

July 17, 1957

**Record of a Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev
and Ho Chi Minh, President of the DRV, at 1100 17
July 1957**

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Summary:

The leaders talk about the Geneva Accords and General Vo Nguyen Giap's travels. Ho Chi Minh asks Khrushchev about Soviet economic and political support to North Vietnam, as well as Soviet relations with other socialist countries. Ho Chi Minh takes personal culpability for a bureaucratic issue which caused the imprisonment and deaths of party members.

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RECORD OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN N. S. KHRUSHCHEV AND HO CHI MINH,
PRESIDENT OF THE DRV, at 1100 17 July 1957

After mutual greetings Ho Chi Minh passed on warm fraternal greetings of the CC of the DRV Worker's Party to the Central Committee of the CPSU. Ho Chi Minh said, the CC of the Worker's Party completely supports the recent decisions of the CPSU CC plenum.

Then Ho Chi Minh said that he desired to present some questions and hear the opinion of the Soviet comrades about them. He first of all touched on the question of the observance of the Geneva Accords. The Americans and the authorities of South Vietnam, he pointed out, are trying to nullify these Accords. India let us know indirectly that it would desire that both South and North Vietnam to be neutral. We also let India know, also indirectly, that we cannot be neutral, that we are in the family of socialist peoples and will remain in it.

But the Geneva Accords are not being observed by South Vietnam. Now the question is whether we ought to demand the convening of a second Geneva Conference. If we ought to, then we would like to know the opinion of the comrades from the CPSU CC regarding when it will be advisable to demand the convening of such a Conference inasmuch as the Soviet comrades know the international situation better than us.

Right now, continued Ho Chi Minh, we are making preparations for the Second Congress of the Worker's Party of Vietnam. We have prepared a short report on this question. According to information at the end of 1956 the Party numbered 268,000 members. In addition, it has 99,000 members in the army. In the South, where the Party is illegal, it has about 30,000 members. There is no data with respect to the fifth zone inasmuch as great terror rules there. We know that the Soviet comrades are displaying interest in the situation in the South and we have prepared a small corresponding document with this purpose. Ho Chi Minh said further, if one compares the situation of the Party in South Korea and in South Vietnam, then the difference is that in the South of Korea the Party is very weak and has suffered badly, at a time when in South Vietnam in spite of some losses, has its own illegal cells in almost all villages. The Ngo Dinh Diem government has not yet been able to put the countryside under its control.

Touching on military questions, Ho Chi Minh noted that the Soviet Union has been giving great aid to the DRV. This September, he continued, Vo Nguyen Giap will make a secret trip to China and will be able to come to Moscow to give more detailed information if the Soviet comrades agree to this.

Khrushchev replied that we will be glad to receive Vo Nguyen Giap.

Ho Chi Minh spoke further about agrarian reform in the DRV and pointed out that serious mistakes had also been made when carrying it out along with the successes. The successes were that distribution of land was conducted among working peasants. The mistakes were that Party cadre and cells suffered badly in the countryside. The problem was that the workers who dealt with the distribution of the land mistakenly classified many Party members as landowners and reactionaries and put them in prison and even killed them. It ought to be admitted that part of the reason for these mistakes was bureaucratism. Ho Chi Minh declared that this is to some degree also my fault, inasmuch as I did not go to the countryside during all this time, but only read and compiled reports. When the mistakes were identified they were already a fact. A correction of these mistakes was conducted over the last year; however this is a difficult process.

Switching to questions of the economic aid given to North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh said that he had prepared a list regarding the size of the aid given the DRV by the Soviet Union, people's China [SIC], and the other fraternal countries. The Soviet comrades might receive a complete idea of the essence of the question on the basis of this list. In addition, a document about the DRV three-year plan has been prepared. Ho Chi Minh said further that he had two requests concerning economic questions. Two weeks ago a list of goods and machines was sent to Moscow which the DRV government requested the Soviet government supply this year. It would be desirable

to receive these goods and machines possibly earlier.

Khrushchev replied that this question will be considered.

Ho Chi Minh said further that next year the DRV will begin fulfilling its three-year plan and that it should request aid from the USSR to [do] this. The DRV is counting on receiving 100 million rubles annually from the USSR for three years, that is, a total of 300 million rubles. The best option would be if the USSR gave this aid free of charge, that is, in the form of a gift. However, we know that the USSR has to give aid to other fraternal countries and therefore we have a second alternative, which is that the USSR give half of this aid in the form of long-term loans. Ho Chi Minh added that he leaves the solution of the question of in what form it is more convenient to give this aid to the judgment of the Soviet comrades.

Khrushchev said that this question will be considered.

Ho Chi Minh said that a DRV deputy minister of trade and a DRV deputy minister of industry are in Moscow at the present time. They are ready to give any necessary explanations. However, considering that Cdes. Zimyanin and Fadeyev are well-acquainted with the questions of Vietnam, the DRV deputy ministers possibly ought not remain in Moscow.

Khrushchev said that if necessary there could be consultations with the DRV ambassador in Moscow and our ambassador in the DRV.

Ho Chi Minh then passed documents concerning the questions which he touched upon in the conversation, and said that he would like to hear the opinion of the Soviet comrades about them when he stops in the USSR on return from the European countries of people's democracy next month.

Khrushchev agreed with this.

Ho Chi Minh then said that, inasmuch as he planned to visit different countries of people's democracy with definite differences in conditions, he would like to receive some information about them since he was insufficiently well informed about the state of affairs in these countries. Yesterday, he added, he had a conversation with Cdes. Kuusinen, Pospelov, and Andropov. This was a useful conversation; however he, Ho Chi Minh, insufficiently imagines what he ought to say in various countries. He explained that he is accustomed to talk with comrades, but he is not experienced in diplomacy.

Khrushchev said that we have very good confidential relations with the European socialist countries in which Party language is quite sufficient. As concerns Yugoslavia so far the discussion with it has been more in diplomatic than Party language. Kardelj and Rankovic are in the USSR at the present time and we plan to meet with them. Tito has agreed to take part in the conference of fraternal Parties of the socialist countries. Nevertheless a long path will be required for [us] to be able to establish absolutely confidential relations. Right now Yugoslavia is displaying interest in strengthening ties with the USSR and, in particular, asked us for licenses to produce MIG-19 aircraft, tanks, anti-tank artillery, and other things. We are considering this question and will evidently furnish them with these licenses. However, the Yugoslav comrades interpret Marxist-Leninist theory very freely and are insufficiently strong Communists.

As concerns Poland, our relations with it have still not been set right as we would like. But we trust Gomulka although, it seems to me, he also has some taint of nationalism. The fact that relations with Poland have not developed very well is the result of certain historical circumstances: relations between our countries were very complex in the past; they fought more than once and all this created difficulties which need to be reckoned with. To a certain degree the difficulties in relations are connected with mistakes which were made. In any event, our comrades, as well as myself personally, we think that Gomulka is an honest man and he needs to be trusted. But obviously not everyone of his colleagues can be trusted.

We have good relations with the GDR. Our Party and government delegation will be sent there at the beginning of August. We have respect and trust for Cdes. Ulbricht, Pieck, and Grotewohl. The German comrades have disputes among themselves, of course, this is completely natural, but they are good comrades and honest Communists.

Khrushchev said, I have touched on our relations with Yugoslavia, Poland, and the GDR for the reason that the bourgeois press asserts that abnormal relations exist between us. But this is wishful thinking here. We have no clouds with the other Communist Parties of the socialist countries, good confidential relations exist between us. Briefly put, this is our assessment of the relations with these countries.

As concerning the convening of a Geneva Conference on the question of Vietnam, we will discuss this question. However, it can be said in advance that neither North nor South Vietnam will make mutual concessions. The de facto existing situation needs to be taken into consideration when this is done, but political pressure on the enemies of the unity of Vietnam need to be used in the process and appropriate tactics developed. The Geneva Accords which were won by the Vietnamese people in a stubborn multi-year struggle are beneficial to North Vietnam and therefore the advantages ensuing from it ought not be lost. We think that the Vietnamese people have achieved good results in their struggle. In addition, the economy of the North needs to be boosted and economic advantages created there, and thereby influence the consciousness of the population of South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and the other neighboring countries.

In conclusion, Khrushchev said that we will study your documents and then inform you of our more thorough opinion.

Ho Chi Minh said that he will be in Moscow on 21 August and asked who might give him a reply then inasmuch as N. S. Khrushchev will be on vacation at that time.

Khrushchev said he will be in Crimea at this time; if Ho Chi Minh desires he can be received there. However, under all conditions the questions posed by the President will be considered and a reply will be given by comrades from the CPSU CC.

Ho Chi Minh thanked N. S. Khrushchev and bid farewell.

The conversation lasted one hour.

Cdes. Andropov and Zimyanin were present at the conversation from the Soviet side; [Present] from the DRV side were Hoang Van Hoan and Nguyen Van Kien.

Recorded by [signature]
(Martynov)