

Sir Frank Roberts, to my mind so unconvincingly.<sup>171</sup> On contrary Khrushchev said that since Americans had got so upset about deployment of rockets in Cuba, he had agreed to withdraw them, because “it is not repeat not really a matter of much importance to me just where our rockets are located.” Khrushchev immediately developed this theme by claiming that he had plenty of submarines which could fire Polaris type missiles against USA, and also had plenty of ICBMs in Russia which could reach USA. Khrushchev said that problem of redeployment therefore did not repeat not seriously matter from his point of view.

3. Khrushchev’s remarks about strategic irrelevance of geographic location of IRBMs and MRBMs are I think obviously untrue at present in view of Soviet paucity of nuclear missile firing submarines and of ICBMs. But I did not repeat not think it necessary to challenge Khrushchev on this point, since probable effect if any of such challenge would merely have been to reinforce his inclination to press ahead with buildup of more Polaris type missiles, nuclear submarines and ICBMs. However I thought Khrushchev’s remarks on this subject instructive, as tending to reveal his realistic concept of the indivisibility of Soviet deterrent capacity, especially when considered in conjunction with Khrushchev’s remarks on a different point in conversation (reported in paragraph 3 of my telegram 863 November 28)<sup>172</sup> about his local tactical and strategic superiority in region around Berlin, which would make it possible for USSR to take unilateral action there which would place squarely on West onus of choosing between acquiescence in Soviet fait accompli or escalation to major hostilities and probably to global nuclear war.

4. To my mind this conversation tended to confirm the line of analysis of Khrushchev’s motives in Cuban plot which I suggested in my telegrams 778 October 28 and 785 October 30.

5. Also relevant is Khrushchev’s statement to me, mentioned in my telegram 863 November 28 (paragraph 3 (b)), that for practical purposes no repeat no disarmament agreement could be expected prior to settlement of Berlin problem. Khrushchev immediately added that disarmament and Berlin questions were quite distinct, but that they nevertheless were related in time because in practice no repeat no man could be expected to disarm if he anticipates that he may have to fight. “It is for this reason that Berlin problem must inevitably be settled by agreement first.”<sup>173</sup>

6. I commented to Khrushchev on this that in my opinion prior agreement on and partial implementation of disarmament would remove danger of upsetting strategic balance, and thus would enormously facilitate for both sides mutual concessions and agreement on problem of Berlin, of peace treaties with Germany or Germanies.

7. But comment I wish to make in this message is that Khrushchev’s statement that disarmament is impossible prior to Berlin settlement seems to me to suggest that he is still toying with idea that he can achieve Berlin settlement by threat of unilateral action backed up by sufficiently strong military deterrent force. It seems to me probable that it is Khrushchev’s continued adherence to this earlier concept which goes far to explain his relative disinterest in getting disarmament agreement first.

8. If there is anything in this line of analysis, it seems to be possible that if only we could somehow disabuse Khrushchev of idea that he can somehow get Western backdown on Berlin by threat of force, then once this idea was genuinely abandoned Khrushchev might be much

<sup>171</sup> Voir/See document 733.

<sup>172</sup> Voir/ See document 197.

<sup>173</sup> Note marginale :/Marginal note:

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