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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU
 Nikolay V. Podgornyy, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet
 Aleksey N. Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR
 Andrey A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR
 Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the U.S.
 Georgy M. Kornienko, Member of the Collegium, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Andrey M. Alexandrov, Assistant to the General Secretary

President Nixon
 Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
 General Alexander M. Haig, USA (ret.), Assistant to the President
 Amb. Walter J. Stoessel, U.S. Ambassador to the USSR
 Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Counselor of the State Department
 William G. Hyland, Director, INR
 Jan Lodal, NSC Senior Staff
 Friday, June 28, 1974
 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

DATE AND TIME:

PLACE:

St. Catherine's Hall
 Grand Kremlin Palace

SUBJECTS:

ABM; Test Ban

Brezhnev: Mr. President, what is the first subject for discussion today?

President: I think ABM. We want to make sure that Kissinger and Gromyko don't sign something that is not in our interest.

Brezhnev: Yes, that is very important. For my part, it is important and we are setting about a solution in the

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correct way. A certain time has passed and our scientists have concluded that we can spare this and I feel we should agree with their findings. Not only will we be saving money but we will also prove the direction we want to go is toward peace. It will be most expedient and significant in terms of increasing confidence between our two countries and, therefore, I feel sure that we will reach a unanimous decision in this field. And so we are prepared to sign an agreement tomorrow.

President: Good. Yes, we will then be limited to one ABM for each side but will have the right to exercise a change.

Brezhnev: Yes, at the option of that side. As far as the zone for ABM is concerned I only request that the area not be in the region where Dr. Kissinger lives.

Kissinger: You see what understanding I have achieved in only two years.

Brezhnev: You see how solicitous we are of your health.

President: Considering our bureaucracy we could probably do without Washington easier than you could do without Moscow.

Brezhnev: The scientists show that ABM has little effect but let them have their one area and do what they want although we could get by without ABMs altogether. We feel people will take the correct view. They will regard it as another step to gain confidence. You always advance

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step by step and perhaps we can eliminate the one remaining site in the field.

Kosygin : The main thing to point out to the public is that we are removing and limiting ABMs not because we are technically unable to produce a new system but that we do not need it. There are two ways the public may react. There will be a feeling of concern that they are not adequately protected. But the other way will be the result of increased confidence on both sides.

Podgorny: In short, people will be more certain that neither side wants to attack the other.

Brezhnev: Good, shall we turn to the European Conference?

President: Either that or the threshold test ban. Since the threshold test ban relates to the same general subject we have been discussing maybe we should take it up and then go on to Europe.

Brezhnev: Good, let's do it. That question is basically agreed as Dr. Kissinger said. Why do you want to conduct any underground nuclear tests when we have already had so many tests. When will they stop?

Kissinger: 1985.

Brezhnev: That long? What we should do is build on what we have achieved. The previous agreements limit strategic arms. The agreement provides that we will not develop cardinally new types of weapons. And suddenly against this

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background we will tell the people that we want to go ahead with nuclear testing. So reasoning logically, they will be bewildered: we agree to limit strategic arms but want to go ahead on testing -- therein lies certain contradictions. People will ask about that. On the one hand we limit and on the other we conduct explosions. And this against the background of the limited test ban treaty, and they will question why are we conducting underground testing. Therefore, if one looks at another aspect of this matter the present situation enables other nations that signed the NPT also to test. This is a politically adverse aspect of this question. So we believe we should discuss the entire range in a friendly manner. We agree to move gradually forward step by step. This question if it remains without a solution will draw the attention of the people. That is why we must give earnest thought to the whole matter.

President: Regarding the argument the General Secretary raised with regard to the comprehensive test ban, we have heard this before, and also the points he made. While that might be an objective view, nevertheless, we consider it possible to go the step by step approach. That is why we suggested, as you know, a threshold of 100 kilotons. That gets around the problem and answers the verification problem. I think a step by step approach will have very great meaning. It is the testing of major weapons that causes the greatest concern. We believe we should take a step of this magnitude

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now to see how it works and it is possible we shall make further progress in the future. When I used the number 100 kilotons we are not totally tied to this but in that low magnitude. There are also other issues we have put on the table for discussion. In addition to the threshold magnitude of 100 kilotons you may have some other ideas on this. We feel from the point of view of promoting non proliferation of nuclear weapons our agreement can be a factor in encouraging others not to test and will show we are indeed fully determined to proceed along the path of detente and disarmament. Whichever way, whether favoring your or our point of view, there is disagreement. Therefore, logic speaks in favor of ending tests altogether and this will also have a great effect on others to refrain from testing because there is a gradual spread. In suggesting this we are not pursuing self-seeking goals. It is in the interests of both sides.

Kosygin: Mr. President, if we were to endorse publicly that we want to continue nuclear testing it will not convince anyone. We need to reach agreement as we did on the ABMs not to expand our effort. We are going to only one area and that is already disarmament limiting one type of weapon, that is disarmament. But we are continuing nuclear testing with the obvious aim of improving nuclear warheads. So what, in short, does a threshold test ban mean that we will be renouncing? We will not be taking the road of disarmament, but will be perfecting weapons. That will be the obvious tenor or the comments. I just heard today that 20 senators

had come out in favor of ending tests.

(President: 37.)

Kosygin: So what do you think is easier? To justify the need for continuing or the need for stopping. We believe it is easier to justify the need to stop. We believe it is very hard to prove the need to continue nuclear testing. We can prove the value of ending tests to the Congress but the very fact that we don't reach agreement on ending tests will reduce the significance of questions we are also agreeing to. Speaking frankly, everyone will say we are making concessions to your Pentagon and to judge by the statements of your Secretary of Defense this may be seen as some kind of support of the line taken by the Pentagon. That is, to step up military preparations. Whatever way we decide to discuss, in fact, people will agree that it is a severe blow to our general cause. Also of late, there is on the part of the US a line of general thought -- Israel and Egypt for example received reactors -- and all big things start with such little things and therefore for us it is very important to find a solution to this issue and to solve it on a long term basis. If we reach a solution this will be welcomed by all people everywhere.

President: We discussed this issue in very great depth before I came. It is true some in our Senate favor a comprehensive test ban. At the other end of the spectrum there are equal numbers who favor no ban at all having in mind the problem of verification. We have tried to take a

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very significant step to restrain both sides by setting a low threshold. Having taken such a step we will get the support of the majority of our Congress. It is true as Premier Kosygin has said that we will not be going all the way. I will speak very candidly in terms of the limit to our negotiations. We cannot go to a total test ban and we think the threshold we are suggesting will be considered a very significant step. Obviously, we have a difference of opinion as I indicated in my opening remarks. I do not want to give the impression that I am not giving consideration to the remarks of the General Secretary and his colleagues. But I also do not want to leave any impression that I simply do what the Pentagon wants to do.

Kosygin: I don't have that impression.

President: If so, I wouldn't be here at all. In our system the decision is taken at my level. If there are differences in our system those in our bureaucracy will disagree publicly rather than as in a more responsible government limit their remarks to private meetings. We have surveyed this question very carefully, not only in our NSC but also with the Congress, and I have reached the conclusion that the proposition we have made to you for discussion is the step we can take but we cannot go further. We have prepared our own people for a threshold test ban.

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We are prepared to discuss the specifics and to negotiate but not for a comprehensive test ban at this time.

Kosygin: But then you will be coming out in favor of continuing nuclear testing.

President: No, the fact is that we are coming out in favor of limiting nuclear testing.

Kosygin: Yes, but those who oppose testing and come out in favor of a comprehensive test ban want to see more progress.

President: That may seem to be the case.

Kosygin: In fact, they will be right because then we will have to come out in favor of continuing testing. We cannot claim to interpret the internal aspects of the US; you are the best judge of that. But we feel the broader approach is more correct.

President: We recognize that there has been a lively debate over the years on this issue.

Kosygin: There is throughout the world.

President: But the point we have in mind is the one the General Secretary recognized. We have got to take these things on a step by step basis. For example, the most progressive point of view would be to ban all nuclear weapons and destroy all of them. Yet neither of us is in a position to go that far at this point. In this field we feel an obligation for our security and also to consider verification. Taking account of public opinion this will

still be the biggest step we can have taken in that the threshold will be very low -- in the neighborhood of 100 kilotons. That, of course, is a matter for negotiation.

Brezhnev: While discussing this the question arises: why do we need tests at all. This is the toughest question. It must be taken into account. Under the previous agreement you have tested all you can and we have tested all we can. We favor the non-proliferation treaty and so do you. And yet, nonetheless, we want to go on testing. Why do we leave this loophole? We can vouch for everybody here so let us understand what is the real reason. Who are we acting for? Who are we trying to please by continuing testing? I am perplexed; we are not pleased with continued testing. We are not pleasing the people, but maybe the top echelon of the Pentagon. So the question does arise why continue testing. I don't know. Maybe because of a group of senators, maybe because of Jackson. But we care ourselves in the interests of our people. In terms of world opinion, if we continue, if our two countries cannot cease testing, this will become a decisive factor in terms of others who wish to continue testing. The step we want would have beneficial influence on the entire international situation. It would favorably affect the French public and opinion in China. Several of them would in this situation be in complete isolation. Otherwise, they say the US and USSR are still testing. Let's join in and test with them. But this is not much in line with the expression of world opinion today.

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Kosygin: Every correspondent will ask did we discuss limiting nuclear testing. What happens when we say we discussed continuing testing? What will you say? It will not be a pleasant burden. I would not wish to carry thus unpleasant task. We want to take another step more beneficial in strengthening the line of cooperation. Otherwise, when we are asked who wanted to continue testing and we have to say it was not the Soviet Union, and in our draft as we suggest it is specifically addressed to others. We merely call on them to accede. If this has no effect, if others to not accede, then in two years we will be free to resume. We would not want to but we must leave ourselves this option. On the other hand, under the arrangements already envisaged which will be extended, neither side will create cardinally new weapons so there will be no need for further testing. I say this not merely out of a desire to attack your position or to talk you into it, but to give you an understanding of our position and to gain an agreement that will improve mutual confidence. We fully accept what some will say about this but it is up to us to find agreements that our views frankly and openly. We can discuss this at greater length but boldly.

Kissinger: We have had a period of exchanging views on this subject, and you are aware of our reasoning why we are not prepared to have a comprehensive test ban. Incidentally, the fact that you pointed out concerning SALT

the agreements do not prohibit developing weapons that will require some testing. Thus, we had agreed that we could have a threshold test ban, the one which our experts have been working on for two weeks, which would not exclude a comprehensive test ban in the future if the whole situation with respect to strategic weapons were clarified. We want a threshold test ban at this summit, Mr. President, but there are a number of important issues that require resolution, at least in principle: (1) at what level the threshold should be set; (2) what to do about peaceful nuclear explosions; (3) what to do about exchanging enough data to convert a kiloton threshold into a seismic magnitude; and finally, what to do about Soviet proposals for a quota on the number of tests below the threshold. There are other points but they can be settled so that we could sign a protocol giving instructions to establish a threshold test ban within a reasonable period. And then the comprehensive test ban could be taken up within the general framework of stopping the arms race in strategic arms when that is achieved.

Brezhnev: None of the points you mentioned would exist if we banned all tests.

President: Except for the real problem which shall remain: until we get the nuclear arms race under control some testing is inevitably going to go forward. I realize that the General Secretary and Prime Minister Kosygin have lost none of their very effective advocacy ability and I

appreciate their point of view. But we explained our position before we came and what we are trying to do is to negotiate something that is possible now. That is why we suggest a threshold test ban. I know the press will say this is half a loaf but nevertheless it is a step in the right direction, and we look down the road to stopping all tests, when those conditions that require testing are achieved. Incidentally, either one of you (Kosygin or Brezhnev) would make a very good Senator but I would want you on my side.

Kosygin: I will be on your side if you agree to end testing. No, I will always be on your side.

President: Speaking quite candidly, we have an ironic situation as 1976 approaches in the US with respect to detente. There are some who are quite critical of the hard line as opposed to the arms control. But others have now changed their minds. It gets down to this. Those who applauded our efforts toward detente successfully over the past two years now for reasons more of a pristine motive would like to see our efforts fail. I would not make any enemies if I were intractable. It is unlikely that I would be criticized too hard. On the other hand, if I take a reasonable position as I intend to do they will say that I am giving away the store. For example, should I agree to a threshold test ban that cannot be verified they will say that clever fellow Brezhnev, he took Nixon again. Even today Dr.

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Kissinger and I are used to tough negotiations but I heard our critics say in 1972 we made a deal with regard to SALT in which we gave away too much at the conference table. I do not raise these points to indicate that my position is based simply on these political figures. I will move in the direction of detente because for the US and USSR it is indispensable for the peace of the world and that is why we want every possible agreement we can make and implement. That is why I am so critical of the members of the Senate who did not produce MFN . For those who do not follow the American scene it may be quite illuminating to read my Naval Academy speech where I said neither of the great powers can think in terms of military power and threats or think that their economies can affect the internal policies of other nations. We are not going to change your system and you are not going to change ours. The point I want to make is this: I am in a unique position of being able to bring the American public along in support of detente. I can handle our so-called hawks but only one step at a time and I do not want this process to be interrupted, I want it to continue. What we would like to do is go from here to here but not too far in any one step or one meeting. I have considered it and understood the points you have made. I don't want to be in a position of questioning Premier Kosygin's eloquent comments on limiting the nuclear arms race. We have to get it under control. But we have to do it on an orderly, step-by-step

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basis. I consider that our position on this particular issue of the threshold test ban will be a very important step not only for America but for world opinion, though it will not satisfy those who always want to go all the way. But it is far better than the unlimited testing of big weapons. This would not give us an advantage or give you an advantage although some military people might disagree on both sides. It is good to have this kind of open conversation. As we look to those golden doors (gesturing to doors at the entrance) we could say that we all want to reach them but we will not make it if we try to do it in one step. We will always find, Mr. General Secretary, various factors in the US and in other countries who for differing reasons want to see detente fail. And we on our part do not want to take a step that we have not prepared the support for. We do not seek to go in that direction because we will be looking for repudiation.

Brezhnev: In this position we approach all aspects for all sides. We have never engaged in politics. We have never tried to be clever no matter what Senator Jackson might think. We try to conduct ourselves in a forthright a honest manner in every important issue. This compels us to give serious thought to other aspects and to think about the problem from the standpoint of public opinion and the viewpoint of our allies, both yours and ours. There is no reason to speak further about this but I want to say merely that this step would have a strong impact in line with the goals

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we set in 1972 to achieve a measure of detente and an impact on the world. You have presented arguments in which you say elements must be heeded but you are steering the foreign policy of the US. We are acting on a long term basis and not on the basis of temporary considerations. This is the point: we will have to think it over and tomorrow return to further discussions. I will consult my Soviets and we will discuss it further and then we will continue discussions tomorrow. Otherwise if we do not take a step the question will arise why does the US want to have the right to test. All will say it is more in our interest. You are right in saying that if the US test we will also do so. Science continues to confront us with new developments. Faced by the scientists we can go on testing. There are those in the Pentagon who would want to but we came to this table not to outwit you. We know we are dealing with a responsible statesman of a great country. In all these remarks I am merely thinking aloud. But logic prompts us to take a step and end testing.

Kosygin: We have to use our head. We have a head on our shoulders. Let us use our head.

President: I suggest we ask Secretary Kissinger and Foreign Minister Gromyko to take into account our discussion and if they can come up tomorrow and submit something to us because it is a complicated issue. In view of the fact that we have not reached an agreement on the threshold test ban I think it would not be a good idea to sign the ABM agreement

Tuesday because if we did everyone would speculate that we couldn't agree on anything else. I suggest instead we sign the long-term economic agreement tomorrow which indicates movement and try to have something more than just ABM.

Kosygin: If any two men can settle this question I'm certain it is Kissinger and Gromyko.

Podgorny: We will give them a time limit.

Brezhnev: We will lock them up over night or give them both an artificial heart.

President: Then we will go to the Black Sea and take the boat ride.

Brezhnev: So our friends decided not to go to Star City and instead we will invite our spaceman to our final reception and have some photos. That will give us more time tomorrow for meetings in the morning and sign in the afternoon so we can get to the Crimea while it is still light. We could take a helicopter but there are air streams and if it is not light we would have to go by car.

President: We would see more of the country that way.

Brezhnev: We have to leave before dark. How long does it take. We should reach there not later than 5:00. In the South the night falls about then.

Podgorny: It takes an hour and 50 minutes to fly.

Kosygin: We should leave about 3:00.

President: So we will have the long term agreement. I consider it a well-written document, long-term and looking toward more combinations of our economies. The more our relations improve the more they become irreversible and they give our people a stake in progress. I believe this agreement will be well received by the American business community. They of course want to make deals but they also want to make a profit.

Brezhnev: You think we don't?

President: Unless both sides profit it will be a bad deal.

President: We will have to use our influence to encourage business. The Secretaries of State, Agriculture and Commerce will be so instructed.

Brezhnev: I do not want to intervene in your internal affairs.

President: You want to overthrow us.

Brezhnev: No, we want to get you elected.

President: I'll do it in the next 2 and 1/2 years.

Podgorny: Sometimes it is easier to make an effort when you have the power, the more strength you have the more people hear you. That is why we must use every meeting to reach agreements where we can. We cannot set impossible goals, but as we use the means possible then the goals themselves become more possible and that is what we intend as a step in the test ban.