

July 11, 1961

**Record of a Conversation of Cde. N.S. Khrushchev,
with the Ambassador of India, S. Dutt**

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Summary:

The conversation between Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and Indian Ambassador S. Dutt centers on bilateral relations, disarmament, and global political tensions, particularly concerning Berlin, nuclear disarmament, and US foreign policy. Khrushchev emphasizes Soviet strength in missile technology and space exploration, expressing criticism of Western powers, especially the United States, for their imperialist policies and reluctance to engage in meaningful disarmament. The discussion also highlights Khrushchev's respect for Prime Minister Nehru and India's neutral but supportive stance, with plans for Nehru to visit the Soviet Union. The conversation concludes with mutual affirmations of goodwill and shared interests in promoting global peace and cooperation. This document summary was generated by an artificial intelligence language model and was reviewed by a Wilson Center staff member.

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RECORD of A Conversation

of Cde. N.S. Khrushchev, with the Ambassador of India, S. Dutt
11 July, 1961.

N.S. Khrushchev. I apologize for receiving you so late, Mr. Ambassador, but the situation was such that I just was not able to do it earlier.

S. Dutt. I understand it quite well since I see how guests are constantly arriving in Moscow. Moscow has really become a world Mecca. In the short time that I have spent in Moscow I have already gone to the airport three times to greet guests of the Soviet Government.

N.S. Khrushchev. True, we do have to torture you, the Ambassadors, too.

S. Dutt. It's fine in the summer, but I have some concerns about the winter.

N.S. Khrushchev. All in all, we are happy that friends come to visit us. But of course that requires certain expenses. I've been wanting for a long time to get some rest, but until now haven't had an opportunity to do it. Now, finally I have decided to go to the Caucasus, and I am leaving tomorrow morning.

S. Dutt. I believe this would be good for your country and for the whole world, since it is very important in this difficult time that the Prime Minister of such a country such as the Soviet Union is in good health.

N.S. Khrushchev. I will come back to Moscow for a few days around 30 July in order to receive a Romanian delegation, but after that I will leave again. Frankly speaking, this trip of mine to the south cannot be called a vacation in the literal sense of this word, since in the south I will have to prepare two speeches which I will deliver at the Party Congress - the keynote report and the report on the new program of our Party. After all there's very little time left till the Congress.

I enjoyed reading the recent letter of Mr. Nehru and I am pleased to welcome you as the new Ambassador of India in the USSR. I can assure you that we will treat you with the same level of respect which we afforded your predecessor, Mr. Menon, who we all respect a lot.

S. Dutt. Thank you.

N.S. Khrushchev. We have good relations with India, and there is no reason for them to worsen. On the contrary, there is every reason for the further improvement and development of these relations. There are no contentious issues between us, and there are a lot of things on which we and you are very productively cooperating.

S. Dutt. I worked with Nehru for seven years and therefore I am very familiar with his attitude toward the Soviet Union. As you are undoubtedly very well aware, Nehru places great importance on the friendship between India and the USSR. You are also undoubtedly very well aware of the conditions that exist in India. The English language newspapers published in India are controlled by big capitalists who do not agree with many of Nehru's plans, as well as with many of the actions he is taking aimed at developing the country. Therefore Nehru is often subject to criticism on their part. If you believe what they sometimes write in our newspapers, then it looks like Nehru is actually not the real leader of India. In reality it is of course not like that at all. No matter what the newspapers sometimes write about the relations between the Soviet Union and India, Nehru himself very sincerely believes in friendship between the two countries and believes that this friendship is a blessing not only for India but for the whole world. Therefore he is committed to supporting and further developing the friendly relations between India and the Soviet Union.

N.S. Khrushchev. I am very pleased to hear these words. We also understand the policy of the Indian government, the policy being pursued by Prime Minister Nehru, whom we appreciate and respect in the Soviet Union. We are quite aware of the conditions that exist in India, and of the personal challenges for Nehru that ensue from this. However I think that even those bourgeois circles who own the newspapers in India treat Nehru with respect.

S. Dutt. Yes, it is true.

N.S. Khrushchev. There are two countries - India and Pakistan who in the past, when

the whole India was a colony, were in equal conditions. But later on, after independence was gained, these two countries started implementing different policies, and thus [there are] different results. India occupies a deserved position on the international arena, while Pakistan in essence plays no role. I am not very knowledgeable about the internal economic situation in Pakistan, but I believe that India is ahead here.

S. Dutt. Of course we Indians are in no position to comment on Pakistan's politics, but it is necessary to note that the foreign policy of this country is based on hatred toward India. Pakistan sometimes behaves like a jealous lover. If the US suddenly extends a loan to India, Pakistan is angry and as a result the visit of the President of Pakistan to the US is delayed for three months.

That said, Pakistan is not the only such country. There are many other countries who conduct a policy of playing on disagreements between large countries. Their objective is to gain benefits for themselves by blackmailing both sides.

N.S. Khrushchev. This is very well said. Indeed there are countries like that, and Pakistan is one of them.

In general the situation in the world is currently not bad. There seem to be thunder clouds in the sky. Yet I think that, even if there is a thunderstorm, there will be no hail. We are currently living through a turning point in history. The current situation in the world can be compared with the situation that exists in a patriarchal family when the children grow up. In such a family the father is used to controlling everyone. But time comes when the children are no longer small, when they start stepping on the independent path and often make even more [money] than their father. But he continues viewing them as children in short pants. It is clear that, if the father doesn't understand before it's too late that his children have grown and become independent, they are not going to resign themselves to this situation, and consequently the temperature in the family will go up. But sooner or later the father for sure will understand that he no longer has the right to interfere in his children's lives and then everything will go back to normal.

The same way the conditions in many countries in the world arena have changed now, and the policy has to change accordingly, as well as the relations between these countries and other countries. This is what the current transitional period boils down to.

In the past the US could lay claim to some sort of exclusivity, to the fact that no country could compare to them. After all it was the wealthiest country, and wealth in the capitalist world is the main capital. There intellect plays a secondary role. In a capitalist society if you are wealthy, then you are also smart, and if you are poor then [you are] stupid. Everyone is tiptoeing around the dollar, afraid of disrupting its peace. But then the Soviet Union appeared and challenged the almighty dollar. We do not take our hats off either in front of a dollar or the [pound] sterling, and we have proven that we can provide economic growth without them.

Furthermore the US had a military advantage in the past, but now it doesn't have it either. It often happens that an old retired general who has no one to command and no army, continues to live through the memories of the times when he had real power, when he had armies, and cannons... This is more or less what is happening with the US right now. They had a monopoly on nuclear weapons in the past and established their military bases around the Soviet Union. We had to reckon with that.

But now we have created our own intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the American bases have lost their importance since we can shoot at the US over them. This of course sharply changed the situation. The Soviet Union was the first to send a man to space, and what is more, our spaceship circled the earth, while Americans just made a jump. The US is currently preparing to launch a new rocket with man on board, which again will only be a jump into space, but not a flight. Therefore it is obvious that our technology is at a higher level than the American.

It needs to be said that Americans are aware of that but they still want to pursue old policies. During our meeting with President Kennedy in Vienna he acknowledged that our countries currently have equal capabilities. To which I answered him that it is therefore imperative to implement policy based on equality. I asked him why he ordered his officers who serve as advisors to Nosavan forces in Laos to dress in

military uniforms. He responded that he did it to elevate the spirits of Laos's troops. So did it raise the spirits? Of course not. After all, Kong Le defeated these troops. He also ordered the deployment of American Marines in Laos. To be honest, he then cancelled this order, though in Vienna he said that he supposedly never issued this order. I told him then, that, if the Americans were to land their Marines in Laos, then other countries will perhaps send their infantry there. So what will come out of it then? A new Korea will happen, and a more serious one at that.

Such a policy on the part of the US is a policy of living beyond [one's] means and pursuing a policy without regard to real possibilities. Kennedy advanced the argument that the US had given some sort of commitments to Laos, just as, according to him, they undertook obligations with respect to West Berlin. I asked him what right does the US has to give their promises left and right, like the Pope gives out indulgences?

We cannot recognize these rights on the US's part, and therefore are forced to break the sound barrier, so to say, with respect to West Berlin. They are trying to intimidate us. But we are not afraid and will sign a peace treaty with Germany, notwithstanding the fact that we are being threatened with war. And then the access to West Berlin will be conducted strictly based on agreements with the government of the GDR, and not as it is happening now, i.e. on the basis of the occupation regime.

We do not want any conquests. We don't need West Berlin, and we are prepared to provide all guarantees for the preservation of freedom for these people. We are prepared to ensure this freedom with our military forces along with the forces of the Western powers. We are also prepared to agree that these functions are carried out by the UN or neutral countries under the UN flag. But in any case the occupation regime in West Berlin will cease, and we are not going to recognize any rights of the Western powers in West Berlin. If, as they are keep stating, the Western powers attempt to get to West Berlin by force, our military will mount a resistance to them. I have said this to Kennedy and I am saying this to De Gaulle and Macmillan. They are threatening us, and in return we take appropriate military measures. If they announce a mobilization, we will do the same, and by the way we have more troops. This is why arguments based on force should be abandoned. Reasonable arguments should be put forward.

The Western powers say that they support the independence of West Berlin. But so do we.

The Western powers say that they support freedom of access to West Berlin. But so do we.

The Western powers say that they support noninterference in internal affairs of West Berlin. But so do we.

Therefore we do not have any disputes among us, except one - they want to ensure all of this on the basis of the occupation of West Berlin, and we want to achieve this based on a peace treaty. This is what the dispute between us boils down to - we want to eliminate the remnants of WWII in Europe, but they want to preserve them. We want to eliminate the remnants of WWII in order to strengthen peace, but they want to preserve these remnants in order to maintain tensions in Europe. This type of politics can only be based on force, on brutal force. But we will pose our force against this force.

The question then becomes: will there be war? I answer - no, there will be no war. Why do I think that? We are going to sign a peace treaty, and I think that reason will prevail in the end. After all, we don't want to humiliate or insult anyone. We are not demanding anything for ourselves and do not want to change anything except for the legal basis for the access of the Western powers to West Berlin. The legal basis of access will change because the legal conditions will change. Currently the access to West Berlin is conducted based on the occupation regime, but after the peace treaty is signed, it will be conducted based on an agreement with the GDR.

If there is a war, we will not be the ones who have started it. The Western powers will have to start it, but they know well that in that case their countries will be destroyed literally within the first few hours of war.

Only madmen, only suicidal [individuals] can start a war in the present conditions. That is why I think that there will be no war. But we will sign the peace treaty and

perform those actions that we are talking about.

Of course, one cannot fully guarantee that there will be no war. But nevertheless we proceed based on the understanding that common sense will prevent the Western powers from starting one, and that they will follow the path of reason. Should they after all start a war, it will bring unquantifiable disasters, but the imperialism will find its grave in this war. No other result is possible.

So I have laid out for you the position of the Soviet Union on this issue. In the past I often informed your predecessor, Mr. Menon, on important international issues, and now I am informing you.

Now I will briefly lay out for you our position on the issue of disarmament and the cessation of nuclear tests. We are not going to agree to sign a separate agreement on the cessation of tests and we propose to combine this issue with the solution of the problem of disarmament. We will agree to sign a separate agreement on the cessation of tests only on the condition that an additional executive monitoring body is created which will include representatives of the three main groups of countries that now exist in the world. However, if a decision on universal and complete disarmament is made at the same time as the cessation of tests, we are not going to require that such a monitoring body is created.

This does not mean that we have somehow changed our previous policy. The fact is that, even if the tests cease, the weapons themselves will still remain, and that means the threat of war will remain too. Therefore the concern over the security of countries will remain. Hence it follows that the desire of the opposing side to collect information on the defenses of the other side, or, put plainly, to spy, will remain. This implies that the Western powers will want to establish checkpoints, or in other words spy posts, in order to collect information on the territory of the Soviet Union. If an agreement on disarmament and the destruction of all types of weapons is reached, however, then the most comprehensive and deep control will be needed, and furthermore all sides will be interested in such monitoring. Then the secrecy will indeed be dangerous and will raise suspicions. That's when we will readily turn out our pockets and provide the inspectors with access to any point in our country, to any industrial site. Then we will give this opportunity to the Western powers and will demand it for ourselves too. Then we will still insist on a unanimity of decisions on just one issue, and specifically on the issue of the use of the international forces which will be created after the universal and full disarmament is completed.

In this sole issue we will insist that three make the decisions. This is understandable because otherwise these international forces may be used to the detriment of this or that side, and may even be turned into a gendarmerie which will interfere into internal affairs of this or that country.

However, one can say right away that the Western powers are not going to agree to disarmament. They are afraid of it. After all, if disarmament is achieved then what will France do with Algeria? What will Britain do with Kuwait? Britain is saying now that it's protecting Kuwait's freedom. But in reality, as everyone knows, it's protecting its oil there. The British are experienced colonizers, they oppressed India and other countries for ages! They are highway robbers! They only say that they are protecting freedom. But we understand very well what meaning they assign to the word "freedom".

Therefore negotiations on cessation of nuclear tests will apparently continue, but it is, as of now, a barely flickering flame.

One has to take into account one more thing, that at the same time as we are holding negotiations in Geneva, France is conducting nuclear tests. But France is an ally of the US and Britain. If it continues like that, then, as we have already stated, we will be forced to resume our nuclear tests.

This is the position of the Soviet Union on these two most important international issues of modern times.

As to the negotiations on disarmament, which our representatives are conducting with McCloy, it seems that they will not produce any results. I have already told the Americans that making McCloy responsible for conducting disarmament negotiations is like releasing a goat to guard a cabbage field. McCloy himself told our representatives that he had never dealt with disarmament before, and on the

contrary, had spent his whole life dealing with arms. In reality Americans don't want to talk about disarmament, they want to only talk about the procedure. We, on the other hand, want to talk about the substance of disarmament. Americans don't want to agree to the organizational principles for conducting disarmament negotiations which we propose, but want to continue negotiating within "the Ten" and refuse to allow representatives of neutral countries to participate in the negotiations. But we have already seen "the Ten" in action!

S. Dutt. Are they continuing to insist on negotiations within the Ten [Nation] Committee?

N.S. Khrushchev. Yes, and what's more De Gaulle is the most unyielding and stated that France will not agree to disarmament negotiations with the participation of neutral countries since, in his words, this would mean acceptance of the tri-partite structure for the UN Executive Body proposed by us. Currently France is planning to propose that the disarmament question be raised for discussion at the UN General Assembly. This proposal has not been announced yet, but we are aware of it through secret sources. But can one play soccer with this issue, kicking the ball from side to side?

We ourselves have suggested discussing disarmament at the General Assembly based on the fact that this will mobilize the public opinion to fight for the universal and complete disarmament. Even now we believe that it would be beneficial to discuss this issue at the General Assembly because this way we will be able to corner the imperialist countries and expose their intransigent position. Of course the General Assembly won't be able to take any decisions because the Western powers oppose disarmament and are afraid of it.

Apparently we will have to continue sitting on a powder keg. That is why we are now forced to increase our military budget and suspend a reduction in our army. Maybe we will even have to resort to an increase of our armed forces. So apparently we might have to live in peace, but with armaments. This is not so bad either, but in these conditions one cannot exclude all sorts of eventualities. We are powerless to do anything in this respect. After all we cannot fight with them because of a lack of agreements.

These are the most pressing issues that the world is concerned about.

Otherwise we are doing well. The internal situation in the USSR is good. Our people are tight-knit, united, and support our party unanimously. Our economy is growing ahead of the schedule set by the seven-year plan. This year agriculture will apparently bring good results. It's a bit too early to talk about Siberia and Kazakhstan now, though the forecasts are good there too, but with respect to Ukraine and southern Russia we can now say with confidence that the harvest will be good.

Therefore our people are approaching the Party congress with good achievements.

S. Dutt. I thank you for such a detailed account of your government's position. I know that you are very busy, but I would like to ask you to clarify two points which are often exploited by Western propaganda.

The first relates to access to West Berlin. You were saying that you were prepared to take part in ensuring free access to West Berlin. On the other hand, you are saying that the access will depend on the agreement with the GDR. I would like to ask whether after the peace treaty has been signed access to West Berlin will depend exclusively on the GDR or will the Soviet Union also participate in this?

N.S. Khrushchev. Access to West Berlin will depend on agreement with the GDR, but the peace treaty will stipulate a condition that, if certain provisions are satisfied, the government of the GDR will not obstruct ties between West Berlin and the outside world. The peace treaty will be signed by many countries, including the Soviet Union. Therefore in a certain sense the USSR will also be a guarantor of the access. The status of a Free City for West Berlin will be specially stipulated in an addendum to the peace treaty, which will be registered with the UN, and this will ensure international access to West Berlin. Of course this access will be predicated on the observance of the sovereignty of the GDR just the same as, when for example we fly to London, we request an [overflight] permission from the government of Denmark over whose territory we fly.

S. Dutt. My second question is related to disarmament. You said that if disarmament

is completed, the Soviet Union will not insist on its "tripartite" principle with the exception of the issue of the use of international forces. But the implementation of complete disarmament will take some time, during which the weapons are going to be destroyed. During this period each side will obviously want to check the compliance of the other side with the agreement on destruction of their weapons. So how will the monitoring be performed during this period?

N.S. Khrushchev. Unrestricted control will be necessary so that each side could really satisfy itself that the other side is complying with the agreement. If the monitoring is restricted then there will be no trust in the relations between the partners, which means that there will be no disarmament. All of this is stipulated in our proposals on universal disarmament, and the Western powers know this very well. But they evading this provision and assert that the Russians are against monitoring.

They are afraid of bringing neutral countries into the disarmament negotiations because the neutrals would be impartial witnesses and judges who would really quickly figure out the real intentions of the Western powers. We, on the other hand, are not afraid of witnesses and, on the contrary, want to bring them into the negotiations. We are proposing to bring India into these negotiations, but the Western powers are saying that if India is to be involved, then [it can] only [be] in an advisory role. It makes essentially no difference to us, since the issue of disarmament cannot be resolved through voting, but it is discriminatory with respect to India.

S. Dutt. Thank you for your clarifications. I will pass your statements to Prime Minister Nehru. By the way, as I already told your Minister of Foreign Affairs yesterday, Nehru would like to personally come to Moscow on a brief unofficial visit so that he can talk with you. He would like to come to Moscow on 6 or 7 September on his way back from Yugoslavia, where he will participate in the conference heads of state of the non-aligned countries.

N.S. Khrushchev. We would be happy to host Mister Nehru. September is a good time to visit the Soviet Union. I believe the date you gave will be acceptable. However I will have to consult my calendar first.

S. Dutt. Prime Minister Nehru asked me to inform you that the choice of this date can be also explained by the fact that later on the Parliament of India will start deliberating on the third five-year plan for the development of India so in case you cannot see him in September, he will only be able to come in the middle of October. But, as far as I know, you will be quite busy at that time.

N.S. Khrushchev. Yes, unfortunately October is completely out of the question, since the Party Congress will open in the middle of October and then the November festivities will start, at which apparently a lot of guests will also be present. I believe that September will be the most suitable time.

S. Dutt. thanks N.S. Khrushchev for the conversation and bids his farewell.

N.S. Khrushchev expresses his satisfaction with the meeting and the conversation with S. Dutt and asks him to pass his regards and best wishes to Prime Minister Nehru.

Along with the Ambassador of India, also present at the conversation was the First Secretary of the Embassy of India Gonsalves. On the Soviet side were present: First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, V.V. Kuznetsov, and the Head of Southeast Asia Department, V.I. Likhachev.

The conversation is recorded by
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V. Sukhodrev