

News Conference by Henry Kissinger (25 June 1973)

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News Conference of Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, on the Joint Communique and the Summit Meeting. June 25, 1973.

MR. ZIEGLER. You have the communique, which is embargoed until 1 o'clock, eastern time, and 10 o'clock, Pacific time. Dr. Kissinger is here to discuss that with you and take your questions on the communique and also on the summit between the President and General Secretary.

For the statistics buffs in the press corps, the President and General Secretary spent a total of 47 hours together. They met in formal sessions with advisers or alone for 18¼ hours. In addition, the President and General Secretary were together 28¾ hours at informal gatherings, social functions, and signing ceremonies, and events of that sort.

Q. How much alone, face to face?

MR. ZIEGLER. Almost 10 hours — 9½ hours.

DR. KISSINGER. Ladies and gentlemen, I will not go through the communique because I understand you have already had a chance to read it. Let me make a few general observations about the summit and how it fits into the general development of our foreign policy, and then I will take questions about the communique or any other part of the summit which you may wish to raise.

One good way of assessing the results of the summit is to compare last year's communique with this year's communique.

Last year's communique spoke about the desirability of peaceful coexistence. It said: "Having considered various areas of bilateral U.S.-Soviet relations, the two Sides agreed that an improvement in relations is possible and desirable."

This year we say that: "Both Sides are convinced that the discussions they have just held represent a further milestone in the constructive development of their relations.

"Convinced that such a development of American-Soviet relations serves the interests of both of their peoples and all of mankind, it was decided to take further major steps to give these relations maximum stability and to turn the development of friendship and cooperation between their peoples into a permanent factor for worldwide peace."

In other words, what marks the turning point last year, in which the fact of peaceful coexistence required special affirmation and the possibility of improving relations between the United States and the Soviet Union was thought deserving of special note, and this year we are speaking of a continuing relationship.

As a result, as relations between the Soviet Union and the United States proceed along the course that was charted last May, and accelerated this June, we cannot expect that these meetings, which we have affirmed should become a regular part of U.S.-Soviet relationships, will produce a dramatic new departure. It is on the strength of this relationship as it develops that the road is charted and that what we expect to see is a further evolution along a path which will be increasingly free of confrontations, and which will become increasingly a part of a stable international system. This is the context in which we see the U.S.-Soviet relationship.

If you look back over previous summit meetings between Soviet and American leaders, they almost invariably occurred in the shadow of some crisis, and they were inevitably directed to removing some source of tension and some cause of confrontation.

In May 1972 we still met in the shadow of the Vietnamese war and the recent decisions that had led to an expansion of military operations in Indochina. But even then, before the first talk enunciated some common principles of conduct and affirmed the desirability of a long-term evolution toward a peaceful and ultimately

cooperative relationship between the two states and the two peoples. These expectations were fulfilled over the course of the year, and, therefore, what this summit intended to do was to strengthen the cooperative bonds that had developed in particular areas, to give a new impetus to the key areas of negotiations, especially strategic arms limitations and mutual force reductions, and thirdly, to take the joint principles one step further by embodying them in a formal agreement designed to prevent war, and especially nuclear war.

There is nothing I can add to the particular agreements that are enumerated in the communique that deal with the cooperative relationships in various fields and that represent a continuation of a process that started last year.

I can only say from my personal experience in participating in many of these negotiations that what I told you ladies and gentlemen before the summit has been reinforced by the experience of the summit. Many of these agreements do not themselves take the attention and time of the top leaders, and it would be absurd to pretend to you that the General Secretary and the President sit down and discuss the details of the civil aviation agreement, but it is also true that the imminence of their meetings, and the fact that they have determined to give a symbolic expression to this relationship gives an impetus to negotiations that otherwise would drag on for months, and permits the quick resolution of particular issues which, if left to the expert level, could produce extended stalemate. And there is some significance in having the relationship develop on such a broad front, developing on both sides a commitment that is becoming increasingly difficult to reverse.

With respect to the other areas, I have talked to you at some length about the decisions with respect to strategic arms limitation talks. I think you can assume that in addition to what has been stated formally in the agreement on principles, that the two leaders had extensive discussions as to how the process can be accelerated so that a meaningful agreement can be achieved consistent with the deadline that they have set themselves. Therefore, we believe, with considerable hope, that a permanent agreement limiting strategic offensive arms, which would be one of the historic achievements in the field of arms control, can and will be negotiated during the course of 1974.

With respect to the mutual balanced force reductions, we told you before this summit conference that this was not the forum in which to negotiate the specifics. This is a matter of the profoundest concern to our allies, and it had never been intended to discuss the specifics, the specific schemes, at this meeting.

However, as those who have followed the discussions realize, there had been some uncertainty about when these discussions would begin. Prior to the meeting, in the preparatory conferences in Vienna, the Soviet position had tied the opening of the MBFR conference to the ending of the European Security Conference. At this meeting, it was decided that the MBFR conference would begin unconditionally on October 30, and, of course, both leaders agreed that they would make a serious effort to deal with the question of armaments in Central Europe.

The Indochina problem, which last year was a source of contention, has received a common expression in this document.

And finally, there has been the agreement on the prevention of nuclear war. Now, I have seen several comments to the effect that it is nonbinding, that it is not self-enforcing, and no doubt I have contributed to this by comments that reflect my former professorial profession, so let me state our position: that no agreement in history has ever enforced itself. Every agreement in history that has been observed has depended either on the willingness of the parties to observe it or on the willingness of one or the other parties to enforce it, or on the rewards for compliance and the risks of noncompliance.

This agreement is no different from any other agreement in that respect. When great powers make an agreement with each other, they, of course, have the capability of not observing it unless the other side is prepared to draw extreme consequences. But the violation of this agreement would have serious consequences for the whole context of U.S.-Soviet relations, and, conversely, the observance of this agreement can mark, as I said on Friday, a milestone in the achievement of self-restraint by the major

countries, a self-restraint which is, by definition, the essence of peace and which we intend to observe, which we expect the Soviet Union to observe, and which can therefore provide the foundation for a new international relationship.

Of course, history is replete with changes of course and we must be vigilant and prepared for such an occurrence, but it is the belief of the President that this period has a unique opportunity to create a new and more peaceful system. It is an opportunity that has come about partly as a result of the enormity of the weapons that would be used in case of a conflict, partly by the depth of human aspiration towards peace, partly as a result of the complexities of a world in which the ideological expectations of any side have not been fully met.

But whatever the reasons, we consider the summit as a further advance along that road, that as these meetings become a regular feature of international life, and as we come to take them more and more for granted, the results will follow paths that will come to seem more and more natural, and we would consider that one of the best signs that a peaceful world is coming into being.

So this is our assessment of the summit and I will be glad to answer any questions on this, or on what I have said, or on the communique, or anything else related to the summit.

[...]

Q. Is there any significance in the dropping of the word “balanced” from mutual force reduction in the communique, and I noticed that you used it once and didn’t use it another time.

DR. KISSINGER. That is because I usually speak extemporaneously. No, there is no significance in the dropping of the word “balanced.”

In the preparatory discussions in Vienna, there was some discussion about it, but since it concerned entirely procedural matters, it has no substantive significance. The United States position with respect to the mutual balanced force reduction negotiations has been submitted to our allies. We think that it has received substantial support from our allies. We will enter the negotiations, we are convinced, with a reasonable and united position.

What particular adjective one gives to describe it is really less important, but the substance of it will be that it must be balanced, and that is must reflect the principles of this communique and of May 29 last year, that no negotiation can succeed that attempts to give a unilateral advantage to one side or another.

[...]

Q. Dr. Kissinger, there has been a considerable amount of confusion in connection with the SALT agreement about MIRV’s. In the agreement it states that national means of inspection will be the only possible means. Is it possible to control MIRV through only national means of inspection, or should we read into the wording there that, in effect, you have abandoned the notion of being able to control MIRV’s?

DR. KISSINGER. First, the agreement does not say national means are the only possible means. It says that both sides agree that they must be verifiable by national means. If both sides should decide to have other than national means that wouldn’t be precluded, but I think that is extremely unlikely.

So, the realistic assumption has to be that any agreement that will be made is one that will be monitored by national means. Now then, the question is, does that principle really exclude any control of MIRV’s?

First, let me say that we believe that MIRV’s are an important part of this negotiation, and, therefore, we believe that it is possible to have some restraints on MIRV’s that can be monitored by national means, and, therefore, a great deal depends on what restraints we are talking about.

If you are talking about bans on production, those would be next to impossible to monitor by national means. If you are talking about deployment, then they are possible to monitor within a margin of error which is larger than is the base in mere quantities, than if you are monitoring quantities, but that is finite. If you are talking about a combination of deployment and improvements in accuracy and so forth, so that you could add certain testing restraints, then you have ever greater possibilities of inspection.

I am not saying that these are our specific proposals. I am saying that you cannot just look at this in terms of one category of restraints and assess the relationship of national means to that one category. You have to do it in the whole complex of MIRV technology and of the kinds of restraints you want to employ, and we think it is possible to put together a package by combining several restraints verifiable by national means.

Q. Dr. Kissinger, on page 12 of the communique, it says they set the goal for trade over the next 3 years at \$2 to \$3 billion. This is the figure for the entire 3-year period, as I understand it; is that right?

DR. KISSINGER. That is right.

Q. Since the current trade is running at, I think, \$1.3 billion annually now, '73, would not this be —

DR. KISSINGER. The \$1.3 billion includes agricultural. This is excluding agricultural commodities.

Q. Do you have any figure including agricultural commodities?

DR. KISSINGER. I do not have it including agricultural. I think excluding agricultural, it runs at about \$600 million now, and I think this envisages an increase of about 50 percent.

Q. Dr. Kissinger, does the communique hint, or more than hint, at an East-West summit at the end of the European Security Conference?

DR. KISSINGER. Well, it obviously mentions it. The position of the communique with respect to the East-West summit is one that we have taken before; that is to say, that the level of the concluding phase of the European Security Conference will be determined by progress that is made in the first two phases, the first of which begins on July 3 at the foreign minister level. Then there will be commission meetings. And upon the conclusion of the commission meetings, one can determine first the final phase of the conference, and secondly, the appropriate level of participation.

We are, in principle, prepared to consider a summit if the results of the first two phases warrant it.

Q. May I ask you to enumerate as briefly as possible the total package of benefits that will accrue to the United States as a result of the past few days' activities?

DR. KISSINGER. I can see this is not somebody who has attended previous briefings or he wouldn't have made a demand for brevity. [*Laughter*]

The benefits that accrue to the United States are the benefits that will accrue to all participants in the international system from an improvement in the prospects of peace. To the extent that we live in an atmosphere of confrontation, the United States, as the strongest country in the non-Communist world, and as the one on which the security of most others depends, is immediately drawn closer to the brink of war than almost any other participant.

Secondly, we expect that as a result of many of these cooperative efforts, both peoples will benefit in a concrete way.

With respect to the economic relationships, about which this question is often asked, they have to be seen in the whole context of the web of relations that is developing between the two countries. Most of the large deals that are being talked about will have to be made by private American industry, and they would

presumably not be made unless they were thought to be of mutual benefit.

We have taken the view, from the beginning of this Administration, first that negotiations with the Soviet Union should not be conducted on the basis of atmospherics, but on the basis of very concrete negotiation; and secondly, that the economic and political matters should be linked together so that the progress would take place on a broad front. And I must say it is a little ironic that early in the Administration we were all accused of delaying the progress of negotiations, and now many of the same people who accused us then of being too slow are discovering that the benefits may be too one-sided. But the benefits of peace in this period cannot be one-sided.

Q. Dr. Kissinger, what is the reason for including a proposal for a world disarmament conference to be held at an appropriate time? What is your definition of an appropriate time? Does it mean after the treaties on the strategic arms, or what?

DR. KISSINGER. Well, you know that the proposal for a world disarmament conference is one that the Soviet Union has repeatedly made. It was included in last year's communique, and it was repeated in this year's communique, and I think it is safe to say that if our Soviet colleagues and we were pressed to the wall, our definition of the appropriate time might differ. [*Laughter*]

Q. Dr. Kissinger, what we have been listening to is an anthology of the positive results of the summit. Were not there some things that you had hoped to achieve at this particular summit that you have not?

DR. KISSINGER. Either due to lack of imagination or megalomania, I can't really tell you anything that we were hoping to achieve that we didn't. These summits are prepared over a long period of time. This particular summit is the result of many exchanges with the Soviet Union: Secretary Peterson's trip in July, my trip in September, Foreign Minister Gromyko's trip to the United States in October, Secretary Schultz's trip in March, my trip in May, many exchanges between the two leaders.

So it really is organically almost impossible for these summits to occur with a long agenda in which you will say we will try this and see what happens. It is impossible, and also undesirable, because when you have the two leaders of the most powerful nations in the world confronting each other, you do not want to have a situation in which a totally unpredictable clash can occur.

So in this meeting, the range of what was attainable was clearly understood by April or May, and the result were within the range that had been previously agreed to.

Now, at the end of each summit, there is always a very extensive meeting between the two leaders in which they decide the sort of problems they can be working on over the next year. We had such a meeting in the Kremlin on the day of the President's departure in 1972, and that was the third time that this agreement on the prevention of nuclear war in a slightly different context was raised.

As you all know, the President and the General Secretary met for 3 hours on Saturday night, and there was a discussion of the sort of problems that could be worked on in preparation for next year's summit, and, of course, there is an unfinished agenda. Obviously, the Middle East is part of the unfinished agenda, but we didn't expect to settle it at this meeting. SALT is part of it. MBFR is part of it. This is where we stand now in relation to next year's summit.

Q. General Secretary Brezhnev said, as he was departing, that he believed that President Nixon could be returning to the Soviet Union as early as 6 to 8 months. He also said that he expects that there will be more important agreements, or equally important agreements, signed there, indicating to some that he was possibly projecting perhaps an interim agreement on SALT.

On those two points, could you give us the United States view on the timing of a visit, and also on possibilities of an interim agreement on SALT which was referred to in an earlier statement by the principals?

DR. KISSINGER. Well, as you saw, the General Secretary was speaking without notes, and in the exuberance of the moment. *[Laughter]*

We don't foreclose a meeting earlier than 12 months that has been customary between the two recent summits, but if we had been asked on that occasion to give our estimate, we would have been somewhat more cautious. So if it is more rapid, then this would indicate a more rapid pace of negotiation than we have foreseen, which we do not exclude, but which we think is unlikely.

Now, it is not at all excluded, as the principals made clear, that there would be an interim agreement on SALT in a period less than the 2 to 14 months that I would have given you as an estimate, and this is one of the matters to which we will now turn.

Q. A follow-up on Mr. Kalb's question: Was chemical weapons control one of the things that had been dropped by April or May, or was that actively under consideration at this summit?

DR. KISSINGER. No.

Q. You suggested that most things had been decided on the agenda by April or May. I wondered if this matter had been excluded at that point for possible agreement or was under active consideration for agreement here?

DR. KISSINGER. When I say "had been decided by April or May," let me make clear what I mean. By the end of my visit to Zavidovo, it was not that everything had been decided, but that the range within which the negotiations between the two leaders would take place had been essentially determined, and, therefore, the shape of probable agreements had become fairly clear. By that time it was clear that there would be no agreement on chemical warfare.

Q. It used to be a theory that it would be a good idea for the top Soviet leaders to come to this country to get an idea of our strength; that is, the size of the country, what the people are like, the size and scope of our production, that kind of thing. This summit conference could have been held on a rock in the Atlantic Ocean for as much or as little that Mr. Brezhnev saw of America and Americans. Did he have at any time any desire to see anything of us and our country outside of the Presidential compound?

DR. KISSINGER. The nature of the travel of the General Secretary was left to him. We made it clear that he could go anywhere he chose and for as long as he wished, so the General Secretary's itinerary was not determined by us. However, it seemed logical to us, as well, that the General Secretary wanted to follow the summit in Moscow, that had been devoted entirely to work with just two very brief side trips, with another summit in the United States of a more or less similar nature, in which the two leaders would spend most of their time in accelerating the momentum of their previous conversations.

I think, however, it is safe to say that now that the basic course has been established, and many of the major agreements have been achieved, that the purpose to which you referred will be realized in future summits. For example, the General Secretary has pointed out to the President that when he returns to the Soviet Union in 1974, the Soviet Union would like it very much if we would agree to a greater exposure to various aspects of Soviet life, and also to see more of the Soviet Union than proved to be the case last year. We have agreed to this.

If these summits become annual events, and the General Secretary returns here in 1975, it can be taken for granted that much more extensive travel would be included in his program.

[...]

Q. My impression is that the granting of most-favored-nation status to the Soviet Union, whether or not it is granted, is no longer a serious obstacle to the development of long-term trade. Is that the case?

DR. KISSINGER. No, we believe that the granting of most-favored-nation status to the Soviet Union is important for the development of large-scale trade, and it is extremely important to the development of Soviet-American relations. This was part of the series of understandings in a whole complex of relationships between us and the Soviet Union last year, and it would cast serious doubt on our ability to perform our side of understandings and agreements if, in each case, that part of an agreement that is carried out later by one side or the other is then made the subject of additional conditions that were not part of the original negotiation, and, therefore, I would say that for both symbolic and substance reasons and substantively both economic and political, it would be very unfortunate if the request to grant most-favored-nation status to the Soviet Union, which means nondiscriminatory status vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, were not granted.

[...]

Q. The glowing manner in which the two leaders have described their past two weeks [...] carries with it the impression that we can now expect an acceleration of demands or requests or proposals, at least within our own country, for the reduction of armaments. A moment ago you talked about the necessity of maintaining vigilance. Would you discuss that in context with the summit meeting?

DR. KISSINGER. This period requires great sophistication on the part of the American people. We have reached this point because we have proceeded from the basis of adequate strength, and because we have consistently taken the position that we would reduce our strength only by agreement with the other side in some agreed relation to the reductions by the other side.

This must remain an essential part of our policy, and we cannot do, as a result of this agreement, unilaterally those things that the Soviet Union will not do. We have made it clear in the communique and we have made it clear in the conduct of our policy that the principal goal leave behind it a world that can be said to be safer, more peaceful, and more permanently free of crisis than the one we found.

But we, in our view, cannot achieve this by unilateral reductions of American strength, and we believe that the course on which we are, which has made, in our judgment, significant progress, can be maintained only if we were to continue to pursue it on the basis of strict reciprocity.

Q. If I may, I would like to come back to this not-so-important adjective, “balanced.” Isn’t it true that the Soviets have quite a different interpretation of balance than you have, and is this one of the reasons why not even the formal title of MBFR talks was spelled out in the communique?

DR. KISSINGER. What was spelled out in the communique is, I believe, consistent with what was agreed to in Vienna. The future of force reductions in Europe will not be determined by adjectives. It will be determined by concrete programs. It will not be determined by constant insinuations of some dark American design.

The United States has taken the view and has stated publicly that our security is integrally linked to the security of our European allies. Therefore, we are prepared to work with our European allies on working out a concrete program that reflects the common conception of security. We have invited our European allies to participate with us in developing this program, and we think the time has come to discuss the program, rather than the adjectives of a title of a conference.

[...]

Q. Dr. Kissinger, does the agreement to prevent nuclear war mean that we would have to enter into consultations with the Russians before we would come to the defense of an ally under attack?

DR. KISSINGER The agreement for the prevention of nuclear war, in Article 6, makes clear that allied obligations are unaffected. Secondly, the significance of Article 4 is that in case of situations that might produce the danger of nuclear war in general, consultations have to be undertaken. It should, therefore, be

seen as a restraint on the diplomacy of both sides and, as I pointed out on Friday, not a guide to action in case those restraints break down and war occurs.

[...]

Q. Dr. Kissinger, the proposal for a world disarmament conference has been mentioned many times over the years and has not been a subject necessarily of agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States as to its usefulness. I wonder whether the mention of it here in the communique, whether you would characterize it as one of the accomplishments of the summit?

DR. KISSINGER. The world disarmament conference was mentioned in last year's communique, and, therefore, to have it mentioned again cannot be considered a radical departure and one of the principal accomplishments of the conference.

We have said that we would be prepared to discuss it at an appropriate time, and I suspect that this will lead to several exchanges on that subject.

[...]