would be no problem in paying that much money. Dean claimed that after January I had begun calling him personally to "find out the status of the cover-up," and on March 21 he had told me that "to save the presidency" it would be necessary for Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and Dean himself to disclose fully their involvement in the Watergate affair. He charged that after that meeting I had met with Haldeman and Ehrlichman and then told Dean that I would not tolerate any division in the White House and warned him that he would stand alone if he went to the prosecutors.

I felt discouraged, drained, and pressured. I asked Haig whether I shouldn't resign. His answer was a robust no, and he urged me to steel myself to taking whatever time and effort would be required to listen to the tapes of the Dean meetings and to construct an unassailable defense based on them. I agreed to see what we could do in this regard, and Haig said that he would make the necessary arrangements.

A check of my daily logs showed that I had met with Dean twenty-one times and made or received thirteen phone calls from him between February 27 and April 1973. Except for the March 21 conversation I had little or no recollection of any of the rest of them. As I sat looking at this list, an uneasy feeling came over me as I wondered what we might have talked about in all those conversations.

Monday, June 4, was the first time I listened to a tape. Steve Bull brought a tape machine to my EOB office and cued the first one for me. I put on the earphones and pressed the "play" button. The reel began unwinding. Sounds drifted in and out; voices overlapped each other. Gradually, as my ears became accustomed, I could pick up more and more. I listened to conversation after conversation with Dean in February and March, all before March 21. At the end of the day I was both exhausted and relieved.

I knew that there would be problems, but I was sure that they could all be explained. I had said that I first learned about the cover-up on March 21, and the tapes showed that in the conversations prior to March 21, Dean and I had talked about Watergate, the Ervin Committee, executive privilege, and political retaliation against the Democrats strictly as political problems. Dean had told me that no one in the White House was involved in the Watergate break-in.

He had reassured me that from the White House point of view, Watergate and Segretti were not nearly so bad as they had been made to appear in the press. He had agreed with me that he himself had had nothing to do with campaign activities. And he had certainly not disclosed his own role in the cover-up to me before our meeting on March 21.

I called in Haig and Ziegler to tell them the good news. I felt the tapes proved Dean was lying. For just a moment after I had read all the newspaper stories, I was worried that maybe Dean and I had talked about a cover-up. But now that I had reviewed the tapes, I told Ziegler I felt enormously relieved. "Really, the goddamn record is not bad, is it?" I remarked almost cheerily.

The day that John Dean was scheduled to begin his testimony before the Watergate Committee, June 18, was also the day that Leonid Brezhnev was to arrive in Washington to begin the second U.S.-Soviet Summit. At the last minute Ervin said "with some degree of reluctance," as he himself said — postponed Dean's appearance for a week, until after the summit.

SUMMIT II

By early spring of 1973, the Soviets appeared to be moving full speed in pursuit of détente. Brezhnev, according to press and intelligence reports, had conducted a quiet purge of the Politburo, apparently in order to remove anti-détente recalcitrants. In February he wrote me a letter outlining his expectations for the summit, saying that he looked forward to the signing of a treaty on the nonuse of nuclear weapons; to useful discussions of the Middle East; to the completion of a further SALT agreement; to the signing of trade and economic agreements and agreements to cooperate in the areas of science, technology, health, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy; to discussion of relations between the two Germanys; and to talks concerning European security and mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe. Considerable progress had already been made in building on the agreements for cooperation in economic and other non-military areas we had reached in Moscow in 1972. The prospects for a successful summit appeared good.

But problems were beginning to develop at home, even apart from Watergate. In the year between the first and second Soviet Summits, a fusion of forces from opposite ends of the political spectrum had resulted in a curious coalition. Kissinger later described it as a rare convergence, like an eclipse of the sun. On the one side the liberals and the American Zionists had decided that now was the time to challenge the Soviet Union's highly restrictive emigration policies, particularly with respect to Soviet Jews. On the other side were the conservatives, who had traditionally opposed détente because it challenged their ideological opposition to contacts with Communist countries. My request in April 1973 for congressional authority to grant most-favored-nation trade status to the Soviet Union became the rallying point for both groups: the liberals...
wanted MFN legislation to be conditioned on eased emigration policies; the conservatives wanted MFN defeated on the principle that détente was bad by definition.

I have never had any illusions about the brutally repressive nature of Soviet society. But I knew that the more public pressure we placed on the Soviet leaders, the more intransigent they would become. I also knew that it was utterly unrealistic to think that a fundamental change in the Soviet system could be brought about because we refused to extend MFN status.

I felt that we could accomplish a great deal more on the Jewish emigration issue when we were talking with the Soviets than when we were not. As I said to one group of American Jewish leaders, "The walls of the Kremlin are very thick. If you are inside, there is a chance that they will listen to you; if you are outside you are not even going to be heard." That was the approach we adopted. Although we did not publicly challenge the Soviet contention that these questions involved Soviet internal affairs, both Kissinger and I raised them privately with Brezhnev, Gromyko, and Dobrynin. This approach brought results. In March 1973 Dobrynin informed Kissinger that the high exit tax, which the Soviets described as the repayment of state educational expenses by those who wanted to move abroad, had been removed and only a nominal fee was now being required of emigrés from the Soviet Union to Israel. He said that a similar approach would be maintained in the future. Brezhnev sent me a personal note claiming that 95.5 percent of the requests for emigration visas to Israel during 1972 had been granted. Whether or not this claim was exaggerated, the statistics are proof of undeniable success: from 1968 to 1971 only 15,000 Soviet Jews were allowed to emigrate. In 1972 alone, however, the number jumped to 31,400. In 1973, the last full year of my presidency, nearly 35,000 were permitted to leave; this figure is still the record high.

On December 11, 1973, the House of Representatives passed a trade bill that in effect prohibited MFN for the Soviet Union because of its restrictive emigration policies. I met with Dobrynin on December 26 and expressed my profound contempt for the alliance that had combined to defeat MFN, but I said that we must not let temporary setbacks, no matter how discouraging, interfere with or poison the relations between the two superpowers that still held the future of the world in their hands. In the end, the congressional action unfortunately but predictably had an effect that was exactly the opposite of what was intended: the number of Jews allowed to emigrate declined from 35,000 in 1973 to 13,200 in 1975.

Brezhnev's plane landed at Andrews Air Force Base on the afternoon of June 16. Because we had decided not to begin the summit officially until Monday, I had gone to Florida for the weekend. I called him from Key Biscayne shortly after he arrived at Camp David, where he would spend two days resting and adjusting to the time difference between Washington and Moscow. I had never heard him sound so friendly and completely uninhibited as he did on the phone that afternoon. I said that I wanted to welcome him to the United States. Even before Dobrynin, who was on an extension line to act as our interpreter, could begin the translations, Brezhnev said "thank you" three or four times in English.

I told him to get as much rest as he could because I knew from experience that it would take some time to recover from jet lag. He said that he appreciated my thoughtfulness in providing a place as private and comfortable as Camp David, and that he regretted that his wife had not been able to take the trip with him. I said that Pat and I would look forward to having her come with him during the Fourth Soviet Summit, which would take place in America in two years. At least as far as atmosphere was concerned, Summit II was off to the best possible start.

The Soviets were fully aware of Watergate, but they made little effort to conceal the fact that they could not completely understand it. Dobrynin told Kissinger that he was utterly dismayed by the way Americans were acting over the whole affair. He called it a "mess" and said that no other country would permit itself the luxury of tearing itself to pieces in public.

Dean's testimony before the Ervin Committee had been postponed until after Brezhnev's departure, but the drumbeat of Watergate leaks and accusations from him and his nameless associates, and from various anonymous Ervin Committee sources, continued. On the morning Brezhnev arrived, the Washington Post published a front-page report revealing that "sources" said I was going to abandon Ehrlichman and Haldeman in a last-ditch effort to save myself. The story was absolute fiction, but perhaps more than many others, it contributed to the impression that the Nixon White House was a viciously cynical place where I would turn on my closest aides to save myself. Our denial of this front-page fabrication was relegated to page five of the next day's edition. Archibald Cox also chose the day of Brezhnev's arrival to hold a press conference, at which, in reply to reporters' questions, he stated that he was studying whether or not he could indict me before an impeachment had taken place. Having said this, he hastened to add that, of course, such a study was only academic.

Just before eleven o'clock on Monday morning Brezhnev's car came up the curving driveway to the South Portico of the White House. In my welcoming speech I said, "The hopes of the world rest with us at this time in the meetings that we will have." His response was warm: "I and
my comrades, who have come with me, are prepared to work hard to ensure that the talks we will have with you... justify the hopes of our peoples and serve the interests of a peaceful future for all mankind.”

After the brief speeches we walked out onto the rain-soaked lawn to review the honor guard. As we came to the end of the front line of troops and were about to walk by the rear ranks, Brezhnev could no longer suppress his animation and joviality. He waved enthusiastically at the spectators, who were applauding and waving American and Soviet flags, and then strode over to them just like an American politician working the crowd at a county fair. He shook hands with several people and grinned broadly as they reached out to him until I reminded him that we had to complete the ceremony. As we walked back to the South Portico, he threw his arm around my shoulders and said, “See, we’re already making progress!”

Our first meeting in the Oval Office was private, except for Viktor Sukhodrev, who, as in 1972, acted as translator. Brezhnev began by assuring me that he spoke for the entire Politburo. I replied that, despite domestic differences, I spoke for the majority of Americans. He nodded his head vigorously.

We reviewed our general schedule and agenda for the next few days. As we talked he became more animated. Several times he grabbed my arm and squeezed it to emphasize the point he was making. I couldn’t help thinking that the last time such tactile diplomacy had been used in that room was when Lyndon Johnson wanted to make a point.

Brezhnev became very serious when explaining his views about the relationship between our two countries. He said, “We know that as far as power and influence are concerned, the only two nations in the world that really matter are the Soviet Union and the United States. Anything that we decide between us, other nations in the world will have to follow our lead, even though they may disagree with it.” It was clear, although he did not mention China, that he wanted this summit to demonstrate that the U.S.-Soviet relationship was more important than the U.S.-Chinese relationship, and that if we had to choose between the two our ties to the Soviet Union would prevail.

I replied that, while I recognized the reality of our pre-eminence as the two nuclear superpowers, we both had allies. “They are all proud people,” I said, “and we must never act in such a way that appears to ignore their interests.”

At 12:30 our private session ended, and the other participants for both sides came in. Brezhnev quoted the Russian proverb that he would invoke several times during the visit. “We say,” he remarked to me, “‘Life is always the best teacher.’ Life has led us to the conclusion that we must build a new relationship between our countries.” Then he turned to the others in the room and announced that he had already invited me to return to Russia in 1974 and that I had accepted the invitation.

I thought back to 1959, when I had sat in this same office for the first meeting between Eisenhower and Khrushchev. Khrushchev had known that he was speaking from a position of weakness and had felt that it was therefore necessary to take a very aggressive and boastful line. Since then the power balance had evened out, particularly as the gap in the decisive area of nuclear development and capability had been closed. Brezhnev could afford to speak more quietly. In 1973 the United States overall still held the stronger hand, but Brezhnev could laugh and clown and vary his stern moods with warmth, based on the confidence that comes from holding very good cards.

That night there was a state dinner in his honor at the White House. As Brezhnev and I greeted the guests in a receiving line in the Blue Room, he was clearly impressed and somewhat surprised by the broad cross section of political, business, and labor leaders, many of whom opposed each other politically but who had gathered socially under the President’s roof to meet the Soviet leader. I was reminded again of how isolated the Russians still are by history and geography, as well as by their communist ideology. Several times Brezhnev asked me, “Do they all support the new Soviet-American initiatives?” In my toast I said, “Not only in this room but across this country, regardless of whatever the organization may be, the overwhelming number of Americans support the objective of Soviet-American friendship.”

The first talks with Brezhnev held few surprises. He expressed his disappointment that we had not been able to grant MFN status, but he understood that the fault lay beyond my control in Congress. The Soviets were not yet ready to have limitations imposed on their own multiple-warhead missile development, so he remained adamant against expanding the SALT agreements at this summit. He did, however, reluctantly acquiesce in my insistence that we set the end of 1974 instead of 1975 as the deadline for reaching a permanent SALT accord.

At public functions Brezhnev’s demeanor remained ebullient. He obviously enjoyed the attention he was receiving, and, like a skilled actor or a born politician, he knew how to hold center stage. At one signing ceremony, he toasted the event so vigorously that he spilled champagne on his suit and hid his face behind a handkerchief in an exaggerated display of embarrassment. At another signing ceremony he initiated an elaborate pantomime of pretending to race me to see who could finish signing the various copies first.

On Tuesday night we went for a sail aboard the Sequoia and then
boarded helicopters and flew to Camp David to continue our discussions there. I presented him with a windbreaker bearing the Seal of the President with “Camp David” beneath it on one side and “Leonid I. Brezhnev” on the other. He was delighted and wore it most of the time we were there, including during our photo session with the press. I also presented him with an official gift commemorating his American visit: a dark blue Lincoln Continental donated by the manufacturer. It had black velour upholstery and “Special Good Wishes—Greetings” engraved on the dashboard. Brezhnev, a collector of luxury cars, did not attempt to conceal his delight. He insisted upon trying it out immediately. He got behind the wheel and enthusiastically motioned me into the passenger’s seat. The head of my Secret Service detail went pale as I climbed in and we took off down one of the narrow roads that run around the perimeter of Camp David. Brezhnev was used to unobstructed driving in the center lane in Moscow, and I could only imagine what would happen if a Secret Service or Navy jeep had suddenly turned a corner onto that one-lane road.

At one point there is a very steep slope with a sign at the top reading, “Slow, dangerous curve.” Even driving a golf cart down it, I had to use the brakes in order to avoid going off the road at the sharp turn at the bottom. Brezhnev was driving more than fifty miles an hour as we approached the slope. I reached over and said, “Slow down, slow down,” but he paid no attention. When we reached the bottom, there was a squeal of rubber as he slammed on the brakes and made the turn. After our drive he said to me, “This is a very fine automobile. It holds the road very well.”

“You are an excellent driver,” I replied. “I would never have been able to make that turn at the speed at which we were traveling.”

Diplomacy is not always an easy art.

Our meetings at Camp David included long sessions on SALT, European security, and the mutual and balanced force reduction talks concerning the comparative military strengths of the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries.

The most difficult and significant subject we negotiated at Summit II related to the proposed Agreement for the Prevention of Nuclear War. In our contacts before the summit, Brezhnev had strongly urged that we agree to a treaty on the nonuse of nuclear weapons. But Kissinger and I recognized that the practical effect of such a treaty would be to prevent, or at least to inhibit, us from using nuclear weapons in defense of our allies or of our own vital interests. In fact, we felt that a major reason for Brezhnev’s interest in a nonuse treaty might be his suspicion that we were about to conclude a military agreement with Peking. The Soviets felt that a renunciation of the use of nuclear weapons would greatly undercut our usefulness to the Chinese in the event of a Sino-Soviet war. The Soviet fears were unfounded as far as our relations with Peking were concerned. But a treaty of the kind they wanted would have wreaked havoc among our NATO allies in Europe and with countries like Israel and Japan that depended on our nuclear protection against the threat of Soviet attack.

In May Kissinger had worked out a formula that went part way in meeting the Soviet proposals without undercutting our allies and other nations that would look to us for assistance if they were subjected to a Soviet attack. Rather than a treaty renouncing nuclear weapons in the event of war, Kissinger proposed that we should both renounce the use of force not only between us but between each of us and third countries, and agree to consult with each other when the danger of the use of nuclear weapons seemed imminent. I knew that Brezhnev would not be completely satisfied with this formula because it did not preclude the further development of our relations with Peking. But it was better than nothing for his purposes, and he agreed to accept it. We signed the agreement on Friday, June 22, in a formal ceremony in the East Room of the White House.

Later that afternoon we flew to California. As we passed over the Grand Canyon en route, Air Force One made a low sweep so that Brezhnev could see the spectacular play of light and shadow on the canyon walls. “I’ve seen many pictures of this in newsreels and in cowboy movies,” Brezhnev said.

“Yes,” I replied, “John Wayne.”

Suddenly he jumped back from the window, hunched his shoulders, put his hands to his hips, and drew imaginary six-shooters from imaginary holsters.

On the short helicopter ride from El Toro to San Clemente, I had Brezhnev sit by the window so that he could get a good view of the freeway network and the suburban landscape beneath us. I could sense that he was impressed, particularly by the number of cars on the roads and by the large number of private houses. I told him that some of the beachfront houses were owned by wealthy people, but most of the others belonged to people who worked in factories and offices and were typical of what he would see if he had the time to travel over other parts of the country.

It was a beautiful summer evening in San Clemente, so I took Brezhnev for a ride in my golf cart. We had suggested that he stay at the commandant’s large house at nearby Camp Pendleton Marine Base, but he insisted on staying with us. I think that he wanted to do so in order to emphasize our personal relationship. Although our house in San Clemente is very beautiful, it is very small by the standards of Soviet leaders, who are used to the dachas and villas of Czarist nobles, and it is not at all equipped to accommodate state visitors. The only extra bedrooms were Julie’s and
Tricia’s. Because Tricia had recently redecorated hers, we put Brezhnev there. The room is only about ten by fifteen feet, and Tricia had chosen wallpaper with a large floral design in soft lavender and blue. It was amusing to picture a bear of a man like Brezhnev ensconced amid such feminine decor.

During our talks in Washington and at Camp David, Brezhnev had been very restrained on the subject of China. In a meeting in my San Clemente office on Saturday afternoon, however, he spoke about China for several minutes with only thinly veiled concern. He was apparently still worried that we were contemplating some secret military arrangement, possibly a mutual defense treaty, with the Chinese.

I assured him that, while we would continue our policy of communication with China, we would never make any arrangement with either China or Japan that was inconsistent with the spirit of the Agreement for the Prevention of Nuclear War that we had just signed in Washington. I knew that this was not what he had been getting at, but I could not be in the position of agreeing to establish a reporting relationship with him on our dealings with the Chinese.

I told him that I really did not believe that his concern about the Chinese was justified. He asked me why, and I said that it was not a judgment based on any of the conversations I had had with the Chinese leaders but on the realities of military power. I expressed my opinion that it would be at least twenty years before the Chinese would acquire a sufficient nuclear capability to risk an aggressive action against the Soviet Union or any other major nuclear power.

Brezhnev said that he disagreed with me on this question. “How long do you think it will be until China becomes a major nuclear country?” I asked him.

He held up his two hands with fingers outspread, and at first it struck me he was making some kind of gesture of surrender, but then he stiffened his fingers and said, “Ten, in ten years, they will have weapons equal to what we have now. We will be further advanced by then, but we must bring home to them that this cannot go on. In 1963, during our Party Congress, I remember how Mao said: ‘Let 400 million Chinese die; 300 million will be left.’ Such is the psychology of this man.” Brezhnev gave the impression that he did not think that the Chinese policies would change, even after Mao’s death; he was certain that the entire Chinese leadership was instinctively aggressive.

I turned the conversation to Cambodia, a subject I had already raised several times during our meetings. I pointed out that the renewed North Vietnamese activity there was a major threat to world peace. “If that continues,” I said, “the reaction of many people in this country will be that Soviet arms made it possible.” Brezhnev became highly agitated and strongly denied that any new Soviet military equipment had been sent to Indochina. He said that the Soviet Union was 100 percent for a speedy termination of the war in Cambodia and Laos, and he promised to speak in strong terms to the North Vietnamese. As far as the appearance of new weapons in the area was concerned, Brezhnev said he thought the Chinese might be responsible, not only for the weapons themselves, but for spreading stories that they were being sent by the Soviets.

At the end of the meeting Brezhnev urged as diplomatically as his obviously strong feelings allowed that we not enter into any military agreements with China. He said that he had refrained from raising the question in 1972, but now he was worried about the future. He asserted that the Soviets had no intention of attacking China. But if China had a military agreement with the United States, he said, “that would confuse the issue.”

We adjourned from the ideological rigors of the Sino-Soviet split to a poolside cocktail party. The guest list read like a Hollywood Who’s Who, and we had a receiving line so that Brezhnev would have a chance to meet everyone. While a strolling mariachi band filled the twilight with gay music, Brezhnev greeted each guest warmly and in several cases showed a familiarity with old movies that indicated either that he had been very well briefed or that he had been spending time in the private screening rooms in the Kremlin.

In my remarks I noted that there were many cowboy and movie stars among the guests, but I reassured Brezhnev that they had checked their pistols and holsters at the door. In response he made a very gracious speech: “I am here in the home of President and Mrs. Nixon, and I feel happy.”

After the reception we had a small dinner for him. Our dining room seats only ten people, and we made the dinner deliberately informal so that he could feel at home. In my toast I remarked that he had told me how he usually ate very lightly at the big state dinners, and went home afterward to have a late dinner with his wife, an excellent cook. I said that I considered this private dinner in our home to be even more meaningful than the formal and official dinners we were both so accustomed to attending. I pointed out that he was the first foreign visitor who had ever stayed in our house with us, that he was sleeping in Tricia’s room, and that Dobrynin and Gromyko were sharing the small guest cottage that David and Julie stayed in when they visited us together.

“As you can see, Mr. Chairman,” I said, “this is not a large house, but it is our home. On such an occasion our thoughts turn away from the affairs of state to our families and loved ones wherever they may be. I want our children to grow up in a world of peace, just as I am sure you want your children and grandchildren to grow up in a world of peace.
What the meetings that you and I have had last year and this year have done is contribute to that goal. I only hope that Russians and Americans in future generations may meet as we are meeting in our homes as friends because of our personal affection for each other, and not just as officials meeting because of the necessity of settling differences that may exist between our two countries. Therefore I propose this toast of course to your health, and that of our other guests, but even more to Mrs. Brezhnev, to your children and our children and all the children of the world who, we trust, will have a happier and more peaceful future because of what we have done.”

As my toast was translated, Brezhnev’s eyes filled with tears. He impulsively got out of his chair and walked toward me. I rose and walked toward him. He threw his arms around me with a real bear hug and then proposed an eloquent toast to Pat and our children and all the children in the world.

After dinner he asked the other guests to excuse us for a moment. Then he took Pat and me aside and said, “We have already exchanged official gifts, but I have brought something with me which is for you and Mrs. Nixon alone.” He gave Pat a scarf that had been handwoven by artisans in his home village. “It is a modest gift,” he said, “but every stitch in this piece of fabric represents the affection and friendship which all the people of the Soviet Union have for the people of the United States and which Mrs. Brezhnev and I have for you and President Nixon.” Tears again came to his eyes as he spoke.

After this rather emotional dinner, Brezhnev said that he was tired because of the three-hour time change from Washington, and he planned to go to bed early. I walked with him to the door of Tricia’s room and we said good night there. I decided to have an early night myself, and I was reading in bed in my pajamas around 10:30 when there was a knock at my door. It was a Secret Service agent with a message from Kissinger: the Russians wanted to talk.

I asked Manolo to light a fire in my upstairs study, and I had just finished dressing when Kissinger came in.

“What is this all about?” I asked.

“He says he wants to talk,” he replied.

“Is he restless or is this a ploy of some kind?” I asked.

“Who ever knows with them?” Kissinger answered with a shrug.

We went to the study, where Brezhnev, Dobrynin, and Gromyko soon joined us.

“I could not sleep, Mr. President,” Brezhnev said with a broad smile.

“It will give us a good opportunity to talk without any distractions,” I replied as I settled into my easy chair.

For the next three hours we had a session that in emotional intensity almost rivaled the one on Vietnam at the dacha during Summit I. This time the subject was the Middle East, with Brezhnev trying to browbeat me into imposing on Israel a settlement based on Arab terms. He kept hammering at what he described as the need for the two of us to agree, even if only privately, on a set of “principles” to govern a Middle East settlement. As examples of such principles, he cited the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the occupied territories, the recognition of national boundaries, the free passage of ships through the Suez Canal, and international guarantees of the settlement.

I pointed out that there was no way that I could agree to any such “principles” without prejudicing Israel’s rights. I insisted that the important thing was to get talks started between the Arabs and the Israelis, and I argued that if we laid down controversial principles beforehand, both parties would refuse to talk—in which case the principles would have defeated their purpose.

Brezhnev was blunt and adamant. He said that without at least an informal agreement on such principles he would be leaving this summit empty-handed. He even hinted that without such an agreement on principles he could not guarantee that war would not resume.

At one point he made a show of looking at his watch and furrowing his brow. “Perhaps I am tiring you out,” he said. “But we must reach an understanding.”

As firmly as he kept demanding that we agree on such principles—in effect, that we jointly impose a settlement that would heavily favor the Arabs—I refused, reiterating that the important thing was to get talks started between the parties themselves.

This testy midnight session was a reminder of the unchanging and unrelenting Communist motivations beneath the diplomatic veneer of détente. Brezhnev was aware of the slow but steady progress we had been making in reopening the lines of communication between Washington and the Arab capitals; and he was also aware that if America was able to contribute toward a peaceful settlement of Arab-Israeli differences, we would be striking a serious blow to the Soviet presence and prestige in the Middle East. From his point of view, therefore, his use of shock tactics at the ostensibly impromptu meeting in my study in San Clemente was a calculated risk. Brezhnev could not seriously have expected me to rise to the meager bait he held out in return for what would amount to our abandoning Israel. Whether he already had a commitment to the Arabs to support an attack against Israel is not clear, but I am confident that the firmness I showed that night reinforced the seriousness of the message I conveyed to the Soviets when I ordered a military alert four months later during the Yom Kippur War.

In the joint communiqué Brezhnev and I signed the next morning there was no effort to use diplomatic language to conceal that we had
not been able to reach any common ground for our differing views on this difficult subject. The short section on the Middle East stated, "Each of the parties set forth its position on this problem."

Brezhnev and I made our parting remarks in front of microphones in the flower garden next to the house. He said that he would see me next time in Moscow. At the end he said "goodbye" in English.

After Brezhnev left, I tried to put Summit II in perspective. It was too soon after the 1972 SALT agreements for another major breakthrough in that area, but I did make it clear at every opportunity that 1974 would be the year of decision, when we would have to make progress in ironing out our differences, particularly on offensive weapons. I knew that the Soviets were moving much faster than we were in this area. Unless we got some agreement soon, we might face a situation in which we would be weaker than the Soviets in the eyes of our allies, our friends, and the neutral countries. Therefore, in addition to pinning Brezhnev down to a new agreement by the end of 1974, I specified that we would be talking about reductions and not just limitations of nuclear weapons.

There were several important agreements signed at Summit II covering specific areas: transportation, agriculture, oceanic studies, taxation, commercial aviation, the peaceful uses of atomic energy, and trade. These continued the process that we had begun in 1972 of building an interlocking web of relationships to increase the Soviets' stake in stability and cooperation.

This summit also gave me an opportunity to get to know Brezhnev better and to try to take his measure as a leader and as a man. I had spent forty-two hours with him in 1972, and now thirty-five hours with him in 1973. However superficial this kind of personal contact may be, it can still provide important insights.

I found Brezhnev more interesting and impressive than I had during our first meeting. Away from the constraints of the Kremlin he was able to indulge the more human and political sides of his personality. At one of the signing ceremonies, when his antics made him the center of attention, I jokingly said, "He's the best politician in this room!" He seemed to accept my statement as the highest possible praise.

His conduct and humor were almost impish at many of his public appearances. Whenever possible, I acted as his straight man on these occasions, but it was sometimes difficult for me to balance politeness against dignity.

Brezhnev showed the typically Russian combination of great discipline at times with total lack of it at others. An amusing symbol of this inconsistency was his fancy new cigarette case with a built-in timer that automatically rationed out one cigarette per hour. This was the way he was going to cut down on his chain-smoking. As each hour began, he would ceremoniously remove the allotted cigarette and close the box. Then, a few minutes later, he would reach into his jacket and take another cigarette from the ordinary pack that he also carried. Thus he was able to continue his habit of chain-smoking until the timer went off and he could take another virtuous cigarette from the box.

At Summit I, I could not help making mental comparisons between Brezhnev and Khrushchev. During Summit II, however, I had a chance to observe and analyze the differences between them in more depth and detail. They were alike in the sense that they were both tough, hard, and realistic leaders. Both interlarded their conversation with anecdotes. Khrushchev was often quite vulgar; Brezhnev, however, was just earthy. Whereas Khrushchev had been crass and bustling, Brezhnev was expansive and more courteous. Both had a good sense of humor, but Khrushchev more often seemed to be using his at the expense of others around him. Khrushchev seemed to be quicker in his mental reflexes. In discussions, Brezhnev was hard-hitting, incisive, and always very deliberate, whereas Khrushchev had tended to be more explosive and more impulsive. Both men had tempers, and both were emotional. I was struck by the simple look of pride on Brezhnev's face as he told me that he was about to become a great-grandfather, and that we now had still another generation for which to guarantee peace.

Despite the shortness of Brezhnev's visit, I felt that he had seen a diversity of American life for which no briefing books and studies could possibly have prepared him. I know that he returned home with a far better understanding of America and Americans than he had before he came.

On June 25, the day Brezhnev left Washington, the House of Representatives agreed to a Senate bill immediately cutting off funds for U.S. bombing actions in Cambodia. The effect of this bill was to deny me the means to enforce the Vietnam peace agreement. We were faced with having to abandon our support of the Cambodians who were trying to hold back the Communist Khmer Rouge, who were being supplied and supported by the North Vietnamese in violation of the peace agreement. The Cambodians were completely and justifiably bewildered; they could not understand why we were suddenly deserting them—especially when the military tide seemed to be turning in their favor.

Congress, however, was not prepared to hear any arguments and was determined to go forward despite the consequences. This congressional insensitivity had been dramatically symbolized a few weeks earlier as Kissinger was preparing to leave for a meeting with Le Duc Tho over violations of the cease-fire agreement. We had pleaded with Congress
not to send Kissinger to Paris with no negotiating leverage, but Mike Mansfield's response was typical: he offered his "sympathies" but nothing more. In short order, two separate Senate committees voted to cut off funds for combat activities.

The cutoff bill passed on June 25. I vetoed it, and in my veto statement I said, "After more than ten arduous years of suffering and sacrifice... it would be nothing short of tragic if this great accomplishment, bought with the blood of so many Asians and Americans, were to be undone now by congressional action." The House of Representatives sustained my veto the same day, June 27, but it seemed clear that another cutoff bill would be proposed and that I could not win these battles forever. Therefore, we agreed to a compromise that set August 15, 1973, as the date for the termination of U.S. bombing in Cambodia and required congressional approval for the funding of U.S. military action in any part of Indochina. At least this gave us more time, but the invitation to aggression represented in any cutoff date remained unchanged.

I was determined that the historical record would mark Congress's responsibility for this reckless act, and on August 3, shortly before the scheduled mandatory cutoff, I wrote to House Speaker Carl Albert and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield:

This abandonment of a friend will have a profound impact in other countries, such as Thailand, which have relied on the constancy and determination of the United States, and I want the Congress to be fully aware of the consequences of its action... In particular, I want the brave and beleaguered Cambodian people to know that the end to the bombing in Cambodia does not signal an abdication of America's determination to work for a lasting peace in Indochina...

I can only hope that the North Vietnamese will not draw the erroneous conclusion from this congressional action that they are free to launch a military offensive in other areas in Indochina. North Vietnam would be making a very dangerous error if it mistook the cessation of bombing in Cambodia for an invitation to fresh aggression or further violations of the Paris agreements. The American people would respond to such aggression with appropriate action.

I knew that since Congress had removed the possibility of military action I had only words with which to threaten. The Communists knew it too. During this period Kissinger held one of his regular luncheon meetings with Dobrynin. When Kissinger raised the question of the Communist violations of the cease-fire in Cambodia, the Soviet ambassador scornfully asked what we had expected, now that we had no negotiating leverage because of the bombing cutoff imposed by Congress. Kissinger tried to be as menacing as he could, even though he knew that Dobrynin was right.

"There should be no illusion that we will forget who put us in this uncomfortable position," he said.

"In that case," Dobrynin replied, "you should go after Senator Fulbright, not us."

For more than two years after the peace agreement the South Vietnamese had held their own against the Communists. This proved the will and mettle of the South Vietnamese people and their desire to live in freedom. It also proved that Vietnamization had succeeded. When Congress reneged on our obligations under the agreements, the Communists predictably rushed in to fill the gap. The congressional bombing cutoff, coupled with the limitation placed on the President by the War Powers Resolution in November 1973, set off a string of events that led to the Communist takeover in Cambodia and, on April 30, 1975, the North Vietnamese conquest of South Vietnam.

Congress denied first to me, and then to President Ford, the means to enforce the Paris agreement at a time when the North Vietnamese were openly violating it. Even more devastating and inexcusable, in 1974 Congress began cutting back on military aid for South Vietnam at a time when the Soviets were increasing their aid to North Vietnam. As a result, when the North Vietnamese launched their all-out invasion of the South in the spring of 1975, they had an advantage in arms, and the threat of American action to enforce the agreement was totally removed. A year after the collapse of South Vietnam, the field commander in charge of Hanoi's final offensive cited the cutback in American aid as a major factor in North Vietnam's victory. He remarked that Thieu "was then forced to fight a poor man's war," with his firepower reduced by 60 percent and his mobility reduced by half because of lack of aircraft, vehicles, and fuel.

The war and the peace in Indochina that America had won at such cost over twelve years of sacrifice and fighting were lost within a matter of months once Congress refused to fulfill our obligations. And it is Congress that must bear the responsibility for the tragic results. Hundreds of thousands of anti-Communist South Vietnamese and Cambodians have been murdered or starved to death by their conquerors, and the bloodbath continues.

Congress's tragic and irresponsible action, which fatally undermined the peace we had won in Indochina, was buried amid the media's preoccupation with John Dean's testimony before the Ervin Committee. On Monday, June 25, when Dean took the stand, all over the country—even in the compound in San Clemente—the hypnotic monotone of his voice drew people to their television sets. The three television networks gave these sessions all-day gavel-to-gavel coverage.