

October 1, 1962

Transcript of the Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and a Gandhi Peace Foundation (India) Delegation

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Summary:

On October 1, 1962, N.S. Khrushchev met with a delegation from India's Gandhi Peace Foundation to discuss nuclear disarmament and ongoing arms negotiations. The delegation presented concerns about nuclear testing and urged the Soviet Union to take unilateral steps toward disarmament. Khrushchev responded that while the USSR was willing to sign an agreement to halt nuclear testing, the United States' refusal to accept verification measures and continued military expansion made such an agreement difficult. The conversation also covered US foreign policy, Soviet-Indian relations, and global security issues.

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TRANSCRIPT

[handwritten: uncorrected]

CONVERSATION BETWEEN N. S. KHRUSHCHEV
and a "Gandhi Peace Foundation" (India) delegation

1 October 1962 (Ashkhabad)

U. N. Dhebar First of all, allow me, Your Excellency, to pass you greetings and best wishes from the President of India and Prime Minister Nehru.

N. S. Khrushchev Thank you. Please, when you are in India, pass my deep respects to Prime Minister Nehru and the President. I have the best recollections of the conversations which I had with the Prime Minister and President, and I think that we have the very best relations.

U. N. Dhebar Your Excellency, we consider you one of us.

N. S. Khrushchev Thank you. There are really the warmest close fraternal relations between our people and the Indian people. We do not have anything that keeps us apart.

U. N. Dhebar When you were in India, Your Excellency, I had the pleasure of receiving you as Chairman of the Congress Party, but today we have come in another capacity. We have come at the instruction of the "Gandhi Peace Foundation". Our organization was created to commemorate the name of Gandhi, and Prime Minister Nehru and former President Prasad are members, as is well-known. I am a member of the Executive Committee and my colleague is the Secretary of the Executive Committee. A conference of our Foundation was held in June of this year in which representatives of all part and all the most important organizations of India took part. We also had guests from other countries, including representatives of the Soviet Union. Thanks to the kind assistance of the Soviet ambassador in Delhi we had Academician [Tan], a representative of the Soviet Union, at our Conference. And the Conference decided to send delegations to the heads of the nuclear powers. In implementation of the Conference's decision one part of the delegation was sent to the United States to meet with President Kennedy, and another part of the delegation, present here now, was sent to meet with you in the Soviet Union.

We have been honored and in Moscow we were received by Mr. Georgadze, the Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and Mr. Kuznetsov, and they told us in detail about the policy of the Soviet Union about all questions which, of course, are well known in India. We have come here right now to pass on the people's alarm about nuclear tests, and we call upon Your Excellency to help solve this difficult problem.

We know how both the government of the United States as well as the government of Russia [SIC] very much want to cease all testing, but a difficult situation exists and the tests go on and on. Of course, we understand the difficulties connected with this, in individual countries; however, a great danger exists, a danger for all humanity.

N. S. Khrushchev All?

U. N. Dhebar I would like of course to say something else, but this is the main thought.

Millions of people in India view you, Mr. Prime Minister, as a person who has consistently advocates for peace. I think if anyone can facilitate the strengthening of peace, it is first of all the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union. This literally includes all the members of all the parties of India, regardless of their party affiliation. And here we have come from the Indian people to express our desire that peace, eternal peace, reign on the Earth. Our great leader, M. Gandhi, who was passionately devoted to the cause of peace, had the same views as you.

N. S. Khrushchev First of all I want to express to you the most sincere gratitude for the correct understanding of the policy which the Soviet government pursues on the questions of disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear testing. I express to you sincere gratitude for such a high appreciation of my role in questions of the struggle

for disarmament and securing peace.

Permit me to express deep appreciation to you, the people who devote their activity and direct their efforts to averting a worldwide catastrophe. This is a most noble activity, the struggle for peace; it demands the efforts of all peoples. Only on this condition can a worldwide catastrophe be averted which might break out in the form of a Third World War, now a nuclear war.

I am familiar with the work of your congress and the documents, have also familiarized myself with the appeal which you sent me, and am well acquainted with your mission. Your activity suits our understanding and therefore I have decided to meet with you, even though I am not in Moscow. But once you did not consider the difficulties and agreed to come to Ashkhabad, then I was ready and pleased to hold a conversation with you, to listen to you, and to express my views to you.

U. N. Dhebar No, on the contrary, we put you in a difficult position.

N. S. Khrushchev I am flying to Dushanbe today, to the Republic of Tajikistan, and then I will be in Tashkent in about four days.

Now, I would like to express my views as to the substance of the question which you touched upon and in connection with which you have made such a long journey.

Here you say: both the Soviet Union and America are interested and seeking disarmament and a cessation of tests, etc. to an equal degree. I think that you are mistaken in this.

Negotiations are going on to halt the testing of nuclear weapons. Eight neutral countries have worked out their platform. India is the author of this document and an initiator. We have publicly declared that we agree with this proposal. And why then is there no agreement? If America also declared this then an agreement would have been signed. It means that America takes another position. But you say the same. (Commotion). It means that you are mistaken.

I will cite you another example. We say that the national means are sufficient to be able to track the explosions which are being conducted in any country. But America says [they] are insufficient. But they said this when we offered to sign an agreement, maybe three or four years ago already, about halting tests and then the question was not of underground explosions, but about tests in general. And we said: let's sign without any monitoring, and we'll accept the responsibility. America said: no, this is insufficient, monitoring points on the territory of the Soviet Union are absolutely necessary.

It is clear that this pursues intelligence and espionage goals. And now the Americans and the entire world admit that no monitoring posts are required to monitor the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere.

We have said this for five years, or even more. Now they have trumped up underground tests.

In general we don't conduct underground tests, but we have decided to check America and expose that they are lying when they assert that national means are insufficient to track tests through underground explosions. You know, speaking jokingly, it happens this way: about a person who pretends to be deaf, they say so - when they tell him give (they ask him), then he is deaf: but? what? I don't hear; but when they say no, he says come on, he hears (commotion).

America takes such a position here.

We have prepared an underground test and have exploded [one]; we told no one about it, it was a secret explosion. America announced on a second day that the Soviet Union had conducted a nuclear underground test. Where did it find out? Instruments told it and told it correctly. And then we announced that we had actually conducted this explosion. We did this to catch them in a lie, in a deception of world public opinion. We confirm this and confirmed [it] earlier. It means that they are demanding monitoring on our territory not that they doubt the instruments, but for intelligence purposes.

We told them: let's sign a treaty. And if we can't agree on underground explosions right now let's leave this question open and write down that during the negotiations before an agreement on this question neither side, no one should conduct any explosions, including underground ones. They say: no, we don't trust you, you will

conduct explosions. But this is the morality of a robber who catches a person in the forest and says that I will kill you because if I don't kill you you will kill me (commotion). What grounds does he have that I want to kill him? One reason: that he wants to kill me and morally justify his crime, imposing his idea that I can kill him if he doesn't kill me. But this is the morality of dishonest people, the morality of a robber.

That's our position and the American position.

U. N. Dhebar When I said that both America and Russian want peace, I meant the peoples of these countries. Of course there is a distinction here.

N. S. Khrushchev This is right.

U. N. Dhebar Of course, there is a distinction in the assessment of this question from different governments and those parties which stand behind these governments. But such a condition has been created at the present time when the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union and the President of the US are seeking a way out of the situation which has been created and, fortunately, both of them are striving to conclude an agreement to settle this problem.

N. S. Khrushchev I will give you one more example, one reason I wanted to cite in favor of the fact that it is possible to sign a treaty right now.

At the Pugwash Conference in London British scientists proposed a compromise proposal to our scientists to get the negotiations to prohibit nuclear weapons off the ground. They suggested that perhaps the Soviet Union would agree that two or three instruments be installed on the territory of the Soviet Union without people, an automated station which would be sealed and that this instrument would be from an international organization and it would automatically record ground motion; and after some time this international organization would verify the recordings of the automated station: whether there were movements and what was the nature of the movements or were these nuclear explosions.

We have declared that we agree with this. Perhaps we'll choose together the site where these stations are to be set up (but of course a site most susceptible to seismic phenomena needs to be chosen), we set up these stations, and let them monitor and track. But the automatic device is more honest than a person, it won't let [us] down. This would already be international monitoring.

But America will not agree. What does it need? It needs its people, agents, it needs intelligence. It is frightened of Communism, that it is, like crazy people they can do anything. (commotion). But, of course we won't agree to intelligence.

U. N. Dhebar Of course, one can fully understand those fears which the capitalists have.

N. S. Khrushchev Here you see we are seeking equal conditions for all countries regardless of the sociopolitical system so that they are equal, and sign this treaty. They tell us that we have violated the moratorium. This is a lie. There was no moratorium, there was no agreement at all.

We made a unilateral declaration that we would not make any more explosions. After our declaration America and Britain conducted their explosions. The whole world knows this. It means, who committed the violation?

When he was President, at the end of his presidency Eisenhower made a statement that America bore no responsibility for halting the testing of nuclear weapons. This public statement is known to the entire world.

America has begun to mobilize [its] army and prepare for war. And the whole world know that America was the first to devise nuclear weapons, the first to conduct tests, and it has not only conducted tests, but it conducted [them] on human lives in Japan.

When such a situation was created it forced us to conduct more of our own explosions. We are concluding our explosions right now. We are ready to sign a treaty. There was the idea that either Mexico or Brazil offered that after 1 January 1963 no country would conduct any explosions. We agreed to sign, but America does not want to.

U. N. Dhebar Could you not say again how your unilateral halting of testing was done?

N. S. Khrushchev I cannot accurately reproduce [it], but it can be done: I can charge

[someone] and he will give you the memorandum of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I don't remember with whom I talked - then they gave me this idea to unilaterally halt testing. And we made use of this good advice and we declared: let's halt the testing. And we are halting testing; but if the other side begins explosions then it thereby releases us from the word we gave not to conduct explosions. In my opinion, this was in 1958. We halted explosions, but after this America conducted its broadest explosions; America and Britain. Thus, when we stopped, we made a declaration that if the other side accepted these conditions there would not be explosions, but if it conducted explosions, then it would release us from the word we gave.

U. N. Dhebar Is it possible in these conditions to again return to that position?

N. S. Khrushchev We agree. We are ready to solemnly not only give a commitment, but we will give [our] signature so that it is registered in the UN. We don't need the explosions, there are enough explosions; although the cessation of explosions is not the end of the arms race. It is the end of the contamination of the atmosphere. This is already a great achievement, but the arms race will continue until there is an agreement on disarmament.

U. N. Dhebar We know this, but we think that if a statement is made concerning a unilateral cessation of nuclear tests this will promote the process of the conclusion of an agreement on disarmament.

N. S. Khrushchev If we make such a statement right now, but America does not support it then this statement will not have practical significance. But America has already declared that it does not agree; it wants to conduct underground explosions. And, of course, we cannot agree with this.

Right now hope is flickering that possibly in the end America will listen to the reason and the desire of the peoples. I can confidentially tell you: we are conducting a confidential exchange of opinions on this question with the President (this is not for the press). But I don't know what the answer will be - I sent him my views a week ago.

U. N. Dhebar What can we do, as the Indian public, the Indian government, and the peoples of the other non-aligned countries?

N. S. Khrushchev The peoples can do much. I think the Indian people do much that is in their power, and therefore the Indian government and the Indian people have gained the high moral ground, that they stand on the positions of peaceful coexistence and fight to ensure peace on Earth.

But America, and not India, decides and the American people are very much deceived. You understand, in America all the press is in the hands of capital, radio is in the hands of capital, and television is in the hands of capital; all the same they feed the workers better than in other countries and there is no hunger among the people. But, you know, a full belly is deaf to these questions. Look, who forms the public opinion of America? Hearst. He has so many newspapers - I don't even know how many dozen. Who is this Hearst? A robber, a pirate, he pursues goals that are not moral or humane, but goals of profit and income, and writes all sorts of nonsense to deceive people's minds. Therefore it is necessary to bear in mind the capitalist, American conditions.

America will not agree to disarmament: it is not to their advantage. They earn money from the arms race. What is the government of America? It is the representatives of the corporations. A person goes into the government from a corporation which makes weapons, and as a Secretary he gives [factory] orders to his corporation.

Yesterday I read an interesting document, a transcript of a television program with Rusk, McNamara, and other leaders of the United States of America. And here I will tell you.

U. N. Dhebar What date was it?

N. S. Khrushchev I'll tell you right now (reads). 8 P.M. local time, 24 September 1962. This is an official American document

This is what McNamara, the Secretary of Defense, wants here about disarmament. It's interesting. They give McNamara the floor and Rusk is the chairman. He said:

"We have taken specific measures to increase both our nuclear as well as non-nuclear forces. Approximately six billion dollars was added to the \$44 billion dollars which

was planned or these purposes to the Defense budget, but the budget for the current fiscal year, 1963, exceeded the initial 1962 figures by about \$8 billion". Then it said, "We have increased our forces as follows: First, the program of the construction of submarines armed with Polaris missiles was expanded by 50%. Initially it was proposed that there would be 19 Polaris submarines on hand at the end of 1964; now it is planned to raise this number to 29. As I said, this is an increase of more than 50%. In addition, soon after this about an additional 12 submarines will be in operational and the total number will rise to 41".

Then he said further that the production of "M...." {SIC} (these are intercontinental ballistic missiles) missiles will be increased.

"Third", he said, "the number of our strategic bombers on constant airfield alert and capable of taking off within 15 minutes after an alert is declared has been increased by 50%", etc.

"The number of army divisions in combat readiness has been increased by 50%. Last year 11 army divisions were in full readiness for battle; right now there are 16 such divisions.

2. [SIC, there is no 1. in the text]. The production of weapons and ammunition for our armed forces, ground, naval, and air [forces], has been increased by 50%.

The size of our air and naval transport has been considerably increased".

That's disarmament for you. But what are we to do about it?

Now I want to direct your attention further, what goal are the Americans pursuing? Assistant to the President Rostow has already spoken about this. Here is what he said:

"It is necessary to take into consideration the cost of the arms race. The arms race costs us (that is, America) dearly, even more than it costs the Soviet Union. It is reflected in its housing construction, it is reflected in its food supply, and it has an effect on it in many other fields. And if Secretary McNamara carries out his plans in the next few years he will lead the arms race into a very costly dead end for the Soviet Union".

They are imposing an arms race on us in order to exhaust us economically, not stopping at a very dangerous path, because it might lead in the end to a world thermonuclear war. What prompts them to this? The fear of Communism, they are frightened of Communism, and are losing their minds, if they have not [already] lost them. And therefore it will take much more time for the people to force them.

Look at this: there was Eisenhower, they said Eisenhower was bad, and they elected Kennedy. But they takes the same position on questions of disarmament, whether Eisenhower or Kennedy. The international policy of the two parties is the same. Well, the term will pass, they won't elect Kennedy, but Rockefeller or someone else, but what is Rockefeller's position on these questions? The same as Kennedy.

Therefore the question of the struggle for peace is a very serious question; [there is] a very real threat of the possibility of an outbreak of war. But the UN is not performing its functions. Look: there is voting in the UN; they cannot even restore China's rights in the UN. What kind of world can there be if China is not in the UN? You can respect China or not respect China - this is another matter, a different attitude toward China in the world, but China has a 650 million population. How can one hold negotiations about disarmament without involving China? What kind of disarmament? And what do you think, America does not understand this? It understands but it does not want disarmament. It holds negotiations to deceive public opinion. This is an acting technique. But there are very many countries in the UN which are independent of America; therefore they either do not vote with America or they abstain. But both go in support of America.

When we see such a situation, what are we do to? It is necessary to strengthen our armed forces, and it is necessary to rely on our own weapons. Here this forces us to conduct tests and spend money for nuclear weapons. I would rather spend this money on agriculture since I would get more bread and meat. If you have the time, go look at the canal which is being built here; 800 km of the canal in the deserts is done and it will extend another 700 km.; this canal from the Amu-Darya River flows into the Caspian Sea.

U. N. Dhebar I fully understand that a real socialist cannot use the resources of a country to prepare for war, he uses them for creation.

N. S. Khrushchev Why do we need missiles, for this is to kill people. But we want to direct our resources for the improvement of people's lives, and not for killing.

U. N. Dhebar Every socialist is faced with such a question right now - we want humanity to survive, and to exist in the future - what should we do for this?

N. S. Khrushchev [We] need to join our forces. In spite of such a situation which has developed we are not losing hope and not slackening our efforts in the struggle for peace. But it is necessary to struggle more actively.

I also criticize you, gentlemen, don't be offended. For you take such a position: not to offend anyone, neither the Soviet Union nor America. But there is one truth, there cannot be two truths (commotion). And America makes use of this. I read the communique which they published after the President met the Indian delegation. So, if you read there, Kennedy is St. Peter; he wants disarmament, he wants a prohibition, he wants all of this. Why then is there no agreement?

Do you see? But the Indians also agreed with this communique. It means that Kennedy sings to the doubts of the Indian public.

U. N. Dhebar It seems to me that the position which our delegation took there is, why not unilaterally undertake all these actions for the Americans for which they are ready.

N. S. Khrushchev But I do not want to make any more critical comments. I believe that both your delegation and the delegation which met with Kennedy have very good motives. common to all humanity.

I have also met with Kennedy twice. This is an intelligent person. But he is a millionaire. (commotion). But I am a former miner. Our position with him is different.

G. Ramachandran. I have some views which I would like to express very briefly.

Your Excellency made a comment concerning the Pugwash Conference. It is in this place that you most closely approach the Western powers. Never have the positions of the two sides been closer than in this regard. These are the instruments. I am speaking of the instruments which might be placed on the territory of the country which might then be inspected. And Your Excellency accepts this suggestion. If we combine the positions on other questions touching on testing then we will have a complete picture. If you could accept the proposal right now about halting testing - in the atmosphere, space, and underground - and at the same time agree with this proposal, instruments would be placed on the territory of the Soviet Union and declare this unambiguously, and after this you would announce to the whole world in the UN, and this would call upon all countries to agree to follow your example.

N. S. Khrushchev We did this. Gromyko declared this in the UN.

U. N. Dhebar If this could be done and the statement on this question from your side heard.

N. S. Khrushchev We can do this, because I am telling you this, I wrote the President of the United States about this. This is our position. Our scientists talked about this in London, they voted for this proposal together with your scientists. So this is our position.

U. N. Dhebar A second consideration is as follows. A war for peace, as any other war, has its own strategy. During a war, if we are faced with a strong enemy, we search for the means to defeat him. In this war for peace, if we see that the enemy raises obstacles on the path to the achievement of a goal, we should do something to remove these obstacles. And a genius of struggling for peace should always find such means with the aid of which the enemy's obstacles in the path to the achievement of peace could be removed. In this respect our leader, M. Gandhi, was a very great leader. We would like Your Excellency to undertake something right now which would force the other side to destroy all the obstacles raised by the other side in order for the war for peace to be won. In India we think that you have a great and good heart. Today you should be that genius of peace who ensures peace on Earth. We see in you a very great leader in the cause of achieving peace. In this struggle for peace we should not suffer defeat because our enemies raise various obstacles. We should find the means to overcome these obstacles. And no one in the world can do it the way

you could. If you do this the whole world would be very grateful to you, and this would not only be your personal victory, but a very great victory for socialism and the whole world turn to socialism.

N. S. Khrushchev I completely agree with you; if this only depended on our country, then peace would have reigned on Earth long ago. And right now we, or course, are doing everything not to slacker [our] efforts in the struggle to ensure peace. But this is our burden which can only be lifted by all the peoples of the world. If we join our efforts, we will achieve the goal. Therefore we want to use everything that is in our power, in society's power, to compel those forces which resist the conclusion of an agreement on disarmament. Of course, the main thing is to guarantee peace, this is not only the cessation of tests, but the question of an agreement on disarmament. This is the main thing. But the cessation of tests is only a stage toward the main goal.

U. N. Dhebar A step is necessary which will reduce tension and which, of course, will make possible the achievement of an agreement. And that is why we also stress the importance of halting tests as a step on the path to achieving an agreement on general and complete disarmament.

N. S. Khrushchev We completely agree with you.

U. N. Dhebar And therefore we are just saying, whether it is possible to achieve such a psychological moment when the two powers, the two sides, will agree to conclude an agreement to halt tests; this would considerably lessen international tension and create favorable conditions to achieve an agreement on disarmament.

N. S. Khrushchev When will this be possible? Eight neutral countries have submitted their proposal. We agree with them. Scientists have proposed setting up automated stations for monitoring; this is very substantial monitoring. We agree with this. What is preventing it if they actually want an agreement? But the fact they they don't want an agreement is preventing it. This gives them profit, McNamara earns capital.

U. N. Dhebar Is this possibly a reaction to the events which are occurring in Cuba?

N. S. Khrushchev Possibly.

U. N. Dhebar But President Kennedy declared clearly and quite unambiguously that everything that they are doing is not a threat.

N. S. Khrushchev He declared this ambiguously, this is the whole question. He spoke thus: that America considers for itself the right to take such measures against Cuba which it finds necessary if America is convinced that Cuba threatens the security of America. What a statement! This is actually a robber might speak this way when he encounters a person in a forest: you might kill me, therefore I will kill you first.

U. N. Dhebar You of course know that a certain public opinion in the United States is so minded that actions have been taken immediately.

N. S. Khrushchev Correct. But we are located right now almost on the very border, 40 km from the border, of Iran. But this is an ally of America. We border Turkey, but there are American missile bases in Turkey. By what right is this done? By the right of a robber. It means that America can do this with respect to us. This threatens us. But if we helped Cuba with something and sold weapons, they say to us: this threatens America. Perhaps Cuba can threaten America? Even if it wanted this, it can't. America can threaten us through the territory of Iran and through the territory of Turkey. But we cannot threaten America even through the territory of Cuba because the lines of communications are too long. Therefore America is completely safe.

U. N. Dhebar Of course, it is right that the propaganda is doing increased work, there is mistrust and there are fears in relations between different countries. But the danger is in this, that such a situation might cause a world conflagration.

N. S. Khrushchev I said that America is safe; of course, in relative security, because danger might threaten America not from the territory of Cuba. Cuba is a small country. In an age of nuclear and missile technology America is threatened by our territory, from our territory we can crush America with nuclear weapons. And Cuba has nothing to do with it. Perhaps we can send our troops to Cuba? We don't have enough [one word illegible] (commotion). This is impossible. We also cannot conquer America. I say this even if there were such evil intentions. We can destroy, but we cannot conquer in the sense of occupying territory. Although you know that we have never set ourselves goals of conquering and we ourselves fight against those

countries which set these goals. This is wild. There are no free countries [or] pure [countries] right now, everywhere there are people. And let the people live on their own land, and we on our own land. We have territory, we have reason, we have hands, and we will create wealth. Therefore we say honestly – we are for disarmament.

U. N. Dhebar As regards India we have no doubts with respect to your intentions. We know your socialist ideology, we know of those colossal sufferings which you endured during two World Wars. All this determines your intentions. But the difficulty is in how to pass, to convey this to the other side.

N. S. Khrushchev For example, I personally think that I have formed such an impression that President Kennedy also does not want war. I even think that Eisenhower, too, did not war. But there are very strong forces there which want war. And whether the President has enough strength to resist these forces, there is no guarantee of this.

U. N. Dhebar And this is what causes us to worry. Therefore we also speak of the onset of that psychological moment when some actions from Your Excellency might correct the situation.

N. S. Khrushchev I would like to touch on a question which has no direct relation to disarmament, much less to a prohibition on testing. Trust, so to speak, might begin to be created when we solve the problem of Berlin. Berlin is a tumor on a healthy body. Who needs Berlin in such a form as it stands right now? Aggressive forces. We say: let's sign a peace treaty with the Germans. They don't want to. When we say that we will sign ourselves, they threaten war. What is the argument? They say: we want to ensure the freedom for the German people in West Berlin. But we say that we are not encroaching on this freedom. We agreed to sign the peace treaty so that the two German states are accepted into the UN, so that West Berlin is a free city, that is, an independent state so that there are armed forces of the UN in this free city, to guarantee – as they say – the non-interference in the internal affairs of West Berlin.

It would seem one could think up [something] else, more reasonable. No, they say, there should only be troops of the Western powers. So this does not pursue the goals of relaxing tension, but just the purposes of increasing tension. And look here:

West Berlin has twice come to such a state when a mobilization of the armed forces in America has been announced. I don't know how this ends. In my opinion, an agreement on disarmament will not be reached as long as the question of West Berlin is not resolved.

U. N. Dhebar West Berlin throws a serious challenge to diplomacy and aggravates everything. The whole problem is in what kind of world we live.

N. S. Khrushchev What goal do the Western powers set in preserving the tense situation in West Berlin? I understand them. They want to unleash an attack against the socialist countries through West Berlin, that is, the elimination of the socialist systems in the European countries. But we would like to liquidate the capitalist systems in the West. Therefore this is consequently also the stumbling block, West Berlin. Each side wants to use West Berlin in its own interests. But we are for a reasonable proposal. In order to eliminate the tension and create conditions of trust it is necessary to sign the peace treaty and eliminate the tense situation in West Berlin, that is, to give it the status of a free city.

U. N. Dhebar Mr. Prime Minister, what is happening at the present moment is that the two sides are moving in parallel directions; yesterday's allies have become enemies at the present time, and yesterday's enemies have become today's allies. We are closely following the course of events in the world and it seems to us that the onset of that psychological moment when an agreement about a prohibition of testing might be concluded might open the way to disarmament so that such a development of the two sides moving in parallel directions might be halted.

N. S. Khrushchev I think the opposite. If we achieve agreement on the German question we will achieve agreements on a prohibition of testing and disarmament sooner.

We are prepared to sign right now. Suddenly the President announces that he is requesting permission that he be granted the right to call up 150,000 reservists. We would also need to announce such a step. Well, what is the disarmament here? We

didn't go this route, this is a provocative step. Why did the President do this? I think to give the American cutthroats the satisfaction that, they would say, the President of the United States is not a coward, that he is ready to meet the danger and is ready for war.

I don't know whether you agree with me, I draw this conclusion: it is the cowards who commit suicide. During the War a soldier who lost his nerve shot himself. It seemed that he would die in any event. No, he did not have enough nerve to fight the enemy, he shot himself. I was a witness at the start of the War when Hitler attacked our country. I was a Member of the Military Council of a Front; a general came to me in the evening and said that things were bad for us, that it was necessary to replace the commanding general of the front. I said: I don't agree, the War has just begun, I trust the commanding general, and I am opposed to replacing him. He left and early in the morning he again came to me very agitated and again began to report to me that the situation was bad, everyone had died, and right there he declared that he was going to commit suicide. This was a coward. Because if it is all over, well he would die, accordingly, but if he lost his nerve and did not live to the end. I cursed him for this. And right in front of me he pulled out a pistol and put a bullet in [his] temple. He shot himself, a professional general. What is this? This is a coward, this is cowardice. He died.

Here is a dangerous moment for people of all ranks and especially for the people who occupy high posts, because a soldier took a bullet; he himself died; but if the heads of governments lose reason, then millions die. This is very dangerous.

U. N. Dhebar There always exists a difference between a politician and a leader. A real leader always leads people so that they follow him.

On the basis of your experience what could you recommend be done to correct the situation [?]

N. S. Khrushchev It is necessary to raise the voice of world public opinion to put pressure on the aggressive forces in order to force the governments to go along the correct path and adopt a rational decision to halt the testing of nuclear weapons of all kinds. This would actually be a step toward an agreement on disarmament, and it is necessary to solve the German question. Without a solution to the German question it will be very difficult to achieve an agreement and trust. The main thing is trust, because trust is preliminary preparation for an agreement on disarmament. And it is necessary that China take its place in the UN. This all depends on the UN member countries. It would seem that the question is absolutely clear, but it has not been decided for several years. And there can be no agreement on disarmament as long as China does not take part in these negotiations.

These, in my opinion, are the questions which require an immediate solution.

U. N. Dhebar What do you think is more immediate: the question of giving China a place in the UN or the question of halting tests, or do you think that these measures should be adopted simultaneously?

N. S. Khrushchev They may or may not coincide in time. It is possible for a particular action to be ahead or solved subsequently, but this should be done. It would be better if they accepted China; then an atmosphere would be created right away. If the German question is solved, that is, the peace treaty signed, and an agreement about testing. These are three actions This would clear the atmosphere for discussions about disarmament.

G. Ramachandran What would you like to pass to the Indian people, in particular, to the "Gandhi Peace Foundation"?

N. S. Khrushchev I would like to pass my good wishes to the Indian people. What is the task with which the Indian people are faced right now? It is to raise the standard of living of the people. It is the development of industry and the development of agriculture and culture. I remember that when I was in India we held a conversation in, I think, Madras. During the conversation when I was speaking about industrialization the governor or the premier objected to me that industrialization was not suitable for India. I said: of course, it's up to the Indian people to solve their problems, but there is no movement forward without industrialization. I then told Mr. Prime Minister about this. He told me: he is a good person. But I did not begin to specify (commotion).

These are my wishes to the Indian people: the development of their productive forces and peace to all peoples.

U. N. Dhebar I would like to touch upon one more question. I have already spoken of the unilateral declaration regarding a halt to all testing, in about the same way as was done in 1958. Do you think this stage has already passed. [?]

N. S. Khrushchev I have told you that we agreed to do this. But since it's already happened once therefore for us to display initiative in this question could cause some rumors. Therefore I would tell you this. It seems that Mexico is displaying initiative in offering a proposal - I am telling this to you confidentially, not for the press, although governments know about this - that beginning 1 January 1963 no one will conduct nuclear tests. If such a proposal is introduced we will support it. If India will display this, we will also be glad to join this. Or if the group of non-aligned neutral countries declares this, we will eagerly support and join this and will strictly observe it.

U. N. Dhebar I would like to ask whether it is possible to ease our situation with respect to a unilateral declaration of a cessation of testing so that such a step by you would be correctly understood; would it help if the neutral countries turned to you with an appeal to take such a step?

N. S. Khrushchev It would be better if the appeal were not only to our country, but to all the nuclear powers. But right now we have already made a declaration that we will support and observe [this]. Of course, we will do [this] with the reservation that all other countries also follow this appeal and accept the responsibilities and fulfill them.

U. N. Dhebar I understand this problem somewhat differently. I was saying that the non-aligned countries make an appeal to the nuclear powers about a unilateral declaration of such a nature. It seems to me that the world ought to be given one more opportunity to try and solve this problem on such a basis. Of course, I do not want you to be obligated to speak out at the present moment; I have already heard that you regard such a proposal favorably.

N. S. Khrushchev If there is such a proposal, then we will welcome it. We will support and from our side will call upon the other nuclear powers to join it.

U. N. Dhebar So we have brought you a lot of trouble. When can we await you again, when will you come to India? You come to us every two years.

N. S. Khrushchev It is pleasant to go to India, of course. But, as they say, it is necessary to restrain oneself from this pleasantness so as not to burden hospitable hosts (commotion).

Please pass my good wishes to the Prime Minister and the main thing from these good wishes, good health to him.

Pass my good wishes to your President. In my opinion, his health is better than the Prime Minister's. This is my impression, but health is not a burden to anyone.

U. N. Dhebar Why doesn't Your Excellency convince our Prime Minister to rest a little more?

N. S. Khrushchev You see, he might raise a retaliatory question to me. I would just be glad if the Prime Minister came to us to vacation; we have good conditions for a vacation.

U. N. Dhebar He told us that you invited him.

N. S. Khrushchev We would be glad and this invitation remains. The Prime Minister will always be able to use it when he finds it possible for him.

U. N. Dhebar We think, Your Excellency, that this place is good for us, is not foreign, is not unfamiliar, inasmuch as you have created such a favorable friendly atmosphere for our conversation. When we left Delhi a correspondent asked us:

if you already have an agreement that you will meet, and as you are going to Moscow, aren't you afraid that you won't succeed in meeting the Prime Minister [?]
But we were confident that such a meeting would take place. We think that you are one of us.

N. S. Khrushchev Good wishes and mutual understanding should always be ensured on a good basis.

U. N. Dhebar Mr. Menon, the former [Ambassador] of India is in Moscow right now and he has asked [us] to pass you [his] best wishes.

N. S. Khrushchev Thank you. I hope that I will probably meet with him. They have told me that he plans to vacation with us for a while, and it seems he plans to go to the Crimea. This is good.

U. N. Dhebar We have many other questions which we would like to discuss, but we have taken too much time.

G. Ramachandran We have come from India to meet with you and talk. And we would like for the head of the delegation to have the opportunity to meet with you in the future if there are suitable conditions to continue the exchange of opinions.

N. S. Khrushchev Perhaps. I am always at your service when you have questions.

U. N. Dhebar I still have not spoken in detail about the problem of China, and [we] have also not spoken of the plans of economic development. At this time we have come to discuss those questions which we have touched upon.

N. S. Khrushchev I am very glad.

S. Dutt I would like to bid farewell to you inasmuch as I am leaving the Soviet Union.

N. S. Khrushchev They have told me about your misfortune. We regret that your stay in our country was brief. I express [my] condolences to you. I wish you happiness and success. Your tenure has left a very good impression with us. I hope that your contacts are preserved and when you have the need to come to our country we will be glad to consider you as our guest.

S. Dutt Thank you.

N. S. Khrushchev Goodbye. I wish [you] success.

The conversation lasted two hours, from 0830 to 1030 (local time). The conversation was translated [no named given]

The conversation was recorded by N. Gavrilova

Zng 2 October 1962