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Record of Conversations between Cde. N. S. Khrushchev, First Secretary of the CPSU CC, and Ho Chi Minh, Chairman of the CC of the VWP

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Summary:

Khrushchev and Ho Chi Minh discuss global tensions around imperialism, nuclear disarmament, and peace talks over Germany. They review worsening Soviet relations with Albania and China, as Albania aligns with Beijing and Western powers. The leaders also address the conflicts in Laos and South Vietnam, balancing support for revolutionary forces with concerns over provoking US intervention.

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RECORD OF A CONVERSATION

between Cde. N. S. Khrushchev, First Secretary of the CPSU CC, and Ho Chi Minh, Chairman of the CC of the VWP

The text of the record was not reviewed by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev

Pitsunda
17 August 1961

After mutual greetings Cde. N. S. Khrushchev informed Cde. Ho Chi Minh of the state of affairs in industry and agriculture of the Soviet Union, and also about the Conference of the First Secretaries of Central Committees of the Communist Parties of the Member Countries of the Warsaw Pact held in Moscow.

HO CHI MINH. Does the West agree to hold negotiations about the German question?

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV The Western powers have not yet responded officially, but let it be known that they agree to hold negotiations. This, of course, is for now only a preliminary expectation. But there will undoubtedly be negotiations. We have prepared the Western powers for this, using every means for this, both logic and the big stick.

HO CHI MINH Why did Kennedy request additional funds for military needs?

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV The imperialists are also trying to use the big stick method against us, and they are trying to strengthen their positions in the upcoming negotiations. They are getting considerably more from the money acquired for an intensification of the arms race.

HO CHI MINH. Such a method will cost them dearly.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV Only America spends the money. Britain and France aren't spending money for this matter.

What concerns us is that we have carried out a number of measures: we have appointed Cde. Konev as Commander-in-Chief of the Group of Soviet Forces in the GDR, closed the border with West Berlin, and have begun to monitor it. These measures have made a big impression on West Germany, whose ruling circles have displayed nervousness and have become afraid. At the same time they are threatening to abrogate trade agreements with the German Democratic Republic. In response the GDR government has declared that if the trade agreements are abrogated then the GDR will take retaliatory measures. It can be supposed that West Germany will not abrogate the trade agreements. I told the ambassadors of West Germany, France, and Italy that if West Germany takes such a step we will find the resources to give them a fitting response. Specifically, it might mean that we are blockading West Berlin; nothing can get into the city and nothing can be taken out of it.

HO CHI MINH. The Western countries will be able to use air transport.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV The creation of an airlift to take finished products out of West Berlin and bring raw material in would cost too much and be practically impossible.

HO CHI MINH In the event of a complete blockade the population of West Berlin might suffer.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV Of course, the factories in West Berlin are idle. The disruption in trade relations is also fraught with serious consequences for the GDR. Our comrades in the German Democratic Republic did not manage to free their economy from dependence on West Germany in time.

Now the Western countries and especially West Germany are developing plans for an economic blockade of the socialist countries. We will not suffer from this. As concerns the GDR, it will suffer definite losses.

For our part, we are doing everything to help the government of the GDR free their economy from dependence on the FRG. We have created a special reserve and have budgeted hard currency to help the GDR. But it is possible there will be no blockade.

We will even assume that West Germany will announce a blockade, but Britain, France, Italy, and Japan will hardly support it. The truth is, in life anything can happen. It might happen that West Germany comes to an agreement with the other countries that they do not fulfill orders from the German Democratic Republic. However, right now West German firms are letting us know that they might supply products produced per GDR orders to other countries with whom we trade. As you see, the capitalists are striving to earn money despite everything.

HO CHI MINH But how are things with the main question, war and peace?

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV Of course, we cannot guarantee 100% that there will be no world war. The Chinese comrades say that as long as imperialism exists so will wars. The truth is, it wasn't the Chinese comrades who said this first, but V. I. Lenin. We agree with V. I. Lenin and our Chinese comrades. However, right now the situation has fundamentally changed - there is no fatal inevitability of war. In my opinion, at the present time a real danger of war arising is about three to five percent. But war can break out spontaneously, and we are ready for this. I told this to Kennedy in Vienna. On 27 July I talked with McCloy after Kennedy's radio and television speech. I told him that Kennedy actually presented us with an ultimatum in this speech. He declared that there will be a war if we sign the German peace treaty. I told McCloy that we accept this challenge of the US President. The peace treaty will be signed. But, if the US begins a war against us, then evidently Kennedy will be the last American President. McCloy, it is true, noted that Kennedy did not speak of war, but also of negotiations.

Initially the Western powers wanted to frighten us, but were convinced that such a tactic would not bring them success. Again I repeat that all this does not mean that the possibility of an outbreak of war is 100% excluded. The imperialists might impose a war on us. Not long ago in a conversation with Fanfani I told him that the USSR and the US are not adjoining territories and therefore the US can fight us chiefly with intercontinental missiles. But the US is weaker than us in this area. They should think hard before going on such a dangerous adventure. In a war against us the US we will first of all try to use its bases in the European countries and Asia. But in such an event we will strike the bases and then nothing will be left of these countries. The governments of Britain, France, Italy, Greece, and Turkey do not want a war. And Adenauer does not want it. He shouts about war more than everyone, but he fears it himself. No long ago Strauss, the Minister of Defense of West Germany, declared that there will not be a war, but negotiations will be started. Thus, the Western powers are frightened by the reaction from our side, which is caused by their militaristic appeals.

Cde. N. S. Khrushchev informed Cde. Ho Chi Minh that in the near future the Soviet Union has planned to resume the testing of nuclear weapons.

HO CHI MINH Will the USSR begin the testing of nuclear weapons if the US does not conduct its own tests?

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV replied that the USSR will conduct such tests in any event; this question has already decided.

HO CHI MINH What will happen with the conference in Geneva to prohibit atomic testing?

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV We are forced to resume the test of atomic weapons in connection with the position of the Western powers on the question of disarmament. We offer them peace, but they threaten us with war. This threat is not only connected with Berlin. They are threatening all the socialist countries. We are obliged to draw the appropriate conclusions and increase the combat readiness of our army. We would be committing a mistake if we did not organize the testing of a new atomic weapon proposed by our scientists. But we are ready to sign a treaty on disarmament and solve the question of the prohibition of atomic tests. A document on this question will be published soon. In it we declare that the Soviet Union is forced to resume the testing of thermonuclear weapons inasmuch as the Western powers do not want disarmament and they are strengthening their military might and stockpiling new weapons. We are testing atomic bombs with a power equal of 10, 20, 30, 50, and 100 million tons of TNT.

Various pacifist organizations in the world will obviously start to protest. To this we will reply that peoples should put pressure on their governments to force them to

seek effective steps in the area of disarmament. In addition, we will point out that France, without reckoning with the decision of the UN, continues tests of atomic weapons. Yesterday I spoke about this question with Cde. Korneychuk in Kiev. He went to Moscow, where he met with Bernal and will confidentially tell him of our plan to resume the testing of atomic weapons.

In addition, some days ago I received the ambassador of Yugoslavia, whom I also told of our plans to resume the testing of atomic weapons. I asked him to confidentially report this to I. Tito.

HO CHI MINH In this case everything will become known to the imperialists.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV We know this. We take into consideration that a conference of neutral countries will soon meet in Belgrade. It is to our advantage for them to find out about our position and our plans. We have charged our ambassador in Belgrade with delivering our document about the testing of nuclear weapons to all the representatives of the neutral countries a day or two before its publication. In all probability, these countries will condemn us. However, in the final account they should draw the correct conclusion.

We cannot be led around by the pacifists. It is necessary to wage an active struggle for peace. It is asked, why does France continue tests and they do not condemn it [?]

It is possible they will reproach us for contaminating the atmosphere with radioactive fallout. But we Russians have a saying, "there's no use crying over spilled milk" [literally: "having lost your head you don't cry about your hair"]. The imperialists are preparing a war. We should have sufficient resources to respond to them properly. As you see, imperialism is far from a paper tiger. It can still inflict serious wounds. But socialism, too, now has enormous strength. We should and will have weapons to give a fitting rebuff to aggressors. This is our position.

HO CHI MINH said that he completely agrees with this position.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV All the socialist countries agree that it is necessary to sign the German peace treaty. Only the Albanian leaders declined to discuss this question. They fight against the imperialists louder than others in words, but when it comes to business, they retreat. M. Shehu and E. Hoxha sent people to the Conference of Warsaw Pact member countries who were not authorized to decide the question of signing the German peace treaty. This is not that level which was required. And, naturally, the Albanians were told that they cannot take part in such a Conference.

We were extremely surprised at the position of the Chinese comrades, who addressed a special statement to the Conference on the Albanian question. They insisted that we recognize the competence of the Albanian delegation or, as a last resort, put its signature on the communique. At the Conference I asked PRC Ambassador in Moscow Cde. Liu Xiao, who was there as an observer: is he acting in the name of the CPC or in the name of the Albanian Party of Labor? Cde. Liu Xiao, answered me that I am engaging in a slander. But is this slander? I explained to Cde. Liu Xiao that if they are acting at the request of the Albanian Party of Labor then we will make an appropriate decision. If this is an initiative about which Albania does not know, then it could lead to a big misunderstanding. We'll assume that we will adopt the decision at the Conference to which Albania's signature will also be put. In such an event the Albanians might ask on what basis their signature was affixed.

During an intermission Cde. Liu Xiao approached me and asked forgiveness for the rude expression. I replied to him that he had committed a dirty trick in front of everyone, but asks forgiveness face to face. This isn't fitting.

We well understand that the position of the Albanians is essentially the Chinese position. The Albanian leaders would not act without the support of the Chinese. The Albanian leaders say that they have risen to the defense of China; this is simply laughable. China is a great country and the CPC is a big Party. Neither China nor the CPC needs Albanian protection, and no one is attacking them. The current Albanian leaders are not smart people and big smart alecks. They use nothing less than a bandit's means in their actions. Judge for yourselves. They essentially exterminated all the old members of the Politburo, whose honesty was in no doubt. M. Shehu bragged that he had personally executed Koci Xoxe and had buried his body so that no one would know where his grave was. At a recently-held APL Congress M. Shehu said approximately the following: "Whoever criticizes our line we will beat in the face,

and if necessary, we'll put a bullet in his forehead". That's how the Albanian leaders understand the struggle for unity in their Party.

Perhaps this has something in common with that struggle which V. I. Lenin led to strengthen the unity of Party ranks. Everyone knows the fact when Zinov'ev and Kamenev spoke against V. I. Lenin at the most important and critical period in the life of our Party. They acted like traitors, giving the enemy the date of the uprising. But V. I. Lenin did not execute Kamenev and Zinov'ev, but demanded that they be expelled from the Party. And the history with Trotsky. V. I. Lenin had every grounds and opportunity to make get rid of him, but did not do this. He understood that it is necessary to wage the fight against Trotsky and Trotskyism firstly ideologically and politically. The Albanian leaders are putting terrorist methods into play against honest, devoted Communists. In a Marxist Party one cannot wage a struggle for unity by such methods of banditry.

Now the Albanian leaders extol I. V. Stalin. They often exalt the methods of his work. The Albanians say, the only mistake I. V. Stalin made was that he did not achieve the physical destruction of W. Gomulka. What are these, if I may say, Marxist-Leninists! As we say, you don't want to breathe the same air as such people.

The Albanian leadership seized four submarines, naval ships, and other military property at our base in Vlore. Is it possible? Who needs this military base? All the socialist countries. Against whom is it directed? Against the US 6th Fleet. The Albanian leadership showed that they spit on the common interests of the security of the socialist camp. They have paralyzed all the activity of the base. In addition, they dreamed of seizing all 12 submarines, but they didn't manage to do this. Why did they need our submarines? What will they do with them? For these submarines in the hands of the Albanians will be sunk by the Americans in the first battle.

I think that all the actions of the Albanian leaders have recently been directed at leaving the Warsaw Pact. They are actually following in the footsteps of Tito. Albania is establishing close relations with Italy and France. It is seeking credits from these countries.

It is asked, what did we do bad to Albania, why have its leaders taken up arms against us, for we have done everything to strengthen the friendship with Albania. When we signed the Warsaw Pact some of us, Molotov in particular, were against including Albania in it. He was motivated by the fact that it was not necessary to fight because of Albania in the event the Americans were thinking of seizing it. I objected and criticized such a position of Molotov's. I said then that it is necessary to declare that in the event of an attack on Albania we would defend it. The Albanian leaders have forgotten this and pay us with base ingratitude.

We have published the draft Party Program. It presents our position, our platform on all the most important questions. Whoever disagrees will express his views. Even in one Party different points of view are possible, and different opinions are even more so tolerable in different Parties. But there should be monolithic unity in questions of fighting capitalism and for Communism. But this unity can be on a principled Marxist-Leninist basis.

Not long ago M. Shehu and E. Hoxha send us a vile letter to which we are preparing a response. We are extremely surprised at the insolence of the Albanian leaders. They insult us and say at the same time that we are obligated to help them. Of course, this method is not new. It is the tactic of political robbers. But a robber should always be stronger than the one he robs, otherwise he won't get anything. In this case the balance of power is exactly like a cat being unable to eat a tiger.

With the current behavior of the Albanian leaders we will not help Albania. We will reconsider our trade agreements with Albania in the near future. We will trade with them on the same principles as with the capitalist countries. Such relations have already been developed with Yugoslavia. We have signed trade agreements with Yugoslavia, and we trade in accordance with them. We sell them weapons and other goods. They have asked us to grant them privileges, but we have refused. We have declared to them: if you don't like [this], don't buy. Yugoslavia pays us with good merchandise. This is to our advantage.

Albania supplies the capitalist countries with good merchandise, but has sent us

everything that had no demand on the world market. We offered them credits, and then [we] were forced to write them off. We have acted like brothers, but the Albanian leaders act like swine. If friendship with us is not dear to them we will do without them.

The Albanian leaders have dealt harshly with APL Politburo member Cde. Liri Belishova. It is asked, for what? Only that she told them about the substance of a conversation with Liu Shaoqi and other CPC Politburo members which an Albanian delegation had during an official visit to China.

Then we still did not know the true face of the Albanian leaders and informed them of what Cde. Belishova told us. M. Shehu, who was in Moscow at that time, immediately flew to Tirana after our report and dealt with Cde. Belishova. Then we understood that the Albanian leaders consider us enemies.

That's how we assess the behavior of the Albanian leaders. It is possible that we will preserve relations with Albania through government channels. There are no longer normal relations between the CPSU and the APL.

The following fact is instructive. The CPSU CC informed all the fraternal Parties of the socialist countries about the substance of my conversation with a representative of US President Kennedy. We charged our ambassador in Albania with also informing E. Hoxha. But E. Hoxha did not want to receive the Soviet ambassador, but delegated one of the APL CC department chiefs with doing this. The Albanian leaders thereby demonstrated their reluctance to maintain contacts with the CPSU leaders. In such circumstances the Soviet government gave its ambassador in Tirana instructions not to enter into contacts with Albanian officials.

HO CHI MINH said that he was happy for the opportunity afforded him to meet with Cde. N. S. Khrushchev. Almost a year has passed since he was in the USSR. However, during this time the Soviet Union has launched the Vostok-1 and Vostok-2 spacecraft with men on board. The CPSU has published a draft Program. It is also very good that the Soviet Union is gathering a good harvest this year. We are also happy that all CPSU CC Presidium members are healthy and feel well.

The main thing that has forced me to come to the Soviet Union, said Cde. Ho Chi Minh, is the Albanian question. I took this trip at my own initiative.

I do not want to defend the Albanian comrades. This is simply impossible. We all recognize that there is great strength in the unity of the countries of the socialist camp. Until recently Albania was a member of this great socialist family. If Albania were publicly expelled from this commonwealth, then this would fall on us like a black spot. Albania is a small country, the smallest in the family of socialist peoples. It is recognized that the USSR is the head of the socialist family. And if we are guided by familial feelings then the elder brother should help the younger brother, defend him, and pardon his mistakes. If Albania were expelled from the commonwealth of socialist countries then the imperialists could easily swallow it. The Albanian people would suffer from this. Can we permit an entire people to suffer because of the mistakes of individuals?

Our country - Vietnam and the VWP Party - is small. We have much in common with Albania from the point of view of geographic position. Next to us are enemies who are prepared to swallow us. And if we gave the impression for a minute that the Soviet Union were not with us then what would become of our Motherland?

Undoubtedly the Albanian leaders have made mistakes, but the Albanian people did not make them. Don't you think that one can criticize the Albanian leaders and help the Albanian people at the same time?

The situation of the socialist camp is like a wonderful picture: the growing unity of the Communist and worker's Parties achieved at the November 1960 Moscow Conference, the unprecedented successes of the USSR, the successes of all the countries of the socialist camp, and the successes of the international proletariat. The only black spot on this background is the Albanian question.

I don't want to act in the role of the attorney of the Albanian leaders, but I would like to speak on the side of this majestic picture and the Albanian people.

The elder brother can find the strength in himself to forgive the younger brother for his stupidities. We recognize that this is very difficult. In a great ocean there might be

unpleasant things. That is why I appeal to you with a call to exhibit indulgence. I want only one thing, so that there be no dark spots in the overall picture of the wonderful successes and that the Albanian people not suffer because of bad leaders. It is possible I am acting as an attorney for a very bad cause, but I believe in the greatness of the elder brother. It is very important that we withstand the intrigues of imperialism with the monolithic unity of the socialist family. This is especially important now, when Albania has become like a cat which threatens a tiger. And when the tiger forgives the cat, then he is still greater from this. This is what forced me to make a trip of many thousands [of kilometers] to you.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV thanked Cde. Ho Chi Minh for the efforts which he has made to settle the Albanian question and the correct understanding of the situation which has developed. But, said Cde. Khrushchev, it is possible to pose the same question as I posed to Cde. Liu Xiao: did Albania ask you to make such a demarche? If it did not, then what should be done? Let's assume that we change our attitude toward the Albanian leaders, but afterwards they say that they do not want to be friendly with the Soviet Union. In what position would we end up then?

Your position is very much like the Christian dogma of not resisting evil with violence, when they hit you on one cheek, turn the other.

We have displayed great patience and have continued to help the Albanians even after they spoke against us. But they spit on being well-treated, and cynically demand that we continue to aid them without looking at their rudeness. This is simply impermissible, elementary indecency, for even ordinary people say that you don't shit where you eat. The current Albanian leaders obviously don't understand this. If they display proper attention to their mistakes and return to us the seized weapons and submarines, then we would be able to normalize relations with them. In the end the matter is not in the value of the weapons and submarines. In the final account this is not the main thing. Their boorish behavior insults us. They disregarded our friendship. Their actions are equivalent to those of pirates. We will not suffer from them having seized our property. But we will not give them a hand until they do what is required by elementary norms of the human community. At one time we told the Albanians that in the interests of the Warsaw Pact it was necessary to preserve the base in Vlore for a certain time. It was very useful to all the socialist countries. But the Albanian leaders have done everything to liquidate the base. Why?

Previously we had a military base at Port Arthur. After the war in Korea we decided to leave it, although Cde. Mao Zedong tried to persuade us to stay for, in his opinion, it could deter the Americans. We managed to convince the Chinese comrades that the Soviet Union will always help China in the event of aggression against it and the base is not needed for this. Now, as is well-known, we have no base in Port Arthur.

We also had a base in Finland. We have had no arguments with the Finns about the question of the base. At our own initiative we liquidated the base on the island of Porkkala-udd ourselves.

Why have the Albanians sought the liquidation of a base which was in the interests of all the socialist countries? Their actions on this question are very similar to the actions of the Chinese comrades. At one time we developed a need to build a radio station in China with joint efforts to control the operations of the Pacific Ocean Fleet, especially the submarines. Cde. Mao Zedong said that this was excluded because such construction would supposedly infringe on the sovereignty of their country. In our opinion such a position is not internationalist. If China wanted to build some military structure in Murmansk or some other place on Soviet territory in the interests of fighting imperialism we would meet them halfway without hesitation.

If the Albanians actually want to normalize relations with us they should meet our conditions which proceed from the interests of the entire socialist camp. Let them create a normal situation for the operation of our naval base at Vlore. We could then send our submarine fleet there again. This would be a big step in strengthening our friendship and the base would serve the interests of the entire socialist camp. We are not opposed to the normalization of our relations with Albania. Try and convince them. But I think that they will not agree to this.

You said that the Albanian people are suffering because of the mistakes of M. Shehu and E. Hoxha. We agree with this. But we cannot help the people through the head of

their government which spits on friendship with us. For this might be incorrectly understood by our Soviet people. We deeply and sincerely sympathize with the Albanian people, but right now we cannot help them. The government, which is not concerned about the interests of its people, cannot exist for long.

After the death of I. V. Stalin the immortal name of V. I. Lenin shone again in all its majesty. In the work of Stalin we see two aspects. On the one hand, we recognize and respect him; on the other, we condemn [him]. But can one really compare M. Shehu with I. V. Stalin? For it is all the same as equating a cucumber with a watchtower.

I ought to add to what I have said that if the Chinese comrades wanted, they could influence the Albanians. The Albanian leaders most likely are not taking your opinion into account.

We are Communists. We have always favored and [still] favor unity and will not put personal grudges first. If the Albanian leaders really want to improve relations with us then let them say this themselves. Let them show in deed their desire to improve relations with the CPSU and the other fraternal Parties. If this doesn't happen we won't be able to achieve close relations.

The return of our property and a settlement of the question of the base at Vlore should be the first condition for an improvement of relations. We can even not return to the base. But we demand the return of all our property. This is a matter of principle and we will not reward piracy.

I will inform you of one more fact which clearly characterizes the Albanian leaders. Our ships entered their waters with Albania's permission to get Soviet people who worked at the Vlore base. Warships of Albania came to meet [them] and ordered our ships to halt. They conspicuously uncovered the guns on their ships and aimed them at our ships to make it clear. The truth is, now the Albanians deny this fact, but we photographed everything. That is how the younger brother acts with the elder.

HO CHI MINH I am far from expounding the Christian principle according to which "when they hit you on one cheek, turn the other", but in a family there is the youngest brother who is sometimes naughty, just because he is small.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV noted that in this case peasants are accustomed to teach such a son, to thoroughly "thrash" him until he understands the naughtiness of his action. It is another matter here, of course. There cannot be such a thing in relations between countries. Both large and small socialist countries are responsible for the state of affairs in the socialist camp. The Albanian leaders are trying to undermine the foundation of fraternal relations - the principles of proletarian internationalism, which is sacred to all of us, but they will not succeed in this.

HO CHI MINH If the Albanian comrades had listened to me, they would not have committed such acts. I think that I, as an old Communist, should act in the role of a conciliator. Although I am almost confident that the Albanian leaders will not understand me.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV I agree with you. A meeting was held with representatives of Albania at our initiative during the period of the work of the November Conference of Representatives of the Communist and Worker's Parties in Moscow. However, they did not want to listen to us, got up, and demonstratively left the premises. Then I very much wanted to say a strong miner's word after them, but had to restrain myself. The position of an elder brother confers obligations.

During the period of this Conference we hospitably give the Albanian leaders residential premises, but they did not want to enjoy our hospitality and essentially fled to their embassy so as not to live under our roof and not eat our food. They probably thought that we wanted to poison them. With this act they made a deadly insult at us. After this what can be said about them? By the way, the personality of M. Shehu himself is extremely ambiguous. He was an officer of Zog's. Balluku was also an officer under Italian occupation. Their current affairs are incompatible with the title of Communist. It is possible that they are not those people they claim to be. Go to them and listen to their opinion. They will probably say what they want.

Then N. S. Khrushchev said that the CPSU and CPC have different opinions on several important questions, including on the question of communes and "The Great Leap

[Forward]". We know that in China they call us opportunists for vigorously defending the principle of material incentive. Now everyone sees that the policy of the Chinese leaders had led to serious difficulties in the country. If the peasants are not interested in the results of their labor, there will always be "droughts and floods".

We had the same thing in 1930. The reason was that I. V. Stalin incorrectly supervised agriculture. The results were very deplorable.

The Chinese leaders have repeated the mistake of I. V. Stalin. We have not supported them on the question of the construction of people's communes. Evidently now Cde. Mao Zedong himself realizes the mistakenness of the policy of creating communes. The Chinese comrades wanted to jump over an entire stage in the development of socialist production relations, but they could not do this, for this cannot be done. Our peasants say: you can't jump over your head. It was pleasant for me to read the telegram of our ambassador in Korea, who reported about a trip of Cde. Kim Il Sung to China. In a conversation with Cde. Kim Il Sung, as follows from the report of the ambassador, Cde. Mao Zedong said: you have a good situation in Korea, you have not had mistakes, but we have committed them.

Last year in our country the material incentive was eliminated in several collective farms. We found out about this, intervened, and corrected the situation. We demand that the principle of material incentive be strictly observed on collective farms.

The conversation was interrupted at this [point] by the arrival of Cdes. M. Thorez and J. Vermeersch.

After lunch Cde. N. S. Khrushchev familiarized Cdes. Ho Chi Minh, Maurice Thorez, and Jeanette Vermeersch with a telegram of the Soviet ambassador in Rome in which he reports about a conversation with Fanfani.

Fanfani's request concerning his trip to Moscow, said Cde. Khrushchev, was a big surprise for us. We also did not think of inviting him. However, when Fanfani let it be known that he would like to come to Moscow before the Conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Western powers in Paris, we decided that he was not going at his own initiative, but as a representative of the Western powers and US President Kennedy personally. Fanfani admitted this fact himself in his statement at a meeting of the commission of foreign affairs before the trip to Moscow.

In Moscow we held very frank and useful conversations with Fanfani. We told him that we will sign a German peace treaty and settle the West Berlin question on this basis. The Western powers are threatening us with war because of Berlin, but the Western powers themselves will suffer first from a war. Therefore it is in their interests to agree to a peaceful settlement. Fanfani agreed with us. The telegram which they just read to you demonstrates the desire of the Western powers to settle the German question peacefully.

The current Albanian leaders have criticized us for threatening to conclude a German peace treaty and deciding the West Berlin question for three years now and in fact we were doing nothing. But people who understand nothing in politics can say so. Essentially the criticism by the Albanians is provocative, for it was necessary to force the Western powers to agree to consider the question of a German peace treaty and to create the necessary preconditions for its conclusion. This took about three years. Now such conditions are present and nothing will stop us from concluding the peace treaty with Germany.

The conclusion of the peace treaty with Germany will be a great victory for the entire socialist camp. One should say that the leaders of the Western powers, as their secret documents which have fallen into [our] hands demonstrate, are aware of those consequences which a settlement of the German question will have for them. Essentially it is a matter of the liquidation of the entire system of aggressive blocs created in Western Europe by the imperialists. In fact the uselessness of NATO will be proven.

A settlement of the German question will create an entirely new situation in Western Europe. History knows such examples. In the pre-war period hardly anyone assumed that a non-aggression pact would be concluded between the USSR and Germany. However, such a pact was signed. Such turnabouts are also possible in the future. Right now one could hardly suppose that West Germany would be so bold as to fall on the socialist countries. It does not have the strength for this. At the same time it is

sufficiently strong to try and improve its position at the expense of its Western neighbors. West Germany is now the chief revenge-seeker in Europe. The Western powers ought to think about this.

It is evident from the telegram that our steps with respect to the Vatican are producing positive results. We need to use all forces in the struggle for peace, even as far as the Vatican.

Cdes. Ho Chi Minh, M. Thorez, and J. Vermeersch thanked Cde. N. S. Khrushchev for the conversation.

HO CHI MINH addressed a request to Cde. Khrushchev to meet again for a half hour to conclude the discussion of some questions.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV agreed with him. It was decided to agree on the time of the conversation separately.

CONVERSATION BETWEEN CDE. N. S. KHRUSHCHEV AND CDE. HO CHI MINH

(Pitsunda, 19 August 1961)

HO CHI MINH warmly thanked N. S. Khrushchev for the conversation held on 17 August 1961. This conversation, said Cde. Ho Chi Minh, helped me understand a number of questions connected with the current international situation. In Hanoi we had the opinion that right now the danger of war is about 45%. But your statement about the danger of war being only three to five percent is quite soothing.

US Vice President Johnson was in South Vietnam not long ago. After his visit sabotage increased in North Vietnam, and spies and saboteurs began to be infiltrated to there more often. Not long ago we forced one enemy American-made aircraft to land on our territory, and arrested some parachutists and spies.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV Kennedy calls the spies infiltrated into the countries of the socialist camp "guerrillas [*partizany*]". The Americans think that we Communists have been and are waging a fight in South Vietnam, in Laos, and in Korea by the very same methods. They want to respond in kind, not understanding however that guerrillas can live and operate only with the comprehensive support of the people. It is possible that the infiltrated spies will be able to find some sympathy and support in such countries as Hungary, Poland, and China. But in our country this is excluded.

HO CHI MINH At the present time the revolutionary movement of the peasantry in South Vietnam is strengthening. The peasants sympathize with our Party. Back in the years of the War of Resistance our Party transferred land to the peasants in these regions. With the support of the Americans Diem's government took this land away from the peasants, which caused strong discontent. Diem's government does not in fact exist in some provinces of South Vietnam.

The situation in South Vietnam is fundamentally different from the situation which has developed in South Korea. In South Vietnam we have strong underground Party organizations which enjoy the support of the peasants. At the beginning of this year a National Front was created in South Vietnam which has a strong influence on the masses. In spite of the white terror pursued by Ngo Dinh Diem supporters the revolutionary movement grows from day to day. Diem's supporters have managed to physically exterminate many Communists and revolutionary-minded peasants. The white terror pursued by Diem has taken on the same savage forms as during the period of Nazism: Diem's people cut off heads, gouge out eyes, and rip open the stomachs of their victims. Almost every day Diem's government sends punitive expeditions to the provinces of South Vietnam. All this sharpens the revolutionary movement of the peasants still further. We are sending new comrades to South Vietnam besides the Communists who remained in South Vietnam after the regrouping of forces in 1954.

Now, said Cde. Ho Chi Minh, I would like to again return to the Albanian question. On return to Moscow can I pass the following to the Albanian leaders through the charge

d'affaires of Albania:

"On 17 August N. S. Khrushchev confidentially said that the Soviet Union advances the following three conditions for the normalization of relations with Albania:

1. The Soviet Union demands the return of the four submarines at the naval base illegally seized by the Albanians.
2. The Soviet Union is not striving to create its own naval base on Albanian territory, although the presence of such a base would help promote an increase of the combat capability of the entire socialist camp.
3. The Soviet Union is ready to receive an authoritative Albanian delegation having appropriate authority to settle other questions of Soviet-Albanian relations?"

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV said that he basically agrees with these points. However, he stressed, if the Albanians send third-rate people then neither I nor any other member of the CPSU CC Presidium will hold discussions with them. In a discussion with the charge d'affaires of Albania [you] can say that a meeting is possible only at the highest level.

HO CHI MINH This ought to be understood as a demand that Mehmet Shehu or Enver Hoxha head the delegation.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV Just that Either M. Shehu or E. Hoxha, or both together, especially as E. Hoxha can decide nothing without M. Shehu. If the current Albanian leaders actually want to normalize relations with us, then they will send these people. If they want to play a double game, then we will not talk with them.

Among the current Albanian leaders E. Hoxha is smarter than all of them, but M. Shehu is a more forceful person. If M. Shehu does not want it, then Hoxha will not go to the Soviet Union. M. Shehu rules and determines policy in Albania right now. If you want to find out the true face of the current Albanian leaders then ask Cde. Andropov for a letter of one Albanian living in Yugoslavia at the present time. In this letter he explains the reasons for his flight from Albania. The Albanian leaders poisoned his brother; he found out that a small group in the APL CC headed by Shehu and with the participation of E. Hoxha had made a decision to also poison him. Therefore he fled to Yugoslavia and at the present time is asking to come to us. Obviously [we] will have to permit him to come to the Soviet Union.

The Albanian leaders say that the Soviet Union is interfering in the internal affairs of Albania. When they do so they make reference to our letter in which we present our opinion about their decision to shoot a former Politburo member, a pregnant woman, Liri Gega. We considered and [still] consider this decision to be barbarism, for even the Tsarist satraps did not execute pregnant women. The Albanian leaders, having received our letter, paid no attention to it and shot Liri Gega only because she did not agree with their opinion on a number of regulations.

The question might arise, why the Albanian leaders suddenly decided to oppose us? I want to tell you that all the actions of the Albanian leaders are blessed in China. Recently the Chinese leaders have taken a lot of trouble to discredit the USSR. They have begun to look for flaws in our policy and have begun to stick the label of revisionists on us. They outwardly directed their blow against Yugoslavia, but the Albanian leaders, like stupid people, were hooked by this policy of the Chinese.

We told the Chinese comrades that [they] ought not pay Yugoslavia too much attention. This would be too great an honor for them. The CPSU criticizes Yugoslavia, but does this in moderation, for Yugoslavia is not our main enemy. Our main enemy is imperialism. Perhaps Yugoslavia shakes our foundations? Of course not. It is not necessary to force up the price for the Yugoslav revisionists. This infuriates the leaders of the SKYu [League of Communists of Yugoslavia]. When we started to pay less attention to Yugoslavia the American began to aid it less.

The Chinese leaders now depict the matter such that all the misfortunes and dangers for the Communist movement come from Yugoslavia. This is wrong. The Communist movement also suffers greatly from the mistakes of the Chinese comrades. A certain negative role here is played by the megalomania which has overwhelmed Cde. Mao Zedong, who considers that his place in history has already been determined, so to speak. But in our time it is difficult to take the position of Marx [or] Engels, for the ideas of scientific socialism have already become the ideas of the broad masses.

When I. V. Stalin died some thought that the situation in our country would worsen. In reality the situation has become better. New people have come to the CPSU leadership who know the matter of socialist development well. Cdes. Kozlov, Suslov, and others unquestionably know the practice of socialist development better than Voroshilov and Molotov. Now, neither Mao Zedong nor anyone else can become an indisputable, absolute authority, the world leader of the Communist movement, for the fraternal Parties have left childhood and have become fully independent. Now democracy plays an important role both inside a Party as well as in relations between Parties.

The Albanian leaders exalt I. V. Stalin. But I can inform you in strict confidence that at one time Stalin himself suggested to Tito that Albania become part of Yugoslavia as one of its republics. The Albanian leaders did not know about this. Now the Albanians extol I. V. Stalin, but what will they say if we publish this document? Of course, we will not publish this document, for it demonstrates a mistake of I. V. Stalin. By the way, Stalin said the same thing to the Chinese leaders with respect to Korea. Right now some want to copy I. V. Stalin. But now is another time.

I think that you need to talk to Cde. Mao Zedong about the Albanian question for, in truth the question of our friendship with Albania is being decided not in Tirana, but in Peking.

HO CHI MINH During my time in Peking, if I am afforded the opportunity to meet with Cdes. Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, or Liu Shaoqi, can I tell them that Cde. Khrushchev advised Ho Chi Minh to turn to the Chinese comrades to settle the Albanian question?

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV Of course I agree, but I want to warn you that [you] ought not pass the Chinese comrades everything that was said to you confidentially, for this would promote not closer relations between the CPC and the CPSU, but increase the existing differences. But we are striving to eliminate our differences with the Chinese leaders, we want a good, strong friendship with the Chinese Communists. We should be able to see the main thing, the unity of the Communist forces in the fight against imperialism.

HO CHI MINH fully agreed with such a presentation of the question.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV said that the Albanian leaders have spoiled relations with almost all the socialist countries with the exception of China, which they regard with great trust. Therefore the voice of the Chinese comrades is decisive for them. I would like to stress, Cde Khrushchev said further, that we are not asking Cde. Ho Chi Minh to take any steps to the Chinese leaders with the goal of influencing the Albanian leadership. They know themselves what to do and how to do it.

HO CHI MINH said that he would like to provide information about the situation in Laos. There are three factions in Laos at the present time: the supporters of Souvanna Phouma, Boun Oum, and Souphanouvong. Souvanna Phouma knows that he cannot remain in power without the forces of the Pathet Lao. At the same time he fears the growing influence of the Pathet Lao. The USSR, China, and we support Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Lao. The DPRK and the MNR [Mongolian People's Republic] also help Laos. But the main aid comes from the USSR and China. Right now Souvanna Phouma is exhibiting dissatisfaction in connection with the fact that most of the aid being sent to Laos goes to the Pathet Lao forces. In turn, the leaders of the Pathet Lao are also discontented, for part of the aid which is being sent to Laos, goes to Souvanna Phouma.

We wanted to give aid to the Pathet Lao in creating an army of 10,000 men. But the leaders of the Pathet Lao do not agree with us; they want to have a 20,000-man army. In our opinion, the Laotian friends do not realize those difficulties with which they would encounter if a 20,000-man army were formed. When we tell them this, they agree with us, but when they go back to their homeland they act differently. We are of the opinion that a 10,000-man army is needed in Laos, a strong united front of anti-imperialist forces to be created, and work among the masses to be increased. For this purpose we are trying with all our strength to increase the authority of Souphanouvong. Souphanouvong is the banner of the Pathet Lao forces He has gone to Geneva, and was in Moscow and in Peking, and was received by N. S. Khrushchev; Souphanouvong is an established leader who enjoys fame in the country and abroad. We also help our Laotian friends with cadre. In our opinion, the Laotian friends still

underestimate work among the masses, which is done extremely badly. The leaders of the Pathet Lao devote more attention to the creation of the armed forces.

The main difficulty, said Cde. Ho Chi Minh, which we encounter in Laos at the present time is the question of the formation of a coalition government. Souvanna Phouma is striving to keep the main ministries in this government for himself. In addition, many difficulties arise as a consequence of the fact that the Laotian friends do not have sufficient experience and trained personnel. The leaders of the Pathet Lao even think that we are preventing them from establishing direct ties with the Soviet Union and China. In conclusion, Ho Chi Minh asked N. S. Khrushchev to express his opinion on the Laotian question.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV I do not know the domestic situation in Laos at all well. Right now the German question is more important than the Laotian one and occupies all our time. However, I would like to express some views about this.

We support the patriotic forces in Laos which we help with weapons and give other aid without hesitation.

The question can be asked, have conditions matured to rely entirely on the Pathet Lao? Is there confidence that the Pathet Lao can rally all the patriotic forces together and take power into their hands completely? We think there are not as yet such conditions. At the present time Souvanna Phouma is the central figure in Laos. It is understood that he is farther from us than Souphanouvong. There is no doubt of this. But it is necessary to understand that the Pathet Lao forces are viewed by the imperialists as Communist. If right now we arm the Pathet Lao, whose armed forces will become stronger than the forces of Souvanna Phouma, then we should thereby be ready for a war in Laos. No one in the world will agree to consider a Pathet Lao government as neutral.

In our opinion, a more flexible policy ought to be pursued in Laos, first giving aid to Souvanna Phouma. World public opinion, and also the US and British governments, and also the King view him as a neutral figure. Do you have confidence that Souvanna Phouma will pursue a neutralist policy? No, Souvanna Phouma is an unstable person. Right now he is already more afraid of us than the imperialists. In spite of this, it is necessary to place reliance on Souvanna Phouma for the time being. His government will be transitional, so to speak. Of course, Pathet Lao representatives should be in it. At the same time the Pathet Lao will increase work among the masses, winning them to their side.

If the Pathet Lao receive more weapons than Souvanna Phouma then the latter will leave us and join with Boun Oum against the Pathet Lao and us. This [would] not be to our advantage. As a result of our aid given to Souvanna Phouma he has strengthened his position in Laos. At the present time such a situation has developed in Laos that he trusts us only halfway. But even in such a situation all is not lost. The fact that you give more weapons to the Pathet Lao frightens Cambodia. We think that the Pathet Lao forces should get legal working conditions with the government of Souvanna Phouma among the masses throughout the entire territory of the country. It is necessary that Souphanouvong understand that he should act under the shield of his brother for the time being.

HO CHI MINH Up to the present time Souphanouvong has been exerting great influence on Souvanna Phouma.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV This ought not give Souvanna Phouma a reason for mistrust and distancing from us. This is a short-sighted policy. If we give Souphanouvong more weapons then Souvanna Phouma will ask America for weapons, but right now he is asking us for them. We help the King of Morocco. He joins us with a common desire to fight colonialism. We also support Nasser. Nasser is an enemy of Communism, he keeps Communists in jails, but he kicked the British out of Suez. And this is important. If we stop helping him this will play into the hands of the Americans.

We should use Souvanna Phouma in the interests of the victory of a socialist revolution in the future. He has still not exhausted his opportunities. We cannot allow him to cross over to the side of the US. It is to the advantage of the Americans to conciliate Souvanna Phouma and Boun Oum and isolate Souphanouvong. In depriving Souvanna Phouma of weapons, you are playing into the hands of America. It is necessary to correct the situation which has developed. We are sending weapons

to Vietnam for Laos, you distribute them, but you are distributing [them] incorrectly. The matter needs to be put right.

HO CHI MINH Right now the Pathet Lao have a larger number of troops than Souvanna Phouma. The correlations of troops between them is five to one.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV This is an arithmetic approach to the matter. It is completely unsuitable when it is a question of policy. In policy it is necessary to consider phenomena not from an arithmetic, but from a political point of view. What the Vietnamese comrades are doing now frightens Souvanna Phouma. As a result of such a policy we have already almost lost him.

HO CHI MINH Souvanna Phouma does not have his own armed forces.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV In such an event who does Kong Le represent? These are the forces of Souvanna Phouma. But the Vietnamese comrades do not also give weapons to Kong Le.

HO CHI MINH Kong Le is too young. It is true that he considers Souvanna Phouma irresolute. He turned to the Vietnamese comrades with a request to help him create his own political party.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV Kong Le gives a correct assessment of Souvanna Phouma. He is not a Communist, and it is to our advantage that he act in such a role. He ought to be supported just as he is. Fidel Castro also is not a Communist, but he will be one. However, this process need not be forced. Fidel Castro has expressed a desire to come to the Soviet Union. We told him that for the time being he ought not do this. Let him remain as not a Communist in the eyes of world public opinion. Kong Le ought to be used in the same way. At one time the Communists in China operated inside the Kuomintang. Then the situation changed, and they became the ruling party. The Pathet Lao ought to go the same route.

HO CHI MINH We advised the Laotian comrades to help Kong Le; however, they are very cautious to do this so as not to frighten Souvanna Phouma. Then Ho Chi Minh asked whether it was true that they want to invite Kong Le to the Soviet Union.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV replied that he knows nothing about this. Moreover, this is inadvisable. Kong Le ought not be stuck with the label of Communist.

HO CHI MINH agreed with this opinion. Cde. Ho Chi Minh said that the government of the DRV would like to award the Soviet cosmonauts Yu. A. Gagarin and G. S. Titov with the Order of Labor, 1st Degree. He asked N. S. Khrushchev's opinion on how to best organize the presentation of the orders: in Moscow or to invite them to Vietnam.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV thanked Ho Chi Minh and expressed an opinion about the advisability of inviting Yu. A. Gagarin and G. S. Titov to Hanoi. In this event their trip might have great political importance.

HO CHI MINH said that the Vietnamese people impatiently await N. S. Khrushchev's visit to the DRV. Is it possible that such a trip might occur at the same time as a visit to Cambodia and Indonesia?

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV For the time being it is hard to say anything definite with respect to the date of my visit to Cambodia and Burma. Right now we are occupied with preparations for a Congress and a solution of the German question. When we decide it there will be more time, then it will be possible to discuss the question about a trip to Vietnam. But this will not be soon. I should have visited the DPRK this year, but I could not go. This trip cannot be put off further. Most likely, this trip will take place in the future. At the same time I will stop off in the MNR en route to look on the spot what aid can be given it. We have helped them improve their agriculture. Right now the MNR is completely supplied with grain and even sells it abroad.

HO CHI MINH thanked N. S. Khrushchev and the Soviet people for the aid given the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, especially rice. Last year the rice harvest in the DRV was poor, as a result of which great difficulties were created in the supply of the population with food. This year the first rice harvest was good. We cannot say anything yet about the second since sometimes it can perish 10 days before it is collected. In conclusion Ho Chi Minh asked N. S. Khrushchev whether he can give more advice.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV replied he does not know much about Vietnam. He would like to say only: don't create communes and don't get carried away with gigantomania in

cooperative development.

HO CHI MINH said that in the DRV is 85% of the peasant families are in cooperatives right now. On average each cooperative has from 50 to 200 families.

Ho Chi Minh again warmly express gratitude for the conversation and wished Cde. N. S. Khrushchev good health.

The conversation was recorded by M. Podol'sky and Yu. Pankov

five copies [were made]