

~~SECRET~~

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

91 OCT 17 AIO: 02

October 16, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Alexander M. Haig, Jr.

SUBJECT: Letter from Leonid Brezhnev

Ambassador Dobrynin delivered the attached letter from Leonid Brezhnev to me tonight. The letter is in response to your letter to him of 22 September. We are studying the letter now and will have a considered analysis of it for you.

Attachment

As Stated

~~SECRET~~

RDS-1 10/16/11

dlb 5/4/89

10/31

6115

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET ATTACHMENT~~

October 17, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: RICHARD ALLEN *Allen*

SUBJECT: Letter from Leonid Brezhnev

*RR*  
*Do you suppose he really believes all that crud - or did he even write it? RR*

We have received a letter from Leonid Brezhnev (Tab A) in response to your letter to him on September 22 (Tab B).

The State Department is preparing an analysis, as are members of the NSC Staff. A copy of the Brezhnev letter could be given to Bill Casey.

Attachments

cc: Ed Meese  
Jim Baker  
Mike Deaver

~~SECRET ATTACHMENT~~

NO FORN DISSEM  
OF INFORMATION

*M-20 SYSTEM*

REPRODUCTION COPY

*(RR handwriting)*

~~SECRET~~NLS F99-057 #35Amf NARA, DATE 10/4/88Unofficial translation

Dear Mr. President,

Your letter of September 22 contains thoughts which, as you write, touch upon the future of the relations between our two countries. I studied them carefully.

I noted, of course, the statements in your message regarding your readiness to maintain a constructive and stable relationship with the Soviet Union, adherence to the dialogue with it, and interest in peaceful resolution of problems causing the international tensions. Those intentions can only be welcomed. We are fully in favor of proceeding along such a path and, on our part, have been constantly calling upon the United States to act in exactly the same way.

We are convinced that a positive development of relations between the USSR and the USA meets the interests not only of the Soviet and American peoples; leveling off these relations, bringing them back on the road of businesslike cooperation would facilitate lessening the dangerous level of tension in the world and would give a real hope for resolution of many acute international problems.

At the same time, to be frank, it is regrettable that a new attempt is made in your letter to present the matter in such a way, as if the obstacle in the way of improving Soviet-American relations and reducing the general international tensions is the policy of the Soviet Union. In the correspondence between us I

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

2.

already dealt in detail on the absence of any basis for posing the question in such a way. And the fact that this thesis is again present in your message does not make it any more convincing.

Nor any useful purpose is served either by the tendency discernable in your message which suggests in one way or another a linkage between the prospect of development in our relations with some sort of modifications in the Soviet Union's "behavior". To proceed on this premise is to steer clearly the whole matter toward a deadlock.

We, Mr. President, just as many other countries, really have serious and legitimate objections to raise with the United States and its policy. However, we are against replacing the consideration of acute and outstanding issues with mutual recriminations over the behavior of any party on the international scene.

You are speaking in favor of taking mutually into account each other's interests. We are in favor of that, too. But no double standard here should be allowed, whereby one side perceives its interests everywhere and in everything, but any legitimate step on the part of the other side is immediately portrayed as encroachment on those interests, as a desire to get unilateral advantages. Abandonment by the United States of such a double standard will in fact demonstrate readiness to heed the interests of the other side and will be a good contribution to the cause of stabilization of the world situation.

~~SECRET~~

3

~~SECRET~~

3.

And, of course, each side possesses a sovereign right to have appropriate relations with its allies and friends, and to render them necessary assistance. Let me make a point, if we are to speak of our friends, they threaten nobody. Some people do not wish, however, to leave them alone, but left alone they must be.

Here is an example - the campaign against Cuba - a campaign that is constantly being whipped up. Why, for what purposes, is this being done? One cannot be serious in saying that Cuba can allegedly threaten the vital interests of the United States. We call upon the United States not to aggravate the situation around that country but to embark on the path of establishing normal relations with Cuba.

If the US side is really prepared, as you, Mr. President, write, to seek solutions to international problems through negotiations, there exist all possibilities to start doing that.

Take, for instance, that same question about a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan. As is known, the DRA Government has been consistently seeking such a settlement, in whose context the question of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan would also be resolved.

Recently the Afghan leadership came forth with new proposals on a political settlement. We support those proposals and regard them as a good basis for reaching appropriate agreements without any prejudice to the security and prestige of any country. Think about it.

~~SECRET~~

14

~~SECRET~~

4.

Likewise, why should not the United States take, at last, an unbiased look at what is going on in Campuchea? Is it really that the American interests are infringed there? How is it possible in pursuance of some expedient calculations to try to play with the destiny of a nation, which has, as it is, suffered a terrible tragedy. It cannot be permitted that the leftovers of the Pol Pot regime could again stage a bloodbath for the Campuchean people.

And there is still another question - the one concerning the situation around Egypt. Here too, there should be no outside interference. Nobody has any right to tell the Egyptians how they must solve their problems. The pressure, which is being brought to bear on that country and, in so doing, on the adjacent countries, must be stopped.

As we have already stated to the US Government, the developments around Egypt affect the security interests of the Soviet Union. Indeed, there is approximately the same distance from the USSR border to Egypt, as from Boston to Chicago.

In your message you, Mr. President, mentioned as one of the factors poisoning the political atmosphere "the campaign of anti-americanism", which is allegedly waged by the Soviet Union. However, if anybody has the grounds to bring a charge on account of the raging hostile propaganda, it has to be us, the Soviet side. After all, not a day passes in the USA without ever new fabrications about the Soviet Union and its policy being launched. What is more, the most active part in this unseemly exercise is taken by many representatives of the administration.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

5.

For instance, what about the incessant campaign about the so-called "Soviet military threat". All sorts of fantastic fables have been told in this regard on our account.

And why did you, personally, Mr. President, recently need to state publicly that the Soviet Union bases its policy on the calculation to score a victory in the nuclear war? Are you not aware of my repeated and clear statements - may be somebody intentionally conceals them from you - that the nuclear war, should it be unleashed, would turn out to be a catastrophe for the mankind?

I stated on more than one occasion, for all to hear, that the Soviet Union is against any nuclear strike, be it the first or not the first, massive or limited. We are for totally precluding the possibility of using nuclear weapons. This is, indeed, the thrust of our proposals set forth at the current UN General Assembly session. This is our firm and consistent position. It is in this spirit that we are striving to educate also the entire Soviet people.

We are not the ones who entertain thoughts about winning a nuclear duel. We believe such calculations to be an insanity.

Of course, we unmasked and will continue to unmask the calumny against our country and our policy. As far as we are concerned, we are against the use of unpermitted methods in conducting the polemics. We are in favor of a quiet, businesslike and, if you will, respectful dialogue.

Your message quite correctly points out what danger for the mankind is presented by the already existing nuclear weapons stockpiles as well as the need for serious efforts to reduce the

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

6.

armaments. However, it is difficult to match these thoughts with the program of a steep increase in the US strategic forces that you have recently announced. After all, this program in no way leads in the direction of the restraint, which you seem to be advocating. No reasonable grounds for the adoption of such a program exist.

The implementation of this program will mean placing the arms race into a new spiral with all its consequences.

The Soviet Union never sought a military supremacy. But we simply cannot permit the disruption of the military-strategic parity.

Mr. President, a meeting between our ministers has recently taken place in New York. In a certain sense its results are positive. I have in mind the agreement reached to hold negotiations on limiting nuclear arms in Europe. It is, of course, only the first step, and serious mutual work is yet to be done in search of solutions that would equally meet the interests of the Soviet Union and the United States and be consistent with the principle of equality and equal security. We are prepared to engage in such a search and would like to hope that the US side too will approach the negotiations in a businesslike manner.

The most important question concerning the continuation of strategic arms limitation negotiations remains open. Regretably, neither your letter, Mr. President, nor what was said by the Secretary of State A. Haig, introduce, so far, clarity in the US position in that respect.

These are the thoughts which I wanted to set forth in connection with your letter. Let us hope that the exchanges between us will ser

SECRET



~~SECRET~~

the cause of establishing a better understanding on the key  
issues of Soviet-American relations.

Sincerely,

L. BREZHNEV

October 15, 1981

~~SECRET~~