

Editorial Note

Under cover of a March 26, 1969, memorandum, Henry Kissinger forwarded to Jacob Beam the President's instructions for Beam's meeting with Soviet Chairman Kosygin upon becoming Ambassador to the Soviet Union. Nixon's instructions included the following:

5. As regards Berlin and Germany, you may say that we would welcome any improvement in Soviet-German relations. We think German signature of the NPT will assist this and we hope that the Soviets will be able to give Chancellor Kiesinger any help they consider feasible to enable him to get the treaty adopted. On Berlin, we are prepared to examine any way to improve the present unsatisfactory situation and I believe from my recent talks with the Germans that they are prepared to do so too. But this cannot be done under pressure. Perhaps some quiet exchanges would show the way.

(National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Backchannel, Box 433, Beam Instructions, 3/26/69)

Ambassador Beam met with Kosygin on April 22. The next day, in the enclosure to Airgram A-446 from Moscow, Beam reported on his oral presentation, including the following:

6. As regards Berlin and Germany, we would welcome any improvement in Soviet-German relations. We think German signature of the Non-Proliferation Treaty will assist this and we hope that the Soviets will be able to give Chancellor Kiesinger any help you may consider feasible to enable him to get the treaty adopted. Meanwhile as we have told Ambassador Dobrynin and Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov in Washington, we believe early completion of the ratification process by the major nuclear powers, including simultaneous deposit of instruments of ratification, would be helpful in bringing about the widest possible endorsement of the treaty which we both seek. On Berlin, we are prepared to examine any way to improve the present unsatisfactory situation, and the President believes from his recent talks with the Germans that they are prepared to do so too. But this cannot be done under pressure. Perhaps some quiet exchanges would show the way.

(Ibid., Presidential Correspondence 1969-1974, Box 765, USSR, Premier Alexei Kosygin, Correspondence)