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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

E48  
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November 21, 1979

Cy -

I feel that the following is important enough to warrant your attention even at this busy time. I understand that at the VBB luncheon today you approved the reply to Brezhnev's message on the false alert, which I have marked "A".

Unfortunately, and probably inadvertently, you were working from a DOD draft that I, Reggie, and at least some of the NSC staff feel is gratuitously insulting and inappropriate for the Carter/Brezhnev channel.

I strongly suggest, and I feel Reggie would concur, that you work from the draft, marked "B", which incorporates Reggie's ideas, those of the NSC staff, as well as my own.

*Handwritten signature*

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NOTE: R. Bartholomew raised orally w CV  
Thanksgiving weekend.  
CV reportedly said he didn't like the reply but  
didn't want to re-open the issue.  
R.B. said late that CV will not hand the  
note over. R.B. thinks G Vest should.

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*EH8B* 11/20

*PM's redraft  
of Bremer  
redraft*

Draft Oral Message to President Brezhnev

You expressed concern in your message over reports of a technical malfunction during a military training exercise.

I want to make clear that the instance to which you refer is not a legitimate basis for questioning United States control of its forces. This instance in fact demonstrates that the multiple safeguards we employ operate reliably in precluding any in(~~ap~~)propriate consequences.

Having looked into the matter thoroughly, I can tell you that the press accounts upon which your message was based were incomplete and therefore misleading. At the time of the reported incident the degree of alert of US strategic offensive forces was not raised above its usual level. It does not serve the purposes of peace or mutual understanding to exaggerate such instances in diplomatic exchanges [or to exploit them for purposes of propaganda.]

*to be changed  
in accordance  
with  
your  
note*

You may be assured that the control of the offensive use of our forces is totally reliable.