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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Amb. LETHompson/ceh

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Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: January 16, 1959.
At Dinner, F St. Club

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SUBJECT: Soviet-American Relations

PARTICIPANTS:	Vice President Nixon	Mr. Merchant	Soviet Deputy Premier
	Secretary Dulles	Secretary Anderson	Mikoyan
	Under Secretary Herter	Secretary McElroy	Ambassador Menshikov
	Under Secretary Dillon	Secretary Strauss	Mr. Soldatov
	Mr. Murphy	Mr. Allen Dulles	Mr. Troyanovski
	Ambassador Thompson	AEC Chairman McCone	S. A. Mikoyan

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During the major part of the dinner the conversation was general with the Vice President the principal interlocutor. The subject matter covered a wide range including the following.

The Vice President asked Mikoyan what were the most striking changes in America which he observed since his visit twenty-two years ago. Mikoyan named first the improvement in roads which he said to his surprise now equaled or surpassed the German autobahn system. Secondly, he said he was impressed with the amount of research conducted by the large monopolies such as Ford and General Motors and in particular their activity in the field of research in medicine.

The Vice President inquired what problem was the most serious between the USSR and the United States. Mikoyan replied Europe and in expanding this point made it clear that specifically he had in mind Germany.

The Vice President inquired of Mikoyan how, if at all, he expected Communism to develop in the United States. This launched Mikoyan into a prolonged historical discourse on the period from 1917 on in Russia with particular reference to the development of the Red Terror and the acceleration of the takeover by the Bolsheviks as a result of foreign intervention notably by the British and ourselves.

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SECRET

-2-

There was a prolonged interchange between the Vice President and Mikoyan in which parallels were attempted between the rock-throwing experience by the Vice President in South America and the egg-throwing experience by Mikoyan on this visit. In the course of it Mikoyan denied that there had been any inflammatory Soviet broadcasts to South America or any other effort to stir up trouble. He said that the reception of the Vice President in certain countries had surprised the Soviets in its violence. He said that Latin America was not in range of any Soviet propaganda transmitters. Mr. Allen Dulles challenged Mikoyan on several points in this passage and Mikoyan turned the questions aside without attempting to answer them.

A number of guests questioned Mikoyan on developments in China with particular reference to deviation in theory between the Soviet Union and China. Mr. McElroy pointedly asked if, with the growing power of China, its ensuing decreased dependence on Russia and the differential in population between the two countries, would not Russia find its position challenged and superseded in the Soviet bloc by China. Mikoyan denied that power alone determined leadership. He also deprecated any ideological discrepancies between the two countries. He avoided direct criticism of the commune system, pointing out that at various stages of development different devices were required. As an illustration he pointed to the changes which collective farming had undergone in the Soviet Union in the past decades. On the whole he gave the impression of being on the defensive in discussing relations between the two countries. In any event he was careful to avoid outright criticism of the Chinese leadership.

Toward the end of dinner there was a discussion in which a number of guests participated on the present stage of development of Communism in Russia. The Secretary of State pointed out that Communism had not been achieved with its "From each according to his ability; to each according to his need," but rather they were in a period of offering material incentives under the philosophy of "From each according to his ability; to each according to his contribution." Mikoyan readily admitted this to be true and complimented the Secretary on his knowledge of Communist theory. Mikoyan insisted the Chinese also recognized the need for incentive. He added that at the forthcoming Party Congress later this month there would be an emphasis on the importance of maintaining material incentives for the workers.

Mikoyan repeatedly asserted that Communism was the better system and said that had the Communist system prevailed in the United States during the twenty-two years since he had last visited this country we would have made even greater progress than we had actually achieved. It was clear, however, that he recognized the strength of our system in this country both in material resources

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-3-

and in our institutions. At one point he maintained that under the Communist system our production would be three times what it actually was but when he was asked to support this the only example he gave was that we are producing five million cars whereas under our present capacity we could produce ten million cars a year.

Mikoyan repeatedly asserted that the Soviet Union did not dictate to Communist parties in other countries and for this reason when he traveled in countries other than the United States there were no demonstrations against him. It was our policy in Latin America and not Mr. Nixon personally that caused the demonstrations against him. When a public statement by Khrushchev was cited which referred to the monolithic character of the Communist parties of the world, Mikoyan replied that this referred to their ideological cohesion.

The Vice President raised the question of the benefits of contacts and tourism, the exchange of exhibitions, etc., and asked why this could not be extended to the field of the exchange of information and ideas. Why did the Soviet Union feel it had to jam our broadcasts?

Mikoyan said the Soviet Union was cooperating in such matters as encouraging tourism and the exchange of delegations. So far as jamming was concerned this was occasioned by the character of the broadcasts. Jamming cost a lot of money and the Soviet Government had in fact been advised to stop jamming and spend the money on increasing their own broadcasts instead. There was some discussion of a relationship between Soviet broadcasts to Latin America and the demonstrations against the Vice President. Mr. Soldatov alleged that the Soviet broadcasts could scarcely even be heard in Latin America. Mikoyan pointed out that following the visit of Bulganin and Khrushchev to England the Soviet Union had for a period of about six months stopped jamming British broadcasts but after the Hungarian affair and the line taken by the BBC on that issue they had been obliged to resume jamming. Mr. Thompson suggested that Mr. Mikoyan have his people listen to the VOA, or if they couldn't hear it because of the jamming, we would furnish them the transcripts. After examining them perhaps they could tell us what there was in the broadcasts to which they objected. Mikoyan admitted that he was not familiar with the content of our recent broadcasts. The Secretary of State pointed out that there had been a considerable change in the character of the VOA broadcasts beginning about a year ago and he thought they were now mostly straight news.

Incidentally Mikoyan's son remarked after dinner to one of the guests that over and beyond the important contentious issues such as Berlin he found himself amazed and excited that leaders of the two countries could meet and discuss so many serious issues in the atmosphere which prevailed.

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-4-

The dinner broke up at about 10:30. The atmosphere during its entire course at no point became strained. It was by no means, however, completely light and barbs appeared in interchanges on a number of occasions on both sides.

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