

MINUTES OF THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN N. S. KHRUSHCHEV AND U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION LLEWELYN THOMPSON

JULY 25, 1962

On July 25, N. S. Khrushchev met U.S. Ambassador L. Thompson prior to his departure from the Soviet Union. After greeting each other, L. Thompson asks N. S. Khrushchev about his trip to the north of the country.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV answers that he thoroughly enjoyed this trip. Specifically, he visited the area bordering Norway where Soviet and Norwegian professionals are cooperatively building a hydroelectric plant in accordance with an agreement signed by Gerhardsen while in Moscow. Khrushchev states that the land there has a harsh climate. It is no secret though, mentions Khrushchev, that there are Soviet military and naval submarines bases in that area, as well as in Arkhangelsk and other places.

According to Khrushchev, the main purpose of the trip was to get acquainted with the activity of the Soviet fishing fleet and to inspect the fish processing plants. Nowadays, our trawlers fish near Iceland and many other places; they even reach American shores. These areas have an abundance of fish. However, says Khrushchev in a joking manner, President Kennedy told Adzhubei that Russian trawlers fish right in front of his summer house. What can you do! The Soviet fishing fleet is so well-equipped that it is capable of making long passages into these areas rich in fish.

Khrushchev says that on July 26 he will be leaving on vacation. He is planning on visiting the Tula, Orlov, and Kursk regions on his way, and then he will make a stop in his home village. Afterwards, he will set off to Kremenchug to attend an official opening of a hydroelectric power plant. Finally, he will move on to the Crimea either by automobile or ship. Khrushchev then asks Thompson about his departure date from Moscow.

L. THOMPSON responds that he is planning to fly to Copenhagen on July 27, and from there he is going to take a ship to New York. The trip will take nine days, thus it will provide a good opportunity to take a break from telegraphs and urgent telegrams. Thompson mentions that he read about the USSR having plenty of fresh-water fish.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says that, while this is true, there is an abundance of fish being caught in the Caspian and Aral Seas and the Sea of Azov. However, the primary fishing areas are in the Far East, near Sakhalin, and the Barents Sea. Fishing vessels from the Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as Kaliningrad, go far beyond the Baltic Sea and fish near the shores of Africa and Greenland. Even though there are many more fish in those areas, we were not able to explore their abundant resources due to the lack of an adequate fishing fleet. We are currently considering sending five fishing vessels to Cuban shores in order to explore the fishing prospects in that area. Provided

we find plenty of fish there and Castro has no objections, our vessels will be based in Cuba. It is also possible that we will build a fish processing plant, though this is a matter for the future. The Japanese think realistically. Recently, they have been fishing near Brazil's shores. Apparently, this is profitable.

L. THOMPSON mentions a sonar device capable of determining the location of large schools of fish. It is a small device that, when submerged in water from a helicopter, records fish groups' migration.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says that nowadays technology works wonders. The United States, for example, launched a Telstar satellite. This is a big deal. While being in the north area, continues Khrushchev, I was shown a satellite and other devices capable of exploring the seas, lighting certain areas, and so on.

Further, we observed missile target practice conducted by submerged submarines. Americans wrote a lot about their target practice. We should be able to shoot as well. It was there where I saw our new military equipment. Honestly speaking, and I don't intend to scare you, this equipment is terrifying. Of course you have your own armament system; nevertheless, both of our countries' science and technology are on the same level. I told our military not to consider a potential enemy a fool. They have, to a varying degree, what we have. What exists now is already terrifying. One cannot survive in the water. What is in the water is basically a floating casket. The submarine fleet stands in a slightly better position, but it is also vulnerable.

I want to tell you a little "secret", mentions Khrushchev jokingly. Shortly before my trip up north, there were military exercises in that area. According to the exercise plans, a submarine was supposed to and did go to a certain grid square. It was attacked, chased for a long time, bombed by practice munitions, as it was thought to be "an enemy submarine". Finally, when this submarine left the exercise area, there suddenly appeared "an extra" one not in the plan. As it turned out, the first submarine was probably American or English. Apparently, the submarine captain reported having experienced major problems to his command.

L. THOMPSON says that both parties should unify their efforts to find ways of reducing the risk of war as a result of a mistake or miscalculation. The United States unilaterally took a series of steps to enforce security. These steps drastically reduce the risk of war due to misunderstanding. This should also be discussed in Geneva.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV expresses hope that Ambassador Thompson believes that the USSR's statements on disarmament are not merely propagandistic, but rather express a sincere Soviet desire to reach an agreement. We are Communists and we do not gain profit from the arms race. There are no material incentives - no groups in the Soviet Union that would benefit from weapons production. However, the USA does have monopolies that make fabulous profits supplying weapons. They certainly get worried when somebody somewhere raises the issue of disarmament. The Soviet Union is not facing any difficulties in its conversion to a peaceful economy. We cannot say that about

our allies in disarmament. We are sincerely striving for disarmament and are making great efforts towards this. We think that unified disarmament is still a matter of the future. People close to Kennedy have expressed similar ideas.

L. THOMPSON says that he agrees with some of Khrushchev's statements. Considering everything, however, this is not totally the case. According to a recent study, disarmament, introduced gradually, will not be harmful to the American economy. By all means, monopolies have great influence, but they do not dictate our policy and they understand that if a war is to break out, it will not spare them either. Americans seek peace and disarmament. However, there is one issue that lies at the base of all predicaments – lack of trust. On the one hand, it is suspicion that complicates the resolution of matters such as inspection, among other things. On the other hand, the Soviet Union has issues with secrecy. Thompson understands the reasons why this issue is getting less and less significant because currently the world is getting smaller and smaller.

The military, by nature of their work, thinks that if they are entrusted with dealing with state security, they have to know what is happening on the other side. If they don't know that, they are inclined to assume the worst. The arms race, by all means, requires unbelievable funds and resources, yet all countries could put those resources to better use. The United States should be building hospitals, schools, and other important institutions. Peaceful application of resources would better facilitate the significant development outlined in the Soviet Union's groundbreaking Twenty-Year plan.

Frankly, continues Thompson, I was surprised and disappointed that the Soviet Union rejected the zonal inspection plan suggested by the United States, apparently without even taking a close look at it. This plan does not intend to deceive, but rather to seriously attempt to address the Soviet Union's concerns regarding confidentiality. It is not essential to accept the current version of the plan. We could base our discussions on it, and give it serious consideration.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says that we, in fact, take the confidentiality of state secrets very seriously. However, the other side is trying to break through this barrier of secrecy. This shows that the other side is making it a priority, so we “are pushing back”. Eisenhower once said in Geneva that Khrushchev is a civil person and may not know this. If you ask Zhukov, on the other hand, he will tell you that he assigns high priority to the confidentiality of state secrets.

L. THOMPSON says that obtaining information regarding military exercises in the United States is not that difficult.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV replies that it is unlikely that the Soviet Union knows more about the American military forces than the United States does about the Soviet Army.

L. THOMPSON says that Americans don't know much about the Soviet Army. And this is the reason why they are worried more than it is necessary. The military tends to assume the worst and expects the other side to own terrifying weapons.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says that American military cliques sent Power's flight in order to find out Soviet military secrets. What should we call such an act? The flight was timed to coincide with the meeting of the heads of state. It put us on alert.

Personally, continues Khrushchev, I do not place special emphasis on air and space intelligence. Our comrades showed me photographs of airfields, cities, military bases, and factories. Yet we don't know what this factory does. One can hide from air intelligence. One can camouflage bases, institutions, and so on. This was done even during World War II. Apparently, the intelligence itch makes them plan acts such as Power's flight. On top of that, President Eisenhower went as far as to say that, since the United States does not know much about what Russians are doing, that "it has the right" to send in spy planes into Soviet airspace. This is robbery! This is a violation! Can you imagine what would happen if we sent in our planes to the American frontier? Such acts put us on high alert. As it turns out, we were looked upon as a colony, from the position of strength. We didn't even get an apology. De Gaulle and MacMillan tried to convince me then saying that the United States is a superpower and cannot apologize because this may tarnish its reputation. The Soviet Union is a superpower as well, and we are not going to tolerate insults. By the way, when we were talking about this, Eisenhower mentioned something about apologizing. Herter told him something, and Eisenhower fell silent. Kennedy, the new president, said he would have given an apology if he were Eisenhower. It is possible to find an appropriate way to do that. I gave President Eisenhower an excuse to find a way out, hinting that he probably was not aware of the planned flight. He did not, however, want to make use of this opportunity.

In 1955, Twining, a commander in the United States Air Force, came to the Soviet Union. He was received as if he were an officer of much higher rank. Despite this, upon returning from the USSR to Berlin, he sent in a spy plane that reached Kiev. What a dirty act! They call such people "someone who shits where he eats."

L. THOMPSON says that the Soviet Union has always insisted that inspections follow disarmament. The American plan provides for 30% disarmament and inspection of 30% if the areas disarmed, thus meeting the Soviet inspection requirements.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV notes that the American 30% arsenal reduction plan does not have provisions for overseas bases; it deals with only scraping missiles. One American columnist wrote that Americans have fallen behind Russians in constructing intercontinental ballistic missiles. This is the result of American bases being located along the Soviet border, therefore making it easy to "reach" Russia. At the same time, Russians face the harder task of constructing long-range missiles capable of reaching the distant American frontier.

Thus, according to the American plan, we will destroy our missiles, yet American bases near the Soviet border will remain unharmed. How can we agree to this? The Soviet Union's stance, repeatedly expressed by the Soviet leaders, is to eliminate bases and all means of nuclear delivery, including intercontinental ballistic missiles. Americans point out that the Soviet Union is located near Europe, while the USA is far from it, and thus must keep their troops and bases there for defense purposes. On the other hand, provided we destroy our intercontinental missiles, our planes will not be able to conduct nuclear delivery to the destination intended. For example, can a plane that I flew to the United States, such as TU-114, civil version of the military TU-95, deliver bombs to American territory? Certainly, not. It would be destroyed by surface-to-air missiles. We suggested we keep such missiles for the time being and not scrap them in the beginning of the implementation of the disarmament plan. It was a surface-to-air missile that shot down Powers. All the stories about how the pilot had to land because he felt dizzy and experienced problems with his oxygen supply were made up.

You should take into consideration, continues Khrushchev, our interests as well. Let us do the following: we destroy our missiles, and you destroy your bases and pull out your troops. If you don't treat us equally, there will be no disarmament.

L. THOMPSON replies that he cannot call himself a specialist in a matter as complicated as disarmament. He, however, believes that the first step in the American plan does not provide for scraping missiles.

A. A. SOBOLEV mentions that the first stage of the American plan has provisions for reduction of intercontinental missiles by 30%.

N. S. KRUSHCHEV says that in order to have a clear understanding of what 30% of the arsenal means, we need to know the total number. Basically, we are talking about conducting on-site inspection before implementing the disarmament plan. By the way, the American plan says that any country has the right to stop the process if any other country does not meet its obligations for disarmament. The United States may conduct an inspection in the Soviet Union, and later announce that, let's say, Czechoslovakia is not honoring its commitments.

L. THOMPSON responds that the American plan calls for zonal inspections. The Soviet Union may be divided into, for example, ten zones; and only 30% , three of them, will be subject to inspection during the first stage of disarmament.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says the Americans are knowledgeable, and therefore they should not demand inspection in, let's say, Sakhalin, because there are no intercontinental ballistic missiles there. This is true. You don't have to be a genius to determine which zones may have intercontinental and global missile launch pads. Everybody knows where Soviet global missiles are located. If we are talking about trust, bases must be eliminated in the first stage. Moreover, they have lost their significance because the United States also owns such missiles.

L. THOMPSON agrees that these bases do not, in fact, have much significance, but says they are important for the Europeans' psychological well-being.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says that for the Soviet Union these bases carry physical and not psychological meaning; thus, it is impossible to accept unequal terms. We will not do it. We will destroy our missiles, and you will destroy your bases and your means of delivery, such as missiles, submarines, etc.

L. THOMPSON points out that Chairman Khrushchev has just come back from his trip up north and that he has many things to take care of. This is why Thompson does not want to take much of the Chairman's time.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your respectful attitude and hospitality, continues Thompson, and I hope my successor Kohler will be treated the same way. Kohler is close to the President; he is trusted and he understands the President's points of view very well. I hope that Kohler will be able to succeed where I failed. Then, Thompson asks Khrushchev to give him his signed photograph.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV replies that he will do so with pleasure. I would also like to express my appreciation for your work. We have always felt nothing but deep respect for you, and we hope you will continue to do your best promoting relations between both of our countries. We have faith in your approach to many international disputes. You have experienced many difficulties while in Moscow, meaning that you had to defend U.S. policy when it was clear to everybody that it was doomed to fail. In any case, being optimists, we hope for improvement in relations between our two countries. Ambassadors play an important role in international policy, but they are often ignored. For example, Ambassador Schulenburg was against Hitler starting a war with the Soviet Union. The French Ambassador to Moscow opposed Napoleon's intentions to go to Russia. They were ignored. We all know the outcome of those "expeditions."

Further, Khrushchev says that he had been reading what the American journalists were saying about the arms race, and that what was being imposed on the Soviet Union may interfere with its Twenty-Year Plan. I must say that the plan was written with expenses associated with the arms race in mind. Nowadays, it would be naïve not to take that into consideration. Our development plans are being carried out successfully. The same is true for the disarmament plan. If we reach agreement on disarmament and fulfill it, the funds saved will enable us to shorten the plan by about five years. However, all the talks about disarmament remain just talks if not followed by action. I don't even know if we will see disarmament at all. I cannot promise this.

Khrushchev further mentions that he was reading Gromyko's telegram about his conversation with Rusk, and he (Khrushchev) is under the impression that Americans have recently "taken the bit between their teeth." In his letter to President Kennedy, Khrushchev once again explained the Soviet Union's stance on Berlin, and he made new propositions. The President did not reply for a long time, until he finally sent a very courteous letter, but did not really address any of the Soviet propositions.

We told Gromyko, continues Khrushchev, to inform Rusk about the end of negotiations. We said enough, but, apparently, all you want is to keep your troops in West Berlin and to maintain the current regime. We cannot agree to that. It has been 17 years since the war, but the occupational regime, with all of its consequences, still remains. In history there are no such examples of occupational regimes lasting this long. Rusk insists on keeping troops in West Berlin. Apparently, Rusk doesn't want peace, does he? Signing the peace treaty would mean the United States would lose its right to keep troops in West Berlin. West Germany is a U.S. ally. Having full American support, West Germany is nurturing a plan for revenge. The United States wants to keep West Berlin as a NATO military base in case of a conflict. And it is West Berliners who are stirring up this conflict.

We will sign the peace treaty because we do not recognize any western rights in West Berlin. The USA says it will claim its so-called right to West Berlin, but the USA is claiming too much. In the olden days, landlords did with their serfs as they pleased, such as “whipping them in the stables.” It all went unpunished. Times have changed, and Americans cannot “whip us in the stables.” All communication between West Berlin and West Germany is conducted from East Germany. After signing the treaty, the West will lose its rights, unless, of course, it reaches an amicable agreement with East Germany.

In our last proposition we basically agreed to let the western empires keep troops in West Berlin. What more do you need? It turns out that the solution to the German question is perceived by the West as the elimination of socialist Germany. If we put it this way, then we would like, on our part, to see a united socialist Germany. We know you will not agree to this, but Rusk raises the question of uniting Germany as Adenauer sees it. President Eisenhower agrees that this approach is not realistic, and even Dulles admitted it was impossible. Rusk once again is returning to positions that even Dulles rejected. We believe that the question of uniting Germany is a matter of discussion between the two German states. It would be good if they reached such agreement. If they are unable to do so, this should not interfere with signing the peace treaty. It would be good if Adenauer sized up the situation, but he is, apparently, unable to do this.

We will sign the peace treaty, thus making access to West Berlin by the occupational regime impossible. The only way to get access will be through negotiations with East Germany.

Only those who want to receive the same beating from us, continues Khrushchev, can threaten us. No one can “whip us in the stables.”

We expected a different kind of letter from Kennedy. We thought it would be possible to meet somewhere, let's say, on neutral territory or neutral waters to discuss the option of finding a solution to these disputes. All we want is to sign a peace treaty, but you insist on your “rights” in West Berlin; you talk about your commitments. We do not need West Berlin, neither do you. Apparently, you want to insult us, as these commitments offend

us. What are these commitments? Do they mean not signing the peace treaty and keeping the occupational regime?

No, we *will* sign the peace treaty and we will record that Germany lost the war and that the Soviet Union, along with the United States, won it. Unless you have a clear understanding of the reasons for such an action, you will have to negotiate it with East Germany because your rights in West Germany will be gone. We ask you to remember this.

During the election campaign in the United States, during the battle between Nixon and Kennedy, we considered Kennedy to be a better candidate than Nixon. After Kennedy's election as president, we did not insist on signing the peace treaty until he got "the hang of things." His early days in office brought us hope. We managed to come to agreement regarding some issues, but got stuck on the Berlin question. We cannot decide on anything without finding a solution to this dispute. We gave Kennedy our proposal to keep half of the Western military troops in West Berlin, as well to add troops from other countries. This is a matter of principle, and not the number of troops. From a defense perspective, neither West Berlin nor any number of troops stationed there, mean anything. And I'm telling you this because, as the Chairman of the State Defense Committee and in the previous war a member of the Military Front Council, I am familiar with defense issues.

We are convinced of the righteousness of our stance, as well as our propositions regarding the settlement of the West Berlin dispute. We can entrust lawyers with discussing this issue. We are not afraid of this. I sometimes think of raising this question at the United Nations.

We are under the impression that the other party wants to downgrade the Berlin negotiations and bury them in the labyrinth of endless negotiations. We cannot agree to that, and we will sign the peace treaty with East Germany. This is not a threat. Wouldn't it be nice if everybody were "threatened" by signing a peace treaty? We postponed signing the peace treaty, and that time was not wasted. We reached agreements on many issues, though the West Berlin issue still remains. How can we think that a war could start because of a peace treaty, because of two million people whom no one is threatening? At the same time, hundreds of millions may die if a war were to break out. The Soviet Union and the United States will, to some extent, survive, while Europe becomes a death zone.

We expect the United States to be rational and the President to understand that we have no other option. After signing the treaty, western troops will only be able to pull out from West Berlin, but no longer enter. Of course, limited access will remain, but no troops will be sent into West Berlin. It has been 17 years since the end of the war; West Berlin is in East German territory. Temporary rights of the western allies have lost their significance.

This topic is not pleasant, and I wish I did not have to have this conversation. You, Mr. Ambassador, will become Counsellor to the President and Rusk, and that brings us hope. Khrushchev then asks Thompson what Bohlen is going to do.

L. THOMPSON replies that Bohlen would keep his office. There is a lot to do, in coordinating of the work of various departments.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV points out that the Soviet Union and the United States reached agreement pertaining to Lassa.¹ Both countries have legitimately fulfilled their duties. Why is it that they cannot solve other issues?

N. S. Khrushchev asks Thompson to inquire of the President as to when American planes are going to stop pirating on the sea routes. They continue to conduct flights over our ships on the open sea, nosedive on them, and so on. The Soviet Union may come up with an appropriate response. This is not difficult; it is harder to do a good deed. I wonder if the President is aware of these occurrences.

L. THOMPSON says that he previously reported to his government how the Soviets were protesting these incidents and informed the President as well. Indeed, things had improved for a while. The only exception was when a Soviet ship was spotted not far from the U.S. nuclear test site.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV points out that those were commercial oil-tankers, timber ships, etc.

L. THOMPSON confidentially tells Khrushchev that while in Washington D.C., he demanded such acts to be stopped. After that, the orders for the military aircraft were changed.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV recalls that an American destroyer ordered a Soviet ship near Cuba to stop. The captain, of course, did not obey. He wouldn't have stopped even if the destroyer were to open fire. The ship could have been annihilated, but we would have found a way to retaliate, even though the United States owns more and bigger ships.

We ask you to take control of your overzealous military, continues Khrushchev. You are not pleased with our good relations with Cuba, and we are not pleased with your bases surrounding us. We have to put up with it. I was once considering writing President Kennedy regarding this matter, but changed my mind because we are not powerless either. Let us put a stop to this. There is enough negativity between us. Why exacerbate the situation?

L. THOMPSON expresses hopes that Khrushchev will take a close look at the protocols of the minutes of all three conversations between Gromyko and Rusk. It is of high importance that each party try to understand the other's way of thinking. In 1955, the

¹ N. S. Khrushchev is referring to either Lassa, Mali or Lhasa, Tibet in China.

Soviet Union initiated a serious attempt to remove the Berlin question from the Cold War, meaning to solve it. Unfortunately, no agreement was reached. West Berlin has become a symbol for the people of western Europe. Its population is worried whether they will be supported since they believe that they are being threatened. Many hold the following opinion: if the West loses West Berlin, it will also lose Germany and all of Europe.

Thompson indicates that it was Khrushchev who said that the troops in West Berlin carry no military significance. Western powers have plenty of evidence as to what Ulbricht would do to West Berlin. East Berlin has already merged with East Germany, even though it was supposed to be under the control of the four states. The troops remain in West Berlin with the sole purpose of appeasing its population, and ensuring that East Germans will not be able to occupy West Berlin. As for threats, it is more likely that stating that the treaty will be signed is a threat, because the troops will be cut off.

Please try to understand our point of view, continues Thompson. Provided we reach an agreement regarding this dispute, tensions will ease even without us signing the peace treaty. As for the troops, they remain stationed in West Berlin, in particular, to prevent their authorities from acting impulsively. We want to expand the options.

In this respect, Thompson would like to tell a joke that he heard in Washington D.C.

One man died and went to hell. The devil asks him where he would like to stay. The man asked to show him around. One room had sinners standing on their heads on burning coals. The man declined the room and said, "no." Another room had people standing on sharp spikes. The man once again said, "no". The third and the last room had people standing knee-high in manure drinking coffee. "If this is all you have," said the man, "I will stay here." When the devil left, the man heard someone say, "The coffee break is over, get back to standing on your heads."

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says in a joking manner that Russians do not want to stand on their heads and they are not asking others to do so. We are very particular regarding our international commitments. We have been on friendly terms with Afghanistan for 45 years. Despite the total shared border line of 2,500 km, we have never had conflicts. Why should we argue with the United States? We maintain normal relations and trade with England, France, and even West Germany. Let us be wise and pull out this rusted splinter, that is West Berlin. If Rusk and Gromyko do not reach an agreement, I don't even know what will happen. It would be really nice if they did.

I would like you to talk to the President confidentially, continues Khrushchev, without letting the rest of the government know, and find out a convenient time for signing the peace treaty. Is it better to do so before the November election this year, or later? We do not want to harm the President's re-election bid. We wish him another successful election campaign.

L. THOMPSON responds that he cannot know how the President may answer this question. We still hope that, regardless of when the German peace treaty is signed, that it will not lead to tensions between both of our countries. And, if we are seriously talking about signing the treaty, I personally think it would be better to do this after the U. S. election.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says that if the Soviet Union and the United States reached an agreement regarding Germany and the Berlin question, and signed the treaty before the election, the American people would receive this well. This should favorably affect President Kennedy's campaign.

L. THOMPSON agrees with this.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says that President Kennedy is by all means a smart person, and he prepared the public for decisions that previously nobody wanted to hear. He asked them to give him time to solve all the problems. We cannot, however, postpone the decision forever. I cannot say we will definitely do it this year, but it would reflect badly if we didn't sign the treaty.

Solving the German peace treaty question would have a positive impact on the negotiations on disarmament and on the nuclear test ban. The Pentagon has recently made a statement about devices capable of determining from afar whether a tremor is the result of a nuclear explosion or an earthquake. Apparently, the Pentagon is inclined to use state nuclear detection systems. We are planning to conduct nuclear tests sometime around August 5 or 6, and we believe it will be possible to sign the agreement this year. Furthermore, we would be able to consider the well-known propositions made by the eight states.

L. THOMPSON says that development of a nuclear explosion detection system should be completed soon. This will be possible to do after the U.S. current tests.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says that the Pentagon is not to be trusted. Even before the tests, the United States had underground explosion detection systems. Once there was an underground explosion in the Soviet Union that received no news coverage, but Pentagon officials made a statement the next day that its devices had detected the explosion. Both countries own sensitive devices capable of detecting even a small explosion from a long distance. Why continue arguing because of small earthquakes that could be mistaken for explosions? We advocate a nuclear test ban. If Kennedy hadn't declared mobilization last year, we wouldn't have conducted a series of tests.

If the President wishes to confidentially exchange opinions, we are willing to do so. We are also willing to consider his situation and not complicate it before the election.

L. THOMPSON says that he does not know the President's opinion on this. This is a very serious and important question.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV asks the Ambassador to convince the President to solve the Berlin question, because he will benefit from this.

L. THOMPSON replies that since he did not take notes during the conversation, he would like to clarify in what respect Khrushchev mentioned the United Nations and West Berlin.

N. S. KHRUSHCHEV says that this question has not yet been discussed and that this is an idea still in the making. Moreover, he has not consulted other members of the government. The United States and its allies have threatened us with war because of our intentions of signing the German peace treaty, thus solving any issues regarding West Berlin. In view of this, we were considering engaging the United Nations, to a certain extent, in eliminating the threat that western powers would pose if we signed the German peace treaty.

Conversation lasted 1 hour 50 minutes.

In attendance was: Comrade A. A. Sobolev.

Conversation recorded by: Y. Vinogradov

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