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**Record of a Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev
with the Iraqi Public Figures, Members of the Peace
Delegation**

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Summary:

Khrushchev meets with and answers questions from an Iraqi Peace Delegation, including strategies for preventing war in the Middle East, the suspension of nuclear weapons testing, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, current situations in Algeria, Yemen, Oman, and Iran, and the possibility of the Soviet Union building a pilot hospital in Baghdad.

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21 November 1958

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RECORD of a Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with Iraqi Public Figures, Members of the Peace Delegation*

* [handwritten: Cde N.S. Khrushchev did not examine the record of the conversation]

On 21 November a conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and Iraqi Public Figures, Members of the Peace Delegation, took place. The delegation was visiting the USSR at the invitation of the Soviet Peace Committee and the Federation of International Friendship and Culture Societies. The delegation is headed by Naji Yousef, an attorney, and Sheikh Latif and includes representatives of a wide spectrum of Iraqi society - Abdullah Goran, Salwa Matti Zaku, Hasan Kazym el Nahr, Ismail Rashid, Farid al-Ahmar, Mahdi Hamid Ismail, Jameel al-Shawwaf, Musa al-Sheikh Radi, Abdul Gani Mutar, Mudhar Rakhmi al-Azzawi, Lukman, Mulla Jameel Rozbiani, and Shakir Jerreau.

N.S. Khrushchev greets the guests. Addressing the member of the delegation by the name of Lukman, who is a son of a famous Kurdish public figure, Barzani, he says, "We have great respect for your father for his courageous struggle for the liberation of his people."

Lukman thanks N.S. Khrushchev for the warm words.

Sheikh Latif expresses his gratitude to the Soviet people and especially to N.S. Khrushchev personally for the good relations with Kurdish people.

The head of the delegation, Naji Yousef, at the behest of the delegation, expresses his great gratitude for a nice reception and the attention that the representatives of the Iraqi people were shown all through the Soviet Union. He passes sincere congratulations on the occasion of the anniversary of the Great October Revolution. They felt lucky that they were able to be present for the festivities in connection with this glorious event in Moscow.

Naji Yousef proceeds saying that the visits to different regions of the Soviet Union confirmed their opinion that the Soviet people are peace-loving and that they take a firm stand for peace. We have familiarized ourselves with great successes in the fields of economics, culture, in every sphere of peaceful building. All of these achievements can be preserved only under conditions of peace. Your people are interested in peace because they are interested in preserving their great achievements.

The Iraqi delegation, Mr. Chairman, expresses its deep appreciation for the great help that the Soviet Union extends to Arab countries in general and to the United Arab Republic and the young Iraqi Republic in particular, for the honorable position of the Soviet Union in the first days of the July 14th Revolution and during the deployment of the aggressive foreign military forces in Lebanon and Jordan, when a great threat was hanging over the young Iraqi Republic. We also want to thank you for the economic assistance that you extend to the United Arab Republic, and now to the Iraqi Republic.

The Iraqi people, continues Naji Yousef, are a democratic and peaceful people. They consider the Soviet Union a citadel of peace, the defender of vulnerable people and their helper in the struggle for liberation from imperialism. Therefore the Iraqi nation is confident that the cooperation with the Soviet Union and all peaceful people has to become the corner stone of the policies of the young republic. At this time the Iraqi people, both Arabs and Kurds, formed a united front around their leader, Abd Al-Karim Qasim. He is prepared to safeguard the revolutionary achievements and to develop the economy of the republic for the benefit of its people.

The movement for peace in Iraq has been actively working since the Stockholm Appeal. And neither imperialists, nor their proxies are able to stop this movement. After the revolution it energized even more and turned into a mass movement. The supporters of peace in Iraq are firm in their support of the Soviet policy with respect to disarmament and moratorium on nuclear and hydrogen weapons tests. This honorable policy is directed at liberating the world from the horrors of the deadly nuclear war. It's directed at preservation of peace, its achievements in culture and civilization. Therefore the Arab supporters of peace along with all of the peaceful forces are fighting to prevent the war and for the world peace. We are confident that close cooperation between peaceful nations will allow them to overcome enemies of peace and instigators of wars, because the will of the people is indestructible.

Long live world peace!

Long live people who fight for the peace!

Long live the great Soviet people!

N.S. Khrushchev. I would like to express my gratitude to you for such nice words towards our people and the Soviet state. We are very pleased to hear that you, the representatives of the Iraqi people, who were oppressed for a long time, highly appreciate the role of the Soviet people in the struggle against all forms of oppression.

You know that before the Revolution the peoples of the Soviet Union were also in a very difficult, oppressed situation, and that the old Russia was very poorly developed in economic terms and was to a great extent dependent on western countries. The standard of living of our people was very low. There was a high percentage of illiterate people among the peoples that were part of the former czarist Russia, including among the Russians. The level of economic and cultural development that we achieved after the October Revolution, was the result of the victory of Lenin's national policy, i.e. the result of the victory of the revolution. It's now obvious to everyone that the peoples in our country, the most multinational country, have the strongest and most amicable relations. The peoples inhabiting the Soviet Union speak different languages, practice different religions, but they are all filled with the common desire to better the life of all workers irrespective of the language they speak and the color of their skin. We can proudly hold our head high and we can look in the eyes of everyone who wants to objectively evaluate our achievements after the October Revolution, and the results of our work in the area of intra-ethnic relations.

We Soviet people understand very well the desire to achieve national and economic liberation. Therefore, as brothers, we sympathize your revolutionary movement. We have supported, are supporting, and will support your revolution, and will do everything within our power and abilities to help you solidify the gains of your revolution. We will always be true to the principle of friendship between peoples and world peace.

I want to once again greet you as brothers. We will do everything to strengthen brotherly relations between our countries. Our friendship - the friendship of the Soviet people - is selfless. We do not need anything from the Arab people. All material wealth that they possess, we have too. We want only one thing - that you solidify your gains against your enemies, and we want our friendship to continue to strengthen. This friendship is beneficial to us and, I believe, it is even more beneficial to you. This friendship does not harm other people - on the contrary, it benefits all people who are striving to preserve the world peace.

I wish you future success in strengthening of your Republic, and most importantly the economic prosperity to your country and increasing the living standard for your people. People want revolutions not just to change the old order, but to change the

old order to the new so that they can get a better life, a higher quality of life. Revolution is not just a change of names in the country's leadership. Revolution always has as its goal to bring the old oppression to an end and to create new conditions for the people to thrive. If the revolution does not resolve these issues, then as a consequence it is not complete and it does not satisfy the expectations of the people. What does it mean to satisfy the expectations of the people? Different people understand it differently. You are representatives of various political parties and schools of thought, and I am a communist. I will not force you to accept my ideas. You will make a decision on this issue on your own so that the people can later say, "These are true leaders who care about the needs of the people."

Sheikh Latif asks N.S. Khrushchev to accept from the Iraqi supporters of peace a golden pin with the dove of peace image on it and inscribed with the word "Iraq" in Arabic.

N.S. Khrushchev says thank you.

Naji Yousef addresses N.S. Khrushchev with the request to answer a number of questions which the members of the delegation were interested in.

N.S. Khrushchev agrees to answer questions.

Attorney Abdul Gani Mutar, asks how the peace movement in the Middle East can be strengthened. What are the ways that exist that will allow to prevent the threat of war in this region?

N.S. Khrushchev. I believe that the main thing is that there are deeply rooted interests of western imperialistic states in the Middle East. The poverty of the Middle Eastern people and the relative wealth of the people in the West – are the result of the oppressive exploitation of the people of the Arab countries and other peoples inhabiting Asia and Africa. Your revolution was victorious. Your leaders acted wisely, and the people supported them. But do not think that your enemies consider themselves defeated. They have their own cadres and their agents. These agents maybe wear revolutionary ribbons on their chests today, but this doesn't mean that they have put down the arms. And therefore after the revolution the struggle doesn't stop, it just changes its forms. And these are more complex forms, because if previously an Englishman or a Frenchman would be on the other side, then everyone was clear on who was the Arab and who was the outsider, i.e. the representative of an imperialistic state. But after the revolution, everyone is an Arab, but they all have different opinions. And in this situation it is more difficult to figure out who is not the real Arab, who is an Arab at heart and therefore is a friend, and who is dressed as an Arab but is an Englishman at heart. This is a more difficult and more complicated thing to figure out for a simple person. That is why we need to do everything for the Arab people so that they can see who their friends are, who is fighting against them, and who is working for the benefit of imperialists. The strengthening of the Iraqi Republic and the preservation of peace in the Arab East depends on that.

In order to unite the peoples of all Arab states, first of all we need to unite their efforts in the struggle against the imperialistic rule. For this it is important that each Arab country which is being liberated from the foreign oppression, could at their own discretion set up their internal order and determine their government structure. I am only saying this because, if you try to adapt the internal order in all Arab states to the internal order either one of them, then this is not going to be a wide enough base for uniting all Arabs in the fight against the imperialistic rule. I consider this a very important point. There is no room for wasting energy on internal struggle between the Arab states. The efforts of all Arabs need to be united in the fight against the imperialistic rule. Otherwise cracks will start forming between the Arab states. And enemies may be able to get through these cracks, and they will try to undermine the Arab unity from within, and this will do no good. This is how I understand this issue.

Mulla Jameel asks what joint activities the supporters of peace should conduct in different countries in order to liquidate the "cold war".

N.S. Khrushchev. The main thing is to unite the efforts in the fight against the aggressors. But it's not such an easy thing to do. One has to keep in mind that there will be imperialistic propaganda. In our times the forces of peace are so big that the aggressors have to adjust. Modern aggressors mask their actions. In our times not a single aggressor will call himself an aggressor and say that he is pursuing aggressive

goals. Therefore a big task, in my opinion, is put on the shoulders of progressive forces, which first have to understand this task and then be able to tirelessly work to explain to the people what aggression is, to expose aggressive forces, to unmask them and to unite the masses, and to solidify and broaden the peace movement.

The famous Kurdish poet Abdullah Goran asks to give a list of tasks that the supporters of peace [should pursue] in their struggle for the prohibition of nuclear and hydrogen weapons and suspension of these weapons' tests, as well as what the opinion of N.S. Khrushchev is with respect to the intentions of France to conduct nuclear testing in West Sahara and in Algeria.

N.S. Khrushchev. You know what our attitude is to the nuclear and hydrogen weapons' testing, and our desire to attain the permanent moratorium on these weapons' tests. Currently there are negotiations going on in Geneva on this issue. But the French ruling circles do not want to support the movement against the testing. They want to turn France into a nuclear state at all costs and they are intent on conducting their nuclear tests in Sahara. What can be done with this respect? A great propaganda work against nuclear testing has to be conducted among the population. This is the only way, because if the tests are conducted then they may have very dire consequences for the peoples who reside in the area where these tests are planned.

Landowner Hasan Al-Nahr points out that the western imperialistic circles view the peace movement as a communist movement. What does N.S. Khrushchev think in this respect?

N.S. Khrushchev. If they believe that, I am happy to hear that. For us, the communists, there is no better reward than the statement that the peace movement is a communist movement, since the fight for peace is undertaken in the interest of all peoples. I, as a communist, am proud that they acknowledge that we, the communists, are fighting for peace in which all peoples are interested, irrespective of the skin color, religious belief, and social and other differences.

Communists, for example, have different views than the religious leaders, whether Christian, Muslim, or Buddhist, but the main thing is that all honest people want peace and they fight for the same cause - for peace. And they have the same point of view on this issue. I am very pleased that on this important issue communists unite with everyone who genuinely wants to maintain peace between the nations.

Entrepreneur, historian and writer, independent democrat, Musa al-Sheikh Radi asks N.S. Khrushchev what his opinion is on the role of Israel in the imperialistic provocations and numerous aggressive acts of Israel in the Arab East, as well as what N.S. Khrushchev thinks about the British weapons recently offered to Israel and the negative consequences of that for the peace cause.

N.S. Khrushchev. First of all, I would like to point out that our position on ethnic issues is different from those that are based on nationalistic positions. We communists treat people without regard to their skin color, ethnicity, or religious beliefs, but based on what role they play in the production of material wealth, what position they occupy in this process, who exploits others, and who produces material wealth. After the October Revolution we fought a civil war for three years. This was a war between the Russian people, but some of them were on the side of capitalists and landowners, while others were on the side of workers and peasants. Of course this doesn't apply to some of the landowners which after the revolution voluntarily gave up their estates since they were on the same side with the people. Let's take for example the story of Romanian revolutionary movement. A famous Romanian statesman, Doctor Petru Groza, was one of the biggest landowners in old Romania, but he gave up his estates voluntarily and proved himself a good friend of the people and to his death was a friend of the people.

If we take Israel, we believe that it was artificially created on Arab land by expelling the Arabs. This state is designed to strengthen the positions of imperialists against the interests of Arabs. Therefore the peoples of Arab countries should always exercise vigilance with respect to Israel's schemes and to build up their forces in order to be prepared to stand up to the possible provocations by imperialists who may use Israel against the Arabs.

Representative of a women's organization, employee of the Iraqi Ministry of Development and a freelance contributor at "Al-Bilad" newspaper, Salwa Zaku, asks

what ways and possibilities, in the opinion of N.S. Khrushchev, exist in order to return Palestinian refugees to their homeland.

N.S. Khrushchev. It's hard for me to give a concrete answer to this question. Palestinian refugees are mostly farmers who were chased off their lands. They can go back to their lives only when they will receive the land again. As you know, Israel enlarged its territory by way of war at the expense of Arab states. Therefore I believe that it would be reasonable if Israel remained within the borders that were determined by the resolutions of the United Nations back in the day. This is just one side of the issue.

On the other side, apparently, new possibilities will have to be identified to increase the irrigated lands so that farmers-refugees were able to apply themselves and be self-sustainable.

Question is, who is going to be compensating the refugees for damages. Obviously Israel should have to be paying this but they have the support of the US and of other imperialistic states. Therefore this fight is not going to be easy. However you have to fight for this cause and, in addition to that, look for possibilities for settling the refugees so that the people could have human conditions for living.

Union leader from Mosul, carpenter Ismail Rashid, asked N.S. Khrushchev's opinion with respect to the aggressive war of the French imperialism against the Algerian people who are fighting for their independence.

N.S. Khrushchev. We have expressed our opinion on this issue numerous times. It was published by the world press numerous times. We expressed our opinion on this issue to the French prime-minister Guy Mollet, who visited our country together with the foreign minister Pineau in 1955. We told them that apparently French ruling circles did not learn after the unsuccessful seven-year war in Vietnam and, having learned no lessons from this, got involved in a war against the Algerian people. We then expressed our support for the type of solution that would satisfy the national sentiments of the Algerian people, that is, that this solution was in the first place aligned with the interests of the Algerian people, but at the same time would not harm the French people. This is only possible if full independence is given to Algeria. There is no other solution. Until the Algerian people get their independence, the issue cannot be resolved. We have supported and are supporting the Algerian people's position and wish them success in their struggle for liberation.

Attorney, member of the Baghdad municipal government, Jameel Shawwaf, asks to clarify whether, in N.S. Khrushchev's opinion, the aggressive acts by the English in Yemen and Oman are a threat to the peace movement in the region and throughout the world.

N.S. Khrushchev. We have also previously expressed our opinion on this issue. This is a very indicative issue. You know, when the Hungarian government put on trial the traitor, Imre Nagy, and he was sentenced for treason against his people, there were a lot of protests in the imperialist countries against it. They were saying that it was inhuman, that it was inhuman, etc., though it is well-known that Nagy was tried because when his government was in power, hundreds of people were tortured, hanged by their legs, hearts were pierced with bayonets, people were killed on the streets without charge or trial. No one from the imperialistic camp protested against these atrocities then. Why? Well, because they were killing communists, they were killing workers, they were killing peasants, and they were killing members of intelligentsia who were supporting the revolution.

The imperialists have moral values that are different from ours. If those who are killed support the revolution, are for the interests of people, then they consider this right, they consider that this is the way it should be. If the people rise in rebellion and kill their oppressors and their lackeys, similar to Imre Nagy, then apparently this becomes inhuman. We were saying, "He was found guilty by the people's court, but you are killing Arabs in Yemen, Oman and Algeria without charge or trial, and no one can raise their voice in defense of those people." We are going to do everything possible on our side to destroy the imperialistic oppression once and for all, so that all peoples are liberated. But it's not going to be achieved without a fight.

Sheikh Latif, the son of a famous Kurdish leader, Sheikh Mahmud, says that in some regions of the Middle East the imperialists still continue to plot and organize

provocations against the young Iraqi Republic. He asks whether N.S. Khrushchev views this as a threat to the peace in the region and what the position of the Soviet Union is on this issue.

N.S. Khrushchev. To some extent, I already answered this in my answer to the first question. The fact that you have a lot of enemies. I believe, you know that yourself already. And the main ones are Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, in the first place. The Sheikh of Iran apparently lost his sleep, and tosses and turns at night dreaming about Faisal's fate. And I have to say that he most probably won't escape it, no negotiations with America will save him, because his policies contradict the interests of the Iranian people. Police and gendarmes are not omnipotent. Russian Czar back in the day also relied on the police and gendarmes. All political parties in Russia were prohibited, but one of these parties led by Lenin turned out to have enough spirit to bring the czarist autocracy to its end. The government and the system are strong when they are guided by the interests of their people and rely on the people, and on the working people in the first place.

A treaty between Iran and the US has been prepared. In accordance with this agreement the US receives the right to deploy its military in Iran if there is a so-called direct or indirect aggression. This concept is very broad and will allow the Iranian Sheikh at any time to ask the Americans for help and invite them to deploy their military in Iran. The Iranian people are told that supposedly the agreement is being signed because there is a threat of attack from the Soviet Union. But we do not have any need to attack anyone. The Sheikh of Iran is just lying to his people, but it won't save him.

For example, people used to think that Iraq was a citadel of imperialism in the Middle East. They even called a pact after the capital of Iraq. But one morning people woke up and there was no king, no prime minister, and no Baghdad Pact. Such will be the fate of all rulers who are guided in their policies not by the interests of their people, but by the interests of imperialists.

You have to solidify your independence and unite your forces. If the people and the government are one, then you won't care about any threats. Nobody will attack you directly. The imperialists are going to look for cracks within your own states, and if they succeed in finding these cracks, then it will be very difficult for you, because the fight that will come about will then look like an internal struggle, and your friends will have a hard time helping you. When there is a struggle with external forces, then it's a different story. For example, after your revolution Turkey and Iran were thinking of attacking you, but we said at the time - don't touch! You know that we conducted military exercises on the borders of Turkey and Iran, and Bulgaria also conducted exercises on the Turkish border. Turks and Iranians correctly understood these military exercises. But if the struggle breaks out inside the country, then no one will be able to help you because it will then be your internal matter. The most important thing is to strengthen and unite the Arab people, to fulfill their hopes. If you achieve that, you will win the revolution. If not, you may be blown up from within. Here everything will depend on the wisdom of the leaders of your government and your parties. If you manage to find the correct policy and to unite your people around the government, then you will have everything you need for victory. If you do not use this opportunity, then the imperialists will use it against you.

Sheikh Latif points out that when the revolution started in Iraq, Kurds in Turkey and Iran were incited to rise against the revolution, but nothing came out of it.

N.S. Khrushchev. Based on the information we receive from our intelligence, we know that Iran is trying to expel its Kurds from the Iran-Iraq border region. Iran's ruling circles are afraid of Kurds. But re-settling them is not such an easy thing to do. This means struggle. One thing to want it, and quite another thing to actually implement it.

Sheikh Latif says that the Soviet Union very honorably supports the Iraq revolution and that Kurdish representatives will do everything to disrupt the imperialistic plots.

Naji Yousef thanks N.S. Khrushchev for exhaustive answers to the delegates' questions. These answers are very important to us, he says. We are very grateful to you for finding the time to see us.

In the conclusion we would like to bring up one more small issue: with the purpose of

strengthening the friendship between the two countries, Iraq and the Soviet Union, we would like the USSR to create a separate Soviet Union-Iraq Friendship Society, and on our part we will create Iraq-Soviet Union Friendship Society.

N.S. Khrushchev. I believe it's a good idea. We have Cde. Popova present here, she is the head of the Federation of International Friendship and Culture Societies. I am sure she will take your suggestion under consideration. This society needs to be created.

A.F. Sultanov, who is the Deputy Chairman of the Soviet-Arab East Friendship and Culture Society and is present at the meeting, points out that then they will have to split the existing Friendship Society into a separate society for each of the Arab countries.

N.S. Khrushchev. We will have to work it out somehow. We can, for example, keep the Soviet-Arab East Friendship Society and in addition to eat create a Soviet-Iraq Friendship Society.

Naji Yousef. I would like to ask your permission to touch upon one more small issue. In the spirit of strengthening friendship between the people of our two countries, do you mind looking into the possibility of building a pilot hospital in Baghdad, similar to the one which the Soviet Union built in Teheran? We would like for this hospital to be a gift from the soviet people to the Iraqi people as a sign of friendship and as demonstration of humanitarian goals of the Soviet Union.

N.S. Khrushchev. This issue is worth considering, and if there is a respective request from the Iraqi government, then the Soviet government will consider this issue favorably.

At the conclusion N.S. Khrushchev wished the Iraqi delegates the best of success in their lives and in building of the young Iraqi Republic.

The conversation was written down by N. Kotov and O. Troyanovsky.

[Handwritten: forwarded]