P.S. to the NEWS
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RELEASE: July 12

NIXON AT YALTA

Well, President Nixon went to Yalta after all -- despite the White House protestations that he would not. The Soviets insisted that Nixon go to Yalta, and it seems that whatever Brezhnev wants, Brezhnev gets. For a few days, the White House tried to put across the fiction that Nixon was going only to Oreanda; but that turned out to be merely a section of Yalta.

Stalin was similarly insistent that President Franklin Roosevelt meet him at Yalta in 1945. At least ten alternative sites were considered, but Stalin held out for Yalta. Winston Churchill later remarked: "If we had spent ten years on research, we could not have found a worse place in the world than Yalta. ... It is good for typhus and deadly lice which thrive in those parts."

The reason Richard Nixon was reluctant to go there is because Yalta has almost become a synonym for sellout and secret agreements. It was at Yalta in 1945 that President Roosevelt agreed to give one-third of Poland to Russia, to allow Communists to control the remainder of Poland, to let the Soviets use German prisoners as slave labor, to forcibly return to Stalin all Russian citizens who had fled from Russia, and to give the Soviets three votes in the United Nations.

There was no reason for Roosevelt to make any concessions to Stalin. The United States then had the most powerful army, navy, and air force in the world. Shortly before Roosevelt left for Yalta, he was told by General Leslie Groves, in charge of the atom

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bomb project, that its success was "a 99 percent certainty" and that it would be "extremely powerful."

On March 1, 1945, President Roosevelt appeared before a joint session of Congress to give what he called "a personal report to you and at the same time to the people of the country" on the Yalta Conference. In the course of his address, Roosevelt asserted: "This Conference concerned itself only with the European war and with the political problems of Europe, and not with the Pacific war." Months later we learned that Yalta did in fact deal in detail with the Pacific war. Roosevelt agreed to give the Soviets the Kurile Islands, the southern half of Sakhalin, the naval base of Port Arthur, and control of the Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the commercial port of Dairen.

The chief of the U.S. military mission to the Soviet Union, Major General John R. Deane, summed up U.S. relations with the Soviets in a top secret memo to General George Marshall: "It is amazing how these [vodka] toasts go down past tongues in cheeks. After the banquet we send the Soviets another thousand airplanes and they approve a visa that has been hanging fire for months. We then scratch our heads to see what other gifts we can send, and they scratch theirs to see what they can ask for."

As the old French saying goes, the more things change, the more they remain the same. Thirty years later, another U.S. President is still scratching his head to see what other gifts we can send the Soviets, and they are still scratching theirs to see what they can ask for. We may not know for months, or even years, what secret deals may have been made at the 1974 Yalta Conference.

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