

September 6, 1961

Record of the Conversation of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR N. S. Khrushchev with the Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru

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Summary:

Khrushchev and Nehru discuss rising global tensions, particularly surrounding the German peace treaty and the status of Berlin. Nehru expresses concerns about the resumption of Soviet nuclear tests, warning of their impact on global opinion and the risk of escalating conflict. Khrushchev defends the tests as a necessary response to Western threats and military buildup. The two leaders are later joined by Ghanaian President Nkrumah to present a collective appeal from the Belgrade Conference, urging peaceful solutions and proposing a summit between Khrushchev and Kennedy to reduce the risk of war. Khrushchev emphasizes the need for global disarmament and greater involvement from neutral nations to pressure the US toward peace, while Nehru advocates for careful diplomacy to avoid further polarization.

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Russian

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Translation - English

RECORD OF THE CONVERSATION

OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR N.S. KHRUSHCHEV
WITH THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA JAWAHARLAL NEHRU6 SEPTEMBER, 1961^[1]

N.S. Khrushchev says that he is really happy to welcome J. Nehru in the Soviet Union.

J. Nehru notes that he is happy to be in Moscow again, in this remarkable and constantly growing city. He continues to say that he remembers very well this office in the Kremlin and the friendly conversation that took place in it.

N.S. Khrushchev says that the Kremlin's appearance is changing. Currently a large palace for 6,200 seats is being constructed here. It will be ready by 20 September, and on 17 October the 22nd Party Congress will commence its work. We intend to hold this Congress on a more representative basis than the previous congresses. Approximately 5,000 delegates will take part in the work of the 22nd Congress, while approximately 1,200 delegates took part in previous congresses. This will be a good, modern building with escalators, bright, spacious rooms, etc. This is my report to you, jokingly remarks N.S. Khrushchev. You and I have already talked about the construction in Moscow on our way from the airport. We are all very happy with the way things are going inside the country. Everything goes as we have planned it. However, international issues should not be resolved this way, they should be resolved by all of us together, collectively. They are not plannable. Not everyone helps with solving international issues; some obstruct and threaten, but we have a straightjacket for these. It's not 1939 or 1941. Both we and they know that those who want to attack us are suicidal. But otherwise everything is wonderful - the domestic situation, the economy, industry, agriculture, culture, science - all of this is quite satisfactory to us. The latest achievement of our science, the space flights, are a source of special satisfaction and pride.

J. Nehru expresses hope that no one will attack the Soviet Union, but there exists a threat that a war may be started by accident.

N.S. Khrushchev says that he thinks the same way. It is necessary to adopt measures so that one is not caught off guard, therefore we undertook certain steps to strengthen the defensive potential of the USSR. As a Russian saying goes: "God helps those who help themselves". We are planning to conduct large-scale maneuvers, the like of which have never taken place. They are going to be [conducted] under simulated combat conditions, and all means of warfare will be used in them. We are doing this in response to similar actions by America. Since they do it, we have to behave the same way.

J. Nehru remarks that there are people who commit suicide. This is already bad in itself, but it is even worse when such a suicidal person unleashes forces that can annihilate others who do not want [to die].

N.S. Khrushchev says that he fully agrees with such a point of view and that he also talked about this in his televised statement. N.S. Khrushchev recollects an incident from his life when at the very beginning of the Great Patriotic War a general came to him and shot himself in his presence. This general declared that Russia was repeating the same thing that happened in France and demanded that the Commanding General of the front was replaced. I responded, continues N.S. Khrushchev, that it wouldn't be right to replace the Commanding General of the front in the very beginning of the war. Though we were of the same rank, I was superior to him in the Party ranks, and therefore the general had to agree [with me].

He lost every bit of self-confidence, succumbed to panic and, being convinced of the hopelessness of the situation, pulled out a gun and shot himself in front of me. When one person does it, it's his right. But when, by killing oneself, this person causes death to millions of people, this cannot be allowed. Currently there are some flickers of common sense that emerge in, as it seems, desperate people. Some time ago Adenauer made militant statements; Brandt and Strauss were echoing him. But now they have begun to understand what a war means for Germany. They are already supporting negotiations, though they are not saying that these are peace negotiations, but it is already good that they are saying that there will be no war because of Berlin. Germans in West Germany are very frightened and now it starts to

produce results.

J. Nehru asks who frightened them.

N.S. Khrushchev responds that the West German leaders themselves frightened them. Strauss said that if there is a war, then it would mean the end of Germany. Adenauer is currently saying the same thing.

Moving on to his conversation with Fanfani, N.S. Khrushchev says that Fanfani made a favorable impression on him. However, Italy apparently does not occupy an important position in NATO. Currently the US is the most aggressive force. They unfortunately don't have a person whose voice would be heeded by the whole country. The current situation in America is reminiscent of the situation in Great Novgorod, a republic that existed in Russia many years ago. The merchants and boyars would get together and resolve all the issues by [determining] who pulled more hair out of his opponents' beards. This is how everything is done now in Congress. There is no person whose voice would be heard throughout all of America, and therefore there is a possibility that dangerous decisions may be taken. President Kennedy is young, smart, but he is afraid of being accused of cowardice. He is looking this way and that, and therefore may take some sort of a random decision. But we have guarantors - Macmillan, De Gaulle, Fanfani, and Adenauer. N.S. Khrushchev proceeds to say that he told Fanfani that he, Khrushchev, considers France, Britain, Germany and Italy to be our hostages. America cannot attack the Soviet Union without their agreement, since it doesn't have territory bordering ours. The only possibility is an intercontinental duel, but they are not going to want that because we are stronger than them in terms of missiles. Americans need the territories of France, Italy, and Germany for their bases.

N.S. Khrushchev notes that he told Fanfani that if they allow a war to be unleashed then the first blow will be dealt to the American bases and they will be erased from the face of the Earth.

J. Nehru asks to clarify in what sense these Americans need the territories.

N.S. Khrushchev responds that such territories are needed for them as staging areas. As he already told Fanfani, the bases located in their countries will be dealt a devastating blow if a war is unleashed. N.S. Khrushchev adds that he expressed the hope in his conversation with Fanfani that the leaders of Italy, Britain, France and Germany will be able to prevent a war.

J. Nehru says that it appears N.S. Khrushchev believes that Macmillan, De Gaulle, and Adenauer serve as brakes for Kennedy.

N.S. Khrushchev responds that he cannot say this of De Gaulle, but Macmillan and Fanfani, and currently Adenauer too, indeed serve as such brakes.

J. Nehru asks whether Adenauer is playing a similar role.

N.S. Khrushchev responds that De Gaulle is the only opponent of negotiations, but Adenauer is ready to start negotiations even now. What kind of negotiations - is a separate issue. Not the same as we would like, but still he supports negotiations in principle.

J. Nehru asks for an explanation of De Gaulle's position.

N.S. Khrushchev says that De Gaulle is quite a strange man. Recently the Soviet ambassador visited De Gaulle, and the latter said that reunification of Germany shouldn't be allowed and that it would be even better if it were divided, let's say, into three parts and the borders were strengthened [*zakrepleny*], i.e. De Gaulle wanted to say that he was against the reunification of Germany. He said the same thing in the course of conversations which he, Khrushchev, had with him in Paris. De Gaulle was upset with Stalin because Stalin was against the annexation of the German Saarland by France. I understand this policy as following, continues N.S. Khrushchev: he wants to achieve a position of leadership in Europe but cannot do it without Adenauer's support, and therefore wants to secure his hold on Germany, thus increasing his weight in European politics. But I warned De Gaulle that this is a dangerous policy. Russian people have this story: A peasant went to hunt a bear, found a bear, and screamed, "I am holding him." His friends respond, "Well then, bring him here." He says back to them, "But he doesn't want to come." "Well then come by yourself." "I can't. The bear won't let me go." Same way France may hug West Germany and get bogged down in this hug itself because West Germany is stronger than France. It is

the biggest country in Europe.

(President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, joins the conversation.)

J. Nehru says that the participants of the Belgrade Conference charged President Nkrumah and him to visit Moscow and deliver a letter signed by all 25 heads of delegations. J. Nehru presents the letter to N.S. Khrushchev.

N.S. Khrushchev familiarizes himself with it and asks whether J. Nehru and K. Nkrumah want to share their opinions on the contents of the letter at this time.

J. Nehru responds that this would be desirable.

N.S. Khrushchev says that he understands and shares the concerns of the authors of the letter with respect to the possibility of the start of a new war, and adds that the key decision for all problems would be the universal and complete disarmament, and that the German question is the agent of all conflicts. But, unfortunately the US doesn't want to solve these issues. As to a meeting with President Kennedy, it is very unlikely that it would be useful. Nations are not waiting on this meeting itself, but on the constructive results of such a meeting. At this time the world is troubled by the same problems as it was at the time of the Vienna meeting, when both sides laid out their positions in detail. Therefore a meeting in the near future may be merely reduced to the repetition of positions already stated. America wants to keep us from signing a peace treaty with East Germany and doesn't want to sign any peace agreement itself. It is clear to us that with every passing year West Germany is becoming more powerful and brazen. Even now it is already playing a key role in determining NATO's policy. For us to say no to a peace treaty with the GDR would mean to agree to an aggressive country with revanchist inclinations gaining strength in the center of Europe. West Germany wants to absorb East Germany. Candidly speaking, we wouldn't be against the absorption of West Germany and transforming all of Germany into a unified socialist country, but this is not realistic and we are not seeking that. But West Germany believes that it can absorb East Germany. And they want to go further - East Germany is just the beginning. They intend to "liberate" Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and then the Russian people too from the Bolsheviks. But we are not Bizerte or Algeria, and we are capable of defending ourselves.

N.S. Khrushchev continues: Kennedy remarked during the conversation that our forces are equally balanced and that we can destroy each other. I agreed with that, though I know that we are stronger. The only scales that we could measure our forces with are the scales of war, and we are against such measurement. It's better to recognize that our forces are equal, sign a peace treaty, and give Berlin the status of a free city with all the guarantees of freedom. Kennedy answered that he cannot allow that because America, a great country, gave Germany guarantees of freedom. If the promise is broken, America will not be respected and all military blocs will break up. However I am not the one to be concerned about their military blocs. We would like to get rid of ours, too. As to the freedom that Kennedy mentioned, we are not impinging on it. We can provide new guarantees in this respect. The thing is that they are overcome by grandiose delusions: what I said shall be law, I gave my word. I told Mr. Kennedy that he is like a Pope who gave out indulgences, but even the Pope abolished this and Fanfani confirmed this, but Kennedy continues giving them out, though he is a Catholic himself. If we meet, what are we going to talk about? Our country is not aggressive, and it doesn't have either territorial or political aspirations. We want to lock in [*zafiksirovat'*] the conditions that came about as a result of WWII. We want to rein in the revanchist forces, to sign a treaty which will defuse the atmosphere, and change the situation, but Adenauer wants something different. Kennedy, Macmillan, De Gaulle and Fanfani support Adenauer. Macmillan, De Gaulle and Fanfani - all of them have said in conversations that the unification of Germany shouldn't be allowed. Eisenhower said the same thing. However in their public statements they advocate its unification. The West was especially relying on the conference in Belgrade. They wanted to "plant" the slogan about "self-determination of the Germans" there and to capitalize on this slogan. But such a slogan is not applicable to the German situation. It is obvious that these are two [different] states with established sociopolitical systems. Self-determination is a complicated problem. We fought four years for self-determination: Russians fought against Russians, brothers against brothers, children against fathers. This is how we fought for the

self-determination. Russia was split into four parts then: Bolsheviks, Denikin's Whites, Kolchak's Whites, and Yudenich Whites. Moreover, Britain, the US, Germany, Japan, and France were supporting our enemies. We were alone against them and we won. The same situation is now in Germany. This issue cannot be solved by a referendum. This referendum will be an armed one and this shouldn't be allowed to happen. Adenauer will not want for West Germany to become socialist. We recognize two Germanies - a socialist one and a capitalist one, and if this is recognized by the US, Britain, France, and Italy, then this issue will be resolved. We agree to hold a meeting. We want to, first of all, resolve the issue of disarmament whereby strict monitoring is exercised. We are for negotiations. Yet the West keeps harping on the [idea] that the Russians are supposedly against monitoring. At the last session of the UN General Assembly I said that we support monitoring. Macmillan spoke after me and said that the Russians are against monitoring. I stated again that we were for monitoring, and they would say something completely the opposite. The best way of testing us is to put forward a proposal about monitoring, but they are not putting it forward because they know that we will accept it. We are for disarmament but they don't want to disarm. This issue will be resolved only when all nations vote for complete disarmament. I am ready to sign a disarmament treaty any time. If you, Mr. Nehru, prepare a treaty, I will sign it immediately. Please persuade Mr. Kennedy of the necessity of such a treaty!

J. Nehru asks to clarify what promise Kennedy gave West Germany.

N.S. Khrushchev responds that the Americans, according to Kennedy, made a promise to the Germans to protect freedom, i.e. to preserve the existing regime in West Berlin.

J. Nehru says that as far as he understands, N.S. Khrushchev stated that the status of West Berlin will remain unchanged, i.e. the system of government won't be changed, and access to West Berlin will be maintained. Therefore he, Nehru, cannot understand the meaning of the "promise" and doesn't see the substance of the issue.

N.S. Khrushchev says that he doesn't understand this either. Access to West Berlin will be conducted not on the basis of the occupation regime, but on the basis of a peace treaty and relevant agreements with the GDR as with an equal country and in accordance with the accepted practice. For example, in order to fly to India over the territories of Afghanistan and China, we have corresponding agreements with these countries. Kennedy stated that Russians are trying to humiliate the Americans, i.e. by having them ask the Germans for permission to access West Berlin. But when we were setting up direct railway connection between Moscow and Paris through the territory of West Germany, we asked for this permission from Bonn. Then why can't America address a similar request to East Germany? This can only be explained by grandiose delusions. We addressed the government of West Germany with a request notwithstanding the fact that we lost more than 20 million people in the last war. Then why can't the Americans, who lost 250,000 people, ask East Germany for the right of access? They are interpreting international law arbitrarily.

J. Nehru thanks N.S. Khrushchev for the explanation of his position and expresses the hope that they can meet in the future so that they can continue the conversation. As to Berlin, a detailed discussion of the issue did not take part at the conference, but there was an exchange of opinions. It is clear that there are two states - East Germany and West Germany, and only a war can change such a situation, but a war will not only mean the end of one of these states, but also many other unpleasant consequences.

N.S. Khrushchev says that we also believe that.

J. Nehru points out that other borders, also formed as a result of the war, cannot be changed without the use of force, i.e. without a war. This, in the first place, relates to the border along the Oder-Neisse line. One has to accept the situation as it is. Our concern with respect to these problems has been reflected in the letter. The fear of war has to be erased from the minds of millions of people. Everything in the world depends on two countries, the United States and Russia, to a greater degree than on other countries. We are the weak countries, weak in military terms, but the point that needs to be taken into consideration is that we represent millions of people who want peace.

J. Nehru says: we have a request of you and to Kennedy. The existing situation has to be resolved by peaceful means. We believe that the only practical method of doing this is a meeting between the heads of leading powers. Negotiations at the diplomatic level are not deemed to be desirable due to [missing word; possibly *dlitel'noy* ("prolonged")] correspondence. Due to the gravity of the situation, a meeting at the highest level is needed as soon as possible. Such meeting could produce positive results, and therefore we propose a meeting between you and Kennedy because we believe that both you and he don't want war. The main objective is to avert a catastrophe, and we believe that such a direct approach could lead to negotiations that would take into account the real aspects of the situation.

N.S. Khrushchev expresses gratitude for the clarifications. You know, he says, we don't want a war. It won't bring anything except disasters. Allow me to express some thoughts about the role of the non-aligned countries. We believe that, though these countries are weak in the sense of military potential, they can play an important role in the moral sense. In what way can it be manifested? If all non-aligned countries recognize the GDR, for example, and not only *de facto*, but *de jure* as well, this will face West Germany with a *fait accompli*. The next step could be taken at the UN General Assembly if the two German states are accepted in the UN. This depends on the UN member countries. Neither cannons nor missiles will be needed for this. A real recognition of the two countries, establishing diplomatic relations with them and their acceptance in the United Nations will be needed for this. There is one more situation: I cannot speak for President Kennedy, and I am hoping that what I am going to say will stay between us, because otherwise this will hurt our already bad relations with Kennedy. I believe that Kennedy [inserted word: "personally"] is not consumed with military desires and doesn't want to unleash a war because of Berlin and Germany, but it should be taken into account that he won the election by just a small margin. This is also reflected in the composition of his government, and this weighs on him. His government is like Noah's Ark – seven pairs are pure, and seven pairs are impure, i.e. there are Dulles's, Rockefeller's people, etc. He himself is chained by the decisions made during the years when Dulles determined the US policy. Apparently, President Kennedy doesn't have the domestic strength to cut this Gordian knot. It is necessary to put the pressure of public opinion on him. We have to show him that, if there is a war, then it won't be only against the socialist countries but also against public opinion. This would give Kennedy the opportunity to come to the right decision. Kennedy in his conversation with me acknowledged that he made a mistake with respect to Cuba, and added that we would have not made such an admission. But I responded that our acknowledgment of Stalin's mistakes refutes his statement. We weren't afraid to do it. Kennedy also noted that Laos is Eisenhower's legacy and proposed to find a joint solution to the Laos issue. This provides some grounds to believe that he wants to relax the atmosphere, but the Congress and the press are pressuring him, and the press, as is known, is primarily owned by the Republican Party. World public opinion should make Kennedy's position easier. He needs to find support in it to be able to withstand the reactionary forces in his country which are pressuring him. In other words, the neutral countries have a controlling share of the stock in this deal. A lot will depend on where you direct this great power. The US are not going to go against the public opinion of the whole world. However, if you are placing your hopes on us only, this is wrong. You have to help us.

The US has conducted a mobilization. We also did it. Furthermore we resumed our nuclear testing. We acknowledge that the fact that we began nuclear tests, has made Kennedy's situation even more difficult. If he supports peace, he will be accused of being intimidated by us. However, if the neutral countries induce him to do this, he will have an easier time.

If the neutral countries do this, this will tip the scales in the right direction, and will make a great contribution to the cause of resolving the main issue of modern times.

We understand, continues N.S. Khrushchev, that our taking steps to strengthen our defense capabilities has created additional difficulties for Kennedy since, if he advocates settling contentious issues, he could be accused of being intimidated. It would be quite different if neutral countries raise their voices in support of this. It would be easier for Kennedy to justify his position by invoking world public opinion.

If we say that we will sign a peace treaty, but the US will not agree to that, and both

sides put their military forces on full alert, then a war may break out. Therefore support for the normalization of the situation in Germany by world public opinion would seriously assist Kennedy against the militaristic forces which are strong in America and West Germany. Here are my thoughts - I want us together to be responsible for the outcome of events.

J. Nehru thanks N.S. Khrushchev for clarifying the Soviet position and says that he shares N.S. Khrushchev's opinion regarding the fact that Kennedy's position is complicated. He inherited the Cuban and German problems from the previous Administration. Every government inherits both bad and good, and has to accept that. As N.S. Khrushchev correctly pointed out, Kennedy won the election by only an insignificant margin. Therefore he cannot make radical [korennye] decisions. I am confident, continues J. Nehru, that he doesn't want a war and that his administration is more liberal than the Eisenhower Administration, considering the conditions in America.

It is desirable to help him display these liberal tendencies, and this to a certain extent could be done by neutral countries. I believe we will be agreeable to that. But there are limits to what the non-aligned countries can do. These limits should not be exceeded. Otherwise President Kennedy may have additional complications. All of this needs to be done rather judiciously; that is why we wrote this letter. Two more heads of delegations took a similar letter to Washington. Approximately in two months I will be in the US and will definitely discuss this issue with Kennedy. I believe it would be wrong to lecture Kennedy. We have to do our best to exert friendly and tactful influence on him and on the US public. I don't see another way of resolving the current crisis other than having a meeting at the highest level. It is possible that some issues could be solved even ahead of this meeting. One of the objectives of the letter is to eliminate the possibility of hurting the prestige of one of the sides, therefore the non-aligned countries took the initiative of organizing this meeting upon themselves. We are prepared, J. Nehru continues, to do everything that depends on us in the best way possible.

As to the resumption of nuclear tests by the Soviet Union, he would like to say that he, Nehru, cannot be a judge of military issues, but this decision became a blow to the world public. The [world] public believed that nuclear tests were done away with, and what is more, N.S. Khrushchev himself did a lot to create such an opinion. This was unexpected and brought [the world] closer to the possibility of starting a war. This makes it even more difficult for Kennedy to take action, and it will lead to an increase of undesired pressure on him. It is quite possible that the US, too, will resume nuclear testing, and this will step by step lead to the worsening of the warlike atmosphere. The emotions will run higher and higher, and it will be more difficult to solve these problems based on common sense, logic, and amicability.

N.S. Khrushchev says that the Soviet Union was forced to make a decision about conducting a series of nuclear tests. There was no other choice. The Soviet Union proposed to sign a peace treaty with Germany, the West responded to that by threats of war. It would have been reckless on our part and our people would have condemned us if we hadn't taken steps to strengthen the defense capacity of our country. For many years we have been putting forward proposals on disarmament, and have harped on the need for a disarmament agreement. The Soviet Union unilaterally reduced its military forces, but the imperialist powers were ridiculing us, were increasing their military forces, and were increasing their military budgets. We were left with only two choices - to capitulate to the West or to demonstrate to them our military might. The imperialists apparently understand this language better, the whole course of history teaches us that. After the revolution we were subjected to an attack by France, Britain, Japan, Germany, the US, Poland - 14 countries altogether, but we were able to defend our independence. After that an attack by Japan on the Soviet Union followed in 1937, then the treacherous attack by Hitler's hordes. It is clear to everyone now that Britain and France pushed him to do this. So now, when we are trying to eradicate the consequences of the Second World War, we are being threatened with a new war, but we, too, have become different, the situation has changed, we possess the most powerful weapons, and we didn't have any other choice but to conduct new [nuclear] tests.

I would have betrayed the people's trust, continues N.S. Khrushchev, I would have

been unworthy of my high position, if I hadn't made this decision. If there is no agreement on disarmament, the nuclear testing program will be carried through to completion. Our scientists are capable of building a bomb with an explosive yield equivalent to 100 megatons of TNT. A bomb with such an explosive yield will not be tested, but several bombs equivalent to several dozen megatons of TNT will be exploded. This will allow us to build bombs with explosive yield equivalent to 50, 70, and 100 megatons of TNT. We don't need too many of these bombs. Such a bomb is a threat of disaster not only to the place where it detonates, but to other countries, too. We have already conducted three tests of smaller anti-missile and anti-aircraft bombs, but we will also conduct tests of more powerful bombs. If we are speaking about the moral side of testing, then we haven't even conducted one-third of the total amount of explosions conducted by Britain, America, and France, and we have to be strong so that we are able to defend our Motherland and the entire socialist camp. As J. Nehru correctly pointed out, the United States could start testing, however they are trying to put all the blame on us and to mislead politically inexperienced people. When a person is threatened, he protects himself by any means, and, after all, we have the most powerful weapons that have ever existed.

We have persistently put forward a proposal to disarm, and now, if a disarmament treaty is signed, there will be no need to conduct tests. However, the other side doesn't want such an agreement, it threatens us with war, and wants to fight us. Then let them learn our power and understand that they will receive a crushing response.

Please understand me correctly, says N.S. Khrushchev, this is a decision made under duress. We can give up testing if such a treaty is signed. The Americans are advocating a ban on atmospheric nuclear explosions, but they have no objection to continuing underground and outer space explosions, as well as [blasts] for "peaceful" purposes. There are no peaceful or non-peaceful explosions of nuclear devices even if a powerful explosion is necessary for shifting earth, then a military-grade nuclear device will be used for this, too. We very consistently advocate disarmament, we advocate that there be no weapons, armies, or headquarters. That way there will be no need for testing and perfecting weapons. It is surprising that they are appealing to us and not to their allies, the French, who are conducting tests and are not planning to stop them. Of course they did not condemn their ally. We advocate peace, but we will fight mercilessly if we are provoked. Messrs. imperialists have a strange logic! They kill in Bizerte, Algeria, Angola, and the Congo, they keep the Arabs and the Negroes in servitude, and at the same time they speak of morals, and they say that we are poisoning the atmosphere. The following comparison can be made: an executioner postpones the execution of a person who falls ill, but still hangs him after he recovers. The same is with the imperialists - they say that they care about the health of people, but at the same time they are stockpiling weapons which can end every form of life on Earth. I am not a pacifist, I am a Bolshevik, a government official. We want a free and peaceful life, and the imperialists want to take this away from us. Therefore we will do everything to arm ourselves the best way, so that the enemy knows what awaits it. Our decision to conduct tests is just as much in your interests as it is in ours, because if there were no socialist camp with the powerful military, the imperialists would bully everyone into submission and keep all nations in servitude. We don't want to be slaves of capitalism, we'd rather remain "slaves of Communism" as Western reporters say. I repeat again that we, the most powerful socialist country, would have been condemned by history if, having the ability to defend ourselves, we wouldn't have done everything possible to organize our defense. After all, every new system requires defense.

The conversation lasted two hours and 20 minutes. Present at the conversation on the Soviet side were: Cdes. A. A. Gromyko, V. V. Kuznetsov, I. A. Benediktov, I. V. Likhachev; on the Indian side: General Secretary of the MFA of India, R. K. Nehru, Ambassador of India to the USSR, S. Dutt, and Head of a department of the MFA of India, V. H. Coelho; and joined later on Ghanaian side by President K. Nkrumah and Ambassador of Ghana to the USSR, J. B. Elliott.

Recorded by: [Handwritten: "Yu. Vinogradov"] (Yu. Vinogradov)

[\[1\]](#) [Handwritten: "Has not been reviewed by Cde. Khrushchev"]