

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION, W. A. H. AND ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
THE WHITE HOUSE, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1978, 5:30 pm

Brzezinski showed me the exchange of messages about Iran-- first those from Brezhnev to the President, and the President's reply. He said the reply had been approved by State and Defense (Marshall Shulman told me that Zbig's original draft of the President's letter was toned down very much. It was overly aggressive in the original form. In addition, he said that Zbig had, on background, given the press that the President was greatly disturbed by Brezhnev's letter; whereas the agreement for the public statement was to play it down, as State did not take the letter as seriously as Brzezinski did.)

Brzezinski told me they had asked through the German Ambassador to get a message to Alexandrov that he, Zbig, would be willing to have a conversation with Alexandrov. I was horrified at the idea! (Marshall Shulman told me he had never heard of it. Of course I will tell Cy when I see him Thanksgiving.)

In reply to my question, he thought there was very little difference between the views of the President and his advisors. I replied directly that I knew the President's views on nonproliferation because he had told me in the autumn of 1976, prior to the election, and he has stuck to it ever since. Everybody else has given up on it, but the President has not. I will certainly tell Brezhnev that on the subjects in which I have been dealing with

the President, there has been no vacillation. The President is a firm, definite, and courageous man.

(Of course Zbig wanted me to cover up the fact that the Russians think he, Brzezinski, is causing a lot of the trouble. In fact, I believe this to be true. He is always much sharper in his language to the Soviets, and also disagrees with Vance on some things. Whereas, I, of course, support Vance and find myself in full agreement with the positions Vance takes.)

Brzezinski said there were only a few differences left between the U. S. and Soviets for an agreement. I said I thought it was of vital importance to get an agreement rapidly and get Brezhnev over here. I said I felt that if the President and Brezhnev get together they would be able to come to agreement on a number of points and our relations would improve. I pointed out that the President had always been ready to meet with Brezhnev, and it was Brezhnev who had held out until a SALT agreement was ready for signature.