

August 7, 1962

**Record of a Conversation between Cde. N.S.
Khrushchev and Mohammed Zahir Shah, King of
Afghanistan**

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Summary:

Khrushchev and Brezhnev visited King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan, who was vacationing on the Black Sea. Khrushchev provided an overview of key international issues, focusing on tensions in Berlin and Taiwan, and highlighted Soviet economic growth. The King expressed gratitude for Soviet economic and military assistance and praised the work of Soviet specialists in Afghanistan. He discussed the ongoing conflict with Pakistan, emphasizing Afghanistan's neutral foreign policy and the mediation efforts of the Shah of Iran, which he viewed as ineffective. The conversation also touched on broader regional dynamics, including proposals for a bloc of Muslim countries, which both leaders considered unrealistic.

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RECORD OF A CONVERSATION
BETWEEN Cde. N. S. KHRUSHCHEV and MOHAMMED ZAHIR SHAH, KING OF
AFGHANISTAN

7 August 1962

On this day Cde. N. S. Khrushchev and Cde. L. I. Brezhnev paid a visit to the King at his residence.

The King said that he was very touched by this attention, however, if one is guided by protocol, then he himself should have paid the first visit, for N. S. Khrushchev and L. I. Brezhnev met him yesterday and kindly escorted [him] to the residence.

N. S. Khrushchev replied jokingly that according to Soviet protocol it is first necessary to visit a guest and see how he has settled in and find out what else is needed to organize his rest in the best manner.

The King expressed gratitude, and replied that everything necessary for the best rest is right here. Like yesterday after arriving at the airfield and at the residence he again expressed deep appreciation to N. S. Khrushchev for the invitation to spend his rest in the Soviet Union. The King said that he had obtained a fortunate opportunity to again meet with N. S. Khrushchev, the past conversations with whom had left an indelible mark on him. He is glad for the occasion to get to know L. I. Brezhnev, about whom he had heard much and whom he would like to see in Afghanistan. Finally, he would be very happy to again spend several days on the wonderful shore of the Black Sea.

N. S. Khrushchev thanked the King for the friendly words and said that, besides bathing and sea baths one can take boat trips, and go to Sevastopol', the Nikitsky [Botanical] Garden, etc. N. S. Khrushchev suggested going to the mountains tomorrow [8 August 1962] to have lunch there, and then go around the mountains on an all-terrain vehicle and, if deer are encountered, to then hunt. At this time Nikita Sergeyevich said that it was not hunting season right now and invited the King to come in September to hunt deer and moose.

The King eagerly agreed with the offer about the trip to the mountains and recalled that on [his] last trip a strong downpour prevented him from hunting in Crimea.

By general approval the following plan was drawn up for 8 August 1962: at 1200 arrival of the King and his travelling companions at N. S. Khrushchev's for a return visit. At the same time the King meets members of N. S. Khrushchev's family. Then - departure for the mountains and lunch in the mountains. After lunch - a walk and hunting in all-terrain vehicles.

The King welcomed the opportunity to hunt for deer, which in his words, do not exist in Afghanistan, in the mountains of Crimea with great pleasure.

N. S. Khrushchev said that according to established tradition during meetings with leaders of the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, he would like to make a short survey of international events and the domestic situation of the USSR.

The King replied that he would be quite appreciative of such an opportunity.

N. S. Khrushchev gave a brief analysis of the most important events, especially selecting out two hotbeds of international tension, on Taiwan and in Berlin. Nikita Sergeyevich dwelt in detail on the Berlin problem, presenting the position of the Soviet Union and the Western powers on this question.

N. S. Khrushchev noted that on almost all the questions agreement had been reached or the possibility of an agreement had been reached as a result of conversations that had taken place except the question of the withdrawal of occupation troops from West Berlin, on which the Western powers insist as before, forgetting that West Berlin

is on GDR territory and that after the conclusion of a peace treaty with it the provisions ensuing from the act of surrender of Germany lose effect with respect to the territory of the GDR.

N. S. Khrushchev then said that the Western powers explain leaving their troops in West Berlin by the fact that they, he said, want to defend the "freedom" of the population of West Berlin. But, firstly, no one is encroaching on the freedom of West Berlin, for the two million residents of West Berlin and [its] insignificant resources are absolutely not necessary to the socialist countries, which number more than a billion in population. Secondly, the function of the protection and the guarantee of the status of the free city of West Berlin can be successfully accomplished by UN troops or the troops of neutral countries. The Soviet Union, N. S. Khrushchev said in conclusion, cannot agree to leaving the occupation troops of the Western powers in West Berlin.

Citing the statement of the US President at the meeting in Vienna that both sides have equal power, N. S. Khrushchev noted that, based on this, the West should abandon the policy of a position of strength and not insist on leaving its forces in West Berlin in order to threaten us. The policy of a position of strength has suffered defeat in Laos, where at one time the US had decided to remove Souvanna Phouma, whom it did not like, but today has been forced to tolerate not only him but along with him the representatives of leftist forces, too, which have become considerably stronger and are now even in the government.

Then Nikita Sergeyevich gave a comprehensive analysis of the events in Laos, South Vietnam, and Indonesia.

Speaking of the domestic situation of the USSR, Nikita Sergeyevich noted that at a time when the production in a number of the most important American industrial sectors is being reduced, the production of our industry is growing at a rapid pace. Now many Americans already admit the enormous successes of the Soviet Union. We have already left the US behind in many fields of science, in the field of education and the training of personnel, especially engineers. In the field of agriculture, said N. S. Khrushchev, we are taking a number of steps to move ahead rapidly. We are building large factories to produce mineral fertilizers, and we are creating powerful tractors and other agricultural machinery to increase labor productivity in agriculture. This year we will gather a very good harvest, but in the next two years we will achieve even greater successes in the field of agriculture, and then we will see what the Western propagandists will say who talk over and over again about the crisis in our agriculture.

The King said that he is very grateful to N. S. Khrushchev for the deep and clear analysis of the most important world events. He expressed the hope that all the acute international questions will be solved by peaceful means. The King noted that the development of the economy of the Soviet Union has not only domestic, but also international significance for, first, it strengthens peace and, second, it provides an opportunity for your country to give even greater aid to such countries as ours. If the very best and most powerful tractors are operating on your fields then it means that they will also till on our fields and therefore, said the King, we are also interested in the development of the Soviet economy. The King rapturously recalled the work of the Soviet specialists in Afghanistan. He said that at the beginning of this year during a trip around the country he had become familiarized with the progress of the construction of various facilities by the Soviet specialists, and everywhere he noted that the Soviet specialists worked with great enthusiasm, in spite of the climatic and other difficulties. In reply to his question, how is your life, the Soviet specialists invariably replied "very good". In the King's opinion, the main thing is that the Soviet specialists in the sectors that they oversee are creating a situation of genuine friendship and brotherhood, being themselves an example of the Soviet people's attitude toward Afghanistan. The King noted that the Soviet specialists are passing their experience on to the Afghan personnel and have already trained numerous local personnel. Therefore, said the King, the facilities which are being built in Afghanistan by Soviet organizations are actually also schools for the training of Afghan national cadre.

The King expressed appreciation and gratitude for the economic and military aid given to Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. He especially noted the fact that always,

when pressure was exerted on Afghanistan, and the country was experiencing difficulties, this aid was given immediately. He expressed special gratitude to N. S. Khrushchev for last year's aid, when the Soviet Union broke the blockade and took out Afghan fruit. The King said, you thereby saved our peasantry from ruin.

N. S. Khrushchev said that the Soviet government is satisfied with the relations which have developed between our country and Afghanistan, and also between the leaders of our countries. Our contacts, said Nikita Sergeevich, show that complete trust and understanding exists between us on the most important questions. Our relations become ever stronger with each meeting. Therefore it is natural that the Soviet Union has given, is giving, and will give any possible aid to friendly Afghanistan.

The King thanked N. S. Khrushchev, and said that he fully endorses the words of N. S. Khrushchev.

The King noted that in recent years pressure has increased on Afghanistan with the goal of forcing it to change [its] traditional policy of neutrality. However, in the King's words, this policy is not the fruit of a desire of the current leaders of Afghanistan. This policy is the expression of the people's will and therefore it cannot be changed by anyone. The King said that in the last year Pakistan, not without the consent and approval of the US, closed Afghan consulates and trade missions. This unilateral act in violation of international law has led to Afghanistan being forced to break diplomatic relations with Pakistan. The King said, they wanted to put pressure on us, to prevent [our] sending our fruit to India, and cause great damage to our peasants, for whom the export and sale of fruit is the main means of sustenance. However, thanks to the tactful attitude of Your Excellency, the Afghan fruit were bought and shipped out by the Soviet Union. Thus, this attempt to put pressure on us failed.

The King said that the Shah of Iran recently came to Afghanistan. Before his arrival the Afghan side found out from a communiqué published in Pakistan that the Shah of Iran had taken upon himself the responsibility to mediate between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The King added that the Afghan side was not notified about this in advance. And only after the publication of the communiqué about the talks between the Shah and Ayub Khan did the Iranian side reply to an Afghan inquiry through diplomatic channels that the Shah wanted to mediate with the goal of eliminating the conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan and therefore he would come to Afghanistan.

The King noted that he and his government had always stood for a peaceful resolution of all questions. In addition, at one time he (the King) had visited Iran and therefore the Shah of Iran should have paid him a return visit. Based on this, Afghanistan agreed to receive the Shah.

In the King's words, the Shah of Iran brought with him a previously-prepared text of a communiqué which provided for the reopening [*vosstanovlenie*] of two Afghan consulates closed by the Pakistani authorities and was drawn up as if the reopening of these two consulates resolved all the contentious questions which existed between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is interesting that nothing was said about reopening the closed Afghan trade missions. In addition, it was evident that the Shah of Iran was not at all informed of the position of Afghanistan and he had formed a distorted idea about this. Therefore, as the King noted, he was forced to present the position of Afghanistan to the Shah of Iran. The King said, we told the Shah that two problems exist between us and Pakistan: they are, first, the Pushtun [problem], about which we do not intend to seek any compromise and we insist on granting the Pushtun people the right to self-determination and, second, the question of the restoration of our relations with Pakistan. The resolution of the second question also entirely depends not on us, for Pakistan has unilaterally closed two of our consulates and three trade missions under the ridiculous pretext that they were allegedly engaged in sabotage. (Here the King gave the floor to Etemadi, Director of the Political Department of the MFA of Afghanistan, who explained in detail the known position of Afghanistan about the Pushtun question and the question of the resumption of diplomatic relations with Pakistan).

Then the King said that if the reason of the break of relations is eliminated and the Afghan missions are again opened, which depends entirely on Pakistan, then the consequence of these actions by the Pakistani side (the break of our diplomatic relations with Pakistan) disappears by itself. In the King's words, the Shah of Iran was somewhat surprised when he found out about the arguments of Afghanistan and,

realizing that he had insufficient information, he declared that after the explanations he had received he considered it advisable fly to Pakistan for one day and return.

The King noted that after return the Shah had no clear idea of the intention of the Pakistani side. He again repeated Pakistan's agreement to reopen only the two Afghan consulates. Based on all this, it was written in the communiqué that the Shah of Iran will continue his efforts as a mediator in the direction of resolving this question. This phrase constituted a small part of the overall communiqué and was not the substance of the entire communiqué, as the Shah of Iran initially desired. The King said that he considered the arrival of the Shah a positive phenomenon even in the event that his efforts did not lead to any results, for the Shah had an opportunity to familiarize himself with Afghanistan's views on this and other questions of international life.

Then the King reported that in the program of the Shah's stay in Afghanistan also did not include a survey of the facilities being built with the aid of the Soviet Union. He said that the Shah of Iran himself had displayed great interest in these facilities. For example, at the construction of the road through Salang the Shah wished to go above the program which was provided and to look at other sectors of this road. He was given explanations by Soviet specialists. The King said, it was clear from everything that the aid of the Soviet union and its effectiveness had made an enormous impression on the Shah.

N. S. Khrushchev, speaking of the mediation of the Shah of Iran, explained that these actions of the Shah were obviously prompted by the Americans, and therefore the Shah could not have been taking the interests of Afghanistan into consideration. His mission was to try and sow the seed of mistrust between the USSR and Afghanistan and solve the conflict with Pakistan on the basis of the demands of the latter. The Shah wanted to carry out not an Afghan, but a Pakistani-American, concept. Therefore a communiqué was prepared beforehand in which the stress was placed on the restoration of diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the problem of Pushtunistan was sort of dissolved in this question. However, these attempts failed thanks to the consistent and firm position of Your Excellency and the Afghan government. Therefore, said Nikita Sergeevich, I do not think the mediation of the Shah of Iran will bring benefit in the future. The problem is that it, a CENTO member, has not and is not setting the task of facilitating the solution of your problems. Its goal is to try and spoil our relations and push through the policy of Pakistan and the Americans standing behind them.

The King thanked N. S. Khrushchev for the explanations and agreed with his arguments. He said that, in spite of this, it is still not superfluous to again present the policy of Afghanistan on this score so that there be no doubt.

N. S. Khrushchev said that there are intentions right now to create a bloc of Muslim countries. Britain is to leave CENTO with this purpose. As is well-known, the US is not formally in CENTO. And then so it will turn out as if CENTO consists only of Muslim countries (Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan). They want by such means to attract the Muslim countries of the Near and Middle East to this bloc.

The King replied that these plans are not new. This same question was raised several years ago. However, these plans, in the King's opinion, are unrealistic. He noted that at that time he had already said that in various countries Islam is entangled with numerous local customs, traditions, and conditions. Therefore it is hard and unrealistic to join different Muslim peoples on a religious basis. In addition, the economic, political, and social conditions in these countries are very different. Taking all this into consideration, said the King, at the time I answered them that the question of joining together cannot be solved from above, by the leaders. This question should be decided by the peoples themselves, but at this time they are not ready for this.

N. S. Khrushchev expressed agreement with the King's opinion.

Then the King switched to a presentation of the domestic situation of Afghanistan. He said that the first five-year plan was successfully fulfilled thanks to an enormous aid of the Soviet Union. The King again thanked N. S. Khrushchev for the attentive attitude to the needs of Afghanistan. He expressed gratitude for the aid and gave a high estimation of the work of the Soviet specialists in Afghanistan.

The King said that Afghanistan is faced with the task of carrying out the second five-year plan, which will provide the country with an opportunity to stand on its own feet. He noted that according to second five-year plan the Soviet Union will give Afghanistan enormous aid and expressed gratitude for this aid. The King said further that, in spite of a number of difficulties, the fulfillment of the second five-year plan is going successfully.

Then King then said that the Queen very much wanted to come with him to the Soviet Union, but the illness of her mother prevented [it]. He passed greetings from the Queen to N. S. Khrushchev, L. I. Brezhnev, and the family of N. S. Khrushchev.

N. S. Khrushchev invited the Queen to come to the Soviet Union to rest at any time convenient to her.

The King expressed gratitude [for this].

The conversation lasted about three hours and was recorded by Eh. M. Aliyev.

[illegible signature]

3-ls/EhA

1-2 - Secretariat of N. S. Khrushchev

3 - to the file of the OSV [Translator's note: the Department of the Countries of the East, the MFA's bureau for Asian countries]

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