

NIXON WILL VISIT MOSCOW IN MAY
FOR TALKS ON 'ALL MAJOR ISSUES';
SEES 'PROGRESS' ON AN ARMS PACT

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President Says Trip Is 'Independent' of Journey to Peking

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 12—

President Nixon disclosed today that he would go to Moscow next May for a meeting with Soviet leaders.

The announcement was made by the President at a surprise news conference at the White House this morning. He read a formal statement that was made

News conference transcript
will be found on Page 18.

public simultaneously in Moscow, and then answered questions on a number of foreign and domestic issues.

Mr. Nixon described the trip to Moscow as "independent" of his planned journey to China, which he announced last July. He insisted that neither trip "is being taken for the purpose of exploiting what differences may exist between the two countries." [Question 1, Page 18.]

'Better Relations' Sought

On the contrary, he stressed that both trips were conceived with a single purpose—achieving "better relations" with the Communist world—and declared that neither trip was being taken "at the expense of any other nation." Mr. Nixon said he planned to visit Peking first, and suggested that he had chosen May for the Soviet trip so as to sandwich that journey between the China visit and the beginning of the political season at home next summer. [Question 5.]

The President said that the trip to Moscow would be a "working visit" and that ceremony would be kept to an absolute minimum." He said he hoped to confer with Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin and President Nikolai V. Podgorny, but expected his most "significant" encounter would be with Leonid I. Brezhnev, the chief of the Communist party, who is the Soviet Union's most powerful figure. [Question 6.]

Although he resisted discussing the agenda of the talks in any detail, asserting that it would be premature to do so, Mr. Nixon said he and the Soviet leaders would review "all major issues," including arms control, the Middle East and East-West relations [Question 3.]

Without directly saying so, Mr. Nixon suggested that nothing would please him more than to be able, while in Moscow, to join the Soviet leaders in signing an agreement on limitation of strategic arms. He said that "we are making progress" toward such an agree-

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Nixon to Make Trip to Moscow in May

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ment, and expressed hope that settlement of the issues involved in arms limitation "may be behind us" by the time he arrived in Moscow.

Mr. Nixon said the idea of a top-level meeting had been discussed informally at various levels of the United States Government ever since he entered the White House—and with the Russians on several occasions during the last 18 months. But he said he resisted the idea until he sensed that there had been satisfactory progress in bilateral negotiations between the two Governments at lower levels, and some evidence that the two countries could reach agreement on specific, concrete subjects. [Question 4.]

Treaty Agreements Listed

The President went on to say, however, that a careful examination of the last two and a half years revealed that there had, in fact, been sufficient progress to convince him and the Russian leaders that a meeting could be held with at least a reasonable hope of "making significant progress."

As evidence, he listed treaty agreements with the Soviet Union barring nuclear weapons from seabeds along continental shelves, a treaty curbing the use of biological weapons and an agreement designed to reduce the risk of accidental war.

Even more persuasive, the President said, were two other

factors. One was the recent agreement among the big Four powers regarding travel and communications between East and West Berlin. He noted that many details of the agreement remained to be settled but that the Berlin negotiations had done much to convince both himself and the Russians that "now was the time for a summit meeting."

The second factor, Mr. Nixon said, was a more general but profound feeling shared by both sides that they had reached anuclear stalemate and that negotiations provided the only sure route to the solution of differences.

"There is no alternative to negotiation at this point," Mr. Nixon said, asserting that neither side could engage any longer in nuclear "blackmail" because they had achieved nuclear parity.

"I think we can both agree that neither major power can get a decisive advantage over the other, an advantage which would enable it to launch a preemptive strike" and thus "engage in international blackmail," Mr. Nixon said. Subsequently he added:

"It is for this reason that the time has come to negotiate our differences, recognizing that they are still very deep, recognizing, however, that there is no alternative to negotiation at this point."

Mr. Nixon said that he had discussed the possibility of a summit meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei A. Gromyko, when the two met at

the United Nations last year, and that Mr. Gromyko had brought a formal invitation when he came to Washington again Sept. 29.

Mr. Nixon portrayed his meeting with Mr. Gromyko as in the nature of rehearsal for the talks he expects to have in Moscow in May. He said he and the Foreign Minister had agreed that there were still "very significant differences" between the two nations and that not all of these could be resolved even at the highest level.

"But there is one thing on which we agree at this point," he said, "and that is that the interest of neither country would be served by war." [Question 12.]

Third Major Revelation

Mr. Nixon's journey would be the first visit by an American President to Moscow. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's plans for such a trip were canceled after the Russians downed an American U-2 reconnaissance plane over the Soviet Union, and a visit to Moscow planned by President Lyndon B. Johnson was canceled after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The announcement of plans for the Moscow trip constituted Mr. Nixon's third major revelation within three months and reinforced the growing impression here that he enjoys the dramatic, surprise announcement every bit as much as did his predecessor, Mr. Johnson.