



**October 9, 1961**  
**Reception of Mohammed Murad Ghaleb,  
Ambassador of the United Arab Republic in the  
USSR, by N. S. Khrushchev**

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**Summary:**

Khrushchev and Ambassador Ghaleb discuss Soviet-UAR relations, emphasizing cooperation on the Aswan Dam and differing views on the UN "troika" proposal. Khrushchev offers candid criticism of Western influence and advises caution regarding Arab unification efforts, referencing the recent Syrian secession.

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RECEPTION OF MOHAMMED MURAD GHALEB, AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED ARAB  
REPUBLIC IN THE USSR, BY N. S. KHRUSHCHEV

9 October 1961\*

[faded handwriting at the bottom of the first page, probably "the record of the  
conversation was not reviewed by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev"]

N. S. Khrushchev received Ghaleb at his request and had a conversation with him. Greeting N. S. Khrushchev, Ghaleb said that he has already come to Moscow a third time, where from 1953 to 1957 he worked as a Secretary of the Egyptian Embassy and in addition he accompanied President Nasser during his visit to the Soviet Union in 1958.

N. S. Khrushchev. I am glad to welcome you, Mr. Ghaleb, in our country as Ambassador of the United Arab Republic. We think that we have formed good relations with the UAR, and do not see what could divide us. Therefore, we hope that our relations will be even better in the future. The construction of the Dam in Aswan might serve as an example of this. This Dam is not only your pride, but ours, too. Although I do not constantly follow these questions, it seems that the construction of the Dam is developing normally.

I think that we have no contentious questions with you. We act together on many questions in the area of international policy. It is true that on the question of the "troika" in the UN you take a somewhat different position. I attribute this to the fact that you have still insufficiently understood our point of view. It is possible that your Government has other considerations on this question.

What is the "troika"? It is a reality. Essentially, all international organizations should be constructed on this basis. If this does not happen, then one of the parties will constantly not recognize decisions of one organization or another. When I talked with Paul Reynaud, he asked me, would we be able to recognize the arbitration of the World Court [*mezhdunarodnyy sud*]. I answered him that we can recognize it if this Court is actually an arbitration court. Ask a Muslim whether he agrees to confess to a Christian. And, on the contrary, perhaps a Christian would confess to a Muslim. Of course not!

An arbitration court- this should be an objective and impartial court. How can Communists go to such a court which is notoriously known as an imperialist court?

But perhaps the imperialists would go to a Communist court? We are not fools and they are not fools. We will not go to an imperialist court, but they won't go to a Communist one. If there were three judges in such a court, from the imperialist, neutral, and socialist countries, then one could count on the objectivity of the court.

What is the UN? It is also to some degree an arbitration court. All questions in the UN should be decided objectively. Only in this event will the decisions of the UN be recognized by everyone. That is why we demand that the UN be constructed on the principle of a "troika".

Kennedy recently asserted that a "troika" should have one "coachman", and that one cannot do without a "coachman". At one time they said that the peoples cannot live without tsars and kings; it was said, they were given by God. The Americans themselves refuted this assertion, rising up against the rule of the English King and establishing a republican system. In the US the head of state is the President. We have a collective body of management in the country, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. We think that the argument about a "coachman" is bankrupt.

Sooner or later all peoples will come to an understanding of the need for a "troika". Otherwise UN bodies will not have authority. As long as there exists such situation as right now we will be forced to remove a shoe and bang on a desk at the UN. I remember when I banged a boot on the desk in the hall at a UN General Assembly session your minister of foreign affairs – he was sitting not far from me – looked at me and smiled.

We don't respect that institution where we don't enjoy equal rights! A time will come when we will have a majority in the UN and other international organizations. Then they, the imperialists, will themselves demand a "troika".

Three days ago I read an article of one famous American columnist who quite accurately noticed a trend toward such a change of the correlation of forces in the UN, as a result of which there might come a moment when the US itself will be forced to demand the adoption of the "troika" principle. Unfortunately, not all Arabs and not all black Africans understand our point of view on this question.

Moreover, part of them still fear imperialism, which intimidates them in every possible way. The refusal of the US to grant credits to Ghana to build a dam on the Volta River might serve as an example of such intimidation.

We think that possibly the moment has already come when it is necessary to introduce the secret ballot in the UN. Not every UN member is so brave as to openly vote against such rich and powerful countries as the US, FRG, and Britain.

Many representatives at the UN have told us: "We are for your proposal, but we are afraid to vote for it". With the secret ballot the element of fear would be absent in such delegates.

Now I would like to say some words about some domestic questions of Syria and the UAR. This is your internal matter, of course, and we don't want to interfere in it, but we are political people and have our opinions and our views.

President Nasser acted wisely in rejecting the unleashing of a war against Syria. If one is to speak frankly, such a war would have been impossible for Nasser and in view of the geographical position of Syria, which is separated from Egypt by the sea and borders Jordan and Israel. Of course, these countries would not have stood aside. Moreover, the American 6th Fleet is in Turkey. In such conditions it is necessary to have a strong navy and air force for a war. The President made the correct decision and did not permit a fight of Arabs against Arabs into which not only Arabs would have been drawn. Such a question cannot be solved by military force.

It is good that the President spoke in favor of accepting Syria in the UN and its recognition by other countries. All this is a continuation of a correct policy which the President has pursued after the events in Syria. He did not begin to wait for others to put pressure on him, but took the initiative into his own hands. He gained politically and morally.

I am not saying that what happened in Syria was good. If I said that you would have thought badly about me. I understand the position of the President. It is superfluous to say that the events in Syria damaged the UAR and the President personally.

In general, the President knows our point of view and I told him our opinion on the question of the union of Egypt and Syria.

I told Nasser: you are proud and in a hurry. Nasser replied to me that he was not being hasty, but the Syrians who feared for their independence. Then he was still offended by me. I advised him not to follow the lead of the Syrians, not to seek a union, [but] to seek a federation or confederation. In this event all the internal questions, with the exclusion of foreign policy and defense, would remain under the management of Syria. If domestic difficulties occurred in Syria, for example, of an economic nature, then the dissatisfaction of the Syrians would be turned against their own government. But now the dissatisfaction is directed against Egypt and President Nasser.

I do not want you to understand us badly. Everything that I am telling you I am saying confidentially so that only the President knows about this, and not the MFA chancery, and so that no one giggles. Now many smart people can be found inside the country who will start to gloat. I know this from personal experience, after our difficulties in Poland and Hungary. I want the President to strengthen his position.

In Syria they have adopted a French “culture of a thousand parties”. You broke them up. Nasser broke up the Socialist Party, expelling its leader Hawrani. You might not respect this Party, I also don’t respect it, but Hawrani was the leader behind whom people stood. You put a broom in motion and sort of swept clean, but then weeds began to grow.

If Nasser had sought a confederation, then other Arab countries, for example, Sudan and Lebanon, might have joined the confederation. But when these countries saw what happened with Syria, they were frightened.

Now many years will be needed to work to compensate for the damage inflicted on the very idea of Arab unity.

I told Nasser that the USSR is not afraid of Arab unity. From the point of view of the amount of power, that is crudely speaking, the Arabs do not scare us. There are 80 million of you, but 220 million of us. Arab unity is even more to our advantage since the Arabs would become stronger in the fight against colonialism, for we and you, if not allies, are then sympathizers in such a struggle.

But President Nasser got excited and acted incorrectly. I say this to you, frankly speaking, as a Communist. None of the Arabs will say this to you. I am not an enemy of Nasser and I do not envy him, therefore I can frankly express my opinion, even if he does not like it.

What happened in Syria should serve as a great and serious lesson. The President’s position is difficult. Many newspapers write about this, and yes I have information that there are difficulties inside Egypt.

That is what I wanted to say in connection with the events in Syria. When I meet with Nasser I will tell him about it more strongly. I do not say this from a bad attitude toward the President. I treat him with respect and I feel that he treats me with respect.

Ghaleb: Thank you for the frankness.

I have had the honor to be present at the discussions the President had with you in 1958. Then I recorded your conversation and therefore I will remember your statements about this question. I remember how you told the President about the need to organize the people. I was the chief of the President’s office when the exchange of ambassadors took place. I recall your message where you spoke of the differences between the interests of the workers and the factory owners, the peasants and the landowners.

The events in Syria occurred because of class contradictions. In 1958 all the strata of the population in Syria saw in the unification with Egypt a guarantee of the preservation of their interests. Right now those strata whose material interests were affected oppose unification. Accordingly, there was no firm basis in Syria for unification.

N. S. Khrushchev This is true, but not entirely. You can be sure that if the Communists have accomplished the unification they would have created a firm basis in the people in the person of the working class. When the people are organized there is no need to resort to force of arms.

Take Cuba for example. Fidel Castro is not a Communist, but he created support for himself in the form of all the people, handed out weapons to workers and peasants, and conducted an agrarian reform. Therefore when the US began the intervention against Cuba all the people rose to the defense of the country and killed the interventionists’ desire to infringe on the independence of Cuba.

Nasser said that he is building socialism. During the meeting I told him: “What kind of socialism can it be if you keep the most devoted fighters for the cause of socialism in prisons, the Communists?” You, Mr. Ambassador, might not record this phrase, [but] the President remembers it. I am not imposing my opinion on him, everyone has spoken about their understanding of socialism. We have also friendly conversations on this question with Nehru and Sukarno. They also asserted that they were building socialism. Nasser is also for socialism, but for his special socialism.

Ghaleb: I recall that in a conversation with A. Sadat you told him, “History will judge us”.

N. S. Khrushchev That’s absolutely right. I should note that our conversation with

Sadat was friendly, but your newspapers began to make a fuss that I imposed my opinion on him and also insulted [him]. My opinion is this - Communism is the strongest and most logical teaching.

I want to cite you an example which I didn't tell Nasser. In Stalin's lifetime and after his death the socialist countries turned to us with a request for acceptance into the USSR. Stalin answered them - no, and we, too, answered, no. But after all our countries have the same ideology. However, in such questions it is necessary to also take other factors into consideration - the material standard of living, the cultural level, etc. It is no secret that in Czechoslovakia the material standard of living is higher than ours. Accordingly, to unite with it at the present time means to lower this level. The Czechs would be upset with the Soviet Union. Therefore the question of unification is a matter of the future. Evidently such a thing will happen, but it is impossible to do this right now.

Ghaleb We are drawing lessons from the events in Syria. We have ideological differences with the USSR, but they don't prevent the development of friendly relations between our countries, and we want [them] not to prevent [them] in the future. Please understand me correctly. The imperialists will try to spoil our relations in connection with the events in Syria and to poison the friendly atmosphere. I am convinced that our relations will be even better, for friendship with the Soviet Union is a cornerstone of the foreign policy of the UAR. I hope that the UAR and the USSR will cooperate in the matter of the elimination of the consequences of the events in Syria.

N. S. Khrushchev I can assure you that we will do everything possible for no damage to be caused to Egypt. I told you all this confidentially and please report everything I have said directly to President Nasser so that the substance of the conversation not become known to third parties.

Ghaleb: I always do exactly that. I report directly to the President about all conversations with leaders of the USSR, bypassing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Permit me to thank you for the frank and valuable conversation and to pass you greetings and best wishes from President Nasser.

N. S. Khrushchev Pass wishes for [good] health and success to the President from me. The conversation lasted 50 minutes. Present at the conversation was Ye. D. Kiselev, Chief of the Department of the Countries of the Near East of the USSR MFA. The conversation was recorded by A. Baranochnikov, Attaché of the Department of the Countries of the Near East of the USSR MFA.