

October 2, 1960

**Transcript of the Conversation between N.S.
Khrushchev and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of
Turkey, S. Sarper**

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Summary:

On October 2, 1960, Nikita Khrushchev met with Turkish Foreign Minister Selim Sarper in New York to discuss bilateral relations, disarmament, and the global political climate. Sarper conveyed greetings from General Gürsel and emphasized Turkey's desire for good-neighborly relations based on realism and stability. Khrushchev criticized the presence of foreign military bases in Turkey, arguing they pose risks to Turkey without enhancing security, and suggested a neutral, cooperative stance for Turkey in the Black Sea region. Both leaders discussed challenges in improving Soviet-American relations and the broader Cold War context, including the recent U-2 incident. Sarper acknowledged Turkey's economic difficulties and expressed optimism about gradual improvements in Soviet-Turkish relations. The conversation concluded with mutual agreement on the importance of diplomatic patience and fostering personal connections between leaders to achieve peace and stability. This document summary was generated by an artificial intelligence language model and was reviewed by a Wilson Center staff member.

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Disseminated to members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU and
candidates of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU

TO MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDUM
OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

I am forwarding the transcript of my conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Sarper.

Sarper requested that we send this transcript to him in Ankara in a sealed envelope via diplomatic channels.

If there are no objections from the members of the Presidium, I request that this be done accordingly.

It would also be advisable to send the transcript of the conversation to our ambassador in Ankara to assist him in his work. He could also discuss it with Gürsel at a convenient time to ensure that the details of the conversation are conveyed to him.

N. Khrushchev

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE CONVERSATION
BETWEEN N.S. KHRUSHCHEV AND THE MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF TURKEY, S. SARPER

2 October 1960, New York

A.A. Gromyko was present at the meeting.

S. Sarper thanked N.S. Khrushchev for the opportunity to make this visit and conveyed greetings from General Gürsel.

N.S. Khrushchev expressed pleasure in receiving greetings from the head of the Turkish state and expressed hope that it would demonstrate that relations between the two countries would be strengthened not only in words but also in deeds.

S. Sarper mentioned that it appears N.S. Khrushchev and A.A. Gromyko were aware of the discussions that took place between General Gürsel and Ambassador Ryzhov, as well as those between Ryzhov and Sarper himself. The conversations were amicable, and similarly Turkey aims to foster friendly relationships based on a realistic and stable foundation.

N.S. Khrushchev, noting that he is neither a professional diplomat nor a philologist, says that he finds it difficult to understand the meaning of "realistic and stable" as used by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs.

S. Sarper explains that by "realistic," they mean friendly, good-neighborly relations, which, as correctly noted by the Prime Minister of the USSR, should exist not just in words but in deeds. The "stability" of the foundation refers to the sense of security that should exist in both bilateral and multilateral relations, and disarmament can play a significant role in this, as discussed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers

of the USSR and mentioned in his, S. Sarper's, speech at the General Assembly.

S. Sarper remarks that although he is a professional diplomat, he does not belong to the generation of the past, the traditional one; he is somewhat bold for a diplomat.

N.S. Khrushchev notes that the relations between the USSR and Turkey have become somewhat softer and better recently compared to the past. It is known that the government of Turkey, led by General Gürsel, is indeed making efforts to completely liberate Turkey from foreign influence. This is good. For the Soviet Union, the benchmark of the best neighborly relations is the relationship with Afghanistan. It is pleasing to know that after the establishment of Soviet power and the successful liberation of Afghanistan from British domination, the relationship between these two countries have never been clouded by anything. And this is despite the fact that the USSR shares a border with Afghanistan spanning over 2 thousand kilometers, much of which passes through fairly flat terrain. There have never been any misunderstandings between the USSR and Afghanistan, and one can hope that there never will be.

In recent times, the relations with Turkey have been developing positively. There have been no border conflicts, and the Soviet-Turkish border is well-defined and marked. However, there are foreign military bases in Turkey that are directed against the USSR, which is not in harmony with the good relations and is in dissonance with the relations established between the USSR and Afghanistan. It would be wonderful if the relations between the two countries were the kind that was aspired to by Lenin and Atatürk. Turkey would benefit primarily from such relations. Currently, Turkey is a member of military alliances that are directed against the Soviet Union. Foreign bases located on Turkish territory are also directed against us, and Turkey does not deny this. From a security perspective, these bases provide nothing to Turkey. However, if war were to break out, if an armed conflict were to be provoked, Turkey would be the one to suffer. The locations of missile bases are known and, in the event of a conflict, they would be destroyed. But destroying bases is not like breaking a plate. Now, artillery fire would no longer be used against such bases, but rather missiles and nuclear weapons, which would result in widespread devastation due to their immense power. All this is said not for the sake of threat.

The situation would be completely different if our countries had trusting relations based on Atatürk's principles. Turkey could become a neutral country. Iran could follow suit, and a peaceful environment would be created to the south of our country. In the event of a conflict, our countries would not mutually threaten each other. We agree to make the Black Sea a sea of

peace. In this case, we could also eliminate our navy in the Black Sea with the Turkish side monitoring [the process]. Both sides could, and the USSR is ready for this, reduce armed forces along the border. Turkish officers could be stationed on our territory as monitors, and ours could be stationed on the Turkish side. Turkey would free up resources for the development of its national economy. We could also provide economic assistance, and the Americans would increase assistance from their side.

A.A. Gromyko suggests that it would be beneficial for Turkey and the Soviet Union in every aspect.

N.S. Khrushchev states that the Soviet Union acknowledges Turkey's position. Indeed, mistakes were made in the past by Stalin. However, after Stalin's death, these mistakes were publicly condemned. The USSR is the only great power in the world that has publicly acknowledged and condemned its wrongdoings.

S. Sarper remarks that this is to the credit of a great power.

N.S. Khrushchev says that the United States does not help develop the Turkish economy. They provide money for building bases, but for every dollar provided by the Americans, Turkey spends one or even two dollars of its own. This kind of expenditure does not contribute to economic development. The country cannot prioritize building missile bases without it negatively affecting the supply of basic needs such as food and clothing, or improving their cultural standard of living. Turkey must focus on developing its agriculture and building factories. The country needs to produce more industrial goods so that workers' wages can increase. The United States cannot and

does not want to support this because it is not in their interest. The more developed the national economy is, the fewer opportunities there are to obtain cheap raw materials, and the smaller the market becomes for American goods. Therefore, the U.S. provides aid in the form of wheat and other consumer goods rather than the means of production necessary for national economic development. The Soviet Union is not at all interested in the deteriorating of the relations between Turkey and the U.S. The Soviet Union itself wants good relations with the U.S.

S. Sarper, emphasizing his desire to be honest and straightforward, states that, as already discussed in the conversation with Ambassador Ryzhov, there are some psychological aspects to consider. If quick steps are taken, with two out of three quick steps towards reconciliation and one backward, the public will only focus on the backward step and not the two steps forward. It is crucial to gradually and persistently move forward.

Regarding the parallel drawn by Khrushchev between Soviet-Afghan and Soviet-Turkish relations, Sarper believes that such comparisons may not always lead to positive outcomes. The relationship between the USSR and Turkey is unique and specific to its bilateral nature.

In 1952, Turkey became a member of NATO. However, after the May 27th revolution, Turkey has been following an independent domestic and foreign policy that was not in existence before the revolution. Currently, Turkey has returned to the principles of Atatürk, as mentioned by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

Turkey is pursuing an independent policy within the United Nations. It does not desire a state of cold war in its relations with the USSR. It seeks to develop friendly and neighborly bilateral relations to gradually reach the horizon in the economic and political sphere, as mentioned by the Prime Minister of the USSR. There are currently two sets of issues. On the one hand, there are bilateral Soviet-Turkish relations; on the other hand, there is a series of significant problems between the two blocs. The latter category of problems can, and one should hope for this, be resolved between the USSR and the USA, along with their allies. Turkey is willing to play its part in it.

Regarding N.S. Khrushchev's mention of foreign military bases in Turkey, S. Sarper stated that he did not perceive it as a threat, as Khrushchev expressed himself very calmly and with irrefutable logic. Sarper assured that in times of peace, as he does not entertain the idea of war, there would be no unfriendly acts from these bases, and furthermore, measures have been taken to prevent any provocative actions.

S. Sarper expressed the opinion that if those who are responsible for the policy of either country, strive to act patiently and with goodwill towards improving relations, it will lead to positive results.

Turkey is currently facing challenges in the economic sector, and therefore, the thoughts expressed on this matter should be received with appreciation. However, Turkey has learned from its own experience the arithmetic involved. There is an issue of payments. Economic and financial issues must be carefully studied. S. Sarper adds that he remains optimistic about the developments in the relationship between the USSR and Turkey, as well as between the USSR and the United States.

N.S. Khrushchev states that, of course, improving Soviet-American relations would be desirable, and everything has been done from the USSR's side to achieve this. Unfortunately, not everything depends on one side. Why did the United States need to send the U-2 plane into Soviet airspace just before the Paris summit? It is incredible, but it is a fact. The Americans embarrassed themselves in front of the entire world.

N.S. Khrushchev suggests that it would be beneficial to establish personal connections between the leaders of the Soviet Union and Turkey. This need not happen immediately. As we know, the Soviet Union places great importance on building good personal relationships between heads of state and government. Our countries are geographically close and share borders. With the advent of airplanes, maritime fleets, and automobiles, it is possible to establish personal contact rapidly.

S. Sarper agrees that establishing personal connections is important. However, it is not necessary to establish them immediately, as N.S. Khrushchev noted. At present, General Gürsel holds four positions: he is the head of state, head of government, party chairman, and commander-in-chief. S. Sarper clarifies that he cannot speak on

behalf of General Gürsel, but in principle, establishing personal connections is desirable. Currently, the focus in Turkey should be on internal development. Elections are upcoming. It is still too early to predict the situation after the elections.

S. Sarper has expressed a keen interest in the constructive idea expressed by N.S. Khrushchev that the Soviet Union did not want the relationship between Turkey and the USA to worsen, and the USSR also desired to maintain close and friendly relations with the United States.

The diplomats, who believe in serving the cause of peace as their honorable duty, had set high expectations for this [U.N. General] Assembly. However, their hopes were not fulfilled. The Prime Minister of the USSR did not come to visit the United States but instead came to the United Nations, and he, just like Eisenhower, had the opportunity to restore relations without causing any harm to anyone's pride. The restart of the Cold War is causing concern among medium and small countries.

N.S. Khrushchev agrees, noting that it is specifically the United States who are not interested in renewing good relations. What was the necessity of sending a plane into the skies on the eve of the summit? The measures taken before the arrival of the head of the Soviet government, seem like pinpricks. Movement restrictions were imposed, although the head of the Soviet government came to work at the U.N., and not for leisure travel. Protests were organized, with placards bearing unfriendly remarks, and all this was organized by official authorities. It is no secret that the American government annually allocates, not to mention unofficial allocations, \$100 million to support so-called "emigres" from Eastern European countries. American authorities turned to the press and television, urging them to ignore the activities of the leader of the Soviet delegation, but it was not successful. The public was officially encouraged to greet Soviet representatives coldly.

Doesn't the American government realize that by orchestrating such actions against the leader of the government of the USSR, they are attempting to turn the public against the Soviet Union? And what if the Soviet people are incited against the United States? Where will this lead to? After all, the Soviet government holds more authority among its people than the American government does among its own citizens. The United States has never experienced war on its own soil, but the language of bombs is a terrible language.

S. Sarper notes that Turkey, just like the Soviet Union, knows what war is. Therefore, efforts must be made to prevent it. The Cold War can escalate into a hot one. Therefore, it is necessary to break the vicious circle.

N.S. Khrushchev says that the Soviet Union is trying to do just that. But for this to be a success, there has to be an action from the other side.

At the end of the conversation, N.S. Khrushchev asks S. Sarper to convey his best wishes to the head of the Turkish state, General Gürsel.

S. Sarper replies that he will definitely do it.

Written down by: M. Busarov

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