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Miscellaneous Matters

Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, USSR

**Llewellyn E. Thompson, Ambassador-at-Large
Department of State**

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Ambassador Dobrynin invited me to lunch following his return from leave in the Soviet Union. He said he had a talk of about an hour and a half with Chairman Khrushchev shortly before his departure. In the course of the conversation, I asked Dobrynin what their estimate was of the possibility of the Chinese Communists conducting an atomic test. He replied without hesitation that the Soviets thought the Chinese could conduct a test at almost any time now.

Dobrynin seemed quite interested in learning whether we were working on any postelection plans, particularly with respect to Germany. He asked me directly whether or not the Ambassadorial Group was working on any papers. I replied that we had not had a meeting for several months.

There was considerable discussion of the American electoral campaign. When I said that in the course of the next month or so he would probably read statements that would not be particularly pleasing to them, he asked why it was that people like the Secretary felt it necessary to discuss publicly such subjects as

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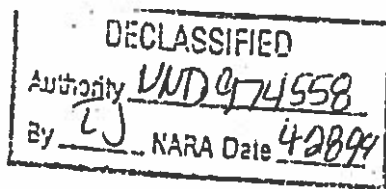
the Eastern European Communist countries. I said that as he knew it was our policy to improve our relations with all countries but as he must be aware we frequently ran into difficulties because Congress sometimes put specific legal restrictions on some of our activities. I said therefore it was necessary to do a certain amount of public education. He appeared to understand my point.

I asked the Ambassador if he had any indication of the timing of the Chairman's visit to Bonn. He replied he did not, but when I pressed him, he expressed his personal opinion that it would not take place in the next month or two.

In return, Dobrynin asked if the President had any plans for travel after the election. I said I understood that the President did not wish to leave the country until there was a Vice President, and pointed out that this would not happen until the end of the year. Dobrynin raised the question of a possible visit by the President to General de Gaulle and said that perhaps the President could visit de Gaulle, Erhard, and then the Soviet Union. I said I had no idea of what the President's thinking was on this subject.

On his own initiative, Dobrynin asked what I thought of Soviet relations with Communist China. I said that I was unable to understand Communist Chinese policy and said that in view of all the difficulties they were having internally, it was difficult to understand why they pushed their quarrel with the Soviet Union so vigorously. I tried to get him to discuss the border quarrel, but without success. When I mentioned that the Chinese leadership was far from young, he said that this was true. He mentioned that some of the leaders, such as Chou En-Lai, were somewhat younger but he said that Chou had little influence on Chinese policy and that it was Mao who made the decisions. I inquired whether he thought the Chinese would arrange a separate meeting of the Communist Parties supporting them, and he said he thought this was quite possible.

Dobrynin asked me whether there was any truth in the rumors about various moves in our diplomatic service, including my own transfer to Rome. I replied that this was pure newspaper speculation and so far as I knew there was nothing to these rumors whatever.



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Dobrynin asked several questions regarding the nature of my duties as Acting Deputy Under Secretary and said that there was no equivalent position in the Soviet Foreign Office.

When I referred to rumors of Ulbricht's illness, Dobrynin merely said that for a good many years there were repeated rumors of this kind and implied that there was nothing to them.

I asked him if the remodeling of our Embassy in Moscow had been completed, thinking that he would then raise the question of their desire to obtain a new location in Washington, but he did not mention this problem.

Dobrynin said that in the Soviet Foreign Service there was no compulsory retirement age. He said that they could apply for retirement after age fifty-five. He said that most of the people he knew who had retired soon regretted it and tried to get back into Government service. He said that Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov was about sixty-three or sixty-four years of age but was in good health and had no intention of retiring.

Dobrynin asked me what I thought would be the main issues in the American electoral campaign. I said that although Senator Goldwater and other Republicans had said that foreign affairs would be the main issue, that I personally did not think, in the absence of some unusual event, that foreign policy issues would affect many voters. I said that my own opinion was that domestic issues would be more important. The Ambassador said that he hoped that for the next couple of months he and I could take things easy and that there would be no critical issues raised in our bilateral relations. I pointed out that there were a number of serious problems, such as Cyprus, Viet-Nam, Indonesia, and Laos, but he was disinclined to discuss these questions.

I also drew attention to the Article 19 problem in the United Nations. Dobrynin said that his impression in Moscow was that if they were deprived of their vote in the General Assembly, they would probably withdraw. I said that if this problem were not solved, it was a question of whether or not

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we could continue our membership. The Ambassador seemed quite surprised at this and asked me if I seriously thought that such a development was possible. I pointed out that it was the Congress that had to authorize our contribution, and said that there had long been a feeling in the Congress and throughout the country that we were carrying more than our share of the expenses of the United Nations. I said that we were not trying to exploit this issue against them but merely wanted to solve it. I reminded him that almost a year ago I had emphasized to him the seriousness of this problem and the firmness of our position, and said that as he knew Ambassador Stevenson had made a sincere effort to work out with their representatives some solution.

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