

May 26, 1961
Interim Guidance: Kennedy-Khrushchev Meeting,
June 3-4, 1961

Citation:

"Interim Guidance: Kennedy-Khrushchev Meeting, June 3-4, 1961", May 26, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Released by the Central Intelligence Agency on October 16, 2019, in response to Mandatory Declassification Review request EOM-2018-00930. Contributed by A. Ross Johnson. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/290943>

Summary:

Radio Liberty outlines how they will report on on the 1961 Kennedy-Krushchev meeting. They emphasize avoiding false optimism and highlighting the differing opinions on key issues.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

9

KENNEDY-KHRUSHCHEV MEETING

June 3-4, 1961

Assumptions

U. S. President Kennedy's meeting with Soviet Premier Khrushchev in Vienna is not for the purpose of reaching agreement on specific questions but will allow the two leaders to confront each other for the first time and exchange views informally on major issues which affect relations between their two countries.

An overconfident and distorted appraisal of the present world situation may lead Khrushchev to try, by means of continuing intransigence or new diplomatic aggressiveness, to hasten the advent of world communism, which he claims is historically inevitable. He may well find that he has underestimated the resolve of the new president. The Free World remains willing to engage in truly peaceful world-wide competition with international communism but does not accept its historical inevitability, and will not passively yield to indirect aggression or the imposition of communist dictatorship on free peoples.

7/92/51620-46/2x

Soviet citizens are probably puzzled as to what to expect from these talks between Kennedy and Khrushchev. Vituperative attacks by the Soviet regime on the United States and the new Kennedy administration will lead some to wonder why Khrushchev is meeting with Kennedy. The majority probably continue to hope for an improvement in relations between the two countries, largely because they see this as an omen for continued improvement in the economic and political climate inside the USSR. Many if not most of them are largely unaware, or do not accept, the fact that the aggressive tactics of Soviet foreign policy and its support for local communist movements arouse resentment and suspicion of the USSR among governments and peoples of the Free World.

Objectives

To persuade Soviet listeners that the American president is meeting with Khrushchev to determine whether the Soviet leader is in fact interested in easing international tension or whether he merely wishes to exploit summit meetings for propaganda purposes. Although direct results of the talks will not immediately be apparent, the assessment by each leader of the other's basic attitudes and intentions will influence subsequent decisions of each on national policies. It is to the interest of the peoples of both countries that their leaders adopt an open-minded, reasonable approach, not only in the Vienna talks but in their subsequent conduct of policy.

Methods

1. In Part I (news coverage) we avoid creating an atmosphere of false optimism about the possible outcome of the talks, and project the idea of the talks as an exploratory, not decision-making meeting. In this connection, in feature coverage, we recall the exaggerated hopes generated by summit conferences from Geneva in 1955 to Paris in 1960.

2. In our coverage of the main news stories during the period immediately prior to and during the Vienna meeting, we stress for the listener the substantive differences between the USSR and the Free World on vital issues such as nuclear testing, disarmament, Southeast Asia, the Congo, and Berlin. We also underline the alternatives posed for U.S. policy makers by Soviet aggressive policies and/or intransigence in these areas.

3. All Desks consider, within the scope of present programming, repeat broadcasts of RL analyses of Soviet policy, specifically the Moscow Declaration in December and its subsequent elaboration by Khrushchev. We also re-run commentaries on Soviet actions which expose the true meaning of their policies of "peaceful coexistence" and support to wars of national liberation.

EVDR:Adew