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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

~~SECRET~~  
S/S 7724393

DATE: September 22, 1977  
PLACE: The Secretary's Office  
TIME: 6:30 - 6:45 P.M.

SUBJECT: SALT

PARTICIPANTS: US USSR

Secretary of State  
Cyrus R. Vance  
Mr. William D. Krimer,  
Interpreter

Foreign Minister A.A. Gromyko  
Mr. V. M. Sukhodrev,  
Interpreter

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Gromyko recalled that a few days ago the Secretary had, on behalf of his government, expressed concern over the following issue. It was Gromyko's understanding that the U.S. side wanted the new agreement to contain a provision to the effect that the total number of land-based MIRVed missiles must not exceed 800. He asked if his understanding was correct.

The Secretary replied in the affirmative.

Gromyko said that in that case he wanted to express the following thought to the Secretary. If the question of Soviet heavy missiles were eliminated, and provided that the question of ALCMs on heavy bombers was resolved on the basis of the Soviet proposal, i.e., that each heavy bomber equipped with ALCMs be counted as one MIRVed unit, then the Soviet Union would be prepared to agree that the number of land-based MIRVed ICBMs be limited to 820. Gromyko added that this almost coincided with what had been proposed by the United States. He wanted to convey this thought to the Secretary before his meeting with President Carter tomorrow.

The Secretary said he would communicate this to the President as soon as possible.

OPR/LS:WDKrimer:ach

(Drafting Office and Officer)

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- 2 -

Gromyko had a second idea he wanted to convey to the Secretary; this concerned the bomber called "Backfire" in the United States. He understood this was also a matter of great concern to the U.S. side. He had prepared a verbal communication in English which he would now read:

"As a good will gesture the Soviet side informs the US side that the Soviet medium-range bomber Tu-22-M, called "Backfire" in the United States, has a radius of action of 2,200 kilometers, and that the Soviet Union does not intend to give it the capability of operating at intercontinental distances. In this connection, the Soviet side states that it will not increase the radius of this aircraft so as to enable it to strike targets on the territory of the USA, nor does it intend to give that aircraft this capability in any other manner, including by means of in-air refueling. At the same time, the Soviet Union states that it will not increase production rates of this aircraft as compared to the present rate."

The Secretary said that this was certainly of interest. He would convey both statements to the President, so that he would have them tonight. He was going to have breakfast with the President tomorrow morning, but would also talk to him about this tonight.

Gromyko expressed his appreciation and thought that their conversation today could be ended on that note.

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