**Telegram from Secretary of State Rusk to the Department of State**

New York, June 22, 1967.

Secto 16. Memorandum of Conversation.

Participants: Kosygin, Gromyko, Dobrynin, the Secretary and Amb. Thompson. Soviet Mission, 12 noon, June 22.

**1.**

After some polite remarks the Secretary said the President had telephoned him and asked him to express his regret that he was not able to arrange to extend his personal hospitality to the Chairman at the White House or Camp David. The President understood, however, the Chairman’s concern with the General Assembly and how occupied he was. He hoped that on some other occasion he would be able to personally entertain him.

**2.**

The President wanted, if the Chairman thought a meeting to be desirable, to suggest that they meet tomorrow without any formal agenda. Either side could bring up any questions they thought would contribute to a useful meeting. The President had in mind discussing nonproliferation, the missile problem—both offensive and defensive, the Middle East where we had some common points of interest but also some differences and perhaps Southeast Asia. If the Chairman thought a meeting would be useful the President suggested MacGuire Airforce Base in New Jersey. This was a federal government facility about one hour and 10 minutes drive from New York. The President would be glad to make a helicopter available and suggested the meeting might begin at eleven. They could have lunch and the President would have to depart about 2:30 or 3:00 in the afternoon.

**3.**

Kosygin said that he had no objection to discussing the problems the Secretary had mentioned. The discussion should not be limited by a fixed agenda. He anticipated a general exchange of views in which each could explain their general position. What he was after was the answer to a question. What should we strive for.

**4.**

The Secretary said no one can answer this question better than the President.

**5.**

Kosygin said this question was decisive for the Soviets. If this could be decided then all other matters would fall into place. He wished to raise the question as to why the meeting should take place on a military base. Both he and the President were civilians engaged in a peaceful endeavor.

**6.**

The Secretary said he wished to be quite frank. The location proposed would be quiet and secure. It was difficult for the President to arrange on short notice the communications he needed. He had an appointment to speak in California and could take off from the base directly after the meeting. He said the base was not bristling with guns. Kosygin said the important thing was to consider public opinion. People would wonder what we were trying to demonstrate. Perhaps a place could be found off the base. He was not objecting to the area. He stressed that in his view it was not in the President’s interest to meet on a military base. Both countries had declared for a peaceful approach, they needed only one room for about four hours and even a hotel room would suffice. People would wonder whether we had wanted to show him our guns or rockets.

**7.**

The Secretary said that this was President Johnson’s third choice. His first being the White House and the second Camp David. If Camp David were chosen the Secretary could escort him there by helicopter. There had been no design to get Kosygin on the military base but the President’s thought was a federal facility which we could control and arrange the necessary security and privacy.

**8.**

Kosygin said he understood but the people would not. Perhaps the meeting could be put off until Saturday in order to make better arrangements. He said perhaps Americans did not understand how Europeans looked on such questions and he repeated a meeting on a military base would not be in the interest of the President. He would be prepared to meet at 9 or 10 on Saturday. The meeting should serve the cause of peace and the solving of important world problems. He did not want this to be considered a meeting which would increase tension. He believed the President wanted it to be of a friendly character. He was not standing on formal consideration and did not want to make it more difficult for us. He appreciated the invitation to visit the White House but pointed out he was not on an official visit to the United States.

**9.**

The Secretary asked if he could reconsider the suggestion of Camp David.

**10.**

Kosygin said he simply could not go there. This was not his caprice. He had to consider the reaction of public opinion. Perhaps we did not feel the same delicacy.

**11.**

The Secretary said within the American scene a meeting on a base would not appear to us as it apparently would to them. A military base in our system did not have that character and a meeting on it would be more normal to us. A base was not just soldiers but a community which had schools, hospitals, residences, etc.

**12.**

Kosygin suggested they might go to a farmer’s house. If they were in the Soviet Union this could be easily arranged for a meeting of a few hours.

**13.**

The Secretary said he would report back to the President. It would be difficult to propose a fourth site. The Chairman has his problems but the President has problems of his own.

**14.**

Kosygin said the public need not know of other sites and the one selected could be presented as the President’s proposal.

**15.**

The Secretary said he understood that the Chairman was stating a preference but did the Chairman wish him to say to the President that he could not meet at the base.

**16.**

Kosygin said he did not want the matter put in such black and white terms but he wanted to ask the President that he take his views into consideration. Kosygin said that if it would help matters he could meet at any time on Saturday. **Rusk**