ties for the strengthening of Soviet-American relations and general improvement of the international situation."

Kissinger was jubilant. He said the president felt it now was time to fix the date of Brezhnev’s visit to the United States. He said also that Nixon had privately offered the post of American ambassador to the Soviet Union to former Secretary of State Dean Rusk in order to put the relations with Moscow on a solid basis. But Rusk unfortunately had refused to return to public life and preferred to remain a lecturer at his state university in Georgia.

In his reply Nixon agreed with Brezhnev that an end to the war would benefit Soviet-American relations and stressed that the process of detente would now be accelerated. He asked Brezhnev to tell him the most convenient date for his visit to the United States and the next summit meeting.

Undeniably, both Brezhnev’s and Nixon’s letters reflected genuine feelings of relief and satisfaction at the end of the Vietnam War, although perhaps for different reasons. But they both believed the end of the war opened up new prospects for promoting relations between the two countries. As for me, having lived through three difficult presidencies with their permanent irritation in our relations over Vietnam, I was really happy in my own professional way, for more constructive work lay ahead. Both governments were now set on a firm course toward the next summit.

V. To the Summit Again, in America

Detente and Its Problems

Soviet-American relations reached a level of amity in 1973 never before achieved in the postwar era. Events demonstrated the viability of the policy of detente, although there were some relapses, mainly on the American side. Indeed, the very idea of detente in terms of its practical implementation came to Americans out of the blue and caught many completely unaware. The shift also created new and strange domestic alliances, the most aggressive linking right-wingers, liberal anti-communists, and Jewish groups working together for free emigration and other human rights in the Soviet Union. It was their campaign that prompted Congress to endorse the Jackson-Vanik amendment, linking trade concessions to the Soviet Union to a relaxation of its domestic policies. Thus it was not yet time to talk about a serious change in the American mood in favor of a stable improvement of our relations, in contrast to the sentiments in the Soviet Union.

But by far the most remarkable influence on the developments in the United States was made by Watergate, which provoked a crisis of American constitutional democracy. At first the break-in on May 28, 1972, at the Democratic Party’s headquarters in Washington’s Watergate apartment building, had seemed only a minor event. The burglars were later discovered to have been acting on behalf of Nixon’s inner circle of political operatives, but even then I did not pay much attention to the first reports of the trail leading toward the White House. I thought it inconceivable that Nixon, a man of great political experience, would permit his office to become involved in such a petty venture.

The Soviet Union and its government had great difficulty understanding how public opinion in the United States could have gotten rid of President Nixon, surely one of the most able leaders of his time in foreign affairs even if he was also one of the most reckless in his climb to the top. Here was the president, elected for the second term by a significant majority, threatened by impeachment for what was seen as a minor affair. His use of the CIA, the FBI, and the considerable powers of his own office to remain in the White House was considered in the Soviet Union at that time a fairly
natural thing for the chief of state to do. Who cared if it was a breach of the Constitution? So our inclination was to think that Watergate was some kind of intrigue organized by his political enemies to overthrow him. And in Moscow, most of those enemies were considered anyway to be the opponents of better relations with the Soviet Union. Although in the short run all this had no serious effect on the process of detente, it was eventually recognized as capable of exploding the process at any time. It was of course the time bomb that finally destroyed the presidency of the man who in our minds was the principal force in the United States behind the policy of detente.

**Jewish Emigration and the Coalition Against Detente**

After the first summit an anti-Soviet coalition had begun to take shape from opposite sides of the U.S. political spectrum. It is perhaps not surprising that conservative forces became more active in their opposition to detente, a policy that flew in the face of their traditional hostility to the Soviet Union and communist countries and their determination to prolong the arms race. But they were joined by those who decided the time had come to challenge Soviet policy on emigration, especially Jewish emigration, and by liberals who supported the dissident movement.

Perhaps we should have been forewarned of the emotional content of the issue by the activities of Jewish extremist groups who began picketing our embassy almost daily in 1970. They set off explosions outside Soviet offices in Washington. Rifles were fired at the windows of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations in New York City and its residential compound in the suburbs, which Secretary of State Rogers publicly condemned as "a barbarous act." Hooliganism against individual Soviet citizens in the streets and stores became common. The most violent were performed by militants of the Jewish Defense League, led by Rabbi Meir Kahane, later the founder of an extremist political party in Israel and victim of an Arab assassin in the United States. He made it abundantly clear that his campaign was to be considered a "traitor to the Motherland" and was imprisoned or sent into exile. After Stalin's death the situation began to change gradually, but the government was still very reluctant to permit Soviet citizens to leave.

The irony of the situation was that our embassy and other Soviet officials in the United States were, as a rule, in favor of improving our relations and lifting the unreasonable restrictions on Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, and that was what we recommended to Moscow. But the outrages vexed Soviet diplomats emotionally and discouraged them from continuing their efforts to persuade our leadership.

Many Jewish leaders as well as officials of the administration condemned the attacks in their private conversations with us. The State Department deployed its own security service to help protect us, but we were officially urged to advise all Soviet diplomats and their families living in the Washington area to be careful, which did not make a Soviet diplomat's life easy in Washington in that period. When Gromyko was about to fly home after attending a General Assembly session, there came a call warning of an attempt on his life at the airport. His plane was moved to a far corner of the airport and he remained in the airport hangars until the alarm was lifted.

As our preparations advanced for the second summit and Brezhnev's visit, so did a vitriolic but politically sophisticated campaign to promote free emigration from the Soviet Union which was actively supported by a number of American members of Congress and led by Senator Henry (Scoop) Jackson, a conservative Democrat from the state of Washington with strong presidential ambitions and a long record as an opponent of the Soviet Union.

The opposition coalesced around a request by Nixon in the spring of 1973 for Congress to grant the Soviet Union "most favored nation" trading status, which meant that we would essentially be on the same commercial footing as America's other trading partners. Liberals wanted to make our MFN status dependent on Moscow lifting all restrictions on emigration from the Soviet Union. Conservatives were against granting MFN status simply because they were against detente as such. All this prompted a debate that blighted U.S.-Soviet relations ever after.

Let me explain the background of the notorious subject of this debate: Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. Nowadays it is difficult to believe, but during the period of Stalin's tyranny anyone who wanted to emigrate was considered a "traitor to the Motherland" and was imprisoned or sent into exile. After Stalin's death the situation began to change gradually, but the government was still very reluctant to permit Soviet citizens to leave. It was not much easier to emigrate than qualify for cosmonaut training.

I never understood why we did not allow Jews to emigrate. What harm could it have brought to the country? On the contrary, by solving this question we could have ridden ourselves of a serious and permanent source of irritation between us and the West, particularly the United States. Even the members of the Politburo under Khrushchev and Brezhnev could not provide a clear and convincing answer when asked in private to explain their views on emigration. Some were still under the influence of Stalin's view that emigrants were traitors. Others would claim that many Jews in the Soviet Union knew state secrets because of their work on military projects using science and technology or other sensitive work, or that Jewish emigrants would join noisy anti-Soviet campaigns abroad. Then there was our Middle East policy: the Arab countries were in permanent protest against Jewish emigration, which they thought would strengthen Israel by augmenting its population and skills.
Those reasons were often heard in Moscow. But the most important one was not often heard. In the closed society of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin was afraid of emigration in general (irrespective of nationality or religion) lest an escape hatch from the happy land of socialism seem to offer a degree of liberalization that might destabilize the domestic situation. So the crucial difference in the Soviet and American approaches to the issue was that while the Americans wanted to export to the Soviet Union its free humanitarian and commercial values, the Soviet government simply wanted the commercial benefits of trade, but not the political values.

Nevertheless, the Soviet government could not completely ignore the growing foreign and domestic pressure because it sought an improvement of Soviet-American relations, to be fixed by summits in Moscow and Washington. Thus the issue of Jewish emigration was cautiously discussed through the confidential channel between Kissinger and myself.

The Nixon administration understood that it was better to proceed without publicity, rightly assuming that Moscow was more likely to change its practices if not openly challenged. Indeed, in planning for the first summit in 1972, Kissinger had delivered an assurance from Nixon to the Soviet leadership that the president would not make any appeals on behalf of Jewish and Zionist organizations during his Moscow visit. Quietly though reluctantly, Moscow began to change its emigration policy. Whereas only 400 Soviet Jews had been allowed to emigrate in 1968, the number rose to nearly 35,000 in 1973.

This process was marred by the administrative decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of August 3, 1972, imposing an exit tax on emigrants, ostensibly to "refund" the state for the cost of their free education in the Soviet Union. I was both surprised and disturbed by this decree, and not only because of its petty justifications but because of the fact that it was issued so soon after the Soviet-American summit in Moscow which both sides had proclaimed a big success. I sent a telegram to the Foreign Ministry saying that the step would provoke adverse reaction in the United States and asked them to explain to me the meaning of this decision. I never received an explanation.

Later on, while in Moscow for consultation, I found out about this bizarre affair. It was our Ministry of Education that originated the idea of seeking a refund. At the moment the tax was imposed, Brezhnev and Gromyko were on vacation at the Black Sea. Mikhail Suslov, number two of the Communist Party and its chief ideologist, was left in charge in the Kremlin. He had always been reluctant to accept the new, more liberal, emigration policy and found the new tax quite a reasonable idea, so the tax went on the books. When Gromyko returned from vacation, he realized what a stupid political move it was. Gradually we convinced Brezhnev and the Politburo to annul it. But the harm had been done, and it only helped stir up the debate in the United States linking Jewish emigration to trade with the Soviet Union.

On March 15, Senator Jackson, with the support of seventy-three senators, introduced an amendment to the Nixon trade reform bill known as the Jackson-Vanik amendment for its co-sponsor, Representative Charles Vanik. The amendment barred the Soviet Union from receiving most favored nation status and trade credits until it had lifted restrictions on emigration.

The Soviet rulers gradually became alarmed by the scale of the campaign. On March 30, Brezhnev instructed me to give Nixon—at the president's own request—confidential data on Jewish emigration. It stated that 95.5 percent of applications for emigration to Israel had been authorized in 1972. It also said that from 1971 to 1973 a total of 60,000 Soviet Jews had left for Israel. In the same message Brezhnev informed Nixon that the Soviet Union had lifted the exit tax.

Both Nixon and Kissinger asked me whether they could use all this information in their discussions with Congress on the trade bill. Moscow's reply showed how much importance it attached to U.S.-Soviet relations on the eve of the second summit. It authorized Nixon to communicate Brezhnev's message to Congress as an official Soviet statement.

On April 18, Nixon briefed the congressional leaders. Senator Mike Mansfield, the majority leader, and some leading Republicans, including Hugh Scott of Illinois and George Aiken of Vermont, expressed their satisfaction with the news. Senator Jackson, however, was unconvinced. The report, he said, gave no guarantees for the future. He demanded that the Soviet Union commit itself publicly to a large and fixed number of emigres, which implied that there was an unlimited number of people eager to emigrate from the Soviet Union. He was supported by Senator Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut and some other senators who could not risk accusations of being soft on the issue of Soviet emigration.

The administration and its Soviet counterparts were still trying to work out some compromise. I thought that the threat of the Jackson-Vanik amendment helped keep the Soviet government focused on the question of Jewish emigration, but Jackson kept escalating his demands in an appeal to the Jewish constituency for his presidential aspirations. I am convinced that had it not been for him and his disruptive tactics, we could have found a way out. Nixon even instructed Kissinger to ask Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir not to incite the American Jewish community against the Soviet Union and the U.S.-Soviet emigration agreement. This had no appreciable effect.
The summit, when it took place in Washington in May 1973, left unsettled the future of trade and economic relations between the two countries. The Congress had linked them too tightly to the freedom of emigration. Nixon explained all this to Brezhnev during the summit and promised to help solve the problem, but he warned that Congress would have the last word. Brezhnev could not accept the Jackson bill because of the organized public campaign that supported it. In the eyes of the Soviet leaders, that would have been tantamount to yielding to open American interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. A lack of political courage and foresight prevented them from crossing this threshold.

Still, both sides recognized that the issue had become a sore spot in our relations. Several additional attempts were made to untie the knot through the confidential channel. The emigration statistics showed a continued increase, but this only spurred Senator Jackson to exploit the issue even more to advance his political career. He and his supporters were not satisfied with the administration's quiet diplomacy; they wanted Moscow to capitulate to their demands. Characteristically, about a week before Brezhnev's arrival for the summit, Jackson demanded that the visit be canceled. The senator needed confrontation, not agreements or detente. The Jackson-Vanik amendment continued on the statute books until after the end of the Cold War.

**Nixon Reshapes His Government**

At the start of the year Kissinger told me that, in preparation for a meeting with Brezhnev expected in May or June, Nixon proposed to conduct an intensive review of all questions through the confidential channel in February. He wanted to start preparing the texts of the joint documents so that they would be almost completely agreed even before the summit began. Once again, the State Department would play the lesser role in the preparations. Kissinger had already told me before the New Year that Nixon had decided to reshuffle the government, particularly the State Department. Rogers was to stay for about six months, and Kenneth Rush, the ambassador to West Germany and Nixon's friend and former law professor, would probably replace him. Elliot Richardson, who had earlier served as deputy secretary of state, would become secretary of defense. Kissinger explained that "it will be easier for the president and me to manage the Pentagon, because Richardson is flexible enough and knows military and political affairs." Nixon was also planning to replace Commerce Secretary Peter Peterson.

In the White House itself, the shake-up sent Alexander Haig back to the Pentagon. Haig was moving from the position of deputy national security adviser to deputy chief of staff of the army and was to be replaced by Brent Scowcroft, a forty-seven-year-old air force brigadier general who was serving as the president's senior military assistant. Kissinger observed that Scowcroft lacked Haig's political skills and experience—an opinion he later changed—so he had decided to split his deputy's duties. Scowcroft would handle military affairs while diplomatic questions would go to Helmut Sonnenfeldt, although he did not like Sonnenfeldt's "arrogance." Sonnenfeldt, like Kissinger of German origin, invariably accompanied Kissinger on his Moscow visits and so shadowed his boss's steps elsewhere that he became known as "Kissinger's Kissinger."

Kissinger also said the president told him he would remain as his principal foreign policy assistant for another four years, that is, to the end of his second term. Kissinger said he was pleased to accept it. By that time Kissinger had reached his highest point in terms of political popularity. In the opinion polls, he was the most popular person in America, followed by Billy Graham, with Nixon, already under suspicion because of Watergate, ranking third. His lifelike dummy was on display in the waxworks museum in London, and even the participants of the Miss Universe beauty pageant enthusiastically chose him as "the most outstanding world figure."

In his memoirs, Kissinger records his reluctance to move up to the position of secretary of state because he had no political constituency of his own. He writes that he had been planning to retire from his White House post after the end of the Vietnam War because his celebrity had made his position untenable as a supposedly anonymous White House adviser dependent entirely on the president's favor. He indicates that he was the reluctant choice of a president who had little alternative but to select him since the source of his power was a presidential mandate and now, weakened by Watergate, Nixon needed him in a public position to ensure the continuance of their policies.

Let me add my own observation. Kissinger told me in May in strict confidence that the president was prepared to let him decide who should replace Rogers as secretary of state: Rush or Kissinger himself. Rogers's resignation was to be announced in July after he attended the NATO Council in Brussels. Kissinger was evidently flattered that the president had left the matter to him, although it implied certain inconveniences such as the heavy burden of protocol and the regular demands of explaining himself to congressional committees.

Nixon had been prepared to offer Rogers the position of ambassador to any country or any other government position in the United States, but Kissinger thought that Rogers would rather return to the legal profession where he had earned large sums representing corporations. By August, however, Watergate was beginning to dominate Nixon's decisions, and Kissinger
said Nixon wanted Rogers as his attorney-general to organize his defense. To Nixon's annoyance, Rogers refused, and the president finally decided to get rid of him.

On August 22, Kissinger called me from San Clemente to tell me that the president had finally decided to appoint him secretary of state. The appointment would be announced that evening. Kissinger was also to continue as national security adviser, and our confidential contacts, including lunches and dinners, were to continue. Rogers would leave as of September 3.

Thus, the protracted period of speculation was over, and I was not surprised that Kissinger had emerged victorious from the behind-the-scenes rivalry. It would mean an improvement in managing Soviet-American relations, if only because it would end the confused and uncertain situation in which the White House kept the secretary of state and indeed his entire department in the dark. The agreements reached through the confidential channel would become easier to put into practice through the State Department's diplomatic staff, thus eliminating many of our earlier difficulties. I therefore welcomed Kissinger's appointment and sincerely congratulated him.

Kissinger explained how he would rearrange his schedule as secretary of state. Since his work could only be successful if he kept in close touch with the president, he would continue to begin his working day by meeting the president in the White House between 8 and 9 A.M. to discuss fundamental as well as urgent foreign policy problems. He would also continue attending the daily morning meetings of the White House staff to keep in touch with its views and with domestic issues.

He planned then to go to the State Department, remaining there from 11 A.M. until late in the evening, although he would still spend some evenings in the White House. Needless to say, he was to be present at all National Security Council meetings in the White House chaired by the president. Kissinger remained the NSC executive secretary in his capacity as the president's assistant for national security, and as such he would continue to conduct meetings with the secretary of defense and the director of the CIA. These meetings would continue to be held at the White House rather than being shifted to the State Department to emphasize White House control of foreign policy. Kissinger hoped that his appointment as secretary of state would consolidate the White House control over the huge diplomatic and national security machinery of the United States, making it more workable and reliable. This he managed to achieve.

**Brezhnev Makes Kissinger “Sign for It”**

Early in May Kissinger visited Moscow, and as usual I accompanied him.

Kissinger's talks involved not only Gromyko, but Brezhnev himself, who participated actively, especially on military and political issues. They were held at Brezhnev's favorite hunting preserve in Zavidovo, about eighty miles from Moscow, where they devoted much time to discussing the draft of an agreement on the prevention of a nuclear war, which Brezhnev believed to be of special importance.

There was an extraordinary episode, totally characteristic of Brezhnev's and, indeed, the whole Soviet leadership's attitude to Nixon and his administration. When the working draft was finally prepared, Brezhnev suggested that Kissinger initial it. But he declined, saying that he lacked the authority. At the same time he expressed confidence that the president would approve it entirely.

Brezhnev gave vent to his emotions (which I think were somewhat artificial), declaring that surely he had not spent two days with Kissinger just to find his work had ended up in noncommittal talk. The upshot was that Brezhnev finally made Kissinger take a piece of paper and write "a pledge" that the American government was ready to sign the agreement as drafted. While it had little legal force, the pledge nevertheless gave Brezhnev a sense of satisfaction. He acted as if he regarded it as a great personal diplomatic achievement and told members of the Politburo how he "forced Kissinger's hand and made him sign for it." But the whole scene was reminiscent of the famous bargaining scene in Gogol's comedy *Dead Souls* between Chichikov and Sobakevich, the two characters who did not trust each other.

When I spoke with Nixon after my return to Washington, the president told me he was rather surprised that the Soviet leadership would not trust his word as given through Kissinger. And in any case, he said, even Kissinger's written undertaking would not have helped if as president he had finally decided against it. I did my best to play down the episode, and frankly I did not much like Brezhnev's behavior myself.

Brezhnev liked to play jokes whenever he met with Kissinger and his advisers. During one break in the talks, they were chatting about their wrist-watches. Kissinger's aide Helmut Sonnenfeldt proudly showed off his Swiss watch. Brezhnev suddenly covered his watch with his hand so Sonnenfeldt could not see it and suggested a swap. Sonnenfeldt hesitated, but then changed his mind, apparently thinking that the general secretary of the Communist Party certainly would have a luxurious watch. After he accepted he discovered that Brezhnev wore a common Soviet watch, a gift from the workers of the Moscow clock-making factory. It was of good quality, but
steel rather than gold, which is what Sonnenfeldt had expected. His only comfort was the fact that he had received a souvenir watch from the leader of the Soviet Union.

The talks over, Brezhnev invited Kissinger for an automobile ride around the picturesque countryside of Zavidovo. Kissinger said he would love it. Little did he know that they were in for an adventure with Brezhnev, a reckless driver. They sped along a winding narrow road for about half an hour with the security guards in another car behind them. Traffic militiamen did not dare to stop the general secretary. Who would have? The daredevil ride was a harrowing experience. After the drive came another dashing ride on a powerful motorboat in the upper reaches of the Volga that totally shook Kissinger and temporarily took away his habitual sense of humor.

At the beginning of May Kissinger also talked to me confidentially about Watergate, evidently to show he was not involved and that it would not affect his position in the White House. On the contrary, he claimed it had consolidated his position with the dismissal of two of the president's closest aides, H. R. Haldeman and John Erlichman. Because of Watergate, Kissinger had never gotten on well with them.

Kissinger stressed that the president would not "even think of resigning" because of Watergate but, still, it was a very unpleasant affair for Nixon. At the same time Nixon believed his political opponents would play it up for some months but eventually the matter would settle down. According to Kissinger, Nixon was angry and upset that his major foreign policy achievements were ignored by his compatriots, while "a trifling matter by American standards" was being exaggerated by his adversaries.

Kissinger remarked in passing that the president had a long memory and he would certainly repay the harm done to him during the remaining three and one-half years of his presidency. He also said that the demands by opposition newspapers that he postpone his meeting with Brezhnev had no influence on the president. Quite the reverse, he was increasingly convinced that the summit should be held as scheduled and was bound to be a success. "The president just cannot let it be otherwise," Kissinger said.

It may be difficult to believe, but Moscow did not try to exploit its knowledge that Nixon badly wanted the summit to be a success for domestic reasons. It had practically no effect on our bargaining before the new summit, and Moscow did not push harder to obtain more from him. First, Moscow was not interested in creating additional difficulties for the president who had just begun to improve the Soviet-American relations. But the main reason was that in the middle of 1973 the Soviet leaders (and I should confess, our embassy in Washington as well) still did not believe that

Watergate was a political crisis of major proportions. To my knowledge, that issue was not discussed in the Politburo seriously until the beginning of 1974.

At the end of May Nixon sent Brezhnev a detailed program of his visit to the United States for his approval. He had already decided that the summit would be held at the White House, Camp David, and San Clemente in violation of all the established diplomatic norms in order to emphasize the importance of the visit. Nixon proposed to sign two principal agreements (on the prevention of nuclear war and on "fundamental principles" of SALT) on two days, to accentuate their specific importance. But then early in June our agreement on the SALT stalled. At the last moment Nixon made some categorical amendments to the text which Brezhnev had to accept, though reluctantly.

This angered Brezhnev and he declined Nixon's invitation to visit his private residence in San Clemente. He excused himself by saying that his doctors advised him against too much flying. (This was one result of the initial signs of disturbed cerebral blood circulation, but it had not gone too far and few knew about it in even in the top leadership.) On June 11, Kissinger and I conducted a thorough review of all documents to be signed during the summit and continued our elaboration of the communiqué. At the end of the meeting Kissinger told me "without beating about the bush" that Nixon was deeply hurt by Brezhnev's refusal to visit San Clemente. I was convinced that the place was a good location for informal talks, and I therefore cabled my recommendations to Moscow for Brezhnev to reconsider.

The next day Brezhnev informed Nixon about his decision "to defy his doctors' advice" and go to California. Around midnight Nixon himself telephoned and asked me to forward his thanks to Brezhnev. He had invited Brezhnev to stay in his house because he was confident that the time they would spend under the same roof would promote a closer personal relationship; he was convinced that together the two could largely determine matters of war and peace.

"That is not vanity or presumptuousness of any kind," Nixon went on, "that is a historical reality. My house in California is called Casa Pacifica, Spanish for 'House of Peace.' This is an old name, quite unpretentious, but now it acquires great symbolic importance." Nixon sometimes liked grandiose language.

All draft agreements were prepared beforehand, to be signed during Brezhnev's visit. Thus, the forthcoming talks between Nixon and Brezhnev would not involve any negotiations or the elaboration of the agreements, leaving plenty of time for a free exchange of views on a broad range of questions.
Brezhnev in America

Brezhnev arrived at Andrews Air Force Base aboard our special plane on June 18 with an entourage that included Gromyko. They were met by Secretary of State Rogers. I accompanied Brezhnev and Gromyko as we were flown by helicopter to Camp David, where they stayed the night. Brezhnev liked the rustic place (it reminded him of his hunting lodge), and he immediately shared his good impressions with some Politburo members via the specially installed radiotelephone.

The next day he flew to Washington for his meeting with President Nixon. I still remember the ceremonial reception of June 19 on the well-groomed South Lawn of the White House, with Brezhnev and the American president standing on a special platform. For Brezhnev, it seemed the moment of his highest triumph. What could be greater than his being placed on a footing equal to the American president, with the Soviet Union equal to the United States—of all powers—in its nuclear might, its missiles, and their warheads? Even the brilliant sunshine seemed to accentuate the importance of the event.

The solemn ceremony, with both countries' national anthems and a guard of honor, the leader of the Soviet Communist Party standing side by side with the American president for the whole world to see—all this was for the Soviet leadership the supreme act of recognition by the international community of their power and influence. I must confess that for all of us who accompanied Brezhnev, it was a proud moment. The irony of all this was that though they had been suspended for a week during Brezhnev's visit.

The visit resulted in two important agreements, one on the prevention of nuclear war, and the other outlining the "fundamental principles" for limitations on strategic weapons. There also were the agreements on scientific and technical cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy; cooperation in farming, transport, ocean research; and a tax treaty. At the insistence of Brezhnev, who wanted detente to sound like an irreversible policy, the communiqué formally declared the promotion of Soviet-American friendship as a permanent factor in world peace. It also included an agreement to hold regular summits; Brezhnev invited Nixon to visit the Soviet Union in 1974, and Nixon accepted.

The summit also helped to advance other issues. The month following the summit, NATO and Warsaw Treaty member states finally agreed to begin talks in Vienna on October 30 on mutual reductions of their armed forces in Europe. And thirty-five foreign ministers began preparations for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which was convened in Geneva September 18. Thus, by mutual concessions, the Soviet Union and its allies obtained a European conference they had sought, while the United States and its allies obtained negotiations on troop reductions in Central Europe.

The Soviet leadership regarded the agreement known as the Prevention of Nuclear War (the PNW agreement) as the main result of Brezhnev's visit to the United States, and so it was loudly acclaimed in the Soviet media. The American critics of the agreement, however, did not see it that way. They regarded it as a threat to NATO's basic military strategy of launching a nuclear counterstrike to defend Western Europe against conventional attack. In his memoirs, Kissinger wrote that he saw the agreement as a Soviet attempt to establish a Soviet-American condominium directed at supporting a potential Soviet attack on China. Even in their dreams, the Soviet leaders of the time never went that far.

Our main political and ideological doctrine provided for peaceful coexistence not condominium with the capitalist United States, and the Kremlin publicly and angrily denounced "fabrications concerning superpower condominium." For Moscow, the PNW agreement marked a further step in the process of detente, or as it was rightly put by the American writer Raymond Garthoff, a step toward some sort of crisis management and prevention by defusing tension before a crisis arose. But it was still only a step because the agreement was never institutionalized. As for China, the Kremlin was not so naive as to ally itself with Washington against Beijing, knowing only too well that Washington would not agree and that its sympathies lay on China's side anyway. Many years later Kissinger admitted to me that he had been wrong in basing his concepts on the inevitability of a Soviet attack against China.

In his memoirs, Kissinger recounted how during Brezhnev's visit to the United States he managed to stall Moscow's supposed gambit of a "nuclear condominium" and finally persuaded Brezhnev to accept a watered-down version of his original goals in the PNW agreement. But he ignored the fact that the original and longstanding Soviet goal was a mutual pledge not to use nuclear weapons first. So, instead of saying that the administration, and he as secretary of state, were against nonuse of nuclear weapons (which was not a very popular thing to say), he skillfully put into circulation the phrase about him and Nixon being against "nuclear condominium" with the Soviet Union. This was not exactly the same thing, to put it frankly. This should have been obvious simply from a quick examination of the history of the PNW agreement.

Starting in the 1960s, the Soviet Union in various forums repeatedly proposed a joint pledge not to use nuclear weapons first. Anxious to keep their nuclear deterrence in case of a conventional attack, the United States
and its allies repeatedly rejected the idea. Brezhnev pursued the subject at his meetings with Kissinger and his first summit with Nixon, and Nixon essentially dodged the subject, although he okayed discussion of a noncommittal draft through the Kissinger-Dobrynin channel. The Soviet side continued to press Nixon and Kissinger. But our American partners kept procrastinating, something I palpably felt with Kissinger.

This turned out to be the most difficult part of the preparations for the Washington summit. The Americans finally decided to accept an agreement but tried to shift the emphasis from nuclear weapons to the broader concept of the nonuse of force. After hard bargaining, we agreed on a compromise: the agreement did not contain a joint pledge adjuring the first use of nuclear weapons, which was what Moscow initially wanted, but it recognized our military parity and declared it unsuitable to threaten or use military force to serve political objectives. What that really did was to expand our general policy of avoiding confrontation and the risk of war, including nuclear war, by engaging in urgent consultations to defuse political tensions in times of crisis or when one loomed. In general this represented an advance in our relations. But since both sides were not yet ready to commit themselves fully to crisis consultations, the document was vague and nonbinding.

Of course, the chief disadvantage of the agreement, as well as the 1972 statement of basic principles in Soviet-American relations concluded at the previous summit, was that neither contained workable measures to put their principles into operation. It soon became clear during the Arab-Israeli war less than six months later that the idea of working together did not operate too well without mutual trust and firm commitments. Nevertheless one could not underestimate the moral and political effect of the agreement on the international atmosphere and on Soviet-American relations. In their communiqué Brezhnev and Nixon declared that the agreement marked a historic turn in bilateral relations. In a confidential summary by our Foreign Ministry for Soviet ambassadors, Brezhnev’s visit was proclaimed an important milestone in the removal of the threat of nuclear war.

Some details of the organization of Brezhnev’s visit to the United States were unique. Brezhnev himself had instructed the Soviet security service to organize his trip in such a way that he would in no way appear to the Americans inferior to the president of the United States. Sometimes this led to curious situations. First of all, there were stringent requirements for Brezhnev’s telephone service to match Nixon’s. Apart from an individual local telephone, he was connected by a special Soviet network with Soviet operators to any point in the city of Washington where members of the Soviet delegation might be. He also had a direct and instant connection with Moscow, something extra-ordinary for us at the time. The Americans sensed his mood and went as far as to permit us to install some of our intercom network devices even in the White House, in case Brezhnev should feel the need for urgent consultations by phone while visiting there. (Predictably, there were no such cases.)

Brezhnev was remarkably pleased at the signs of Soviet technical progress that accompanied his journey and began to call other members of the Soviet delegation in Washington, his wife in Moscow, and friends back home in the Moscow leadership to give them his highly favorable first impressions about America immediately on his arrival at Camp David. While in Washington he stayed opposite the White House in the principal government guest house, Blair House, which gave rise to still another request of ours: traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue, one of the capital’s principal streets, was closed off near the White House for security reasons so Brezhnev could cross on foot. It was the first closing of that central avenue in the American capital’s history.

At Camp David, Nixon gave him a Lincoln Continental of the latest model, knowing his passion for collecting foreign cars (Brezhnev had broadly hinted at this through the confidential channel in advance). Brezhnev was very pleased with the new gift and eager to try it immediately to show Nixon his driving prowess (I accompanied them to interpret). The general secretary was a good driver, but he was unfamiliar with the Lincoln and its powerful engine. I warned him about it but he was itching to start. He put his foot hard down on the gas pedal at once. The car jerked violently. Both Brezhnev and Nixon (the president was in the front seat, I was in the rear) nearly hit their heads against the windshield when Brezhnev had to hit the brake because of a sharp curve in the road. The winding roads of Camp David are clearly not suitable for auto racing, and usually only carry small, battery-driven cars. Nixon was shocked, but still managed to say tactfully, “Mr. General Secretary, you drive very well.” Brezhnev took this at face value. Among the gifts also was an eagle in Steuben glass, and Brezhnev, not fully acquainted with traditional American symbols or the famous maker of this token, wondered why Nixon had given it to him. “I don’t need it,” he said to me. “You take it.” I said that would be just fine but told him it was quite an expensive gift. How much? Thirty to fifty thousand dollars, I said. “Really?” he said in amazement. “Give it back.”

Among the most impressive events of formal protocol was the ceremony to sign the joint documents, followed by an official dinner in honor of the Soviet leader. The functions were arranged with impeccable taste and tact, especially in view of the fact that events of this particular nature were new to the White House and the Cold War was still not over. I remember the solemn moment when the master of ceremonies loudly announced Brezhnev’s entrance inviting everybody to stand up: “Ladies and gentlemen! The general
secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union." Certainly that was
the first time in history such an announcement had been heard in the White
House. Brezhnev and his associates, as well as all others present, recognized
that this was extraordinary. Little could anyone even imagine that twenty
years later the Soviet Union would no longer have any such party, which for
so long—and even then—symbolized an evil empire to many Americans.

Brezhnev gave a return dinner in Nixon's honor at the embassy. All the
food was delivered by special plane from Moscow for a lavish display of
Russian cuisine. There was Russian vodka and wines from the Caucasus, and
the dinner went off in the embassy's Golden Hall in an informal and friendly
atmosphere. There were about one hundred guests, including the president
and his wife. Kissinger, who was still unmarried at the time, brought a starlet
and his wife. Kissinger, who was still unmarried at the time, brought a starlet
lively conversation was interrupted by the security service chief, who beck-
oned me to follow him. Brezhnev noticed the signs and snapped: "You
are not necessarily to be seated
next to the most gorgeous woman at state dinners."

Brezhnev was satisfied with the dinner and after it he wanted "to see
where the ambassador and his wife live." We went up to our apartment on
the third floor. Sitting cozily and buoyed by the dinner that put him in good
humor, Brezhnev began to question us about our life in Washington. The
lively conversation was interrupted by the security service chief, who beck-
oned me to follow him. Brezhnev noticed the signs and snapped: "You
don't have to whisper into his ear. We know each other quite well. Come on,
tell us."

After a moment's hesitation the security officer said there had just been
an anonymous call saying a bomb had been planted at the embassy; he sug-
gested that Brezhnev return to the Blair House urgently. I also urged the gen-
eral secretary to play it safe.

"Well, what are you going to do?" Brezhnev asked. My wife said such
calls were rather common, and normally we would just go on with our busi-
ness because we had nowhere else to go anyway.

Brezhnev declared he "would not be panicky, either" and, despite ef-
forts to persuade him otherwise, stayed with us for another half-hour until
about midnight. All ended well, though I felt uneasy, conscious of my re-
sponsibility.

The other unusual stage of Brezhnev's visit was his trip with Nixon
aboard the president's plane to Nixon's private California residence at San
Clemente. On arrival at the local airport the telephone game was on again.
Since no official ceremony was planned, there were only a few people there,
mostly the Security Service and attending staff. But there was our secure tele-
phone on a table nearby, just in case the general secretary might happen to
need to make an urgent call to Moscow. It had been installed at Soviet insis-
tence for prestige rather than business. Brezhnev did not use it.

I should add that before leaving for home, Brezhnev magnanimously
offered to let me maintain the embassy's direct telephone link—via satel-
lite—with Moscow despite the expense of operating it. I thanked him but
declined his offer, referring to the cost of its maintenance and of the addi-
tional personnel that would be needed to service the line. Besides, I said, we
now had continuous cable communication with Moscow. But the real reason
behind my refusal was much simpler. I had already had my fill of that tele-
phone, which had been installed a week before Brezhnev's arrival. During
that whole week preceding the summit, I hardly had any sleep. Brezhnev,
Gromyko, and other leaders happily experimented with the new line to call
me from Moscow on every conceivable pretext, or without any at all, to ask
questions like, "What kind of weather are you having there in Washington?"
It did not matter to them that because of the time difference of eight hours,
their calls would arrive in Washington in the middle of the night. I came to
hate that telephone and refused to keep it. As for Brezhnev, he appreciated
what he thought was my desire to save state funds.

In San Clemente Brezhnev stayed in the same compound as the president.
We arrived there late in the day on June 22. Since it had been a long flight
from Washington, Brezhnev decided to retire early, around 6 P.M., after ex-
changing short greetings with Nixon. But two hours later he still could not
sleep. So he went out onto the patio to have some fresh air. I happened to be
there (all other members of our party had gone to their apartments to rest).
Brezhnev started telling me that he liked the Spanish style of Nixon's house.
Suddenly Nixon appeared on the patio. He was alone, so I had to act as an
interpreter. After a brief discussion of the architecture of Casa Pacifica, the
president invited Brezhnev inside and offered him tea, wine, and whiskey.
Leonid Ilitch preferred straight whiskey—he did not want "to spoil it with
water"—and before long he was tight. The conversation shifted its focus from
international issues to effusive outpourings. Brezhnev complained it
was not easy being a general secretary. He had to listen to "all kinds of silly
things" from other Politburo members whose opinions he still had to take
into account. Some of his colleagues, he volunteered, were trying to under-
mine his authority, so he had to be on his guard all the time. He gave names,
too.

Nixon was evidently uneasy listening to Brezhnev's revelations, although
he seemed interested. As for me, the scene was most awkward. In fact, it was
the most bizarre situation in all my years of diplomacy; he was especially crit-
ical of Kosygin and Podgorny. I did my best to avoid translating the most sensitive details of these behind-the-scenes Kremlin relationships, some of which were not known even to me.

I finally managed to assist the drunken Brezhnev to his room which, fortunately, was close by. Nixon lent a hand. The next day Brezhnev asked me: “Anatoly, did I talk too much yesterday?” I told him he had talked too much, but I had been careful not to translate everything. “Well done,” he said. “Damn that whiskey, I am not used to it. I did not know I could not hold that much.”

During that night there was another highly unusual event. Around 2 A.M., Brezhnev’s bodyguard, standing watch near his bedroom in the courtyard just across from Nixon’s apartment, saw the door of the president’s quarters open. His wife Pat appeared in a long nightgown, her hands stretched forward and her eyes fixed in the distance, apparently in some kind of trance. She reached our bodyguard and stopped, saying nothing. The guard attempted to turn Mrs. Nixon around, but she refused to move and stood stiffly. After some hesitation the Soviet guard, an officer of the KGB, took Mrs. Nixon in his arms and carried her back to the room from which she had just emerged; it was her bedroom. He put her back in bed, and at just that moment the Secret Service arrived. They waved, smiled, and said to our man, “Okay, okay, thanks.” They did not seem all that surprised. Our bodyguard left, wondering what had happened. Carrying the American first lady in his arms had been a real adventure to him! His chief told him to keep the story to himself. Only I was informed—just in case.

The next day, June 23, Brezhnev and Nixon had a tête-à-tête meeting at noon, devoted to China mainly on Brezhnev’s initiative. The Soviet leadership was worried that American cooperation with China would lead to sales of military equipment and wanted to prevent it. Brezhnev was vigorous, persistent, and indeed emotional in warning the Americans against concluding any military agreement with Beijing. Nixon assured him that the involvement of relations was by no means directed against the Soviet Union. But Brezhnev complained of China’s “perfidious attempts to bring about a clash between the Soviet Union and the United States.” He asked for stronger assurances. Nixon again assured him, though in such a guarded way so as to keep Moscow still guessing about the future course of the United States.

At 4 P.M. Nixon held a poolside reception in Brezhnev’s honor for some of the Hollywood and California elite, including Ronald Reagan, the future president. But Brezhnev, who liked westerns, paid more attention to the cowboy stars than to other performers present at the reception, which somewhat hurt their feelings. He especially liked Chuck Connors, who gave him a cowboy belt with two guns. (Brezhnev would proudly demonstrate the pistols to his colleagues later. Flying home to Moscow from the United States, he buckled on the gunbelt and like a boy dexterously manipulated the pistols, imitating the movie cowboys and amusing his staff.)

The reception was followed by Nixon’s dinner for a close circle, including Brezhnev, Kissinger, Rogers, Gromyko, and me. During the day Gromyko and Kissinger had held a separate and fruitless discussion on the Middle East. On the next morning we were to leave San Clemente, so after dinner Brezhnev suddenly decided to take the issue personally to Nixon. After hasty and embarrassing last-minute arrangements, the meeting took place in Nixon’s study around 11 P.M., attended by Kissinger, Gromyko, and me. It lasted for several hours, well into the night. Brezhnev, having had a nap of one hour, was in good shape. By contrast Nixon, accustomed to being in bed by then, was inactive, tired, and by the end of the meeting was propping up his head with pillows. Nor was he interested in the subject. It was clear that no Middle East settlement would be reached there. Clear to all, that is, except Brezhnev himself, who apparently believed he was defending a just cause and that his eloquence would convince Nixon. On the contrary, his perseverance created the impression that the Soviet leadership was keen on reaching a secret agreement with Nixon on the Middle East, and that put the president on his guard. Actually it was Brezhnev’s favorite Mideast theme: employing joint U.S. and Soviet diplomacy to impose a Mideast peace on Arab terms, based on total Israeli withdrawal in return for security guarantees—which were not yet spelled out. All this was definitely unacceptable to Nixon.

We parted at about 2 or 3 A.M., with the usual reference—in such cases—that the issue would be further discussed at ministerial levels. But there was still one important new element in Brezhnev’s presentation on the Middle East that Nixon should not have overlooked. From my observations, neither he nor Kissinger, evidently tired of the whole conversation, took it seriously. The point was that Brezhnev had been specifically instructed by the Politburo to draw the president’s attention to the mounting threat of a new Arab-Israeli war. The Soviet Union was finding it increasingly difficult to keep its Arab allies in check. In Moscow’s view, this should lead to closer cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union to find a solution and to prevent the war. Brezhnev did tell Nixon that in as many words, although in a very obtrusive and clumsy manner that hardly convinced the president of the need for stronger cooperation in this delicate and explosive area. Nixon and Kissinger, judging from their memoirs, thought Brezhnev was simply using the threat of war to press them for tactical purposes during the negotiations. But they were proved wrong. A new Arab-Israeli war broke out in October.

After the late-night meeting Gromyko and I saw Brezhnev to his room.
As we entered, he suddenly remembered that the Politburo had instructed him to make an agreement with Nixon to purchase several million tons of grain. Since no more meetings were scheduled and we were to leave early that morning, it was not clear how we could discuss a grain deal since Nixon was staying behind.

Gromyko immediately suggested that I go to Kissinger, who was billeted in a separate cottage to which he had already retired. Gromyko assured Brezhnev that Kissinger would find a way to get in touch with Nixon, even in the dead of night, and obtain his consent for the grain sale.

I pointed out to Gromyko that Kissinger would be already in bed and my intrusion would be rather awkward. But Brezhnev gladly supported Gromyko. He said I could say I was relaying the general secretary’s personal request, and “Henry will certainly understand us and help.” Brezhnev did not want to leave without carrying out the Politburo’s important instruction. He believed that I could find a common language with Kissinger.

Kissinger was surprised, to put it mildly, when I entered his cottage bearing Brezhnev’s belated request. He said that awakening the president at this hour was out of the question; but thinking aloud, he said he would rather not reject Brezhnev’s request out of hand. Yes, he said, they had grain for sale, and the president would most likely agree to sell it to the Soviet Union.

Kissinger suggested the following course: he would report the matter to the president in the early morning and, he hoped, obtain his approval. But if the president did not agree, Kissinger would immediately call me with some explanation for Brezhnev. Fortunately, all ended well and we did not have to explain anything to Brezhnev. In the morning Kissinger informed me that the president had sanctioned the grain deal in principle, and Brezhnev was grateful to Nixon for it.

Early in the morning of June 24, Brezhnev and Nixon said goodbye to each other on the lawn in front of the San Clemente residence. Then they took a short helicopter ride to the local Marine Corps Air Station. Both were in a good mood. Brezhnev warmly thanked Nixon for his hospitality and invited the president to visit the Soviet Union next year.

Aftermath of the Summit

Brezhnev’s visit to the United States served to advance the process of improving Soviet-American relations that was set in motion by Nixon’s first presidential visit to Moscow. I still believe that both leaders were sincerely prepared for an extensive period of stability and further cooperation. Their personal relations were consolidating. They exchanged a series of messages. Kissinger told me in mid-August that Nixon had remarked to him an ex-
dent, he said, was determined to serve out his term, continuing his activities vigorously, particularly in foreign policy. That would be the best answer to his critics. In the meantime, he was looking forward to next year's summit in Moscow.

Kissinger concluded that because of the special relations that had been developed with the Soviet leadership, Brezhnev was the only foreign leader to whom the president deemed it necessary to give such frank and confidential clarification of a purely domestic American affair. I must admit it was a curious goodwill gesture; rather than demonstrating the security of Nixon's position, it disclosed his growing awareness of domestic pressure and, simultaneously, his eagerness to reassure Brezhnev (and himself) of his determination to continue his course in Soviet-American relations. The Soviet government began to understand his serious difficulties but still believed that he would overcome them, and that the process of consolidating our relations would develop further. But the events in the Congress, courts, media, and a number of disputes in international areas were to show how ephemeral were our hopes of making detente irreversible.

VI. The October War

Moscow, Washington, and the Middle East

The October 1973 Arab-Israeli War engaged the superpowers in a competition that bordered on confrontation, but also in a collaboration that meant close day-to-day contact, mainly through the confidential channel between Moscow and Washington. The two countries found themselves deeply involved both as partners seeking the earliest possible end to the war, and as rivals supplying their traditional clients with arms. At the same time, the crisis demonstrated that tension could be localized and prevented from disrupting relations between Washington and Moscow. This was the first serious international conflict under the conditions of detente, which was strongly affected by it.

While both powers cooperated in bringing the war to an end, they sought to manipulate events to serve their own ends and to extend their own influence in the Middle East. Both shared the objective of preventing the war from engulfing them while preserving their relationship. But as it became clear later on from Kissinger's memoirs, he was at the same time prepared to use and even sacrifice this relationship to reduce and if possible eliminate Soviet influence in the Middle East under the cover of detente. He made it clear that the United States was not willing to sacrifice its geopolitical position for detente. He wrote in his memoirs that it was often forgotten that "detente defined not friendship but a strategy for a relationship between adversaries. After all, a principal purpose of our Mideast policy was to reduce the role and influence of the Soviet Union, just as the Soviets sought to reduce ours." *

American policy during the war seemed to be designed almost exclusively by Kissinger, while Nixon was preoccupied with Watergate and its ramifications. In a way, one could say it was Kissinger's war as far as the American side was concerned. Thus an important part of American diplomacy was to play the Arab-Israeli rivalry in such a way that both sides would

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