

Soviet Military Buildup in Cuba and Crisis in Jordan, August 4–October 9, 1970

191. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, August 4, 1970.

SUBJECT

Soviet Note on the Middle East

You will recall that I mentioned to you earlier this week that the Soviets had given us a forthcoming note concerning their "military presence" in Egypt. I think you will be interested in seeing the exact text of the message, which was delivered in Washington and is attached at Tab A.

In a telephone conversation with Ambassador Dobrynin he stressed, as the note does, the cosmetic importance to Moscow of making the removal of military presence a mutual obligation. When I pointed out that we do not have such a military presence, Dobrynin replied, "Then it is better for you." He also reiterated the willingness of the Soviets to discuss regional arms limitations and the great importance his government places on contacts with us on the Middle East, both in our channel and generally.

I told Dobrynin that I had informed you of his message, that we thought it was a constructive reply, and that we will be using my contacts with him more often on the Middle East issues.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, Box TS 36, Soviet Union, Chronological File, 7/70–1/71. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Another copy in the file indicates it was drafted by Lord on July 31 and the President saw it.

Tab A

Message From Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union Kosygin to President Nixon

Moscow, July 27, 1970.

Referring to our previous conversations the following is authorized by Moscow to be transmitted to the President.

Since President Nixon expressed his wish to know the intentions of the Soviet Government regarding the prospects of the Soviet “military presence” in the UAR we would like the President to recall that it was not the Soviet Union who initiated the arms race in the Middle East. We have always believed and believe now that appropriate steps towards limiting this arms race would not contradict the interests of countries of that area. At the same time, for obvious reasons, we can not discuss the question of unilateral assurances from the Soviet side in terms of our accepting any preliminary conditions.

As we already stated to the US Government earlier, the Soviet side would be ready to discuss the question of limiting the shipments of arms to the countries of the Middle East after a political settlement has been achieved. At that time the question of “military presence” in that area of the world by non-Mideastern countries could probably also be considered. Naturally, in this case it would be a matter not only for the Soviet Union but also for other states involved to assume appropriate obligations.

The Soviet side regards its contacts with the American side on the Middle East question as very important ones and sincerely wants these contacts to bring about concrete results in terms of a speediest achievement of a lasting and just peace in the Middle East.

192. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, August 4, 1970.

Conversation with Vorontsov—Map Room

I saw Vorontsov at his request. He had called in San Clemente to say that he wanted to have an appointment as soon as I got back. When I saw him, he was extremely cordial and read me the attached communication from the Soviet Government. I asked him on what this was based. He replied that there had been many news stories about the American determination to defend Guantanamo and many incorrect allegations about Soviet buildups in Cuba.

I asked in what way he thought we should confirm the understanding and what he thought the understanding was. He said an oral statement from me would be enough and he took the understanding to be that we would not invade Cuba by military force. I said I would have to discuss the matter with the President and let him know.

There was then some desultory conversation about Dobrynin. Vorontsov said he knew the Kremlin was taking my recent communications extremely seriously, and that he thought matters were now on a good turn. Vorontsov is, of course, without any authority to negotiate and therefore he sticks strictly to his instructions.

HAK

Tab A

Note From the Soviet Government

Moscow, August 4, 1970.

The increase lately in the United States of activity hostile towards Cuba could not but attract attention in Moscow. Certain anxiety has been caused, in particular, by attempts to unite various groups and organizations of Cuban counterrevolutionary emigration in the United States and by resuming of sabotage and subversive activity of these organizations against Cuba, directed from American territory among other places. There has been an increase in number of provocative

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, Box CL 215, Soviet Union, Chronological File, "D" File. No classification marking.

appeals in the American press and of ambiguous statements on the part of certain officials of the United States.

We would like to stress that in the Cuban question we proceed as before from the understanding on this question reached in the past, and we expect that the American side will also strictly adhere to this understanding.

193. Editorial Note

In *White House Years*, Henry Kissinger, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, describes his and President Richard Nixon's reactions to the Soviet note on Cuba delivered by Yuli Vorontsov on August 4, 1970 (Tab A, Document 192):

"Nixon and I even speculated that the message delivered by Vorontsov might be a token of Soviet goodwill to improve the atmosphere for a summit in the fall. Our complacency was reflected in our reaction to an FBI report which, as chance would have it, reached us on August 5; it claimed that two boats hired by exiles in Miami would try to sink a Soviet tanker headed for Cuba." (page 634)

Concerned that the Cuban exile operation might provoke a crisis between the United States and the Soviet Union, the National Security Council staff immediately began monitoring the situation. On August 5, at 9:35 p.m., General Alexander Haig, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and Arnold Nachmanoff, NSC Operations Staff officer for Latin America, spoke on the telephone. Haig informed Nachmanoff of the following:

"I spoke to Henry [Kissinger]. He thinks the best bet is to call the Coast Guard and get the Coast Guard duty officer. Henry wants you to get some war game contingency plans. I mentioned the possibility of notifying the Soviets and Henry said he didn't think we should now and if we do, we should go to the President. We don't want this to happen at this point in time. I will now tell [Captain] Dan[iel] Murphy to check with NMCC for more feedback from CINCLANT [Commander in Chief, Atlantic]. They can not engage in anything like this—if they can get a fix on it and buzz it, they might frighten it away. Check the Coast Guard." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 998, Haig Chronological File, Haig Telecons, 1970)

In an August 6 memorandum to Nixon, Kissinger summarized the administration's follow-up actions concerning the Cuban exile operation:

"A Coast Guard cutter was dispatched to intercept and escort a Soviet tanker, the only known Soviet vessel scheduled to traverse the

Straits, to prevent possible attack. An extensive air and sea search during the night has failed to locate the Cuban-manned vessel. Although our intelligence agencies are still attempting to corroborate the report, the search is continuing today." (Ibid., Box 25, President's Daily Briefs)

By August 10, the possibility of a crisis over the Cuban exile operation subsided. In an August 10 memorandum to the President, Kissinger explained: "The search for possible Cuban exile vessels allegedly involved in attempting to attack a Soviet ship was concluded Saturday morning. In view of the time elapsed, the probability of the raid occurring had become very low. The Coast Guard has returned to normal operations and U.S. Navy P-3 aircraft have been released from surveillance/patrol flights." (Ibid.)

194. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

"Understandings" with Soviet Union at the Time of the Cuban Missile Crisis

You asked me for the precise language relating to our "understandings" with the Soviet Union at the time of the missile crisis. Attached at Tab A are excerpts from the letters and messages exchanged between President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev in October, 1962 and December, 1962. Copies of the full texts of those letters and messages are attached at Tab B.²

The Khrushchev–Kennedy exchanges indicate clearly that there was an implicit understanding that we would agree to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba if the Soviet Union would remove its offensive missiles from Cuba under UN observation and would undertake, with suitable safeguards, to halt the re-introduction of such

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 783, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Understanding with USSR at Time of Cuban Missile Crisis. Confidential with Nodis Attachment. Sent for information. Another copy of this memorandum indicates it was drafted by Nachmanoff on August 4. A handwritten note, stamped August 14 and initialed by Haig, reads, "Nachmanoff. Via Davis—for file where easily available. Excellent job, Arnie!" Below this comment in an unknown handwriting is the note, "Not going to Pres." (Ibid.)

² Attached but not printed.

weapons systems into Cuba. However, the agreement was never explicitly completed because the Soviets did not agree to an acceptable verification system (because of Castro's opposition) and we never made a formal non-invasion pledge. The negotiations between McCloy and Kuznetsov, which were designed to work out a satisfactory means of formalizing the Kennedy–Khrushchev “understanding” eventually just fizzled out.

The “understanding” we have with the Soviets, therefore, is an implicit one, which was never formally buttoned down. In fact, the Soviets removed their missiles and there is no evidence that they have re-introduced them; and we, of course, have not invaded Cuba.

Tab A

Excerpts From Letters and Messages Between President Kennedy and Soviet Chairman Khrushchev

Washington, undated.

*Letter from Khrushchev to Kennedy—October 26, 1962*³

“If assurances were given by the President and the government of the United States that the USA itself would not participate in an attack on Cuba and would restrain others from actions of this sort, if you would recall your fleet, this would immediately change everything. I am not speaking for Fidel Castro, but I think that he and the government of Cuba, evidently, would declare demobilization and would appeal to the people to get down to peaceful labor. Then, too, the question of armaments would disappear, since, if there is no threat, then armaments are a burden for every people. Then, too, the question of the destruction, not only of the armaments which you call offensive, but of all other armaments as well, would look different.”

... “I propose: We for our part will declare that our ships, bound for Cuba, will not carry any kind of armaments. You would declare that the United States will not invade Cuba with its forces and will not support any sort of forces which might intend to carry out an invasion of Cuba. Then the necessity for the presence of our military specialists in Cuba would disappear.” (Nodis)

³ For text, see *Foreign Relations, 1961–1963*, vol. VI, Kennedy–Khrushchev Exchanges, Document 65. All ellipses are in the source text.

*Text of Khrushchev Message to Kennedy Broadcast October 27, 1962*⁴

“I therefore make this proposal: We agree to remove from Cuba those means which you regard as offensive means. We agree to carry this out and declare this pledge in the United Nations. Your representatives will make a declaration to the effect that the United States on its part, considering the uneasiness and anxiety of the Soviet state, will remove its analogous means from Turkey.

“Let us reach agreement as to the span of time needed for you and us to achieve this. After this, persons enjoying the confidence of the U.S. Security Council might check on-the-spot fulfillment of the pledges assumed. Of course, the authorization of the Governments of Cuba and Turkey are necessary for entry into those countries of these plenipotentiaries and for inspection of fulfillment of the pledge assumed by either side.”

... “we will make a statement within the framework of the Security Council to the effect that the Soviet Government makes a solemn promise to respect the inviolability of the frontiers and sovereignty of Turkey, not to interfere in its internal affairs, not to invade Turkey, not to make its territory available as a bridgehead for such an invasion, and will also restrain those who contemplate perpetrating aggression against Turkey both from the territory of the Soviet Union and from the territory of other neighbor states of Turkey.

“The U.S. Government will make a similar statement within the framework of the Security Council in respect to Cuba. It will declare that the United States will respect the inviolability of the frontiers of Cuba and its sovereignty, undertakes not to interfere in its internal affairs, not to invade, and not to make its territory available as a bridgehead for such an invasion of Cuba, and will also restrain those who might contemplate perpetrating aggression against Cuba, both from the territory of the United States and from the territory of other neighboring states of Cuba.

“Of course, for this we would have to agree to some kind of time limit. Let us agree to some period of time, but not to delay—two or three weeks; not more than a month.

“The means situated in Cuba which you have stated are perturbing you are in the hands of Soviet officers, therefore, any accidental use of them to the detriment of the United States is excluded. . . . if there is no invasion of Cuba or attack on the Soviet Union or any other of our allies, then of course these means are not and will not be a threat to anyone, for they are not there for the purpose of attack.”

⁴ For text, see *ibid.*, Document 66.

*Letter from Kennedy to Khrushchev—October 27, 1962*⁵

... “The first thing that needs to be done, however, is for work to cease on offensive missile bases in Cuba and for all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use to be rendered inoperable, under effective United Nations arrangements.

“Assuming this is done promptly, I have given my representatives in New York instructions that will permit them to work out this week end—in cooperation with the Acting Secretary General and your representative—an arrangement for a permanent solution to the Cuban problem along the lines suggested in your letter of October 26th. As I read your letter, the key elements of your proposals—which seem generally acceptable as I understand them—are as follows:

“1. You would agree to remove these weapons systems from Cuba under appropriate United Nations observation and supervision; and undertake, with suitable safeguards, to halt the further introduction of such weapons systems into Cuba.

“2. We, on our part, would agree—upon the establishment of adequate arrangements through the United Nations to ensure the carrying out and continuation of these commitments—(a) to remove promptly the quarantine measures now in effect and (b) to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba and I am confident that other nations of the Western Hemisphere would be prepared to do likewise.

“If you will give your representative similar instructions there is no reason why we should not be able to complete these arrangements and announce them to the world within a couple of days.”

*Message from Khrushchev to Kennedy—October 28, 1962*⁶

“In order to eliminate as rapidly as possible the conflict which endangers the cause of peace, . . . the Soviet Government, in addition to earlier instructions on the discontinuation of further work on weapons constructions sites, has given a new order to dismantle the arms which described as offensive, and to crate and return them to the Soviet Union.”

“I regard with respect and trust the statement you made in your message of October 27, 1962, that there would be no attack, no invasion of Cuba, and not only on the part of the United States, but also on the part of other nations of the Western Hemisphere, as you said in your same message. Then the motives which induced us to render assistance of such a kind to Cuba disappear.

⁵ For text, see *ibid.*, Document 67.

⁶ For text, see *ibid.*, Document 68.

“It is for this reason that we instructed our officers—these means as I had already informed you earlier are in the hands of the Soviet officers—to take appropriate measures to discontinue construction of the aforementioned facilities, to dismantle them, and to return them to the Soviet Union. As I had informed you in the letter of October 27, we are prepared to reach agreement to enable the United Nations Representatives to verify the dismantling of these means.

“Thus in view of the assurances you have given and our instructions on dismantling, there is every condition for eliminating the present conflict.”

... “If we do take practical steps and proclaim the dismantling and evacuation of the means in question from Cuba, in so doing we, at the same time, want the Cuban people to be certain that we are with them and are not absolving ourselves of responsibility for rendering assistance to the Cuban people.”

*Letter from Khrushchev to Kennedy—December 11, 1962*⁷

“More resolute steps should be taken now to move towards finalizing the elimination of this tension, i.e. you on your part should clearly confirm at the U.N. as you did at your press conference and in your messages to me the pledge of non-invasion of Cuba by the United States and your allies having removed reservations which are being introduced now into the U.S. draft declaration in the Security Council and our representatives in New York should come to terms with regard to an agreed wording in the declarations of both powers of the commitments undertaken by them.”

... “I will tell you frankly that we have removed our means from Cuba relying on your assurance that the United States and its allies will not invade Cuba. . . . We hope and we would like to believe—I spoke of that publicly too, as you know—that you will adhere to the commitments which you have taken, as strictly as we do with regard to our commitments. We, Mr. President, have already fulfilled our commitments concerning the removal of our missiles and IL-28 planes from Cuba and we did it even ahead of time. It is obvious that fulfillment by you of your commitments cannot be as clearly demonstrated as it was done by us since your commitments are of a long-term nature. But it is important to fulfill them and to do everything so that no doubts are sown from the very start that they will not be fulfilled.”

“Therefore, Mr. President, everything—the stability in this area and not only in this area but in the entire world—depends on how you will now fulfill the commitments taken by you. Furthermore, it will be

⁷ For text, see *ibid.*, Document 83.

now a sort of litmus paper, an indicator whether it is possible to trust if similar difficulties arise in other geographical areas.”

“We believe that the guarantees for non-invasion of Cuba given by you will be maintained and not only in the period of your stay in the White House.”

. . . “But the confidential nature of our personal relations will depend on whether you fulfill—as we did—the commitments taken by you and give instructions to your representatives in New York to formalize these commitments in appropriate documents. . . . it is necessary to fix the assumed commitments in the documents of both sides and register them with the United Nations.”

*Letter from Kennedy to Khrushchev—December 14, 1962*⁸

“You refer to the importance of my statements on an invasion of Cuba and of our intention to fulfill them, so that no doubts are sown from the very start . . . The other side of the coin, however, is that we do need to have adequate assurances that all offensive weapons are removed from Cuba and are not reintroduced, and that Cuba itself commits no aggressive acts against any of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. As I understand you, you feel confident that Cuba will not in fact engage in such aggressive acts, and of course I already have your own assurance about the offensive weapons. So I myself should suppose that you could accept our position—but it is probably better to leave final discussion of these matters to our representatives in New York.”

⁸ For text, see *ibid.*, Document 84.

195. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, August 7, 1970.

Conversation with Vorontsov

I saw Vorontsov at the request of the President to give him the following communication.

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, Box CL 215, Soviet Union, Chronological File, “D” File. No classification marking.

We have noticed with satisfaction the assurance of the Soviet Government that the understandings of 1962 are still in full force. We take this to mean that the Soviet Union will not emplace any offensive weapons of any kind or any nuclear weapons on Cuban soil.

For our part, the President wishes to point out that although we have heard repeated reports of increased Soviet activity in Cuba, he was exercising the utmost restraint in not increasing reconnaissance activities. He was maintaining the understandings of 1962 which I was hereby authorized to reaffirm. Specifically, the United States would not use military force to bring about a change in the governmental structure of Cuba.

I then said I wanted to add a personal observation to the formal communication. It had come to our attention that Soviet long-range airplanes of a type that were suitable to nuclear bombing missions were flying with increasing regularity to Cuba. While we believed that these planes were on reconnaissance missions, we thought, nevertheless, that this might provide a basis for approaching the limit of our understandings. It would certainly be noticed if the Soviet Union kept such operations to an absolute minimum. The same went for Soviet fleet activity in the Caribbean. I pointed out that these were not conditional but rather atmospheric.

I then added that we were showing our good faith by having assigned two Coast Guard cutters in recent days to shadow a Soviet ship which we believed was in imminent danger of being attacked by some Cuban exile groups.²

Vorontsov said he appreciated the good spirit in which I had made these observations and he was certain that the Kremlin would be very happy to receive them. It was in sharp contrast, he added, to our last conversation on April 30³ when he had been in a position (correctly) to point out to me that a Soviet reaction to our Cambodian venture would be extremely unfortunate. I told Vorontsov that the major problem now was to see what concrete progress could be made in the area of negotiations.

HAK

² See Document 193.

³ The last conversation between Kissinger and Vorontsov actually took place on April 29; see Document 155.

196. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, August 13, 1970, 2:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Chargé Vorontsov
Henry A. Kissinger

The meeting lasted about a half hour. I asked Vorontsov to see me on the basis of a report by a New York photographic manufacturer called Mr. Hament,² who alleged that he had been asked to visit the Soviet Embassy and had been told there of the Soviet interest that President Nixon visit the Soviet Union before the end of October. (Attached is a memorandum³ for the President by Bill Casey, a business associate of Hament's.)

I opened the meeting by telling Vorontsov that we had had a rather strange communication from a New York photographic manufacturer and wondered whether he knew him. I mentioned Mr. Hament's name and Mr. Vorontsov said yes he had met him at some social function at the Soviet Embassy. I then told him the substance of Casey's memorandum and said that it was difficult to know how to respond. If it was a serious communication, we would of course want to make our comments. On the other hand, if it was a general communication which Hament overplayed then we could drop it. The major point was that if it was a serious communication there was some time problem and we could therefore not play it the usual way.

I said that I understood that Vorontsov himself had attended the meetings. Vorontsov said this could not be true since on July 28 he was not in the Embassy. He said that he had only come back from the Soviet Union on July 29 and had only seen Dobrynin at the airport for

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, Box TS 36, Soviet Union, Chronological File, 7/70–1/71. Top Secret; Sensitive. The conversation was held in the Map Room at the White House. The memorandum was sent under an August 22 covering memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon that summarized this meeting with Vorontsov.

² Harvey Hament was a New York distributor of films and photographic items who was trying to conclude a contract with the Soviets that would provide him exclusive rights for the marketing of Soviet cultural films and television shows within the United States. For several years, the KGB had been cultivating him unsuccessfully as a channel to the White House. Memoranda from Helms to Haig, November 19 and December 10, suggesting that the Soviets were attempting to use Hament as an "important unofficial channel to the White House" are in the Central Intelligence Agency, Executive Registry Files, Job 80–R01580R, Box 10, S–17.3, Soviet, 1/1/70–12/31/70 and *ibid.*, Box 12, Soviet, respectively.

³ Attached but not printed.

a farewell exchange of views. He said that it sounded to him as if this was not a serious communication but that Hament had played up a general expression of interest into a very specific proposal. However, he would check it and let me know.

I then told Vorontsov that regardless of whether this particular thing was a serious communication, I wanted to use this occasion to discuss the general subject of a higher level meeting. Vorontsov said that he was, of course, familiar with the subject having read the record of my previous conversations with Dobrynin. (Note: Dobrynin had told me that Vorontsov was the only person in the Embassy who was informed of them. This was done in order to prevent a situation from developing while Dobrynin was out of town and no one present at the Soviet Embassy would have any information.)

Vorontsov said he knew for a fact that the subject was under very active discussion in Moscow at the moment. Indeed, one of the reasons for Dobrynin's return to the Soviet Union was so that he could participate in these high level meetings with the top leadership. They were probably now at the Crimea for a leisurely discussion and we would no doubt receive an official reply.

I said the difficulty was that we had to make our plans for the fall and winter and that we had kept a number of them in abeyance in order to be able to respond to the possibilities. For example, we had been told that Kosygin would come to the United Nations General Assembly but we had never had any official word. Vorontsov said that he did not have any word on this either, and he doubted that Kosygin knew.

I said, of course, that we had discussed various levels for meetings and various possible occasions but that the matter was in abeyance until we got some further word. I told Vorontsov that it would be highly desirable for us to have some preliminary indication fairly soon. Vorontsov said he would get word to us. He said he certainly felt that his leadership believed now that there were many advantages in high level meetings as was proved by the recent high level visitors to Moscow, particularly Brandt.

After an exchange of pleasantries the meeting ended.

Henry A. Kissinger

197. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, August 19, 1970.

SUBJECT

My Meeting Today with Vorontsov on Possible Summit Meeting

Soviet Minister Vorontsov came in today to give us an answer to our query about their interest in a summit meeting, prompted by recent Soviet approaches to Mr. Harvey Hament.²

Vorontsov handed me a rather vague note, attached at Tab A, which indicates that Moscow has decided to play the subject of a possible summit meeting coolly, at least for the time being. The note states that Dobrynin brought to the attention of the Soviet leadership your idea of a summit meeting, and declares the Soviets' "positive approach" to a summit, "provided that such meetings are duly prepared allowing thus to count on getting results." It then invites your concrete suggestions about moving toward a summit, saying that Moscow will be ready to study them attentively.

In our brief conversation Vorontsov said that Mr. Hament had exaggerated the importance of his conversations with Soviet officials and that these encounters were not serious. He denied that a large meeting had taken place as described by Hament.

Our response to the Soviets, I believe, should be played coolly like their note itself. I propose that I go back to Vorontsov and merely tell him that we are prepared to move toward a summit meeting within the framework that Ambassador Dobrynin and I have been discussing, recalling that we had set a tentative agenda featuring European security, SALT, and the Middle East. I would add that the next step will have to be to set a date and that November or December are impossible.

Recommendation:

That you approve my responding to Vorontsov in this fashion.³

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, Box TS 36, Soviet Union, Chronological File, 7/70–1/71. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for action.

² See footnote 2, Document 196.

³ Nixon initialed the "approve" option.

Tab A

Note From the Soviet Government

Moscow, August 19, 1970.

The Soviet Ambassador has brought to the knowledge of the Soviet leadership the idea of President Nixon, which was forwarded through Dr. Kissinger, about arranging of a Soviet-American meeting on the highest level.

The American side is aware of our positive approach to the contacts on the highest level, including the form of personal meetings of the leaders of the two powers—the USSR and the US, provided that such meetings are duly prepared allowing thus to count on getting results.

With such an understanding of this question Moscow will be ready to study attentively concrete suggestions which President Nixon may wish to put forward in development of the general idea expressed by Dr. Kissinger on instructions from the President in the conversations with the Soviet Ambassador.

It would be desirable to know what problems and in what light does the American side intend to suggest for the consideration.

198. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, August 24, 1970.

SUBJECT

Meeting between Soviet Chargé d’Affairs Vorontsov and General Haig, August 24, 1970

General Haig met with the Soviet Chargé d’Affairs Vorontsov at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, August 24, 1970 in Dr. Kissinger’s Washington White House Office.

After a formal exchange of greetings, General Haig handed Mr. Vorontsov the written communication (copy of which is attached at Tab

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, Box TS 36, Soviet Union, Chronological File, 7/70–1/71. Top Secret; Sensitive.

A). The message was typewritten on plain paper with neither heading nor signature, in conformance with instructions received in the message of August 22d from Dr. Kissinger to General Haig at Tab B.²

Mr. Vorontsov read the communication carefully. He then stated to General Haig that he understood it completely. General Haig then stated to him that he, General Haig, had also been instructed to deliver the following oral message from Dr. Kissinger: The U.S. Government believes that pending progress between Dr. Kissinger and the Soviet Ambassador on the agenda items contained in the U.S. communication that it might be of value to fix a date for a meeting between President Nixon and Chairman Kosygin or General Secretary Brezhnev, or both, on the occasion of the Anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly during the week of October 18 in New York. General Haig reiterated that the months of November and December would pose insurmountable problems for the U.S. side for such a meeting since the President would be involved in a heavy work schedule associated with the preparation of the President's Annual Message to the Congress. Finally, General Haig stated that Dr. Kissinger would be most grateful for an early response from the Soviet side as to the feasibility and timing of the suggested venue. Mr. Vorontsov stated that he would be in immediate touch with Moscow and anticipated an early response.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

Tab A

Message Handed to the Soviet Chargé d'Affairs (Vorontsov) by the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Haig)³

Washington, August 24, 1970.

The President has studied with great care the communication forwarded to him through Dr. Kissinger by the Soviet Chargé D'Affairs.

For a meeting at the highest level the President wishes to repeat the agenda items already outlined to the Soviet Ambassador by Dr. Kissinger. These topics and their possible outcomes are:

European Security—Agreement in principle on the calling of a conference.

² Attached but not printed is a backchannel message from Kissinger through Winston Lord to Haig outlining Nixon's message and instructions for delivery.

³ No classification marking.

Middle East—Discussions of a comprehensive political-military solution.

SALT—Agreement on the general outline of an accord.

Provocative Attacks—Initiation of discussions at the highest level only.

Principles of Co-existence—With special reference to Southeast Asia.

Trade—Measures to expand trade.

Other topics either side may wish to raise.

Dr. Kissinger is prepared to conduct preliminary discussions on these topics with the Soviet Ambassador.

The President wishes to point out that preparations for the new session of Congress make November and December unfeasible for a meeting.

The President will study attentively proposals the Soviet side may put forward in reaction to this communication.

199. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

Possible Meeting with Kosygin

As we await Soviet reaction to our latest exchange, I thought you might want to have some reflections on the subject of summits. This memorandum discusses the background of U.S.-Soviet summits; Kosygin's role in the Soviet leadership and his personal traits; and the role a trip of his would play in current Soviet policy generally.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 713, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. IX, August 1–October 31, 1970. Secret; Sensitive; Nodis; Eyes Only. Sent for information. The memorandum was not initialed by Kissinger, and there is no indication it was sent to the President. According to a handwritten note on the August 25 covering memorandum from Lord to Kissinger, this memorandum was drafted on August 26. Lord's memorandum explains: "Hal Sonnenfeldt sent out some revisions in the last couple of pages in the memorandum. He knows nothing about your exchanges with Dobrynin and Vorontsov, so I had to delete some of his material toward the end of the memo which suggests that we should send a positive signal to the Soviets and ways in which to do this."

Over the years, summit meetings with American Presidents have held as much, albeit rather different, fascination for Soviet leaders as vice versa. It has always been one of the paradoxes of Bolshevik behavior that their leaders have yearned to be treated as equals by the people they consider doomed. For Khrushchev, consorting with the high and mighty of the capitalist world roused some of the impulses of the parvenue. But the totality factors that have gone into Soviet thinking and feeling (as into American) have been complex and ambivalent and defy precise definition.

Certainly, in the last 15 years or so—since the Geneva summit—there has been the element of coresponsibility for the survival of mankind that is so uniquely part of the American-Soviet relationship by virtue of our size and power. In many ways, the psychological adjustment to this special relationship has been harder for the Soviets who were raised in a value system of victors and vanquished, of historically-ordained and objectively determined class hostility which temporary, subjective factors could not really change.

In any event, there is now a history of Soviet leadership interest in communication with American Presidents; and the same impulse, whatever its wellsprings, has existed among American Presidents since Roosevelt. This has been true despite the fact that summits, since World War II, have produced few if any specific results, except procedural ones: i.e., agreements to have more meetings, at lower levels. It might be argued that the 1959 Eisenhower–Khrushchev summit, by producing agreement on a four-power summit six months hence gave Berlin that much of a lease on life. But in the end that four-power summit, in 1960, aborted and Berlin lived on, anyway.

Many hold the view that a summit is useful for atmospheric reasons, to make it easier for countries to reach subsequent understandings; from this perspective, agreement all too often becomes an end in itself. However unimportant or irrelevant the settlement may be, it is said to contribute to a climate of confidence which will “improve” the situation.

The usual consequence of such an approach is that more ingenuity and effort are put into finding things to agree on than in coming to grips with the issues that have caused the tensions. As a result the difficulties which are “ironed out” are often soluble only because they are inconsequential. This distortion is forgotten and the mere fact that something is settled, no matter how trivial, is said to be “progress.” Such agreements, therefore, become a means of postponing instead of solving the real issues. They do not lessen the tensions but rather perpetuate them.

The topics which were slated for discussion at the Paris summit conference in 1960 are evidence of this point: exchange of persons, nuclear testing, arms control, and Berlin. They are either so unimportant

that they can be solved fairly easily and without the attention of heads of state, or they are so complicated that a summit conference can at best serve as a means for deferring decision.

The intangible results of meetings between American and Soviet leaders are harder to define and more controversial; many observers think that these results far outweigh the absence of concrete ones: e.g., the supposedly tacit agreement in 1955 that nuclear war was unthinkable; or the impact on Sino-Soviet relations of the mere fact of the Camp David meeting in 1959; or the ultimate effect on Soviet strategic doctrine and on their view of the ABM of McNamara's Glassboro lectures to Kosygin in 1967. These things are hard to judge; but that American-Soviet summits involve or produce some special chemical mixtures that American-Mexican ones don't is undoubtedly true. The only question is whether the mixture is for good or ill.

Nor have domestic political considerations always been absent—on either side. Khrushchev saw his cavortings with the Capitalist great as enhancing his stature at home. In Kosygin's case, foreign trips and summit meetings are not so much part of a personal "election campaign" (although, in fact, the current pre-Party Congress period is something not unlike an American election campaign). Rather, as the representative of the aging Soviet Troika, a Kosygin trip to New York and meeting with the American President—especially if they could be depicted as successful—would be used on arguments against Young Turk elements in the Party who are critical of the moribund approaches of the now top ruling group which has now been at the top for six years. Arguments like "we know how to handle the American ruling group" undoubtedly figure in internal debates.

It may be that in this particular year a Kosygin foray into the West is connected with a general Soviet effort to delineate certain more orderly relations with the West. This could be because of the uncertainties of the Chinese challenge, the instabilities in Eastern Europe which the Czech invasion submerged but did not remove and the need for greater certainty in economic planning at a time when the USSR faces tough and expensive economic and technological choices.

Perhaps we need not take quite so epochal a view of a possible Nixon-Kosygin meeting. After all, Kosygin is *not* the Soviet summit. (In fact, one of President Johnson's unending frustrations was that he could never quite find his Soviet equivalent: sometimes it was Brezhnev, sometimes Kosygin and sometimes—usually only for purposes of writing messages beginning with "Your Excellency"—it was Podgorny.) Kosygin quite evidently is number 2 in the USSR in many important ways; yet some would argue that someone like Kirilenko, who might some day be General Secretary, is more like the real number 2 than Kosygin. Kosygin has never challenged Brezhnev for the top spot,

though we know that he has sometimes done things in ways that made Brezhnev feel he was showing insufficient deference to number 1. Kosygin obviously is a manager who likes to manage, sometimes he cuts corners, even around the Party. (Yet, as a Marxist, on many issues we know him to be almost a Puritan.)

If Kosygin comes to New York, it will not be because *he* decided to come but because the Collective, whatever precisely that is, decided he should go. He may or may not have plenipotentiary power on some issue or other. In 1967, we know he frequently checked with the home office for instructions; though in London in 1966, our intelligence caught him slipping a couple of things past the lethargic Brezhnev in the interest of speed. (Speed, cutting corners, getting things done, indeed, is where Kosygin's main troubles with Brezhnev have been. His strength has been that he has not reached for the top job and, in fact, does not have the constituency in the Party for doing so.)

An intriguing question, if Kosygin comes toward the end of October is whether by that time November 2 will be so close that he would be able to give President Nixon the Soviet counterproposal on SALT (assuming the Soviet leadership can agree on one). Then again, if Bahr's analysis of Soviet interests has any merit, would Kosygin come in October to offer some interesting proposition on Berlin? SALT (including the fascinating and ramified third country problem) and Berlin are the two issues on which Soviets could make really interesting offers on their own initiative. On the Middle East, they are not free agents. However, even if Kosygin made such moves, it is unlikely that he would be here long enough or that his terms would be so close to ours that anything remotely close to conclusive negotiations could be expected.

As in the past, Kosygin would come not only in the expectation of seeing our President. The Soviets have in recent years acquired a certain interest in the UN and in the potential it provides for a Soviet role as the defender of small, formerly colonial countries. Depending on where the Middle East situation stood, the Soviets could also, under his leadership, seek to start an anti-Israel/US bandwagon as they abortively tried in 1967. They could try a push for admission of divided countries, with Germany in the vanguard. In sum, the strand in Soviet policy that gropes for co-responsibility, condominium, duopoly with the US remains vigorously accompanied by other strands more directly and more obviously prejudicial to our interests. Kosygin would be here to exemplify this multiplicity of tendencies. (The more hopeful strand, incidentally, would continue whether Kosygin came or not, though it might perhaps be set back a little if the Soviets felt they had been deliberately snubbed or insulted.)

Kosygin has on occasion in the past demonstrated keen negotiating skill. Even if undoubtedly acting on Politburo orders, and closely

flanked by the diplomatic and military expertise of Foreign Minister Gromyko and Defense Minister Grechko, Kosygin deserves much credit personally for bringing off the Tashkent-compromise between India and Pakistan. (It should be added that the establishment of peace, or at least the prevention of war on the Subcontinent was genuinely in the Soviet national interest—as it was in ours—since war might have faced the Soviets with the dilemma of openly supporting India against a China-supported Pakistan.)

The sudden fatal heart attack of Indian Prime Minister Shastri at Tashkent has never been traced, by any one, to the effect of his personal encounters with Kosygin. Indeed none has ever attributed to the Soviet Premier the capacity for personal brutality and crudeness that, according to the most reliable reports, were displayed by Brezhnev, for example, just two years ago when the kidnapped, Liberal Czechoslovak leaders were Kremlin “guests.”

We know that Kosygin is tough and unyielding, if need be. We know, too that while foreign policy is not his first love, he briefs himself meticulously and masters the subject matter at hand and the Soviet position on it.

Kosygin has sometimes been identified with the “liberal” wing of the Soviet leadership, mostly because of his interest in economic advancement and efficient management. His son-in-law, Gvishiani has been responsible for expediting certain kinds of technical US-Soviet exchanges. Yet none could, like Kosygin, survive near the very top of Soviet leadership for over thirty years without at least having acquiesced in the brutalities of the regime. His origins are in the Leningrad Party organization which was almost completely purged by Stalin. Like the rest of the sixty-odd year-olds in the Politburo, Kosygin has had to walk over corpses to be where he is.

Kosygin has also showed considerable shrewdness in dealing with Americans, even if, as one must assume, his general conduct was on orders from the Politburo. There have been several instances when he has impressed Americans, and others, as the equivalent of the manager of a large Western corporation. But in 1965—to cite just one example—he displayed unusual psychological adroitness when dealing with Averell Harriman. On the first day of the Governor’s visit, Kosygin was tough, dour and almost brutal in depicting the deleterious effects of the American aggression against the DRV. The Americans were depressed and their telegrams showed it. On the second day, Kosygin painted vistas of US-Soviet cooperation once we had only screwed up enough courage to get out of Vietnam. He reminded Harriman how he had successfully negotiated the test ban treaty and subtly suggested that there might well be other treaties (at that time the NPT was the great US dream) that the Governor might bring to fruition.

Without attempting psychological judgments, the Governor's firm conviction that somehow, sometime the Soviets would "help" us in Vietnam seems to have stemmed from that second day's encounter in 1965.

200. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, September 1, 1970.

SUBJECT

PFIAB Recommendation on Sino-Soviet Intelligence Affairs

The attached package² is a followup of the FIAB's concern on the Sino-Soviet issue registered to you at last month's luncheon. While it goes somewhat beyond the pale of their areas of responsibility, I do think that we should handle it seriously, given the responsible attitude of the FIAB. I do not think the draft reply prepared by Hyland³ fits the bill in any sense in that it passes the buck back to Burke to deal with Helms on something that the FIAB has quite rightly brought to your attention as a followup of their luncheon meeting with you.

I am also not so sure that an NIE of the kind requested would not better be put into a NSSM prepared by us which would reconvene a special Ad Hoc group of experts to review the entire issue and to have at its disposal the earlier work done by the NSC staff on this issue.

If you agree, I will send this back to Sonnenfeldt for the preparation of a comprehensive NSSM and for the development of

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 276, Agency Files, PFIAB, Vol. V. Secret. Sent for action.

² Attached but not printed at Tab B is an August 10 memorandum from Gerard Burke, Acting Executive Secretary of PFIAB, to Kissinger summarizing the PFIAB meetings of August 6–7.

³ Attached but not printed.

recommendations for the composition of an Ad Hoc group of the caliber that offers some hope for a decent product.⁴

Tab A

Memorandum From William Hyland of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)⁵

Washington, August 28, 1970.

SUBJECT

PFIAB Recommendation on Sino-Soviet Intelligence Affairs

In its early August meeting PFIAB considered the problem of current intelligence estimates of possible developments in the Sino-Soviet confrontation (Tab B). They apparently conclude that, as a "matter of high priority," a national intelligence estimate should be prepared on the timing, nature, scope, duration and probable outcome of military operations that might be initiated by the USSR against China. Second, they recommend a similar estimate on implications as to the effect on US interests of such hostilities. Finally, they suggest a study of courses of action available to the US (1) to avoid becoming involved, and (2) to improve US relative positions vis-à-vis the two contestants in areas of US interests.

Comment:

I do not understand why you, rather than Dick Helms, are the addressee of this memo; presumably PFIAB recommendations were also passed to CIA.

The projected studies would do no harm, though probably not much good either. We have been through this exercise twice. It is doubtful that we will produce a better paper than the one shepherded by Roger Morris last year (which still must exist somewhere). Moreover,

⁴ Kissinger initialed the "disapprove" option and added: "I would request an NIE minus C." On September 3, Haig sent Sonnenfeldt a memorandum instructing him to follow-up on items "A" and "B" of Burke's August 10 memorandum. Those items read as follows: "a) the timing, nature, scope, duration, and probable outcome of military operations that might be initiated by the USSR; b) implications as to the effect on U.S. interests of such hostilities; c) courses of action available to the U.S.: to avoid becoming involved; to improve U.S. relative positions vis-à-vis the two contestants in areas of U.S. interests such as Berlin, the Middle East and Southeast Asia."

⁵ Sent for action.

the National Intelligence Estimate is not the form for the kind of study that might provide a helpful background. A CIA, or CIA–DIA study without the need for careful coordination, and containing considerable factual data on troop dispositions, capabilities, and possible attack scenarios, would be best. As for the implications of US interests, this is not an intelligence matter and should not be.⁶

If PFIAB and the intelligence community want to perform a service, they might consider a different aspect entirely. No amount of intelligence guessing on a Sino-Soviet war is of any value unless hostilities seem imminent; when they did last year, the most we got was a waffle. Intelligence might perform a service, however, by considering what factors might lead to a Sino-Soviet accommodation. This is usually ignored, but would be as important for our interests as a war. Moreover, we in the West have comfortably come to regard Sino-Soviet hostility as a permanent feature of the landscape, much as we did monolithic communism. Yet many Sinologists believe much of the hostility is due to Mao and Maoism. Indeed, there is ample evidence that the early phase of the cultural revolution was sparked by a dispute over relations with the USSR—with an important part of the Chinese establishment, including some of the military, disposed to patch up the dispute. The Soviet-German treaty ought to be a reminder that patterns of international politics can shift rapidly.

I have done a memo from you to the PFIAB (Tab A) indicating that you have no objections to the first study, ignoring the policy aspects which are not in the PFIAB bailiwick.

Recommendation

That you sign the memorandum to the PFIAB at Tab A.

Mr. Holdridge concurs in this memo.

⁶ A handwritten note from Winston Lord at this point reads, "Burke memo does not suggest that it is—WL."

201. Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State¹

Moscow, September 3, 1970, 2000Z.

5076. Dept please pass Immediate info to London, Paris, Beirut, Jidda, and Kuwait. Ref: State 144257.²

1. I made oral statement per paras 26–29 Reftel³ to Soviet Dep FonMin Vinogradov late afternoon September 3, mentioning previous talk on same subject with Kuznetsov August 22.⁴

2. Vinogradov then launched into lengthy, repetitive, and largely unyielding reply. Although he said his remarks were preliminary in nature, and that my oral statement would be studied, the manner in which he made his comments suggested he may well have been expecting my approach. Following is account of discussion.

3. First, he could not accept wording in oral statement that USSR along with UAR would bear responsibility for possible resumption of fighting. The USSR could never accept such an accusation. The USSR was not engaged in hostilities in ME, and therefore could not be held responsible for things with which it is not connected.

4. Second, he said he could see very clearly our idea was to cover up for recent Israeli actions. The well-known facts were that Israel had disrupted the NY talks. It was unwilling to accept resumption of Jar-ring mission, had done so only in “funny way,” and then Tekoah ran off to Israel and is still there. The Arabs are still in NY. Why then blame USSR/UAR for disrupting the talks?

5. Third, the US was accusing the UAR of a “kind of violation” of ceasefire agreement. However, one does not know if there were violations. For its part, the UAR accuses Israel of violating the agreement. Since US planes are flying over Eastern side of Suez Canal and can see over both sides, USG should be able to determine accuracy of UAR charges. Therefore, my statement looked “strange.”

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, CL 172, Jordan Crisis, September 1970, Selected Exchanges, Soviet Union. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Repeated to USINT Cairo, Tel Aviv, USUN, and Amman.

² Telegram 144257 to Moscow, September 3, reported on the administration’s evaluation of the apparent violation of the cease-fire agreement between Israel and the UAR by the latter, which was supported by the Soviet Union. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27–14 ARAB–ISR)

³ Paragraphs 26–29 contained instructions for Moscow to transmit the oral statement described below to the highest possible level at the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

⁴ No record of this meeting has been found.

6. I told Vinogradov that, while we were taking up matter with UAR, we regarded the USSR as involved since Soviet weapons and personnel were there and that their people on the ground must have knowledge of developments which were contrary to the ceasefire agreement. He asserted that any talk of ceasefire violations should be established by "both sides." In proposing the ceasefire agreement, the US said that verification of observance should be done by national means. The US may be right in charging that violations have occurred, but neither "you nor we," he asserted, know whether they have actually taken place. We both know clearly only that Israel has raised a hue and cry about violations.

7. He then said "there were no Soviet weapons in the UAR," although the UAR had bought Soviet weapons. There were no Soviet troops there; only advisers and technicians. Therefore, the situation was different than represented, and he said the USSR was in no way involved in the ME crisis. I told Vinogradov my government would take note of his statement, and added that it was our belief that Soviet personnel were involved with complicated weapons in the UAR.

8. I stressed our concern over the situation, noting that we had approached the GUAR regarding the violations I was speaking to him about. I said both the USG and the GOI were convinced that ceasefire violations had taken place, and handed him list of coordinates contained in paras 16–18 of Reftel. These violations were reason, I said, why the Israelis were staying away from NY. Although we were pressing them to return to NY to resume the talks, the GOI was confronted with a serious domestic situation as a result of the violations. This simply was a factor which we should both realize. In response to Vinogradov's question, I said we had raised with the GOI Egyptian charges of Israeli violations and were pressing Tel Aviv for more precise information.

9. Vinogradov then returned to his assertion that we were trying to put the blame on the USSR rather than where it belonged. I responded that we shared a joint responsibility. The USG was convinced that the ceasefire has been violated, and that the situation is extremely serious. The ceasefire and talks may be in jeopardy. Therefore, both of us should approach the situation in the spirit of taking steps to maintain the ceasefire.

10. Vinogradov then said that our accusations were wrong. He could see, he asserted, that the US wished to prepare the ground for the disruption of the talks and the resumption of hostilities. I immediately interrupted, saying this was not true. There was not the slightest such intention on our part, and I repudiated his suggestion. The situation was serious. The UAR had violated the ceasefire. We should both be concerned about such a development inasmuch as it could lead to a breakdown in the talks.

11. Vinogradov then backed off somewhat, especially when I asked him whether the Soviet Government should not be concerned, assuming our charges were true. He replied the USSR did not want the talks to break down. He said Moscow had supported the US initiative, whereas Israel had been reluctant to do so. Now Israel was accusing Cairo of violating the ceasefire as a pretext for trying to disrupt the talks. The situation, according to Vinogradov, was serious because of all the “shouting” Israel was doing; if the talks were resumed the situation would not be serious.

12. He then asked if I did not think that the ceasefire agreement provided for maintenance and the repair and restoration of facilities, to which I replied that our information clearly indicated that the violations I was talking about went far beyond repair and restoration.

13. Vinogradov then charged that we were making our accusations and drawing conclusions before waiting for the results of our approach to Cairo. He wondered how we could put ourselves in the role of being the only judge in such a complicated situation and why we wished to take on such a role.

14. I reiterated that, because of the seriousness of the situation, we were approaching both the UAR and Moscow. I then said that, as a personal suggestion, it seemed to me that if something could be done, quietly and without publicity, it might improve the situation. If the UAR would withdraw some—maybe not all—of its missiles as a gesture, this would be a small step toward restoring confidence and returning Israel to the conference table.

15. The discussion then turned to Jordan, with Vinogradov saying that their information indicated the situation was “no worse—no better.” It was his assessment, Vinogradov said, that it would not be useful for Iraq to do something “serious.” He did not, however, know how Jordan had behaved. The Soviet concern, he asserted, was to have good conditions for the Jarring mission. I closed by stating both our governments were faced by a situation of extreme seriousness.

16. State 144297⁵ received after FonOff meeting. Gromyko understood to be on leave so that Vinogradov and Kuznetsov highest officials available.

Beam

⁵ Telegram 144297 to Moscow, September 3, reads, “Re State 144257, we strongly urge you to make the démarche to Gromyko.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US–USSR)

202. Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State¹

Moscow, September 5, 1970, 1531Z.

5122. 1. EmbOff summoned to Soviet Foreign Office urgently 5 PM Saturday September 5 to receive following statement which read orally by Zinchuk, Deputy Head of American Section. Informal Embassy translation follows.

A. Begin text. According to information received by the Soviet Government, the Israeli Air Force intends to carry out on Sunday, September 6, bombings of a number of regions of the UAR in the zone of the Suez Canal beyond the ceasefire line. Thus, the Israeli ruling circles, encouraged by the constant declarations from Washington about an increase in military deliveries to Israel, in addition to the sabotage they are conducting of the talks in New York, are now preparing to set out on a course of direct military provocations against the UAR with the aim of disrupting the efforts toward a peaceful settlement of the middle-east conflict.

B. The Soviet Government expects that the Government of the USA will urgently undertake the necessary steps to restrain Israel from the dangerous actions it is planning, the entire responsibility for the consequences of which, under whatever pretexts they might be carried, would fully fall on Israel and the United States. End of text.

2. Zinchuk commented that they had asked us to come urgently to receive above declaration in view of shortness of time before actions referred to in note were supposed to be undertaken. Emboff said we would transmit context of declaration to department with greatest speed.

Beam

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Geopolitical File, CL 172, Jordan Crisis, September 1970, Selected Exchanges, Soviet Union. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Repeated to Cairo and Tel Aviv.

203. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union¹

Washington, September 5, 1970, 2101Z.

White House please pass San Clemente for Secretary Rogers and Kissinger from Sisco.

146306. Subj: Soviet Démarche on Middle East and U.S. reply.

1. Soviet Chargé Vorontsov called urgently afternoon September 5 on Assistant Secretary Sisco to present démarche re alleged Israeli intention to mount air attack on UAR regions beyond ceasefire zone on September 6 which is identical to démarche received in Moscow (Moscow 5122).²

2. Sisco said we had just received the Soviet message which was passed to our Embassy by Soviet Foreign Ministry official Zinchuk in Moscow. Suggesting Vorontsov note his following remarks, Sisco stated Soviet message will be studied. In U.S. view, if cause is removed, then danger would be removed. This situation has been brought about by violations of ceasefire/standstill agreement which were brought to attention of Soviet Government in specific detail over past days, most recently on September 3.

3. Sisco continued that way to remove danger is for situation to be rectified immediately. We have provided specific locations of violations to Soviet Government. There have been serious violations in our view of at least three kinds: (A) construction which has increased total number of sites, (B) number of SA-2 and SA-3 missiles have been installed where there were none before ceasefire, and (C) missile sites have been occupied which previously were unoccupied.

4. Sisco pointed out Soviet and USG agreed to ceasefire/standstill. It is clear this agreement does not sanction aforementioned activity, or moving around missiles from position to position, installing missiles, new construction, or increasing operational readiness. All this is contrary to para C of ceasefire/standstill agreement, text of which Sisco then read to Vorontsov.

5. Sisco said we feel that USSR cannot take position expressed to US by Deputy Foreign Minister Vinogradov that it has no responsibility for this matter. There no need to outline how heavily involved USSR is in UAR with its own personnel and equipment. USSR and US agreed

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 713, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. IX. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Repeated to Tel Aviv, USINT Cairo, Amman, London, Paris, and USUN.

² Document 202.

on ceasefire/standstill in hope that it would lead to serious talks and political solution. Violations are serious, and both USSR and UAR would be taking on heavy responsibility if they should lead to breakdown in peace efforts.

6. Sisco observed that Soviet *démarche* contains allegation which also was stated to US by Vinogradov. Sisco stated US rejects categorically Soviet charge that US is attempting to establish grounds for resumption of military activities and break-off of talks. Sisco asked Vorontsov what possible incentive US could have to torpedo its own initiative after weeks of work with parties to bring about its acceptance.

7. Sisco continued what US wants is what Mr. Brezhnev said USSR wants in recent public statement: honest observance of agreement. This is important agreement between US and USSR. For agreement to work confidence between us is needed. If there cannot be confidence on this agreement, a question is raised as to what kind of confidence there can be between us in other areas.

8. Sisco pointed out that whenever nations take risks for peace—and US proposal was accepted on all sides—danger exists that any breakdown will bring about even more difficult situation than existed before acceptance of proposal. Sisco urged that Soviet Government examine very carefully information we provided in Moscow and take every feasible measure to rectify situation and bring about end of violations. This would remove danger and risks to which Soviet message refers.

9. Vorontsov said he would relay US comments and that Moscow and Washington understand each other's positions. He returned to Soviet note; he said most pressing matter is information in Soviet message about impending Israeli actions and asked that he should tell Moscow as to what US will do. Sisco replied US will study Soviet message; Sisco refused to be drawn out further. Vorontsov added Soviets expect US will take action because time is running out. Sisco replied he had nothing further to add.

10. *For Moscow*: you should follow up immediately with highest available MEA official, responding to Zinchuk statement³ along preceding lines.

Johnson

³ This statement was transmitted in Document 202.

204. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco)¹

Washington, September 6, 1970, 10:30 a.m.

S: Henry, we have just received a telegram from Moscow² which you probably will have received in San Clemente by now. I am having a check run. Let me read it to you because it is a note—an oral type thing. (Sisco read the message.)

S: The Soviet Government expects that the Government of USA will undertake the steps to prevent Israel from taking the steps they are planning. Our man in Moscow believes we should come back urgently with action he recommends.

K: Thing is not true, of course.

S: We have talked about this here and think it affords us an opportunity to do the following. Vorontsov just asked to see me urgently and he is meeting with me at 2:30 pm today. At the meeting I will just say thank you very much and receive the message. I will take two steps. We ought to tell the Israelis that this note has been received and, of course, we wish to repeat to them what we really said the other day that we assume that there is not going to be any unilateral action on their part and how serious this would be. The second phase would be to go back to the Russians and say we have taken action in this regard but we want to say to you that you have a responsibility and we have then put them in a position of getting these things out of here and then to conclude by saying once these missiles have been removed, you, the Russians will no longer have any worry about this. I would like to proceed this way. This raises the question of the letter you have.

K: The Secretary does not wish to send it. And I am not prepared to overrule him.

S: Then we can proceed in this way which will achieve the same thing but it gives us the opportunity to (K interrupted here).

K: Let me tell you my reaction. I would not give color to the fact that we have taken appropriate measures. That gives them a shot at the Arabs. All we need to do is tell Rabin that we have had this communication and I would not make any new views. I would not go back

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 364, Telephone Conversations, Chronological File. No classification marking.

² Document 202.

to the Russians today and then today I would go back with essentially what you have done here.

S: Without claiming the credit.

K: That would be my recommendation.

S: Okay, that makes sense. I will proceed with that.

K: Good.

205. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, September 16, 1970.

SUBJECT

Soviet Reply to our Mid-East Démarches

Deputy Foreign Minister Vinogradov's omnibus reply to our three démarches² offers nothing concrete that would indicate that the Soviets or UAR intend to restrain their missile build-up, let alone tear it down. *Yet*, both the tone of the oral statement and Vinogradov's comments suggest that the Soviets may have blinked, if only slightly.

There is very little truculence in the formal statement and, rather plaintively, Vinogradov asked "rhetorically," how could rectification be accomplished? This last question is perhaps the operative part of the Soviet presentation, and may be the diplomatic opening that we need, especially if coupled with that part of the formal statement—which Vinogradov called attention to—that offered bilateral talks or a multi-lateral effort to move toward a settlement.

This could be pure evasion, particularly in light of the continuing missile build-up and direct Soviet involvement in it. (This last aspect incidentally seems to be getting lost in the shuffle. We will ultimately have to face up to the question of how to deal with the issue of Soviet presence.) On the other hand, having sliced several large chunks off the salami both the Soviets and the UAR may feel that they can resume

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 713, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. VIII. Secret; Nodis. Sent for urgent information. Initialed by Kissinger.

² See Document 201.

political maneuvering to bring the Israelis back to the conference table, or at least to retrieve what they may have lost politically by the violation through isolating Israel (and us) as the opponents of talks.

The fact that Vinogradov displayed responsiveness to the concept of “rectification,” even if rhetorically, could be a key opportunity. Read one way, this could be a cautious invitation for us to respond and could be a signal that the Soviets do not reject the idea privately broached by Beam to Vinogradov on September 3,³ that removal of some missiles would be a necessary sign of good faith. Under this interruption, the Soviets could be inviting us to follow up and give them our ideas of what would constitute rectification, but in the secrecy of bilateral channels.

If so, it would be a great mistake to become involved in the morass of detailed numbers games over this or that missile site, or as currently proposed by Sisco, to put to the Soviets a list of actions they should take.

What we need is a concept that matches our general position that neither side should gain a military advantage and that a balance should be maintained. Under this approach what we should concentrate on is the *number of operational missile sites* as of August 10 and tell the Soviets that what we expect is that they will, in whatever manner they choose, restore this situation. If the Soviets do not accept our estimate of number of operational missile sites and claim there were less, so much the better. If they claim there were more, within limits we could go along and say this becomes the new ceiling. This approach focuses on the critical military item (missile launchers) and avoids the ambiguity of “related” equipment, occupied vs unoccupied, mobile vs stationary, SA-2 vs SA-3.

This approach could be linked to the other Sisco idea of cancelling out violations in return for dropping further investigation of Israeli violations.

In any case, it is worth exploring whether Vinogradov has in fact given a signal, or is merely throwing sand in our eyes. It does not appear to warrant, however, the proposed Sisco approach of elevating the rhetoric but rather a fast, but quiet Beam–Vinogradov negotiations. That this had already started would, presumably, have some effect on the meetings with Mrs. Meir.

Hal Saunders points out that it is difficult from intelligence to determine the number of operational sites. Using “occupied” sites might bring us close enough to the general concept to establish a reasonable

³ See Document 201.

base. The intelligence people would have to go back over the photos and do a best guess list of occupied sites which represent military capability. He feels that this approach might be a better one than the more elaborate Sisco proposals now that there may be some opening to explore, but wonders whether the Soviets are really prepared to make that kind of concession given the fact that they and the Egyptians have not even broken stride in their build-up since our approach of September 3.

I do not know of course whether, in fact, the Soviets will make any concessions. The point is that we probably should exhaust this possibility, particularly in view of what may have been some very mixed signals to the Soviets during August. If it proves fruitless, we will have to haul out the heavy artillery.

206. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, September 16, 1970.

SUBJECT

Our Signals to the Soviet Union and Their Possible Misconstruction as a Source of Crises in US-Soviet Relations

I should like very briefly to convey to you my deep concern that in the present Middle Eastern situation we may have (unwittingly) misled the Soviets to believe that cheating on the cease-fire was a matter of indifference to us and that we may have thereby contributed to a potentially much deeper crisis.

Interpretation of Soviet conduct is a tricky and quite inexact exercise and I am very conscious of all the pitfalls and evidential gaps and ambiguities in this sort of analysis. I also do not claim to know or to have followed in detail all that we may have said and done with respect to the present state of affairs.

I am disturbed by the present train of events because of a history of US-Soviet crisis situations which lends itself to the respectable

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 713, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. IX, August 1, 1970–October 31, 1970. Secret; Nodis; Eyes Only; Outside System. Sent for urgent information.

hypothesis that, especially in election years, we may be prone to give the Soviets the impression that they are relatively free to do certain things inimical to our interests; that they then do them; that we then react and find ourselves propelled into potentially dangerous and damaging confrontations. Some work has been done on this hypothesis as it relates to Suez (1956), various phases of the Berlin crisis, and, most especially, the Cuban missile crisis (1962). I have not done the research myself, do not have the required mass of findings or data available and would question some of the conclusions that have been advanced.

But, to take Cuba 1962, there is a tenable theory that runs somewhat as follows:

—that with the minimal camouflage accompanying the heavy Soviet military movements into Cuba during the spring and summer, including at first SAMS and then M/IRBM-associated gear, the Soviets must at least have suspected that we had an idea of what they were doing;

—that what was said (especially, at that time, by a phalanx of White House assistants and hangers-on) and done by us during the summer could well have appeared to the Soviets as US acquiescence in what they were doing, including in the Soviet depiction of it as solely “defensive”;

—that Khrushchev may have concluded that as long as he did not flaunt his action in our face before the fall election we would remain passive and that, indeed, it was politically more important to us that nothing leaked out before November than that the Soviets would acquire some 40-odd additional first-strike strategic launchers;

—that even or especially the President’s public warnings against offensive deployments as late as September 11, when they were well underway (plus further ongoing negotiations, e.g. on NP1), were interpreted in Moscow as further signs of toleration, if not collusion;

—that our blowing the issue wide open on October 22² thus came as a complete surprise and could well have led to so irrational a Soviet reaction as to produce disaster.

I am drawing no *precise* analogies. One can’t. I do suggest, however, that the nature, timing and speed of our cease-fire initiative, the relative looseness of its terms, the informality of its consummation, our reluctance to concede violations and our other statements and actions *after* violations began could have led the Soviets to conclude that all that really mattered to us was a cease-fire in a pre-election period in which we preferred not to confront the awkward choices of continued open warfare. They could, therefore, have concluded that what they know are violations certainly of the spirit and also of the terms of the

² On October 22, 1962, President Kennedy delivered a radio and television report to the American people on the Soviet arms buildup in Cuba. (*Public Papers: Kennedy, 1962*, pp. 806–809)

agreement were not of vital interest to us. They could thus have been surprised by our subsequent apparently real indignation at what was happening (having meanwhile given the UAR, and themselves, the green light to proceed with violations and thus put their prestige on the line). Or they may even yet believe that we are merely play-acting.

I have sent you another memo, on the latest Beam–Vinogradov exchange,³ to suggest that the Soviets may just possibly now be sufficiently worried about our further reaction that they are willing to consider some form of “rectification”; or that at least they are trying to maneuver politically to inhibit us from acting. On the other hand, this is far from clear. And there is no telling what may happen to the cease-fire and what the Soviets may do in the face of some unilateral Israeli act of “rectification” (or some new US act of support for Israel) when they may well have thought of themselves (and their clients) as acting on the Suez west bank with our toleration. (Even more than in Cuba, the Soviets this time *knew* for certain that *we* knew the standstill was being violated.)

I do not claim to know the right way to communicate our intentions and conceptions of interests (assuming we ourselves know and agree what they are) to the Soviets in a way that minimizes the danger of misconstruction and subsequent deep confrontation. Nor, emphatically, do I exonerate the Soviets, who after all are the perpetrators of or accessories to the inimical acts in question.

I merely note from past involvement in these matters that our propensity to give the wrong signal has been considerable and that a theory is intellectually quite tenable that holds that some major US-Soviet crises of the past, especially in months before US elections, can be correlated to what we ourselves say and do, including at highest (presumed or actual) levels. Admitting that I have not been very close to Middle Eastern developments and to our explicit and implicit communications to the Soviets about them, I nevertheless wish to register my deep concern that this theory has acquired additional weight by recent events.

³ See Document 205.

207. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, September 18, 1970.

SUBJECT

Recent Soviet Naval Activity in Cuba

Analysis of reconnaissance flight photography over Cuba has this morning confirmed the construction of a probable submarine deployment base in Cien Fuegos Bay. Specifically:

—A Soviet submarine tender is anchored next to four buoys which the Soviets have placed in the Bay.

—[*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] submarine nets have been emplaced across the approach to the deep water basin in which the mooring buoys and the tender are located.

—A Soviet LST is anchored at a fuel pier and a Soviet tanker is anchored in the northern bay.

—Two special purpose barges are also located in the area.

—Special construction on Alcatraz Island, an island in the Bay, appears to have been completed. This includes an administrative area, two single-story barracks, a soccer field, basketball court and probably handball, volleyball or tennis courts. An offshore wharf and swimming area are on the east side of the island and a platform tower has been constructed just south of the administrative area.

The foregoing situation acquires special significance in the light of the conversations I had with Chargé Vorontsov on August 4² in the White House Map Room. You will recall that I saw Vorontsov at his request on that occasion. He called me in San Clemente to say he wanted to have an appointment as soon as I got back. When I saw him he was extremely cordial and read a communication which he handed to me.

The text of the note which is at Tab A³:

—Expressed Soviet anxiety over alleged attempts by Cuban revolutionary groups in the United States to resume sabotage and subversive activity against Cuba from the U.S. soil.

—Complained about provocative articles in the American press and ambivalent statements on the part of the U.S. officials concerning Cuba.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 782, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Soviet Naval Activity in Cuban Waters (Cienfuegos), Vol. I. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. In the upper right hand corner is the handwritten remark, "Late AM Report." Attached but not printed is a map of the Caribbean Sea with Cienfuegos circled.

² See Document 192.

³ Attached but printed as Tab A of Document 192.

—Stressed that the Soviets were proceeding on the Cuban question from the understanding with regard to Cuba that existed in the past and confirmed that the Soviets expected us to adhere to this understanding.

Note: The so called understanding to which Vorontsov was apparently referring was arrived at during the Cuban missile crisis. In essence, during the exchanges between the U.S. and the Soviets in 1962 at the time of the Cuban missile crisis we were given assurances that the Soviets would not locate nuclear weapons on Cuban territory in return for assurances from the U.S. government that we would not undertake military action to change the government of Cuba.

On August 7⁴ I stated to Vorontsov that at your request I had been instructed to give him the following reply:

—The U.S. notes with satisfaction the assurance of the Soviet government that the understandings of 1962⁵ are still in force, adding “We take this to mean that the Soviet Union will not place any offensive weapons of any kind or any nuclear weapons on Cuban soil.”

—I stated further that you wish to point out that although we have heard repeated reports of increased Soviet activity in Cuba that you were exercising the utmost restraint in not increasing reconnaissance activity.

—You were maintaining the understandings of 1962 which I was hereby authorized to reaffirm.

—Specifically the U.S. would not use military force to bring about a change in the governmental structure of Cuba.

—I then added that it had come to our attention that Soviet long range airplanes of the type suitable for nuclear bombing missions were flying with increasing regularity to Cuba. While we believe these planes were on reconnaissance missions we thought nevertheless that this might constitute a basis for approaching the limit of our understanding. It would certainly be noticed if the Soviet Union kept such operations to a minimum. *The same applied to Soviet naval activity in the Caribbean.*

—I called Vorontsov’s attention to the fact that we had taken protective measures in recent days with respect to a Soviet ship which reportedly was in danger of attack from Cuban exile groups.

—Vorontsov indicated he appreciated the good spirit in which the observations were made and was certain that the Kremlin would be very happy to receive them.

—I concluded by telling Vorontsov that the major problem now was to see what concrete progress could be made in the area of negotiations.

Today’s photography readout confirms that despite the exchange between Vorontsov and myself the Soviets have moved precipitously to establish an installation in Cien Fuegos Bay which is probably designed to serve as a submarine staging base in the Caribbean. Because

⁴ See Document 195.

⁵ See Document 194.

of the seriousness of this situation I have asked CIA to provide me with a briefing at 12:30 today at which time we will carefully evaluate the full range of photographic evidence now held in an effort to determine more precisely the full scope of Soviet activity in Cuba. I am also initiating, on an urgent basis, a detailed analysis of the strategic implications of this development.⁶

⁶ At the bottom of the page, Nixon handwrote the following comments: "I want a report on a crash basis on 1) what C.I.A. can do to support *any* kind of action which will irritate Castro; 2) what actions we can take which we have not yet taken to boycott nations dealing with Castro; 3) most important what actions we can take covert or overt to put missiles [unintelligible] the Black Sea [unintelligible] some trading stock."

208. Minutes of Senior Review Group Meeting¹

Washington, September 19, 1970, 10–10:45 a.m.

SUBJECT

Cuba/USSR—Military Activity in Cienfuegos

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger	JCS—Adm. Thomas H. Moorer
State—U. Alexis Johnson	NSC Staff—Viron P. Vaky
Defense—David Packard	
CIA—Richard Helms	

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

1. There would be a restricted NSC meeting on the subject on Wednesday, September 23 immediately following the regularly scheduled one.²

2. There would be a pre-NSC meeting Tuesday afternoon³ (time to be announced). Johnson and Kissinger would check to see if Llewellyn Thompson could not be present to discuss the Soviet perception of the situation.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-111, SRG Minutes, Originals, 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room.

² See Document 214.

³ The President's Daily Diary does not indicate that a meeting was held before the NSC meeting scheduled for 12:07 p.m. on September 22. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files)

3. Admiral Moorer is to prepare a paper on the strategic significance of the Soviet activity in Cienfuegos.⁴

4. Discussion of possible US responses will be deferred to give the principals time to consider the matter.

5. If there are press leaks, everyone will “stone-wall,” simply saying we constantly receive such reports and we constantly and carefully evaluate them; no further comment.⁵

Dr. Kissinger stated that the Cuban/Soviet Base problem was to be discussed only in this very restricted group. The President and Secretary Rogers want to keep it very restricted. They want to avoid a crisis mood until we know what we are going to do. Therefore, each principle is to keep the circle that knows about this very small and paperwork very restricted.

Dr. Kissinger then asked if there were any new facts to add to the intelligence we now have on the Cienfuegos area.

Mr. Helms said there was nothing to add to the report⁶ circulated yesterday.

In response to Dr. Kissinger’s question as to military significance, Admiral Moorer said that there was no question but that the Soviets were building an advance submarine base. This kind of installation would enable the Soviets either to have submarines come into the port or have the tender rendezvous anywhere in international waters. It greatly increases the on-station time of the subs.

Dr. Kissinger observed that there was some evidence this is also an R&R area. Thus he assumed they could fly in reserve crews and rotate crews via the tender. All the servicing of the subs could take place in international waters; in short, it was possible for the Soviets to operate in a “legal” way that would make it very difficult for us to meet.

Admiral Moorer suggested, however, that this might be a violation of the 1962 Kennedy–Khrushchev agreement.⁷

Mr. Johnson pointed out that strictly speaking there was never an “agreement” in 1962. There was an exchange of letters some of which crossed each other. In essence, the discussion then concentrated on UN inspection. The only thing we focussed on were land-based missiles and IL 28’s. There was really nothing else, and no “agreement” in the conventional sense.

⁴ Document 211.

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 221.

⁶ Not found. A September 18 memorandum from Nachmanoff to Kissinger summarizes the report. Kissinger included the information in his memorandum to the President on that day; see Document 207.

⁷ See Tab A, Document 194.

Dr. Kissinger agreed with this interpretation based on his review of the record and talks with McCloy and McNamara.

Dr. Kissinger pointed out that what the Russians did in 1962 was “legal.” What President Kennedy did was to react on the basis of a challenge to our security. There were two questions—Do the Russians violate an international understanding with this activity? Probably not. Secondly, what do we do from the security aspect?

Mr. Johnson cited President Kennedy’s press conference of November 20, 1962, in which the President said that peace in the Caribbean would depend upon strategic weapons being removed from Cuba and “kept out in the future” under adequate measures of inspection. This was the only specific thing we had, although everyone agreed that this was only a unilateral declaration of our own position. (A copy of the text of the November statement was given to Dr. Kissinger.)⁸

Mr. Johnson asked if there was any evidence as to whether the base accommodated Y-Class subs or attack subs or both.

It was generally agreed it could accommodate both.

Admiral Moorer pointed out that the base extends the operation of either Y or E class subs. The Soviets can now do with 1 what it now takes 5 to do. The net effect is to permit them to maintain a greater number of subs on station with the same force level.

Mr. Packard pointed out that the Soviets put up this installation in a hurry, something they do not usually do. They apparently want to have it quickly as a *fait accompli*. He believed the Soviets may want it in existence before the November 1 SALT talks.⁹

Mr. Johnson added that this was his theory.

Dr. Kissinger asked Admiral Moorer to do a paper on military implications. He asked if the Russians would store missiles at the base, and inquired as to what we did.

Admiral Moorer replied that we keep weapons on the tender, and that is what they will undoubtedly do.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Packard both pointed out that the Russians were doing just what we are doing in advanced areas.

Mr. Helms said he was surprised they had not done it sooner.

Mr. Packard also pointed out that apart from the SALT angle, the number of Y class subs becoming operational now made the establishment of this kind of advanced base installation more sensible from the Russians’ viewpoint.

⁸ For text, see *Public Papers: Kennedy, 1962*, pp. 830–838.

⁹ The third phase of SALT was to begin on November 2 in Helsinki.

Dr. Kissinger then asked if it was agreed that any decision we make in this regard must be on the assumption that the base can be used for Y Class, not just attack subs; in short, there was no point in trying to distinguish—the base is to be assumed to be for both. All agreed.

Secondly, Dr. Kissinger suggested that the strategic situation is different from 1962.

Mr. Packard agreed, saying this does not change the balance very much.

Mr. Johnson agreed, pointing out that the 1962 situation did constitute a major change of the strategic balance.

Mr. Packard said we must nevertheless assess the matter carefully, and that one danger was to the US bomber bases. The subs would have to get in close to our shore and they would need about 4 to 5 Y Class subs to have a credible threat against the bases.

All agreed with Dr. Kissinger's observation that what the Russians are doing is comparable to our building a sub base on the Black Sea.

Dr. Kissinger said that the President wanted an NSC discussion of this subject on Wednesday (Sept. 23) with just the major principals concerned—Rogers, Helms, Laird, Moorer. This would be done after the regular NSC meeting. We will operate on the assumption that the base is designed for Y Class subs and the question is whether a base of that kind requires a US response and if so what it should be.

Dr. Kissinger again asked Admiral Moorer to prepare a paper on what the base does for Y Class subs, for attack subs, to the strategic balance. The worldwide USSR naval picture should be included.

Dr. Kissinger asked how we can get a sense of Soviet perception of the situation.

Mr. Packard expressed the view that it is a long-range naval plan; he did not think it was a nuclear strike move, just a long-range build-up of power.

Mr. Helms observed that the Russians are doing the same thing in the Indian Ocean—they have built an airfield on the "God-forsaken island" of Scotoa, which belongs to South Yemen.

Admiral Moorer stated it may be just the beginning, and they might want to put up facilities in Chile.

Mr. Johnson said he would like to talk to "Tommy" Thompson on the Soviet angle.

Dr. Kissinger said that maybe Thompson should talk to the whole group. They agreed that Dr. Kissinger would check with the President and Johnson would check with Secretary Rogers, and they would be in touch with each other.

It was further agreed that there would be a pre-NSC meeting on Tuesday afternoon.

Mr. Helms pointed out that the jumpiest people in the world about Cuba are in the Congress.

Mr. Packard pointed out that the only reason for some speed is that the story is likely to leak, and may leak by Wednesday. Everyone agreed that they would just stone-wall it.

In response to Dr. Kissinger's question, everyone said they would prefer to think about the matter before proceeding to discuss possible US responses. It was agreed that consideration should proceed through the spectrum from doing nothing on up, but at the moment the meeting had gone as far as it could.

209. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to Secretary of Defense Laird¹

Washington, September 21, 1970.

SUBJECT

Sino-Soviet Border Dispute

As you know, the President is most interested in developments relating to the Sino-Soviet border dispute. It would be helpful to have a memorandum² which assesses the significance of the continuing buildup of military forces on the Soviet side of the border.

In particular, the memorandum should address the question of what the present level of Soviet forces along the border tells us of their intentions. It should address in particular the question of whether the current Soviet strength in the border area is sufficient only for defense against a possible Chinese attack or whether it is enough to allow the Soviets to invade China and if so, how far into China. The memorandum should also examine the question of what more, if anything, we

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 225, Agency Files, Department of Defense, Vol. VIII, July 21, 1970–September 1970. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Latimer on September 15.

² On October 22, Laird sent Kissinger a paper entitled "Soviet Force Level on Sino-Soviet Border," under a covering memorandum that read: "While [the enclosed report] cannot tell us definitively what Soviet intentions are, it does indicate the extent and general significance of the Soviet buildup. The buildup of Soviet forces has been steady and methodical but is inadequate for a major and prolonged offensive against the Chinese. The further buildup required for a major offensive would almost certainly be detected by intelligence." The CIA response is Document 227.

might expect to see on the Soviet side before an invasion, more trucks, armor, logistics buildup, etc.

If you agree, a due date of 7 October 1970, would be good.

Henry A. Kissinger³

³ Printed from a copy that indicates Kissinger signed the original.

210. Memorandum From Viron Vaky of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, September 22, 1970.

SUBJECT

The Cuban Side of the Soviet Military Activity in Cuba

In concentrating on the Soviet intention and plans regarding Cienfuegos, we should not ignore the other side of the equation—what does Cuba get out of lending its territory for this purpose? The answer would be illuminating as to what Cienfuegos is all about.

Cienfuegos may be the key to a number of puzzling and otherwise unexplainable things that have happened in the past two or three years:

(a) Evidence that the Soviets are increasing their control over the Cuban regime, and some reports that Castro is unhappy at this and somewhat impotent. The attached memo which I sent to you on September 8 describes some of these; note Castro's alleged comment on Soviet "coldbloodedness and ruthlessness."

(b) In several speeches last Spring, castigating exile activity, Castro made curious references that they (exiles) would not stage out of Central America or the Bahamas if Cuba had long range military aircraft. He would add "but of course we don't." However, the references were almost in the sense of "just wait."

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 782, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Soviet Naval Activity in Cuban Waters (Cienfuegos), Vol. I. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for information. Vaky's memorandum is Tab A of a September 22 memorandum from Haig to Kissinger for the NSC meeting on Cuba held September 23. Sent for information; designated "non-log."

(c) Cubanologists have long puzzled about why Castro made such a point of a ten million ton sugar harvest when it was such an improbable thing to achieve. The most interesting theory is one Rand researchers have developed linking back to Cuba's support of the USSR in the Czechoslovakia crisis:

—At that time Castro delayed for about a month before speaking out, and it seemed fairly clear that he was struggling with himself. He finally came out for the Soviets. If, the theory goes, the Soviets put the economic squeeze on him at that time because they needed his support in international socialist terms, Castro is the type to chafe at this dependence and seek to build his base to contest this kind of control.

—The ten million ton harvest was a typical Castroist mission—the subjective willing of a goal—which if he succeeded would have refurbished his leadership and his charisma—and his control over the society.

—To have failed and to have had to admit it decreases this control and leadership. He is now weaker; he gambled and lost. The Soviets can work their will with less sensitivity for Castro's wishes.

With reference to Cienfuegos, there are several possibilities; moreover, they are not mutually exclusive:

1. The Russians forced Cuba's consent with economic blackmail.
2. They bribed Castro with promises of additional economic and military aid, and perhaps a promise of protection against overthrow.
3. They bribed Castro's cooperation with promises to underwrite the export of revolution—Soviet naval units in the Caribbean could provide cover for clandestine guerrilla expeditions.

The last seems the least likely; to stimulate Castro's revolutionary exploits again goes counter to every other stance they are taking as to the *via pacifica*. On the other hand, the Russians could possibly have made a conscious decision to press the erosion of US influence in the continent by a variety of means.

There is no evidence of increased aid, either military or economic, but that of course could be in the future. An intelligence effort to check on weapons flow would be particularly interesting.

I am most intrigued, however, by the possibility that the Russians made a cold decision and then proceeded to ram it down Castro's throat. It is a tactical decision which may well have sprung out of their success in forcing Castro to bow to their wishes on Czechoslovakia—if we accept that theory for the moment. This may have made them realize—after clashes with Castro's maverick ideology—that Cuba could be theirs in absolute terms.

Tab A

Memorandum From Viron Vaky of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)²

Washington, September 8, 1970.

SUBJECT

Soviet Activity in Cuba

Attached is an interesting CIA report³ indicating increased Soviet control over the Cuban Communist Party. According to this report, the machinery of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) is increasingly controlled by young Soviet-trained officials whose primary loyalty is more to international Communism than to Castro or Cuban revolution. Castro only recently became aware of the extent of Soviet control when it was proposed that the position of Prime Minister be occupied by some one other than the Secretary General of the PCC. Since Castro holds both positions, the proposal in effect was that he give up the Secretary Generalship.

The report also cites Castro as commenting on Soviet "cold-bloodedness and ruthlessness" and that Latin American revolutionaries would have to face opposition from both the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Castro is also reported to have said he believes part of Cuba's economic problems are due to the rigidity of the Soviet style of Soviet-trained officials.

Comment: Note that CIA suggests that the Cubans may have deliberately surfaced this line to provoke a pro-Castro reaction among the revolutionists abroad. While that is a possibility, there have been several other reports indicating that there is some dissention between the old 26th of July veterans of the revolution and the younger technocrats who are largely Soviet-trained. There have also been fairly firm reports of Soviet domination of the Cuban intelligence apparatus, the DGI, and of increasing control of the Foreign Ministry by "Soviet-phytes." A key figure in all this is Carlos Raphael Rodriguez, the only old-time Communist party leader to have survived the ten years of Castro's revolution. He is smart, tough, and without any question the Soviets' man in Havana.

² Secret. Sent for information. The memorandum is initialed by Kissinger.

³ CIA Intelligence Information Cable TDCS DB-315/04525-70, September 2, on "Indications of Increased Soviet Control Over Communist Party of Cuba and Reaction of Fidel Castro" is attached but not printed.

211. Paper Prepared by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Moorer)¹

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

Assessment of Soviet Military Activities

1. Our latest intelligence indicates that the Soviet Union may be developing the port of Cienfuegos, Cuba, into a base capable of supporting nuclear submarines. This is but the latest in a series of moves that appear to fit into a pattern which indicates increasing Soviet hostility toward the United States and a willingness to take greater risks in pursuing objectives inimical to the security of the United States. Several Soviet actions which illustrate this pattern are listed below:

—Soviets continue to construct strategic missiles, SSBNs, and a new strategic bomber during SALT.

—Soviets have increased the threat to NATO Europe by deployment of ICBMs with improved accuracy replacing older MRBM/IRBMs.

—Soviet conventional forces in Europe have been strengthened. General Goodpaster has pointed out that the land, sea, air and missile forces of the Warsaw Pact represent a concentration of military power far in excess of defensive needs.

—Soviet actions in Czechoslovakia indicated that they will not hesitate to employ military force when their vital interests—as they define them—are at stake. The continuing occupation force has served to strengthen Soviet forces in Eastern Europe by five divisions.

—Soviet Navy deployments are increasing in scope and frequency, and in April 1970, the Soviet Navy conducted the most extensive exercise ever attempted by any navy, operating simultaneously in three oceans.

—Soviet merchant fleet has increased from 432 to 1,717 ships in the post-World War II period.

—Soviet influence in the Arab world, Soviet military presence in the Middle East and Soviet naval operations in the Mediterranean have increased dramatically in the past three years.

—Soviets have virtual control of UAR air defense and have challenged US peace initiative by violation of standstill provision with massive buildup of missile defenses along Suez Canal.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 782, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Soviet Naval Activity in Cuban Waters (Cienfuegos), Vol. I. Top Secret; Sensitive. On September 22, Haig forwarded this paper to Kissinger for the NSC meeting on Cuba held on September 23.

—Soviet airfield construction activity has been reported on Socotra Island in the Gulf of Aden.

—A Soviet naval task force has been operating in the Indian Ocean on a semi-permanent basis since November 1968, and aircraft landing rights have been acquired in Mauritius. Somalia recently has become pro-Soviet in its orientation.

—Election of a Marxist President in Chile may present the Soviet Union with an opportunity to expand military as well as political influence into the southern cone of the Western Hemisphere.

—Three Soviet fleet visits have been made to Cuba (July/August 1969, May/June 1970 and September 1970), and TU-95/BEAR D reconnaissance aircraft made three flights to Cuba in April and May of this year.

2. Military implications of the Soviet pattern of increasing military capabilities are clear. In the strategic field, they have attained a position of relative strength that makes the US nuclear deterrent credible only in extremis. They are developing the airlift, sealift, and submarine forces to project and support military power throughout the world. The establishment of Soviet bases in the Western Hemisphere or Indian Ocean would spread our ASW forces thinner, make our sea LOCS even more difficult to protect, and enhance Soviet efforts to penetrate the areas economically and politically. It would appear that the Soviet Union is boldly pursuing more aggressive policies in the Middle East, Indian Ocean, and Western Hemisphere.

3. Offsetting, in part, this steady buildup in Soviet capabilities has been some ostensible cooperation in diplomatic moves. They have agreed to SALT—even though they continue to build while talking. They have signed a non-aggression pact with the FRG and have raised the possibility of a Conference on European Security and force reductions in Europe. The Soviets urged the Arabs to accept a Middle East ceasefire, but have assisted in violating the standstill aspects of the ceasefire. (This makes one wonder how reliable Soviet adherence to a SALT agreement would be.) However, while professing peaceful intentions, military capabilities have been improved across the board.

4. The latest and perhaps the most serious challenge to US security interests is occurring in Cuba. Recent port improvements and construction activity at Cienfuegos indicate that the Soviets are establishing a facility that will support naval units, including nuclear submarines, in the Caribbean and the Atlantic. A detailed assessment of the military significance of a Soviet naval base or naval support facility at Cienfuegos is contained in enclosure 1.²

² Attached but not printed. Also attached but not printed are enclosures on "Actions to Signal Resolve and to Prepare for Military Action to Eliminate or Neutralize Soviet Base at Cienfuegos" and "Actions Designed to Eliminate or Neutralize Soviet Base at Cienfuegos."

5. Soviet use of Cienfuegos to directly support Y-class submarine operations, or indirectly by basing support ships there for at sea rendezvous, would represent a significant increase in the strategic threat to the United States due to the additional on-station time and extra stations that could be covered, for example, in the Gulf of Mexico. A sharp reduction in transit time would have the effect of increasing the size of the Soviet submarine fleet and decreasing the time available to detect submarine movements. Early model SSB/SSBNs could be employed without a long, noisy transit. Sustained operations in the Caribbean or Gulf of Mexico would threaten additional areas of the US and increase the vulnerability of SAC to SLBM attack.

6. Attack submarines utilizing Cienfuegos would have additional time on station for operations against our SSBNs and other naval forces based at Charleston, Mayport, Key West, Guantanamo, and Roosevelt Roads. The vulnerability of our naval forces, merchant ships and sea LOCS would be increased. As with SSBNs, supporting attack submarines at Cienfuegos would have the effect of giving the Soviets a net increase in available force levels.

7. If the foregoing assessment is valid, then appropriate countermeasures appear necessary. They fall into two categories: those dealing with the overall trend in Soviet capabilities, and those focusing on the specific activity at Cienfuegos. The countermeasures are, of course, related to our national objectives which remain sound and should not be changed. In connection with the overall expansion of Soviet capabilities, the following broad politico-military countermeasures seem appropriate:

a. Intensified intelligence effort to deepen our knowledge of Soviet capabilities and trends in ballistic missile submarines, ICBMs and MRBMs.

b. Tough negotiating line with the Soviets in such areas as Berlin, SALT, MBFR. We should not pass up opportunities to point out the stark inconsistency between the Soviet's professed intentions to ease tensions, and their growing world-wide capabilities and actions.

c. Shore up NATO. Actions include initiatives to bring France into closer cooperation, efforts to prevent any unravelling effect on NATO by the FRG's Eastern policy, and revalidation of our military posture in Western Europe.

d. Provide sufficient economic and military aid to counter growing Soviet influence in less developed nations.

e. Increased world-wide US naval presence. This would counter demonstratively the increased Soviet naval presence in areas such as the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, and possibly off Chile if that situation develops to Soviet advantage.

f. Enhance the capabilities of our Strategic Forces and General Purpose Forces.

8. Turning to specific countermeasures for Cienfuegos, we must first determine the extent of the capability to support SSBNs and the

pattern of operations. This will involve a cautious increase in aerial and off-shore surveillance to detect levels of sea and shore activity, types and numbers of vessels, types and quantities of equipment and supplies, and personnel. If Cienfuegos does develop into an SSBN base, the countermeasures listed below should be considered:

a. Protest the existence of the submarine support base and demand its removal, claiming violation of the 1962 understandings. This could involve a direct confrontation over such measures as quarantining Cienfuegos, boarding and search of enroute Soviet ships, surface and sub-surface surveillance of Soviet vessels, clandestine sabotage efforts, or placement of negotiation hazards. Additional illustrative actions both to signal our resolve and to remove the base are listed in enclosures 2 and 3.

b. Negotiate removal. This would involve determining some suitable US quid pro quo in exchange for Soviet withdrawal from the base. While these actions would avoid a direct confrontation, they would clearly erode our military capabilities and freedom of action.

c. Obtain assurances on the non-offensive nature of the base. However, the long history of Soviet deviousness makes this a high-risk action for the United States.

9. In conclusion, if Cienfuegos emerges as an active submarine base, it would increase significantly Soviet capabilities in the Western Hemisphere. The missile crisis in 1962 drew a line against Soviet military expansion in this Hemisphere and we should toe that line now even though our relative strategic posture has deteriorated since October 1962. If we do not, the Soviets might mistake acquiescence for weakness and be encouraged to develop other bases in this Hemisphere. Accordingly, the following actions should be undertaken:

a. Increase intelligence operations to determine conclusively whether Cienfuegos is an active submarine base. If it is, then appropriate countermeasures should be employed to force removal. We could not rationalize the continuing presence of such a base, nor should we negotiate its removal by sacrificing some of our freedom of action or capabilities.

b. Continue the urgent, detailed assessment of Soviet military capabilities in relation to our capabilities in order to determine appropriate countermeasures.

c. Maintain tight security over disclosure of all aspects of Soviet activities in Cienfuegos to avoid a premature disclosure which could foreclose options available to the United States.

212. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon¹

Washington, September 22, 1970.

SUBJECT

Soviet Naval Facility in Cuba

I. The Current Situation

A. The Soviet Facilities

Photographic intelligence indicates the USSR is constructing a naval support base, apparently for submarines, in Cienfuegos Bay, Cuba. Definite identification of this activity was first made from U-2 photography [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].²

The facilities at present consist of a Soviet submarine tender moored to four heavy buoys in the bay. Two Soviet submarine support barges, a landing ship, a heavy salvage vessel, and a rescue vessel are in the harbor. Other ships that had been there—a tanker and two missile anti-submarine warfare (ASW) ships—have departed. Construction on Cayo Alcatraz, an island in the bay, consists of two single story barracks, sports area (soccer field, basketball and tennis courts), an off-shore wharf and a swimming area. Three AAA sites and a communications antenna array are also in the harbor area.

None of this construction or naval activity was in the area on [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] the last prior date on which U-2 photography of the bay was available. All of this was thus accomplished in the intervening four-week period, suggesting that it was done on a crash basis.

The installation is similar to what we have in Holy Loch, and is of semi-permanent nature. It would appear at this point to have the capability of servicing submarines, including nuclear subs, and of providing rest and recreation facilities for naval crews as well as permanent support personnel. No other naval support capabilities are evident at this point.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 782, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Soviet Naval Activity in Cuban Waters (Cienfuegos), Vol. I. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Designated "non log." Not initialed by Kissinger. There is no indication it was sent to the President.

² The Soviet naval activity was summarized in a CIA intelligence memorandum, which Helms sent to Kissinger on September 21 with the note, "Henry, the essential points here will be included in my NSC briefing Wednesday [September 23] morning." (Ibid.) See Document 215.

B. The Background

Circumstantially, this construction appears to be part of a series of events involving Soviet-Cuban military relations which have stretched over the last year:

—In July 1969 a Soviet naval group, including a nuclear submarine, visited Cuba for two weeks.

—The Soviet Minister of Defense visited Cuba for eight days from November 12–19, 1969, the first visit by a Soviet Defense Minister to the Western Hemisphere.

—Raul Castro, the Cuban Minister of the Armed Forces, visited the USSR for one month from April 4 to approximately May 13.

—On April 22 and again on August 23 Castro made public remarks welcoming close military ties with the Soviets.

—Three flights of Two TU-95 Bear surveillance/reconnaissance aircraft were made to Cuba on April 18, April 25 and May 13.

—A Soviet naval task force paid a two-week visit May 14 to Cienfuegos. Two units called at Havana subsequently for a ceremonial visit.

—On August 4, in a note for you, the Soviets complained of new exile activities and asked if the 1962 understanding was valid; we replied that it was.

—The current ships now in Cienfuegos were first noticed moving to that area on August 28.

II. Military Significance

There is a wide spectrum of views regarding the military significance of this development. The JCS believe that the military impact would be significant equating, in the case of submarines, because of increased on-station time, to approximately one-third of the size of the Soviet Ballistic Missile Submarine (SLBM) force. Additional advantages they cite include:

—The establishment of SLBM patrol stations in the Gulf of Mexico;

—The option of keeping all missile submarines (SSBN) in port at Cienfuegos and either launch from port or deploy rapidly as the situation dictates;

—The lessening of personnel hardship and the concomitant increase of SSBN crew effectiveness by significantly decreasing at-sea time.

The JCS further believe that this action fits into an overall Soviet pattern which indicates increasing Soviet hostility toward the U.S. and a willingness to take greater risks in pursuing their objectives. In support of this contention they note, among other Soviet actions, the following:

—the continued construction of strategic missiles and SSBNs during SALT;

—dramatic increases in Soviet naval forces and operations in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean;

—virtual Soviet control of UAR on defense and the challenge to the U.S. peace initiative by violation of the standstill provision with a massive buildup of missiles along the Suez Canal;

—the Soviet fleet visits and flights of TU-95/Bear D reconnaissance aircraft to Cuba; and

—improvements in Soviet military capabilities across-the-board while ostensibly cooperating in a number of diplomatic moves.

I share the JCS's concern with Soviet intentions. I also share their concern over the increasing Soviet military capabilities vis-à-vis the U.S. and this is a matter which we are carefully analyzing. However, I believe the development of the port of Cienfuegos into a base capable of supporting nuclear submarines would add only marginally to the total Soviet capability for attacking the U.S. with nuclear weapons. The fact of the matter is that there are always some Soviet subs off our East Coast with the capability to launch missiles against most targets in the U.S. If they want, the Soviets can increase this number at any time by simply increasing their force levels. Having a base at Cienfuegos makes it easier to achieve such an objective but at considerably higher risks considering past U.S. reactions to Soviet military activities in Cuba. Unlike 1962, the Soviets have a massive land base missile capability which continues to grow.

If my view that the increase in military capabilities of the Cienfuegos base would be only marginal is correct, then the Soviet action becomes even more puzzling. *Why run such high risks for such low returns in increased military capability?* This strongly suggests that this Soviet move is perhaps more politically-motivated than militarily.

III. Soviet Intentions

There are several basic questions:

—Why, at this time, have the Soviets embarked on a venture that they should know has a low flashpoint in terms of American sensitivity?

—Why, beforehand, did the Soviets seek to reaffirm the 1962 post missile crisis understanding on the flimsy pretext of the threat to Cuba?

—Having reaffirmed the essentials of the 1962 understanding, why did the Soviets almost immediately proceed to violate the spirit if not the precise letter of that understanding?

—Finally, how does the move into Cuba relate, if at all, to the larger posture of Soviet behavior, especially in the Middle East?

There are several possible explanations:

1. It could be that this move in Cuba is simply *to show the flag*, perhaps to impress Latin America generally; having done that, the venture will be terminated; in other words, there would be no longer-term implications or consequences intended.

The main problem with this interpretation is that establishing a semi-permanent facility goes well beyond showing the flag. No Soviet leader could imagine that such a move could be passed over by an American administration.

2. It could be a move in the SALT context, to establish a presence to be bargained away for the removal of U.S. forward bases which the Soviets have pressed for in SALT.

The problem with this argument is that the prospective SALT agreement currently on the table is one that, in itself, is quite attractive to the USSR. To raise the sensitive issues of Cuba risks upsetting SALT; at a minimum, it would establish a far more belligerent atmosphere for negotiations. If the Soviets did accept a trade-off in the end, it would once again demonstrate to Castro and Latin Americans generally, that the Soviets exploited Cuba for their own strategic purposes.

3. *A deliberate confrontation.* If the above two explanations are implausible, we must assume that the Soviets are well aware of the crisis potential of their action. It is possible that the Soviets some time ago looked ahead and saw the Middle East escalating to a dangerous point. They could have reasoned that it was to their strategic advantage to widen the arena of potential conflict with the U.S., in part to put pressures on us from at least two points.

—They could foresee that these two crises would come to a head in a pre-election period, when the U.S. might be under some internal constraints.

—They lied to us as in 1962 to create an “understanding” for the record beforehand, later to be used against us in some distorted fashion.

—In this scenario, the Soviets, typically, have not thought through their tactics of a double crisis, but in their arrogance, will brazen it through.

—It could be argued that for some years, now, as their strategic power has grown, the Soviet leaders have wanted to even the score from the humiliation of 1962.

A double crisis of this magnitude, however, has always been an intriguing theory but a dangerous strategy. No one can foresee the consequences of inter-actions between two areas of contention. There is not only the danger of uncalculated escalation but the significant risk of a double defeat.

Moreover, Cuba would seem the last place the Soviets would want to invoke in a Middle East crisis. Cuba is, after all, still an area where we have immense tactical advantage.

4. *Soviet expansionism.* This interpretation fits the Cuba move into the pattern of the projection of Soviet power to various points around the globe, and expansionism symbolized primarily by a naval presence. *Under this theory the Soviets have been in the process of testing us for a reaction, and having estimated that we were relatively complacent, have decided to take a further step, following their earlier naval visits to Cuba and flights of bomber-reconnaissance aircraft.*

—The primary purpose of the Cuban move is not to create another confrontation, but to establish step-by-step the Soviet right to establish a naval presence in the area, much as they have done in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf (not to mention the now-regular on-station patrolling of Y Class submarines within range of the East Coast).

—The Soviet actions are demonstrative and political for their own, not Cuban objectives, to show that the balance of power is now such that we can no longer effectively block Soviet power even in our own sphere of influence.

—The Soviets may have reasoned that it would be prudent to reaffirm the basic 1962 understanding, as a test of the limit of our permissiveness.

—The Soviets may have concluded that the Middle East crisis inhibited any forceful U.S. reaction, especially in a pre-election period.

—In this interpretation, however, there is room for tactical retreats when the Soviets judge that the temperature is rising above that of tolerable level.

My own view is that this explanation, a test of expansionism, is probably the right one. In the last six months the Soviets could have concluded they could move forward without major risks *as long as they did it piecemeal*. If they are successful, however, as the news leaks out, the Soviets can demonstrate to much of the world that the correlation of forces has shifted significantly since their defeat in Cuba almost exactly eight years ago. *In short, this is a calculated but highly significant political challenge.*

The fact that on two separate occasions the Soviets have deliberately deceived us may be an important symptom of the mood of the Soviet leaders, and an index of their assessment of us. It suggests an ominous contempt and a judgment that we are not likely to react quickly or vigorously to Soviet challenges. Why they should hold such a view, if they do, is never easy to understand. It could relate to what they may perceive as our excessive eagerness in SALT and MBFR or perhaps their view of the domestic effects of Vietnam, or their distorted views of our social-economic “crisis.”

In any case, the Soviets have been moving aggressively, first in the Middle East, and now in Cuba. They are likely to continue to do so until they receive clear and unmistakable warning signals.

IV. The Cuban Angle

Why did Cuba agree to lend its territory for this purpose? What does Castro get out of it?

Conceivably Castro may have asked for such a facility to obtain a more demonstrative show of support, or the base decision could have been the result of mutual initiative based on mutually perceived advantages. However, a more plausible thesis is that this was a Soviet initiative. The Soviets clearly have the leverage to obtain Cuban cooperation—either by blackmail in threatening to stop essential economic

support or by bribes in the form of more economic and military aid. This would explain a number of otherwise puzzling reports we have received over the past year or so. For example, there have been increasing reports of Soviet attempts to increase their control and influence within the Cuban regime. There have been reports of Castro's uneasiness at this, and of his alleged comments about Soviet "cold-bloodedness and ruthlessness." Failure of Castro's highly touted effort to harvest ten million tons of sugar is a heavy blow which damaged his charisma and control. The Soviets could well have felt that they could pressure him without being as concerned about his sensitivity as they have been in the past. In any event, they appear to have more influence and authority in Cuba now than at any time in recent years.

Whatever the case, the Cubans do receive—in return for use of their territory—Soviet military presence with its implicit promise of Soviet support and protection. They could conceivably use an expanded Soviet naval presence in the area to cover their clandestine subversive movements. They presumably have received expanded economic and military aid.

V. Meaning in Latin America

Existence of a Soviet base and Soviet naval power in the Caribbean is likely to be seen by Latin America as a sign of U.S. weakness, especially if seen in conjunction with the recent Chilean elections.³ It would strengthen Soviet efforts to increase their influence in the region. It would encourage indigenous radical left elements while discouraging their opponents. It may tempt many of these American nations to become neutral vis-à-vis U.S. or to turn to the Soviets to hedge their bets.

VI. The View of the World

Most of our allies have little taste for a major confrontation with the USSR, especially in an area quite remote from Europe, and over a situation that they may not perceive as a serious strategic threat. We could expect, as in 1962, little support and considerable advice to restrain our responses. In the longer term, however, the Europeans and our other Allies could conclude that Soviet success in Cuba was an important index of the balance of power. They would assess a Soviet base as clear evidence of the decline in our power and will. Much of the world, contrasting the result with that of 1962, would see it the same way.

The main Europeans have a vested interest in the beginnings of détente. At the same time, the Soviets also have a vested interest in the new German treaty and may also be inhibited from a deliberate confrontation with us.

³ On September 4, Salvador Allende Gossens was elected President of Chile.

VII. Options

If as I have suggested this is a serious political challenge, then we have no choice but to respond. In my view, our major options are:

1. *Pursue a purely diplomatic effort to get the Soviets out.* We would tell them that we know of their activity and remind them of our 1962 understandings which we expect them to respect and wait for their reply.

—The *advantages* of this course are that the chance of immediate confrontation is minimized and we might be able to strike a bargain which would get them to leave, thus solving the immediate problem. If this strategy succeeds and the Russians leave in response to an offset to which we agree, Castro may even see himself as a pawn in the USSR game and be less likely to play in the future.

—The *disadvantages* are that if we bargain to get their withdrawal the Soviets may see this kind of action as an easy route to follow for other concessions they want in the future. If they are testing us they may be willing to bargain yet engage in prolonged bargaining. Moreover, our low-key reaction may prompt them to go ahead on this project and even to make further waves in the Hemisphere or elsewhere. With the passage of time during our talks, we may end up facing Soviet submarines and weapons in Cuba—a result similar to that in 1962.

2. *Pursue a diplomatic course with Castro.* We would tell him that we cannot permit this kind of Soviet base in Cuba and that we expect him to get it out.

—The *advantages* would be similar to those above but would include also the avoidance of the need to strike a bargain with the Russians and delay further the time of confrontation. If Castro believes we are serious he may be more willing to concede than the Russians. It is Russian interests which are primarily at stake.

—The *disadvantages* are that we might have to strike some bargain with Castro which would be no less easy for us than striking one with the Soviets. Moreover, if the Soviets induced or pressured Castro into standing firm, the chances of a *fait accompli* would be great and we would face it without yet having made our position clear to the Soviets. They could take our delay in approaching them as a sign that we are unwilling to push them hard.

3. *Move decisively diplomatically, making clear at the outset we are prepared to move to confrontation.* We would tell the Russians directly and at a high level that we consider their action intolerable, that we expect them to remove the facility without delay and that we expect a prompt reply. If a satisfactory reply is not forthcoming we consider the entire 1962 understanding invalid. As a follow-up, we could call off SALT and go to the OAS—as we did in 1962—either before or simultaneously with our approach to the Soviets. Some military steps—e.g., increased surveillance, sea patrols off shore, deployment of additional tactical air to the Southeast U.S.—would signal our resolve and willingness to move to confrontation.

—The *advantages* of this course are that our resolve would be clear to the Soviets from the outset, but they could still move out without losing face (if we had not gone to the OAS). We would have made clear that we would not bargain for their withdrawal.

—The *disadvantages* are that if they are testing us, they may still not believe our determination short of an ultimatum. We will have taken more time and will still have to confront them. If they really want a base, as if they are seeking some concession from us, they may be willing to sacrifice SALT and accept confrontation as a means of getting a concession for withdrawal. If we went to the OAS and were unsuccessful in getting Soviet withdrawal we would be losing twice.

4. *Confront the Soviets immediately.* We would give them an ultimatum and take immediate military measures to emphasize our intention to prevent their use or retention of the facility. If they did not respond we would publicly demand their withdrawal and within a short time, if they did not do so, take military action against the base.

—The *advantages* of this course of action are that our intentions would be unambiguous and the consequences clear to the Soviets from the outset. It would minimize the likelihood that the base would become operational and heavily defended. It would be easier for the Soviets to withdraw now when their investment is relatively small than it might be later with a more developed facility.

—The *disadvantages* are that a crisis could be precipitated early during a period when our forces are heavily oriented toward the Middle East. A public ultimatum gives the Soviets no graceful way out and we will have played our last card and foreclosed other options.

In my view the slow diplomatic approach has serious risks. It may seem safer but most likely it would result in a gradually escalating crisis leading ultimately to confrontation. At the same time, moving immediately to military confrontation may be needlessly risky until we have probed to see what the Soviets intentions really are. But whatever our initial course, we must be prepared to move toward confrontation if this is the price of Soviet withdrawal.

I recommend that you hear out all of the views on this subject but that you do not make a decision at today's meeting.⁴

⁴ The National Security Council met on September 22 to discuss the situation in Jordan. Nixon made limited references to Cuba. According to minutes of the meeting, "He remarked that perhaps what was needed was an additional facility in both [Greece and Turkey], not for the purpose of waging war but to underline our determination to maintain a U.S. presence and to strengthen our credibility with respect to the Soviets, especially in light of Soviet actions in Cuba." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-109, NSC Minutes, Originals, 1970)

**213. Memorandum Prepared for the President's Assistant for
National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹**

Washington, September 22, 1970.

SUBJECT

Cuba—The Problems of Soviet Intentions

While there are some fairly clear strategic advantages for the Soviets in a permanent naval base in Cuba, the incremental value to the Soviet strategic posture seems, at first glance, not to be worth much in the way of risks to Cuba, or in the complications in relation with the U.S. Thus, several questions are raised:

1. Why, at this time, do the Soviets embark on a venture that they should know has a low flashpoint in terms of American sensitivity?
2. Why, beforehand, did the Soviets seek to reaffirm the 1962 post missile crisis understanding on the flimsy pretext of the threat to Cuba?
3. Having reaffirmed the essentials of the 1962 understanding, why did the Soviets almost immediately proceed to violate the spirit if not the precise letter of that understanding?
4. Finally, how does the move into Cuba relate, if at all, to the larger posture of Soviet behavior, especially in the Middle East?

Three possible explanations can be advanced:

1. It could be that this move in Cuba is simply a self-liquidating project to show the flag, fulfill a requested gesture to Castro, and having done that, will be moved out; in other words, there are no longer-term implications or consequences involved.

—There has been a new warming trend in Cuban-Soviet relations; Castro has publicly welcomed a closer military relationship; his brother visited the USSR and talked with Marshal Grechko.

—Thus, the Cubans for some reasons, may have asked for a more demonstrative show of support from the Soviets (even in 1962 the Soviets probably gave some credence to Cuban warnings of imminent invasion).

—Under this reasoning, the diplomatic approach to the US was probably an afterthought, simply reinsurance to make sure that the 1962 noninvasion pledge still obtained; this would then be conveyed to Castro.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 782, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Soviet Naval Activity in Cuban Waters (Cienfuegos), Vol. I. Secret; Sensitive. This memorandum is Tab B of a September 22 memorandum from Haig to Kissinger in preparation for the NSC meeting on Cuba held on September 23. A notation by Haig states that Hyland drafted it. Designated as "non log."

The main problem with this interpretation is that the actions of establishing a semi-permanent facility seem to go well beyond showing the flag. No Soviet leader in his right mind could imagine that such a move could be passed over by an American administration. If this explanation is implausible, then we probably must assume that the Soviets are well aware of the crisis potential of their actions. They could thus be aiming for (1) a deliberate provocation designed intentionally to create a second Cuban confrontation; or (2) a move *not* designed to become an issue of confrontation as such, but part of a longer-term pattern of Soviet expansionist policy, of which this is one important—but not decisive test.

2. *Deliberate Crisis Mongering*

It is possible that the Soviets, while Raul was in Moscow, looked ahead and saw the Middle East rapidly escalating to a dangerous point. They could have reasoned that it was to their strategic advantage to widen the arena of potential conflict with the US, in part to put pressures on us from at least two points.

—They could foresee that these two crises would come to a head in a pre-election period, when the US might be under some internal constraints.

—They sought to lie as in 1962 and create an “understanding” from the record beforehand, to be later used against us in some distorted fashion.

—In this scenario, the Soviets, typically, have not thought through their tactics of a double crisis, but in their arrogance, will brazen it through. Such a line of actions cannot be easily dismissed as totally implausible. It could be argued that for some years, now, as their strategic power has grown, the Soviet leaders have wanted to even the score from the humiliation of 1962.

Yet, from what we know of the character of the present Soviet leadership, they seem to behave with a strong element of pragmatism and prudence rather than adventurism. A double crisis has always been intriguing theory but dangerous strategy. No one can foresee the consequences of inter-actions between two areas of contention. There is not only the danger of uncalculated escalation but the significant risk of a double defeat.

But above all, Cuba would seem the last place the Soviets would want to invoke a Middle-East crisis. Cuba is, after all, still an area where we have immense tactical advantages.²

² It is not inconceivable that the Cuban venture is related to Chile. For example, the Soviets, if challenged, might try to extend the 1962 non-invasion pledge to include nonintervention in Chile, if in return the Soviets abjured any permanent naval facilities in the Caribbean. [Footnote in the source text.]

3. *Cuba and Soviet Expansionism*

This interpretation relates to the pattern of projection of Soviet power to various points around the globe, and expansionism symbolized primarily by a naval presence. Under this theory the Soviets have been in the process of testing us for a reaction, and having estimated that we were relatively complacent, have decided to take a further step, following their earlier naval visits to Cuba and flights of bomber-reconnaissance aircraft.

—The primary purpose of the Cuban move is not to create another roaring crisis, but to establish, step-by-step the Soviet right to establish a naval (not necessarily strategic) presence in the area, much as they have done in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf (not to mention the now-regular on-station patrolling of Y Class submarines within range of the East Coast).

—Under this theory, the Soviets actions are, in the first instance demonstrative and political (for their own, not Cuban objectives); to show that the balance of power is now such that we can no longer effectively block Soviet power even in our own sphere of influence.

—This interpretation, however, would leave room for tactical retreats when the Soviets judge that the temperature is rising above that of tolerable level.

—The Soviets may have reasoned that it would be prudent to reaffirm the basic 1962 understanding, as a test of the limit of our permissiveness.³

—The Soviets may have concluded that our eagerness for a Middle East cease-fire *after* their involvement expanded was an indication of our fear of confrontation.

—As for the risks of a new Cuban crisis, the Soviets have left themselves the out of returning the equipment to the USSR, leaving some of it behind, but withdrawing the vessels, or negotiating for a new basic understanding (and if not challenged taking another step later, when submarines go on station).

It is difficult to argue against such possible Soviet thinking. Their ability to expand the nature and scope of activities in Cuba must have tempted them for a long time. In the last six months they could have concluded they could move forward without major risks as long as they did it piecemeal. Since the strategic increment is not a major one, and against a background of SALT beginning in about a month, a new European détente blossoming, and worldwide preoccupation with the Middle East—all would be factors conspiring against a major US reaction to the establishment of facilities that could be defended as minimal and temporary, of no immediate threat to the US.

In short, the Soviets may have embarked on a calculated risk to test whether they can break out of the spirit of the 1962 restrictions on

³ The Soviets will now argue (1) that the precedence for their naval activity was established in the last two visits, without U.S. protest, and (2) that the basic 1962 understanding was reconfirmed in the knowledge that this precedent has been established. Thus, their latest move has been sanctioned. [Footnote in the source text.]

their actions. They tested the waters and decided that we would not make a major issue of their moves. And in the process, as the news leaks out, the Soviets could demonstrate to much of the world that the correlation of forces has shifted significantly since the black days of their defeat almost exactly eight years ago.

What To Do?

If the first and third explanations are close to the mark, it means we are dealing, not with a major strategic-political showdown of worldwide proportions, but with a limited challenge supported by some rational Soviet calculations (however wrong that calculation may be). The important aspect is that such a line of strategy includes, presumably, built-in lines of retreat. Once confronted with an appreciation of the limits of their actions, the Soviets can fall back on a diplomatic scenario, perhaps to renegotiate the terms of the 1962 understanding, and determine just what they can and cannot do. (A new “guarantee” for Cuba might be all they could salvage.)

If, however, the second explanation is correct, then we are confronted with a line of conduct based on entirely different and perhaps irrational calculations. If the Soviets want a deliberate crisis, they will disregard diplomacy and reinforce their own actions (more building, submarines, etc.) Such a strategy is so unpredictable that no countermoves can be prescribed to have any given effect. If we are facing this situation, however, it would be of the utmost urgency to determine it now.

My own view is that the third explanation, a test of expansionism, is probably the right one, and if faced with the consequences of their actions the Soviets will bristle and bargain but will, if permitted to do so quietly, withdraw from the Carribean.

One Final Thought

The fact that on two separate occasions the Soviets have deliberately deceived us may be an important symptom of the mood of the Soviet leaders, and an index of their assessment of us. It suggests an ominous contempt and a judgment that we are not likely to react quickly or vigorously to Soviet challenges. Why they should hold such a view, if they do, it is never easy to understand. It could relate to excessive eagerness in SALT or perhaps their view of the domestic effects of Vietnam, or their distorted views of our social-economic “crisis” (e.g., the Arbatov article).⁴

In any case, it is reasonably clear that the Soviets have been moving aggressively, first in the Middle East, and now in Cuba. They are likely to continue to do so until they receive clear and unmistakable warning signals. Then, and only then, will they hedge their bets.

⁴ This paragraph was highlighted and checked.

214. Minutes of Meeting of the National Security Council¹

Washington, September 23, 1970, 9:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Jordan and Cuba

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Secretary of State William P. Rogers
Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird
Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms
Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard
Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Thomas Moorer
Henry A. Kissinger
General Alexander M. Haig

The President opened the meeting by stating that there would be two topics on the morning's agenda—the first a review of the situation in Jordan and the second a sensitive discussion of the latest intelligence on the situation in Cienfuegos Bay in Cuba.

[Here follows an intelligence briefing and discussion on Jordan.]

He [Secretary Rogers] suggested that the group now turn from the Jordanian problem to the problem of Cuba. The President cautioned the group that the discussion on Cuba was limited to a strictly need-to-know group, pointing out that we were faced with a major election issue which opponents could seize upon for their own domestic political advantage. He cautioned each of the principals to hold the information strictly to themselves and to take equivalent action on any paperwork associated with the Cuban issue.

The President then asked Mr. Helms to present an update briefing on the Cuban situation to the group. Mr. Helms followed the prepared text at Tab A,² using photos. As Mr. Helms depicted the situation on the ground in Cuba through photographic evidence, Secretary Laird stated that it was important that we proceed with the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Corona. Deputy Secretary Packard commented that the only limitation on the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] adding that the experience in Cuba confirmed the

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-109, NSC Minutes, Originals, 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room.

² Attached but not printed. For additional information about Helms' briefing, see footnote 2, Document 212.

importance of providing for the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. The President asked whether or not the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] would have helped us along the Suez Canal. Secretary Packard replied, “Yes, providing it had been scheduled properly.” He also pointed out that the Real-Time-Readout camera would be of great benefit [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. The President asked whether or not these systems would not be an important factor in the policing of any SALT agreement. Secretary Laird confirmed that, indeed, these would be important technological assets for us. The President then stated that he wanted no more budgetary nibblings on [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] or the Real-Time-Readout capability and stated that these systems were too important and must be funded. He added, somewhat jokingly, that the Department of Defense could pay for these systems out of its funds.

Director Helms continued with his prepared briefing and Secretary Rogers asked when the construction in Cienfuegos and Alcatraz Island actually started. Director Helms stated that we had our first evidence this spring. He stated that in August we noted the athletic facilities and all believed that it was significant that there were no baseball fields—only soccer fields, suggesting Soviet occupation rather than Cuban. The President commented that the dates were very important and Mr. Helms replied that he would try to get a firm verification on the precise dates when various stages of the construction were initiated. Secretary Laird said that the construction had moved extremely rapidly and Admiral Moorer commented that all of the work had been done within 30 days from the period August 15 to September 15.

Admiral Moorer then commented that if the Soviets increased their SLBN levels to 41 and put a portion of them in Cuba that the Cienfuegos facility would give them what would amount to 10–12 additional submarines. The facility would also enable them to penetrate more deeply into the Gulf of Mexico and therefore enhance their targeting capabilities within the central United States. Admiral Moorer concluded that if the Cienfuegos base is, in fact, a permanent submarine support facility, it will have the effect of increasing Soviet force levels.

Admiral Moorer next stated that we are watching the situation very carefully through U–2 flights at a minimum of one every three days. He reported that the JCS are developing an attack plan and a plan for trailing Soviet submarines as well. He remarked that the Soviets themselves maintain surveillance trawlers adjacent to all U.S. bases.

Admiral Moorer then asked Mr. Helms to comment on the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] which were picked up from one of the Soviet vessels. Mr. Helms stated that they had overflown with detection aircraft one of the Soviet vessels enroute to Cienfuegos and

had received positive evidence of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] from the vessel. However, following departure of the vessel from Cienfuegos a similar flight did not pick up such [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. The President stated that this suggested that they have already stored some nuclear components in Cienfuegos.

The President then asked Admiral Moorer what additional surveillance besides U-2's we had undertaken. Admiral Moorer responded that the Navy has a destroyer right in international waters close by and stated that the Soviets are aware of its presence. Secretary Rogers asked if we have positive evidence that they have or intend to have nuclear weapons stored on shore in Cuba. The President stated that in his view whether the weapons are on the tenders or on shore, this would constitute a violation of the nebulous 1962 understanding.

Admiral Moorer replied that they have built a dock and have established permanent buoys, and that storage can be effected afloat or on shore. Secretary Rogers agreed that this would be a violation. The President stated that anyone familiar with the problem would agree that it would constitute a serious violation. Admiral Moorer stated that current Soviet tactics we have observed permit the Soviets to transfer missiles from Soviet tenders to the submarines at sea, so that storage on the tenders alone constitutes an important military asset for the Soviets.

The President then pointed out that the situation was especially serious in view of the exchange between Vorontsov and the White House in August,³ since at that time, Vorontsov had given the U.S. assurances that they would abide by the earlier understanding and asked us to do the same. Secretary Rogers stated that his understanding of the so-called agreement was that we agreed not to invade Cuba in return for the removal of offensive missiles from Cuba. Mr. Kissinger stated that there was no agreement as such but merely a series of parallel statements. He stated that the U.S. conditions were open-ended and provided that we would not invade if adequate inspection were established whereby the removal of offensive weapons could be verified. The Soviets, in turn, never delivered on the inspection issue. Therefore, in effect, there is no binding agreement and we never gave any additional pledges.

The President asked what has been said recently on the subject. Mr. Kissinger stated that on August 4 [5], there was a scare report of a Cuban exile attack against a Soviet trawler⁴ and that he, Kissinger, had assured Vorontsov that we were taking protective action in behalf of the Soviet vessel traveling to Cuba. Vorontsov, in turn, had told

³ See Document 192.

⁴ See Document 193.

Kissinger that the Soviets wished to use the occasion to reaffirm the understandings of 1962.

The President then asked whether or not CIA had the capability to re-institute the exile program against Cuba. Mr. Helms stated that this capability had been dismantled. The President commented that obviously there was no real understanding, and Secretary Laird confirmed this. Secretary Rogers stated that, in any event, it was a very fuzzy understanding.

Secretary Laird commented that we must now consider whether we want to reaffirm our position with respect to Cuba. The President stated that the important thing today is to think about this issue very carefully. The U.S. could consider sending a note to the Soviets but where would we go from there? The alternatives must be carefully considered. Secretary Laird stated that the whole issue will surface very shortly. He pointed out that it had come up in conference on the military authorization bill and was discussed openly. The issue added more effect to the conference, adding \$25 million more for U.S. ships. He stated that the issue will surface just the same as it did in 1962 and the timing is important. The U.S. must consider and be prepared on how it will handle this issue very quickly.

Mr. Kissinger then commented that the U.S. also had to consider the international political implications of the Soviet action. Why, for example, had they chosen this point to install a base? Why also would the Soviets try to reaffirm the 1962 understandings and then 11 days later move precipitously to install strategic weapons in Cuba? What is the relationship with this action and the situation in Chile and what are its implications should Chile go Marxist? Mr. Kissinger stated that the political consequences of the Soviet action present a most serious dilemma and transcend the purely military strategic implications of the Soviet action. The real question, he stated, was why have the Soviets undertaken this move directly against the spirit, if not the letter, of the 1962 understandings?

Secretary Laird reported that they have three Y-class submarines now targeted on the U.S. and that this would increase that capability. Secretary Rogers stated that he hoped that the United States would not pull any alarm bells until after the Congressional election. He suggested that if the Soviet action leaks, then it will be necessary to low-key our response. It would be disastrous to have this break between now and elections. Therefore, it is essential that this group react very carefully to the intelligence presented. The President stated that our problem is not to react to the Soviets in a blustering way. He stated that the U.S. needs to low-key the issue for the present. We should respond with the fact that the government is aware of the situation, that we are watching it very carefully, that we consider the understandings of 1962

in effect, and that we will hold the Soviets to that. Admiral Moorer interjected that this action should be tied into the Soviets world-wide naval expansion. The President directed the WSAG to develop a suggested U.S. public response if the intelligence information breaks. He also directed the WSAG to prepare a suggested line to take officially with the Soviets.

The President then commented that, in his view, the new base would constitute a marginal strategic advantage. Therefore, it might be that the Soviets thought out the implications of this action very carefully for other political reasons. In either event, the President stated, it is desirable to keep the discussion within the group assembled in the room. That group, the President stated, knows what is actually being done by the Soviets and all understand that there can be no Soviet offensive weapons in Cuba. Mr. Kissinger stated that he regretted the necessity of playing the role of a villain on this issue. The President interrupted, stating that what he had been referring to was the public U.S. position. It was necessary, the President noted, that in private we must be very tough but that this line was to be taken privately. If we are to take a tough public stance, we will set up a great domestic clamor. Secretary Rogers reiterated that it was necessary to keep all discussions and information within this particular group. The President stated we need, in effect, two lines: (1) a public line designed to preclude a crisis atmosphere, and (2) an official line to take privately with the Soviets. It will be necessary to consider this line most seriously and it was essential that our concerns be brought forcefully to Soviet attention. In public, however, we should merely take the stance that we are aware of the situation and are watching it carefully. Dr. Kissinger stated that the important aspect of our public line is not to permit the Soviets to think that what they have done is acceptable. The President agreed, stating that it was true, that we had to be sure that the Soviets know that their acts were unacceptable.

Secretary Laird then stated again that the whole situation was soon to break and that it was important that the Soviets know our stand before it breaks publicly—not after. Secretary Rogers asked what the United States would do if the Soviets were to ignore our warning. What action could the United States take to show that it is serious? It is important that the U.S. is able to back up its words with deeds. Secretary Laird stated that we might consider moving strategic bombers into Turkey. Secretary Rogers said, “What about Cuba, itself, if we take naval action around Cuba?” Secretary Laird replied that we need more ships in the area and more surveillance.

Secretary Laird added that he did not visualize our being able to do anything in Guantanamo. The President asked if we could blockade Cuba or mine Cienfuegos Harbor. Admiral Moorer confirmed that this was possible. The President stated that he wanted us to refrain from restraining the Cuban exile community from acting against Cuba. He wanted to consider the possibility of a new blockade with surface

ships and the possibility of mining the entrance to the harbor. Admiral Moorer added that we should initiate a trailing program with respect to Soviet ships traveling to and from Cuba. Secretary Laird stated he would implement this immediately.

Secretary Rogers said the important thing is how it is all done. Mr. Kissinger stated that the WSAG, which was in effect the same group as in this room, would work out a careful scenario for Presidential decision. The President stated that two problems existed—the first was the problem of our public posture. This was to be accomplished with calmness, an expression of awareness of the situation, but above all, in such a way that it is low-key. The danger would be that we would take a bellicose public stance which would force the Soviets to react in the same way. The second problem concerned the official line. The President indicated he wanted strong U.S. action. He wanted to make it clear that the U.S. could not permit the establishment of a Soviet strategic base in Cuba. In his view, the President stated, even though the strategic balance has changed drastically since 1962 the Soviets would never trade Russia for Havana.

Secretary Laird then stated again that it would be difficult to hold this any longer. He reiterated that he had been asked three times on the Hill about Cuban intelligence. Secretary Rogers suggested that we prepare a scenario without anyone knowing. Admiral Moorer commented that he could prepare one himself. The President pointed out that this was a special case with particular impact domestically. It may already be clear what the Soviets are up to. They may step up their activities world-wide and this may only be the beginning. The President stated that the group should meet again at noon the following day.

215. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, September 24, 1970.

SUBJECT

Meeting of Senior Review Group on Cuba

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-111, SRG Minutes, Originals, 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. On September 24, Richard Kennedy sent Kissinger talking points for the meeting. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 782, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Soviet Naval Activity in Cuban Waters (Cienfuegos), Vol. I)

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Deputy Secretary David Packard
Under Secretary U. Alexis Johnson
Admiral Thomas Moorer
Director Richard Helms

The group met briefly for the purpose of discussing contingency press guidance to be used in the event that information concerning a Soviet base in Cuba became known publicly.

Dr. Kissinger began the meeting by cautioning that it was necessary to be prepared for possible press stories on the Cuban base. He suggested that the Government's public response be along the following lines:

"We are aware of the reports. The President has reviewed these reports with his senior advisors. The Soviets are well aware of the fact that establishment of a base would be of great concern to us. We are keeping the situation under constant review."

Under Secretary Johnson stated that, because of the statements made by President Kennedy in 1962, we could emphasize that the Soviets are well aware of the seriousness with which we would view such a development. He suggested that we use President Kennedy's language when he stated that we would expect that they would be kept out of this hemisphere in the future.

Dr. Kissinger commented that we wouldn't want to imply that if the Soviets stopped now, we would acquiesce in what they have done.

Director Helms then commented that we were dealing with a period of 10 days or so and asked whether we couldn't get by with reassuring reports along the lines that ever since 1962 we have been concerned about missiles in Cuba and have been checking the situation and will continue to check.

Dr. Kissinger remarked that because so many analysts were now aware of recent developments, there were two dangers: (1) it might be built into a Cuban missile crisis, and (2) on the other hand, if we kept it too low-key, then the Congress might build it up.

Director Helms indicated that he was worried about saying that the President had been briefed, feeling that this might dignify the situation. Dr. Kissinger interjected that we have to say that the President has been briefed on the situation.

Director Helms then spoke of the difference between a naval base and a naval base with special equipment. He pointed out that we know there is special equipment at Cienfuegos. Secretary Packard remarked, "But we haven't seen submarines."

Dr. Kissinger then indicated that we needed to find a happy medium that would keep the public calm and quiet and at the same time stir up the Soviets enough to get them to close down the base.

Secretary Packard commented that he wanted to see more information before drawing a final conclusion about what is actually going on in Cienfuegos. Dr. Kissinger asked him if it would be acceptable if the Soviets stopped what they were doing right where they were. Secretary Packard replied, "No." He would say he knows of reports but wants more information.

Admiral Moorer stated that the Soviets have done everything necessary to provide a base. All the fundamental elements are there now. Even if the ship leaves, the buoys and the communications are there. Dr. Kissinger then asked what we wanted the Soviets to take out. Admiral Moorer answered, "It boils down to whether we will let them use it."

Dr. Kissinger then turned to the issue of whether to mention the President in the statement or not. He suggested doing two statements which would be distributed to the principals. The President could then decide.

Admiral Moorer then stated that there should be mention in the statement of previous Soviet deployments.

Dr. Kissinger cautioned the group that nothing should be said to the Soviets until a scenario had been developed. The President wanted to have such a scenario worked out.

Dr. Kissinger closed the meeting by summarizing the consensus of the group. He asked Secretary Packard to submit what the Defense Department proposed to say limited purely to the facts of the situation. Secretary Johnson would prepare a statement along the lines outlined at the meeting and dealing with the political aspects of the question. Dr. Kissinger stated that he would blend these submissions into a composite set of instructions for the guidance of all. The guidance would be used as follows: Defense would limit itself to responses dealing with the facts of the situation but only if pressed. Any questions on the political issue or contacts with the Soviets should be handled by State or the White House as appropriate.

216. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Soviet Ambassador (Dobrynin)¹

Washington, September 24, 1970, 3:04 p.m.

D: You didn't keep your word not to organize anything during my absence.

K: Don't speak about who isn't keeping his word. You stayed away a lot longer than we thought. Let's not go into this on the phone.

D: I am calling today if it's possible to see the President about two points—The summit and things about Jordan.

K: I will talk to him. His schedule is very full. Can you talk to me?

D: Yes but the question is when I left Moscow they said [omission in the source text]. Today or tomorrow really. It could wait until tomorrow and it's not urgent.

K: I understand. I will have to ask him.

D: Understand and the timing. 20–25 mins. and then I could talk to you on a more detailed basis.

K: You understand we are leaving town next week.

D: Sunday.²

K: Probably, yes.

D: That's why I am calling. I just arrived late last night.

K: I will check with the President.

D: Let me know when it's possible to arrange it.

K: I will let you know. Will you be seeing others before you see the President?

D: No. Nobody. You are the first I am to call. Perhaps half an hour before I could talk with you.

K: I have no particular need to talk with you. I have to see if the President has time and if not, you may have to talk with me. Today I know is impossible.

D: Tomorrow is no problem. I am not going to see anyone before that. I will await your call.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Office Files, Box 128, Chronology of Cuban Submarine Base Episode, 1970–1971. No classification marking.

² September 27.

217. **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Soviet Ambassador (Dobrynin)**¹

Washington, September 24, 1970, 7 p.m.

D: You were playing golf with the President?

K: No, I don't play. I just talked to the President² and he is extremely occupied tomorrow and is going to Camp David tomorrow night. What he wonders is if you could give me the messages. If there is anything warranting a personal reply from him he will see you later in the day. That's his position.

D: I have to check it with Moscow, if you don't mind.

K: No.

D: In this particular case when I left they asked me to ask for an audience with him. I would have to ask my government in this case.

K: I understand, but you recognize that he is leaving Friday night for Camp David.

D: That's why they asked me to come earlier back to Washington. But it's up to the President.

K: If a written reply is needed we will give that; if something else . . . But under no circumstances will he have much time.³ Why don't you ask Moscow if you can tell me, then we can have 15 minutes later in the day for you to get his reactions.

D: It is up to Moscow; it is not up to me. This is really the question. I can't decide myself. It is not that they don't want me to speak with you.

K: Of course, if there is something in your communication that warrants his reaction, he will, of course, see you, but not for long.

D: The question is how he will react on this, not just telling him

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Office Files, Box 128, Chronology of Cuban Submarine Base Episode, 1970–1971. No classification marking.

² Kissinger spoke on the telephone with the President at 6:40 p.m. and summarized his earlier conversation with Dobrynin. Nixon responded: "Tell [Dobrynin] you would like to have a look at [the message concerning Cuba] and that you would look at my schedule. I don't think we want to appear that everytime he comes back I am going to slobber over him. Tell him if there is something substantive that would justify my seeing him, I will, but if it is just routine I can't do it." (Ibid.)

³ Ellipsis in the source text.

the things and nothing else.

K: If it requires a significant reaction he will react, but first he wants to see what it is. Call me in the morning and see if you can give it to me; if so, I propose 10:30.

D: I will check with Moscow. When will he be back?

K: October 6.

D: He is not going anyplace after the 6th?

K: He will be in and out. We told you his schedule was very crowded for October and November. November is the political campaign and he will be taking several trips.

D: I understand, but it is a question of a 10-minute talk.

K: We don't reject the idea of a 10-minute talk. We just want to see if there's something to talk about.

D: All right. I will check with Moscow and call you tomorrow morning before 10:00 to clarify the situation from my side.

218. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 25, 1970, 10 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin

Circumstances of Conversation

Ambassador Dobrynin called the evening of September 24th to tell me that he had a personal message for the President from his leadership and that he wanted to have an appointment with the President the next day. In view of the newly discovered Soviet base in Cuba, the President and I thought it unwise to have such a meeting. Therefore, I told Dobrynin that he would have to deliver the note to me and only after reading it could it be judged whether it would be worthwhile for him to see the President. Ambassador Dobrynin replied that his instructions were to deliver it to the President and he would consequently have to check with Moscow whether he could deliver it to me. He

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 490, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1970, Vol. 2. Top Secret; Sensitive. The conversation was held in the Map Room at the White House.

added that this reflected no lack of trust in me and that he would, of course, be glad to chat with me for half an hour before we saw the President. I said that unfortunately it was impossible to see the President and, therefore, his choice was between delivering it to me or waiting until after the President came back from his European trip.² Dobrynin said he would let me know during the course of the next morning. I told him the only time I would be free would be at 10:30 a.m. The next morning at 9:30 a.m. Dobrynin called to say that he would be available at 10:30 a.m.

Summit

I met with Ambassador Dobrynin in the Map Room. After an exchange of pleasantries, he made the following point. His government had studied the proposal of a Summit with great interest and as the Soviet Government had already indicated, it was ready to proceed in principle. The Soviet Government agreed in general to the agenda outlined in our previous communication.³ It also agreed that Ambassador Dobrynin and I should proceed with exploratory conversations. The Soviet Government wondered about the site of the conference and whether the President was perhaps thinking of Moscow. It also asked for the President's views about the best time for such a meeting and specifically whether it should be in the first half or the second half of the year. Ambassador Dobrynin added that actually it could not take place before May because of the Soviet Party Congress. I replied that given the weather conditions, what the Ambassador was really asking was whether it should be in the last half of the first half or the first half of the last half of the year—in other words, whether it should be in June or in July or September, August probably being a vacation month for both sides. Ambassador Dobrynin stated that this was essentially correct. During this portion of the discussion, Ambassador Dobrynin also informed me that Premier Kosygin would not be attending the United Nations 25th Anniversary Celebration in New York this fall. I told Ambassador Dobrynin I would let him know later about our views on a possible Summit. At this point in the conversation, Ambassador Dobrynin tried to initiate a conversation on the Middle East and other problems, but I cut him off by saying that these subjects were too complex and that too many things had happened to enable us to discuss them in a semi-social way. I added that if he wished to discuss these subjects, we should schedule a meeting and I would then be prepared to do so.

² Nixon left for Europe on September 27 and visited Italy, Yugoslavia, Spain, England, and Ireland. He returned to Washington on October 5. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

³ See Tab A, Document 198.

Jordan

Ambassador Dobrynin said that Moscow was struck by the fact that the U.S. had never replied to its note⁴ of the previous Monday with respect to the Syrian invasion. Were we not interested in consulting with Moscow on Mideast developments? I said that certainly we were willing to discuss them with Moscow but it seemed to us that over a period of weeks every Soviet *démarche* had been followed by the contrary action and we simply wanted to wait to see what would happen. Dobrynin said we might not believe it but the Soviet Union had not known of the invasion of Jordan by Syria and that in any event Soviet advisors had dropped off Syrian tanks prior to crossing the frontier. I let this somewhat contradictory statement go and told Dobrynin that I would ask the President's views about consultation on Mideast issues. I added that the United States Government was always prepared to discuss the situation with the Soviet Union in times of international crises. Our ability to do so, however, was quite dependent on the degree of confidence which existed between us and our overall relationships in general. In light of Soviet violations of the ceasefire and Soviet responsibility for the violations—or what we considered Soviet responsibility for unloosening some of the forces that produced the crisis—the Jordanian situation did not provide the atmosphere for a frank exchange of views between our governments. In principle, however, we were prepared to discuss such matters with the Soviet Government. I added that the United States had no intention of launching military operations in Jordan if other outside forces stayed out of Jordan. The meeting adjourned.

⁴ On September 21, Vorontsov presented to Sisco the Soviet reply to the U.S. request that the Soviets urge Syria to pull back from Jordan. The Soviet reply is in telegram 155169 to Moscow, September 22. According to the telegram, Sisco and Vorontsov then had the following exchange: "Sisco asked Vorontsov whether we should understand this statement to mean the Soviet Government is taking steps to bring about withdrawal of Syrian forces from Jordan. Vorontsov said he did not have information regarding the exact nature of the contacts taking place but that the Soviet Union was using all its influence in contacts with Syria." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 713, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. IX)

219. Memorandum From William Hyland of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, September 25, 1970.

SUBJECT

The Cuban Dilemma

What the Soviets have done in Cienfuegos is so ambiguous that avoiding a severe political setback in dealing with it will be exceedingly difficult.

First of all, what is in place now cannot persuasively be described as an immediate or direct military risk for the United States. This installation could remain there for a year or more without much change. Indeed, the fact that something of this nature has been known to be in the works for almost a month is, in itself, a de facto evidence that we have not regarded the installation per se as a cause for serious challenge to the Soviets. Moreover, if Soviet ships or submarines do not use the installation in the next month or so, how can we, with much credibility, claim that it has suddenly become a serious matter. The only conceivable grounds for doing so is to claim that what appeared to be temporary now has become permanent, and is definitely under Soviet control.

The question arises: permanent for what?

As long as no Soviet warships or submarines visit Cienfuegos it can be credibly claimed by the USSR and Cuba that all that has happened is that the port of Cienfuegos has been slightly improved. Our claim that this is in fact a Soviet base area will not be very convincing; it rests on pictures of new barracks, and a soccer field, and the prior presence of Soviet naval ships which have now left. In other words, the time when it might have been legitimately described as a Soviet base may have passed. (The fact that the ships remaining are Soviet is still an important point.)

The dilemma is roughly this:

- Can we deny the Cubans the right to improve port facilities; can we convincingly deny the Soviets the right to make any naval visits?
- Thus, the installation in itself cannot be easily challenged.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 782, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Soviet Naval Activity in Cuban Waters (Cienfuegos), Vol. I. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for information and designated "non-log."

—Only certain aspects of the installation could be challenged; namely the submarine tender and the submarine nets, which are the only physical presence that can be tied directly to the USSR and which could conceivably be associated with strategic offensive weapons.

Thus, we face the possibility that the only legitimate and persuasive grounds for challenge may be the *use* of the facility by certain types of vessels, rather than the facility itself.

In effect, this means we may have to swallow a de facto Soviet base, and concentrate on denying its use in any way that would contravene the 1962 understanding.

But, if this is the outcome, we must also recognize that the Soviets will have taken an important forward step, and that much of the world will regard this as a political setback for the United States.

The alternative is to decide what specific part of the installation must be removed in order to clearly demonstrate that we are not tolerating a Soviet base.

Unfortunately, this virtually means making a crisis over three barges and one submarine tender. Thus, to be convincing we are going to have to complete a history of Soviet activities that demonstrate an expanding Soviet military presence in Cuba, of which Cienfuegos is the last straw.

Cienfuegos will have to be challenged along with flight of strategic aircraft, the guided missile ships, the Castro speeches, and the Y-Class submarines patrolling in the Atlantic. If we go this route we should recognize that we are shifting the conflict from a strict interpretation of the 1962 understanding to a larger issue of the Soviet presence, and not focussing on Cienfuegos alone. This, of course, is not necessarily a definition of the conflict that is easy to sustain, but it may be the only persuasive political ground from which to attack the rather rudimentary facilities that currently exist in Cuba.

In short, we can choose between making the issue Cienfuegos only, and restricting its usage, or on the Soviet naval presence implied by Cienfuegos.

220. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 25, 1970, 5:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin

Background

After consulting with the President about the answer on the Soviet Summit proposal given to me by the Soviet Ambassador that morning,² I called Ambassador Dobrynin to tell him that I wished to see him briefly to provide our answer on the Summit. Just after I completed this phone call, the Defense Department, due to a misunderstanding, released full details about Soviet naval activity in Cienfuegos. Interdepartmental contingency guidance had provided that minimum information would be released publicly on this subject and specific guidance had been circulated to all Departments. This unauthorized release had in turn led to my making the statement that had been agreed to as governmental guidance in event that the Soviet installations in Cienfuegos became known. Attached is that portion of my press backgrounder given earlier that afternoon dealing with Cuba.³

Summit

When I saw Dobrynin in the Map Room his face was ashen. I began the conversation by saying that I had the President's answer on the Summit and that the answer was as follows. In principle, the President was willing to consider a Summit. Further, the President would consider either June or September 1971 as appropriate dates and the U.S. Government was willing to consider Moscow as the site for such a meeting. Ambassador Dobrynin said this was very good news. But, he clearly had his mind on the Cuban problem.

Cuba

I then told the Ambassador that I wanted to talk to him about the press statements that had been made in both the Pentagon and at the White House earlier that afternoon. I called his attention to the fact that the announcement made in the White House had inferred that the U.S.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 490, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1970, Vol. II. Top Secret; Sensitive. The conversation took place in the Map Room at the White House.

² See Document 218.

³ Attached but not printed.

Government did not yet know whether there was actually a submarine base in Cuba. The U.S. Government had done this deliberately in order to give the Soviet Union an opportunity to withdraw without a public confrontation. I wanted him to know that we had no illusions, that we knew already there was a submarine base in Cuba, and that we would view it with the utmost gravity if construction continued and the base remained. I added that we did not want a public confrontation and were, therefore, giving them an opportunity to pull out. But we would not shrink from other measures including public ones if forced into it. I said that the President considered the Vorontsov démarche of August 4⁴ followed by the construction of the base as an act of bad faith. If the ships—especially the tender—left Cienfuegos we would consider the whole matter a training exercise. No more would be said and there would be no publicity. This is why the President had asked me to talk to him “unofficially.” Otherwise, we would put matters into official channels. Ambassador Dobrynin asked whether I was telling him that this alleged base violated the understandings. I said this was a legalistic question. I did believe it violated the understandings but I wanted to remind him that in 1962 we took the most drastic action even though there was no prior understanding. To us Cuba was a place of extreme sensitivity. We considered the installation to have been completed with maximum deception and we could not agree to its continuation. Dobrynin said he would have to report to his government. And he would hope to have an answer for me soon.

The Ambassador tried to discuss other matters such as the Middle East but I cut him off and said that this was the only subject I was authorized to discuss with him. He said why do you have to give me good news and bad news simultaneously; it would be very confusing in Moscow. I said I was giving him the news that now existed. I added that the U.S. and the Soviets had reached a turning point in their relationships. It is now up to the Soviets whether to go the hard route—whether it wanted to go the route of conciliation or the route of confrontation. The United States is prepared for either. Ambassador Dobrynin said that probably the U.S. Government will start a big press campaign on this Cuban business. I said we were not going to do that but we were also determined that there would be no Soviet submarine base in Cuba since whatever the phraseology of the understanding its intent was clearly not to replace land-based by sea-based missiles in Cuba. Ambassador Dobrynin said that he would consult with Moscow and let me know.

The meeting adjourned.

⁴ See Tab A, Document 192.

221. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 29, 1970.

SUBJECT

A Soviet Submarine Base in Cuba

PARTICIPANTS

Senator Charles Percy
Senator Marlowe Cook
Senator Robert Mathias
The Acting Secretary of State
Mr. David Abshire
Mr. Ronald Spiers
Mr. Colgate Prentice

After an extended discussion of the situation in the Mediterranean, Senator Percy asked what the State Department position was on the construction of a Soviet Submarine Base in Cuba. He said that he had been asked about this subject by a newspaper reporter the previous day and was convinced that he was going to get more questions on this topic. Without official guidance, he said, Senators and Members of Congress would begin to formulate their own positions on the subject because of the pressure of public concern. He mentioned Congressman Mendel Rivers' statement as a case in point.

The other Senators strongly endorsed Senator Percy's statement and began asking questions about the nature of the Soviet installation and the USG's intended response to it. The State Department participants initially attempted to avoid a direct answer on the grounds that complete information on the nature of the installation was unavailable, and therefore a decision on our policy in this matter was premature.² The Senators were not satisfied with this response, however, pointing

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 782, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Soviet Naval Activity in Cuban Waters (Cienfuegos), Vol. I. Secret. No time indicated. Sent by Theodore Eliot on October 1 to Kissinger. An October 2 memorandum from Vaky to Haig transmitting this memorandum of conversation bears Kissinger's initials. The Acting Secretary of State on that day was Irwin. Abshire was Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations; Spiers was Director of Politico-Military Affairs; and Prentice was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations.

² On September 26, Kissinger informed the Secretaries of State and Defense, the DCI, and the Chairman of the JCS that, "The President has directed that no comment, speculation, or backgrounding of any kind be undertaken by U.S. spokesmen or officials and that future inquiries on the subject of a possible submarine base in Cuba be responded to with the following line: 'I have nothing to add to what has already been said on this subject.'" (Ibid.)

out that they were all already under considerable pressure to take a position on this issue.

Mr. Abshire then informed the Senators that the Administration had not yet decided its position on this issue and that we had been enjoined by the President from making any further statements on the subject until his return from Europe.

The Senators then insisted that we communicate with the President and inform him of their feeling that public concern was reaching a critical stage and that without firm guidance from the Administration the President would find himself plagued with a rash of public statements, many of them unhelpful, by Senators and Congressmen. They emphasized that they were anxious to support the Administration on this issue, but could not do so without guidance and could not remain publicly silent on this subject much longer.

Mr. Abshire assured them that we would communicate their concern to Secretary Rogers.

222. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 1, 1970.

SUBJECT

Soviet Intentions Regarding a Cuban Base

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Yuly M. Vorontsov, Minister Counselor, Soviet Embassy

Mr. Raymond L. Garthoff, Deputy Director, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs

In a luncheon conversation arranged to discuss procedural aspects of the forthcoming SALT talks in Helsinki, Vorontsov took the initiative in raising the subject of American agitation over a possible Soviet

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 490, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1970, Vol. II. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Garthoff. On October 2, Haig sent Kissinger this memorandum through Lord. Also included was a covering note from U. Alexis Johnson to Kissinger that reads: "Enclosed is a copy of a report of a very interesting conversation in which, to my knowledge, the Soviets for the first time took the initiative in bringing up the Cuban submarine base question with an American official. I particularly draw attention to the penultimate sentence in which Vorontsov said that the Soviet Government would soon 'explain fully' its position regarding the base." Copies of this note and the memorandum of conversation were also sent to Helms, Packard, and Moorer.

naval base in Cienfuegos in Cuba. He said that we could expect the subject to be mentioned at Helsinki, that Semenov would no doubt refer in more than one statement to the inconsistency of an American position opposing Soviet proposals for abolition of overseas bases and limitation on missile submarine deployment, while maintaining such bases, and then objecting to the fact that the Soviet Union might get such a base itself. Vorontsov said there was no reason for the US to be concerned. I replied that I hoped he was saying that the Soviet Union would not be establishing a submarine base at Cienfuegos. Vorontsov objected that he had not said that, nor had he said that they would do so, but that in any case there were no grounds for American objection or concern. I replied that the United States would make its own determination of what constituted a cause for concern, but that although Vorontsov chose to be vague, I still hoped that he meant that the Soviet Union would not seek to establish such a base. Vorontsov then said that the Soviet Government would “explain fully” its position regarding developments at Cienfuegos “soon.” He, Vorontsov, did not want to say more in advance of the Soviet Government.

223. Memorandum From Viron Vaky of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, October 5, 1970.

SUBJECT

Cuban Exiles and the Current Cuban/Soviet Sub-Base Issue

Attached at Tab A² is a Canadian report from its Embassy in Havana describing alleged Cuban Government preoccupation with fears of an exile invasion. The reported concern centers on exile activity in Central America.

There is exile activity in Central America. Attached at Tab B² is a CIA report on this.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 782, Country Files, Latin America, Cuba, Soviet Naval Activity in Cuban Waters (Cienfuegos), Vol. I. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for information and designated “non-log.”

² Attached but not printed are Tabs A and B.

I call your attention to other items which are related:

—Since May Castro has repeatedly declared the right of Cuba to carry the fight to the territory of any country which lends itself to the exiles' organization of invasions.

—If exiles are organizing in Central America they may be making a mistake in including Costa Rica President Figueres in their discussions, for reasons which you know about. If we should be supporting these exile plans, all the more so.

—We have wondered what the Cubans got out of agreeing to Soviet construction at Cienfuegos. Increased military assistance is probably part of the price. If Castro is worried about exiles, or if he wants some kind of capacity to project his own military strength, the Soviets may have decided to up their military aid accordingly. Exile activity in Central America might now be a convenient excuse for (a) Soviet aid, and (b) Cuban adventurism and retaliation.

—Alpha-66, a Miami-based group, has undertaken about three or four infiltration raids since May. All have been rolled up. The Agency denies they have anything to do with Alpha-66. The equipment reported captured by the Cubans when exiles were arrested include AR-18 rifles, cipher pads, and other items indicating some sophisticated support. DOD also has the capacity for clandestine support of such activity.

Our approach to the Cuban sub-base problem seems to me to require a very controlled precise approach. While in the abstract exile raids might seem useful to give Castro trouble, they are also "unguided missiles." How would such raids fit into the total picture? Are we sure of the reaction and its relation to other things? What do raids do by way of projecting signals to the Soviets and the Cubans?

In sum, do we have any well-thought-out purpose for encouraging exiles? Have we thought out the chess moves down the road? Shouldn't these be very controlled? Should they be done now?

224. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 6, 1970, 2:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 490, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1970, Vol. 2. Top Secret; Sensitive. The conversation was held in the Map Room at the White House.

I received a phone call from Ambassador Dobrynin the morning of my return from the President's European trip² during which he stated that he would like to see me if at all possible that day. We agreed to meet at 2:15 p.m. in the Map Room. Ambassador Dobrynin greeted me by saying that he had had two communications from the Soviet Government which had come back with very great speed after our earlier conversation. He stated that Moscow's hope had obviously been to reach me before our departure for Europe but that it had been too late to do so.

The Ambassador then handed me the two communications. The first dealt with Jordan, the second with Cuba. With respect to Jordan, Dobrynin added that the note was somewhat dated but it should give us a good idea of the attitude of the Soviet Government. The two communications read as follows:

Jordan

"The Soviet Government has received with satisfaction President Nixon's communication to the effect that the United States do not contemplate any military actions in connection with the events in Jordan and that the US Government is exerting restraining influence in order to prevent interference in the events in Jordan by other foreign states.

"From the very start of the events in Jordan the Soviet side, as the US side has already been informed, has been taking steps aimed at bringing about a speedy end to the fratricidal collisions in Jordan and at preventing interference in the events therein by other states, both belonging to that area and those outside of it. This, as the US Government is aware, has produced certain results.

"The situation in Jordan still remains, however, rather complex. Therefore, we proceed from the assumption that also in the time ahead all states should exercise necessary prudence in their actions in order not to aggravate the situation but, on the contrary, to help end the conflict in Jordan.

"In Moscow it is believed that the most effective means of preventing events like those which occurred in Jordan, is a speedy attainment of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East as a whole.

"The Soviet position on questions pertaining to such settlement and, in particular, on the question of contacts between the sides through Jarring is well known to the US Government."

Cuba

"The Soviet Government has received with attention President Nixon's communication indicating some uncertainty which has appeared in

² See footnote 2, Document 218.

the President's mind in light of the understanding reached in 1962 between the USSR and US Governments on the Cuban question.

"We noted with satisfaction the reaffirmation made by President Nixon in reply to our inquiry, that the appropriate understanding reached at that time on the Cuban question remains fully in force, that is, the United States as before will not seek by the force of arms, through military means to change the existing situation in Cuba. We also noted the reaffirmation made as regards the United States's preventing such actions on the part of the Cuban counter-revolutionary exiles.

"On our part, we have already stated to President Nixon and are ready to affirm it again that in the Cuban question the Soviet Government continues to proceed from the understanding reached on this question in 1962.

"The Soviet side has not done and is not doing in Cuba now—that includes the area of the Cienfuegos port—anything of the kind that would contradict that mentioned understanding.

"The American side is well aware of the negative attitude generally on the part of the Soviet Union toward creating military bases by foreign states on the territory of other states. Moreover, the Soviet Government has introduced—both in the Committee on Disarmament and in the course of the Soviet-American strategic arms limitation talks—a proposal to limit the area of navigation for rocket-carrying submarines.

"In any case, we would like to reaffirm once more that the Soviet side strictly adheres to its part of the understanding on the Cuban question and will continue to adhere to it in the future on the assumption that the American side as President Nixon has reaffirmed, will also strictly observe its part of the understanding.

"I would like to draw your attention in connection with your remarks in our last conversation to the sometimes asserted 'right' for American atomic submarines to enter the Black Sea. Such assertions are groundless since the 1936 Convention on the status of the Black Sea Straits clearly forbids submarines of non-coastal states to enter the Black Sea."

After I had read the Cuban note, Ambassador Dobrynin added that the Soviet Government would not be able to make an agreement that Soviet submarines would never call at Cuban ports but he was prepared to state that Soviet submarines would not call there in an operational capacity. He could not say whether there might not be one submarine in six months and another one in twelve months. I told him that I considered this a forthright statement. I stated that I was concerned, however, that there might be some ambiguity about the meaning of the word "base" and, therefore, I thought it would be very unfortunate if our two governments got into a major disagreement over the issue of what actually constituted a base. Consequently, our side

would have some clarifying questions to ask the Soviet Government. At the very least we would have to state our view of what constituted a base. The presence of the Soviet ships, especially the tender and barges, at Cienfuegos, was clearly inconsistent with the understanding. Ambassador Dobrynin said he would send on these questions.

Ambassador Dobrynin then tried to engage me in a discussion of the Middle East, specifically whether I thought the Deputies in New York could make some progress in negotiations. I told him that the Mideast negotiations probably had to mark some time for the moment. He then asked whether I could provide some advance information about the President's Vietnam speech.³ I replied that it was not finished yet. He asked whether I was worried that he might give the information to their North Vietnamese allies and promised that this would not happen. I said I would not want to test your loyalty to your allies in this manner, but that I would see whether I could get him an advance copy of the President's remarks, perhaps by the next morning.

The meeting adjourned.

³ On October 7, President Nixon delivered an "Address to the Nation About a New Initiative for Peace in Southeast Asia." (*Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 825–828)

225. Memorandum From William Hyland of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, October 7, 1970.

SUBJECT

The Soviet Reply

The Soviet reply² both in tone and substance is obviously intended to be conciliatory. It clearly backs away from any suggestion that the Soviets have a "right" to establish a base in Cuba, which would have been the toughest response. Rather, it specifically claims that the USSR traditionally opposes foreign bases—thus establishing a presumption

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 490, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1970, Vol. II. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The memorandum is not signed. Kissinger wrote "Keep specially" in the upper righthand corner.

² See Document 224.

that they would not do so in Cuba (it is worth recalling, however, that Khrushchev in September 1962 publicly claimed that the USSR had no need to “transfer” its strategic missiles to any foreign bases). The note also goes to some length to pin down the understanding of 1962 and claims in particular that their activities at Cienfuegos are consistent with that understanding.

This general line, plus other possible signs strongly suggests that the Soviets are anxious to avoid a public (or private) confrontation:

—On the day following your press release, two of the Soviet vessels—the salvage and landing ship—that had been in Cienfuegos since September 9–10, departed for the USSR.

—Since then there has been virtually no change in Cienfuegos: no new construction, no significant increase in defense, no change in the use of the tender (it has apparently been at the pier since September 25–26, rather than moored at the deep basin, thought to be the submarine support area, guarded by the submarine nets).

—The Soviets have made only a minimal public acknowledgement (on September 30) and have tried to dismiss the affair as mere propaganda.

—The Soviet counselor (Vorontsov) told the UAR Ambassador in Washington that the Soviet activities were only Cuban port improvements.

The general Soviet response thus suggests that they are looking for an easy and quick end to the incident. This is consistent with the interpretation that the main purpose of the exercise has been a probe of our permissiveness, following on their earlier visits, especially the one to Cienfuegos in May, which included a cruise missile submarine. Having found that move has drawn a strong response, they probably want to resolve it by taking refuge in the 1962 agreement. In this light, the earlier conversation with Vorontsov was a form of reinsurance against the current contingency, as well as sounding us out for any reaction to what had already transpired in May and July.

Nevertheless, the Soviet response is deliberately ambiguous, a retreat but only a partial one. The note implies that, while an offensive or strategic base is not involved at Cienfuegos, the facilities could still be used from time to time in unspecified ways. Thus they are proposing a narrow definition of the 1962 agreement. The consequence could be that we might accept a *de facto* Soviet support base, limited only by the exclusion of ballistic submarines.

In short, the Soviet approach implies a reaffirmation of the 1962 understanding but on the basis of the status quo, i.e., the acceptance of the current facilities at Cienfuegos, and perhaps their improvement.

Next Steps

The definite commitment to the 1962 accord is an important first step toward resolving the issue on our terms. *But* there remains a gray

area that should be clarified lest there be a future misunderstanding, and, most important, could signal to the Soviets we were prepared to tolerate a *de facto* base in Cuba.

To avoid this, *the following could be your general response:*

—You note that both sides have now reaffirmed the basic 1962 understanding.

—You also note that this applies specifically to the facilities at Cienfuegos.

—This means that Cienfuegos cannot be used to service or support missile submarines.

It remains to clarify in what way the facilities will be used.

—While we could not object to ceremonial port calls, accepted as traditional international practice, certain patterns of activity and the appearance of certain types of vessels would raise serious questions of Soviet intentions.

—In other words, our interpretation of the 1962 agreement is that the USSR should not use Cuba in any way to gain a military advantage over the US.

—The simple solution would be for the submarine tender to return to the USSR. This would be a tangible change. Otherwise it will be extremely difficult to explain to the Congress or the American public why we have not taken this up through regular diplomatic channels.

—As long as the tender remains, there will be doubts in our minds of the Soviet commitment to abide by the 1962 accords. (*Optional: If the tender does remain, we would have to be far more concerned over any use of the Cienfuegos port by Soviet vessels.*)

—Until the remaining ambiguities are resolved, we cannot consider the matter closed, and must reserve the right to shift to less confidential channels, which we would not prefer. It is in our common interest not to allow this issue to fester, and become a public confrontation.

Questions

1. What is the purpose of keeping a submarine tender in Cienfuegos, if it is not to be used? (How would the Soviets regard the stationing of a US submarine tender and nets in the Gulf of Finland?)

2. Does the Soviet Government agree that the intention of the agreements in 1962 was that the USSR would not attempt to use Cuba to gain a military advantage over the US—that is, not to change the status quo in the area?

3. Does the USSR agree that any *regular use* of Cienfuegos by *any* Soviet warships or *any* kind of submarine (ballistic, cruise or attack) would violate the basis of the understanding reached in 1962?

4. Do the Soviets agree that further construction of barracks, new communications with the USSR, storage for weapons (missiles) would change the status quo and be inconsistent with their assertion that they do not intend to establish a base in Cienfuegos?

226. Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Liaison at the National Security Council (Robinson) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, October 8, 1970.

SUBJECT

Cuba

Attached at Tab A² is a draft response to the Soviet note concerning recent naval activity in Cuba (Tab B).³ The proposed reply makes clear that we understand the Soviets will take no action to:

- Handle or store nuclear weapons in Cuba.
- Construct or maintain submarine or surface ship repair facilities or tenders in Cuban ports.
- Undertake visits by ballistic missile submarines.

We considered it prudent to include *all* submarine/surface ship repair facilities in our interpretation since the Soviets could convert any repair installation to one with an offensive weapon capability on short notice. Similarly, although it would be desirable to restrict visits to Cuban ports by *all* submarines and surface ships with a surface missile capability, we have not done so for several reasons:

—Their cruise-missile submarines, missile cruisers and destroyers have visited Cuba without U.S. protest on several occasions during the past 18 months. A challenge at this time might undermine the credibility of our note.

—U.S. Polaris submarines do not visit any foreign ports (other than Rota and Holy Loch). We should expect the Soviets to abide by this same restriction, but they probably would refuse to agree to a greater limitation.

One aspect of the 1962 US–USSR “Understanding” concerned the U.S. pledge of no U.S. invasion of Cuba and U.S. prevention of invasion by other countries, contingent upon verification of removal of the missiles from Cuba. Since Castro prevented on-site verification, President Kennedy never gave an unequivocal guarantee not to invade Cuba

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box TS 36, Geopolitical File, Soviet Union, 7/70–1/71. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only.

² Attached but not printed. The draft response to the Soviet note is virtually identical to the final version printed as Tab A, Document 228.

³ The text of the Soviet note on Cuba is in Document 224.

(Tab C).⁴ A possible Soviet ploy for removal of the base at Cienfuegos might be to have the U.S. make an explicit non-invasion guarantee. Our proposed note has not addressed this issue.

In arriving at a set of conditions acceptable to the United States, a number of activities were considered. These are enumerated at Tab D. You will note that those items which would be difficult to verify or confirm were not included in the draft note.

For your information, the nomenclature of Soviet submarines and missile-equipped surface ships is appended at Tab E.⁵

Tab D

List of Soviet Activities in Cuba⁶

Washington, undated.

Unacceptable Activity

- Facilities ashore for handling/storage of nuclear weapons.
- Facilities ashore to repair and maintain submarines or surface ships armed with nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missiles.
- Basing or extended deployment with semi-permanent facilities of tenders or other repair ships capable of repair and maintenance of submarines or surface ships armed with nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missiles.
- Facilities to transfer nuclear weapons afloat.
- Communications support facilities for submarines.
- Visits by ballistic missile submarines.
- Stockpiling of repair parts for submarines or surface ships armed with nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missiles including parts for propulsion and weapons (difficult to verify).
- Facilities for provisioning submarines or surface ships armed with nuclear capable surface-to-surface missiles to extend deployment (difficult to verify).

⁴ Attached but not printed. See footnote 7, Document 194. After providing part of Kennedy's remarks from his November 20, 1962, press conference, Robinson added, "In the context above, and considering the current situation at Cienfuegos, the following should be considered 'offensive weapons': all submarines; nuclear missile surface warships."

⁵ Attached but not printed.

⁶ No classification marking.

—Presence of Soviet technicians to repair and maintain submarines or surface ships armed with nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missiles (difficult to verify if no tender present).

—Facilities ashore for submarine crew rest and crew transfer (difficult to verify if transfer occurs at sea).⁷

Acceptable Activity

—Port visits except by ballistic missile submarines.

—Harbor improvements such as placing buoys, building additional pier space, dredging to widen and/or deepen channel.

⁷ The four previous paragraphs were bracketed with the marginal comment: "Not included in U.S. Reply to U.S.S.R. note."

227. Memorandum From Thomas Latimer of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)¹

Washington, October 9, 1970.

SUBJECT

CIA's Memo² on the Soviet Buildup on the Sino-Soviet Border

This is a comprehensive examination of the significance of the Soviet military force now deployed opposite China. Its major conclusions are as follows:

—The 37 to 41 division force structure which the Soviets have developed opposite China now exceeds what would be required to repulse any foreseeable Chinese incursion.

—The present Soviet force could probably carry out large scale raids in the border regions of China but in view of their underdevel-

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 713, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Vol. IX. Top Secret; Sensitive; Contains Codeword. Latimer handwrote "action" at the top of the memorandum. The memorandum bears Kissinger's initials and the handwritten comment, "Tell Helms excellent job." On October 28, Latimer sent Kissinger this paper and a similar report prepared by DOD (see footnote 2, Document 210) under a cover memorandum that bears Kissinger's handwritten remark, "Sum up both memos for Pres[ident] as info." (Ibid.)

² An attached cover memorandum to the CIA report indicates that the paper is a response to Kissinger's request, September 21, for a study on the Sino-Soviet border dispute. (Ibid.) For Kissinger's request, see Document 209.

oped service support structure they could probably not occupy and defend a significant amount of Chinese territory.

—With the divisions filled out to combat strength, a process which would take about three weeks, and provided with normal army and front level support, the Soviets would be capable of large scale offensive operations in the peripheral regions of China. Under these circumstances, the full strength Soviet force probably could seize and occupy sizable portions of territory, including Manchuria, the eastern part of Inner Mongolia, and the Dzungarian Basin in Sinkiang, using only conventional weapons.

—To date, there is no persuasive evidence of a Soviet intent to commit deliberate aggression against China. The forces now in being are not ready to undertake protracted large scale offensive operations. Were the Soviets planning to initiate a deliberate aggression, there would be a concerted effort to fill out existing understrength divisions and support units. In addition, some tactical missile units probably would be redeployed from other areas.

The CIA memorandum states that the Soviets probably had several objectives in undertaking the buildup. One objective, already realized, may have been to set the stage for discussions on the border. The Soviets also probably calculated that a credible land war threat near the China border will enhance their ability to influence events in China after the death of Mao. In addition, of course, the buildup has—from the Soviet viewpoint—put the damper on any inclination the Chinese may have to launch military forays against Soviet territory. From the standpoint of providing security for Soviet territory, the forces near the China border are not excessive when compared with Soviet forces located opposite other potential enemies.

Tab A³

Intelligence Report

Washington, October 1970.

THE SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP ON THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER

Summary

Since 1965 the Soviets have tripled their ground forces opposite China. There are now some 37 to 41 Soviet ground force divisions

³ Top Secret; Ruff; Umbra; Handle via Talent–Keyhole–Comint Control Systems Jointly. According to a footnote in the source text: “Note: This report was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Strategic Research and coordinated with the Offices of Basic and Geographic Intelligence, Current Intelligence, and Economic Research.”

deployed in the border area, about 6 of which are fully combat ready. All of the others have one or more subordinate regiments with sufficient strength to undertake combat missions. About 210,000 troops are deployed with these divisions, and nondivisional support elements bring the total to about 335,000 men. The buildup is continuing.

In 1965, when the buildup was initiated, there were only 11 or 12 divisions in the border area, and only one of these was at combat strength. All of the others were understrength and some were only cadre divisions.

Over the same period tactical air forces have increased from a single air army of 190 combat aircraft and about 40 helicopters deployed in the Vladivostok area to at least 725 combat aircraft and 300 helicopters deployed along the entire border.

Soviet strategic air defenses in the border area also have been improved in recent years, but most of this probably would have taken place even if there had been no rift with China. Most of the new missile and aircraft deployment probably results from a continuing program to strengthen air defenses throughout the USSR.

Three operational units of the 500 nautical mile Scaleboard surface-to-surface missile system—the only confirmed units in the USSR—have been deployed near the border since 1967.

Strategic ballistic missile and bomber forces have not undergone any major changes that can be attributed to the confrontation with China, other than some command and control adjustments.

The Soviet ground and tactical air forces in the border area are deployed in two essentially separate operational theaters. Most of these forces—29 to 33 divisions and nearly 700 aircraft—are located opposite northeast China in the Trans-Baikal and the Far East Military Districts and in Mongolia. The other 8 divisions and about 35 aircraft are deployed in the newly formed Central Asian Military District opposite Sinkiang.

There are, in addition, 4 divisions in the Siberian Military District and 6 in the Turkestan Military District which probably are available as reinforcements for the border area. These are located in remote areas, and except for an airborne division in Turkestan, all are at low strength. Only one, a cadre division moved into the Siberian Military District in 1969, has undergone any change since the buildup began in 1965. These divisions are not believed to be currently available for early commitment.

Other reinforcements could be obtained by redeploying divisions from the western military districts. Depending on the readiness level of the divisions to be moved and the distance to be traveled, divisions could begin arriving in the border area 10 to 17 days after the Soviets decided to reinforce.

The 37 to 41 division force structure which the Soviets have developed opposite China now exceeds what would be required to repulse any foreseeable Chinese incursion. The present force could probably also carry out large scale raids in the border regions of China, but in view of their underdeveloped service support structure they could probably not occupy and defend a significant amount of Chinese territory.

With the divisions filled out to combat strength, however, and provided with normal army and front level support, the Soviets would be capable of large scale offensive operations for objectives in the peripheral regions of China. Such a force would have about 570,000 troops, 8,200 tanks, at least 5,400 conventional artillery pieces, and some 250 missile and rocket launchers for direct nuclear support.

With their present air forces the Soviets probably could quickly establish air superiority in the peripheral regions of China. This would enable them to provide massive support to the ground forces with tactical air and medium bomber forces.

Under these circumstances, the full strength Soviet force probably could seize and occupy sizable portions of territory, including Manchuria, the eastern part of Inner Mongolia, and the Dzungarian Basin in Sinkiang, using only conventional weapons. The Soviets would probably refrain from the use of tactical nuclear weapons unless it appeared necessary for the achievement of their military objectives.

To date, however, there is no persuasive evidence of a Soviet intent to commit deliberate aggression against China. The forces now in being are not ready to undertake protracted large scale offensive operations. Were the Soviets planning to initiate a deliberate aggression there would be a concerted effort to fill out existing understrength divisions and nondivisional support units such as artillery, engineer, ponton bridge, and assault crossing units. In addition, some tactical missile units probably would be redeployed from other areas. There would also be a heavy influx of trucks to provide both divisional and rear service motor transport.

To bring the forces in the border area to full combat readiness, reservists and civilian trucks would have to be transported from centers in the central and western USSR to supplement those obtained from local mobilization. The Soviets have the resources and transportation facilities to accomplish this in about three weeks.

The availability of stocks of ammunition, POL, and general supplies in the border area is not known. Because the forces opposite China are located at the end of long and, in some areas, vulnerable supply lines, the Soviets probably have made some effort to develop their logistical base in the area. If the current rate of military traffic on the Trans-Siberian Railroad has been maintained throughout the force

buildup, the Soviets could have provided the troops now in place with stocks of ammunition and POL sufficient for 90 days of combat. Unless it is interdicted, the Trans-Siberian Railroad has ample excess capacity to supply the daily tonnage of supplies needed to support the present force in combat without seriously reducing civilian traffic.

The fact that the force is still not fully combat ready after five years of buildup suggests that the immediate objective of the Soviet buildup was not to initiate hostilities against the Chinese. The pace of the buildup may have been limited by a Soviet desire to avoid drawing down forces opposite NATO or straining the civilian economy.

The personnel and equipment strengths of the developing divisions in the border area continue to increase gradually. Some divisions probably will reach combat readiness during the next year or so. Others may stabilize at less than combat strength. This would be consistent with the manner in which the Soviets have structured their forces in the USSR intended for use against NATO, where only about one-third of the divisions are kept at combat readiness during peacetime.

If the Soviets should follow this practice with the forces in the border area, it would suggest that they believe that the time it would take the relatively immobile Chinese forces to mount a serious threat would permit the Soviet forces in the border area to be filled out with reservists and mobilized civilian trucks.

Conversely, if the Soviets continue working to bring all the forces to full combat readiness, it would indicate that they believe a large scale conflict could break out suddenly with little warning. This would reflect a more serious view of the Chinese threat than is now apparent, or it could mean that they were contemplating the initiation of offensive action themselves.

The Soviets probably had several objectives in undertaking the military buildup opposite China. One objective—already realized—may have been to set the stage for the Sino-Soviet discussions on border issues. The Soviets probably calculate that the possession of a credible land war threat near the China border will enhance their ability to influence events in China after the death of Mao. In addition, of course, the buildup has—from the Soviet viewpoint—put the damper on any inclination the Chinese may have to launch military forays against Soviet territory. From the standpoint of providing security for Soviet territory, the forces near the China border are not excessive when compared with Soviet forces located opposite other potential enemies.

The pattern of the buildup to date suggests that the Soviets are developing a force structure of at least 3 and possibly 4 army groups (potential fronts)—two or three opposite Manchuria and one opposite Sinkiang. This would imply a force of 42 to 48 divisions and 900 to 1,000 aircraft. At full strength, this force would have about 780,000

troops. Such a force would probably still not enable the Soviets to carry a conventional land war against China beyond the peripheral regions. It would, however, provide the Soviets with a capability to respond to the initiation of hostilities on a level of their own choosing, up to and including an attack to seize and hold indefinitely the most important peripheral regions of China such as Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, or large parts of Sinkiang.

[Here follows the table of contents and the body of the report with annexes and illustrations.]

228. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 9, 1970, 5:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin

The meeting was initialed at my request and began with my handing Dobrynin a copy of an oral note² dealing with the installations in Cuba. The purpose of the note was to tie down our understanding of the Soviet base. Rather than putting the issues in the form of questions they were phrased in the form of an understanding of what we considered a base.

Ambassador Dobrynin then read over the note (Tab A) and said that the only point that seemed bothersome was the point about “communica-facilities,” but he would have to await further instructions from Moscow.

Ambassador Dobrynin added that Tass would soon publish a statement repeating in effect the content of the oral note of October 6³ denying any Soviet intent to establish a base in Cuba. I said that we would judge it by the criteria of our oral note. Later in the evening Dobrynin called to inquire whether the point about repair facilities

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 490, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1970, Vol. II. Top Secret; Sensitive. The conversation was held in the Map Room at the White House.

² Printed at Tab A.

³ See Document 224.

applied to all Soviet ships or only those capable of offensive action. I replied that it applied to the ships described in the note.

We then discussed the possibility of a meeting between Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko and the President. Ambassador Dobrynin asked whether it should take place before or after the Foreign Ministers meetings with Secretary of State Rogers. I replied that my instincts suggested that the meeting should take place afterwards. Ambassador Dobrynin then asked what date was convenient and I suggested the afternoon of October 23rd following the President's speech at the UN. Ambassador Dobrynin said that this was in general acceptable. I then told the Ambassador to make sure that during these conversations no mention would be made of the US-USSR Summit meeting or, in any event, to be sure that I received advance word in order to provide me with an opportunity to put the issue into formal channels. Ambassador Dobrynin agreed and further agreed to come to Washington before the meeting of the President and Foreign Minister Gromyko so that we could coordinate on and agree to the agenda.

Ambassador Dobrynin then turned to a general discussion of US-Soviet relations. He said it was hard to exaggerate the concern of his leadership in Moscow. Their feeling was that the United States had already decided to adopt a hard line and it was whipping up a propaganda campaign in order to get larger defense budgets and perhaps affect the election. He said that the campaign on the Mideast was out of all proportion to the provocation. He called my attention to the fact that the Soviet Union had never been part of the cease-fire. He said that when Secretary Rogers first told him about the cease-fire standstill in conjunction with the US proposal for Middle East Peace negotiations, that he had asked Secretary Rogers whether these items were linked together. Secretary Rogers had replied that it was desirable "but not" indispensable that the cease-fire and the negotiations be linked together. The Ambassador stated that, therefore, the Soviet Government did not understand why the U.S. suddenly decided to effect a linkage. Ambassador Dobrynin then said that Assistant Secretary Sisco, in the presence of Secretary Rogers, had told him there was no linkage between these elements and that, in any event, the Soviet Union had only been informed of our understanding of the cease-fire for informational purposes. The Ambassador added that the Soviet Government was seriously debating whether to start a press campaign against us along similar lines.

Ambassador Dobrynin said that he hoped that the U.S. Government did not draw the conclusion from the Middle East crisis that the Soviet Union could be intimidated by a show of United States force. He asked whether we really thought that one additional U.S. carrier in the Eastern Mediterranean would make the Soviet Union back down.

Further, Ambassador Dobrynin stated he could understand that the United States might claim for propaganda purposes that the Soviet Union controlled the Syrians but that if we really believed that to be the case then we were in bad shape. He continued that if the Soviet Union acted when its national interest was involved then it would act with great force and it would be hard to dissuade them. I replied that we were not children, that we looked at the situation with great care. Having observed Soviet military actions in the last decade and a half we knew that when the Soviet Union used its forces it did so massively. But that was not the point. The point was that we were asking the same questions about the Soviet leaders that he allegedly was asking about our leaders. I reminded him that we had offered a Summit meeting on two occasions during the summer without ever receiving a formal reply. In response there was the massive move forward of Egyptian and Soviet missiles along the canal and the massive deception in Cuba. Ambassador Dobrynin began to explain that the Cuban situation was “not clear.” I interrupted saying if there is to be any sense in our meetings we must not kid one another. I added, “you know what is there and I know what is there even though we may not say it, so let us not discuss it any further.”

With respect to the Egyptian missiles, Ambassador Dobrynin called my attention to the phrase that there were no Soviet personnel with the missiles in Egypt. I said that perhaps he meant “military” personnel and that they had put them into civilian clothes. He replied that the phrase was intended to mean that there were *no* Soviet personnel.

Ambassador Dobrynin then appeared to bluster stating that the Soviet Union had a lot of experience in dealing with Americans and they thought their system was more permanent than ours and therefore if things came to that point they would wait for 6 years until President Nixon was out of office. I replied that perhaps the inference that the press campaign came from us was started by people who did not know anything about American affairs. Ambassador Dobrynin said “no” it was the consensus of all their senior officials that relations with the United States had never been worse since the Cuban missile crisis. I said that I could only repeat what I had said to him previously. We were at a turning point. We recognized very well that neither side could gain anything in an arms race but if present trends continued they would force us into an enlarged military budget. He might well tell me that his leaders could wait six years and this might be true; however, President Nixon did not become President by not being persistent. Nevertheless, it did not seem sensible to exchange protestations on the issue of greater endurance. The problem was how to turn this present impasse into a more fruitful direction and, therefore, to turn our attention to that.

Ambassador Dobrynin said that it was important to discuss the Middle East and related issues. I replied again that this was not the time to do it. But that if they were ever willing to take up our offer for serious bilateral talks between Ambassador Dobrynin and me we would make every effort to proceed. The Ambassador told me that the memorandum he had handed to me, which is attached at Tab B, was written only for the President and would receive no publicity and be referred to nowhere else.

Tab A

United States Oral Note⁴

Washington, October 9, 1970.

The President appreciated the forthright reply of the Soviet Government conveying the affirmation of your government that the USSR is not and will not construct any facility in Cuba that will violate the understanding of 1962 between the USSR and US Governments on the Cuban questions. The clarification of this situation can be a significant contribution to improving US-Soviet relations.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Soviet Government with what we understand by the phrase: "The Soviet side has not done and is not doing in Cuba now—that includes the area of the Cienfuegos port—anything of the kind that would contradict the mentioned understanding."

The US Government understands that the USSR will not establish, utilize, or permit the establishment of any facility in Cuba that can be employed to support or repair Soviet naval ships capable of carrying offensive weapons; i.e., submarines or surface ships armed with nuclear-capable, surface-to-surface missiles. The US Government further understands that the following specific actions will not be undertaken:

—Construction of facilities for the handling and storing of nuclear weapons and components in Cuba.

—Removal of nuclear weapons from, or transfer of nuclear weapons to, Soviet ships in Cuban ports or operating therefrom.

—Construction of submarine or surface ship repair facilities ashore in Cuba.

—Basing or extended deployment of tenders or other repair ships in Cuban ports that are capable of supporting or repairing submarines or surface ships armed with nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missiles.

⁴ No classification marking.

—Construction of communications support facilities for Soviet submarines.

Finally, the President wishes to emphasize that the U.S. Government will observe strictly its part of the 1962 understanding as long as the Soviet Union does the same.

Tab B

Memorandum From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon⁵

Moscow, October 9, 1970.

The attention of the Soviet leadership has been attracted to the campaign, hostile to the USSR, being waged in the US around so-called “violations of the terms of the cease-fire” in the Suez canal zone and the Soviet Union’s alleged involvement in those “violations”.

This anti-Soviet campaign is clearly being encouraged, and, to say more frankly, in fact inspired by American officials. How else can one judge, for example, the statement made by the Assistant Secretary of State Mr. Sisco at the press briefing in Chicago on September 16 when he, while accusing the UAR without proof of having violated the cease-fire terms, alleged in addition that all “these violations could not have taken place without the knowledge and the complicity of the Soviet Union”. Speaking at the same briefing Mr. Kissinger also permitted himself to make remarks about violations of the cease-fire “by the Egyptians and the Russians”. Moreover, and again with the blessing of officials, the theme was launched professing some general “credibility gap” with regard to the Soviet Union.

Clearly, in this connection the Soviet leadership cannot but raise the question as to what all this is being done for? What is the aim of the US Government in all of this? Because who else is better aware than the American Government of the complete lack of ground for the assertions that the Soviet Government had something to do with reaching the agreement on the terms of the cease-fire in the Suez Canal zone, still less—with some kind of “violations” of such agreement.

It is worthwhile to recall some facts pertaining to this question. On August 8, i.e. on the day when the cease-fire in the Suez Canal zone entered into force, the US Ambassador in Moscow, while handing to

⁵ No classification marking.

the USSR Foreign Ministry the text of the terms of that cease-fire, already agreed upon with the Governments of the UAR and Israel, clearly and unequivocally stated that this was being done only "for the information of the Soviet Government". On August 11 transmitting to the Ministry some additional details of the terms of cease-fire, the US Ambassador said again that those clarifications had already been discussed by the US Government with the Governments of the UAR and Israel and that they were being handed to the Soviet side "just for its information".

That is how the record stands regarding involvement or, rather, non-involvement of the Soviet Union in the agreement itself on the terms of cease-fire in the Suez Canal zone.

On what basis, then, did the American side start later to present the matter in such a way as if there were some terms of cease-fire in the Suez Canal zone agreed upon between the US and USSR Governments? We have already drawn the attention of the US Government, through the American Ambassador in Moscow, in particular in the conversation with him held at the Foreign Ministry on September 15, to the fact that this kind of presentation was groundless. Nevertheless, US officials continued to distort the actual state of the matter.

Now about so-called "violations" of this agreement. It is necessary first of all to emphasize the complete lack of foundation for the attempts being made in the United States to prove that the Soviet side had something to do with such "violations". This refers, in particular, to statements alleging deployment in the Suez Canal zone of new rocket-launchers manned by Soviet personnel after August 8. That is deliberately false. Contrary to the assertions by American officials, there have not been and there are not now rocket-launchers manned by Soviet personnel in the Suez Canal zone.

What leaps into one's eye is that the American side while so unsparingly accusing the UAR of "violating" the terms of cease-fire, keeps almost complete silence with regard to actual violations made by Israel from the very first day of the cease-fire. Moreover, spokesmen of the US Government deem it appropriate to speak directly about "utmost importance for Israel to retain air superiority in the Suez Canal zone", as well as about "manoeuvrability and freedom of action in that area". Such a position hardly serves as a proof of US "impartiality". It can only mean one thing—a desire to mislead public opinion by presenting a distorted picture of the state of things and whitewashing the aggressor. All this is actually nothing but encouragement by the United States of a stubbornly obstructionist tactics of Israel, which from the very beginning and until this day has been rejecting contacts and negotiations through Ambassador Jarring, raising all sorts of far-fetched pretexts. Among them are accusations against the UAR of "violating" the terms of cease-fire. These assertions have already been refuted in

an official statement made to the US representative in Cairo by the UAR Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Riad and also in M. Riad's Cairo TV address on October 6, 1970.

It should also be noted that Israel is now trying in every way to complicate and confuse the very question of cease-fire. One should recall that in American proposals of June 19 themselves negotiations between the sides through Jarring were not organically linked to the cease-fire. That was publicly acknowledged by Mr. Sisco, who said in Chicago on September 16 that "originally the American proposals did not envisage any direct link between cease-fire and start of the talks".

However after the UAR Government accepted the American proposal on cease-fire, having thus displayed its full readiness to negotiate through Jarring, Israel started inventing new pretexts to dodge from such negotiations.

The Soviet Union has always been a sincere supporter of cease-fire, viewing it also as an important factor in creating a more favourable climate for talks between the sides. However the Soviet Union cannot ignore the attempts to deliberately complicate the question of cease-fire in order to torpedo the negotiations as is being done by Israel with the US support.

It could not but be noted in Moscow that supporting the obstructionist position of Israel the US Government itself also undertakes steps which lead to aggravation of the situation in the Middle East area. In this connection one should mention for instance the uproar created around the visit by the US President to the American 6th fleet in the Mediterranean. Among acts of this nature are the new deliveries of "Phantom" fighter-bombers and of other weapons to Israel and the reconnaissance flights by American aircraft over the territory of the UAR, a sovereign state, in gross violation of the norms of international law.

All this cannot but raise a legitimate question: where in effect is the United States leading to in the Middle East?

On our part we should like to reaffirm that the Soviet Government has been and remains a firm supporter of speedy achievement of a political settlement in the Middle East, of establishment of a durable and just peace there, on the basis of the well known resolution of the Security Council, in all its parts.

We believe that every effort should be made in order not to lose the opportunity for progress in political settlement in the Middle East which is being created by the agreement of the Arab states to negotiate through Ambassador Jarring and the actually existing state of cease-fire. We are ready to contribute to that both within the framework of our bilateral meetings and at the four-power consultations.

As for the talk about so-called "crisis of confidence" in general, the unseriousness of US officials' approach to this matter has attracted

attention in Moscow. All those groundless statements indeed give reason to ask: is the US Government ready to support by its deeds what it says in the course of exchange of opinion with the Soviet Government or are those words said because of some considerations of the moment. The US position on the Middle East question and the distortion by the American side of facts pertaining to the cease-fire in the Suez Canal zone, indeed, cannot contribute to the strengthening of mutual understanding and trust in relations between our countries so needed for a fruitful development of these very relations.

229. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Soviet Ambassador (Dobrynin)¹

Washington, October 9, 1970, 10:20 p.m.

D: You are not still in bed?

K: No.

D: Oh good, you see I would like to clarify some points beginning on the Cuba paper² you gave me dealing with nuclear and atomic things. One is the construction of submarines or surface repair facilities ashore in Cuba. You do not use any reference to nuclear or atomic in points covering this issue in the note. It refers in the heading to strategic systems, is that what is meant concerning repair facilities?

K: We are talking about ships in the above mentioned categories. (i.e. nuclear and atomic)

D: Just would like to be sure, they will ask me. I was under the impression that this was so but I wanted to be sure.

K: Yes, that's correct.

D: This is important. Thank you. Have a nice weekend.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 490, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, 1970, Vol. 2. No classification marking.

² See Tab A, Document 228.