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Reception by N.S. Khrushchev of Sa'ed, Leader of the Iranian Parliamentary Delegation

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Summary:

Khrushchev asks Sayed, the head of the Iranian delegation, about his impressions of the Central Asian and Caucasian republics that they visited. He also expresses his dissatisfaction with Iran's entry into the Baghdad Pact and urges for improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and Iran.

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THE RECEPTION OF SA'ED, THE HEAD OF AN IRANIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION,
BY N. S. KHRUSHCHEV

11 January 1956 at 1600

Sa'ed greets Khrushchev in the name of the Iranian parliamentary delegation and himself personally.

Khrushchev expresses gratitude and asks about Sa'ed's and the delegation's impressions from [their] stay in the USSR.

Sa'ed says that he and the delegation saw a great deal. He, Sa'ed, left the Soviet Union in 1942 and has the opportunity to compare. During these years the USSR has managed to achieve exceptional successes. One can only be happy for such a flourishing of the Soviet land.

Khrushchev asks what the delegation saw in the Soviet Central Asian republics.

Sa'ed says that the successes here were especially great. He, Sa'ed, had occasion to pass through Ashkhabad 40 years ago. There was almost nothing then. But now in Turkmenia the delegation saw more industrial enterprises, developed agriculture, wonderful cultural institutions, the national theater, a high level of musical culture, and remarkable national cadre. All this was achieved with the friendly aid of the Russian people.

Khrushchev notes that the successes of our Central Asian republics are the brightest demonstration of the ability of the Soviet people, and asks Sa'ed about Baku.

Sa'ed says that he was previously in Baku for seven years as an Iranian consul. Since then he has not seen Baku for a long time. Now Baku is luxuriant, industry has grown unusually, their own numerous intelligentsia have been created, etc.

Khrushchev says that he has not been in Baku and that Sa'ed is in a better position in this respect since he has seen everything himself. Khrushchev adds to this that we are proud of our local national cadre who have arisen in our union republics and their work.

Sa'ed notes that there are very many engineers in Baku.

Khrushchev says that the engineers who grew up in Baku work not only in Azerbaijan, but also in the oil industries of other union republics.

Sa'ed says that Baku with its industry and cadre have grown by many times compared to the past, and remarkably, but what was done in Turkmenia and Uzbekistan exceeds everything the delegation saw in the Soviet Union. The Turkmen and Uzbeks were considered incapable of working, lazy, and they were looked at like robbers, but in the Soviet Union they have shown themselves to be industrious, capable people who have created their own industry, their own agriculture, their own culture, and have raised scientists and artists from amongst their midst. Sa'ed stressed, we have seen good workers in these republics devoted to the cause of peace. The success of these republics have been achieved with the aid of the central government of the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev notes that the Tajiks, for example, have brought forth from their midst Rassulov, a Deputy Minister of Agriculture, who deals with cotton-growing on a Soviet-wide scale, and is responsible for the organization of the production of cotton, hemp, and other fibers.

Sa'ed says that in old time the Russian culture was great and strong, but then it was only for themselves, but now it has become a culture for all peoples of the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev asks about the level of supply of the collective farms and the impression which the standard of living of collective farmers in the Central Asian republics of the USSR made on the delegation.

Sa'ed replies that the delegation was in the prosperous collective farm [*kolkhoz-millioner*] Kzyl-Uzbekistan not far from Tashkent, whose income this year has reached 17,000,000 rubles; in this collective farm the delegation saw a remarkable modern stockbreeding farm, the technically well-equipped construction of a new

stockyard, an excellent hotel, etc. At a reception held by the collective farm in honor of the delegation they poured collective farm wine of such quality that it could be compared with the best kinds of French wine. The chairman of this collective farm is an Uzbek, a cultured, sophisticated person, and a good manager. The collective farm workers' income is high

Khrushchev asks whether the Iranian parliamentary delegation was satisfied with what they had seen during their trip throughout the Soviet Union.

Sa'ed replied that the delegation gained great satisfaction from their trip and says that on return to Iran the delegation will try to tell about everything it saw in the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union's struggle for peace as widely as possible, and will try to create that atmosphere of mutual understanding on which Soviet-Iranian relations can be built in the future. It will do everything that depends on it in order to try and find a path to friendship with the Soviet Union. It will not forget what it saw in the Soviet country

Khrushchev says that all this is good, but he would like to ask Sa'ed and the delegation "what is it with this Baghdad Pact that is bothering you[?]"

Sa'ed says that now the matter is to get out of the situation which has been created and asks [Khrushchev] to give some idea about a possible escape from this situation.

Khrushchev continues and says that the Soviet Union has done everything to create the conditions for normal, good relations with Iran which could grow into a friendship. Khrushchev says, we have decided to make concessions for the sake of this. We transferred gold to Iran, and settled contentious question about the border. We have tried to develop trade and even bought such goods from Iran for which there was not much need. And after this suddenly the Baghdad Pact, like a thunderstorm on a clear day!

Sa'ed explains that he, Sa'ed, spoke with Prime Minister of Iran Ala', and Ala' said that twice during the two recent World Wars Iran was neutral, and this neutrality cost Iran dearly. At the same time Sa'ed stressed that Iran has always attached great importance to good relations with the Soviet Union, and recalls those instructions which Reza Shah gave him at one time with the purpose of improving Soviet-Iranian relations. Sa'ed said that he warned Ala' that if a new world war broke out everything would change in 24 hours and that Iran would be made a field of battle. Sa'ed stresses that he is not entrusted with any diplomatic mission and he has no authority, but he says that the current situation in relations between the USSR and Iran cannot remain this way and that Iran does not want the Soviet Union to have any suspicions against it. Sa'ed refers to a discussion with V. M. Molotov at a reception in the Embassy of Iran about a possible way out of the situation. In this connection Sa'ed mentions a trip to the USSR by Norwegian Prime Minister Gerhardsen and that Gerhardsen gave some assurances; Sa'ed adds that at this time some assurances could also be made in the name of Iran

Khrushchev stresses that there is a substantial difference between the situation of Norway and the situation of Iran, Soviet-Norwegian and Soviet-Iranian relations. Concerning the argument that Iran would not like to be occupied a third time, Khrushchev asked, how can Iran avoid such a prospect as joining the Baghdad bloc? From the point of view of a simple calculation such an entry could only worsen Iran's position. It is one thing when troops enter a country which is not a military enemy; it is another when they come into an enemy country in wartime conditions. If, says Khrushchev, one takes Ukraine and Iran, for example, who lost more from the War and the entry of foreign troops?

Sa'ed replies that, of course Ukraine suffered immeasurably more, and adds to this that the delegation was in Stalingrad and saw what destruction and casualties a modern war can bring.

Khrushchev mentions that he, Khrushchev, was in Stalingrad during the Battle of Stalingrad. Khrushchev says, we know what modern war is like. But a future war, if one breaks out, in that situation in which Iran has put itself, will bring with it such as Iran has not known in all its history. Khrushchev stresses that Britain plays the main role in the Baghdad Pact. It is interesting and advantageous to them that Iran be in the Baghdad Pact. Previously colonizers seized economically poorly-developed countries by conquest; now they seek their goal by drawing such countries into

military blocs. They come to these countries outwardly not as conquerors but as allies, but essentially this is only a new form of colonial enslavement. They are in command in these blocs. They take oil from their weak partners in the bloc. They force the soldiers of these countries to be and act together with their own armies. One can understand the position of Britain, which is interested in not all the bombs flying at it, but part of the bombs flying at others, for example, at Tehran. But one cannot understand the position of Iran which, upon joining the Baghdad Pact, has displayed a readiness to expose its flanks to attacks for the interests of Britain and America.

Sa'ed explains that Turkey, Iraq, and Pakistan joined the Baghdad Pact earlier than Iran. In these conditions Iran found itself in a difficult position. In Iran they remember how Britain made one sheikh a king in Iraq and thus was turned into the master of the situation in this country. Sa'ed says, we knew that the British could plant their sheikh from Iraq to the oil regions of the south of Iran and separate these regions from Iran. We also knew that Turkey could get Iranian Azerbaijan and Pakistan, Iranian Baluchistan. Iran's joining the Baghdad Pact had the goal of preventing this.

Khrushchev notes that, on the contrary, the military cooperation between Iran and the Baghdad Pact makes the ability for Iraq, Turkey, and Pakistan to come to Iran more easily as "allies" and then not leave Iran.

Sa'ed says that he personally considers Iran joining the Baghdad Pact a rash step. He thinks that it would have been necessary to tell the Americans that Iran would like to remain in approximately the same position as Sweden, for it is also a neighbor of the Soviet Union, but does not participate in blocs.

Khrushchev says we have excellent relations with Sweden.

Sa'ed mentions that when the Premier of Iran was Zahedi suggestions were also made to him, Zahedi, about joining the Baghdad Pact, but Zahedi did not do this in spite of the pressure put on him. Sa'ed says, I warned Zahedi away from joining the bloc and Zahedi listened to me. Well, now, under Ala', this happened. It stands to reason that such a situation cannot continue. It is impossible for the Soviet Union to suspect Iran of other intentions so that we suspect one another. It is necessary to search for a way out.

Khrushchev says that the Iranian parliamentary delegation did not manage to come to the Soviet Union like the American Admirals Rayford and Dudley were welcomed in Iran; their goal, besides military matters, was to create mistrust toward Iran in the Soviet Union.

Sa'ed says that America has created a war psychosis. It depicts war as unavoidable, fatal. If, says Sa'ed, you, the Soviet Union, were not so strong then the war would have already begun. Sa'ed speaks further about Eisenhower, stressing that he seems a very reasonable person and an important military [leader], but not a politician.

Khrushchev stresses that Eisenhower showed himself to be a very decent person, especially during war time. When he gave his word, he always kept it. Unfortunately, an arms race is taking place in the state of affairs which has developed in relations between the USSR and the US and, in spite of the Soviet Union's proposal to reduce arms, prohibit atomic weapons, and the testing of atomic bombs, in one country or another atomic bombs and explosions of hydrogen bombs are being made, one stronger than the other.

Sa'ed says that the Americans give Iran money. Iran needs aid. Iran is experiencing economic difficulties and inflation. Ala' has been forced to seek this aid, but he is an honest person and a great patriot. Sa'ed will speak with Ala' on return to Iran.

Possibly a way out can be found. Sa'ed says, for his part he will try and do everything to restore the Soviet Union's trust in Iran.

Khrushchev says that the Soviet Union has formed good relations with the Arabs; he also cites the example of Afghanistan, with which the Soviet Union has excellent relations. They have no claims against one another, but the Soviet Union grants Afghanistan credit and technical aid. We want to achieve good relations with you, too, but you have created a knot and created a hotbed of friction. Who pushed you to do this thing?

Sa'ed says that the Shah of Iran will go to India in two weeks. Sa'ed hopes that this

trip will favorably influence the future policy of Iran and the attitude of the Shah, who is still a young person who might be influenced. Nehru, says Sa'ed, is an experienced, important politician. The Shah might be influenced through him.

Khrushchev says that Nehru is a great government figure and excellent person; he is not a Communist, but we have a common position with him on questions of fighting for peace. We are together with him. He will tell the Shah himself what he will find necessary. We have no need to prompt him. This would be incorrect.

Sa'ed says that he himself will write Hekmat, the Iranian Ambassador in India, who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran at the time when Sa'ed was premier. He, Sa'ed, will ask Hekmat to speak with Nehru in connection with the upcoming meeting between Nehru and the Shah. A way needs to be found to get out of the situation which has been created.

Khrushchev says that the Soviet Union has sought good relations with Iran and that it seemed that matters were going well; a treaty was concluded regarding the settlement of contentious border and financial questions between the USSR and Iran, etc.

Sa'ed says that he helped in this matter and, as Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Senate, he promoted the approval of the treaty by the Iranian parliament.

Khrushchev, referring to his statement in the USSR Supreme Soviet, says that if we criticize Iran for joining the Baghdad Pact then we do this with good intentions, in order to be friends.

Sa'ed again refers to the fact that Prime Minister Ala' told him, Sa'ed, that the Baghdad Pact does not pursue aggressive goals and that it is a "defensive" pact.

Khrushchev asks, against whom does Iran want to be defended? Evidently it means "defense" against the Soviet Union? But the Soviet Union has not attacked and does not intend to attack Iran. The Soviet Union has enough of its own land and own riches, and does not need foreign land or foreign riches. Khrushchev says to Sa'ed, you are conspiring against us together with Britain and America. You agree beforehand to give your territory to our possible enemies in the event of war. You are already giving them your territory. Khrushchev stresses in connection with this that some see a manifestation of weakness in the peace-loving Soviet Union: they are mistaken. Understandably, it is impossible to test strength by war every year, but it is necessary to see without this that the Soviet Union is not weaker than its enemies. Moreover, it is not alone, as before. Such an enormous country as China is with it, and the countries of people's democracy are on its side. The strength of the Soviet Union ought not be underestimated.

Sa'ed says that he understands this and that Pavlov spoke with him about this question during the trip of the Iranian parliamentary delegation throughout the Soviet Union. Sa'ed says that the experience of history shows that those who have become an enemy of Russia have lost. So it was with Napoleon, so it was with Hitler. Sa'ed adds that, however, as long as people like the current Soviet leaders, who have enormous experience, have seen everything, and know everything, stand at the head of the Soviet Union there is hope and even confidence that there will be no war and peace will be preserved. Iran hopes for peace.

Khrushchev says that the Soviet Union wants peace with the US and Britain, too; the Soviet Union sets itself the task of improving relations even with respect to Turkey.

Sa'ed says that it seems to him that Britain is more interested in and wants peace more than the US.

Khrushchev says that he thinks that there are people in Britain who understand the harm of war. He, Khrushchev, lists Eden here. There are also such people in the US. He includes Eisenhower, who also does not want war; however, Khrushchev adds, I cannot say this about Dulles.

Sa'ed says he has known Eden a long time. Eden does not have the authority that Churchill had. Nevertheless, one can talk with him and this will have importance.

Khrushchev says that at one time Britain considered itself impregnable by virtue of its island position. Now it has become very vulnerable in connection with the development of new kinds of weapons. It can become a target reachable only from

the air, but also from the continent thanks to the development of the technology of missiles and guided projectiles; the range and destructive force of such shells has now been increased many times and cannot be compared with the German FAU-1 [V-1] and FAU-2 [V-2] from which Britain suffered badly at one time. Khrushchev says, we have this technology, just like the other side. But we do not want for this technology to be put into operation at some time. Why is this needed?

Sa'ed gives assurances that he will do everything to let the Shah and the ruling circles of Iran know that the situation needs to be corrected. Sa'ed is setting himself the task of preparing a trip to the USSR for the Shah of Iran in order for this trip to serve the cause of improving Soviet-Iranian relations.

Khrushchev says that it is impossible to proceed from [the notion] that war will be unleashed in the coming years. This is clear even from the fact, for example, France is not ready for a war, Britain does not want a war, the Germans are not able to fight, and Italy is also not in a condition to fight.

Sa'ed says that he will explain the situation to Prime Minister Ala', the Iranian government, and the Iranian parliament, that he will speak as Chairman of the Commission of Foreign Affairs in the Senate of Iran.

Khrushchev says that we did not want and do not want for Iran to be drawn into a war. We are not proposing it enter into any bloc with us. We have done everything to improve Soviet-Iranian relations. We want Iran to be outside blocs and hoped that Iran would help us in our measures directed at strengthening peace. However, in spite of this Iran has joined the Baghdad bloc.

Sa'ed says that they understand in Iran and the parliamentary delegation now understood very well that the Soviet Union is concerned that Iran not become a trampoline for war against the Soviet Union. Sa'ed again repeats that he thinks it would be useful if Hekmat advises Nehru to let the Shah know that it is necessary to change the situation.

Khrushchev says that he does not want to conceal from Sa'ed we had such voices not to receive the Iranian parliamentary delegation, that after the Baghdad Pact and Iran's joining it there was no sense in the arrival of the Iranian parliamentary delegation. We said, declares Khrushchev, that there is a point [in receiving them]. We proceeded in so doing from the fact that one offense ought not to be piled on another. Khrushchev says, we wanted you to come. We thought that this would be to the benefit of Soviet-Iranian relations. And we think that if the Shah of Iran comes to the Soviet Union and sees what is being done here, this also would be to the benefit of peace and play a positive role in the further development of Soviet-Iranian relations.

Sa'ed notes that, besides all of this, speaking materially [*material'nym yazykom*], it is to Iran's benefit.

Khrushchev says that everything needs to be done to clear the path to an improvement of Soviet-Iranian relations. The Baghdad Pact is a dark cloud which has darkened Soviet-Iranian relations. Economic relations between the Soviet Union and Iran need to be developed, but they should understand in Iran that the Soviet Union can do without purchasing rice from abroad. We have good relations with Burma, and we buy and will buy rice from Burma. Effectively speaking, we need neither Burmese nor Iranian rice, but if it is necessary to buy rice for one reason or another then, of course, it is natural to do this with the situation which has been created with respect to Burmese rice, and not Iranian rice.

Sa'ed says that the Soviet Union is such a great country that it can buy nothing from abroad at all for itself and get by with what it has itself.

Khrushchev adds to this that now the Soviet Union is not alone and that the policy of an economic blockade of the Soviet Union and the countries of people's democracy only promotes the strengthening of the economic ties between the Soviet Union and the other countries of the democratic camp.

Sa'ed says that he understands this, and in conclusion would like to thank Khrushchev for the reception and again in the name of the Iranian parliamentary delegation gives assurances that everything possible will be done to improve relations between Iran and the Soviet Union.

At this the conversation, which lasted about an hour, concluded.

Recorded by [signature]
(A.P. Pavlov)