

Nixon's Fight for A Soviet Detente



— Jack Anderson

PRESIDENT NIXON is deeply conscious of the terrible power at his fingertips to plunge the world into a nuclear holocaust.

"I could push this button right here and in 20 minutes 70 million Russians would be dead," he told a secret strategy session on March 8. "And 25 minutes later, 70 million Americans would be dead," he added.

He made the statement to dramatize the importance of the Soviet-American detente. But it is a remark he has made in past private conversations, betraying a strange fascination with his control over the world's mightiest nuclear force.

He has also spoken admiringly of the cold courage that the late President Kennedy demonstrated during the nuclear showdown with Russia in 1962 over missile shipments to Cuba.

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BUT ON March 8, according to the confidential minutes, he spoke only of averting the massive casualties he could cause by pushing the nuclear button. We should "pray a lot," he told party leaders, and "do everything in our power to get along" with the Russians.

The way to prevent a "long-term crisis," he said, was to avert a "short-term crisis." One way this could be accomplished, he urged, was to grant them trade concessions.

"If we don't talk to them, if we don't

trade with them, we're going to face enormous increases in defense expenditures," he warned.

The President argued that it is possible to deal with the Russians without approving their ideology.

"I despise what happened to Solzhenitsyn," he said, referring to the banishment of the dissident Soviet writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. "But he's in Paris rather than Siberia or six feet under. We're not approving anything about their system."

Senate Republican leader Hugh Scott quickly agreed. "We used to look for Reds under the bed," he said. "As I see it, we're moving to the living room, not into bed with them."

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THE Commerce Department's contentious patent czar, Betsy Ancker-Johnson, unceremoniously kicked a Justice Department antitrust expert out of a briefing she was giving to a House subcommittee.

Ancker-Johnson was trying to convince the subcommittee that the taxpayer should give up hundreds of millions of dollars worth of patents to the energy industry, even if the patents are developed with government funds. The Justice Department is fighting the boondoggle.

A spokesman for Ancker-Johnson admitted she ordered the Justice lawyer to keep out. "Justice can have their own meetings," the spokesman huffed.