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RECORD OF THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE CONVERSATION
BETWEEN A.A. GROMYKO AND THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE C. VANCE

May 31, 1978, New York

Our final meeting with the USA Secretary of State C. Vance took place on May 31. First I met with Vance alone (trans. i.e. "eye to eye") (only interpreters from both sides were present).

A.A. Gromyko. Taking advantage of this opportunity to talk to you in private, I want to ask how the explosion of propaganda hostile to the USSR, which we have observed in the USA for some time already, can be explained? Until now we have observed various declarations made by representatives of the American administration, and evaluated them in different ways according to their orientation. Yet we have always tried to stress constructive aspects of those declarations which were put forward by the President, and by you and by other leading American authorities who deal with foreign policy.

But most recently our attention has been more and more attracted to the fact that, beginning with the President (and Brzezinski has already surpassed himself in this), American officials are constantly making statements which are aimed, or so it seems to us more and more, at nearly bringing us back to the period of "cold war."

In Washington, D.C. the other day, I could not but come to the conclusion that the orientation of President Carter's statements is to a great extent determined by the character of the false information which he receives. This can be illustrated by his declarations on the situation in Africa, which are obviously based on wrong, distorted information.

Now I see that the matter is even more serious. Evidently somebody in the United States, some circles, consciously are creating myths, and are then referring to those same myths, and dumping all this on the laps of the President, the Secretary of State, and other American leaders.

So what is the real policy of the USA, and towards what is it directed: to the creation of relations based on mutual respect, on non-interference in internal affairs, and on building relations; or towards aggravating of tension in our relations. This is the question, which I

would like you to answer.

On returning to Moscow I will report to L.I. Brezhnev and to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party about the general political situation in the United States today and about the USA's policy towards the USSR. I presume that you, in turn, will inform the President about this conversation.

C. Vance. I will certainly inform the President about our conversation. Actually you have just asked me two questions. First, you asked me to explain the reasons for that which you have called an explosion of hostile propaganda toward the USSR in the United States. Let me try to answer this question with the utmost openness.

There are several facts which provoke concern in regard to the Soviet Union in the United States. These are reflected, naturally, in newspaper articles, materials, TV programs etc. I would like to point out three main areas, in which this concern reveals itself.

Very many people in the USA and in other countries, especially in the West, reveal serious concern in connection with the increase by the USSR of its military forces, especially in Europe, and the fact that the dimensions of this increase significantly exceed the dimensions needed for defense. Looking at the Soviet Union's spending for conventional arms, people picture a dramatically rising curve, at the same time keeping in mind the stable level (of spending) for arms by the US and other western countries.

The intentions of the Soviet Union sincerely concerns many people. A natural question arises: if the intentions of the USSR are to preserve the existing military balance, why does it increase its military forces and weapons on such a scale. Doesn't it mean that the Soviet Union, rather than trying to reduce military rivalry in Europe by cutting down the level of weapons and military forces in the region, has more aggressive intentions.

As for strategic weapons, we made definite progress in the past: we concluded the ABM Treaty, signed the Temporary Agreement on limitation of strategic offensive weapons and have moved forward on working out a new agreement on SALT. All these can be considered positive elements in the relations between our two countries.

On the other hand, the constant growth by the Soviet Union of its armed forces and modern conventional weapons by the USSR provokes serious concern in many people.

Another major issue which alarms us is Africa, which President Carter and I have already discussed with you in detail. I think we all recognize that elements of rivalry will remain between us in the future. But at the same time there will be areas, in which we will be able to achieve mutual understanding and find a common language. If you look at the situation in Africa today, it seems that the areas of rivalry have developed beyond the limits of normal competition and led to military conflicts, fed by Soviet weapons and equipment and by armed combat detachments provided by Cuba.

I am acquainted with your explanation of the factors which stimulated certain military actions

in Africa, and I will not repeat what was already said by both sides. However, in answering your question, I want to set forth the evaluation of the actions of the Soviet Union in Africa which is being formed in the USA and many other countries (not only European). Many people now presume that the Soviet Union sets fires in various regions of Africa instead of preventing those fires in a peaceful way.

The third issue which provokes serious concern is connected with the question of human rights, which has become particularly urgent recently because of actions like Orlov's trial.

These are the three main issues, which provoke what you call the explosion of emotions directed against the Soviet Union.

The second part of your question referred to what the USA actually wants: to build good relations with the Soviet Union or to return to the "cold war" period, accompanied by permanent confrontation and arguments between us.

I can answer that question quite simply and clearly. The United States does not want to return to the period of tension and confrontation between our two countries. We want to return our relations to their correct path, we want to return to better, tighter, closer relations between the Soviet Union and the USA. We want to reduce tension in the military and other spheres, to find as many more grounds as we can for a common language between us.

There are several means by which it would be possible to move forward in this direction and, maybe, the main way lies in making progress in the negotiations on limitation of strategic weapons. Yet, besides this there is a lot more which we can do. Most importantly, we must come to a deep mutual understanding of the fact that detente is a two-way street; we have to develop broader links in commerce, cooperation, culture and other spheres. We made some progress in these areas in the past, but unfortunately we have lately backtracked significantly.

I would like to mention some concrete steps, which in our opinion, could make it possible to achieve our aims. First, progress during the negotiations on limitation of strategic weapons. Second, progress in the Vienna negotiations on reduction of armed forces and weapons in Central Europe. Third, progress on a range of other arms control issues in the discussion of which we and you participate. Fourth, a better mutual understanding of the character of detente, and about how to turn this process into a two-way street. Fifth, to come to agreement on other steps which could be undertaken in order to provide broader exchanges between our peoples in the spheres of cultural, scientific, and other activity, as well as in the area of commerce.

In conclusion I must point out that, relating to the fact that detente should be a two-way street, and in the context of the situation in Africa, we must determine how we should act so that all these questions do not continue to be a constant source of confrontation between us.

I tried as I could to set forth more simply some fundamental problems and to express my opinion about those steps which could be undertaken in order to develop our relations in a

correct direction and to improve them.

A.A. Gromyko. I will try to react to your statements as briefly as I can. Thus I will be able to avoid repeating what I already said in Washington, D.C.

I listened with positive feelings to your words to the effect that USA is trying to conduct its affairs so as to allow us to find solutions to the problems that confront us, avoiding tension in Soviet-American relations and not returning to the period of the "cold war". I am sure that all my colleagues in the Soviet leadership, including L.I. Brezhnev personally, will also react to your words positively. This is my response to the constructive part of your statements. It would have been good if the actions of the American government had corresponded with your words, but that is not the case now.

You went on to say that one of the reasons for the explosion in the United States of propaganda hostile to the USSR was that the Soviet Union lately had, apparently, greatly increased its military potential, and that this fact worries the United States and other Western countries.

I must categorically deny this statement. Moreover, it has already been repeatedly denied at the highest level by L.I. Brezhnev. It is not true. It is a myth, thought up in the West with a definite goal in mind -- to camouflage the Western program of arms increases. And the facts completely support this.

Our military forces are certainly at their required level. But we do not want to spend on defense any more than is necessary to preserve the security of the Soviet Union in the face of the constant--I repeat, constant--growth of NATO's, and especially of the USA's, armed forces and weapons.

If we had other intentions, why should we, in the U.N. and in other forums, insist every year, every month, every day, on the necessity of disarmament, up to general and complete disarmament? Recall the proposals which were put forward by L.I. Brezhnev at the recent Komsomol Congress. They were devoted to a total ban on the production of nuclear arms, and the subsequent destruction of these weapons and the complete switchover of nuclear energy to purely peaceful uses. Remember the programme, adopted at the 25th CPSU Congress, of additional actions in the sphere of the struggle for peace, which we try to bring to life literally every day, though you act in the opposite direction.

We would not have conducted such a policy if we had wanted to constantly increase our armaments. We carry out this policy of peace and detente firmly and consistently, despite the ring of American military bases around the Soviet Union. We are ready to disarm, even radically, but at the same time, it goes without saying that we will never agree to unilateral disarmament. Do not expect this. An equal degree of security must be observed, there must be no loss of security for any of the sides. This is an immutable law which must be observed.

C. Vance. Neither of us is speaking about unilateral disarmament. We believe that both

sides are pragmatic enough to understand that unilateral disarmament is impossible. It can take place only within the mutual interests of the sides. The question, however, is whether we will manage to create a situation in which mutually advantageous arms control agreements, which will clearly show everyone that we are striving for disarmament rather than for an increase in arms, can be achieved.

A.A. Gromyko. I will respond to what you have just said later. Now I will continue to express ideas, which I started before. I will touch on the issue of military budgets.

Several times we have introduced proposals to reduce military budgets, naming in this regard concrete percentages, corrected our proposal in accordance with counterproposals of other states. Yet, the USA and its allies never expressed any positive attitude to our proposals. They met them with raised bayonets, every time rejecting them at once. We proposed to freeze military budgets at their present level, from which it might later have been possible to begin their reduction. But these proposals, too, were declined without consideration.

At the present special session of the United Nations General Assembly, devoted to questions of disarmament, we decided to propose a new approach to the issue. Earlier, when we had named a definite percent by which to reduce military budgets, Western states had referred to various difficulties related to the allegedly different structures of the military budgets of the Soviet Union and the countries of the West. We always acted from a belief that these complexities had an artificial character and must not serve as a barrier on in the way of reducing military spending. Now we decided to take another approach: to speak not about percents, but about absolute figures. These figures may not entirely coincide, although, it goes without say that they must, as they say, in the same ballpark. There must not be a situation when one great power would reduce its military budget by 1 bln. dollars a year, and the other -- by 1 mln. Think over our new proposals. It seems to us that they could make it easier to achieve an agreement.

Both previously and now, American representatives have tried and are trying now to suggest that their military budget is not growing, although in fact US military spending grows enormously every year. This truth is known to everyone.

C. Vance. Spending is growing, but not in real terms.

A.A. Gromyko. We are speaking about the real budget.

C. Vance. From the point of view of dollars our military budget is growing, but only because of inflation.

A.A. Gromyko. I am afraid that now you will start to throw blame at us for not having inflation in our country. In fact the USA military budget is growing both in real and in material terms. You can not cover this with inflation.

You spoke further on about the situation in Africa. I must say that in this case a total and crude distortion of the real situation is taking place. If I, discussing this topic, behaved like

some of your high ranking officials, who let loose with simply insulting declarations directed toward the Soviet Union, I would have been forced to use not those, but sharper expressions. By the way, those American officials who make such declarations should study how to communicate with people, especially with representatives of foreign states.

Who should know better than the USA, with its a far-reaching espionage network, that the Soviet Union had absolutely nothing to do with events in Zaire, Rhodesia, Namibia. As for the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia, when Somalia launched an attack against Ethiopia we, responding to a request from the latter, helped out by sending to Ethiopia a certain amount of weapons and a group of specialists to train them how to use the weapons. At the same time, as I already told you, we would at that time have welcomed any help of this kind from other countries, including the USA, if any such assistance had been requested of them.

But instead of this we face the fiction that Ethiopian troops acted under Soviet command, etc. Why is this done? Being realists, we started to look for reasons for such absurd assertions. We came to the conclusion that we it is necessary to search for those reasons in the attempts of some definite forces, particularly in the United States, to create a screen through which it would be more difficult for people to understand the true situation, in order to justify its own actions in Africa, which appear as interference in the domestic affairs of the countries on that continent.

An illustration of this statement is the slaughter which took place in Zaire not long ago. In fact neither USSR nor Cuba had anything to do with it. As you remember, I told President Carter about this. We were indignant at this slaughter and at the insinuations in our address. I have already said that there is not a single Soviet person in Namibia or in Rhodesia, and in Zaire we have only official diplomatic representatives.

Pass my words on to the President. Tell him that the assertions, which we confront in connection with events in Africa, in particular in Zaire, we can treat only as a pure and deliberate fiction.

As it happened, some individuals and governments themselves threw an explosive ball of lightening into the arena and now are saying: look, how terrible that looks. We are not responsible for somebody else's sins and do not intend to be. Those who sin are responsible.

Touching on the question of so-called human rights, you raised a question of Soviet citizens, giving the concrete name Orlov, and noting that you could give some other names. I will say only that we will not discuss questions like this neither with you, nor with anybody else, because these are questions in our internal competence, and only in our competence.

And now I respond to your statement that there are other questions on which we do not agree, but which we should discuss in order to find mutually acceptable decisions. You are right: there are such questions. I want, however, to draw your attention to the fact that the USA and some of its allies do not, as a rule, want to discuss the proposals which we put forward. It often happens that you decline our proposals on the basis only of some fragmentary reports in the press, even before you have received the official text. This was

the case, for example, when the Warsaw Treaty states proposed that all countries which signed the Helsinki Final Act should agree not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against each other.

You turned this proposal down, but life itself did not reject it because of that. We suggested having a preparatory meeting, at which it would have been possible to consider this proposal, if necessary to sharpen it, to ask each other different questions etc. You did not want to do this either. We also could follow this same approach, turning down at once any proposal of the Western states at once. But is this how serious people conduct their affairs. We would not like to conduct our affairs this way.

C. Vance. First of all I want to say that I fully agree that it is necessary to work out some sort of a mechanism for the discussion of those or other proposals put forward by the sides, which would allow us to hear each other out and to seriously consider those or any other questions. The thing is that sometimes we are faced with divergent interpretations of these or other problems, the consideration of which could have helped to eliminate differences of opinion. That is why it is very important to understand how each side pictures the existing situation. Let us think of the best way to conduct affairs which touch on relations between the Soviet Union and the USA. Maybe it makes sense for the sides to meet more often both on our level and on the level of those who negotiate concrete questions, in order to clarify the positions of both sides? Maybe it follows that we should think of other methods? One thing is clear: something must be done to change the tendency, which has lately appeared in the relations between our two countries.

A.A. Gromyko. This is a very important question.

C. Vance. Let me now respond to your remarks regarding our information about the participation of Cubans in the events in Zaire. According to our intelligence data, Cubans took part in planning and preparation of the intrusion there. As for the sources of our information, it was the Commander of Katang armed forces, General Mbumba, and Cuban sources in East Germany. We considered these sources reliable.

A.A. Gromyko. Oh, then you are simply victims of disinformation. If we were not sure that our information was authentic, we would not have told you about it. We take great responsibility for what we are saying.

C. Vance. But how could we know that information provided to us by Mbumba and Cubans themselves does not correspond with reality? When this information came to us we assumed that it was based on solid evidence.

A.A. Gromyko. But who on Earth knows what kind of General this is? Who does he serve? Is he really the only one to tell the truth, like Jesus Christ for the Bible legend?

You have information from us -- accept it. Your sources of information are bad if they present lies as truth. You yourself know from experience that you must not believe every report. Man was given his brain in order to analyze information, think and make realistic

conclusions.

Unfortunately, there are officials in the USA who easily, to put it mildly, present lies for truth. But a serious policy cannot be built on this.

C. Vance. I take into consideration what you have said. Yet I want to say that we have to take as serious the information, which we receive from people like the Commander of the Katang forces.

A.A. Gromyko. But may be the General you mentioned is only saving his skin? You do not know his reasons, who he works for, do you? Many questions arise here.

C. Vance. Evidently it does not make much sense to continue this argument. I mentioned these facts only to illustrate difficulties in receiving trustworthy information. Probably it is one more argument in support of the necessity of having more frequent meetings and exchange of opinions between us.

A.A. Gromyko. Perhaps. But if on the basis of this type of information, known to be false, a broad campaign, hostile to us, is developed in the USA, then it is another kettle of fish. And if, on top of everything, the government takes part in this process and heats up this campaign, then what conclusion should we draw? Really, this is not happening with the four walls of a working study. It is taking place on a national scale.

C. Vance. President Carter asked me to find out your opinion of the expediency of carrying out exchange visits of some senior military officers from the Soviet Union and the USA. I mean, for example, a meeting between the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Head of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces. As for selecting questions for discussion, they can agree on them in advance.

A.A. Gromyko. We will discuss this question and inform you about our decision.

C. Vance. We start from a belief that such exchanges could demonstrate to the public our readiness to have contacts on all levels. This could even prove, in a way, that we do not aim at confrontation.

During the private conversation with Vance, the question of Article 12 of the future treaty, dealing with non-circumvention of the agreement, was touched on.

C. Vance. Talking to President Carter in Washington, D.C., you mentioned the article, connected with non-circumvention of the future agreement, and said that we agreed on it in Moscow. Now I would like to make a brief conclusion of what was discussed in Moscow, in order to avoid any misunderstandings.

I said in Moscow that the USA does not intend to circumvent the Treaty. You set forth the Soviet understanding of what could be considered a circumvention and asked if it coincided with our point of view. In the context of issues then under discussion I expressed an opinion

that our positions coincide, i.e. first, the USA is not prepared to assume an obligation of non-transfer as far as our allies are concerned, and second, that the USA will not circumvent the Treaty either through any third countries or in any other way.

A.A. Gromyko. Both you and we have protocols in which the understanding that we had achieved is recorded. We believe that everything is clear here: we talk about non-circumvention of the Treaty in any way, including assigning the weapon itself or knowledge, connected with this weapon. We achieved a definite understanding on this issue and consider it to be the foundation for further development.

C. Vance. I want to clearly declare that the USA will have the right of transfer, if such a transfer will not mean circumvention of the Treaty.

A.A. Gromyko. Oh, this is like walking a tightrope. Isn't it clear that non-circumvention of the Treaty suggests also not transferring the weapon, its parts or knowledge about it to third countries? It goes without saying that we are talking only about those types of weapons which are covered by the Treaty.

C. Vance. We refused to include the regulation on non-transfer into the Treaty because we wanted to maintain the right to make such a transfer to our allies on condition that circumvention of the Treaty would not take place.

A.A. Gromyko. From our point of view non-transfer of certain kinds of weapons or knowledge about it is a form of non-circumvention of the Treaty, just as transfer would be a form of circumvention. Speaking concretely, the transfer to state "X" of missiles covered by the Treaty would be a circumvention of the Treaty. I cannot understand if are dealing now with a real difference in interpretation or with a question of semantics. If the USA intends to transfer weapons covered by the Treaty to its allies, then the regulation about non-circumvention seems to be an empty barrel, without content.

C. Vance. It is quite obvious that there are questions connected with some transfers to our allies, which we carried out in the past and will continue to carry out. In this respect the Treaty must not change the character of our relations with our allies.

If according to the Treaty some prohibitions of some sort of actions will be imposed on us, then it is clear that we will not undertake any actions which could lead to circumvention of the Treaty.

P. Warnke explained this issue to V.S. Semenov, and it seems that the matter became perfectly clear for both of them. Now I wanted just to explain this regulation once more.

A.A. Gromyko. We can not be bound by your past experience. If, say, after the Treaty is concluded you will, in order to increase the general quantity of that or another type of weapon, transfer it to England, will it be lawful? No, it will be a violation of the Treaty.

C. Vance. According to the Treaty we will be forbidden to test and deploy mobile launchers

for ICBM. If, after the signing of the Treaty, we transferred such a system to somebody, it would be a violation and hence a circumvention of the Treaty. But if we transferred, say, one bomber to somebody, I do not think it could be viewed as a circumvention of the agreement. Still, transfer of a number of bombers big enough to change the strategic balance would be a different thing.

A.A. Gromyko. But where is this line which before crossing it the strategic balance is not changed, and after crossing it, it would be changed. In this issue the mathematical aspect of our Treaty should be absolutely precise.

Because if you will undertake something in one area and we do the same in another area, mutual suspicions, accusations etc. will unavoidably arise. Do we need this? This must not happen. If necessary, explain it to your allies.

By the way, it suddenly occurred to me that a delay in preparing the new agreement might be explained by the fact that the United States is using this time to transfer to its allies some kinds of weapons which should be covered by the Treaty. This could make the situation more difficult: for the USA, the profit would be small change, but it would cause major damage to our mutual business.

C. Vance. Let us instruct P. Warnke and V.S. Semenov to have one more talk and discuss final details of this question. I raised it only in order to avoid any misunderstanding on this matter in future.

A.A. Gromyko. Let them discuss, but our position can not be different. The Treaty can be prepared only on the basis of honor.

The conversation went on in the presence of other participants (on our side: comrades Kornienko G.M., Dobrynin A.F., Makarov V.G.; on the American side: P. Warnke, M. Toone, K. Bartholomew).

C. Vance. Now I would like to speak about new types of ICBM and SLBM. We considered three variants of settlement of this issue, which you introduced to President Carter. We find all of these variants unacceptable.

As the President told you already, in our opinion there are two possible alternative solutions to the ICBM issue. The first would relate to defining a relatively short period during which the protocol is carried out. In the course of this period new types of ICBM would not be tested or deployed.

According to the second alternative, one exception from the ban on testing and deployment of new types of missiles would be allowed for the whole period covered by the Treaty, i.e. till the end of 1985. However, in the event that the agreement is based on this variant, it will be absolutely necessary to give each side the right to decide whether to equip the one new type of ICBM with a single warhead or MIRV.

A.A.Gromyko. As far as I understand, you are insisting on the same proposals, which you put forward in Moscow?

C. Vance. Yes.

A.A.Gromyko. It is unacceptable for us. Any person understands that freedom of choice between one type of ICBM, either MIRVed type or equipped with a single warhead gives an advantage to one side, namely to the side which will equip this new type of ICBM with MIRV.

At first glance the proposal of American side seems to almost observe the principle of equality, but in reality, taking into consideration the factual side of the matter, the USA would for a long period of time, measured in years, have an obvious advantage. This contradicts the principle of equality and equal security for the sides. We will not reach an agreement on this basis.

You treated our variants too frivolously: mind, we offered three.

C. Vance. According to your third variant, testing and deployment of all new types of ICBM without exception would be banned for the whole period covered by the Treaty.

According to our first variant, these same things would be banned for the period covered by the protocol. So in this case the only difference between our two proposals is the time period when the ban would be in effect. Let us include this clause in the protocol.

P. Warnke. As the Secretary of State has just said, your third variant is basically analogous to our first, with the single exception that we propose to set the ban for the period of time covered by the protocol, and at the third stage of SALT negotiations come to an agreement whether the ban should be extended. If it is acceptable to you to establish such a ban for the period covered by the Treaty, we do not understand why you disagree to establish this banning for the period covered by the protocol.

It seems to us that such an agreement would provide equal security for the sides, because it would be based on a recognition of the different structures of our strategic forces. You, as far as we understand, believe that according to the structure of your strategic forces, modernization must be carried out by means of new missiles equipped with a single warhead. But we do not need such missiles. And so, an exception for both sides defined as one new type of ICBM with a single warhead only, could not ensure us equal security.

C. Vance. All the more so because we still would be limited to the sub-level of 820 ICBM with MIRV. Taking into consideration the existing limit, which is 1200 MIRVed ICBM and SLBM, including 820 MIRVed ICBM, we all the same could not deploy more than 500 ICBM with MIRV, because the rest of the missiles with MIRV would have to be SLBMs.

We understand that for the Soviet side, with the different structure of strategic forces, it is important to have an exception for one ICBM. So the Soviet proposal superficially seems to

observe the principle of equal security, but in fact it does not, insofar as the USA is not interested in having a new single warhead missile.

A.A. Gromyko. What you have just said does not add anything to the arguments you gave in Moscow. You go around in circles, and I don't know whether we must begin anew to discuss this question again, because there are no new elements in your statements. I think that you know perfectly well that in the event that we accept your conception, the USA will have an advantage over the USSR for a long time.

P. Warnke. I don't think that is true. It seems to me that we are stuck on the difference between the structures of our strategic forces. The Soviet Union needs a new type of single-warhead ICBM because it relatively recently deployed three new types of MIRVed missiles -- SS-17, SS-18 and SS-19. Therefore you intend to modernize your strategic forces by means of developing what you need in these conditions. But the fact that you do not need to create a new type of MIRVed ICBM does not mean that we shouldn't have this kind of a missile either.

A.A. Gromyko. How is it possible to say that the USA will not have any advantages if, in fact, missiles with MIRV have an advantage over single-warhead missiles? It would be another matter if you said that we could create a single-warhead ICBM so powerful that it could surpass any missile with MIRV. Yet it is not possible, because there are definite recognized criteria relating to power, which can not be surpassed. And your speculations about ceilings do not change anything.

P. Warnke. I told you what kind of a situation would develop if we accepted your proposals. The Soviet Union would have the MIRVed missiles SS-17, SS-18, and SS-19, of which 308 missiles [of the total number] would be SS-18, which is more powerful than any of our missiles.

We would have had 450 "Minuteman-II" missiles, 550 "Minuteman-III" and 54 "Titan".

If your proposal was put into practice, we would have been left with the same missiles that we have now, while the only exception provided for by this agreement would be of no interest to us. Such a situation would not in the least correspond with the principle of equality and identical security of the sides.

A.A. Gromyko. Is the issue really the number of missiles? No. We must also take into consideration the overall balance, within the limits of the agreed ceilings. From this point of view the American side, your specialists, understand perfectly well that the agreement, based on American proposals would have given the USA a big advantage in the overall balance.

You mentioned the Soviet missile SS-18. But when we achieved agreement on those levels, we made definite concessions to the United States after taking into account a range of factors. Already during our meetings with Kissinger in Geneva we agreed that if even one missile of a certain type was tested with MIRV, all missiles of this kind must count as missiles equipped with MIRV. If you want to talk about our missiles which are deployed in

the region of Derazhni and Pervomaisk, this, as you know, does not apply to them. And how much time will it take to equip all these missiles with MIRV? So, in this case take into account the final balance. Then you will be able to analyze how much each side will have.

This will be a really scientific approach to the matter, and artificial combinations of all sorts do not change anything.

We want to achieve an honest agreement and do not demand a right to create a new type of single-warhead missile, equal in capacity to our heavy missiles SS-18. Why should we return to this question which has already been agreed upon?

We could raise other questions as well, connected, in particular, with the geographic factor.

C. Vance. What do you mean?

A.A. Gromyko. In particular, the American means of forward basing.

Maybe now you would like to say something in regard to our intermediate-range bomber "Tu-22M"? I raise this question not because we wish to discuss it, but only because you are talking about the necessity to discuss it all the time and have expressed doubts regarding the last formulation of our unilateral declaration.

C. Vance. I do not understand what the formulation of the Soviet draft unilateral declaration on the question the refueling of the Backfire means.

A.A. Gromyko. You can not but admit that this or that kind of plane, if it is equipped with special devices, can take on board varying amounts of fuel. That is why we can talk about one refuelling, and why we can also talk about two-three or more refuellings. It is possible to construct a device, which will make it possible for the plane take on bigger or smaller amounts of fuel. We say that we are ready to declare that our plane will not be given the capacity to reach the US territory by means of additional refuelling in the air.

Determining so precisely our intentions regarding the plane "Tu-22M", we wanted to make a concession to the American side, but our intentions were not properly evaluated. Maybe it would be better if we returned to the original formulation and perhaps to take back the data which made the flight profile more precise besides. We also can refuse to withdraw the words "as a piece of information", which you disliked so much, from our initial variant and return to the original formulation as a whole.

C. Vance. I presume that the formulation which you proposed is useful. Yet I must have a clear understanding of what it means, otherwise I can not explain it to anyone.

Does, for instance, your declaration mean that you do not intend to provide the "Backfire" plane with a capacity to reach the territory of the USA by means of equipping it with additional fuel tanks? Or, say, would it be correct to make a conclusion that you do not intend to provide additional refuelling for the plane more than once?

Neither is it clear to me whether your declaration covers the issue of not carrying out training related to additional refuelling, and a decision not to create a fleet of tankers for this plane.

A.A. Gromyko. We can and have a right to develop methods of more than one additional refuelling of this plane, but not to provide it with a possibility to reach the territory of the USA. This is what we want to say.

I think that it makes no sense to discuss this question further, because it is impossible for us to make other concessions. This plane is not a strategic weapon.

If you continue to insist, we will officially propose that the corresponding American planes -- "Phantoms" in particular -- be discussed on equal terms with our plane. Will that make the situation easier? You will hardly like it.

C. Vance. At the present time I have nothing to add to what representatives of our side have already said on the "Backfire" issue.

A.A. Gromyko. I listened to you attentively, but I have to say directly that American position as it was presented by President Carter and now by you, leaves a dual impression. I will say further: today we have, excuse me, more doubts than ever about the USA position on the new agreement on limitation of strategic offensive weapons.

Both President Carter and you assure us that the USA wants to conclude an agreement and want to do it soon.

We gave those declarations much credit and we regarded them as a starting point for developing our position on concrete questions in preparation for these negotiations. We expressed again our readiness to take, when possible, the wishes of the American side into consideration in trying to find real mutually acceptable solutions to the questions which remain unresolved.

I want to remind you briefly what we are talking about. We proposed three alternative variants for solving the question of new ICBM types: either to ban flight tests and deployment of new types of ICBM with the exception of one type with a single warhead, for a term of three years, covered by the protocol or treaty, or to ban flying tests and deployment of all new types of ICBM without exception -- whether with a single warhead or with MIRV.

We also declared our readiness to agree not to increase the number of warheads on the existing types of ICBM if a decision on new types of missiles will be based on one of the mentioned alternative variants. In this regard, it goes without saying that a mutually acceptable decision on the limits of modernization of existing ICBM types should be found, and that the maximum number of long-range cruise missiles on a strategic bomber (trans. i.e. a bomber-carrier of such missiles) should be limited (to not more than 20).

Upon arriving at a mutually acceptable decision on new types of ballistic missiles, and only in this case, we would agree -- I confirm this -- to establish a level of 1200, but not 1250 units, for ICBM, SLBM, and ALCM equipped with MIRV.

Further, we expressed readiness to take into consideration the insistent requests of the American side and significantly elaborated our unilateral declaration regarding the Soviet intermediate bomber "Tu-22M". We did this with good will, wishing to promote the final working out of the agreement, though this question has nothing to do with the subject of the negotiations.

In such a way we again put forward major constructive proposals, thus demonstrating in practice our firm commitment to bringing the negotiations to a successful and quick conclusion. I repeat: doing this we took into consideration the firm declarations of the American leadership about its intention to act in a similar way, and the clear understanding that we achieved during our conversations in Moscow that both sides, I stress, both sides, must undertake energetic efforts to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining questions.

But what are we facing in reality? If we look at the position on concrete questions which you have expounded during these negotiations, it immediately becomes clear that this position, in comparison with your position when we parted in Moscow, has not changed on a single question.

We were all the more surprised when literally on the day after the meeting with the President a high-ranking representative of the American government publicly made an announcement to the effect that the USA had put forward proposals, which had, as if, opened the way to an immediate conclusion of the treaty and that now the United States had only to wait until the Soviet Union accepted them.

Officials who behave like this, evidently do not consider how the American side will look if we make our proposals public and evaluate to the position which the USA occupies. Do we have a moral right to react analogously to this declaration, which was not refuted by the American government? We have a right to explain the situation to our public opinion.

Such a way of acting, I say directly, puzzles us and does not coincide with the assurances given to us by the President and by you.

We also could declare: here are our proposals, if you accept them -- we will have an agreement, if you will not -- there will be no agreement. Then the conversation would have been short.

We must state that because of the position of the American side, the preparation of the agreement has not now moved forward in any way.

You and I exchange opinions on what to say about our negotiations to the public. Doing this we circle around the truth, but nevertheless, sincerely speaking, we ease the situation. But

if, as they say, we spoke the plain truth, no doubt it would shock many people.

Now on top of all this there is the question of your transfer of information about the progress of the negotiations on SALT to the Chinese leadership. On what basis did you do this? We did not agree you should do this.

And how should we understand that instead of businesslike discussions aimed at moving forward on the question of strategic weapons and on other issues, the resolution of which would serve the goals of constructive development of our relations, attempts are made to force on us a discussion which has nothing to do with these goals, and in which besides an acknowledged wrong interpretation of the USSR policy is permitted. In a word, this is an aggravating atmosphere which puts a heavy load on our negotiations.

Coming back to the agreement on limitation of strategic offensive weapons, I want to stress once more: the Soviet Union is ready to finish working on it within a short period of time and to sign such an agreement.

We would like to hope that the American side will consider once more the proposals which we have brought. Certainly it would be bad if during our next meeting the atmosphere will be the same, and if the American side will occupy the same position. Because it can happen that in the future the even the possibility of concluding a new agreement will be lost. We have sufficient resoluteness and patience. We are ready to continue the negotiations.

By the way, what advice could the Chinese give you as for the negotiations on SALT. Perhaps only one piece of advice: damn the agreement on SALT.

We often hear declarations to the effect that the USA public and the Congress are greatly concerned about the future agreement. This is not surprising at all if the US government does almost nothing to defend the agreement. We are taken aback by timidity of American administration as far as the development of the agreement is concerned.

It is not by chance that almost all speakers at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament speak about the significance of a new agreement on SALT, and speak in defense of this idea. Why then can the USA government not gather its courage and declare that this agreement coincides not only with the interests of both countries but also with the interests of peace in the whole world?

Many people in our country ask this question. And as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, it is asked of me. But I can do nothing but shrug my shoulders in response. Is it surprising that in such circumstances there are people in the US Congress who even believe that it is risky to make an agreement with the Soviet Union, because, as they say, the Soviet Union can break it. But we can say the same about the attitude of the United States. That is why it is necessary to firmly declare that such a possibility does not exist, and that the agreement is based on the ability of each side to control its observance, that we have in this regard the experience of implementing the first agreement. It is a positive experience, which shows that all misunderstandings, if any arise, can be quickly cleared up.

To be honest I must say that we heard some explanations of the significance of the future agreement from the Department of State and from P. Warnke. But all the same, the firm, brave and resolute voice of the US government is lacking.

C. Vance. Let me briefly respond to you. It is true that both the President and myself many times declared our desire to complete the negotiations as soon as possible and expressed our readiness to do everything possible to achieve this goal. We still have this intention. I spoke about it many times, and a couple of days ago President Carter himself told you this.

As for defense of the agreement by the American government, you might have insufficient information.

I said many times that the agreement which we will sign will be just for both sides and necessary for increasing stability in relations between our two countries, that it will help to provide security and peace all over the world.

After I returned from Moscow I visited all but one of the leaders of the US Congress and during private conversation with each of them I spoke about the importance of achieving a new agreement and also about my confidence that such an agreement will serve interests of peace all over the world.

Last Friday P. Warnke and I spoke to the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and in our testimony in the positive sense we stressed the importance of negotiations and our hope they will be finished soon.

So I cannot agree with the opinion that we lack readiness to firmly support the a quick conclusion of a new agreement on SALT.

Of course there are people in the USA who do not want such an agreement to be concluded between the USSR and the USA at all. It is impossible to be responsible for every statement of such people, but on the whole we are working hard to support the agreement.

We have pursued an initiative which will soon result in visible representatives in Congress as well as many famous Americans will announce their support of the agreement, stressing the importance of concluding it soon. There is, of course, a delicate question of determining the most appropriate time for such an initiative, which is certainly connected with the perspectives of concluding this agreement. But we will solve this question too.

The proposals, which we introduced in Moscow in April, were flexible enough. In them the concerns of the USSR were taken into consideration, and we consider them to be constructive.

We carefully studied the three variants of a solution to the issue of the new types of ICBM which you brought to the attention of the President. As P. Warnke and I said here, we do not believe that these three variants can provide to the sides the necessary equality and the equal security which is so necessary for achieving an agreement of full value.

We think that the proposals which the President introduced to you fairly meet the demands of both sides, and we hope the Soviet side will study them again.

As for the question of determining the new type of missiles, we took into consideration what you said and admit that it was caused by a number of factors, which are still under discussion.

As far as reduction of the maximum total level of ICBM, SLBM, and ALCM with MIRV from 1250 to 1200 units is concerned, you are right to say that resolution of this issue depends on coming to an agreement on some other questions. I would like to add that our agreement on setting the maximum total level of strategic weapons carriers at 2250 items depends on coming to agreement on a definition of the new types of ICBMs, as well as the order and terms for dismantling and eliminating certain number of launchers in accordance with the new agreement.

President Carter clearly stated the position of the USA on the "Backfire" issue, I have nothing to add to what he said.

Having commented on what you said I would like to make some general statements about how we have to act further. We believe that both sides have to strive for achieving a just and mutually acceptable agreement. We are ready to apply all our effort to achieve this goal as soon as possible. I agree that during all kinds of negotiations both sides have to listen carefully to each others' opinion. We do this and will continue to act in this spirit.

I think the main task now is move forward as quickly as possible toward concluding the negotiations. On the whole we have already made serious progress in solving the questions which face us, and now additional efforts to overcome the remaining difficulties are needed. These questions are complicated, but with good will on both sides we can solve them.

In the course of the conversation C. Vance showed interest in organizing of our next meeting somewhere in Europe in the end of June or the beginning of July, this year. We decided to discuss the details of the meeting and its terms later through diplomatic channels.

During the final meeting with Vance on May 31 a short discussion of the situation on the Cyprus took place.

A.A. Gromyko. The other day I met the President of the Republic of Cyprus, who said that the Greek Cypriots had come to a dead end in their negotiations with the Turks. Under such conditions he, in his own words, would not mind if the Soviet Union and the USA took the questions of settling the situation on Cyprus into their own hands.

We maintain good relations with both sides, i.e. with Greece and with Turkey. And, in principle, do not mind helping, if it is possible and if the American side is ready to do it too.

C. Vance. President of Cyprus Caprin asked us to assist in organizing his meeting with B. Edzhevit. The latter was informed about this request this morning. Adgevit promised to

consider it.

In general, according to Edzhevit, the Turks would prefer to have a meeting with Caprin, Denktash, Karamanlis and Edzhevit.

However, they do not exclude the possibility of conducting at the first stage a meeting between Caprin and Denktash under the aegis of the Secretary General of the United Nations, who could later invite Edzhevit also to such a meeting.

As for a possibility of joint activity with the Soviet Union in assisting to solve the Cyprus problem, we could return to this question later, depending on how their negotiations (I have just told you about) develop.

During the final meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State Vance the issue of two Soviet citizens, staff members of the United Nations Secretariat Enger and Cherniaev, who are being held in a prison in New York City, was discussed. The record of the main contents of this conversation; which took place at the presence of two interpreters only, is given below.

A.A. Gromyko. During this meeting you promised to answer the question we raised about freeing the two Soviet citizens kept in prison by American authorities.

C. Vance. I can do that. At the present time we can not undertake any definite actions as far as these two people are concerned. I specially got acquainted with the case and am afraid that it will have to follow the assigned order.

As for reducing the amount of bail, M. Shulman has already told a representative of the USSR Embassy in the USA that the lawyers of the two mentioned people know how to solve this problem in accordance with American legislation.

A.A. Gromyko. I listened your answer with the feeling of regret. What prospects do you see for solving this problem?

C. Vance. I think that a legal proceedings will take place, and when it's over we will see what we can do.

A.A. Gromyko. I will not repeat what I have already said on this account, not to waste time. You are familiar with everything I said about our attitude to such a development of the events and about possible consequences.

I want to inform you that we found and confiscated more than 50 bugging devices which were functioning in different Soviet institutions in the USA -- in Washington, D.C., in New York, in San-Francisco. I will give you the materials connected with this issue now. We, naturally, have at our disposal many more photographs and, if we wanted, we could have released them long ago. But we have not done it yet, because we have a broader approach to Soviet-American relations. We also took into account the requests of the American side not to publish these materials.

I can tell you, by the way, that many of these devices were established already under President Carter's Administration. I do not want to claim that this was sanctioned by him personally, but the fact is that they were put into practice after he came to power.

C. Vance. I do not know anything about these devices and have absolutely no information whether they were installed somewhere or not. I will consider materials, given by you but I do not want you to treat my silence as agreement with the fact that we did install such devices somewhere.

A.A. Gromyko. It is necessary to say that here, in New York, there took place many approaches to our workers by staffers of American intelligence services who work for the United Nations Secretariat. According to our estimate, at least 200 agents of American intelligence work in this international Secretariat.

So we have at our disposal very many quite interesting, and I would say, piquant photomaterials on this subject. They will make a very interesting exhibition, though a pretty big hall would be needed to accommodate it.

Our decision regarding these materials will to a great extent depend on the development of this matter on the whole. You have just said that after the trial you will see what you can do. We also will take a look at what you do.

C. Vance. We do not start a war of intelligence services with the Soviet Union. Yet we are very much concerned by the case of the two mentioned Soviet citizens, especially by the fact that they work for the United Nations Secretariat.

Besides, we are greatly concerned with the case, connected with our Embassy in Moscow. The investigation on this matter is still going on. But the fact that there is a tunnel under the building of the USA Embassy, more than 7 meters of which occupy the territory of the building, which belongs to the United States, disturbs us. We consider this as a rude intrusion into the building of our Embassy.

As far as the issue of two Soviet citizens arrested in the USA is concerned, I will contact you again after the trial is over, and tell you which measures we could undertake.

A.A. Gromyko. We will be waiting for such a report.

As for the incident with the USA Embassy in Moscow, according to the information, which I received, the case is totally different. What your representatives describe as an intrusion into the territory of the US Embassy, belongs, in fact, to the area of our normal economic activity. The goals of these measures actually had a purely protective character. In particular, there also were fire-prevention measures.

And in general it would have been primitive to rely on some sort of tunnels in our age of perfect technology. You and I do not live during the post-war period, when in the middle of the 50-s we discovered a tunnel, several hundred meters long, which led from the West to

the East Berlin. It was dug by Americans.

I will be expecting your reports about our two citizens who are detained in the USA, and we will plan our activity according to your decision.

C. Vance. Good.

The conversation was translated and recorded by V. Sukhodrev.

Correct: (signature)
[not quite legible]

June 2, 1978.
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