

App'd in U 3/6/69 **Memorandum of Conversation**

PART V of VI

DATE: February 28, 1969

**SUBJECT:** (1) U.S. Participation in Study Related to Use of  
Nuclear Explosions to Develop Harbor in Australia;  
(2) U.S.-Soviet Technical Discussions on Peaceful Uses  
of Nuclear Explosions

**PARTICIPANTS:**

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador  
The Acting Secretary  
Morton Abramowitz, Special Assistant, U  
Adolph Dubs, Acting Country Director, SOV

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Ambassador Dobrynin said that just prior to coming to the Department to pay his courtesy visit he had received an instruction from his Government which he said he would like to take the liberty to read:

"Referring to the statement of the Department of State of February 6, 1969, that the Government of the United States agreed to participate in a study on the technical and economic feasibility of employing nuclear explosions to develop a harbor at Cape Keraudren on the northwest coast of Australia, I am instructed to state the following.

"The decision of the Government of the United States to assist Australia in research work on the creation of a harbor with the help

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(Drafting Office and Officer)

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of underground nuclear explosions attracted attention in the Soviet Union.

"In this connection the Soviet side would like to get from the Government of the United States explanations and additional information as to whether the planned actions of the United States in conducting nuclear explosions in Australia will be consistent with the Moscow Treaty on a limited nuclear weapons test ban. This Treaty prohibits the conducting of any nuclear explosion under water, including territorial waters and open sea, and of any explosion, which causes radioactive debris to be present outside the territorial limits of the state under whose jurisdiction or control such explosions are conducted."

The Acting Secretary said he would look into the matter. He noted that he was aware of questions which had arisen in connection with our PLOWSHARE program involving the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The legal questions involved were being explored by the Department of State and other appropriate U.S. agencies. He understood that one of the central problems involved the quantity of nuclear debris which might be released by underground explosions and vent into the atmosphere. It was important for both countries to clarify their views on matters such as this. Both the Soviet Union and the U.S. are proponents of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and both evidently propose, as he understands it, to make nuclear devices available for peaceful purposes. The Acting Secretary added that both countries obviously wish to observe the limitations which treaties impose upon the signatories.

Ambassador Dobrynin said that the Soviet Government had indicated its preparedness to hold technical talks on the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions (PNE's). No

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specific answer has yet been received from the U.S. Government. He conjectured that this was perhaps due to the fact that the U.S. Government is going through a transition period. In any event, the Soviet Government is looking forward to receiving the views of the U.S. Government on this subject.

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