

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION, W. AVERELL HARRIMAN AND
AMBASSADOR ANATOLIY F. DOBRYNIN, SOVIET EMBASSY, March 14, 1978

Ambassador Dobrynin asked me to lunch today at 1:15 p. m, and I left just before 3:00 p. m. Dobrynin is leaving on Friday for Moscow, and he is lunching with Zbig, on the latter's invitation, on Wednesday, March 15, and with Vance, (as I already knew) on Thursday, March 16.

We had a frank and relaxed talk, and he asked me what he could tell Brezhnev from me. I said to tell him that everything I had said to him about President Carter was true--that he wants an agreement on SALT and he wants it as soon as he can get it. President Carter wants very much to see President Brezhnev and believes the outstanding difficulties could be solved if they could get together (other than of course certain technicalities that are being worked out in Geneva). Dobrynin understood about the delay caused by Panama. Vance had told him we were going to make another offer in Geneva. I said that I thought we ought to work towards a schedule making it possible for Carter and Brezhnev to get together and settle the few outstanding points that had not been completely agreed to. Tito, who had just left, would urge Brezhnev to get together with President Carter and also assure him that Carter was sincere in wanting the SALT agreement. We then discussed how it could be achieved. I suggested Vance and Gromyko might get together. He asked "where?" and continued, "How about Moscow, and he (Vance) could see Brezhnev?" I said I thought that would be fine if it was not for

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just one meeting. If Mr. Brezhnev was ready to spend enough time with Vance to work out the remaining points. Dobrynin said, "Of course he used to do that with Secretary Kissinger." Dobrynin felt that Brezhnev would like Vance and would like to deal with him when he got to know him. I told him that he ought to suggest that to Vance and my belief would be that the President would approve. We agreed that that meeting should take place in April. He then said that Gromyko would be over here in late May or early June for the United Nations disarmament meetings, and the details of a summit meeting could be arranged. I said that an agreement for a summit need not wait that long.

We also talked about the Horn, and I said both sides had played it up too much. They had sent too much in--too many generals, too many Cubans, and too many weapons. He said that we had talked about it too much in public, that it was impossible for the Soviets to accede to things we talk about in public. I understood, but said that they had to pay attention to U. S. public opinion. He was outspoken in his feeling that Brzezinski put the press up to things which were unwise; that his Polish temperament made him strongly anti-Soviet; and that he just did not understand the Russian psychology. I told him I could not accept the Polish ancestry reference, but I had to agree that at times his mind worked too fast and he has an urge to do things too quickly. But I said that there was goodwill between Vance and Brzezinski in spite of certain difficulties Brzezinski had caused Vance. Dobrynin spoke in the highest terms of Vance,

commenting only that he did not always assert himself. I said that Vance did assert himself when the subject was important enough, but I had to agree that Vance was generous in not objecting to a White House spokesman. Dobrynin said that he would tell Brzezinski that when he (Brzezinski) spoke for the White House, that brought the President into it; and when the President was brought into something, that brought in Brezhnev. The Foreign Office and the State Department could have differences without it being too important, but when the two heads of government appeared to be in variance it appeared to be serious. I encouraged him to say that to Brzezinski bluntly.

I underlined that the President was sincere, and so was Vance, not to have any linkage on SALT. It is the overpowering issue between us, but that when things went wrong in other directions, like the Horn, it caused difficulties in public opinion and in the Congress. As always, he mentioned what we were doing in Iran. I maintained that we had kept them in touch with things in the Middle East, whereas he had not been so frank in telling us about the visit of the PLO leader, Arafat. He said his government was beginning to be more frank with us. He thought it was a great leap forward when they agreed to release a statement of their nuclear capabilities rather than waiting until an agreement was signed.

We discussed Panama, and I agreed to let him know if there was anything particular that should interest him if the vote in the Senate went wrong on Friday. He told me to contact him through his Minister Counselor, Mr. Vasev.

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Dobrynin's adopted daughter, really his granddaughter, came into the room. They showed there was a great deal of affection between them. She talked pleasantly with me and later came to say goodbye after lunch. Dobrynin was in a relaxed frame of mind, not tense, but stated frankly that our relations were at a low ebb. I agreed, but said they should and could be altered, as it was so important in the interest of our two nations. He pooh-poohed the idea of the Cubans getting involved in Rhodesia, but I said the Cuban presence in Africa was dangerous. I said I thought if the Cubans get involved with the Ethiopians against the rebellion in Eritrea, it would be a great mistake as that is entirely an internal affair. The Soviets should now work with us to smooth out the differences between Somalia and Ethiopia. Dobrynin did not react.

Dobrynin told me that regarding Brezhnev's health, he had had the flu badly and was really ill for two and a-half months, even having pneumonia. I asked if it was the "Russian flu." He said "No, (laughing) he had caught it from the Chinese!" He said he thought Brezhnev's health was good again and he was now in full health. I told him that the President, Secretary Vance, and others were all for getting a SALT agreement while Brezhnev was in command, as some new person might take some time before being able to discuss some important subjects. He didn't disagree, but indicated that there was no reason to worry at the present about Brezhnev's health.