

Brezhnev Used Hot Line To Complain to Nixon

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Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet leader, used the Moscow-Washington "hot line" in October, 1973, to complain that Israel had violated the just-concluded cease-fire and to urge the United States to force Israel to stop.

This hitherto unreported use of the direct telex between the capitals was disclosed by former President Richard Nixon in excerpts from the sixth of seven installments from his memoirs, "RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon."

This installment, devoted to the Middle East, provided some additional footnotes to the October, 1973, war between the Israelis and the Arabs but failed to answer fully some of the controversial questions

surrounding the American role in the war.

On Oct. 22, 1973, a cease-fire negotiated by then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in Moscow went into effect, but the fighting continued, with the Israelis and Egyptians charging each other with violations.

"At 11 a.m. on October 23, Brezhnev, over the Washington-Moscow hot line, charged the Israelis with rupturing the cease-fire," Nixon wrote. "He urged that the United States move decisively to stop the violations. He curtly implied that we might even have colluded in Israel's action."

Nixon said he replied that the United States had insisted that Israel take steps to halt hostilities: "and I urged Brezhnev to do the same on the Egyptian side."

Later, it became well-known that on the evening of October 24, Brezhnev sent a message through the Soviet ambassador in Washington warning that the Soviet Union might intervene unilaterally if the United States did not stop the Israelis by joining with the Soviet Union in sending military contingents to the Middle East.

Nixon wrote in his memoirs that he regarded this message as "perhaps the most serious threat to U.S. Soviet relations since the Cuban missile crisis" of 1962. He related how American military forces were put on alert as a result of the message, and disclosed — for the first time — parts of his response to Brezhnev.

The former President said he sent a letter to the Soviet leader warning that a unilateral Soviet move "would produce incalculable consequences which would be in the interest of neither of our

countries and which would end all we have striven so hard to achieve."

The Soviet behavior during the October war — particularly Moscow's failure to tell the United States that war was about to break out, and the heavy Soviet airlift to the Egyptians — was cited by critics of detente to show the perils of such a relationship.

Nixon, however, wrote that it was not an example of the failure of detente, but rather "an illustration of its limitations — limitations of which I had always been keenly aware."

As the result of the October war, a major controversy arose over the American airlift to Israel of needed supplies, which did not begin in earnest until the eighth day of the fighting.

Kissinger and his supporters have contended that the delay was caused mostly by bureaucratic problems in the Pentagon. Critics of Kissinger have said that he and Nixon wanted to use the airlift to bring pressure on the Israelis.

Nixon said that on the third day of the war, when it was clear that the Israelis had miscalculated, "I met with Kissinger and told him to let the Israelis know that we would replace all their losses, and asked him to work out the logistics for doing so."

"When I was informed that there was disagreement in the Pentagon about which kind of plane should be used for the airlift, I became totally exasperated," Nixon wrote, "I said to Kissinger, 'Goddamn it: use every one we have. Tell them to send everything that can fly.'"

Nixon also included some la-

vish praise for Kissinger, who undertook what became known as his "shuttle diplomacy" after the war.

Referring to the first Egyptian-Israeli disengagement accord of January, 1974, Nixon said, "It was a tribute to Kissinger's enormous stamina, his incisive intellect, and not least, his great personal charm."

"It was an even greater tribute because he had to cope with the burden of a President weakened by political attack at home," referring to Watergate.

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