

September 12, 1962

**Record of a Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev With
the Minister of State and Permanent Representative
of Saudi Arabia in the UN, Ahmad Shukeiry**

Citation:

"Record of a Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev With the Minister of State and Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia in the UN, Ahmad Shukeiry", September 12, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI, f. 52, op. 1, d. 577, ll. 11-2. Contributed by Sergey Radchenko and translated by Angela Greenfield.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/300934>

Summary:

On September 12, 1962, N.S. Khrushchev met with Saudi Arabian representative Ahmad Shukeiry in Gagra to discuss various global issues. They covered Soviet intervention in Egypt and the Middle East, European imperialism in Africa, the Algerian and Indonesian struggles against colonial powers, and US elections and labor unions. Khrushchev emphasized the USSR's competition with the capitalist world, while Shukeiry expressed gratitude for Soviet support in Arab and anti-imperialist movements, including Palestine. They also discussed potential Soviet-Saudi diplomatic relations and Khrushchev's possible visit to the UN General Assembly.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

SECRET. Copy No.1
19 September 1962
Outgoing No.574/obv

RECORD of A conversation of N. S. KHRUSHCHEV
with the Minister of State and Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia in the UN,
Ahmad SHUKEIRY
12 September 1962 in Gagra

Shukeiry thanks N. S. Khrushchev for giving him and his wife the opportunity to visit the Soviet Union and to see with his own eyes the enormous progress that the Soviet Union has achieved in every aspect of life. This progress has become possible only within the existing social system in the USSR and with the current government leadership which cares about the development of the country and the improvement of people's lives. In the course of the week's stay in the Soviet Union, Shukeiry says, he visited Moscow, Leningrad, and Sochi, visited a factory, construction sites, a subway system, and other sites, and was amazed with the achievements of the Soviet people. In the metal forging shop of the machinebuilding factory in Leningrad Shukeiry observed the work of the giant drop hammer. In his conversation with the workers he said that the imperialists should be put under such a hammer and be eradicated forever and ever. The workers welcomed this statement with great approval. In Sochi Shukeiry visited beautiful health resorts located in palaces. Only tsars lived there before, and now regular folk spend their vacation in them. What I especially was impressed with, said Shukeiry, was the attentive treatment of people by the doctors. Unlike doctors in Western countries, who in their majority view this noble profession as a business and strive to get money out of the client and then get him out of the office as fast as they can so that they can see the next patient and get paid again, the Soviet doctors want to help the person in the first place, regardless of how much time it takes. In capitalist countries healthcare is very expensive, and doctors, according to Shukeiry, are some of the biggest rip-off artists.

N. S. Khrushchev inquired whether Shukeiry was planning to visit Siberia and the Central Asian Republics. He briefly mentions that Siberia is a very large region, rich in various natural resources. It is known for very harsh weather conditions. The frosts reach -40°-50° and sometimes even -60°. But Siberia is known not only for its harsh climate, but also for its remarkable people and grandiose buildings. For example, it would be very interesting to visit Bratsk Hydroelectric Power Station, the biggest in the Soviet Union and in the world, with a capacity of 4.5 MkW.

Shukeiry remarked that evidently the austere environment has developed in the Soviet people perseverance, resilience, strength and courage known throughout the world.

N. S. Khrushchev agreed with this statement and, by way of example, told him that during the war the Siberians were great fighters. However, after the war none of them stayed in the European part of the Soviet Union, where, as it is well-known, the climate is milder than in Siberia. All of them returned to their home towns. This proves that they love Siberia, and go to the south only on vacation, to recuperate, and to swim in the sea. N. S. Khrushchev advised Shukeiry to also visit Baku, and then through the Caspian Sea travel to other Central Asian republics where Muslims live. He briefly characterized these republics, saying that Azerbaijan is known for its abundance of oil and developed machine building, while the Uzbek Republic specializes in highly productive agriculture, and especially in cotton farming. Industry in this republic is not as developed, compared to the rest of the Soviet Union, though there are a lot of industrial enterprises in Uzbekistan. In Tashkent, for example, Shukeiry could visit a textile mill, which employs thousands of workers. It would be also interesting to visit Kazakhstan - the largest republic by area after the RSFSR, which is rich in fertile land and natural resources.

Shukeiry thanked him and said that, when he is in the USSR the next time, he will definitely follow N. S. Khrushchev's advice and take a trip following this itinerary. At present, however, he ought to rush back to the UN General Assembly session.

Shukeiry expressed his hope that Khrushchev would find time to visit Arab countries whose people deeply respect the Soviet Union and N.S. Khrushchev personally for the firm and consistent support of their struggle for independence. The Arabs are grateful to the Soviet Union for helping Syria and Lebanon obtain independence in 1945. The decisive factor in the cessation of the tripartite British-French-Israeli aggression against Egypt was the firm position and effective support provided by the Soviet Union to the Egyptian people.

N. S. Khrushchev remarked that he had already received a number of invitations from many countries, but there was never enough time. Recently Soviet journalists visited the UAR on the occasion of a national holiday in this country. In his conversation with them President Nasser reiterated his invitation for N. S. Khrushchev to visit the United Arab Republic. But at this time, N. S. Khrushchev continued, he has a lot of things to do and it is hard to allocate time for this trip.

Shukeiry repeated his wish that N.S. Khrushchev visited the Arab countries.

N.S. Khrushchev said that according to what he heard from the knowledgeable Frenchmen during the aggression against Egypt, the French Prime Minister Guy Mollet slept in his office. When he was informed that the USSR had issued a serious warning that it would use weapons against the aggressors, he ran to call Eden without even pausing to pull on his pants. Twenty-two hours after this warning the military actions were halted and the aggression stopped. In an attempt to play down the impact of the Soviet warning, pro-Westerners claimed that the military action was halted in compliance with the UN decisions. However everyone knows that the UN decisions had already been adopted but the war against Egypt had continued nevertheless.

Shukeiry stressed once again that the Soviet Union played a decisive role in the cessation of the aggression against Egypt. Additionally he stressed that if the Soviet Union didn't exist, then the Arab countries would have been thrown back to the 19th century. Arab countries, Shukeiry stated, are currently fighting for their independence and have achieved great success on this path, but have not achieved full political, economic, and cultural liberation. Moreover there are still imperialist military bases in the Arab East, including [in] Israel. We are going to fight, Shukeiry said, for the elimination of these bases, and in doing so we are counting on the help of the mighty Soviet Union as our neighbor. He stressed that in the Palestinian question the Soviet Union had always taken the position that was in the interests of the Arabs, and specifically, on the issue of the Palestinian refugees. As to Ben-Gurion, according to Shukeiry, the Arabs will "pull his pants down" on their own.

Shukeiry said that it would be desirable for N. S. Khrushchev to come to the opening session of the UN General Assembly. Shukeiry stressed that the presence of N.S. Khrushchev at the UN General Assembly would be very useful for all nations and for the cause of peace. He would welcome him at this session from the bottom of his heart, as he did two years ago.

N. S. Khrushchev responded that at present the circumstances are not conducive to that. At present there is a congressional election campaign in the US, and there is a dog fight between the Republican and the Democratic parties. My arrival, said N.S. Khrushchev, would only intensify this squabble, and we could be accused of interfering in the elections. Under these conditions we wouldn't want to provoke them, and there is no need for that. It is true, mentioned N. S. Khrushchev, that two years ago at the time of his visit to the UN, there were presidential elections in the US, but then we wanted to stick it to Eisenhower and Nixon, and now we don't need that. N. S. Khrushchev added that in general he does not exclude the possibility of the visit to the UN General Assembly in the second half of November, if there is a need for that, when the elections are over and the passions subside in the US.

Shukeiry said that N. S. Khrushchev's participation in the work of the UN General Assembly in 1960 was very beneficial for all nations, including for the American people, who learned of the USSR's position on the key issues of today's world. The nations were able to hear a word of truth about the Soviet Union and its policy.

N. S. Khrushchev returning to the issue of the US elections, noted that he doesn't understand how one can talk about any sort of democracy in America, when all the power is accumulated in the hands of the bigwigs of the two parties, and the common people are for the most part apolitical. The leaders of American workers are bribed by

the bourgeoisie. There is not a single honest person among the US union leaders, with the exception of the chairman of the longshoremen's union in San Francisco. N. S. Khrushchev met him when he visited the United States. All sorts of accusations were made against this honest union leader, and he apparently was even tried in court. In the United States the workers have a rather high quality of life but it's a result of robbing other nations. American capitalists pay their workers rather high wages, and the nations robbed by them are starving. Capitalists always operate like real robbers.

Shukeiry on his part added that, indeed, America and other capitalist countries in Europe steal bread from the nations of Asia and Africa. He said that he had an occasion to visit the luxurious palace of the President of France where tremendous treasures are accumulated. The French are proud of them, but Shukeiry told them then that these treasures cannot be an object of pride because they have been stolen from the African people.

N. S. Khrushchev says that he remembers the reception organized in his honor by De Gaulle during his visit to France. At this reception De Gaulle assembled a lot of black people and other so-called representatives of French colonial possessions. He came up to N. S. Khrushchev with such "representative" from Algeria, quite a young woman. N. S. Khrushchev asked her whether Algeria wanted freedom. She responded to that that Algeria wanted to always be with France. Then N. S. Khrushchev asked her what the Algerians, who were fighting the war against France in Algeria, thought about this issue. She didn't have an answer to that. "Representatives" of the black nations present at the reception stated that their nations also wanted to remain with France. N. S. Khrushchev notes that one day such representatives will be hung from a tree by the African nations. These people are paid vassals of French imperialists.

Shukeiry agreed with N. S. Khrushchev's statements and added that the presence of his wife at the meeting doesn't allow him to call these people by their true names. He then proceeded to compare them with harlots of Champs Elysees.

N. S. Khrushchev said that back at the beginning of the Algerian war Guy Mollet tried to convince him of the need to promote a peaceful resolution of the Algerian issue. N. S. Khrushchev told him then that for this issue to be peacefully resolved, Algeria had to be given independence. Guy Mollet responded that it was impossible because there were two million Europeans living in Algeria. N. S. Khrushchev asked: then how many Algerians are there in Algeria? Guy Mollet responded that there were 7 million. N. S. Khrushchev reminded Guy Mollet that the Vietnamese people fought for their rights for seven years and ultimately gained their independence. Similarly, the war in Algeria may continue for seven years but the Algerians will get their victory. So it happened exactly how N. S. Khrushchev told Guy Mollet. I wonder what would Guy Mollet have said if I met him now, N.S. Khrushchev remarked.

Shukeiry expressed gratitude to the Soviet Union for the assistance to Algeria.

N. S. Khrushchev then said that the British Empire consisted of a lot of countries, including India, but one could not compare the living conditions in England with the conditions of Indian people who were literally starving to death. Talking about equality within the British Empire was out of the question, since Britain robbed nations that were part of this empire, and was able to pay its workers higher wages at their expense. Tsarist Russia, continued N. S. Khrushchev, also included a number of neighboring nations into its empire. People of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus were approximately in the same situation, and they were united by a number of common characteristics, including the cognate languages. The Tsarist government also granted a number of privileges to Georgia. As to other nations, such as peoples of the Central Asia, they were predominantly completely illiterate, and some even led a nomadic life. In the 45 years of Soviet rule these republics have developed their own industry, and [created] highly developed agriculture and national culture. In this short period of time the people, who took over the government and gained independence, created their own science and technology cadre, and made great strides in the development of their republics. N. S. Khrushchev said that some very remarkable people grew up in these formerly backward regions. Their national cadre is in charge of governing them. They also have scientific institutions which play a great role in the scientific life of the USSR. For example, the Kazakh Science Academy is led by a Kazakh who is one of the leading Soviet geologists.

N. S. Khrushchev said that he often visits Uzbekistan and is very familiar with the head of the farm, Tursunkulov, who didn't have any land before the revolution and worked as a farm laborer. The farm of which this talented person is in charge, is very well-off. I was told, continued N. S. Khrushchev, that once an Indian delegation came to visit there. After a tour of the farm facilities one of the members of this delegation, a representative of Indian intelligentsia, was invited to have lunch at Tursunkulov's. When they were sitting at the table, the Indian man suddenly started crying. He explained his tears by the fact, that seeing how well-off the Soviet people were, he remembered the poverty and the bitter life of his own people.

When talking about changes that took place in the 45 years of the Soviet rule, N. S. Khrushchev remarked that in Batumi area, as he was told, there was a village divided into two parts by the Soviet-Turkish border. The Soviet part of the village is flooded at night with electric lights; tractors and other agricultural machinery are working in the fields, and on the other side of the border everything is still the same as it was 45 years ago. Even kerosene is in short supply there. This is a real-life example for studying the history of the changes that have taken place during the years of the Soviet rule in the formerly backward regions of Russia.

Shukeiry noted that possibly in the future the Soviet Union will become the seat of the United Nations. Then the UN would have to take a decision on visiting this village in order to study such an illustrative example. This would be much more beneficial than the dozens of speeches and resolutions of this organization. He then says that the imperialism is trying to justify its dominance in Asia and Africa by supposedly carrying out a civilizing mission with respect to these continents. However, Shukeiry continues, the example of the Asian republics of the Soviet Union, and specifically of the aforementioned village, pull the rug from under the feet of imperialism. The nations of Asia and Africa can see in the example of the USSR that all nations have sufficient skills to achieve progress in all aspects of life with their own recourses. Imperialism just creates obstacles on the path to this progress. These obstacles need to be removed, and for them to be removed, [people] will have to fight and liquidate imperialism.

N. S. Khrushchev, talking about the competition between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world, mentions that the USSR has harsher climatic conditions which require considerably more material resources. Soviet people need clothes for the summer, for the fall, and for the winter, solid warm houses, and lots of fuel. Most of the land in the Soviet Union is covered by snow for extended periods of time. Therefore a person needs to put a lot of work to procure supplies for the winter, both for their own sustenance, and for the welfare of the animals. People in severe climate conditions have to have better diets. In the US the climate is mild in most regions, the cattle is out on open pastures year-round. People in southern countries are in even more favorable conditions. I believe, said N. S. Khrushchev, that in the USSR it takes twice as much effort than in America, and three to four times more than in Africa, to provide [good] living conditions for people. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union has challenged the capitalist world and [I am] convinced we will succeed.

Before leaving for Moscow, Shukeiry said, agents of the Western countries asked him of the purpose of his visit to the Soviet Union. He responded that he was going to the Soviet Union to familiarize himself with its life and successes. Before I would travel to the UN General Assembly sessions through Paris and London, Shukeiry remarks, but this time I wanted to travel there through Moscow.

Shukeiry said that he was happy to visit the Soviet Union after the space flights of cosmonauts Nikolayev and Popovich, who once again confirmed the superiority of the USSR not only on land but in space, too. He would like to use this opportunity to extend his sincere congratulations to N. S. Khrushchev on the occasion of the victory of Soviet science which serves for the benefit of all the nations in the world.

X
X

X

At the dinner, at which A.I. Mikoyan was present, N. S. Khrushchev touched upon the issue of West Irian. He said that the Soviet Union substantially aided Indonesia with

arms, as well as sent its military experts there to provide training for the Indonesian military. Indonesia received submarines and surface combat vessels armed with missiles. In this manner Indonesia was guaranteed the ability to successfully fight for West Irian against the Netherlands. As you know, the Netherlands are a member of NATO. In the current situation the US is facing a sensitive issue: how to deal with Indonesia's demands with respect to West Irian. Of course America's sympathies are on the side of the Netherlands which is a member of NATO. However, on the other hand, they were forced to take into account the unavoidable defeat of the Netherlands should the military actions begin, which in turn would damage the US reputation. If the US decided to help the Netherlands, then they would unmask themselves in the face of all the nations. Therefore the US were forced to support the transfer of West Irian to Indonesia. The Dutch were very unhappy about that, and the Dutch Minister made a statement about this in the parliament.

Shukeiry remarked to this that the US were trying to put on the peacekeeper's hat in the face of the cannons. In this case, Shukeiry continued, providing Indonesia with weapons ensured the triumph of law, justice, and freedom. At the same time, the provision of weapons by the Americans to Cuban counterrevolutionaries, who are undergoing training in Miami, is directed against freedom and justice.

Speaking about Algeria, N. S. Khrushchev said that the Soviet Union provided substantial arms aid to the fighting Algerians through UAR and Morocco.

Shukeiry said that he knew of that.

Going back to the topic of the tripartite aggression against Egypt, N. S. Khrushchev said that during the visit to Britain in 1956, the British received him with [diplomatic] correctness but condescendingly. They, however, were told directly that if they continued that way, the visit would have to be cut short and [the Soviet delegation] would have to leave Britain. After this, the British immediately changed their demeanor. In their conversation with us, continued N. S. Khrushchev, they were saying that they had a vital interest in the Middle-Eastern oil, and would protect their interests in this region. To this [we] responded that in case of aggression the Soviet Union would not remain indifferent to the events that would unfold not far from its southern borders and would interject in them. Apparently, N. S. Khrushchev remarked, the British didn't treat this warning with due seriousness. N. S. Khrushchev also said that, when he was in the car with S. Lloyd, the latter told him that "a little bird told him" that the Soviet Union was providing weapons to Yemen. To which N. S. Khrushchev responded that "the little bird told him", too, about the arms shipments to Turkey and Iran by the West. This was happening at the time when the Soviet Union had already provided weapons to Egypt.

N. S. Khrushchev further said that when the Soviet government was discussing possible measures on our part for stopping the British-French-Israeli aggression, he personally proposed to send an invitation to the United States to act jointly with the Soviet Union against Britain, France and Israel. Slow-witted Molotov was opposing it then, stating that the United States wouldn't go for that. We understood this perfectly well, N.S. Khrushchev continued, but we counted on the fact that an official rejection by the US would expose their true goals. After the US rejected our proposal, we took the next step and sent a warning to Eden, Guy Mollet and Ben-Gurion. Twenty-two hours after that the aggression stopped.

At the same time the Hungarian events were taking place, so the British were offering us a commercial deal in politics – they would not interfere in the Hungarian events, and we wouldn't interfere in their dealings in the Middle East. They were told that these were separate issues. Events in Hungary were an internal business of the Hungarian people, and an act of aggression was taking place in the Middle East. The British were clearly told that the Soviet Union was not going to enter into any sort of political deals.

Shukeiry remarked that Lloyd was a narrow-minded politician with habits of a Manchester tradesman. And in general, according to Shukeiry, mercantile attitude towards politics is characteristic of the British.

On his part, Shukeiry said that during the discussion of the question of giving independence to Cyprus at the UN, the British representatives were trying to convince Arab delegates that the British military should stay in Cyprus in order to

protect the Middle Eastern countries. Then Shukeiry delivered a speech from the speakers' rostrum at the UN and asked: from whom are the British intending to protect the Middle East? Who is threatening it? The only threat against it originates in Britain, and that's who the region needs to be protected from.

Shukeiry said that a year ago he had a talk about the Soviet-Saudi relations with King Saud, and he tried to convince him to exchange diplomatic missions with the Soviet Union. Shukeiry told the King that the current state of Soviet-Saudi relations was abnormal, as it was illogical to look over the shoulder to America since it itself maintained diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and had an embassy in Moscow. Establishing normal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, as Shukeiry told the King, is more in the interests of Saudi Arabia than of the Soviet Union. Shukeiry told N. S. Khrushchev that naturally one cannot be more American than Americans themselves, and expressed his hope that in the nearest future the exchange of diplomatic missions between Saudi Arabia and the USSR will take place, and it will promote the development of the relations between the two countries.

A.I. Mikoyan said that there was a fear that sharp statements of Shukeiry at the UN would be met in Saudi Arabia with disapproval, and that would have an impact on the position of Shukeiry himself. To which Shukeiry remarked that these fears had no basis. Furthermore, his statements are met with widest possible approval among various social circles in Arab countries and he is proud of that. As to the American printed media, which calls Shukeiry the red representative of King Saud, according to Shukeiry, it is of little interest to him because he knows what kind of media it is.

The conversation was recorded by A.S. Semioshkin and V.Ya. Lomakin.

3 copies, -ik/AS

No.1307-obv

18.09.1962

[two illegible signatures]

[handwritten: Pr. 3674-gs

19.09.1962]