

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 26, 1977

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI 25.
SUBJECT: Weekly National Security Report #2

1. Opinions

US-Soviet Relations: A Preliminary Assessment. It is much too early to make confident predictions, but certain preliminary conclusions seem to emerge from Soviet behavior and statements since the election, and, more particularly, during the recent tensions over human rights:

-- Brezhnev has made a personal and public commitment to re-establishing the "detente" policy, based on an early SALT agreement;

-- To this end, he will insulate the human rights issues, at least to the degree he can without losing face with his Politburo colleagues;

-- He is probably increasingly apprehensive that a failure to re-establish this line will lead to a gradual shift in American opinion;

-- Finally, the strategic political weakness of the USSR in two critical areas--the Middle East and China--creates an added pressure to stabilize his relations with the new American Administration.

* * * *

To understand Brezhnev's perspective, one has to remember that the events of the last two years have been perplexing and disconcerting for the Soviet leadership. In 1971-73, the Soviets, and Brezhnev personally, invested in the "irreversibility" of detente, only to see the two main Western interlocutors -- Nixon and Brandt -- fall from office. The Soviets moved quickly to recapture the momentum by inviting President Ford to Vladivostok, and making concessions on SALT that they denied to Nixon three months earlier. Within a year, SALT was slipping from their grasp, and, soon thereafter, Ford moved to the right to outflank Reagan. Brezhnev's dismay was registered in several bitter private communications.

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Thus, it was clearly in the Soviet interest, immediately after the election, to revive the general thesis that detente could be set back but not fundamentally altered. A series of well orchestrated statements were climaxed by Brezhnev's speech in Tula on January 18, in which he made two strong points: (1) that the Soviet Union was prepared for a "major advance" in Soviet-American relations, and (2) that, "above all, it was necessary to complete in the nearest future the drafting of an agreement on limiting strategic armaments. . ."

The intervening tension concerning human rights obviously threatened to upset the Brezhnev assessment that the new Administration was prepared to restore a better relationship with Moscow. The Soviet reaction has been interesting. While responding sharply and reasonably promptly, the response has been guarded: no direct criticism and/or attribution to you has appeared; indeed, your statements, including the Sakharov letter, are non-events as far as Soviet public treatment is concerned; moreover, the Soviets have stopped short of linking human rights to security issues, have continued to stress the importance of the Vance mission, and have made no explicit threats to take action.

Soviet wariness to engage in a confrontation on this issue is probably reinforced by their concern over the possible contagion of the human rights issue in Eastern Europe. Thus they have an incentive to be firm but not to allow the situation to escalate.

Moreover, the Soviet position elsewhere is not so promising that they should seek at this early date a confrontation with the US.

-- In the Middle East, they are in possibly the weakest position since they entered the area in 1956; their relations with Sadat have reached a new low, with the direct personal attack on him in Pravda.

-- On their Eastern front, things have also developed unfavorably. After Mao's death, some moves toward a Sino-Soviet rapprochement seemed inevitable and in the interest of both sides. This general judgment may still prove correct; but it appears that Soviet probing for a small breakthrough led the Chinese to take an even harder line, to the point that the Soviets have broken their public silence and initiated an attack on the Chinese in Pravda; and the border negotiations have once again foundered.

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4. Concerns

East Asia. A month into the Administration, US policy in East Asia suffers a certain lack of coherence; initiatives which individually have merit convey in their combined effect potentially misleading impressions about US steadiness and purpose; many Asian leaders appear confused about our current priorities in the area.

-- The key strategic issue confronting the US concerns our relationship with the Soviets. Our primary task is to inhibit disruptive Soviet acts while developing more compelling incentives for the USSR's cooperation with us on a wider range of issues. Our policies in every region must be related to an overarching, coherent strategy for gradually transforming the nature of the Soviet challenge. But the Soviet dimension of our Asian policy has not been articulated, thus generating uncertainties in our relations with the two most powerful Asian nations--Japan and China.

-- We have embarked on major initiatives in Korea and Vietnam. We are undertaking a major reevaluation of our base requirements in the Philippines. The first two issues that we fastened on in our dialogue with the Chinese involved settlement of financial claims and nuclear proliferation--neither of which is of high priority interest to Peking. These moves have been considered in a disjointed fashion with domestic considerations supply much of the impetus. Some adjustments in our military posture in East Asia are overdue, and normalization with Hanoi can serve American interests. But we must take care lest our timing and execution of these initiatives convey unintended signals of declining interest in Asia, and a disposition of neglecting traditional allies while courting past adversaries.

-- We will be looking for an opportunity to publicly define our overall approach reasonably soon. We have an interagency group at work to develop an over-arching Asian policy statement.

-- Diplomatic cables from around the world are beginning to form a picture of PRC posture toward the new Administration. Without telegraphing their negotiating position, the Chinese are eager to begin to talk seriously with the US about improving our relations. They realize we are in the midst of a policy review, and are uneasy because they see the Soviet-US relationship moving forward. Further, while seemingly somewhat assured by US commitment to a strong NATO and to the Sino-Japanese relationship, some concern can be detected about the US posture elsewhere (e.g., Korea, Southeast Asia, and southern Africa). At this stage, the earliest likely time we will be able to enter

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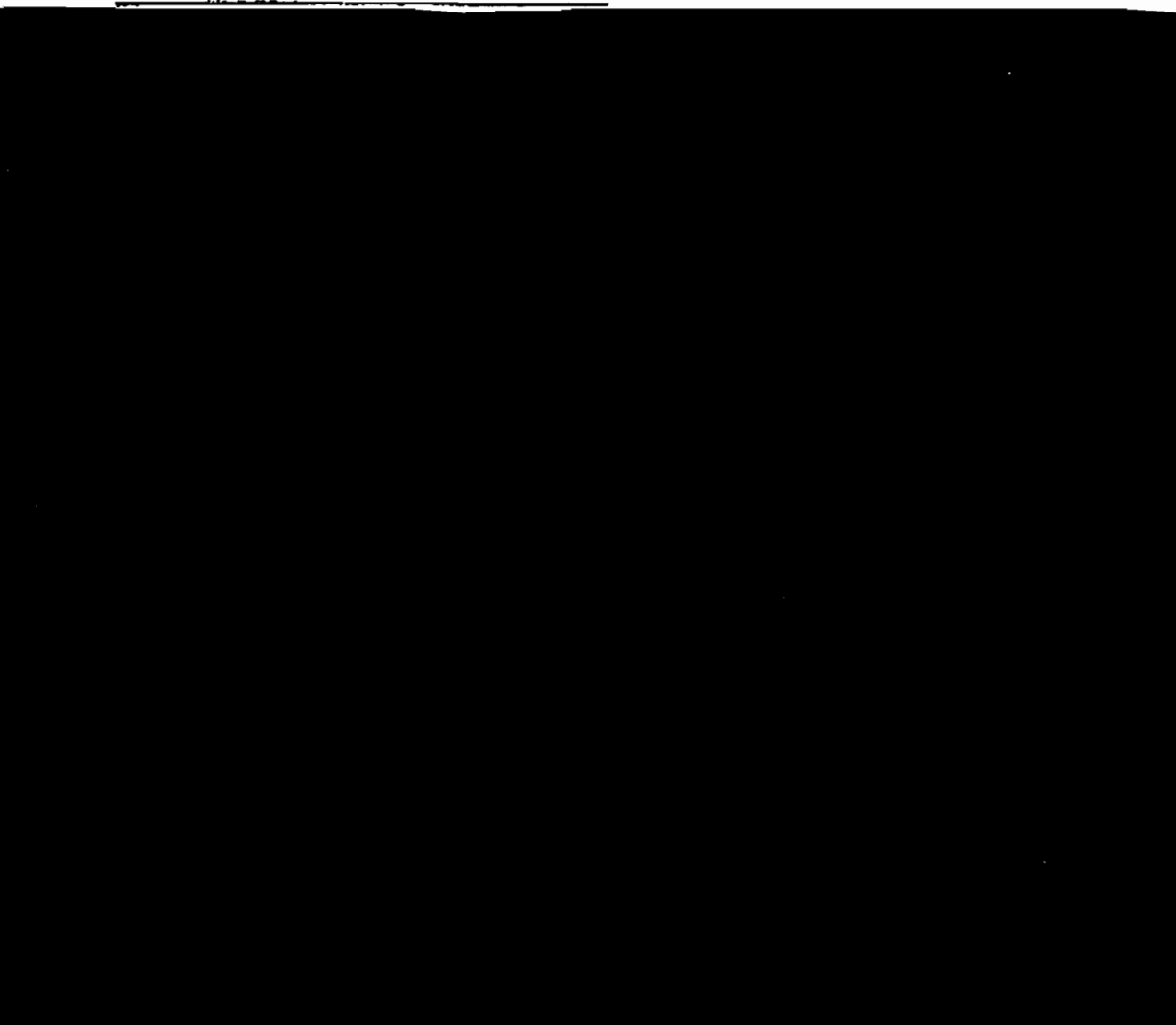
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into meaningful discussions with the PRC will be April-May. Given Chinese concerns with our Soviet drift, their hope that we will enter into a dialogue, and their expectation--as the President told Huang Chen--that we will keep them informed, Secretary Vance should soon meet the PRC Liaison Chief to brief him on his trip to the Mid-East and on planning for his Soviet trip. In particular, if we are going to be talking to the Soviets about mutual efforts to limit competition in South Asia, the Indian Ocean, or the Mid-East--which the Chinese might misperceive as collusion aimed against their interests -- we should explain our intent to Peking prior to the negotiations with the Soviets.

5. Reactions

Foreign Governments/Officials



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Foreign Press

Soviet Union. The Soviet Union finally published a partial text of the President's February 8 press conference on SALT. The interesting aspect is that the weekly "Za Rubezhom" left in his remarks about achieving a quick agreement by omitting Backfire and cruise missiles.

Human Rights. A February 12 Pravda editorial strongly denounced recent US initiatives regarding human rights. Of the Pravda editorial, the London Observer said it "appears to be an official rebuff for President Carter's call for greater respect for human rights in the Soviet Union." Figaro of Paris declared that "the stern warning addressed by Pravda to the West cannot leave Jimmy Carter under any illusions about the diplomatic and political risks of his crusade." The Times of India reported that the President's human rights statements are "clearly intended to soften up the superhawks in Congress" paving the way for a new SALT package.

Franco: "Carter Chose the Right Method". News and comment on the prominent subject of human rights increased this week. Raymond Aron writing in Le Figaro supported the Administration saying: "In my opinion Jimmy Carter, much more than Kissinger, has chosen the right method, perhaps unwittingly. These men in the Kremlin have respect only for those who resist them; they despise those who lie down."

"We must not promise a help that we are unable to give, but we would betray ourselves if we denied Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn--or any of those who embody the values that we use as a reference--the moral support to which they are entitled." (2/24/77)

Brazil: Concern Not Limited to Latin America. An editorial in Rio's most prestigious newspaper, Jornal do Brasil welcomed the fact that "President Carter's concern with human rights (is) not limited to Latin America" and called the letter to Sakharov "an example of political coherence and byalty to the promises made by candidate Carter. (It) also reveals that he believes human rights are an indivisible asset, which cannot be violated in one part of the planet and respected in another." (2/24/77)

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One final important factor is the rising tide of debate and concern in the US about the Soviet military posture and Soviet intentions. The Soviets have begun to respond by a surprisingly frank discussion. In refuting the charges of "superiority" they have begun to say that their strategic intentions are indeed limited, and that they would in fact settle for "parity." This probably is a sign that the case is being made in the Kremlin for tactical concessions to the Americans, lest the situation get out of hand, and the US embark on a major rearmament program.

In short, the more significant indicators point to a Soviet desire to establish an accommodation with the new Administration and to nail this down as soon as possible. For the Kremlin, the first practical test will be Secretary Vance's mission, which was recently characterized as intended to "give the green light for the final step (in SALT)."

(W. Hyland)

US-French Relations. Pierre Hassner, a leading French scholar told Robert Hunter (NSC) that:

-- The United States should support Giscard strongly, as the best bet for France. But it must be done subtly, without pushing Giscard too fast into cooperative efforts, because of French "Gaullism" of both left and right. Yet, we should put the onus on France to act more positively within the European Community, by not circumventing EC processes of internal decision -- even if we do not always like the result.

-- There is a real danger of another "Year of Europe" mentality here, through a failure to think through the complexities of relations with Europe, while (ironically) seeking to improve relations with it. Consultations must be real; and we must be flexible on preparations for the summit so that it will give the appearance of harmony, even if little is decided. We must not initiate a review of NATO strategy, without a clear idea of the outcome. Too much zeal just frightens Europeans.

-- Preparations for Belgrade should be through the EC, not NATO:
1) The EC has done well on Helsinki issues; 2) this is a practical way of getting the EC to coordinate on a political issue; and 3) NATO gives issues a "military cast", and runs up against French abstention.

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1. Facts

During the first month of your Administration, the NSC processed 808 action items. Although past NSC records are somewhat incomplete, this number appears to be close to a record (a dubious honor).

ended at 11:15
We had our first crisis coordination effort on the Uganda situation Friday. It went quite smoothly and unlike the subordinate effort in the State Department, we managed to keep it out of the newspapers, and maintained a low profile. I will ask Jerry Schecter to speak to his colleagues at the State Department in order to ensure that future counterproductive crisis publicity is not generated.

Proliferation -- France and Pakistan. Bilateral talks were held with the French on Friday and Saturday of last week. They were extremely reluctant to discuss the Pakistani issue in any of the formal sessions. For political reasons, they are deeply afraid that the US might even hint publicly that they are considering any abrogation of their contract. They continue to make clear, however, that if we can get any movement out of the Pakistanis, they will welcome it. One major problem is that they have already exported nearly 80% of the blueprints. State is beginning to explore ways to approach the Pakistanis after their elections which will be held on March 10.

C French and Germans oppose EC presence on Economic Summit. Our Ambassador to the OECD reports that the French Ambassador casually informed him that the French and Germans were opposing the presence of EC Commission President Roy Jenkins at the Economic Summit. We know Callaghan is very unenthusiastic about Jenkins being there. Although this is an issue which the EC must resolve itself, it could again complicate preparations as it did for Puerto Rico.

Cuba. The Cubans have been very confused by recent statements by Administration officials on the question of normalization of relations, but after the Swiss Ambassador delivered a note to the Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Torres from the Secretary of State early this week stating clearly the desire by the US Government to negotiate directly with Cuba on the maritime boundary issue, the Cuban was reported to have said: "We have been waiting for a signal from the Carter Administration, and this is it."

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How can we explain?

A PRC official in an African embassy revealed Somalia and Cuba have signed a defense agreement. PRC officials believe that there are about 700 Cubans in Somalia, that the number of military instructors will increase, and that the training of guerrillas will be more open and on a larger scale. There was also a report of a Cuba-Uganda military link in the offing.

Soviet Activity in Southern Africa.

we are missing the source?

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Tensions Within LDC Group in UNCTAD. Twelve commodities -- including jute, rubber and copper -- are scheduled for discussion under UNCTAD auspices in 1977.

[REDACTED]

for developing countries like India, finding a middle ground which protects their economic interests without adversely affecting the solidarity of G-77, the UN caucusing group which coordinates LDC positions at North-South conferences. Most LDCs regard such solidarity as one of the few effective sources of pressure on the industrialized countries. But tensions between national and bloc goals may induce more moderate developing countries to support tactics designed to avoid confrontation over demands to restructure the global economy.

3. Alerts

Concorde. The British and French governments continue to be concerned about the fate of Concorde, now scheduled to be decided by the Port of New York Authority on March 10. That is also the day Prime Minister Callaghan arrives. We are seeking (discreetly) further intelligence on the possible decision of the Authority.

Japan. The Japanese nuclear energy team is here to express concern about the potential impact of US non-proliferation initiatives upon Japanese plans to obtain a full nuclear fuel cycle. The Japanese have laid heavy emphasis on the importance from a security standpoint of diminishing dependence on imported oil and natural uranium, and enrichment and processing services. Their estimates of future world uranium supplies are pessimistic; they underscore the long lead time for the development of nuclear reprocessing technology; they discount

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we must have an international position

two possibilities of enlarging very substantially their capacity to store spent fuel rods in Japan. Clearly, they are eager to avoid a moratorium on reprocessing. They will be raising this issue again with political--as well as technical--arguments when Fukuda comes.

Thailand. The Thai situation merits a close watch. The internal situation is most unstable. The military junta has not generated much popular or bureaucratic support, and is faction ridden. The insurgency movement on the Thai-Malaysia border persists. Thai relations with Laos and Cambodia involve military clashes and Thai assistance to resistance groups. Former Premier (Thanin), who retains considerable influence and support, emerged from his Monkhoo this past week. Our goals are to retain our low profile and to prevent the Soviets from gaining a beachhead, which they would like to do. The only option seems to be diplomatic: to impress on the Thai leadership that factional strife and external strife can only accrue to the Soviet's benefit.

ok- Presidential Message on Foreign Assistance. Secretary Vance kicked off Administration testimony in support of your foreign assistance requests on Thursday, and officials of AID, State and Treasury will be testifying over the next few weeks. I will shortly be forwarding to you with my strong concurrence a recommendation from Secretaries Vance and Blumenthal that you transmit a message to Congress supporting the foreign assistance programs, and that you meet with key Senators and Congressmen to make the point personally. Establishing your strong commitment to these programs will be critical in obtaining the full amounts requested.

Human Rights. Opposition is forming in Congress because of the proposed minimal cuts in security assistance programs based on human rights considerations. The feeling is growing that much is being done and said about communist countries, over whom we have limited leverage while almost nothing is being done in regard to countries which depend upon us for economic and security assistance. This situation will become critical when the current classified security assistance country figures are released early in March in the Congressional Presentation Document.

Short Items: -- Bukovski visits the White House next week.
-- Vance gives initial testimony on Arab boycott legislation Monday.

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