

The Meeting With Premier Kosygin at Glassboro, N.J.

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AFTER the six-day war between the Arabs and Israelis in June, 1967, as the United Nations tried to find a permanent settlement, we learned that a large Soviet delegation headed by Kosygin was coming to New York for the U.N. meeting. Almost as soon as the trip was known, we began to hear that Kosygin would welcome a visit with me, preferably in New York. After his trip was publicly announced, pressures increased on me, from Senators and others, to work out a meeting.

I invited Kosygin to the White House, which I felt was the courteous thing to do, though it might pose problems for him. In the charged atmosphere of mid-1967 we recognized that the Soviet leader might prefer not to be an official guest in the U.S. capital. The Arabs, the Chinese Communists, the North Vietnamese and others might misinterpret it or misunderstand the circumstances. I therefore suggested Camp David as an alternative. Kosygin replied that he did not wish to come to Washington or even the Washington area—what was wrong with meeting in New York?

The United Nations was in an excited, emotional state and hardly provided the setting for quiet, relaxed talks between Soviet and American leaders. There would be problems of security if we met elsewhere in the city of New York.

Rusk was in New York for the U.N. meeting. I asked him to suggest to Kosygin that we meet at Maguire Air Force Base in New Jersey. Kosygin told Rusk that his going to a U.S. military base would be misunderstood. The

Soviet leader said that he favored a meeting, and the general area of New Jersey was acceptable, but he could not go to a military establishment. That was June 22. The day before, my old friend Gov. Richard J. Hughes of New Jersey had called the White House and talked to Walt Rostow. Hughes had been reading about the problems of arranging a Johnson-Kosygin meeting. Why not agree on some site in New Jersey? he asked.

I asked Marvin Watson to call Hughes and tell him that we were interested if he could suggest a good site—not a big city, but one close to an airport, and in a quiet setting. Hughes had been thinking hard during the night and had decided that Glassboro would be ideal. It was a small, peaceful college town. It was near the midpoint between New York and Washington. And it was only 18 miles from Philadelphia International Airport and 10 miles from the New Jersey Turnpike.

I will always has a warm spot in my heart for Dr. Thomas E. Robinson, the president of Glassboro State College, and for his wife. Few people have the kind of patience and consideration they showed when the "invaders" from Washington descended that evening on their large old stone house, called Hollybush. A massive communications network had to be installed overnight for us and for our guests, as well as for the huge press corps that would invade the tree-lined campus. With so many people likely to be in the house for the meetings, technicians also felt it necessary to install air-conditioners. Complicated security arrange-

ments had to be made for both parties. We also had to prepare lunch for the visitors. I was told later that Mrs. Robinson remained stoic through all these advance preparations—that is, until she saw all the food being removed from her refrigerator. Then she went upstairs for a good and well-earned cry.

OUR helicopters set down on the football field at Glassboro just before 11 o'clock of Friday morning, and when we arrived at Hollybush everything was in order. Preparations that ordinarily would have required 12 days or more had taken just 12 hours.

When word came that the Soviet delegation was delayed by heavy traffic on the turnpike, I visited with the Governor and President Robinson and their wives. Then I walked outside and shook hands with townspeople and students who had gathered for this historic meeting. Finally, at 11:22 A.M., Kosygin's limousine pulled up in front of the house and I walked down the steps to welcome him. As we walked toward the house, the Chairman and I chatted amiably. He congratulated me on becoming a grandfather two days earlier. "I have been one for 18 years," he said with a grin, "and I have no regrets."

We went directly into Dr. Robinson's study, just the two of us and our interpreters. We were to spend most of two working days in that quiet room, discussing the state of the world and its major problems, especially those that concerned us both. For the most part, Kosygin was reserved but friendly during our long talks. We spoke of our grandchildren

and of our hopes that they would grow up in a world of peace. He described his experiences in Leningrad through the long German siege of that great city during World War II. The memory of war's horror was always with the Soviet people, he said, and they wanted nothing but peace.

I picked up his point and reviewed all the steps I had taken as President to lessen cold war tensions. Now, I said, it was time to take new steps. I told him that I had been waiting for three months for his answer on starting talks on ABW's and ICBM's. As soon as I brought up strategic arms talks, he changed the subject to the Middle East. This became a pattern during both days of our talks. Each time I mentioned missiles, Kosygin talked about Arabs and Israelis.

At only one point in our first session did Kosygin seem close to becoming really heated. He said we had talked about territorial integrity before the Middle East war, but we had ended by protecting aggression. He insisted that Israeli troops go back to the original armistice lines and that the question of opening the Gulf of Agaba be referred to the International Court of Justice. Then he said, and the implication was "only then," could we discuss other problems. At that point he came close to issuing a threat. Unless we agreed to his formula, he declared, there would be a war—"a very great war." He said the Arabs would fight with arms if they had them and, if not, with bare hands. "All troops must be withdrawn at once," he said. If they fight with weapons, I replied, we would know

where they got them. Then I leaned forward and said slowly and quietly: "Let us understand one another. I hope there will be no war. If there is a war, I hope it will not be a big war. If they fight, I hope they fight with fists and not with guns." I told him that I hoped both our countries could keep out of any Middle East explosion because "if we do get into it, it will be a most serious matter."

I tried repeatedly to bring the talks back to limiting the missile race. I invited McNamara to join this discussion. At lunch, he and I made the strongest case we could for opening strategic arms talks immediately, but Kosygin apparently had come to Glassboro with a block against this subject. Time and time again he implied that we only wanted to talk about limiting ABW's, while the Soviets felt that ABW's and offensive nuclear weapons should be linked. I reassured him repeatedly that we wanted to limit both of offensive and defensive weapons, and McNamara said the same. But the point did not get across clearly—or Kosygin chose not to understand. That Friday, and when we met again on Sunday, I tried several times to persuade Kosygin to agree to a time and place for missile limitation talks. "Name the place," I said. "Give us a date—next week, next month. We will be there. Secretary McNamara is ready now." But it seemed obvious that Kosygin had come without the authority needed from the Soviet Presidium to make firm commitment. We did promise to continue our search for agreement through talks between Rusk and Gromyko in New York.