

A Personal Affair: Diplomatic Negotiations and the Portrayal of Détente in *Pravda*, 1972-75

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## ABSTRACT

MICHAEL V. PAULAUSKAS: A Personal Affair: Diplomatic Negotiations and the Portrayal of Détente in *Pravda*, 1972-75  
(Under the direction of Donald J. Raleigh)

This thesis explores how diplomatic relations between the US and the USSR changed during détente, specifically concentrating on the period between the 1972 Moscow Summit and the enactment of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1974 Trade Bill. I employ transcripts of diplomatic negotiations to investigate the ways that Soviet and American leaders used new personal relationships with their adversaries to achieve their foreign policy goals. In order to gain further understanding of the Soviet leadership's attitudes toward détente, I also examine how the Soviet government, through *Pravda*, communicated this new, increasingly complex diplomatic relationship to the Soviet public in a nuanced fashion, with multilayered presentations of American foreign policy that included portrayals of individual actors and not simply impersonal groups.

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## Introduction

Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin greeted the news of Richard M. Nixon's 1968 election to the presidency with considerable wariness. Dobrynin's thoughts drifted to a day ten years earlier, when then Vice President Nixon visited Moscow and joined Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in the infamous "kitchen debate," with each leader extolling the virtues of his respective society. In his memoirs, Dobrynin describes how Khrushchev, "infuriated by an anti-Soviet [American congressional] resolution referring to the 'captive peoples'" of Eastern Europe, "took Nixon for a ride on a motor launch down the picturesque Moscow River" following the debate. The ambassador recalls

It was a weekend, and the boat stopped at sandy beaches, where Khrushchev introduced Nixon to ordinary citizens enjoying themselves in the sun. He then would ask them loudly and in a joking manner if they felt enslaved. The answer was always a burst of laughter. Throughout the trip he persisted in lecturing and teasing Nixon, who was made quite uncomfortable by his hectoring host.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet leadership feared that these initial contacts as well as Nixon's personal history of "anti-Sovietism, anti-communism, and militarism" could lead to only "hard times for Soviet-American relations."<sup>2</sup>

In 1968, *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, displayed similar reservations about the new president. During the week prior to the election,

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<sup>1</sup> Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents (1962-1987)* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 197.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 196.

in an article “President or Sheriff?,” *Pravda* correspondent B. Strel’nikov described how each of the presidential candidates was essentially the same, writing, “It is necessary to note that in a society of universal fear the slogan ‘law and order’ hypnotized many voters. But not all. Here today there is a very popular caricature: two Americans stand in front of portraits of the candidates. One American asks another: ‘Whose blow to the head by nightstick do you prefer? Vote.’”<sup>3</sup> Two days later, correspondent V. Nekrasov mirrored these feelings: “Many realize that, in the final analysis, nothing is decided, nothing is determined.”<sup>4</sup> While such critiques of the democratic process do not outwardly attack Nixon for his anticommunist past, they also do not point to an optimistic future for Soviet-American relations. This makes Nixon and Brezhnev’s ushering in of the new era of superpower affairs known as détente, or “a relaxation of tensions,” every bit more remarkable. During the Nixon and Ford presidencies, Soviet and American leaders met at summits in Moscow in May 1972, in the US in June 1973, in Moscow in June 1974, and in Vladivostok in December 1974. Détente also included constant secretive “back channel” negotiations carried out by Dobrynin and Dr. Henry Kissinger, who served as national security advisor from 1969 to 1974 and as secretary of state from 1973 to 1977. These private talks led to the first Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty (SALT I), signed by Nixon and Brezhnev in Moscow in 1972, and further negotiations resulted in a second agreement (SALT II), with the preliminary framework approved in Vladivostok in 1974 before Brezhnev and President Jimmy Carter signed a final draft in 1979.

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<sup>3</sup> B. Strel’nikov, “Prezident ili sherif?,” *Pravda*, 29 October 1968, 5.

<sup>4</sup> V Nekrasov, “Nad chem zadumyvaetsia Amerika,” *Pravda*, 31 October 1968, 5.

Addressing the changes in diplomatic relations between the superpowers, my essay considers how *Pravda* represented this new relationship with the US during détente.<sup>5</sup> Drawing on diplomatic documents and Soviet newspapers, I seek to answer a number of important questions about détente and official public culture. First, how did Soviet and American diplomats on the highest levels interact during détente? Here, I hope to provide insight on how the leaders used personal relationships to further their own agendas. Also, how was this new, increasingly complex relationship between the superpowers communicated to the Soviet public by the official press? Finally, what can be learned about the Soviet government's attitudes toward détente by examining their presentation of Soviet-American relations during this time?

My work speaks to several underdeveloped historiographies. The first concerns Soviet writings on détente. Most important to my research is Morton Schwartz's examination of the scholarly literature produced by the Institute of the USA and Canada, formed by the Soviet government in 1967 as a think tank for issues regarding American politics, economics, and society. He contends that the "interests, attitudes, expectations, influences – the underlying 'motive forces' of American foreign policy – are recognized to be more differentiated than originally assumed" by Soviet thinkers before détente.<sup>6</sup> Although my own research substantiates his point, my paper diverges from Schwartz's work in two important ways. First of all, whereas Schwartz's research provides a window into the theorizing of détente by

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<sup>5</sup> *Pravda* utilizes a number of terms to refer to détente. First, the newspaper frequently employs *razriadka* or *razriadka napriazhennosti*, literally "relaxation" or "relaxation of tensions." *Pravda* also uses *sotrudnichestvo*, which means "cooperation" or "collaboration," to describe the détente-era relationship with the USA.

<sup>6</sup> Morton Schwartz, *Soviet Perceptions of the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 156.

Soviet academics as a philosophy for leadership cadres,<sup>7</sup> I investigate how the government tried to communicate an increasingly complex superpower relationship to its public while accommodating American leaders seeking indications of Soviet policy changes in the pages of *Pravda*. Second, while Schwartz's sources, the monthly journal *SShA (USA)* and the books written by members of the Institute, are useful in detecting broader shifts in the attitudes of the academics who influenced Soviet leaders, newspapers are more helpful in seeking day-to-day changes in the thinking of the Soviet leadership.<sup>8</sup>

I also enter into dialogue with other authors who have addressed Soviet images of the other, particularly with regards to the United States. Eric Shiraev and Vladislav Zubok discuss the Soviet and Russian public's attitudes toward America as a "pendulum," changing from the "mistrust and fear" promoted by the Soviet government early in the Cold War, to the "admiration and hope" maintained by individuals privately in the late Soviet period, "then back to suspiciousness and alienation" in the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> My essay captures a unique moment in the swing of this pendulum, as the government, hoping to garner support at home in the wake of the crackdown in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the repression of dissidents, shifted from its previous rhetoric of "mistrust and fear" to present a more nuanced image of the US, grounded in both positive and negative images of US foreign policy.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 160.

<sup>8</sup> Other authors have performed work similar to Schwartz that is more tangentially related to my research. For instance, see Jong-Pyo Kim, *Image-Behavior Linkage: An Analysis of Soviet Images of America and Détente, 1969-1978* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1991). While my research confirms Kim's description of the image of America during détente as "a reversed U-shaped pattern," with its peak at the 1973 US summit (89), Kim's focus on using the presentation of the US to predict foreign policy and his use of *New Times*, a weekly paper printed for foreign consumption, separate his work from my own.

<sup>9</sup> Eric Shiraev and Vladislav Zubok, *Anti-Americanism in Russia: From Stalin to Putin* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 3.

Finally, my work enters into debates among diplomatic historians of the Cold War concerning the causes of détente. Kissinger set the tone of the discussion in his memoirs, focusing on issues of international balance of power and national interest and arguing that American negotiations with the Soviet Union and China were designed “to shape a global equilibrium” that “could assure stability among the major powers, and even eventual cooperation, in the Seventies and Eighties.”<sup>10</sup> While Jeremi Suri does not deny that these international concerns played some role in the rise of détente, he also suggests that détente primarily “grew from a common urge for stability among leaders under attack at home.”<sup>11</sup> Therefore, social conflicts forced the superpower governments to make peace abroad in order to quell dissent at home, as the waves of American protest against the Vietnam War as well as the growing prominence of the Soviet dissident movement and the fallout from the 1968 military repression of Czechoslovakia’s Prague Spring brought both American and Soviet leaders to the conclusion that they “could no longer assume that they commanded legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens.”<sup>12</sup> Stephen Gilbert examines Soviet political speeches and the publications of the Institute of the USA and Canada to argue that the Soviet leadership viewed détente as “America’s only option,” as an evident decline in the capitalist world made détente an offensive policy on the part of the Soviets that guaranteed the imminent victory of socialism.<sup>13</sup> My essay argues that although evidence of détente as a Soviet offensive strategy exists in *Pravda*, the newspaper centered its coverage on Soviet-American collaborative efforts toward peace, countering Gilbert’s claims. This focus on the Soviet leadership

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<sup>10</sup> Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 192.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen P. Gilbert, *Soviet Images of America* (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc., 1977), 46-47.



stressing peaceful cooperation as opposed to offensive policy supports Suri's work, as the Soviet government sought to use détente to strengthen its legitimacy amongst the Soviet populace following the turmoil of 1968 and the repression of the dissident movement. Furthermore, while Gilbert's work focuses on how "certain transcendent, universalist goals, derived from ideology" shaped Soviet foreign policy during détente,<sup>14</sup> my investigation confirms the view of Robert D. English, who describes how "gradually, mutual respect and trust were built" between Soviet and American diplomats, with one Soviet diplomat stating that this occurred: "'not only during negotiating sessions but also [in] conversations at home, intervals, or 'walks in the woods.'"<sup>15</sup> My essay expands upon this point, as personal connections between Soviet and American diplomats on a higher level transcended ideological barriers and allowed for closer US-Soviet relations and an expansion of détente.

I employ two types of sources to examine the dynamics of détente and its presentation to the Soviet populace. Each chapter of this essay begins with an analysis of the memoirs of key leaders as well as transcripts of diplomatic negotiations to lay out the basic issues that brought the Soviet leadership and the American authorities to the negotiating table and to establish the tone of discussions between the superpowers. These sections discuss prominent diplomatic issues that separated and brought together the Soviet and American leadership and examine how these leaders interacted in an unprecedented personal fashion. Then, each section inspects how the Soviet leadership used *Pravda* to communicate its new, more complex vision of Soviet-American relations developed during détente.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 19- 20.

<sup>15</sup> Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 149.

I focus on *Pravda* in my analysis of this shift in public discourse for several reasons. First, during the years of this survey, *Pravda*, the official organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, had the largest readership of any Soviet newspaper, with a circulation of about 9 million in 1969 that rose to nearly 11 million by 1974.<sup>16</sup> Also, as Angus Roxburgh writes, *Pravda* “is slightly more authoritative than *Izvestiia*,” the newspaper of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, due to “the primacy of the Communist Party over the Government.”<sup>17</sup> This distinction is particularly important in the foreign policy discussed in my work, as all détente negotiations with the United States were carried out by Brezhnev and the Communist Party. Even as late as 1987, when *Pravda*’s circulation began to fall, Roxburgh describes *Pravda* as the “first violin” of the Soviet media’s “orchestra,” as “*Pravda*’s comment [set] the political and ideological tone for all the other media.”<sup>18</sup>

My research strategy comprised reading issues of *Pravda* by targeting specific events, including the Soviet-American summits, the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1974 Trade Bill, in order to examine how the presentation of détente shifted during and after these critical moments in history. To ensure that there would be no gaps in my coverage, I scanned one week of newspapers per month during the Nixon and Ford administrations, making sure that I read at least one month of newspapers in full per every half year. Since this essay concentrates on *Pravda*’s presentation of American foreign policy, reports on issues such as American social injustice or worker strikes, which received attention in *Pravda*, are not a central focus. My analysis of the articles on American

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<sup>16</sup> Angus Roxburgh, *Pravda: Inside the Soviet News Machine* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1987), 281.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 58. For circulation figures for *Pravda* and other Soviet newspapers from 1987 through 1989, refer to John Murray, *The Russian Press From Brezhnev to Yeltsin: Behind the Paper Curtain* (Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1994), 260-62.

foreign policy involves scrutinizing the tone, the placement of an article within the space of a newspaper, and the assignment of agency for various actions. I have taken a similar approach in examining political cartoons.

## A Cautious Beginning: Soviet-American Relations before the Moscow Summit

The period between Nixon's assumption of the presidency in 1969 and the May 1972 Moscow summit can be characterized as a cautious beginning to détente, with the leaders becoming acquainted with each other, negotiating some preliminary agreements, and gauging how seriously the opposing side took the matter of nuclear limitations. According to Dobrynin, in his first year of office Nixon "confirmed [Soviet] apprehensions" that arose after his election "because there were no attempts on his part to improve relations on the diplomatic level. He avoided making any statements about armaments control." In Dobrynin's opinion, Nixon later became the first US president to accept that "the nuclear power of the Soviet Union was as strong" as that of the US, and "he thought that there had to be some means of control: that there should be no political confrontation that would have brought about nuclear confrontation." Dobrynin concluded, "When Nixon came in, there was a combination of confrontation and apprehension on both sides, but at the same time a mutual desire to somehow control things."<sup>19</sup> Détente developed slowly, with both sides taking time to size up their opponents and consider their positions.

Before Nixon's election, *Pravda's* coverage of American foreign policy was negative, particularly with regards to Vietnam, providing sharp criticism of President Lyndon B. Johnson late in his term. For instance, a front-page article on July 7, 1968, states, "The cars

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<sup>19</sup> CNN Cold War Series, "Interviews: Anatoly Dobrynin," March 1997, <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/16/interviews/dobrynin/> (4 November 2005).

of the president and his attendants were met in San-Salvador with columns of demonstrators, who were protesting against Johnson's visit, against the aggressive policies of the USA and the dirty war in Vietnam."<sup>20</sup> Another article, discussing a meeting between Johnson and South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu in Honolulu, notes, "More than fifty people picketed the consul of the puppet president of South Vietnam Nguyen Van Thieu, who arrived in Honolulu for a meeting with American President Johnson. The picketers . . . protested against the Pentagon's dirty war in Vietnam."<sup>21</sup> Also, a political cartoon from July 19, "'The Floating Bridge' of Foreign Developers," shows a caricature of Johnson, wearing a cowboy hat and an inner tube with "USA" written on it, preparing to climb onto a wooden bridge that floats on several menacing-looking ducks. The planks to the bridge read "blackmail," "espionage," "ideological sabotage," "provocation," and "slander," and the rails at the end of the bridge are pointed as spears. A swastika-tongued snake is wrapped around a flowery arch that passes over the center of the bridge.<sup>22</sup> While critiques of American foreign policy did not always center on the character of the president, with nonpersonal entities such as the Pentagon, the armed forces, and capitalists regularly condemned, the coverage of the Johnson presidency was negative and personal, making use of his name in articles and his image in cartoons.

Following Nixon's election, the cautious attitude that characterized détente before the May 1972 summit finds reflection in the conflicted nature of the coverage of American foreign policy in *Pravda*. Newspaper articles concentrating on the Vietnam War continued to

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<sup>20</sup> "Sal'vadortsy protestuiut," *Pravda*, 7 July 1968, 1.

<sup>21</sup> "Vstrecha v Gonolulu," *Pravda*, 20 July 1968, 5.

<sup>22</sup> V. Fomichev, "'Naplavnoi most' zamorskikh stroitelei," Cartoon, *Pravda*, 19 July 1968, 4. For a photograph of this cartoon, please see Appendix I, 1.

portray American foreign policy negatively, similar to the late Johnson years, featuring titles such as “The Vietnam Aggression of the USA is Under the Fire of Criticism,”<sup>23</sup> “The Dangerous Course of the Pentagon,”<sup>24</sup> and “The Perpetrator of the suffering of Millions – Imperialism.”<sup>25</sup> The 1972 New Year’s Day edition of *Pravda* contains a section entitled “Condemnation of the Criminal Actions of the USA,” with the articles “Retribution for Robbery” and “A Firm Warning.”<sup>26</sup> These titles display the aggressive language typical of articles discussing American policy in Vietnam. Moreover, the articles often demand that US forces leave Indochina. The article “A Resolute Condemnation,” from January 11, 1972, provides such a statement, citing an “insolent call to peoples” from the Ministry of Foreign Relations of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), “which decisively demands that the USA immediately cease bombardments of Laotian territory and put an end to the aggressive war in Indochina.”<sup>27</sup>

Early in détente, the Soviet government published similar statements condemning the Vietnam War in *Pravda*, such as its “Statement in Connection with the Continuation of the Aggression of the USA in Indochina,” which prominently appears on the front page next to a “Declaration of Peace, Security, and Cooperation in Europe” signed by leaders from the entire Soviet bloc. It slams the American war effort, stating that “the actions of the USA in the region of the Indochinese peninsula convincingly show that Washington continues to serve as a headquarters not for political but for military solutions to the problems of that

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<sup>23</sup> “V’etnamskaia agressiia SShA pod ognem kritiki,” *Pravda*, 20 September 1969, 5.

<sup>24</sup> “Opasnyi kurs pentagona,” *Pravda*, 7 April 1970, 5.

<sup>25</sup> “Vinovnik stradii millionov – imperializm,” *Pravda*, 1 January 1971, 4.

<sup>26</sup> “Osuzhdenie prestupnykh deistvii SShA,” *Pravda*, 1 January 1972, 5.

<sup>27</sup> “Reshitel’noe osuzhdenie,” *Pravda*, 11 January 1972, 1.

region.” It concludes that American imperialism, the policy of Vietnamization, and preserving the “puppet government” of South Vietnamese leader Nguyen Van Thieu ensure that “the politics of the USA in Indochina are doomed to unavoidable failure!”<sup>28</sup> Similar to the statement of condemnation from the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry, this declaration from the Warsaw Pact countries stresses American aggression in Indochina and the role of American imperialist attitudes in allowing the unjust war to continue.

Despite the intensity of these criticisms, one defining attribute that both shapes and softens them is the impersonal manner in which the articles discuss American foreign policy, differentiating this coverage from the articles targeting President Johnson personally at the end of his term. For instance, in the “Statement in Connection with the Continuation of the Aggression of the USA in Indochina,” the guilty actors mentioned include the American government, Washington, South Vietnam, and Thieu. The authors do not blame any specific American leaders, including Nixon, Kissinger, for the campaign.<sup>29</sup> In another article, “The Forces of Progress and Peace Are Invincible,” the author writes, “New secret documents of the US government appeared in several organs of the American press, as an aggressive American policy, hostile to the liberation movements of Bangladesh and India, was developed in detail in the hiding places of Washington.”<sup>30</sup> Here, while Washington and the government retain a portion of the blame, the author’s use of passive voice leaves the question of agency open ended.

One of the few instances where reference to a particular American leader can be found in *Pravda* at this time is when the newspaper prints an interview or press conference with the

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<sup>28</sup> “Zaiavlenie v sviazi s prodolzheniem agressii SShA v Indokitae,” *Pravda*, 27 January 1972, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Vitalii Korionov, “Sily progressa i mira neodolimy,” *Pravda*, 9 January 1972, 1-4.

president or other American leaders. The article “Interview with R. Nixon,” appearing on January 4, 1972, provides its harshest critique of the president when it states, “He was forced to contend with sharp criticism of the American administration’s policy in connection with the concentrated air raids in [North Vietnam], which caused a broad wave of indignation and protests in the USA and the entire world.”<sup>31</sup> In general, *Pravda* reserved its most aggressive criticisms for non agents in the passive voice or inanimate objects, including the White House, the Pentagon, and Washington. When using the names of Nixon or his advisors, the critiques tended to be mild, concentrating on the facts of the situation and allowing these officials to state their positions.

This tendency to criticize American foreign policy in an impersonal manner during the early years of détente is also found in *Pravda*’s political cartoons. For instance, a cartoon from January 26, 1972, “Diplomacy of the USA ‘At Work,’” addresses the slowness of the American withdrawal from Vietnam. In the lower left-hand corner of the cartoon, a sign pointing along a relatively straight road reads, “The path to the settlement of the Vietnam conflict.” Blocking that road, however, is a construction sign followed by a “Detour” sign that points along a divergent, winding path. Behind these signs stands the stereotypical symbol of a capitalist, who smokes a cigar and wears a top hat, glasses, a long black tuxedo coat, and striped trousers. He works in the road, using a jackhammer to destroy the path that would most easily lead to settlement. Unable to follow this path of peace, American soldiers lie prone under some palm trees that stand along the meandering road of the detour, pointing their machine guns in anticipation of a battle against North Vietnamese forces.<sup>32</sup> In this way,

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<sup>31</sup> “Interv’iu R. Niksona,” *Pravda*, 4 January 1972, 5.

<sup>32</sup> V. Til’man, “Diplomatiia SShA ‘za rabotoi,’” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 26 January 1972, 5. See Appendix I, 2. This caricature represents a capitalist and not Uncle Sam for various reasons, including his black overcoat,



American policy in the Third World remains under scrutiny, as American forces are delayed in their exit from Vietnam. This criticism, however, is applied to the impersonal depiction of the capitalist and not representations of American foreign policy leaders such as Nixon or Kissinger.

Political cartoons reflecting this same impersonal criticism can be found discussing other aspects of American foreign policy. For instance, in “Smoke Screen above Olympus,” the artist employs an often-used symbol of the United States military establishment: a uniformed man wearing a pair of dark sunglasses and a large helmet. The caricature sits on a mountaintop bust of Zeus, firmly straddling the statue with his legs and gripping its hair with his right hand. In his left hand, the soldier holds a battleship with smoke that is pouring from its smokestacks and surrounding the mountain. A caption sitting within the smoke reads, “!!!Soviet threat!!!” The caption explains: “American admirals recently have made much noise about the mythical ‘Soviet threat’ in the Mediterranean. However, under the cover of deceitful fabrications the strategists of the Pentagon develop aggressive plans for this region.”<sup>33</sup> Once again, the cartoonist attacks American policy, describing it both as “aggressive” and “deceitful.” The cartoon also assigns agency for this policy to a number of impersonal forces, including the US military, “American admirals,” and “the Pentagon.” Therefore, the cartoon criticizes US foreign policy without attacking the American leaders who were most responsible for it. They remained out of sight, covertly negotiating détente with the Soviet government.

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black top hat, and the cigar in his mouth, all of which are atypical of the representation of Uncle Sam in the Soviet press between 1969 and 1977.

<sup>33</sup> Kukryniksa, “Dymovaia zavesa nad Olimpom,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 28 January 1972, 5. See Appendix II, 3.

The coverage of American foreign policy in *Pravda* reflects the apprehensive mood of détente before the May 1972 summit, as described by diplomats such as Dobrynin. Even as late as January 1972, Soviet censors continued to treat American foreign policy critically, targeting the war in Vietnam and other American actions in developing countries. Be that as it may, the newspaper eliminated personal attacks on prominent American leaders associated with détente, including Nixon and Kissinger. While Soviet skepticism of détente is displayed in the intense criticisms, the lack of direct attacks on officials negotiating détente with the Soviet government indicates that the Soviet authorities had left the door open for the possibility that détente between the powers would widen.

## The Lifting of the Veil: The 1972 Moscow Summit

The course of détente shifted dramatically in late May 1972, when Nixon and Brezhnev met in Moscow for a summit meeting and signed the several agreements that make up SALT I, including the “Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems,” the “Interim Agreement on Certain Measures With Respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms,” and “Basic Principles of Relations between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.” Now, the veil that hid the full extent of détente was lifted, especially in the Soviet Union, and the fruit of the secret negotiations between the White House and the Kremlin was placed on public display.

On the eve of the Moscow summit, Kissinger met with Brezhnev at his private guest house to settle the last main points of contention that the private “back channel” negotiations between Kissinger and Dobrynin had not yet finalized. The two leaders stood, overlooking the Moscow River, and reflected on the progress that they had made while anticipating Nixon’s visit. Discussing Kissinger’s most recent editing of the documents, Brezhnev noted: “They tell me you’ve been working on the draft of the Principles and strengthening it. That’s what I had suggested. You’re a good man. If I were you and I were an evil man, I’d have just kept quiet about the draft as it was. But you are a generous man.”<sup>34</sup> Following a

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<sup>34</sup> “Kissinger-Brezhnev Conversation, 22 April 1972, 11:00 AM-4:05 PM,” <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB60/abm34.pdf> (20 October 2005).

promise to mention Kissinger favorably in a speech, Brezhnev praised the nature of “back channel” diplomacy and spoke positively of the future of détente: “You and I can accomplish much together between the two of us. Maybe we should just abolish our Foreign Offices.” Playing along, Kissinger assured the general secretary that the US had “already taken steps in that direction.”<sup>35</sup> Even after the parties entered the house and official talks began, this banter persisted. Kissinger joked about the weight he gained every time he visited the Soviet Union, eating copious amounts of cookies and cakes, which he referred to as the USSR’s “secret weapon,”<sup>36</sup> while Brezhnev let loose a series of long jokes to both lighten the mood and, occasionally, shed light on the negotiations.

Both sides initially saw the development of this sort of congenial relationship as leverage for receiving further concessions from the other. On the American side, this is evident when Kissinger privately informs Nixon about a conversation he had with Dobrynin, when he angrily explained to the Soviet ambassador that the US was reinstating a bombing campaign of Hanoi because of the DRV’s decision to retract an agreement for a meeting. Kissinger explains, “Dobrynin was in slobbering all over me,” despite the fact that he “should [have been] yelling and screaming” over the news that the US was “bombing the capitol and near the capitol of one of their close allies.”<sup>37</sup> Here, Kissinger demonstrates an open understanding that each superpower attempted to massage the other party’s ego, even as the opposing superpower did something unfavorable. In his memoirs, Dobrynin provides further insight into his decision to avoid “yelling and screaming,” noting that the Politburo “was

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> “Nixon-Kissinger Telephone Conversation, 15 April 1972, 10:25 PM,” <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB123/Box%2029,%20File%208%20Kissinger-%20President%20April%2015%201972%2010,25%20pm%20.pdf> (5 December 2005).

caught in a dilemma between wanting to stop the American bombing and wanting to go ahead with a summit meeting with the president who had ordered the attacks.”<sup>38</sup> By acting calmly and playing into his personal closeness with Kissinger, Dobrynin could buy more time for the Politburo to consider the issue of the summit while simultaneously keeping the roots of a working relationship with Nixon and Kissinger on track. Despite this mutually-manipulative aspect of the superpower relationship, it remained unusually intimate and grew more earnest as time went on and the concrete settlements of the first summit ended the caution held by the Soviet leadership in the first years of détente.

The developing personal relationship helped the negotiating parties deal with the one sticking point in the talks, as even the Vietnam War was discussed in a friendly manner. Noting that he “certainly support[ed] President Nixon’s idea of ending the war,” Brezhnev stated: “Of course, it was not President Nixon who started the war. But of course it’s up to the United States to extricate itself somehow from it.” He continued: “The U.S. will have to do it; whether it is President Nixon or someone else, is not for me to say, but the U.S. will have to do it. That is the only way. Otherwise, the fighting will go on. You know their determination, and the support they are getting [in] public opinion throughout the world.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, similar to the coverage in *Pravda*, Brezhnev attacked the continuation of the war in his discussions with Kissinger while avoiding assaults directed at Nixon or other foreign policy leaders. While he needed to support his Vietnamese ally, Brezhnev could not alienate his negotiating partners in the United States, so he did his best to encourage negotiations between the USA and the DRV while avoiding offending Kissinger. Even during their

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<sup>38</sup> Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 245.

<sup>39</sup> “Kissinger-Brezhnev Conversation, 22 April 1972, 11:00 AM-4:05 PM,” <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB60/abm34.pdf>.

contentious discussions involving Vietnam, the negotiating partners worked calmly, and each side left the table eagerly anticipating Nixon's visit to Moscow. While the personal relationship between the leaders was still in its infancy on the eve of the Moscow summit, it was already proving effective in helping leaders from both superpowers to regulate their affairs in a friendly manner, providing means for both sides to pressure each other on the issue of North Vietnam and for Dobrynin to delay the Politburo's decision on the summit.

In the weeks preceding the Moscow summit, newspaper coverage of American foreign policy in *Pravda* remained critical, but impersonal. For instance, on May 13, in an article "Schemes of the Pentagon Suffer Failure," political commentator Iurii Zhukov retains the criticism of Vietnam seen in previous years, writing, "The Soviet people and the entire progressive community of the world decisively condemn the new expansion of aggressive actions in Vietnam undertaken by the United States." Moreover, this article, unlike most others of the period, discusses the actions of an American president: Lyndon Johnson. Zhukov first quotes a *New York Times* reporter, who writes that "Vietnamization ended in no less of an immense failure than the land war of Johnson." He later describes Operation Rolling Thunder, "when the Pentagon subjected the entire territory of North Vietnam to systematic mass bombing" and "Johnson was forced to end these operations, in the course of which American aviation suffered heavy losses, and go to negotiations." Even though the paper associates Johnson with the land war, the impersonal force of the Pentagon retains agency in beginning the former bombing campaign. The only other American politician mentioned in the article is Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, who is quoted as giving the number of American soldiers in Vietnam to the Senate and evading the questions of a reporter about the role of American troops late in the war. But no mention is made of Nixon

or Kissinger, leaving the primary players in negotiating détente untouched in this criticism of American foreign policy.<sup>40</sup>

The political cartoons in *Pravda* leading up to the summit, like the newspaper coverage, remained focused on an impersonal, negative portrayal of American foreign policy. For example, in the cartoon “For the Beloved Melody, (I) Don’t Begrudge the Money,” Uncle Sam, in a starred vest and a cowboy hat with a gun on his belt, leans on a jukebox, dropping money into the machine. The side of the jukebox reads, “Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe,” and from the jukebox comes music, which forms the word “Anticommunism.” The caption reads, “The government of the USA generously finances the radio stations Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, which broadcast slanderous propaganda against the Soviet Union and other socialist nations.”<sup>41</sup> As in the cartoons from previous months, US foreign policy served as the standard target for political cartoons in *Pravda* in the weeks before Nixon’s summit, with each of the cartoons taking an impersonal approach to the critique.

After a May 17 article announced that “the government of the United States continues preparations for the trip of President Nixon to the Soviet Union in accordance with plans,” *Pravda*’s coverage of American foreign policy changed dramatically.<sup>42</sup> The following day, the article “Sober Heads” examines the growing preference among American scholars for foreign policy “realism,” which they describe as a commitment to negotiate with the Soviet Union on equal terms for the peaceful coexistence of two separate systems of government. The editorial concludes, “All these facts attest to the fact that in American academic circles the position of forces that speak in favor of the turning of the USA to a more realistic policy

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<sup>40</sup> Iurii Zhukov, “Zamyslyl Pentagona terpiat proval,” *Pravda*, 13 May 1972, 4.

<sup>41</sup> D. Araev, “Dlia liubimoi melodii deneg ne zhal’,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 3 May 1972, 3. See Appendix II, 4.

<sup>42</sup> “Press-konferentsiia R. Ziglera,” *Pravda*, 17 May 1972, 5.

and a more constructive approach to urgent international problems is strengthening.”<sup>43</sup> The next day, the article “From the Positions of Realism” attempts to place this newfound interest in the positive side of American foreign policy in a historical context, declaring that “the improvement of relations between the USSR and the USA is possible and desirable – the Soviet government invariably adhered to this position from the moment of its birth.”<sup>44</sup> Finally, in “Desire of the Majority of Americans,” another author examines American newspapers, news, and radio commentary, and a discussion with the vice-president of Caterpillar Tractor to ascertain how Americans felt about the upcoming summit in Moscow. He concludes:

Wide circles of the American public hope that the mutual interests of our peoples in solving urgent problems will gain the upper hand over the aspirations of those American politicians who would freeze Soviet-American relations in the trenches of the Cold War. To remove obstacles to détente in Soviet-American relations, to search for mutually-beneficial constructive solutions to vital problems in the interests of general peace – such, in the opinion of many observers, is the sincere desire of the majority of the people of the USA.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, in the days following the confirmation that Nixon would travel to Moscow for the summit, before the president even set foot in the country, coverage of American foreign policy changed dramatically, suddenly concentrating on the merits of American “realism” as well as on the great possibilities of improved relations between the two superpowers.

When Nixon became the first US president to visit the Soviet Union, arriving on May 22, the press exploded with positive coverage of American foreign policy. First of all, *Pravda*

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<sup>43</sup> G. Trofimenko, “Trezvye golosa,” *Pravda*, 18 May 1972, 4.

<sup>44</sup> S. Vishnevskii, “S pozitsii realizma,” *Pravda*, 19 May 1972, 4.

<sup>45</sup> T. Kolesnichenko, “Zhelanie bol’shinstva amerikantsev,” *Pravda*, 20 May 1972, 5.



provided the full text of all three major agreements concluded at the summit.<sup>46</sup> The emphasis placed on these treaties put the talks at the fore of the world news, trumping praise for Soviet domestic affairs, coverage of Vietnam, and attacks on other aspects of Western foreign policy. Also, rather than continuing to present American foreign policy as faceless, newspapers suddenly made it a very personal affair. This is most evident in the daily front-page coverage of the summit, which the newspaper devoted to listing all of the various superpower meetings, including the names of all attendees of the talks as well as the agreements that they made. The newspaper published Nixon's speeches next to those of Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders.<sup>47</sup> This lent Nixon's words a sense of authority and helped to stress the existence of cooperation, with Nixon telling guests at an official lunch, "At the moment, as we begin to remove the burden of armed confrontation from the shoulders of our two peoples, let us recall that we must justify the hopes of all peoples of the world for peace."<sup>48</sup> Additionally, the press followed the movements of Nixon and his wife around the city, reporting their activities to the public. For instance, *Pravda* devoted coverage to the first lady's visit to Moscow State University, the president's trip to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the Kremlin, where he laid a wreath, and their evening outing to the Bolshoi Theater, where they both attended a performance of *Swan Lake*, sitting with Brezhnev, Kissinger, and other delegates "in the central box, which was decorated with the

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<sup>46</sup> "Dogovor mezhdru Soiuzom Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Soedinennymi Shtatami Ameriki ob Ogranichenii Sistem Protivoraketnoi Oborony," *Pravda*, 28 May 1972, 1; "Vremennoe Soglashenie mezhdru Soiuzom Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Soedinennymi Shtatami Ameriki o Nekotorykh Merakh v Oblasti Ogranicheniia Strategicheskikh Nastupatel'nykh Vooruzhenii," *Pravda*, 28 May 1972, 2; "Osnovy Vzaimootnoshenii mezhdru Soiuzom Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Soedinennymi Shtatami Ameriki," *Pravda*, 30 May 1972, 1.

<sup>47</sup> For instance, see "V chest' vysokogo gostia," *Pravda*, 23 May 1972, 4; and "Obed u prezidenta SShA," *Pravda*, 27 May 1972, 4.

<sup>48</sup> "V chest' vysokogo gostia," *Pravda*, 23 May 1972, 4.

flags of the USA and the USSR.”<sup>49</sup> *Pravda* coverage during the summit personified the US with the names of dozens of diplomats and the figurehead of President Nixon, giving American foreign policy a face for the first time and thereby helping to create a more positive representation of the US and détente.

While adding optimistic representations of Soviet-American relations through the inclusion of positive personalities, *Pravda* also dramatically changed its presentation of other aspects of American foreign policy by limiting criticisms of the Vietnam War and increasing negative coverage of other Western nations. For instance, on the third page of the May 29 edition of *Pravda*, the editors printed two clips on Vietnam under the heading “At the Front of Indochina.” While the first clipping continued to portray the war in a negative light, describing the South Vietnamese government as a “puppet regime” and the army as “puppet troops,” the US is not mentioned once. The second clipping, on the other hand, mentions the United States, but in a surprisingly neutral light, simply stating, “During the air raids of the USA in the North Vietnamese provinces . . . units of the anti-airborne defense brought down two American airplanes.”<sup>50</sup> The picture of North Vietnamese troops or suffering North Vietnamese civilians that normally would accompany such articles is gone, replaced by a photograph of British troops preparing to meet North Irish demonstrators in the streets of Belfast.

Across the page from the shortened coverage of Vietnam sits a lengthy article “In the Interests of the People,” which summarizes press clippings from newspapers around the world with positive reactions to the Moscow summit. Included is a statement from

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<sup>49</sup> “Vozlozhenie venka” and “Supruga prezidenta SShA v Moskve,” *Pravda*, 25 May 1972, 4; “Na spektakle v Bol’shom Teatre SSSR,” *Pravda*, 26 May 1972, 1.

<sup>50</sup> “Na frontakh Indokitaia,” *Pravda*, 29 May 1972, 3.

Washington that “the leaders of both party factions in the American Congress came out in support of the agreements,” with the Senate Democratic majority leader describing the summit as “an important step in the right direction” and the Republican minority leader stating that the agreements were “the most important documents in modern history.”<sup>51</sup> In sum, this page represents the changes that occurred in the coverage of American foreign policy in *Pravda* during Nixon’s visit, with outwardly negative descriptions of the American role in Vietnam limited, replaced by positive coverage of Soviet American negotiations in Moscow and criticism of other Western powers.

The change in coverage is also reflected in the political cartoons printed in *Pravda* during Nixon’s visit. The main topics of the cartoons shifted from criticisms of American foreign policy to critiques of other powers, especially England and Israel, as well as general condemnations of capitalism. For instance, on May 27, *Pravda* printed a cartoon “The Lion – the Arms-Bearer,” which portrays a Portuguese man in safari-hunting garb, holding a rifle and wearing a holstered pistol, an ammunition belt, and a flamethrower. Behind him stands a lion, the symbol of Great Britain, obediently holding the hunter’s ammunition box and grenades in its paws and additional firearms in its mouth. The hunter, who reaches for more cartridges in the lion’s ammunition box stands in a pool of blood, surrounded by the fallen bodies of African people and a burning hut. This criticism of European foreign policy in Africa is rooted in economics, with the lion’s tail forming the sign of the pound to indicate the important role of capitalist concerns in the destruction of the African village.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> “V interesakh narodov,” *Pravda*, 29 May 1972, 3.

<sup>52</sup> V. Fomichev, “Lev - oruzhenosets,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 17 May 1972, 5. See Appendix III, 5.

In addition to shifting criticism to other Western countries, *Pravda* changed the focus of its political cartoons during the summit to include more general critiques of capitalism. For instance, a May 25 cartoon entitled “Monopolist Circles and their Steps” featured a circle of capitalists chasing each other in a counter-clockwise fashion. Wearing a tuxedo and a top hat, each capitalist carries a fork and knife and attempts to bite the foot of the smaller capitalist in front of him. The smallest of the monopolists chases the largest, nipping at his toes. A large bag at the center of the circle is labeled “Profits,” implying that the monopolists will devour each other until there is only one left, who will successfully take possession of the profits.<sup>53</sup> Whereas most political cartoons before the summit attack US foreign policy, especially in Vietnam, political cartoons during the summit shift their focus, criticizing other Western nations and increasing general condemnations of capitalism.

Even though the volume of coverage on the US diminished after the summit, the shift in reporting on the US in a positive light continued in the month after Nixon’s departure on May 30. The first place this can be found is on a front-page spread in the June 2 edition of *Pravda* entitled “On the Conclusions of the Soviet-American Negotiations.” While the article praises Soviet negotiators for remaining firm in their stance “on the question of the continuation of aggression of the USA in Vietnam,” it retains the praise for realism expressed in *Pravda* just before Nixon’s visit, writing that “the results of the Soviet-American negotiations once again demonstrated that under contemporary conditions disputed international questions cannot be solved from a ‘position of strength.’” The article, which mentions Nixon, retaining the more personal approach achieved during the summit, concludes that the negotiations “represent a major step in the development of Soviet-

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<sup>53</sup> M. Abramov, “Monopolisticheskie krugi i ikh shagi,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 25 May 1972, 5. See Appendix III, 6.

American relations, contributing to the strengthening of the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems to the cause of peace and the security of peoples.”<sup>54</sup> Despite the reference to Vietnam, the majority of the article praises the negotiating strategies of the US and the USSR, showing the trend in the Soviet press to continue presenting the US in a more positive light after the Moscow summit.

The Vietnam War reentered the political cartoons in *Pravda*, but cartoonists downplayed US involvement. For instance, a June 4 cartoon “Work Placement the Saigon Way” shows students exiting Saigon University, dropping their books in a pile, receiving military equipment, and being handed a rifle with an attached diploma by a Vietnamese officer.<sup>55</sup> Then, on June 8, *Pravda* printed a political cartoon “‘Combat Formation’ of the Saigon Warriors,” with Thieu chasing after soldiers who are running to the jungle, with the word “deserters” spelled on the soles of their shoes.<sup>56</sup> Both of these cartoons criticize the Vietnam War, with the first discussing the loss of youth that comes with the war and the second arguing that South Vietnam does not have the ideological fortitude or the strength to keep its own soldiers in line. Neither of these cartoons, however, attacks American involvement in Vietnam, signifying that the Moscow summit continued to affect the Soviet press following Nixon’s departure.

In the months after this outpouring of positive coverage that followed the summit, however, *Pravda* formed a composite view of American foreign policy, with both negative and positive coverage of US foreign policy. *Pravda*’s coverage indicates that this occurred

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<sup>54</sup> “Ob itogakh Sovetsko-Amerikanskikh peregovorov,” *Pravda*, 2 June 1972, 1.

<sup>55</sup> V. Fomichev, “Raspredelenie po-saigonski,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 4 June 1972, 4. See Appendix IV, 7.

<sup>56</sup> M. Abramov, “‘Boevoe postroenie’ Saigonskikh voiak,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 8 June 1972, 5. See Appendix IV, 8.

as the Soviet leadership's euphoria from the conference subsided, with Nixon's continuation of Operation Linebacker, the bombing campaign against the DRV, signaling that the Vietnam War would not end in the near future. For example, on October 12, *Pravda* discussed the approval of the military budget for the financial year in a negative and impersonal manner, describing the Vietnam War as "the aggressive war in Indochina" and noting "the fact that the enormous sum of defense expenditure approved by the Congressmen comprises the lion's share of the federal budget of the country."<sup>57</sup> Paralleling the articles prior to Nixon's visit, these place emphasis on impersonal forces playing a negative role in American foreign policy, as the article mentions Congress and the Pentagon but not specific politicians. An accompanying political cartoon features American involvement in Vietnam, "Receive School Work/Mission." In this cartoon, an American officer shows his pilots a map, which is marked with the location of North Vietnamese schools. The caption, quoting the North Vietnamese Minister of Education, reports that beginning in April, "American aviation attacked . . . more than 150 schools."<sup>58</sup> Both the article and cartoon witness the revival of the negative depiction of the role of the United States in Vietnam that occurred in the months prior to Nixon's visit. They portray the US government impersonally and as senselessly aggressive, spending the majority of its national budget on the war and even bombing schools.

Despite the return of such negative coverage of American policy in Indochina, *Pravda's* positive outlook on Soviet-American cooperation and détente retained a prominent role in

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<sup>57</sup> "Odobren voennyi biudzheta," *Pravda*, 12 October 1972, 5.

<sup>58</sup> V. Fomichev, "Poluchite shkol'noe zadanie," Cartoon, *Pravda*, 12 October 1972, 5. Note that the word "zadanie" can mean either "work" or "mission" and is frequently used to discuss schoolwork, meaning that the title can either be translated as "Obtain School Work" or "Obtain School Mission." The double-meaning is important here, as the pilots take notes like students doing their "schoolwork" and receiving orders for their "mission." See Appendix V, 9.

subsequent months. On October 4, a *Pravda* article describes the White House ceremony that commemorated the ratification of the SALT agreements negotiated at the Moscow summit. The article quotes both Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and Nixon, stressing the importance of the agreements in helping to create a safer and more peaceful world. According to the article, “Nixon indicated that the documents, signed this year in the Kremlin, arouse all of humanity’s hopes for the accomplishment of his dream of peace on Earth” and for the building of a new world order where “the peoples, having different governments and adhering to different world views, could live in the world together.”<sup>59</sup> Here, the personal and positive views of the US evident during the Moscow summit are repeated, complete with quotations from both Gromyko and Nixon about the possibilities for cooperation between the USSR and the USA and for peace on Earth.

An article on April 6, 1973, entitled “Expansion of Cultural Ties,” reflects the positive coverage, highlighting the different Soviet artists and performers presenting work in the US in 1973. These included the “Treasures of Soviet Museums” exhibit that arrived in New York and the collection of paintings from the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art that simultaneously opened in the Soviet Union. After discussing upcoming visits by the Bolshoi Theatre and the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, the author notes that in one day, 30,000 people visited the art exhibit in New York. The article concludes, “All this serves as an expression of the attitude of Americans to those key problems that now concern the entire world, and, above all, to the problems of the normalization of relations between the USSR and the USA.”<sup>60</sup> Stressing the growing connections between the Soviet and American

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<sup>59</sup> “Soglasheniia vstupili v silu,” *Pravda*, 4 October 1972, 4.

<sup>60</sup> “Rasshiriaiutsia kul’turnye sviazi,” *Pravda*, 6 April 1973, 5.

people, the article states that the attendance numbers at the exhibit demonstrate the commitment of Americans to détente and friendly relations with the USSR.

In sum, Nixon's visit to Moscow in May 1972 brought about dramatic changes in the Soviet representation of American foreign policy. During the Moscow summit, *Pravda* provided a positive view of American foreign policy, virtually ignoring American participation in Vietnam, adding positive and personal depictions of American foreign policy leaders to the articles, and stressing the progress in world peace and security achieved through the negotiations. After time, however, a composite view emerged, with the persistence of Operation Linebacker prompting the return of the impersonal, negative portrayal of American foreign policy in Vietnam and the continuation of the personal, positive portrayal in détente. Thus, the impersonal, negative imagery resulting from the Soviet government's distaste for the ongoing war merged with its personal, positive support of détente to produce a two-tiered official public discourse with regards to American foreign policy.



## The High-Water Mark of Détente: The 1973 US Summit

The strengthening of the relationship between Soviet and American leaders that occurred as a result of the Moscow summit is evident in diplomatic exchanges between the parties as the US summit approached in June 1973. The United States and the North Vietnamese governments came to an agreement for the withdrawal of American forces in January 1973, removing a major thorn in the side of Soviet-American relations. On May 25, 1973, Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin called Kissinger to arrange a meeting to discuss plans for Brezhnev's visit to the US between June 17 and June 25. Dobrynin, in a humorous mood, brought up Kissinger's infamous love life. After Kissinger stated that he had "been a little tired" the day before, Dobrynin sought an explanation, noting that he heard that the National Security Advisor was "sitting with a very nice girl" whose picture he had "on this Playboy Calendar." After Kissinger responded, "Oh-h-h-h-h, you're a dirty old man," Dobrynin stated, "Oh, come on, come on. . . . She's a real nice girl. I don't know how she looks now but at that time—" Kissinger interrupted, asserting that "she's very attractive" and exclaiming, "I hope she isn't a nice girl." Dobrynin concluded this personal exchange, stating: "You were with her, I wasn't. So you are an authority, not me."<sup>61</sup>

Despite this jocular banter, the assessment of Brezhnev's trip to the US differs in the memoirs of its participants. Although Kissinger reveals his belief that "Brezhnev was

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<sup>61</sup> "Kissinger-Dobrynin Telephone Conversation, 25 May 1973 12:30 PM," <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB123/dobrynin/dobrynin11.pdf> (18 October 2005).

sincerely prepared for a prolonged period of stability,” he stresses that “the impact of the 1973 summit was almost certainly unfortunate – not for foreign policy reasons but because of the dramatic demonstration of America’s internal disarray” during the Watergate scandal. Kissinger concludes that while this show of domestic disorder would not tempt the Soviets to undertake “adventures staking Soviet assets,” it “undoubtedly made them less willing to expend capital on preventing adventures by friendly nations,” particularly in the Middle East, where war would erupt in October.<sup>62</sup> Dobrynin, on the other hand, asserts that the summit “served to advance the process of improving Soviet-American relations that was set in motion by Nixon’s first presidential visit to Moscow,” with both leaders “sincerely prepared for an extensive period of stability and further cooperation.” Moreover, “personal relations” between Nixon and Brezhnev “were consolidating,” and while “the Soviet government began to understand [Nixon’s] serious difficulties,” they “still believed that he would overcome them, and that the process of consolidating [Soviet-American] relations would develop further.”<sup>63</sup>

With such conflicting reports on the results of the summit, it is important to look to how these relations served the actors in a heated moment in order to assess how Brezhnev’s visit to the US affected the status of détente. Four months after the summit, during the October War of 1973, the Israeli Army was in the process of pushing back Egyptian and Syrian forces when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat asked Brezhnev for support. The United States demanded that the USSR not send forces, told the Israeli government to stop its advance, and placed its nuclear forces on high alert. Whether or not the Soviet government would

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<sup>62</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982), 300.

<sup>63</sup> Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 284-86.

intervene unilaterally against Israel was unclear, and while the US attempted to quiet the situation, the rise in nuclear alert status created additional friction between the superpowers, as Soviet authorities viewed this maneuver, which came without warning, as a sign of American unilateralism and adventurism.<sup>64</sup> With tensions at a high, Kissinger tried to reassure Dobrynin, discussing the importance of preserving détente: “Now the important thing is for you and us to stay together having made this historic achievement. . . . We’ve got to stay together for the peace settlement. That is the most important thing.”<sup>65</sup> Two days later, Dobrynin emphasized these same feelings to White House Chief-of-Staff General Alexander Haig: “It is very important to keep the personal relationship as strong as it was before. . . . It is very important now to keep really everything as much as possible intact.”<sup>66</sup> As Dobrynin concludes in his memoirs, “The Middle East War never grew into a direct military confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States – in contrast to the Cuban crisis – precisely because of the remarkable new level of Soviet-American relations.”<sup>67</sup> Indeed, while both sides had the incentive of avoiding nuclear war to motivate them to negotiate, the personal relationship between Soviet and American leaders, solidified during the US summit, served as a tool for these leaders to make the personal appeals that helped to ease tensions and defuse the situation in the Middle East.

Just as the personal relationships between Soviet and American leaders grew stronger as a result of the US summit, *Pravda*’s coverage of Soviet-American relations received another

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<sup>64</sup> For more information on the crisis caused by the October War, refer to Fraser J. Harbutt, *The Cold War Era* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

<sup>65</sup> “Kissinger-Dobrynin Telephone Conversation, 24 October 1973, 10:10 AM,” <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB123/dobrynin/dobrynin06.pdf> (18 October 2005).

<sup>66</sup> “Haig-Dobrynin Telephone Conversation, 26 October 1973, 8:04 PM,” <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB123/dobrynin/dobrynin07.pdf> (18 October 2005).

<sup>67</sup> Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 300.

shot in the arm with Brezhnev's visit to the United States. Preceding his visit, *Pravda* printed an article by academic A. Vinograd and Deputy Chairman of the Government Committee of the Ministry for Science and Technology D. Gvishiani. Addressing the importance of developing economic relations between the countries, they write, "Examining in this light the contacts of the USSR and the USA, one cannot fail to note that the change in relations between the two governments, outlined as a result of the Moscow meeting in May 1972, laid the foundations for the development of cooperation in the fields of science and technology."<sup>68</sup> In anticipation of the summit, *Pravda* printed two articles on June 16. One provides Nixon's announcement of Brezhnev's visit, and the other asserts that both Republican and Democratic senators looked forward to the summit and the furthering of détente. Nixon mentioned the great progress made in the previous year and his hope to "expand even more these relations during the vitally important meetings in the coming week," while one senator explained his certainty that "the results of this visit will be real progress in the improvement of relations between the USSR and the USA and the furthering of détente."<sup>69</sup> Like the period preceding the Moscow summit, *Pravda* focused on the positive aspects of American foreign policy before the beginning of the US summit.

Following Brezhnev's arrival in the United States, *Pravda* adopted a style of coverage similar to its treatment of the US during the Moscow summit. The newspaper removed all negative references to American foreign policy, instead including reports of Brezhnev's visit in fine detail. Authors of newspaper articles outlined the many different ways that stronger Soviet-American relations could improve the world. For instance, in "Cooperation Serves

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<sup>68</sup> A. Vinograd and D. Gvishiani, "Zalozhena khoroshaia osnova," *Pravda*, 15 June 1973, 4.

<sup>69</sup> "R. Nikson o vizite L. I. Brezhneva" and "V tseliakh bol'shego vzaimoponimaniia," *Pravda*, 16 June 1973, 1.

Peace,” the Soviet Minister of Public Health writes of the first parallel studies of viruses in the USA and the USSR: “We need to hope that cooperation with the USA as well as with the leading firms of other countries will contribute to raising the level of medical technology, necessary for our clinics and scientific establishments.”<sup>70</sup> Also, in the June 17 edition, *Pravda* quotes artist I. A. Monseev: “The expansion of contacts and the mutually-enriching cooperation of the workers of art of the USSR and the USA . . . contributes to the strengthening of mutual understanding, peace, and friendship between the peoples of our countries for the good of humanity.”<sup>71</sup> Additionally, the newspaper printed the speeches of Nixon and Brezhnev side by side, noting that the speeches were “listened to with considerable attention and greeted with applause.”<sup>72</sup> And, once again, the newspaper listed new agreements between the two superpowers nearly every day, most often on the front page. Finally, near the end of his visit, Brezhnev gave a televised speech, which *Pravda* reprinted in full. The general secretary declared: “I heard that in the American political lexicon there is an expression ‘to win the peace.’ I think that the present historical moment perhaps appears to be most suitable for the use of this expression. Together we won the [Second World] War. Today our joint efforts must help humanity win a durable peace. The possibility of a new war must be eliminated.”<sup>73</sup> In this way, Brezhnev provided a positive assessment of Soviet-American relations, highlighting the cooperative defeat of the Nazis in World War II and the success of the summits in Moscow and the US, while pointing to the need to continue expanding and strengthening détente.

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<sup>70</sup> B. Petrovskii, “Sotrudnichestvo sluzhit miru,” *Pravda*, 17 June 1973, 3.

<sup>71</sup> “Iskusstvo sblizhaet narody,” *Pravda*, 17 June 1973, 5.

<sup>72</sup> “Rech’ R. Niksona” and “Rech’ L.I. Brezhneva,” *Pravda*, 9 June 1973, 1.

<sup>73</sup> “Vystuplenie L.I. Brezhneva po amerikanskomu televideniiu,” *Pravda*, 25 June 1973, 1.

Once again, political cartoons during the visit ignore America but criticize other Western countries' foreign policies. For instance, a *Pravda* cartoon "The Fox and the Grapes" featured a fox dressed as an Israeli soldier attempting to take a bite from a bundle of grapes, which is shaped and labeled as "Africa."<sup>74</sup> Another anti-Israeli cartoon came on June 21, "The Face of the Aggressor." In this cartoon, the nose of an Israeli soldier, appearing as a smoking cannon, reads "Provocation" and stretches far across a fence, which represents the Lebanese border.<sup>75</sup> In addition to presenting anti-Semitic caricatures, both of these cartoons avoid criticism of America, Israeli's primary ally, instead directing the blame away from the US government in the spirit of the talks. Finally, "The Bonanza" appeared in *Pravda* shortly after Brezhnev left the United States. This cartoon features a man in a dark suit and an African explorer's hat rolling the southern tip of Africa like a can of sardines. A second man, dressed in typical capitalist garb, reaches into the continent to plunder its goods. The caption warns that "monopolies acquire enormous capital" in the "merciless exploitation of human and natural resources" in Africa.<sup>76</sup> Overall, like the cartoons that appeared during Nixon's visit to Moscow, these provide a criticism of Western foreign policy and capitalism in general, avoiding critiques of American foreign policy.

As détente continued to build in the summer of 1973, *Pravda* followed suit. Glowing reviews of Soviet-American cooperation and détente in both the articles and the cartoons once again characterized *Pravda* during Brezhnev's visit to the United States, replacing the composite view that emerged after the excitement of Nixon's May 1972 visit died down. The departure of American troops from Vietnam and the additional agreements signed at the

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<sup>74</sup> Iu. Cherepanov, "Lisa i vinograd," Cartoon, *Pravda*, 17 June 1973, 5. See Appendix V, 10.

<sup>75</sup> V. Volkov, "Litso agressora," Cartoon, *Pravda*, 21 June 1973, 5. See Appendix VI, 11.

<sup>76</sup> V. Volkov, "Zolotoe dno," Cartoon, *Pravda*, 26 June 1973, 5. See Appendix VI, 12.

US summit did not push *Pravda* to focus on the impending victory of communism over capitalism; rather, *Pravda* explored the growth of cooperation between the superpowers with feverish optimism, even raising the hope that the threat of conflict with the United States could be made a permanent feature of the past.

## “Nixon’s Last Friend”: The Watergate Scandal

In the event that Brezhnev truly dreamed that the threat of nuclear conflict could be eliminated from the world, as he claimed in his televised address to the US public, his hopes were soon crushed, as the Watergate scandal began a process that would eventually limit the Republican presidential administration’s ability to single-handedly control foreign policy. While the foundations for a close personal relationship between the leaders of the superpowers had been developed during the détente summits and secret negotiations, the Watergate scandal ironically managed to bring Nixon and Brezhnev even closer. As Dobrynin outlines in his memoirs, Nixon opened a channel of personal communication about Watergate with Brezhnev, who, believing “that the scandal was being used against Nixon by opponents of détente,” provided a sympathetic ear, serving as “Nixon’s staunch friend and supporter, probably the last he had among the leaders of great nations, including his own.”<sup>77</sup>

Dobrynin concludes:

The irony of the situation was that during this period Nixon seemed to be as frank, direct, and even cynical in conversations with his old communist enemies as he was with friends, if not more so. I think the old cold warrior finally became friendlier toward the Soviet Union in the deepening Watergate isolation. The good personal contacts and deepening relationship he developed with Brezhnev also helped. After all, we are all human.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 302.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 305.



Therefore, during the Watergate crisis, the leadership of both superpowers viewed closer relations as an important political move. While Nixon sought greater support from abroad as a means to counterbalance his increased “isolation” at home, Brezhnev drew closer to the president in an effort to preserve Soviet gains in détente, fearful that American opponents of détente were using the crisis to stop SALT II negotiations and to rekindle the Cold War, which would discredit Brezhnev’s approach to foreign policy at home, weakening his claims to legitimacy and necessitating higher defense spending that the Soviet Union could not afford. By August 9, 1974, when Nixon resigned in order to avoid impeachment, his relationship with Brezhnev was as close as it had ever been.

*Pravda*’s presentation of the Watergate affair to the Soviet public parallels Dobrynin’s description of the Soviet leadership’s personal feelings. Prior to Nixon’s resignation, the press coverage featured no attacks on Nixon or the White House leadership. During the late spring and early summer of 1974, when the American press put more and more emphasis on Nixon’s role in Watergate, *Pravda* downplayed the scandal, focusing on other issues. For instance, the press kept a spotlight on Nixon’s second visit to Moscow in June 1974, which historian Fraser J. Harbutt describes simply as a “third showy summit spectacular” organized by the Soviets to help the president counter the crumbling of his image in the US.<sup>79</sup> On July 5, *Pravda* wrote positively of the summit, summarizing a Nixon speech: “The agreements concluded during these negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. . . . make an important contribution to the building of peace that we are attempting to erect in relations between our two countries and on the whole planet.”<sup>80</sup> Moreover, on August 6,

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<sup>79</sup> Harbutt, *The Cold War Era*, 234.

<sup>80</sup> “Vystuplenie prezidenta SShA R. Niksona,” *Pravda*, 5 July 1974, 4.

three days before Nixon's resignation, *Pravda* outlined the accomplishments of détente since the first Moscow summit, concluding: "Wide circles of the world public give high marks to the work accomplished during the negotiations. The third Soviet-American summit assigned a new practical impulse to the process of universal détente, began an important stage in the cause of eliminating the danger of war and improving the international political climate on the whole."<sup>81</sup> By continuing to cover the summit in July, the article describes the positive accomplishments of Nixon and Brezhnev in détente, ignoring the Watergate scandal and rendering support for the American president.

Another way the newspaper deflected attention from the Watergate scandal was by concentrating on other scandals around the world and problems on the American homefront. Reporting on one of the crises deemed worthy of discussion in *Pravda* in 1974, Author V. Drobkov wrote an article on an Italian "Mail Scandal" five days before the resignation of Nixon, covering one of the few scandals deemed worthy of discussion in *Pravda* in 1974. In the article, Drobkov described how "entire trains, millions of letters did not reach their addresses in recent years because of the disorder reigning over the Italian mail."<sup>82</sup> Regarding the United States, coverage shifted away from scandals to other crises. On July 30, *Pravda* noted that "vast areas of the central part of the USA have been stricken by a terrible drought, the most severe of the past forty years."<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, in the subtitle of an article printed three days before Nixon's resignation, *Pravda* provided a quotation from Secretary of the Treasury William Simon and declared, "Inflation – problem number one for the USA."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> G. Alekseev and S. Gerasimov, "V interesakh vsego chelovechestva," *Pravda*, 6 August 1974, 4.

<sup>82</sup> V. Drobkov, "Pochtovyi Skandal," *Pravda*, 4 August 1974, 5.

<sup>83</sup> "Zasukhoi v SShA," *Pravda*, 30 July 1974, 5.

<sup>84</sup> "Trevozhnye signaly v ekonomike zapada," *Pravda*, 6 August 1974, 5.

Even in the days prior to the end of Nixon's presidency, the Soviet press shifted attention away from Watergate, instead focusing on other international scandals or other domestic issues faced by the American government.

While articles on the successes of détente or the other world crises dominated *Pravda's* international news during Watergate, when the newspaper actually addressed Watergate, it did so in a manner that assured its readership that the scandal would not negatively affect détente. One article from July 29 notes: "The Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives . . . approved the first article of resolution, recommending that the House of Representatives vote to impeach. In this resolution, they indict the president in connection with the investigation referred to as the Watergate affair." The article concludes, however, by allowing Nixon to emphasize his innocence. It states, "In the words of a White House representative, President R. Nixon is confident of the fact that the House of Representatives . . . will not vote on impeachment, as there is no basis for that."<sup>85</sup> Also, on August 3, after reporting that the House "came to a preliminary agreement to begin debate on the question of impeachment of the president on August 19," *Pravda* defends the president: "A representative of the White House again announced that the president is confident of the fact that if the members of the House of Representatives carefully and impartially weigh the facts, they will come to the conclusion that the charges advanced by the commission do not hold up."<sup>86</sup> In the few instances that *Pravda* openly discussed Watergate, including both of these articles, writers began with the impeachment proceedings and concluded with Nixon's

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<sup>85</sup> "Zaiavlenie belogo doma," *Pravda*, 29 July 1974, 3.

<sup>86</sup> "V palate predstavitelei kongressa SShA," *Pravda*, 3 August 1974, 5.

statements, giving the embattled president of détente the final word in pronouncing his own innocence.

The political cartoons that appeared during the Watergate era share in this effort to divert attention away from the scandal. One cartoon, entitled “Mars: the guard they pecked to death!,” depicts a large dove, with a body shaped like the globe and wings formed from the word “détente,” chasing a small figure of Mars, the Roman god of war.<sup>87</sup> Here, rather than focusing on the political difficulties encountered by their negotiating partner, the Soviet newspaper assigns the accomplishments of détente to center stage, as the relaxation of tensions between the superpowers allows the dove, a symbol of peace, to take off in flight and attack the small, insignificant specter of war. Another example of a cartoon providing implicit support for President Nixon comes on July 30, with “Peking fashions in the Western world.” In an unusual twist, the cartoon provides caricatures of current politicians, including British conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath, head of the Bavarian Christian Socialist Union Franz Josef Strauss, and Nixon and détente critic, US Senator Henry Jackson, who is given the nickname “Hawk” in the cartoon’s caption. Each of the characters is dressed in Chinese clothing, with Heath wearing a vest that reads “Tory,” Strauss wearing a belt that reads “Revenge” and holding a fan with his party’s initials on it, and Jackson holding cards depicting missiles that collectively read “anti-Soviet.”<sup>88</sup> While this cartoon lends insight into the tense nature of Sino-Soviet relations in 1974, it also provides an instance of Soviet newspapers directly criticizing Jackson, a proponent of Nixon’s impeachment and an enemy of détente, during the Watergate affair. Rather than standing on the sidelines or even taking

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<sup>87</sup> Yu. Cherepanov, “Mars: Karaul, zaklevali!,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 5 July 1974, 4. See Appendix VII, 13.

<sup>88</sup> V. Fomichev, “Pekinskie mody v zapadnom mire,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 30 July 1974, 5. See Appendix VII, 14.

an opportunity to employ a Marxist-Leninist attack on Watergate as an example of corrupt bourgeois government, Soviet newspapers actively highlighted what they saw as the positive aspects of Nixon's presidency, especially détente, while downplaying Watergate. This stance reflected the growing relations between the Soviet and American leadership circles as well as the Soviet government's desire to preserve the credibility of détente among their home populace despite the difficulties encountered by their American negotiating partner.

Once President Nixon's resignation became imminent, *Pravda* continued with an all-out defense of détente, assuring its readers that the policies pursued by the two governments would carry on indefinitely. The first article to signal Nixon's future, "Toward the Resignation of R. Nixon," came on August 9, with House Minority Leader John Rhodes stating that "the president will announce his resignation in his address" to the nation. This article is careful to conclude, however, with two reassurances for the preservation of détente, regardless of the president's resignation. It quotes Kissinger, who "indicated that 'not one foreign government should experience any doubts concerning the conduct of our foreign policy,'" before continuing with Democratic Senate Majority Leader Michael Mansfield's assertion that he still would "work in the interests of the guarantee of two-party support of the present international course, above all détente in relations with the Soviet Union."<sup>89</sup>

Another editorial spread from that day, which condemns the forces of anticommunism while praising détente, concludes with a quote from Brezhnev:

We are convinced of the correctness of our path, our Marxist-Leninist ideology, and do not doubt that naturally, under the conditions of détente, the widening of contacts, the exchange of spiritual values, information, the development of ties between the peoples

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<sup>89</sup> "K otstavke R. Niksona," *Pravda*, 9 August 1974, 1.

of different countries well serves the spread of the truth about socialism, the winning of more and more new supporters to the cause of scientific communism.<sup>90</sup>

Therefore, in the day before the official declaration of Nixon's resignation, the *Pravda* staff prepared its readers for the announcement, hinting at the resignation, emphasizing the gains of détente over the previous two years, and stating its shared conviction with the US government that regardless of President Nixon's decision, the two superpowers would not deviate from the path of détente. Additionally, while these statements demonstrate confidence in the future of Marxist-Leninism, they do not do so in the aggressive manner described by Gilbert. Instead of explicitly discussing the imminent victory of communism, they vaguely suggest that future international cooperation will facilitate greater understanding and acceptance of socialism by people throughout the world, allowing new constituents to accept the superiority of the ideology.

The next day, the paper announced Nixon's resignation and Ford's rise to the presidency, assuring its readers about the future of détente. In its short, seven-sentence biography of Ford, *Pravda* provides Ford's stance on détente, exclaiming, "In his address, G. Ford stated his opinion in support of the policy of the normalization of Soviet-American relations and favorably appraised the results of the Soviet-American summits."<sup>91</sup> Later in this edition of the newspaper, after a statement of Nixon's belief that the US "should develop and widen these new relations" of détente, a *Pravda* correspondent tells his readers, "All American newspapers are publishing the statement of G. Ford, explicitly giving his word that as

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<sup>90</sup> V. Kudinov and V. Pletnikov, "Razriadka napriazhennosti i manevry antikommunizma," *Pravda*, 9 August 1974, 4.

<sup>91</sup> "Dzh. Ford – novyi prezident SShA," *Pravda*, 10 August 1974, 1.

president of the USA he will continue the policy of achieving a secure peace.”<sup>92</sup> A final article from the August 10 edition of *Pravda* assures the newspaper’s readers that “an overwhelming majority of Americans approve of the foreign policy directed toward the search for paths of further improvement of Soviet-American relations and the relaxation of international tensions.”<sup>93</sup> In sum, *Pravda*’s positive presentation of détente survived the Watergate affair, as the Soviet leadership sought to continue to encourage détente despite the changing of the presidency. Owing to Brezhnev’s personal interest in maintaining the public legitimacy of his foreign policy choices as well as his refusal to abandon Nixon in private, *Pravda* did not publish an ideological condemnation of the American leader for public consumption, instead choosing to limit coverage of Watergate, defend Nixon and his policies, and assure its readership that regardless of political change in the US, détente would continue uninterrupted.

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<sup>92</sup> “Otvstavka prezidenta SShA,” and B. Strel’nikov, “Korrespondent ‘Pravdy’ soobshchaet iz Vashingtona,” *Pravda*, 10 August 1974, 5.

<sup>93</sup> “V podderzhku politiki razriadki,” *Pravda*, 10 August 1974, 5.

## Détente in Crisis: The Jackson-Vanik Amendment

With the Watergate scandal discrediting unrestricted executive authority, a resurgent Democratic majority in the Senate, emboldened by the Watergate scandal, sought a means to reclaim a role in foreign policy, now totally dominated by Kissinger. Congress made its move with the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1974 Trade Bill, which stipulated that the Soviet Union needed to free conditions for the emigration of Jews from the USSR to Israel in order to receive most-favored-nation (MFN) status. This not only perturbed Moscow, as the Soviets attempted to hold back immigration in order to prevent a “brain drain” resulting from the emigration of unhappy dissidents and to maintain order in the authoritarian country, but also cramped Kissinger, who did not personally feel that a nation’s treatment of its citizens should affect its “legitimacy” on the international scene. Moreover, Kissinger could no longer claim to his negotiating partners that he had free reign in brokering deals, and his ability to effectively back up his words with actions became questioned by the parties he dealt with.

Kissinger expressed this frustration in a meeting with his staff of State Department Soviet experts, stating: “But what bothers me about all of this is that the Soviets are getting nothing out of détente. We are pushing them everywhere and what can I deliver in Moscow?”<sup>94</sup>

Vowing to “have a public brawl” with Senator Henry Jackson, the primary sponsor of the

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<sup>94</sup> “Memorandum of Conversation, Kissinger and Soviet Staff Experts, 18 March 1974, 11:40 AM,” in *The Kissinger Transcripts*, ed. William Burr (New York: The New Press, 1999), 224.



Trade Bill amendment, he continued, “The same sons of bitches who drove us out of Vietnam and said it would be immoral for us to tamper with the North Vietnamese internal system now try to destroy détente and assert that it’s our moral obligation to change internal Soviet policies.”<sup>95</sup> He concluded his venting, stating: “Every stinking, God damned bureaucrat in this town has reservations about cooperation with the Russians. I am not asking about their reservations.” He repeated, “I am not asking about their reservations. I am asking what they can do.”<sup>96</sup> Increasingly surrounded by unfriendly bureaucrats and politicians who hoped to cripple his ability to negotiate unilaterally, Kissinger was left to pursue his policies of détente in a world that became less friendly to his work every day.

These restraints on Kissinger’s foreign policy exceeded private frustrations to color diplomatic conversations between Kissinger and Brezhnev in 1974. Although a meeting on March 25, 1974, began with the usual pleasantries, with Kissinger joking about how Brezhnev’s cigarette holder looked like a MIRV,<sup>97</sup> the initial cracks soon appeared in détente’s armor. Brezhnev first discussed the “good foundation” that they had laid, promising that he would “not now speak of those who want to shake or destroy that foundation” and emphasizing his belief that “when those people become more mature they will apologize to their own people for the harm they are trying to do.” He later added: “I have never seen President Nixon disappointed with what we have done. Only [Senator]

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 225.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 227-28.

<sup>97</sup> “Kissinger-Brezhnev Conversation, 25 March 1974, 11:05 AM – 1:57 PM,” in *The Kissinger Transcripts*, ed. William Burr (New York: The New Press, 1999), 232. MIRV stands for “Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles.” A MIRVed missile carries several nuclear warheads, making it able to simultaneously hit several targets.

Jackson. . . . And he is not America.”<sup>98</sup> At this point, however, the two men could still joke about the matter. This is seen two days later, when Brezhnev discussed his fears of the growing sentiment in America that the US needed to build a larger nuclear arsenal as a display of strength. The general secretary stood up, imitating the gestures of a campaigning politician, stating that if he gave a campaign speech and called for the Soviet Union to become stronger than America, “the military men [would] say, ‘Give us the money.’” Kissinger laughed, “If you said that, Senator Jackson would give you wide publicity in America.” Amused over the number of times the senator had come up, Brezhnev exclaimed, “Senator Jackson again!”<sup>99</sup>

But the Jackson-Vanik Amendment would not last as a laughing matter for long. In a meeting on October 24, only seven months later, Brezhnev aggressively attacked the American approach to détente. Regarding most favored nation status, Brezhnev lectured:

Everything was agreed and crystal clear two and one-half years ago. Yet we do not see any part of that agreement fulfilled. Several days ago, I read that the United States had decided to accord MFN to several countries including China. But, regarding the Soviet Union, MFN would be accorded only as a special favor and only for 18 months. Let me say frankly that we cannot accept that ‘gift’ (hits table with hand). We see it as a discriminatory practice that we cannot agree to. I wish to emphasize that!<sup>100</sup>

Brezhnev loudly complained about many facets of American foreign policy, including conflicts in the Middle East, cancelled contracts in grain sales, and restricted access of Soviet business representatives to American factories, but he soon returned to the trade bill and a series of letters between Jackson and Kissinger that discussed a Soviet promise to allow

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 231, 233.

<sup>99</sup> “Kissinger-Brezhnev Conversation, 27 March 1974, 5:50-9:10 PM,” in *The Kissinger Transcripts*, ed. William Burr (New York: The New Press, 1999), 255.

<sup>100</sup> “Kissinger-Brezhnev Conversation, 24 October 1974, 11:00 AM-2:00 PM,” in *The Kissinger Transcripts*, ed. William Burr (New York: The New Press, 1999), 331.

60,000 Jews to emigrate from the USSR to Israel. After asserting that “the Soviet Union has not given an obligation in terms of numbers,” Brezhnev concluded: “You know that the Soviet Union has not given an obligation in terms of numbers. We have said we would not erect barriers; we are not. . . . The import of this is that Jackson has won a great victory over the White House and that he has managed to extract certain concessions from the Soviet Union.” Kissinger, left speechless, simply said, “What burns me up is that a lot of what the General Secretary has said is true.”<sup>101</sup>

When given the opportunity to speak at length, Kissinger defended his policies. He explained that his relationship with the new president, Gerald Ford, was “at least as close as that with his predecessor.” He went on to assure Brezhnev that he and Ford were “both determined as soon as the election is over to have a showdown with the Congress on who controls foreign policy.”<sup>102</sup> Later, the issue of MFN drove Kissinger into a frenzy. He stated: “[Senator Jackson’s] manner is as humiliating for me as it is for you (hits table with hand). The press is saying that Kissinger has been defeated by Jackson. I’m as angry as you are.” Following this tirade, Kissinger left the room for three minutes, and when he returned, he had regained his composure, joking in his response that Gromyko’s proposal for a lunch break was “ending this discussion in the middle of [his] most eloquent speech.”<sup>103</sup> Despite the resuming of jokes and Brezhnev’s January 1976 assessment that “in spite of all the complexities that exist, our two countries have succeeded in consolidating the line of détente

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 332-33.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 337.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 341. While to some extent Kissinger’s tirade is simply a performance designed to convince Brezhnev that he still supports the policies of détente, taking it in combination with Kissinger’s private outburst with his Soviet staff seven months earlier suggests a certain level of honesty in the secretary’s frustrations.

and the line of improvement of US-Soviet relations,”<sup>104</sup> a permanent scar had formed over détente, as Kissinger’s limitations as secretary of state rendering him incapable of effectively managing his system of diplomacy. With Kissinger now working in a secretarial position instead of as a presidential advisor, opening him to congressional oversight, Kissinger could no longer secretly pursue negotiations through back channels. Moreover, with Congress inserting moral concerns into détente through the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and Kissinger’s promises to the Soviets to link only economic benefits to détente foiled, Kissinger seemed less credible to his Soviet negotiating partners, making personal appeals to the Soviet leadership far less effective.<sup>105</sup> In sum, Congress, reacting to the Watergate scandal, struck at the very heart of Kissinger’s negotiating strategy by passing the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, discouraging Soviet policymakers and permanently stalling détente.

The composite image of the US continues with Ford’s signing of the trade bill with the Jackson-Vanik Amendment into law on January 3, 1975, leading *Pravda* to present the US as both a friend in détente and a nation that unfairly discriminated in its trade agreements, thereby maiming any potential for mutual cooperation. The day that Ford signed the bill, *Pravda* placed a quote on the front page from a London journal, which supported the work done at the fourth Soviet-American summit in Vladivostok the previous month, where Ford and Brezhnev agreed upon the preliminary outlines of the SALT II agreement.<sup>106</sup> The article reads, “The Soviet-American agreement reached in Vladivostok presents a concrete program

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<sup>104</sup> “Kissinger-Brezhnev Conversation, 21 January 1976, 11:00 AM-1:50 AM,” in *The Kissinger Transcripts*, ed. William Burr (New York: The New Press, 1999), 435.

<sup>105</sup> “Trials of Détente: Washington-Moscow, 1974-1975,” in *The Kissinger Transcripts*, ed. William Burr (New York: The New Press, 1999), 323-324.

<sup>106</sup> For more on the 1974 Vladivostok summit, see Harbutt, *The Cold War Era*, 235, 247.

of cooperation between the two countries for the coming years.”<sup>107</sup> Moreover, the press continued presenting Ford’s efforts for détente in a personal and positive light, similar to the way that it approached the work of Nixon. On January 25, 1975, *Pravda* wrote that “Ford supported the continuation and expansion of détente and the improvement of Soviet-American relations” and that Ford discussed “the excellent opportunity to make a contribution to the strengthening of the matter of peace throughout the world.”<sup>108</sup> In this way, the newspaper’s approach to détente after the fall of Nixon and the approval of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment remains similar to the way it had been portrayed since Nixon’s visit to Moscow in May 1972, with the positive descriptions of negotiations and the personal view of American foreign policy.

Despite this positive coverage, *Pravda* provided readers with an impersonal and negative portrayal of American economic policy, owing to the Jackson -Vanik Amendment. *Pravda* describes this act to the Soviet public as “discrimination in trade,” as the government attempted to retain its legitimacy by avoiding the issue of emigration in its public discourse while remaining critical of the restrictions imposed by the amendment. Therefore, *Pravda* asserts, “As is well-known, the Congress of the USA, during the approval of this bill, introduced into it some discriminatory provisos and limitations, which concern Soviet-American trade.”<sup>109</sup> Similar to previous instances of negative coverage, criticism is not applied to specific American leaders, and the newspaper instead targets the impersonal force

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<sup>107</sup> “Razriadka i sotrudnichestvo pobezhdaui,” *Pravda*, 3 January 1975, 1. Ford and Brezhnev met for the first time at the Vladivostok summit in November 1974, where they agreed upon the basic framework for the SALT II agreement. For more information, please see “SALT II TREATY,” <http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/treaties/salt2-1.html> (4 December 2005).

<sup>108</sup> “Dzh. Ford za prodolzhenie kontaktov s L.I. Brezhnevym,” *Pravda*, 25 January 1975, 4.

<sup>109</sup> “Podpisan zakon,” *Pravda*, 5 January 1975, 4.

of Congress. Later in the month, in an article “Against Discrimination in Trade,” *Pravda* inserted opinions from several foreign presses, including India, where it was written that “the law about trade, which was accepted in the USA, is in sharp contradiction with the spirit of détente.”<sup>110</sup> Here, *Pravda* incorporates voices from around the globe to provide its readers with the impression that the rest of the world sided with the Soviet Union, condemning American economic policy as a means for aggressively anti-Soviet forces in the US, portrayed in an impersonal light, to limit détente. The newspaper presents the trade bill as blocking the path to the achievement of peace in the world similar to the way that it represented the Vietnam War earlier, with a negative but impersonal critique of American policy.

The conflict in détente caused by the Jackson-Vanik Amendment also finds reflection in the political cartoons of the era. On the one hand, some cartoons praise the accomplishments of détente, including “The Peaceful Co-existence of Two Separate Systems.” This cartoon from July 1975 celebrates the Apollo-Soyuz mission, which featured an American spacecraft and a Soviet spacecraft docking together in what became the first manned international space mission.<sup>111</sup> The cartoon shows the two spacecraft docked together above the planet, with astronauts from each side standing on their respective ships and holding flags that meet to form the “M” in “Мир,” which means “peace.”<sup>112</sup> This cartoon stresses the positive

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<sup>110</sup> “Protiv diskriminatsii v trgovle,” *Pravda*, 19 January 1975, 5.

<sup>111</sup> For more on the Apollo-Soyuz docking, see Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, 342-343, where he states that it “demonstrated the potential for Soviet-American cooperation in science and technology – and much more” (342).

<sup>112</sup> V. Zharinov, “Mirnoe sosushchestvovanie dvukh razlichnykh sistem,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 16 July 1975, 5. See Appendix VIII, 15. Also cited in Kevin J. McKenna, *All the Views Fit to Print: Changing Images of the US in Pravda Political Cartoons, 1917-1991* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2001), 144.

attributes of détente, highlighting the great accomplishments the two superpowers could achieve when working together for peace.

On the other hand, some cartoons criticize the economic restraints that the Jackson-Vanik Amendment placed on détente. For example, in the cartoon “As You See, We Try to SUPPORT Détente,” a sign marked “Cooperation” points down a road. Blocking the path, however, are three men in suits, assembling a wooden barricade. While the man in the middle, wearing a dark suit and a sinister grin, presents the crossbar to the barrier, which reads, “We are for détente,” his two henchmen stand on the ends of the main beam, hammering together the supporting beams, which read “provisos” and “amendments.”<sup>113</sup> This cartoon demonstrates the Soviet government’s frustrations with the economic policies of Congress, presenting them as a roadblock to détente set up by devious politicians who claim to support the policies of cooperation.

With the enactment of the Trade Bill and the Jackson-Vanik Amendment on January 3, 1975, détente became crippled, as Kissinger could no longer effectively back up the promises he gave to his negotiating partners, destroying his accountability. Once again, the public presentation of the US occurred on two different levels, with a negative and impersonal portrayal of the trade bill and a positive and personal presentation of détente.

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<sup>113</sup> M. Abramov, “Kak vidite, my staraemsia PODDERZHAT’ razriadku,” Cartoon, *Pravda*, 11 January 1975, 5. See Appendix VIII, 16.

## Conclusion

On November 2, 1976, Gerald Ford lost the presidential election to Democrat Jimmy Carter. Ford became a lame-duck president, and Henry Kissinger no longer was the guiding force behind American foreign policy. The day after the election, Dobrynin offered Kissinger his condolences. “I just wanted to say to you that I am going to miss you – in the future, I mean.” Promising to “stand outside the government for what [he] stood for inside,” Kissinger responded, “I will miss you, too. If it is possible to have a Marxist friend. . . .” After lamenting that the completion of a SALT II agreement probably “would have changed the outcome” of the election, the primary negotiators of the back channel diplomacy hung up their phones and went their separate ways.<sup>114</sup> The election of Carter brought a serious decline in the prospects for détente, and by June 1978, Brezhnev grimly declared in a speech to the Politburo that “a serious deterioration and exacerbation of the situation has occurred,” with Carter apparently “intent upon struggling for his election to a new term as President of the USA under the banner of anti-Soviet policy and a return to the ‘cold war.’”<sup>115</sup> Therefore, with the end of Kissinger’s tenure in the State Department in 1977, the personal tone of negotiations changed dramatically, and détente was stalled.

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<sup>114</sup> “Kissinger-Dobrynin Telephone Conversation, 3 November 1976, 4:30 PM,” <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB135/19761103.pdf> (23 October 2005).

<sup>115</sup> “Speech by L.I. Brezhnev to CPSU CC Politburo, 6/8/1978,” *The Cold War International History Project*, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.document&identifier=5034F5A8-96B6-175C-9DD9D17B9F404E16&sort=Collection&item=US-Soviet%20Relations](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.document&identifier=5034F5A8-96B6-175C-9DD9D17B9F404E16&sort=Collection&item=US-Soviet%20Relations) (17 March 2006).



The personal diplomacy of the superpower rivals during détente proved important in both shaping superpower foreign policy and giving the leaders an important tool to use in pursuing their foreign policy agendas. It helped Kissinger to gain Brezhnev's trust at the Moscow guest house on the eve of Nixon's visit. It allowed Dobrynin to delay the Soviet decision on whether or not to hold the Moscow summit in light of the continuation of Operation Linebacker. It made Brezhnev Nixon's last friend during the Watergate scandal, as both leaders hoped to preserve their own legitimacy by holding onto the successes of détente. And it gave both superpowers a means to negotiate their way out of the nuclear crisis that came with the October War.

In tracing the history of this personal diplomacy of détente, I have examined the major turning points of Soviet coverage of détente in *Pravda*, seeking to understand how this major Soviet newspaper adjusted its coverage to correspond with changes in the international scene. What I have discovered confirms Schwartz's findings that Soviet views on American foreign policy motives became much more complex during the Nixon era, especially after the 1972 Moscow summit. Indeed, the United States could no longer simply be discounted as a constant foe operating by one set of rules of capitalist imperialism. Now, individuals such as Nixon, Ford, Kissinger, or even members of Congress emerged to shape policy independently, while entities that previously would have been defined monolithically, such as Congress, broke into different factions supporting or hindering détente.

My analysis departs with Schwartz's work, however, by providing new insight into how the Soviet government attempted to alter the public's attitudes on a day-to-day basis. Here, we see how a cautious Soviet government did not leak news of warming relations with the US until five days before Nixon's arrival to sign the SALT agreements. Once his visit was

officially confirmed, however, the tone of the press changed immediately, as the government signaled to its people that relations with the US were about to dramatically improve. This is also seen in the paper's handling of the Watergate affair, as the government carefully managed the scandal's portrayal in the press to preserve the credibility of its support for détente, in spite of a presidential scandal that started the demise of détente in the US. Press coverage of the United States could be multilayered, as was demonstrated between the summits, with a mixture of condemnation of American participation in Vietnam and excitement for détente, and when the Jackson-Vanik Amendment took hold, with further excitement for détente but negative coverage for what *Pravda* dubbed "discrimination in trade." While public response to these changing images cannot be easily ascertained, it can be assumed that they caught the Soviet people by surprise. *Pravda* suddenly stopped imparting a static, negative image American foreign policy to the Soviet people prior to the Moscow summit. At that point, it offered coverage that was more dynamic, with a portrayal of an American government that functioned on several layers.

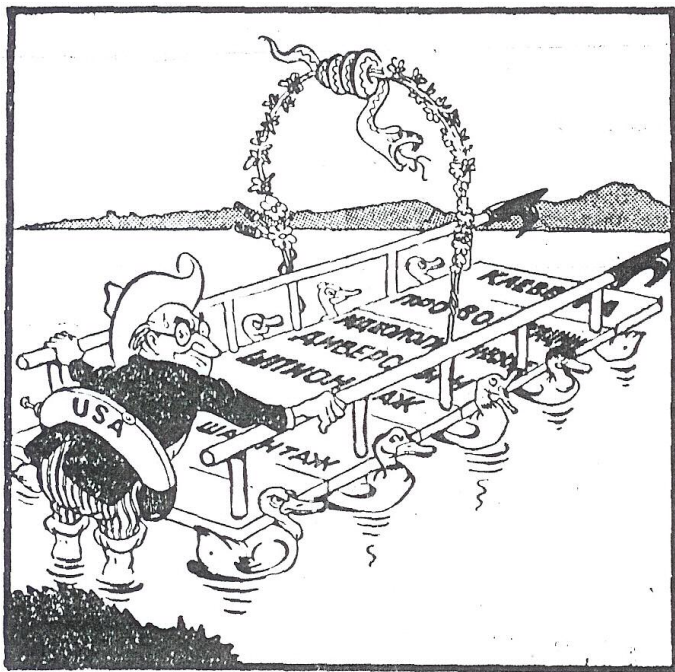
Similar to the diplomatic scene, where Kissinger and Brezhnev's personal approach to relations played a key role in melting the ice of the Cold War, the presentation of individuals proved important in shifting newspaper coverage of the United States. *Pravda's* authors skillfully wove the personalities of Nixon, Ford, and other foreign policy leaders into the narrative of détente to differentiate the positive attributes of US foreign policy from their impersonal and negative portrayals of US policy in the Third World or the "economic discrimination" of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

Finally, while some of *Pravda's* more radical statements, such as its optimism that the superpowers could secure an everlasting world peace, come off as mere propaganda, the pre-

summit negative and impersonal portrayals of American policy in Vietnam reflect the Soviet government's early apprehension about Nixon and détente. Even though the back channel negotiations had not yet yielded concrete agreements, the decision to wait patiently to see how the new situation would unfold is evident in the lack of personal attacks on Nixon, Kissinger, or the other American foreign policy leaders responsible for détente. The explosion in the positive, personality-driven coverage of détente during the Moscow summit indicates the Soviet leaders' growth in confidence in cooperation, paralleling Dobrynin's assertion that the Soviet government was apprehensive about détente until the superpowers publicly agreed upon concrete measures. The formation of the composite view in the following months reflects the continued enthusiasm for détente among the Soviet leadership, even as Vietnam remained a thorn in the side of negotiations. The optimism grew in the months following the announcement of American withdrawal from Vietnam in 1973. *Pravda's* tone reached a feverishly optimistic pitch during the 1973 US summit before the newspaper defended Nixon during the Watergate scandal in response to Brezhnev's personal feelings toward Nixon as well as a need to defend the legitimacy of détente, a process that had become associated with Brezhnev in the previous years. The composite view of American foreign policy returned with the passing of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1974 Trade Bill, indicating persistent hopes for the continuation of détente, but also a realization that its progress might now be limited by new factions within the American government. Therefore, even without transcriptions of Politburo meetings, it is evident that once détente was established, the Soviet government saw it as the new centerpiece for its worldview, which is reflected in both the diplomatic exchanges with Kissinger and the newspapers presented to the public.

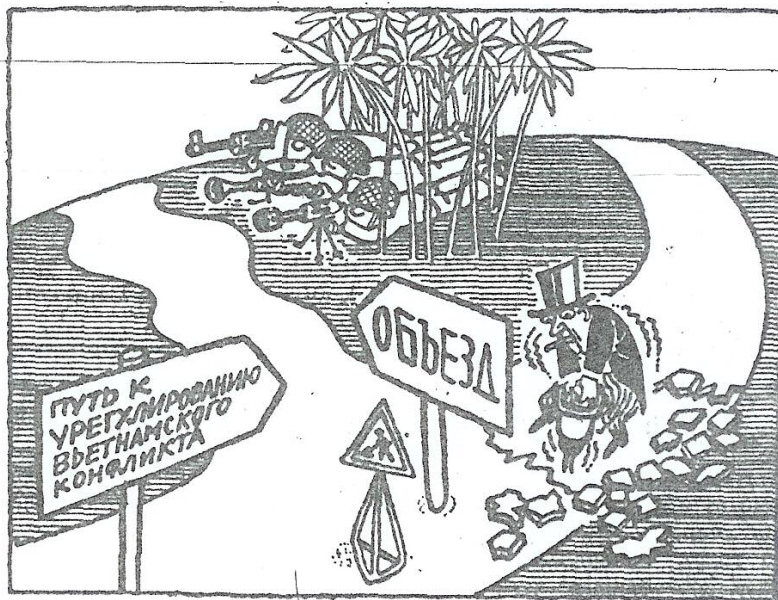
Appendix I

- 1) V. Fomichev, "The Floating Bridge' of the Overseas Developer," *Pravda*, 19 July 1968, 4.



«НАПЛАВНОЙ МОСТ» ЗАМОРСКИХ СТРОИТЕЛЕЙ.  
Рис. В. Фомичева.

- 2) V. Til'man, "Diplomacy of the USA 'At Work,'" *Pravda*, 26 January 1972, 5.



Дипломатия США «за работой».

Рис. В. Тильмана.

Appendix II

3) Kukryniksa, "Smoke Screen above Olympus," *Pravda*, 28 January 1972, 5.

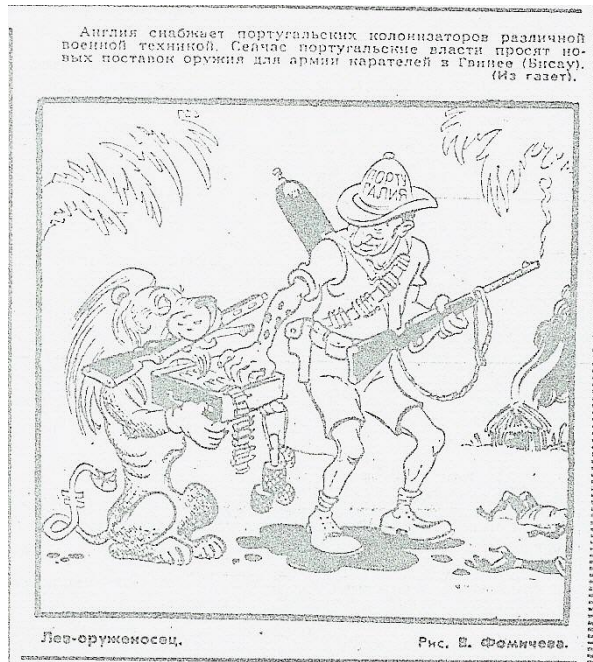


4) D. Araev, "For the Beloved Melody, (I) Don't Begrudge the Money," *Pravda*, 3 May 1972, 3.



Appendix III

5) V. Fomichev, "The Lion – The Arms-Bearer," *Pravda*, 27 May 1972, 5.



6) M. Abramov, "Monopolist Circles and Their Steps," *Pravda*, 25 May 1972, 5.



Appendix IV

7) V. Fomichev, "Work Placement the Saigon Way," *Pravda*, 4 June 1972, 4.



8) M. Abramov, "'Combat Formation' of the Saigon Warriors," *Pravda*, 8 June 1972, 5.

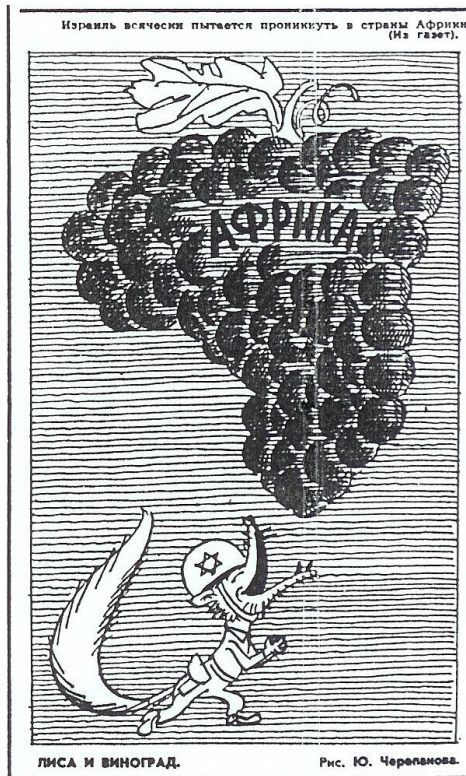


Appendix V

9) V. Fomichev, "Receive School Work/Mission," *Pravda*, 12 October 1972, 5.



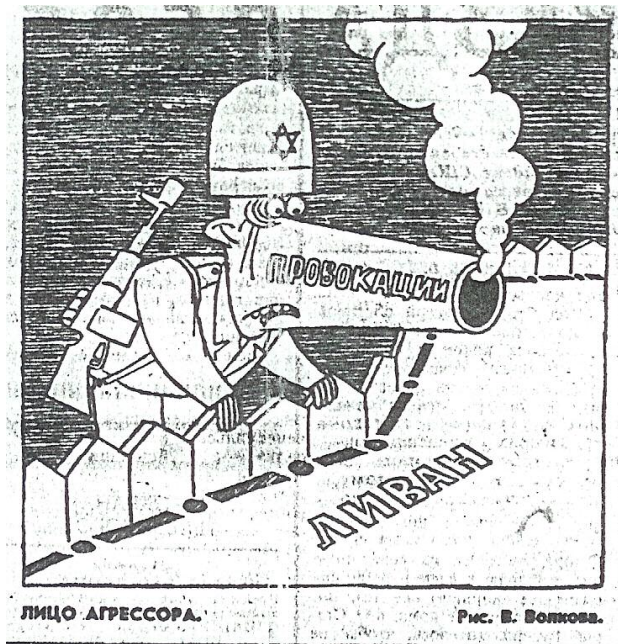
10) Iu. Cherepanov, "The Fox and the Grapes," *Pravda*, 17 June 1973, 5.



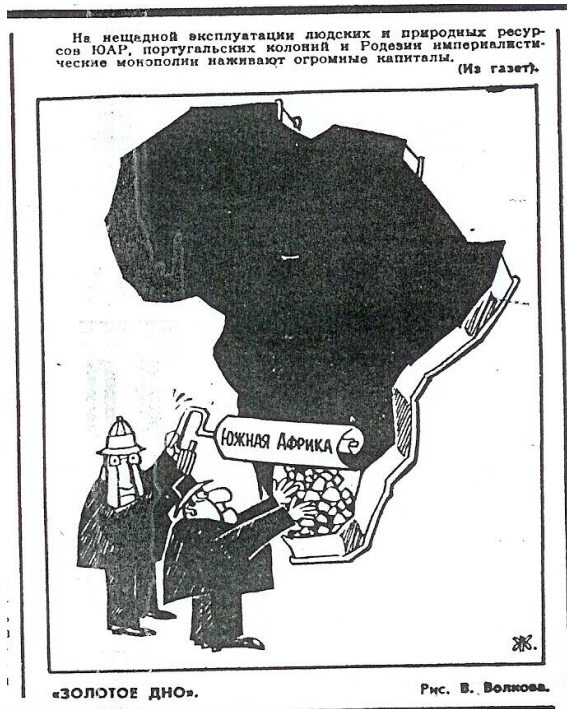


Appendix VI

11) V. Volkov, "The Face of the Aggressor," *Pravda*, 21 June 1973, 5.

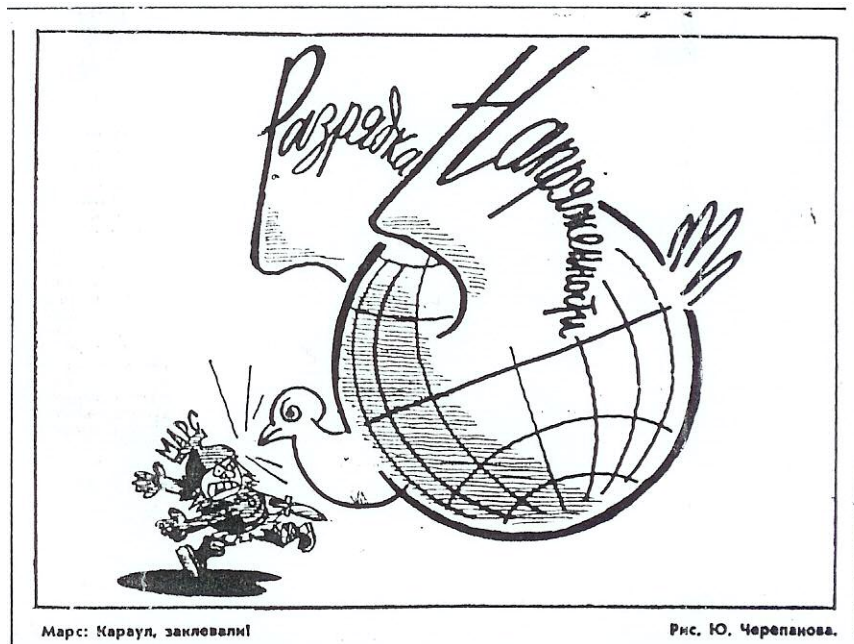


12) V. Volkov, "Gold Rush," *Pravda*, 26 June 1973, 5.



Appendix VII

13) Iu. Cherepanov, "Mars: The Guard They Pecked to Death!," *Pravda*, 5 July 1974, 4.



Март: Караул, заклевали!

Рис. Ю. Черепанова.

14) V. Fomichev, "Peking Fashions in the Western world," *Pravda*, 30 July 1974, 5.

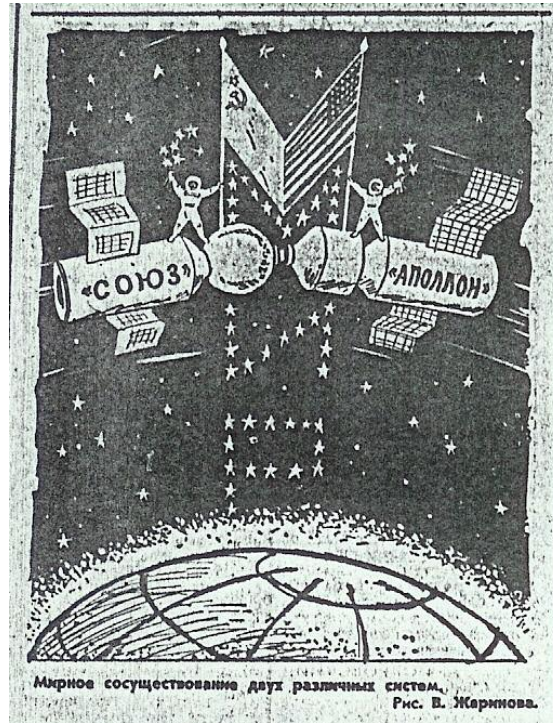


ПЕКИНСКИЕ МОДЫ! В ЗАПАДНОМ МИРЕ.

Рис. В. Фомичев.

Appendix VIII

15) V. Zharinov, "The Peaceful Co-existence of Two Separate Systems," *Pravda*, 16 July 1975, 5.



16) M. Abramov, "As You See, We Try to SUPPORT Détente," *Pravda*, 11 January 1975, 5.



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<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB123/dobrynin/dobrynin11.pdf> (18 October 2005).

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<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB123/dobrynin/dobrynin06.pdf> (18 October 2005).

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<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB135/19761103.pdf> (23 October 2005).

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<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB123/Box%2029,%20File%208%20Kissinger-%20President%20April%201972%2010,25%20pm%2000.pdf> (5 December 2005).

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[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.document&identifier=5034F5A8-96B6-175C-9DD9D17B9F404E16&sort=Collection&item=US-Soviet%20Relations](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.document&identifier=5034F5A8-96B6-175C-9DD9D17B9F404E16&sort=Collection&item=US-Soviet%20Relations) (17 March 2006).

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