

Our President Does It Again



Arthur Hoppe

IT WAS the wild ringing of the church bells and the joyous hooting of the sirens that brought me out in the street.

"Haven't you heard?" cried my neighbor, Mr. Crannich who was dancing with old Mrs. Magruber. "Our President is back from Moscow with two secret protocols, one partial test ban and maybe even a consulate in Kiev some day!"

"And don't forget," shouted Mrs. Magruber over the din, "his personal friend, Brezhnev, agreed both sides would keep only the one ABM site they already had and not build any more — not that either side wanted to build any more, but our President's now got it in writing!"

"That's not all," hollered Mrs. Cranberry, who was jumping up and down on her porch, waving a huge American flag. "Their ABM site is in Moscow and ours is in Grand Forks. And any time in the next five years we can move our site to a single area of the two provided in Article Three of the 1972 treaty — if we get tired defending Grand Forks."

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WHEN I COULD catch my breath, I collared old Mr. Hoopes, who was happily setting off skyrockets, and yelled in his ear: "What about the secret protocols?"

"Oh," he said, "you mean the two secret protocols to the 1972 Arms Limitation Accords, which allowed us to build 1040 land-based missiles and put 656 on submarines, while the Russians could have 1618 and 740, respectively. Well, the two secret protocols will allow both sides to replace old missiles with new missiles, but not increase the number."

"Why are they secret protocols?" I shouted.

"'Cause they're the best kind, you durn

fool," said Mr. Hoopes. "Our President sure is a foxy one when it comes to dealing with his personal friend, Mr. Brezhnev."

Down at the corner, Mrs. Bennet was singing "America, The Beautiful" while her husband, Tony, accompanied her on the piano. "Do you realize our President coerced his personal friend, Brezhnev, into agreeing to teach us how to build houses," she said between stanzas.

"And transplant hearts, too," cried her husband. "Listen to this new tune I wrote for the occasion — 'I left my heart in Vladivostok . . .'"

Mrs. Frisbee fluttered by. "Oh, I can't wait until March 31, 1976," she said, "when both sides will limit underground tests to devices under 150 kilotons. Why, that's only seven times bigger than the Hiroshima bomb!"

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THE ONLY sour note was sounded by Mr. Mudgeon. "Don't see what good it does with all those thousands of missiles we still got aimed at each other," he grumbled.

"Oh, but they're even going to do something about that," said Mr. Crannich. They agreed an agreement should be completed at the earliest possible date before the expiration of the interim agreement."

"So they can only blow us up 20 times over while we can still blow them up 30 times over," explained Mrs. Magruber.

"Hallelujah!" shouted the crowd. "Hallelujah!"

Oh, it was a joyous celebration. I just hope Mr. Brezhnev doesn't discover how our President outsnookered him. Our President can't afford to lose another warm personal friend.