

The original documents are located in Box 10, folder “Solzhenitsyn, Alexander” of the Richard B. Cheney Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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To Dick

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 8, 1975

GRY

MEMORANDUM FOR: DON RUMSFELD
FROM: DICK CHENEY
SUBJECT: Solzhenitsyn

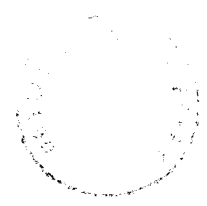
Dick

Question: Has a final decision been made concerning the possibility of the President visiting with Mr. Solzhenitsyn?

The press coverage we're getting out of the current situation where Ron's guidance is simply to say that there is nothing currently on the calendar has created serious problems.

Attached is a Herblock cartoon from this morning's Washington Post. My own strong feeling is that the President should see Solzhenitsyn for any one of the following reasons:

1. I think the decision not to see him is based upon a misreading of detente. Detente means nothing more and nothing less than a lessening of tension. Over the last several years it has been sold as a much broader concept to the American people. At most, detente should consist of agreements wherever possible to reduce the possibility of conflict, but it does not mean that all of a sudden our relationship with the Soviets is all sweetness and light.
2. I can't think of a better way to demonstrate for the American people and for the world that detente with the Soviet Union, and the signing of a SALT Agreement does not imply also our approval of their way of life or their authoritarian government. It would be a clear signal that while we do in fact want to sign a SALT II Agreement and the European Security Treaty, that in no way means that we've given up faith in our fundamental principles concerning individual liberty and democracy.



Solzhenitsyn, as the symbol of resistance to oppression in the Soviet Union, whatever else he may be, can help us communicate that message simply by having him in to see the President. Seeing him is a nice counter-balance to all of the publicity and coverage that's given to meetings between American Presidents and Soviet Leaders. Meetings with Soviet Leaders are very important, but it is also important that we not contribute any more to the illusion that all of a sudden we're bosom-buddies with the Russians.

3. Whatever we finally come up with by way of a SALT Agreement will require ratification by the United States Senate. I think that ratification will be easier to achieve if the President is in good shape with the conservative wing of the Republican Party and those who might ordinarily be expected to oppose SALT II. His position in that regard is weakened by our refusal to date to see Solzhenitsyn. Indeed, I think it can be argued that the long-term relationship between the U. S. and the Soviet Union would be enhanced by a Presidential visit with Solzhenitsyn because it enhances the President's capability to deal with the right wing in America, the group most likely to oppose SALT II.
4. Finally, the decision not to see Solzhenitsyn is totally out of character for the President. More than any President in recent memory, he's the man who's willing to see anyone, talk to anyone and listen to anyone's views, no matter how much they may differ from his own. That same operating principle should apply in foreign policy, just as it does domestically.

If, in fact, there is a potential foreign policy problem here, I would think it can easily be solved by a communication to Breshnev to let him know the reasons for the meeting and that it is not intended as a slap at the Soviets. They have been perfectly free to criticize us for our actions and policies in Southeast Asia over the years, to call us imperialists, war-mongers, and various and sundry other endearing terms, and I can't believe they don't understand why the President might want to see Solzhenitsyn. Secretary Kissinger is about

to meet with Gromyko in Europe, and I would think he could certainly lay the groundwork so that the Soviets know that the meeting is being done basically for domestic, not international, purposes.

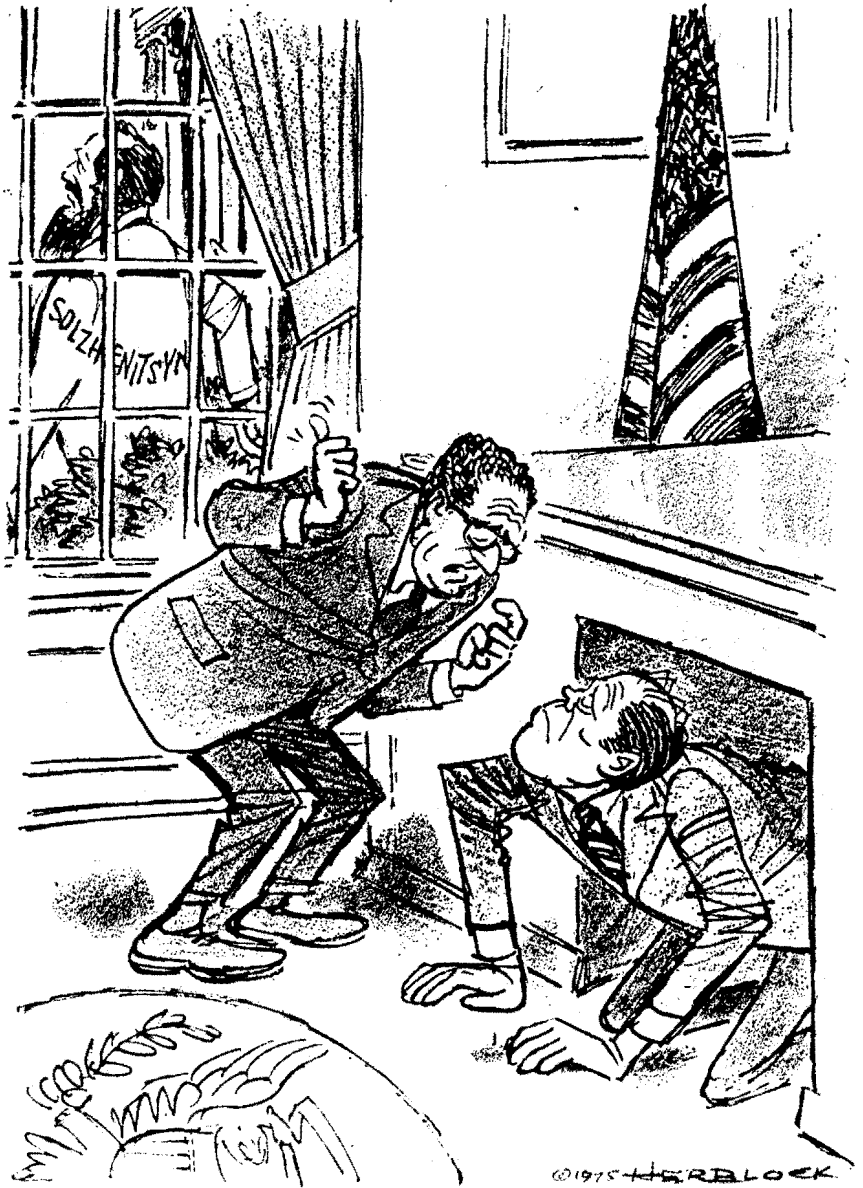
I would hope the issue could be reopened and debated once again. This time it should be done with a very small group, so that we don't have the kind of leaks we did last time.

Attachment



JULY 8, 1975

"It's all right to come out now. If you had met him, Brezhnev might have disapproved"



Flash

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 11, 1975

~~SECRET~~

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FROM: DICK CHENEY

RC Cheney

Attached are suggested questions and answers on Solzhenitsyn.

Scowcroft has no objection. However, he has suggested a slightly different answer in connection with the question of whether or not a meeting would be harmful to U. S. /Soviet relations. It also is included.

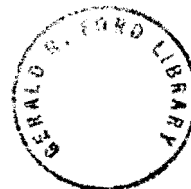
Material on the Olson matter will follow.

Regards.

Attachments

Determined to be an administrative marking
Cancelled per E.O. 12356, Sec. 1.3 and
Archivist's memo of March 16, 1983

By DAO NARS date 5/29/85



Solzhenitsyn Questions

Questions

Mr. President, why won't you see Solzhenitsyn?

Is it true that you refuse to see Solzhenitsyn because it might affect detente?

Did you refuse to see Solzhenitsyn because you were afraid it would harm our relationships with the Soviet Union?

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Answer

I will be happy to see Mr. Solzhenitsyn if he wishes to see me.

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Added Thoughts

There was some confusion at the outset when a Senator first called for an appointment for Mr. Solzhenitsyn. The original date proposed could not be worked out because of my own heavy schedule.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn is a distinguished man, a writer of some note, and a Nobel Prize winner.



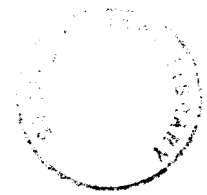
I would not expect my seeing Solzhenitsyn to have any impact on detente. Our relationship with the Soviet Union, our efforts to negotiate a Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, and detente itself are all based on the concept of finding ways to reduce tensions in the world and build relationships where it is in our mutual interest to do so. Our relationship is also founded on the recognition that there are fundamental differences between ourselves and the Soviets with respect to philosophy and our internal political systems. A meeting with Mr. Solzhenitsyn would in no way be inconsistent with, nor would it affect, the considerable progress made in recent years in strengthening our ties with the Soviet Union.



Scowcroft Suggestion

Q: Won't your meeting with Solzhenitsyn be harmful to U. S. / Soviet relations and detente?

A: In my judgment, no. While I do not agree with ^{Some} many of the views Mr. Solzhenitsyn has been expressing, I respect and admire his literary talents which have won for him the Nobel prize for literature. Our relations with the Soviet Union comprise a solid and expanding fabric of mutually beneficial endeavors. We have engaged ourselves to further progress across a broad front involving strategic, political, economic and cultural matters. A meeting with Mr. Solzhenitsyn is not related to and will not affect these very important policies and objectives.



FLASH
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FM CHENEY/MARSH

TO RON NESSEN

~~SECRET~~ WH51230

(F)

MEMORANDUM TO: RON NESSEN
FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: JACK MARSH AND DICK CHENEY

RON NESSEN HAS READ TO US THE PROPOSED STATEMENT CONCERNING SOLZHENITSYN.

WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE CORRECT STATEMENT WOULD BE A SIMPLE INDICATION OF YOUR WILLINGNESS TO SEE HIM IF HE WISHES TO SEE YOU.

WE FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO ISSUE THE STATEMENT LINKING SOLZHENITSYN TO DETENTE AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION. SCOWCROFT AGREES THAT THE TWO SHOULD NOT BE LINKED IN A STATEMENT.

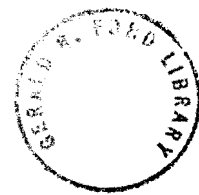
MARSH AND CHENEY BOTH FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO SAY NOTHING AT ALL THAN TO ISSUE A STATEMENT WHICH INDICATES THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO SEE SOLZHENITSYN AND WHICH ALSO DISCUSSES U.S. AND SOVIET RELATIONS.

THUS OUR PREFERRED OPTION WOULD BE A SIMPLE STATEMENT INDICATING YOU WILL SEE SOLZHENITSYN. OUR SECOND OPTION WOULD BE TO SAY NOTHING AT ALL UNTIL NEXT WEEK. SCOWCROFT WOULD PREFER THAT YOU SAY NOTHING AT ALL.

WE ALL AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE TO ISSUE THE STATEMENT RON READ TO US.

ALSO ALL AGREE THAT THE PROPOSED STATEMENT WOULD CAUSE A CONTINUING PROBLEM AND FURTHER AGGREGATE THE SOLZHENITSYN SITUATION.

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Archivist's memo of March 16, 1983

By EAD NARS date 5/29/85

DK R. Cheney

SECRET/FLASH

MEMORANDUM TO: RON NESSEN
FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: JACK MARSH and DICK CHENEY

Ron Nessen has read to us the proposed statement concerning Solzhenitsyn.

We strongly believe that the correct statement would be a simple indication of your willingness to see him if he wishes to see you.

We feel very strongly that it would be a mistake to issue the statement linking Solzhenitsyn to detente and our relationship with the Soviet Union. Scowcroft agrees that the two should not be linked in a statement.

Marsh and Cheney both feel that it would be better to say nothing at all than to issue a statement which indicates that you are willing to see Solzhenitsyn and which also discusses U.S. and Soviet relations.

Thus our preferred option would be a simple statement indicating you will see Solzhenitsyn. Our second option would be to say nothing at all until next week. Scowcroft would prefer that you say nothing at all.

We all agree that it would be a serious mistake to issue the statement Ron read to us.

~~SECRET/FLASH~~



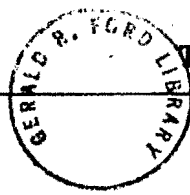
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Page 2

Also all agree that the proposed statement would cause a continuing problem and further aggravate the Solzhenitsyn situation.

~~SECRET/FLASH~~





George F. Will

Solzhenitsyn and the President

The U.S. government may have to expel Alexander Solzhenitsyn from the republic, not only as a hands-across-the-barbed-wire gesture of solidarity with its detente partner, the Soviet government, but also to save the President and his attendants from nervous breakdowns.

This is not the first time Solzhenitsyn, winner of the Nobel Prize in literature, has taxed the nerves of the mighty. Last year Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev, having decided that he could not conveniently kill Solzhenitsyn and could not endure the sound of his voice, expelled him.

Solzhenitsyn became a nuisance to Gerald Ford when AFL-CIO President George Meany invited Solzhenitsyn to Washington to give a speech in which he reiterated his low opinion of detente, as the U.S. practices it. He believes this policy reduces the United States to craven, degrading reticence about slave labor, concentration camps, and other problems of human rights in the Soviet Union.

Solzhenitsyn is, of course, correct: The U.S. government thinks such reticence is "necessary" lest the Soviet government get angry and refuse to accept U.S. trade subsidies or engage in our memorable grain deals. But mere truthfulness does not redeem politically inconvenient speech, and Solzhenitsyn carries free speech to inconvenient conclusions.

His presence here posed a problem: Should Mr. Ford meet with him? In coping with this problem the President contrived to confirm Solzhenitsyn's point while snubbing him for having made it.

Mr. Ford nervously diagnosed Solzhenitsyn's presence here as a foreign policy problem and summoned advice from the National Security Council, which copes with such threats to the nation's security. He and aides brainstormed about how to justify snubbing the man who, outside U.S. and Soviet government circles, is recognized as one of the moral heroes of the 20th century.

According to reports, several aides, showing a flair for baseness that would have stood them in good stead with the previous administration, questioned Solzhenitsyn's mental stability. The idea of American politicians rendering negative judgments



By Tom Wilson for The Washington Post

about Solzhenitsyn's mental health has an antic charm, but such judgments were not publicly advanced to justify the snub, perhaps because they would not play in Peoria.

Other aides reportedly noted that during his visit to the United States, Solzhenitsyn is promoting the sale of his books. They said the President should not do anything that might even indirectly help a commercial promotion. The White House is selectively fastidious about such things.

A few days earlier Mr. Ford met with the Cotton Queen. A few days after he summoned photographers to the White House lawn where he kicked a soccer ball with Brazilian star Pele, for the benefit of the American entrepreneurs who are paying Pele \$4.5 million to help promote their soccer franchises.

Press Secretary Ron Nessen, keeper of the presidential image, explained that Mr. Ford could not see Solzhenitsyn because of a "crowded schedule."

Nessen added: "For image reasons the President does like to have some substance in his meetings. It is not clear what he would gain by a meeting with Solzhenitsyn."

Nessen may have a point, but if so it reflects on Mr. Ford's ability to

receive, rather than on Solzhenitsyn's ability to impart, wisdom. The President's image thus clarified, like butter, Nessen refrained from adding the salient point: Brezhnev frowns on Solzhenitsyn, but not on Pele.

Obviously Mr. Ford decided that meeting Solzhenitsyn would be inconsistent with detente. Obviously Solzhenitsyn is correct: Detente, as practiced by the United States, prevents even gestures of support for the cause of human rights in the Soviet Union.

Certainly Solzhenitsyn was not surprised by Mr. Ford's snub. As he said in his Nobel Lecture:

"THE spirit of Munich has by no means retreated into the past; it was not a brief episode. I even venture to say that the spirit of Munich is dominant in the 20th century. The intimidated civilized world has found nothing to oppose the onslaught of a suddenly resurgent fang-baring barbarism, except concessions and smiles."

Detente has conferred upon Brezhnev veto power over the appointments calendar of the President of the United States. Perhaps Brezhnev, in the spirit of detente, would refrain from seeing people offensive to the U.S. government's moral sensibilities—if it had any.

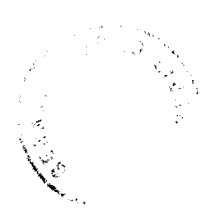
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Solzhenitsyn Questions

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Answer

I will be happy to see Mr. Solzhenitsyn if he wishes to see me.

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Added Thoughts

There was some confusion at the outset when a Senator first called for an appointment for Mr. Solzhenitsyn. The original date proposed could not be worked out because of my own heavy schedule.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn is a distinguished man, a writer of some note, and a Nobel Prize winner.



I would not expect my seeing Solzhenitsyn to have any impact on detente. Our relationship with the Soviet Union, our efforts to negotiate a Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, and detente itself are all based on the concept of finding ways to reduce tensions in the world and build relationships where it is in our mutual interest to do so. Our relationship is also founded on the recognition that there are fundamental differences between ourselves and the Soviets with respect to philosophy and our internal political systems. A meeting with Mr. Solzhenitsyn would in no way be inconsistent with, nor would it affect, the considerable progress made in recent years in strengthening our ties with the Soviet Union.

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Answer

I will be happy to see Mr. S. if he
I note that there has been a good deal written on this subject. Frankly, the matter has not been well-handled at the White House.

wishes to see me.

Added thoughts

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Mr. Solzhenitsyn is a distinguished man, a writer of ^{*some note*} distinction and a Nobel Prize winner. ~~I like most Americans, I find some areas where I agree with him, and others where we disagree.~~



~~I would be pleased to see him, and have asked Dr. Goldwin of my staff to see if something can be worked out.~~

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July 11, 1975

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Regards.

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Q & A's

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FORD-SOLZHENITSYN 170

CHICAGO (AP) - PRESIDENT FORD IS WILLING TO MEET WITH SOVIET NOVELIST ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN; IT WAS LEARNED SATURDAY FROM WHITE HOUSE SOURCES.

AT THE RECOMMENDATION OF SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER; FORD LAST WEEK VETOED A WHITE HOUSE MEETING WITH SOLZHENITSYN TO AVOID UPSETTING THE SEARCH FOR DETENTE WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

HOWEVER; IT WAS LEARNED THAT FORD HAS REVIEWED HIS POSITION SINCE THEN AND WOULD HAVE EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH THE NOVELIST HAD HE BEEN ASKED ABOUT IT AT HIS REGIONAL NEWS CONFERENCE HERE SATURDAY.

CHATTING INFORMALLY WITH REPORTERS AFTER THE CONFERENCE; THE PRESIDENT SAID THERE WERE SOME THINGS HE WANTED TO SAY BUT HADN'T BEEN ASKED ABOUT. HE DID NOT ELABORATE.

WHITE HOUSE SOURCES REPORTED LATER THAT; IF ASKED; FORD WOULD HAVE EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO SEE SOLZHENITSYN BUT ALSO WOULD HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE NOVELIST'S VIEWS OR BE AIMED IN ANY WAY AT UNDERCUTTING DETENTE.

SOLZHENITSYN IS CONTINUING A TOUR OF THE UNITED STATES.
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