

December 19, 1967

NOTES ON WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS

Doty, Ruina, Rathjens and I, accompanied by Keeny and Scoville, met with Rostow and Nate Davis the morning of December 6th. Rostow first discussed Soviet-U.S. relations from a broad, almost background standpoint. He noted that it was important for the Soviet to realize that McNamara leaving was not due to a change in policy, nor did it foreshadow one. It was simply that an excellent job of a kind McNamara wanted opened up at the right time. As to the general state of U.S.-USSR relations, it is Rostow's impression that things are not very different from a year ago. He thinks that we and they find it possible to work together when our mutual State interests are involved, and he pointed to the Middle East settlement as an example. At the same time, the Soviets continue to be recalcitrant on helping in Vietnam and have caused a good many troubles with their foreign activities, notably in support of what Rostow called the Romantic-Radicals such as Nkrumah and Castro.

From Rostow's standpoint, the over-riding problem is that of strategic balance. He thinks that it is of the greatest importance that we, the US and USSR, must show restraint. As a specific example, he thinks it is important that we say directly to the Soviet that we are apprehensive that the NTP will not be durable if a Soviet-US arms race occurs. In Rostow's view, we must search immediately for a formula to handle the ABM-ICBM problem. (where one should think of ICBM as also including IRBM and MRBM) In Rostow's view, the USSR is not yet so deeply committed to ABM, or for that matter to ICBM build-up, that they cannot withdraw before a catastrophic arms race is in motion. He thinks that the US position is a similar one. He does note that the next few months are critical for the US. The combination of new Soviet programs, plus occasional sweeping statements of their superiority, combined with the political activities of an election year could mean that a few more months of unchecked

Soviet activity could lead us to believe that we must react and the possibility would then be that the arms race would be on. In this connection he noted that their FOBS program has not been particularly helpful in aiding the U.S. to hold the line. On the other side, at least one of our programs, ie. MIRV development, he notes as essentially a response to their ABM program.

(Although Rostow did not say it, one could suspect that even though this U.S. development may not be stopped, it might be held down in size in context of an agreed program of restraint.)

A critical point to Rostow is that we need formal talks of the kind that were proposed by us in February, the need for which was reiterated when Johnson and Kosygin met. In Rostow's view, there are a number of options which the U.S. would find acceptable and which might be discussed between us. The important thing is for them to accede to talks promptly and bring some of their own preferences out in the open for discussion. Rostow clearly hopes that our discussions with the Soviet will emphasize this need for more formal talks between the two governments.

With respect to the NPT, the Soviets ought to realize the very substantial cost which getting agreement from some of our Allies has been assumed by the U.S. It is not helpful if, as Kosygin did in London, the U.S.S.R. simply berates one of our important allies. Rostow is persuaded that we can clear a good plan with our allies, ie. one acceptable to the U.S.S.R. At the same time, getting some of the other countries in, e.g. India, will be a joint problem and the U.S. and U.S.S.R. must work together. This will also be necessary to keep the treaty viable. Parenthetically, Rostow noted that if our European alliances were seriously weakened, in his opinion, the European countries would withdraw

from NPT and develop nuclear weapons. In this sense he thinks it worth noting that our alliances effectively lock the U.S. into the world and the NPT will carry this farther.

Rostow turned to the question of Vietnam and noted the failures of the Soviet in carrying out commitments in Laos. As a result, there is a clear Soviet responsibility for this war and the sophisticated Soviets know it. He thinks that the U.S.S.R. really should be working to reconvene Geneva, as they have been repeatedly asked to do. The question that he obviously thinks should be asked the U.S.S.R. is, what specifically would they do if the U.S. stopped its bombing of the north?

On the question of a bombing stop, Rostow noted that in his judgment, the war has become significantly a frontier war, ie. that fighting increasingly is occurring on the periphery of South Vietnam rather than in the interior, and he noted that this is particularly true with respect to the northern provinces. Because of this, he thinks the San Antonio formula for a bombing pause is our rock-bottom position. (I am not sure what this formula is precisely, but it is my impression that according to it, a bombing pause must be "promptly followed by productive discussions.")

The most significant aspect of the Rostow discussion was his feeling that the key problem of the time is the question of strategic balance and his hope that this could be explored at some depth with our Soviet colleagues.

After meeting with Rostow we talked some with Hornig who, in his analysis of the political situation came out very much as had Rostow. He noted that we have strayed away from the position we had been in with the USSR of proceeding toward arms restraint by a process of mutual example, and raised as an interesting question whether we might not discuss this and persuade them to return to this. On the question of general relations, particularly in science, Hornig felt that we were likely to be able to agree on an exchange program, but that it probably would be little different from the current one. He noted that some of the exchanges in technology areas were not going very well. Apparently the expected exchanges in the field of nuclear energy have bogged down completely. It appears also to be true that some of the proposed information exchanges in the area of desalination have bogged down. Parenthetically, Hornig noted that we are going ahead with the Los Angeles plant and expect to produce 200 million gallons of water daily at a cost some place between 20 and 25¢ per thousand gallons. The same plant will produce 1800 megawatts of electricity.

In Hornig's view the most important technical thing that we needed to do was to think of ways in which we did better at information exchange. This was true in the above areas, but equally true in things like meteorological programs, space programs, etc.

After lunch we met with several DOD people in Morton Halperin's office. Halperin felt that there were several principles which ought to guide our discussions of a strategic balance. The first principle was that freeze or cutbacks of strategic delivery systems (particularly launches) was possible for the U. S. with only unilateral verification. This Halperin believes is a real step forward. This is not to say that there might not be interest in discussing the possibility of inspectors in missile plants or perhaps submarine yards, but such verification need only be involved in significantly larger cutbacks. The important thing is a good deal is possible with no international

inspection.

A second principle is that discussions of freezes and restrictions should simultaneously involve both offensive and defensive missiles. A third principle which he felt ought to be discussed is that we should look for simple agreements, e.g., agreements relating to ballistic missile and anti-missile launch system. In a very casual way it was noted that, if one threw in on the Soviet side their MRBM's and IRBM's, one might very well be able to discuss things in terms of an approximate parity as measured by perhaps two or three different measures. With respect to the simple agreements, it was noted that it was probably true that the first thing to think about would be a stoppage, i.e., a freeze.

Another principle which Halperin felt operated was that we should think in terms of informal agreements rather than a treaty. A final general point was that in a very early stage the U.S. may be a little reluctant to produce a detailed proposal just because we will be hesitant to draw fire in context of a public discussion of a proposal before we know that the USSR is serious in its desire to talk.

As a couple of specific points, Halperin noted that the USSR has not agreed to the signing of Protocol II of the Latin American Nuclear Free Zone Agreement in which large powers agree to a non-first use of nuclear weapons on countries which have agreed to a nuclear free zone. He wonders why the Soviets have not found this easy to accede to. As a somewhat similar point, he notes that we have tabled at Geneva and at the UN drafts of a no-first-use arrangement which would hold for non-nuclear nations except when they are supported by a nuclear nation in some active aggression. The implication is that this would apply to countries who have signed the NPT. Halperin notes that this is close to the Soviet position and thinks we should be able to get some kind of an agreement on this.

The last part of these discussions involved also Paul Warneke. He expressed himself generally along lines rather similar to Rostow. Among other things that were noted were that a principal problem is that of communication, with an interesting

question being what highly visible thing might the Soviet Union do to indicate that it is prepared to diminish the intensity of its build-up. It was also noted that a good illustration of defensive systems that had turned out to be less than useful are airplane defense systems. Warneke commented with vigor on the importance of establishing with the Soviet Union, the second point made in McNamara's self-discussed speech, i.e., that nuclear weapons really have no significance as instruments of foreign policy and that their sole utility now is that of deterring their use by others. This fact should make it easier to get agreement between two countries.