

June 25, 1957

Transcript of CPSU CC Plenum, Evening

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Gromyko. Comrades! Our foreign enemies are at present betting on and placing their main hopes on disorder and collapse in our leadership. Let us ask one question: what would happen if this anti-party group seized the leadership; how would that be seen abroad, above all by the American bourgeoisie-our main enemy? They would see it as their victory.

Voices. Without a doubt.

Voice. They would thank Malenkov, Kaganovich and Molotov.

Gromyko. They would see it in the following way, that Dulles' policy, the policy of the "cold war," the policy of squeezing, of pressure on the Soviet Union, had won out. Let coms. Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, and those who made a bloc with them, look at the situation they have put themselves in. I think that it would not be a mistake to say that they have put themselves in a certain sense in the position of Dulles' allies.

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. And in the absence of unity, it is easier for enemies to slip us another Hungary and a second edition of 17 June 1953-the events in the GDR. They can say to us: fine, the Russian people have shown that more than once in complicated circumstances they close ranks; the leadership also closes ranks, and victory is assured thereby.

It is true, history has shown that both the people and the leadership close ranks when the dark hour tolls. The people closed ranks even when the tsars were in our country. But at what price would the defense of our great cause of socialism come, if the hopes of the enemy were realized, if our leadership were shattered!

Comrades, I cannot agree with some of the statements that there is only an embryonic political platform here so far, but not a platform. I think that if one analyzes everything that has been said by the troika, above all by Molotov as well as those who formed a bloc with him, then one must come to the conclusion that politically-if a political assessment is to be given-a real revisionist platform was present. It affected both the political and the economic life of our country, as well as the issue of cadres.

As for cadres, I think that no one would disagree that if the troika and their accomplices had taken control of the leadership, the shadow of Shatalin or some equivalent of him would have reappeared. And these people don't have to be taught how to make short work of cadres.

The comrades who spoke correctly said that we were talking about people who had lost touch with life, with the people, with practical work, having buried themselves in paperwork [zashlis' v bumagakh]. But I would like as far as possible to emphasize one side of the affair, which has not been sufficiently emphasized. These people for a long time put themselves in a position where they lecture members of the CC Presidium who are taking the correct position, CC members, and so on, left and right. They regard everyone sitting here, as a rule, as adolescents who, as they say, walk under the table like a pawn [pod stol peshkom khodiat].

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. It is true that many of us are ten or perhaps fifteen years younger than some of the participants of the anti-party group. But that is not our fault. If that is anyone's fault, it is our mothers' and fathers'.

Voice. That is only by age.

Gromyko. They do not notice that people have grown up both literally and politically. They are not the same people who they were ten or fifteen years ago. The present plenum has confirmed this well. Our CC is the full master of the situation.

The participants in the anti-party group have put themselves in the position of some sort of priests [zhretsy]. Even in ancient Greece where there were priests, they existed when their existence corresponded to the needs of the ruling class. I think that something similar must be said now. Approximately the same conclusion should be made: there is no need at all for these priests. (Laughter, applause.)

Comrades, even the bourgeoisie, including the American and English [bourgeoisie], cannot permit themselves the luxury of keeping a person who has lost all value for the state leadership in his job. An example: Churchill. He did not serve badly in the interests of the colonial British empire, but when he lost his value, they sent him to paint landscapes.

(Laughter in the hall.)

Voice. Correct.

Gromyko. When Eden lost his value, although he was a bit younger, they sent him on an indefinite vacation.

I think that the troika, and perhaps some of those who formed a bloc with the troika, should also be sent to paint landscapes. (Laughter in the hall.)

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. Comrades, I wanted to emphasize with all decisiveness one more point, since it relates to many of the actions of our foreign policy. In my opinion, the Central Committee should know some facts which the previous speakers could not talk about simply because they are not involved in this business, while our brother [Molotov] sits on [nash brat sidit na] foreign policy affairs.

From all of the practical work of the CC Presidium over the course of at least the last two years, it has become clear that these priests are trying to present com. Khrushchev's role in the CC as that of an agronomist. That is a definite line. You see, they say, he knows agriculture and runs it. In this way they want to cancel out the huge contributions which the First Secretary of the CC, com. Khrushchev, has made to the country and the party.

I want to touch on another area in the political and economic leadership of the country, and also in the area of foreign policy.

Here com. Mikoian has touched on one issue of foreign policy-our serious warning which was made to England and France when these countries launched into military adventurism against Egypt. It is well known that that action was appreciated abroad, and it is correct, that the way the ultimatum put an end to the military actions against Egypt in 28 hours after com. Bulganin's message was sent to Eisenhower, the English and French premiers and the Israeli premier, Ben Gurion, was in our interests.

Malik. Eden broke out crying when he received the message.

Gromyko. There were reasons to cry.

Comrades, I consider myself a person who is economical with words, but I should

report to the Central Committee that the dispatch of that message was the initiative of com. Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Central Committee. (Applause). Shepilov was minister of foreign affairs then. He spoke here, but his tongue could not move to note that fact. He loses the gift of speech in such cases.

Shepilov. At dozens of meetings, including at MID meetings, I said that this aided our rapprochement with the Arabs, that this was com. Khrushchev's initiative.

Gromyko. Why did you not say so to the Central Committee?

Shepilov. I agree.

Gromyko. Why am I talking about this? I want to emphasize that the CC Presidium, and above all the First Secretary, has led on issues of the USSR's foreign policy. Unfortunately, not so many foreign policy issues were discussed at plenums. It would be good if we correct this in the future; we must correct this situation.

And so, speaking about the leadership of our foreign policy, I do not want to create the impression that merits in this matter fall proportionately to all in the CC Presidium, including from the troika. Nothing of the sort.

The main, if one can express oneself this way, impulses on issues of foreign policy came from the First Secretary of the party Central Committee (Applause).

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. I do not hesitate to say this, although at present I head our diplomatic department. If I did not want and did not desire to speak about this, I would be misunderstanding [lozhno ponimal by] the prestige of the MID.

Second issue. I will only mention it-the Austrian treaty. That is not only a decision by the CC Presidium. Com. Khrushchev insisted on the necessity of making a decision. You all know the positive significance of that whole affair.

The Trieste issue-that is also his proposal.

The issue of normalizing relations with West Germany-that is also his initiative. As a result, we received a huge lever of influence on the internal conditions in West Germany. Without this, it is possible that the Bundeswehr would be armed with atomic weapons. The plans to expand the West German army were disrupted and in any case delayed in large part because we, by establishing our embassy in Bonn, provided the Social Democratic opposition in West Germany with a rich line of argument. I repeat, the normalization of relations with West Germany has in large part aided this.

This was adopted on the insistence, not only by the proposal, but on the insistence of com. Khrushchev in the face of opposition from com. Molotov.

Voices. Yes.

Gromyko. The normalization of relations with Japan...

Molotov. I did not oppose, but on the contrary, supported...

Gromyko. When, Viacheslav Mikhailovich?

Molotov. I supported the establishment of relations with West Germany as well.

Gromyko. I will remind you of the facts: You came back from the conference in San Francisco. The day before, the issue was discussed in the CC Presidium. There was a decision at com. Khrushchev's suggestion to normalize relations with West Germany and to send an open note to the Adenauer government. We at MID prepared such a note in keeping with com. Khrushchev's proposal. Against this, as far as I remember, there were no objections in the Presidium.

Com. Molotov returned. I did not physically have the time to introduce [show to the Presidium] this issue before his return. The minister arrived; he examined the proposal. Deputy minister V.S. Semenov who is present here and I tried to convince com. Molotov that the draft should be brought to the CC as had been pre-approved in the Presidium. Am I speaking correctly, com. Semenov?

Semenov. Correctly.

Gromyko. We said: it is a correct decision and should be introduced in this form in particular. Com. Molotov says: no, by introducing such a draft, we will extend a hand to [West German Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer and entreat him. He cancelled this decision and introduced his own proposal. Of course, the Presidium altered the whole thing and affirmed its decision.

Molotov. An open letter is one thing, and a non-open letter is another. The difference here is not an essential one, but one of form.

Gromyko. Not only on this issue, although it in particular was a very important issue.

Voice. We were talking about the content.

Gromyko. We were talking about making a direct proposal on normalization to put Adenauer in a difficult position and not to drag out the matter as before.

On disarmament. I am not going to repeat what has been said before-it is a complex problem. But here as well the main decisions were, as a rule, taken by the First Secretary of the CC.

The virgin lands were spoken about here. I want to emphasize this matter from another angle. If it hadn't been for the virgin lands-and it is well known on whose insistence the relevant decision was made-this year we not only would have been on hunger rations [na golodnom paike], but we could not have sold grain to our friends. We would have been obliged to market our gold abroad, in the context of our very tight foreign-trade balance. We could not have sold bread to the Poles, the Hungarians, or the Albanians. I am not even talking about the fact that we could not have sold [bread] to Egypt.

I do not want to repeat myself on the theme of how significant that would have been, but I do want to emphasize one fact: if we had not given [dali] the people's democratic countries bread, then...

Mikoian. If we had not sold [prodali] it [to them].

Gromyko. If we had not sold them bread, those countries would have been obliged to turn to someone else; there is only one someone else-the Americans. And they will not only sell bread, but will sell with the simultaneous attachment of one-sided conditions.

The negotiations which have recently taken place between the Poles and the Americans on some issues, including on the issue of selling so-called agricultural surpluses to Poland, have shown that the Americans seize anything they can with their teeth in order to attach the conditions they need.

After all, in Egypt, if it had not been for our arms and our grain...

Mikoian. And oil plus [our] purchases of cotton, then, although it cannot be said definitely; in such matters you cannot make categorical assertions; but there is a good likelihood that Egypt would have been brought to its knees.

I want to touch on another issue as well. It would be good if com. Molotov mentally went out into the middle of the hall and looked at himself speaking from this tribune. He would see what a pathetic picture it is. It was also a pathetic picture when he tried to denigrate the visits of our leading officials, above all, of course, com. Khrushchev, to other countries with serious missions, as a result of which the foreign-policy influence of our state, the Soviet Union, has been increased in several countries and several world regions.

I must say that I simply bow before the huge work of great state importance which was done during these trips by com. Khrushchev. As is well known, com. Bulganin travelled with him, but com. Khrushchev was always the soul of the matter.

Voices. Correct. (Applause).

Gromyko. This applies to the visit to India. I was among the accompanying persons. It applies to the trip to Yugoslavia, to Afghanistan, to Burma, to England, to Finland, and to the meeting of the leaders of the four powers' summit in Geneva in 1955. And I think that com. Molotov resorted to fairly dirty methods on purpose in his effort to denigrate [Khrushchev], since com. Molotov did not and could not have any other arguments worthy of attention.

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. In Finland during the last visit there was a pack of foreign correspondents from Finnish, French, American, and English newspapers that were very hostile to us. But not one of the correspondents nor any one of the newspapers which were most hostile to the Soviet Union dared to bring any facts that would cast a shadow on the behavior of com. Khrushchev and com. Bulganin during their last trip.

What sort of conclusion follows from this? The conclusion is as follows: the ethics of the bourgeois newspapers which were most hostile to us turned out to be more elevated than the ethics by which Molotov now lets himself be guided at the CC Plenum.

Voices. Correct. (Applause.)

Gromyko. Com. Molotov also dredged up com. Khrushchev's interview. I want to inform the Central Committee [about something]. I consider that it has the right and should know this fact. Com. Khrushchev did not propose himself, did not ask for this interview. The proposal that com. Khrushchev agree to give an interview was made by the MID, by me. It was discussed in the CC Presidium. At the beginning I had the following impression: com. Khrushchev did not have a very fixed opinion as to whether he should or should not give an interview. I spoke "for," and the members of the Presidium approved our proposal, and the decision was taken.

By its content the interview given was good and correct. I must say that not many of the Soviet Union's foreign policy actions have stirred up a hornet's nest in the USA as

did that interview. In vain, Molotov tried to depict the matter as if there were some new doubtful positions which do not follow from our party line and were not approved by the CC Presidium. There is nothing of the sort. There are no such positions. The only positions there are those which follow and are wholly founded on the resolutions of the 20th congress of the CPSU, on the resolutions of the CC Presidium and of the party CC itself. There is one new thing in the interview. What is new? It is the fresh, original form of the presentation of our views with an exposition of Soviet foreign policy. But that itself is valuable. What was needed was exactly a lively, intelligible form of presentation, of exposition of the views and issues of our foreign policy. That was needed; it contributed to the interview's huge effect.

In the course of our work we read official and unofficial communications, which in particular relate to an assessment of this interview, and with all confidence I can state that it was assessed in precisely that way...