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NUMBER 189

FIFTY YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS.

On November 15, 1983 the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars held a dinner discussion on the occassion of fifty years of diplomatic relations between the United States and the USSR. Hosted by James H. Billington, the discussion centered around talks by former U.S. Ambassador to the USSR, George F. Kennan, and by the present Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Anatoliy F. Dobrynin. This report contains excepts from the discussion.

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November 15th Dinner/Discussion

James H. Billington: On behalf of the board of trustees and the staff of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and its Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, I would like to welcome you all here for this evening of reminiscence and discussion. Judging from the animation of the conversation over dinner, I have no doubts that tonight we shall well serve Congress' mandate to the Center to cultivate the fruitful interaction between the world of affairs and the world of ideas.

I should begin by saying that, in these times, there is a serious need for such interaction. As a scholarly institution, the Center has an obligation, in commemorating the fifty years of diplomatic relations between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., to initiate discussion. As the Center's distinguished guests this evening, you by your many distinctions as diplomats, members of Congress, and academics also face the same task at hand. Since this is not a ceremonial occasion, please, no toasts. They would only take up all of the evening given the customs of our countries.

The program calls for Ambassador Kennan to introduce the evening and present some remarks. In the general discussion that will follow, Ambassador Dobrynin has kindly agreed to say some words first. We want to have as full and open a discussion as we can, and we look forward to the contributions of the extraordinary group of people assembled here.

Now, it gives me particular pleasure to introduce one of your senior colleagues, whom I first had the privilege of introducing some twenty-five years ago when I was a young, beginning teacher at Harvard. I remember the electrifying effect his great series of lectures had on that highly qualified, but somewhat morally somolent atmosphere. How it aroused a whole

set of thoughts among very intelligent young people who suddenly found their moral universe being expanded. No less in recent years, his great productivity as a historian and public figure has been a result of his successful bridging of the purely intellectual and reflective with the deeper moral concerns of our republic. Ladies and gentlemen, I present the Honorable George F. Kennan.

Ambassador George F. Kennan*: Ladies and gentlemen, the reason I find myself standing before you this evening is not that anyone believes me to possess any special wisdom about international problems but because tomorrow marks the passage of fifty years since diplomatic relations were established between the United States and the Soviet Union and because I appear to be the sole survivor among the small group of individuals on both sides who were personally involved in that particular event.

For anyone as old as I am it is always a temptation to become anecdotal and to regale one's listeners with reminiscences--reminiscences that become more striking and more flattering to one's self, with each telling. In this instance, the temptation is particularly strong, because the events of those days of November 1933 were, indeed, for me, momentous and exciting ones. I was at that time, as it happened, back in Washington--on leave from my post at Riga. I could look back, at that time, on five years of training and experience in Russian matters. Three of those years had been spent in territory which is now part of the Soviet Union, although it was not then; but I had never been in Moscow or indeed in any part of what was then the Soviet Union; and I was wild with curiosity to see Russia proper.

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By pure chance, I happened one day to be introduced, in the corridors of the State Department, to Mr. William C. Bullitt, who had just been selected by President Roosevelt to be our first ambassador to the Soviet Union. Bullitt discovered that I spoke Russian and knew something about the Soviet economy; and with the impulsiveness and ebullience that were the hallmarks of his nature he at once decided that I should accompany him, as a diplomatic secretary, on the journey he was about to undertake to Moscow, to present his letters of credence.

Well, I did so accompany him. I was with him when he presented those letters of credence, in one of the great halls of the Kremlin, to Michael Kalinin, who was at that time the titular head of the Soviet state. And when, after accomplishing this initial ceremony, Bullitt returned home to organize an embassy staff, he left me there in Moscow, junior as I was in rank, to maintain liaison with the Soviet government on various practical problems of the moment. I was thus the first regular American representative in that city and--for the ensuing three months--the only one. The rest is in my memoirs and other accounts of the time.

It is not easy to evoke today, and particularly in a few words, the atmosphere and political climate of that time. Sixteen years had now elapsed since the Russian revolution--sixteen years of hostility, suspicion and remoteness in the relationship between the two countries. This was a considerable time; and yet the Revolution still had for many of us the vividness of a recent event. The atmosphere of it--the excitement, the hopes, the fears attached to it--could still be felt, as could the dramatic developments of the immediate post-revolutionary period. Less than ten years had elapsed, after all, since the death of Lenin. Such developments as the New Economic Policy, the collectivization of the

peasantry and the First Five-Year Plan, were fresh on our minds. And the men on the Soviet side with whom we had to deal were figures of that recent revolutionary period--people who even had interesting pre-revolutionary careers. Litvinov, the Soviet foreign commissar with whom we travelled on the train together from Paris to Moscow; Kalinin, himself, to whom the credentials were presented; Troyanovski, the father, actually, of the present Soviet ambassador of that name to the United Nations--who had been selected as the first Soviet ambassador to Washington; these were all the men whose careers had begun in the pre-revolutionary time--in a Russian oppositional movement, which, we must remember, had enjoyed considerable sympathies in the United States. In what they had to tell us about their past careers--in Litvinov's confession to Bullitt that his real ambition had always been to be a librarian instead of being the foreign minister of the Soviet Union--in Kalinin's mention to me of his enthusiasm, as a youth, for my uncle's books about the penal and exile system in Siberia--in things of this sort we were reminded not only of earlier and happier times--not only of the century of relatively amicable Russian-American relations that had preceded the Revolution--but also of our common humanity. These men, as I then dimly realized, were no more guilty of the positions and the intellectual attitudes into which Fate had thrust them than were we for ours. We were all the victims of the accidents of birth--and of Fate.

We had, in other words, not yet learned to see our Soviet opposite numbers as something beyond the limits of human understanding and communication. And there prevailed, at least among us, the American participants in these events, a pleasant sense of anticipation and excitement. We knew that a long, unpleasant, and sterile epoch in Soviet-American relations was coming to an end. We could not know what the future was going to

bring: We were well aware of the great traditional and ideological differences that separated us from our Soviet counterparts. But we were all imbued, I think, with the hope that somehow or other the establishment of these new bonds between two great peoples would open up new and more hopeful vistas for everyone.

These attitudes no doubt involved a certain amount of euphoria; and to that extent, experience soon corrected them. Difficulties were not long in developing. Some of these difficulties could be regarded as abnormal ones; and to this category I would relegate the Stalinist purges which began soon after our embassy was established in Moscow and which continued, to one extent or another, throughout the Stalin era. This terrible and incredible series of repressive actions weighed heavily, in more ways that you might suppose, on Soviet-American relations. But most of the difficulties we encountered were of the endemic variety. They were the products of what you might call permanent environmental factors of the Soviet-American relationship: such things as the conflicting ideological commitments; geographic situations; different traditions and customs; different ways of looking at things; differences in the ways the two peoples saw themselves and each other; and the unrealistic expectations each addressed to each other. We were aware of these factors, even if at that time we probably underrated their long-term importance.

So Soviet-American relations in that pre-war period were often troubled ones. We rubbed each other painfully in many ways, as we continue to do today. The ideological competition was then far more intense than it is today, and the political tension no smaller. Those of us who served in Moscow in those years were gradually taught to reconcile ourselves to a

long period of political and ideological rivalry--to a long struggle for the minds of men.

But what we did not anticipate (and this is the fundamental point I wish to stress tonight) was anything resembling military conflict between our two countries. War with Nazi Germany?--yes, possibly. War with the Japanese militarists?--yes, possibly. War between the United States and the Soviet Union?--no. Nothing, it seems to me, was farther from our thoughts. It simply did not occur to us that this ideological and political competition with the Soviet Union needed to be, or could be, resolved on the field of battle. It was a struggle for the minds of living men--not for bodies of dead ones.

Surely, there is no one in this room to whom I need to point out the drastic and unhappy contrast between that day and this. One has only to glance at the morning newspapers--one has only to note the nature of the issues of Soviet-American relations that are now under public discussion and the ones over which the two governments are negotiating or are supposed to be negotiating--in order to perceive the overwhelming extent to which this relationship has now been penetrated and indeed taken over by military considerations. It is weapons we now talk about--weapons we read about--weapons we negotiate about. Behind this endless debate about weaponry the real political issues between the two countries fade into obscurity; and the public is left with the inference the relationship consists exclusively of maneuvering for military ascendancy--that weapons are all that count--that it is they, the weapons, that will some day determine the ultimate outcome of all our differences.

What has caused this change? It had its initial origins, no doubt, in the great geopolitical displacements flowing from the outcome of the

Second World War--changes which left the two powers confronting each other for the first time in history over a military border drawn down through the center of Europe. But a second and even more fateful factor was the introduction into both their arsenals of a form of weaponry--the nuclear one--wholly unprecedented in its destructiveness and conducive to the establishment of a wholly new range of military anxieties and speculations. These two factors have led to the development of a weapons race unparalleled in history for its intensity and for the apocalyptic fears and reactions it engenders.

Now I am by profession a diplomatic historian; and I am here to testify that any sort of a weapons race between great industrial powers of the modern age, even a non-nuclear one, sets up a pattern of compulsions which soon acquires its own momentum as a motivating force for national behavior--a momentum wholly independent of the political differences that may have led the two powers to view each other as rivals in the first place; and this momentum easily and almost invariably then becomes a dominating factor in the formulation of national policy, commanding the public imagination, commanding the attention of the press, commanding the reactions of statesmen and politicians. Such a weapons race is, in other words, a dangerous trap, from which, to date, the competing parties, once fallen into it, have never found a means of escape, except in the disasters of war. It is this trap in which the Soviet Union and the United States find themselves caught today and from which, as yet, they have seen no way to extract themselves. Behind this trap, and obscured by it, still lie the permanent complicating political factors of the relationship, largely as they existed in the

1930's and as they will long continue to exist, if our civilization itself continues to exist. Were the military rivalry to be removed tomorrow, these complicating factors would still be there; and they would still be troublesome; but they would not be mortally dangerous. The military competition, on the other hand, _is_ mortally dangerous; for the war to which it could so easily lead is one in which, as we all know and as all our leaders have recognized, there could be no victory--only total catastrophe for all concerned.

When, then, I look at this relationship from the historical perspective, what I see are two great powers, only recently elevated to positions of political and economic ascendancy among modern nations. I see these two powers just beginning, in the 1930's and early 1940's, to tackle in all earnestness the difficult but not impossible task of adjustment to each other in a world where new technology was making all men neighbors. And then I see them suddenly overtaken by tremendous new developments in the geopolitical and military fields--developments for which they were not at all prepared; and I see them thrown by these developments into a predicament--namely the nuclear weapons race--that had nothing to do with those normal problems of adjustment of earlier years--a predicament from which, as of today, they know no means of escape, and in which they are simply writhing helplessly, at immense danger to themselves and to the world around them.

I have said it before. I can only say it again. There are no considerations--no aspirations, no ambitions, no anxieties, no defensive considerations--which could justify the continuation of this dreadful situation. The two governments may not be at fault--or at least they may be very little at fault--for its development. It was largely unforeseeable forces of history that thrust them into it. But it is a mortal danger for them both. And precisely because the problem is unprecedented, the effort

of leadership required to extract them from it will also have to be unprecedented--unprecedented in determination, in imagination, in courage, and, if necessary, in political self-sacrifice.

That this task can be accomplished, if only these qualities can be brought to bear upon it, I have no doubt. This is not the place for me to advance my own poor ideas as to how it might best be tackled. But behind its necessity, and behind its significance, many of the things that preoccupy us today--the resentments, the suspicions, the irritations, the minor conflicts, the considerations of prestige and of short-term advantage--these things fade in importance. If we only could see this--if we could only see that the real problem is not with the other party, that the problem is with both of us, that we are both a part of it, both the victims of it, that it is in fact a common problem--if we could see these things, the road to self-extraction from this predicament would begin, I am sure, to become visible. The road would not be smooth; but it would not be impassible. It would not lead to the paradise; at the end of it would lie only the normal measure of frictions, misunderstandings and agonies of adjustment that have always marked, and are always going to mark, the co-existence of great powers on this planet. But there would be, at the end of this road, life, hope, and a future for posterity. Whereas the failure to enter on that road allows for none of those things.

In the letter President Franklin Roosevelt addressed to Litvinov fifty years ago tomorrow, informing him that the United States government had decided to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, he wrote:

> I trust that the relations now established between our peoples may forever remain normal and friendly, and that our nations may cooperate for their mutual benefit and for the preservation of the peace of the world.

I find it hard, in this sad time, to comment on these words. Their pathetic quality, with relation to the situation that exists today, will be apparent to all of us.

Franklin Roosevelt was not a profound thinker; my own admiration for him was not unlimited; but he was a man of great heart and courage. And I will do him the justice to say that were he alive today and able to perceive the state in which Soviet-American relations now find themselves, he would not throw up his hands in cynicism and despair but would set about, undismayed, with false starts, no doubt, as well as with sound ones, but always with boldness and good cheer, to make things better. Is there any reason, I must ask, why we should reconcile ourselves to anything less?

Dr. Billington: I know you all join me in thanking Ambassador Kennan. The format is to proceed to a broader discussion that I am happy to have led by Ambassador Dobrynin, a man of unequalled experience whose record of longevity in the Soviet Embassy here in Washington equals perhaps our entire group assembled tonight. We are pleased that he could be with us tonight.

Incidentally, these comments will be off the record and non-attributable, and we hope that thereby we can have the maximum amount of participation and frankness. Having assembled a group with the qualities and experiences of this one, we do not want to miss the opportunity to say not the things that are ritual, but the things that are really important. We would like everyone to observe those ground rules. It is now a great pleasure to present His Excellency, Ambassador Dobrynin. We hope that you, Mr. Ambassador, will follow Ambassador Kennan's lead and write memoirs (about which half the people in this town will be quaking to read, but would all be grateful to have).

Ambassador Dobrynin: One thing I can assure you: those well acquainted with me for many years, are on the safe side. I am not going to write memoirs. So there will be no stories about one in the works.

I would like, first of all, to welcome my colleagues, friends, and Ambassadors Kennan, Stoessel, Toon, and Kohler. Today I called Harriman, who is a dear friend of mine. Watson and Beame, of course, are not here. But what is really in names, which are really stages in our history?

If you look about at the Soviet ambassadors, I am the only one besides Mr. Gromyko who is alive, and it shows how hazardous it is to be ambassador in Washington compared to Moscow.

Well, I would like to thank you for inviting me to this specific occasion, the celebration of diplomatic relations. Today it might be appropriate to recall how they started. President Roosevelt is known to have once said, and I quote, 'in 1933, my wife visited one of the American schools. In the classroom she saw a map on which there was a large white spot. She was told that this space was prohibited to be named. It was the part of the map known as the Soviet Union. This whole incident prompted me to deliver a letter to the President Kalinin, with a request to send a representative to Washington to discuss the establishment of diplomatic relations.'

I do not know whether it was true or not, but this is the story as it was recalled by Roosevelt himself. Perhaps it was a little bit simplified, but it was the beginning of our relationship. A lot of water has since flowed under the bridge. The historic record of our relationship is too eventful to be even briefly analyzed tonight. Ambassador Kennan already tried, but even he could not do it in this short time here today.

It has been a long road and not always as smooth as the Nevsky Project in Leningrad or your neat New Jersey Turnpike. Nevertheless, during all those

years we had a number of fruitful, positive experiences. It is very well reflected in the fact that since 1933 we have signed approximately 110 agreements, with about half of them signed in the 70's.

Tonight, however, I would not like to indulge myself in the recollection of the good things we had, which already belong to history, but would rather share my thoughts with you as to where we stand now in our relations.

I must admit in all sincerity that there are very little grounds, if any, for jubilation at this Golden Anniversary. Should we congratulate ourselves on the unprecedented arms race between our nations, which brings about more and more sophisticated weapons of destruction; or on the lack of any significant political dialogue between our governments; or on a virtual dismantling of the very basis and structure of the Soviet American-bilateral relations--cultural, scientific and economic--which had been so painstakingly created in the 70's? Almost none of the agreements in the above-mentioned areas exist anymore, and the few exceptions I could count on the fingers of one hand.

Besides those agreements, we did have good negotiations, though difficult and necessary, in such areas as the limitation of American and Soviet military activities in the Indian Ocean; a comprehensive nuclear test ban; anti-satellite systems and commercial arms transfers. Are they gone with the wind, too?

There is yet another extremely disquieting aspect to me as ambassador in this country for so many years. Frankly speaking, this is the rather gloomy state of affairs which exists now between us. Only a few days ago, my granddaughter, who has lived with me for thirteen years in Washington, after watching some TV program (and she speaks English very well) asked me the question "Why do they hate us so much?" What she meant is the growing hatred and hostility [in the U.S.] toward my country and its people [--hatred and hostility] comparable only to the worst examples of the bitter years of the Cold War period in our

relationship. Believe me, this is not an easy thing to explain to a thirteen-year-old girl who likes this country very much and who loves her own homeland.

Some people are saying to me, 'Mr. Ambassador, do not pay too much attention to the rhetoric.' But ladies and gentlemen, words are deeds insofar as they influence a person's mind and behavior toward other people. Let us be frank, this is the first time--and I share the views which were just expressed by Ambassador Kennan--in the entire history of our two countries that serious talk has started about the possibility of a nuclear war between us. It is something to think about. What is more significant is that not only the press and the journalists talk about it, but the general public as well. Ordinary people are really frightened. The possibility exists. I think it is something for politicians and for all of us to think about.

In old times, the important part of any diplomatic success was the ability to keep an opponent in the fog, mystified about one's real intentions. In times like ours, when humanity lives under the constant danger of a nuclear conflict, the clarity of one's intentions becomes a necessary axiom for survival, based upon at least minimal mutual trust.

A continuous, rather than episodic dialogue of substance between our two countries is yet to be established. Without it, nothing at all will come out. The aim of diplomacy is to keep things moving, to generate compromises, to look for alternatives, opportunities, and possibilities. Should we pronounce them as an anathema to Soviet-American relations now and think that the complex international problems are best solved by military force or by trying to turn a threat of nuclear war into an instrument of diplomacy?

When we decided fifty years ago to establish diplomatic relations, we proceeded from the understanding that this would be a relation between equals. This indisputable role of natural behavior seems to be forgotten sometimes now

in our bilateral relations. Such an approach is particularly inadmissible and dangerous in the matter of security of both our nations. Security in a nuclear age is indivisible, gentlemen. There can be no such a thing as only your security or only our security. Unfortunately, not everyone realizes this now.

Remember, the United States' reaction--I was here and you, too, remember--during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. But now with more sophisticated United States missiles to be deployed eight minutes away from such important targets in the Soviet Union as Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev, Americans seem to forget about their own feelings and about their own emotions and demand that the Soviet Union accept the deployment of new United States missiles at our doorstep. What kind of a reaction do you expect from us now, ladies and gentlemen?

Of course, you and we have our own lives. You have your lives and are concerned about your own security and well-being. We both try to counter them. With what? With the missiles, with additional bombers, additional nuclear weapons? But ultimately, with all respect to both of our lives, it is ultimately you, the United States, and we, the Soviet Union who will decide whether there will be a nuclear war or nuclear catastrophe.

So this is the important thing for you to understand: our philosophy, our psychological approach, our emotions; and for us, it is necessary to understand your concerns, your emotions. We should keep 1962 in mind.

It has been speculated that once those American missiles are in place, the Russians would make outcries for a while and then it would be business as usual. There should be no illusions on this score, ladies and gentlemen. We will always remember what this eight-minute capability means to us. It will create an inequality, a new and highly destabilizing situation for all of us, both for you and for us.

I would like to emphasize this point not only for the Soviet Union, but for the United States as well. Just think of eight minutes as the distance between peace and nuclear winter. What could be done in eight minutes? Communicate through the hotline between the White House and the Kremlin? Think the situation over. Or would there be enough time for the congressmen and the Supreme Soviet to make a crucial decision to prevent a war? Or will the only answer be to rely on the computer? We are definitely against communicating with you through the computer. We are amazed, frankly, how you can so easily play not only with our security, but with your own security as well.

Although we are not going to attack anyone and we hope that you are not going to attack us, frankly speaking, the risk of outbreak of nuclear war through miscalculation or accident cannot be ruled out, particularly in such an explosive political situation as we have now in our relationship.

I was struck by one of your statistics: you actually have more nuclear warheads in the United States than students of Russian. Well, I can assure you that in my country we have many more students studying English than we have missiles. There are millions and millions of Russians who study English because we want to communicate with you in your own language. I think it is a good thing and we try to encourage it. I mention it not accidentally. I repeat that we really would like to speak with each other in the language of culture, of science and technology, rather than in the language of nuclear warheads.

The solution, of any international problem--large or small--be it concerning disarmament or the Middle East -- first of all, is understanding and cooperation between our two countries. When we quarrel between ourselves, not only our two nations, but also other countries get involved in the world conflict. This is rather well known and factual. Under the new pressure in our relations, it is so important to make a joint effort to stabilize them a little bit more

and to stop fruitless and repeated mutual accusations. I assure you, each side no doubt has a lot to say about each other's intentions and actions. Let us find some new practical way to improve them, so that outstanding issues in Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and, of course, the control of nuclear weapons could little by little be solved. We do not expect a miracle overnight but to work steadily in this direction is essential.

However important these issues are, the central problem of Soviet-American relations remains a question of nuclear arms control. It is a secret to no one that talks in this area have been remarkably slow to bring results. As of now, unfortunately, they are in a complete deadlock. Let me emphasize that the matters of disarmament are too serious a business. If one cares about results, one should not come forward with unrealistic proposals that disregard the legitimate interests of the other side, and that aim not to reach agreements, but to gain unilateral advantages at the other side's expense. Both sides should recognize the principle of equality and equal security. After all, this principle up to now was recognized by all previous administrations.

Some people wonder whether the Soviet Union is looking at the problem of arms control or at a different important issue: the forthcoming presidential election in the United States. In this connection, I would like to stress most categorically that we consider our bilateral relations above your domestic politics. If an agreement is reached today, tomorrow, next year or the year after--the sooner the better-we are prepared to sign it and have a summit meeting between our two presidents, should your president be Mr. Reagan or any other. We are prepared to sign an agreement at any time, and I mentioned a summit meeting, no matter what effect it could have on the outcome of your elections or on the political fortune of your political leaders.

For me, fifty years of our relations is a remarkable and important event, not only because it is a golden jubilee, but also because I have spent more than half of those years in the United States with my dear wife. (She is sitting right here.) This includes twenty-two years as ambassador of my country, and it just so happens that the very day of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries coincides with my own birthday. During all these years there were days, frankly speaking, of both joy and sorrow, of satisfaction and disappointment, of success and frustration. But I have never been a pessimist. Recall, in 1809, a great American, Thomas Jefferson, had spoken about the remarkable peaceability of our two nations. I don't really see a reason why this kind of attitude cannot be gradually revived nowadays.

My experience during all these long years in the United States has led me to conclude that there are no outstanding issues that cannot be resolved by the two states, if goodwill prevails. Moreover, experience shows that both of us can join efforts to ensure a long term and constructive solution to the vital problems; not all of them, but many of them. This is especially important to underscore today, when the time is recalled here by some as a nightmare which should be forgotten, the sooner the better. We hold a different view. On the contrary, what is going on in our relations now is rather an aberration and deviation from the normal state of affairs. We have always believed and will continue to believe that the future belongs to a relationship between the two nations that is based on more mutual understanding, more trust, more cooperation -- no matter what you call it, detente or otherwise.

We have to face the fact that mutual understanding constitutes a strategic necessity. We have a common enemy now--the threat of nuclear war. In this sense, we too, have a common destiny ladies and gentlemen,

to live or die together in a nuclear holocaust. But we all should not be fatalists and wait passively until it happens. For the sake of the present and the future of our peoples, of all mankind, every possible mutual effort should be made today to make the relationship of estrangement, mistrust and enmity between the Soviet Union and the United States, a matter of the past.

As Mr. Andropov said in a recent statement, the Soviet leadership does not hesitate about what line to follow in international affairs regarding the present acute situation. Our course remains one of preserving and strengthening peace. The Soviet Union wishes to live in peace with all countries, including the United States. Ladies and gentlemen, we know that such aspirations are shared by most people of the world. Time and again, they get side-tracked by something of the nature of a Cold War. All of us have already had more than enough of it.

To complete my remarks, I would like to return to where I started. On November 16, 1933, the founding fathers so to speak, of USSR US relations, President Roosevelt and Mr. Litvinov on behalf of my government, exchanged official notes which read, and I quote, 'Express the hope that the relations now established between our peoples may forever remain normal and friendly, and that our nations henceforth may cooperate for the mutual benefit and for preservation of the peace in the world.' One cannot say it better than that. As it was true then, it is simply a necessity now. Thank you very much.

Dr. Billington: The floor is open for comments and questions. The hour is late, but we are anxious with this extraordinary group to give as many people a chance who have something they wish to say. Please try to keep your remarks brief.

We have an exceptional range of experience here. I'm tempted to call on one of our other ambassadors. Ambassador Toon.

Ambassador Toon: Well, first of all, Jim, let me say that I am delighted to be part of this very fine evening and I am very happy to have you, Mr. Loy Henderson, here in attendance, because you, of course, were one of my great heroes when I came into the foreign service years ago.

Now, there is much that was said tonight by Ambassador Kennan, my old mentor, and by Ambassador Dobrynin, with which I totally disagree. But I do not think it would advance the purposes of this evening if I were to go into detail about my basic disagreement. You know, I find a tremendous source of discomfort when I discover that I am in agreement with Ambassador Dobrynin or his boss, Foreign Minister Gromyko, but frankly, I think they are right when they maintain, as they have publicly in recent months, that our relations are perhaps at the lowest ebb since World War II, at least since the Cuban missile crisis. I disagree with them, of course, when they say that the fault is entirely ours that our relations have dipped to this very low ebb. I think, frankly, the fault is mutual. I think we bear a certain degree of blame for this. The rhetoric that we have carried on in this country over the past two or three years has not been helpful. It has not calmed the atmosphere at all. I think some of the irresponsible statements that we have made in Washington about the possibility of a limited nuclear war has not helped things at all. But I think, frankly, that the Soviet Union bears the major responsibility for the worsening of our relations.

In any case, let us not get into a debate about that tonight. I agree with Ambassador Dobrynin that we should recognize that our relations are at a new all time low and we should do what we can to improve them, to bring about an increased improved mutual understanding between our two peoples, between our two governments, between our two systems. Frankly, I would think, Mr. Ambassador, if I may say so, that this opportunity that you have had tonight--to

speak as frankly as you have to this distinguished group of congressmen, senators, and public opinion leaders in this country--is an opportunity that I think should be accorded our ambassadors in Moscow. I think both of us are in agreement that we should have an improved mutual understanding of what concerns the other side and I think, frankly, if we do not have this sort of thing, then we are facing, as you and George Kennan pointed out, ultimate disaster. But I would hope that somehow or other you would use your influence, Mr. Ambassador-and you have a good deal of influence--to bring about a possibility for our people to speak to your people on the same basis that you have spoken to us tonight.

When I was ambassador in Moscow with Walter Stoessel and others before me, we happened to handle your language rather well. But we really never had an opportunity to talk to your opinion leaders, as you have had tonight. So I would ask you, in the interest of improved understanding, to provide the same sort of opportunity that we have given you tonight. Thank you very much.

Dr. Billington: Any other comments? If anyone wants to respond, you are free to, but I do not want to force anybody into speaking. It's Quaker meeting rules, even though Wilson was a Calvinist. The floor is open for further comments and questions. Representative Levitas, could you come up to the microphone?

Representative Levitas: First of all, Jim, I want to thank you for this memorable evening. I want to express my appreciation to Ambassador Toon for saying something I was discussing with Ambassador Dobrynin earlier this evening. On Sunday night one of our networks is going to show a film that is going to outline very graphically the consequences of a nuclear war -- to which I think most of us would stipulate, without dealing with how you avoid that situation. I was hoping that arrangements might be made to have that film shown in the Soviet Union as well, so that the citizens of the Soviet Union might have the

same understanding. The reason I mention that, Mr. Ambassador, is that your very graphic explanation of the eight minutes, and what the significance of that is, has some impact and some meaning. But you did not address what the impact is to the citizens of Western Europe, of the deployment of the SS-20's in that theater. I wonder if you could perhaps, or someone could perhaps, address for me the parity between those two situations: the significance of the deployment of the SS-20's as compared to the cruise missiles and Pershing II's. I think you touched a point tonight that all of us in this room would like to see a better relationship, but I think that can only come from a better understanding.

That was the concern I had and I wanted to express my gratitude to Ambassador Toon for making the point that he did earlier. Thank you.

Dr. Billington: Other speakers? Would anyone like to say something? We have some of the world's most articulate people in this room. Mr. Allan Reich.

Mr. Reich: Jim, I understand that this is the opportunity, having heard from the eminent ambassadors that there may well be ways in which we can enhance and strengthen mutual understanding between our peoples and our countries. What, as they see it, as they look ahead to the future, might be some of the ways in which this might be brought about, looking beyond the present environment of confrontation about which there seems to be such great pessimism? Really, what might be the prescriptions for strengthening the relationship in the future through better understanding between our respective peoples?

Dr. Billington: He is the president of the Bimilenium Foundation, which is looking toward the year 2000. So if anyone has an answer or a comment, it is invited, but again, I do not want to put anyone on the spot here. Any further comments or questions from the floor? If you have an answer for the year 2000, humanity would be grateful. Yes, Senator Leahy.

Senator Leahy: Jim, like everybody else, I congratulate you on bringing this group together. I will try not to put you in a bad shape by being overly long now and make everyone wish they had not come. I do not want you to feel, Mr. Ambassador Dobrynin, that everybody is ganging up on you here tonight; I listened to your speech and found many things I agree with, but I also noticed a certain one-sidedness to it. You're entitled to that, but I would have to echo what Congressman Levitas said about the neglect of mentioning that the NATO decision to install Pershing II's was prompted by the installation of the SS-20's. The eight minutes from the Pershing is true, but those European capitals would say the SS-20's are also about the same amount of time away. Our capital faces eight or nine minutes from Soviet submarines off the east coast, and so forth.

But I wonder if we talk over each others' heads and if we are not looking at some of the things that are going on, some of the concerns that are raised by arms control advocates in the Congress of the United States. I raised a question in our meeting with Mr. Andropov, which you kindly set up in August. I raised a point which is yet to be addressed, and that is, arms control advocates like myself have our credibilities undermined and the ability to get supporters undermined by actions of the Soviet Union. You seem to be developing a new radar system which raises very serious questions. It is in total violation of the ABM Treaty. While both countries have said that they will abide by the restrictions in Salt II, very serious questions are raised by the fact that the Soviet Union is now in violation of Salt II with the development of a missile which goes beyond the restrictions of Salt II. Those questions have not been answered as of yet.

I raise this not so much as to get into a debate on arms control as to note for the Soviet Union that this is a time where unfortunately there is too much rhetoric on both sides, far too much. The United States has to share

some of that blame. But the actions of the Soviet Union are such that it is destroying a great deal of the constituency for arms control within our government.

So I pass that on. It is the same thing I passed on in the Soviet Union that was reported back here in the United States, and Mr. Andropov's statements were reported adequately in the United States. Unfortunately, in your country, only the statement by Mr. Andropov was reported and not the statements or any of the criticisms raised by the Senate delegation that was there.

Dr. Billington: Any other comments, questions? Representative Wirth.

Representative Wirth: If I might, Jim, I would like to address a question to Ambassador Kennan. You said earlier, Mr. Ambassador, if I can paraphrase, that the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union was the struggle for the minds of living men, not the bodies of dead men. Could you give us a sense of what we can expect in terms of mutual relationship between these two great powers, which is the basis of survival? What do you see coming up that we ought to be thinking about and working on?

Ambassador Kennan: Well, I think that before you can think in any hopeful way about the future, you will have to find ways of grinding down this military competition in which we are today involved. That is purely negative and so long as it dominates our relationship, I cannot see anything very constructive being done. If we could achieve that, if we could get beyond it, and you may be surprised to hear me say this, I think that the difficulties that we would confront (and some of them are apparent from the comments that have been made tonight from the American side here) would still be quite formidable ones. I think we would have to reconcile ourselves for a long time to a rather distant, but I would hope, polite, reserved and restrained relationship. I think the differences in psychology, the differences in outlook, and the differences in

ideology, are so great that there is a danger in striving for too great an intimacy between our two countries. If we could only overcome the military bind that we are in today, I would say let us then treat each other courteously, but at arms length. I think anything else would be dangerous.

I think that you can have mutually profitable relations in a number of the fields of scientific and cultural exchanges, in which we have had agreements in the past. I think one should not look at these agreements from the standpoint of who gets the greatest military intelligence out of them. If that is the way you look at them, you better not have them at all. But if you believe that there is some benefit to be obtained by people, scientists, and scholars talking with each other, then I think those exchanges should go forward.

I do think that there is a great and profitable and very urgent field for collaboration between our two countries in environmental matters. I feel this very strongly. I mean, we are in such trouble, both of us, in this respect, that even if we do not blow ourselves or each other up with the nuclear weapons, we are going to be--within twenty or thirty years--in real difficulties. We in this country are witnessing--and the Soviet Union, I have no doubt just as much, if not more-the pollution of the river basins, the pollution of the seas, the pollution of the air, the reckless consumption of irreplaceable natural resources. All these things are now of such urgency that there has got to be a real revolution in the modern technology, not only in our countries, but in the other great industrial countries. Here, surely, is a common problem in which we could collaborate.

I do not think we will agree for decades on how people should be governed. I do not think we will agree on political institutions or anything of that sort. But I do not think that is absolutely necessary. The main thing is that we should keep the peace between the two countries and that we should develop those forms

of collaboration which are possible. That seems to me to be within the realm of possibility, if properly tackled.

Dr. Billington: Further comments? We have time for just a few more as the evening draws to a close. Does the spirit move? I am tempted again to tap the wisdom of all our former ambassadors. Ambassador Kohler, since you won the long distance prize in coming here this evening, I think we should give you just a moment, if you would not mind. Thank you, sir.

Ambassador Kohler: Well, it will be just a moment, I hope. I do not quite share some of the testaments that have been expressed tonight, because in the history of our relationship with the Soviet Union, we have had a lot of ups and downs. I am sure that neither of us want a nuclear war, neither the people nor the leadership. I am also sure that we will find a way not to have one. The important thing is to keep the dialogue going and this we must do. I have been happy to be a part of that dialogue for a good many years. I am sure it will go on and we will not have that war. We have had fears of war before. The dimensions are greater with the nuclear weapon, and we may have to have a crisis over the TNF talks and a few things. But after Cuba we found a way to make a lot of progress. After this crisis, I think with wisdom, patience, and persistence, we can find a way to make some progress again. I would like to close on that kind of pacifying note.

Dr. Billington: Anyone else as the evening draws to a close? We have time for one or two more. Yes, Ambassador Dobrynin?

Ambassador Dobrynin: Nobody else wants to speak?

Dr. Billington: Well, I am not sure. Well, you go ahead and then we will have another final one after you. Please.

Ambassador Dobrynin: I would like to comment on only a few remarks specifically made by Ambassador Toon. First, I came here and did not want to

have to discuss the really serious problems we have. Today we discussed what happened during the fifty years of our relationship. I did not come here with the intention to say that we are all right and you are all wrong. Far from that. We share our own part of responsibility, as you share. What I share with you today are our thoughts. How we look at the relationship and what should be done -- that was my purpose. What I received in return from Ambassador Toon were not any serious remarks, but simply: You are like a fellow who is invited to this house to speak but we are not likely to speak in your country. By the way, the ambassadors who are present here, some of them, I do not know about Toon himself, spoke on our national television. I think you, too.

Ambassador Toon: Twice.

Ambassador Dobrynin: Twice, which is broadcast over all the Soviet Union. How many times have I on our anniversary? Not a single one, because each time when they ask your major networks to give me time, ten minutes without questions, just to tell the American public what we think about the situation, I am told that I would be questioned about this question, about that question. Is it fair? You have opportunity; your ambassadors have opportunities. Even now, I should say, if your ambassador would like, I'm sure he will be given an opportunity to speak on our television. But you do not give others the opportunity to speak specifically on the subject which we want to address, if only for ten minutes. It is customary and that is another story. I do not accuse the networks of anything. Each country has their own way to do it. I reiterate that your ambassador spoke on our national television. This is a fact, several times.

Speaking about this kind of rhetoric. I can tell you there is no problem to arrange a reciprocal discussion because they know the problem. I am sure they will do something in Moscow to commemorate this anniversary. We have a friendship

society, and I am sure they will invite your ambassador or his deputies to come and to say something about this. I am sure about it. It is nothing unique really.

Please, do not be deceived that today's discussion is such a benefit to the Soviet Union, just a gift with this one. This is not the case. If, I repeat, you get the impression that I tried to take one side and blame the other, you, it is wrong. We share our responsibility, but the main idea is what we have to do from now. I agree with Ambassador Kennan. That will not be done overnight. We are going to have long periods of strained relations, but we still have the possibility to improve in many fields, including nuclear fields. I am prepared to have a discussion with Senator Leahy, if he likes. I know the subject. But I think that this is not the place to discuss all this TNF field and so on, because we simply have no time. By the way, I discuss with many of your colleagues such things as build-down, if you know or not. I could give you an example -- to simply raise the question whether we violated something. Do you know we have a control commission, which annually meets three or four times, and we presented to your country our gripes, saying, 'Look here, you have done this wrong, this is wrong, and this is wrong.' Then you present us with a number of grievances. We are equal, by the way, as we do not receive any answers from your side each time. Sometimes you cover your missiles with some metal and then you explain some geographical things, which we do not accept. I could give examples. We do not complain publicly. If we complain, we complain through the commission which has been established between the two governments. Just pick up one case of specific violations and we will discuss, if you like, but this is not the place.

So the point is we have it both ways. We are not angels, but neither are you. Both ways there are many problems, including what you mentioned. We have something to ask you and you do not answer us, and vice versa. The question is

of narrowing these problems, such as the one of chemical warfare. There are many things which you could do to conclude the agreement prohibiting the use of chemicals.

The only thing, to conclude once again, is that we should live in peace with you. We will have disagreements with you, sure, but we want to have disagreements in a controlled way. There are areas in which we could come to signed and controlled agreements. This includes armaments, and some other issues. There are several issues which we could be negotiated and agreed upon.

This is the only message I tried to tell you from our side. Of course, I am outnumbered here so it is a little bit difficult to defend certain kinds of things, but I tried to. I did not ask for the speech, as Mr. Billington knows. He initiated this. My first intention was not to speak at all, because I could suspect what would happen. Ambassador Kennan called me, it is true, and he said he would like me to be here. I came here because I respect him very much. I respect very much many of you, because I have had contacts and fruitful discussions during the twenty-two years. I don't know how many more years, maybe one year, maybe less, maybe more.

So I came here and tried to share views with you, not to accuse anyone, not to put fingers on any of you, because we both are guilty in a situation which is now. The situation now is the threat of nuclear war. I think we really could not solve this question today, who is right, who is wrong. This is not the issue here today. The question is how to get out of this mess, how to prevent the things happening -- worse things happening. This is really the major concern which I was trying to pass to you, ladies and gentlemen, not to try to say that you are guilty and we are not. This was my message.

There are plenty of areas, as Ambassador Kennan said, where we could even cooperate: within the field of environment, many other things. There is a way, and little by little we could live in a better world. This is the message I think we should pass to the next generation. I hope there will be a one hundredth anniversary. So, step by step, little by little, without any specific expectation, we should try to put aside our mistrust. My friend, the Ambassador of West Germany, sitting here and writing very effectively, is a good friend of mine. I know he has his own concerns about what was going on, from the standpoint of his own country. We should take this into consideration, both you and we.

So it is not only a matter of problems restricted to us. It affects all who really are concerned about peace in this world. This is what I would like to leave with you. We really would like to get together and find out what could be done, reasoned, and discussed. This is the only thought I tried to bring to you, nothing else, nothing more, Mr. Toon. Thank you.

Dr. Billington: Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador. I do want to say we appreciate your coming and we hope that further dialogue, for which you said there was not time tonight, could be continued by you and Senator Leahy here in the future. I would like to issue on the spot the invitation to continue this discussion. We hope that you will do so, because that is what this Center is all about.

Professor Tucker had nine years in the Soviet Union (and no one can match your record, Mr. Ambassador). He is currently a Fellow of our Kennan Institute and one of the wise scholars. I just thought he might say a word or two.

Dr. Tucker: Jim, thank you very much. I feel a little abashed to say a word here after the distinguished people who have spoken, people from Congress

own. But perhaps just a few words from a person who could only describe himself as a citizen scholar might be appropriate.

I would like to take off from something that was said by George Kennan. First, let me say that speaking of anniversaries, April 1984 will mark the fortieth anniversary of my arrival in Moscow, as the most junior member of the American Embassy. My mentor in Russian studies was the then Minister Counselor of that embassy, George Kennan. In a very deep way, that has been the case ever since. I see him as a person of three different dimensions: diplomat, scholar and leader. I see something of him as leader in what he had to say here tonight. In particular, when he said that we must learn to recognize that this problem, namely the problem of keeping the world afloat, is a commoon problem. That, I think, went to the quick of the issue. I think the first function of a leader is to define the situation properly, and that, I think, went very close to defining the situation that we are in.

What would it mean? I simply want to make two comments. What would it mean to recognize that the problem is a common problem, not just their's, not just our's, but our's in the sense of both Russia and ourselves? I think it would mean rethinking our relationship, and in rethinking our relationship, I think I am talking about the relationship between the two super powers above all, and that two questions need to be asked, the answers to which may be suggested by the nature of the questions.

In the first place, may it not be time to think anew about the meaning of security? Always in the past, nations, nation-states, and great powers have felt that the greater their power _vis-a-vis_ the nation they fear, the stronger and more secure they are. Now, I think maybe the time has come when a radical mutation has come about and when the two great super powers have each acquired an interest in the other's security. That is to say, I

think the time has come when a mutual security interest has come into being. I'm not sure that that has been recognized. I am not sure that the recognition of it has gone very deep.

The second question that I think we need to ask in rethinking the relationship is whether we can go on in the non-military sphere, in the sphere of our relations all around the world, and in the Third World in particular, acting as we have in our relations with one another. Can we go on competing for political influence in third countries as though this were, somehow, something that we could insulate from our overall relationship? I do not believe we can. I think that the rethinking of the relationship that would be required to keep the world afloat will have to lead in the direction of some answers to both of these questions.

Dr. Billington: Thank you. The evening is drawing to a close. Ambassador Stoessel is the only former ambassador we have not heard from. I am tempted to give you the last words, Walter, if you want it, but you can pass if you do not.

Ambassador Stoessel: Well, after all these words of wisdom, Jim, I hesitate to say anything. But I have been impressed by the exchange of views this evening. I think it is a very useful thing and a very healthy thing that we have this type of discussion. I must say, as one who has shared the experience with Mac and Foy and others in Moscow, we would hope that we would have a chance to have this sort of an exchange in Moscow, in the Soviet Union. It is all too rare. Although, as Ambassador Dobrynin has said, we have occasionally had opportunities in a very formal way to express views, but it is not quite the same thing.

We are different societies. I think we have to realize that. We do have different traditions and different approaches. This must be taken into consideration as we look at the problems we face today. I do believe, with

Ambassador Kennan, that we, as two peoples, have to recognize that we do have these differences, that we cannot for a very long time to come, certainly, be truly friendly. At the same time, we have to recognize that we can not go to war. That is excluded. Somehow, between these parameters we have to find a way to live together, to manage our differences, to have that dialogue which is so very important. I think all of us here this evening feel that this must continue. We have had too little of it. We must have more. I do not wish to suggest that there is none now. There is dialogue, but it is certainly not at the level we would like on both sides. I think we have to work for that and to pursue the effort to increase the understanding between us of the dangers we face.

I share what Foy Kohler has said. I do not think that necessarily we are faced with an apocalyptic future. I think we can overcome these terrible problems. We have in the past gone through a great many difficulties. We can survive this. Both of us realize the dangers. As we work together and develop this dialogue, I think that the dangers can be minimized. So I hope that we will continue that in the future. Thank you.

Dr. Billington: Well, I want to thank you all for coming. I would like to thank our financial supporters for this evening, including the Blum Foundation, and the many members of Congress and scholars who have been with us.

I want to pay a special word--because the importance of continued dialogue has been stressed--of saying that Ambassador Kennan has only spoken to you tonight, but he had a dream that there would be a need in Washington for a place where study and dialogue of these questions would go on, because they are not problems for one evening, but for many lifetimes. The Kennan Institute, which we are happy to have here in this building, in the Wilson Center, is a living memorial to this man and to his uncle who wrote the first book in this very building on

Russia back in the nineteenth century. I thank the Secretary, Herb Ellison and his lovely wife for giving great impulse to this Institute. We hope it will continue. We hope, also Ambassador Dobrynin, that you and Mrs. Dobrynin will come back again and continue the dialogue with Senator Leahy and others, and with the scholarly world.

Now I would like to turn for, as they use to say in President Wilson's day, 'the benediction,' from our speaker Ambassador Kennan, if he would like to give us a final word.

Ambassador Kennan: Jim, the sermon is given by the preacher, but the benediction is usually given by the lower hierarchy. You have done it. I will not expound on it.

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