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SECRET/EXDIS

SALT TWO
SESSION I
A-86

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
U.S. SALT DELEGATION
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

DATE: December 14, 1972
TIME: 1930 - 1945
PLACE: USSR Mission Reception

SUBJECT:

PARTICIPANTS: US — Dr. Brown; USSR — Academician Shchutkin

Shchukin repeated a number of the points he had made before about the need to proceed by small steps. He said that the concept of "throw-weight" was years away from being able to bring into the agreement.

The important thing to bring out, he said, is that modest imbalances in one category or another do not matter. It is important for the US to make it clear that it has the same attitude.

He emphasized that there was more in his mini-plenary statements than simply the words of those statements. The US side should read them carefully and make a constructive response.

I replied that though from a military and physical security point of view, I agreed with him that modest differences in numbers for one system or another had no important effect, there were important political and psychological considerations involved both at home and with our allies. He mentioned Senator Jackson, but I said that these considerations went far beyond Senator Jackson. I noted that these same considerations were important to the Soviets, as was shown by their unwillingness to have a 3:1 or 4:1 disparity on ABM sites, even though the purposes of the two kinds of sites were different, and neither conferred the ability to defend pupulations. He

State Department review

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nodded and interrupted before I had finished to show that he understood the point.

I went on to say that I understood that it was very difficult for military people to accept the fact that they no longer were able to defend their country from destruction by active military capability. He said that General Alexeyev understands this point very well.

I suggested that direct conversations between the military men might make for better understanding between them. He disagreed with this suggestion, saying that Trusov, for example, was an excellent and capable person as a professional military man, but could not display any independence. Expanding on what he had said to Nitze and myself on earlier occasions, he said that the senior Soviet military pattern of behaviour - never questioning orders or doctrine from above or even questioning doctrine that they think may exist - was strongly set in that pattern during world war II. The situation was "obey orders without question or be shot, even if you think you are in possession of additional knowledge which would dictate modifying these orders." Now people are not shot, but the pattern of thought remains, rigidifying Soviet military thinking and behaviour. It will take the growing up of a new generation of military to change this, perhaps until those now 25 years old reach senior positions.

HB
SALDEL:HBrown:mb

Geneva,
December 15, 1972

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