi and Haiphong, if all of this can be done, then, I believe, Hanoi during the course of this summer will settle with us. What's their prospect? They would have to be sure you lose. It isn't enough for them to think that you might lose.

Nixon: No.

Kissinger: I cannot, I don't know what your polls show, but I cannot believe that you would be anything other than even money—anything less than even money.

Nixon: By the time of the election?

Kissinger: Well, by the time they have to make their decision, Mr. President. See, if they run you right down to election day, they're in bad trouble.

Nixon: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It will be an even money election.

Kissinger: If by July it looks 53–47 for a Democrat, then I think they'll play it out to November. But in my view it's going to look more likely 53–47 for you.

Nixon: Could be.

Kissinger: And if it does—

Nixon: [unclear]

Kissinger: Well, assume the scenario that I have described.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: If you assume that scenario, then there will be a negotiation on Vietnam and you will have been in Moscow and had had a

very successful Moscow meeting. Therefore by July, I cannot see anything that would put you into a minority position in the polls. That's when they have to make their decision whether they're going to settle or not, because if they play it to October and you get even further ahead in the polls, you may not want to settle in October.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: So, if they're going to settle, they're going to settle in September. By September. So in my judgment, we are now in a really crucial period, and the practical effect of this proposal is going to be that they will have to settle.

Nixon: You have to realize too that they are quite aware of American political things because there isn't any question but that they agreed to the bombing halt before the election because Johnson convinced them that that was the only chance of defeating Nixon.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: And Harriman—

Kissinger: As I told you all that fall, what the game was.

Nixon: That's what they were doing. Don't you agree?

Kissinger: Oh yeah. And that's why, now they've tuned it too finely.

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: Because—

Nixon: They held out too long on—and Harriman didn't get, or whoever it was didn't get Thieu lined up.

Kissinger: You would have to appear to be in a hopeless position—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: For them to—

Nixon: We don't even have to be ahead in the polls. We just got to be close.

Kissinger: If you are—

Nixon: We got to be close.

Kissinger: You have to be even or slightly ahead or very tingly behind.

Nixon: Well, they aren't that fine-tuned, the polls are not, so they'd be scared to death if they showed 52–48 against us.

Kissinger: Yeah. That's what I mean.

Nixon: We still win.

Kissinger: But it won't—I don't honestly see how it could show 52–48 against you.

Nixon: Who knows.

Kissinger: I think, Mr. President, in fact, that once there's a Democratic candidate your polls are going to go up.

[Omitted here is discussion of the situation in Vietnam, the President's schedule, and arrangements at Camp David, including the cover story for Kissinger's trip to Moscow. Kissinger left the White House at 8:20 p.m. and returned home before attending a private dinner in Washington. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) In his memoirs Kissinger noted that he departed for Moscow on a Presidential aircraft shortly after 1 a.m. on April 20, accompanied not only by six staff members and two Secret Service agents but also by Dobrynin, "since it was the quickest way for him to get to Moscow." (*White House Years*, page 1124) Dobrynin also described the departure in his memoirs: "In deep secrecy, I drove in the dead of night in an embassy car to a prearranged place, where a station wagon from the White House was waiting for me. It took me to a military airfield near Washington [Andrews Air Force Base]. Kissinger also arrived secretly. On our way to Moscow we made a refueling stop at a NATO air base in Britain. Kissinger told me, half-joking, not to get out of the plane for exercise because they would faint if they saw the Soviet Ambassador walking around their super-secret base. To preserve the secrecy of our mission, he did not get out either." (*In Confidence*, pages 244–245) According to his trip itinerary, Kissinger was scheduled to arrive in Moscow at 7:50 p.m. on April 20. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2])]

127. Memorandum From President Nixon to his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 20, 1972.

After reflection on your briefing book,² I believe the opening statement should be much briefer. The general themes should all be mentioned. But I think we have to have in mind the character of the man we are meeting—Brezhnev is simple, direct, blunt and brutal. The sophisticated approach we used with the Chinese is neither necessary nor wise with him. On the contrary while you should, of course, be gracious and forthcoming, particularly at the beginning of your statement, I think you should very quickly get to the heart of the matter. You will find that his interest during your talks with him will be to filibuster in order to spend relatively little time on Vietnam. Our goal in talking to him is solely to get action on Vietnam. Anything you accomplish with him on the summit you could have accomplished just as well with Dobrynin. In other words, you should approach these talks recognizing that Brezhnev and probably Gromyko as well, will have as their prime aim getting you to talk about the summit. Your primary interest, in fact your indispensable interest, will be to get them to talk about Vietnam.

I know this is your goal and the latter part of your opening statement gets to that point and makes it strongly. But I think it would be well not to spend too much time on general philosophy, what kind of a man the President is, etc., having in mind the fact that he may pick you up on those subjects and delight in digressing in those fields so as to avoid coming to the tough question of discussing Vietnam which, of course, is your primary interest.

I think you can get across to him in asides what kind of a man the President is, but I think the most effective way you can get it across is to be tough as nails and insist on talking about Vietnam *first* and not

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Eyes Only. Rose Mary Woods transcribed the memorandum from Nixon's taped dictation; copies of the final version, and of a draft with Nixon's handwritten revisions, are *ibid.*, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow. In a message forwarding the memorandum to Kissinger, who was en route to Moscow, Haig wrote: "The President wanted you to have the attached memorandum as soon as possible." A stamped notation indicates that the White House Situation Room sent the message at 12:03 p.m. as Sitto 5 from Haig to Kissinger. (*Ibid.*, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]) According to Kissinger, he was "on the plane heading for Moscow" when the President's memorandum arrived. (Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1136–1137)

² Document 125.

let him get away with discussions of philosophy, personalities or other summit agenda items until you have reached some sort of understanding on Vietnam.

I realize you are going to have to play this pretty much by ear, depending on developments, and I have the utmost confidence in the decisions you will make on the spot. I have had some additional thoughts with regard to what you might seek to get out of the meeting.

First, it might be worthwhile to indicate quite bluntly that from now until the summit, the Soviets should desist from strong rhetoric in support of Vietnam. This was no problem before your trip. However, after your trip if the Soviet continues to indicate that they are giving all-out support to Vietnam our critics will jump on your trip as being a failure. This will be much more the case with the Soviets, incidentally, than with the Chinese. With the Chinese, we made no pretense about having made progress on Vietnam. On the other hand, with the Soviets we are going to try to leave the impression that we have made some progress.

With regard to a statement that could be issued jointly, one possibility would be along these lines: "The Soviet Government and the Government of the United States have agreed that Vietnam will be one of the priority agenda items at the summit meeting. The two governments will work toward achieving a negotiated settlement of the conflict."

To recap, I recognize that it will be important for the first half hour or so of your meeting with Brezhnev to set the stage with some of the personal observations and the historic opportunity of having a different spirit out of this summit than others. But I think that after you have gone through that for about a half hour you should quite bluntly turn to Vietnam and say, in effect, "Mr. Chairman, there are many important matters we should discuss. I can assure you that the President will be very forthcoming in meeting you half-way in reaching agreement which will be to our mutual advantage and of historic and profound significance in terms of creating conditions which could lead to a more peaceful and prosperous world. But I know that you are a very direct, honest and strong man. The President, as Mr. Dobrynin and Mr. Gromyko have probably reported to you, is also a very direct, honest and strong man. He believes in coming to the point, just as you believe in coming to the point. The point we both have to recognize is that we cannot have useful discussions on the other items on the agenda unless and until we get down to brass tacks on Vietnam and make some progress on that issue."

You are absolutely correct in your concern that we do not get ourselves tied down insofar as restricting our bombing activities because of the possibilities, either of another plenary session or of the upcoming Russian summit. Brezhnev must directly be told that as long as the

invading North Vietnamese are killing South Vietnamese and Americans in the South the President will have to resort to bombing military installations in the North that are supporting that invasion. When the invading armies withdraw to the North, the bombing of the North will stop but not until then.

Our meeting with Haig was excellent,³ but one thing that came through loud and clear is that our action in hitting Haiphong and Hanoi has had a dramatic effect on the morale of South Vietnamese forces and, perhaps just as important, the morale of our remaining forces in Vietnam. We both know that it has also had a significant effect in building up the morale of that decreasing number of Americans who support us on attempting to avoid a humiliating defeat in Vietnam. If our understanding with the Russians *in any way* indicates that we have been taken in and consequently are letting up on our bombing while the enemy continues its own level of fighting, we will have the worst of both worlds—the contempt of the left and total frustration of the right.

This brings me to the announcement of your visit in the event the Russians will agree to one. It *must*, at the very least, include some wording to indicate, directly or indirectly, that Vietnam was discussed and progress made on it.⁴

³ See footnote 10, Document 126.

⁴ Kissinger sent an immediate response from Moscow: “President’s message received. Please assure him it will be carried out meticulously.” A stamped note indicates that the White House Situation Room received the message at 12:16 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK’s Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]) For the more substantive reply, see Document 130.

128. Editorial Note

On April 20, 1972, President Nixon met with Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman from 8:41 to 9:38 a.m. in the Oval Office to discuss the Moscow trip of Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Kissinger. During the discussion Nixon mentioned his memorandum to Kissinger (Document 127), which he had just given Rose Mary Woods, his personal secretary, for correction.

Nixon: “I woke up early, about 3 o’clock this morning, and I’ve written a memorandum to Henry. I didn’t want to say it while he was here because, you know, he was so uptight, he worked so hard. But he had a very, very long, long, long statement he was going to make in

the open—he calls it an opening speech. He’s always got this fetish for making an opening speech. He does it to the Vietnamese. Now he’s going to do it to Brezhnev. With the Chinese, I think, it was all right. With the Communists, the Soviet, it is not all right. He’s writing for history, you see, that’s his point. And I put the thing, I’ll let you see the memorandum, it’s ‘Eyes Only,’ after I finish it. I’d like to cable it to him tonight in a couple hours. I put it to him this way. I said what you have to realize is that Brezhnev’s and Gromyko’s purpose will be to filibuster on Vietnam and talk about the summit. Your purpose is to talk about Vietnam. In other words, their desire is to talk about the summit, your desire is to talk about Vietnam. I’m saying that for two reasons. One, because Henry wants to talk about the summit. He just loves this excuse for going over there.”

Haldeman: “You’re damn right. He—”

Nixon: “You see?”

Haldeman: “There’s no question.”

Nixon: “And he’s, he’s believing now that he’s getting to do what he’s always wanted to do. To set up the summit. So I put this brutally to him, very tough. And I’m also saying—I read his statement again and I thought it was very good on the substance but he has to be brief—that Brezhnev was as distinguished as Chou En-lai, he was a simple, direct, brutal man. So he should be very simple and very direct after a few, just a few, you know, courteous remarks at the beginning. You see Henry is fine in negotiation after, when you get down to the specifics and the rest. He doesn’t, Bob, have—[sigh] Well, he gets so wound up and writing for history and the rest that sometimes he misses the point that you just don’t have to beat a goddamn subject to death.”

Haldeman: “Yeah.”

Nixon: “Sometimes you just go at it, you flick it, and you come back and so forth. You see what I mean?”

Haldeman: “But that’s not Henry’s way—”

Nixon: “No.”

Haldeman: “—and I don’t think we’ll ever get him to.”

Nixon: “No. [Nixon banging the desk] You go on this as I have—”

Haldeman: “Be specific.”

Nixon: “I’ve told him that, goddamn it, he’s got to get it simple, and he’s got to be direct and he’s got to get them on the subject of Vietnam [unclear]. Otherwise, what will happen is he’ll spend the day with Brezhnev. And I know the Communists. And they’ll—and Henry has a lot of philosophical stuff in there about how the cold war had changed, how obviously that, that Nixon in the old days thought of the whole Communist world as being monolith, which is true, that they thought the United States was being a threat to them, which is not true.

He's dead wrong on that, that's such an old Harvard line. As Dulles once said to me, the Soviet army don't believe we're surrounding them and the rest. That's just bullshit. It's like, Bob, he says—"

Haldeman: "It's rhetoric for their own purposes."

Nixon: "The thing is that he—And then a lot of stuff about, you know, in a very, in a way that Chou En-lai would enjoy enormously. But, you see, if you go into that kind of subject, let me tell why the danger of it is. The danger of it is if you go into that kind of subject, Brezhnev will immediately seize on that, pick you up on point after point after point, and Henry will be involved in that debate all day long. And then about 5 o'clock, Brezhnev will have to go and Henry will say, just a minute Mr. Chairman, can we talk about Vietnam? You see the point? That's exactly what he'll do. Exactly what he'll do. I predict it. Well, Henry, my way of handling him would be to go ahead and say, 'Mr. Chairman, I first want to say on the summit, it's going well. I've been talking with Dobrynin and we're all, and the President, everything is possible, the President will meet you half way on every major issue. Now, and I want to talk about that after we've concluded. However, without some settlement, some progress on Vietnam, significant progress on Vietnam, there can be no successful summit, and there may not even be a summit. 'Cause I have to be very direct with you. And I want you to know that. I know you're a direct man, and the President is a direct man. And you like it straight from the shoulder. And here it is. And I think we ought to talk about Vietnam and see what we can work out.' And get right into it from the start."

Haldeman: "In about the first paragraph."

Nixon: "Well, Henry said, I, he came in, and he belabored this, and I, because, I didn't push him, he was pretty emotional, you know, getting ready to go. But he, believe it Bob, he had, with translation, it would have taken about an hour and 15 minutes or an hour and a half, of general stuff, before he ever got to Vietnam. He got to Vietnam. He said I'm doing this is in order to sort of pave the way to Vietnam. But he talked about all the summit issues and he talked about all of those philosophical issues and then came to Vietnam and said now we've got to talk about Vietnam. That ain't no way to do it."

Haldeman: "I don't think so."

Nixon: "You see? Well, I know it's not the way because I know these bastards. These, these people are too smart and Henry will get his pants taken off. Look—"

Haldeman: "He ends up playing their game instead of ours."

Nixon: "Bob, his eight meetings with the North Vietnamese are not examples of good negotiating. They were in terms of the little nit-pick crap, you know, that he got to but they didn't give him anything in terms of substance. I mean he, you know, he farted around and this, that, and the other thing."

Haldeman: "Yeah."

Nixon: "But the point is that, Henry, when he gets into this, he spends hour and hours and hours on philosophical bullshit, you see, and arguing with them. And that is totally irrelevant to the whole thing. Now Rogers goes too much the other way. Rogers solely goes for what can be agreed on, you see?"

Haldeman: "Yeah."

Nixon: "And doesn't put it—You've got to put a little subtlety around it, you know. You've got to make it appear that you're talking philosophically. But very, very early in the game you've got to hit them in the solar plexus. You've got to get their attention. Stick that knife in deep and turn it. Well, that's what I was doing last night. But it's important, you know."

After Woods returned with a revised version of his memorandum, Nixon read much of the text aloud. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Haldeman, April 20, 1972, 8:41–9:38 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 714–2) Haldeman later commented in his diary: "Henry isn't going to like it, because it doesn't follow his style, but he may still go ahead and do it the way the P told him to." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, page 443)

As soon as Haldeman left, Secretary of the Treasury Connally entered the Oval Office for a wide-ranging discussion on domestic politics and foreign policy. After revealing the fact of the secret trip, Nixon reported the gist of his memorandum to Kissinger.

Nixon: "I dictated it last night at 3 o'clock 'cause I wasn't satisfied with his talking points; they were too long. I said be direct, be blunt, say [unclear] we'll do everything you want on the summit, the President will meet you half way, but we can't do anything unless you do something about Vietnam. So it's going to be cold turkey and we're going to find out. Now if they don't do anything on Vietnam, if they filibuster, if they don't give anything, then we're going to be up against a hard spot. The hard spot will be that then we may have to go to a blockade, because we cannot bluff on this and not carry it out."

Connally: "No."

Nixon: "If we go to a blockade, there will be all hell to pay around here. But, we will, you know what I mean, riots and all that sort of thing, but we will put in on the basis that we're going to remain until they withdraw their forces from South Vietnam and return our POWs."

Connally: "I think, I think it's wise."

Nixon: "Now that's going to be, that's the game we're playing. Now it's an enormously—"

Connally: "Tough."

Nixon: "—tough game."

Connally: "It sure is."

Nixon: "Because you see, the thing where the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese misjudged, and where Moscow misjudged, is that they thought that because of the political situation, that I would cave—"

Connally: "Right."

Nixon: "—as Johnson did."

Connally: "That's right."

Nixon: "And they read that I'm a political man. They're quite correct. But what they didn't realize is that I know that nobody can be President of this country, and have a viable foreign policy, if the United States suffers a defeat fighting the miserable, little Communist country, fueled by Soviet arms, and that the world is going to be a very dangerous place to live in. If the Soviet succeeds here, it will try the Middle East, it will try everywhere else, and the United States will roll over and play dead. So therefore this is the supreme test." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Connally, April 20, 1972, 9:38–11:06 a.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 714–4)

In a meeting with Deputy Assistant to the President Haig at 12:30 p.m., Nixon reviewed the Soviet role in Vietnamese peace negotiations, including plans to resume both plenary sessions and secret talks in Paris. The two men also discussed Kissinger's memorandum (Document 125) and Nixon's response, which the White House Situation Room had just relayed to the plane en route to Moscow.

Nixon: "Well, I woke up last night, and I read Henry's thing yesterday. And I didn't want to disturb him when he was getting ready to go. I think it's so vitally important for him to know, to trust—You know Henry. We have to face the fact, that he wanted to take this trip purely for the summit and would have taken it purely for the summit if we hadn't vetoed. That wouldn't have worked. Now Henry, of course, [unclear] priority, but on the other hand, he would consider it to be a success, if he just comes back and says well we worked out the agenda for the summit and the communiqué. No, no, no. It will not be. And—Did you read the memorandum?"

Haig: "I did. And it's—"

Nixon: "What did you think?"

Haig: "—precisely what I told him when I saw him last night. I said my greatest fear, and I think it will be the President's, is that we've done this now—"

Nixon: "That's right."

Haig: "—and it cannot appear to be a backing away. And I said that was Thieu's concern. And somehow we've got to be sure that Vietnam is the purpose of this trip and is portrayed as that."

Nixon: "What did he say?"

Haig: "He said he agreed completely. And he said that what we have to do is, hopefully, if they agree, to come out on Tuesday, announce that, announce the plenary, and we will defuse these bastards totally."

Nixon: "Well, if, for example, on Tuesday, you saw a very little simple line, I would continue to think I couldn't agree with that."

Haig: "I don't either."

Nixon: "[unclear] So you would agree that they would work toward a negotiated settlement of the conflict. Now that, that is a hell of a—They should say that."

Haig: "That's right. What worried me was that we would announce the plenary, you see, without having referred to Moscow and then it would look like we backed down—"

Nixon: "The plenary? No, I thought we turned that down today."

Haig: "Yes, sir. But in order to meet secretly, you see, now we're going to have to announce the 27th."

Nixon: "Yeah. When is the secret meeting? When is that? Did you read the message?"

Haig: "May 2nd. May 2nd."

Nixon: "Well, that's all right. That's the bottom line—"

Haig: "And it would be ideal if we can have the Soviets—"

Nixon: "But on the other hand, on the other hand, does this mean that the moment we make the announcement we have to de-escalate the bombing?"

Haig: "No, sir. He's not going to do that. And of course we might drop down from the Hanoi area and keep it down low as a sign of good will 'til we have our meeting. But we'll keep, we're going to bang tonight." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation between Nixon and Haig, April 20, 1972, 12:30–12:57 p.m., Oval Office, Conversation No. 714–14) The editors transcribed the portions of the conversations printed here specifically for this volume.

129. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 20, 1972, 11–11:40 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Soviet Foreign Minister
Anatoliy Dobrynin, USSR Ambassador to the United States

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Miss Julienne Pineau, Notetaker

Gromyko: We have a folk tale which is called “The Invisible Hat” and it is probably not an exclusively Russian tale anyway. But anyone who puts on this hat become invisible, and so I guess in your situation you should don a hat like that so no one will see you here except those who are supposed to.

Kissinger: You have done it very efficiently. You know who will be very angry with me? The Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Dobrynin: Why?

Kissinger: He absolutely insists I should make a secret visit to Jamaica.

Dobrynin: Secret?

Kissinger: Yes.

Dobrynin: And make it open after?

Kissinger: Yes.

Dobrynin: Nice place I am told.

Gromyko: So, how are you?

Kissinger: Fine. Had a good trip, slept on the plane, and have been treated very well here. But I am afraid I am going to gain too much weight here.

Dobrynin: We could put you on a diet tomorrow.

Gromyko: We are very pleased to see you here and we are ready to exchange views. And we are ready, as I say, to exchange views with you on the questions that are of interest to you and to ourselves. The questions have more or less clearly been delineated. I wish to say right away . . . to mention the level of the talks you will have in this country. You will be talking on matters of interest with Leonid Brezhnev and I will be there with him too. If you have any observations to make

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in Kissinger’s room at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

or wishes to express at this time, I am glad to hear anything you have to say.

Kissinger: First of all I am here because the President believes that our two countries have a historic opportunity at this moment to put our relationship on an entirely new basis. Through a combination of circumstances we can advance on a broad front, an opportunity which has not existed until this period.

Gromyko: All right, please go on.

Kissinger: But also I am here to see whether there is a possibility of removing the one obstacle we can now see that could produce consequences that I don't believe either of our countries want, and, which so far as we can tell are not in the interest of our two countries—namely Southeast Asia. I am authorized by the President to deal with you on a broad range of issues concerning the summit and also what will happen in the next month elsewhere. These are my main tasks in coming here.

Gromyko: During the conversations the position of the Soviet leadership on the cardinal problems which will be the subject of discussions will be set out to you in a clearcut way in a spirit of frankness. We understand and appreciate your emphasis on the significance of the relationship between our two countries and on the problems that will be the subject of discussions. This we fully appreciate, and for our part we attach great importance to you as an eminent representative of the President of the United States. This alone says a great deal of the importance of the forthcoming meetings and discussions with you. As regards the forthcoming meetings between the leaders of the Soviet State and President Nixon, you will certainly be aware from the communications made to the President through channels you are familiar with that we attach very great importance to the meetings and talks with the President. And this is what guided our leaders in taking the decision at the very outset regarding the forthcoming meetings with the President, and I wish also to emphasize it is from these considerations also that preparations are going forward on the part of General Secretary of the CPSU Leonid I. Brezhnev.

Kissinger: We believe also that the preparations have gone forward in a positive and businesslike fashion. And we will do all in our power to see that these meetings won't just be an episode but will start a whole sequence of events.

Gromyko: We are certainly quite sure that you are indeed making intensive preparations for the meetings and naturally I wish to say we too are preparing for them. As regards the preparations for that meeting, these meetings you will have here will have particular significance. We believe our two sides have decided to carry out their preparations deeply aware of the importance of the forthcoming meetings and the great responsibility that devolves on both sides in these meetings.

Kissinger: Perhaps what we should do first is develop a work plan: How long do you envision these meetings to last, what will be discussed, and how do you foresee the outcome for the coming meetings?

Gromyko: How long can you stay here?

Kissinger: I cannot stay longer than Monday.² I must be back Monday night. I prefer to leave Sunday night but I can stay to Monday if it is worthwhile.

Gromyko: Tomorrow Leonid Brezhnev is meeting you at 12:00. The meeting will continue through the afternoon. If necessary you have also the day after, first half of day, and if necessary the second half of day in the afternoon.

Kissinger: We are talking now about what, Brezhnev?

Gromyko: Yes, and then if necessary the day after.

Kissinger: You mean Sunday?

Gromyko: Yes. Or it is prohibited to work on Sunday?

Kissinger: Not for me.

Gromyko: What is the custom in Washington? What is the custom in the White House?

Kissinger: In the White House the custom is not to work on Sunday; in my office the custom is to work.

Gromyko: So it is not surprising.

Dobrynin: No, is necessary.

Kissinger: We should work on preparations that are necessary in Washington, but we don't have to do it tonight. Decide how long you think the meetings will last. But perhaps I can do this with Mr. Brezhnev.

Dobrynin: After the first meeting.

Kissinger: Right. I must be back in Washington and be seen in Washington sometime Monday evening, but I can stay here as late as 5:00 on Monday for that.

Gromyko: You have the advantage as far as time is concerned. You follow the sun.

Kissinger: So, we will decide tomorrow the length of the stay. As for substance, how do you propose we proceed?

Gromyko: I was told by the Ambassador in the beginning you probably are going to make some kind of observations, if my information is correct.

Kissinger: He gives me so much caviar and vodka I always tell him everything.

² April 24.

Gromyko: Probably this is mutual.

Kissinger: No, we have a very frank relationship on both sides.

Gromyko: This is good.

Kissinger: And only one suggestion I have made to the Ambassador. I might just as well bring all my assistants to the meeting, or does he not like so many?

Dobrynin: How many do you have?

Kissinger: Four.

Dobrynin: Think that is too many.

Kissinger: Okay, I will bring two and a girl; I will work out the rotation. I will bring tomorrow Sonnenfeldt and Lord.

Gromyko: And all questions of interest for you and for us can be discussed. I have my own problems we think should be discussed with the President.

Kissinger: I can just judge my knowledge of the President . . . Mr. Foreign Minister, you are wanted.

Gromyko: [Goes to door, talks with someone there, returns]:³ Maybe we should banish all telephones both in Washington and Moscow as the basic violators of human peace and quiet.

Kissinger: I agree. I am in an ideal situation here.

Gromyko: You have the advantage.

Kissinger: Yes.

Dobrynin: But you have a plane, so you are still in communication.

Kissinger: But not by telephone. I think, Mr. Foreign Minister, from my experience with the President, the more we can discuss some of the subjects we know he and Mr. Brezhnev will discuss, the further he will be able to go, because then he can prepare himself properly. So I am ready to discuss to any subject that will come up.

Gromyko: It is very good.

Kissinger: You realize you have driven my friend Smith crazy.

Gromyko: Why?

Kissinger: By calling Semenov back.

Gromyko: But it is helpful. He will stay in Helsinki.

Kissinger: Yes.

Gromyko: Nice place.

Kissinger: But he doesn't know I am coming here. He has two theories.

Gromyko: What are they?

³ All brackets in the source text.

Kissinger: One is that you are angry with us and have called your negotiator back. The other is that you are prepared to yield to all our points. [laughter]

Gromyko: Just regular consultation.

Kissinger: That's what we have said. It was a natural thing for him to come back.

Gromyko: It takes only one hour.

Kissinger: It was the most natural thing.

Gromyko: Absolutely. So all problems involved we will discuss preliminarily and they will be subjects for discussion here. They are known to you and to us.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Gromyko: In what order? . . . I think when we here have considerations probably you will speak at the beginning. Anyway both sides are free to make suggestions on how to proceed.

Kissinger: We will proceed in the manner most likely to achieve the results we want. We agree on the objective.

Gromyko: And mutually acceptable.

Kissinger: Exactly.

Gromyko: The main thing is the substance of the matter.

Kissinger: Exactly. So we meet then at noon tomorrow?

Gromyko: Absolutely right, at noon. The place of the meeting is this general region, not far from this house by car, very close, maybe just one minute. Very close. In this general area. This is your first visit to Moscow?

Kissinger: I have been in Moscow once with a scientific group.⁴

Gromyko: When was that?

Kissinger: In 1967 and 1968, just at New Year's Day.

Gromyko: How long did you stay?

Kissinger: Five days in Moscow and one in Leningrad and they were solving all the disarmament problems at the time.

Gromyko: That time you were thinking, thinking, thinking. This time you are thinking, thinking, thinking and working, working, working.

Kissinger: Some people think I don't think and just work. Among the issues, are there any to which you attach particular importance?

Gromyko: It is a question of the questions, how to build and develop our relations between two powers. This is a question of questions.

⁴ Kissinger had been a member of the so-called Pugwash Group, a group of Soviet, European, and American scientists, who frequently met to discuss issues of mutual concern, including arms control; the group first met at Pugwash, Nova Scotia.

As to particular problems we attach great importance to the problem of security in Europe and with respect to the development of events in the European continent. We attach importance you know—we say this to the President and to you—strategic arms limitation and ABM. We attach importance to the Middle East on which we talked when we met in Washington with you. We attach importance to economic problems. Some regions of the world cannot be avoided. You are familiar with the questions in the channel. Secretary General is ready to outline certain considerations.

Kissinger: So am I.

Gromyko: Certain considerations on Asian problems will be discussed. Not an exhaustive list.

Kissinger: Each side is free to raise any topic it wishes.

Gromyko: Of course.

Kissinger: And on all the topics you have mentioned I will be prepared to outline our position. We have two tasks here—one is to agree where we can on a course to solve the problems, or to make preparations, and the second is how to manage what we agree upon vis-à-vis other countries and vis-à-vis our own bureaucracy. That is my problem. I just want your understanding. When I say this will be done, I will tell you how long it will take and how we will do it, so you understand the circumstances.

Gromyko: Are you going to reach the point at which it is possible to finish the discussions of the Middle East at the next meeting with the President, or ready not to discuss in detail but in a preliminary way without completing the discussion of the problem on the forthcoming meeting?

Kissinger: I am prepared to discuss the documents with which to conclude the meeting.

Gromyko: It would be probably good.

Kissinger: In fact I think if I may suggest it the more of this sort of thing we can get done on this trip the better it will be when the President is here. If we can get a good part of it done we can concentrate on the key issues when he is here.

Gromyko: Good.

Kissinger: And on the topics you have mentioned we should agree how to complete them at the time of the meetings of our leaders, or how they can bring them as close as possible to completion.

Gromyko: It should be possible.

Dobrynin: It is more than possible.

Gromyko: I would not say more than possible. But I would like to broaden the possibility.

Kissinger: Mr. Foreign Minister, your Ambassador should be instructed to let me win an argument every three months so my self-confidence isn't destroyed.

Gromyko: You are not unfamiliar to us. I am glad we have met before. This man [indicating Dobrynin] is familiar to you.

Kissinger: Oh yes.

Gromyko: And we are your friends, your partners.

Kissinger: I am here with the attitude that we will make major progress.

Gromyko: Good.

130. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 20, 1972.

WTE 0004. 1. President's instructions² are extremely useful. You can assure the President that I will not fall into the summit trap and that I am aware of our principal concern. I have a caveat on only one point. I do not think it is a good idea to have a statement which defers Vietnam to the summit agenda.

We now have maximum momentum and Hanoi for the first time in the war is backing off. Also, the summit is one of our best bargaining counters. We therefore must get some concrete results now, such as a clear reduction of violence and a withdrawal of NVA forces. I hope the President lets me hold out for this.

2. Was greeted at the airport by First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov who took me to the State Guest House similar to Peking's. Gromyko called on me for one hour to settle the program. Atmosphere

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. No time of transmission or receipt appears on the telegram. Haig summarized the message in an April 20 memorandum to the President. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow) This and subsequent messages from Kissinger were transmitted via the Presidential airplane at the airport outside Moscow to the White House Situation Room. For his account of the message, and of communications for his trip, see Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1137, 1154–1155.

² Document 127.

so far is effusive, with endless protestations of eagerness to have summit and willingness to settle all issues. Apparently Brezhnev will conduct all the discussions, having cancelled his weekend plans. Gromyko said they have some “concrete considerations” regarding Vietnam. They seem eager to have me stay through Monday but this will of course depend on first substantive meeting and above all on Vietnam prospects.

3. Also please keep me informed of South Asia developments.³ I was told subject may come up. (We have briefing book here.)⁴

³ The next morning, Haig forwarded to Kissinger a memorandum from Saunders on the Soviet Union and South Asia. In his covering message Haig explained that he told Saunders, evidently to conceal Kissinger’s trip to Moscow, “that the President wanted to know on a preliminary basis how he should handle this issue at the summit.” (Message Sitto 17 from Haig to Kissinger; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK’s Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File) Saunders argued that “the principle objective in US-Soviet talks on South Asia should be to try to get the Soviets to acknowledge explicitly a common interest and some responsibility for stability in South Asia and a commitment to it” and mentioned four specific steps: 1) enlisting Soviet support for “an early peace agreement on reasonable terms”; 2) informing the Soviets that long-term stability in South Asia required getting “a grip on the arms race”; 3) securing Soviet assistance for Bangladesh—“if for no other reason than to put them a bit on the defensive”; and 4) warning the Soviets that any effort to “establish military bases of its own in South Asia would require a U.S. response.” (Memorandum from Saunders to Kissinger, April 20; *ibid.*)

⁴ Not further identified.

131. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 20, 1972, 8:25 p.m.

P: I got your memo from Henry.² I suppose now it is the middle of the night there. So he begins his conversations tomorrow—is that correct.

H: Yes, sir.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President’s Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (*Ibid.*, White House Central Files)

² See footnote 1, Document 130.

P: Do you gather that he is completely on salvo—from my memo³—it seems he is about as tough as I want him to be.

H: Yes, sir.

P: I think the fact they are slobbering around—let me say this—now he will be watching for their flattery—they are masters at it. But he is not going to sell out cheap.

H: It is inconceivable!

P: Let me suggest this—don't you have a WSAG tomorrow?⁴

H: I was going to postpone it.

P: Why don't we suggest—what were you going to do tomorrow?

H: I have a staff briefing at 8:45.

P: Rogers wanted you to do State.

H: Yes, sir, at noon.

P: Be sure you praise what he did on Monday.⁵

H: Oh, yes, sir.

P: You will have a report from Henry at noon. Could I suggest you drop up here and talk to me about it.⁶

H: Fine.

P: Have you had any report on the strikes?⁷

H: Have not had a report yet.

P: We don't know if we lost any planes yet. You don't think you will hear until late tonight.

H: Right, sir.

P: Let me suggest after you have the staff meeting you call me and give me a report on what went on last night there.⁸ But I think in view of the fact that Henry is having this meeting is good.

³ Document 127.

⁴ The WSAG did not meet again until April 24. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-116, WSAG Minutes, Originals)

⁵ April 17. Reference is to the Secretary's testimony that day before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. In his statement supporting security assistance for South Vietnam, Rogers argued that the North Vietnamese attacks in the South "dropped the pretense that this war is in any sense a 'popular uprising' and have exposed it as a naked aggression of the most flagrant type." (Department of State *Bulletin*, May 8, 1972, pp. 668–671)

⁶ See Document 136 and footnote 2 thereto.

⁷ Reference is to tactical air strikes against targets near Vinh, including petroleum storage, barracks, and railroad facilities.

⁸ According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon talked with Haig by telephone on April 21 from 10:47–10:59 a.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) No substantive record of the discussion has been found.

H: I think it is just ideal.

P: Is there anything to add—let's do it—maybe those naval ships could do something.

H: They have had a real tough fight in An Loc—knocked 10–15 tanks. That's a hairy one.

P: Yes, that's a second surge. Let's don't make An Loc a symbol that losing it will demoralize the South Vietnamese. But we may not lose it. What is your feeling?

H: I think they will hold it.

P: Abrams is certainly not going to think this strike in the north will stop him from hitting An Loc?

H: No. There were 18 strikes earlier and the total today was 30. They get these guys in close and you can't hit them with 52's you have to use outside stuff.

P: It's going to work, Al.

H: Right and we are going to have another carrier by Wednesday⁹—69 sorties. They should be in there now.

P: You come up tomorrow at noon and give me a report. We have to watch it. We can't leave it to chance. Having taken this great risk and putting it on the line—disappoint our friends—don't you agree.

H: Absolutely. Henry understands that. I hit it very hard and your memo was just too clear. He is in full accord.

⁹ April 26.

132. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 20, 1972, 0223Z.

Sitto 11. I have reviewed with the President your WTE 10 004² in which you discuss in greater detail the President's instructions.³ He would have no difficulty concerning your caveat. His main concern, as you know, is that no arrangement is accepted which would be interpreted as a sharp disappointment by his supporters, which is also of course the main thrust of his memorandum to you. He is completely comfortable with your proposed approach and is most anxious to have an early report on the outcome of your first substantive discussions.

Paragraph 2 of reference message looks most encouraging and you must know that you have our full confidence as well as our ardent prayers for the tasks at hand.

I am sending a separate message with draft communications and game plan for all parties concerned.⁴

Warm regards.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. This and subsequent messages from Haig were transmitted via the White House Situation Room to the Presidential airplane at the airport outside Moscow.

² Document 130.

³ Document 127.

⁴ In a subsequent message Haig outlined "a game plan" for transmitting news both of Kissinger's trip to Moscow and of the resumption of peace talks on Vietnam to the North Vietnamese and Porter (Paris); Thieu and Bunker (Saigon); Pompidou and Brandt. (Telegram Sitto 12, April 21; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

133. National Intelligence Estimate¹

NIE 11–72

Washington, April 20, 1972.

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICIES AND THE OUTLOOK FOR SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Summary

The USSR's View of Its World Position

A. Developments of recent years have given the USSR increased confidence in its security and strategic posture, in its capacity to engage its adversaries on favorable terms, and in the prospects for the long-term growth of its international influence. The Soviets have thus begun to pursue a more vigorous foreign policy and to accept deeper involvement in many world areas.

B. The attainment of rough parity in strategic weapons with the US has contributed more than anything else to the USSR's self-confidence. The Soviets have also been encouraged to see the US suffering a loss of influence in certain areas, facing economic difficulties at home and abroad, and coming under domestic pressure to curtail its world role. Largely on the basis of these considerations, Moscow believes that the US no longer enjoys a clear international predominance. It does not appear to have concluded, however, that US power has begun a precipitate or permanent decline; US economic, military, and technological capabilities continue to impress the Soviets. Thus, while they may be tempted to conclude that the US will no longer be the competitor it once was and may therefore be inclined as opportunities occur to use their greater strength and flexibility more venturesomely, they can still see themselves getting into serious difficulties with the US if they press too hard.

C. The China problem is another factor which limits Soviet confidence. It has become increasingly clear to the Russians that China is capable of seriously undermining their international positions, keeping

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79–R1012A, NIC Files. Secret; Controlled Dissem. The estimate was submitted by the DCI and concurred in by the USIB. The CIA, intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, and the NSA participated in its preparation. All representatives of the USIB concurred with its release except the representatives of the FBI and Treasury who both abstained because the subject was outside their jurisdiction. The summary section of the estimate is also published in Center for the Study of Intelligence, *CIA's Analysis of the Soviet Union, 1947–1991: A Documentary Collection*, edited by Gerald K. Haines and Robert E. Leggett, (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 2001), pp. 88–95

them off balance ideologically, and in the longer term, constituting a serious strategic threat. It unquestionably concerns the Soviets that China's ability to challenge them in all these ways would be all the greater in circumstances of Sino-American rapprochement.

Domestic Political and Economic Factors

D. The present Soviet leadership has been notable for its stability, and this has resulted in continuity in the decision-making process during most of the seven years since Khrushchev's overthrow. Brezhnev has clearly emerged as the principal figure in the regime and has been taking a vigorous lead in the area of foreign policy; he now has a personal stake in the USSR's current policy of selective *détente*. Decision-making, however, remains a collective process. Indeed, there are occasional signs of stress over the content and implementation of foreign policy. And maintaining a consensus behind a more active Soviet foreign policy, in circumstances of greater international complexity, may become increasingly difficult over time.

E. The USSR has been able to achieve rates of economic growth which are high by international standards and to maintain a military effort roughly equal to that of the US. But the Soviet economy is still backward in some sectors and it faces serious problems stemming from low productivity, the declining effectiveness of investment, and technological lag. Economic constraints do not *oblige* the Soviets to reduce military spending, however. While an agreement on strategic arms control would relieve somewhat the heavy demands which military programs impose on high quality human and material resources, agreements of the sort now contemplated would not enable the Soviets to increase the rate of economic growth appreciably.

The Strategic Weapons Relationship with the United States

F. We believe that the USSR has concluded that the attainment of clear superiority in strategic weapons—i.e., a superiority so evident that the Soviets could be assured of success in a confrontation and even “win” should they press the issue to nuclear war, say, by a first strike—is not now feasible. Nevertheless, there are no doubt those in Moscow who believe that it may still be possible to obtain a meaningful margin of advantage in strategic weapons which would give the USSR increased political-psychological leverage. The Soviet leaders must, at the same time, reckon with the possibility that any attempt to gain such an advantage would look to the US much the same as an attempt to move toward clear superiority and would produce the same counteraction. The course they have chosen, at least for the immediate future, is to attempt to stabilize some aspects of the strategic relationship with the US through negotiations, and they appear to believe that a formal

antiballistic missile agreement and an interim freeze on some strategic offensive systems, on terms they can accept, are within reach.²

G. Assuming such an agreement is reached, the Soviets would continue serious negotiations on more comprehensive limitations. But the Soviet leaders are probably not clear in their own minds as to where these negotiations should lead. They may fear that too comprehensive an agreement might involve disadvantages they could not anticipate or foreclose developments which might eventually improve their relative position. And the more complex the agreement being considered, the greater the difficulties the Soviet leaders would face in working out a bureaucratic consensus. Thus, their approach to further negotiations would almost insure that these would be protracted.

The Sino-Soviet Conflict

H. The Soviets understand that their difficulties with China are in many ways more urgent and more intractable than their difficulties with the US and that, as Chinese military power grows, the conflict may become more dangerous. Moscow no doubt expects that the approach to normalization in US-Chinese relations will strengthen Peking's international position and will make China even more unwilling than before to consider concessions to the USSR. It has also occurred to the Soviets that the US may gain some increased freedom of maneuver against them and that Washington and Peking will in some situations follow parallel policies to Moscow's detriment. The new US-Chinese relationship could, in addition, make a military solution to the Sino-Soviet conflict seem to the Soviets an even less attractive alternative than before.

I. Sino-Soviet relations will not necessarily remain as bad as they are now. At some point, the two sides might arrive at a modus vivendi which would permit them to "coexist" more or less normally. But to obtain any deep and lasting accommodation the Russians would have to pay a price they would consider unacceptably high, including a lifting of military pressures, some territorial concessions, disavowal of Moscow's pretensions as the paramount authority among Communists, and acknowledgment of a Chinese sphere of influence in Asia.

J. The Russians are likely to want to establish a wider role in Asia in the next few years. Consolidation of the Soviet position in South Asia, with the focus on India, will be one feature of this effort. The Russians will also continue to work to prevent an increase in Chinese in-

² For separate statements of the views of Lt. Gen. Jammie M. Philpott, Acting Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; Vice Adm. Noel Gayler, Director, National Security Agency; Rear Adm. Earl F. Rectanus, Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; and Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, Jr., Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF, see their footnotes to paragraph 28, page 16. [Footnote in the source text.]

fluence in North Korea and North Vietnam. In the case of the latter, this will mean that Moscow will remain staunch in its support of Hanoi's effort to obtain a favorable settlement of the Vietnam war. The Soviets will, as a further objective of their policy in Asia, try to increase their influence in Japan, and an improvement in relations has already begun. Soviet prospects in this regard are, however, probably limited by Tokyo's greater concerns for its relations with the US and China.

Soviet Policy in Eastern and Western Europe

K. Although Moscow has made progress in restoring order in Eastern Europe, it has not come to grips with the root causes which have in recent years produced unrest or even defiance of Soviet authority there—in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Many East European leaders still hope for greater national autonomy and wider political and economic intercourse with the West. The USSR's task of reconciling its efforts to consolidate its hegemony in Eastern Europe with an active policy of *détente* in Western Europe can therefore only be complicated and delicate. If it came to a choice between erosion of their position in Eastern Europe and *détente* in Europe as a whole, the Soviets would choose to let the latter suffer.

L. The USSR's security concerns in Eastern Europe, its own economic weaknesses, and growing preoccupation with the Chinese have turned it away from a policy of crisis and confrontation in Europe. At the same time, the changing pattern of US-West European relationships and trends within Western Europe itself have evidently convinced Moscow that its long-standing European aims—including a reduction of the US role and influence there—have become more realizable than ever before. A conference on European security represents for Moscow one way of encouraging the favorable trends in Western Europe and slowing the adverse ones. The Soviets also hope that a conference would open the way to a definitive and formal acknowledgment of the status quo in Germany and Eastern Europe. Rejection of the West German-Soviet treaty by the West German Bundestag would deal a setback to Soviet confidence in the viability of its German policy and possibly of its wider European policy. We believe, however, that in these circumstances Moscow's inclination would still be, perhaps after an interval of threatening talk, to try to salvage as much as possible of these policies rather than to reverse course completely.

M. The USSR's position on force reductions in Europe appears to stem mainly from its overall European tactics rather than from economic pressures or from military requirements related to the Sino-Soviet border. Moscow has doubts about the desirability of reducing its forces because of its concerns about Eastern Europe and about its military position vis-à-vis NATO. We believe, nevertheless, that Moscow is coming to accept that, assuming continuation of present

trends in East-West relations in Europe, it could safely withdraw some of its forces from Eastern Europe, particularly from the large contingent in East Germany. This does not mean the Soviets have decided on any reduction or soon will. But, if they should decide to move beyond their present position, they will presumably see advantage in thoroughly exploring the possibilities of a negotiated agreement rather than acting unilaterally. On the other hand, if they should conclude that such negotiations are unpromising, they might make limited withdrawals on their own, mainly because they would judge that this would lead to more significant US withdrawals.

The USSR's Position in the Middle East

N. In order to protect their close political and military ties with Egypt, the Soviets have been willing to increase their direct involvement and to accept larger risks in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. A full-scale renewal of the Arab-Israeli war would, however, be unwelcome to the Russians and the present situation causes them some anxiety. There is thus some chance that Moscow will come to see the desirability of urging the Arabs to accept a limited, interim agreement which would diminish the dangers of renewed hostilities, while still allowing the Soviets to enjoy the fruits of continued Arab-Israeli animosity. The Soviets are, however, unlikely to be amenable to an explicit understanding with the US limiting the flow of arms to the Middle East, though they might see advantage in some tacit restraints.

O. The Russians are probably generally optimistic about their long-term prospects in the Middle East, believing that radical, anti-Western forces there will assure them a continuing role of influence and eventually an even larger one. But the Soviets are uncomfortable because their present position is tied so closely to the exigencies of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They have also seen that radical nationalism can occasionally take a violently anti-Russian turn and with increasing involvement they will probably encounter greater difficulty in following a coherent and even-handed policy among the diverse and quarrelsome states of the area. In order to put their position in the Middle East on a firmer foundation for the future, they are likely to try both to forge stronger political ties with the "progressive" Arab parties and to develop their diplomatic relations with the moderate Arab states.

The Third World

P. The USSR's policies in the Third World are greatly affected by its urge to claim a wider world role for itself and by the need to protect its revolutionary credentials, especially against the Chinese challenge. In addition to its strong position in the Middle East, the USSR has over the years won for itself a pivotal role in South Asia. It has also

gained wider influence in Latin America. In Africa, the Soviet record is considerably more mixed and Soviet activities there now have a relatively low priority. In the Third World as a whole, partly because of some serious setbacks in the past, the Soviets are now inclined to view their prospects somewhat more soberly than they once did. Their approach is in general characterized by opportunism and a regard for regional differentiation. Nevertheless, by virtue of its acquisition in recent years of a greater capability to use its military forces in distant areas—a capability which is likely to continue to grow—Moscow may now believe its options in the Third World are expanding.

Future Soviet-American Relations

Q. The USSR has compelling reasons for wanting to keep its relations with the US in reasonably good repair, if only in order to control the risks arising from the rivalry and tensions which Moscow assumes will continue. It realizes that the larger world role it seeks is unrealizable except at the expense of the US. Whether the USSR will in particular circumstances lean toward sharper competition or broader cooperation with the US will naturally depend on the interaction of many variables. Crucial among these will be Moscow's appraisal of US intentions and its assessment of developments in the triangular relationship involving the US, China, and itself.

R. Progress in talks on strategic arms limitations might, by buttressing the USSR's sense of security, help to wear away some of its suspicion of US intentions. But problems in other areas where the political interests of the two countries are deeply engaged may prove to be of a more intractable sort. The conflict of interests in the Middle East seems likely to be prolonged. This may be true also in Europe where the Russians have an interest in the kinds of agreements which contribute to the security of the Soviet sphere but not in a genuine European settlement.

S. Whether the future will bring a more meaningful modification of the Soviet international outlook seems likely to depend ultimately on the USSR's internal evolution. And here the crucial question may be how the Soviet leaders deal with the problem of adaptive change in Soviet society, including the problem of economic modernization: by minimal measures or by serious reform. The entrenched bureaucratic oligarchy now in charge is resistant to change. Among the younger men in the Politburo who now seem most likely to take over from the aging top leadership there may be some who harbor reformist views. But such tendencies, if they exist, are not now in evidence.

T. Thus, for the foreseeable future at any rate, Soviet policy, for reasons deeply rooted in the ideology of the regime and the world power ambitions of its leaders, will remain antagonistic to the West, and especially to the US. The gains the Soviets have made in relative

military power, together with the heightened confidence these gains have inspired, will lead them to press their challenge to Western interests with increasing vigor and may in some situations lead them to assume greater risks than they have previously. At the same time, their policies will remain flexible, since they realize that in some areas their aims may be better advanced by policies of détente than by policies of pressure. They will remain conscious of the great and sometimes uncontrollable risks which their global aims could generate unless their policies are modulated by a certain prudence in particular situations.

[Omitted here are the Discussion section of the estimate and an Annex on “The Prospects for Soviet-American Trade.”]

134. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 21, 1972, noon–4:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of Central Committee of the CPSU
Andrei Gromyko, Foreign Minister
Anatoliy Dobrynin, USSR Ambassador to the United States
A. Alexandrov-Agentov, Assistant to Mr. Brezhnev
Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter
Notetaker

Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, National Security Council Staff
Winston Lord, National Security Council Staff

SUBJECTS

Summit; Vietnam; Principles of U.S.-Soviet Relations

(There were some opening pleasantries during which Dr. Kissinger said what a tough negotiator Mr. Dobrynin was. Mr. Brezhnev asked Dr. Kissinger if he were comfortable. Mr. Brezhnev said that they could have given the U.S. party more pleasant accommodations but they wanted to be close to their plane. Dr. Kissinger replied the Americans appreciated not only the technical arrangements but also the human warmth. Mr. Brezhnev said that he was glad and as for the warmth, perhaps they could add to it in the talks. Dr. Kissinger wondered

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

whether that was a threat or a pleasant prospect and Mr. Brezhnev replied pleasant prospect. They were against threats.)

Mr. Brezhnev: How is President Nixon?

Dr. Kissinger: He is fine. He sends his warm personal regards.

Mr. Brezhnev: Thank you.

Dr. Kissinger: He lays great stress on personal contact and looks forward to his meetings with you.

Mr. Brezhnev: In fact I have met President Nixon personally, but it was some time ago. I was in a different position and he was too at that time. He probably did not pay attention to me at the time. I even have a photo of myself with him which I have now found. He may have one too.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand the General-Secretary was present during the so-called Kitchen Debate.² We don't expect to have the same at this meeting during this visit.

Mr. Gromyko: The famous Kitchen Debate.

Mr. Brezhnev: God forbid. I would never be capable of such debate. It was one of President Nixon's most famous debates. The great debate as the Foreign Minister said. But that indeed is talking of the past and has no bearing whatever on the present.

Dr. Kissinger: That is exactly our feeling.

Mr. Brezhnev: Is this the first visit to Moscow, Mr. Kissinger?

Dr. Kissinger: I was in Moscow once as a member of a scientific delegation. I met with some members of the Soviet Academy of Science to discuss disarmament.

Mr. Brezhnev: Let us endeavor to lead matters into a direction to enable us to visit one another's countries more often, Moscow and Washington. After all it does depend on us.

Dr. Kissinger: Exactly. We have an historical opportunity.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is true. I will, of course, convey friendly regards for President Nixon at the close of our discussions. But since you are probably in touch with him even today, even now I convey my warm good wishes to him.

Since you did mention earlier on the significance of our meeting, I would like to start out by elaborating on that subject for a little time. And we certainly understand and believe that President Nixon and your leaders generally attach great importance to this meeting. As for myself and my colleagues we too attach great significance to these meetings and express the hope that they will be successful and culminate in

² Reference is to the exchange between Vice President Nixon and Soviet Premier Khrushchev at the American National Exhibition in Moscow on July 24, 1959.

useful and constructive decisions. All hesitations or vacillations in regard to these meetings have now become a thing of the past. The decision that we took was a considered decision and we are therefore entitled to believe that these meetings will be not only important but perhaps even historic and epoch-making. This will all depend on the decisions arrived at.

We have already traversed a long road toward one another in preparation for these meetings. There are quite naturally on these roads various bumps and cracks, but that is not the crux of the matter. The most important thing is that both sides were guided by a desire to achieve positive results for this meeting and to ensure that it ends well.

Now I gather that you are aware of our desire as regards the way in which the meeting should be completed. We have no wish to bring about a quarrel in the meeting. That is something we could easily do by staying in Washington and Moscow.

Dr. Kissinger: We have proved that.

Mr. Brezhnev: And to quarrel so badly as not to be able to patch up the quarrel, that is something that requires no great wisdom. That is something any leader of much less rank can easily do.

But to find a good solution for our two big powers—such two big powers as the Soviet Union and the United States—is something that requires great statesmanship and foresight, and we will need to look forward into the future.

Of course, we can both note that the general atmosphere and general political situation is well. It is a fact that it plays not a second rate importance in our meetings, but that is only too natural. I would not be saying anything new, and you are as aware of this as we. We like yourselves want there to be a good atmosphere at the time of our meeting. At present world public opinion is riveted to the forthcoming meeting and a great deal is being said on the subject. We believe we should utilize all useful things and cast aside all harmful things. In the remaining month we should do what we can to produce what we can for successful negotiations. That is very important I feel.

You know we live at a time when due to well-known circumstances things can change very rapidly in world politics. There are forces in the world which seek . . .

At this point Mr. Brezhnev offered Mr. Kissinger some tea and told him not to drink water. Mr. Gromyko said that he had already earned some tea. Ambassador Dobrynin commented that the General-Secretary had earned some tea since he had done all the talking. Dr. Kissinger remarked that he hadn't said anything and that was right. Mr. Brezhnev promised to give him an opportunity. Dr. Kissinger remarked that maybe then he would want to take the tea away. Mr. Brezhnev replied that after that he would give him brandy, although perhaps he favored

whisky. Dr. Kissinger replied that he preferred brandy. Mr. Brezhnev and Ambassador Dobrynin noted that it would be a 5-star brandy.

Mr. Brezhnev: There are forces in the world which seek to bring about a heightening of tension, but of course the majority of the countries of the world endeavor to bring about an atmosphere conducive to the lessening of tensions and improvement in the atmosphere.

So both you and we can see both sides of this matter and others. Unfortunately it so happens that events in the recent period—shortly before this private meeting between us—dampened the atmosphere somewhat. I am not saying that this will reduce the prospects for our meeting. I am merely saying it as a statement of facts. Of course, the general question of atmosphere is one we will be able to elaborate on as the talks proceed. Now I wish merely to mention it as such. All the more so since I do not believe that either of us is limited in the time set aside for these negotiations. I am assuming—in fact I am counting on it—for myself and all my colleagues that the discussions with you and the discussions with President Nixon will be as frank as possible, direct and honest. This should be an obligatory condition if we want to assure a complete mutual understanding and leave behind no doubts or anything unsaid. The spirit of frankness I feel is the spirit of confidence. Because we intend to be very frank in our discussions with President Nixon, I believe this spirit of frankness should be the dominant spirit in these conversations we are going to have with you.

I was satisfied indeed to hear the news that you have broad authority to conduct discussions on a broad range of important issues and this I feel is a very important factor. I would say that the basic issues which will be subjects for discussions at the summit meeting have in principle been identified in the process of preparatory work in which you are playing a most active and perhaps a decisive role. There are included the basic issues of the day which neither of us can bypass in our discussions. I do not on the other hand rule out, in fact I assume, that we can discuss any question which you may wish to raise or I wish to raise. I would be happy if you acquiesce in that feeling.

Dr. Kissinger: Absolutely.

Mr. Brezhnev: If any of our aides would like to say anything, let's give them the opportunity. I don't mean that they should say nothing. That is the worst way to do that.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't run my staff as democratically as you, Mr. General-Secretary.

Mr. Brezhnev: I'm a great democrat, a great democrat, a great democrat. (He laughs). Dr. Kissinger, you are in agreement to that approach to our discussions.

Dr. Kissinger: Completely.

Mr. Brezhnev: Thank you. When I saw the range of questions we might discuss was very broad I decided to have no preparations in writing. It gives me a complete freedom of maneuver.

That was what I really wished to say by way of introduction. I would like to invite you to feel completely free in these discussions.

Here try this candy. It is very good; it is plums in chocolate.

Dr. Kissinger: I just started a diet before I came here, which has already been destroyed in 12 hours in Moscow. It is very good.

Mr. Brezhnev: Let me just record in that connection that I was a guest of President Kekkonen of Finland, and I gained 2½ kilograms in several days. I complained to him that this was all wrong. He asked me how much I had gained so I told him 2½ kilograms. He said that's nothing. When two of our engineers were in Moscow ten days with a delegation, each one added 8 kilograms in ten days. (Dr. Kissinger laughs.) About that I was very happy since I had only gained 2½ kilograms and not more. In good neighborly fashion.

May I make a few comments on procedures on our work with you?

Dr. Kissinger: Please.

Mr. Brezhnev: I would like to devote the maximum possible time to our meetings and discussions. Because they are indeed serious negotiations we ought to do our best to introduce the greatest possible clarity in our discussions and that will take time. I was in fact the sponsor of your coming earlier.

Dr. Kissinger: I know.

Mr. Brezhnev: You've got me revealing my secrets already. You haven't told me anything and I am giving away all my secrets. I'm losing all of my advantages now all because I am so kind. Now today unfortunately I can only stay with you until 4:00 p.m. Because after that we have a solemn meeting dedicated to Lenin's birthday and I have to attend it. Later in the evening I have family circumstances to prevent me from resuming discussions. But tomorrow and the day after I can devote all day to discussions. Perhaps that is all for the good because this evening you will have a chance to have some rest. If there is no objection to that procedure we could then be ready to start.

Dr. Kissinger: It seems like a very good procedure to me.

Mr. Brezhnev: I think it is business like.

Dr. Kissinger: Good. Yes.

Mr. Brezhnev: Very well. Dr. Kissinger, I know you have many instructions and duties to perform, and I would like to hear what you say.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, I appreciate your observations which are exactly in the spirit of my instructions and in fact also of the purposes which brought me here. The General-Secretary was very kind in calling me a diplomat, but I think that my major contri-

tribution to these meetings can be to cut through diplomatic discussions and to speak with you in complete frankness and answer any questions you might have with great openness.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is very very good. If you get rid of the State Department we will get rid of the Foreign Office.

Mr. Gromyko: Shall we burn the buildings down?

Mr. Brezhnev: We'll burn them down. Otherwise you'll get back into them again.

Mr. Gromyko: That's okay; you can build new ones.

Dr. Kissinger: With all respect, Mr. General-Secretary, we have made more progress in abolishing the State Department than you have in abolishing the Foreign Office. (Russian laughter.)

Mr. Brezhnev: I have to get to the bottom of that. I'm not all that familiar with American realities.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be sure that this part of our notes will be suppressed.

Mr. Brezhnev: You may rest assured that the same fate will befall our notes on this question. We are always true to our word. We have agreed that the talks will be strictly confidential, and that's the way it will be. If I may say in a very friendly way, sometimes your safes leak. There are holes in them, and things get into the papers. Perhaps it is necessary to send someone to put plaster or weld them tight. Perhaps there should be one big patch for the State Department.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be absolutely certain, Mr. Secretary, that these discussions will never leave the White House and will be seen only by the President and no one else.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's the way it should be. There is nothing to fear, however, since we are talking honestly.

Dr. Kissinger: So we can speak with complete openness and without fear of any embarrassment.

Mr. Brezhnev: This is the only way we can proceed, I'm sure.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, let me make a few general observations and then we can decide what topics to go into in greater detail.

Mr. Brezhnev: Well I'm prepared for anything you have to say in any order. You go ahead in any way that you see fit.

Dr. Kissinger: First, the spirit of the General-Secretary's remarks reflects the attitude of President Nixon. (Mr. Brezhnev nods.) He, too, believes we have an historic opportunity. The leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States have met on several occasions since the end of World War II when we were allies. But they have never managed to recapture the spirit of cooperation which characterized our relationship in that period, that is before the end of World War II. Their

meetings were episodes. We feel, as the General Secretary does, that we should begin an epoch.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is very true indeed if I may just butt in. Please excuse me if I occasionally interject.

Dr. Kissinger: That's much better. Otherwise we are just exchanging diplomatic notes.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's exactly right. If I wait until the end for my observations I have to write things down or forget them, and later I trust you will act in the same fashion.

Dr. Kissinger: Thank you.

Mr. Brezhnev: The name of President [Franklin] Roosevelt is very popular in the Soviet Union and whose name remains very popular in the minds of the Soviet people. I can say very sincerely, truly the Soviet people have maintained very good feelings toward President Roosevelt. There is no other President in my lifetime, and I am 65, in the history of Russian-American relations who enjoyed such a respect among the Russian people. I know about our people. I have been active in party life for 40 years. I am a war veteran. I know the attitude of our party generally and of our people. I agree with you when you talk about the attitude in that period. The attitude in that period was very important. I think all of us are so conditioned, so built in fact, that we always maintain in our memory either things that are very good or are very bad. The mediocre or second rate goes away from the memory. I think that concerns all nations, the Russian or American nation or anyone else. Those who really leave their mark in history are either bad ones or very positive figures relative to the times past, present and future. Napoleon, Wilhelm or Hitler are known in history, and in a positive sense President Roosevelt. This also goes for the various Czars. Peter the Great was one kind of Czar, Nicholas the Second another, and Catherine another.

Dr. Kissinger: Lack of personality was not one of the problems of Russian history.

Mr. Brezhnev: There were certainly different kinds of personalities.

Dr. Kissinger: You have had dramatic figures in your history.

Mr. Brezhnev: There were different kinds.

Anyway that's just by the way. I just touched on an area which belongs more to scholars, historians or other scholars. But even so it illustrates—the illustration might teach us where to go and the correct path.

Dr. Kissinger: Very much. Our intention is to recapture the spirit of the Roosevelt period. The reason why summit meetings since the war have never had a lasting effect was either because they only dealt with surface events and with personal relationships of leaders, or because they concerned only very narrow individual problems. On our

side there may have been the difficulty that we felt that we had to deal with you from a position of superior strength. That was in the past. I was speaking of the past. On your side there may have been the difficulty of looking at us in a certain way . . .

Mr. Brezhnev: That is completely fruitless. One does not deal from the position of strength.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is a complete waste of time.

Dr. Kissinger: On your side there may have been, in the earlier time, too much of the ideological aspect. In any event there were specific incidents, which may not have been intended by either side, that thwarted the progress of previous meetings.

On this occasion our opportunity is so unique because for the first time since the cooperation in the second World War we are proceeding on a very broad front. We are dealing with you from an attitude of complete equal and no pretense of a position of strength.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is very true indeed. I recall that when President Nixon first came into office, indeed he indicated when he was seeking office, that he advocated the formula that we should proceed from an era of confrontation to an era of negotiation.³ Perhaps it is taking too long a time in coming; the good thing is that the process has not stopped completely.

Dr. Kissinger: We are dealing with you on the basis of complete reciprocity. Any agreement we make with you must be in your interest as well as ours. You must want to keep it. It must be a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Mr. Brezhnev: Certainly, just by a word of addition, I certainly am in full agreement with that. I merely wish to add it is my view that we should conduct negotiations in a big way, not a small-minded way. And the arrangement which we achieve should be significant and should be well understood by the peoples of our countries. The arrangement should encourage tranquility in the world and respect in all states. I believe both states, the United States and the Soviet Union are worthy of such agreements. We are against talking about petty things, although that is necessary sometimes, but only as a corollary of big things.

Dr. Kissinger: That reflects exactly the attitude of President Nixon. Indeed, we believe the meeting between the General-Secretary and President Nixon is so important because our two countries are the two

³ Reference is to the President's first inaugural address, in which Nixon declared that the superpowers should move from an era of confrontation to an era of negotiation. (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1969*, pp. 1–4)

strongest powers in the world today. The future peace of the world and the well-being of the world depend on big decisions made by the two leaders and not simply on tactical moves to deal with immediate crises.

Mr. Brezhnev: There is no machine in the U.S. which could translate your language into Russian and mine into English?

Dr. Kissinger: It would make things much easier.

Mr. Brezhnev: Perhaps we might make a resolution that you learn Russian and I English.

Dr. Kissinger: I started to learn Russian one summer but I am very bad at languages.

Mr. Brezhnev: I don't think I am too good. Besides I have no time.

Dr. Kissinger: The President once tried a system with a man speaking softly into a microphone simultaneously while he had on ear-phones. We threw the machine out after five minutes because it made him nervous. (Mr. Brezhnev laughs.)

Mr. Brezhnev: You just suggested one comment to me. Frankly, I did not intend to mention this at all, at least at the first meeting. In this connection, I do recall and I had occasion to mention it in one of my speeches when I referred to a remark attributed to President Nixon during his China visit.⁴ He said, these two countries, the U.S. and China, were holding the future of the world in their hands. I don't know whether he was misrepresented. I'm not asking a reply to this point. Maybe at some time in our discussions we can return to it. You pushed me into saying it. When I speak to President Nixon I will say that Dr. Kissinger pushed me into saying it. On second thought, I will just mention it to President Nixon, [without saying you pushed me into it].⁵ I don't think the crux is holding the future of the world in our hands; that is not the important thing. The important thing is to secure peace and tranquility in the world and respect others. That is what we should endeavor to do, our two countries.

Dr. Kissinger: If the General-Secretary will permit me, perhaps I can give an answer if we can keep it informal.

Mr. Brezhnev: I give you my word that this is between us. I will be content to wait for that reply, but not at this juncture. I would rather hear you go on with the general discussion.

⁴ Reference is to Brezhnev's speech at the 15th Congress of Soviet Trade Unions in Moscow on March 20. For an English translation, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, April 19, 1972, vol. XXIV, No. 12, pp. 1–9. In his speech Brezhnev cited the toast at the final budget in Shanghai on February 27, in which Nixon declared not only that "our two peoples [the Americans and Chinese] hold the future of the world in our hands," but also that "this was the week that changed the world." (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 379–380)

⁵ All brackets in the source text.

Dr. Kissinger: I may forget; therefore, I will give it to you now anyway. There are two things I would like to say very briefly about this comment. First, it was correctly reported. Secondly, it was made in a toast at the end of a very long banquet in which very much mao tai was consumed.

Mr. Brezhnev: I certainly don't want you to forget, so I want to listen to you now.

Dr. Kissinger: It was not a fully worked-out statement of national policy.

Mr. Brezhnev: Does President Nixon feel a bit bad about it now?

Dr. Kissinger: It was to express a general mood of friendliness rather than a detailed statement of our policy. In fact, since the General-Secretary mentioned this occasion and since I intended to speak about it anyway, why don't I just make a few observations on the subject of China? I had intended to do it anyway.

Mr. Brezhnev: No, no. We can get to that sometime in the future; I prefer you do what you planned. Had you intended to talk about it anyway? If you prefer, you can go on.

Dr. Kissinger: I was going to say three or four sentences in my opening remarks as I told the Ambassador on the plane yesterday.

Mr. Brezhnev: I too on my side have many questions I would like to raise and discuss. One thing I omitted to mention in my opening remarks. The way I see it, before we get to questions such as the relations with China and other countries, and we should discuss many such countries; perhaps we would make better progress by starting out on relations between our two countries, the Soviet Union and the United States. Of course, other issues hinge on this question—all are interwoven. I think the basic issue is U.S.-Soviet Union relations. You set out your views in any order that you prefer.

Dr. Kissinger: Our conviction is that peace in the world and progress in the world depends on the relations between our two countries. We are the two principal countries on whom this depends.

Mr. Brezhnev: Do you smoke?

Dr. Kissinger: I never learned to inhale.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's good then. Inhale or exhale?

Dr. Kissinger: Many of my colleagues in the bureaucracy hope that I also forget how to exhale. (Mr. Brezhnev laughs.) There are no other countries in the world that can take a global view of events or take the generous farsighted attitude which the General-Secretary described.

Mr. Brezhnev: I fully agree. I certainly agree with the additional thought that it is very true we can play such a role in the world provided we pursue a policy of peace. Then we can play a decisive role in the world. Of course, we can take different stands on different issues.

The role we can play is different, too. This is certainly something that is important to bear in mind considering the fact that the last century has been marked by wars. (Mr. Brezhnev stands and says, "Excuse me, I get tired of sitting.") There are still alive men and people everywhere who recollect the last war. During the war we had occupation and really great sacrifices, and wars are still going on in the world and one can not abstract one's self from this on this occasion.

Dr. Kissinger: In our view we can cooperate on many occasions and in others we can differ on occasion and in those cases we can cooperate to exercise restraint and keep our differences within limits.

With these attitudes, we believe we can settle a number of issues at the summit. We believe we can complete an agreement on limits on strategic arms. We should make important progress on the question of European security and other European issues. We are prepared to review the Middle East question. We are prepared to discuss any other part of the world in which we have a mutual interest. With respect to economic questions, we are prepared to consider such issues as most favored nation and long-term credits, a whole range of bilateral relationships, such as science and the environment in which negotiations are now progressing.

More important than these specific issues is that we have an opportunity to engage our peoples and governments on such a broad range of issues, that every time there are conflicts in parts of the world we will remember what unites us rather than what divides us. That could be the greatest achievement of the summit.

(Mr. Brezhnev then offered the Americans some pie that had been brought in. Dr. Kissinger said we would break Kekkonen's record and complained about gaining weight and Mr. Brezhnev said that he could start losing weight after the negotiations. Dr. Kissinger then said the summit would come and we would all put our weight back on. Mr. Brezhnev said that was right. By photos he saw that President Nixon had been losing weight. Dr. Kissinger replied that he kept quite stable. Mr. Brezhnev commented that was good. There were further exchanges between Dr. Kissinger and Mr. Gromyko and Ambassador Dobrynin in which Brezhnev said they were all youngsters. Mr. Gromyko said he appreciated that very much. Mr. Brezhnev said that he and Dr. Kissinger were much more serious minded than all those youngsters there.)

Dr. Kissinger: I am authorized to discuss all these subjects with the General-Secretary and bring them either to conclusion or closer to conclusion. Also, as I told the Foreign Minister yesterday, we should begin working on final statements of the meeting.

Mr. Brezhnev: I agree.

Dr. Kissinger: But there is one problem which I must discuss with the General-Secretary. The General-Secretary speaks about obstacles

that may be in the way of the summit that we should try to remove. That is a subject I would now like to address.

Mr. Brezhnev: Certainly.

Dr. Kissinger: That is the problem of Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam. I will put our point of view before the General-Secretary with complete frankness.

Mr. Brezhnev: Please.

Dr. Kissinger: The Soviet Union did not start the war in 1963 and 1964, and there have been many mistakes made since then. But the past is not of interest in the immediate crisis. I am talking about the situation of 1972, specifically April 1972. We are confronted now with a massive offensive by the North Vietnamese four weeks before a summit meeting, at a time when we are withdrawing our forces and in the process of slowly liquidating American involvement in the war. We had no intention of having a crisis at this time. As your Ambassador knows, I intended to take a vacation at this time. The only reason I didn't take one was he thought that the more intensive period for summit preparations would be now, so I moved it up three weeks.

Let me give you my judgment of North Vietnam with total frankness.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is the only way to talk.

Dr. Kissinger: You, of course, know them better than I.

Mr. Brezhnev: But I have never been there myself.

Dr. Kissinger: I haven't yet either. They are a heroic people but not a wise people. They are sometimes more afraid of being deceived than of being defeated. They are not prepared to leave anything to history. I know they believe that in 1954 they were deceived by the settlement at Geneva.⁶ But the objective conditions between 1954 and 1972 are entirely different. In 1954 John Foster Dulles conducted our foreign policy and he was constructing positions against what he considered Communist aggression all over the world. We were going into countries.

But in 1972, when President Nixon is conducting American foreign policy, we are seeking a policy not of confrontation with the Soviet Union or for that matter other major Communist countries, but negotiations. We are doing this in the spirit of cooperation which I described. We are not going into countries to build barriers; we are trying to work out cooperative arrangements. We don't want any permanent bases in Vietnam.

⁶ Reference is to the Geneva Accords, three agreements signed in Geneva on July 20, 1954, to end hostilities in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. For texts, see *American Foreign Policy, 1950–1955: Basic Documents*, vol. I, pp. 750–785.

We have two principal objectives. One is to bring about an honorable withdrawal of all our forces; secondly, to put a time interval between our withdrawal and the political process which would then start. We are prepared to let the real balance of forces in Vietnam determine the future of Vietnam. We are not committed to a permanent political involvement there, and we always keep our word.

Mr. Brezhnev: Do you have a sort of judgment of your own, an assessment of your own, as regards the withdrawal of your forces, or is this just a general principle?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. We have some ideas. We are talking of months, not years. The number of months is a detail.

Mr. Brezhnev: These plans or projections you have, have they already in any way been communicated to North Vietnam?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. But we don't believe . . . the difference is that the Vietnamese . . . we cannot withdraw our forces without getting our prisoners back and without some perspective of what follows afterward. This North Vietnam refused to do. But if we can get this, we are prepared to withdraw all our forces without any residual forces, and to close all bases within a period of months, which remains to be negotiated, but is not an obstacle to a solution.

Amb. Dobrynin: Within this year?

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, by the end of this year. By the end of the year. The number of months will not be a question of principle. We have said six months in our last proposal.

Mr. Brezhnev: That would be starting from what date?

Mr. Kissinger: The date of agreement.

Mr. Brezhnev: Do you have really accurate data as to the number of American prisoners in Vietnam?

Mr. Kissinger: Not as accurate as the Vietnamese. They have never given any names officially. They have the irritating habit of dealing only with our domestic opposition. They have given others the names of about 500 prisoners but have published pictures of prisoners whose names they didn't give anybody.

Mr. Brezhnev: What would be the approximate figure? More than 500 or less; about what figure?

Mr. Kissinger: The confirmed number is about 500. Then there are about one thousand missing, not all of whom are confirmed as prisoners. Therefore, there is a maximum of 1500, certainly less than that, and a minimum of about 500.

These are our two objectives. What we will not do under any circumstances, no matter what military pressures and no matter what the results, is to meet their demand which is to install their government in Saigon. They claim that isn't what they want, but I can explain to the

General-Secretary that the objective consequence is that. I do not wish to waste time on that now because I wish to make a more fundamental point. But we are prepared to have a political process which gives political forces in Vietnam a chance to express themselves over a period of time, although we recognize this is difficult to design.

These are the general considerations which the President would have [*sic*] discussed with you in May. I only mention them to explain the immediate crisis. And that is the crisis started by the North Vietnamese offensive on March 30 which has the additional complication that it is conducted almost completely with Soviet equipment.

This affects us in four ways. First, as great powers; second in terms of what I already mentioned, whatever the Soviet role in this offensive has been. Third, the impact of this offensive on our immediate situation which also affects you, which I will explain in a minute. And fourth, the measures which must be taken to end the crisis.

Let me talk about the last two points first. If this offensive succeeds—and if I read *Pravda* I would be very concerned⁷—the impact on our relationship, quite unintentionally, would be very serious. I hope my reports are better than your newspaper.

Amb. Dobrynin: Unintentionally?

Mr. Kissinger: Unintentionally. I hope the General-Secretary forgives me for being so frank, but Ambassador Beam can put it in diplomatic language later on.

Mr. Brezhnev: That is exactly what I expect. Complete frankness is the only way to gain a true perspective of the state of affairs.

Mr. Kissinger: If the North Vietnamese offensive succeeds, there will be another 69,000 Americans who will become prisoners.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Do you believe in this?

Mr. Kissinger: That's at least what we must protect against. They are trying hard. If the South Vietnamese army collapses, which is what the North Vietnamese army is attempting to do, this will be the consequence. We cannot tolerate it, and we will not tolerate it at any cost.

Secondly, if we look at the perspective which we described before, it would deprive an American President of any authority to have the sort of discussions with the General-Secretary that it has been the principal objective of his Administration to bring about. We have had the . . . we are discussing now, for example, in Helsinki the limitations on

⁷ In an April 20 message to Kissinger, Haig forwarded an Associated Press account of an article in *Pravda* which charged that "the United States bombed downtown Hanoi Sunday and then lied about its targets." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

strategic arms, and the Soviet proposal is that submarines should not be included, the one that came through the confidential channel.⁸

Now, as I told the Ambassador, our military people have an almost religious conviction. The President, assuming he could come to Moscow, which would be very doubtful, [the translator omitted the last phrase] even if he came to Moscow he would have to be a very rigid participant. He could not say, after having suffered an enormous defeat in Vietnam, I have made the following concession to the leader of the country whose arms made our defeat possible. I want to tell you the truth. I am telling you facts, not subjective speculation. I am just telling you what the facts are.

But let us take a more realistic case, which is that North Vietnam will not win but will continue its offensive in order to gradually undermine our domestic support. Then we will be in Moscow under conditions where the issue is still in doubt, when major military operations are going on and our retaliatory measures are also going on. We understand that this creates great difficulty for you, and it also creates enormous difficulty for us. In that case, the major campaign will concern our domestic public opinion. Now, as your Ambassador knows, we have had riots every May since we came into office. And we have defeated them each time—by October people are always wearing American flags in their lapels each time. Upper middle class students are not good revolutionaries. In America at least, the upper middle class does not make good revolutionaries, but they make a lot of noise. [Mr. Brezhnev laughs.]

In order to defeat this domestic upheaval, especially in an election year, we will have to go right and have to appeal to those people who normally vote for Wallace.⁹

In short, a little country whose heroism derives from a monomaniacal obsession with local problems is bringing about a situation where the whole situation is clearly developing in a direction which neither of us wants, and which is not our preference, and which is imposed on us by developments which we would not have chosen. This is why we are determined to bring this issue to some sort of conclusion, either a final one or an interim one which removes it for this year, while you and we settle fundamental issues and while other developments take place.

We are doing this in no spirit of hostility. We are not asking for anything other than the two objectives I mentioned to the General-Secretary. And even if we defeat the offensive we will not change our objectives.

But what I must in all honesty tell the General-Secretary is that if developments continue unchecked, either we will take actions which will threaten the summit or, if the summit should take place, we will

⁸ See Document 84.

⁹ See footnote 14, Document 126.

lose the freedom of action to achieve the objectives which we described and which are the principal goal of our Administration.

We have read your last communication¹⁰ with great care, Mr. General-Secretary. We chose not to reply to the specifics because we knew we would have an opportunity to talk. We recognize that the Soviet Union is pursuing a principled foreign policy, and we would never ask you to betray an ally. I also, as a professor, have studied Russian history and know that it has not happened infrequently that certain sentiments of loyalty are put before tactical considerations. That's not the worst trait a country can have. All I can say is that we are prepared to deal with the issue with a spirit of generosity, fairness and broad-mindedness, and we hope this lays the basis for the development of U.S.-Soviet relations which will be a historic departure.

Mr. General-Secretary, I am sorry to have spoken at such length, but as a former professor it seems that my internal clock is geared to 50-minute presentations.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Fifteen minutes or 50 minutes?

Mr. Kissinger: Fifty minutes.

Mr. Brezhnev: No, I think that is all to the good because I do want to gain a better understanding of the way in which President Nixon and his Administration in general views the prospects for all these problems. After all, it is the United States and not the Soviet Union which is conducting this war in Vietnam.

(Mr. Brezhnev takes a document from Mr. Aleksandrov and reads it in Russian. Dr. Kissinger interrupts by saying that the only thing he understood was his name which happened very often.)

Mr. Brezhnev: I would like to broaden the Vietnam question in this discussion by introducing the following matter. Can you tell us why the U.S. suspended talks and what your view is regarding the resumption of talks in Paris? Because after all the questions have to be resolved by you and the Vietnamese, no one else, President Nixon and yourself. We have been in communication with Vietnam and have received this communication today. They have advanced their views regarding the resumption of meetings with the Americans. I have had no time to distribute this to my colleagues and will do so whenever there is an opportunity. They have informed our Ambassador about their position in response to the proposal put forward by Dr. Kissinger.¹¹ That is where I started reading from the cable:

"The Vietnamese are of the view that the Vietnamese problem must be resolved through negotiations in Paris and in no other place and

¹⁰ Documents 107 and 110.

¹¹ See Document 100.

only between the Vietnamese and the Americans. In this connection Dr. Kissinger's proposal for a confidential meeting in Moscow is not accepted by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

"The Vietnamese side continues to insist on the parallel conduct of talks, both official and restricted, but in this case the resumption of official talks must precede the resumption of the meetings between Special Advisor Le Duc Tho and Dr. Kissinger.

"The U.S. side has proposed first to have a restricted meeting, and if they should yield progress to resume official negotiations. The Vietnamese side has made its proposal regarding the date of the resumption of the official negotiations, that is April 27.

"The restricted meeting could then take place on May 6, but the U.S. side is free to make its own proposal as regards that date.

"If the U.S. side should state its readiness to hold the 148th meeting of the Paris talks on the 27th, Special Advisor Le Duc Tho could without delay fly to Paris. On April 20, instructions have been sent to Minister Xuan Thuy to get in touch with the U.S. side and communicate the above to the Americans, but it is also said that at their own discretion the Soviet comrades can communicate this reply to Dr. Kissinger in person."

This, as I have said, I received this morning. Only I have seen it; I have not had time to acquaint my colleagues with it. I will do it. (Mr. Brezhnev shows the document, pointing out that only his name had been checked off on the distribution list.)

Ambassador Dobrynin: They should have contacted you yesterday.¹²

Mr. Kissinger: They did. I was going to tell you.

Mr. Brezhnev: I see in that cable they have instructed Xuan Thuy to deliver this message to the U.S. side.

Mr. Kissinger: If I may point out to the General-Secretary, this note, even to the Soviet Union, and even more marked in dealings with us, contains an attitude which we cannot accept any more. They make proposals not as proposals but they say "must", "the U.S. must". If it is about a meeting, it is not so bad perhaps but it is impossible for proposals of substance; then it takes on an ultimate non-like character. And in negotiations they always take the attitude, even in private talks, as if I were a student taking an exam on the adequacy of my understanding of their proposals. They never answer my proposals.

But I will then give an answer to the question you gave me, Mr. General-Secretary, and will then give you our answer to this part of it.

Mr. Brezhnev: I wanted to add something.

Mr. Kissinger: The General-Secretary asked me why we suspended talks on March 23. I would be glad to answer his question if he wants. First of all, Mr. General-Secretary, there have been 147 plenary sessions

¹² See footnote 7, Document 126.

which have settled absolutely nothing, not one thing of even the most minor kind. Indeed, it seems to be the North Vietnamese strategy to demonstrate no progress in negotiations in order to maximize our domestic difficulty. Let me talk about specifics here. Since this is not a public forum, I can tell you absolutely honestly how the sequence of events came about.

Mr. Brezhnev: Perhaps we can take a ten-minute break and give the interpreters a break, a breather.

(There followed a 20-minute break during which the two parties walked around outside. 2:25 p.m.–2:45 p.m.)

Mr. Brezhnev: So how will you deal with this proposal of whether to resume the Vietnam talks or not to resume them? What is to be done, in short?

Mr. Kissinger: I don't insist—does the General-Secretary want an answer as to why we suspended talks? It is up to him.

Mr. Brezhnev: Of course, I want to hear everything you want to tell me.

Mr. Kissinger: Then I will give an answer to his question. First, as I already pointed out with regard to the plenary sessions, there have been 147 without any results. Now let me give the General-Secretary the sequence of events of recent months. I am doing it from memory, so my dates may be off by a day or two, but they are generally correct.

On February 15 (*sic*) North Vietnam proposed to us a private meeting for anytime after March 15. On February 18 (*sic*) we accepted this and proposed a date of March 20.¹³ The reason we proposed March 20 was because for reasons of secrecy, we always do it on a weekend, so we did it for the first weekend after March 15. On February 29, the North Vietnamese accepted the date of March 20.

Mr. Brezhnev: Some tea?

Mr. Kissinger: That would be good.

On March 7, they cancelled the meeting of March 20 and proposed instead April 15. They said we had bombed between March 2 and March 6, and also February 19 and 20. The first dates we had bombed, but this preceded the acceptance of our dates so they were irrelevant; they were 10 days before the acceptance of the date. The second date, it was a lie. We had not bombed; it was just an excuse.

On March 13, we accepted to meet in April, but we proposed April 24. The reason we proposed April 24 was that I had already agreed, as you know, to go to Japan the weekend of April 15, so we suggested the first weekend after my return from Japan.

¹³ The correct dates are, respectively, February 14 and 16. (Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1105.)

To this they didn't reply. When they had not replied for 10 days, we suspended the plenary sessions. We saw no sense in plenary sessions when they were playing games with the private sessions, and we were making no progress on plenary sessions. We suspended on March 23, 10 days after we accepted their date and had received no reply.

On March 27 . . .

Mr. Brezhnev: Please eat up. You will certainly have to report back to the President.

Mr. Kissinger: On March 27, the North Vietnamese accepted the date of April 24. As soon as they accepted the date, we notified them that we would return to the plenary sessions on April 13. We told them, in other words, that we would return to the plenary sessions, not because of their offensive but because they accepted the private meeting. The offensive had not started, or we didn't understand that it had started. So then the offensive had started, and so we cancelled the plenary meeting, but we maintained our willingness to go to the private meeting. They cancelled the private meeting again, and now we are playing children's games.

But the basic issue isn't this. We are prepared to find a solution as to how to have plenary and private sessions concurrently. We can probably tomorrow make a concrete proposal to you as to how we can do this because that is a subsidiary issue.

Mr. Brezhnev: You have not yet arrived at a final decision on that?

Mr. Kissinger: I will let you know tomorrow. I have an idea. I will let you know exactly what we propose to do. Because we just got their message and I want to think about it a little more.

Mr. Brezhnev: I was too late in communicating it to you.

Mr. Kissinger: No, it was really simultaneous.

The real issue is this. First, it is now obvious that they used this private meeting really in order to deceive us about their offensive. It is clear to us that they scheduled the private meeting to happen some period after their offensive started, and when their offensive was delayed they always delayed the private meeting.

But we will leave that aside. There is a more fundamental point. (The Soviet side holds brief discussions among themselves.)

But a more fundamental point is this. The North Vietnamese for four years now have pursued the tactics of selling us talks for concessions. They have done it with great skill. But they have to understand now, as far as we are concerned, the party is over. We are not interested in talks. We are interested in results. I like Mr. Le Duc Tho. He is a most impressive man, but the reason I want to see him is not for the pleasure of his company, but to have some concrete results. All their communications always talk as if it is a favor to see us and act as if a private meeting is a special concession to us.

So we have two requirements. The first is that the meeting cannot take on May 6; first, because I am occupied on that day and secondly, because that is too late, as I told your Ambassador. May 2 is the latest date I can attend and on which private talks still make sense. But we will make a proposal as to how to bring this about.

Mr. Brezhnev: As they write in their message, the American side is free to make their own proposal with regard to a date.

Mr. Kissinger: That is why I think it is a solvable problem, and I will make a concrete proposal tomorrow, but the second point is more important.

Mr. Brezhnev: It is an easier decision to make than the decision to bomb.

Mr. Kissinger: Bombing is very painful for us. In your own experience, when a leader has necessities and a country has necessities, he must take painful steps which he doesn't like to do. I have told your Ambassador socially that when you have acted, I have been impressed that you have done so massively, without looking back. These were observations that I made as a historian; it doesn't have anything to do with a specific situation.

But I agree with you, Mr. General-Secretary, we can solve this problem.

(During this time Mr. Brezhnev and Mr. Gromyko exchanged animated words.)

Mr. Brezhnev: You can hear what I said. You were evidently hinting at Czechoslovakia.¹⁴ I see you are a very astute lecturer.

Mr. Kissinger: And you a very good debater. But as your Ambassador can tell you, Mr. General-Secretary, I made the comment to him at the time in a spirit of understanding, in a complimentary way, not critically. (Ambassador Dobrynin explains to Mr. Brezhnev.)

The second point I wanted to make . . .

Mr. Brezhnev: You availed yourself of that opportunity to make a point; because I jokingly wanted to divert you from the subject you immediately seized on it. That is a diplomatic strategy. Although at first you said you were not a diplomat, I see that that is not so. You are just doing it as a diversionary tactic so you were starting an attack on me. So then it is a matter of a counterattack on my side. So you resorted to your lecturing tactic. So I resorted to my experience in war, though my true nature is that of a very peaceful man.

Mr. Kissinger: The General-Secretary is an expert at flanking maneuvers.

¹⁴ Reference is to the invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 23, 1968, by the Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact.

Mr. Brezhnev: War can teach you anything—flanking maneuvers and mounting frontal attacks. You weren't actually in the war, were you?

Mr. Kissinger: First, I was in the infantry, and then I was in intelligence.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's something I experienced from beginning to end. The Soviet people, our people, did too.

Mr. Kissinger: It was a very heroic effort.

Mr. Brezhnev: It was an awesome thing.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes.

Mr. Brezhnev: Our people are still very sensitive to matters related to that, and it is really something that no amount of propaganda can dull, particularly since the generation that really fought the war is still living. There are still hundreds of thousands of war victims, invalids, still living. There are still millions of families who lost their dear ones in the war—their mothers, their fathers and brothers.

Mr. Kissinger: The casualties, the deaths of the Soviet people were unbelievable.

Mr. Brezhnev: Entire generations of modern society have been affected by the war or the results of the war.

Mr. Kissinger: Our people did not suffer anything the way you people did. We didn't have nearly the casualties and none of the devastation.

Mr. Brezhnev: I am sure, God forbid, if your people had had to suffer anything like the Russian people did, the post-war American foreign policy would have been different. The average American is just not familiar with this, has not gone through this, and his mind is conditioned entirely differently.

Mr. Kissinger: Except in the South, where they had an experience with tragedy, most Americans have not experienced this.

Mr. Brezhnev: I have just developed this a little bit now. It is certainly not a time when anyone or any people can welcome anything like what happened before. It would do no one any good. The world is moving away from all such concepts. And particularly with the development of civilization, the raising of educational standards and the independent-mindedness of social groups is growing, especially working people. The opposition to war is mounting constantly everywhere. In these circumstances it is hard for anyone to justify a possible war in any way. And particularly if the clouds of world war, or even the prospect of anything like that, drives fear into the hearts of all people. They gird their loins to oppose such a possibility and any proposal of that sort breeds in the people a desire to rise in self-defense to oppose that. Perhaps these are invisible factors, but they are a very powerful force, and something that each of us must be alive to.

This is just an aside. I am sure we all understand it equally well. When we do talk about military action, it is something that must be borne in mind. That is particularly so for you historians—any war has always left a trace on human history. Conclusions have been drawn, and the wars, of course, more recently have taught people of all the world very important lessons. This is one digression which I wanted to make.

Mr. Kissinger: It is very important, because the overriding consideration must be to avoid confrontation and improve the general prospects for peace in the world.

Mr. Brezhnev: (Gesturing with his hand.) I vote for that. Our people and our Party are wholeheartedly in favor of that, and I also mention this because we will certainly spend as much time as possible on it in our talks with President Nixon. This topic is bound to come up.

Mr. Kissinger: The preservation of peace.

Mr. Brezhnev: We must find principles on which to base our relationship in this regard. It is always better to discuss this in man-to-man talk than to set it down on paper, because, for example, if the Politburo had asked me to write out exactly what I intended to tell Dr. Kissinger, I would have been hard-pressed because I don't know how the talks would develop, and how we would get along. As it turns out, these are frank and free discussions. We do have a chance to put forth views, to speak from the heart. And that is how it will go with President Nixon: talk about the prospects of peace. It is wrong to formally set out positions, to abstract oneself from the overriding problem of peace and the prospect of developing bilateral relations. Perhaps we will not write down all that we discuss. The mere fact that we talked about it and nodded to each other in a friendly way might sometimes be even more important than what is written on a piece of paper.

I am again saying this because as I see it, the talks you will have here will perhaps be more than one-half the discussions at the summit meeting. After all if we can reach mutual understandings—the problems we discuss with President Nixon when he comes—you can convey the substance to President Nixon and then we won't have need to cover the same ground if agreement is already reached. We will spend less time on these subjects.

Mr. Kissinger: But more time on broad perspectives.

Mr. Brezhnev: Yes, and we can then spend time on more specific and concrete things.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree, Mr. General-Secretary, that peace is not a piece of paper but an attitude. One of the more important things that could come out of the meeting is that, without formal obligation, we would ask ourselves what the General-Secretary thinks. And then this rapport between the two leaders would mean that they take each other seriously even without written commitment.

Mr. Brezhnev: I certainly have no intention of arguing with Mr. Nixon about whose kitchen is better, the U.S. manufacturer or the Russian one. (Mentions name of Soviet factory.)

Mr. Kissinger: This will not occur.

Mr. Brezhnev: Undoubtedly.

Mr. Kissinger: To get back to Vietnam, to our two difficult allies. Assuming we solve the problem of the sequence of plenary and private meetings, then the problem is what happens at the private meeting. We will not be satisfied simply with the presence of Mr. Le Duc Tho, much as I enjoy his company. We will come up with some formula for that prestige issue which we will settle.

Mr. Brezhnev: Parallel talks. It's really a procedural matter which one shouldn't fight over.

Mr. Kissinger: We will make a concrete proposal which we find acceptable, and we think they will find acceptable. And what must happen at this meeting or very shortly afterward is either a final settlement of the war, which is probably not possible, or a definite reduction in the violence which will be guaranteed at least for a substantial period of time, say through the period of this year. If this reduction of violence is achieved, we will, of course, be prepared to reduce our activities and remove some of our reinforcements that we have sent out.

Mr. Brezhnev: You have been sending in some reinforcements in certain quantities? Troops?

Mr. Kissinger: We have sent in substantial amounts of Air and Navy.

Mr. Brezhnev: Mainly Air Forces?

Mr. Kissinger: And Navy.

Mr. Brezhnev: Marines?

Mr. Kissinger: We have sent in Marine Air Force. We have not yet sent in ground forces. I can only repeat, Mr. General-Secretary, as a statement of objective fact, that if we are confronted with a continuation of major military operations, first we will have to take very drastic military steps, but secondly we will have to depend on people domestically that we would rather not choose to work with. So as I said, we have two problems—one the sequence of meetings, and second to bring about at least an interim result to the meetings.

Mr. Brezhnev: Well, as I understand the position of our Vietnamese Comrades, they too are prepared to resume the Paris negotiations and also seem to agree to the holding of a private meeting. The question is which comes before which.

Mr. Kissinger: That we will resolve.

Mr. Brezhnev: It should not be a stumbling block when dealing with the all-important issue of war. In any negotiations, for example

on matters of commerce and trade, people also barter and agree on sequence of steps to take and there is sometimes haggling. But in matters relating to war, resumption of negotiations, particularly as far as a private meeting is concerned, should not be affected by the prestige of either side.

Mr. Kissinger: We will make a concrete proposal tomorrow and solve the problem, even though we have been trying to set up a meeting since March 15 and our confidence in North Vietnam is not exactly overwhelming. We agree with the General-Secretary on which comes first. We will make a proposal tomorrow, and I think you will find it reasonable. We won't treat it as a prestige question. What is important is what happens at the meeting. This is a matter of great importance.

Mr. Brezhnev: Well, as I see it Dr. Kissinger will have the appropriate powers to conduct constructive discussions with Le Duc Tho.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, but will Le Duc Tho?

Mr. Brezhnev: That honestly I can't say. Well, that will probably depend in some measure on the proposal you come up with tomorrow and on what you want us to convey.

Mr. Kissinger: Our proposal tomorrow will only be procedural, how to get the talks started.

Mr. Brezhnev: But you probably have some plan in your mind as to what to endeavor to do whenever the meeting is finally organized.

(Ambassador Dobrynin to Dr. Kissinger: I just recalled what you told me recently.)

Mr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, I want to be honest with you. If North Vietnam follows their usual practice—I don't know how they talk to you—but if they follow the usual practice, they have a document with points, eight points, five points, etc., and each point says "you must." Then I say something, and they say you are not yet "concrete." Not being "concrete" means that we do not agree with them. If I accept one of their points, they say now I am concrete, and we go to the next point. In other words, they give a series of ultimatums. This will under no circumstances be acceptable. If this process is maintained, we will act unilaterally, at whatever risk to whatever relationship. I say this not as a threat but as our objective policy so that there is no misunderstanding.

I can give you tomorrow, if you are prepared to consider it, our idea of what steps should be taken this year to reduce the level of violence without giving up principles. I can give it to you tomorrow. If they proceed in normal fashion, it will be a very difficult session.

Mr. Brezhnev: Just by way of putting some lining in there at that point, let me comment that sometimes Americans find life too dull. Rock and roll is dull, and there are no domestic problems, so let's start a war in Vietnam.

Mr. Kissinger: With the most difficult people in the world.

Mr. Brezhnev: Now you complain. That was just an aside. Later certainly we will set out our views in detail on the Vietnam problem as a whole. But go on.

Mr. Kissinger: I said essentially what I have to say. As I said, there are two problems. First, the start of the talks on which we will make a proposal tomorrow and which is soluble. Second, how to make the talks fruitful in a brief period of time. On that we could make some suggestions. I would be glad to have your ideas.

It is a matter not only of Vietnam but a question really of the whole international situation. If it is not resolved, events will happen domestically and internationally—and basically for nothing. We don't want to stop there; we want to get out. You don't want to go in. For us to run the risk of a conflict in an area where neither of us have any vital interests left would be an historical absurdity.

Mr. Brezhnev: On Vietnam we will certainly continue our discussion tomorrow, perhaps in the context of concrete considerations and observations. We will be ready tomorrow to listen to any proposal you can state, and perhaps something practical will result. On the whole I would like to say that we would favor that. Of course, it's a very complex problem. I don't want to delve into the history of the Vietnam conflict except to say that it was not ourselves who started the war. It is the United States who started the war, the U.S. who intensified it when Kosygin visited Vietnam.¹⁵ Of course, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is a socialist country, and we fulfill our international duty of solid support for a socialist country. We make no secret of our support for the victims of aggression and the people who uphold independence and freedom.

What is the United States defending in Vietnam? It doesn't matter anyway. I doubt anyone would understand that the United States is truly defending that country. The war has been going on eight years, but for what sake? For what sake is money being squandered, for what sake are so many Americans being killed and thousands of Vietnamese? Has the war brought the United States anything positive? Surely nothing. For eight years this shameful war brought on the United States nothing but the wrath of the peoples. We did not engineer it. It is not something we are engaged in or directly involved. It is people's feelings coming to the surface. You know better than we the strong protests in the world against the war raging in Vietnam. This evokes all over

¹⁵ Kosygin was leading a high-level Soviet delegation in Hanoi when—in response to the Viet Cong attack of February 7, 1965, on an American military installation at Pleiku—the United States began to bomb targets in North Vietnam.

cries of imperialism all over. All this is on the shoulders of the present United States Government. Certainly this is a subject that you know better than we. Bombing is not a solution to any problem. Bombing will not solve the problem. It never has. Sometimes it will soften the opposition, then again there will be new fighting. Then what if there is another period of bombing, surely that is not the path for the United States to win new glory in the world.

If we take the situation today, the bombing at this time has particular consequences because it takes place at a time when we are preparing major steps forward to improve the world climate through the summit meeting between the leaders of our two countries. This will be a meeting which has significance not only from our point of view but great significance in the view of all public opinion. In the meetings we hope to affect the attitude of the world and attract the sympathy of the people all over the world to such decisions as we might take during the meeting.

I certainly don't think that the bombing at this time will help President Nixon get elected. I know he wants to have a successful election. We take no position in any way to prevent his re-election. That is why we are going to the summit meeting at this particular time—surely on our part this is the best assistance to the President. The best policy is for both of us to look at the problem from the standpoint of casting aside all negative things and for an attitude on all positions that will help ease and resolve this problem.

From some remarks that you made I tend to draw the conclusion that you feel we are in part to blame for the escalation of the fighting, for the offensive in Vietnam. Surely you do not dispute that you are fighting, not we. Is this your method of bringing certain indirect pressures to bear upon us? I feel that both perhaps President Nixon and yourself have been misled and deluded in this regard. There are certain forces in the world who by their activity try somehow to obstruct the American-Soviet summit meeting. They would be very gleeful and would gloat to see the Chinese meeting come off while with the Soviet Union no meeting would come off. We take a very firm decision about the meeting with the United States—we are taking no steps to prevent it, but it is not easy.

As regards Soviet assistance in Vietnam, I wish to say very clearly and openly that in the recent period there have been no additional agreements with regard to Soviet supplies, and I am sure you are aware that throughout the history of the Vietnam war we have nothing to do with the planning of the war. This is up to the North Vietnamese themselves. They never ask us to take part in the planning or ask for our acceptance. They know about wet and dry seasons. They know when to act in war.

Mr. Kissinger: They know too well.

Mr. Brezhnev: I for one, never having been there, would not have the slightest idea when things are best.

Mr. Kissinger: It took me two years to learn the rainy and dry seasons, because every region is different.

Mr. Brezhnev: And secondly, I take the sequence of events that preceded the offensive. President Nixon travelled to Peking and before he visited Peking Chou En-lai went to Hanoi and there was no offensive.

Mr. Kissinger: I thought that was after his visit.

Mr. Brezhnev: No, before.

Mr. Kissinger: I get it.

Mr. Brezhnev: There was no offensive during President Nixon's visit to China. Then after his visit Mr. Chou En-lai went again and then came the offensive.

Take a look at the Chinese press concerning Vietnam. It is now saying that the Soviet Union is now rendering immense assistance to Vietnam. They never said this before. They always said that our assistance was negligible. Now in one month's time all has changed in the Chinese press. And what is more, the American opposition press is writing in unison with the Chinese press. They too are writing that the Soviet Union has given North Vietnam such great assistance, not only to overrun South Vietnam but to go as far as India. That certainly shows that both the Chinese and opposition press are writing in parallel. They are acting to prevent, to block the summit between the Soviet Union and the United States.

I mention all this and list all the arguments because I feel they are weighty proof in opposition to what you said concerning Soviet arms in the offensive. Before our meeting, because of the continued talk about Soviet weapons and planning in Vietnam, I asked my people to draw up a special list of all weapons sent to Vietnam during recent years. I have it before me. Look at it. It definitely concludes that it is certainly not the Soviet Union who has organized the latest offensive in Vietnam. It is not the right time to show it to you. But you would see the point. It proves whether the Soviet Union is instrumental or not in organizing the offensive.

I say also that you should bear in mind that powerful forces in the world are out to block the summit meeting. It certainly would be quite a big gift to the Chinese if the meeting did not come off. It would only help China.

(Dr. Kissinger, noticing that Mr. Brezhnev is standing up, comments that he did not wish to keep him from his next appointment. Mr. Brezhnev looks at his pocket watch and indicates he still has time.)

I don't know whether President Nixon and yourself grasp Chinese philosophy. It is certainly centuries old and goes back in age. But China today, the country, does not really have a principled policy of its own, no consistency. First they took advantage of the international Communist movement to build hegemony. On other occasions they use accusations: "Social imperialists", they call us.

Mr. Kissinger: I thought they called you "revisionists."

Mr. Gromyko: That was in the past. They use stronger words now.

Mr. Brezhnev: "Revisionists" is old hat. They use "social Imperialists" now. For me they have ordained an honorable death. They plan to shoot me. Mr. Kosygin they plan to hang, and Mr. Mikoyan they will boil alive. At least I have an honorable fate, not like Mikoyan, like those who will be boiled alive. Just last year that country beheaded their own people, which is what is to be expected at a time of the so-called Cultural Revolution.

It is a very strange country indeed. First, they called our assistance negligible and now they call it tremendous. I don't know if you have studied their minds. They are certainly beyond the capacity of a European mind to fathom. (Mr. Brezhnev says to Mr. Gromyko: "beyond my European mind.")

We are in no way against the improvement of U.S.-China relations. I am not personally opposed, nor is the Communist Party. As I said publicly, we regard this as a natural process, provided it is not prejudicial to the interests of any third country. That is the position of our Party and Government.

The main thing you must understand is that nothing is accomplished by bombing. It can only spoil the atmosphere in light of forthcoming events. It objectively can lead to a situation where for President Nixon the trip might be impossible, just as events might confront us with a very difficult situation for the summit meeting.

I don't know the impact on U.S. society. That is up to you. I know the President wants to preside over an honorable expression of your 200th anniversary. You realize—we don't know what kind of celebration, but it would not be a good celebration, a happy holiday, if it comes at the time of unfriendly relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Before we end the meeting, I would very much like you to convey to President Nixon that I can confirm and reconfirm our view and the desire of our government to have a Soviet-American summit meeting. We attach immense importance to it. We believe it can be not only historic but epoch-making. We believe it is in the American interest and the Soviet interest, in the best interests of the Soviet and American peoples. We believe both our sides can exert a beneficial influence on all world affairs.

On that I will end this meeting. We believe the main issue between our two countries is the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, our two countries. To this end I would like to leave a document with you. It is entitled "Foundation of Mutual Relations between the United States and Soviet Union." This is a very important document, because we have several other suggestions about decisions that could be taken as to the outcome of the summit meeting with President Nixon. But I will announce this in our subsequent meetings.

This bears no relation to our previous discussions, but just last year I found a document in Leningrad, a document drawn up in 1894 by a certain geographer who lived near China. His name was Maximov. He was evidently a most intelligent man, and he gives a character study on the Chinese. I will read this later. Let me say that I don't think either your scientific institutes or ours studying China could produce anything better about China today. This is just a piece.

Mr. Kissinger: I would love to have it.

Mr. Brezhnev: It is just a piece of literature.

Mr. Kissinger: Could I get it?

Mr. Brezhnev: I will read it first.

It is in Russian and an unofficial translation into English. (Mr. Brezhnev hands over the document "Foundation of Mutual Relations between the United States and Soviet Union" to Dr. Kissinger. Attached at Tab A.)¹⁶

Mr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, we will read it with great care and give you our preliminary reactions certainly while I am here.

Mr. Brezhnev: We would certainly welcome any chance to reach a preliminary understanding or a final understanding while you are here. If you want to make it stronger, not weaker, we would welcome that. If you weaken it, we will make a public statement and say we had a very fine draft to improve relations on which we wanted help and wanted to adopt it, but Dr. Kissinger was against it, and he refused it. We would go on and say that since we were not willing to complicate relations with President Nixon, we were forced to accept a weaker document, but the blame lies squarely with Dr. Kissinger.

But if you strengthen the document, I will find equally strong words to praise you. I will then say that our Foreign Minister was very poorly informed about the conciliatory mood of Dr. Kissinger and

¹⁶ Not attached but both, including the unofficial translation printed as an attachment here, are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes.

therefore submitted a weak document and we are indebted to Dr. Kissinger for having strengthened it.

Mr. Kissinger: We will study it with great sympathy and try to reach a preliminary understanding.

Mr. Brezhnev: I trust you will take a serious view of it. It is a considered proposal of our government and the Central Committee, not just a man-to-man document.

As I said, I will not be able to give you more time today. We can meet tomorrow, Sunday and Monday if necessary.

Mr. Kissinger: I am prepared to stay through Monday¹⁷ if that turns out to be necessary. If I don't get home by Monday night, they will all think I have a new girl friend.

Mr. Brezhnev: That's not so bad. We hand out prizes for that, especially concerning men as old as I. If that were to happen to me I would get a medal. After 65, one gets the "order of the badge of honor" for one's ability.

So what do [you] say about a meeting tomorrow?

Mr. Kissinger: Any time.

Mr. Brezhnev: I am taking into consideration the fact that your body clock is at 5:00 in the morning.

Mr. Kissinger: No, that's okay.

Mr. Brezhnev: So I think 11:00.

Mr. Kissinger: Any time. It can be earlier.

Mr. Brezhnev: Let's aim for 11:00.

Mr. Kissinger: I know, Mr. General-Secretary, that today is a solemn day for you to celebrate the birth of one of the great figures in history. I would like to extend the best wishes and the respect of President Nixon and the American people on this occasion.

Mr. Brezhnev: Thank you very sincerely.

And I will see you tomorrow. I, for one, am satisfied with our discussions today. I am satisfied with the frankness with which we speak and the general method of discussing these questions. Let us try to look back on our experience today and work better tomorrow so that the President on no account will be angry with you, and I will not be criticized by the Central Committee. Both of us must take that into account. Both of us are charged with responsible duties and risk of being scolded.

Mr. Kissinger: I run a greater risk of having the President scold me than the Central Committee scold you.

¹⁷ April 24.

Mr. Brezhnev: Perhaps. I wouldn't like you to get into hot water either. We will in large measure affect the considerations of the President. He has to take our opinions into account. He is not all-powerful. The two of us will outvote him.

Mr. Kissinger: I have been pleased to meet you.

Attachment

Soviet Draft¹⁸

FOUNDATIONS OF MUTUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America,

Guided by the obligations assumed by them under the Charter of the United Nations and by a desire to strengthen relations of peace with each other and to place them on the firmest possible basis, in which the Soviet and American peoples are equally interested,

Aware of the necessity of making every effort to prevent the threat of the outbreak of nuclear war and to create conditions promoting détente in the world and the strengthening of universal security and international co-operation,

Believing that the improvement of Soviet-American relations and their mutually advantageous development in areas including the economic, scientific and cultural fields, will meet these objectives and contribute to better mutual understanding and business-like co-operation, without in any way prejudicing the interests of third countries,

Have agreed as follows:

First. The Parties will unswervingly proceed from the recognition of peaceful co-existence as the sole acceptable and essential basis of their mutual relations. Differences in the socio-political structures and ideologies of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. are not an obstacle to the development between them of normal international relations based on the principles of sovereignty, equality, noninterference in internal affairs and mutual advantage.

Second. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. attach important significance to preventing the occurrence of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of relations between them and will act in such a

¹⁸ The English language text is an "unofficial translation."

way as not to allow a military collision, and to preventing situations capable of causing an aggravation of the international situation. To these ends they will invariably display in their mutual relations a will to negotiate and to settle differences by peaceful means.

The necessary prerequisites for maintaining and strengthening relations of peace between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. are the recognition and implementation of the principle of the equal security of the Parties and the renunciation of the use or threat of force.

Third. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. intend to widen the legal and treaty basis of their mutual relations and to exert the necessary efforts so that bilateral agreements concluded between them and multilateral treaty acts to which they are parties are unswervingly translated into life.

Fourth. The Parties will continue their efforts, both on a bilateral and on a multilateral basis, with a view to limiting armaments, particularly strategic armaments. In those instances when this becomes possible, concrete agreements aimed at achieving this purpose will be concluded.

The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. consider the ultimate objective of their efforts to be the solving of the problem of general and complete disarmament and the ensuring of an effective system of international security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Fifth. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. reaffirm their readiness to continue the practice of bilateral exchanges of views on problems of interest to them and, where necessary, to carry out exchanges of opinions on the highest level, including meetings between leaders of the two countries.

The widening of contacts between representatives of the legislative bodies of the two countries will be encouraged.

Sixth. The Parties consider Soviet-American trade and economic ties as an important and necessary element in the strengthening of bilateral relations and will actively promote the strengthening and growth of such ties. The Parties will facilitate co-operation between the interested organizations and enterprises of the two countries and the conclusion of appropriate agreements and contracts between them, including long-term ones.

The Parties will contribute to the improvement of navigation and air communication between the two countries.

Seventh. The Parties consider it topical and useful to develop with one another contacts and co-operation in the field of science and technology.

Where suitable, matters of concrete co-operation between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. in the above-mentioned fields will be regulated

by appropriate agreements the conclusion of which will be encouraged by the Parties.

Eighth. The Parties reaffirm their intention to deepen ties with one another in the field of culture and to widen possibilities for the fuller familiarisation of each other with their cultural values. The Parties consider their objective to be to facilitate the creation of appropriate conditions for cultural exchanges and tourism.

Ninth. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. will seek to ensure that the ties and co-operation between them on all the above-mentioned lines, and on other lines which will correspond to their mutual interests, are built on a firm and long-term basis.

Tenth. The U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. do not claim for themselves and do not recognize the claims of anyone else to any special rights or advantages in world affairs.

The development of Soviet-American relations is not directed against third countries and their legitimate interests.

Eleventh. The provisions set forth in this. . . (name of the document) do not affect the obligations with regard to third countries earlier assumed by the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A.

Twelfth. Each Party will take all the necessary measures to ensure conditions fully corresponding to the norms and customs of international law for the functioning on its territory of the diplomatic and other accredited missions of the other Party.

135. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 21, 1972, 6:15 p.m.

RN: Did you get the communications—can they be received?²

GH: Not yet. No. They can't—I have the message on the wire.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² According to reports from the American radio operator and the aircraft commander in Moscow, the communication outage was the result of problems with both equipment and logistics. (Ibid., NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2]) Kissinger later noted "an additional

RN: So we can't receive or send now. Another thing. About Rogers' comment³—our friends may be up to a trick—the Soviets offer something to Smith—they think we will push this if Smith is panting for something. Try to force us to go to the summit.

GH: Absolutely—that could be—but we are not sure.

RN: It may be just another game. Give me a call if you get anything. He is sleeping now. The strike went well in the North.

GH: Yes. Just the 52's—but it was a good solid jolt and [hit?] Vinh really good—buildings, air fields, etc. out of operation.

RN: This is the right thing to do right now.⁴

GH: Yes. Good leverage. Mr. Laird went over our air capabilities said they are better—more air than we had at the peak of the war. We are using it better and have got more of it now.

delay caused by interference with the communications" and suggested that the Soviets were jamming the transmission. (Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1154–1155) In a telephone conversation at 8 p.m., Nixon instructed Haig to transmit messages via Dwight Chapin, the President's appointments secretary, who was also in Moscow leading an advance team for the summit, "because we can't have the situation that the Russians may be messing us up—use Chapin's plane." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2])

³ According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon called Rogers twice from Camp David on April 21: from 3:24 to 3:32 p.m., during a meeting with Haig (3:15–4:05 p.m.); and from 4:09 to 4:11 p.m., after Haig had returned to Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files) No substantive record of either discussion, or of the meeting with Haig, has been found. For Haig's report to Kissinger on the subject, see Document 136.

⁴ Nixon called Haig again at 9:40 p.m. to urge further use of American air power. According to the transcript, the two men had the following exchange: Nixon "Al, on an urgent basis, get Moorer to send a 52 strike in North Vietnam—not particularly Hanoi. They can hit in the day, can't they?" Haig: "Yes sir." Nixon: "25 or 30 planes tomorrow while Henry is there." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2])

136. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 21, 1972, 0044Z.

Sitto 21. Communication failure at your end has been most disconcerting at this end.² I hope in future if situations like this develop, you can have Sonnenfeldt or Win call us on telephone using alias of member of advance and double-talk problem.

Secretary Rogers called President and passed to him substance of message from Smith which is attached.³ The President immediately concluded that your hosts may be hoping to trade flexibility in SALT for U.S. concessions on South Vietnam. The President is very concerned that we hold first and foremost to tough position on South Vietnam—that we not giving up bombing of North for illusory promises of negotiations with Hanoi or any other promise that is not firmly guaranteed.

Please note TDCS report contained in noon notes of April 21st⁴ touching upon discussions in Paris by Madame Binh and Xuan Thuy. This report is considered fairly reliable and would suggest that air action in north has been major shock to the other side. The President is apparently determined to continue raids on Hanoi/Haiphong area if your discussions do not appear fruitful. I impressed upon him the need to relax on this subject until May 2nd session, if the session gels.

The President informed me he is convinced that Soviets have been in league with Hanoi on the timing and objectives of Hanoi's offensive. He considers that Soviet summit was to be leverage that both sides considered would deter air action against North. He is now doubly suspicious that reasonable posture on SALT may be designed as pot-sweetener for concessions by us on South Vietnam. He has asked that

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² See footnote 3, Document 135.

³ Rogers received a separate message from Smith in which he reported that Semenov "expressed desire of his authorities to prepare both draft ABM treaty and interim offensive freeze for consideration and signature in Moscow at summit." After a brief exchange, Semenov suggested meeting the next day for a "fuller substantive discussion on informal basis with aim of developing mutually acceptable solutions to remaining issues." The telegram was received in the Department at 3:15 p.m., i.e. shortly before the first telephone conversation between Nixon and Rogers. (Telegram 1270 from USDEL SALT VII (Helsinki), April 21; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN(HE))

⁴ Transmitted in message Sitto 18 from Haig to Kissinger on April 21. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Trip to Moscow Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

you recall Brosio's 1965 assessment to effect that hosts are biggest liars, best actors and greatest cheaters in international diplomacy.⁵

The President has asked that I convey foregoing to you in precise terms outlined. I have assured him that no one has better understanding of hosts than you do.

Situation in Vietnam is still under control with greatest danger area in III Corps. ARVN are moving one airborne brigade from II Corps to III Corps and replacing that brigade with Ranger group from I Corps. An Loc has been under heavy attack for past two days but remains intact although some apprehension is developing.

We are, of course, most anxious to receive report from you,⁶ as you can tell from this message, the President's mood is very strong at the moment.

Warm regards.

Attachment

Backchannel Message From the Head of the Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (Smith) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)⁷

Helsinki, April 21, 1972.

0328. Top Secret/Sensitive 211845Z Fm. Amb. Smith SALT Helsinki 0328. To the White House Exclusive Eyes Only Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Dear Henry

Semenov returned today at three. We met at six with Garthoff and Kishilov. Semenov reported that he had met several times at the highest level to consider SALT questions.

⁵ Nixon met Brosio, then Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, during a trip to Europe and the Soviet Union in March 1967. According to Nixon, Brosio "emotionally and emphatically expressed his doubts about Soviet intentions." "I know the Russians," he said. "They are great liars, clever cheaters, and magnificent actors. They cannot be trusted. They consider it their duty to cheat and lie." (Nixon, *RN: Memoirs*, p. 281)

⁶ In message WTE 005 to Haig, April 21, Kissinger briefly reported: "It is hard to overemphasize Soviet eagerness for summit. President will be royally treated but none of this matters if we do not settle Vietnam." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2]) The message, however, was also initially garbled in transmission. (Ibid.)

⁷ Another copy of this message is *ibid.*, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages SALT 1972.

He then read the following: “The question on certain launchers in connection with a possible agreement on certain measures with respect to strategic offensive weapons was presently under serious study in Moscow.” I noted the positive nature of this statement for SALT prospects.

He said his instructions were to try to finalize both agreements here for summit signing.

Semenov then probed about the authoritativeness of the Kishilov/Garthoff conversation of April 16th, USDEL SALT 1265.⁸ I stressed the informal and unofficial aspect of this exchange and asked Semenov if this approach was of interest to his side. He said categorically that it was. I told him that I, personally, thought it had a good deal of sense, but I still had to persuade my authorities and it would help if I had the specifics of his post-Moscow visit position. I hinted that I might return to Washington soon, and that it would be helpful promptly to have his new position.

Pleading need to study his voluminous Moscow record, he suggested deferral of substantive discussion between us until tomorrow at 4:30 p.m.

My three main impressions from this meeting are:

- 1) The USSR want to complete the two agreements at Helsinki for summit signature.
- 2) The USSR will on a general ABM approach involving one NCA and one ICBM defense site for each side, with ICBM deployment area expanded to 150 kilometers, and 75 or 100 launcher level per site.
- 3) Something is possible in SLBM freeze area.

Warm regards.

Gerry Smith

⁸ Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN (HE))

137. **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹**

April 21, 1972, 9:35 p.m.

H: I have a message from Henry finally. Some garble in it but it is fairly clear.² Here is what he said. [Reading]³—“Had 4½ hour meeting with Brezhnev. Atmosphere was extremely cordial, almost effusive. His protestations of eagerness to have the summit no matter what the circumstances was at times almost maudlin, certainly extremely strong. Brezhnev is very forceful, extremely nervous, highly unsubtle, quite intelligent but not in the class of other leaders we have met. His mood can best be summed up in the following concluding quote:”

P: Yeah.

H: “Before we end I would like very much for you to convey to President Nixon that I can confirm and reconfirm our views and the desire of our government to hold the Soviet-American summit meeting.”

P: That doesn't mean a thing, all that is bullshit.

H: “We attach immense importance to it and we believe that it cannot only be historic but epoch-making. We believe it would serve the best interest of the US Government and Soviet people. We believe in this way both our sides can exert a beneficial influence on world affairs.

We believe the main issue is the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, our two countries.”

P: Right.

H: “% of the meeting dealt with Vietnam. I gave him just enough about the summit to whet his appetite but nothing concrete and refused to discuss any specifics. Brezhnev read me a telegram addressed

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² The message was initially garbled in transmission. (Ibid., NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File) In his conversation with the President, Haig apparently read from the message as retransmitted; substantive discrepancies between the text as read in the transcript and the text of the message itself are noted below. (Message WTE 006 from Kissinger to Haig; *ibid.*) Haig also forwarded a retyped version of the message to Nixon on April 22. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

³ All brackets in the source text except the last one citing an omission.

to him from Hanoi which in effect restated the position Hanoi gave us on April 19.⁴ It rejected a meeting in Moscow in particularly insolent terms. Brezhnev indicated considerable readiness to help bring about a meeting. He seemed less sure about how to help in substance. I did not advance any substantive ideas nor even our formula on how to get talks started. This will be the first item of business tomorrow.”⁵

P: Yeah.

H: “It seems improbable that we can be back before Monday night. We have not yet discussed one substantive issue other than Vietnam. Tomorrow I shall submit our proposal and they said they had some concrete ideas about Vietnam to present tomorrow. I was brutal in explaining that a guaranteed deescalation for a year was the minimum we could settle for.”⁶

Brezhnev said that they are now doing everything to help the President get re-elected.”

P: Did you get to Henry my ideas about this?

H: I got them to him.

P: Good, just so he knows.

H: Fine, Mr. President.

P: We’ve really got to get Henry stiffened up. All that bullshit about gives us lunches and all that crap. Despite the fact that he is brutal—you get a message out to Henry and tell him I am rethinking this thing; that I have reached conclusion that it has to be absolutely concrete. I have ordered an urgent study [of strikes to be conducted in North].⁷ Under no circumstances is he to stay. He is to be back Sunday night. They asked him to stay but we are not going to have it. Tell him he has got to be back Sunday night!

H: [Reading again] “What about the Thanh Hoa operation? It is essential that it take place while I am here. The bombing last weekend was an absolute necessity. We certainly got their attention.”

P: What bombing?

H: Last weekend.

P: I understand all that. But Henry better understand that Brezhnev is playing the typical sickening game. He is being taken in. We

⁴ See footnote 7, Document 126.

⁵ According to the transcript, Haig did not read the following passage here from the message: “Brezhnev’s attitude can perhaps be summed up in two quotes about Vietnam: ‘We must remove all obstacles to the summit.’ ‘In finding a solution, let us try tomorrow to find the positive.’”

⁶ The message itself continues here with the section, as subsequently read by Haig, on the Thanh Hoa operation.

⁷ See Document 136.

have got to stiffen him up. He loves to sit back and philosophize for the history books. You tell him in cold turkey that he can not stay till Monday⁸ and bullshit about the summit. He can not stay till Monday for reasons I can not explain. Unless he gets absolute agreement tomorrow, strike is going Sunday night. Don't you think he needs this? The sound of it doesn't sound right to me. Henry is so easily taken in by flattery. He is great but—

H: He thinks the summit is more important to you than Vietnam.

P: It is not. We have got to give up the summit in order to get a settlement in Vietnam and he has got to have that tomorrow! He has got to come back Sunday night. He can not stay till Monday. If he says he can be there three days, they will keep him three days. That ploy that Rogers talked about is one they are pushing.

H: We got a message from Gerry Smith, which I sent to Henry, which pointed out your concern. That will just sweeten—

P: Sweeten the pot. You tell Henry, first, he has got to come back Sunday night. The extra day is so [omission in the source text]. You tell him in not subtle terms I have decided that Vietnam is ten times more important than the summit. Vietnam tomorrow; summit is not to be discussed further until Vietnam is settled. He should know that I have ordered a three-day strike period to begin Sunday night.

H: I have talked to Laird.⁹

P: Send that line to Henry. Shake him up hard! He's already started though, hasn't he? What time is it now?

H: 10:00.

P: They are 8 hours ahead so it's 6 o'clock there now. Reach him before his morning meeting and tell him no discussions of the summit before they settle Vietnam and that is an order!

⁸ April 24.

⁹ Haig talked to Laird via secure phone on April 21 at 6:30 p.m. According to a transcript, Haig began the conversation: "I know you have been trying to get Henry. I wouldn't try. This is all I can say." After an exchange on redeployment and cloud seeding, the conversation continued as follows: Haig: "Don't say anything about not being able to get Henry. And the President wants to be sure another strike for the Hanoi-Haiphong area—we will be ready." Laird: "We are ready—this weekend?" Haig: "No." Laird: "It is always better if we have 48 hours but we can do it in 24." Haig: "I don't foresee it over the weekend." Laird: "I think we should do it." Haig: "That was an interesting TDCS in Paris." Laird: "Yes. They must have miscalculated." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2]) For discussion of the TDCS report, which noted that the North Vietnamese were concerned about the impact of the U.S. bombing campaign, see Document 136.

138. **Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹**

Washington, April 21, 1972.

Sitto 22. We have just received your 007² and 006.³ 007 is readable. 006 was garbled but I believe we got bulk of it. Reference 007, Thanh Hoa target was struck on schedule by B-52s but with sharply reduced number of fighter bombers due to weather. All evidence indicates B-52 strike on target and effective.

There has been little change in military situation from morning of April 21 report.⁴ Situation in An Loc remains serious and there is evidence of deterioration within perimeter which is now under direct enemy fire. Thieu has ordered reinforcements: one airborne brigade from II Corps and Ranger Group from I Corps to the area. Intelligence indicates enemy will pay any price to take An Loc and situation there must be considered serious.

Situation in MR-1 remains stable with initiative still on friendly side. Situation in II Corps is still dicey with enemy attacks against fire bases in Dac Tho area.

I am sending more detailed report following this message.⁵ You should be aware that President is increasingly concerned by lack of communication from your aircraft. If situation continues any longer, it may be necessary for you to use General Scowcroft who is scheduled to leave today, or the backchannel [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] with cognizance of Ambassador Beam. Dangers here are obvious but this may become necessary.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash. No time of transmission or receipt appears on the message.

² In message WTE 007 to Haig, April 21, Kissinger reported: "1. I must have a detailed update of the military situation before my next meeting with Brezhnev at 1000 Moscow Time 0200 Washington Time. I must be sure I will not sound absurd when I ask for withdrawal. 2. The Thanh Hoa operation should take place before we deliver the note to the North Vietnamese. Please advise." (Ibid., [1 of 2])

³ See footnote 2, Document 137.

⁴ Sent as message Sitto 16 from Haig to Kissinger on April 21. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Trip to Moscow Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

⁵ Reference is presumably to a memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon on the Indochina military situation, which Haig forwarded in message Sitto 26 to Kissinger in Moscow on April 22. (Ibid.)

When I gave the President substance of your 006, he was very strong that you should return Sunday night.⁶ He also insists that no substance on summit be discussed until Vietnam situation has been fully explored. He states that from his perspective the settlement of Vietnam is in order of magnitude ten times more important than the Soviet summit and he is fully prepared to sacrifice summit if need be.

President has also ordered another 52 strike against North Vietnam hopefully to be executed before Sunday night. I have told Laird to prepare targets which can not be farther north than Thanh Hoa. Laird will clear with me and I will re-raise with President when target is selected tomorrow morning Washington time. Need your guidance on how to play this with President in the morning (eight hours from now).

Finally, President has ordered preparation of three-day strike in Hanoi-Haiphong area which he insists he will order if your talks prove to be unfruitful.

You should be aware that President has just received results of Sindlinger poll⁷ which indicates his popularity has risen sharply since escalation of fighting in Vietnam. Same poll indicated George Wallace's rating doubled in the same period and that Humphrey and Muskie slipped so badly that they are all but out of it. McGovern was rated as having appeal with about 20 per cent of electorate. More specifics are contained in Evening Notes.⁸ As you can see, President's starchy mood since this afternoon has increased immeasurably. Please keep this in mind in your reporting and in your most difficult tasks there. I will stay at this end around the clock. Please be sure that Win or Hal keep me fully abreast of your thinking even at expense of absence of one or other in your substantive sessions.

Also please be sure that aircraft is instructed and is adequately manned to guarantee immediate delivery of my communications to you and of yours to me.

Warm regards.

⁶ April 23.

⁷ Albert E. Sindlinger, a national telephone pollster. The results of the poll were reported in a release by United Press International (UPI-151) on April 21. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 117, Vietnam Subject Files, Vietnam Offensive (2 Apr 72), Permanent File)

⁸ Sent as message Sitto 19 from Haig to Kissinger on April 21. (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

139. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 22, 1972, 11 a.m.–4:05 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General-Secretary of Central Committee of CPSU
Andrei Gromyko, Foreign Minister
Anatoli Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA
A. Alexandrov-Agentov, Assistant to Mr. Brezhnev
Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter
Mr. Samoteykin, Assistant to Mr. Brezhnev
Mr. Henry A. Kissinger
Mr. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Senior Staff
Mr. Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
Mr. John Negroponte, NSC Staff
Mr. Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

Basic Principles; Vietnam; SALT; European Security; Bilateral Relations;
Announcement of Visit; Summit Arrangements; China

[When Dr. Kissinger's car arrived at 11:00 a.m. at the front door of the Guest House reserved for the meetings, the General-Secretary and the Foreign Minister came down the steps and welcomed him. Brezhnev was wearing a stylish dark blue suit, dark blue shirt, dark tie, gold watch chain and two Orders of Lenin. Before entering the building, Brezhnev led Mr. Kissinger on a walk around the building to the garden in the back, and onto a small covered platform overlooking the Moscow River. They exchanged informal pleasantries:]²

Brezhnev: They tell me you've been working on the draft of the Principles and strengthening it.³ That's what I had suggested. You're

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road. For his memoir account of the meeting, see Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 1146–1150.

² All brackets in the source text.

³ A copy of the U.S. redraft of the Soviet draft on Basic Principles, including handwritten changes by Kissinger, Sonnenfeldt, and others, as well as a 15-page paper with parallel columns comparing the two drafts, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes. According to a list of notes exchanged during Kissinger's trip to Moscow, Kissinger handed the U.S. redraft to Dobrynin the morning of April 22. (*Ibid.*) Kissinger submitted further revisions of the text to Dobrynin on April 24; see footnote 4, Document 159.

a good man. If I were you and I were an evil man, I'd have just kept quiet about the draft as it was. But you are a generous man.

Kissinger: Now the General-Secretary is obligated to me to mention me in a speech of his—favorably.

Brezhnev: I will do so. You and I can accomplish much together between the two of us. Maybe we should just abolish our Foreign Offices.

Kissinger: We on our side have already taken steps in that direction. Now we need a reduction of Gromyko.

[The group then left the platform, walked through the garden and through a fence into the next compound. This was the Reception House (Dom Priyoma) which housed a tennis court, swimming pool, and many meeting rooms. The group went upstairs and out onto the balcony overlooking the river.]

Brezhnev: The President will see many things. Will he go up Ostankino Tower (the radio-TV tower)? We will make the ground soft for him, in case anything goes wrong. I may not go with him; I'll send Gromyko.

Kissinger: We're prepared for all contingencies.

[The group then returned to the guest house and convened at a long table in a room on the ground floor. The talks began at 11:40 a.m.]

Brezhnev: We meet once again. I would be pleased if you had a good rest, and if so, that you reported back to Washington that you did. If you did not, it's the Foreign Office's fault.

The meat pies had a beneficial effect on us yesterday. Have some more.

Kissinger: I haven't eaten for at least an hour.

Brezhnev: Impossible. I had my last cup of tea one hour and 20 minutes ago—this gives you an advantage over me. I feel I'm getting thin.

I have one request. If we conduct talks at this pace, you'd better ask the President to allow you one more week in Moscow. We're both so loquacious and like each other's company. Both of us have responsible instructions to solve all problems. My feeling is that you have such instructions, too.

So I think perhaps we come today to concrete issues. We do not rule out general issues but should concentrate on the concrete. Since I was the last speaker yesterday, it is fair if you speak first today. This is another piece of evidence that our country wants no advantage and no superiority. That is the truth.

[The General-Secretary then served some more food.]

Kissinger: That is your secret weapon.

Brezhnev: Yes.

Gromyko: A conventional weapon. [laughter]

Kissinger: I will make a few observations. First, I want to thank you again for the warmth with which we have been received. Secondly, the President is pleased and thinks this is a positive sign for the Summit.

Brezhnev: I am pleased to hear that.

Kissinger: After our discussions and the reception we have received, I have no doubt that our discussions will be extremely fruitful and of great benefit to our two countries and to the peace of the world.

Last night, Mr. General-Secretary, my colleagues and I studied the draft you handed us at the close of yesterday's meeting. Quite frankly, I haven't sent it to Washington because I do not consider it useful to have too many bureaucratic comments at this point. I'm sure I speak for the President when I say that in principle and in basic outline it will be acceptable to us. I think it was drafted by your side in a large and generous spirit, and it reflects the attitude that we too bring to our relationship.

Brezhnev: We did in drafting try to take all circumstances into account. We felt it should be a document in keeping with the general spirit of both ourselves and yourselves. We did not inject any bargaining points, but tried to do it in a balanced way.

Kissinger: That was our impression. We have redrafted it and it is being typed. It includes all of your points. I have taken seriously the General-Secretary's suggestion that we strengthen it, in the hope that he will mention me favorably in one of his speeches.

Brezhnev: I told you I would do that.

Kissinger: It will ruin you with your ally in the East.

Brezhnev: What ally is that?

Kissinger: I think the Foreign Minister has an idea.

Gromyko: I ask the same question.

Dobrynin: Try and guess.

Brezhnev: After that remark, I'm tempted to try to get to the bottom of this. There must be some catch there, perhaps a delayed-action mine or bomb (to use a popular American term).

Kissinger: A conventional bomb.

Brezhnev: If Dobrynin had an atomic bomb with him [in Washington] he wouldn't be here. He can stand conventional bombs, though.

Kissinger: We propose the following procedure: We are typing the draft now. At an appropriate moment today or tomorrow, or whenever it fits our program, we will show it. I really think we can come to an agreement while I'm here that is substantially complete.

[Mr. Samoteykin, an aide to Brezhnev, entered the room.]

Brezhnev: I've brought reinforcements, too. I had to because you did. I've been talking so much I didn't notice how many you have here today. When Americans bring reinforcements, they do it on the quiet, but when they withdraw they do it with big fanfare! [laughter]

I too feel it highly desirable if we can avoid additional detailed communications later on this document, and can reach agreement here.

Kissinger: I'm sure we can do this. I've explained to your Ambassador the somewhat Byzantine requirements of our bureaucracy. The President may have some comments, but I know his views. They will not be substantial because I know his views. We may have some details to discuss at the Summit, but then only minor suggestions. Our lawyers will have to look at it.

Brezhnev: If you have bureaucratic departments, they have to have something to do. One professor has proved that if you have a department of 1000 employees, they can do nothing except serve their own needs.

Gromyko: [in English] Busy, busy.

Brezhnev: Therefore I try my best to keep my departments down to 999! [laughter]

You'd certainly be mistaken to show it to lawyers. As soon as you ask the lawyers, then you are finished.

Kissinger: We will finish it here. We will keep it in the White House until we come to Moscow, and then give it to the lawyers here, for 24 hours to work on it.

Brezhnev: Twenty-four minutes.

Kissinger: There will be no leaks this way, and we can have it as final.

Brezhnev: There is in it a clause that protects both sides. It says "nothing in this is prejudicial to third countries or to the interests of third countries."

Kissinger: It is really a final document, with only some possible minor technical modifications. We can consider that a result of this visit.

Gromyko: [in English] Good, good.

Kissinger: We will show you our version as soon as it is typed. It is really very close to yours.

Brezhnev: I believe you. My colleagues will welcome this, too. If the basis we put forward turns out acceptable, that is good.

Kissinger: The basis is OK, just minor strengthening as you suggested. For example, where you spoke of "ensuring that their ties are on a firm and long-term basis," we added a line about joint commissions to give it more concreteness.

Brezhnev: I would say that would be acceptable.

Of course, it is important not to make errors in making these concrete specifications. There is an anecdote about the Tsar who had before him a case of an arrested man. The question was, would he be executed or pardoned? The Tsar wrote out a piece of paper with only three words on it (*kaznit' nyelzya pomilovat'*), but the commas were misplaced. He should have read it as "execution impossible, pardon." But he insisted read it as "execution, impossible [to] pardon." No, that wasn't quite it: actually the Tsar wrote it without commas and then the lawyers had to decide which he meant.

Kissinger: What happened to the man?

Brezhnev: I will tell you that at the end of our discussions, before you go. My answer will depend on how our talks go.

Gromyko: Maybe the answer should be given only at the Summit.

Brezhnev: No, Dr. Kissinger has to leave Moscow with clear answers to all his questions. Because you might want to tell the President this story. He will want to know the ending. If you don't know it, he will wonder what you were talking about here.

Kissinger: From my experience with bureaucracies, they probably did both.

Brezhnev: I have another story before we go on. There was a very poor man who wanted to get rich quick. He thought and thought of how to do it. He realized that many people like to drink and drink, and their noses get red. He thought he could exploit this. [To notetaker:] this is only a joke. You don't need to write it down. Don't write it. [Resuming:] So he put advertisements in the paper that all who wanted to get rid of red noses should send money to him for the remedy. He was flooded with letters and money. There were too many to answer, so he put an ad in the paper to reply to them all: "If you want to get rid of red noses, just keep drinking and your noses will turn blue." [laughter]

We'll be waiting for your draft.

Kissinger: Better to wait. It is close to yours. I am sure we can settle it. Our draft follows yours very closely.

Brezhnev: I think we're all very friendly here. If anyone wants to take his coat off, go ahead. (All did.) Now you see how constructive the Soviet side is.

Gromyko: When I was in the White House, no one asked me to take my coat off.

Vietnam

Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, if I can return to the subject we raised at the end of the day—which is the only one which could cause

problems for the Summit meeting. I promised you yesterday that I would present a concrete suggestion on how we might proceed, on Vietnam, if you are willing.

Brezhnev: Please. It is indeed a very complicated issue.

Kissinger: There are two parts of the issue: the procedural part and the substantive part. The first is how to get talks started. The second is what will happen when talks do get started. As you know, we proposed a private meeting first, to be followed by a plenary meeting; the DRV has proposed a plenary to be followed by a private meeting. They have told us it would take a week for Le Duc Tho to come to Paris after we have announced the plenary session. This is a rather absurd statement, but we will not play these children's games. So we are disposed to notify Hanoi privately tomorrow of the following proposition: If they agree to a private meeting on May 2, we will announce on April 25 (Tuesday afternoon) that we will attend the next plenary on Thursday, April 27.

We think this is a fair proposition.

Brezhnev: I think it is constructive. Particularly since they have said the U.S. can put forward its own date with regard to their proposal of May 6.

Kissinger: We've put forward a suggestion which is consistent with their messages to us. It is really the last practicable date that week for me—particularly in view of other decisions that will have to be made, as I have told your Ambassador.

I would think it would be very helpful if the DRV could restrain itself from its usual practice of claiming this is a tremendous victory. Because, if they do, it will have consequences for our future discussions. Also, in the spirit of my discussions here, until the meeting on May 2, we are disposed not to take any actions in the Hanoi–Haiphong area.

Now, the important issue is the meeting on May 2, because we are not interested in a meeting; we are interested in the result.

Brezhnev: Yes, in this situation, there is probably no sense in having an empty meeting.

Kissinger: Exactly. Therefore, as I said, I would like to tell the General-Secretary our ideas for what should be done.

Brezhnev: On substance? At the private talks?

Kissinger: Yes, at the private talks. The plenaries are a waste of time.

Brezhnev: I was just considering whether or not to ask that question. I wish to add; if you want to communicate this to us in strict confidence, we'll do whatever you wish in this respect and will not communicate it to them.

Kissinger: You can communicate it to them if you feel it useful, because we don't have too much time.

Brezhnev: Let's hear you out first, so we can tell.

Kissinger: The Plenary Session will be a waste of time, as I said. All we will learn then will be some new adjectives. But the private session should be constructive and productive.

Brezhnev: How do you do those? Just you, Le Duc Tho and interpreters?

Kissinger: Him and Xuan Thuy and two or three aides, and me and two or three on our side. But usually he and I do most of the talking.

What we will demand on May 2 is a return to the situation of March 29, that is, the situation before the beginning of the offensive. We shall propose a declaration that the two sides will make a serious effort this year to negotiate an end to the war in Vietnam. And in order to create favorable conditions for this, that both sides will reduce the level of violence. We shall ask that the North Vietnamese withdraw the divisions that entered South Vietnam after March 29, that is to say, the three divisions in Military Region 1 and the three divisions in Military Region 3. We will then withdraw the air and naval forces which we have introduced since March 29. We shall ask that the North Vietnamese respect the Demilitarized Zone. We shall then stop the bombing of North Vietnam completely.

Because of the suffering that has been caused, and as a symbol of progress, we shall propose that all prisoners who have been held more than four years be released immediately by both sides.

And we shall ask for guarantees that these conditions will be observed during the period of negotiations this year.

In other words, we are not asking for a unilateral advantage for us. We shall ask that both sides review their negotiating positions. And we shall promise that we shall review ours to see if both can be brought closer, in a generous spirit.

If I can add a personal observation. If the North Vietnamese would talk to us in the spirit of our discussions here, I believe we could settle this in a reasonable way, and fairly quickly.

I do not think you want to be involved in all the details of the political proposals, but I can tell you that our eight points of January 25⁴ are not presented as an ultimatum, and we are prepared to listen to counterproposals.

⁴ Reference is to the peace plan Nixon unveiled during a nationally televised address on January 25. (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1972*, pp. 100–106)

In short, we envisage two stages: (1) an immediate reduction of the violence, which is guaranteed to last a reasonable period, for example, a year, and (2) a serious effort at negotiation.

This would end the threat of war, and of course would end the bombing of North Vietnam.

Brezhnev: One question which the Vietnamese are bound to ask, and probably will be bound to ask is, when will the U.S. withdraw all its troops? That is very important, within this complex of discussions.

Kissinger: We are prepared to withdraw all our forces and military installations within six months of a final settlement, and are prepared to begin this immediately once agreement in principle is reached, while the details are being worked out—which is a major concession.

Brezhnev: I of course do not want to raise any conditions or anything, because you know our general line on this matter and we are not changing it at all. But just by listening by ear, I wonder if, don't you think it would perhaps ease a solution and soften the situation if you perhaps exclude the condition about withdrawal of divisions and substitute that they should stop at their present lines and that there be no more acts of war? And then you don't have to withdraw your air and naval forces. That change should be of no consequence, because the important thing is to end the fighting. In your proposal, it sounds a bit tough, a bit much. The important thing is to get hostilities ended, to end the violence. The whole thing would sound more conciliatory.

Gromyko: You say you will withdraw your forces that you have deployed since March 29. But the bombing that has taken place cannot be removed. You cannot return what has been destroyed.

Brezhnev: Nothing would change if you could incorporate this in your proposals. The important thing is to end the war. But the flat demand to withdraw complicates matters a bit, in my opinion. The only condition should be that the fighting be stopped, and talks begin. Otherwise, they will say that you ask them to withdraw their forces and the aggressive forces would retake the land [they vacated].

At the outset we did agree to be very frank in our talks and to keep them confidential. I believe that, apart from practical matters, there are two permanent and really major issues. Certainly it is a fact that the Vietnamese are fighting for what they see as a just and sacred cause. Of course, it was not President Nixon who started the war. But of course it's up to the United States to extricate itself somehow from it. And I am sure President Nixon is aware of this. Of course, certain prestige considerations are brought to bear on the U.S. Administration, and are impeding a quick solution. But there is a need for the U.S. to rid itself of this shameful war. The U.S. will have to do it; whether it is President Nixon or someone else, is not for me to say, but the U.S. will have to do it. That is the only way. Otherwise, the fighting will go

on. You know their determination, and the support they are getting in public opinion throughout the world.

I cannot vouch for the Vietnamese, but perhaps some amendments to your proposal can be made. Of course, the Vietnamese have to negotiate themselves. But even the smallest unacceptable proposals will do harm to the general prospects, and you'll be farther away from a solution.

A halt to the bombing, withdrawals, and an end to bases, etc.—all these are constructive proposals. With regard to an end to fighting, this could happen even before a formal agreement has been arrived at. If this method is adopted, I see no harm being done to the interests of the U.S. On the contrary, a solution along these lines would be welcomed everywhere, and welcomed here as well, and be a good basis for our discussions here.

This is only my personal view. I'll discuss it with my colleagues and report to you any additional comments.

I have one more comment. Regardless of whatever method we choose for our subsequent actions—that is, whether you think we should communicate with them or not—the mere fact of these positive steps coming out of our talks here (it will probably leak eventually, probably in the American press), this tacitly elevates the significance of our discussions. At least to those in the know, this is a token of accord between us. Of course, I do not mean we are trying to reach agreement by us on behalf of the North Vietnamese side. I thought therefore I would suggest these amendments. We of course would want a radical solution to the entire problem. But I won't go into that, or into details, because time does not permit, and surely you know the details of our radical solution.

Now, if I might return to the question you yourself raised earlier, it is one thing to agree on dates for a meeting with the North Vietnamese—as regards the plenary, you said it is a waste of time. The question then arises, what happens if the private meeting yields no success and doesn't produce something constructive or useful? It's hard to foresee. But it is a question of war going on. It is easy to unleash a war, but it is hard to put out the flames. The second question is how all this will look in the context of the forthcoming Summit. Will it be possible, or not? There are two reasons why it might not be possible. One factor is the objective state of the public opinion background, and secondly, it may prove impossible from President Nixon's standpoint. We don't want this. But these are the negative possibilities.

Kissinger: Whose public opinion?

Brezhnev: The general world political climate. Because, if the war goes on, with the bombing going on or increasing in intensity, that would cause a generally unfavorable political climate throughout the world.

Of course, I omit to make another analysis. I know President Nixon and you, Dr. Kissinger, know what the state of American society is over this problem. You know it is split, into hundreds of various groups, as a result of constantly fluctuating policies. This is why President Nixon has to move forward, right, downwards, this way and that. That's why I think there is a need for radical solutions. That's why I know the President is now looking for such a solution. All these are very acute problems, and require drastic solutions. In any organization, the greater the laxity of discipline, the greater the need for order—especially in a war.

It is for the U.S. side to find the method to extricate itself. We discuss it here because we're having a free and frank discussion. This may require some thinking. Maybe not now, but later, I would welcome comments from you on what I have said here.

Kissinger: I know the President's views, and I can make some comments now. And I will reflect, and if I have additional comments, I will make them later.

Brezhnev: I'd be pleased to hear them.

Kissinger: First, in the spirit of personal confidence that I believe characterizes our discussions, I must tell you the determination the President has to bring about some solution, whatever price he has to pay. I tell you this because it is my duty to be sure you understand his frame of mind.

We had no intention two weeks ago to add any new element to the North Vietnamese problem. We were prepared to discuss it with you in a general way, but did not imagine it would reach these proportions. The situation was forced upon us.

We consider that what North Vietnam is now doing goes beyond Vietnam. It's an attack on the institution of the Presidency. And we cannot tolerate this.

Three weeks ago we would have eagerly accepted the proposal that hostilities be stopped or reduced. Indeed, we proposed it ourselves two years ago. We would have accepted it at any moment—until the offensive started—even a *de facto* ceasefire.

But now we have a situation where North Vietnam has violated the understanding we had with them in 1968.⁵ You know very well in this room that there was an understanding to respect the Demilitarized Zone. Therefore, it is imperative, if we are to stop the bombing, that they withdraw the divisions that crossed the DMZ, and that henceforth the DMZ be respected.

[General-Secretary offers cakes.]

⁵ See footnote 16, Document 126.

Kissinger: I can never refuse the General-Secretary.

Brezhnev: Delicious things.

Gromyko: Inspiring.]

Kissinger: With respect to other parts of the country, the problem is more complex, and we are prepared to discuss what exactly is meant by a reduction of military activity.

Another point that must be made is, if Hanoi in the interval between now and the private meeting increases its offensive activity, then of course the restraint I mentioned cannot be maintained. It cannot use the interval to seize even more territory.

Brezhnev: I think I can discern in the course of this conversation different approaches to these problems, though the final goal seems to be the same. You say, on the one hand, that the President is very anxious to find a positive way out and is willing to pay a price to find a solution. . . . The question then arises, how is that to be understood? It could mean flexibility or concessions, or it could mean the price of all-out war. Perhaps there is some error of logic. I think the goal [of ending the war] should be clear. But what is to be subordinated to what? The way you have put it forward, a solution may be very difficult.

[Dr. Kissinger interrupted the translation of the above paragraph at the point marked by the ellipsis. He said: I may not have explained it fully. The President is willing to take any risk, not to make any concession. I meant price in terms of risk.

[The Russians at the table conferred among themselves and agreed that Brezhnev had in fact understood Dr. Kissinger correctly, as the rest of the translation then made clear. At the end of the translation, Brezhnev resumed.]

Brezhnev: You say any risk? Meaning war. That means acting out of desperation.

Kissinger: Let me be precise. The President is prepared to be very flexible but he will not be pushed into negotiations by military action. And he must have assurance that military actions will now stop so that there can be a climate for negotiations. As I explained to your Ambassador. (He always leaves town when things get hot.)

Dobrynin: But this time I'm here with you.

Kissinger: The President would prefer a political solution, not a military solution. And his thinking is not too far from the position of the General-Secretary that first military activity should stop. Only there is a difference between us on how to interpret the stopping of military activity.

Brezhnev: The interpretation should be easy. Everybody stops shooting, stops where they are, and talks start.

Kissinger: We cannot accept that with respect to the forces that have crossed the Demilitarized Zone.

Brezhnev: That means war.

Kissinger: War between whom?

Brezhnev: It is just a statement of fact. It means continuation of war between you and the DRV. You want a political solution. And I believe that. What is needed is a complete stoppage, a ceasefire, without formal agreement, and then everything is placed on the table for negotiation.

Kissinger: For how long?

Brezhnev: That will be a subject for understanding between you and the DRV. It depends on how much time you think is necessary—one month, two months—and the two sides conduct negotiations on putting an end to the conflict as such. Then, let's say if there are five private meetings—or plenaries (that's a purely technical question)—this period can be used in an effort to do away with the problem and reach agreement.

Here there can be virtually dozens of ways of going about this. One can develop a whole timetable of measures by one side and by the other, to be done by one month, or by December, or by whatever period you want.

Kissinger: By when?

Brezhnev: By whatever period.

[The General-Secretary then launched into a long unrelated joke, which he forbade the notetakers to take down.]

Kissinger: The General-Secretary is so forceful a speaker that I think I understand him when he speaks even though I don't know a word he is saying.

Brezhnev: I am always forceful when I am sure of what I am saying. When I don't have conviction, I am silent or don't speak so forcefully.

Kissinger: I have not yet heard the General-Secretary on anything on which he does not speak with conviction.

Brezhnev: One thing surprises me. The U.S. cannot seem to understand that no bombing, on whatever scale, can end the conflict. The only result is to drag out the war for dozens of years more, and even worse consequences. Of course, really it's up to the President to find a way out. But it is an indubitable fact that if one side resorts to tough and harsh measures, this will only evoke equally harsh measures on the other side. And where is the way out?

I recall that deGaulle fought seven years in Algeria. After seven years he concluded he had to find a way out. It was the same thing with the French in Indochina. When I was recently in France, the French Minister of Industry (Cointin) accompanied me to Marseilles. He told

me he had spent twenty years in Vietnam. Doing what?, I asked. Fighting, he said. It was simply a waste of time and effort, he said. You face the same prospect.

And none of the countries neighboring Vietnam will agree to stop fighting against the U.S. They will continue to fight. This is the inexorable logic of the situation as things stand today.

This reminds me of another story. I want this off the record too. It is a poem I learned 35 years ago about the force of logic, about the wonders of science. A farmer had a son who had been to college. The family had two chickens, but the son tried to show that there were really three. There's one chicken here, one there, and really a third inside one of the first two. The father said to the son, "For that I sent you to college? I'll tell you what. We'll divide up the chickens—one for me, one for mother, and you can have the third!"

I learned the poem 35 years ago and declaimed it at school. This conversation just brought it back.

There is a lesson to be drawn from jokes. Maybe by logic you can make 3 out of 2. But it is not for me to prophesy what the outcome will be. The experience of the past is that the outcome of a war is often far from what the initiators had in mind who unleashed it. These are the hard facts of the case.

I certainly support President Nixon's idea of ending the war. Logic cannot lead to any other result. That is the end-goal of all of us. Certainly the Soviet Union has no axe to grind. Certainly we seek no advantage to us whatsoever.

Perhaps we can end the discussion of Vietnam at this point. You said you would give our comments some thought and perhaps come up with some variants. I would like to talk now about limitation of ABMs and the freeze of ICBMs.

Kissinger: I feel I have made sufficiently clear that our basic position on Vietnam is an extremely serious one. We are prepared to negotiate, and have sought since February 15 to start negotiations. We will negotiate in a generous spirit. But I cannot understate the seriousness and determination of the President not to be pushed by military action.

I will return to this briefly later. Could I ask now for a two-minute break?

I am prepared to see some of the concessions made de facto. But they should withdraw their divisions across the DMZ.

[It was 1:45 p.m. The meeting resumed at 1:50 p.m.]

SALT

Brezhnev: Now I would like to make some comments on ABM limitation and the freeze on ICBMs. This is an important measure, and we have been discussing it for two years now.

I want to show how the Soviet side solves problems in a constructive spirit. We have taken into account all the communications made to us by President Nixon. We have had quite a few over the past few months, and we have tried to take them all into account, particularly those in the most recent period.

[The General-Secretary then read the Soviet note on ABMs:]⁶

“It is recognized as expedient to limit ABM systems in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. to covering the capitals and to one area each for the location of land-based ICBM silo launchers.

“The location of ABM facilities for the covering of the capitals would be limited to an area in the form of a circle with a radius of 150 km whose center would be within the limits of the capital.”

This is a reflection of your proposal to us.

Kissinger: One member of our delegation is an adviser to your delegation.

Brezhnev: [resumes reading ABM note:] “The location of ABM facilities for covering land-based ICBM silo launchers would be limited to an area in the form of a circle with a radius of 150 km whose center for the United States would be in the area of location of ICBM launchers where the deployment of ABM facilities is most advanced.”

This also reflects your proposal.

“The quantity of ABMs and their launchers for each side should not exceed 100 units for covering the capitals and 100 units for covering land-based ICBM silo launchers.”

That, too, reflects your proposal.

So now you have something to take back, a proposal from your confidential channel.

Kissinger: The only one which does not reflect our official thinking, but that of a member of our delegation, is the 150 km radius.

Mr. General-Secretary, let me say this is a constructive approach. I will reserve comment until I hear what you say about submarines.

Brezhnev: Nothing.

Kissinger: Nothing?

Brezhnev: Be patient. What can I say about them? They travel under water, we can't see them, they're silent—

Gromyko: [in English] Puzzle, puzzle!

Kissinger: You do have something on submarines?

⁶ A copy of the Soviet note on anti-ballistic missiles, including the original Russian text, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes.

Gromyko: You can't read it before Sukhodrev!

[Sukhodrev then reads the text of the note on submarines:]⁷

"We have thoroughly considered the state of affairs at the strategic arms limitations talks taking into account the considerations expressed by the U.S. side through the confidential channel, relating to the freeze on ballistic-missile carrying submarines.

"In this connection we believe it appropriate to state the following:

"1. The question of the freeze on the number of modern ballistic-missile carrying submarines and the total number of launchers thereon is of very significant importance.

"Ballistic-missile carrying submarines occupy a special place in the composition of strategic offensive weapons and their consideration should not overlook differences in the geographies of the sides, the ballistic-missile carrying submarines at the disposal of the U.S. NATO allies and the U.S. forward submarine bases.

"As is known, that offers important strategic advantages to the American side, and under these conditions the number of submarines and ballistic missiles thereon at the disposal of the sides cannot be the same.

"2. In order to bring about relaxation of international tensions, normalization of relations between our two countries and cessation of the strategic arms race we agree to consider the question of including ballistic-missile carrying submarines in the suggested freeze agreement provided, naturally, that there should be established for the sides appropriate limits for such systems taking into account the considerations set forth above.

"The Soviet Union would agree that the U.S. and their NATO allies should have, for the period of the freeze agreement, up to 50 modern submarines with the total number of ballistic missile launchers thereon of up to 800, including 41 submarines with 656 ballistic missile launchers thereon at the disposal of the United States. Over that period the Soviet Union could have 62 modern submarines with the total number of ballistic missile launchers thereon of no more than 950.

"It is understood that over that period the sides will reduce the number of land-based ICBMs through dismantling older launchers. The sides would also be entitled to modernize and replace older submarines by new submarines but without increasing in the process the above-mentioned number of modern submarines and ballistic missile launchers thereon.

⁷ A copy of the Soviet note on submarines, including the original Russian text, is *ibid.*

“However, since the above proposal would only be a partial compensation for the strategic disbalance in the location of missile carrying nuclear submarines of the sides, the Soviet side proceeds from the premise that the whole of this problem—and primarily the issue of dismantling U.S. missile submarine bases outside the territory of the United States, should be appropriately resolved in the course of subsequent negotiations.

“If over the period of the Interim agreement the U.S. NATO allies increase the number of ballistic-missile carrying submarines to the excess of those operational or under construction, the Soviet Union reserves the right to the corresponding increase in such submarines.

“3. Taking into account the proposals of the U.S. side the Soviet Union could agree to include in the suggested freeze agreement the obligation not to start, in addition to ICBM silo launchers, new construction of fixed soft land-based ICBM launchers as well.

“4. Moscow believes it possible to have the period of the Interim freeze agreement—5 years.

“5. Given understanding in principle on such an approach we would be prepared to give necessary instructions to the Soviet delegation in Helsinki to discuss practical matters related to the final elaboration of the corresponding articles of the Interim Agreement on certain measures with respect to strategic offensive armaments having in mind that this Agreement together with the Treaty on the limitation of ABM systems would be signed during the forthcoming meeting in Moscow.”

Brezhnev: I think that is a very constructive proposal and it is in keeping with the spirit of all those communications you made through Ambassador Dobrynin. I would think President Nixon should think it very constructive. Apart from the constructive nature of our proposals, that paper is another sign of the spirit with which we approach the Summit meeting.

Kissinger: If the General-Secretary says as little on Vietnam as he said on submarines, we will make enormous progress today.

Brezhnev: I'd have been pleased to say less on Vietnam, but Dr. Kissinger took so much time.

Kissinger: That was meant as a compliment. You had said you'd say nothing on submarines.

It's a very constructive approach. I recognize that it incorporates many of the points we made in the confidential channel. It is a serious effort to address many of our concerns.

May I ask a practical question, simply for my understanding?

When you say, “Over the period the sides will reduce the number of land-based ICBMs,” does this mean you accept the obligation I

mentioned to Dobrynin to dismantle older land-based missiles once we grant you the right to build more submarines?

Brezhnev: That is what is implied. We have accepted that principle. We won't build new ones to replace the ones removed. We will build submarines according to the terms allowed, and we are prepared to inform you of the exact month and date we will dismantle the ICBM facilities.

Kissinger: We will have a problem in explaining to our Congress why you have a greater number of missiles in both categories. If we have an understanding that you will dismantle some of the older missiles, we will instruct our delegation to work out the precise numbers. Semenov can work this out with our delegation. We needn't do it here, at this level.

Gromyko: We will instruct accordingly.

Brezhnev: It is very easy. Of course we will be dismantling.

Kissinger: I only want to fix this so we can make this instruction to our delegation and make this part of the negotiation.

Brezhnev: We will give similar instructions.

Kissinger: No problem. But I have one other point. It is difficult for us to discuss limitations on British and French submarines. It would be easier if you make a unilateral declaration. We agree to 41, then if the British and French build more than 9 and if the total number reaches more than 50, then you can respond accordingly. This will be easier, because we have no right to tell the British and French what to do. You will make unilateral deal. We have no right to negotiate the total number.

Brezhnev: Of course. We shall certainly give thought to a unilateral declaration. But the figures are agreed.

Kissinger: The figures are agreed. There is no problem about figures. I will show you what a bad diplomat I am. Gromyko wouldn't do this, but I think the submarine matter is acceptable in principle.

Brezhnev: This shows what a strong diplomat you are. I agree our Foreign Ministry would never do that, but that's an example of how bad it is.

Gromyko: It's your advantage. I would never have said this outright. I would have waited at least three minutes.

Brezhnev: I don't want to raise the question at this time, but I do want to mention the serious matter of the U.S. military bases ringing the Soviet Union. This relates to your air force and intermediate range missiles.

Sonnenfeldt: We have no IRBMs.

Kissinger: We are going to ground Sonnenfeldt.

Brezhnev: We mean forward-based missiles. It doesn't make any difference what kind of rocket you die from.

Kissinger: Sonnenfeldt is right. We have no forward-based missiles that can reach the USSR, but I understand the General-Secretary's point.

Brezhnev: Of course it's useless to deploy intermediate range missiles in the U.S., so you deploy them abroad.

Kissinger: We have airplanes that can reach the USSR. As it happens, we have no missiles in Europe that can reach the USSR, but we have airplanes that can. But we understand the General-Secretary's point and we take it seriously.

Brezhnev: As we see it, this could be the start of an important future process. It could be the start of the strengthening of confidence; this should be followed by further measure of goodwill to strengthen normal relations between our two countries.

Kissinger: Agreed.

Brezhnev: . . . measures that would be in no way prejudicial to obligations each of us has to other countries, and would be at the same time encouraging to the Allies of us both. Therein lies the greatness and noble purpose of our two countries.

Kissinger: This attitude can be a principal result of the Summit.

Brezhnev: These are indeed problems of great importance. First, the statement of principles yesterday, then this,—all this carries great significance. It will last the commentators and analysts about 2 years, until the next Summit. I could write a good commentary. I could write a good article for the U.S. press. How much do you pay for a good article?

Kissinger: My only hope is that the next meeting is sooner than 2 years, and I hope the General-Secretary can visit us next year.

Brezhnev: I don't think I have an invitation or visa yet.

Kissinger: You will have an invitation when President Nixon comes here. We hope to have that in the final communiqué.

Brezhnev: Thank you. In the coming 4 years, the United States and Soviet Union should take even more important steps to increase the spirit of good will.

Kissinger: As for ABMs, Mr. General-Secretary, we have proposed using 2 ICBM fields, rather than Washington and 1 ICBM field, but I consider your proposal constructive.

Brezhnev: Then you said 2 and 2.

Kissinger: I will have to discuss this in Washington, but we will do so in very positive attitude.

Brezhnev: Mr. Kissinger—I would not want this on the record—this has the advantage for you, which your military are aware of, that yours covers more ICBMs than ours does.

Kissinger: I understand, but not necessarily if there are 150 km radius. It depends on where you put your fields.

Brezhnev: This won't be the case. The area will be clearly defined. It is a secret now, but not for long. Your military will photograph it anyway.

Kissinger: If you can give me informally some idea of the number of ICBMs you will put in this field, it would help persuade some of my people. You don't have to tell me the field, just an idea of the number, to tell the President.

Brezhnev: I will tell you that later.

Kissinger: It's just for the President.

Brezhnev: But I can say beforehand that we will have fewer than you have.

Kissinger: May I make a suggestion?

Brezhnev: It is not to be made public. Because it is really to your advantage and it would be bad if it came out.

Kissinger: I must be honest with you. Anything in the White House we can keep totally secret. Once it leaves the White House, as your Ambassador can tell you, I can't completely control it.

Brezhnev: That's why I say I should have invited Rogers in the first place!

Kissinger: You would have gotten more publicity. Therefore what you tell me here will not become public. Once agreement is completed, I can't guarantee that numbers won't become public, but what the General-Secretary says here will not.

Brezhnev: In nature of speculation, but not officially.

Kissinger: But once we have a treaty, our people will have to testify before Congressional committees. We will try to control it, but the testimony will only happen several months after an agreement.

Brezhnev: That's a procedural matter. If we agree on this principle, procedural matters won't be a problem.

Kissinger: The submarine matter is certainly acceptable. The ABM matter I will have to discuss in Washington but it is certainly in the direction. . . .

Brezhnev: I feel it incorporates your latest suggestion and incorporates the principle of equality, and I don't foresee changes.

Kissinger: I don't see any problems. Let me suggest the following procedure. I will take this up with the President as soon as I return Monday or Tuesday.⁸ We'll then call back our negotiator from Helsinki

⁸ April 24 or 25.

and simultaneously get together our military people. All of this will take about a week. We'll then instruct our negotiator. If you can send your Ambassador back. . . . If in the meantime Semenov can be kept under restraint so he doesn't reveal this, it would speed this matter.

Brezhnev: We have given him instructions. But if you think this is easier, we can send him a telegram to keep it back for a time.

Kissinger: Let me think about it.

Brezhnev: We have enough time to cable him to hold up.

Kissinger: When will he propose it? Monday?

Gromyko: At his discretion. He met with Smith yesterday and said nothing.⁹

Kissinger: He hinted at it.

Brezhnev: On submarines, Semenov knows nothing.

Kissinger: Let him propose it. Let me on second thought talk to the President. I'll tell Vorontsov.

Gromyko: We'll hold Semenov up.

Brezhnev: We have a closed phone link, so we will phone him immediately.

[Aide goes out to do so.]

Kissinger: How should we do it in Helsinki? Should they conclude the whole thing in Helsinki, or should we leave something for the Summit? We can settle certain things privately but not in Helsinki.

Brezhnev: The signing should be on a high level. The final decision and signing should be at the Summit level.

Kissinger: The signing and final decisions should be at the highest level, yes.

Gromyko: Since this matter relates to a text, it may be best for our delegations to finalize as much as is possible. Because it is a text, the lawyers should look at it. If all is done here, there is a risk of not having enough time. But the final decision and signing should be here.

Kissinger: I agree with the Foreign Minister that perhaps we should pick some issues, perhaps one or two—I don't want to take the time of the General-Secretary on this—on which the delegations should write the text, but then, the President and the General-Secretary can settle them here.

Gromyko: Deliberately you mean?

Kissinger: Yes.

Brezhnev: But to have reached confidential agreement beforehand?

⁹ See Document 136.

Kissinger: Confidentially.

Brezhnev: So there will be a special signing ceremony in the Kremlin.

Kissinger: We will have a SALT agreement, there is no question.

Brezhnev: I think so too.

Kissinger: I will let your Ambassador know by the end of the coming week when we can proceed in Helsinki, but it will be very soon.

Brezhnev: Good, because there is not so much time left.

Kissinger: Let them talk about radars this week. They have a lot to talk about.

Brezhnev: Yes. That's my view. I don't think they're in any hurry. They don't have much to talk about, but let them talk. Let them talk about the nature of the universe. The Delegations should be locked in a room for the final 3 days without food and told they must get an agreement or not get food for another 3 days.

Kissinger: We've reached the point where despite all the efforts of our delegations we will still reach an agreement.

Brezhnev: No matter how hard they try! That's our success.

Kissinger: Our delegation is so complex we don't understand them anymore.

Brezhnev: You want an example of how to make something very complex? I can pose one or two questions that neither you nor the President can solve for months. So we can consider this closed.

European Security

Brezhnev: I would like to say a few words on another important question, that is, the problem of Europe. I won't go over old ground on the importance of this issue not only for the Soviet Union, the FRG, the GDR, and France, but for all European nations generally, and I would say for world affairs and from the standpoint of our joint desire to direct matters toward a general détente in the world. As I see it, both your efforts and ours are directed at that goal.

I would like to ask you to tell President Nixon that we value highly the President's position on this matter, the support he is giving to ratification of the treaties and the agreement on Berlin. I would like you to bear in mind this is not [just] a compliment to the President, this is the truth. At the same time, I don't want to be too reticent or shy in speaking my mind on other aspects. I want to express the wish that at this decisive stage for Chancellor Brandt and the FRG the President should say a still more weighty word in favor of ratification. This would have a considerable significance and would be much appreciated in the Soviet Union and throughout the world. I would like to ask you Dr. Kissinger to draw President Nixon's attention to this.

Kissinger: You can be sure I will.

Brezhnev: President Nixon does have an unlimited capacity in this respect. It would be a very important step toward very successful negotiations.

Kissinger: In what respect “unlimited?”

Brezhnev: If I were elected President, I would show you. It would be good if I were elected President, but I don’t seek the nomination!

Kissinger: With respect to influencing the Germans?

Brezhnev: The President has unlimited capacity with respect to ratification. We do highly appreciate his position. The point I make is that we would appreciate any further efforts he could make in favor of it. Intuition is sometimes a good guide, and I have the impression President Nixon will respond favorably.

Kissinger: As you know, there are elections tomorrow in the German state of Baden-Württemberg.¹⁰ If these go badly, that is, if the Free Democrats get wiped out or get reduced substantially, or if the Social Democrats don’t do well, then I don’t think anything we do can make any difference. I think the Brandt Government will fall. I give you my honest judgment.

Brezhnev: Would that be to our advantage for the Brandt Government to fall?

Kissinger: No, we don’t want this, but I state it as an objective fact.

Brezhnev: The U.S. President still has 24 hours to act. I know you sometimes put out surprise press conferences. Well, the President knows better how to do it.

Kissinger: No, we cannot influence a State election in Germany. It is too difficult. I don’t think it will happen, but I wanted to say it would be difficult.

Brezhnev: You are a difficult man to come to terms with. We came to agreement immediately before, and we have already notified Semenov immediately.

Kissinger: But can you influence elections for us?

Brezhnev: Isn’t all this understanding we have reached in favor of that? On SALT, ABM, European issues, long-term credits, the whole radical improvement in the atmosphere of U.S.-Soviet relations?

[The Russians conferred among themselves briefly, at which Dr. Kissinger remarked: Everytime I say something, there is a brawl on the Russian side.]

¹⁰ See Document 159.

Brezhnev: Because, after all, the President is a politician, not a merchant. Politics cover all questions. The important thing is for us to reach agreement.

Kissinger: Realistically, what I would like to do is to claim credit when the elections go well tomorrow and then ask you for concessions.

Brezhnev: What concessions?

Kissinger: I'll think of one.

Brezhnev: I'll be prepared to give you credit if it goes well, but if things go badly, I'll say it was your fault.

Kissinger: You must have read in the Ambassador's cables that I am vain.

Brezhnev: I have never read that.

Dobrynin: I have told them you are modest.

Kissinger: I will have revolutions on my hands. Realistically, it is too late to do anything. If the elections go as expected without radical change in Bonn, we will see what can be done.

Brezhnev: What is your general forecast?

Kissinger: My forecast is that tomorrow's election will not affect the parliamentary situation in Bonn. Perhaps some minor parliamentary changes, but it will not affect the situation. Confidentially, we have attempted to be helpful. We invited Bahr to Washington¹¹ and let it be known, and we have not received anyone from the Opposition. This is a fairly clear signal in Germany. We have not seen Barzel since the ratification debate started.¹² He wanted to come in April and we did not receive him.

Brezhnev: I know you received Bahr.

Kissinger: And when Barzel came in January, your Ambassador in Bonn can confirm we did not encourage him.

I want to be honest with you. I had arranged with Bahr to send a memo that perhaps he could use confidentially in early April.¹³ But this became impossible because of the Vietnam situation. Our domestic situation became more complicated. We will review what can be done between now and May 4.

Brezhnev: This is a very important component of the general package of problems we will be having discussions on and hoping to resolve. We feel that on all the issues, agreements should be reached that will be worthy of our two countries.

¹¹ Bahr visited Washington in late-March; See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XL, Germany, 1969–1972, Document 348.

¹² Barzel visited Washington in late-January; see *ibid.*, Document 338.

¹³ On Kissinger's refusal to send a "memo," see *ibid.*, Documents 80, 86, and 87.

Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, we have invested so much in the Berlin agreement that we are in favor of ratification of these agreements. In light of these discussions, we will see what additional steps we can take to assist ratification.

Brezhnev: We know that, and that is why we said we value President Nixon's position regarding European matters very highly. I have said so publicly, too, in our Central Committee. My feeling is that European problems will be discussed in a favorable spirit.

Kissinger: We expect it too.

Brezhnev: We feel sure that when President Nixon hears what we have to say he will see that we are not trying to inject any "underwater rocks" in our European policy. We are not self-centered.

Kissinger: Will you be introducing new European matters at the Summit?

Brezhnev: We would like perhaps to have something to say on the European Conference. The general position and attitude of the U.S. Administration is known to us, that is to say, agreement in principle. What is needed is just a few specifics. By that time we may have ready in written form how to conclude a European Conference, that is to say the basic principles for a European Conference. Possibly even before the May meeting, we could agree on or discuss certain additional points bilaterally.

Kissinger: You will find it easier to discuss with President if there have been prior exchanges, so he's not confronted with entirely new matters when he gets here.

Brezhnev: We will follow the channel.

Kissinger: May I raise in this connection the problem of mutual force reductions? In your considerations regarding the European Security Conference, has your thinking reached the point where you would be willing to have parallel discussions on force reductions?

Brezhnev: Just to return to European affairs generally, there will be discussed the ratification of the treaties, the Berlin agreement, agreement on principles of convening a conference, and the relation of the GDR to the FRG. Then on a purely confidential basis we would certainly like to know the answers to such questions as when the U.S. would support the admission of both Germanies to the U.N.

With respect to force reductions, that question is one that we do not intend to withdraw from the agenda, but perhaps it is one that should not be linked too closely to the Summit so as not to impede matters of top priority. But at some stage we would be ready in the future to discuss it on a confidential basis bilaterally. Of course, the general portent of our proposals on this score is to have the least possible number of troops in Europe, reducing to a minimum the risk of war

in Europe. At some stage, we will certainly start to talk to you on this. Even if at first there is only a very slight reduction, the mere fact of a reduction will have a tremendous significance. It will be a token of our desire for a reduction of tensions and a token of goodwill and spirit of confidence. No one is implying that we will have 3 million and you will have 600. There can be no unacceptable proposals made in this field. Mutually acceptable principles will have to be found. There can be no unilateral advantage.

Kissinger: How about if side by side with preparations for a European Security Conference we begin discussions on reductions, directed at basic principles?

Brezhnev: In general, that would be a very good thing. But what we both have to bear in mind is that the merging of these 2 issues would divert attention from the main issues. Because it is to be foreseen that with respect to a European Security Conference hundreds of questions will come up. Luxemburg, Switzerland, Denmark can all raise questions.

Kissinger: You like chaos.

Brezhnev: On the contrary. So let's get this question out of the way first.

Kissinger: We do not think force reductions should be discussed at a European Security Conference, because a European Security Conference is a much larger forum. We think a force reduction should be discussed in a parallel body among the countries whose forces would be reduced.

Brezhnev: Mr. Kissinger, of course it is certainly possible that the Conference itself could say something favorable on approaching it. Perhaps the Conference could set up a special body or another organization with the necessary diplomatic and military personnel—naturally with the participation of countries concerned. On this question, we could use our bilateral channel to conduct quiet and steady discussions on this. But at the forthcoming meeting, we should register our general attitude and desire to advance to a European Security Conference.

Kissinger: Assuming that ratification goes through, which we expect, we are prepared to do this. But our attitude is that side by side, we would have discussions on this subject in a separate forum.

Brezhnev: We are certainly in agreement to start in the confidential channel. As soon as we feel we have come to a common approach, we can then involve more openly the others who are concerned. Because of course attitudes and positions of states in this are different. Brandt at the Crimea asked me, should we also discuss Luxemburg and its 94 policemen? Should this be covered?

Kissinger: That is consistent with his practice of always getting to the fundamentals of an issue.

Brezhnev: But as on the subject of the admission of the 2 German states to the U.N., you know when we signed the treaty with the FRG, there was a clause in the statement on efforts of the sides to secure the admission of the 2 Germanies. Since at the Summit we will be discussing important issues, it would not be understood by the public in the USSR or the GDR or also in the U.S. if nothing was said on that subject.

Kissinger: The Foreign Minister knows the sequence. It is possible that the treaties won't be ratified by the Summit. They may pass on May 4 and then be rejected by the Bundesrat, then go back to Parliament for a full majority in June.

If this is the sequence, then a successful Summit would be a guarantee of ratification. It would be impossible that a German Parliament could reject them after a successful U.S. and Soviet meeting. Secondly as regards the GDR, I don't want to raise the wrong expectations as regards what we can say at the meeting. I don't think we can go much beyond the Berlin Agreement. With respect to admission of the 2 Germanies to the U.N., we frankly have not yet taken a position. My informal view is that we will back whatever Chancellor Brandt wants to do. If he proposes it, we will be prepared to support these steps.

Brezhnev: Brandt did register in a document his readiness to support entry.

Kissinger: We will check with Brandt before the Summit.¹⁴ We will not be an obstacle. If he is willing, we have no American interest to oppose it.

Brezhnev: Good.

Bilateral Relations

Brezhnev: Yesterday after a meeting devoted to the memory of Lenin I briefly informed my colleagues of my meeting with you. Naturally I touched on the main points and general questions which came up, and the questions you are prepared to settle at the Summit: Europe, bilateral relations, (for example, MFN, credits, broad commercial cooperation, increased cultural ties, environmental, etc.) and I could see that generally my colleagues were favorably disposed. Of course, there is a lot to be specified here, with respect to MFN, the scale of credits, etc. As we see it, the specifics could be gone into through the

¹⁴ Kissinger later sent the following undated message to Bahr: "Brezhnev has approached us with a request to support UN membership for the GDR and the FRG. We have told him that we will be guided by the FRG's approach on this matter. I would greatly appreciate your suggestions on how we should handle this in Moscow." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 426, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages, Europe, 1972)

channel, and then discussed finally at the Summit. As we understand it, broad prospects are opening up in the field of commerce. Your commercial circles are interested in it, for example, in Soviet natural gas. This could be done by a long-term contract, e.g. for 20–25 years. This could be good for both sides. I won't go into details, but perhaps at our next meeting you could agree on the broad outlines. I welcome at the next meeting your readiness to give your general views and your readiness to go into these matters.

Vietnam

I must add, in all frankness, that when I informed my colleagues, they did all voice concern over our discussion of Vietnam. That is only too natural, and you should currently understand. But we did come to an understanding today that we would discuss it again after you think things over.

Kissinger: After we both think things over.

Brezhnev: Certainly there is never any harm in thinking things over. It can get tiring sometimes, but I'm a man who is always thinking things over. Perhaps it is dictated by the post I hold. Like all of us, I get such a torrent of information every day, on problems both international and domestic, that are difficult to manage. With a planned economy, 15 Republics and autonomous regions, all of this has to be plugged into my computer [points to his head]. So by 1:00 a.m. when I get to sleep I still dream of these problems. Some are difficult; others aren't but are interesting. It's a question of logic again. One tries to bring them to some kind of useful resolution. Without being personal, just abstract, we Russians have different kinds of logic. One kind is horses' logic. It is difficult to face the prospect of that. We have a Proverb: A teacher asked a student a difficult question. The student did not know, and he said, "Let the horse answer it, he has a big head." That is an old story.

Gromyko: Horses should be put to the task of conducting foreign policy. I wonder what would happen then?

Brezhnev: The back page of our newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta* is called "Horns and Hoofs." It is devoted to jokes. My jokes of course are just meant to be a "lining," or a little respite from the seriousness of our discussions. There can be curious results from translations of jokes.

I have another story. This one is fact. Two years ago, we were appointing an able man to be Ambassador to a certain country. He was well known, positively, in the host country. Fortunately, its leader was on good terms with me, and could speak freely. He told me, "He's a fine man, but his name translated into our language sounds very rude and rather indecent. It would be okay in a male society but not in our country."

I hope my jokes aren't misunderstood. It is not consistent with my character. I know Americans like humor. If I see a glum look on President Nixon's face, I will tell him a couple of stories to cheer him up.

Kissinger: Your Foreign Minister looks a bit like the President.

Gromyko: The President said that to me himself. But I don't know whether he looks like me or I look like him. Next time in Washington I will pick a dark night and try to walk into the White House.

Kissinger: I will take you to dinner and we will go in together.

Brezhnev: If President Nixon will be like Gromyko, I am horror-stricken. It is impossible to talk to Gromyko. It will mean a lot of grief. The word "grief" reminds me of a joke. A foreign visitor to the Soviet Union wanted to buy flour for baking. But the word "flour" in Russian [muká] is the same as the word "grief" [múka], except that the stress is different. So after looking up the word quickly in a dictionary, she went into a shop and asked for two pounds of grief!

It has been a good day. Useful. Of course, the Vietnam issue is still there. It is complex, but we have agreed to think things over and return to it. You are now armed with sufficient material to report to President Nixon.

I have one request and wish: I would like to say something privately to you and directly for the President when we take a walk. That is the end for today. We will resume Monday morning. Time is an important factor in these matters. As for tomorrow, certain urgent matters have just come up—not related to these discussions. I think it is possible for you to stay until Monday. Perhaps you can meet tomorrow with Gromyko, at 10:00 a.m.

Kissinger: I will do my best. The President is getting restless in my absence and has expressed the hope that I will return tomorrow. I will suggest to him that we have unfinished business, but I think we will be able to do it.

Brezhnev: Okay.

Kissinger: I must in all events leave by 6:00 p.m. Monday.

Brezhnev: Okay.

Announcement of Visit

Kissinger: I have another point to raise, and it would be useful to communicate your view to Washington. I believe that after my return we should make a brief public announcement that I have been here. Otherwise it could leak out. If it leaks, it would look very mysterious. Hanoi already knows, probably, but would be confused. We could work out the text tomorrow with your Foreign Minister.

Brezhnev: I give my consent in advance, although I have not discussed it with my colleagues and they understand this as a confidential visit.

Kissinger: It will remain confidential while I am here.¹⁵

Brezhnev: I will discuss it with my colleagues, but I will not stand in the way.

I have another story, not related to anything. A man was seen carrying two TV sets over his shoulder, and he was asked why he needed two. He said, one is for myself. As for the other, my mother-in-law told me she would give her life for a TV set!

[The meeting then broke up, at 4:05 p.m. General-Secretary Brezhnev took Dr. Kissinger aside for a private conversation, standing, in a corner of the same room.]¹⁶

¹⁵ For text of Kissinger's message reporting Soviet agreement to announce his trip, see Document 145.

¹⁶ Although no verbatim account has been found, Kissinger later described his private conversation with Brezhnev; see Document 148.

140. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 22, 1972.

WTE 008. 1. I am astonished both by the tone and the substance of your communications. Please remember there is an eight-hour time differential. We have worked fifteen hours a day. The airport is one hour from our residence. We were unaware of communications failure and therefore lectures about how we should have acted are highly inappropriate. We need support, not constant strictures.

2. We have reported constantly. My 006² is being retransmitted. But if the President does not trust me there is not much that can be done.

3. What is all the excitement about? There is no chance of my trading talks for an end to bombing. No one has suggested it. I would not accept it. My 006 which is being retransmitted leaves no doubt of that.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 4:44 a.m.

² See footnote 2, Document 135.

I have been more brutal on Vietnam than in any talk with any leader of any country. Who after all has pushed the existing strategy against everybody?

4. The situation seems to me as follows: Brezhnev wants a summit at almost any cost. He has told me in effect that he would not cancel it under any circumstances. He swears that he knew nothing of the offensive. He told me they did not step up aid deliveries. Even though untrue, this gives us three opportunities:

- (A) We may get help in deescalating or ending the war.
- (B) If not, we can almost surely get his acquiescence in pushing NVN to the limit.
- (C) We can use the summit to control the uproar in the U.S.

We have got to this point by a judicious mixture of pressure and flexibility. But here we have shown no flexibility whatever. Why blow it now? And for what?

5. As for my staying till Monday,³ here is the situation: So far we have refused to discuss any summit subject including very favorable to us draft statement⁴ Brezhnev handed us at the end of the meeting yesterday. Today is again devoted to Vietnam. Brezhnev knows I was prepared to go to Paris on Monday and so do his colleagues. Refusal to stay is a slap in his face and it deprives us of opportunity to get reaction to tough presentation of first day which no doubt is in Hanoi now. However if I can finish today I will do so. Everything discussed here will be ad referendum. We get more out of their acquiescence in our bombing than out of a rupture which will throw the whole Communist world-wide propaganda apparatus against us and permits no possibility of a reply.

6. In sum I am not sure they are able to deliver on Vietnam. The tone of the message from Hanoi they read me was insolent to them in the extreme. But they will stand aside and they will have the summit. We can use this as cover for other actions. Why not play out the string?

7. I have demanded concrete progress at the May 2 meeting in the toughest possible terms. Today I shall give Brezhnev our program demanding the withdrawal across the DMZ, release of some prisoners, etc. They have all but promised to try to help.

It seems to me better to step up actions South of the 20th parallel this week, go to the private meeting, and then go all-out if it fails. The very people who are now screaming for blood will collapse when the going gets really tough. But you may assure the President that under no circumstances will I agree to an end of bombing here; nor have Soviets even asked for it. It is however essential that I play out the string and

³ April 24.

⁴ See the attachment to Document 134.

not be provocative. And above all he must trust me. I have not exactly let him down on other missions.

8. I am counting on you to help keep things in perspective. We are within sight of all our objectives. Let us keep steady on the home-stretch. You may also show this to the President.⁵

⁵ Haig later read excerpts from the message in a telephone conversation with the President; see Document 142.

141. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 22, 1972, 4:05–4:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of Central Committee of CPSU
Andrei A. Gromyko, Foreign Minister
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA
Viktor Sukhodrev, Soviet Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

Summit Preparations; Vietnam; China; Economic Relations

[After the formal meeting broke up, General Secretary Brezhnev took Dr. Kissinger aside for a private conversation.² They stood by the window in the same room where the formal meeting had taken place.]³

Summit Preparations

Brezhnev: I want you to tell the President of our serious intention. He can count on an unlimited number of personal conversations with me, at any time. The program we have is a very good one. I have several additional pleasant suggestions, for example, a visit to the Ostankino TV tower. There will be the least possible attention to protocol. We could put aside all second-rank and petty matters.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

² Although no verbatim account has been found; see Document 148.

³ All brackets in the source text.

Everything will have been prepared, so that we do not burden ourselves with all the arguments. Of course, it will be impossible to pass over certain questions in silence. But we will be able to deal with them in a tranquil way. There should be nothing unexpected.

In the future, there should be further steps to reduce arms and reduce tensions and improve relations. In fact, it will be envisaged in the SALT agreement itself. In this connection, your bases with your air force will have to come up.

Kissinger: This was always foreseen.

Brezhnev: There are some enterprises we want to show President Nixon that are not far from Moscow. Your advance group⁴ has not given a definite answer; they fear overburdening the President. This is a restricted enterprise, which is the most modern we have.

Kissinger: Mr. General Secretary, if there is something you are particularly interested in and recommend, tell your Ambassador about it.

Brezhnev: This is a new satellite town we have recently built. We want with an open heart to show him the best we have.

Kissinger: I will take care of it. Our advance people are rather complicated.

Brezhnev: Our people have been instructed not to object to any reasonable request. We will generate an appropriate atmosphere for the correspondents. The program for Mrs. Nixon will also be suitable. There will be a visit to a chocolate factory—there will be women workers there; chocolate seems to be a female weakness. Also the Palace of the Pioneers, the Osipov Ensemble, and “Swan Lake.”

[The General Secretary then handed Dr. Kissinger the attached note on the Middle East.]⁵

⁴ Reference is to the U.S. advance team, headed by Dwight Chapin, the President's appointments secretary, which was in Moscow to handle arrangements for the summit.

⁵ Not attached. The unofficial translation of the note and the Russian original are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes. The Soviet note stated that a final settlement in the Middle East should “contain an obligation by Israel for a complete withdrawal of her troops from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and obligations by the sides in the conflict for a termination of the state of belligerency and the establishment of peace among them.” Once Israel withdrew its troops from the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, Egypt would take steps to ensure freedom of navigation through both the Suez Canal and the Strait of Tiran as well as in the Gulf of Aqaba. The Soviet proposal further suggested the establishment of demilitarized zones, possibly manned by troops and military observers from the United Nations, on both sides of the Israeli border. As part of the settlement, either the United Nations or the great powers should agree to assure the security of Israel and neighboring Arab states. Although it called for measures to resolve the plight of Palestinians, the Soviet note emphasized that “the final settlement in the Middle East shall not be delayed until translating into reality practical measures for solving the refugee problem.”

Kissinger: Do you want to discuss that subject [the Middle East] tomorrow?

Brezhnev: Monday is better.

Are your communications all right?

Kissinger: They broke down last night for a while. The President nearly had a heart attack.

Vietnam

Kissinger: I have to tell you frankly, Mr. General Secretary, that we will have a difficult four weeks coming up. The President genuinely believes that the dignity of America and the dignity of his office is involved.

Brezhnev: Every question has two sides, like a medallion. One side of a medallion has an image of a soldier or a general, etc., but if you look at the other side sometimes there is something like “rest in peace.”

Kissinger: When you and the President meet, I know the spirit in which I had the privilege of seeing you work and speak.

Brezhnev: There are times in negotiation when I feel compelled to raise acute matters. But in these forthcoming meetings there will be no such talk. We have now to overcome the forces in the world which are doing their level best to prevent our meeting. There is opposition in America. The way I see it, they are preparing to do battle. I don't know in what terms they can become your allies.

Kissinger: Let me give you my honest judgment, unofficially. If it had not been for the North Vietnamese offensive, the President could have mobilized the center and the moderate left, and he would have been certain to be reelected this way.

Brezhnev: I have said many things on this offensive. So I do not want to repeat myself. It has to be borne in mind that the next 3–4 weeks should generate a background conducive to the Summit. You still have time to generate this favorable background. We are doing what we can.

Kissinger: If the North Vietnamese do not stop this offensive, I can foresee only bad consequences.

Brezhnev: If you really do, there will be serious consequences. But the American bombers and the proposals you make are not in my hands. I did make the reservation at the outset that I am in no position to negotiate for the North Vietnamese. But I made a few suggestions which in my personal view could be useful, in order to help. If ever the Vietnamese found out that I was making these suggestions to you that could only worsen matters for you.

Kissinger: You can be sure we will not disclose it.

China

Brezhnev: I do not know how and in what way the Chinese could find out, but they would put a definite interpretation on all this. There

is a lot I do not know about the Chinese philosophy, just as the President does not.

Kissinger: Yes.

Brezhnev: I realize there are certain reasons and motives behind the President's visit to China, but I am certain he does not have the full picture.

Kissinger: One related point. There have been rumors spread by Soviet personnel that there were discussions between us and the Chinese on military matters. I don't care about your propaganda, but I want to assure you that there were no military discussions.

Brezhnev: There was only the one occasion when the Ambassador on instructions cited reports received from Chinese sources.⁶

Kissinger: Governmental sources?

Brezhnev: We don't want to be more specific.

Kissinger: It is a provocation anyway.

Brezhnev: It was related to that speech of the President's in Peking, when he made the remark that the U.S. and China were holding the fate of the world in their hands. This remark circled the world. It gave us concern.⁷

Kissinger: Let me give you our view. The People's Republic of China is very important in the Asian area, and in 10–15 years it will perhaps have a role in other regions. Peace in the world now depends on relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. We can settle things concretely; with others we can settle only theoretically.

Brezhnev: The Chinese general tendency for world hegemony is an obsession with them. It is something they will not give up. It is important not to encourage it, but to localize it.

Once they made an enormous effort to gain hegemony in the world Communist movement. I can give you an example. A Soviet diplomat was in Algeria on business, and he happened to visit an outlying district where there were oil refineries and a workers' settlement. Many tourists and delegations go there. Right there, in the middle of the desert, was a Chinese restaurant! The diplomat was interested in this. Anyone who came into the restaurant for a meal left with a bundle of free Chinese propaganda. This was the period when they tried to split

⁶ In a meeting with Kissinger on March 9, Dobrynin raised the question of whether the United States and the People's Republic of China had discussed the "dislocation" of Soviet forces along the Sino-Soviet border; see Document 56. Kissinger relayed Soviet concern on the matter in a meeting on March 14 with Huang Hua, the Chinese permanent representative to the United Nations.

⁷ See footnote 4, Document 134.

the world Communist movement. They would throw bundles of Chinese literature at the Peking–Moscow train. Well, when they lost in their attempt at hegemony over the movement and lost their foothold, they closed up this restaurant in Algeria.

This presents a very big question: What tendencies does one want to encourage? Although, as we have said, we believe it quite natural for two countries to improve relations, provided that it is not done in a way that is harmful to third countries. Short-run considerations do not always yield benefits in the long run. Do you understand me?

Kissinger: Yes I do.

Brezhnev: I am just philosophizing. It may help us both to delve deeper into this matter.

Kissinger: We have no interest in encouraging anti-Soviet policies on the part of the PRC.

Brezhnev: There is enough of that already without you. If I am shot 150 times and buried with a cross on my grave, what more can you do? I have resigned myself to my Chinese death, though not to my natural death.

Kissinger: You seem very much alive to me.

Brezhnev: My wife asked me at breakfast yesterday how I feel. About 40–45 years old, I said. Have you been feeling this way for long? she asked. For the last 5 years, I said. She understood my answer!

We have had fruitful talks, you and I. If we left it to Gromyko and Rogers, they would be talking for two months.

[The General Secretary and Dr. Kissinger then walked out of the meeting room together. Outside the door, before going down the few steps toward the lobby, the conversation resumed.]

Economic Relations

Brezhnev: Monday we will want to discuss trade, credits, exchanges, and so forth. There is a Presidential decision involved.

Kissinger: There are two different things. One involves a Presidential decision; the other involves a Congressional decision.⁸

Brezhnev: But you yourselves write the laws. It is for you to change them. It is to the U.S.'s advantage to extend us credits. Certainly something can be done. We have vast resources of gas. There will be a crisis in that respect in the U.S. in a few years' time. We could have said

⁸ As Kissinger explained to Gromyko in their meeting on April 23, the President could exercise executive discretion in the awarding of loans from the Export-Import Bank; but the Congress would have to pass legislation to establish Most Favored Nation trade relations with the Soviet Union; see Document 150.

to ourselves, to hell with them, let the Americans have a crisis. But instead we say, let us build a pipeline and let you have millions of barrels of gas.

That is the purport of our policy.

Kissinger: Mr. General Secretary, in principle we are prepared. We have concrete schemes. Your Minister is coming on May 7.⁹ I have instructed Secretary Peterson—who is a very intelligent man—to deal with him with a constructive approach.

Brezhnev: We once had an arrangement with the Japanese. We could revitalize that.

Kissinger: Our conception is that if our relations go during the Summit the way we hope, then during the Summit we can work out a complete project and make it concrete in the summer.

Brezhnev: As I see it as a politician, if business circles in the U.S. see government support for this they will support the President in the campaign.

Kissinger: It may be tactless for me to say this on Lenin's birthday, but frankly Lenin was wrong in one respect—when he said businessmen understand their political interests. Most businessmen I know are political idiots!

Brezhnev: I have no comment on that! You know the best!

[There were some closing pleasantries and handshakes all around, and Dr. Kissinger departed.]

⁹ Reference is to the meeting in Washington between Nixon and Soviet Trade Minister Patolichev, which was postponed until May 11; see Document 215.

142. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 22, 1972, 10:35 a.m.

AH: I have a message from Henry before he started today's meetings. We shook him up I am afraid.—(reads from Henry's wire)²

RN: Don't worry about Henry—Send over his original message so Rose can type it and I can read it.³

AH: (continues reading from wire) "the situation is as follows" . . . a, b, c.

RN: The point is that Henry has to keep today in front of the Soviets that we do not have to have the summit. We can continue our bombing—And another side to this—the Soviets can change their minds if they see the domestic side here is in an uproar. We can't assume they may be playing a double game—Vietnam and the summit. Henry has to be aware that this blabber doesn't mean anything.

AH: I sent him a message that this was one concern which he should be alerted to.⁴ But we don't have to face that until after May 2 meeting, Mr. President.

RN: The problem that I have with it—May 2 meeting at this point is whether we can agree or what is the condition for agreeing to Plenary meeting?

AH: The condition is that they will be there on May 2.

RN: And we agree to stop bombing?

AH: No.

RN: Even if we don't, once we go to the meeting, the pressure will be great.

AH: We can work that—

RN: You remember the pain of the bombing pauses—every bombing pause is helping the enemy—Don't want a bomb halt under conditions of agreeing to meeting. We must continue to hit them up to the 20th parallel.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² Document 140.

³ The retyped version of the message from the President has not been found.

⁴ Reference is evidently to Document 136.

AH: They will strike tomorrow—52's still have some good targets 50 miles south. Laird has just put the word out.

RN: for the 20th?

AH: Yes. We are getting some good BDA. I fighter bombers have raked that over.

RN: You mean BDA is the enemy—

AH: We hit a power plant.

RN: There is so much flying on this—he must realize that we can't play a game out here. I care about a lot of people who are really concerned now—not so much the colleges.

AH: I have a message from Sonnenfeldt⁵—rather doubled talked so Henry wouldn't see it—you know what a hawk he is. Very confident Henry is playing it tough.

RN: Henry must have finished the meeting by now.

AH: I think I will go back to him on this Monday meeting.

RN: Frankly, I think we should compress meeting on Vietnam—all day is good. I am confident that Brezhnev is trying to get Henry to slide meeting over to the summit. The summit thing worries me.

AH: Henry knows our concerns. (reads from Henry's memo) he has got some good advice—that they are soft in one line so firm on the other.

RN: The decision with regard to staying until Sunday only based on progress he has made today. Otherwise come back and start talking to Dobrynin again. How was the strike yesterday?

AH: Well handled.

RN: Didn't cause much reaction here.

AH: People don't much care.

RN: It wasn't Hanoi or Haiphong, people don't care. The press is really something—*Baltimore News* headlines say "U.S. loses eight planes in Viet—" then subhead reads, "Over the Month of April". Can you imagine?

AH: They are all bleeding over the Vice President's speech.⁶

⁵ In an undated message delivered to Haig on the morning of April 22, Sonnenfeldt reported: "Appreciate your worrying about my health. But so far really nothing to worry about. If things go on like this I am confident health will be better when we return than when we left. I think even Fritz [Kraemer] would agree." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File)

⁶ In a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington on April 21, Agnew charged that the Democratic Party, including such Presidential hopefuls as Senators Humphrey, Kennedy, McGovern, and Muskie, had staked its future on the failure of Nixon's policy in Vietnam. Agnew also argued that *The New York Times*, "an ardent advocate of getting into Vietnam," was doing "penance regularly by scourging the President who is getting us out." (*The New York Times*, April 22, 1972, p. 15)

RN: I am sorry to disturb him, but Henry is mesmerized by summitry. I don't want to lose the summit, but I have gone one step further—we can lose the summit and not the country—we must save the country not pay for the summit by jeopardizing the outcome of Vietnam—I want to come out of Vietnam with our heads high.

143. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 22, 1972, 11:08 a.m.

Sitto 29. Reference your 008.² There has been no effort to harass but rather to point out that we were totally out of communication with you from 1:00 p.m. yesterday until 9:00 last evening, and then the first message we received was unreadable. Furthermore, we had no way of knowing whether or not you had received our traffic. The President was, of course, extremely interested in outcome of your first substantive session which tended to spice up the situation here considerably. Your reply³ confirmed precisely what I feared, that is that you did not know of the communication breakdown. Apparently, the problem was at plane site and it has now been resolved.

I entered this situation somewhat behind the power curve not having been here when preparatory work was done for your trip. It was quite evident yesterday that the President was not completely comfortable with the book submitted to him prior to your departure.⁴ This generated his memo to you sent early yesterday.⁵ I used the same argumentation contained in your 008 in discussing the character of your visit with him yesterday. However, he has made the point to me that if we get no assist from the Soviets and then proceed with stringent action against the North, at the last minute, the Soviets might cancel the summit on their own thereby further complicating the domestic situ-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

² Document 140.

³ See footnote 2, Document 137.

⁴ See Document 125.

⁵ Document 127.

ation—all this at a time when domestic reaction against our actions in the North is running highest. His point is that if the summit is to be sacrificed, he wishes to be the one who cancels it on his own terms.

I will discuss your message with the President 30 minutes from now and am confident that he will agree with all points that you have made but with the lingering concerns noted above. I will emphasize to him that this concern does not have to be faced until after we have an opportunity to assess outcome of May 2 meeting.

Don't worry about concerns here. You, as has always been case, are the only one who can deliver the mail and we all know it. Naturally our other friend whom I briefed the night you left calls hourly to find out what is in train.⁶ I am also informed that hawkish injections are coming regularly from Treasury.⁷

⁶ Haig and Haldeman briefed Rogers on April 19; see footnote 2, Document 109. A transcript of a telephone conversation between Haig and Rogers, evidently at 9:25 a.m. on April 22 but misdated 9:25 a.m. on April 21, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2].

⁷ According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon called Connally on April 21 at 4:22 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) No other record of the conversation has been found.

144. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 22, 1972, 11:25 a.m.

RN: Occurred to me that we should send to Henry, via Sonnenfeldt, the Sindlinger poll—he should know that the people are very emotional about this also. If you could pass on the thing that the protests here were not successful, there has been strong editorial support and the Sindlinger sort of hawk support.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [–] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

GH: I gave him all the statistics in the poll.²

RN: You did, well that's fine. Colson talks with a lot of these politicians—he said that the President is taking the heat for what he is doing here. Don't want any sort of spirit of the Kissinger breastfeeding in Moscow to say that we must mute things. I think they want the summit but they lied to him. When do you think they got the tanks?

GH: The equipment that I saw was all brand new.

RN: We shouldn't talk about the hawk/dove sentiment. The cold fact is that we think Vietnam is more important than the summit. The Moscow trip may be helpful, sure. Candidly, part of the reason the I Corps thing and its magnitude was that for two weeks before we went to China and during and for two weeks after we were there, we were very muted. I can't have this happen at the Moscow summit.

GH: I agree.

RN: I don't need the warm opinions here about the summit—

GH: We have to be cautious that he is conscious of the college protestations.

RN: I don't care about them—we are going to see this thing through. You have a message to him—should be getting a message to him.³

GH: I am sending his first message to you⁴ along with the battle stuff.

RN: How is An Loc.

GH: Still hairy.

RN: Please submit to Abrams for a strike in that area like one of the B 3 things. Abrams to take all assets in there and pop it for the full effect.

GH: I have talked to Abrams about this and he agrees. 28 B-52's sortees right along An Loc yesterday.

RN: The B-3 had effect.

GH: He is confident that that is what did it.

GH: Ask him about An Loc—it is his decision.

² See Document 138.

³ At 11:29 a.m. Haig sent the following message, via the White House Situation Room to Kissinger, in Moscow: "Have discussed your 008 [Document 140] with President. He is in full accord and wants you to know there is no doubt whatsoever about his total confidence and trust in you. He merely wanted you to know that in terms of his priorities, an honorable conclusion to Vietnam conflict far exceeds importance of Soviet summit. He knows you also share this view. Concerning your stay over through Monday, he agrees completely that decision is up to you based on your assessment of progress on Vietnam question." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]) For the discussion between Haig and Nixon on Kissinger's message, see Document 142.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 142.

145. Editorial Note

As he waited for a report from his Assistant Henry Kissinger on April 22, 1972, the second day of secret talks in Moscow, President Nixon assessed the situation at Camp David with his Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman. According to Haldeman's diary entry for the day, Nixon began the 3-hour discussion at 11:30 a.m. by issuing instructions for Dwight Chapin, his appointments secretary, who was also in Moscow leading an advance team for the upcoming summit. "He gave me a lot of instructions for Chapin," Haldeman wrote, "on taking some very firm positions on the things that we want to do, such as using our car, using our plane, going to Leningrad on Saturday, not on Sunday. The P's convinced that the Soviets are pushing for Sunday in order to avoid the P getting a good crowd there, such and so on." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, page 444) On the basis of these instructions, Haldeman sent a backchannel message that afternoon in which he further admonished Chapin "not to lock any schedule or any arrangement commitments until you return and have the opportunity to review the entire trip." Deputy Assistant to the President Haig forwarded the text of the message to Kissinger "in case your hosts attempt an end-run on any of these subjects." (Telegram Sitto 33 from Haig to Kissinger, April 22; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Trip to Moscow Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2])

In addition to the instructions for Chapin, the President was preoccupied with Kissinger's trip, the military situation in Vietnam, and the impact both would have upon his plans to deliver a television address on April 26. Haldeman recorded Nixon's views in his diary on April 22.

"He's concerned about the effect of K's trip, whether the people in this country will think he's there because the Russians are pressing us and that this is a sign of weakness or not. He feels that we can't show any overt weakness and he called Haig several times during the meeting. Each time he emphasized the important of maintaining our bombing and other attack levels. He's especially concerned about the effect on our people, the hawks, who are now enthusiastic, but could be turned off pretty rapidly if, as a result of Henry's trip, we backed off." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

According to Haldeman's handwritten notes of the discussion at Camp David, the President saw Kissinger's private session with the North Vietnamese in Paris on May 2 as an important turning point. If the session was inconclusive, Nixon insisted, the United States would bomb Hanoi and Haiphong for 3 days. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I)

During his meeting with Haldeman, the President spoke twice by telephone with Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Although no other record of the first conversation has been found, Haig called Nixon at 12:34 p.m., presumably to report on Kissinger's latest message, which had arrived at the White House an hour earlier. In lieu of his forthcoming message on the second round of discussions, which had been "mostly devoted to Vietnam," Kissinger briefly reported that the Soviets had agreed in principle to a public announcement of his trip on April 25. "Believe announcement should be made at Tuesday noon by President," Kissinger maintained. "Given Soviet sensitivities, announcement of our willingness to return to Paris plenary should be held for Tuesday PM briefing. Point will be clear but it has benefit of dissociating the President from it." (Telegram WTE 009 from Kissinger to Haig, April 22; *ibid.*, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 1972, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2])

Nixon called Haig back at 1:06 p.m. to discuss Kissinger's message. According to a transcript, the two men had the following exchange:

"P: I want to keep some running room—whether I have to announce Henry's trip. You see there is a very strong argument having Ziegler do it. On the China trip I wasn't announcing Henry's trip, I was announcing I was going to Peking. I have already announced that I was going to Moscow. That I would spend three days in Moscow, it isn't right—what I have to do later. Is he committed to me to make the announcement.

"H: No he isn't committed. The message says he believes.

"P: I want the option to be made but I don't know if I want to make the announcement.

"H: You want to assess the announcement.

"P: Yes, I want to read it first. You haven't gotten his message yet.

"H: No." (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2])

Nixon then raised a report, issued the previous day by the Associated Press bureau in Moscow, stating that, "in apparent reprisal for resumption of American bombing of North Vietnam, the Soviet Union has downgraded the status of President Nixon's scheduled visit here next month." (Telegram Sitto 20 from Haig to Kissinger, April 21; *ibid.*, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Trip to Moscow Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]) On this point the President was adamant: "I have told Chapin we are not going to take this crap about downgrading the visit. If we are going to stay at the Kremlin it is going to be a State visit. We will not accept it otherwise and they have to clear it up." Nixon concluded his discussion with Haig by further outlining the hard-line adopted in his instructions for Chapin. (Transcript; *ibid.*, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2])

In the wake of the message from Kissinger, including the report on possibly downgrading the summit, Haldeman reflected the President's views as follows:

"Part of our problem here is K's unbelievable ego, in that he's really pushing to have the P announce this Moscow trip and make a big thing out of it. Also apparently he hasn't followed instructions from the P as to what he's to be negotiating. He's spending his time on the Soviet Summit agenda rather than on getting Vietnam settled. The P was clearly disturbed by the information he had received on Henry last night. He waited all day and into the evening for a message today, and then at the last hour it still hadn't come. It now appears that Henry won't come back until Monday, which is again the ego thing, because he was determined to have a three day meeting and he's managed to do it." (Entry for April 22; *The Haldeman Diaries*, page 444)

During his conversation with Haldeman, Nixon said he had opted for a televised address, arguing that he could explain the background of developments on Vietnam and the summit "in an uncluttered atmosphere of a speech rather than in a press conference." After an extended discussion of preparations for the speech, Nixon told Haldeman to relay the plan to Haig: the White House would announce Kissinger's trip to Moscow on April 25; the next day, the President would announce both the withdrawal of troops and the agreement with North Vietnam to hold a plenary session in Paris on April 27. (Entry for April 22; *The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

146. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 22, 1972, 3 p.m.

Sitto 32. Have received 009² and discussed with President who is very pleased with progress you have made. He asked that I pass the following to you: He hopes that announcement you work out with Gromyko will explicitly mention that Vietnam was discussed if at all possible. If not, it is then essential that the implication that Vietnam

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only.

² See Document 145.

was discussed is clear. He then added that he hoped that it will be mentioned that Vietnam will be top priority item on Soviet agenda. I told him that you had already raised doubts about the desirability of the latter and he understands your view so you can certainly feel free to play that one in accordance with your own judgement.

Without the benefit of having read your detailed report of today's discussion, the President also wishes that you make clear to the Soviets before departing that there will be no letup in U.S. air operations south of twenty degrees without a reciprocal deescalation by NVA forces in SVN from this point on. He also hopes that you can make clear to the Soviets that unless May 2 secret meeting results in conclusive progress toward settlement, U.S. will reserve the right among other things to renew strikes in the Hanoi–Haiphong area.

The President would also wish to reserve on the decision as to whether he or Ziegler should make noon announcement, depending on your assessment of the outcome of the talks and the text of the announcement which you and Gromyko arrive at.³

Finally, the President was disturbed by news stories to the effect that the Soviets had now downgraded his visit to summit status rather than State and summit status and has asked that you complain about these stories to Gromyko.⁴ He also told me that Soviets are pressuring Chapin to have President go to Leningrad on Sunday, not Saturday, and he has instructed Chapin to hold firm for Leningrad trip on Saturday because he wishes to be in Moscow on Sunday. He has also instructed Chapin to hold firm on the issue of using his own plane and his own car because of communications. He has, however, agreed to ride in the Soviet automobile if there is a State occasion involved. He has pointed out to Chapin that the China precedent does not apply in this instance and that he found that communications were unsatisfactory in China and that he cannot accept a similar arrangement during the Soviet trip.⁵

I thought you should know the foregoing in case Dobrynin or Gromyko raise these issues with you. As you can see from the foregoing, the President remains very strong both on the Vietnam issue and his attitude vis-à-vis the Soviets. I am passing this on to you so that you will be fully aware of climate here and not in an effort to badger you or to make your most difficult tasks more so.

³ For Kissinger's response on this point, see footnote 3, Document 149.

⁴ See Document 145.

⁵ See Document 145.

We have just received a report that a Soviet civil IL–18 is scheduled to depart Moscow on April 23 at 1025Z enroute to possibly Hanoi. The aircraft has in the past been associated with VIP movements. Warm regards.⁶

⁶ A copy of the report is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2].

147. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 22, 1972, 4:55 p.m.

Sitto 34. I have had long and frank discussion with President² and I believe he is completely satisfied with proposed concept of operations and with the superb manner in which you have conducted meetings thus far. He is, in fact, becoming increasingly optimistic that the delicate balancing act which you have established is getting us the best of all worlds by (1) inflicting maximum psychological and military pressure on Hanoi, (2) enabling him to reassure hawks here that punishment of Hanoi will continue while (3) totally disarming doves who will be completely puzzled by implications of Moscow visit and commencement of plenaries.

President wants very much to modify slightly the game plan to insure that the announcement of your visit to Moscow gets solo ride on Tuesday evening news cycle. In this way, broadcasters will speculate constructively about the implications of your talks in Moscow.

He would accomplish the foregoing by withholding the announcement of our decision to attend the plenary session on Thursday until 7:30 pm Washington time Tuesday evening. We could make changes in messages to our customer in Paris and to Bunker and Thieu and

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Nixon called Haig at 2:35 p.m. on April 22 and the two men spoke for 23 minutes. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) No further record of the conversation has been found.

others if you agree. If not, please advise by Flash message³ and I will urge President to return to original game plan. I do believe, however, that he has a good point. His main concern is that the Soviet visit get the major ride and appropriate speculation and that we use another news cycle to surface the plenary decision. He also plans to follow up immediately on Wednesday evening prime time (9:00 pm), with a brief ten minute television address in which he would explain the situation in Vietnam, what actions he has taken and the reasons therefor, refer to Tuesday's announcements on your meetings in Moscow and the decision on the plenary sessions and make specific mention of the fact that he will continue with strikes in the North against targets which are sustaining the massive invasion of the South and that these strikes will continue until the enemy desists. He would also, during his ten minute address, make his next troop withdrawal announcement.

Concerning the troop withdrawal announcement, General Abrams sent in a message⁴ which strongly recommends against any further withdrawals beyond the 1 May 69,000 level until the situation clarifies. Laird, in turn, has forwarded to the President a multi-page analysis⁵ which in general sustains Abrams' position but which recommends that the President announce a new force goal of 15,000 U.S. forces remaining in country by the end of the Calendar Year (31 December 1972). As you know, Abrams informed me he could probably live with 20,000 drawdown between 1 May and 1 July providing we hold at that level until at least September. Thieu is also comfortable with this order of magnitude. Laird's recommendation is a disaster in my view since it ignores the psychological impact that such a sweeping announcement would have on Saigon even though it is spread over a long period. Furthermore, I do not believe a 15,000-man force constitutes much, if any, leverage on Hanoi and on the POW issue at a time when we wish to be as threatening as possible while still maintaining an acceptable momentum for the President's withdrawal program. I have discussed this with the President and he is still firm on going with 20,000 between 1 May and 1 July. If you have any contrary views, please advise before he gets further set. This would certainly be my recommendation.

³ For Kissinger's response on this point, see Document 151.

⁴ Backchannel message 0071 from Bunker to Haig, April 21. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 414, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages 1972, From: AMB Bunker—Saigon)

⁵ Memorandum from Laird to Nixon, April 21, on force redeployment. (Ibid., Box 159, Vietnam Country Files, Vietnam April 1972)

Attached is a new back channel to you from Gerry Smith which further supports impressions you have gained there. Finally, Bob Haldeman called and asked that you be made aware of the strong position Chapin is taking on the administrative details of the trip so that you do not inadvertently sing from another sheet of music if Gromyko should approach you on these matters. Along with the strong guidance Chapin was given, as outlined in my earlier message, he was also told not make any final commitments while in Moscow but to wait until his return to Washington where these decisions will be made.⁶

Warm personal regards.

Attachment

Backchannel Message From the Head of the Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (Smith) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)⁷

Helsinki, April 22, 1972.

Dear Henry:

At today's Smith/Semenov meeting, he opened by repeating that SL issue was under serious consideration in Moscow.

He said never in his life had he seen such preparations as were being made for President's visit.

He presented OLPAR written formulation,⁸ which Nitze approves. Subject to our dropping prior consultation provision, Sovs would agree to smallest ABM radar as ceiling for OLPARS.

He also presented formula banning multiple ABM warheads, which is acceptable in substance.

Based on our telecon of April 10,⁹ I then probed on personal basis Soviet interest in ABM approach permitting one ICBM site plus

⁶ Reference is to Nixon's instructions for Chapin, see Document 145.

⁷ Another copy is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages SALT 1972.

⁸ In an April 24 memorandum to Kissinger, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt assessed the Semenov proposals, explaining that the formulation on Other Large Phased Array Radars (OLPARs) "essentially accepted our proposal," while the formula on multiple ABM interceptors "showed movement." (Ibid., Box 718, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. XXIA)

⁹ In an April 8 backchannel message to Kissinger, Smith asked for informal authority to probe Soviet interest in allowing an anti-ballistic missile defense for two sites, the national capital and an ICBM field. (Ibid., Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages SALT 1972) "This was authorized two days later," he later wrote, "on a 'highly tentative personal' basis." (Smith, *Doubletalk*, p. 363)

national capital defense for both sides. I suggested radius of circle of ICBM defense at 150 kilometers. Under this approach, we could agree to 6 MARCs for NCA. If there was defended only one ICBM site on each side, the MARC concept would be especially useful for ICBM defense. I indicated that we could double our present proposed number of MARCs. (You will recall that NSDM¹⁰ authorizes me to triple; we will in all likelihood need to go that far or slightly higher.)

Semenov indicated strong interest in his side's part in such an approach. I stressed that it was in the context of SLBM inclusion.

We have learned that Semenov's instructions are to respond to US initiative, but not to make a new Soviet proposal.

In light of these developments, it would be very helpful from our angle to have early Washington response to delegation recommendations in USDel SALT VII 1261.¹¹

If this unofficially floated ABM approach is not to be US position, damage limitation argues for early advice to Soviets. I trust that will not prove necessary.

Soviets, per Kishilov, are thinking of a 15 May Helsinki end, with both agreements wrapped up "to last comma."

Warm regards.

Gerry Smith

¹⁰ Reference is to NSDM 158, March 23, which set parameters for flexibility in the American position on Modern ABM Radar Complexes (MARC)s. The text is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XXXII, SALT I, 1969–1972.

¹¹ In telegram 1261 from Helsinki, April 14, the SALT delegation submitted its recommendations on SLBMs, ABM limitations, and provisions for the duration of and withdrawal from the proposed agreement on freezing offensive weapons. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 18–3 FIN(HE))

148. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 22, 1972.

WTE 10. Just finished second meeting with Brezhnev lasting some 4 and $\frac{3}{4}$ hours followed by additional face-to-face meeting alone of 45 minutes. (See separate message.)²

Session, though again marked by moments of levity and personal warmth, was basically deadly serious and extremely substantive.³ First 2 and $\frac{1}{2}$ hours dealt exclusively and intensively with Vietnam which also repeatedly came up in remainder of session.

I went through our procedural proposal and substantive position on de-escalation and desired outcome of negotiations, interspersing this with blunt warning that President determined to settle Vietnam regardless of risk.

Vietnam

I exposed at length our position on the Vietnam question, first outlining the procedural course we would be prepared to follow in respect to public and private meetings. Brezhnev characterized our suggested procedural approach as "constructive."⁴

I emphasized that substance of private session would be what was important, and what we would demand of Hanoi is a return to the situation of March 29, e.g. the situation prior to the offensive. We would propose a declaration that both sides will make a serious effort this year to negotiate an end to the war and to this end both sides would reduce the level of violence. For its part the DRV would have to withdraw the divisions that entered SVN since March 29 and respect for

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 5:20 p.m. Haig forwarded the message to Camp David for Rose Mary Woods, who retyped it for the President. Nixon wrote "can reduce arms shipment"—an apparent reference to the Soviet role in Vietnam—at the top of the retyped version; additional notations by Nixon are noted below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

² Reference is presumably to telegram WTE 009 from Kissinger to Haig, April 22; see Document 145. For the two meetings on April 22, see Documents 139 and 141. The second was not a "face-to-face meeting alone," since Gromyko and Dobrynin as well as the U.S. notetaker and the Soviet interpreter were also in attendance.

³ The President underlined this sentence.

⁴ The President underlined this sentence.

the DMZ would have to be restored. We would then stop the bombing of the DRV, propose the immediate exchange of POWs held more than four years and insist on guarantees that the foregoing conditions be observed while negotiations toward a settlement were pursued. In short we would visualize two stages, an immediate reduction of the violence to last for a period, say a year, and a serious attempt to negotiate a settlement, thus ending the threat of war and the bombing of the DRV.⁵

Brezhnev's response was that the important thing was to end the fighting; if we insisted on withdrawal of NVA divisions now in SVN, it would mean continued warfare. He suggested we consider instead a de facto cease-fire with units stopping at the lines where they are presently situated. Under these circumstances we would not even have to draw down the air and naval deployments we had made since March 29.

In making these points Brezhnev on more than one occasion stressed themes that he could not vouch for DRV; and that we reflect on his suggestion adding that the mere fact of these positive steps following my trip to Moscow would be of tremendous significance.⁶

I replied by stressing in strongest possible terms the President's determination to bring about a Vietnam solution at no matter what risk⁷ we had no intention of injecting any new element in VN situation three weeks ago; but the situation had been forced upon us. We now consider what has developed as going beyond the issue of VN itself but an intolerable attack on our Presidency. Before the offensive we would have readily accepted the solution Brezhnev had advanced; we in fact had proposed it ourselves as long as two years ago; but now we are faced with a violation of the 1968 understandings which must be restored and the status of the DMZ respected.⁸

Brezhnev repeated his view that we should simply demand a stop to the fighting; then put everything on the table for negotiations over a period of time.

After covering other issues we returned to VN at end of meeting. Brezhnev said he had briefed his Politiburo colleagues on our meeting of the previous day. They had been generally pleased with tenor of our

⁵ The President underlined most of this paragraph and wrote a question mark in the margin by "immediate reduction of the violence to last for a period, say a year, and a serious attempt to negotiate a settlement."

⁶ The President underlined "the mere fact of these positive steps following my trip to Moscow would be of tremendous significance" and wrote "!! K not B!" in the margin.

⁷ The President underlined this sentence.

⁸ The President underlined the last clause of this sentence.

discussions but all had voiced concern over Vietnam. He closed on this subject by proposing that we both reflect on our positions and discuss the matter again on Monday.

After meeting Brezhnev took me aside to protest again that their deliveries had not been excessive. He argued that the enemies of the summit in Hanoi and Peking were trying to wreck the summit and we had to thwart them.⁹ He said he would do anything to deescalate the fighting but he could not ask North Vietnam to withdraw its troops. He made it clear that we would have to cancel the summit; he would not.

He next sent Dobrynin to ask what they should do. Dobrynin stressed that if we confined bombing to present limits there was no chance of cancelling summit and they were extremely anxious to have it.¹⁰ Dobrynin told me that the Politburo would meet tomorrow and we would hear something on Monday.

Please tell the President that Sonnenfeldt feels no one has talked to Brezhnev as I have on Vietnam and President's resolve. Dobrynin stressed that AP report¹¹ about being downgraded from State visit is rubbish.¹²

SALT

During extensive SALT discussions Brezhnev indicated new Politburo decision taken to include SLBMs in SALT and to accept a variant of our 2 for 2 ABM position as well as 5-year duration for offensive agreement. At my request they stopped Semenov from giving Smith new ABM position which he already had instructions to do in next few days.¹³ To fit in with our overall strategy I told Brezhnev we would react to any new proposals only after Presidential and Washington review. This gives President the proper credit. My impression is Soviets moving most of way to our SALT position, permitting rapid conclusion of agreement whenever we choose.

Length of Stay Here

Brezhnev has urged me to stay until Monday afternoon. I said I would have to check with the President who was restless for me to return. All arguments for staying here covered in my 008¹⁴ still apply. We have nothing to lose by staying and much to lose by leaving. They

⁹ The President underlined this sentence and wrote an exclamation point in the margin.

¹⁰ The President underlined this sentence.

¹¹ See Document 145.

¹² The President underlined this sentence.

¹³ The President marked this sentence and wrote "already done!" in the margin.

¹⁴ Document 140.

are keeping us from nothing and have been most conciliatory on all issues in their control and have promised to transmit our proposals to Hanoi. They are not using summit to keep us quiet; we are using the summit to impose restraints on them.¹⁵ In addition Brezhnev may wish to check with Hanoi on our procedural and substantive proposals—he promised to take up Vietnam again after “thinking things over.” I believe it essential to stay.

Comment

My approved instructions for this trip were to use stick of bombing and carrot of being forthcoming on summit-related matters in order to get mutual deescalation in Vietnam.

So far we have spent two-thirds of our time on Vietnam during which I have gone to the brink with repeated declarations that we will continue military operations. They in turn have approved our procedural compromise and floated ceasefire-in-place with follow-on negotiations. While latter is unacceptable because of North Vietnamese invasion across DMZ which must be rolled back, it is noteworthy that Brezhnev thrice repeated concept at a time when Communists have yet to seize a major town.

Thus we have given up absolutely no options on Vietnam and have made no concessions on any other issues. In turn we have obtained SALT proposals that exceed our best estimates; a statement of principles for US-Soviet relations that meets our concepts rather than loaded France-Russian political type. Brezhnev has also agreed to consider our concept of separate explorations on MBFR in parallel with explorations on a European security conference; and has been constantly effusive about prospects for summit.

Thus they, not we, have been forthcoming on summit-related issues while we have a stand-off on Vietnam with all our options open, Brezhnev has spent more time with me than with any other foreign visitor. To kick them in the teeth now would be an absurdity.

¹⁵ The President underlined this sentence.

149. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 22, 1972, 01133.

Sitto 36. I have given President gist of your 010.² He is delighted that you are holding very firm but he has also unfortunately drawn conclusion that Soviets are either not going to be helpful on Vietnam or worse have colluded with Hanoi in final steps of strategy designed to achieve a cease-fire in place, with bulk of North Vietnamese divisions in South Vietnamese territory.

Despite my best efforts, he tends to equate largess on summit with collusion with Hanoi on South Vietnam. This has been most difficult forty eight hours here, with Rogers insisting on seeing messages and President calling hourly for reports from you. He is at this point absolutely firm on not letting summit influence outcome of Vietnam in any way. He has just instructed me to inform you that he considers it most important that the joint announcement that you work out with Gromyko not portray your visit to Moscow as oriented primarily on pre-summit arrangements and suggests something along the following lines: "Dr. Kissinger visited Moscow to discuss urgent international problems, including Southeast Asia and (if absolutely necessary) pre-summit arrangements." The foregoing concerns of the President are based on both the substantive problem of being sure that hawks do not think we cave on plenary session and his fear that Rogers will have difficulty swallowing reference to summit preparations.

President is also increasingly restless in Camp David and has asked me to advise you that you must be at Camp David not later than 6:00 p.m. Washington time Monday evening. This means your departure from Moscow must have occurred by 1:00 p.m. Moscow time. As I completed this message, the President just called again and added that he views Soviet positions on South Vietnam as frenzied and frivolous and, therefore, is determined to go forward with additional strikes on Hanoi and Haiphong unless some major breakthrough occurs. I have insisted with him that twenty degree restriction must be maintained until

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Document 148. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon called Haig twice on the evening of April 22, from 6:19 to 6:42 p.m., and 7:23 to 7:27 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) No substantive record of either conversation has been found.

completion of May 2 meeting but President terminated conversation with the following: “It may or may not hold.”

As you can see from foregoing, situation here is almost as difficult as you have found it there. I am sharing the who-shot-Johns with you to be absolutely sure that you appreciate fully the President’s frame of mind so that your further discussions with your hosts are consistent with it.

I have just received your 011 and will implement provisions of paragraphs 1 through 7.³

Warm regards.

³ After issuing further instructions on prior notification, Kissinger addressed the official announcement of his trip to Moscow: “Just received your 32 [Document 146]. My own judgement is that a Ziegler announcement may be preferable, protect the President better and show less anxiety.” (Message WTE 011 from Kissinger to Haig, April 22; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK’s Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [1 of 2])

150. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 23, 1972, 10:15 a.m.–1:12 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Soviet Foreign Minister
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to USA
Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Winston Lord, Special Assistant to Dr. Kissinger
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

Basic Principles; Middle East; Economic Relations; Announcement of Kissinger Visit

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Guest House on Vorobyevski Road.

Basic Principles:

Dr. Kissinger: Our associates are going to work on the Principles. I would be interested in whether the Foreign Minister has any comments on our paper.²

Gromyko: Yesterday evening I looked through them. My first impression is that it is all right. But it was not yet translated. Therefore today I will read it more thoroughly and then report to Mr. Brezhnev.

Dr. Kissinger: It accepts 95% of your formulations and adds one or two points.

Gromyko: Maybe very small ones.

Dr. Kissinger: I will wait for your suggestions. If you find it generally acceptable, we can work it out.

Gromyko: Maybe strengthen it. If it is OK, stand up and cry "Eureka!"

Dr. Kissinger: As far as we are concerned, we're prepared to leave with it agreed.

Middle East:

Gromyko: Did you have a chance to read our note on Middle East [Tab A].³

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Gromyko: I just wanted to say in addition that we are proceeding from the assumption that this is a continuation of that scheme we discussed when I visited Washington and talked with the President and you.⁴ It is a continuation of that exchange of opinions. You will recall that we then discussed several aspects of the situation and several provisions, including the withdrawal of Soviet military personnel and withdrawal of Israeli forces. It goes without saying that what we said then remains in force.

Dr. Kissinger: Your Ambassador and I have had several discussions on the Middle East. As I have told him, the Middle East negotiations have taken a weird direction. There has always been a frenzy of activity, and great excitement, and nothing ever happened. Therefore I have discussed it with your Ambassador not just to produce a paper

² See footnote 3, Document 139.

³ All brackets in the source text. Regarding Tab A, see footnote 5, Document 141.

⁴ During his annual visit in late September for the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly, Gromyko also visited Washington, meeting Nixon at the White House on September 29 and Kissinger at the Soviet Embassy on September 30. The memoranda of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

but to get something done. This paper is just what the Ambassador has said to me.

To be honest, Joe Sisco may have been authorized, but there was no chance of anything happening. So I have had to inject realism into our discussion.

We cannot go to war with Israel. We cannot put someone else in the position to go to war with Israel and defeat it. Therefore we want to come to some understanding with you on measures we can persuade Israel to accept without war. Some pressures, financial and otherwise, we can exert without putting Israel in the position where it feels it has to go to war.

After our discussions, I told you I would see if there was any chance of coming up with a realistic conclusion, which I did. Then I told the Ambassador that I was prepared to start discussions.⁵ It had to be a practical, not a theoretical exercise.

Also, I have been talking to the Israelis, in more general terms: that this would be a topic of the Summit, that it was impossible to keep it off the Summit agenda, and I had to learn their views. In fact their Ambassador⁶ has a map for me, which I have not looked at because I did not want them to think I brought it here. It won't be acceptable.

Also, I have had enough discussion with the Israelis to know that this [the Soviet note] will not be do-able without war. I have tried to tell Anatol what I thought was do-able even with a great domestic crisis in Israel and great pressure from our side. We have to find a formula. . . .

It makes no difference to the U.S. whether they have one more or less airfield, nor to you.

This is the problem as I see it, Mr. Foreign Minister. It may turn out to be an insoluble problem. Within that framework, we are prepared to have discussions.

Gromyko: I should like to hear your views or comments on the major question which we feel predetermines all the rest, that is, the withdrawal of Israeli forces. You say you speak in terms of finding a realistic way of resolving the matter. I would like to know what you actually mean. We formed the impression last year that our views were a general basis for discussion, though not specific. You referred to certain difficulties in doing business with Israel. That is a subject we can

⁵ Kissinger and Dobrynin began "exploratory" discussions on the Middle East on October 15, 1971. After Nixon met Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir on December 2, Kissinger told Dobrynin on January 21, 1972, that talks on the subject could proceed; see Documents 4 and 41.

⁶ Yitzhak Rabin.

talk about without reaching a conclusion. Our feeling is, it is doubtful that the U.S. could not bring effective pressure on Israel. I would like to hear some more concrete considerations, so I can report back to Comrade Brezhnev before he meets with you tomorrow.

Dr. Kissinger: I did not mean to imply that the Arabs were an un-mixed joy.

Gromyko: I have two additional comments. First, we are not too clear in our minds on your views on the following question. We have felt all along—and were clear last year in Washington—we are interested in reaching a complex solution, that is, withdrawal from Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, in a complex. But one of your last conversations with our Ambassador [Dobrynin interjects: Third from the last]⁷ related only to Egypt; Jordan was touched upon, but not in a concrete way, and Syria was not touched upon at all. In our thinking, only a complex or package solution can help solve the problem.

My second comment is: You have already discussed with Comrade Brezhnev some questions with respect to a radical improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations. Let us assume the forthcoming meetings will open up great possibilities. What happens if the Middle East problem is still unresolved? Can we allow the situation in the Middle East to keep on shaking and enfevering relations between the Soviet Union and the United States?

In our view, it would serve the interests of both our countries to secure a lasting solution to this problem. Because while now the situation seems more favorable to reaching a solution, it is hard to predict what will happen tomorrow.

Dr. Kissinger: First, simply to clear my own mind, my impression is that this document contains nothing different from what Anatol has discussed with Sisco.

Dobrynin: Plus the addition that you and Gromyko discussed last year.

Dr. Kissinger: But they are not in the document.

Gromyko: Right. We can confirm it in written form if you wish.

Dr. Kissinger: We don't need that. We are serious people. The proposition you brought to Washington is one we are interested in, and

⁷ According to Kissinger: "After the start of Hanoi's Easter offensive on March 30, I interrupted the private Middle East talks with Dobrynin as a sign of displeasure with the Soviet arm shipments that had made the North Vietnamese offensive possible." (*White House Years*, p. 1291) Although they briefly discussed the subject on April 6 (see Document 84), no further evidence has been found that the two men continued their talks on the Middle East before Kissinger's trip to Moscow.

it reflects a serious effort on your part. We recognize you have made an attempt to find a solution.

There may be a slight misunderstanding. My impression was that while an ultimate global solution is what you wanted, you were prepared in the immediate discussions to confine the discussions to Egypt. We agree that an ultimate solution must be global.

Gromyko: Global in Mideast terms? Complex.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Gromyko: We can certainly discuss the question by phases, let's say, first take up for discussion the Egyptian angle, then the Syrian angle, then the Jordanian, but always having in mind that the general ultimate solution must be global.

Dr. Kissinger: You are saying that you won't withdraw all your troops until all the problems have been solved, or on the basis of an Egyptian solution?

Gromyko: We see the ultimate agreement as a global one.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, but in practice, does that mean that you won't withdraw until all three arguments have been signed? Or [will you withdraw] when the Egyptian one is signed, while maintaining the principle that the others have to be agreed?

Gromyko: We believe that the solution as such should be a global one. Not necessarily one piece of paper, but the agreement in principle, the solution, should be complex. Withdrawal is one integral part of this single complex solution. We know the feelings of the Arabs, and we feel it is the most realistic way.

I want to add one thing. We do not exclude the possibility that a certain part of the agreement may be carried out, fulfilled, before the elections. Maybe it can even be made public. We talked about this.

Dr. Kissinger: The interim part, the Suez Canal settlement.

Gromyko: You may call it "interim." That is a popular word, part of Sisco's lexicon. But this part will be an integral part of the general, and our governments will proceed on that basis.

Dr. Kissinger: I was under the impression that you maintained the principle of a general solution but were principally interested in settling the Egyptian part as the first step, and that Syria was not interested but the Jordanian part would follow.

Gromyko: "Settle" is not the word. Maybe it would not be carried out yet, but settlement includes agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: There are ways to approach it: A Canal settlement, an Egyptian settlement, and a general settlement.

Gromyko: The settlement is general, global. Then the question arises, how to fulfill it, carry it out, in life. Here we could build a scheme that a certain part could be carried out as a first stage.

Dr. Kissinger: The Canal settlement.

Gromyko: Maybe the Canal settlement. Maybe publicly.

Dr. Kissinger: That is a genuine misunderstanding. I understood you were prepared to have a settlement on the Suez Canal if it was linked organically to a settlement of the Egyptian-Israeli problem. I also thought the withdrawal of Soviet forces was related to that part. I didn't know you wanted a settlement concurrently with Jordan and Syria.

As I told your Ambassador, I have started preliminary talks with Hussein⁸ so that I do not get it all third hand. I did not do this to see where we could go, but to see whether Jordan could be settled first, or concurrently, or after. I wanted to consult with you to see how you would want to proceed. So in principle, Jordan is something we are thinking about. But Syria involves extraordinary difficulties.

The more comprehensive the agreement, the more difficult it will be to get the Israelis to go along with it. Therefore, I am afraid if Syria is brought in, it will be the same as the process we've seen. Purely theoretical. Any one of the volatile Arab states could destroy what we have agreed to.

Gromyko: I do not think you objected in Washington to what we called a complex settlement. We must be specific and precise in our propositions. We did not say a settlement could be reached with Egypt alone, leaving Syria and Jordan suspended, hanging in the air. All along we have been speaking in terms of a complex problem. But like any complex, it does contain component parts; they need not be carried out in a single time. They could be carried out in stages. We could take up and solve the Canal problem first. But if we were to attempt the entire Egyptian angle first while leaving aside Syria and Jordan, that would not be a viable approach.

Then again, if in discussions of this problem we do assume it is possible first to discuss matters relating to Egypt prior to signing an eventual agreement, of course it would be better to move forward on a broader front. But we are certainly aware of the difficulties the parties have even in sitting at one table. So discussions could proceed separately, having in mind an ultimate complex settlement.

Dr. Kissinger: There was a genuine misunderstanding on my part in September. I thought you were interested in an Egyptian settlement alone. Your Ambassador can confirm, I only talked with him on Egypt.

⁸ King Hussein of Jordan met Nixon and Kissinger at the White House on March 28. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–1976, Record of Schedule) When Dobrynin asked about the King's visit on April 6, Kissinger replied that "there was some possibility of making progress there." See Document 84.

I informed him of the Jordan part only out of openness, but we never exchanged ideas on Jordan, and Syria was never discussed at all.

Gromyko: But with both you and the President, I was concerned only with a complex settlement.

Dr. Kissinger: I had the impression that you maintained the principle of a complex solution but were prepared to settle Egypt first. In all my discussions with Anatol, we discussed Egypt alone. There was a misunderstanding about the degree of linkage and the relation of Soviet withdrawal to the rest.

Gromyko: Then do you see a link between Egypt and the others, or do you wish to separate them?

Dr. Kissinger: I recognize linkage in theory. But the important practical question is to get Israel to withdraw without a war. My belief is that once a settlement is reached between Egypt and Israel, a Jordanian settlement, at least, will follow easily. I don't understand the Syrians.

Let me be concrete. On a Jordanian settlement, I frankly think that what you have here [in the note] is behind events, in the sense that an Israeli-Jordanian settlement can be brought about (with some pressure, e.g., on Jerusalem). And to make it too overt a U.S.-Soviet arrangement would slow it down. Maybe it could even be done without an Egyptian-Israeli settlement. I thought maybe we could use certain principles of the Jordan-Israeli settlement to facilitate the Egypt-Israel one. On Syria, I have no judgment. They don't want to make peace, and Israel will never give up the Golan Heights.

Gromyko: I think it is very bad that you haven't given thought to this [Syrian] part of a settlement. As we see the position of the Arabs, it would be impossible to seek a settlement leaving aside an entire country. I am sure you're well familiar with the Arab position. You said we were behind events with respect to Jordan. But last year, we did not exclude the possibility that the Jordanian King, for instance, might agree with Israel to have certain corrections in his boundary with Israel. This we would be free to do, provided it didn't look like a prize for Israel for war.

You mentioned the linkage of an Egyptian settlement with the general settlement. But how do you envisage it? We say we're in favor of linkage, and you say you are. Maybe we are talking of one and the same thing, maybe about different things.

Dr. Kissinger: I can see the same relation between the Egyptian and Syrian settlements as between the Canal settlement and the Egyptian settlement, that is, as steps toward a global solution. You would have a general formula in the Egyptian settlement that the solution is part of a more general approach. But I do not believe it is practical to negotiate all the details simultaneously, and I believe it will be more

difficult to impose it on the Israelis depending of course on what the settlement is.

Gromyko: You said negotiations. We certainly allow of the possibility that negotiations could be carried out by stages, and first there could be negotiations relating only to Egypt. But what if agreement has been reached (but not put into force) with Egypt, but Syria has not yet been discussed? Is Syria then completely lost from view? Do you presume that an Egyptian-Israeli agreement in principle should then be signed? Or do you believe, as we do, that there could be these negotiations with Egypt, and there could be prepared an agreement between Egypt and Israel, which could be discussed with the responsible leaders, but then—before it is signed or implemented—we should pass over to the next stage, i.e. Syria? As regards Jordan, perhaps a Jordan-Israel agreement could be negotiated or at least considered at the same time. And no one has conclusively proved that Syria could be discussed simultaneously. But as for their embodiment and implementation, we feel that the parts should be considered only as parts of a whole.

Dr. Kissinger: It is an interesting philosophical problem. You're saying, for example, first discuss an Egyptian settlement, then reach agreement, then talk to the leaders. But before it is carried out—your withdrawal and Israeli withdrawal—we then have to discuss Syria.

Gromyko: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: It is going to be a long effort. There are two catches to it—one favorable to you (you don't have to withdraw your troops) and one favorable to Israel (they do not have to do anything until they do everything). Since it is so hard to get them to do anything, this looks hard. We think Egypt and Jordan could be done. Then the pressures would perhaps be unavoidable for Syria to settle, too. It would be in your interest, I would think, to do it in stages.

We recognize in principle the need to include Syria. You overestimate what we can do with Israel. We can't do everything.

Gromyko: Let us differentiate between the negotiations for a settlement, and the settlement itself. As I said, the negotiations could be done in phases. But as for the eventual settlement itself, that we see only as a complex one and we believe any other approach would be most unrealistic. If Israel exploits that approach to frustrate a settlement, that only shows that Israel will use either a complex or a phased one to frustrate settlement. That raises a grave risk that neither of us would want to subject our relationship to.

Dr. Kissinger: What is your view of the timing of how to bring this to a conclusion?

Gromyko: It depends on what you mean—achievement of a general all-embracing settlement, or a time limit for implementation of an agreement. If the former, the sooner the better. We would feel it best

of all to discuss it before the Summit, so during the Summit we could reach a formalized understanding on all the issues and how they are to be resolved. And we could also reach an understanding on when it is to be discussed and agreed with the leaders in the countries concerned. The problem there is less on our side than on yours; you said there are delicate points on your side. I do not mean to say we don't have delicate points, too.

Dr. Kissinger: But you don't have to run for reelection this year.

Gromyko: We could make the Canal settlement public. If you meant a time limit for implementation, the part that is confidential could be implemented after the U.S. elections—but as soon as possible after the elections. Implementation should be completed at the very beginning of next year or at the end of this year. And all the countries of the Middle East heave a sigh of relief.

Dr. Kissinger: You're becoming more optimistic the longer I know you. My understanding was within the first six months of next year.

Gromyko: If we assume that agreement is reached in May, at the Summit, this means that, at least in some part, its implementation will begin. Implementation can begin after May. Do you mean it takes another six months next year?

Dr. Kissinger: I thought I made it clear that implementation could not begin until after the election.

Gromyko: That's not what we have in mind.

Dr. Kissinger: I know what you have in mind. I'm telling you what is possible.

Gromyko: The Canal?

Dr. Kissinger: The Canal can be done now, and published and implemented. As a practical matter, after the election, everyone will be exhausted for a few months. Then the government has to be reorganized, etc. It cannot begin until January.

If we reach agreement—and it is not yet demonstrated that we can—we will have to carry it out our way. When we reach agreement, we will keep our word. But we may need indirect methods.

I told you in September we could not begin until January. I do not want to mislead you.

If we drew a line halfway thru Sinai, Israel would carry it out right away. The more comprehensive we try to make it, the more painful.

Gromyko: Painful? For whom? It's Arab territory.

Certainly the time limits could be the subject of discussion. Our feeling is that it should be done to begin next year. In any case, we agree on the general principle that a part can be started as soon as agreement is in force.

Dr. Kissinger: If you want to start withdrawing troops, we wouldn't insist you wait until next year.

Gromyko: Israel's troops?

Dr. Kissinger: No, yours.

Gromyko: At the same time.

Dr. Kissinger: I have one other procedural question. I have my doubts, quite frankly, that the President and Mr. Brezhnev will be able to get into all the details of the Middle East settlement in a realistic way at the Summit. Secondly, we have the absolute necessity of the President being able to come back from Moscow and say no secret agreements were made—because there will be pressure from many in our country, especially Jewish groups. You and I will talk, and Anatol and I. General principles can then be addressed at the Summit. I suggest we then continue discussions during the summer. Conceivably, I could come back here in September, on which occasion we could reach agreement on an overall solution. We have four weeks, and I'm not sure the President—I don't know about Mr. Brezhnev—would want to be involved in all the complex issues of boundaries. This is just a suggestion. What do you think?

Gromyko: It depends on what you mean by principles. Some could be no more than the UN Security Council Resolutions,⁹ which would be of no use; other principles might be helpful for reaching a solution.

Dr. Kissinger: I would have in mind some concrete advance over the Security Council Resolutions. Otherwise there is no point.

Gromyko: Certainly let us lead matters so as to be as concrete as possible in our discussions. If it is not possible at this time to achieve and finalize a concrete agreement, at least let us agree on a basis for such an eventual agreement, or on some provisions that could be used as a basis.

Dr. Kissinger: That is possible.

Gromyko: It is useless to discuss only what's in the Security Council Resolution, because the Resolution is there and is not being carried out and each side is interpreting it in its own way. In our discussions, we should agree on something more concrete and more conclusive than the Security Council Resolution.

Dr. Kissinger: How do you think we should proceed, Mr. Foreign Minister?

⁹ Reference is to UNSC Resolution 242, adopted on November 22, 1967, which attempted to address the Arab-Israeli conflict in the wake of the Six-Day War. For text of the resolution, see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XIX, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967, Document 542.

Gromyko: Let us endeavor to do the maximum possible during the May Summit to reach agreement on an eventual basic accord—even if the accord is formalized on some later date, e.g. September. We might indeed after the Summit have another special meeting—now that you have found your way to Moscow. But to insure the success of this process, let’s do as much as we can even before the May summit, so the principles we are talking about won’t be meaningless. The principles should be as content-filled as possible, so they can be used as a basis for an eventual agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Gromyko: How do you envisage solution of the question of withdrawals? Because it is one thing to discuss in principle and another thing to get down to brass tacks.

Dr. Kissinger: In time, or ultimate destination?

Gromyko: The ultimate destination.

Dr. Kissinger: I have tried to formulate the issue to your Ambassador in what I take to be realistic terms. We have no differences on the issue of Egyptian sovereignty being restored back to the prewar border. The problem, as I have stated it frankly to your Ambassador, is that in order to persuade Israel to go along and to prevent a total explosion domestically, we have to show we can do better than the so-called Rogers Plan.¹⁰ I realize it is an unusual negotiating method to insist on more than we have offered.

Gromyko: Why “so-called” Rogers Plan? It is the Rogers Plan.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. It is called the Rogers Plan.

I have talked to the Israelis. We cannot go along with their proposal, but they consider presence—not sovereignty—as essential with respect to Sharm El-Sheikh and the airfield west of Eilat. If we could be ingenious on this and find a solution, we could face up to the domestic situation—our newspapers and Congress—and put pressure on Israel to return to the 1967 borders. This is what we have in mind on withdrawal. We also have some ideas on an interim settlement, but we both agree that is fairly easy.

Dobrynin: How far is the airfield from the border?

¹⁰ Reference is to the joint U.S.-Soviet working paper of October 28, 1969, to implement Security Council Resolution 242 for a “final and reciprocally binding accord” between Israel and Egypt. The text is scheduled for publication in *ibid.*, 1969–1976, volume XXIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969–1972, or William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*, (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1993), Appendix B, pp. 437–440. Rogers outlined the plan on December 9, 1969, in a speech at the Galaxy Conference on Adult Education at Washington, D.C.; see Department of State *Bulletin*, January 5, 1970, pp. 7–11.

Dr. Kissinger: A nominal distance, eight miles or so.

Dobrynin: How far is Eilat from Sharm El-Sheikh?

Dr. Kissinger: Seventy-five/one hundred kilometers. If we can find a formula for that, we can settle everything without difficulty.

Gromyko: How much is the area with respect to the air base?

Dr. Kissinger: I don't think it is much. And it needn't be annexed either. It could be. . . .

Gromyko: We think it is impossible to agree on this. It is a question of principle. It would give a reward to the Israelis. Presence won't be accepted by the Arabs. Another thing could be considered—some other foreign or UN personnel.

Dr. Kissinger: That is your plan. Can the UN personnel be Israeli?

Gromyko: No. A chicken can't be baptized a fish. (That is from a Dumas story.) The territory may not be large, but a principle is involved here. Probably Israel knows that a principle is involved here. It's their idea.

Dr. Kissinger: Well, how do you visualize the evolution if there is no agreement?

Gromyko: We do not think either you or we want to reach a situation where we cannot foresee what will happen. You yourself know full well what forces are operating in the Middle East and what moods are prevalent in the Arab world, and this should be borne in mind by both yourselves and ourselves.

How do we complete our discussions today?

Dr. Kissinger: I was going to ask you.

Gromyko: Our position briefly is this: We are in favor of a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territory. We cannot recognize any principle of Israel's being given any prize in the form of Arab territory. This applies to Egypt, to Syria, and to Jordan—although as I said earlier, last year, if the Jordanians want to make some corrections in their border with Israel, it's their business, it's their border.

Secondly, all the states of the Middle East are entitled to their independent sovereign existence and development, and that includes Israel.

Thirdly, there could be the most effective guarantees. The Soviet Union and the United States could place their signature under any guarantee, adopted in the Security Council or some other way. There certainly could be no stronger guarantee than that in the modern world.

And provided there is a solution of these fundamental issues, we do not see any problem with such issues as continuation of the cease-fire or passage of Israeli ships through the Canal.

The question touched on in our discussions last autumn, that there be some understanding on arms shipments, is something we are prepared to discuss, and that too should be part of an agreement. Then

also, some solution should be found with respect to the Palestinians. There is still a lack of absolute clarity on that score, and that has to be settled. With regard to Soviet military personnel, I have stated our position and I feel you now have complete clarity on that matter. As regards the nature of the agreement, I have nothing to add. We envisage it as complex or global in scale.

Dr. Kissinger: What level of forces do you envisage for yourselves?

Gromyko: We will leave behind only a certain quantity of advisors and military specialists. All the rest will be withdrawn, as I said in my discussions with you.

Dr. Kissinger: What number?

Gromyko: That is something we will tell you later, but I do not see any problem—in fact we think you will applaud us when we tell you and perhaps tell us to leave some more!

Dr. Kissinger: I would not bet on the last.

Gromyko: Of course, we are assuming you will take appropriate steps with Israel, too. For instance, the question of arms supplies should relate to Israel as well as the Arabs. Whether it is enough to agree between the U.S. and the Soviet Union is another matter. Maybe Britain and France should be included.

Dr. Kissinger: The same with Czechoslovakia.

Gromyko: You are right. The whole thing should be considered.

Dr. Kissinger: We have no intention of evading. Obviously, agreement should not be evaded by third countries.

Gromyko: On the principles, if we want to see to it that the May meeting approves the principles on the Middle East, they have to be elaborated on concretely as much as possible. Therefore, there should be intensive work through the channel.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me make sure it is clear. On Sharm El-Sheikh and the airfield, we are not talking about sovereignty or annexation, but some presence.

Gromyko: I would say, not only is there no difference, but it could be more of an irritant for the Arabs, because it will mean Israel getting a base on the territory of Arab states. We for our part will endeavor to draft these principles, and you should be too. It will be hard work.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree. I think we should have intensive discussions. In fact, it is the principal unsolved issue for the Summit. We have solved all the others. As for SALT, I frankly think we will settle it next week. I will have to browbeat our military, but it will take a week.

Gromyko: Are you a three-star general?

Dr. Kissinger: At least. We will call Smith back Tuesday,¹¹ and send him back Monday or Tuesday. They can spend the time drafting. So I agree, the Mideast is the big unsolved problem.

Gromyko: [In English] Big, big, twice big.

I tell you frankly, if it is not solved, it may poison the atmosphere.

Dr. Kissinger: After the Summit, or at the Summit?

Gromyko: At the Summit.

Economic Relations:

Gromyko: Would you like to say anything additional on economic matters?

We certainly attach importance to these economic matters, but we do not raise it implying that something is grabbing us by the throat or that it's do-or-die for us or that it's top urgency for us.

Dr. Kissinger: We do not look at it this way.

Gromyko: I would put it as follows. We believe that the development of economic relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union—progress would be conducive to better political relations. The specifics have been mentioned: Most Favored Nation treatment, credits, and certain other issues. If you would like to say something more specific, I would appreciate it.

Let me say, by the way, that in the course of the talks on Lend-Lease in Washington, not everything is proceeding smoothly. In particular, because the Americans have been asking for an elephant of a price.

Dr. Kissinger: That is a good method. We may catch you in a weak moment and you'll pay it.

Dobrynin: You asked for a billion.

Gromyko: We know you have inflation, but why should we suffer?

Dr. Kissinger: We do not think of it as a necessity for you. We see it as a natural result of your economic development. So it comes from equality, not necessity. We are two great industrial nations. We complement each other. As your Ambassador knows, if anything, we have looked at it in a political context, so that when our political relations reach a certain level, economic relations shouldn't lag behind. We will both have a stake in our political relations. It is a sign of confidence in our political relations. I tell you our philosophy. I have taken a personal interest, not because of the details—which don't interest me—but to see that it is done on a big scale.

¹¹ April 25.

As for Export-Import Bank facilities, which are a matter of Presidential discretion, if the evolution proceeds as we expect, a decision can be this year, possibly this Summit.

Most Favored Nation treatment is a matter for Congress. If our relations proceed along present lines (with nothing additional), we expect to ask for it this year. It cannot be implemented this year. Because of the elections, Congress will be occupied with the elections after August. We will ask for it before the elections, but I do not anticipate action on it this year. In any event, by this time next year we will have both Export-Import Bank and Most Favored Nation.

The Lend-Lease negotiations are now being handled entirely as a technical matter of repayment of debts in the present framework. I told Anatol not much would happen, and I keep my word! We are using these present negotiations to establish some framework. When Patolichev comes, Peterson—who is a good man, a thoughtful man—these will be brought into relation to the natural gas. The Lend-Lease can be used to finance the gas, and would solve some problems with regard to what currency is issued and so on. We will have a comprehensive scheme when Patolichev comes.

Peterson will have it.

Gromyko: And the volume of credits?

Dr. Kissinger: We have some idea, but I don't have the precise figures. I will give Anatol the figures, on an informal basis, with some idea of the order of magnitude. It will be adequate for a substantial development.

We are taking it very seriously. My office is taking a direct interest in it. At the Summit, we could decide on some commission for a permanent relationship. We will send Peterson in July, prepared to work out a concrete long-term substantial arrangement, including credits.

Gromyko: To what extent will it be capable of finalization at the Summit? Amounts and conditions?

Dr. Kissinger: There can be an agreement in principle, including the order of magnitude, before the Summit. The amounts and conditions will be left for Peterson.

Gromyko: Most Favored Nation will come after the elections?

Dr. Kissinger: On Most Favored Nation, we will ask for it before the elections.

Gromyko: When will there be a decision?

Dr. Kissinger: By, say, April 1. A little depends on the state of our relations. If they are tense, many Congressmen will drag their feet. If our relations proceed as I expect, I foresee no problem.

One consideration which will affect the situation in Congress is Vietnam. It is a little tough when the trucks carrying weapons in Vietnam are Russian. We will ask for it anyway, but this is a problem.

On agriculture, what you ask for is not possible on the credits. Ten years is not possible; we think in terms of, say, six years. We are looking for a reasonable compromise.

Gromyko: How do you envision the agreement on problems of the environment? In general terms or concretely?

Dr. Kissinger: We are somewhat flexible on this. We can either announce at the Summit that we are creating a commission, or we can do something concrete before the Summit. You have made a proposal to Train. We can create it at the Summit, or announce at the Summit that we are beginning negotiations.

Gromyko: We have not yet discussed this at the government level. We are still waiting for the outcome of the talks.

Dr. Kissinger: We will do whatever you prefer. As for the Commission on science, is it your thinking to set this up at the Summit, or after?

Dobrynin: I gave Dr. David a scheme five days before I left. He hasn't replied.

Dr. Kissinger: He won't reply until I approve. I want your preference.

Gromyko: To do it before the Summit.

Dr. Kissinger: We will announce it at the Summit, and then send David here.

At the Summit, if we announce everything at the end, the press will be insane in the meantime. Can we make partial agreements each day?

Gromyko: With most important ones at the end. That would be my opinion.

Dr. Kissinger: Otherwise the press will have nothing to do but keep looking at your facial expressions.

Gromyko: Right. I will look gloomy one day and you will look cheerful, and Dobrynin will be gloomy. And it will all depend on the state of the back!

Dr. Kissinger: Do you want a communiqué also, or just the Principles?

Gromyko: It is not enough just to have Principles. Though we believe the Principles are more important.

Dr. Kissinger: Do you have a draft of the communiqué?

Gromyko: Not for the time being.

Dr. Kissinger: You agree that we should have a communiqué substantially prepared before the Summit? There may be a bureaucratic problem for us about the drafting of it. I hope you will be patient.

Gromyko: As patient as possible.

Announcement of Kissinger Visit:

Dr. Kissinger: Have you had a chance to look at the draft of the announcement? [The U.S. draft, at Tab B,¹² read as follows:

“At the invitation of the Soviet Government, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was in Moscow from April 20 to April 24, 1972. While there he conferred with the General-Secretary of the CPSU, Mr. Brezhnev, Foreign Minister Gromyko and other Soviet officials. Their talks which were frank and friendly throughout dealt with the most important international questions of interest to both governments as well as with bilateral matters, preparatory to the discussions between President Nixon and the Soviet leaders in May.”]

Gromyko: Just briefly. It looks OK, except we prefer “by mutual agreement.” Suppose also that we say “frank, businesslike, and useful.” A three-story building.

Dr. Kissinger: If this is how you behave when you are businesslike, I don’t know how you will be when you are friendly. I don’t think I could endure it.

Dobrynin: When the President comes, we will escalate!

Sukhodrev: To “brotherly.”

Gromyko: “Brotherly and on the basis of proletarian solidarity and socialist internationalism”!

Dr. Kissinger: That would have been good if Rockefeller¹³ was President!

We don’t really need “businesslike.”

Gromyko: Everyone assumes he’s businesslike.

[Dobrynin: Reads the text again, with the above agreed changes.]

Gromyko: We don’t need “most” important, or “the.”

Dr. Kissinger: Do you think we need the last clause about it being preparatory to Summit?

Gromyko: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: All right. Do we need “mutual agreement” at the beginning? What’s wrong with “by invitation of Soviet Government?” That would be true.

¹² Not attached; the U.S. draft announcement, including Kissinger’s handwritten revisions, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons.

¹³ Nelson A. Rockefeller, the long-time Republican Governor of New York and Kissinger’s former patron.

Gromyko: You spoke in detail on the Vietnam issue on your side. There is another side to that issue. There are other forces that look at us from the other side. You too would have to take into account our position, just as we take into account your views.

Dr. Kissinger: Why not leave out the first phrase completely?

Gromyko: It is maybe a little bit angular. . . .

Dr. Kissinger: So we will say to the press that you invited us, and you will say to the press that I insisted on coming and you were just being polite!

Gromyko: No, we won't go beyond the text. It is not a question of polemics.

Dr. Kissinger: As Anatol knows, when this announcement is made, the press will go crazy. I would like to have a briefing—this may be tactless to say—a briefing something like what I had when I came back from my first trip to Peking. No substance, just to give the atmosphere, and it will calm them down.

Gromyko: Don't use superlatives, like "excellent". . . .

Dr. Kissinger: No, it is not in our interest either. They will ask what sort of man was Brezhnev. Can I say "warmhearted, energetic?" Frankly, I know that you do not want to leave the impression, when we are bombing North Vietnam, of great cordiality.

Gromyko: That's what I meant about superlatives.

Dr. Kissinger: If they ask about substantive matters, we will not discuss it.

Gromyko: Right.

Dr. Kissinger: If they ask about substance, I will say the communiqué speaks for itself. If I don't do it, they will all speculate. On-the-record. I will send a copy to Vorontsov.¹⁴ Nothing else, no inspired stories.

Gromyko: Good.

Dr. Kissinger: On SALT, when we reach agreement within our Government and send Smith back, can the President say when he sends Smith that on the basis of the discussions here he expects a settlement?

Gromyko: Through the channel we will have confirmation?

Dr. Kissinger: By next week.

¹⁴ In a letter to Vorontsov on April 25 Haig enclosed a copy of the transcript from Kissinger's press briefing that morning. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 992, Haig Chronological Files, Haig Chron April 22–30, 1972)

Gromyko: Then we should instruct our delegations to embody it in an agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: No, that's a separate question, an easy one. The purpose of the send-off is to move it to the Presidential level.

Gromyko: Yes.

[The meeting then broke up.]

151. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 23, 1972.

WTE 012. 1. I am reading your messages with mounting astonishment. I cannot share the theory on which Washington operates. I do not believe that Moscow is in direct collusion with Hanoi. At this time the leaders here seem extremely embarrassed and confused.² Their summit objectives go far beyond Vietnam³ and would be much more easily achievable without it. They may want to disintegrate NATO, ruin our other alliances, and soften us up by an era of seeming good will. But they do not need Vietnam for that. Indeed right now Vietnam is an obstacle to it.

2. Moreover what in God's name are they getting out of all this? They see me three days after we bomb Hanoi. Their agreeing to a public announcement must infuriate and discourage Hanoi. They are willing to see the President while he is bombing North Vietnam. For the first time in the war we have them engaged in trying to help in Vietnam.⁴ Sure their first offer is inadequate. What else do we expect? As you point out we can get the best of all worlds: (1) inflicting maximum

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 3:54 a.m. Haig transmitted the message to Camp David at 10:50 a.m. with instructions for Rose Mary Woods to deliver it in a sealed envelope to be opened only by the President. Nixon's handwritten notations on that copy are cited below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

² The President underlined the preceding two sentences.

³ The President underlined "summit objectives go far beyond Vietnam."

⁴ The President underlined "we have them engaged in trying to help Vietnam."

punishment on Hanoi, (2) appealing to hawks, (3) appealing to doves, (4) making historic progress on SALT, (5) getting a highly acceptable communiqué.⁵ I do not see how we can even consider blowing it all by the kind of attitudes which you describe.

3. Does the President understand that all concessions have so far been made by Moscow⁶ and that we have given nothing, including on Vietnam? Two months ago we would have been jubilant.

4. I agree with game plan on plenaries.⁷ Please change messages accordingly.

5. I agree with Abrams that withdrawal is ill-timed though I suppose beyond control. Laird's plan is totally unacceptable.⁸ Make sure it does not leak.

6. As for my return, 6:00 p.m. is out of the question. The Politburo is meeting today. Brezhnev will see me tomorrow at 10:00. There is no sense cutting the discussion off just when it is coming to a point. I shall leave right after the meeting—hopefully arriving in Washington by 2000. If earlier arrival seems possible I shall flash you.

7. Please keep everybody calm. We are approaching the successful culmination of our policies. Must we blow it in our eagerness to bomb targets which will not move and when the delay is only one week? You might remind doubters of who thought of last strike and pushed it through against everybody.⁹

⁵ The President underlined the second, fourth, and fifth points in this sentence.

⁶ The President underlined "repeat all concessions have so far been made by Moscow."

⁷ See Document 147.

⁸ See footnotes 4 and 5, Document 147.

⁹ Reference is presumably to the B-52 strike against fuel storage depots near Hanoi and Haiphong on April 15 and 16. Kissinger later wrote, however, that Nixon had approved his recommendation for the strike "over the opposition of Abrams but with the support of Laird." (*White House Years*, p. 1121) See also Document 102.

152. **Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹**

Moscow, April 23, 1972.

WTE 013.1. Had four hour meeting with Gromyko to discuss Middle East and bilateral issues. On Middle East Gromyko stuck to familiar Soviet position. I gave no ground, holding out just enough hope to keep them from setting on an irrevocable course before the summit. On bilateral issues I painted glowing picture of prospects making everything conditional on the end of Vietnam however.

2. If my memory is correct present bombing authority extends only to 19 degrees. We can and should extend it to twentieth parallel.

3. I despair of making position here clear to Washington. These people are tough and in a sense in a corner. So far they have made all the concessions; we have made none.² On Vietnam they have helped us by inviting me and by maintaining summit invitation;³ they are certainly not making Hanoi happy. What more they can do I do not know. But this visit as well as the imminence of the summit should put a ceiling on domestic opposition.⁴ Moreover friendliness here helps discipline Peking. Has anyone thought through the domestic and international implications if we kick Moscow in the teeth and all our diplomacy goes down the drain?

4. We shall leave right after the Brezhnev meeting tomorrow hopefully by 1500 local time but I cannot be sure.

5. Gromyko apologized today for story about downgrading President's trip.⁵ He said it came from Western sources and was totally untrue.

6. I have arranged for Presidential announcement of SALT breakthrough.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 10:12 a.m. and retransmitted to Camp David for the President. Nixon's handwritten notations on the retransmitted copy are cited below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal File, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972 Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

² The President underlined this sentence.

³ The President underlined this first part of this sentence and marked it in the margin.

⁴ The President underlined "should put a ceiling on domestic opposition."

⁵ For reports that the Soviets would downgrade the trip, see Document 145.

153. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and his Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

April 23, 1972, 10:25 a.m.

P: Hello. I'm dictating a message to Henry.² Observations on his talk with Brezhnev. Nothing new I haven't seen yet?

H: Just got another message—4 hour meeting with Gromyko.³

P: On the summit?

H: Middle East bilateral (reads message).

P: Good.

H: . . . extend bombing to 20th. I would agree with that.

P: All bombing authorities on the 20th. Would you do that please?

H: Yes sir. (continues reading) "Despair making my position clear here to Washington. So far they have made all the concessions. On Vietnam they have helped by inviting me . . . This visit should put ceiling on the domestic opposition."

P: That's not true. Go ahead.

H: (continues reading).

P: 1500. What do you mean?

H: 3:00 o'clock their time. That would get them back about 7:00 or 8:00.

P: He has already got your message.⁴ I thought the argument was whether they should leave at 12:00 their time or 3:00 their time.

H: He did not get my message. The message he has is to leave there at 1:00 o'clock.

P: So now we have told him he could leave at 3:00?

H: I haven't told him anything.

P: He could leave at 3:00 or 4:00 as far as I am concerned. Tell him to make it 4:00 o'clock their time if necessary. Don't have him extend beyond what they really want. Leave it flexible; 3:00 is fine, or 4:00. He isn't going to get in in time for us to go back by midnight.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 999, Haig Chronological File, Haig Telcons [-] 1972 [2 of 2]. No classification marking. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon placed the call from Camp David to Haig in Washington. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

² Document 157.

³ Document 152.

⁴ Document 149.

H: Gromyko apologized about downgrading. Said it came from western sources. I have a message from Bunker here.⁵

P: OK.

H: On the Abrams recommendations for troop levels.⁶ They don't draw any more down. Understand other considerations which President will have to take into account.

P: What do you feel?

H: Take the 20 out.

P: We had to do it takes them out anytime he wants. No 10 and 10. I think it should be 20 but tell him things are going over here. He could take all 20 out in the next week.

H: That would ease his problem.

P: That will be put out as guidance here—20 over two months.

H: Goes to new ceiling, 495 by 1 July.

P: 1 July is all right. 2 months is enough. If he needs more flexibility. Let's leave it. Let's say 20 over 2 months but we will indicate no bitching here. He has total flexibility as to when. He can balloon it at the end if he wants. He could take none out in June if he wants, or May. You and I know a few other things may have happened.

H: I am confident by this time this thing will be settled.

P: You will get a message to Abrams⁷ re assessment? Just like Cambodia, how many times has Phnom Penh been lost—about 30 in the past. . . . ?

H: Exactly right. It looks better around An Loc.

P: We will give him this.

H: Yes.

P: Apparently Henry didn't get the message. I thought we were going to send him. I told you to be sure to send message on Rogers' call to me Saturday with regard to Semenov talking to Smith.⁸

H: I did send it to him.

P: Why does Henry say at my request they stopped Semenov from going to Bush?⁹ Here's what Rogers said, Semenov had just come back from meeting in Moscow.

⁵ Backchannel message 0071 from Bunker to Haig, April 21. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 414, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages 1972, From: AMB Bunker—Saigon)

⁶ See footnote 4, Document 147.

⁷ See footnote 6, Document 155.

⁸ See Document 136.

⁹ The reference, presumably to Permanent Representative to the United Nations Bush, is in error. In his message regarding the meeting with Brezhnev on April 22,

Offered to include SLBMs to accept 2 ABMs. What has Henry got here, Semenov has not told Smith.

H: I think he is wrong.

P: Don't you remember that is what Rogers called and told me. Smith already knows that.

H: Smith knows it. Henry got a message telling him he accepted through departmental channels. Wasn't that far-reaching on the SLBM.¹⁰

P: Smith made it that. Said at my request that. . . .

H: He is wrong. They have lied to him.

P: I think they have. Unless as you say, maybe it's not quite as specific. But I don't know what they are talking about. Old Communist trick here—they will always sell you the same thing 15 times. I don't know what they stopped Semenov from getting done, do you?

H: No.

P: I am not questioning Henry. I am just wondering what Brezhnev told him.

H: The only difference is in the case of Smith they said they would consider SLBM and Henry got a firm commitment they would include them.

P: That's fine. Rogers said they are going to include. Of course, Rogers feels they got a victory. Only a small thing—just wanted to be sure that this note to Henry, the message did go to Henry—what Rogers told me about Smith.

H: Yes, I sent it immediately.

P: No clinker in this. Dobrynin stressed if we confine bombing to present limits there is no chance . . .¹¹

H: Yes.

P: I cannot agree to that. Don't you agree that we hit Hanoi and Haiphong? We have to have option to hit that.

H: I agree completely.

P: I know Henry's great concern. He believes the summit will cool the domestic critics but it isn't going to do it. Criticism isn't that bad. You did get Henry a little of that feel didn't you.

Kissinger reported: "At my request they stopped Semyonov from giving Smith new ABM position which he already had instructions to do in next few days." See Document 148.

¹⁰ Although it does not claim acceptance "through departmental channels," reference is evidently to backchannel message 0328 from Smith to Kissinger, April 21; see Document 136.

¹¹ Haig interrupted the sentence, which concludes as follows: "of cancelling summit and they were extremely anxious to have it." See Document 148.

H: Yes. I think on the bombing Haiphong and Hanoi that all Henry should do is to say that we will not be bound by any limitations. I put that in the message yesterday to him.¹²

P: Good, good. I remember you and I discussed it.

H: And I added other messages.

P: Including blockade.

H: Both these messages¹³ are on their way now, sir.

P: On the military front?

H: It looks better today than yesterday. I don't understand what the press is yacking about.

P: I don't think it's TV so much, but the press talks about cutting the country in half. Means cutting a road, or what? They can open a road again, can't they?

H: Surely. An Loc—sporadic artillery.

P: That was yesterday.

H: ARVN probes outside. Enemy's attacks around An Loc have decreased. I think they are running out of gas.

P: Why don't you message that channel to Bunker and ask him.¹⁴ I want it indirect form. Get Moorer to get it for you. Understand we don't want any snow jobs like on Laos. It will stir Pentagon to knock down a little of this stuff. What do you think?

H: I think it will be useful. It will help you to know what you will get on Wednesday.

P: Right. If you will do that I would appreciate it. Fine, fine.

H: All right sir.

¹² Document 146.

¹³ Also see Document 149.

¹⁴ In a backchannel message that afternoon, Haig asked Bunker to assist Abrams in drafting his appraisal of the military situation in Vietnam for the President's upcoming televised address. Haig also briefed Bunker on Kissinger's trip to Moscow: "Henry's discussions in Moscow suggest Soviets may wish to be helpful on Vietnam because of their concerns with other areas. They have been most adamant that they were not aware of the timing and scope of the enemy's offensive. They also have been extremely forthcoming in commitments for maintaining the summit at all costs and in achieving progress in bilateral and multilateral issues planned for the summit. There is of course a degree of healthy skepticism here but in any event the fact that they have received Kissinger to discuss the war at a time when we have been intensely bombing North Vietnam must be disconcerting to Hanoi. We are very hopeful that the revelation of Henry's meeting in Moscow will do much to add to the President's flexibility in continuing air operations in the North." (Backchannel message WHS2053 from Haig to Bunker, April 23; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 854, President's File—China Trip, Camp David, Vol. XIII)

154. Editorial Note

On April 23, 1972, President Nixon called Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman at 11:22 a.m. to assess the trip to Moscow of Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) According to Haldeman's handwritten notes, Nixon began by reviewing the conflicting requirements of secrecy and publicity for the trip. Kissinger's decision to remain in Moscow meant that Nixon could not return to Washington until late the next evening, since, under the agreed cover story, both men were supposed to be at Camp David. At least, Nixon told Haldeman, they had not gone to Key Biscayne, where—with public access heightening speculation—they would have been "dead ducks." If the press still questioned the whereabouts of his Assistant, the President concocted yet another cover story: Kissinger was in Paris (presumably for secret negotiations with the North Vietnamese). Looking beyond Kissinger's trip, Nixon continued to prepare for his upcoming televised address on Vietnam, directing Haldeman to arrange for someone on the National Security Council staff to draft a 500-word statement.

The principal subject of conversation, however, was linkage between the summit in the Soviet Union and a settlement in Vietnam. Nixon complained that Moscow had done nothing on Vietnam, except agree to deliver a message to Hanoi, and that Kissinger had been "completely taken in." To emphasize the point, Nixon read Kissinger's report on his second meeting with General Secretary Brezhnev (Document 148), including the assertion that, while the Soviets could not vouch for the North Vietnamese, "the mere fact of positive steps following my trip is good." To make matters worse, Kissinger was "effusive" on the prospects for the summit, writing that Brezhnev had spent more time with him than any other foreign leader. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I) As Haldeman noted in his diary, this claim drove Nixon "up the wall."

"P's problem is he just doesn't agree the trip itself will have a big effect. K justifies it as cooling the domestic furor here and sending huge shock waves in Hanoi, but the point is we've sent the shock waves to Hanoi for months. That's typical K gobbledegook, and we don't have a domestic furor here, at least to the degree that we have to worry about getting it back. P's worried about the effect in this country, especially amongst the hawks and our supporters, of his going back to talks in Paris." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

When Haldeman called him later that afternoon, Haig expressed concern about the way Nixon and Haldeman were "bludgeoning"

Kissinger. Haldeman noted in his diary: “[Haig] says Henry’s not getting snookered over there, and that we shouldn’t imply it to him. He thinks that P’s putting too much heat on Henry and he thinks Henry will overreact.” The President showed little sign of letting up, however, summoning Haldeman for an impromptu meeting at 2:30 p.m. As Haldeman summarized Nixon’s position: “Our real problem is that the Soviets want the Summit, but they won’t help us in Vietnam in order to get it. Which leaves us on a bad wicket, in that we will be meeting with them during a Soviet supported invasion of South Vietnam.” (Ibid.) According to Haldeman’s handwritten notes, Nixon took this argument one step further: that he could not “survive Moscow trip if VN doesn’t decelerate.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I)

155. Message From the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, April 23, 1972, 12:08 p.m.

Sitto 39. 1. Thank you for your 012 and 013² essence of which have been discussed with the President.³ President understands need for you to remain longer on Monday and leaves it to your best judgement as to precise departure time providing you are convinced that constructive discussions on Vietnam are taking place. He is insistent that you be in Washington Monday night since he does not believe cover will hold beyond that and he can not afford to remain at Camp David himself beyond that point. It is not yet firm whether you should go straight to Camp David or come here to the White House upon arrival.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK’s Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Documents 151 and 152.

³ For discussion between Nixon and Haig on the latter message, see Document 153. The two men probably discussed the former message during a telephone conversation from 9:30 to 9:59 a.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President’s Daily Diary) No substantive record of the discussion has been found.

2. We are extending air authorities to twenty (20) degrees, per your suggestion.

3. I had another long and very testy session with the President in an effort to hold to present course.⁴ His main concern appears to be that he believes our agreement to resume plenaries despite the announcement of your visit to Moscow will convey impression of US collapse. I told him that my reading was precisely the opposite and that what it will do when accompanied by intense bombing up to the twentieth parallel is suggested that Moscow has blinked and provide a firm base for further escalation if required.

4. President also seems to be concerned about the bureaucraties of announcing your trip especially if the announcement does not emphasize that trip was based on situation in Vietnam. He also questioned your report that you have prevailed upon Gromyko to prevent Semenov from presenting SALT proposal to Smith when facts are that Semenov did tell Smith of new Soviet position.⁵ Smith, of course, told Rogers, who informed the President. I told the President that Semenov was very hazy with Smith about possibility of SLBM agreement but that in the discussions with you in Moscow the Soviets indicated firmly that they would accept an SLBM agreement.

5. Another complication here has been doom and gloom newspaper reporting out of Vietnam which is not justified by situation on the ground. In any event, in order to help allay fears, I am requesting a direct personal appraisal from Abrams for the President.⁶

6. I am only too aware what additional strains my messages entail for you at this time but I cannot gloss over attitudes here which you must be aware of.

7. Warm regards.

⁴ According to the President's Daily Diary, Haig called Nixon at 12:20 p.m. on April 23; the two men spoke for 21 minutes. (Ibid.) No substantive record of the discussion has been found.

⁵ See Document 148.

⁶ The request for Abrams's personal appraisal and the appraisal itself are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 130, Vietnam Subject Files, HAK/Pres Memos (NVA), Situation in Vietnam (Apr 72).

156. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 23, 1972.

WTE 014. 1. Thank you for your 39.² All I can say is that if this is President's attitude he had no business approving the Moscow trip.

2. I do not know whether anything useful is going on with respect to Vietnam. All I know is that we got our message across, that they are studying it and that the announcement of the trip should help us.

3. I fail to see how we can panic at doom and gloom stories from Vietnam and yet refuse to consider political options.

4. With respect to SALT, the Washington view is nothing short of absurd. Semenov told Smith that he might have a new ABM proposal and hinted at its nature. He also said that Moscow was "reviewing" the SLBM position.³ We obtained a precise proposal on both. The SLBM proposal moveover is exactly the scheme we advanced in the special channel. In any event Semenov is now under instructions to make no further move until President acts. But if the President likes to run down his own accomplishments that is his business.

5. Please send me for return trip precise, detailed analysis of what I shall face when I return.⁴

6. I will be back Monday night without fail. Brezhnev meeting has been moved to 1100. I should be in Washington by 2100.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. No time of transmission or receipt appears on the message.

² Document 155.

³ Reference is evidently to Semenov's remarks as reported in the April 21 backchannel message from Smith to Kissinger; see Document 136.

⁴ See Document 162.

157. **Message From President Nixon to his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹**

Washington, April 23, 1972, 1945Z.

CPD–203–72. Memorandum for Henry Kissinger from the President.

I am dictating this message personally to you rather than transmitting through Haig so that you can directly sense my views with regard to the state of play in your historic journey.

First, there is no question whatever among any of us here about the skill, resourcefulness and determination you have displayed in conducting your talks to date. I have read each one of your messages carefully and have been enormously impressed with how you have had exactly the right combination of sweet and sour in dealing with them.

Second, as Haig has already indicated, I have no objection to your staying until 1500 Moscow time or even until 1700 or 1800 Moscow time, provided that you determine that your staying on may make some contribution on Vietnam. It is important for you to arrive at Camp David before midnight on Monday so that we can go back to Washington and thereby maintain our cover and have time to prepare the announcement for Tuesday noon and Tuesday evening, as well as getting your recommendations with regard to what I should say on Wednesday or Thursday. As I am sure it has occurred to you, your hosts have already gained one of their goals—that of having you stay longer in Moscow on your first visit than you stayed in Peking. Of course, this is of very little concern to us and a few more hours makes no difference on that score.

It was predictable that they would give no ground on Vietnam although it seems to me that their primary purpose of getting you to Moscow to discuss the summit has now been served while our purpose of getting some progress on Vietnam has not been served, except, of course, in the very important, intangible ways you have pointed out—the effect on Hanoi of Moscow receiving you three days after we

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972, Kissinger Trip to Moscow. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Rose Mary Woods presumably transcribed the text from Nixon's taped dictation; copies of the final version and of a draft with Nixon's handwritten revisions are *ibid.* Received in Moscow April 24 at 1:07 a.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, 1964–77, Box TS 41, Soviet Union, Trips, 1972, April, Cables) Kissinger later stated that the memorandum "did not in fact reach me until all the Moscow meetings were concluded and the communiqué announcing my visit was agreed." (*White House Years*, pp. 1161–1162)

bombed Hanoi–Haiphong, of course, the obvious result of keeping Peking balanced vis-à-vis Moscow.

As far as what they have agreed to—sending messages to Hanoi, I suppose that in the long run this might have some beneficial effect. At least it enlists them in the diplomatic game in a way that they have refused to become enlisted before. However, we cannot be oblivious to the fact that while they have agreed to send messages, secretly, they will be continuing to send arms, publicly, and the latter fact will be the one our critics at home on both the left and the right will eventually seize upon.

Whether your hosts were in collusion with Hanoi is, of course, a question none of us can answer without knowing their innermost thoughts. But as far as the observers who will be trying to appraise the success or failure of your trip and later the summit, if it comes off, there is one hard fact that stands out—anyone who gives a murder weapon to someone he knows is going to kill with it is equally responsible for the crime. You and I might have reason to believe that both Peking and Moscow would like to de-fuse the situation in Southeast Asia but cannot do so for reasons of which we are aware. On the other hand, in dealing with our own opinion at home, this sophisticated analysis makes no dent whatever.

On the domestic front, the way the scenario may develop is as follows:

(1) The announcement of your trip on Tuesday noon will be a bombshell. But the primary interest in it, unfortunately, except for a few sophisticates, will be whether anything was accomplished to bring the Vietnam war to an end.

(2) The announcement later in the day that we are going back to the conference table, unless it is handled very skillfully, could be extremely detrimental when coupled with the announcement of your Moscow trip. The demonstrators—and, as you have heard, the “uproar” we all feared is far less than anticipated, have all been calling for us to go back to the conference table. When we announce six hours after announcing your trip to Moscow that we are going back to the conference table, the doves who will never be with us will say that we finally have rectified a bad error that we made in ever leaving the conference table; and the hawks will be desperately disillusioned because they will think that Moscow twisted our arms to get us to make this move, particularly when we have said we wouldn’t be going back except with the understanding that we have a private meeting but this is going to pose a very serious public relations problem for us which I will have to tackle in any remarks which I make on either Wednesday or Thursday.

After the first shock of the announcement of your trip wears off—by the end of the week a chorus will arise from both the doves and the

hawks raising two questions: First, what did Kissinger discuss with the Russians? (and here there will be insistence that you inform the Foreign Relations Committee and all others on this score) and (2) what did the Kissinger trip accomplish in terms of getting progress on Vietnam?

You and I know that it has to have accomplished a considerable amount indirectly by the message it sends to Hanoi and also that it may open the door for future progress on Vietnam where the Soviet may play a more helpful role. On the other hand, we must batten down the hatches for what will be a rising chorus of criticism from our political opponents on the left and from our hawk friends on the right for going to Moscow and failing to get progress on the major issue.

I have deliberately painted this picture at its worst because, of course, we must prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Haig makes the point and I share it to an extent, that Hanoi will be under enormous heat to be more forthcoming in their private meeting with you on May 2nd. On the other hand, they may hold firm. It is then that we will have to make the really tough decision. It is my view that if they give no more than they have given on the twelve previous meetings they have had with you—and I believe those meetings were constructive of course but not on the decisive issue—then we will have to go all-out on the bombing front.

That is why it is vitally important that your hosts know that all options—as far as actions against the north are open in the event that the meeting of May 2 turns out to be as non-productive on the really critical issues as have the previous meetings you have had with the North Vietnamese.

Going back to our major goals, I could not agree with you more that the summit in terms of long term interests of the US is vitally important. However, no matter how good a deal we get out of the summit on SALT and on the other issues, we must realize that now the Soviet summit, far more than the Chinese summit, due to the fact that your trip directly dealt with Vietnam, will be judged as a success or failure depending upon whether we get some progress on Vietnam. My feeling about the necessity for resuming attacks on the Hanoi-Haiphong complex in the event that the May 2 meeting is a dud is as you can recognize quite different from the decision I made with regard to activities we would undertake prior to, during and after the China visit. For four weeks before we went to China, for the two weeks that we were there or on the way and for three weeks after we were there we made a decision, which I think was right, not to be provocative in our bombing of targets north of the DMZ even though we knew from all intelligence reports that an enemy build-up was going forward. I think that decision was right at that time.

However, I am convinced that we cannot pay that kind of price for the Soviet summit—much as I recognize that substantively that the Soviet summit is of course going to be infinitely more productive than the Chinese summit.

As Al may have already messaged you, any SALT announcement by me now presents a serious problem. Rogers called me Saturday² and told me that Semyonov had given Smith exactly the same offer that you set forth in your message of April 22.³

I realize that we can point out that there is a shade of difference since you now have apparently an agreement with the Soviet to include SLBMs whereas we could say that Smith only had an agreement to discuss the inclusion of SLBMs. On the other hand, I fear that we have the problem in making any Presidential announcement that Smith and his colleagues will simply say that I was trying to point to your trip and my upcoming visit as having been responsible for accomplishing a breakthrough in SALT which Smith had already accomplished at lower levels. Perhaps we can find a way to handle this problem but I think in view of the call I received from Rogers we will find it pretty difficult.

I realize that this trip even more than your China trip is a very trying one because it involves so much more substance. Be assured that there is absolutely no lack of confidence in your toughness, your negotiating skill nor in your judgment as to how to evaluate the talks you are having. Because the stakes are so high, however, I believe it is imperative that you be aware of what we confront on the domestic scene in the event that some progress on Vietnam does not become apparent as a direct result of your trip and, of course, as a direct result of the summit.

We have painted ourselves into this corner—quite deliberately—and I only hope that developments will justify the course we have followed.

In sum, we risked the summit by hitting Hanoi and Haiphong. After we have gone through your meeting of May 2, we may be faced with the hard decision to risk it again and probably damage it irreparably because we may have no other choice if that meeting turns out to be a failure.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that except for a few sophisticated foreign policy observers, interest in what we are able to get on a SALT agreement, trade, a better communiqué than the French got,⁴ etc., will

² See Documents 135 and 136.

³ Document 148.

⁴ See footnote 6, Document 125.

not save the summit unless one way or another we are able to point to some progress on Vietnam. Of course, I am aware of the fact that if your hosts still want to go forward with the summit, despite the actions we may have had to take after May 2, we will do so because we know that the substantive agreements that we will reach at the summit and in and of themselves substantively very important even without progress on Vietnam. What I am trying to emphasize is that we must face the hard fact that we have now convinced the country that Soviet arms and Soviet tanks have fueled this massive invasion of South Vietnam by the North. Having done so, it is only logical that our critics on both right and left will hammer us hard if we sit down and meet with the Soviets, drink toasts, sign communiqués, etc., without getting progress on Vietnam.

However, it all comes out, just remember we all know we couldn't have a better man in Moscow at this time than Kissinger. Rebozo⁵ joins us in sending our regards.

⁵ Reference is to Charles G. "Bebe" Rebozo, the President's personal friend, who accompanied Nixon to Camp David. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary). Kissinger complained in his memoirs that such company "did not usually make for the calmest reflection." (*White House Years*, p. 1155)

158. Editorial Note

On the evening of April 23, 1972, President Nixon met Deputy Assistant to the President Alexander Haig at Camp David to discuss Assistant to the President Henry Kissinger's trip to Moscow. Before Haig arrived, the President reviewed the situation, in particular, the linkage between summit preparations in Moscow and military developments in Vietnam, with White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman. In an effort to assure the "best possible news stories" before his upcoming televised address, Nixon suggested that Director of Central Intelligence Helms divulge how "things are bad in Hanoi" and that Ray Cline, Director of Intelligence and Research at the Department of State, "leak the intelligence (CIA) stuff" on North Vietnam. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, Staff Member and Office Files, H.R. Haldeman, Box 45, Notes, April–June 1972, Part I) Nixon then addressed his primary concern "that Henry must be controlled about any briefing of press or Senators or anyone else, on the basis that there's nothing in it for us to do any briefings on

the Summit, that we've got to keep the whole focus on Vietnam, and the problem is Henry doesn't have anything on Vietnam." The President insisted, however, that he was not discouraged. "We just have to wait," he explained. "We're on a sticky wicket at the moment about dealing with the Russians while they're supplying North Vietnam." (Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries*, page 445)

According to the President's Daily Diary Haig arrived at Camp David shortly before 8 p.m.; his meeting with Nixon, which Haldeman also attended, lasted until 9:15. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) The President began by emphasizing the importance of public relations: for the next several days, the White House would face a "very rough story" on Vietnam, as the press demanded to know "why we're going back to the conference table at the time that the Russians are pushing this invasion." Nixon would answer this question in his televised address on April 25; Kissinger meanwhile must play the "mystery line" by declining to brief the press. Haig suggested, however, that, even without a public relations strategy, "we would have had all these problems anyway." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*) The North Vietnamese had agreed to hold a private meeting with Kissinger in Paris on May 2. If they still remained intransigent, he argued, then the President had the political basis for "leveling" Hanoi and Haiphong. Haig also rejected the proposition, advanced by Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin in Moscow, that the summit was assured if the United States did nothing to the two North Vietnamese cities. For Nixon to shake hands with men who had "blood on their hands won't look good here." Haig recommended a hard line instead: if the Russians wanted a summit, they could have it; but Nixon might want to give up the summit in order to save Vietnam. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I)

Haldeman recorded the conclusion of the meeting in his diary as follows:

"It was agreed that there should be no statement about SALT before the Summit, that we've got to keep Rogers and Smith locked up on this one. Also there must be no implication that we asked the Soviets for K to come, it was at their invitation that Henry went there. It's important for Haig to be sure that K doesn't blab on a background basis in any way on his trip. P seemed to feel better as we ended the meeting." (*The Haldeman Diaries: Multimedia Edition*)

159. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972, 11:15 a.m.–1:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General-Secretary of Central Committee of CPSU

Andrei Gromyko, Foreign Minister

Anatoli Dobrynin, Ambassador to USA

A. Alexandrov-Agentov, Assistant to Mr. Brezhnev

Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter

Mr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Council

Mr. Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

Vietnam; Middle East; Nuclear Non-Aggression Pact; Economic Relations; European Security; Summit Preparations; Announcement of Kissinger Visit

Dr. Kissinger: [Referring to the disparity of attendees on the two sides]² You trust more people than I do.

Brezhnev: I can send them out!

Let me say first, I think we have done most important work in the last few days. Let us be as constructive as possible.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Vietnam

Brezhnev: I would like to ask you if you have anything new to communicate to us.

Dr. Kissinger: No, Mr. General-Secretary, I don't really have anything new. I have summed up my impressions to your Ambassador which I will report to the President. I am convinced that the Soviet side is sincerely interested in making the Summit a major departure in U.S.-Soviet relations, that it is not just a tactical move, but affects every aspect of your behavior, even personal. We've made very great progress in this visit which practically guarantees the success of the Summit. What has before been a political concern has now become a human concern.

I have told you and your Ambassador our concerns on Vietnam; I don't believe a useful purpose is served by repeating myself. It is the only obstacle on our side in the way. If the Vietnamese deal with us

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

² All brackets in the source text.

seriously, we will deal with them seriously. But not while we are being put under military pressure.

Brezhnev: How did the President react to all the communications you were able to send him from here?

Dr. Kissinger: I haven't given every detail, because I did not want too many experts to analyze every proposal before I got back. I have communicated just the spirit of our talks.

Brezhnev: So as not to squander all the baggage you're bringing back.

Dr. Kissinger: You understand me better than I thought.

Brezhnev: No, it's natural. You did all the negotiating.

Dr. Kissinger: The President sent me a cable,³ part of which I have read to your Ambassador, that he thinks the Moscow Summit can be much more significant than the Peking Summit. This reflects his attitude.

I am sure the President will consider the principles⁴ we have agreed to an historic achievement, and I am convinced that except for minor modifications, the SALT proposal will be considered a constructive one. I will confirm it to your Ambassador Friday. But I'm certain that will be the reaction.

Brezhnev: Thank you for your communication. I guess that now we should be endeavoring to sum up the results of our discussions.

Dr. Kissinger: Exactly.

Brezhnev: Summing up the results, we have said many things on the significance of the forthcoming meeting. We have emphasized that the meeting may be not only useful but also historic and perhaps epochal. On the other hand, we have also talked of circumstances that make the Summit meeting impossible. This is not a way of attempting to bring pressure on you; understand me correctly on this point. The Summit after all was born not only with due regard for American wishes but also on the basis of reciprocity on our side. It is certainly understood on both sides that the possible results may prove to be important from the standpoint not only of our two countries but also world politics. If results are viewed from the point of view of what they can do to reduce international tensions, that would be a weighty

³ Document 157.

⁴ Before the final meeting with Brezhnev, Kissinger gave Dobrynin the latest U.S. redraft of the Soviet proposal for a joint document on "Basic Principles of Relations." The text, including Sonnenfeldt's handwritten revisions, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes. For the draft Nixon took to Moscow in May, which is nearly identical to the version Kissinger gave Dobrynin on April 24, see Document 233.

political asset for both, and would be welcomed everywhere in the world.

In addition to what we have already discussed on Vietnam, I would add a couple of words more. Now it is the most acute question which may reverse the entire course of events. Both agree this is indeed the case and we've discussed many constructive things in this place.

As we see it, you have still not received a reply from Hanoi on your latest proposals, and we have not either.

Dr. Kissinger: Have you transmitted our proposals?

Brezhnev: No, since there was no direct request from your side. We would be prepared to if you express the wish.

I want to voice a thought that is constantly in my head. According to your proposals to Vietnam, there is to be a plenary on April 27, followed by a private session on May 2. I have no knowledge of their position, but what if the Vietnamese suddenly suggest May 6, or May 1, or May 5? Are there any reasons why an alternative between May 2 and 6 couldn't be accepted? I see it as a purely procedural matter, not to be elevated into a principle.

Success always depends on one's approach. Even a slight break in the clouds can be covered again. I merely wish to mention this again, not for the sake of further discussion. I do not think a procedural question should be turned into an obstacle to success.

On the general points, I see no need to repeat ourselves; all our views have been set and I have nothing further to add. That's all I have to say on Vietnam. This is the one remaining problem. I am sure you will faithfully communicate to President Nixon not only our formal proposals but also the general spirit of give and take, and I am sure he will react perspicaciously to all you have been saying.

Dr. Kissinger: Could I say something on Vietnam now?

Brezhnev: Please.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary, there are two things to be considered. First, the Vietnamese have now three times cancelled private meetings to which they have agreed. Considering our attitude to private meetings, this has to be considered. As your Ambassador can testify, for me to plan a trip is extremely complicated. It is a question of courtesy. It is also technically a problem. Secondly, substantively, we have made a major concession in agreeing to go to a plenary meeting, contrary to our public declarations, without assurances of progress or any stopping of the offensive. We agreed to this because as a great power we should not indulge in petty childish maneuvers. If we have a plenary on April 27, and a second is held on May 4, there will have been two plenaries without a private meeting. As I said, for technical

reasons, a meeting after May 2 is impossible. A date earlier than May 2 would be possible, but a date later than May 2, no.

As for our proposals, if you were prepared to communicate them to Hanoi, it would be considered a great courtesy.

I showed the note we received from the North Vietnamese⁵ to your Ambassador, who sees more of these than our Foreign Ministry.

Brezhnev: Maybe Rogers' post should be abolished.

Dr. Kissinger: Or may be Dobrynin should be given an official function.

Brezhnev: He has a second post—the channel.

Dr. Kissinger: Our policy is, anything that comes to the White House is never let out of the White House. All of your communications go only to President.

The North Vietnamese in their note said they could come to a private meeting one week after they were notified of a plenary. We gave them nine days. So we were accepting their proposal. I just wanted to explain to the General-Secretary that we were not giving an ultimatum.

Brezhnev: I was on no account speaking for the Vietnamese. I was just thinking what if, perhaps, they might suggest May 2nd, not May 4th. The point I was making was that this should not be a stumbling block to progress.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand.

Brezhnev: I was speaking merely from the point of view of, let's say, you wanted to come to Moscow on 21 April and we wanted 22 April. If you insisted, we would have agreed. We would not treat it as a matter of principle.

Let's turn to other matters.

Dr. Kissinger: I think we understand each other's positions.

Middle East

Brezhnev: I'd like to give you additional text by way of explanation on the Middle East.⁶ As we see it, the gist of the conversations

⁵ See footnote 11, Document 134.

⁶ The unofficial translation and the Russian original of the second Soviet note on the Middle East are both in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Exchange of Notes. In addition to the "final settlement" outlined in their previous note (see footnote 5, Document 141), the Soviets suggested several provisions as the basis for a "confidential arrangement" between the superpowers. These provisions included the withdrawal of most Soviet military personnel from Egypt and the mutual limitation of arms deliveries throughout the region. Although they hoped to formalize

Gromyko had with the President and with Dr. Kissinger⁷ remains valid, and now the problem is to somehow formalize this in some kind of arrangement, without making public any of the provisions outlined in those conversations. I think we should formalize these provisions in some way.

Dr. Kissinger: Formalize where?

Brezhnev: In the form of some kind of closed agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: At the Summit, or can it wait until September?
[Alexandrov enters]

Brezhnev: I had meant at the Summit, but in as narrow a circle as the President wants it to be, without the presence of the entire delegation.

Nuclear Non-Aggression Pact

Brezhnev: I have one other matter to pass on confidentially to the President. The form is not important, we would be ready to accept any form suggested by the President. It would be of immense significance if we could formalize, if not in this document, maybe in some special document, an understanding that our two countries will not use nuclear weapons against one another.

I feel that would be a “peaceful bomb” whose explosion would have a very positive effect and would be aimed at improving the general international situation and at lessening international tensions. As to form, we would be prepared to do it in a treaty or an agreement. The form is not important, but the principle is important. It would be of great interest to the governments and peoples of the U.S. and Soviet Union. If the President for some reason feels that this question should be discussed for the time being in the confidential channel, we would agree to that too.

Economic Relations

Brezhnev: I’ll not now burden you with remarks on other matters such as commercial matters, such as Most Favored Nation treatment. I have been informed by my comrades, and we accept them with satisfaction. Trade is a question of importance to our two countries. There

the confidential arrangement at the summit, the Soviets recognized that its implementation “would begin immediately after the election in the USA and would be completed in the very beginning of 1973.”

⁷ During his annual visit in late September for the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly, Gromyko also visited Washington, meeting Nixon at the White House on September 29 and Kissinger at the Soviet Embassy on September 30. The memoranda of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

would be no problem also with cultural ties or environmental cooperation. I am sure solutions to these will be reachable by both sides and will be appreciated by both sides. On the economic side, I have spoken of large-scale joint ventures; we feel this would appeal not only to business circles but also to the people. It would be beneficial to both sides.

European Security

Brezhnev: I don't know if you have received the news of the Elections at Baden-Württemberg.⁸ [He has difficulty pronouncing the name.]

Dr. Kissinger: The Germans can make even the names of states sound like profound philosophical statements.

Brezhnev: Or make it sound as if one land is bigger than the Soviet Union! These elections have shown that no great sensations have taken place.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Brezhnev: I mention this just by way of information. Since that is the case, now is a decisive moment when our two countries should take the necessary steps to further ratification of the treaties and to sign a protocol on West Berlin. This is something we are duty bound to do. This is the way we see it. We've exchanged views. I would merely like you to point this out to the President. Also, we should, we feel, take the necessary steps for the preparation and convening of a European Security Conference. I am sure you understand well, and can convey this to the President.

Summit Preparations

Brezhnev: I would also like to recall our arrangement at the start that we would be frank, and to make one small comment. We can't understand why, and for what reason, in the period of the most intensive preparatory work for the Summit, a campaign of anti-Sovietism has been fanned in the U.S. We know anti-Sovietism has been around for a long time in the U.S., but the fanning and intensification now we do not understand. We could reply, but I just wanted to mention it. Convey this, and the tone of my remark, to the President. As we see it, this is an unnecessary business.

⁸ In a handwritten note to Kissinger, intended as preparation for the meeting with Brezhnev on April 24, Sonnenfeldt argued that the clear victory of the CDU in the Baden-Württemberg state election "will look *ominous* to Soviets." In view of Brezhnev's plea that Nixon intervene before the election (see Document 139), Sonnenfeldt offered the following advice: "[B]rezhnev] may believe *we* could have done something. *Let him believe it. You held out hope, indeed virtually promised to do something before May if Brandt survives.*" (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 230, Geopolitical File, 1964–78, Soviet Union, Trips, 1972, April, Notes)

Let me now finally sum up the results of our work. You and I have done a big job, a necessary and useful piece of work. I don't know about my colleagues, but I know that the President will be pleased with what you have done. I say that in all seriousness. But that isn't main note on which I would like to end. I have been thinking of our past, our present and our future.

I don't know in whose interests this is—in the interests of what circles this is being done—but it is clear to us that in the years since the war, everything in the U.S. has been geared to creating and spreading an impression among lending circles and among the American people, a spirit of mistrust of the Soviet Union, depicting the Soviet Union as a dangerous and menacing state bringing war and promoting Communism. That has been the general trend in the U.S. What it has yielded the U.S. and the Administration, I don't know. But it certainly does not promote good will, and it hurts relations between our two countries and world peace. No words can characterize the false nature of these ideas.

What we have achieved in preparation for the Summit has not been done for the movement. I want to state here what I have said publicly. Without forfeiting or sacrificing our principles, we are going forward to the Summit with an open mind. Our attitude is one of principle, and not dictated by any momentary considerations. We are interested. As a matter of principle in cooperation and in lessening tensions, and that will be our attitude in the future—not only in relations with the U.S. but on a global scale. With each passing year, we will be able to make step after step in improving peace, advancing to our great goal that the two greatest nations in the world should act in a way promoting peace, resolving all problems in the world by peaceful methods.

Tell the President that our actions are not and will not be dictated by momentary considerations, both in relations between us and in global policies.

That is the summary of the results. One very small comment on the nuclear question. I would like that part of our conversation not to be registered in a piece of paper but only in our oral conversation.

I have had a brief look at the announcement. Except for some minor alterations, it is generally acceptable, with the understanding, that the content of our talks will not be public either in the U.S. or the Soviet Union.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be absolutely certain.

Brezhnev: After this, I can shake your hand and wish you a safe return. I will hurry back to inform my colleagues, but you can be sure I won't go back on anything I have said here.

As regards further exchanges, I trust they will continue thru the Kissinger/Dobrynin channel. Such exchanges are necessary to bring all problems to the point where they are ripe for solution.

Though this is a secret visit, you have had a chance to see something of Moscow, and you will have seen that preparations for the Summit are under way not only in substance but also in other areas.

Dr. Kissinger: I have been very impressed.

Brezhnev: There is nothing artificial. This is the normal work of the day.

Dr. Kissinger: Even the most anti-Soviet person in the U.S. could not call the General-Secretary an artificial individual.

Brezhnev: There is nothing “synthetic” about me. I am living flesh.

Dr. Kissinger: That is obvious. Mr. General-Secretary, may I make a few observations on what you have said.

Vietnam

Dr. Kissinger: First, I cannot leave any misunderstanding on Vietnam. We have no flexibility on May 2. It can be earlier, but it cannot be later. But we have discussed that. It would be physically impossible. May 8 would be the next possible time.

European Security

Dr. Kissinger: As regards Germany, my analysis of the situation is the same as that of your Foreign Minister, if I understand him correctly. I have not seen our official analyses yet, but my personal analysis is that there has been a slight weakening of the Brandt Government but not a significant weakening of the Brandt Government.⁹ In my judgment—again I am only speaking personally—it means that the treaties will be rejected by the upper house and will therefore have to come back to Parliament to pass by an absolute majority in June. It is my judgment that they will still pass. We will use our influence where we can.

Brezhnev: America can certainly speak in a loud voice when it wants to.

Dr. Kissinger: As I told the General-Secretary, when I return I will discuss with the President what we can do. Having worked so long on the Berlin agreement, we want to see it achieved. It is one of the useful results of the exchanges between the President and the General-Secretary.

Brezhnev: I trust you will convey the general tenor and our tone to the President on our policy toward Europe, which contains nothing bad for Europe or for the U.S.

⁹ Later that evening, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group submitted a motion for a constructive vote of no confidence in the Chancellor, the first time the maneuver had been attempted in the history of the Federal Republic.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be sure. We will see what we can do, possibly a letter to the Chancellor, or something else.

Brezhnev: This requires looking at things thru realistic eyes, and perhaps everything will fall into place. I'm not in any way suggesting any concrete steps, because I am sure the President knows better. To help your own ally. I already told Chancellor Brandt in the Crimea¹⁰ that we had nothing whatsoever against the allied relationship between the FRG and the U.S. I am sure Chancellor Brandt told the President this but I wanted to reassure you.

Dr. Kissinger: We will approach it in a constructive spirit. I will communicate thru the special channel. I will see your Ambassador Friday, but I can tell you now we will approach it in a constructive spirit, and with a desire to get the Treaties ratified.

Brezhnev: Good, thank you. I like living examples. Now the time it will take to achieve the results we want—a true mutual understanding—will depend on the speed and size of the steps we take. There is a story of a traveller who wants to go from one place to another village. He does not know the distance; he knows only the road and his goal. He sees a man along the road chopping wood, and asks him, How much time does it take to get to that village? The woodsman says he doesn't know. The traveller is somewhat offended at woodsman, because he is from there and surely must know. So the traveller heads off down the road. After he had taken a few strides, the woodsman calls out, "Stop. It will take you 15 minutes." "Why didn't you tell me the first time I asked?" the traveller asked. "Because then I didn't know the length of your stride."

I think this example applies also to foreign policy.

Dr. Kissinger: That is a good story. Certainly our intention is to take big strides.

Brezhnev: Good. By the time we meet again, we will be able to tell whose stride is larger, the Soviet side or the American side.

Nuclear Non-Aggression Pact

Dr. Kissinger: On the renunciation of nuclear weapons, I agree with the General-Secretary that we should exchange further communications thru the special channel, so that we can decide what is possible and how to handle it. Let's not do anything in other channels, because that will lead to a stalemate.

¹⁰ Brandt met Brezhnev at Oreanda in the Crimea September 16–18, 1971. Kissinger's assessment of the meeting, is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XL, Germany and Berlin, 1969–1972, Document 331.

Middle East

Dr. Kissinger: As regards the Middle East, I have explained to the Foreign Minister yesterday and your Ambassador can confirm, the realities of what can be done in America with respect to any agreement that may be reached. As an objective reality, it will be impossible to complete any agreement before mid 1973. We cannot do it before the elections, and cannot do it immediately after the elections. November and December will be taken up with constituting a new government. And the agreement can be done only by the new government.

Brezhnev: I understand that. But I feel that an agreement in principle should be achieved and set down at the Summit.

Dr. Kissinger: Secondly, we have this problem. The President must be able to come back from the Summit and be able to say truthfully that no secret agreements were made. Therefore, I suggest we have a preliminary discussion at the Summit. Then when I come back in September, we could talk of completing an agreement. We will keep our word.

Brezhnev: We are not speaking in terms of a formal agreement at the Summit, but there has to be an understanding on the substance. Otherwise, it would go against what Gromyko and the President agreed in September.

Dr. Kissinger: Gromyko made a proposition. We listened to it. We agreed to discuss it; we did not accept it.

Gromyko: The President said we would seek agreement at Summit. It was said that if we reached understanding, the question would be solved.

Brezhnev: This is a question that requires complete clarity on our part. That is the way we responded to the report of the conversations Gromyko had with you. It is a difficult matter how to formalize what is agreed. I want to make one substantive point. There is in Egypt today a vast army, nearly 100,000 strong. I tell you this only confidentially.

Dr. Kissinger: You can be absolutely sure.

Brezhnev: It is also necessary to bear in mind that the general situation in Egypt may unfortunately come to the point where they can get out of control. You know we steadfastly seek a solution. But there are processes at work. The Army is becoming excited. In fact an Army as big as that cannot stay tranquil all the time, especially in these conditions. Conditions such that at some stage it may get out of control, and the entire situation may take a different character.

When we part, I have to attend some meetings with my colleagues. We will discuss other matters, but they'll certainly ask questions on this: What can be achieved at the Summit on this, and what do we have to leave for the September phase?

Dr. Kissinger: We can begin immediately a discussion of principles in the special channels. At the Summit, these principles can be elaborated on, and we can show a positive direction. And we are prepared to make a public arrangement on what the Foreign Minister calls an interim solution. So, it is hard to predict which part will be left open. We can certainly indicate a general direction at the Summit.

I have told your Foreign Minister about the aspects of your proposals which present major difficulties for us. For two years, there were considerable theoretical discussions which were divorced from reality. What we promise, we will do. But I want to make sure we promise what we can deliver. If we use the same ingenuity we showed in negotiating the Berlin accord, and given the ingenuity your Foreign Minister possesses, we should be able to have agreement at the Summit. It depends on how hard we work in the interval. We will do it with a good will and intention to have major progress at the Summit. There are really only one or two points which need clarification.

Brezhnev: I'll tell you honestly. I certainly cannot say that satisfies me. As Gromyko told me clearly,—I have complete confidence in him—concrete things were discussed in Washington in September. Implementation could not begin until after the elections, but a principled agreement could be achieved at the Summit. That is what I understood.

Dr. Kissinger: That is right.

Brezhnev: I had thought that this matter had been in principle agreed on, and that we were now beginning to think along the lines of how to speak to the Arab leaders without divulging the origins. But as things stand now, I do not know how to talk to Sadat, in particular. If I'm deprived of this weapon, that is the agreement with you, I don't know how we can approach the Arab leaders without causing an explosion.

I certainly appreciate the fact that Dr. Kissinger may have certain justified problems and difficulties in giving a lucid answer just now, but I would like to agree that exchanges should begin without delay in the channel to clarify matters as agreed in the conversations between the President and Gromyko.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me briefly review the situation. When your Foreign Minister was in Washington, we were talking hypothetically, about how to handle an agreement if there was one. Then we studied for two months whether there was a possibility of fruitful discussions between us. We then started discussions and decided there was a possibility. These discussions have not yet yielded concrete results. If there are concrete results by the Summit, of course we will carry it out. We are not opposed to an agreement; we don't have an agreement. We have kept our word. What is left for September is a purely optical problem.

[At this point, the General-Secretary left the room for a moment.]

Gromyko: Do you have a record of my conversation with you?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. I did not accept your proposal. I said your proposal of withdrawal was positive, and a major concession. I didn't accept the details, but said I would talk with Dobrynin to try to work it out.

What did the President say to you?

Gromyko: He said, "I do see a good basis for a possible agreement," and suggested I talk it over with you. And you said that a final agreement of substance should be taken at the Summit. If we agreed, there would be no problem and you would bring pressure. And we'd divide it in two parts, one public and one confidential.

Dr. Kissinger: That part is not the problem.

[The General-Secretary then returned.]

Brezhnev: The situation is made complicated by the fact that you are using diplomatic language and I am just a realist politician. Therefore, I have found a provisional way out. Don't look so glum.

Dr. Kissinger: No, no.

Brezhnev: To confirm what I said in my letter to the President.¹¹ Agreement should be reached in the spirit of the conversations with Gromyko, and the President said¹² he regarded with approval the ideas I put in the letter, and this I interpreted to mean we had an agreement. Since your thinking must be close if not identical to that of the President, the only way out is to have an agreement, leaving the details for the channel.

Dr. Kissinger: Your Foreign Minister has reported to you correctly. What he said here is correct. I think we are confusing two things—the substance of an agreement and the mechanics of carrying it out. On substance, if we can reach substantial agreement before the Summit, we can confirm principles at the Summit. The problem here is that we don't have an agreement. Therefore we should work on the substance and not on what happens when. My position is identical to the President's. In fact I have a certain role in drafting these letters.

Brezhnev: I certainly know the part you play.

Dr. Kissinger: I suggest we get to work to see what we can accomplish before the Summit. We certainly favor completing the maximum amount at the Summit, and perhaps all of it.

¹¹ Dated September 7, 1971. The letter is scheduled for publication in *ibid.*, volume XIII, Soviet Union, October 1970–October 1971.

¹² See Document 6.

Announcement of Visit

Brezhnev: Can I say that I have certain doubts about the feasibility of announcing your visit? Because we did all we could to keep it confidential, and now the situation is that we will have to divulge the fact.

Do you think it is completely unavoidable in the United States?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Brezhnev: [Pause] OK [khorosho].

May I ask you to convey my best wishes to President Nixon and the hope that he will attentively and with a spirit of understanding attend to all we have discussed—Vietnam, Middle East, Soviet-American relations, and European matters. Tell him we will continue, as we have, our intensive work thru the channel, in which on our side all our important people will be taking part, and on your side mainly the President and Dr. Kissinger. Some of those asides I made to you when we were out walking.¹³ I hope you will recall and convey to President Nixon.

Dr. Kissinger: I will.

Brezhnev: I have to leave now, to chair an important internal meeting. We have discussed all substantive issues. May I wish you further success.

Dr. Kissinger: Mr. General-Secretary. Let me thank you for your courtesies. I return to Washington with even greater determination to make the Summit a success. I know from the cables the President has sent me that he feels we have an historic opportunity, and this is the spirit in which he comes here.

Brezhnev: I am pleased.

[The formal meeting broke up at 1:45 p.m. After a short break, an informal meeting began with Foreign Minister Gromyko and Dr. Kissinger on the text of the announcement of the Kissinger visit.]

¹³ Reference is to the private remarks on Vietnam and the summit that Brezhnev made to Kissinger between meetings on April 22; see Document 148.

160. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972, 1:50–3 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrei A. Gromyko, Soviet Foreign Minister
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to USA
G. M. Kornienko, Chief of USA Division, Foreign Ministry
Viktor Sukhodrev, Soviet Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECT

Announcement of Kissinger Visit; Vietnam; SALT

[General-Secretary Brezhnev had commented in the morning meetings that “except for some minor alterations,” the U.S. draft announcement of Dr. Kissinger’s visit was “generally acceptable.” When he departed at 1:45 p.m., he left a new Soviet draft with the Foreign Minister, who handed it over to Dr. Kissinger. The Soviet draft consisted of handwritten changes on a copy of the U.S. text which Dr. Kissinger had discussed and agreed with the Foreign Minister Sunday morning (Tab A).² The Soviet text read as follows:

“By mutual agreement, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was in Moscow from April 20 to April 24, 1972. While there he conferred with the General-Secretary of the CPSU, Mr. Brezhnev, and Foreign Minister Gromyko. Their talks, which were in preparation for the discussions between President Nixon and the Soviet leaders in May, dealt with bilateral matters and with important international problems.”]

[What follows is a record of the highlights of the discussion.]³

Dr. Kissinger: Why have you deleted the phrase “frank and useful throughout?” Weren’t our talks frank and useful?

Gromyko: You know that in our lexicon “frank” implies disagreement. Everyone will read it that way.

Dr. Kissinger: [Referring to the second sentence of the Soviet draft.] We cannot accept it this way. Your Ambassador knows what our con-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held at the Guest House on Vorobyevskii Road.

² A copy of the Soviet draft, including handwritten revisions, is *ibid.*

³ All brackets in the source text.

cerns are. The President prohibited me to come here for Summit preparations. For internal reasons, we have to say that other matters were discussed. And why are you reluctant to say that our talks were useful, when we settled SALT here?

Gromyko: I am not empowered to make any changes. It is his [Brezhnev's] decision.

It does no good to insist.

Dr. Kissinger: I am not insisting. I am pointing out that it is improper to do it without any discussion. If we had a discussion about it, that is something else. I have no authority to accept this. You know there are nuances important to our discussions here. We cannot have "bilateral" come first.

Gromyko: You prefer to have "international" first? Okay.

Dr. Kissinger: I will tell you quite honestly. It will make a bad impression on the President that you refuse to call useful a series of talks in which we settled SALT and the basic principles of our relations, and had useful talks on the Middle East.

More than this, I object to the method.

Gromyko: I will call the General-Secretary.

Dr. Kissinger: You still have "by mutual agreement" in here. I told Dobrynin why that is bad. He knows what my situation is. I will be under attack for coming in the first place. We will have internal problems in our Government. Yet you refuse to say that you invited me, even though it is true. And you refuse to say "useful." But the phrase "frank and useful" you agreed to yesterday.

[At that point, Ambassador Dobrynin and Mr. Kornienko entered the room.]

Anatol, I have been telling the Foreign Minister what the situation is. What conclusion is the President to draw? He will conclude that you maneuvered him into getting me over here, which you wanted for whatever reasons of your own, while reserving the right to suggest publicly that it wasn't very significant.

Gromyko: What do you suggest?

Dr. Kissinger: I made my suggestion. I am not rigid. We could discuss it. To attempt it this way is unacceptable.

For my purposes it is essential to put the phrases about bilateral issues and Summit preparations second.

Where is the new draft I gave your Ambassador?⁴

⁴ A copy of the U.S. draft, including subsequent handwritten revisions, is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons.

[Dr. Kissinger took out a carbon of the most recent U.S. draft, which read: "Between April 20 and April 24, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger was in Moscow to confer with the General-Secretary of the CPSU, Mr. Brezhnev, Foreign Minister Gromyko and other Soviet officials. They discussed important international questions of interest to both governments as well as bilateral matters preparatory to the meeting between President Nixon and the Soviet leaders in May. The talks were frank and useful throughout."

This U.S. draft was used as the basis for the ensuing discussion, and some corrections and stylistic changes were made. The phrase "of Central Committee" was added to Brezhnev's title. The phrase "and other Soviet officials" was deleted. The phrase "[questions] of interest to both governments" was dropped.]

Gromyko: I will communicate this to the General-Secretary by phone.

Dr. Kissinger: It is up to you how you do it.

Gromyko: The President will attach importance to this?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, he will. Secondly, the President, you know, personally told Dobrynin he was opposed to my coming at all.⁵

Sukhodrev: Having "international issues" first is a matter of principle?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes.

Sukhodrev: And "frank and useful"?

Dr. Kissinger: That part would be extremely useful.

Your Ambassador can tell of the extraordinary difficulties this will cause in Washington. Any demonstrations of coolness on your part would have serious consequences.

Gromyko: We would like to omit the phrase "frank and useful throughout."

Dr. Kissinger: I can live without it. But I can tell you it makes a very bad impression. It would be extremely useful to have it.

Gromyko: Please do not insist on the last line [of your draft].

Dr. Kissinger: I won't. But you are paying a hell of a price for nothing. You are losing goodwill for this. This would be the sort of thing that would mean a hell of a lot. You know, you have the habit that when someone drops a nickel you will do anything to get the nickel, even if you lose a million dollars of goodwill in the process.

There are many in Washington who oppose this. As a friend, I can tell you I have been telling Washington that you have made significant

⁵ See Document 62.

concessions. Now you are telling me that you have tricked me. You are weakening my arguments.

Gromyko: I will call the General-Secretary.

[He takes the working text and goes out to call the General-Secretary, at about 2:25 p.m. Ten minutes later he returns.]

Gromyko: Mr. Brezhnev regrets that he had to leave. He accepts the new draft, except for the last line, "The talks were frank and useful throughout."

Dr. Kissinger: All right. I have pointed out what the consequences will be.

Gromyko: You can point out, if somebody asks, that the talks were useful. We will be positive, too. On the invitation, we will take care of that.

Dr. Kissinger: We will deal with the situation. I know it's not your fault. You have to do what you're told. The President—and here I am speaking to you without authority—already believes, first, that you got me here so you could say you matched the Chinese, and had me stay longer than I did there, and secondly that all this is a maneuver to keep us from pursuing the course we have chosen in Vietnam by stringing us along.

Gromyko: That is a most impossible interpretation.

Dr. Kissinger: If it were mine, I would not be here. And I would not tell you.

Gromyko: On Vietnam, we will communicate your proposals to Hanoi.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. I believe it is not in your interest [to invite me here as a maneuver] because it would undermine what we have achieved. I will be telling the President when I return that I believe you have a major interest in a successful Summit, and that it governs all your actions.

SALT

There is also a small problem on SALT. Semenov unfortunately said a little too much. This is another problem. The President himself sent me a message personally.⁶ Let me read part of it to you:

"As AI may have already messaged you, any SALT announcement by me now presents a serious problem. Rogers called me Saturday and told me that Semenov had given Smith exactly the same offer that you set forth in your message of April 22.

⁶ Document 157.

“I realize that we can point out that there is a shade of difference since you now have apparently an agreement with the Soviet to include SLBM’s whereas we could say that Smith only had an agreement to discuss the inclusion of SLBM’s. On the other hand, I fear that we have the problem in making any Presidential announcement that Smith and his colleagues will simply say that I was trying to point to your trip and my upcoming visit as having been responsible for accomplishing a breakthrough in SALT which Smith had already accomplished at lower levels. Perhaps we can find a way to handle this problem but I think in view of the call I received from Rogers we will find it pretty difficult.”

And Anatol can tell you it is very very unusual for the President to write me at all.

Gromyko: This is a very improbable thing.

Dr. Kissinger: Let me propose this, Mr. Foreign Minister. The President can step out to the press when he sends Smith back to Helsinki and say that he had been in touch with Mr. Brezhnev and that a new proposal had been made to Dr. Kissinger here.

Gromyko: Certainly.

Dr. Kissinger: You should tell your number two guy to keep quiet. What is his name? Kishilev. He and Garthoff think they are running the negotiations themselves.

Could someone bring Ambassador Beam over here now?

[Kornienko goes out of the room to call Semenov in Helsinki. He returned a few minutes later, saying that Semenov was at the office and they would try again later.

[Dr. Kissinger and Foreign Minister Gromyko, who had been standing and walking back and forth through most of these discussions, then sat down in adjacent chairs by the table, and the discussion resumed.]

Dr. Kissinger: I want to thank you again for your courtesy. We will work to make the Summit a success. We know you have problems here domestically, and we do as well.

This is not meant as a bluff or a threat, but I cannot overestimate what Vietnam has now come to mean with this offensive, and the lengths the President is prepared to go. If we can do for the next three–four years as we have been doing here, our two countries can have a totally new relationship. I am talking to you man to man. It would be a great tragedy if this were lost.

If there had been no offensive, that would be one thing. But now it is such a direct challenge that it has become a tremendous issue for us.

Gromyko: A great issue.

Dr. Kissinger: On the other hand, we will work with great dedication on what we have done here. And the visit has been enormously useful from my point of view.

Gromyko: What do these dates of meetings mean, except prestige?

Dr. Kissinger: But they have changed the dates three times.

Gromyko: Small countries may be more sensitive.

Dr. Kissinger: I cannot come on May 3, 4, or 5. On the 4th I have to talk to some people from *Life* magazine about the Moscow Summit. You don't want me to cancel that. On the 5th, there is a big dinner for me with people coming from many parts of the country. The earliest I could do it is the 7th.

We cannot accept that they continue the offensive until the 7th and then present us with a *fait accompli*. In fact, if there is a big offensive this week—there is a new offensive already in the Central Highlands yesterday. . . . Let me say this: Do not encourage them that we will be flexible, because you will confuse them.

Gromyko: Why should we take on the responsibility? Because, what do we really know of their position?

Tell the President that the man he will meet has broad views, and means what he says.

Dr. Kissinger: I will tell the President what an impressive man the General-Secretary is, and that he is sincere. This will be an enormous opportunity.

Gromyko: It remains for me to convey my best wishes to you and to the President.

Dr. Kissinger: Thank you.

[The meeting broke up. Shortly thereafter, Ambassador Beam was brought in. Dr. Kissinger introduced him to everyone, told him that he had been in Moscow a few days, showed him the agreed draft announcement, and then took a walk with him around the garden.]⁷

⁷ Although no substantive record of the discussion has been found, Beam later wrote the following account: "Just before leaving, [Kissinger] called me to his Soviet villa to give me a fill-in on his discussions. At the end, he explained that while the president had confidence in me, I was not to report to the State Department about what he had told me, since the president could not rely on 'Rogers not to leak.' I told Kissinger I never had in mind telegraphing the State Department about what was obviously presidential business. Incidentally, we were then taking a stroll in the dark through the trees and bushes outside the villa when I heard the click of a rifle and yelled out to the guard that we were Americans (hopefully assuming that at least the guard had advance notice of Kissinger's visit)." (Beam, *Multiple Exposure*, pp. 263–264) see also Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1153.

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

Moscow, April 24, 1972.

Unnumbered. Thank you for your cable² which meant a great deal to me.

Let me make a few preliminary comments as I get ready for the final meeting with Brezhnev.

1. I agree completely with your strategy. If the plenary session and the May 2 private meeting fail to make major progress we must make, before the end of that week, a major onslaught on Haiphong. The question is whether we are in a much better position now. I have no doubt that Moscow is pressing Hanoi to be reasonable. I am certain that Moscow will try to avoid a confrontation with us over Vietnam though there is a limit where things will get dicey.³ We have used the summit ruthlessly as a means of pressure. And on the summit we have harvested concessions. The major issue is not what they promise but what they will do. I have no doubt they got the message. Indeed just to make sure I read major portions of the Vietnam part of your cable to Dobrynin.⁴ If we turn the screw too far and they decide all is lost they will jump us. Brezhnev is no softie.

2. With respect to the plenary I do not share your fear. First, after the Moscow trip announcement everybody will figure that more is going on than meets the eye. Second, we can strongly hint that this is tied to private meeting.⁵ Third, we can confine the plenary to a discussion of how to end the North Vietnamese invasion and make clear that we shall discuss no other subject till that is done.

3. With respect to the final communiqué we have a far stronger and more substantive document than Peking and we have avoided the danger of the nightmarish confrontations of Peking.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 6:22 a.m., retransmitted to Camp David, and received there at 7:16 a.m. The President's notations on the retransmitted copy and cited in footnotes below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972, Kissinger Trip to Moscow)

² Document 157.

³ The President underlined this sentence.

⁴ Since Nixon's memorandum arrived in Moscow at 1:07 a.m. (April 24), Kissinger must have read "major portions" of it to Dobrynin before meeting Brezhnev later that morning.

⁵ The President underlined this sentence and wrote "no" in the margin.

4. With respect to SALT, what was achieved is 100 percent due to the private channel and the meetings here. Let us get the sequence straight. Semenov was called back when my trip was settled. He left Saturday;⁶ my trip was agreed to Wednesday. He returned to Helsinki with two elliptical comments. First, he was prepared to respond to our ABM proposal. Second, Moscow was reconsidering its SLBM position. He has not made a specific proposal. He will not make one until I tell Moscow what to do. All the specifics have been worked out here. These represent an acceptance of what I proposed to Dobrynin on your behalf. Brezhnev told me that your brief conversation with Dobrynin in the Map Room⁷ for the first time made them address the substance of SLBM. In short, you can claim with justice to have broken the log-jam on SLBM.

5. As to substance, the Soviet SLBM proposal is totally new and will be so perceived by our bureaucracy. It is a direct result of what was said in the private channel, and here. In the first place, Soviet proposal to include a precise limit is precisely what I indicated should be done with stipulation that they dismantle old ICBM's as they build up to the SLBM limit. Brezhnev has categorically stated that they agree to phase out old ICBM's. This was never discussed by Smith who never gave Soviets any precise formula for calculating numbers in any event. Secondly, I had repeatedly told Dobrynin that you could not accept equal ABM concept if SLBM's were left out.

6. As regards ABM, Soviet proposal is indeed similar to what Smith discussed with Semenov. But there is one important addition obtained here: Brezhnev explicitly said that the ICBM area they will protect will contain fewer ICBM's than Grand Forks. Thus we have an advantage in the numbers of ICBM protected. We cannot of course confirm this until we know precisely what area they pick but the record of Brezhnev's statement is clear and his appeal that we not make too much of the disparity suggest that this was a sensitive issue in the Politburo. (Incidentally, I told him frankly that eventual Congressional testimony by us will bring this point to the surface.)

7. In short you can claim next week a major accomplishment and at a time just when you may have to go very hard on Vietnam.⁸ Rogers had as much to do with this as with the Berlin settlement.

8. I shall report on the Brezhnev meeting from the plane.⁹

⁶ April 15.

⁷ Reference is presumably to the meeting that Nixon briefly attended between Kissinger and Dobrynin on March 17; see Document 62.

⁸ The President underlined this sentence and wrote "Haig?" in the margin.

⁹ See Document 163.

162. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 24, 1972, 12:38 p.m.

Sitto 46. Bunker has concluded meeting with Thieu and Thieu agrees to plenary announcement at 7:30 pm Tuesday.² As I suspected, he was a little sticky on appearance of cave and I had told Bunker to hit strongly on the implication of your Moscow visit.³ Thieu was satisfied and will support action but does expect strong inference that visit to Moscow was directly related to Vietnam situation. Thieu also agreed with 20,000 withdrawal increment which he was told may be made as early as Wednesday this week.

Second shoe has apparently dropped in MR-2 where ARVN Twenty Second Division was badly mauled in Dak to area over preceding 48-hour period. ARVN have withdrawn forces from Rocket Ridge and Dak to area and situation is cloudy as of this report. Enemy again picked period of bad weather in which to launch his assault. Situation in An Loc has improved substantially and activity in MRS 1, 3 and 4 has dropped off substantially. In an interesting action off the coast of Cambodia, GVN naval units challenged an unmarked trawler which they had been trailing. Trawler dashed for high seas raising ChiCom flag. GVN Navy fired warning shots, then put one round into vessel which immediately generated massive secondaries which sunk vessel. All of crew were picked up except for captain. They were North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese personnel.

Guay just called and confirmed that North Vietnamese have agreed to make May 2 session.⁴

It was evident throughout yesterday afternoon and after sending his personal message to you⁵ that President and his entourage at Camp

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² April 25. This agreement was reported in backchannel message 0073 from Bunker to Haig, April 24. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 414, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages 1972, From: AMB Bunker—Saigon [Part 2])

³ Haig issued these instructions in backchannel messages WHS 2052 and WHS 2053 to Bunker, April 23. (Ibid., Backchannel Messages 1972, To: AMB Bunker—Saigon)

⁴ Guay confirmed this report in a backchannel message to Haig on April 24. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 1041, Files for the President, Vietnam, US–NVN Exchanges, January–October 5, 1972)

⁵ Document 157.

David were increasingly concerned about wisdom of Moscow trip. Consequently, I proceeded to Camp David at 7:30 pm last night and spent two intense hours with the President,⁶ during which I made the following points:

1. We are substantially better off as a result of your trip whether or not Moscow does anything to help on South Vietnamese situation.

2. President would have been faced with crunch on South Vietnam with or without trip and trip has added immeasurably to his flexibility by either garnering Soviet pressure on Hanoi or in worse case by establishing base of reasonableness on your part which would permit further escalation if required.

3. In PR sense, I attempted and I believe with some success, to dispel his concerns that trip combined with announcement of return to plenary would look like U.S. cave. I made point strongly that trip, combined with plenary, if appropriate mystery is maintained, will look to be a hopeful sign by most Americans and especially by vociferous critics who cannot but be disarmed.

4. I made point strongly that your consultations with the Soviets could not but add to the restraint that the Soviets would show as we move up the escalation ladder. On the other hand, I made it clear that this restraint could not be precisely measured and this question poses risks which cannot be taken lightly.

The attitude that I found was one which was closely related to the summit and the President–Kissinger–Rogers triangle. There was a nagging concern that you wanted to visit Moscow for summit purposes. I recalled statement made by Dobrynin to you that Soviets wanted to be helpful and that they had stated that the reduction of shipments by them to North Vietnam would not be felt for three months. I also explained forcefully the gamesmanship being played by Rogers on the SALT business. What he apparently did, with some help from Smith, was to convey to the President that the Soviets were prepared to meet fully our position on SALT. I believe Smith told this to Rogers on the telephone and, in fact, interpolated way beyond what Semenov had given to him. I pointed out to the President that what was accomplished here was purely a result of the discussions in the special channel between you and Dobrynin and the meeting between the President and Dobrynin.⁷ What really had the President concerned was his interpretation of your earlier message to the effect that you had worked out a preliminary progress statement with the Soviets which was planned to be released prior to the summit.⁸ I believe President thought that this would give credit to your visit for the progress rather than to hold in

⁶ See also Document 158.

⁷ Reference is to the meeting, which Nixon briefly attended, between Kissinger and Dobrynin on March 17; see Document 62.

⁸ See Document 145.

accordance with what has always been your game plan to getting the breakthrough when the President actually visits Moscow. You have again suggested this to him and should be aware of the problem that this poses for him personally. When I left Camp David at 9:30 pm last night, Haldeman said that discussion had been most helpful and that President felt much more sanguine about the situation. What we have really been confronted with back here is a period in which the President had begun to really appreciate the seriousness of the challenge which he faces on the Vietnam issue. He somehow linked this with the Soviet visit. I made it clear to him that this challenge developed with the North Vietnamese offensive and that with or without Moscow he was faced with some very difficult choices. The decision to proceed to Moscow merely flowed from the basic realities that Hanoi, with or without Moscow acquiescence, had chosen this time to throw down the gauntlet. What your visit accomplished even in the worst case was to garner additional flexibility and increased options for subsequent Presidential action. Even Haldeman seemed to be wedded to President's view and I believe it is essential that you maintain this perspective in your discussions upon arrival. The other hangup with which you will be faced is the President's concern that the announcement of the return to the plenary following the announcement of your visit will look like U.S. cave.

Like you, I am confident that this can be managed if Presidential statement planned for Wednesday at 7:00 pm brings all the actions taken into proper context. This should not be a difficult PR task.

We are proceeding with notification schedule.⁹ I have taken care of Cromer and spoken personally to Watson and, as outlined above, Thieu and Bunker are fully on board. Please advise as soon as possible on text of Tuesday's noon announcement which you worked out with Soviets Sunday.

If there is any physical stamina in your party after what must have been the most grueling physical and psychological experience of your incumbency, you will wish to have Win draft some remarks for the President's Wednesday presentation. He plans about a ten-minute television talk, limited to 500 words. I gave him a draft, worked up by Holdridge and myself over a two-hour period yesterday afternoon which is not much good.¹⁰ Speech should certainly tie in what has happened, the degree of restraint we have exercised, the military situation,

⁹ Reference is to plans to notify Allied leaders of Kissinger's secret trip.

¹⁰ The first two drafts of the speech, with handwritten revisions from Nixon and Haig, are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, Wednesday, April 26, 1972, Vietnam Report.

the diplomatic play over this last weekend, the troop withdrawal announcement and what we intend to do in the period ahead.

Please give us ETA as soon as it is firm. President will wish you to go directly to Camp David and return here with him.

Warm personal regards.

163. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972.

WTE 016. 1. Had four-hour plus rather stormy session with Brezhnev, Gromyko and Dobrynin, three of them attended by Brezhnev.

2. Brezhnev began with a long emotional statement about Vietnam stressing again that Moscow was not behind the offensive, that Hanoi had been hoarding Soviet weapons for two years. He said that it was the enemies of the summit especially the Chinese, but also Hanoi who were challenging America, that he was proceeding with the summit despite a formal request by Hanoi to cancel it.² He had not yet had a reply from Hanoi regarding the private session which Moscow had urged. If I agreed he would transmit our concrete proposal to Hanoi. I asked him to do so.

After Brezhnev left, Gromyko said that he had been authorized to tell me, first, that Moscow had not realized until ten days ago how very serious we were about ending Vietnam. We therefore had to give them some time to use their influence.³ Second, they were transmitting our substantive proposal to Hanoi with the attitude of bringing about a rapid solution of the war or at least a significant improvement in the situation.

Comment: It was significant that there was no reference to the end of bombing. Under present circumstances transmitting our proposals

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Received at 12:57 p.m. and forwarded to Camp David for Rose Mary Woods, who retyped it for the President. Nixon's notations on the retyped version are cited in footnotes below. (Ibid., White House Special Files, President's Personal Files, Box 74, President's Speech File, April 1972, Kissinger's Trip to Moscow)

² The President underlined "despite a formal request by Hanoi to cancel it."

³ The President underlined this sentence.

even if they do not endorse them must be considered by Hanoi as an unfriendly act.⁴ After all we are asking for the withdrawal of all units introduced into SVN since March 29 or six divisions, respect of the DMZ, an end to rocket attack on cities, release of all U.S. prisoners held for four years or more just to end the bombing.

Whatever the outcome of their *démarche* to Hanoi my visit left no doubt about our determination. I told them that May 2 was the last possible date for a private meeting; that the private meeting had to bring rapid and concrete results; that if it failed the President would escalate and turn right at whatever risk;⁵ that this would make it impossible even for his opponents to pursue a major *détente* policy. If I have erred it is on the side of excessive toughness.

3. The announcement of my visit produced a real fracas. First Brezhnev withdrew his agreement to an announcement. When I put my foot down they engaged in the ploy of producing their version only after Brezhnev had left and then Gromyko claimed he had no flexibility. Their version left open the implication that I had sought the meeting and put it all in the context of the summit. I blew my top, Gromyko called Brezhnev and we finally agreed on following language: Between April 20 and April 24, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was in Moscow to confer with the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Gromyko. The discussions dealt with important international problems as well as with bilateral matters preparatory to the talks between President Nixon and Soviet leaders in May.

The implications are all there and it was in any event the best obtainable.

4. With respect to SALT, Gromyko confirmed that Smith could not have been given the SLBM proposal because Semenov did not yet have it. I think Semenov pulled the same stunt as before May 20 of claiming more than he knew.⁶ In any event it was agreed that the President can say next week that he had been in touch with Brezhnev regarding SALT, that based on his approach the Soviet leaders gave me a counterproposal while I was in Moscow substantially accepting our offer,

⁴ The President underlined this entire sentence except the initial clause.

⁵ Nixon underlined "President would escalate and turn right at whatever risk."

⁶ During a meeting with Smith in Vienna on May 3, 1971, Semenov floated a proposal that had been secretly developed in the Kissinger–Dobrynin channel. As Kissinger later explained: "Whatever the reason, Semenov's move, as well as raising doubts about Soviet good faith, in effect circumvented the Presidential Channel." (*White House Years*, pp. 817–818)

that this broke the deadlock and that the President was instructing Smith to work out the details before the summit.⁷

5. Other matters covered today were the Middle East with respect to which Brezhnev was very tough. I shall reserve this for my return.

6. To sum up these seem to me the pluses of the trip:

(A) Moscow's readiness to receive me three days after we bombed Hanoi and Haiphong and while we were bombing and shelling NVN.

(B) An announcement that when properly briefed makes plain Vietnam was discussed.⁸ The distinction between important international problems and bilateral matters related to the summit is a euphemism for Vietnam.

(C) Soviet willingness to transmit our procedural proposals to Hanoi and to urge private talks even while we continue bombing.

(D) Soviet willingness to transmit a very tough substantive proposal to Hanoi.

(E) Soviet recognition that we are deadly serious about Vietnam and that everything else is dependent on it.

(F) A SALT offer which culminates the private channel and accepts most of our proposals.

(G) Agreement on a declaration of principles to be published at the summit which includes most of our proposals and indeed involves a specific renunciation of the Brezhnev doctrine.⁹

(H) Agreement to begin exploring MBFR.

(I) Agreement not to go beyond the FRG in pushing GDR admission to UN.

(J) Enough holding actions on bilateral matters to give us a control over the implementation of the above.

For all this we give up the bombing of Haiphong for one week.

⁷ Nixon underlined "he had been in touch with Brezhnev regarding SALT, that based on his approach the Soviet leaders gave me a counterproposal" and "the President was instructing Smith to work out the details before the summit." He also circled the word "me," i.e. Kissinger, in the first phrase and wrote an exclamation point in the margin.

⁸ The President underlined this sentence, circled the words "properly briefed," and wrote an exclamation point in the margin.

⁹ In a speech at the Fifth Congress of the Polish Communist Party in Warsaw on November 12, 1968, Brezhnev justified Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia the previous August as a necessary step to prevent capitalist interference in the Socialist camp.

164. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 24, 1972, 3:35 p.m.

Sitto 48. Thanks for your 016² which has been reviewed in detail with the President.³ He is absolutely delighted with the manner in which you have conducted the most difficult of all missions. He further asked that I convey to you by Flash message his complete approval of the conduct of the talks which are totally responsive to his own thinking and which, more importantly, have accomplished far more than our best hopes would have visualized; the President was equally complimentary of the work which must have been done by Sonnenfeldt, Negroponte, Lord, Rodman, and two young ladies whose fingers must have kept a steady pattern on the keyboard for the past four days and nights.

To the foregoing, having been a transmission belt for most of what has transpired, I can only add that this mission in terms of sheer strain and difficulty far exceeds the accomplishments of the earlier trips to Peking. You can all view your voyage with the greatest of pride. No one else could have come near doing it. There are several problem areas which you will wish to consider on your flight home. The first is the matter of the announcement on the SALT breakthrough. I am confident that this is the single hang-up that the President has with your message. He believes in terms of substance that he would not wish to publicly announce a breakthrough while the heavy fighting is going on in Vietnam. Secondly, he is very concerned that the inference will be drawn that we have been talking SALT without having resolved the matter of Moscow's support for Hanoi. Thirdly, and perhaps the most binding concern is the President's fear that the announcement will trigger a bureaucratic brawl with Rogers and Smith which would force Smith or Rogers to leak the fact that Rogers notified the President of the breakthrough as a result of Smith's efforts in Helsinki. My own view is that you must not lose sight of the fact that the President feels he must have total credit for the SALT breakthrough and share it

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Document 163.

³ Haig called the President at 1:09 p.m. and they spoke for 23 minutes. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) No substantive record of the conversation has been found.

with absolutely no one. I pointed out to the President that should it be necessary to escalate air operations next week, it would be very helpful to indicate that even in the face of that, the Soviets had agreed to a major concession on SALT. His answer was that SALT really doesn't mean that much to the average American although it is a critical item of long-term national interest. I think you are going to run into a stiff problem on this matter and should consider carefully en route to Washington how to handle it.

Another problem is the purely bureaucratic task of when and how we should tell Rogers of the Tuesday noon announcement. I have been carefully posturing him over the past three days with the view toward making him fully cognizant of the need to have a public announcement which will justify our decision to return to the plenaries on Thursday. I believe we are postured as well as we can be on this with Rogers and would suggest that we tell him Tuesday morning about the noon announcement and make it clear that we have no control over it because certainly the Soviets would leak it in any event, and posture it in the direction of a meeting designed to discuss the summit.

I believe everything is ship-shape here in terms of implementing the scenario which you have so carefully worked out. Thieu, Bunker and the North Vietnamese are all aboard and, as I mentioned before, the North Vietnamese have agreed to meet with you on May 2. We should be prepared for a leak from them about the plenary, but this, too, will be completely manageable.

Again, accept our greatest admiration for what can only be termed your miraculous accomplishment.

Warm regards.

165. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972.

WTE 018. 1. Thank you for your 46.² There is no point reviewing my reaction to the support I have been receiving on the most difficult assignment of my incumbency. There are a few points you should make to the President simply so that the nation's business can be conducted with the minimum of mutual trust required in a Presidential entourage.

2. It is my firm conviction that without my trip to Moscow the summit would have collapsed and the delicate balance of our Vietnam policy would have disintegrated beyond repair. I believe the acceptance of the May 2 date so fast is the result of Soviet pressure. I also call the attention of the President to the noon note regarding Katushev's trip to Hanoi.³ Kutsnetsov told Sonnenfeldt that Katushev is one of Brezhnev's most trusted associates.

3. As for SALT, the tactical situation was as follows. There was no way the SLBM issue could be held for the summit. First, we have linked our ABM proposal to progress on SLBM. Thus the deadlock would have been total. Second, had Brezhnev held the proposal till the summit which was impossible it could not have been acted upon there because we would have had to get technical analysis and the credit for the culmination would have gone to Smith and Rogers. Third, the Soviets would surely have surfaced the proposal in Helsinki in which case the President would have received no credit at all for work done entirely in his special channel.

4. To protect the President I therefore took the following steps:

(A) I insisted that all further discussion at Helsinki be stopped. I did this so insistently that Gromyko interrupted the meeting to call Semonov.

(B) I arranged at no little difficulty for a Presidential announcement of the breakthrough basing it on a direct exchange between him

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. No time of transmission is on the message; it was received at 4:09 p.m.

² Document 162.

³ Transmitted in Sitto 47 from Haig to Kissinger, April 24. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]; Noon Note)

and Brezhnev. My own role in this, including the Moscow trip, can be easily eliminated. I have not exactly taken credit for May 20, Berlin and the whole plethora of secondary agreements in which I have had a major role.

(C) I arranged for some SALT issue to be left unresolved till the summit so that the President and Brezhnev can settle it there and still sign the agreement. I am not sure this will hold because the Soviets had a hell of a time understanding what I was after.

(D) In this manner the President can get double credit, for the breakthrough next week and for a solemn signing ceremony for a historic agreement at the summit.

5. The SALT game plan now is as follows:

(A) We should call Smith back for consultation.

(B) We should then show him the SLBM and ABM offers, this will keep him from claiming credit for himself.

(C) We should move the proposals through the Verification Panel this week.

(D) Smith should then be sent off with the Presidential statement outlined above.

6. In addition, I have brought back a statement of principles to be signed at the summit. No one knows about this, it does not sound like much now; I predict it will be hailed as as a major event at the end of May.

7. It is important to keep in mind that in order to obtain Soviet restraint in Vietnam we had to dangle the prospects of a successful summit. If sufficiently cornered, the Soviets could have turned violently against us.

8. Please show this message to the President after reviewing its content with him.

166. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)¹

Moscow, April 24, 1972.

WTE 019. 1. Thank you for your 48.² For the hundredth time there no breakthrough in Helsinki. Kindly review the Smith letter³ to me and you will see that what he claims, which is exaggerated in any case, is a paltry fraction of what I am bringing back. If the President is worried about a Rogers or Smith leak let him ask them what the Soviet proposal is. This would flush out fast enough that they have nothing except vague generalities.

2. There is no chance whatever of holding the whole package for the summit. Any such proposal in the face of what the Soviets consider a major concession will convince them that we plan to torpedo the summit. Then they will surely go public. Moreover Helsinki would then have to be called off. The news stories would be that SALT has collapsed.

3. The President can get sole credit for SALT only by the route I outlined. My role can easily be eliminated. I want the result not the credit. At any rate we have no choice. Either we go the way I outlined or the Soviets will go public unilaterally. It was not easy to put it mildly to sell them the present course which helps only the President, not them. And after Smith goes back there will be a hundred issues which can be deadlocked and solved at the summit. Moreover if you leave too many details you will wind up with Smith at the summit.

4. As for the announcement tomorrow I hope Rogers believes that plenary and private session decision resulted from Moscow trip.

5. I do not understand concern that we have talked SALT while Moscow's support for Hanoi is unresolved. What else have we been doing in Helsinki? So let us stop playing games and use what we have accomplished.

6. Thank you for the expression of support which came 40 Sitto's too late.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. No time of transmission is on the message; a stamped notation indicates it was received at 4:57 p.m.

² Document 164.

³ See Documents 136 and 147.

167. Message From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) in Moscow¹

Washington, April 24, 1972, 6:45 p.m.

Sitto 50. Thank you for your 018.² You should be aware that my 46³ and much of what I have sent you on my own represents my personal views of what may or may not be the atmosphere here. I am confident that the analyses have been reasonably accurate. As I pointed out earlier, they were presented to you with the conviction that to do less would be irresponsible and would deprive you of the factual data essential for you to carry out your mission successfully. I agree with you completely that your trip to Moscow was crucial in every respect and I am confident that the President feels likewise although for the reasons I explained earlier I am not sure he ever focussed on the true significance of events in Southeast Asia as they relate to your trip. This realization was compressed into the time frame following your departure.

On SALT, I will immediately outline for the President the valid considerations which dictated the actions you have taken. I will also review with him the substance of paragraph 2.⁴ I would prefer not, without further directive from you, to show him the full text of your message, especially paragraph one—not because it may not be warranted but because I cannot see any value in doing so at this juncture. I believe you will wish to consider the experiences we have all shared over the past four days in a most careful and deliberate way and then, and only then, take whatever action you consider appropriate. I look forward to discussing this overall problem with you in the frankest way after you return. I strongly recommend that you draw final conclusions only after we have discussed the problem.

As an unrelated matter, AP has just carried a report that the Christian Democrats will insist on a positive vote of no confidence for

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 21, HAK's Secret Moscow Trip Apr 72, TOHAK/HAKTO File [2 of 2]. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only; Flash.

² Document 165.

³ Document 162.

⁴ Haig called the President at 6:01 p.m. and the two men spoke for 12 minutes. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) No substantive record of the conversation has been found.

the Brandt coalition government on the issue of Brandt's economic policies.⁵

As another separate issue, Miss Kay called and stated that her friend would like to see Win at the usual location on a non-urgent basis to deliver a message. We have a response here prepared for their last note which can be delivered at the same time.⁶

On SALT, Smith has been driving for instructions for tomorrow's plenary.⁷ After consulting with Odeen, I told him to merely listen to what the Russians had to say and to report back here before officially coming down on the position he has taken in the informal discussions he has had with Semenov. The most recent message from Gerard Smith is attached.

I have just received and read your 019.⁸ There is no question that Rogers and Smith are working on vague generalities. Be that as it may, they planted the seed. With respect to paragraphs two and three, please keep in mind that I have been feeding you my personal appraisals. The President's message⁹ conveys his thinking to you. You should exercise caution in talking to him not to indicate that I have volunteered all that information to you.

Reference paragraph four of 019 Rogers is appropriately postured. He does believe this decision has emanated from your trip. Reference your paragraph five, this factor was touched upon by the President to me when I reviewed for him the contents of your 016.¹⁰ Reference paragraph 6, if that remark is directed to me personally, I am puzzled and concerned that you are as oblivious of what is going on here as I may appear to be of your problems.

Warm regards.

⁵ The CDU/CSU parliamentary group formally submitted its motion for a constructive vote of no confidence in the Bundestag late in the evening on April 24; under Article 67 of the West German Basic Law, which required a 3-day delay, the vote was scheduled for April 27.

⁶ Reference is presumably to the channel established in New York with Huang Hua, the Chinese Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Kissinger and Lord frequently used this channel to deliver messages to Beijing. In their stead, Haig met Huang on April 26 to exchange messages and report on Kissinger's secret trip to Moscow. A memorandum of conversation is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 849, President's File—China Trip, China Exchanges, March 1–June 24, 1972. The text is also in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume E–13, Documents on China, 1969–1972.

⁷ See Document 147.

⁸ Document 166.

⁹ Document 157.

¹⁰ Document 163.

Attachment

Backchannel Telegram From the Head of the Delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (Smith) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹¹

Helsinki, April 24, 1972.

0330. Dear Henry:

Last Saturday afternoon Kishilov advised Garthoff that since a treaty with a complete deferral of the second sites would result in the Soviets having no defense of ICBMs in the initial phase, they would not want to propose such deferral. But Semenov's instructions call for a positive reply if the US proposes deferral—perhaps covering deferral in a side understanding rather than in treaty. They still have in mind three to five years.

An ABM treaty with a second site deferral would have some aspects of a freeze to existing ABM sites and thus would minimize somewhat the psychological difference between the treatment proposed for offensive and defensive limitations.

I stayed entirely away from the deferral question in recent talks with Semenov since I realize that it may be a controversial matter at home.

Warm regards.

Gerry Smith

¹¹ Another copy is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 427, Backchannel Files, Backchannel Messages SALT 1972.

168. Editorial Note

On April 24, 1972, as he waited for Kissinger to return from Moscow, President Nixon continued to assess the situation at Camp David with his Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman and with Deputy Assistant to the President Alexander Haig, who remained in Washington. Throughout the day Nixon received reports on Kissinger's trip from Haig by wire and telephone. After breakfast Nixon called Haig, and before lunch Haig called Nixon back; the two men talked for a total of more than half an hour. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Although no

substantive record of either conversation has been found, Haig probably briefed the President on two messages from Kissinger: see Documents 161 and 163.

At 10:30 a.m. Nixon and Haldeman met for several hours to review plans to notify both political allies and the press on Kissinger's trip and the Paris plenary meeting. The President, for instance, issued instructions for the handling of Secretary of Defense Laird and Secretary of State Rogers: the former should be told of the plenary meeting only after the evening news; and the latter should be allowed to brief some key Congressmen on Vietnam. Nixon, however, rejected Kissinger's suggestion (see Document 169) that the White House "strongly hint" that his trip to Moscow was tied to private talks in Paris. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I) He also expressed his continuing suspicion of Kissinger's motives. As Haldeman noted in his diary: "He [Nixon] concluded that Henry did mean to claim the SALT deal now, rather than waiting till the Summit, although Haig had said earlier that that's not what Henry had in mind. And the P feels we've got to drive K off at this point, that we shouldn't claim anything, until we get to the Summit, and the breakthrough should be tied to the P's meeting, not K's." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, page 446) Otherwise, Nixon told Haldeman, Rogers, and Gerard Smith, the chief of the U.S. SALT delegation, would "knock us out." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Special Files, Staff Member and Office Files, Haldeman Files, Box 45, Haldeman Notes, April–June 1972, Part I)

When Kissinger arrived at Camp David that evening, Nixon was flanked by Haldeman and Haig; the meeting lasted 55 minutes. (Ibid. White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary) Haldeman wrote the following account in his diary:

"Henry finally arrived about 8:30, and he and Haig and I met with the P over at Birch. The P had us gather first and had me call and have him come over. He unfortunately had not zipped up his fly, so during the entire conversation it was noticeably open. We discussed the scenario for tomorrow, the plan for notification of the good guy Congressmen at 5:30. P backed down on the K briefing, agreed that Henry could do one to steer the direction on how the talks were arranged and how they went, so that no substance or content is disclosed. And also he backed down on the SALT thing and agreed that we would make the announcement. He's ordering Smith back right away to set up for that. The meeting went pretty well, although it was pretty tense at the beginning. The P was all primed to really whack Henry, but backed off when he actually got there. Henry obviously was very tense. Haig had called me earlier to say that Henry had sent some extremely bad ca-

bles because he felt we had not backed him, and he was very distressed that he had been sabotaged and undercut, and he greeted me very frostily, but the P broke that pretty quickly as the meeting started. We all came out in good spirits. P and Henry walked together over to the helipad and talked in loud voices all the way down, while Ed Cox sat listening avidly." (*The Haldeman Diaries*, pages 446–447)

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

Washington, April 24, 1972.

SUBJECT

My Trip to Moscow

I spent thirteen hours with Brezhnev and Gromyko and five more hours with Gromyko only. Dobrynin was present at all sessions and other Soviet officials attended the Brezhnev sessions. The central results and conclusions are as follows.

Vietnam

—The Soviets endorse and are transmitting to Hanoi our *procedural proposal* on resuming the private and plenary talks on Vietnam. This has already resulted in their acceptance of the May 2 date for a private meeting.

—The Soviets are also forwarding our *substantive proposal* to Hanoi, despite an undoubtedly negative reaction.

—Katushev, the Central Committee member in charge of relations with other Communist parties, left for Hanoi at 5:25 a.m. 23 April while I was in Moscow.

—Brezhnev countered with a proposal for a *standstill ceasefire*

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 72, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Moscow Trip—April 1972, Memcons. Top Secret; Sensitive, Exclusively Eyes Only. Although prepared on White House stationery, the memorandum was probably written on the airplane en route Andrews Air Force Base from Moscow. No evidence has been found to indicate whether Kissinger submitted it to Nixon at Camp David on April 24 or at the White House at a later date. The memorandum, however, indicates the President saw it; and, on April 29, Nixon wrote on the top: "K—Superb job!" Kissinger, who published excerpts from the memorandum in his memoirs, remarked that the President's commendation "might have reflected his real judgment, or his acceptance of a *fait accompli*." (*White House Years*, pp. 1162–1163)

which I made clear was unacceptable with the presence of invading North Vietnamese divisions. It is nevertheless noteworthy that he put forward any proposal; and a ceasefire-in-place would not be very attractive to Hanoi either, when its forces have failed to capture a single major town and would have to see their major psychological and military efforts frozen short of major objectives.

—The Soviets, on the other hand, gave *no actual promise that they would lean on their friends*, either for deescalation or a final settlement. They disavowed any responsibility for the North Vietnamese offensive. They hinted that they had not answered new requests but they also had the gall to maintain that they hadn't provided all that much offensive equipment in the first place.

—I made very clear that *we held Moscow to account* for the escalation just prior to the summit and that *we would prevent an allied defeat* no matter what the risk to our other policies, including U.S.-Soviet relations and the summit. I emphasized that there had to be a private meeting by May 2 and that if there were not significant progress at that session, we would resolutely pursue our unilateral course.

—Furthermore, *you would have to turn to the right domestically* and gain the support of precisely those elements who were not in favor of better U.S.-Soviet relations in any event. This would clearly inhibit your flexibility at a summit meeting, assuming there will be such a meeting.

—This all took place against the *background of our bombing of Haiphong* (and damage to Soviet ships) and Hanoi, continued bombing up to the 20th parallel during this period, and the clear option of bombing wherever we like after May 2 if there is no movement at the conference table.

—*In short, we did not achieve a breakthrough on Vietnam. On the other hand*, we got our message across; involved the Russians directly in transmitting our proposals to Hanoi; have certainly annoyed the North Vietnamese by just being in Moscow; will issue a joint announcement that, together with Le Duc Tho's return for a private session, will assuredly help us domestically by suggesting something is up; and have effectively positioned ourselves for whatever military actions we wish to pursue after first having once again demonstrated our reasonableness.

Other Issues

—Brezhnev made effusively and redundantly clear the *Soviet eagerness* for, and his personal political stake in, a *successful U.S.-Soviet summit meeting*. On every issue, whether substantive or cosmetic, his emphasis was on the most comprehensive and concrete achievements possible.

—He tabled a set of *principles in American-Russian relations* that closely followed the concepts we submitted through the private channel. His injunction was for us to strengthen it further if possible, and

they accepted our modifications almost without exception. The result is a statement of how relations between the two superpowers should be conducted that is solid and substantive without suggesting political cooperation (like the Franco-Russian document), or implying any condominium or negating any of our alliances or obligations. It should serve as a significant finale to the summit and should discipline the Chinese without alienating them. Moreover we can say that it rejects the Brezhnev doctrine.

—Brezhnev also gave us a *SALT proposal* that is considerably more favorable than we expected. Moscow agrees to include SLBMs at a time when it looked almost certain that we would have to drop this aspect in order to get an agreement by the summit. And the Soviet margin in submarines (21) is partly accounted for by their adding UK and French boats to our total and compensated for by their commitment to phase out their older land-based missiles, as well as the basing advantages we have. Their ABM proposal is a variant of our compromise solution and leaves us with more ICBMs protected than they. They bought our position that the offensive freeze last five years instead of three. They agreed to freeze soft ICBMs. *In short, if the summit meeting takes place, you will be able to sign the most important arms control agreement ever concluded.*

—Whether we would have gotten this SALT agreement without my trip is certainly a debatable question. They might have moved in Helsinki anyway, but the signs before my trip went in the opposite direction. What is not debatable is the fact that this agreement was produced by your intervention and use of the private channel, and that the specific commitments were delivered by the Soviets only in conjunction with my visit. Thus *you deserve personal credit for this breakthrough.*

—On *European issues* Brezhnev and his colleagues displayed obvious uneasiness over the outcome of the *German treaties* and made repeated pitches for our direct intervention. The results of Sunday's election and the FDP defection have heightened their concern, and the situation gives us leverage. I made no commitment to bail them out and indeed pointed out that we had been prepared to assist them through Bahr but had not done so because of the North Vietnamese offensive. We will see to it that we give them no help on this matter so long as they don't help on Vietnam.

—Brezhnev at least agreed to consider our concept of separate explorations on *MBFR* in parallel with those on a European Security Conference. We have no assurance he will actually carry this out, however.

—The Soviets are anxious on the *Middle East* (Sadat is due in Moscow momentarily) and Gromyko pushed hard on this the last two days. They tabled substantive proposals that represented nothing new and pressed for a timetable on negotiations that is considerably faster than what they outlined before. They went so far as to suggest that the

summit atmosphere would be marred by lack of progress on this issue. I gave them no substantive satisfaction, confining myself to willingness to discuss this issue over the coming weeks, while making clear the difficulties involved.

—On *bilateral issues* I sketched promising vistas, but always with the implied caveat of Vietnam's not getting in the way. Thus I indicated we would probably approve *Export-Import Bank* facilities during the summer and that you would consider asking Congress for *MFN* treatment, though implementation would be a year off and depend squarely on whether Soviet equipment was still killing our men in Vietnam. In such areas as science, the environment, and cultural exchange, they were in favor of the most concrete possible outcomes during and after the summit. Here too I indicated a reciprocal attitude, assuming that our overall relations developed favorably.

—In short, these meetings confirmed that *your Moscow summit*—if we go through with it and Vietnam is under control—*will dwarf all previous post-war summits* in terms of concrete accomplishments and have a major international and domestic impact.

—On these issues my instructions were to be forthcoming in order to get Russian help on Vietnam. Since I heard no assurance of their assistance, I primarily listened in these areas—after first confining the talks to Vietnam. The upshot was a standoff (at least for now) on Vietnam while they made a series of moves on summit-related matters.

—*We have accordingly gotten a better summit if we want it while giving up no options on Vietnam and positioning ourselves better for whatever options we do choose to employ.*

Brezhnev and the Soviet Dilemma

Brezhnev's performance suggests that he has much riding on the summit. He is tough, brutal, insecure, cunning and very pragmatic.² His almost reverential references to you and his claims that he wants to do everything to help your re-election—however disingenuous they may be—suggest that he sees his relationship with you as legitimizing and strengthening his own position at home. We may have an election in November; he acts as if he has one next week and every week thereafter.

He has undoubtedly had to sell his Western policy to doubters in the Politburo. I am sure he did so with a line of reasoning that has much that is inimical to our interests. But it has also given him a stake in a steady relationship with us. But now, with our forceful actions in Vietnam, all of this is in the balance (at the very time, incidentally, when

² The President underlined this sentence.

his German policy is under a big question mark too). We will never know for sure whether Moscow colluded with Hanoi's offensive or whether Hanoi, having been given the capability by the Soviets, decided to move on its own. In either event our actions must have come as an enormous shock. Not only have we again put a "fraternal" ally under the gun, we have hit Soviet ships and threatened to do more to Haiphong. And the DRV offensive so far is moving neither fast nor decisively.

The Soviet leaders always have the knives out for each other and the lines of attack against Brezhnev under present conditions can be numerous and diverse. He is more vulnerable than any past Soviet leader, even Khrushchev in 1960, to the charge that comes most easily to the Soviets—as Russians and Communists—that he has staked too much on the foreign capitalists.

Meanwhile, Soviet options in the present situation are beset with dilemmas. If they stay passive vis-à-vis Hanoi while the offensive continues, they must now assume you will go all out against the North. To go forward with the summit in those circumstances is for them psychologically and politically an agonizing prospect. To cancel the Summit may, in their view, lead to your defeat in November, but not without our having meanwhile pulverized the DRV and Brezhnev's Western policy having collapsed. Much the same would happen if you cancelled the Summit or if you came but were hobbled by right-wing pressures. But the alternative to all this—pressure on Hanoi to desist—means the betrayal of a socialist ally, the loss of influence in Hanoi and no assurance that Hanoi will stop the offensive and we our retaliation.

In sum, I would have to conclude that Brezhnev personally, and the Soviets collectively, are in one of their toughest political corners in years. They must want the Vietnamese situation to subside and I would judge that there is just a chance that of all the distasteful courses open to them they will pick that of pressure on Hanoi—not to help us but themselves. The dispatch of Brezhnev's confidant, Katushev, to Hanoi tends to bear this out.

The stick of your determination and the carrot of the productive summit with which I went to Moscow, which I used there and which we must now maintain, give us our best leverage in Kremlin politics as well as the best position in our own.

170. Letter From President Nixon to Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev¹

Washington, April 25, 1972.

Dear Mr. General Secretary:

I would like to express to you my appreciation for the courtesy and warm hospitality shown to Dr. Kissinger and his colleagues during his recent stay in Moscow. His reports to me while he was in Moscow had already indicated that the discussions were extremely useful. This impression has been strongly confirmed by the detailed oral report which Dr. Kissinger made to me immediately after his return.² I am convinced that the ground is being successfully prepared for our meetings in May to which I look forward with keen anticipation and I was pleased to hear that you share this view. We have a unique opportunity to open a new and promising chapter in the relations between our two countries. This reflects not only the desires of our two peoples but of peoples everywhere. As we make progress in constructing relations of peace and cooperation, all mankind will benefit.

As regards specific matters, I welcome the spirit of progress with which you spoke to Dr. Kissinger. As he told you, this is precisely the spirit in which I and my Administration approach these matters also. What has been achieved on Dr. Kissinger's trip gives great promise; I am sure our talks will bring it to completion.

I know that in the period left before our meetings, both sides will intensify their work to ensure the success both of us desire. My own preparations will benefit greatly from Dr. Kissinger's discussions in Moscow.

Richard Nixon

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 494, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1972, Vol. 11. Top Secret. An unsigned handwritten note indicates the letter was delivered to Vorontsov by messenger at 4 p.m. on April 25. According to a typed note attached to another copy, the letter was "machine signed (in a matter of 5 minutes) at HAK's direction and hand carried to Minister Vorontsov." (Note from Muriel Hartley to Haig, April 25; *ibid.*) A draft with Kissinger's handwritten revisions including the sentence: "What has been achieved on Dr. Kissinger's trip gives great promise; I am sure our talks will bring it to completion," is *ibid.*

² See Document 168.