

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 14, 1984

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: George P. Shultz *GPS* *PS*
SUBJECT: My Meeting with Dobrynin June 12

I had an interesting 40-minute meeting with Dobrynin this afternoon, at which he handed over Soviet Embassy translations of Chernenko's reply to your last letter of April 16 and of some additional "talking points" on issues he and I have been discussing. The Russian original with our more accurate translation of the letter is attached along with their version of the talking points. I read them over quickly at the meeting, and will be getting you my analysis of them shortly. At first glance they do not appear to move things forward very much, if at all.

After he handed over the Chernenko reply, I raised Sakharov. I said that you had told me about his call with the message from Chernenko, and that I thought everyone's interests, including theirs, would be best served if they could figure out a way to reassure people about the health of Sakharov and his wife. I suggested that Mitterrand's upcoming visit to Moscow might offer an opportunity for the Soviets to clarify the Sakharov situation.

Dobrynin replied that they saw things differently, and the fact that Chernenko had replied to you directly and so quickly should be understood as a "gesture of good will," even though the Soviets consider Sakharov purely a domestic matter. Asking for more information casts doubt on Soviet credibility, he added. I said I was not questioning their credibility, but making the observation that the issue was a real problem of concern to many people, especially scientists worldwide. He replied that the Soviets are prepared to live with the problem.

Turning to the letter and talking points, I said we would study them carefully and respond shortly. The problem, I said, is that we have been trying to do what we can to move the relationship in a positive direction, but cannot seem to get it off dead center. We have talked about revitalizing our bilateral agreements, we have made proposals in the arms control field, and we have suggested discussions on regional issues.

To take an example, on southern Africa we have a report that they had offered to discuss the issue with the British,

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yet it seemed unclear whether they were ready to talk with us. Dobrynin replied that if we had something to say on southern Africa, they were prepared to listen. I told him that on some regional issues we should be thinking of going beyond information sharing to damage control and even to trying to find mutual solutions.

Summing up, I reiterated that the general problem is how to get our relations off the ground and moving forward. If we could do that, I suggested, he and I and perhaps others might take a day and review the whole relationship. If no progress seemed possible on some issues, we could move on to others.

Dobrynin replied by saying that movement on bilateral issues should be easy. He said we had been discussing them for almost a year and a half without getting anywhere. I said our preparations to upgrade activities under the four bilateral agreements we had been discussing were ready. He replied there are no obstacles on the Soviet side.

Security and arms control problems were more difficult, he went on, but still he thought it should be possible to begin or renew negotiations on some of them. Our election year did not matter to them, he stressed. He had been hearing "tales" of the Soviets "hibernating" and accusations that they were interfering in our politics. The Soviets are not afraid to move ahead on bilateral issues and to begin negotiations on "big subjects." It would be good to show the world that the "big boys" are talking, he said. "We are not afraid to be seen negotiating with this Administration," he concluded. He said he hoped we would study the messages, and that I would sit down with Gromyko in the fall at the United Nations and "get something done."

I went back to Sakharov in conclusion, urging him to consider what I had said. He ended by saying that requests for more information raise the issue of credibility after Chernenko had given a substantive answer. Chernenko had only done so because the President himself had asked. I said it was not a credibility issue, but an objective and scientific fact about the importance of the problem.

Dobrynin said he would be going on vacation at the beginning or in the middle of July, in order to get to Moscow while Gromyko was still there. I said I would be going to Asia for two weeks in July. We agreed we should get together again before we both left town.

Attachments: As stated

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