

## **December 11, 1961**

### **Comments of N. S. Khrushchev**

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#### **Summary:**

Khrushchev reflects on the German question, emphasizing the realities of East and West Germany and the broader Cold War tensions surrounding their division. He discusses the Berlin Crisis, NATO's role in maintaining geopolitical pressure, and the economic and political benefits of normalizing relations between the USSR and West Germany.

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**COMMENTS OF N. S. KHRUSHCHEV**

11 December 1961

Initially I wanted to say so that they understood, but then I will dictate what the nature of the document should be.

I would think it necessary to prepare a memorandum, a memorandum of an impersonal nature: neither from me, nor from the MFA, nor from anyone to anyone. But this memorandum is to present the essence of the situation which has now developed in the world and especially the question of Germany and the solution of the German question and the further development of relations between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany. This is the essence.

Why should there be just such a memorandum? I want to then shove it into Kroll's pocket for the New Year in order to say to Kroll: you have received nothing from me, and I have given nothing to you, etc., read it and tell me when you will have an opportunity [to give me] your opinion about this question; you can act with this document as you want.

So I am demanding nothing from him, [?do?] as you wish. This is front and center. If you have the opportunity and desire to express your opinion about this question, I will eagerly listen, again, when the opportunity affords itself (in order not to call especially).

And now the content for this note:

How many times we have been in a state of war with Germany: Germany actually attacked us, we have never attacked. What calamities our peoples have had as a result of these wars, both the peoples of the Soviet Union and the German people. And the last war, which Germany launched, was the bloodiest war.

Now such conditions have developed. As a result of this war Germany, as the defeated country, was deprived of much. How should things be in the future, what are the best possibilities that need to be seen in order to develop relations between our countries, the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany, that would be mutually beneficial and mutually acceptable?

There are two Germanys right now, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, and West Berlin, a question which will be decided, and the only possible and reasonable solution – based on recognition of West Berlin as a free city. One cannot find another solution with the situation which has developed.

Two world blocs have formed now – the NATO bloc and the countries of the Warsaw union [SIC – *ob'yedinenie*]. An arms race is being conducted between these two unions. And always, history has already shown, an arms race leads in the end to the launching of a war, because weapons can tempt one side or another, and it is evident from historical experience that this has ended in war. And right now we cannot exclude such a disastrous situation for the peoples.

The union of the Warsaw Pact countries is a forced union. It developed as a result of the creation of the NATO military pact which was called by the organizers, and just what it said, this bloc was created against the Soviet Union. Therefore this is a retaliatory measure. Both the Soviet Union and the countries in the Warsaw Pact have repeatedly declared that it would be reasonable to liquidate these blocs and be guided by the relations between the countries and to decide contentious questions peacefully and on the basis of the obligations accepted in the United Nations and guided by the UN Charter.

Right now it is such that it is necessary to reckon with this fact, with what is occurring.

Right now better minds than ours have been directed at how to avert war in order to preclude it. The Soviet Union and the countries of the Warsaw Pact have repeatedly solemnly declared that they do not pursue any aggressive or expansionist goals and that they are prepared for disarmament, etc. And this has been repeated many times.

The Western powers are not seeking an agreement right now either on disarmament...and are obstructing and will obviously stand in the way of finding a

solution about West Berlin and the German question, not because they are actually looking out for the interests of the population of West Berlin. No. They need West Berlin as a source of tension in the world, tension between countries, and thus to always have a heightened temperature and nerves on end, to hold in fear the other countries which are in NATO, but not leading in determining its policy, in order to bind them. Therefore they will do everything not to allow this.

And they also pursue these goals in their own interests in order to also keep West Germany in their NATO union.

Let's objectively look at the interests of West Germany from the point of view - we are not hiding [it] - our, Soviet [point of view].

In our opinion, what pushed West Germany to join NATO? West Germany joined NATO, pursuing aggressive goals with its NATO allies - throwing out socialism, the elimination of socialist ways in European countries. The policy is that which was directly imposed and declared by Dulles. Adenauer has held to this policy and other government leaders whose consciousness has been clouded by hatred for socialism and a desire to liquidate it also hold to this policy.

We will not argue right now what is better, capitalism or socialism, because this dispute does not lead to anything and because our positions here are completely opposite. And this memorandum also does not pursue the goal of achieving unity and an understanding on this question.

But life has gone as usual, history has developed, and countries have developed in their direction. And right now only a blind person absolutely deprived of common sense can think that socialist systems can be eliminated by war in this or that country, and it is especially impossible to think of eliminating socialist systems in all the socialist countries, that is, to eliminate the socialist system in countries which are developing on this basis.

And already America, that same De Gaulle, and others realize and even publicly state that the forces are equal right now. It is natural that always when countries calculate their forces and think that these forces are balanced that government leaders of common sense do not start a war because, as is well-known, for a war the military considers that those who begin a war should have superiority.

Accordingly, this one takes this argument - and we won't object to it, although we think that the socialist countries are stronger, but this difference will be exhibited even more in potential - but since the socialist countries are countries of a peace-loving nature, therefore this difference, so to speak, serves the cause of peace and not the cause of war and aggravation in the world...

But this says that, consequently right now, it is necessary to suppose that hopes have been lost for a solution to the problem of the existence of the socialist countries by military means, that they will develop in their own order.

And therefore either they want or don't want [this], declaring this or not, but such a reality is developing that it is necessary to be guided by the principle of the coexistence of two systems in the world - the capitalist and the socialist. This is a fact. And this fact is already recognized by a majority of the countries in the world, including the NATO countries.

If someone still has a glimmer of a hope then obviously this is simply stubbornness, and not a realization on the basis of some deep analysis.

If this is recognized, and they recognize it, then it is necessary to say that the hopes of government and political leaders of West Germany through entry into NATO and thereby setting the goal of solving national German problems, that is, the liquidation of the German Democratic Republic and its absorption and the strengthening of the capitalist German state, have been lost both for today, tomorrow, and the future. And evidently they are coming to this realization; the government leaders both inside the German state and the Western powers also understand this right now, and De Gaulle especially understands this. Therefore the courtship of De Gaulle, of France, for West Germany is not from excessive love, but is a desire to keep a strong partner around oneself or to be kept around it.

But such a condition does not all the same give West Germany and the German people anything; they cannot decide the question.

If this is recognized – and it is a reality – then accordingly it is necessary to reconsider the situation which has developed right now from this viewpoint, and what situation might be better for West Germany and for the world.

The situation would be better for West Germany – I will not say neutralization, a neutral position, etc. – but, in brief, to break with the aggressive policy of the militaristic nature of the revenge-seekers with respect to the East, because this policy is needed only for those forces which would like to maintain the tension in the world and thereby hold it in fear, to strengthen NATO, and through it, so to speak, mobilize the resources accordingly of more taxes to steal from the population and spend more money on weapons; but this will lead to a drain on the budget and the economy of West Germany.

The direction of such a policy and such a development makes an impression on America. In Khrushchev's conversations with Eisenhower, Eisenhower just explained why the US is prompting West Germany to arm itself and expand its armed forces and accumulate weaponry. Yes, he said, because if we don't put this [burden] on West Germany, then Germany has gained so much economic power that it already competes with us profitably on world markets. And this competition will develop in favor of Germany in the future. Therefore Eisenhower himself thereby spoke and expressed the interests and the goals of America. That is, this promotes a lowering of the economic potential and competitiveness of West Germany. This is actually so.

If one looks at this right now, and it is necessary to take it into consideration, because the forces are equal and it is recognized that it is impossible to solve contentious questions by military means, but this is the most reasonable conclusion to which everyone should come, then the question is that we will develop a competition in the economic area.

What is the most advantageous position for West Germany if [they] accept this point of view, that is, an economic competition of the two systems?

There is no need to guess here. This position, which would be to West Germany's advantage if it did not participate in the arms race, accordingly to come to agreement and find a common language with the Soviet Union and with the socialist countries, and consequently would also facilitate an agreement with the Western powers. Here West Germany was play a quite serious role so the Western powers would seek a real agreement about disarmament, etc.

We don't want to have a one-sided interest right now so that West Germany leaves NATO for the Warsaw union and disrupts the correlation of forces, as General De Gaulle said, which he does not want to admit, and yes, we also don't want this. We don't want to disrupt the correlation of forces, but we want to find a correct understanding to elimination tension and to come to agreement on disarmament and other conditions on the basis of an understanding and common sense, which would create normal conditions for peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition between the countries of socialism and the countries of capitalism.

At the same time, if one looks at it this way, whatever blocs and sevens or eights are created there, closed trade associations, etc. – this is all the same between competitors and therefore this does not create the best conditions for West Germany because this causes a competitive struggle, all these associations.

It needs to be recognized, and no one denies, and the business people of West Germany feel and understand this, and yes not only [those] of West Germany; it is no accident that even with the tension which exists in the world, the business circles of all the NATO countries are the most inclined to develop economic relations with the socialist countries, in spite of the resistance of the political leaders. What does this say? That right now a competitive struggle is developing and therefore West Germany with the United States, these are competing countries; West Germany and France are competing countries; West Germany and Britain are competing countries; West Germany and Japan are competing countries; West Germany and Italy, competition; West Germany and the Soviet Union – no, [they are] complementary. This needs to always be remembered. Why complementary? Because we are not competitors. On the contrary, we are rapidly developing countries which need a large quantity of machinery, we are a country which can absorb the goods of the talented German people on a mutually-beneficial commercial basis. And we are doing good

trading right now, in spite of the interference which they are trying to make in this trade.

The other socialist countries are, so to speak, an open ocean to absorb industrial machinery production, namely the machine production in which the Germans are strong.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries are rich in the minerals which the Federal Republic of Germany needs. In brief, all the requirements which are necessary to develop industry, for a competitive struggle, are needed by the Federal Republic of Germany; it can get [them] from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and it can sell its goods to these countries.

The Western countries in NATO understand this, and they are taking steps just to create tension in order to keep West Germany in its union, in order to thereby impose the burden of the consequences of the war hysteria on it and increase military expenditures so that it does not have an advantage over other countries in the competition struggle. And political goals, in order that West Germany does not use its geographical position and its economic potential and not get in contact with the Soviet Union and its economy on a mutually advantageous basis, etc.

If one speaks about West Berlin right now, they speak of the population of West Berlin, about the concerns about this West Berlin. If this is deeply analyzed, if a political leader thinks deeply, then this is all a lie, they say this to deceive politically immature people. But essentially no one is threatening the population of West Berlin, no one is infringing on it.

As we have declared – and we think that the Western powers believe what we genuinely want, and we sincerely say – why do they not trust why do they reject [this]? Because if the question of West Berlin is decided then the splinter will be pulled out which has created the inflammation in the healthy organism of the relations in Europe between countries, and especially between the Soviet Union, the socialist countries, and West Germany; and to politically keep West Germany in the aggressive NATO bloc via this inflammatory process.

Let's analyze what the population of West Berlin needs right now.

If the political and government leaders of West Germany recognize that the ability to eliminate the socialist system in the German Democratic Republic by military force has been lost, and therefore the opportunity to absorb it has been lost – but this has been lost – then if the national sentiments and concern for their fellow countrymen, the residents of West Berlin, are speaking here, then what is needed for this to sympathize with them and assist them? First of all, peace of mind for West Berlin. It is first of all necessary for West Berlin not to be a volcano, for West Berlin not to be a front-line city, as they call it in the West, but for the population of West Berlin to get normal conditions for their lives, development, and the development of the economy. But what is needed for this? It is necessary to eliminate the tension, to eliminate the occupation regime, and to normalize relations.

If one says it is necessary to eliminate the Wall dividing West Berlin from the German Democratic Republic, well it is impossible to come to agreement on this question right now. This concerns West Berlin and the German Democratic Republic. But this is a border. It is not a division, but it is a border, and obviously it is impossible to come to agreement about [its] elimination.

But once this is impossible, it means it is impossible to create normal conditions for the residents of West Berlin. These normal conditions might be created only when the situation is normalized and the occupation regime ends and a free city is created, the troops withdrawn, and the situation normalized.

There can not be a normal situation in West Berlin if a normal situation is not created for the development of the economy of West Berlin. Because it is impossible for the population of West Berlin to exist on some handouts, because the handouts might have a temporary nature and pursue political ends, but they cannot be permanent. Because no idiot will be found who would give [them] and receive nothing.

Therefore it is necessary to create the conditions for the population living in West Berlin to be vigorous so that they can produce as much as they consume and so that this development of the economy has a trend in its development, because the

population and the needs of West Berlin will grow; and in order not to lag behind other countries. Consequently for this it is necessary, first, to renew the capital, renovate the equipment, and grow labor productivity, and for this orders are needed, and for this capital needs to be invested, etc.

But who will invest capital and concern themselves about a growth of productivity if this is a front-line city? No one. Then already those business people who have enterprises, they do not think about the development of their production, but think of where to go from West Berlin in order to locate this production more profitably.

That is realism. And right now, if one follows the Western press, then this process has already begun. Therefore if a solution to the question of an agreement and normalization of relations is not found then in a quite short period the city of West Berlin itself will end its existence and it will die economically. The people will seek their way out.

(Maybe give figures here).

(It is hard to say right now whether the FRG government is capable of boldly assessing the situation and, the main thing, boldly drawing a conclusion from the situation which has developed. But the conclusion – needs not to take its lead from the aggressive minds, the government and political leaders, and the leaders of the aggressive NATO bloc. But it is necessary to determine the interests of one's own people, the interests of the German people, and the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany.

But these interests, they might first of all be secured in the normalization of relations between the Germans and the Soviet Union. And this is in the interests of not only the German people and the peoples of the Soviet union and the socialist countries, but also in the interests of the Western countries.

But no one who reads this should think that we want to add a capitalist country, the Federal Republic of Germany, to the socialist countries. It is true that the FRG is quite strong and powerful economically, and 50 million in population. But understand, that right now a dispute is not settled with the size of the population of 50 million and with the economic potential which the FRG has, because the socialist countries and, first of all, the development of the economy of the Soviet Union, whoever follows it sees that it is developing and quite successfully and rapidly. Therefore, from the point of view of defense and the ability to maintain the balance so that the socialist countries be no weaker than the countries of the NATO military bloc, this question is decided on the condition when West Germany is in such a position as it is today, among the NATO countries.

This should not be, and we should pursue a common human goal, for this to then prompt other countries to more realistically approach the solution of questions that have come to a head in order to solve all the questions without war and to create normal conditions, that is, to clear the atmosphere for economic competition. But already in our dispute – of socialism and capitalism – each side will take its position here. And let's not show one another right now who is right, because we cannot come to agreement here because one can say beforehand that each will remain of his own opinion, and let history judge us. But let history judge not through war, not through conflicts, but through peaceful competition which side will give more benefits to its own people, which system will provide more benefits. It is obvious that that system will attract the minds of the peoples of the other countries.

The Germans might not be last in this competition, and they have long ago shown their capabilities to the entire world. And the Germans also occupy one of the leading places in their economic development after this bloody war and the destruction which took place.

(I should have thought and given good reasons to show the benefits for West Germany of improving relations with us. It is not necessary to strive to get them out of there. But evidence of such an objective nature is needed here – economic and political. Then this document is strong for a person who chooses how to decide. If we simply pull to ourselves then it's simply every bird likes its own nest. If this document is of such a nature, then it is beckoning to one's own "shop". But we need to show [this] objectively).

One can say –

We know what your allies are saying. If we make concessions - but this means - concessions, if they are subordinated to common sense and they will sign the peace treaty - they fear that West Germany will leave. Consequently, they are not making this tension in the interests of Germany, but in their own interests in order to keep Germany.

But with the continuation of the "Cold War" they don't provide a solution to the question. They themselves see that this is an absurdity, that it is impossible to come to agreement, that the correlation of forces is not such right now. Consequently, an exploitation of the revanchist forces and nationalist sentiments of West Germany is going on here in order to inflame the revanchist ambitions and absorption. But they themselves know that [one or two words illegible] and the danger is concealed, that if a war is launched then all countries will suffer and West Germany will suffer most of all.

One can say -

The last conversation of the Chancellor with the Ambassador of the Soviet Union where he said that a war cannot be permitted because of West Berlin - (say how he said [it]) - is a correct understanding.

And so, if this is correctly understood, so it is necessary to draw the correct conclusions from this. The correct conclusion is this - to normalize relations with us so that West Germany becomes an active force when deciding these unresolved questions, and create normal conditions, etc.

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You can work on all this, your deadline is still very long. In brief, I will return on about 24-25 December. It should be done by this time, to have this document when I return from Ukraine. And then I would give it, if this document turns out to be attractive.

Recorded by N. Gavrilova

5ng 12 December 1961