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Washington Post

Clayton Fritchey

Peace in the World: Nearly at Hand in 1974

Richard Nixon may not yet have achieved the "generation of peace" he so often talks about, but it can hardly be denied that 1974 has become the most peaceful year since the end of World War II.

Some of the President's critics are still contending that, because of Watergate, it is a bad time for him to be holding another Moscow summit meeting with Communist Party Chairman Leonid Brezhnev. Actually, however, considering the present comparatively relaxed state of the world, there could hardly be a more propitious moment to get on with détente, of which arms limitation is only a part.

Now that the shooting has stopped in the Mideast, the world for once is without a major war. In Cambodia there is still some insurgent action, and in South Vietnam there is an uneasy truce, but there are now local settlements which, fortunately, no longer pit the superpowers against each other and hence no longer threaten the general peace. The climate for negotiation is about as favorable as we are likely to get in the foreseeable future.

The President and his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, have not promised any miracles in Moscow. Neither has Chairman Brezhnev. Yet there is good reason to believe that both parties to the summit are genuinely eager to advance the détente that was begun in the Nixon-Brezhnev Moscow meeting in 1972. So why cynically denigrate the new effort in advance? Why not wait and see what comes of it, even if it takes some time, and meanwhile hope and work for the best? How does the Conservative-Republican

"But today, for a change and hopefully for an extended time, it's mostly quiet on the world front. Coincidentally, the climate inside the Kremlin seems benign for the moment."

can senator from New York, James Buckley, know that the mission to Moscow is a "mission in futility"? How does The Wall Street Journal know that "no worthwhile arms agreement is currently within reach"? How does Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the dissident Russian writer, know that Mr. Nixon does not have sufficient strength to demand proper control of these treaties?

There is little doubt that Watergate has impaired Mr. Nixon's leadership on the domestic front, but there is no evidence that the Nixon-Kissinger combine has lost its effectiveness internationally, quite the contrary. The cease-fire in the Mideast is a testimonial to administration diplomacy.

The President and Dr. Kissinger may not pull any rabbits out of a hat on their current trip, but now is the time to lay the groundwork for further development of a détente that has already played a part in bringing about the relatively benign conditions of 1974. As Kissinger says, the object of this summit meeting is "to maintain a dialogue, to contain the danger of

nuclear concentration and to create positive incentives for a peaceful world."

That is a lot, and it should not be undervalued. If, however, the opponents of détente succeed in derailing it and in reverting the cold war, it may be a long time before the climate is again so favorable for cultivating peaceful coexistence.

This is really a rarer moment than it generally realized, for, ever since the beginning of the cold war more than 25 years ago, the world situation has been exacerbated by an unbroken chain of conflicts and confrontations, nearly all affecting the United States in one way or another.

In the late 1940s there was the first blockade, the great Chinese civil war, the first Arab-Israeli war, the takeover of Czechoslovakia and the Greek-Turkish crisis. From 1950 to 1953 the Korean war held the stage, followed by the defeat of the French in Indo-China in 1954 and another Mideast crisis in 1955-56, culminating in the second Arab-Israeli war which finally involved all the great powers.

The mid-1950s were also marked by the bloody revolts in Hungary, Poland and East Germany. The United States openly sent troops to Lebanon, while secretly involving itself in Vietnam. The French-Algerian war reached its climax, torn by the Congo war, the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Cuban missile crisis, the Berlin wall, India's clashes with both Pakistan and China, the third Mideast war in 1967 and above all America's unacknowledged military intervention in Vietnam, which lasted until 1972.

The 1970s also began inauspiciously, with Vietnam threatening controls with Russia and China, plus the war over Bangladesh, plus the four-day Arab-Israeli war last October, plus the tensions between Russia and China, now somewhat relaxed. But today, for a change and hopefully for an extended time, it's mostly quiet on the world front.

Coincidentally, the summit talks in the Kremlin at what at first seems to be a moment just a few days before Mr. Nixon's arrival in Moscow. Chairman Brezhnev noted that critics of détente think arms limitation agreements are risky. But, in practice, he said, "It is an inescapably realistic task to continue unbridled armaments competition."

William Raspberry is on each son. His column will continue upon his return.

Los Angeles Times

For a Total Test Ban

For more than a decade, most efforts to curb nuclear arms have focused not on the weapons but on the missiles and the delivery systems that place atomic bombs on target. Recently, however, there has been a growing realization that, as the nuclear era began with an explosion in 1945, the arms race cannot be halted nor can the nuclear power balance be stabilized without ending nuclear explosions.

A comprehensive nuclear test ban, barring underground as well as atmospheric explosions, would discourage the spread of nuclear weapons to additional countries, a danger pointed up anew by India's recent underground bomb test. It would also hinder proliferation by the United States and the Soviet Union—the steady introduction of new types and generations of warheads, along with improved missiles and aircraft to deliver them.

The limited underground test ban being discussed by President Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev in Russia would be welcome but of strictly limited utility in preventing proliferation. The 200-kiloton "threshold" proposed by the United States Defense Department would not prevent tests such as India's (15 kilotons), nor would it impede the testing program projected by the Pentagon for increasing the power of MIRV multiple warheads.

What is most essential now is to move toward a total cessation of testing within a limited number of years. Fortunately this view is being pressed on President Nixon by a bipartisan group of Senators with additional support from concerned House members. The lawmakers fear that a threshold test ban alone at this point will take the steam out of the drive for a comprehensive ban—as did the limited test-ban treaty of 1963—and again bring an increase in testing.

Many scientists believe unilateral verification techniques already are good enough to detect any evasions of a test ban; and the risks could be diminished further with five more years of research. Meanwhile, military opposition in both this country and the Soviet Union would be eased by having a few more years in which to complete tests deemed essential.

Mr. Brezhnev appears ready to fix a date as early as 1980 for a total ban on testing. With the substantial Congressional support already mobilized, President Nixon should join him in this commitment. A quota of annual tests, gradually declining to zero, offers the best way to solve the problem and to head off a fresh spasm of underground testing that might well follow the conclusion of a threshold test ban.