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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1205

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: January 25, 1965  
Place: Secretary's office

SUBJECT: Underground Nuclear Explosion in the Soviet Union

PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary  
Llewellyn E. Thompson, Ambassador-at-Large  
Department of State

Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, USSR

COPIES TO: Secretary McNamara  
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DEF 18-8 USSR

The Ambassador said that in reply to the Secretary's inquiry, he had been instructed to make the following oral statement:

This January fifteenth, an underground explosion was indeed carried out in the Soviet Union. This explosion was carried out deep down underground. The quantity of radioactive debris, that leaked into the atmosphere, was however so insignificant that a possibility of its fallout outside the territorial limits of the Soviet Union should be excluded. Thus, the underground explosion, that was carried out, does not affect the provisions of the Treaty banning nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and underwater.

The Secretary inquired whether the Soviet Government intended to make any public statement on this. The Ambassador said he did not know.

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The Secretary said that from our observations, debris did clearly get outside the Soviet Union related to this explosion, although it appeared that the amount was small.

The Ambassador said that he had no instructions to say anything other than the statement he had made, but perhaps there was some difference in the expressions "venting" and "fallout."

The Secretary said that our indications were that the explosion had been a very substantial one and our sampling clearly related the debris we had detected to the Soviet event.

Ambassador Thompson said that we had read reports of Japanese detection but as far as he knew, we had not received any official message from them.

The Secretary said that we would have to give careful consideration to the Soviet statement. He said that we would very shortly be replying to the Soviet inquiry regarding the "Kiwi" reactor.

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