

February 14, 1961

Record of Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and the Turkish Ambassador Fahri Korutürk

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Summary:

Khrushchev shares details of recent Soviet economic achievements and discusses the possibility of a joint Soviet-Turkish dam project on the Aras River, which the Turkish ambassador, Fahri Korutürk, agrees to consider. Khrushchev expresses interest in improving bilateral relations, referencing historical cooperation, while briefly noting Turkey's ties to NATO—a topic the ambassador chooses not to pursue.

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE CONVERSATION

between N.S. Khrushchev and the Ambassador of the Turkish Republic, Fahri Korutürk
14 February 1961[*]

At the beginning of the conversation, F. Korutürk says that he was appointed as an ambassador to Moscow after the May revolution in Turkey, and has been in the Soviet Union since August last year. He expresses his regret for not having had the opportunity to visit the head of the Soviet government yet, who was first on vacation in the Black Sea and then attended a session of the UN General Assembly. As it is known, this year, the session lasted a very long time. Korutürk notes, in this regard, that he had requested the head of the protocol department of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs to find out the possibility of meeting N.S. Khrushchev, whose name is widely known not only in the Soviet Union but throughout the world.

N.S. Khrushchev notes that he was indeed on vacation and then attended the General Assembly, which lasted a long time.

Continuing, Korutürk recalls that after the May revolution, there were some messages exchanged between the governments of the USSR and Turkey, which led to an improvement in relations between the two countries. He, Korutürk, is focused on continuing working in this direction. If he can achieve something beneficial, he will consider himself a happy person.

F. Korutürk emphasizes that while in the USSR, he personally witnessed the remarkable achievements made in all aspects of the country's life. They, he says, are truly magnificent. Prior to his visit, he believed these achievements to be merely propaganda. However, having seen them with his own eyes, he is now convinced that the USSR has accomplished much more than what was claimed in propaganda.

In response, N.S. Khrushchev notes that we are indeed pleased with our successes, and tells the ambassador about the achievements of the Soviet Union in the field of economics.

Next, N.S. Khrushchev talks about his trip to Tbilisi for a meeting on agriculture, which was attended by representatives of the three Transcaucasian republics. Representatives of Armenia raised the issue of constructing a dam on the Araks River, on the border between the USSR and Turkey. This dam, says N.S. Khrushchev, could be built by both our countries; it would benefit both sides. The dam would make it possible to irrigate the lands of both Armenia and Turkey. Along the way, N.S. Khrushchev recalls a similar project that was being jointly carried out by Iran and the Soviet Union, but had to be stopped due to the deteriorating relations with Iran.

Regarding the construction of a dam on the Araks River, N.S. Khrushchev says that there are some materials available that Turkish representatives can look into.

Korutürk promised to look into the issue of building a dam, which N.S. Khrushchev had talked about. In this regard, the ambassador says that he is aware of similar [bi-lateral] cooperation between different countries, mentioning as an example the dam project on the Danube, which Yugoslavia and Romania are going to build.

Turning to the issue of the Soviet-Turkish relations, N.S. Khrushchev expresses a desire to improve relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union and emphasizes that during K. Atatürk's life, these relations were good and neighborly.

Korutürk agrees and mentions that Atatürk had allocated one of the best plots in Ankara for the construction of the Soviet embassy. Meanwhile, the Turkish Embassy building in Moscow is not owned by the Turkish Republic. The embassy wants to purchase this building, but the price asked for it exceeds the embassy's capabilities.

N.S. Khrushchev, in a joking tone, says that Turkey has rich friends and, as they say, America brings money to Turkey by ship.

To this, Korutürk replies that the Turks are now too scared to take money from

anyone.

N.S. Khrushchev says that Turkey has joined NATO and is now afraid to leave the alliance.

Korutürk avoids continuing further discussion on this topic. He thanks [N.S. Khrushchev] for the pleasant conversation and says that he would prefer not to overshadow their conversation with a discussion of this issue.

The conversation lasted for about 45 minutes.

The conversation was attended by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Cde. A.A. Sobolev.

The conversation was translated and recorded by I. Mustafaev.

[*][Handwritten text: "Transcript of the conversation was not reviewed by N.S. Khrushchev."]