

of continuing the private Paris talks. It goes without saying that in this channel the U.S. is not interested in pro forma talks but in serious negotiations by qualified representatives at the highest level to bring about a rapid and just solution of the war.

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Meeting Between
Presidential Assistant Kissinger and
Minister Counselor Vorontsov
DECEMBER 5, 1971

227. Memorandum of Conversation (U.S.)¹

Washington, December 5, 1971, 4 p.m.

The meeting took place at my request.² I told Vorontsov that the President had instructed me to convey the following message to General Secretary Brezhnev. A letter for the General Secretary would be delivered the next day, but in view of the urgency of the situation, the President wanted it transmitted to Moscow immediately.

—The President did not understand how the Soviet Union could believe that it was possible to work on the broad amelioration of our relationships while at the same time encouraging the In-

dian military aggression against Pakistan. We did not take a position on the merits of the developments inside Pakistan that triggered this sequence of events. We have, indeed, always taken the position that we would encourage a political solution. But here a member country of the United Nations was being dismembered by the military forces of another member country which had close relationships with the Soviet Union. We did not understand how the Soviet Union could take the position that this was an internal affair of another country. We did not see how the Soviet Union could take the position that it wanted to negotiate with us security guarantees for the Middle East and to speak about Security Council presence in Sharm El-Sheikh, while at the same time underlining the impotence of the Security Council in New York. We did not understand how the Soviet Union could maintain that neither power should seek special advantages and that we should take a general view of the situation, while at the same time promoting a war in the Subcontinent. We therefore wanted to appeal once more to the Soviet Union to join with us in putting an end to the fighting in the Subcontinent. The TASS statement which claimed that Soviet security interests were involved was unacceptable to us and could only lead to an escalation of the crisis.³ We wanted to appeal to the Soviet Union to go with us on the road we had charted of submerging special interests in the general concern of maintaining the peace of the world.

—The President wanted Mr. Brezhnev to know that he was more than eager to go back to the situation as it was two weeks ago and to work for the broad improvement of our relationship. But he also had to point out to Mr. Brezhnev that we were once more at one of the watersheds in our relationship, and he did not want to have any wrong turn taken for lack of clarity.

Vorontsov said he hoped we were still at this good point in our relationship. I said I would be remiss if I did not point out that we were developing severe doubts, both because of the Subcontinent and because of developments in Vietnam.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House.

² During a telephone conversation on December 5, Nixon and Kissinger discussed how to approach the Soviets in the South Asian crisis: "K: [W]e ought to consider seriously getting Vorontsov in and telling him if the Russians continue this line, these talks on the Middle East and others just aren't going to be possible. P: Yeah. Well, get him in. Why don't you send a letter from me to Brezhnev? K: All right." After further discussion, the two men agreed both to send a formal letter to Brezhnev and to give Vorontsov an oral note. "Get him [Vorontsov] in today," Nixon instructed Kissinger, "and tell him I've just talked with you on the phone; that the President would send this in writing but he wants this oral message to go from him; I don't want to use the hotline; you know, give him a little of that crap and that, Mr. Chairman, we have developed this very good relationship, I'm delighted but I must be very frank with you on first in the Mid-East we made very great progress and I would be interested to discuss this—Dr. Kissinger will discuss with Dobrynin when he returns. Then, now, on India-Pakistan we find your attitude very hard to understand and what are you going to do? And we have got to play it [like] that with them." (Ibid., Henry Kissinger Telephone Conversation Transcripts, Box 29, Home File)

³ For the complete English text of the TASS statement, which was published in *Pravda* on December 6, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. XXIII, No. 49 (January 4, 1972), pp. 1–2.

Vorontsov asked whether he could convey something about a political solution, since this was featured so prominently in Kosygin's letter.⁴ I replied that our attitude towards a political solution was as follows: If there were a ceasefire and a withdrawal, the United States would be prepared to work immediately with the Soviet Union on ideas of a political solution. We recognized that substantial political autonomy for East Pakistan was the probable outcome of a political evolution, and we were willing to work in that direction. I wanted him to know that I had offered the Indian Ambassador precisely that—to work out with him a concrete program over a limited period of time. I also wanted to point out to him that President Yahya was eager to turn the government over to civilians, which would in turn open entirely new prospects. Therefore the major thing was to get the military action stopped and stopped quickly.

Vorontsov asked me what was happening on my invitation to Moscow.⁵ The Soviet leaders, he said, were really looking forward to seeing me at the end of January. I said, "There are major bureaucratic obstacles, but now there are major substantive ones as well." Vorontsov said, "In a week the whole matter will be over." I said, "In a week it will not be over, depending on how it ended."⁶ He said he would transmit this immediately to Moscow.

⁴ Dated November 27 but delivered to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow on December 3. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 INDIA–PAK)

⁵ On December 1, Vorontsov gave Kissinger the following message: "I am instructed to convey through you to President Nixon that Moscow proposes that in some time, for example, in January, Dr. Kissinger would come to Moscow in connection with the forthcoming meeting between President Nixon and Soviet leaders. It would be then possible to discuss in Moscow—as a preparation to the May meeting—some questions. In our opinion it would be expedient to thoroughly exchange opinions on the Middle East problem—on the basis which was recently discussed with President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger in Washington." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8) According to his Record of Schedule, Kissinger met Vorontsov on December 1 from 11:49 a.m. to 12:12 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–76) No other record of the meeting has been found.

⁶ Kissinger called Vorontsov at 4:55 that afternoon and underscored this point: "I was just talking to the President to report our conversation and I mentioned that at the end of our conversation you said that in a week or so it will be over and he said that he would like you to report to Moscow that in a week or so it may be ended but it won't be over as far as we are concerned if it continues to take the present trend." "He wants it to be clear that we are at a watershed in our relationship if it continues to go on this way," Kissinger added. "We cannot accept that any country would take unilateral actions like that." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Henry Kissinger Telephone Conversation Transcripts, Box 12, Chronological File)

228. Telegram From Minister Counselor Vorontsov to the Soviet Foreign Ministry¹

Washington, December 5, 1971.

Extremely Urgent

I met with Kissinger today (December 5) at the White House at his urgent invitation.

First. He said that President Nixon, upon his return tomorrow to Washington from his Florida residence, would send a reply to A.N. Kosygin's letter of December 3 concerning the Indo-Pakistani conflict.

At the present time the President has charged him, Kissinger, with urgently conveying directly to L.I. Brezhnev and the other Soviet leaders in Moscow, the essence of his reply, which consists of the following:

—Events in the world are once again bringing Soviet-U.S. relations to a critical juncture. The President would not want the Soviet leadership to have any misunderstanding about the U.S. Government's way of thinking on this score. We do not understand how in the course of talks on the Middle East one can place such emphasis on the sufficiency of [UN] Security Council guarantees, and then systematically paralyze this Council by not letting it do what is so necessary to stop the bloodshed on the Indian subcontinent.

Kissinger continued that the President would also like to stress that we—without at this time delving into the details of who is right and who is wrong—are also in favor of a political resolution to the crisis, but we do not understand how the dismemberment of one country by another, its neighbor, can be considered "an internal matter." And we do not understand how it is possible to build the kind of relations between our countries that we desire and that we believe you desire as well while silently condoning, or even as the latest TASS statement attests, directly encouraging a military invasion of one country by another.

Therefore, since time really is of the essence, President Nixon would now like to call on General Secretary L.I. Brezhnev and the other Soviet leaders to give the relevant instructions to the Soviet representative in the Security Council to support

¹ Source: AVP RF, f. 059, op. 61, p. 199, d. 743, l. 80–85. Top Secret.

urgent measures such as a cease-fire on the Indian subcontinent and the restoration of the inviolability of borders, followed by a political settlement.

In conclusion, Kissinger repeated that the President requested that his words be forwarded to the Soviet leadership as soon as possible.

I replied that the words spoken on the President's behalf would be conveyed to Moscow immediately.

Second. Kissinger then said, as if on his own behalf, that in the U.S. Government "there are people who are recommending to the President to immediately activate the 'Hot Line' with the Kremlin" in connection with the Indo-Pakistani events. The President, however, is refraining from doing this in order not to "additionally and unnecessarily exacerbate" an already serious situation.

I asked Kissinger whether the U.S. Government is taking any steps in its relations with Pakistan towards finding a political solution to the root cause of the present crisis—the situation in East Pakistan, which the Soviet Government had called for in its December 3 letter to President Nixon.

Kissinger said that the U.S. side "had almost completed arrangements for talks between Yahya Khan and Bangladeshi representatives acceptable to M. Rahman when India ruined everything by its invasion of Pakistan." But what kind of political talks can there be right now with regard to East Pakistan when foreign troops have invaded all of Pakistan, Kissinger exclaimed in a somewhat excited tone.

Then, in a calmer tone, he said that in any case matters had been and clearly continue to move towards granting political autonomy to East Pakistan. If the war is stopped now and Pakistan is given "two months of peace and quiet," then as a result of political talks, such autonomy will become a reality. In proposing a halt to hostilities, the United States is not at all suggesting that the "period of peace and quiet" be used to then once again resume hostilities or "to restore the status quo in East Pakistan." The U.S. is in favor of positive results from political talks.

Then, speaking on "the absolute necessity" of having the quickest possible cease-fire, Kissinger stressed several times in various ways that the U.S. position is not the same as that of the Chinese and that the U.S. "does not intend to support another state."

When he again said that Soviet support of India has "is bringing Soviet-U.S. relations to a critical juncture," I expressed surprise on a purely personal level and questioned why events between India and Pakistan are so insistently and obviously being extended to relations between our two countries. After all, the Soviet Government has stressed on a number of occasions that these events are absolutely undesirable and sensational. For it is well known that the Soviet side seeks to halt the bloodletting on the Indian subcontinent no less than the American side. Moreover, military operations in this region, right next to our borders, directly affect the security interests of the Soviet Union, which cannot be said of the United States. The Soviet Government has repeatedly called upon the opposing parties to find a political solution to the crisis. One can only hope that this conflict will be resolved in the near future, better yet, in the next few days. So what does this have to do with Soviet-U.S. relations, whose importance is long-term or, even more so, with predictions about a "critical juncture," etc? There are scarcely any grounds to pose the question in this way.

To this Kissinger replied that the assessment that he had conveyed on behalf of the President is still valid; it will be described in a letter that will be sent tomorrow.

Third. Soon after I returned from the White House, Kissinger called me at the Embassy and said that he had just spoken with President Nixon by phone at his Florida home.² Kissinger said that the President asked him to say in connection with our conversation that "even if the conflict does end in the next few days, it will leave its mark on our relations" if it ends in the same vein in which it is developing right now. These events may turn out to be "a watershed for our relations."³

Fourth. Judging by Kissinger's tone during the entire conversation, one got the sense that the White House is nervous about the fairly complicated situation in which the U.S. has found itself given the current development of events on the Indian subcontinent: the lack of suitable capabilities for effective military aid to the U.S.'s ally, Pakistan

² See footnote 6, Document 227.

³ Translator's note: Vorontsov wrote the phrase "watershed for our relations" twice in this sentence: first as a quotation in Russian translation; and second, as a parenthetical comment in the original English using the Latin alphabet.

given the unpopularity of Yahya Khan's punitive policy in East Pakistan as reflected in American public opinion; a reluctance to have an all-out quarrel with India; a feeling of "awkwardness," in particular towards the right-wing forces inside the U.S. in connection with Washington and Peking's "united front" that is forming on this issue; irritation in view of the fact that the Soviet Union, not the United States, will gain all the political benefits if Bangladesh appears as a new country in Asia as a result of current events, etc. This is what has caused the hasty attempt to transfer the dissatisfaction over the situation in South Asia that is developing unfavorably for the U.S. onto Soviet-U.S. relations.

Vorontsov

**229. Letter From President Nixon to
General Secretary Brezhnev¹**

Washington, December 6, 1971.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I address this urgent message to you because of my profound concern about the deepening gravity of the situation in the Indian Subcontinent.

Whatever one's view of the causes of the present conflict, the objective fact now is that Indian military forces are being used in an effort to impose political demands and to dismember the sovereign state of Pakistan. It is also a fact that your Government has aligned itself with this Indian policy.

You have publicly stated that because of your geographic proximity to the Subcontinent you consider your security interests involved in the present conflict. But other countries, near and far, cannot help but see their own interests involved as well. And this is bound to result in alignments by other

states who had no wish to see the problems in the Subcontinent become international in character.

It had been my understanding, from my exchanges with you and my conversation with your Foreign Minister, that we were entering a new period in our relations which would be marked by mutual restraint and in which neither you nor we would act in crises to seek unilateral advantages. I had understood your Foreign Minister to say that these principles would govern your policies, as they do ours, not only in such potentially dangerous areas as the Middle East but in international relations generally.

I regret to say that what is happening now in South Asia, where you are supporting the Indian Government's open use of force against the independence and integrity of Pakistan, merely serves to aggravate an already grave situation. Beyond that, however, this course of developments runs counter to the recent encouraging trend in international relations to which the mutual endeavors of our two governments have been making such a major contribution.

It is clear that the interests of all concerned states will be served if the territorial integrity of Pakistan were restored and military action were brought to an end. Urgent action is required and I believe that your great influence in New Delhi should serve these ends.

I must state frankly that it would be illusory to think that if India can somehow achieve its objectives by military action the issue will be closed. An "accomplished fact" brought about in this way would long complicate the international situation and undermine the confidence that we and you have worked so hard to establish. It could not help but have an adverse effect on a whole range of other issues.

I assure you, Mr. Secretary, that such a turn of events would be a painful disappointment at a time when we stand at the threshold of a new and more hopeful era in our relations. I am convinced that the spirit in which we agreed that the time had come for us to meet in Moscow next May requires from both of us the utmost restraint and the most urgent action to end the conflict and restore territorial integrity in the Subcontinent.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 492, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1971, Vol. 8. No classification marking. The letter was evidently delivered to the Soviet Embassy on the afternoon of December 6. According to a transcript of conversation, Kissinger called Vorontsov at 3:32 p.m. to report: "I have a letter to your Mr. Brezhnev now. I can send someone in 10 minutes." Vorontsov replied: "I will be waiting." Kissinger added: "Not going in usual channels. Any answer should go back through you." (Ibid., Henry Kissinger Telephone Conversation Transcripts, Box 12, Chronological File)