

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE UNION OF  
SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ON MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE U.S.A.-USSR  
DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS LINK (WITH ANNEX, SUPPLEMENTING AND MODIFYING  
THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH ANNEX, OF JUNE 20,1963)**

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The United States and the Soviet Union had agreed in 1963 to establish, for use in time of emergency, a direct communications link between the two governments. The original "Hot Line" agreement provided for a wire telegraph circuit, routed Washington-London-Copenhagen- Stockholm-Helsinki-Moscow, and as a backup system a radio telegraph circuit routed Washington-Tangier-Moscow. These circuits had one terminal in the United States and one in the Soviet Union.

Concern about the risk that nuclear accidents, ambiguous incidents, or unauthorized actions might lead to the outbreak of nuclear war contributed to concern about the reliability and survivability of the "Hot Line," which had shown its value in emergency situations. The advances in satellite communications technology that had occurred since 1963, moreover, offered the possibility of greater reliability than the arrangements originally agreed upon. Hence, when the SALT delegations established a special working group under their direction to work on "accidents measures," a similar group was established to consider ways to improve the Washington-Moscow direct communications link.

The understandings reached by this group were reported to the SALT delegations in the summer of 1971 and became a formal agreement to improve the "Hot Line" at the same time that the related agreement on steps to reduce the risks of accidental war was concluded.

The terms of the agreement, with its annex detailing the specifics of operation, equipment, and allocation of costs, provided for establishment of two satellite communications circuits between the United States and the Soviet Union, with a system of multiple terminals in each country. The United States was to provide one circuit via the Intelsat system, and the Soviet Union a circuit via its Molniya II system. The agreement of 1963 was to remain in force "except to the extent that its provisions are modified by this Agreement and Annex thereto." The original circuits were to be maintained until it was agreed that the operation of the satellite circuits made them no longer necessary.

On September 30, 1971, the agreement was signed in Washington. The two satellite communications circuits became operational in January 1978. The radio circuit provided for in the 1963 agreement was then terminated, but the wire telegraph circuit has been retained as a backup.

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*Signed at Washington September 30, 1971  
Entered into force September 30, 1971*

The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, hereinafter referred to as the Parties,

Noting the positive experience gained in the process of operating the existing Direct Communications Link between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which was established for use in time of emergency pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link, signed on June 20, 1963,

Having examined, in a spirit of mutual understanding, matters relating to the improvement and modernization of the Direct Communications Link,

Having agreed as follows:

**Article 1**

1. For the purpose of increasing the reliability of the Direct Communications Link, there shall be established and put into operation the following:

(a) two additional circuits between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics each using a satellite communications system, with each Party selecting a satellite communications system of its own choice,

(b) a system of terminals (more than one) in the territory of each Party for the Direct Communications Link, with the locations and number of terminals in the United States of America to be determined by the United States side, and the locations and number of terminals in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to be determined by the Soviet side.

2. Matters relating to the implementation of the aforementioned improvements of the Direct Communications Link are set forth in the Annex which is attached hereto and forms an integral part hereof.

**Article 2**

Each Party confirms its intention to take all possible measures to assure the continuous and reliable operation of the communications circuits and the system of terminals of the Direct Communications Link for which it is responsible in accordance with this Agreement and the Annex hereto, as well as to communicate to the head of its Government any messages received via the Direct Communications Link from the head of Government of the other Party

**Article 3**

The Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link, signed on June 20, 1963, with the Annex thereto, shall remain in force, except to the extent that its provisions are modified by this Agreement and Annex hereto.

**Article 4**

The undertakings of the Parties hereunder shall be carried out in accordance with their respective Constitutional processes.

## Article 5

This Agreement, including the Annex hereto, shall enter into force upon signature.

**DONE** at Washington on September 30, 1971, in two copies, each in the English and Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic.

**FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

WILLIAM P. ROGERS

**FOR THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS:**

A. GROMYKO

### **ANNEX TO THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS ON MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE U.S.A.-USSR DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS LINK**

Improvements to the U.S.A.-USSR Direct Communications Link shall be implemented in accordance with the provisions set forth in this Annex.

#### **I. CIRCUITS**

(a) Each of the original circuits established pursuant to paragraph 1 of the Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding, dated June 20, 1963, shall continue to be maintained and operated as part of the Direct Communications Link until such time, after the satellite communications circuits provided for herein become operational, as the agencies designated pursuant to paragraph III (hereinafter referred to as the "designated agencies") mutually agree that such original circuit is no longer necessary. The provisions of paragraph 7 of the Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding, dated June 20, 1963, shall continue to govern the allocation of the costs of maintaining and operating such original circuits.

(b) Two additional circuits shall be established using two satellite communications systems. Taking into account paragraph I (e) below, the United States side shall provide one circuit via the Intelsat system and the Soviet side shall provide one circuit via the Molniya II system. The two circuits shall be duplex telephone band-width circuits conforming to CCITT standards, equipped for secondary telegraphic multiplexing. Transmission and reception of messages over the Direct Communications Link shall be effected in accordance with applicable recommendations of international communications regulations, as well as with mutually agreed instructions.

(c) When the reliability of both additional circuits has been established to the mutual satisfaction of the designated agencies, they shall be used as the primary circuits of the Direct Communications Link for transmission and reception of teleprinter messages between the United States and the Soviet Union.

(d) Each satellite communications circuit shall utilize an earth station in the territory of the United States, a communications satellite transponder, and an earth station in the territory of the Soviet Union. Each Party shall be responsible for linking the earth stations in its territory to its own terminals of the Direct Communications Link.

(e) For the circuits specified in paragraph I (b):

-- The Soviet side will provide and operate at least one earth station in its territory for the satellite communications circuit in the Intelsat system, and will also arrange for the use of suitable earth station facilities in its territory for the satellite communications circuit in the Molniya II system. The United

States side, through a governmental agency or other United States legal entity, will make appropriate arrangements with Intelsat with regard to access for the Soviet Intelsat earth station to the Intelsat space segment, as well as for the use of the applicable portion of the Intelsat space segment

-- The United States side will provide and operate at least one earth station in its territory for the satellite communications circuit in the Molniya II system, and will also arrange for the use of suitable earth station facilities in its territory for the satellite communications circuit in the Intelsat system

(f) Each earth station shall conform to the performance specifications and operating procedures at the corresponding satellite communications system and the ratio of antenna gain to the equivalent noise temperature should be no less than 31 decibels. Any deviation from these specifications and procedures which may be required in any unusual situation shall be worked out and mutually agreed upon by the designated agencies of both Parties after consultation.

(g) The operational commissioning dates for the satellite communications circuits based on the Intelsat and Molniya II systems shall be as agreed upon by the designated agencies of the Parties through consultations

(h) The United States side shall bear the costs of: (1) providing and operating the Molniya II earth station in its territory; (2) the use of the Intelsat earth station in its territory; and (3) the transmission of messages via the Intelsat system. The Soviet side shall bear the costs of:

(1) providing and operating the Intelsat earth station in its territory; (2) the use of the Molniya II earth station in its territory; and (3) the transmission of messages via the Molniya II system. Payment of the costs of the satellite communications circuits shall be effected without any transfer of payments between the Parties.

(i) Each Party shall be responsible for providing to the other Party notification of any proposed modification or replacement of the communications satellite system containing the circuit provided by it that might require accommodation by earth stations using that system or otherwise affect the maintenance or operation of the Direct Communications Link. Such notification should be given sufficiently in advance to enable the designated agencies to consult and to make, before the modification or replacement is effected, such preparation as may be agreed upon for accommodation by the affected earth stations.

## II. TERMINALS

(a) Each Party shall establish a system of terminals in its territory for the exchange of messages with the other Party, and shall determine the locations and number of terminals in such a system. Terminals of the Direct Communications Link shall be designated "U.S.A." and "USSR."

(b) Each Party shall take necessary measures to provide for rapidly switching circuits among terminal points in such a manner that only one terminal location is connected to the circuits at any one time

(c) Each Party shall use teleprinter equipment from its own sources to equip the additional terminals for the transmission and reception of messages from the United States to the Soviet Union in the English language and from the Soviet Union to the United States in the Russian language.

(d) The terminals of the Direct Communications Link shall be provided with encoding equipment. One-time tape encoding equipment shall be used for transmissions via the Direct Communications Link. A mutually agreed quantity of encoding equipment of a modern and reliable type selected by the United States side, with spares, test equipment, technical literature and operating supplies, shall be furnished by the United States side to the Soviet side against payment of the cost thereof by the Soviet side; additional spares for the encoding equipment supplied will be furnished as necessary.

(e) Keying tapes shall be supplied in accordance with the provisions set forth in paragraph 4 of the Annex to the Memorandum of Understanding, dated June 20, 1963. Each Party shall be responsible for

reproducing and distributing additional keying tapes for its system of terminals and for implementing procedures which ensure that the required synchronization of encoding equipment can be effected from any one terminal at any time

### **III. OTHER MATTERS**

Each Party shall designate the agencies responsible for arrangements regarding the establishment of the additional circuits and the systems of terminals provided for in this Agreement and Annex, for their operation and for their continuity and reliability. These agencies shall, on the basis of direct contacts:

- (a) arrange for the exchange of required performance specifications and operating procedures for the earth stations of the communications systems using Intelsat and Molniya II satellites;
- (b) arrange for testing, acceptance and commissioning of the satellite circuits and for operation of these circuits after commissioning, and,
- (c) decide matters and develop instructions relating to the operation of the secondary teleprinter multiplex system used on the satellite circuits