

Protocol Recording of Conversation

K.E. Voroshilov, N.F. Bulganin, N.S. Khrushchev, A.I. Mikoyan, with the Shah of Iran
Mohammed Reza Pahlavi

June 27, 1956

Attended: On the Soviet side: V.S. Semenov, L.F. Ilyichev, A.I. Lavrentyev, A.P. Pavlov.

On the Iranian side: Minister of Trade of Iran Ibrahim Kashani, Senator N. Saed, Adjutant General of the Shah Yazdan Panah, Iranian Ambassador to the USSR A.G. Masud Ansari.

After a short mutual exchange of greetings, K.E. Voroshilov, addressing the Shah, asks:

V.V. [Your Highness], maybe we will start our conversation? It would be good to hear your opinion on the current international situation. The Soviet side has no prepared program of conversation, and the intension is, if you agree with this, to conduct a free exchange of views.

Shah. In my opinion, the current situation around the world is in a state of flux. There seems to be a need for calm and peace everywhere. However, lasting peace can only be established when agreement is reached between the great powers and ways are found to prohibit atomic and thermonuclear weapons and limit all armaments. On the other hand, we all see that nations are demanding independence, we see that there are no colonies in almost the entire world, and this manifests itself in the form of nationalism and in other forms. I am sure that sooner or later all countries will achieve their goals. Of course, this instills great hope. And when all nations come to this, there will be fewer means of provocation and threats. This will help to ensure peace. This will be when the nations who have gained independence will be able to create their own economy – industry and agriculture – to develop their natural wealth. Then conditions will be created for the development of a friendly existence.

Of course, it will be much better if the industry of different countries, instead of building up instruments of destruction, create livelihoods for the population. How long will the transition stage last? I hope not for long.

N. Khrushchev. Correct.

K. Voroshilov. We agree, we also think so. But how long will this stage last? There may be different opinions. It could be delayed, or events could also move very quickly. I want to add two words to what the His Highness the Shah said. It seems to me that all states, including the USSR and Iran, should be active. There should be activity not only within the country, in its internal development in order to expand the national economy, culture and art, there should be activity in the international arena as well. States should actively prevent the possibility of international conflicts through their activities. His Highness the Shah was right when he said yesterday that even small conflicts can develop into major clashes. If the activities of our state and others will coincide, this is very good. But even if they do not coincide, but are aimed towards the same goal – peace – then this will be good too. Of course, each state should find its own means. I would very much like to know the opinion of His Highness.

Shah. Of course, this is the object of our desires to the extent that we can help to achieve this great goal. Great powers – four or five – have permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council. These countries, which have negotiated large (preferential) rights for themselves – whatever they do, their actions will be effective. The only duty of small countries is to render aid in relation to changing international affairs, to do everything possible.

N. Khrushchev. We consider the international situation to be not bad currently, and in fact, good. There is an improvement in relations between countries. If two or three years ago there was talk of war, of defense, and so forth, now the situation is different. Today it is difficult to talk about war, even for a real speculator, since reactionary politicians must consider public opinion. I think this is a big step forward. You would not suspect us of bragging, says N.S. Khrushchev, addressing the Shah, if we say that our role, the role of our country, in easing tensions is considerable.

Shah expresses agreement.

N. Khrushchev. We are actively pursuing a policy of peace and it seems to us that successes are evident. We have ensured that diplomatic relations were established with the Federal Republic of Germany and eliminated the conflict with Yugoslavia. This conflict was a sort of ticking time bomb in international relations. Now our relations with Yugoslavia have become friendly, and even very friendly. We have resolved the Austrian issue, which created tensions in the international situation. We understood that Austria was a foothold in the heart of Europe, both for us and for the Western powers. We removed our military base in Finland. We believed that while our troops were in Finland – and we had no bad intentions towards Finland – relations between our countries were not quite normal, and we withdrew our troops. This was done so quickly that the Finns were very surprised. When we were with N.A. Bulganin and A.I. Mikoyan in China, we agreed to remove our military base at Port Arthur. We did this on the basis of the principle that there should be no foreign military bases on foreign territory.

Those are some of the steps we have taken to improve the international situation. And even a person who is prejudiced against us finds it difficult to argue against these facts, which prove that we need peace and that we are on the path to reducing international tension, to establishing trust between countries.

We took steps in the same direction in the field of arms reduction and the struggle to ban atomic weapons. We are for the reduction of armaments and armed forces, we are for the prohibition of nuclear and hydrogen weapons. Our position in this area is firm and consistent. We agree to withdraw troops from Germany if our Western partners do the same. However, our proposals have not yet been accepted. But we are sure that these activities, like a drop wearing away a stone, are gradually softening minds and reaching the consciousness of even die-hard people, and we have recently begun to reap the benefits of this policy.

When we saw that some states sent representatives to the Subcommittee on Disarmament who, like gramophone records, repeat the same arguments but don't act, we took the initiative into our own hands and announced the reduction of our army by 640 thousand people. A lot of ink was spilled by our ill-wishers to weaken the significance of this step of ours, but the good

seed gave good results. We went further and are reducing our army by another 1200 thousand people, including withdrawing 30 thousand from Germany (actually 33 thousand).

Such is our work that has been done in the face of global public opinion. If we had a positive answer from our partners, we would go even further. We refrain from unnecessary words so as not to provoke the military circles of some countries. We sometimes read the statements of high-ranking, but unintelligent, diplomats who say offensive things about our country, but we do not respond to them, we do not enter into polemics with them. We see, of course, that our policy enrages them, but nevertheless, they have to change their language. If they themselves do not change it, then their peoples will make them change.

Nations regard the Soviet Union as a powerful force, and this is true. And nations now do not believe the narrative that the Soviet Union wants war or is preparing to attack someone. Indeed, not a single country that wants war will reduce its armed forces, not a single country that wants war will give up advantageous military footholds, especially a foothold in the center of Europe like Austria. You may ask, N.S. Khrushchev says, addressing the Shah, what is our evidence. The evidence is the facts I have just mentioned. It should be clear to everyone that we cannot gain anything through war. In the current context, in case of war, we will have enormous destruction. Of course, for our part, we will destroy Europe and America. As for America, it is right around the corner, as they used to say. Of course, we had and now have aircraft that can deliver any means of destruction very well and a long way, and we have shown you this technology. But it's not even about them now. With the emergence of ballistic missiles, which cover thousands of kilometers in a few minutes, much of the recently advanced aviation technology is losing its former importance. I want to tell you, N.S. Khrushchev says, turning to the Shah, that we are not boasting. This is the objective data of this weapon.

K. Voroshilov notes that the military will soon have nothing to do when the technology operates by itself.

N. Khrushchev. We have such weapons and we think that some other countries also have such weapons – the USA and possibly England. We don't need war, we don't need destruction. The enormous natural wealth of our country and the labor of our people allow us to have everything we need. Moreover, we are ready and able to provide assistance in the development of the

economies of underdeveloped countries and we have put out a call in this area to some industrialized countries. This is a call for peaceful competition, although we know that some people really don't like this call.

Now I would like to touch on ideological issues. The West and other countries have their own system and we have our own system. There it is a capitalist system, we have a socialist system. We conduct our activities and we believe that our system is better, but we do not impose it on anyone. We say, let's compete – whose system is better? If a people live better, acquire more, have everything they need, have prosperity and feel happy, then such a system is better. But we want to resolve this dispute by peaceful means. It is known that you cannot fight ideas by using guns. True, in the Middle Ages, during the Inquisition, when people were burned at the stake, they thought that ideas could be contested by force, but, as we know from their historical experience, nothing came of this, the ideas continued to live. As far as we are concerned, we do not impose anything on anyone and we ourselves want to live under the conditions that, as the saying goes, God gave us. The political structure of various countries is the business of the peoples of these countries. We adhere to the principle of non-interference in the affairs of other countries and demand the same from others.

This is actually our principle of relations with other countries, including neighboring ones. We stand for peaceful coexistence between states with different political and social systems. This is consistent with what Lenin taught. True, Lenin said that from time to time there can be wars, but now after the XXth Congress of our party, we believe that war can be avoided. Some portray things as if the Soviet Union is looking for ways to expand its influence through war. This is not true. We believe that war is not inevitable, it might not occur under present conditions. Of course, if war does occur, we will defend ourselves and attack in self-defense. Now the idea of peaceful coexistence has become widespread. Really, there is no other way – it is either peaceful coexistence and economic cooperation or war. We think that those who do not want to recognize the socialist system and do not want to reckon with the facts nevertheless understand what modern warfare is.

We just celebrated the day of Soviet aviation. We were very pleased that many countries, great and small, sent their representatives to this celebration. We had friendly conversations here with American, British and other military representatives, not to mention the conversations we had with the Americans, British and French before that. For a long time, the Turks did not enter

into any contacts with us, but they also sent their general, the commander-in-chief of their air force, to the celebration of Soviet aviation. Turkey is a poor country. And if they clash with the Soviet Union and look for friends far away, then things could end badly. Unless these friends come to the rescue, Turkey will no longer exist. We can bombard the entire territory of Turkey from our territory, and again, I stress, we are not bragging, this is based on objective data. For example, British scientists have calculated that 6 hydrogen bombs are enough to destroy the whole of England. It's not us, it's English physicists who say so. Turkey has a slightly larger territory and is less populated, it may need 7 hydrogen bombs, which can be delivered by aerial means.

I want to emphasize, says N.S. Khrushchev, this is not a threat. I want you to help us improve our relations with Turkey.

N. Bulganin. Perhaps we should speak about the Near and Middle East.

N. Khrushchev. We have very good relations with the Arab countries. Some say in regard to this that we are pursuing a tactic in the Near and Middle East of displacing the Western countries and therefore establishing good relations with the countries of the Arab East. This is nonsense. We act on the strength of our convictions, on the strength of the fact that we in principle are opposed to colonies, colonial dependence and in favor of the elimination of colonialism. Now even some Western countries have come to the conclusion that the colonies are difficult for them to retain, so they are trying to replace political oppression in the colonies or former colonies with economic oppression. But this is not better for the people. The people do not want to die of hunger for the preservation of the colonial system and its new forms. When we were in England, we very pointedly discussed the issue of the Near and Middle East.

A. Mikoyan. This was one of the most pressing issues.

N. Khrushchev. We told the British that we are irreconcilable on this issue. We do not interfere in the internal affairs of other states, but we will always vote in favor of countries that are breaking free from colonial dependence and against any remnants of colonialism.

Speaking of trade relations with the countries of this region, we believe that it is possible and necessary to have trade relations. But we are against exploitative conditions, against using trade relations as a means of establishing economic dependence. Arab countries and many African countries are pleased with our policy. And they like our voice. We will do everything in our power to ensure that they gain economic independence, in addition to political independence.

Here is our point of view. I have said nothing new. All of this is set out in our documents. We believe that this is a correct and fair policy, and this policy is harmless and beneficial for you, for Iran.

Shah. I was very happy to hear an extremely clear and precise statement from you. I'm drawing this conclusion: maybe what has prevented war until now is the terrible weapon that the United States of America and the Soviet Union have. But one day it may happen that ballistic missiles with atomic and other explosives will begin to fly from one end of the world to the other, and as a result the whole world will be destroyed and ruined. Therefore, it is necessary to strive to eliminate this danger by prohibiting atomic and hydrogen weapons, so that there are no such weapons at all, so that peace can be ensured without weapons.

K. Voroshilov apologizes for the intervention and says: we are striving for this. We foresaw this well in advance and introduced a corresponding proposal on banning atomic and hydrogen weapons, but this, unfortunately, was not supported. We saw that weapons were being prepared outside our borders, we knew that they were being preparing against someone, we knew for sure that they were preparing against us, and we were forced to acquire such weapons in turn.

Shah. In fact, we, Iranians, are in the middle. The Americans have a terrible weapon, the USSR has it, and perhaps also England – the keys to the situation, thus, are in the hands of the USA and the USSR, and possibly also England's. The duty of small countries, and in any case the duty of Iran in these conditions, is to help everything that contributes to the reduction of tension and disarmament. For small countries, and Iran is small, although it is a country rich in possibilities, it is especially necessary that there be lasting peace and sympathy between nations. It is necessary so that the people can use the wealth of the country and have the highest possible standard of living. With regard to Iran, we can say that it has not yet passed the stage of capitalist

development. Since the country's wealth and the main industrial resources are in the hands of the Iranian government, we have no fear of further such development.

I am personally very glad to have heard the clear and precise policy that we [sic] have explained. The clearer the better. In the context of Iran, we, of course, not only know how much our country needs peace and tranquility, we also know that our entire future depends on peace and tranquility throughout the world. I am afraid that what I will say will be a repetition, but a conclusion can be drawn from everything that has been said: we in all sincerity wish that the danger of war throughout the world was eliminated so that we could live in peace and develop trade relations, especially with the Soviet Union.

N. Khrushchev. We are very happy about this.

K. Voroshilov. This is also our wish.

A. Mikoyan says that he finds it helpful to share some of his conversations with statesmen, in particular with the President of Pakistan during a recent trip there. When I asked the Pakistanis why they needed the Baghdad Pact, they declared that they had no claims against the Soviet Union, and that Pakistan would never become a territory for an attack on the Soviet Union. In response to my question, why then the Baghdad Pact, the Pakistanis replied that they need it for protection against India. This is why they did not abandon the pact when they were invited to join the pact. [text crossed out] To this they added that the Baghdad Pact would not prevent them from improving their relations with the Soviet Union. A few days after this conversation, the Pakistanis appointed their ambassador to our country. We are developing trade relations with them and they are taking concrete steps.

The Pakistanis said to me that it would be much easier for them to improve their relations with the Soviet Union if the relations of Muslim countries – neighbors of the Soviet Union, Turkey and Iran – with the Soviet Union improved. For its part, the Soviet Union has taken many steps aimed at improving relations with Iran. Recently, financial claims and border disputes have been resolved, and even such disputes that still remained from the tsar. And suddenly, at this very time, Iran joins the Baghdad bloc. When this was discussed in Pakistan, I said that the arrival of His Highness the Shah in the USSR would clarify the situation.

I had a meeting with [Prime Minister Adnan] Menderes. Why not improve Soviet-Turkish relations, I asked Menderes. The whole world communicates with the Soviet Union, and Turkey is disconnected from them. Menderes replied that until there is a general improvement in the international situation, there will be no improvement in relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union. To this he was told that neighbors can improve relations between themselves and independently from the general direction of international relations. However, Menderes did not want to dig deeper into this topic.

Consequently, I had to tell the president that it was a vicious circle. The Soviet Union wants to improve relations with Pakistan, the Pakistanis associate the improvement of their relations with the Soviet Union with the improvement of Soviet-Turkish and Soviet-Iranian relations, and the Turks associate the improvement of Soviet-Turkish relations with an improvement in the general international situation. But the general situation will not improve if relations between individual countries do not improve.

The conversation I had with [Jawaharlal] Nehru deserves attention, Nehru said that he had the impression that Iran is afraid of its northern neighbor. As for the grounds and reasons for this, we already talked about it yesterday and today. There is no basis for this.

The Soviet Union is not in such a position to ask Iran for friendship; Iran needs good relations, at least no less than the Soviet Union. You can be sure of our sincerity. It is necessary to put fear behind us in the relations of Turkey and Iran with the Soviet Union. During and after World War II, events took place that increased Iran's distrust of the Soviet Union. N.S. Khrushchev said, on behalf of all of us, that we regret the erroneous acts that took place then; but to tell the truth, those present here should not be held personally responsible for these mistakes. We speak about our responsibility because we are responsible for [those] policies, although none of us at one time was a supporter of those erroneous steps that were taken on our part.

N. Khrushchev notes that even then those present now at the talks were against the erroneous steps towards Turkey and Iran, but then they could not change anything. We are talking about actions associated with the name of Stalin, and in addition Beria had a hand in this case at that time.

A. Mikoyan. It is about creating an environment of trust, which is what the Soviet Union wants. We hope you can see that militarily we are not threatening you.

A.I. Mikoyan talks about the good relations between the USSR and Afghanistan and, in connection with this, the recent negotiations between N.A. Bulganin and N.S. Khrushchev with the leaders of the Afghani government. Iran and Afghanistan have a lot in common: the Muslim religion, similar economies, and even similar languages. We have good relations with Afghanistan.

N. Khrushchev offers a reply: we have very good relations with Afghanistan.

A. Mikoyan. Why doesn't Iran have the same relations with the Soviet Union as Afghanistan has with the Soviet Union? What do we need from Iran? First of all, that Iran should not be a foreign base for an attack against the Soviet Union. For our part, you are not threatened with any attack, we want good relations with Iran, we need you to be convinced of this, and this will benefit Iran and the promotion of peace.

Shah. I am very grateful to Mr. Mikoyan for his statement. Since our conversation has assumed an open and warm character and has nothing to do with the notes that are usually exchanged by states according to the official line, it is possible to freely speak words full of friendship and openness. You are asking why Iran entered the Baghdad Pact, which I consider to be a defensive alliance. This has its roots in the 150-year history of relations between our countries, a history that needs to be fixed. Is it possible to cite even one fact [indicating] that Iran attacked Russia over the course of 150 years, or had in mind the idea of attacking and seizing Soviet territory?

Saed notes that Iran in 1878 supported Russia against Turkey and in the early 20s of the twentieth century also supported Russia. I, says Saed, was consul general in Baku during this time and donated tons of wheat to the hungry in Russia. We didn't have any aggressive thoughts.

Shah. But from 1811 until the world war, Iran was attacked two or three times by Russia. In 1907, Russia divided Iran with England. In the First World War, Russian troops entered Iran along with British troops. In the Second World War, in 1941, Soviet troops also entered Iranian

territory. Iran signed an agreement with the USSR; however, despite this agreement, it got to the point that part of Iran's territory was almost torn away from Iran. Therefore, the factor of terror and fear existed and this forced us, even if it was useless from a military point of view, to take measures. Speaking about the possible military futility of Iran's entry into the Baghdad Pact, the Shah adds, I mean that Iranian military power is very limited, and I also am referring to modern military equipment, in particular missiles against, which it is impossible to defend oneself. Our dream is that there will be no war. Any position that Iran would have taken would not matter if, God forbid, there was a war, as Iran would still be involved in hostilities. Now you can see how sincerely interested we are in preventing a war.

I, of course, do not want to say that Soviet-Iranian relations cannot be improved until the general international situation is improved.

Is not the honor that befell us — our visit to your country — is this not a sign and proof of the desire to improve relations with the Soviet Union? But the basis of the whole matter lies in the fact that until the terrible specter that casts a shadow on all of us is eliminated, until the danger of war is eliminated throughout the world, it is completely impossible, not feasible to resolve all issues. The basis of this terrible specter are atomic and thermonuclear weapons and, in general, all modern weapons. Iran itself — what kind of danger could it pose to the Soviet Union?

If Iran itself is not dangerous for you, but you think that you may be in danger from the territory of Iran, then I declare that while I am alive, no danger will threaten you from Iran. (Then the Shah adds: no danger threatens you from the territory of Iran). We are in such a position that we must look at our neighbors and, if necessary, bring our policy closer to the policy of our neighbors. This arises from the geographical location of our country.

Here a conversation began about relations with Pakistan. Iran, for certain reasons — a common religion and a lack of conflicts — has very good relations with Pakistan. I am also of the opinion that Pakistan has no reason to have bad relations with you and to have suspicions about you. In my opinion, the same can be said about Turkey. What power does it have to have unsavory goals against USSR? Of course, if you declare that from your territory you can cause such destruction in this country that it will practically be destroyed, then Turkey knows this too. As for Afghanistan, Afghanistan is in a different position. They did not fight in the last two world wars. Obviously, geographic location was a factor in Afghanistan. Iran and Afghanistan

have one religion and one language, we wish them happiness and progress, although they worry us a little regarding the water in Helmand [Province].

We again come to the conclusion that it is necessary to create such conditions that would prevent war.

N. Khrushchev. We were pleased to hear your statement that you will not allow any threat or danger to the Soviet Union from the territory of Iran. As for some of the facts of the past, which His Highness the Shah has pointed out, we have already spoken about them. But if you talk all the time about some bad deed from one side or the other, then the relationship will remain frozen. We must start a new story. We spent some time with N.A. Bulganin in Afghanistan and had conversations with the king and leading statesmen of Afghanistan.

It was very pleasant, we have established a very friendly relationship, and now we are waiting for the leaders of the Afghan government to visit us. We have no conflicts with Afghanistan, and if there are minor border incidents they are easily settled by our border commissars. We have very good relations with Afghanistan.

Now about your trip to the Soviet Union. You acted wisely in coming to us, and we appreciate your courage, because despite the insistence of some advisers [not to do it], you decided on this trip. However, you are unfair with regard to the assessment of certain developments in the recent military situation. I am referring to 1941.

Saed makes a remark that in 1941, as well as in 1907, the initiators were the English, and adds that in a conversation with V.M. Molotov, during his last visit, he emphasized that the introduction of troops in 1941 was made on the initiative of the British and that the participation of the Soviet Union in this case should only be regretted.

N. Khrushchev. Why such unfair treatment of the Soviet Union? You, the Iranians, have the best relations with those who initiated sending troops to Iran – the British – but not with us. For the unjust step taken by the British, you are on bad terms with us and on good terms with them. We know the role of England – we talked about this to the British and heard a lot from them. They were the initiators of all the bad deeds, yet you are in the Baghdad Pact with them.

Shah. To this I can give two answers. First, I want to point out the events on the Soviet side that occurred during the Second World War and led to such events that almost led to the separation of Iranian Azerbaijan from Iran; secondly, at the end of the war, the Soviet troops did not leave Iran in 1945, while the British troops left.

N. Khrushchev. We have already said that this was a mistake, that it was under Stalin, and Beria also had a hand in it. We considered and still consider it wrong, for example, that at one time Georgian historians, referring to the fact that once the Georgian armies and Georgian people were in some territories of Turkey, declared these territories a part of Georgia. We directly and openly stated that this is wrong. We told you this yesterday, we also say it today. But the main thing is that all our actions in recent years have been aimed at improving relations with Iran. We have settled all financial and border differences, we signed a good agreement with Iran on this issue, and in return received the Baghdad Pact. This is unfair.

Shah. As for the British, who were also guilty of such an evil deed as the entry of troops into Iranian territory, the British were punished for this.

N. Khrushchev. Now you want to punish us?

Shah. The Baghdad Pact is a defensive pact. Wherever you look, there are pacts everywhere: the Atlantic Pact, the Warsaw Pact, your pact with China. Isn't it true that the only key to the situation is the danger of war and the elimination of nuclear and hydrogen weapons? Would we really like for there to be a war and for the Soviet armed forces to come to Iran and destroy us? Wouldn't wanting that be crazy?

N. Khrushchev. I want to agree with you. I want to understand your logic. If you went into a military pact, then today it could be defensive, but tomorrow it could be aggressive. After all, the pact actually stipulates that there may be foreign troops or bases on the territory of Iran.

Shah. I'm happy that I can say that this is not the case. None of the clauses of the pact gives the right to this.

N. Khrushchev. If there are foreign troops and military bases created on the territory of the host country, which is included in the pact, then the possessors of the foreign troops and bases, which are also included in the pact, do not have to ask the host country and can take the territory of this country for their own purposes. Because those countries are stronger than you, they may not ask for your opinion.

General Yazdan Panah intervenes in the conversation and notes that in the Baghdad Pact there is not a word about the possibility of foreign troops entering Iranian territory.

N. Bulganin. We know about the content of the negotiations at the last session of the Baghdad Pact, where military activities were developed, and not any others. We read the speech of the British representative at the last session of the Baghdad Pact. England was represented there by the Minister of War. There was reference there to the development of military activities. Against whom are the activities directed? You have good relations with Turkey, good relations with Pakistan; they also belong to the Baghdad Pact. So, against whom were the speeches made there? We stated this to [Anthony] Eden and [Selwyn] Lloyd, but Lloyd responded with a joke: the prime minister and others were supposedly busy and therefore had to send a military minister to the session of the Baghdad Pact in Tehran. We then asked, if this was the way to explain the matter then why did they send the Minister of War, and not the Minister of Education, and why did they make such speeches?

This is how the situation is developing, and you see the reasons for the deterioration of relations.

Shah. I want to repeat one thing. Of course, the Baghdad Pact has a military character. However, the Baghdad Pact is a defensive pact. I would like to refer to one fact. Many newspapers wrote about where the defensive line should pass in connection with the Baghdad Pact: along the Zagros mountains or along the Alborz mountains. But after all, both those and other mountains are located on the territory of Iran. This once again proves the defensive nature of the Baghdad bloc.

N. Bulganin. This is His Highness the Shah speaking from the Iranian point of view. But after all, N.S. Khrushchev rightly pointed out that allies can impose some things on you.

Shah. That won't happen.

N. Khrushchev. I would like to say a few words to you on a confidential basis, although everything that is said here is not intended for printing. Let's calmly analyze the Baghdad Pact and show who benefits from it. Why did I speak about the conversation on this issue being in confidence? We want to have a good relationship with the English, and we would not want what is being said here to be used to damage our relations with England. However, we would not hesitate to say this to their face, if necessary.

Who needs the Baghdad Pact? The British do not believe that we are aggressive toward the west, much less the east. If they conceived this pact, it was not because they are concerned with defense, but because it is beneficial to them. By advertising the pact as a military one, drawing into it the peoples of the Near and Middle East, the British are creating a basis for the economic enslavement of their allies, for squeezing oil and other natural resources out of them without any obstacles. Any talk about how the pact is supposedly for the defense of the area is only to create the impression that they, the British, care about you. First, in such cases, they say that it is necessary to protect you, and then they say: in order to protect you, we must send our soldiers to you and have bases on your territory. In 1941, the entry of foreign troops into Iranian territory was primarily a matter for the British. The British want their base in Iran. They want to keep Iran in "friendly" dependence on them. We are not talking about this now, but if necessary, we could say directly to anyone, including the British, that the Baghdad Pact is a continuation of colonial policy.

K. Voroshilov. A more veiled form of colonialism.

N. Khrushchev. It is a continuation of the old colonial policy, just in a new form. As for the military side of the matter, we are not afraid of the British and, in particular, are not afraid of them in the Near and Middle East. In the event of a conflict that we may be forced into, we will demolish them and move on. In this respect, we are not scared of the Baghdad Pact, but we see it

as an insult to our good intentions. We are offended by this attitude to all the good we have done for Iran, which is expressed in the [fact] of Iran's joining the Baghdad Pact. However, what is the solution to all this? This way or that way, the Baghdad Pact exists. Of course it will die and perish, we are confident of that, but Iran and the Soviet Union must exist, and our relations must develop. So what should we do? Should we put forth a demand that Iran leave the Baghdad Pact? Maybe we should do it differently – take the existence of the Baghdad Pact as reality, but draw it down to zero in practical terms. Maybe we should agree to express this position in some kind of document, whether it be a statement by His Highness the Shah or our joint communiqué. This document could state that Iran will not allow its territory to be used against the Soviet Union by the actions of any third countries, and will continue to develop economic and trade relations with the Soviet Union.

If such a proposal is acceptable, then we could instruct somebody to draft a text for His Highness the Shah's statement or put together a joint communiqué. We would consider this the beginning of a new stage in the development of our relations.

Shah stays silent for some time, then tries to say something.

N. Khrushchev apologizes for interrupting and says that the Shah does not have to respond to this proposal immediately. He could, if possible, think it over or consult about this issue.

Shah: I would like to clarify two issues. There is more than one pact in the world. Why do you, as Iranians would put it, point your finger at the Baghdad Pact? The Baghdad Pact is the weakest pact compared to other pacts. This pact will never be able to have an aggressive character considering the geographic situation of its participants. This became clear with regard to Iran, in particular, in what was said about the defensive line on the Zagros and Alborz ridges is concerned. I think the solution here is not to have any pacts at all.

Now consider the past. So far, there has not been any pressure on Iran, and there have not been any proposals for Iran to become an instrument of anybody's aggression against the Soviet Union. You can rest assured that as long as I have influence in my country, such a situation will never occur. If some negotiations are possible on this basis, then your embassy in

Iran and our embassy in Moscow could proceed with negotiations. I think that you trust my statements.

N. Khrushchev: We do trust them. But it would be good to make public what you just said. We could find a form for doing that.

Shah: According to the Constitution of Iran, you can accept a personal statement from me. If that is sufficient, it would be better. If not, then we will have to have negotiations between the foreign ministries of both countries.

N. Bulganin: This will be sufficient.

N. Khrushchev: I have one more thing to mention. You were saying here – N. S. Khrushchev addresses the Shah – that we were attacking the Baghdad Pact, although this pact is the shabbiest of all the pacts, but we have attacked and do attack the Atlantic Pact [NATO] as well. We have sharply criticized it and we criticize it now. But today, in conversations with you, to attack the Atlantic Pact, when none of its participants or organizers are present – what use would that be? We are, in principle, in favor of dissolving all blocs, including the Warsaw military alliance, which we were forced to create. But in this matter, not everything depends on us.

K. Voroshilov says he wants to explain why we were so worried by the fact of Iran's joining the Baghdad Pact. Recently, our relations with Turkey have gotten sharply worse. However, after the changes that took place in our own country after Stalin's death, we expressed our desire to improve relations with Turkey. Unfortunately, our statements did not have any impact on Turkey.

N. Khrushchev: Our steps with regard to Turkey are starting to work.

K. Voroshilov: Turkey's membership in the Baghdad bloc and its hostile position toward the Soviet Union are not at all harmless. We are aware that Turkey hosts foreign troops and foreign naval ships and foreign military bases, including the bases intended for atomic bombs. Against

whom is all this directed? Against us, the Soviet Union. Of course, if the Turks, or others from the Turkish territory (there are some irrational people), try to harm us, Turkey will get it bad, very bad. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, you can trust us. Not only we do not plan to attack, we don't even have such intentions in our thoughts. Addressing the Shah, Voroshilov says: your statement is quite sufficient for us, but it is necessary for others to be able to read your statement as well, so that everybody knows that the Baghdad Pact, as far as Iran is concerned, will not serve the goals of attacking the Soviet Union.

A. Mikoyan says that he wants to say something about the past and mentions that the injustices committed by Tsarist Russia against Iran should not be transferred to the Soviet Union. Starting from the first days of the Soviet regime, we respected Iran; we withdrew troops from Iranian territory, we got rid of all the unequal treaties, we established equal relations with Iran. His Highness the Shah forgets this, but [instead] pulls out minor mishaps from the war and post-war years. It creates a certain imbalance. Everybody knows how much Lenin has done for [Iran and] the East, and we are currently restoring Lenin's policies in all their fullness. We are asking you to understand our policies, and then we will have proper relations and mutual understanding between us.

Shah: You must know that there is not a single bad word said about Lenin in Iran. Do not forget that our country was one of the first to recognize Lenin's regime. Do not forget that in that respect we did not exhibit shortsightedness.

N. Khrushchev: Afghanistan was the first to recognize the Soviet Union.

N. Bulganin: Afghanistan and Iran recognized us practically at the same time.

Shah: In Iran, everywhere they always spoke about Lenin with great respect, and still do today. As far as the bases and foreign troops on Turkish territory are concerned, Turkey is a member of NATO and those bases belong to NATO.

K. Voroshilov: It doesn't make it at all easier for us that the bases in Turkey are linked to NATO – in Iran there will be bases linked to the Baghdad Pact.

Shah: This is not what I had in mind; I would like it very much if the Soviet Union had good relations with Turkey.

K. Voroshilov: How are we going to conclude today's negotiations?

N. Bulganin: Today's negotiations should be concluded by a breakfast.

K. Voroshilov: We should agree on what comes next. If the Iranian side desires it, we could meet again and continue our conversation.

N. Bulganin: If we are to draw out some results from our negotiations, the Soviet side is very satisfied with the friendly, open and useful conversation. We think that today we will have breakfast, then take a rest, and maybe continue our conversation tomorrow.

Shah does not object.

N. Bulganin: What should we tell the press?

Shah: If the Soviet side agrees, we could say that the negotiations took place in a very friendly atmosphere and focused on the friendly relations between the two countries. And that the sides adhere to the same views regarding strengthening these friendly relations.

K. Voroshilov: We have no objections to this. We can instruct ambassadors Ansari and Ilyichev to formulate the text of an announcement about today's meeting.

At this, the meeting was closed.

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[Translated by Sarah Dunn and Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive]



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