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**Record of Conversation between Soviet Foreign
Minister Gromyko and President Carter**

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RECORD OF THE MAIN CONTENT OF
A. A. GROMYKO'S CONVERSATION WITH
THE US PRESIDENT J. CARTER

23 September 1977, Washington

J. CARTER. I am very happy to greet you here in the White House. It is an honor to meet you.

A.A. GROMYKO. I am very happy to meet you, Mr. President, and to discuss the questions which are of interest to both sides.

I want to use this opportunity to tell you that L.I. Brezhnev and the Soviet leadership send their greetings and best wishes to you.

J. CARTER. Thank you and upon your return home please give my warmest and most sincere regards and best wishes to L.I. Brezhnev.

At this meeting I would like to set forth in a general form my personal views on the questions of mutual relations between the USA and the Soviet Union. Then, you, if you like, could respond to my general statements, and after that we could discuss some concrete questions in more detail.

A.A. GROMYKO. I agree with such a procedure of our conversation.

J. CARTER. I would like to say right away that as President I attach special significance to good relations with the Soviet Union. I believe that friendly relations and close cooperation between the USA and the Soviet Union are of utmost importance and I will do everything necessary in order to guarantee the steady development of good mutual relations between our two countries.

Certainly, because of the differences between our social systems there will inevitably be competition between our countries. I do not think, however, that this is an unhealthy situation and I believe that we can conduct this competition to our mutual benefit in the spirit of respect for each other.

Like the Soviet Union, our country will support its own defenses on the high level necessary to guarantee the preservation of peace. I am sure that this will not prevent us from developing our mutual relations.

The USA has a highly developed technology. We have powerful economic potential, produce many food items, conduct large scale trade with other countries.

The Soviet Union has its own strong qualities and it too has an ability to offer many benefits to the international community.

Both of our countries still do not use in full the potential for the development of mutual trade, although we have some trade links. We successfully cooperate in a number of science-technical areas such as energy industry. These links and cooperation should be developed further.

We have different approaches to the question of human rights. And I know that some of our statements on this question provoked L.I. Brezhnev's displeasure. However, adhering to our position on this question, we do not want to interfere in the domestic

affairs of any state or to put you in an awkward position. It is necessary, apparently, to recognize that we see differently these problems and that the human rights problem deeply troubles our people. Above all, the human rights problem in our hemisphere concerns us. But some facts in the Soviet Union also give rise to our concern, such as the imprisonment of some Soviet Jews, for instance [dissident Anatoly] Shcharansky.

You know, that our Congress, even before my coming to the White House, linked the development of trade with the Soviet Union with the problem of the Jewish emigration from the USSR. I would like with your assistance to achieve some progress in overcoming of limitations established by the Congress in order to ameliorate this source of tension and misunderstanding.

Next month the question of human rights among others will be discussed at the Conference [on Security and Cooperation in Europe] in Belgrade. We approach this Conference in a constructive way and we will maintain constant consultations in Belgrade with the Soviet representative. We already consulted on the questions related to the Conference with our allies and we do not want this Conference to be an obstacle in our relations with the Soviet Union. But it is also true that it will be necessary to discuss all aspects of the Helsinki Agreement in Belgrade in order to verify how they are being observed. In other words, my approach to the Belgrade Conference is constructive and I do not want it to be conducted in the spirit of controversy.

The USA is actively involved in various international problems which we would like to solve in the conditions of cooperation with the Soviet Union. We, in particular, are trying to resolve the South African problems. We, like you, are very concerned about the situation that has developed there. We are worrying not only about the manifestation of racism in this part of the globe, but, like you, about the intention of the South African Republic to create its own nuclear weapon.

We would like to resolve the problems of Namibia and Zimbabwe. Together with Great Britain we put forth a concrete plan of solving the problem of Rhodesia. I am glad that in the UN the Soviet Union takes a constructive position on this question. I hope that in case of disagreement with our approach to the problems of the South of Africa we could privately discuss these problems via our ambassadors in Moscow or Washington so that we could have a common approach in the public arena. We do not have any specific interest in that a specific government would come to power in this region. This question should be decided by the people themselves. And we do not want to sell weapons to the countries of this region.

Angola, with the presence of several thousand Cuban troops there, creates a problem for us. I think it would have been useful if you, or we together, had convinced Cubans to withdraw their troops from Angola, although I understand that we have a difference of opinions on this question.

We also are interested in achieving a settlement in the Middle East. Vance reported to me that judging from his conversation with you, the Soviet position on this question is close to ours. In the past the Soviet Union was close to the Arab states and the USA was close, mainly, to Israel. But even today we are interested in the preservation of peace in the Middle East, in guaranteeing the independence of Israel by peaceful methods. Over the last several years we won the respect and trust of a number of Arab countries. We are trying to conduct a just and evenhanded policy in this region and we hope that together with you we will be able to further a peaceful settlement. Sometimes the Soviet Union's approach to the problems of the Middle East, in our view, was not constructive enough. I only state the fact, however. I am not complaining.

We intend to keep you informed on the development of the situation in the Middle East, on the position of those countries with whom we have regular contact. And I hope that you too will keep us informed, in particular about the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] position.

Another region that worries us is Korea. We hope that the South and North Korea will live in peace with each other. The USA intends to withdraw its troops from the South Korea in a 4-5 year period. However, we have to do something so that South Korea will be able to provide for its own defence.

The introduction by North Korea of the 50-mile zone of the sea borders concerns us. We hope that the Soviet Union will be able to persuade the North Korea to exercise the required restraint in order to prevent unnecessary aggravation in this region.

A few words about relations between the USA and China. We are striving to normalize our relations with China not for the purpose of creating a kind of alliance with it against the Soviet Union but for strengthening peace, developing trade and other relations with that country. We hope that the problem of mutual relations between the PRC [People's Republic of China] and Taiwan will be resolved by peaceful means. But we do not want to abrogate our obligation to guarantee the peaceful life of Taiwan.

In the past few years we witnessed the improvement of the Soviet Union's relations with some Western European countries which are our allies. We too would like to improve our relations with the Warsaw Pact nations. Our alliance with our friends in Western Europe is solid, like your alliance with your friends. And we hope that this situation will last.

We conduct the negotiations with you on a number of questions of arms limitation. We would like to reach an agreement on demilitarization of the Indian ocean in the future. We also are counting on an agreement on a ban on chemical weapons. We would like to reach an agreement on advance notification of missile launch tests in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings. We hope that these and other negotiations which we conduct with you will be successful.

We hope to achieve an agreement on banning hostile actions against artificial satellites. We know about the Soviet program of the creation of the means intended for fighting the satellites of other countries. We also could develop such a program, but we would like to ban such actions. Both of us take similar positions on the question of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and we together live through disappointments when we witness attempts to violate this principle. Both our countries speak in favor of stricter limitations in regard to proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We worry about sales of arms to other countries. In the past the USA, unfortunately, have been selling too much arms, like the Soviet Union, by the way.

I hope that in the future we will not be doing this. We still supply the arms to some countries in accordance with our past contracts, however, in the future we intend to exercise more restraint in this regard. We hope that the Western European countries and the Soviet Union will take the same position as well.

We would like to conclude a treaty on a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests. We would like to achieve a termination of all nuclear tests on the basis of signing, first, an agreement with the Soviet Union and England in the hope that it will impel France and China to join such an agreement. We think it is important to include in such a ban also so-called peaceful nuclear explosions, since it is difficult to make a distinction

between an explosion for military purposes and for peaceful ones. In any case, the ability to conduct peaceful explosions gives the countries who conduct them the ability to use the nuclear energy also for military purposes.

Now a few words of a general character in regard to a conclusion of the new agreement on the limitation of strategic arms. I think we are very close of reaching an agreement. However, some new circumstances emerged which differ from the situation that existed during the meeting [between Brezhnev and U.S. President Gerald R. Ford in December 1974] in Vladivostok. For us, the measures taken by the Soviet Union regarding the equipping of heavy missiles with MIRV [Multiple, Independently-targeted Re-entry Vehicles--ed.] was unexpected and at the same time troubling. We did not expect that the Soviet heavy missiles SS-18 would be equipped with MIRV at such a quick pace. But this strengthens the ability of the Soviet Union to launch a first strike and it threatens the survivability of our missile silos. You, on the other hand, express concern in regard to American cruise missiles which were not mentioned in Vladivostok. However, the cruise missiles are not capable of a first strike because of their small velocity and also because they can be easily identified during their flight.

I talked with former President Ford and former Secretary of State [Henry A. Kissinger] in detail and thoroughly studied the reports on the negotiations in Vladivostok and I am convinced that the representatives of the USA were talking there only about ballistic missiles, not the cruise ones.

I understand that L.I. Brezhnev does not agree with such an interpretation of the Vladivostok negotiations. If so, one has to recognize the disagreements between us on this question, the disagreements in interpretations.

Secretary of State Vance told me about your conversation with him on these matters yesterday and I intend to give you an account of our concrete proposals a little bit later.

So, I set forth my views on the questions of developing the relations with the Soviet Union and I would like to emphasize once again the great importance that I attach to our mutual relations with the Soviet Union. I would like to assure you that personally as well as as President of the

USA that I will sincerely strive to overcome all existing disagreements between us. I hope that in the course of a few months we will be able to achieve such progress in our mutual relations, which would justify a meeting between myself and L.I. Brezhnev. I would very much like him to visit the USA where we would be able to discuss with him for two-three days here, in Washington, or, even better, in Camp David, all the questions which interest both of us.

Before that, however, I would like us together to have made such progress in solving the problems of particular importance to us, that would demonstrate to the whole world our mutual aspiration consistently to improve our relations. I spoke about it publicly and I use this opportunity to express my appreciation to L.I. Brezhnev for his public reaction to my speech in Charleston.

The American people sincerely strives for cooperation and friendship with the Soviet Union. I hope that I, as the political leader of our country, and L.I. Brezhnev, as the political leader of the Soviet Union, will not create obstacles on the path which our peoples so sincerely strive to follow. And I hope that our meeting today will be useful and constructive in this respect.

A.A. GROMYKO. I attentively listened to your statement in which a whole specter of

questions between our countries has been touched upon. On my part I would like to express my opinion on the questions you have touched upon and maybe on some others.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that the entire Soviet leadership, L.I. Brezhnev personally, and all our people sincerely aspire to maintain good friendly relations with the USA, not just normal business relations but precisely good friendly ones. I think, you, yourself, made such a conclusion from L.I. Brezhnev's speeches, in particular after your speech in Charleston.

Incidentally, I would like to linger a bit on some of your speeches, bearing in mind the importance of this question. You made some statements where you touched upon mutual relations with the Soviet Union. In some of these speeches you emphasized the importance of mutual understanding and cooperation with the Soviet Union. In some others you just mentioned the Soviet Union without definite statements. And yet in some others you criticized the Soviet Union, in your own way, but I repeat, criticized it. Sometimes you did it indirectly but it was not difficult to guess to whom you addressed these criticisms, whom you had in mind.

And so we ponder which of these statements reflect your true policy as the President of the USA, the policy of the USA as a state. We would like to think that it is those statements, in which the need of cooperation was emphasized, the necessity of maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union for the interests of both of our countries, for the interests of the whole world.

But this is our desire too[;] however, only you can interpret your own statements. And that is why we would like you to do it now. I would like to bring to Moscow a definite answer on the question of how you, yourself, imagine the prospects for development of relations with the Soviet Union.

There is hardly a need for a lengthy discussion about the significance of these relations for the peoples of our countries as well as for the whole world. It is self-evident that these relations have a great significance. If there are good relations and mutual understanding between us or, even better, friendly relations, then there will be peace in the world, there won't be another world war. If, however, these relations will go awry, if somebody will ruin these relations, then a world tragedy will occur.

The basic thing in this matter is the question of what will be the policy of the USA government toward the Soviet Union and, consequently, what will be the policy of the Soviet Union toward the USA. For ourselves, for the Soviet Union we have been giving and can give a clear answer right now. I am authorized to declare on behalf of all our leadership, on behalf of L.I. Brezhnev, that our policy is directed to maintaining good and, even more than that, - as we already mentioned - friendly relations with the USA.

In your statement you touched upon some concrete problems. You pointed at the need to take into account the differences in social and economic systems of our countries. Actually, these differences exist, and they will exist. It is important, however, that despite the existing differences between us we should continue to develop our mutual relations. We again emphasize that it would be in the interests of both our peoples and of the whole world. Precisely all that we call the policy of peaceful co-existence, the policy of resolving controversial issues by peaceful means, regardless the differences in economic and social systems and the differences in ideology.

You correctly pointed out the importance of trade-economic relations. It is also true

that they are essential for the development of political relations. It would be very good if all the obstacles on the path of the development trade-economic relations between our countries were removed. But it were not we who created these obstacles. They have been created on this side of the Atlantic ocean. All this is well known.

We, certainly, have noted some optimistic signals that appeared in the statements of some American politicians that the situation can change for the better in the near future. We would like for this to happen. We believe that it would be in the interests of both countries to establish normal trade-economic links, to remove all the obstacles on this path, especially because from the very beginning they were artificial. But in general, such relations are for our mutual benefits. We are convinced that it is both countries that will benefit from trade and the development of economic links between them.

You touched upon the issue of "human rights." We must say that when you or other American politicians begin to talk about "human rights," we, in the Soviet Union, in the Soviet leadership, have a kind of automatic conditional reflex: we expect that some shots will be made towards the Soviet Union, of course without any grounds. Why is it being done? We do not believe that one person in the world or even a group of people can claim the unique right to make judgments about "human rights." Each state has to decide these questions independently. And so it is being done.

If we would like to make a list of all violations of human rights in the USA or, say in England, Italy, the FRG, and in many other countries, it would be a long and impressive list. We are not doing it, however, because we do not want to interfere in other people's affairs. But we will never allow others to interfere in our affairs.

You mentioned someone called Shcharansky. Nobody knows him at all except, maybe, doctors and some representatives of authorities who oversee the order in our country. Such questions have an infinitesimal significance. Certainly, you, Mr. President, have a right to act as you believe is needed, but speaking impartially such position of yours on this question can only harm the climate of our relations. Besides, we think that the gain you get, acting in a such a way, is enormously disproportionate to your political loss.

You touched upon the so-called Jewish question. The Soviet Union during the war saved millions of Jews. These are known facts. This is an open book. Right after the war we together, or to be more precise, at the same time as the USA we introduced in the UN the proposal on the creation of an independent Jewish state. Since then we have always supported the right of Israel to independent state existence. We are trying to convince the Arabs, including the most extremist groups, to recognize Israel as an independent state, i.e. to recognize the reality. But at the same time we are blamed that we act wrongly in regard to Jewish question. In general, the question of emigration from the Soviet Union of any nationality, whether the Russians, the Ukrainians, the Armenians, the Georgians, the Jews or others, is our domestic problem, which is to be resolved in accordance with the laws of our country. If you use the facts then you probably know that dozens of thousands of Jews have left the Soviet Union over the past several years.

With satisfaction I have heard your words that you expect positive results from the Belgrade Conference, the results in the spirit of the Helsinki agreement. It would be good if Belgrade would become a constructive forum instead of a place of mutual accusations, some kind of a box of complaints. The Soviet Union is ready to play in Belgrade its own constructive role and hopes that other participants will do the same.

Now, about the situation in the South of Africa. Our policy for this region is simple. We do not have any military bases, and no military personnel in this region. If one feels

the influence of our ideology there then who in the world can build the barriers against the dissemination of any ideology? The only thing we want there is that all the problems should be solved by the majority of population, by the peoples themselves. The majority of population there are Blacks, so the power belongs to them, not to the White racists. We are against any delays in the transition of power. Such is, in short, our position in regard to Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa. Incidentally, to the question of the SAR I will come back in connection with the problem of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Now about Angola. We hailed the birth of this new independent African state. Not so long ago we met A[gostinho]. Neto in Moscow, on the highest level, with the participation of L.I. Brezhnev. We did not find that Angola took a hostile position in regard to the USA. As for the Cuban troops in Angola, it is the business of Angola and Cuba and I am not authorized to discuss this question. It would be right, however, to ask in this regard: whose personnel supports the anti-Angolan movement, the troops that are based in Zaire and invade Angola? Whose foreign troops acted in Angola even before the arrival there of the Cuban troops. The answers to these questions are clear.

Now about the Middle East. This is a large topic. I do not think we should spend a lot of time at your place discussing it. More so since we already had an exchange of opinions on this question with the Secretary Vance. And we have found out that there are some identical elements in our positions. We also handed over some information to the American side which was not known to you.

We are strongly convinced that if Israel had taken a more sober position and had accepted the idea of a small state for the Palestinian Arabs, the PLO would have been ready to officially declare its recognition of Israel as an independent sovereign state in the Middle East. In other words, it would have recognized the reality. But this is exactly what Israel is striving for. Now it has more chances than ever to achieve it. Of course I am saying this not on behalf of Palestinians. They did not authorize us to make any statements. But we are saying this on the basis of knowing their position, and on the basis of our recent conversations with [PLO chairman Yasser] Arafat in Moscow.

So, is it really not possible to find a solution of the issue who must be the first to take a step forward, Israel or the Palestinians? This is exactly what the diplomacy is for: to solve such problems. It is possible, for example, to find a solution under which such a recognition of the Palestinian state by Israel and Israel by the Palestinians would be declared by both sides simultaneously.

We share the opinion of Secretary Vance that peace in the Middle East should mean not only an armistice but also the establishment of normal relations between two sides.

So let us together strive for the convocation of the Geneva Conference on the Middle East already this year. An all Arab delegation could take part in this Conference, if the Arabs themselves would agree with that. But in any case the Palestinians, the PLO must be represented in Geneva. Let us try to do it. We are ready to make every effort possible in this direction.

Whether you want it or not, the lack of a settlement in the Middle East throws a shadow on our mutual relations. We think that removing this shadow would serve the interests of both of us.

Maybe you supply arms to the Middle East with happiness, we know to whom these arms go, and to many other countries. We do it without any particular joy. If a really

stable peace would be established in the Middle East we would not supply the arms there, if, of course, the others would not do it. It would be the ideal situation for which one should strive.

A few words about Korea. You said that you would be ready to cut the American troops deployed in the South Korea. But as it is known the USA intends to keep its bases there at the same time. I think you, yourself, do not believe that we are going to applaud such a decision, although, certainly, such a step has some significance. All the same, this seat of tension would continue to exist among many others.

Now about China. From the point of view of the international situation and also of the broad interests of the USA and, of course, the Soviet Union, we believe it is correct to emphasize that it would have been a great mistake if a dirty game had been played here, the open or secret collusion against the Soviet Union, against its interests. Because sooner or later it would have become known and the appropriate consequences would follow, including those in the area of the US-Soviet relations. We would like to hope that the USA does not intend to play the Chinese card against the Soviet Union. In the past under other American administrations we have been assured many times that the USA does not have such intentions. We will see what the reality turn out to be.

Presently relations between China and the USA are normal and, possibly, even friendly, whereas our relations with China are tense. We do not object to the existence of normal relations between China and the USA. But be on guard so that they do not pull you into games dirty and dangerous for our both countries. We too once had good relations with China. If the Chinese would be able to embroil the USA with the Soviet Union they would gladly use it for their own advantage. Would this be good for the USA? We do not have a crystal ball so that we could see the future, however, the history teaches historians a lot. It have taught us, in any case, and the USA, too, should have already learned.

You have mentioned the Indian Ocean. Certainly it would have been very good if an agreement would be reached between us on this question. Objectively, there are grounds for this. But it is strikingly evident, however, that you stubbornly cling to one rock in the Indian Ocean which is called Diego Garcia. In our view the USA has no real need for this, but at the same time this is being done with the intention of stepping on our toes. This is being done against the interests of our security. The American side should see this problem in a broader context. On our part we are ready to continue the exchange of opinions on this question that has already begun.

We conduct negotiations with the USA on a range of other questions, including the arms limitations at the expert level, working groups. We are ready to continue these negotiations and would like to believe that they reach positive results.

About the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Our interests in this issue are essentially identical. We both should expect a great danger if this problem will not be effectively resolved. This is a fact that the SAR [South African Republic] step by step is moving forward to the creation of its own nuclear weapon. There are also other states who are close to the creation of nuclear weapons. It would be good if the USA and the Soviet Union would work more vigorously in the direction of reliable prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation. We are ready for it.

You touched in general upon the question of arms sales to other countries. This question is certainly connected to the general climate that exists in the world, to the existence of hotbeds of tension. If the conditions for stopping the arms sales had been created, we would have been ready to make an appropriate agreement. We stated it many times. But first the hotbeds should be removed. One of these hotbeds is the Middle East.

I think that it was not accidental that you lingered on the question of stopping nuclear tests. We would like to hope that the Soviet-American agreement on some partial steps in this sphere, which have been concluded between us and which are being considered by the USA Congress, will be ratified as soon as possible. And we hope that the negotiations, that are being conducted between us on the broad treaty, will have also be successfully concluded.

You also touched upon the problem of problems, the signing of an agreement on strategic arms limitation. I would like to state our position on two major questions which are still unresolved. First, on the cruise missiles of the class "air-land" (i.e. ALCM [air-launched cruise missiles]) on the heavy bombers, and secondly, on the Soviet heavy missiles by which some people love to scare the American public.

I already stated our arguments to Secretary Vance which hardly need be repeated again. Apparently, you have been informed about this. I shall emphasize only that in regard to this questions "there is no land behind the Volga, there is no place to retreat," as we used to say during the war.

Just remember how many concessions we have already made to the Americans. Specifically, in May of this year in Geneva we agreed to cut back - bearing in mind the significance you personally give to this question - by 150 units the total number of carriers of strategic nuclear arms in comparison to the total amount of them in the agreement that was reached in Vladivostok.

Even earlier we agreed on the principle of calculation of missiles equipped with MIRV, under which if the missile had been tested even once with MIRV, then all the missiles of this type should be included in the total amount of missiles equipped with MIRV.

We accepted the USA proposal regarding the structure of the future agreement which would include an agreement or a treaty for the duration until 1985, the protocol to it, and the mutual declaration on basic directions of future negotiations. We also agreed that the protocol should be valid only for three years rather than until 1985.

All these were big concessions to the USA. But all of them, it goes without saying, were made dependent upon the achievement of the general agreement on the whole complex of questions. In other words, we considered all the questions as a complex. All these components are interrelated. One cannot seriously pocket any our concession as self-evident, leaving, however, the rest of questions unresolved.

If the contentious questions that I mentioned would be resolved, then we could conclude the agreement and sign it. I would like you to see the situation from a more realistic perspective.

We understand that you get advice on this question from many different people. I, on my part, was trying to picture the decision which would have been the most correct from our point of view. If we would be able to resolve these two main questions, then the road to a new agreement would be cleared up.

You said that there are two different interpretations of the Vladivostok agreement in regard to the cruise missiles. But, in fact, in Vladivostok there was not made any exception for any types of missiles. Some components of the proposed new agreement were absent in the acting temporary agreement. Precisely, the aviation. The temporary agreement speaks about two components: intercontinental ballistic land-based missiles and the submarine-based ballistic missiles. In the new agreement a third component was added, that is the aviation.

Now we again decided to meet the USA half-way in order to reach the agreement. Secretary Vance, probably, has already informed you. We are talking, in part, about the total number of land-based ICBM [intercontinental ballistic missiles] equipped with MIRV. Yesterday during my conversation with Vance I announced that we would be ready to limit the number of such missiles to 820 units under the condition that in the agreement our proposed limitation would be stipulated for the missiles [of] "air-land" class. I would like to get a definite reaction of the American side to our proposal before my departure from the USA.

Now, there is another thing. We would like you, here, in the USA, to stop scaring the people by the statements about an ability of making a first strike at America by the Soviet Union. Why is it being done? As we understand it, it is being done only to excite the atmosphere so that one could easily build up the military budget of the USA.

What first strike you are talking about? We are not going to make a first strike at anybody. Moreover, together with the other states of the Warsaw Pact we proposed to all countries signatory of the Final Act on Security and Cooperation in Europe to sign an agreement on the non-first-use of nuclear weapon against each other. So stop scaring the American people by this nonexistent Soviet threat. The Soviet Union did not have, does not have, and will not have such an intent.

And now I would like to read what L.I. Brezhnev, whom I met before my departure to the USA, asked me to tell you in person. Besides the greetings I extended to you in the beginning of our conversation, he asked me to tell you the following: "I and the whole Soviet people are struggling for peace and struggling for it conscientiously. But I am firmly convinced as well as all our leadership that this issue must be resolved not arithmetically but politically. We do not have any other alternative. No calculations will lead to anything good. I ask the President to think about it. Such an approach would only elevate the authority of our states. And the peoples of the world would take a sigh of relief."

Now a few words about your meeting with L.I. Brezhnev, which you have mentioned. L.I. Brezhnev, personally, and the Soviet leadership are not at all against such a meeting, in general. We believe that such a meeting would be an important threshold if it had been thoroughly prepared and concluded with a major political outcome. The USA, we think, should also be interested in this. In addition, a meeting would not be in anyone's interests if it were a meeting just for the sake of meeting, or if such a meeting would push our relationship backwards.

This seems to coincide with what you said.

J. CARTER: Let me briefly comment on your statements. My attitude toward the Soviet Union is consistent. On my part, there were no words of criticism as such toward the Soviet Union or Brezhnev personally. At the same time, in the Soviet press there had been critical statements toward me personally. Recently such criticism significantly subsided, which I appreciate. The point is that such criticism gives concern to our people. And I hope that in the future there will be no more.

I would like to emphasize that I am deeply devoted to maintaining constructive friendly relations with the Soviet Union on the basis of solving all contentious questions in a peaceful atmosphere and without public polemics. I hope that in the future Soviet-American relations will constantly improve. I would suffer a complete political fiasco as a President if this does not happen. In other words, I would have betrayed the confidence in me of my people. Now I enjoy the support of the majority of the American people for my foreign policy. The goal of constant improvement of relations with the Soviet Union is a matter of first priority for me. There is no other more important problem for me.

(It should be noted that in regard to this important statement made by Carter, the President made it, apparently, bearing in mind the fact that recent public opinion polls in the USA show that the majority of population critically responded to the way the relations with the Soviet Union are handled by Carter.)

I, continued J. Carter, am aware of the need to improve the Soviet-American trade. I inherited the law, about which you know, which links the questions of trade with other questions. I would like to see this problem solved. I hope that together we will be able to influence our common "friend," Senator [Henry] Jackson, to annul the Soviet-American trade limitations that were adopted on his initiative. I hope that you, as far as you can, will help me in this matter.

When in the near future the Minister of External Trade, Patolichev, will come to Washington, I would like to meet him in order to discuss the practical steps which could facilitate the settlement of the issue of the trade-economic relations between our countries.

We do not believe that the Shcharansky affair lacks significance. I did not blow it up. It concerns broad segments of the American public.

I think that the concern that you expressed about human rights in our country, as well as our public concern over this question in the Soviet Union, could lead to broadening of human rights in both countries. But I hope that both sides will exert necessary restraint and that you will not allow openly expressed concern over these issues in the USA to spoil our relations. And, as I already said, I hope that the Belgrade Conference will be conducted in an atmosphere of harmony between our delegations.

About China. We will never allow that our relations with China would become an obstacle for the development of USA relations with the Soviet Union. We did not have and we will not have any secret or open collusion with China directed against the Soviet Union. I would rather stop my efforts to change for the better our relations with China than to allow something like that to happen.

As for Diego Garcia we have built there a small airstrip, but we do not want at all to use this island to damage the security of the Soviet Union.

About stopping all nuclear weapons tests. A full cessation of all nuclear weapons tests, at least for some time in the beginning, would be a significant achievement. We can achieve it together. In our opinion such a ban should include also so-called peaceful explosions. We are ready to give you some information about the results of our research on nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. This research shows that the application of nuclear explosions for building canals or changing the flows of rivers is unadvisable.

Now on the problem of concluding a new agreement on strategic offensive weapons in more detail. We think - although we are aware that you do not accept this - the Vladivostok agreement took place in a different situation from the one that has developed today. And at that time we thought about a different perspective. As we understand it the issue of cruise missiles was not mentioned in Vladivostok. I certainly understand why the current different interpretations arose. We do not intend to use for our advantage the fact that the question of the cruise missiles was not discussed in Vladivostok. And we do not want to use our current technological superiority in this regard. And in general, we do not want any advantages for ourselves in the area of strategic arms, since attempts to get such an advantage could upset the general balance and create disharmony.

In our country, however, even a unanimous agreement of the whole government is not enough for securing the ratification by the Congress of any signed agreement.

The Soviet side, apparently, does not give any significance to a question of its own heavy missiles, which are three times more destructive than any of our missiles. In this respect I am very worried by your statement that "there is no land behind the Volga" for you, i.e. that you are against any further discussion and concessions on the questions which interest us. I would like to hope that the Soviet side will display more flexibility.

The question of Soviet heavy missiles is a subject of concern for us as a question of our cruise missiles is a subject of concern for you. You said that you intend to strive for the achievement of the mutually acceptable agreement, however, my first impression is that the Soviet side does not display enough flexibility.

We already put forward many proposals directed to achieving an agreement, but the Soviet Union turned them down. We are ready, however, to show further flexibility - although there are limits to it - in the hope that the Soviet side will act the same way.

In the end, I hope, we will be able to totally eliminate nuclear weapons. If in the course of the third round of negotiations on the limitation of strategic arms we would be able to cut back the upper limits on this types of weapons by 50 percent then we would be ready in the course of the following round to go even further, under the condition, of course, that China and France will not start to build up their nuclear weapons on a large scale.

You said that you made concessions to us when you agreed on some decrease of the upper limit of the means of delivering the strategic nuclear weapons. But we do not see it as a concession to us. We would find ourselves in the same situation. It would have been a mutual step leading to a conclusion of a better agreement than the one which we talked about earlier. And still we have the issue of the Soviet heavy missiles.

You said that you made concessions to us on the question of counting ICBMs with MIRV but this too is not unilateral concession, because otherwise it would be needed to check every single missile whether it is equipped with a MIRV device or not.

The consent of the Soviet Union in regard to the structure of the future agreement also is not just a concession since the achieved agreement does benefit both sides.

There are two important question right now, as you have said, which create many difficulties. But before I touch on them I would like to mention those less significant disagreements which exist on a number of other questions.

One of these concerns the overall total level of delivery vehicles of nuclear weapons which under the original agreement must be equal to 2,400 units. You proposed that in 5 years after the signing a new agreement this level would be cut back to 2,250 units. But we would like to lower the mentioned original number by 10 per cent, i.e. to 2,160 units which, in our opinion, would fully satisfy the needs of each side. Thus, the difference between our positions is only 90 units. This issue needs to be solved.

We agree to include into the protocol for a three year term a resolution on non-deployment of the land-based and submarine-based cruise missiles with a range of more than 600 km.

In regard to the Soviet aircraft "Backfire." The Soviet side, as I understand it, is ready

to guarantee that its range will not exceed 2,200 km and that its current rate of production will not increase. It would be useful for us, however, to know what is its current rate of production.

A.A. GROMYKO: American experts have at their disposal the appropriate information.

J. CARTER: On the question of mobile inter-continental ballistic missiles we have some disagreements inside our own government whether we should develop them or reject its production altogether. We are ready to ban its production and deployment for the period of the protocol term. The Soviet side, as we understand, would like this ban to be in effect until 1985. It also proposes to ban testing of these missiles. I think, our positions are close and the only thing is to find a mutually accepted wording.

There are some disagreements on the question of new types of the inter-continental ballistic missiles. We would like agree on a ban on testing and deployment of all new types of the ICBM. But you prefer to ban testing and deployment of only new types of ICBM equipped with MIRV. I do not quite understand what is the essence of this disagreement.

A.A. GROMYKO: Speaking about our concessions I had in mind concessions to the American side. There should not be any misunderstanding here. This is related to the question of the methods of counting ICBMs equipped with MIRV which was appreciated at the time by the USA government.

Yesterday I informed Mr. Vance about our consent to the establishment of a separate level for ICBMs equipped with MIRV to the total of 820 units. This is almost the same number as was proposed by the USA (800).

We agreed to cut back during the term of the agreement the overall level for the number of delivery vehicles of strategic nuclear weapons from 2,400 to 2,250. You mentioned the figure 2,160. What we have proposed is a compromise figure leaning toward the American side.

As for the land-based and submarine-based cruise missiles for some reason you speak not about a full ban but actually about permitting them to be tested on an air platforms. It attracted my attention even yesterday while listening to Mr. Vance's statements. It is clear that if a cruise missile intended for submarine or land basing is tested on the air platform then it is possible to produce them by the hundreds and thousands, like pancakes.

There are also other questions to which I can draw the attention of the USA Government. We will have another opportunity to talk about them with the State Secretary. However, those two questions which I have mentioned are the main obstacle to the agreement. These, I repeat, are the question of our heavy missiles and the issue of cruise missiles on heavy bombers. I would like to hear your opinion about how we can settle these issues.

(In order to exert pressure on Carter we specifically emphasized that if the American side wishes to stick to their previous unacceptable positions, then the concessions in other issues made by us to the USA become invalid.)

J. CARTER: I have spent many hours studying the history of the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the USA on the question of strategic arms limitation, and analyzing the fundamental interests of the Soviet Union and the USA in this area. We hope that you understand what and why is our concern.

On the basis of my understanding of what the main concerns of the Soviet Union are, we now are ready to leave aside the question of modern heavy Soviet ICBMs. In other words, their number could reach 308 units as it was stipulated by the interim agreement.

We also are ready to agree on the sublevel of 820 ICBMs equipped with MIRV (which also includes our heavy missiles).

We are ready to leave at the level established in Vladivostok the total level of carriers with MIRV in the amount of 1,320 units, including ICBMs with MIRV, submarine-based ballistic missiles with MIRV, and also heavy bombers equipped with cruise missiles with a range exceeding 600 km.

We propose, however, that in the limits of this level (1,320 units) a sublevel of 1,200 units for ICBM and submarine-based ballistic missiles with MIRV would be established.

This combination almost fully accords with the Soviet side's position except for the sublevel of ICBMs and submarine-based ballistic missiles with MIRV (1,200 units).

Under such a settlement the difference of 120 units between the total number of carriers with MIRV (1,320 units) and the number of ICBMs and submarine-based ballistic missiles with MIRV (1,200 units) could be used by both sides for heavy bombers equipped with "air-land" class cruise missiles. In the limits of the sublevel of 1,200 units both sides will have the freedom to arrange the composition of the carriers with MIRV taking into account, of course, the sublevel of 820 units for the land-based ICBMs and MIRV.

Then, the sublevel of 820 ICBMs with MIRV, as I understand, will have to include the Soviet launchers, deployed in the area of Derazhnia and Pervomaisk.

There are some other disagreements between us. For instance, you propose that the agreement on the maximum range of 2,500 km for the "air-land" cruise missiles on heavy bombers remain valid for the term of the basic agreement, until 1985. But we suggest to include this question into the protocol for the term of 3 years in order to discuss this question again.

I did not quite understand what you said regarding the rate of production of the "Backfire" aircraft. According to our information you produce 30 such aircraft a year.

A.A. GROMYKO: I did not mention any numbers and have no intention to do so since you know the facts. Yesterday I read a relevant text to Secretary Vance. Incidentally, I want also to recall that part of this text which deals with the range of this aircraft. What we are saying is that the range of this aircraft now is 2,200 km and we are not going to increase it to such an extent so it could hit targets on USA territory. We are not saying that the range of the "Backfire" will not exceed 2,200 km. This is what we said to Vance yesterday.

J. CARTER: We, certainly, would like to have more clarity in this regard. If, for example, you intend to increase the range of this aircraft up to 2,400 - 2,500 km we would like to get precise information about it so that not only you but also we could judge if that aircraft can reach the continental USA or not. I certainly trust L.I. Brezhnev and you but we would like to have more certainty.

A.A. GROMYKO: It is well known that the distance between the Soviet Union and the USA is at least 5,500 km and that was taken as a criterion for the definition of the

ICBM.

J. CARTER: But the range is not the only criterion. An aircraft could fly the maximum distance only in one direction. That is why I would prefer that its maximum range were precisely expressed in kilometers so to avoid any misunderstanding in the future, especially because your statement which you were ready to make, in principle, is a very good one.

A.A. GROMYKO: This question has already been discussed between us. Just read more carefully our possible statement and you will see that it resolves all these issues.

As for your last proposals, we, certainly, will be ready to discuss them but judging from our first impression they are aimed at giving one-sided advantages to the USA. And this is not the way of resolving the problems we are facing.

J. CARTER: But any agreed upon limitation has an identical impact on the USA and the Soviet Union with the exception that the Soviet Union gets a possibility to deploy 308 modern heavy missiles, which the US cannot do. We are to agree on that since it was previously stipulated by the interim agreement.

A.A. GROMYKO: The solution to this question was found in Vladivostok. According to this solution the Soviet Union got the freedom to equip the heavy missiles with independently targetable warheads. The USA, in exchange, got the possibility not to stipulate in the agreement, that is now being developed, its concrete obligations for dismantling their mobile ground-based systems. That was the meaning of the solution of these two difficult questions which had long been an obstacle to an agreement. I did not talk about it before, believing that you knew it very well. Now, I thought I should remind you how it had been done. But since then nothing has changed in regard to the American mobile ground-based systems. What has changed is only the USA administration, but the situation with the mobile ground-based system is the same. So why anybody would ask us to change our position on the heavy missiles?

J. CARTER: Perhaps you did not understand me correctly. We do not demand anymore that you change your position on the heavy missiles. We accept your position. I only said that this is the only aspect where there is some inequality to the Soviet Union's advantage. In the rest the obligations of both sides are identical: what is permitted to the Soviet Union is permitted to us. And only in the question on heavy missiles the Soviet Union has some advantages. I hope, however, that you do not take me for a fool who would put forward proposals damaging to the interests of the USA.

The Soviet side wanted to preserve the upper limit of carriers with MIRV to 1,320 units. We agreed to it.