

March 10, 1962

**Memorandum of Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev
with the Ambassador of Japan in the USSR H.
Yamada**

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Summary:

Khrushchev and Ambassador Yamada discuss US nuclear testing, prospects for disarmament, and the challenges facing the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee. They also review Soviet-Japanese political and trade relations, with Khrushchev expressing interest in expanding economic ties while criticizing US influence over Japan's trade decisions.

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Memorandum of Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with the Ambassador of Japan in the USSR H. Yamada

[originally: Reception by N.S. Khrushchev of the Ambassador of Japan in the USSR H. Yamada]

10 March 1962

Yamada. I thank you, Your Excellency, that you were able to find it possible to spare me some time.

At the direction of my government, I have the honor to deliver to you a personal message from Prime Minister Ikeda on the issue of banning nuclear tests and the resumption of these tests in the USA.

First, I would like to advise you of the following:

At the end of February of this year, U.S. President Kennedy turned to Prime Minister Ikeda with a personal message in which he advised of the U.S. decision to resume nuclear tests and explained the motives causing the USA to embark on this step. However, the U.S. president stressed that his government was striving to achieve agreement on disarmament before the end of April when the tests were supposed to begin.

On the 2nd of March, Prime Minister Ikeda sent President Kennedy a response in which the substance boils down to the following. Japan, as a state which has suffered from nuclear weapons, could not under any circumstances approve of the U.S. decision and, irrespective of the reasons causing the USA to resume tests, insists that the president reverse his decision.

In his response, Prime Minister Ikeda expressed his hope for a favorable outcome of the upcoming meetings of the Committee of 18 States [translator note: Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee].

On 5 March, the government of Japan addressed the U.S. government with an official protest against the decision to resume tests. The content of the protest coincided with the mentioned response from Prime-Minister Ikeda.

At the same time, the government of Japan declared a protest to England and the USA on the underground explosion in the state of Nevada.

Unfortunately, Japan's protests did not yield the desired results and we lay all our hopes now on the Committee of 18 States.

Prime Minister of Japan Ikeda turns to you with a request to take all measures to ensure successful completion of the work of the Committee of 18 States.

After this explanation, Ambassador Yamada handed over the personal message from Prime Minister Ikeda.

N.S. Khrushchev. I ask that you relay my thanks to Mr. Ikeda for the message.

I can only declare once more what is already known to all: the Soviet Union has done and is doing everything it can to achieve a general and complete disarmament under broad control.

Our country and all peoples of the world are striving for agreement for general and complete disarmament and we are not guilty that such an agreement has not yet been concluded. The Americans are playing a game - they say that they are for disarmament under control but, in reality, they want to achieve control over arms. They are endeavoring for the Soviet Union to agree to the establishment of control not only over armed forces and arms, which would be reduced or destroyed in accordance with an agreement, but also over that portion which remain in the states. The USA would like in this manner to establish control over the territory of our whole country. Such aspirations cannot lead to agreement, they only delay resolution of the very issue of general and complete disarmament.

I follow the foreign press, in particular the American press, and must note that recently a big campaign against disarmament is being waged, since - in the opinion of American leaders - disarmament will bring an economic decline and growth in unemployment. Meanwhile, they think in the USA that, as a result of disarmament, the Soviet Union will be relieved of the burden of military expenditures and that this,

in their opinion, will necessarily strengthen the USSR economically and thus will be good for the cause of building communism.

I call your attention to the fact that France, for example, decided to completely boycott the work of the Committee of 18 States. One asks oneself how can an agreement be obtained if such governments as France and the Chinese People's Republic are not participating in the work of the Committee?

This is why we do not place high hopes on the work of the Committee, but nevertheless we are doing everything to enable the achievement of an agreement.

In his message, Mr. Ikeda points out that the USA decided to resume nuclear tests because the USSR has lately conducted nuclear explosions. This is not true. Mr. Ikeda, the Japanese people and all peoples of the world understand that the first nuclear tests - and not just tests but the practical use of this weapon - were undertaken by the USA. It is known that the first bombs were dropped by Americans on Japan. The Soviet government soon after the war proposed that there be an agreement to ban such types of weapons. But the USA did not heed our voice. Instead of moving to a ban on atomic weapons, they advanced the well-known Baruch plan, the main purpose of which is to reinforce the U.S. monopoly on atomic energy and atomic weapons. The USA hoped that they would manage to preserve this monopoly forever. Now it is clear that the USA miscalculated.

The United States has already conducted its 21st underground explosion. Now they are preparing to resume nuclear tests in the atmosphere. We are also preparing for tests and will carry them out.

We are sorry that the USA has foisted such a path on us. But, as is known, one side cannot disarm unilaterally; the solution to this problem depends on other countries. If we were to begin to disarm unilaterally, then this would be a capitulation before U.S. aggressive forces. As regards the Soviet Union, its economic system permits us, even under stress, to compete in the area of economic development and in the area of production the necessary means of defense.

Now I want to offer several considerations on Soviet-Japanese relations.

We consider it necessary to come to agreement with Japan and other states in the Far East on the conclusion of an agreement relative to the creation of a non-atomic zone and other measures which would guarantee peace. The Japanese people and the Japanese government know well that neither the USSR, nor North Korea, nor China have any annexationist tendencies and therefore we can live in peace and friendship. In particular, we would like to start extensive trade with your country. We can buy industrial articles from you and you can buy our goods, mostly as raw materials. We are happy with the state of Soviet-Japanese trade and are ready to facilitate wider development of trade relations. However, all is not going smoothly. I will give you an example. At the initiative of one Japanese firm, we began negotiations on purchasing pipes in Japan for an oil pipeline in the Far East. But, apparently, under pressure from the Americans, these negotiations have slowed down. It must be said that we will not suffer any harm even should these negotiations be halted. Economically, we are not interested in laying an oil pipeline from Lake Baykal to Pacific Ocean regions. We had in mind to purchase these pipes since this initiative came from a Japanese firm and, if we had been presented with credits and other advantageous conditions, we would have moved to purchase the pipes in Japan. But if the Japanese side does not provide such conditions, we can do without your pipes. The Soviet Union is already in a position now to satisfy its requirements for pipes. We already have the experience of negotiations with a West German firm to supply pipes and sheet iron. In that case, there also arose certain difficulties, but now we can do it all ourselves. Of course, if the Japanese firm were to agree to conclude a commercially win/win deal, then I suppose we would agree to buy pipes from it.

It must be said that the USA is conducting the stupidest policy of an economic blockade with regard to the Soviet Union. They have already suffered a crash once with this policy of theirs. I have in mind the economic blockade soon after the October Revolution. The Americans hate us and, under sway of this hate, they are resorting to such a stupid policy.

I repeat that, economically, we are not interested in laying an oil pipeline from Baykal to Nakhoda, but if a long-term agreement on the purchase of Soviet oil were to be

concluded, then we would move to purchase pipes in Japan. Of course, in this case we would pay with oil for the cost of the pipes. If, however, the Japanese side considers such conditions unacceptable, we will not insist and will not complain. The Soviet side considers that any trade deal should be concluded on mutually advantageous grounds.

We have shown our interest to Japanese industry and want to expand business ties with your country. We are interested in such industrial sectors in Japan as ship building, machine building, and instrument building. You have good weaving machines. I saw them at the Japanese exhibition in Moscow. We could place orders in the chemical industry of your country, the level of development of which is fairly high.

Incidentally, our conversation has somehow imperceptibly shifted from the issue of nuclear tests to the topic of business ties. I admit that is a more pleasant topic.

Yamada. I will give Prime Minister Ikeda the substance of your remarks.

The position of the government of Japan on the issue of creating a non-atomic zone and a system of security guarantees is clear, therefore I would refrain from explanations on these issues.

As regards nuclear tests, I do want to note the following. Japan has decisively spoken out against nuclear explosions regardless of the reason for which they are being done. You just stated that if the USA resumes tests, then the Soviet Union will conduct corresponding preparatory work. Japan will undoubtedly make a protest to the Soviet Union, as it is necessary to put an end to this borderless competition. In our age of nuclear weapons, test explosions can lead to the most dangerous consequences. We think that the great powers which possess nuclear weapons should consider the fate of people not only of the present generation but of the future generation. Such is the opinion of the Japanese people, of the whole world. In this respect, I must express regret regarding the low estimation you gave to the prospects of the work of the Committee of 18 States. We ask you to devote maximum effort to the matter of ensuring agreement among the members of the committee.

I admit that for us, the Japanese, we do not get much pleasure dealing with the issues of nuclear tests: they revive our memory of the bitter pages of the past. That is why I will with great pleasure talk about trade.

N.S. Khrushchev. To talk about trade is not only more pleasant, but more useful.

Yamada. Trade between our countries is developing satisfactorily and I am very pleased at that. In September of this year, negotiations will be held on concluding a new long-term agreement and we ask that this issue be approached from a position of mutual advantage.

I am pleasantly surprised by your knowledge of the situation and on the level of industry in Japan. You obviously know as well about a flaw complicating our trade. I am speaking of the deficit for Japan. It is known that Japan has bought 60 million dollars more of goods in the USSR than the Soviet Union has in Japan. This does not at all mean that Soviet organizations are obliged to buy goods in Japan that they do not need. However, we are deeply interested in eliminating the imbalance in Japanese-Soviet trade.

As to the purchase of pipes, I know the following. Negotiations on this issue are underway and the hold-up occurred only due to a discrepancy in the conditions advanced by the sides. In any case, the Japanese side has expressed great interest in these negotiations.

N.S. Khrushchev. I will not undertake to accurately judge the state of negotiations today. At one time I was involved in this issue, but then got away from it.

Yamada. Japanese firms have already agreed to purchase 3,400 thousand tons of oil in the USSR. This means that Japan will take second place as an importer of Soviet oil, behind only Italy. Japanese firms are not yet buying more oil in the USSR for the reason that they are constrained by numerous contracts with American oil companies. These ties are complicated as a result of the massive capital investments by American firms in the Japan's oil industry.

But, in general, I must say that trade links between our countries is developing okay.

N.S. Khrushchev. I agree. Trade relations between our countries is developing well.

Yamada. Japanese firms want to buy iron ore in the Soviet Union. Representatives of our trade firms and business circles have already been in the Soviet Union and have become familiar with the state of affairs in this area. It would be desirable for representatives of the Soviet Union to also visit Japan and become familiar with its economy, industry, etc.

In connection with issues on expanding trade relations I want to make a comment.

Trade relations between our countries should be built taking into account the economic systems of both countries. As is known, trade operations in our country are implemented not by the government, but by private firms. Unfortunately, some problems have arisen for us connected with the issuance of visas and the assignment of living space for representatives of Japanese firms in Moscow.

Tugarinov. The issue with visas is being resolved in the usual manner and are not causing difficulties. Visas are issued without hindrance and are extended if there is a need to conduct commercial operations with Soviet foreign trade organizations. The matter with apartments is more complex as we cannot grant authorized Japanese firms special conditions in comparison with representatives of firms from other countries.

N.S. Khrushchev. These are all difficulties which we can easily resolve.

Yamada. Of course, we will not begin to turn to you, Your Excellency, on such minor issues, but will resolve them through the MFA. Meanwhile, there have been cases when some representatives of firms have been refused a visa extension.

All these issues, I hope, will be resolved in a spirit of mutual understanding.

In conclusion, permit me to again thank you for receiving me.

N.S. Khrushchev. I want to say again that the Soviet government has done and will do all it can to achieve agreement on a general and complete disarmament and nuclear weapons test ban.

Member of the USSR MFA Collegium I.I. Tugarinov was present at the discussion.

A.Rozhetskin translated and recorded it.