

“Principles of Co-existence—With special reference to Southeast Asia.

“Trade—Measures to expand trade.

“Other topics either side may wish to raise.

“Dr. Kissinger is prepared to conduct preliminary discussions on these topics with the Soviet Ambassador.

“The President wishes to point out that preparations for the new session of Congress make November and December unfeasible for a meeting.

“The President will study attentively proposals the Soviet side may put forward in reaction to this communication.”

Kissinger verbally requested, through his deputy General Haig, that we pass on to Moscow that “the President would still be prepared to meet with General Secretary Brezhnev or Premier Kosygin” in New York if either of them comes for the UN anniversary celebration in October. If the Soviet side agrees to this option, Kissinger said it would be advisable to receive notification of that as soon as possible.

Yu. Vorontsov

Note: In [telegram from Soviet Foreign Ministry], 8/18/70, Cde. Gromyko issued instructions to meet with Kissinger and to provide the Soviet side’s message on the question of a summit meeting, in connection with the idea expressed by President Nixon on arranging a Soviet-U.S. summit.

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Meetings Between Presidential Assistant Kissinger and Ambassador Dobrynin

SEPTEMBER 25, 1970

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

Washington, September 25, 1970, 10 a.m.

Circumstances of Conversation

Ambassador Dobrynin called the evening of September 24th to tell me that he had a personal message for the President from his leadership and that he wanted to have an appointment with the President the next day.² In view of the newly discovered Soviet base in Cuba, the President and I thought it unwise to have such a meeting. Therefore, I told Dobrynin that he would have to deliver the note to me and only after reading it could it be judged whether it would be worthwhile for him to see the President. Ambassador Dobrynin replied that his instructions were to deliver it to the President and he would consequently have to check with Moscow whether he could deliver it to me. He added that this reflected no lack of trust in me and that he would, of course, be glad to chat with me for half an hour before we saw the President. I said that unfortunately it was impossible to see the President and, therefore, his choice was between delivering it to me or waiting until after the President came back from his European

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 490, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1970, Vol. 2. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. According to Kissinger’s Record of Schedule, the meeting ran from 10:55 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968–76)

² Dobrynin first requested the appointment during a telephone conversation with Kissinger at 3:04 p.m. on September 24. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Henry Kissinger Telephone Conversation Transcripts, Box 6, Chronological File) Kissinger called Nixon at 6:40 p.m. and reported: “I had a call from Dobrynin this afternoon and he said he had a message for you on that Summit and also on the Jordanian situation. I was very cool to him and said I didn’t know if your schedule permitted you to see him.” After discussing how to handle the request, Nixon told Kissinger: “On the Dobrynin thing, let me leave it to your judgment. Take the message and tell him if the message justifies my seeing him you will work it out.” (Ibid.)

trip.³ Dobrynin said he would let me know during the course of the next morning. I told him the only time I would be free would be at 10:30 a.m. The next morning at 9:30 a.m. Dobrynin called to say that he would be available at 10:30 a.m.

Summit

I met with Ambassador Dobrynin in the Map Room. After an exchange of pleasantries, he made the following point. His government had studied the proposal of a Summit⁴ with great interest and as the Soviet Government had already indicated, it was ready to proceed in principle. The Soviet Government agreed in general to the agenda outlined in our previous communication. It also agreed that Ambassador Dobrynin and I should proceed with exploratory conversations. The Soviet Government wondered about the site of the conference and whether the President was perhaps thinking of Moscow. It also asked for the President's views about the best time for such a meeting and specifically whether it should be in the first half or the second half of the year. Ambassador Dobrynin added that actually it could not take place before May because of the Soviet Party Congress. I replied that given the weather conditions, what the Ambassador was really asking was whether it should be in the last half of the first half or the first half of the last half of the year—in other words, whether it should be in June or in July or September, August probably being a vacation month for both sides. Ambassador Dobrynin stated that this was essentially correct. During this portion of the discussion, Ambassador Dobrynin also informed me that Premier Kosygin would not be attending the United Nations 25th Anniversary Celebration in New York this fall. I told Ambassador Dobrynin I would let him know later about our views on a possible Summit. At this point in the conversation, Ambassador Dobrynin tried to initiate a conversation on the Middle East and other problems, but I cut him off by saying that these subjects were too complex and that too many things had happened to enable us to discuss them in a semi-social way. I added that if he wished to discuss these subjects,

Kissinger called Dobrynin back at 7 p.m. The passage in the memorandum below summarizes this second telephone conversation. (Ibid.)

³ During his trip to Europe, September 27–October 5, Nixon visited Italy, Vatican City, Yugoslavia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Ireland.

⁴ See Document 81.

we should schedule a meeting and I would then be prepared to do so.

Jordan

Ambassador Dobrynin said that Moscow was struck by the fact that the U.S. had never replied to its note of the previous Monday with respect to the Syrian invasion.⁵ Were we not interested in consulting with Moscow on Mideast developments? I said that certainly we were willing to discuss them with Moscow but it seemed to us that over a period of weeks every Soviet démarche had been followed by the contrary action and we simply wanted to wait to see what would happen. Dobrynin said we might not believe it but the Soviet Union had not known of the invasion of Jordan by Syria and that in any event Soviet advisors had dropped off Syrian tanks prior to crossing the frontier. I let this somewhat contradictory statement go and told Dobrynin that I would ask the President's views about consultation on Mideast issues. I added that the United States Government was always prepared to discuss the situation with the Soviet Union in times of international crises. Our ability to do so, however, was quite dependent on the degree of confidence which existed between us and our overall relationships in general. In light of Soviet violations of the ceasefire and Soviet responsibility for the violations⁶—or what we considered Soviet responsibility for unloosening some of the forces that produced the crisis—the Jordanian situation did not provide the atmosphere for a frank exchange of views between our governments. In principle, however, we were prepared to discuss such matters with the Soviet Government. I added that the United States had no intention of launching military operations in Jordan if other outside forces stayed out of Jordan. The meeting adjourned.

⁵ On September 18, Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Army, backed by Syrian military units (including tanks), invaded Jordan to support the fedayeen, who had rebelled against the government of King Hussein. With American and Israeli assistance, Jordan defeated both the rebellion and the invasion; on September 27, Hussein and Arafat signed a cease-fire agreement in Cairo.

⁶ In accordance with the proposal Rogers gave Dobrynin on June 20 (see footnote 7, Document 62), the United States brokered a deal on August 7 between Israel and Egypt, including a cease-fire and renewal of the Jarring Mission. During the brief pause in hostilities, however, Egypt moved Soviet-made SAM-3 missiles to the east bank of the Suez Canal. Israel and the United States charged that the Egyptian move had violated the agreement; they also criticized the role of Soviet "military presence."

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

Washington, September 25, 1970, 5:30 p.m.

Background

After consulting with the President about the answer on the Soviet Summit proposal given to me by the Soviet Ambassador that morning, I called Ambassador Dobrynin to tell him that I wished to see him briefly to provide our answer on the Summit. Just after I completed this phone call, the Defense Department, due to a misunderstanding, released full details about Soviet naval activity in Cienfuegos. Interdepartmental contingency guidance had provided that minimum information would be released publicly on this subject and specific guidance had been circulated to all Departments. This unauthorized release had in turn led to my making the statement that had been agreed to as governmental guidance in event that the Soviet installations in Cienfuegos became known. Attached is that portion of my press backgrounder given earlier that afternoon dealing with Cuba.²

Summit

When I saw Dobrynin in the Map Room his face was ashen. I began the conversation by saying that I had the President's answer on the Summit and that the answer was as follows. In principle, the President was willing to consider a Summit. Further, the President would consider either June or September 1971 as appropriate dates and the U.S. Government was willing to consider Moscow as the site for such a meeting. Ambassador Dobrynin said this was very good news. But, he clearly had his mind on the Cuban problem.

Cuba

I then told the Ambassador that I wanted to talk to him about the press statements that had been made in both the Pentagon and at the White House earlier that afternoon. I called his attention to the fact that the announcement made in the White House had inferred that the U.S. Government

did not yet know whether there was actually a submarine base in Cuba. The U.S. Government had done this deliberately in order to give the Soviet Union an opportunity to withdraw without a public confrontation. I wanted him to know that we had no illusions, that we knew already there was a submarine base in Cuba, and that we would view it with the utmost gravity if construction continued and the base remained. I added that we did not want a public confrontation and were, therefore, giving them an opportunity to pull out. But we would not shrink from other measures including public ones if forced into it. I said that the President considered the Vorontsov démarche of August 4³ followed by the construction of the base as an act of bad faith. If the ships—especially the tender—left Cienfuegos we would consider the whole matter a training exercise. No more would be said and there would be no publicity. This is why the President had asked me to talk to him “unofficially.” Otherwise, we would put matters into official channels. Ambassador Dobrynin asked whether I was telling him that this alleged base violated the understandings. I said this was a legalistic question. I did believe it violated the understandings but I wanted to remind him that in 1962 we took the most drastic action even though there was no prior understanding. To us Cuba was a place of extreme sensitivity. We considered the installation to have been completed with maximum deception and we could not agree to its continuation. Dobrynin said he would have to report to his government. And he would hope to have an answer, for me soon.

The Ambassador tried to discuss other matters such as the Middle East but I cut him off and said that this was the only subject I was authorized to discuss with him. He said why do you have to give me good news and bad news simultaneously; it would be very confusing in Moscow. I said I was giving him the news that now existed. I added that the U.S. and the Soviets had reached a turning point in their relationships. It is now up to the Soviets whether to go the hard route—whether it wanted to go the route of conciliation or the route of confrontation. The United States is prepared for either. Ambassador Dobrynin said that probably the U.S. Government will start a big press campaign on this Cuban business. I said we were

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 490, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1970, Vol. 2. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in the Map Room at the White House. According to Kissinger's Record of Schedule, the meeting lasted from 6:50 until 7:10 p.m. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 438, Miscellany, 1968-76)

² Attached but not printed.

³ See footnote 3, Document 74.

not going to do that but we were also determined that there would be no Soviet submarine base in Cuba since whatever the phraseology of the understanding its intent was clearly not to replace land-based by sea-based missiles in Cuba. Ambassador Dobrynin said that he would consult with Moscow and let me know.

The meeting adjourned.

84. Memorandum of Conversation (USSR)¹

Washington, September 25, 1970.

I met with Kissinger in connection with the events concerning Jordan.

In the course of the meeting, I presented, under instructions, the Soviet Government's detailed assessment of the situation surrounding the Jordanian conflict and directed the attention of the U.S. Government and of the U.S. President personally to the seriousness of the situation and the impermissibility of U.S. interference.

I noted that the Soviet Government, guided by the desire to maintain businesslike contacts, had approached the U.S. Government several times over the past few days concerning the need to take urgent steps to help end the fratricidal clashes in Jordan and prevent other countries, both in the region and outside of it, from intervening in those events.²

I also pointed out that thus far we have not received from the U.S. Government:

—either a cogent response to the Soviet Government's question about the objectives of current U.S. military preparations;

—or information in response to the question about what specifically the U.S. Government, for its part, is doing to exert a restraining influence on Israel and on the parties to the conflict, including King Hussein, with the aim of achieving a peace settlement in Jordan as quickly as possible.

¹ Source: AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 54a, p. 426, d. 1, l. 144–152. Top Secret. From Dobrynin's Journal.

² On at least three occasions during the previous week, Vorontsov approached Department of State officials to discuss the crisis in Jordan, meeting with Rogers and Sisco on September 18, and with Sisco on both September 20 and 21. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 713, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. IX; and AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 54, p. 405, d. 6, l. 59–60, 63–68)

In this connection, I then said that a legitimate question is arising in Moscow about the U.S. Government's intentions and objectives in connection with the recent events in the Middle East, which could have serious consequences that go far beyond the bounds of this region of the world.

In general, our views were set forth in a calm but firm tone in order to exert a certain amount of pressure on Nixon and his closest advisor, Kissinger. In doing so, I handled the conversation in such a way that they would not get the impression that we are somehow nervous about their military preparations. I showed our readiness both to have businesslike relations with the United States in the Middle East in the matter of a just peace settlement and to give the required rebuff to all U.S. endeavors that are in conflict with such a settlement.

Most of what Kissinger said boiled down to lengthy arguments "about the major Soviet share of responsibility for Egypt's violation of the terms of the ceasefire agreement" (moving missile launchers in the Suez Canal Zone). He tried to portray all this as an important "psychological element," which supposedly caused the U.S. Government and Nixon personally "to have serious doubts about the Soviet Union's intentions" in the Middle East, and this, according to him, was bound to be reflected during subsequent contacts with the Soviet side in regard to the events in Jordan.

I flatly rejected such "reasoning" by Kissinger.

My interlocutor also attempted to justify the U.S. military preparations with familiar references to the seizing of Americans—passengers from the hijacked airliners—by Palestinian guerillas, and also to the need to ensure the "security" of American citizens living in Jordan.

I gave an appropriate assessment of such "arguments."

Then I again asked Kissinger the above questions concerning the U.S. Government's position and actions in connection with the Jordanian events. I added that I would nonetheless like to know President Nixon's own view now so that I could report it to Moscow. To this end, I was prepared to meet with him personally at any time.

After some hesitation, Kissinger said that he would brief Nixon on our conversation and then let me know his response.

That evening Kissinger invited me to the White House again and, citing instructions from Nixon, made the following statement on his behalf:

1. Unless some completely unforeseen events occur, one can now say that the United States does not contemplate any military actions and accordingly the U.S. military preparations will start to become irrelevant.

2. During the present crisis the U.S. Government has been secretly and constantly exerting a restraining influence so as to prevent possible foreign military intervention in connection with the events in Jordan (Kissinger implied that the reference here was to Israel, although he did not explicitly mention it by name).

3. The U.S. Government is continuing to seek an honorable peace settlement in the Middle East, which would be the most effective means of preventing crises like the events that occurred in Jordan. It hopes that the Soviet Government has also set the same goals. In this area, the President believes, business-like cooperation between the two countries is possible and desirable.

On Nixon's behalf, Kissinger strongly requested that this reply from the President remain between our two governments alone and not be transmitted to the governments of third countries with which "to the U.S. side's knowledge, the Soviet Government presently maintains very active contacts in connection with the events in Jordan."

Kissinger also stipulated that the State Department would not be aware of this exchange of views.

* * *

During the conversation we also touched on the question of organizing a *Soviet-U.S. summit meeting*.

In connection with my return from Moscow, Kissinger asked if I could provide him with any new information in addition to the exchange of views that had already taken place on this matter.

I told him the U.S. side was already aware of our positive view of contacts at the highest level, including in the form of personal meetings between the leaders of the two powers—the USSR and the United States—if such meetings are

properly prepared so that they can be expected to produce results.

I also reminded him the U.S. side had already been told recently that given the aforementioned understanding on this issue, Moscow would be prepared to carefully consider specific proposals that President Nixon might put forward to develop the general idea presented by Kissinger, on instructions from the President, in conversations with the Soviet Ambassador.

Per instructions, I then asked Kissinger whether he himself had anything to say in this connection on the President's behalf.

After repeating what had been said to us earlier about President Nixon's willingness to meet with the Soviet leaders if they come to the UN anniversary session in October, Kissinger asked whether any of them would come to that session.

I replied that it was common knowledge that the Soviet Government had designated the Minister of Foreign Affairs as head of the Soviet delegation to the current session of the UN General Assembly. I added that for the moment I was not aware of any other plans.

As if thinking out loud, Kissinger remarked that in all honesty there is little time left now to properly prepare for such a meeting in October. He went on to say that if one also takes into account President Nixon's busy schedule in November and December of this year, which we were informed of earlier, it turns out that, as far as the date for a possible summit meeting is concerned, realistically, we can only talk in terms of next year.

I answered him that in my personal view that is, evidently, how the matter indeed stands.

Kissinger inquired whether we had more specific ideas about the approximate time frame for such a meeting next year and about a possible venue for that meeting.

I replied that I did not have any proposals in this regard but was willing to listen to the U.S. side's ideas, if there were any.

Kissinger merely remarked that he had to talk to the President again.

I refrained from showing any heightened interest in this matter.

This conversation took place on the morning of September 25. That evening we had a second meeting at the White House (when Nixon's answer on

the Jordanian events was transmitted). Kissinger, at his own initiative, again raised the question of a summit meeting.

Citing the President's instructions, Kissinger said that in Nixon's view—taking into account various events that have already been planned both in the Soviet Union (in this connection the upcoming CPSU Congress was mentioned) and in the United States—the most acceptable time frame would probably fall during the period from June through September of 1971. Only August would be less desirable, since it is the traditional vacation time, although it would be possible to agree on that time frame too.

As for the possible venue of such a meeting, since President Nixon had already invited the Soviet leaders to a meeting on U.S. territory in October of this year, he expressed his willingness to travel to the Soviet Union in 1971. Of course, if for some reason that was not agreeable to the Soviet leadership, we could also think about another site for the meeting.

Kissinger requested that these proposals of the President be conveyed to Moscow. He expressed the desire, if possible, to receive a reply from the Soviet leadership after Nixon returns from his current trip to Europe, where he is going on September 27.

I told Kissinger I could not give him any promises about the timing of our reply. I added on a personal note—in reply to a question on the subject—that it was possible some ideas in response from the Soviet leadership might be presented by Foreign Minister A.A. Gromyko when he comes to the UN session in between October 10–19.

Kissinger then asked what we thought about the tentative agenda for a possible summit meeting that he had proposed some time ago on the President's instructions.

I told him, on a strictly preliminary basis, that as a list of the most important problems and areas of mutual interests, there were no particular objections to this agenda. Naturally, it has to be thrashed out in a further exchange of views before it is finalized.

Kissinger said the President had instructed him to continue such discussion with the Soviet Ambassador, and that we could return to it a little later if there are no objections.

I remarked that I was ready to listen to any proposals at all from the U.S. side on this matter.

In connection with the ideas on a summit meeting that President Nixon has presented now for transmittal to the Soviet leadership, we should evidently be prepared to continue discussing this topic when the Minister comes here for the UN session and when the Americans will, to all appearances, again show an interest in this question.

* * *

A few other matters from the conversation with Kissinger can also be briefly noted.

1. Kissinger stated that on Nixon's instructions, he is flying to Paris the night of September 25 to meet with Ambassador Bruce, who is conducting negotiations there with the delegations of the DRV and the NLF of South Vietnam.³ According to Kissinger, the President has instructed the two of them to carefully discuss the latest proposals by these delegations concerning a peace settlement, and a possible U.S. response. Afterwards that whole issue will be discussed again, with Nixon's participation during his stay in Ireland, where he will be joined by Bruce.

From our brief exchange of views with Kissinger regarding the latest Vietnamese proposals and his last secret meeting with the leadership of the DRV delegation in Paris, it is worth noting Kissinger's remark that the North Vietnamese, to judge from certain indications, are reporting to the Soviet side on their contacts with Kissinger in more pessimistic tones than is really the case during these contacts, although he, Kissinger, has no reason to claim that he has achieved great success in his negotiations with the North Vietnamese.

2. It could be inferred from Kissinger's remarks that there was some kind of exchange of views between Washington and Paris concerning a trip to Paris now by Nixon for a meeting with Pompidou, but things didn't work out on the U.S. side.

3. Mentioning a coded message from the U.S. Ambassador to the FRG,⁴ who, referring to his conversations with the Soviet Ambassador to the GDR⁵ (in connection with the talks on issues related to Berlin), "had gotten the impression" that

³ Although he met with Bruce on September 27, Kissinger went to Paris primarily for a secret meeting the same day with Xuan Thuy, the Chief of the North Vietnamese Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks.

⁴ Kenneth Rush.

⁵ Pyotr Abrasimov.

our Ambassador to the GDR would apparently be appointed Ambassador to the United States next year, Kissinger asked if this was true. I replied that such matters are within the competency of the government and that I had no information on that score.

4. Touching on Chinese affairs, Kissinger remarked that U.S.-Chinese meetings in Warsaw would evidently resume before the end of the year, but immediately qualified this by saying there was as yet no agreement with the Chinese on this point.

5. During the conversation I called Kissinger's attention to the slanderous anti-Soviet campaign that is being actively conducted now in the United States regarding fictitious "Soviet violations" of the terms of the ceasefire agreement between the UAR and Israel. I noted that U.S. officials are participating directly in this campaign (in particular, Assistant Secretary of State Sisco is playing an active role behind the scenes). I warned about the possible serious consequences of such U. S. actions for a Middle East settlement and for our relations in general.

Kissinger in effect confirmed the correctness of my remarks, although he made all sorts of excuses.

* * *

During the second meeting at the White House on September 25, Kissinger, on his initiative and citing instructions from Nixon, requested that an oral communication from the President be transmitted to the Soviet Government. Its content was more or less as follows:

He, the President, is very seriously concerned about information that has become available to the U.S. Government that the Soviet Union is *building a base in Cuba*, in the region of the port of Cienfuegos, which, to all indications, may be a permanent base for Soviet submarines, including nuclear submarines carrying missiles.

If those are indeed the Soviet side's intentions, the U.S. Government would have to treat this as a violation of the understanding that was reached between the two governments back in 1962 and that in effect was again secretly reaffirmed in August of this year through the Kissinger-Soviet Chargé d'Affaires channel. Such a precipitate violation of this recently reaffirmed understanding, if it is taking place, would make an extremely

negative impression on the U.S. Government, especially when it is striving for a gradual improvement in Soviet-U.S. relations and is hoping for such an improvement in the future despite existing difficulties, for example, those surrounding the Middle East.

The U.S. Government is compelled to treat this whole matter with the utmost seriousness, since it has a direct bearing on the nation's security. The presence of a permanent base for Soviet submarines, including nuclear submarines carrying missiles, just off U.S. shores, would sharply increase the operational threat to the United States from the Soviet submarine fleet and its missiles, and this cannot be ignored by any American president, who is obligated to take all measures to ensure the security of his country.

The U.S. Government would hope that all of the Soviet measures noted above are not aimed at establishing a permanent Soviet strategic base just off U.S. shores, but are only temporary, something on the order of individual visits by Soviet naval vessels to Cuban ports, although, incidentally, the President himself refrains from sending his nuclear submarines on visits to the Black and Baltic Seas, despite the fact that from a strictly legal standpoint that would not be a violation of international law either.

The U.S. Government treats this whole matter of the base with the utmost seriousness from the standpoint of the further development of Soviet-U.S. relations; the President, for his part, would like to do everything to improve these relations, not exacerbate them.

In conclusion, Kissinger said that the President requests that this message not be regarded as some kind of official representation or protest, but rather as his strictly confidential and important appeal to the Soviet leaders in the hope that it will receive the attention it deserves.

A. Dobrynin