

Module 10: How Will Historians Treat Richard Nixon?

Evidence 11: Soviet Union: Toast of the President to Brezhnev of the U.S.S.R., June 18, 1973

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Question to Consider

- How does the evidence below refute or support the views of the three historians outlined in the Conclusion of this module?

Document

We have resumed the talks that ended just over a year ago. We have resumed those talks on a new foundation of significant accomplishments in reshaping relations between our two peoples and between our two countries. Our common starting point was the document that you, Mr. Brezhnev, and I signed on May 29, 1972, in which we agreed on basic principles of our relations and the agreements to limit strategic weapons. On this basis, a year ago, we set a course toward a more constructive and mutually beneficial relationship. We have been able to embark on this course because we have recognized certain fundamental factors. We have recognized that despite the differences in our ideology and our social systems, we can develop normal relations. We have agreed that in the nuclear age, there is no alternative to a policy of peace for any nation. We have recognized that we have special responsibilities to work for the removal of the danger of war, and of nuclear war in particular. We have accepted the great task of limiting strategic arms. We have recognized that our responsibilities include the scrupulous respect for the rights of all countries, large or small.

Today, in the discussions we have had, we have reconfirmed these principles. We have laid the groundwork for a significant improvement in our relations that will result from the discussions and agreements undertaken this week. We receive you and your colleagues tonight and for this week with the firm intention of building on our past successes. A year ago, when I reported to the Congress upon my return from the Soviet Union, I described the principles we had agreed to as a road map--a map which would be useful only if both our two countries followed it faithfully.

Tonight, looking back over the first 12 months of our journey along the route which that map marks out, I believe there is good reason to be encouraged. Now we have another profound opportunity to advance along this course that we set for ourselves in Moscow a year ago. It is America's hope that the coming days of our meetings will carry forward the promising start that we have made on this first day. Our two peoples want peace. We have a special responsibility to insure that our relations--relations between the two strongest countries in the world--are directed firmly toward world peace.

The question is: Shall the world's two strongest nations constantly confront one another in areas which might lead to war, or shall we work together for peace? The world watches and listens this week to see what our answer is to that question. Mr. General Secretary, I know that your answer, based on our acquaintanceship and our discussions today and a year ago, is the same as mine to that question. We shall be worthy of the hopes of people everywhere that the world's two strongest nations will work together for the cause of peace and friendship among all peoples, regardless of differences in political philosophy.

Source:

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