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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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developed by: [Signature]  
Date: 7 Nov 1984

DATE: July 13, 1978  
Time: 4:50 to 5:20 p  
Place: Soviet Mission Geneva

SUBJECT: Vance-Gromyko Private Meeting

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.

Secretary Vance  
William D. Krimer  
(Interpreter)

U.S.S.R.

Foreign Minister Gromyko  
V. M. Sukhodrev,  
(Interpreter)

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IN PART

Minister Gromyko said that just before the UN Special Session on Disarmament, during that session, and particularly after that session he and the Soviet authorities had noted a veritable explosion of hostile propaganda against the Soviet Union in the United States, and not just propaganda but a concerted hostile campaign against the Soviet Union. Some U.S. policy makers had been involved in that campaign. Did this represent a change in U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union? It was true that in recent days some statements on U.S.-Soviet relations had been made in the U.S., to the effect that our two countries ought to seek possible understanding on some questions. However, he would tell the Secretary quite frankly that the Soviet authorities had the impression that such positive comments had been uttered almost incidentally, as it were. The Soviets would like to hear such statements made as an expression of the official policy of the United States toward the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities wanted to believe that what they had witnessed was a merely temporary phenomenon, and would ask for reassurance that it did not represent the revised policy of the new U.S. Administration. (Gromyko interjected that the Administration was no longer all that new.) This had been the subject of a number of discussions with L. I. Brezhnev. The policy of the Soviet Union toward the United States remained unchanged. Soviet leaders had said so many times, and Brezhnev personally had spoken on that subject.

Not so long ago an editorial had appeared in Pravda which presented an assessment of U.S.-Soviet relations as seen from Moscow. He could confirm that this represented a realistic appraisal of

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WDKrimer:ejg

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S. policy by the Soviet leadership. At the last session of the Supreme Soviet Gromyko had also presented a report which confirmed this as the view of the Soviet leadership. He would state that Soviet newspapers, Pravda, Izvestiya and others, published articles almost daily, favoring good relations with the United States, speaking out in favor of strict compliance by both sides with all the obligations of the treaties and agreements between our two countries--articles in favor of detente, peace and furtherance of relations between us.

Gromyko would ask the Secretary to take a look at the question of disarmament on which our two countries diverged. The Soviet Union favored genuine disarmament, and not only in the area of strategic arms. Indeed, the difference between us appeared to be enormous. For example, what was going on in Washington at the same time that the Special Session on Disarmament was meeting in New York? Was all that some sort of a revenge for the Soviet policy of peace, of developing good relations with the United States, based on mutual respect and recognition of our mutual responsibility for peace, while strictly observing the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of each other's country? Gromyko would be very pleased if the Secretary could tell him something that he could report to L.I. Brezhnev personally and to the Soviet leadership as a whole. He would add that the Soviet Union's policy of peace was one that was pursued not only toward the United States, but also throughout the world. He would appreciate the Secretary's informing President Carter to that effect.

The Secretary said he would be happy to respond to Gromyko's question and would welcome the opportunity of saying what he was going to say.

Our policy toward the Soviet Union had not changed and does not reflect any change in U.S. attitudes toward the Soviet Union. We were seeking to establish better relations between our two countries. We wanted to see things get back on an even keel. We wanted to see more and closer exchanges on a whole variety of matters. He believed that our two countries bore a special responsibility in view of their political, military and economic power and influence. In our judgment it was in the best interests of both our nations to establish closer and deeper relations between us, both from a practical and political standpoint, as well as because over many years there had been deep and close friendships between many of our citizens and between our two countries. There had been a bad time for both of us during the Cold War, but fortunately there then came a period when we decided to put that behind us and improve relations between us. We made progress in that direction. However, during the past year several factors had divided us and made relations between us more difficult. One such factor was the different views we held with respect to Africa and the situation on the African continent. Another was

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the different views we held on matters involving human rights and civil rights. Still another were our different views with respect to the current situation and the trials currently going on in the Soviet Union. Events of this kind have exacerbated relations between us, and had unfortunately led to a gap between our two countries on a number of issues. He would point out, however, that we had been trying to find common ground and build upon it in the hope that in the future we can increase the area of that common ground and get us back on track again. Both the President and the Secretary hoped very deeply that this can be done. Gromyko would note that in his recent press conference President Carter had spoken about Soviet-American relations and had stated his deep desire to have good relations between our two countries. Another important area where we had common objectives was that of arms limitations, objectives on which we can build. The Secretary expressed his hope that we would remember and abide by the Principles of Relations which were signed by the United States and the Soviet Union when Nixon was President of the United States.

Gromyko remarked that that was a good document.

The Secretary believed it was now necessary to turn the corner and enter upon a new path, take into account each other's concerns and see if we can build stronger relations between us in the future. Certainly that was our desire.

The Secretary had one final word. He had read with great care the article in Pravda which Gromyko had mentioned. He had decided not to respond to certain parts of that article, to which he took exception, because he believed that this would merely continue a strident dialogue between us. He thought that we should be judged by our actions, for it was actions that reflected the direction in which we were moving.

Gromyko said he had listened carefully to what the Secretary had said now and at the outset of their current talks. He would not repeat what he had said in briefly setting forth his assessment of U.S. policy and in explaining the basis for Soviet policy. There was only one aspect that he would mention, since the Secretary had raised it. He had already said a few words on that subject in their previous private talk. The Soviet Union would not allow anyone to interfere in its internal affairs. Here he could only repeat what he had said yesterday. In this respect the Soviets would stand firm as a rock. The trials in question dealt with observance of the internal laws of the Soviet Union, and were entirely within the scope of the Soviet Union's competence. He would ask the Secretary to explain this to President Carter and to others in the U.S. Administration to the extent he could.

Gromyko concluded by saying that it would be good if the relations between our two countries could be kept on a realistic track. That was the policy of the Soviet Union, and if U.S. policy was like that, too, both our nations could look forward to the future with optimism.

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Gromyko asked the Secretary to convey his best wishes to President Carter.

The Secretary assured him he would do so and asked him to convey his best wishes to President Breznev.