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MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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November 16, 1981

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: RICHARD V. ALLEN

SUBJECT: Letter from the President to  
President Brezhnev

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL  
Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: APR 02 2018

Attached at Tab I is the proposed text of your letter to President Brezhnev. It is based on a draft by State, and we have added the paragraph at the outset, refuting Brezhnev's claim to his October 15 letter that Soviet actions should have nothing to do with US-USSR relations.

We have sent this text to State and Defense for their comments, due by this afternoon. After your final review and approval, we will then send it to Moscow for delivery.

Tab I Draft Letter to Brezhnev

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Review on 11/16/87

Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS +  
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November 16  
9:00 a.m.

Dear President Brezhnev:

I have given careful study to your letter of October 19.  
*(of Oct. 15)*

Your letter makes it clear once again how profound are the causes differences in our respective assessments of the nature of

international conduct and of the major sources of tension in the contemporary world. I must confess I find it difficult to accept your assertion that Soviet actions in other parts of the world must have no bearing on ~~bilateral~~ <sup>our</sup> US-Soviet relations.

Inasmuch as both of our countries have worldwide interests, <sup>making</sup> it is hard to see how ~~their~~ bilateral relations can be isolated from global happenings. I must, therefore, repeat what I had written in my letter to you of September 22, that Soviet pursuit of ~~bilateral advantage in various parts of the globe as well as~~ resort to the direct and indirect use of force in regional conflicts are matters of deep concern to us. <sup>is the continued</sup> ~~Soviet is the~~ building up of military strength beyond the need for defense. ~~USSR's unremitting and uncompromising military policies~~

~~the issue in a different fashion, that is, to attempt to conduct US-Soviet relations without regard to Soviet actions in other parts of the world would, in my opinion, be entirely unrealistic.~~

Despite these differences, however, we should strive to find a common ground for ~~agreement~~ accords on matters of vital interest to our two countries and the rest of the world. The ~~cause for~~ <sup>interests of</sup> peace, and particularly the threat of nuclear destruction which hangs over mankind, require that our two countries make an concerted effort, together with our partners, to resolve our differences peacefully. <sup>I assure you</sup> The United States is committed to such a process. I therefore welcome your own expressed desire

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DRAFT

~~SECRET~~

- 2 -

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for businesslike cooperation in addressing world problems.

I believe that our exchanges, and the discussions in New York between Secretary Haig and Foreign Minister Gromyko, have laid the essential groundwork for such an effort. The key question now is how we can translate these beginnings into concrete results. We are ready to advance specific solutions and to hear out Soviet proposals aimed at relieving the dangers, as well as the current human suffering, in problem areas around the world.

I am convinced, Mr. President, that we can achieve concrete results in the coming year if there is genuine good will and serious interest on both sides.

Afghanistan remains a major obstacle to progress, befouling the international atmosphere. It appears from recent communications that we both agree on the need for progress toward an internationally acceptable solution of this issue. We appear to agree on basic goals: a non-aligned, secure Afghanistan, free of any military presence and guaranteed against any outside interference. This calls for a complete withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan at the earliest possible date. The United States is prepared to continue the exchange of views on questions that bear on a political settlement in Afghanistan. Ambassador Hartman will be in touch with Foreign Minister Gromyko to determine whether there is the basis for a serious dialogue.

~~Early progress should also be possible on Kampuchea.  
The interests of world peace and regional stability would be~~

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DRAFT

~~SECRET~~

- 3 -

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served if Vietnam would seek a political settlement involving withdrawal of its forces in Kampuchea. Vietnam could advance this objective through cooperation with the International Conference on Kampuchea and its intercessional committee. The Soviet Union, upon whom Vietnam so heavily depends, could play a constructive role in urging this cooperation.

Mr. Let me address your assertions regarding US policy towards Cuba. We are not attempting to overturn Cuba's political or economic system, nor are we interfering in Cuba's internal affairs. However, we do find entirely unacceptable Cuba's unremitting efforts to export its revolution by fomenting violent insurgencies against legitimate governments in Central America. The Soviet Union through its provision of and other necessary material support to Cuba bears ultimate responsibility for the hostile activities which Cuba is directing against its neighbors. The interests of world peace would be well served by Soviet actions to induce Cuban restraint before there is a further escalation in the dangerous tension in the region.

We evidently agree that Namibia should achieve independence at the earliest possible date. We probably also will agree that South Africa should not threaten Angola and that Cuban forces should be withdrawn from that country. The US is doing its part to create the basis for a resolution of the Namibia question on these premises. The South African response to the plan for withdrawal from Namibia announced September 24 by the

~~SECRET~~

DRAFT

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- 4 -

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Contact Group is encouraging. But South Africa's agreement is contingent upon Cuban withdrawal from Angola as an element in an overall resolution of the Namibia question. Now is the time for Cuba's commitment to withdraw its forces as a part of a plan for Namibian independence and enhanced security for Angola. This is a step which the Soviet Union can help achieve immediately.

*But to get to the real purpose of my letter,*  
Arms control is another vital area where progress can be made toward world peace. ~~I wish to discuss~~

The United States is prepared to accept equality in conventional, intermediate-range nuclear and strategic forces at the lowest possible level of forces. <sup>such</sup> We are also prepared to take other steps to enhance general peace and international security.

Let me begin with strategic forces. The United States will be prepared to open negotiations on strategic arms reductions as soon as possible in the new year. In approaching these talks we should learn from past experiences. In my view however, the negotiations also will require fresh ideas - to which both sides should devote urgent and serious attention - in order that we can achieve genuine reductions in strategic forces. This will demand political will and a readiness on both sides to accept a higher degree of openness in order to enhance mutual confidence. In this connection, I welcome your important public statement that verification measures going beyond national technical means might be possible.

Concerning intermediate-range nuclear forces, the agreement to begin talks on these systems on November 30 in Geneva marks

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DRAFT

~~SECRET~~

- 5 -

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an important beginning in dealing with the difficult issue ~~nuclear force~~ of the military imbalance ~~with regard to~~ ~~Theater~~ ~~missiles~~ ~~that has been exacerbated by the deployment of the SS-20.~~ You will see that we are making genuine progress toward agreement in these talks. We are ready to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union which is straightforward and fair. Our aim is ambitious. We are prepared to cancel our plan to deploy Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles <sup>(we believe)</sup> ~~in turn~~ on the condition that the Soviet Union dismantles all of its SS-4, SS-5 and SS-20 missiles, and ~~under~~ ~~takes~~ <sup>and</sup> desists from further deployments of these or comparable systems.

Opportunities also exist for reductions in conventional forces in Europe. The Soviet military buildup of the past two decades has resulted in Soviet military capabilities well beyond any reasonable need for self defense. Our offensive forces have become increasingly capable. The Soviet Union could make no more convincing contribution to peace in Europe than by substantially reducing its conventional forces. Now is the time to take actions to achieve equality at a lower level of conventional forces in Europe.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe offers another practical possibility for increasing confidence and reducing the risks of war. At the Madrid meeting, the Western countries have advanced proposals for a Conference on Disarmament in Europe that could negotiate ~~confidence and security building~~ measures aimed at reducing concerns about surprise attack. ~~We welcome the Soviet willingness to accept~~ ~~some~~ throughout the

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-6-

European part of the USSR) and believe that the most recent proposals of the Western countries should provide the basis for agreement on the zone question. At the same time, it is our principled position that agreement on the zone question at the Conference must be accompanied by agreement on steps that would hope we could move move the Helsinki process forward in all areas, including human rights.

In this connection, I would consider it very positive step if your country were to take favorable action to resolve certain humanitarian matters, such as the reunification of divided families and the individual cases raised during the recent discussions between our foreign ministers in New York. Such action would no doubt have a favorable effect on deliberations in Madrid, and on relations between our two countries. As you know, I am personally concerned with the situation of academician Andrei Sakharov and his family as well as that of Mr. Anatolii Shcharanskii.

There is no shortage, Mr. President, of opportunities for easing world tensions. If the Soviet Union is prepared to move forward in these areas of genuine concern to the United States and its allies, you will find me a ready partner.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

What do you  
think about  
dropping this?  
RJ

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