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Hon. Arthur J Goldberg
New York

Dear Mr. Goldberg

The Washington Post for Jan. 5, containing your article on U.S. pressures on German overtures to the USSR, just arrived.

I am very much with you on your principal conclusions; but was rather nonplussed by one of your arguments, that we might believe a "genuine interest in a detente with the Soviet Union on vital matters of mutual interest and concern, particularly the SALT talks". This would seem to imply that the pursuit of arms control and other arrangements must depend on mutual trust and confidence about the other's intentions and motives, and demonstrations thereof.

There are so many weaknesses in such a position I do not think you mean to entertain it. The "sentiment" of detente, when it exists, is so evanescent and vulnerable to shifts of internal posture and power that it can hardly be relied upon as a basis for strategic bargains. Neither the Kremlin nor our Senate would ever agree to a SALT agreement that lacked internal integrity, that would not stand up under the assumption that both sides had the most malevolent purposes -- which still does not keep adversaries from finding mutual benefits in agreements.

But above all, you give ammunition to our own hardliners, who for their own reasons would prefer further armament to negotiated balances. They can use precisely your own logic to question whether there is any evidence that the Kremlin is interested in the detente of the kind you indicate -- there is certainly little enough sign of this in their arming of Egypt, in their domestic repression and in the stifling of liberalism in Czechoslovakia. Should we then back off from SALT?

Finally, the Kremlin would like nothing better than to exact still more concessions from us as the price of merely agreeing to negotiate, which will then be simply piled on top of bargains that (necessarily and appropriately) will be as close to marginal as we can be pushed to.

In any case, your main point is indisputable. The Soviet's fears of a Greater Germany are archetypal and it would be worth a great deal for world stability if that frontier can be normalized, and chances of misperceptions of motives minimized. One can still argue whether US pressures on Brandt do more to weaken his government than to strengthen his bargaining position with the Soviets. Those double-helical games become too serpentine even for a molecular biologist.

GOLD BERG, Arthur

Joshua Lederberg

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