

August 28, 1961

**Memorandum of Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev
with the President of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah**

Citation:

"Memorandum of Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with the President of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah", August 28, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI, f. 52, op. 1, d. 556, ll. 44-49. Contributed by Sergey Radchenko and translated by Theresa Billow-Supple.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/209755>

Summary:

Khrushchev and Nkrumah discuss the Berlin Crisis, the upcoming Non-Aligned Movement meeting, and the Soviet Union's decision to resume nuclear testing in response to Western actions. Nkrumah emphasizes the need for the Belgrade conference to take a clear stance on key issues and reaffirms Ghana's neutral but principled position.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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After mutual greetings, Nkrumah says that since his last meeting with N.S. Khrushchev he had visited Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania, and the PRC. Meanwhile, he notes that everywhere he was witness to the manifestation of feelings of esteem towards the Soviet Union. The people of all socialist countries are passionately thankful to the Soviet Union for its assistance and brotherly support. Nkrumah emphasized that everywhere - even in China - they speak of the Soviet Union with a feeling of enormous admiration.

In all these countries which he visited, Nkrumah discussed the issue of establishing trade relations and agreement was reached that Ghana would send a trade and economic commission to these countries to finally settle this issue.

Nkrumah emphasized that his trip was exceptionally useful and would result in significant changes both in Ghana and in all Africa.

Nkrumah would like to discuss chiefly the following issues: first, the position of Ghana in the face of the reaction of the West to his visit to socialist countries; second, the Berlin issue; and third, the upcoming Belgrade meeting of the heads of neutral states.

Relating to the last issue, Nkrumah notes that he still does not know what position the Belgrade meeting will take, however he personally adheres to completely firm positions on all issues which are in the agenda for the conference. The line which Ghana will take at this meeting has great significance in Nkrumah's opinion as many other countries will undoubtedly follow Ghana.

Nkrumah expresses his hope that after his return to the Soviet Union from Belgrade he can again meet and talk with N.S. Khrushchev.

N.S. Khrushchev answers that Nkrumah is raising the right questions. However, in the course of this discussion, there apparently will not be time to discuss them as there is not enough time. N.S. Khrushchev proposes meeting in a day or two in order to continue the discussion. Meanwhile, he says that he would like mainly to exchange opinions with Nkrumah on two issues: the German problem and the Belgrade meeting.

On the whole, N.S. Khrushchev continues, the situation is shaping up well. But it is necessary to take our line to the end. In the beginning, the Americans took a high note with regard to the Soviet Union with the aim of scaring us, but ended up scaring themselves.

Nkrumah agrees with this.

N.S. Khrushchev says that he spoke about this with McCloy about this after Kennedy's speech on TV.

N.S. Khrushchev further says that, in response to U.S. threats and ultimatums, the Soviet Union will take corresponding actions. In particular, on Tuesday in all likelihood, a decision of the CPSU CC and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union will be published according to which the Minister of Defense will be granted the right to retain a certain group of soldiers and officers whose service was to expire this fall. N.S. Khrushchev relates that many servicemen have asked about this and in their letters have written that, since they are the most trained and experienced military specialists and considering the threat of military aggression by the USA and other Western powers, they want to remain in the army to defend their homeland in case of war.

That said, N. Khrushchev continues, I think that there will not be war and I said that to Italian Prime Minister Fanfani. First of all, countries such as Italy, West Germany, France and England will not permit a war. They are against war, as they well know that if it is unleashed, they will be the first to be destroyed. Therefore, in conversation with Fanfani, I said that we will consider you a hostage. Characteristically in this regard, actors such as Adenauer and Strauss, who in the past called for war in their speeches, are now calling for negotiations. But then why are the Western powers, first and foremost the USA, trying to intimidate the Soviet Union? The Western powers

must now show a reasonable approach and move to sign a peace treaty with Germany.

Further, N.S. Khrushchev notes that the other day the Prime Minister of India gave a very good speech in the Indian parliament in which he underscored the need to sign a peace treaty with Germany. Nehru noted that there exist two Germanies with West Berlin in the very heart of socialist countries and therefore the relations between Western powers and West Berlin can only be accomplished with the permission of the GDR and the Soviet Union. Nehru's speech elicited a stormy reaction in the West.

Nkrumah expresses his deep satisfaction that it was Nehru who gave a speech with such a declaration.

N.S. Khrushchev answers that it is about this that he wanted to speak with Nkrumah.

Further, N.S. Khrushchev says that the Soviet government is currently preparing one other action. He continues, we decided to conduct a nuclear test on 1 September, which will be announced on 31 August in a document which will be delivered to all member-states of the Belgrade conference and to other states. Of course, this will call forth some morbid reaction among the public. However, the Soviet Union cannot act otherwise, it must have good weapons for its defense, [crossed out - and for this it is necessary to improve its weapons]. The Soviet government will announce that it is against test explosions of nuclear weapons, but under the condition of the conclusion of an agreement on general and complete disarmament - and the Western powers just do not want this. The situation is now complicated because, while the Soviet Union is conducting negotiations with the USA and England about banning nuclear tests, France is at the same time conducting test explosions. But, indeed, France is an ally of the USA and England. And it turns out that the USSR is not testing nuclear weapons while the Western powers in the form of France are testing. There is no logic in this. If the Soviet Union in these circumstances were to disregard the interests of its security, N.S. Khrushchev emphasized, people would simply call us fools.

Of course, N.S. Khrushchev repeats, pacifists and other representatives of the public morbidly perceive this step of the Soviet government. But this will be useful as it awakens them and forces them to undertake more energetic efforts with the goal of defending peace.

Nkrumah says that in the given circumstances it is especially important that the Belgrade meeting provides some concrete results and takes a firm position on the Berlin question and other problems so that it does not go along the line of accepting compromise decisions. This is precisely why he was pleased with the last speech of Nehru's.

N.S. Khrushchev agrees with this and notes that Nehru's speech had especially great significance considering that some in Belgrade - as could be judged by the recent speech of Popovich - are inclined to take a middle line. On the one hand, this is right, and on the other, it is wrong. It is right from the point of view of non-alignment to blocks, but it is wrong with regard to issues of peace and war.

Nkrumah agrees with this and notes that during war it is difficult to stay neutral.

N.S. Khrushchev answers that in the case of war there will be no neutrals under current conditions. If, for example, the Soviet Union uses nuclear weapons against Greece or Italy, then neighboring countries, even if they are conducting a neutral policy, will not be saved from atomic radiation. Therefore, one can conduct a neutral policy, but in issues of war and peace, there can be no neutrality.

Nkrumah says that is precisely why Ghana's neutrality does not have a negative but a positive character. This means that Ghana's support is on the side of truth. Coming from this position, one cannot help but see, for example, that two German states exist. To not see this - means an escape from reality. Therefore, if one now speaks of the unification of Germany, then first of all one must speak about on what basis this unification is to occur, i.e., on the basis of socialism or capitalism.

Nkrumah further says that in his opinion the Americans do not want war but are only trying to maintain tension in the world, considering that the "cold war" is advantageous for them. After his visit to socialist countries, Nkrumah came to the conclusion that if there is no war, then in 10 years capitalism will come to an end and, in his opinion, even the capitalist powers know this. This is why they fear peaceful

coexistence.

Nkrumah assures N.S. Khrushchev that he will not allow anyone to put pressure on Ghana and in the most decisive manner will put forth its position on all issues which will be discussed.

The conversation ended on this note and N.S. Khrushchev agreed to meet with Nkrumah on 29 August.

Com. N.V. Podgorny was at the conversation.

The conversation was recorded by V. Sukhodrev.

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