

January 26, 1977

Letter, President Carter to Secretary Brezhnev

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Embassy of the USSR in the USA
Washington, D.C.
From the diary
of DOBRYNIN A.F.

RECORD OF THE CONVERSATION
with the USA Secretary of State
C. VANCE

January 26, 1977

Secretary of State Vance today transmitted the following letter of President Carter to L.I. Brezhnev:

"Confidential

To His Excellency
Leonid I. Brezhnev
The General Secretary
of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party
of the Soviet Union
Moscow, Kremlin

Dear Mr. General Secretary,

Having assumed the position of President of the United States, I want to share with you my views about relations between our two countries.

I want to express my gratitude for the unofficial letters which I received from you, and in this connection I want to confirm that my aim is to improve relations with the Soviet Union on the basis of reciprocity, mutual respect and advantage. I will pay close personal attention to this goal, as will Secretary of State Vance.

I read your public statements with great interest and they make me believe that we share a common aspiration for strengthening and preserving the perspectives for stable peace.

As I understand your highly important speech in Tula, the Soviet Union will not strive for superiority in arms, it will stand against such a conception, and that it will require only a defense which is strong enough to deter any potential enemy. The United States does not want anything less or more for itself either. Therefore, our two countries, with consistency and wisdom, should be able to avoid a new arms race. I declared to the American people that the elimination of all nuclear weapons is my firm goal.

There are three areas in which progress can be made on the way to this goal. The most important first step must be the urgent achievement of an agreement on the second stage strategic weapons limitation, and also an agreement to move on in the direction of additional limitations and reductions in the sphere of strategic weapons. Moreover, I hope that we will soon be able to conclude a properly verifiable agreement on the universal banning of all nuclear tests, and that we also will strive to achieve more openness regarding the strategic policy of our countries. It is also important to renew the efforts to make progress at the negotiations on balanced reduction of military forces in Central Europe.

We also have a responsibility to carry out a policy directed at preventing explosions, which could lead to dangerous conflicts, in tense regions of the world. The United States will work to support a peaceful settlement in the Near East on the basis of the

applicable resolutions of the United Nations. In the same way, in the South of Africa we encourage all sides to start negotiations toward a peaceful settlement which could lead to security and justice for all.

I believe that the USSR can assist in the achievement of progress toward peace in both of these critical regions.

My Administration gives much importance to improving of our bilateral economic relations on the basis of mutual and equal advantage for the peoples of both our two great countries. At the same time we can not be indifferent to the fate of freedom and individual human rights.

We represent different social systems, and our countries differ from each other in their history and experience. A competition in ideals and ideas is inevitable between our societies. Yet this must not interfere with common efforts towards formation of a more peaceful, just and humane world. We live in the world, which to a greater and greater extent demands collective answers to the main human questions, and I hope that our countries can cooperate more closely in order to promote the development, better diet and more substantive life for less advantaged part of mankind.

I look forward to a meeting with you and to discussing at this meeting both our different and our common interests. In the mean time I suggest both of us should do everything in our power to promote Soviet-American relations. I suggested to Secretary of State Vance to prepare for a meeting with you in the spring, if you wish, for a review of the progress we have made and to discuss the key problems which remain unsolved. Both of us at that time also would like to exchange opinions about the next meeting between you and me.

Any concrete ideas, on these or any other questions, which you might like to relate to me will be very welcomed and thoroughly studied.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

January 26, 1977

White House

Washington, D.C. [...]

The Ambassador of the USSR in the USA

[signature] A. Dobrynin

/A. DOBRYNIN/