

Memorandum of Conversation

Approved in G 1/16/67

DATE: January 14, 1967

SUBJECT: Nuclear Venting Question

RS/R FILES

Attention MRS. HAZARD
Keep this study together.

PARTICIPANTS: Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin;
Deputy Under Secretary Foy D. Kohler

FDK

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DEF 18-8 USSR

At my meeting with Ambassador Dobrynin today I read to him the attached statement (TAB A) of the facts regarding the venting of the Soviet nuclear explosion on December 18, adding that we would appreciate information and comment on this matter from his Government. At his request I gave him a copy of the statement. I went on to refer to the unsatisfactory nature of our exchange with respect to the Soviet test of October 27. I said that both of these events, which had been detected by others as well as ourselves, and the previous accusations on both sides, raised questions which both of us would have to face from other countries with respect to observation of the Nuclear Test Ban. In addition we would certainly face questions in the Congress. Rather than have a series of unsatisfactory accusations and denials, it was clearly preferable that we have a clear understanding as to our interpretation of these events and of the restrictions of the Test Ban Treaty.

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I then read to him, and handed him, the attached statement (TAB B) proposing that there be expert talks on our respective interpretations of the restrictions on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. We had a bit of discussion as to the nature of the problem, and he was at first inclined to relate these to the proposed talks on peaceful explosions. However, I pointed out to him that wholly different problems were involved as well as quite different people. In this connection, I noted that on the Soviet side their Committee on peaceful uses of atomic energy was wholly separate from the agencies involved in nuclear tests. He quickly saw the point here and said he understood that the two were separate matters. He promised to put the proposal up to Moscow.

Attachments:

- TAB A - Statement of Facts
- TAB B - Statement Proposing Talks

On December 18, 1966, the United States publicly announced that it had recorded seismic signals which originated that day from the Soviet nuclear testing area in the Semipalatinsk region. During the week beginning December 21, 1966, the United States collected outside of the Soviet Union fresh radioactive debris. Meteorological and other considerations indicate that this radioactive debris originated from the Soviet event of December 18, 1966.

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There have been several diplomatic exchanges between us relating to specific nuclear events in terms of conformity to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water. These exchanges and other considerations have led us to conclude that there may be some differences in our respective understanding of the restrictions of that Treaty. As Original Parties to the Treaty, we share a special responsibility and interest in preserving the Treaty integrity and maintaining world confidence in our intention to do so. We believe therefore that it is now timely to hold a thorough discussion between our governments, aimed at clarifying and if necessary reconciling such differences as may exist in our understanding of the Treaty restrictions. We consider that such discussions should deal with both scientific and legal aspects of the problem. In our view, they could best be carried out separately from the technical talks we recently proposed with respect to peaceful explosions, on which we are still prepared to proceed.

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