

Nixon Underscores Need for Detente

By 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.

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 Soviets.

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 Soviets without approving their ideology.

"I despise what happened to Solzhenitsyn," he said, referring to the banishment of the dissident Soviet writer Alexander 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."

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger suggested a different analogy. "Presently," he said, "we have broken the ice. We're in a parlous period even so, but we should use the thaw to get good water from the spring."

STRANGE SWAP—The taxpayers are bailing out another giant corporation, Rockwell International, which had been stuck with a lavish, out-of-the-way building it couldn't use.

Now the General Services Administration has agreed to take over the unoccupied building in exchange for government-owned property, which the corporation is leasing but would like to acquire.

The \$20 million facility, which the taxpayers are about to take

off Rockwell's hands, is located about 40 miles outside Los Angeles. It is a magnificent building, nestled in the rolling hills of Laguna Niguel, Calif.

Because of a cutback in military electronics procurement, however, it has remained empty since its completion in 1971. Quite understandably, Rockwell officials have been eager to unload the white elephant, which has cost the company more than \$1 million a year merely to maintain.

About a year ago, GSA advised Congress of its intention to exchange three "surplus" facilities in Los Angeles for the Laguna Niguel building. The appraiser determined the value of the swapped properties as approximately the same.

The deal would have gone through a month later, except for the strong opposition of Rep. Jack Brooks (D-Texas), whose Government Operations Subcommittee doggedly monitors GSA.

Brooks' year-long probe has determined that GSA has actually received reservations for only about half of the 750,000 square feet in the huge Rockwell plant. And some of those requests, Brooks felt, were suspect.

The President's San Clemente estate, for example, is only about 10 miles away, and already, about 20,000 square feet have been designated as a "tem-

porary presidential documents storage area." But most of the government officials who eventually will inhabit the building live 30 to 40 miles away in the Los Angeles area. GSA officials vigorously deny that the \$20 million building was purchased more for the convenience of President Nixon than the government employees it is supposed to house.

"The GSA has misled Congress and the public about the need for this space," Brooks told us, "in an effort to justify the acquisition." He complained that "there is no public transportation, no low or middle income housing in the area, and it is going to cost the government millions to provide these services and to move government agencies" to Laguna Niguel.

GSA boss Arthur Sampson told us, in rebuttal, that the acquisition of the Rockwell facility was "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get (the space) at half price." He said "action plans" would be formulated to provide housing and transportation.

He made no effort to conceal his feelings toward Brooks. "I'm tired of being nice to . . . our dear old friend" on Capitol Hill, Sampson stated, complaining that Brooks had delayed the acquisition of the facility for almost a year.