

**July 27, 1961**

**Continuation of a Conversation Between N. S. Khrushchev with J. McCloy, Special Assistant to the President of the US for Questions of Disarmament**

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**Summary:**

Khrushchev criticizes President Kennedy's recent speech calling for increased armament, warning that such actions escalate the risk of war. He reiterates the Soviet commitment to signing a peace treaty with Germany and outlines the USSR's position on disarmament, emphasizing staged reductions with corresponding verification. Khrushchev also raises concerns about unequal influence within the UN and calls for greater recognition of the socialist bloc.

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**Contents:**

Translation - English

**Continuation of a Conversation Between N. S. Khrushchev with J. McCloy, Special Assistant to the President of the US for Questions of Disarmament, Concerning Soviet-American Relations in Connection with the Solution of the Question of the Signing of a Peace Treaty with Germany, and the Problems of Disarmament**

a The title of the document was partially used.

**27 July 1961**

The conversation began at 1030.

McCloy Yesterday Mr. Khrushchev said that he would present his point of view on questions of disarmament. I will express my views after his comments.

bTypewritten underlining from hereon in.

Khrushchev Before dwelling on the question of disarmament I would like to say the following.

I familiarized myself with Kennedy's speech in which he sort of tentatively declared war on us, rather, presented an ultimatum. He essentially said that if we do not accept this ultimatum then there will be war.

I request Mr. McCloy pass to the President my regrets that he has gone the route of ultimatums. We regret such a statement by Kennedy, but pass to him that we will respond to his ultimatum - we will pursue that policy which we have announced. As I told you yesterday, our policy is directed at the conclusion of a peace treaty which would solve the question of West Berlin and ensure everyone freedom of access to West Berlin. Kennedy declares that if we sign a peace treaty then this will lead to war. We accept the challenge and are ready to respond to it. And you, too, get ready. Let history judge which of us is right and who will survive in this war. We think that we will survive.

I will charge the General Staff and the Minister of Defense of our country with thinking of what [we] ought to do in addition to the steps we have already taken. I will listen to their views on Monday, when I return to Moscow. We will also inform our people that the US is presenting an ultimatum and is threatening war if we sign the peace treaty with Germany. We have stated that we will sign the peace treaty and consequently, in the light of your ultimatum, this will lead to war. We will inform our people, we will call upon them, and they will rise to the defense of their Motherland.

Capitalism has evidently lost hope of success in peaceful economic competition with the socialist countries, it fears this competition, and wants to settle scores with the socialist system on the battlefield [*na pole brani*]. If this is so, then we are ready for this and we will not escape fate. You do not frighten us. They have attacked us more than once, and we can stand up for ourselves. In the Second World War Hitler attacked us. Right now, the US evidently wants to take the functions of Hitler on itself, but they have essentially already become an international policeman. But I said earlier that you will suffer defeat and we will do everything to do this.

As regards the allies of the US, if they attack us then they will not even require coffins. If they attack we will destroy all of Europe: Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, and any country which acts against us. But we are a match for the US. We cannot wipe the US from the face of the Earth and you also can't wipe us [from the face of the Earth]. We will live on, but there will be no more Wall Street. The people will not tolerate a system which causes the most bloody thermonuclear war in the history of humanity. So if the US wants a thermonuclear war, begin it. We are ready for it.

Please pass to the President my regrets, but I cannot do anything. There is no other way.

In his speech President Kennedy launched a program of mobilization of industry and the armed forces and intends to increase the strength of the army. I will think about this but I suppose that for our part we will not increase the strength of the armed forces. In our time war will unavoidably be thermonuclear. Why then tear people

away from their work in industry? Missiles and hydrogen bombs will decide the fate of the war, but we have sufficient nuclear weapons.

As I have already said, in two days I will be in Moscow<sup>89</sup> and I will consult with the General Staff, the Minister of Defense, and other members of the government. We will draw the appropriate conclusions and evidently will tell the people that you have essentially declared a mobilization and threaten war if we sign the peace treaty. The people should be ready for the inevitability of war, and it is really unavoidable once the US declares that there will be a war if we sign the peace treaty. We will sign the peace treaty. You have weapons, and no one can stop you. And if you talk about war it means that you want war. We accept your challenge and will answer war with war. We, too, have sufficient weapons.

Not one person who has not lost reason can declare war right now since it will unavoidably become a nuclear war. There are no reasons for a war. President Kennedy said that we allegedly want to deprive West Berlin of freedom. This is a lie. In our proposals we stand on positions of non-interference and ensuring the complete freedom of West Berlin.

President Kennedy is a young and energetic person. It is obvious that he wants to show his energy by starting a war. But if he begins a war he will be the last President of the US. After the war there will be no more Presidents of the US. But this is his business.

The proposition is confirmed which I expressed in a speech of 6 January of this year that when imperialism sees that it is losing in the peaceful competition with socialism it might make a crazy decision and might unleash a war. Such a step might only be done by a madman. This is a war of monopoly, imperialistic capital against the socialist countries, and not a war for the freedom of West Berlin. The US says that they will fight for the freedom of two million West Berliners whom, by the way, no one threatens. But hundreds of millions of people will be killed as a result of this war, and hundreds of millions more will die from such radiation. If you want to solve political disputes by war, disputes over ways to develop society, no one can prohibit you from this; you have the weapons and you can put them into effect. But when doing so don't make reference to the defense of West Berlin. We think better of your intelligence than you would like to present it.

I am firmly convinced that not one person with common sense would begin a war because of a freedom on which no one is encroaching.

I say all this because before the meeting in Vienna I read a speech of President Kennedy's. It would be strange if I, meeting you today after I knew about the speech of the US President in which he called for a mobilization and the allocation of almost \$4 billion more for weapons, had calmly talked to you about questions of disarmament. How can one talk about disarmament at a time when you are arming yourselves [?] But I cannot in fact pass greetings to the President when he wants me to jump into mouth without scratching his throat in the process. Know that we are uncompromising and [you] need a good stomach to swallow us. I think that you will not swallow us.

As long as a war has not yet begun I want to believe in the rationality of the President, I want to believe that he will think more than once before starting a war. He will obviously consult with US allies, who should also decide whether they will go to war. I don't know how they will act; it's up to them to decide what to do.

I want to stress again that our proposals about a peace conference and the conclusion of a treaty remain in force, they remain open. Pass to President Kennedy that we want to solve the question peacefully. It is necessary to pull the rotten tooth - West Berlin - and clear up the relations between our countries. But it is necessary to do this on the basis of a peace treaty and the creation of the free city of West Berlin, but not on the basis of an ultimatum.

This is my reaction to the speech of President Kennedy. It would be unnecessary to enter into an exchange of opinions with you on this question. You cannot speak for the President. As concerns the substance of the question of West Berlin and the German peace treaty, then we fully exchanged opinions yesterday.

Now I would nevertheless like to present our position on disarmament. As you know, there are threats, storm clouds are gathering, but then the weather is clearing and

the sun is shining. As concerns people, they will take a shower, come to a human condition, discard the threats, and life will come back to normal. As long as I live and occupy the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers I will do everything to keep the peace. Peace can be preserved if the US does not violate it. Therefore I am presenting our position on disarmament right now, and I present [it] as we understand monitoring of disarmament.

McCloy I have not read the speech of President Kennedy and have not seen the text of this speech. Mr. Khrushchev has used strong expressions with respect to the speech of the President.

Khrushchev I read the text of the President's speech. He announced a mobilization in it<sup>85</sup>.

McCloy I don't think that President Kennedy is threatening war because a peace treaty will be signed.

Khrushchev The President of the US did not announce a mobilization to shout "hurray".

McCloy The President of the US did not announce a mobilization, but as I suppose, said that some reserves will be used, several thousand men. This has nothing in common with mobilization. Individual branches of the armed forces will be increased to a small degree, but it will not be a big increase. I am confident of this. If Mr. Khrushchev would closely analyze Kennedy's speech he would be convinced of this himself. The President said that it is necessary to tighten [our] belts, but he is not making preparations for war.

Khrushchev We know what it is to call up the reserves - we also have reserves. If you want this, then you are going to war We can also dress people in soldiers' coats. We have already fought more than once, and if necessary we will try again. You do not scare us.

McCloy You also do not scare us.

Khrushchev We are also not planning to scare the US. We are proposing a peace treaty and you are saying that you will declare war. We will answer war with war.

McCloy We don't plan to answer the signing of the peace treaty with war. This is about another thing, our rights.

Khrushchev We also ensure you access to West Berlin but, of course we will not allow the sovereign rights of the GDR to be violated. For we are not Guatemala, but the great Soviet Union, and together with [our] allies are one billion people.

McCloy President Kennedy thinks that Mr. Khrushchev will sign the peace treaty. He knows that he cannot stop the signing of the peace treaty, [but] the US is concerned with another thing, the loss of its rights. This question goes beyond the geographic bounds of Berlin. This concerns the mood of the people, the good name and the honor of the country; I do not mean the medieval understanding of honor, but the modern understanding. We cannot yield our rights in the face of threats. This very aspect has led to the current situation, and prompted the President's speech and those steps which he is taking right now.

Of course, I will pass to President Kennedy everything which Mr. Khrushchev had told me. I can add nothing to what I said yesterday. Moreover I do not hold any official position with respect to the German question. I can only comment on this question as a private citizen. The German question touches on common interests and the government leaders of our two countries should deal with it. On the basis of my personal discussions with the President I know that President Kennedy treats this question seriously and is thinking of how to find a way out. I share Mr. Khrushchev's faith that a way can be found to avoid running into an enormous underwater rock.

Khrushchev This is exactly what I want, and I will do everything to avoid war. The Soviet Union does not want war, but peace, and wants not only peaceful, but friendly relations with the United States. All this can be achieved by signing the peace treaty with Germany. There is no other way.

McCloy I can say only several words more, but my words cannot change the situation. I don't think that the accusations of Mr. Khrushchev against capitalism and Wall Street are justified, nor are the accusations against the American people are justified.

Khrushchev The US wants to change its situation with a war, for there are six million unemployed there. So they are looking for work.

McCloy We can also make the situation of the unemployed easier without war.

Khrushchev That is the correct way. We suggest to you - let's trade. This would keep your industry running and keep your working hands busy but, as it seems obvious, you want to decide the question by war. Well, so, choose.

McCloy We don't want to decide the question by war. It is completely unreasonable to think that Wall Street is all-powerful and can do everything. On the contrary, when the US finds out that Wall Street has interfered in some matter, it will surely fail.

Khrushchev Yesterday you promised to show me Wall Street. Evidently you knew about the President's speech and wanted to show me Wall Street as a prisoner of war.

McCloy No, I want to invite you as a guest and I am confident that familiarization with Wall Street will take place in an atmosphere of friendship and you will leave convinced that there are no better people than on Wall Street. You will receive the same strong impression as I received there.

Khrushchev If the US does not start a war, then I will be glad to accept your invitation.

McCloy We both need to work to the best of our strength and capabilities so that there is no war.

Khrushchev I agree with this.

McCloy The difference between the capitalists and Communists is not great. All of them are people, and the main thing is that both have reason. No one can be so stupid as to want war or to think that his interests require war. The American people welcome a peaceful competition with the Soviet Union. In press reports and statements Americans often express delight at the successes of the Soviet Union in the conquest of space, in the development of industry, and in sports. These successes of the Soviet Union stimulate the United States which, being the most highly developed country, became complacent in the past. But we have not relaxed and have not limited ourselves to waving after you. We will continue the competition in the industrial field. In addition, if we are able to combine the efforts of our two countries we would achieve more good for all humanity.

Khrushchev We would eagerly welcome such efforts. No one would die from them, and they would go for the good of all. For in the past we learned from you the rates of the development of the economy. Even Lenin said that the US provides a model of the rates of development.

McCloy Now we are learning from you.

I regret that such gloomy notes are sounded on such a good morning.

Khrushchev President Kennedy set this note. Our Soviet note rang out yesterday, but today the American one rings out.

McCloy As I have already said, I will pass to President Kennedy everything that Mr. Khrushchev has said.

I am glad that Mr. Khrushchev is ready to move to another question, the question of disarmament. We hope that the sun will rise after the storm clouds and show us the path which will allow [us] to avoid the obstacles to a solution of the question of disarmament. While still on the road here I told Mr. Zorin that I am thinking of how to realistically approach the question of disarmament, how to get weapons not to be increased. The complexity of the situation is aggravated by the fact that it is hard to separate the question of disarmament from other questions, in particular from the Berlin question.

They are persistently demanding that I leave for the US sooner. I recommended that the President submit a bill to create a government disarmament agency. Members of the American Congress ask me the question, why is it necessary to create an agency when the threat hangs over Berlin and the President is demanding money for weapons. The situation is such that if I don't return to Washington quickly then it will be difficult to get the bill through Congress.

Mr. Zorin told me that it is necessary to continue efforts in the direction of solving the problem of disarmament inasmuch this will help create a better atmosphere in the

world. I agree with this. And although we will be constrained in the negotiations in view of the complicated situation we are ready to continue efforts in order to free our countries and all the rest of the world from the burden of armaments. Now I would listen with interest to the views of Mr. Khrushchev on the questions of disarmament and monitoring. Monitoring represents a big problem for us. I am ready to deal with this question in real earnest and work out solutions on an objective basis. I highly appreciate the opportunity afforded me to discuss questions of disarmament with the Soviet Union although, frankly speaking, this worries our allies. I consider our negotiations useful. It is important to preserve the opportunity to continue contacts in order to search for a solution to the problem of disarmament in the future. I hope that this is not the last opportunity to discuss the important questions facing our countries.

Khrushchev When [are we] to discuss [them]? Before or after the war? After the war it will obviously be necessary to talk no longer about a peace treaty with Germany and not about the Berlin question, but about another treaty, a treaty between those who will survive the war.

McCloy [We] could discuss the question before and after the Berlin crisis.

Khrushchev I am always ready to talk about peace and a peaceful resolution of questions. As concerns the background for holding negotiations on disarmament then today it is bad. You are an adviser to the President. Why did you not advise Kennedy to make his speech at least a day later?

McCloy I advise the President only on questions of disarmament.

Khrushchev I and other members of the Soviet government hold to the following point of view. Negotiations should be held on general and complete disarmament and all-encompassing monitoring. We have already presented our understanding of monitoring, namely: there should not be a "troika" or a "veto" since all-encompassing monitoring is required with general and complete disarmament. Both sides are interested in this. With general and complete disarmament the question of espionage and intelligence is eliminated. When there are no weapons and no armies there cannot be intelligence, and therefore there cannot be any limitations on inspections. An inspection team can go to any point, and there should be open access to it everywhere. We, the Soviet Union, should enjoy the same rights to the territory of the US and other countries on the basis of reciprocity. Thus, a "troika" is needed only to command international armed forces.

You should understand why we insist on this. The experience which we have had in the UN has taught us much, and we should bear this in mind. For example you, Mr. McCloy, would you allow such a situation that the UN Secretary General is elected from the socialist countries? I think that none of you has thought over this and everyone thinks this is a heresy, for we exist and represent one-third of the population of the entire Earth. Our economy is going rapidly on the upswing. You want to ignore the world socialist sector, keep it in a subordinate situation, and not allow the solution of questions at the UN on an equal basis. We demand not only the equal right to speak from the rostrum of the UN, but also equal rights in the management of the UN and in influence on this organization. We are not seeking dominance in the UN, but want only to gain our rights, equal with yours. If you are not morally ready for this, then there cannot be an agreement. We have already grown up from childhood, we don't wear short pants, but long trousers, and demand for ourselves equal conditions and equal opportunities. We will fight for this until we convince all peoples of the correctness of our position.

Our position is simple. The imperialist powers exist - they should have a voice in the UN; the neutral countries exist - they should have their own voice, and the socialist countries should have their own voice. I am speaking of the entire structure of the UN, not about individuals. If this is secured, then there will be real democracy, there will be equal representation. Only in such a situation can a decision be made which would not tear apart our camps, but would remove the tension which exists and which will arise. This my general comment.

Now I will switch to disarmament. If we sign the peace treaty and avoid the submerged rocks in so doing - and I proceed from this - then the path will be open to a mutual understanding and an agreement on disarmament. If there were no German

question there also would not be the current tension, which is by the way being artificially stirred up.

In our opinion, the approach to disarmament should be as follows: all-encompassing monitoring should correspond to that stage of disarmament which is being implemented in accordance with the disarmament agreement. Why do we raise such a condition? If at first monitoring is established over all countries, and then disarmament begins then this would mean monitoring without disarmament, and such monitoring would be nothing other than intelligence. You will see what we have and possibly think that you have less than you thought, and this would provide an impetus to abandon disarmament. Therefore disarmament and monitoring should be accomplished in stages. One cannot poke his nose in what will be done at the next stage. However, each stage should have its own monitoring. At the first stage all-encompassing monitoring should confirm that everyone is fulfilling the terms of disarmament agreed for the first stage. At the second stage monitoring confirms the fulfillment of the obligations of the second stage. The same should be done also at the third, final stage. After the conclusion of disarmament permanent, all-encompassing monitoring is established, so to speak... [Translator's note; several words lost at this point due to a reproduction error] all-encompassing monitoring will go into force as a permanent operating institution. These are our principles.

Now I will switch to considerations of where to start, with what kinds of armaments. We offer you the possibility of choice in this regard.

As concerns us, we propose beginning disarmament with nuclear missiles. Nuclear bombs are easy to hide and thus a partner can be deceived. If all the platforms of nuclear weapons – missiles, launch pads, aircraft, submarines, and bases – are destroyed then there would be no sense in keeping nuclear bombs. Bombs are not grenades, you don't throw them by hand.

It is possible that disarmament ought to be started with ground weapons in order to keep missiles for some time which, in Dulles' language, would be "a weapon of restraint". We agree with such an approach if it suits you.

Of course, it would be best if you agreed to the elimination of military bases on foreign territory and the withdrawal of troops from foreign territory to within their own national boundaries. This would not reduce military potential, however it would promote the creation of an atmosphere of trust. For troops on foreign territory serve as the source of an increase of tension. For example, if the US sends its troops to Europe, then we will think that by agreement with our allies, Czechoslovakia and Poland, we will send our troops to the territory of these countries. All this understandably increases, and does not decrease, tension.

Speaking of the withdrawal of troops from foreign territory. we think that these troops might be withdrawn not right away, but gradually, in stages. An inspectorate ought to be established in that zone so that no one could make a sudden attack.

We are also ready to solve the question of the creation of a nuclear-free zone in stages, as was suggested by Poland. We are ready to establish an inspectorate at strategic points, at rail junctions, highways, ports, and airfields. But the inspectorate should not touch missiles and missile bases. We will not seek such monitoring as long as the US keeps bases on foreign territory. As long as the US keeps bases on foreign territory we will not allow anyone to our missiles and launch pads because right now we consider missiles and nuclear weapons as our main types of weapons. For right now aviation is retreating into history. Our recent air show [*parad*] in Tushino is possibly the swan song of aviation. It is true that President Kennedy announced that he will order new bombers. Well, let them order obsolete equipment.

We also consider it useful to conclude a non-aggression pact. However, in conditions when you are preparing for war, this is evidently precluded. Nevertheless, I speak about this proposal, inasmuch as our goal is to seek the elimination of war. It would be good if we could come to agreement about disbanding all military pacts or alliances.

As I remember, President Kennedy said that he intends to reconsider the question of military bases. This is a rational idea. The appearance of ballistic missiles of various radiuses of action, including intercontinental missiles, will lead to military bases losing their importance. General MacArthur speaks of this right now and he is a great

military specialist. Marshal Montgomery also speaks of it. So we think that it is possible to find a common language on this question.

Khrushchev said that the time for the conversation has elapsed since the aircraft is already waiting at the airfield for McCloy and the people accompanying him.

He added that on the aircraft Zorin will present McCloy with our document about the basic principles of general and complete disarmament in which the position of the Soviet government is presented about the questions concerning which we have spoken.

McCloy thanked N. S. Khrushchev for the kind hospitality and for the opportunity afforded to hold such a frank conversation, and also expresses the hope that he will again be able to meet with N. S. Khrushchev in the future.

Khrushchev expressed satisfaction with the meeting with McCloy and jokingly said that it turned out that some "goats" also think correctly. Khrushchev continued, "So I will consider you a goat as before, but I have changed my opinion about this goat". The conversation lasted 11 hours and 45 minutes.

Present from the American side was interpreter Akalovsky.

Present from our side were: Cdes. V. A. Zorin, I. G. Usachev, and V. M. Sukhodrev.

Recorded by I. Usachev and V. Sukhodrev

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