

Date unknown

Transcript of the Conversation between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR N.S. Khrushchev and the Vice-President of the World Peace Council, Former President of Mexico, Divisional General,

La

zaro

Ca

rdenas

Citation:

"Transcript of the Conversation between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR N.S. Khrushchev and the Vice-President of the World Peace Council, Former President of Mexico, Divisional General,

La

zaro

Ca

rdenas", Date unknown, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI, f. 52, op. 1, d. 547, ll. 131-137. Contributed by Sergey Radchenko and translated by Angela Greenfield. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/300894>

Summary:

Cardenas asks Khrushchev about his position on peacekeeping and requests support to help Mexico's economic and industrial growth. Khrushchev emphasizes the importance of unity and preserving peace against a shift in US foreign policy toward economic and cultural competition as opposed to outright power competition.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

[Handwritten: to Cde. G.T. Shuisky"]

TRANSCRIPT OF THE CONVERSATION

between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR N.S. Khrushchev and the Vice-President of the World Peace Council, former President of Mexico, Divisional General,

La

zaro

Ca

rdenas*

29 November 1958

*[Handwritten] *Transcript of the conversation was not disseminated and was not reviewed by Cde. N.S. Khrushchev*

L. Cárdenas. I am glad to visit your great country and I am very grateful to you, Mr. Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, that you, given your busy schedule, found time for this conversation.

N.S. Khrushchev. Thank you. It is such a pity that your arrival, Mr. Lázaro Cárdenas, came at an unfavorable time of the year.

L. Cárdenas. Yes, I would have liked to visit Siberia, the agricultural areas that have been newly developed, and learn more about the agriculture of the Soviet Union.

N.S. Khrushchev. Come during the summer, you will be able to see it all.

L. Cárdenas. Thank you. That would be interesting.

N.S. Khrushchev. You could visit our beautiful Crimean coast, the Caucasus. It would be interesting for you to visit there too.

L. Cárdenas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman of the Council of Ministers. There are many unresolved problems in Mexico's agricultural sector. We believe that the experience of the Soviet Union could be valuable for our country. However, knowing how busy your Excellency's schedule is, I would like to focus on specific issues that are of concern to the public in Mexico.

N.S. Khrushchev. Please, Mr. Cardenas.

L. Cárdenas. The people of Mexico and all of the progressive strata of our population are very, very concerned about the preservation of peace throughout the world. Its very future depends on the solution of this issue. Moreover, the Cold War gave rise to various complex issues and worsened the already difficult living conditions of the people. Therefore, we would like to know your opinion regarding the prospects for maintaining peace.

We know your statements on this issue. However, if Mexico can do something in this regard, then we are ready to make every effort to maintain peace. We believe that the fate of the world ultimately depends on the progress of industry, agriculture, science, and culture of your country.

N.S. Khrushchev. You said that you are familiar with our statements on this issue. Our statements are always consistent with our actions. We believe in the planned program for developing our economy and improving the well-being of the Soviet people. And we want to maintain peace, and we will do everything in our power to achieve this.

There is a full correlation between the plans we put in place and the implementation of our policies.

We have achieved a lot. I am pleased to note, and I already talked about this at a press conference in connection with the proposals of the Soviet government on the Berlin issue, that US Vice President Mr. Nixon made a statement regarding the need to change US policy. He did not use the word "change", but spoke in this sense. He said that instead of pursuing power politics aimed at destroying communism, it is necessary to shift to the competition between the systems in order to better provide for the people in both material and cultural aspects.

However, as a result of this competition, communism will inevitably win. After all, the aggressive policy, and in the first place of the United States as the leader of imperialism, has already been defeated in Asia and especially in China. After that it was defeated in Indonesia. It is no secret that the armed rebellion in Indonesia was organized by the United States of America. We managed to find out when the rebellion would begin and who would participate in it. And we warned the Indonesian government. The plans for the rebellion were coordinated with America. The policy of the imperialists was defeated in Asia and Africa. We mean the Suez conflict, and it was the greatest defeat. However, the main role there was played by the British and French imperialists.

The aggression against Syria also failed. Here it was already the work of the United States. The United States pushed Turkey and Iraq against Syria. They suffered the most severe defeat in Iraq.

We believe that the US imperialists suffered a moral defeat in South America as well. Mr. Nixon's trip to South American countries caused violent protests and indignation among Latin Americans. It got to the point that the United States even moved its fleet to the shores of South America. It was embarrassing.

In Europe their goal was to overthrow the governments in the countries of Eastern Europe, returning to the old order, and restoring capitalism. They relied on an economic blockade of socialist countries, believing that in this way they could undermine the socialist camp.

The launch of artificial Earth satellites was a significant blow to the aggressive US politicians. After all, these politicians supported the imperialists of England and France in all areas.

However, they do not recognize their defeat, they refuse to change their policies as it would mean giving up their position of power. They are afraid to do this due to internal considerations. They are afraid of the reduction in military orders, recession, and difficulties.

Now we believe that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries hold very strong positions. Our country is currently in the process of discussing a seven-year plan for the development of our economy. When it is implemented, even poorly informed people will witness firsthand the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist system.

If we assess our capabilities from a position of power, we can see that the balance of power is at least equal, and possibly even in our favor. A comparison of the number of accumulated hydrogen bombs and missiles reveals that while the imperialists have a slight edge in terms of the number of hydrogen bombs, we are stronger in terms of missile weapons. However, the total number of hydrogen bombs produced in our country has surpassed the point after which any further increase is meaningless.

All these facts give reason to believe that the policy from the "position of power" of the imperialist countries has completely failed. Now even die-hard Dulles is forced to change his terminology. He is going through a turning point, where the focus is shifting from competing in the number of armaments to competing in the areas of economics and culture, and in improving the well-being of the people.

This is a great victory for the peace-loving nations. Now in all countries, including the United States, politics from the "position of power" is no longer popular. And this is largely thanks to the peace supporters of all countries, thanks to the great contribution of Mexico's peace supporters, as well as your personal contribution, which was recognized by the international Stalin Prize "For Strengthening Peace Among Nations." We must not weaken our efforts, and we will be able to avoid war. These efforts are two-pronged: along the line of strengthening the socialist countries, developing their economies, and strengthening their power, and along the line of the comprehensive development of the peace movement.

We will do everything to prevent war and ensure the development of the struggle for peace.

Currently, the situation has significantly improved, although there are still isolated outbreaks in places like Taiwan and Berlin. However, these outbreaks are unlikely to lead to a war. But at the same time nothing should be left to chance. The dynamics of an organized peace movement may further strengthen public opinion against war.

This is the current state of affairs.

L. Cárdenas. You, Mr. Chairman of the Council of Ministers, have very accurately described the current state of affairs. Indeed, as I have noticed, the US government has started to slightly change the policies that it pursued up until now and which only caused hatred among the peoples of the American continent and the United States itself. On the contrary, the Soviet Union's policies have led to the rapid development of the economy, science, and culture. Additionally, there is a wide range of educational programs aimed at the younger generation. And this indicates an improvement in the standard of living, and a forward movement. The Soviet Union's opening its doors to foreign visitors has had an impact on public opinion in other countries, influencing their leaders. And we see the results of this influence. Mr. Nixon, the US Vice-President, was taught a valuable lesson in Latin America where a new understanding of US policy began to emerge. However, we believe that wider development of resources and improvement of the living conditions of your people is key to strengthening peace around the world. We are also very interested in the progress of the People's Republic of China since we believe that this country is implementing a great revolution and has the potential to assist other countries fighting for their liberation. We wish China to find as many resources as it needs to develop.

We again want to emphasize that strengthening both material and moral factors will help save Latin America from the Cold War and develop its resources, that is, to achieve what the United States has constantly prevented. Therefore, the successes of the Soviet Union, China, and other socialist countries are crucial to fulfilling the hopes of the people of Latin America.

Throughout history, American leaders have attempted to gain the support of the people in Latin America, yet they have consistently failed. In contrast, the remarkable achievements of socialist countries have had a significant impact on Latin America, serving as a crucial motivating factor for us.

N.S. Khrushchev. I am pleased to see that you understand our policy correctly. Though we were always aware of your active defense of the peace, but this pleases us.

The United States fears a growing economy, both in the industry and agriculture of Latin America, including Mexico, since they see some kind of competition for their economy here.

We are always ready to help underdeveloped countries, there can be no talk of any competition. After all, this would only result in the increase of material and cultural standards for all people. The difference in the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States towards other countries is apparent to all people across the globe. Therefore, sympathy for the Soviet Union's policies is growing.

For example, we are not afraid to sell oil equipment to Argentina, something that the United States cannot do.

L. Cárdenas. They deliberately delay the development of the economy of Latin America, using them only as a source of cheap labor.

N.S. Khrushchev. And, besides, as a consumer of their goods.

L. Cárdenas. You are absolutely right.

It was a pleasure to finally meet you in person, although I had known about your impressive abilities before. We have faith in the future of all nations. The world peace is becoming a reality. This is evidenced by the ambitious economic and cultural development plans in your country, which promise to ensure lasting peace.

I am extremely grateful to you for your warm welcome. I kindly request that you convey my gratitude, as well as the gratitude of all those who accompanied me, to Mr. Voroshilov, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

We see that your country is implementing Lenin's covenants, emphasizing the education of children and youth, and developing the economy. We wish you all happiness.

N.S. Khrushchev. Thank you for understanding our policy correctly, and for your support and good wishes. I want to assure you that we will do everything in our power to develop our nation's economy and culture, which in turn will contribute to the

growth of other nations' economies and cultures. We will continue to fight tirelessly for global peace. Mr. Lazaro Cardenas, please accept my wishes for good health, success in your endeavors, and personal happiness, as well as my wishes for happiness for the freedom-loving people of Mexico.

L. Cárdenas. Thank you very much for your warm wishes. Once again, I appreciate it very much.

N.S. Khrushchev. Mr. Lazaro Cardenas, please learn more about the lives of the Soviet people. Where are you planning to go next?

L. Cárdenas. We plan to visit Stalingrad, learn about the construction of hydroelectric power plants, and visit the sites of great battles.

N.S. Khrushchev. I am especially pleased to hear this, since during the Great Patriotic War, I was a member of the Military Council of the Stalingrad Front.

L. Cárdenas. That is wonderful to know. Thank you so much.

N.S. Khrushchev. We suggest you go to the south and have a good rest on the Black Sea coast.

L. Cárdenas. I am sorry, but my schedule is tight, and I won't have the time for that. Nonetheless, I appreciate your kindness.

N.S. Khrushchev. In that case, please consider visiting us during the summer with your family. We are always happy to see you, your spouse, and anyone else you bring along.

L. Cárdenas. Thank you for your kind invitation. Goodbye.

N.S. Khrushchev. Goodbye.

Partially written down and, when possible, restored from memory.

V.E. TIKHMENEV

30 February 1958