

RECORD OF THE MAIN CONTENTS OF A.A. GROMYKO'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE
SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE USA C. VANCE

Geneva, July 12-13, 1978

Excerpted sections related to "1978: Confrontation or Cooperation?"

(...) The next, concluding part of the conversation went on one on one in the presence of interpreters from both sides only.

A.A. Gromyko. We noted that both before the recent special session of the U.N. General Assembly on disarmament and during the session, and especially after its conclusion, there took place in the USA literally a explosion of propaganda hostile to the Soviet Union, moreover not only from the press, but all in the policy of the USA. Some signs appeared of a change in the attitudes of the USA towards the Soviet Union.

True, most recently several declarations about the necessity of searching for an agreement with the Soviet Union, repairing relations, etc. were observed. However, these declarations were made, as if, in passing. We would like for such declarations to be made as part of a precise expression of the political line of the USA.

In this connection I would like to know whether what I am talking about is a temporary phenomenon, or a permanent policy, and whether the USA, consequently, is reviewing the course of its policy towards the Soviet Union. What is it -- the USA government's future course regarding the Soviet Union and other socialist countries?

Our line, as far as relations with the USA are concerned, remains as before, and we have spoken about that many times. L.I. Brezhnev personally has also clearly pointed that out.

Not too long ago in the newspaper Pravda an editorial was published. I can assert that in it was set forth our official evaluation of the USA's present line in relation to the Soviet Union. At the last session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR I gave a speech in which I affirmed that point of view in the name of the entire Soviet leadership.

If you will look at our press, it constantly, consistently comes out in favor of the development of good relations between the Soviet Union and the USA, in favor of fulfilling all the obligations accepted by our country in the treaties and agreements which have been concluded, in favor of detente and a stable peace in the whole world.

If you take the issues of disarmament in the widest sense, beyond the bounds of the purely bilateral negotiations on SALT and so on, then our positions are directly contradictory to yours, since the Soviet Union stands for real disarmament. Take everything that went on in New York during the special session of the U.N. General Assembly on disarmament and that which went on during that time in Washington.

What is that: revenge for our policy of peace, for our policy of developing good relations on the basis of principles of equality, sovereignty, mutual respect, non-interference in each others'

internal affairs, for our appeals to feelings of responsibility for the fate of peace in the whole world?

I would be glad to hear your response to the thoughts which I expressed, which I personally will pass on to L.I. Brezhnev and the entire Soviet leadership upon my return. At the same time I would like to ask you to inform President Carter about our conversation.

C. Vance. I will be glad to answer your question and welcome the opportunity to speak about that issue. Our policy towards the Soviet Union has not changed, and it does not reflect any sort of changes in USA attitudes toward the Soviet Union. We are striving for an improvement in relations with the Soviet Union, we want them to become better again. We want to achieve closer and more frequent exchanges between our countries in various areas.

We are aware that our two powers carry special responsibility as a consequence of our size, and also our power and influence in political, military, and economic areas.

We believe that a tightening and deepening our relations would answer to the interests of both countries. This is dictated by practical and political considerations, and also by the recognition that during the last years there existed close, friendly relations between our peoples and countries.

In the period of the "Cold War" bad times afflicted relations between our countries, but then, happily, a time came when it was decided to end that and to improve our mutual relations. And we made lots of progress in that.

Over the last year several factors arose which caused disagreements between us and created difficulties in our relations. Our positions diverged regarding Africa and various situations which arose on the African continent.

There were differences in the area of human rights and civil rights. There were disagreements related to prosecutions which are going on in the present time in the Soviet Union.

All these events lead to a sharpening of relations between us and, unfortunately, created a crevice between our two countries on a range of issues.

However, we from our own side have tried to find common ground, developing our relations in hopes that in the future we will be able to widen the dimensions of that common ground, in order to get our relations back on the right track...

I hope that we will be able also in the future to observe all the fundamental principles which were worked out and fixed during President Nixon's time in "Basic Principles of Relations Between the USSR and the USA."

A.A. Gromyko. That really was a good document.(...)