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THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

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June 8, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
From: Cyrus Vance <sup>CV</sup>  
Subject: Your Meetings With  
President Brezhnev in Vienna

The Vienna Summit will represent a major milestone in your Administration and in US-Soviet relations. This memorandum is in three parts: first, some observations on the larger objectives of the meeting and the frame of mind of each side in approaching it; second, a discussion of dealing with Brezhnev; and third, an outline of the sequence and priorities of the issues over the course of the four days of meetings.

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I. Objectives and Approach

The Russians have a reputation for toughness in foreign affairs and meticulous attention to detail in any issue affecting their interests. Consequently, there is a temptation to Indian-wrestle them on each of many issues--and indeed they expect this. However, like other foreign leaders you have met, they also attach great weight to the personal element of political relationships. Brezhnev and his entourage will be heavily influenced by your personal style and their perception of your motivations.

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-2-

Despite Brezhnev's uncertain health and tenure, it is worth the effort and patience required to establish personal rapport with him. At the outset, especially, it will be important to convince him that the issue of war and peace is central to your perception of US-Soviet relations. While his interest in other aspects of the relationship is apparently waning as his energy fails him, his focus on this central question remains firm.

Neither Brezhnev nor any of his potential successors now in our field of vision questions the need for a managed relationship with the US which excludes the more dangerous form of competition. He and the other Soviet leaders crave the stability and respectability that go with a smooth US-Soviet relationship, but they want to pursue many of their familiar competitive tactics at the same time. They justify much of their behavior as a reaction to the American exercise of power and influence in areas of contention, and regard any questioning of their right to engage in such behavior as questioning their status as an equal power.

Given this Soviet attitude, and the fact that a new leadership is undoubtedly not far off, a major objective of this Summit should be to reinforce the incentives for the Soviet leaders to adhere to the general course they have taken away from the Cold War, while at the same time nudging them towards a more realistic understanding of what modifications in their behavior are essential if this course is to prosper.

There is an analogous Summit objective of bringing our own political leaders and the American people to a clear understanding of the opportunities and responsibilities of dealing with the Soviet Union--allowing neither euphoria nor animosity to blind us to our self interest. SALT will be the principal step forward towards rationality in managing the US-Soviet relationship. Other arms control efforts can contribute to steadiness in our relations. Differences on Third World issues should not be papered over. However, the primary focus of your exchanges with Brezhnev should be to reaffirm the basic framework of US-Soviet relations,

SECRET

SECRET

-3-

which is based on substantial common interest in strategic stability, mutual acceptance of the status quo in the developed world, and avoidance of confrontation in dealing with the Third World.

One important factor is that Brezhnev has his own domestic constituency. He has had to mold elite opinion in the USSR to accept something more complex than the black-and-white stereotype of Marxism-Leninism vs. US imperialism. In the first instance he has portrayed better US-Soviet relations as essential for peace; beyond that, he has held out the promise of access to American technology and even consumer goods as the potential payoff for detente. Placing trade on a less precarious footing is thus important as a Soviet objective; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] If we can resolve the impasse over MFN, we will have restored the economic option to our tools for dealing with Moscow, and we will have strengthened the hand of those in the USSR who favor detente as a path to modernizing the economic and social system.

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A principal objective for SALT is to strengthen the substantive case and the psychological climate for ratification. In your discussions with Brezhnev, it will be important for him to understand the practical implications of this US need. At the same time, you will have an opportunity to gain insight into the Soviet internal constraints--especially among the military--that will shape Brezhnev's attitude towards the inevitable burdens that the ratification process will place on Soviet patience and willingness to facilitate verification. This is also a chance to probe Brezhnev's estimate of the types and magnitudes of limits that might be negotiable for SALT III. In general, the SALT discussions should offer valuable insight into the Soviet concept of deterrence, which is fundamental to our national security assumptions.

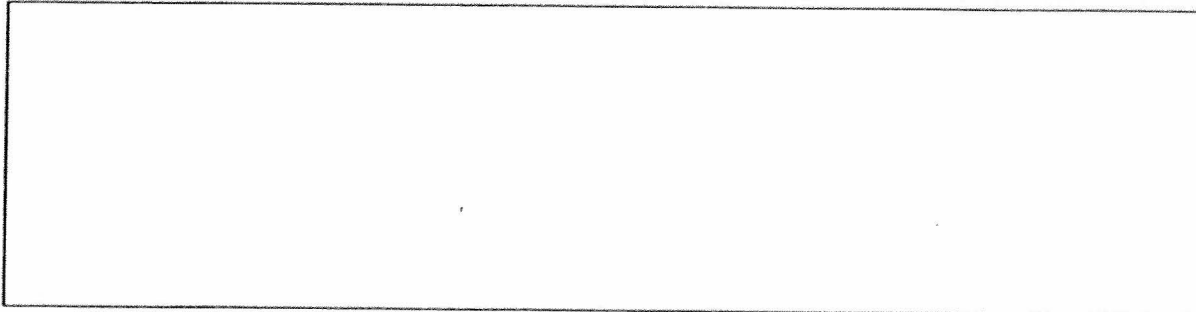
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SECRET

-4-

II. Dealing with Brezhnev

Brezhnev's performance in Vienna will depend on whether he is "up" for the occasion or not. At his best he will be alert and articulate, displaying the intelligence and cunning which brought him to the top in a tough and brutal political system. He may display personal charm and a sometimes earthy sense of humor.



B1,A5

The most recent reports on Brezhnev's condition indicate that he is in one of his better periods, putting in a full day's work and displaying considerable vigor in his discussions in May with Tito. During his visit to Hungary at the beginning of this month, Brezhnev seemed to cope well with the public portions of his program. Nevertheless, his broadcast speech on Hungarian television had been pre-taped before he left Moscow.

In any event, Brezhnev's physical condition will severely limit what he can do. Two hours is about the maximum he can spend in a negotiating session and he will require a long rest between morning and afternoon sessions. At the dinners at the end of the day he will probably be showing the strain of the day's activity.

Because of his unpredictable condition and his failing grasp of detail, Brezhnev is carefully programmed by his aides. In the May meeting with Giscard, real dialogue proved difficult in plenary sessions, but this could change in Vienna. He will undoubtedly start off by reading from a

SECRET

SECRET

-5-

paper prepared by his aides and this, combined with the time needed for interpretation, will take up much time at the four planned meetings on June 16 and 17. More give-and-take should be possible at the two dinners and the small meeting planned for the last day, but actual negotiation on central issues is unlikely. This is especially the case since he will be away from Moscow and the Politburo whose endorsement of major changes in the Soviet position would be required.

Despite these limitations, none of Brezhnev's subordinates will hem him in if he is determined to take charge of his own program--and there is a fair chance that he will do so if he senses the opportunity to reach a greater understanding with you than his advisors have told him to expect.

### III. Meeting Sequence

The structure of the first four plenary meetings has been jointly worked out in advance.

#### June 16 - US-USSR Relations 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

The morning meeting on June 16 will give you and Brezhnev an opportunity to state your general views on US-Soviet relations, the place of arms control in these relations, etc. As host for this meeting (decided by the toss of a coin) you will lead off with a statement as long as 30 minutes (excluding time for consecutive interpretation). This statement can set a constructive mood for the talks, stress the importance of SALT ratification and the need for restraint and emphasize cooperation in the period ahead. We suggest that you take this opportunity to put forward our proposal on regular consultations, military exchanges and the defense dialogue. The Soviets have told us that their statement will be general and not acrimonious. Judging by Brezhnev's discussions with Giscard and earlier Summits with Nixon and Ford, he will concentrate on the dangers of rapprochement with China.

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