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August 9, 1962

Secretary's Conversation of August 8 with Ambassador Dobrynin

(See attachment)

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The Secretary stated that he would like to report briefly on his conversation of August 8 with Ambassador Dobrynin. He said he could report briefly because no perceptible business was transacted. Apparently Mr. Dobrynin had no fresh instructions on any subject that came up and the conversation did not advance any of the issues discussed. The Secretary said he had mentioned three subjects:

1. Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The Secretary said that he had told Dobrynin that Ambassador Dean had gone back to Geneva prepared to take up seriously with the Soviet Union and others the urgent matter of concluding a nuclear test ban treaty. Mr. Dean was also prepared to discuss improvements arising from new technical data. This new information would permit a sharp reduction in the world-wide number of control posts from the range of 180 stations to a range of 80. We had not found any way, however, to avoid the necessity for on-site inspection. With an improved capability to reduce the number of suspicious events which could not be identified it might, of course, be possible to talk about the numbers of on-site inspections.

He commented to the group that we believe we should not talk about numbers so long as the Soviet number is zero. We see no point in negotiating with other people on numbers. He had observed that there were pressures to put forward a very low

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and attractive number and that even when this is done the number becomes subject to erosion. This happens just as a result of a passage of time. There can be erosion just by reconvening the conference after a recess even though nothing has changed in the meantime. People expect something new. We will not subject ourselves to this process unless the Soviets accept in principle the idea of on-site inspection.

The Secretary said he had pressed the Soviet Government through Dobrynin to look again at the question of a test ban treaty. He had told Dobrynin we cannot understand their professed concern over espionage, and cannot see any reality in it. We all know enough about each other to inflict massive damage in case of war. The kind of espionage they seem to be fretting about has no real relevance to that capability.

The Secretary said that Dobrynin had indicated that Soviet opposition to inspection was flat and firm. The Secretary commented that Gromyko had said at Geneva the Soviet attitude on inspection would not change. Dobrynin had said the Soviets believed that we could detect all nuclear explosions by distant instrumentation, so when we press this matter of inspection the Soviets consider our purpose to be espionage. The Secretary had replied to Dobrynin that we could not say the Soviets had no instruments which could do this, but we know we do not. If they do have such instruments they should show them to us and enter into objective scientific talks which might open new avenues to agreement.

Dobrynin had replied that the linkage was tight in the Soviet position between an atmospheric ban and a comprehensive ban and that he did not believe the Soviet Government would move on this question.

The Secretary had told Dobrynin that the United States would be prepared to move promptly to an atmospheric ban. We could not say, however, in advance that at the end of the Soviet test series we could at that moment accept an atmospheric ban.

The Secretary commented to the group that he got no impression that we would be able to make any progress on either a comprehensive or an atmospheric treaty.

2. Irish Resolution. The Secretary said that he had discussed another point in connection with the Irish Resolution, a matter which would be coming up shortly both at Geneva and at the General Assembly.

The Secretary recalled that he had told Gromyko at Geneva that he thought the Soviet Union was making a mistake in injecting the question of multilateral arrangements into the question of preventing the development of new national nuclear capabilities. Their insistence on this point could only mean there would be no progress on a point in which he would suppose to be in our common interest.

The Secretary said he had told Dobrynin that we considered it desirable to move ahead in accordance with the Irish Resolution by means of arrangements whereby existing nuclear powers would not transfer nuclear weapons to other nations and others would not develop nuclear weapons of their own. The Secretary had told Dobrynin the United States feels that in the next several years up to 20 countries will be technically and scientifically able to produce nuclear weapons provided they are willing to devote sufficient effort to it. This figure includes the four who already are doing so. He said the extent of effort required was being constantly reduced as a result of technological advance. He had told Dobrynin that continued movement in this direction would complicate the problem of disarmament and increase the danger of nuclear war.

The Secretary said he had told Dobrynin that the Soviet Union had a misconception in considering that a multinational capability was the same as the extension of national capabilities. He had further told Dobrynin that since there was no consensus in the West yet as to the type of multinational defense system envisaged, that a speculative element necessarily enters into Soviet opposition to multinational arrangements. He had told Dobrynin that it seemed desirable to leave this question aside and move in the direction envisaged by the Irish Resolution.

The Secretary reported that Dobrynin then came to a point which we had turned down several times already. Dobrynin said he wanted to deal with the question specially in the case of what he called the two Germanies. Dobrynin had said that wider arrangements would involve excessive delays. The Secretary had told Dobrynin that we were interested in Mainland China and that we should not pick out individual countries on a discriminatory basis but should move on a world-wide basis. Dobrynin had repeated that

SECRET

this would involve delay. The Secretary had told Dobrynin that if militarily significant countries in which we were interested were not in the Treaty, there could be no Treaty:

The Secretary commented to the group that Dobrynin probably has serious doubts about the possibility of China coming in. He speculated that these doubts might lie behind Dobrynin's assertions that delays would be involved in proceeding on a world-wide basis.

Dobrynin had agreed to report the Secretary's remarks to Moscow, but had said that Moscow would have great difficulty with them.

3. Deputy Foreign Minister's Forum. The Secretary recalled that the question of a Deputy Foreign Minister's forum had been raised with Gromyko as early as the previous spring. The Secretary had asked Dobrynin whether he had instructions from Gromyko on the question of establishment of a Deputy Foreign Minister's forum for discussion of matters relating to Germany and Berlin. Gromyko had said at Geneva that he would have word for us to whether the subject would be dealt with in this way. Dobrynin replied that he would mention this question to Moscow but observed that Khrushchev and Gromyko were on vacation now.

The Secretary said the question of the UN delegation had come up and that Dobrynin had said nothing about Khrushchev's coming. He had said the Soviet delegation was usually decided upon around the first of September and had predicted that Gromyko would probably be there.

The Secretary invited comments or questions.

Lord Hood said it was a rather depressing story.

The Secretary agreed. He had asked Dobrynin whether it would be safe for him to take a vacation in August, but Dobrynin had not been responsive.

Mr. von Lilienfeld asked what impression the Secretary had as to the next move.

The Secretary said he thought that exploratory talks and probes have about run their course. For some time both he and

SECRET

Dobrynin had been repeating themselves. The Secretary stated he had been as long winded and repetitious as the Soviets. He said that unless they have something new to offer he does not see much coming out of the bilaterals. He felt that they might seek a different forum or might have something to say to some other member of the Western group. He recalled that Gromyko at Geneva had indicated that he was glad to pursue bilateral talks but had referred to talks with the Western Four as "better still".

The Secretary recalled that he had emphasized to Dobrynin that we could not accept charges that we have delayed. If we had delayed a year and a half in agreeing with them, they have likewise delayed that long in agreeing with us. He had told Dobrynin, however, that we can always rush to a crisis, while a resolution of differences must necessarily proceed more slowly.

As to what the Russians are going to do, the Secretary said they seek to leave the impression with us that something is going to happen. We are not inclined to think they will announce the signing of a peace treaty with East Germany overnight. They will probably take some action with other governments of calling a conference first. Next Monday will be the anniversary of the wall and the Soviets might be inclined to celebrate it with harassment or new move. The Secretary said he did not know what they will do and was by no means certain they had themselves decided. He mentioned it was about time for another Soviet space spectacular.

Lord Hood said they probably have not decided what to do but that one idea in their minds is probably to sign a peace treaty.

The Secretary recalled that he had not had reactions from all of the Western Four on whether if the Soviets called a conference we should propose a meeting of Foreign Ministers or Deputy Foreign Ministers in response.

As to the coming debate in the United Nation's General Assembly, the Secretary thought the introduction of specific substantive questions could lead to confusion. He thought, however, we would find wide support for the idea of talking instead of shooting—for the idea that neither side should take any action which would aggravate tensions. He thought, however, that a number of solutions on the question of troops or of access would look easier to the UN membership than to those of us who bear primary responsibility.

Lord Hood said he had received comments from his government on a number of papers, but not on this specific proposal regarding Western responses to a Soviet call for a conference.

Mr. von Lilienfeld said that he had received and transmitted to us comments on the conference question but not on the related papers. He commented that we should do something to regain the initiative of action on our side.

The Secretary said he did not know how much we could rely on Soviet advance planning, but that they wanted to send their Minister of Agriculture in September. He said if we were expecting to precipitate a crisis with another state, we would certainly not be sending one of our cabinet members to visit the state at the time.

Lord Hood asked whether we thought the Soviets, if they decided to go ahead with a peace treaty, might not want to minimize the awkward consequence by compensating gestures. They might well be interested in a meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers and propose that we seek to agree on how to handle our disagreements.

The Secretary commented that this might be a rational reaction, but if the Soviets were not pressing matters to a crisis it seems they would have desired to pick up various opportunities which have been before them to avoid a crisis. In recent months they have increased their public commitment to action on Berlin, and have increased for themselves the prestige problem involved in not doing anything.

Mr. von Lilienfeld commented that they had in several ways, however, seemed to accept the idea that the West would still be in Berlin in the future.

Mr. Lebel asked whether they would be likely to precede a move in Berlin with a move in the UNGA.

The Secretary replied that he would feel more relaxed if he thought GA action would necessarily be their first move.

Lord Hood raised the question whether they could get the United Nations to approve the idea of a peace conference.

The Secretary said that we will be in a powerful position in the United Nations if we say to the Assembly in effect, "Ask the Berliners and ask the East Germans what they want to do". This

fact may give the Soviets some pause in deciding what to do in the United Nations. He asked if anyone had any doubts as to what the sentiments of the Berlin people would be.

Mr. von Lilienfeld recalled they had made their views clear in every case where they had had an opportunity to do so. He added that there had been indications that the Soviet test series might be concluded by October and this might have a bearing upon Khrushchev's attendance and Soviet strategy at the Assembly.

The Secretary said there are enough hints and noises around to indicate that the anniversary of the wall may take on some significance to the Soviets. We do not, however, expect a move of the kind that would precipitate a military crisis.

Lord Hood commented there may be harassments.

The Secretary and Mr. Hillenbrand recalled that our mission in Berlin had sent a message indicating the possibility of harassments at Friedrichstrasse and possibly a move to cut off access to East Berlin. Mr. Hillenbrand said we have contingency plans for this possibility, but that they should be reviewed.

The Secretary commented that we could well have some move of that sort.

Mr. von Lilienfeld asked if there had been any shift in emphasis by the Soviets from the question of the presence of Western troops to the question of sovereignty of the GDR.

The Secretary said not really. If this were the Soviet intention they had overlooked opportunities to make it clear. The Secretary recalled that the only stiff talk by the Russians to him was on the first day of his recent Geneva meeting with Gromyko. Gromyko had read from a paper on that occasion and the rest of the several days of conversations appeared to be an effort to soften the impact of the prepared statement. Even as Gromyko was reading it, he pointed out that the statement did not take into account things which he had already said that same day.

Mr. Hillenbrand, in response to the Secretary's question, said he considered the difference between Gromyko's statement on the first day and on subsequent days to be more a difference of tone than of substance.

SECRET

The Secretary recalled that when he had rejected Gromyko's threat, Gromyko had not come back and redoubled it.

The Secretary stated he supposed that all intelligence services were alerted with their antenna out to sense any indications of a new Soviet move. Our intelligence service had been alerted.

Lord Hood asked what was next as regards the exchanges with Dobrynin.

The Secretary said that they owe us comments on two propositions, namely, the proposal regarding a Deputy Foreign Minister's forum and the matter of non-dissemination involved in the Irish Resolution. He did not expect that Dobrynin would be giving us further comments on the test ban question in the near future.

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SECRET

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