

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

