

October 26, 1967

The Honorable Robert S. McNamara
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

First let me thank you for the very illuminating discussions on the occasion of the visit of our group from Harvard a month ago. In all that we heard that day only your perspective seemed to recognize the actual dimensions of the problem and to indicate the range of possibilities that deserve intensive exploration. All of us wish you well in this difficult time and hope that we may be of some use.

I write now on a different matter. For several years we have had a small group, centered here in Cambridge, and financed by Ford, whose aim is to pursue informal discussions with government-connected scientists - natural and political - in other major countries, particularly the U.S.S.R., on matters of arms control, strategic problems and peace keeping. Our group consists of C. Kaysen, H. Kissinger, G. Kistiakowsky, F. Long, G. Rathjens, J. Ruina, M. Shulman, L. Sohn, J. Wiesner, and myself. The people on the Soviet side with whom we have had contact include Millionshchikov, Emel'yanov, Sedov, Kirillen, and Artsimovitch.

We had a two-week meeting with the Soviets in June, 1964. Since that time they have been unable to hold formal meetings with the Soviets in June, 1964. Since that time they have been unable to hold formal meetings with us, owing initially, it seemed, to the uncertainties that followed Khrushchev's ouster and more recently because of the mounting scale of fighting in Vietnam. But our informal contacts have continued. Indeed, Kissinger's present contacts began in an informal meeting in June that included Millionshchikov, myself and some French that have kept in contact in this way.

In recent weeks there have been indications from the Soviet side that Millionshchikov may have received top level political clearance for a resumption of meetings for discussion of the strategic arms race. In a letter just received, a group of us are invited to visit Moscow December 28-30 for a discussion of the effects of new offensive and defensive missiles on the strategic balance. It has been suggested that this visit could be preliminary to a larger meeting to be held next June. We have been told that this idea has been cleared with Kosygin and further that while the official talks proposed by Thompson to Gromyko probably cannot start before the Presidential elections in 1968, private technical talks among scientists could start now.

While we cannot be sure of the connection of our channel to the decision-making group in the U.S.S.R., it seems to us that our discussions with Soviet scientists could be a useful preliminary and open up this area for more ventilation in Moscow.

We have always kept Washington closely informed of our activities vis-a-vis the Soviets, and we have benefitted from Washington briefings on the background of the topics we have discussed with our Soviet colleagues. Our most frequent connection has been with Foster in ACDA, with Tommy Thompson and others at State, and with John McNaughton in Defense. Now we would like your advice as to whom we should turn in place of McNaughton in order that our future contacts with the Soviets can be useful and free of any features that would be contrary to US interests.

I enclose copies of two letters on this matter to our Soviet contact in New York. I would be glad to furnish more information and you may want to take this up with Kissinger or Kistiakowsky. In any event, I hope that you can direct us to the person who will serve in your area as McNaughton did in the past and that in time you will give us your own views on this venture.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Doty

Enclosures