

August 5, 1963

**Reception of UN General Secretary U Thant by
Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers N.S.
Khrushchev**

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Summary:

U Thant and Nikita Khrushchev met on August 5, 1963, to discuss the upcoming signing of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and broader disarmament efforts. They exchanged views on the role of the UN, non-nuclear zones, and the potential for future peace initiatives.

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[illegible]

Reception of UN General Secretary U Thant by Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers N.S. Khrushchev
5 August 1968

[handwritten at bottom of first page: The memorandum of conversation was not reviewed by Comrade N.S. Khrushchev]

Today, USSR Council of Ministers N.S. Khrushchev received UN General Secretary U Thant and had a conversation with him. After exchanging greetings, U Thant says that he is sincerely thankful to N.S. Khrushchev personally and to the Soviet government for achieving the agreement on banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere, space and under water and for the invitation to attend the signing ceremony which had historical significance.

N.S. Khrushchev thanks U Thant for his kind words and notes that this is their common cause and that he highly values the personal role of U Thant in the struggle for peace. U Thant's presence at the signing of such an act will be useful for the cause of peace.

U Thant says that he highly values the opinion of N.S. Khrushchev on the UN and the assessment of the UN as a tool serving to preserve peace and the safety of peoples. U Thant adds that he always remembers his visit to the USSR in 1962 with great warmth. He says that he believes in the UN and he assures that he will fulfill his duty and obligation with a clean conscience and objectivity.

N.S. Khrushchev wishes U Thant success in his work and says that he is always ready to support his work if it is directed towards strengthening peace and is objective. N.S. Khrushchev says that he understands how difficult U Thant's role is. N.S. Khrushchev added that there are many difficulties in the UN's work and that in these conditions it is necessary to preserve objectivity.

A.A. Gromyko notes that preserving objectivity is the main difficulty.

N.S. Khrushchev says that the UN General Secretary is subjected to pressure by many forces and that he understands the difficulty of his position.

U Thant says that in his conversation with A.A. Gromyko he already discussed the issue of how to link the current agreement with the UN's work. He proposed the following: since, in accordance with the specified sequence, the present agreement is supposed to be registered at the UN, then it would be desirable to organize the ceremony to register this agreement in the presence of all UN members in September, which will symbolize this treaty's linkage with the UN.

N.S. Khrushchev says that he understands and supports this idea.

U Thant adds that he has still not had the chance to discuss the aforementioned proposal with American and English representatives.

N.S. Khrushchev notes that they apparently will not object to this proposal.

U Thant says that in his short speech at the treaty signing ceremony he would like to say some words about further steps to strengthen peace and safety.

N.S. Khrushchev approves this intention of U Thant.

U Thant says that he decided not to speak in his speech regarding the Non-aggression pact between NATO member-states and Warsaw Pact member-partners.

N.S. Khrushchev agrees with this, saying that this would be premature.

U Thant further expresses his hope for a successful solution to the issue of concluding the Pact and adds that all honest people on earth await the conclusion of such a Pact.

N.S. Khrushchev notes that there is a hope to sign such a pact but to talk about it is too early. The idea of a Pact is acceptable although there exists a great diversity of forms which could cover it.

U Thant, touching on the issue of forming non-atomic zones, says that all African and Latin American countries are speaking in support of this.

N.S. Khrushchev answers that U Thant knows the position of the Soviet government on this issue – it supports the idea of creating non-atomic zones, considering it a useful one.

U Thant adds that solving this issue would ease the solution of other problems connected with disarmament.

N.S. Khrushchev notes that the creation of non-atomic zones can precede the solution of the problem of disarmament.

U Thant inquires of N.S. Khrushchev as to when he can visit the General Assembly before 1965.

N.S. Khrushchev says that it is hard for him to answer this question since this year he must go to Cuba, in all likelihood in the winter. To accomplish two long trips simultaneously would be very difficult. N.S. Khrushchev continued that if he were to go to the General Assembly, combining it with a trip to Cuba, then he would only manage to get to the UN when the show is over [Translator note: meaning too late]. N.S. Khrushchev adds, however, that he had not considered this issue in depth.

U Thant says that he highly values N.S. Khrushchev's proposal about declaring 1965 the year of international cooperation and conducting high-level meetings during the year. U Thant inquires whether a summit meeting might be possible before 1965.

N.S. Khrushchev answers that such a possibility is not excluded but there were not yet specific plans on this account. N.S. Khrushchev adds that, judging by press reports, Macmillan would welcome a behind the scenes meeting of the heads of the three governments, but as yet this remained only speculation of journalists.

U Thant says that, thanks to the tireless work of N.S. Khrushchev, the international situation has improved, and expresses further his conviction that a meeting of the heads of governments will provide the possibility to productively discuss all existing world problems. U Thant expresses his gratitude to N.S. Khrushchev personally and to the Soviet government for the efforts taken with the aim of strengthening peace.

N.S. Khrushchev thanks U Thant for the high marks on the Soviet government's work and adds that he is doing all possible to improve the international situation. N.S. Khrushchev says there comes a moment when the dilemma will inevitably arise before humanity – either to provide an outcome to accumulated nuclear power in a destructive war or to embark on the path of quests for agreements, the path to peace.

U Thant says that the attention of the whole world is turned now to Moscow and will be riveted to it over the next several days, during which the treaty on a partial nuclear test ban will be signed and the issue of disarmament will be discussed.

N.S. Khrushchev expresses his satisfaction that negotiations on concluding a nuclear test ban treaty are actually in Moscow and that this treaty will be signed in Moscow. It is as though this signifies a recognition of the Soviet government's endeavors aimed at strengthening peace.

U Thant says that, during his discussion with A.A. Gromyko, he had already noted that the ratification of the partial nuclear weapons test ban treaty will be met with opposition in the Senate of the USA. However, he expresses the opinion that resistance will not be very strong.

A.A. Gromyko notes that, during his discussion with D. Rusk and those who accompanied him, Senator L. Fulbright expressed confidence that the treaty will be signed.

U Thant confirms that the American delegation was really convinced of this.

N.S. Khrushchev says that it will be hard for the senators to speak against ratification of the treaty and at the same time link their names to opposition against banning nuclear weapons tests. N.S. Khrushchev compares the position of such senators with the position of American aviators who dropped atomic bombs on Japan in 1945 and were subjected to the condemnation of all humanity.

A.A. Gromyko notes that a permanent taint was put on these aviators.

U Thant says that only a minority did not support the treaty.

N.S. Khrushchev agrees with this opinion.

Present at the conversation were USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs A.A. Gromyko,

Deputy Minister V.A. Zorin, member of the USSR MFA Collegium S.K. Tsarapkin, USSR MFA press department head L.M. Zamyatin, and Director of the UN Information Center in Moscow P.P. Astakhov.

G. Gventsadze recorded.

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10 August 1963