

~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: January 2, 1969
Place: Pierre Hotel

PARTICIPANTS: Boris Sedov, Counselor, Soviet Embassy
Henry A. Kissinger

Boris Sedov, officially counselor of the Soviet Embassy, but in fact a member of Soviet intelligence, called on me today at his request. He had asked to see me during the previous week, but the meeting was delayed because of my trip to Key Biscayne.

Sedov began by saying that the Soviet Embassy had given a copy of their Middle East note to Ellsworth on December 30 because I had warned Sedov against "surprises," and because the Embassy wanted to deal with the President-elect on the basis of complete frankness.

Sedov then read the attached communication (Tab A). I copied it and read it back to him (he made a few corrections).

I then asked Sedov about the meaning of the phrase: "The Soviet leadership would do their utmost...to ensure ratification by states of the non-proliferation treaty." Did it mean that the USSR would try to create an atmosphere in which ratification of the treaty would be possible in the United States, or was it proposing joint action with the US to secure ratification by third parties. Sedov replied that both meanings were intended. I said we were studying the problem.

Sedov then asked about strategic arms talks. I repeated my observation of December 18, 1968, that we did not believe that political and strategic issues could be completely separated. The Nixon Administration wanted to see more progress in Vietnam and the Middle East before committing itself to strategic arms talks. Sedov asked whether the Soviet overture on the Middle East could be seen as a sign of good faith along the lines of my communication of December 18. I said we would have to study it.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the NPT]

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Sedov said that the Soviet Union was very interested that the inaugural speech contain some reference to open channels of communication to Moscow. I said that all this would be easier if Moscow showed some cooperativeness on Vietnam. Sedov replied that he would try to have an answer by January 10.

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