RUSK, D.

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY
1230 YORK AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10021

JOSHUA LEDERBERG
PRESIDENT

March 22, 1979

Professor Dean Rusk
School of Law
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30601

Dear Professor Rusk:

It was an extraordinary pleasure to hear you at the Council for Foreign Relations Monday evening.

I was pressing you for the possibility of corroborating some historical detail on rational motivations for the Russian gambit in the Cuban missile crisis. Enclosed is an extract from Roger Hilsman's book that was the provocation for that hypothesis: I am simply still trying to evaluate the conjecture that effective Soviet missile strength in 1961 was actually below our estimates: this would have made the Gilpatric message even more "horrendous" than we perhaps had intended.

The showdown has been a major pivot of Soviet arms policy ever since. Hopefully, it was the closest object example we will need to encounter for many years, of the dynamics of actual nuclear confrontation.

I also seconded your remarks about the utility of the surface naval option for deterrent platforms. Here is something I wrote awhile ago (by no means still generally valid) that touches on the same issue. There are perhaps two more arguments contra: 1) the problem of manning craft whose manifest role is to be a lure; and 2) the complications for numerical verifiability that would be presented by such deployment of nondescript platforms.

On the other hand, you are surely right about the pervasiveness of the "solid gold" syndrome, and the net detriment to national security that ensues.

Again my admiration for a superb and candid presentation that must have enlarged the imagination and insight of everyone in that audience.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

Encl.