



TELCON

General Haig/Amb. Dobrynin

8:04 p.m., October 26, 1973

H: Mr. Ambassador, General Haig.

D: Oh, hello, General.

H: How are you?

D: Now I think we are coming to the real crust of the problem. (laughs)

H: Yeah. (laughs) I hope you don't think that.

D: Yes, what's the matter?

H: Listen, I just came back from the President and I told him that his remarks tonight were I thought very much overdrawn and would be interpreted improperly.

D: Yeah.

H: And I wanted you to know that he did not in any way have the intention of drawing the situation as sharply as he did. What he was trying to do -- and I don't think it came across -- he thought he was doing it but as being a member of the audience, I didn't think he did it, was trying to emphasize his strong personal relationship with Mr. Brezhnev and it did not come across that way to me at all.

D: Yeah, it didn't come to me either.

H: No. And he's quite upset about it because he did not intend it to be that way.

D: You see, General, I would like to say only one private observation. It is my own but maybe it's good for you to understand and for the President.

H: Sure.

D: What is really in Moscow, they very much upset and if I may use a word -- I am speaking on my own, you should be very clear on this.

H: I understand.

D: Because I didn't know that you would phone me.

H: Right.

D: But I think understanding between us on this is very important. But they are very angry because they consider that you created all these things by reasons we don't know -- we don't want to discuss it -- but artificial crisis, why? And when you compare it with the even human crisis, it is really -- excuse me -- but it is going beyond any comparison. Because why? It's only one detail I would like to mention, we are [constantly] in touch with Henry on all the matters, big and small.

H: Yes.

D: Every hour on the hour. But what happened in the night? When I give this letter, it was as the President said: I determined he answered firm. It's quite all right. The usual procedure is through the confidential channel. But until we received letter, Henry didn't mention a single word that you are going to put this on an alert. It's the easiest way just to call and say to Ambassador: Look here, the President feels very strongly so if you really going to persist sorry -- well, you may use any language you like, tough or no tough or diplomatic -- but we will be forced to do it. Then I will be in touch with Moscow; Brezhnev will answer and then it's natural.

H: Yeah.

D: But you were holding for 5 hours -- Henry and Scowcroft calling me and they say a reply, wait a reply, then I will receive a reply. Reply was well firm, right, President said. But he didn't even mention about this alert. We find out on the radio, by the way.

H: Yeah.

D: But for me, it looks really it was not real. Because if you really were concerned, I am sure you will first be in touch with Brezhnev to find out what's going on, if it's real. But you were not really concerned so it was the easiest way to make up an air raid without telling us. So I am a little bit, quite frankly, I'm telling you without anger, without specific emotions, but I'm really feel sorry about this episode because it damaged very much of what was done, by what reason we don't know really. It was so good trip of Henry to Moscow. Brezhnev spend with him so many hours that the President never spends with Gromyko, by the way. And it looked so it was quite all right. But then he created this _____ crisis that you are real and we are just weaker partners standing looking against braver United States. Really, we have our people too around Moscow. Of course, he looks differently.

H: Yeah. Well, Mr. Ambassador, what worries me, I don't think it's a reflection of the attitudes here at all.

D: Yeah.

H: For example, what was done on the alerts I am sure you know that's been done on countless occasions and for some reason none of the fanfare.

D: Yes, without fanfare. Why you make it without even telling us, why? If it was really war, I am sure you will try to prevent the war.

H: No, no --

D: And you will tell us if so. But if it was not the war, why to play the game publicly about it because you put us in a very difficult position domestically really. Well, we are just thinking what to do -- to make a public statement denying all these things really because after all, one impression in the letter couldn't justify or just to be quiet but remember this thing. This is not the thing to be done. I have spent too many years and I'm telling you rather frankly -- that is not necessary to do but it is better for us mutually to understand what is going on.

H: Well, obviously, I wouldn't call if I was at all comfortable with what was said tonight.

D: Yeah. No, I do appreciate your call and I do appreciate the thoughtfulness of the President about it because it is very important to keep the personal relationship as strong as it was before.

H: Well, that's what he feels about it and he feels that way very strongly. And what he was trying to convey was just that -- the strong personal relationship.

D: Yeah. This is the point.

H: Well, I'm afraid that it just did not come across well tonight at all.

D: No, it did not.

H: And he wanted you to know it. He is very concerned about it. He is up there -- I replayed the thing for him because I wanted him to see -- you know sometimes when you speak you don't know.

D: No, I understand.

H: There was a degree more tension in that room tonight than I think he's accustomed to, you understand.

D: Yes, I understand. There is certain kind of things which happen here.

H: I did want you to know that.

D: Yes, thank you very much. I do appreciate it really. Because it is very important now to keep really everything as much as possible intact.

H: Right.

D: Thank you very much. Bye, bye.