

March 20, 1959

**Record of Conversation between Cde. N.S.
Khrushchev and Mohammed El-Nil, Ambassador of
the Republic of Sudan in the USSR**

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Summary:

Khrushchev discusses the Soviet Union's relationships with both Iraq and the UAR (Egypt), expressing criticism of Nasser's policies and approach to Arab unity. He voices concerns over Nasser's political stance and the impact of his speeches, highlighting areas where Soviet and Egyptian interests diverge. Additionally, Khrushchev thanks the Sudanese Ambassador for his service as he steps down from his position.

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RECORD OF A CONVERSATION

between Cde. N. S. KHRUSHCHEV AND MOHAMMED EL-NIL, AMBASSADOR OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SUDAN IN THE USSR*

* [handwritten at the bottom of the first page: the record of the conversation was not reviewed by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev]

20 March 1959

After mutual greetings El-Nil thanked N. S. Khrushchev for finding time with all his workload to receive him.

Further he said that he had come to apologize since he had received a new appointment. He expressed his appreciation to the Soviet government and the entire Soviet people for the excellent, friendly attitude toward him and all the Embassy employees, and also for the support and aid given to Sudan by the Soviet Union. At this time he especially noted the positive role of the Soviet economic delegation sent to Sudan. All the Sudanese people, he noted, highly value this support and aid.

Then El-Nil wished the Soviet people success in the accomplishment of the seven-year plan for the development of the economy of the country which, he said, has not just purely domestic significance for the USSR, but also promotes the happiness of all peoples and the strengthening of peace in the entire world.

The Ambassador expressed his best wishes for personal happiness, success, and health to N. S. Khrushchev and his family.

N. S. Khrushchev thanked the Ambassador for the warm words and for the correct assessment of the peace-loving policy of the USSR and its desire to live in peace with all peoples. N. S. Khrushchev noted, the Soviet people are always ready to give aid to countries which have lagged in their economic development as a result of certain historical conditions. In the future we will have even more opportunities to give such aid. When we do this we invariably hold to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries; we are faithful to this principle and we will always hold to it.

Then N. S. Khrushchev dwelt on the question of relations between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Iraq and the OAR. He said, I want you to correctly understand how our relations with these countries are developing, for right now this is a very critical question.

N. S. Khrushchev continued, the accusations of President Nasser that we are interfering in the internal affairs of the Arab countries and supporting Arab Communists are, of course, a distortion of the policy of the USSR. In reality things are completely different and the President well knows this. The problem is that Nasser exaggerates his personal capabilities and his role in the history of the fight of the colonial peoples. Right now he imposes himself as the leader not [*navyazyvaet sebya v vozhd'i*] only of his own people, but of all the Arabian East. But for this is a very complex question, and it needs to be approached carefully, and not how Nasser is doing this. We are absolutely not opposed to Nasser becoming the real leader of the Arab world, but to do this it is necessary to win the trust of the Arab peoples so that they themselves desire this. He is exhibiting excessive haste and imposing himself on peoples who are either completely unprepared for this or who do not at all want to recognize him as the leader.

Following this policy of his, Nasser has forced an insurrection in Mosul, hoping to absorb Iraq as a result of this insurrection. Having suffered failure, he tried to cast all the blame on the Iraqi Communists, saying that it was they who offered resistance to it. But, in essence, he exaggerates the role of the Communists in Iraq. The people are the power which defended the independence of the young republic, and Nasser well understands this, but continues his efforts to frighten the peoples of the Arab countries with the imaginary danger of Communism, thinking to thereby strengthen his influence in these countries. But this is a quite shaky policy which, as the experience of history has shown, has not justified itself. At one time Mussolini, after whom followed Hitler and other more minor people, their supporters, was the initiator

of an anti-Communist policy. They established a fascist regime in their countries but, as is well-known, they were beaten.

If Nasser tries to pursue the same policy then we will oppose him and support everyone who fights against this reactionary political trend.

Nasser scared away the Arabs from himself when joining Syria and Egypt together, he showed in fact what this union can mean for the Arab peoples. Before the union the Syrian Republic was a democratic republic, and the standard of living in it was higher than Egypt's. Syria had its own intelligentsia, its own bourgeois-democratic traditions, its own parties, and its own government. After unification Nasser liquidated all this and right now the standard of living in the Syrian region of the UAR is lower than it was in the past. The political independence of the country has been eliminated and the parties disbanded. Syrian political leaders have left the stage, but some of them have even been forced to emigrate. What is happening right now in the UAR can be characterized as the beginning of the fascination of the country, and it is naïve, of course, to think that the peoples of the Arab countries will welcome such a course of events.

N. S. Khrushchev noted that during Nasser's stay in the USSR last year he openly told Nasser that the latter was hasty in the question of the union of Syria with Egypt and that with this he had only set the Syrians against himself. He, Khrushchev, then said that a confederation of Arab countries where, for example, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and maybe Sudan and other Arab countries might be included, would meet the interests of the cause of the Arab peoples more. Such a union would meet the national interests of the Arabs, strengthen their positions in the fight against colonialism, and in the process preserve the independence of each of the countries in the confederation. However, Nasser did not understand this, and went ahead and thought that everyone would loudly welcome it and shout "hurrah" to him. But it doesn't happen that way in life.

When the revolution occurred in Iraq, Nasser thought that the new republic would immediately join the UAR. What occurred in Iraq was not a Communist but a bourgeois revolution, which was based on more democratic foundations than in the UAR and the Soviet Union welcomed this revolution. Therefore the USSR could not sympathize with Nasser's ambitions to absorb Iraq, for this would be a reactionary step and not a progressive one. Of course, the question of the unification of this country or that is not our business, but we sympathize with the struggle of the Iraqi people to preserve their independence.

Then N. S. Khrushchev said that in the event of the creation of a federation of Arab countries, it might also include those Arab countries which are headed by kings. However, such countries cannot join the UAR, of course, for the kings would have to renounce their thrones. Thus, the policy Nasser is pursuing is clearly not well-thought-out and does not promote a consolidation of the forces of the Arab peoples, but on the contrary divides their efforts.

Regarding Nasser's accusations that the Soviet Union is supposedly spreading Communism in the Arab countries, N. S. Khrushchev said that such absurd assertions are easily refuted by the example of the relations between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. For 40 years we have lived next to one another as neighbors, he said, and nevertheless there are no Communists in Afghanistan. We have established good relations with the King of Afghanistan and support him.

As concerns Communist revolutions, this is a question of the historical stages of development of each country, and we fully realize this and do not desire to spread Communism in other countries. For that matter, to a much greater degree than ourselves Nasser has facilitated the development of Communism in his own country himself for, as is known from physics, any action gives rise to a counteraction. The greater the efforts undertaken in the fight against the progressive forces inside a particular country, the greater these forces organize and the more powerful they become. N. S. Khrushchev stressed, Communism is not Moscow, it is an international political and social teaching. No one has artificially implanted Communism in a single country, however this teaching lives among all peoples – Arabs, Negroes, Russians, Chinese, and others. Of course, in Egypt, like everywhere, there is a Communist Party, but we never interfere in its internal affairs, for one cannot advise a Communist Party to make a revolution. Revolutions are not made to order, and it is stupid to

think that this is possible. Political leaders should understand this, but Nasser evidently is poorly versed in politics, considering that it is sufficient for him to make a routine speech and everyone will follow him unquestionably.

Then N. S. Khrushchev presented the Ambassador with the substance of the discussion which he had had with Nasser the previous year. In the course of this discussion Nasser noted that he considers himself a nationalist and opposes parties. N. S. Khrushchev objected to this, that the parties in Egypt are also national and Arab. Nasser replied that there in the Soviet Union there is only one Party and that in [his] country at home he wants there to also be only one party, his party. N. S. Khrushchev replied to Nasser there was a big and fundamental difference between the USSR and the UAR. He said, we have no capitalists, landowners, or other exploiting elements, but have workers, peasants, and working intelligentsia. Thus, there is no internal class struggle in the USSR since there is no group of the population which would exploit another group of the population, and accordingly no basis for the existence of several parties. N. S. Khrushchev continued, you have in the country capitalists, feudal landowners, merchants, workers, peasants, artisans, and other social strata. They all have their own representatives, their own parties. If you want to deprive them of these parties then the parties will simply go underground, but will continue to exist, for they reflect the interests of the various social strata of the population. To this Nasser replied that he alone will defend the interests of everyone. N. S. Khrushchev objected to this that if one takes an Arab capitalist and an Arab worker, then there is no way their interests can be combined inasmuch as the worker wants to work less and get more for his labor, but the capitalist wants the opposite. In this is the fundamental difference in class interests. So, you are for which Arab, N. S. Khrushchev asked Nasser. Nasser simply could not give an answer to this question. Now Nasser is trying to cast all the blame for the activity of the Communists in his country on Khrushchev, and does not see that it is the internal structure of his country itself that harbors the sources of social differences. He displays a clear ignorance in this case.

In the conversations with N. S. Khrushchev Nasser spoke dismissively of the Communists, called them unserious people. N. S. Khrushchev replied to this that at one time when Russia, too, had very few Communists, the Tsar also considered them stupid people, but miscalculated. At the present time there are also few Communists in Egypt, but they, like other Communist Parties, decide themselves in what direction they are to develop. As a Communist, N. S. Khrushchev noted, I of course sympathize with the Communists in the Arab countries, in Asia, Africa, in America, and in Britain, but I do not interfere in their internal affairs.

As concerns relations between countries honesty should predominate above all. In this connection N. S. Khrushchev again referred to the example of relations between the USSR and Afghanistan, and said that the Soviet Union sincerely supports the King, prime minister, and the other ministers of this country. He noted, they come to us as guests and we are always glad to receive them, for we know that they trust us.

We are always guided by the same feelings in our relations with the UAR. We have sincerely helped Nasser and will help him, but he should correctly understand our policy. If he acts as he is doing right now, as an initiator of a fight against Communism on a worldwide scale, then we will naturally defend ourselves, and indeed we ourselves are switching to an offensive in our propaganda. The questions of the internal structure of his country are his personal matter, but when he begins to speak against Communism we cannot stand aside and we defend our teaching, our system. The Soviet Union is not afraid of the enemies of Communism. How many of them, the anti-Communists, have been buried, but the Soviet Union continues to grow all the same.

And Nasser's fate can turn out so badly if he does not change his mind in time, for the peoples will not tolerate their national interests suffering harm.

N. S. Khrushchev noted further that he had presented this question so extensively so that the Ambassador could correctly understand him and correctly inform his government. When he did so N. S. Khrushchev noted that everything he had said did not mean interference in the internal affairs of Sudan or any other country. The domestic development of your country is your own business, the business of your political parties and your government.

El-Nil thanked N. S. Khrushchev and said that he had received quite valuable information which he would send his government without fail, for this question concerns us, too, he noted, for we live next to the UAR. The Ambassador noted that Sudan favors a peaceful settlement both in the Near East region as well as in the whole world. He expressed the hope that the conflict which has arisen will be settled for, he said, humanity is constantly developing and this progress is going in a clockwise manner [SIC - *po chasovoy strelke*].

Further, El-Nil said that Sudan highly values the good relations with the Soviet Union and is confident that the Soviet government is giving Sudan air unselfishly, without any conditions; he continued, we did not know much since we were isolated from the world around us. Now we have opened the door, and with the aid of good friends such as the Soviet Union, we have opened this door still wider. Although Sudan is only eight years old as an independent country, but, confirmed the Ambassador, we are striving to cooperate with all the peace-loving countries and contribute our share to the common good of all humanity.

Then El-Nil expressed regret about his departure from the Soviet Union, noting in the process that during his time here he had come to love this country and its people. I will always be a sincere and loyal friend of the Soviet Union, he said. El-Nil noted that he had been in many countries, but only in the Soviet Union had he seen that the people treated him with genuine warmth, friendliness, and love.

In conclusion El-Nil again wished success and happiness to the Soviet people and its leaders, and also expressed best wishes for health and happiness to N. S. Khrushchev and his family.

N. S. Khrushchev thanked El-Nil for the good wishes, and also for that aid which he as Ambassador had given in the matter of close relations between Sudan and the Soviet Union. For his part N. S. Khrushchev expressed best wishes to El-Nil and his family personally, and also to the people and government of Sudan.

If you ever come to us, N. S. Khrushchev said in conclusion, we will always be glad to receive you.

El-Nil thanked N. S. Khrushchev and said that he will surely come to the USSR in the future.

Present at the conversation was V. Ya. Yerofeyev, Chief of the USSR MFA Near East Department.

Recorded by [signature] (V. Sukhodrev)