

December 11, 1961

Comments of N. S. Khrushchev, 11 December 1961

Citation:

"Comments of N. S. Khrushchev, 11 December 1961", December 11, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, APRF, Fond 52, Opis 1, Delo 598, List 79-94. Published in "Istochnik", (Moscow) No. 6, 2003, pp. 122-127. Translated for CWIHP by Gary Goldberg. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/113340>

Summary:

Khrushchev dictates his ideas for a general memorandum that he will give to Kroll. The memorandum will describe the situation in Germany and the possible development of Soviet-West German relations. It should demonstrate to West Germany the economic and political advantages of improving its relationship with the Soviet Union. Khrushchev describes the potential for West Germany's allies to capitalize on Cold War tensions in Germany and concludes that better relations with the Soviet Union will make West Germany a more active force in East-West relations and lead to a more stable balance of power.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

First I would like to talk so that you understand [me] and then I will dictate what the nature of this document should be. I would consider it necessary to prepare a memorandum, a memorandum of an impersonal nature; neither from me nor the MID [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], nor from anyone to anyone. This memorandum is to describe the essence of the situation that has now developed in the world and especially the question of Germany, the solution to the German question, and the further development of relations between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany. This is the substance. Why should there be such a memorandum? I want to put it in Kroll's pocket for the New Year in order to tell Kroll: You've received nothing from me, I've given nothing to you, etc. Read it and tell me when you have a chance, what is your opinion on this question. You can do with this document as you wish. So I'm demanding nothing of him. [Do] as you wish. This is foremost. But if you have the opportunity and the desire to tell your opinion on this question, I will listen eagerly, again, when the opportunity presents itself (in order not to create one especially). And now the content of this memorandum: [Translator's note: the following extract from the State Department's Historian's Office tells where the text can be found]: For text of the memorandum, which Kohler described as "obviously divisive in intent" (memorandum to Rusk, January 1, 1962; Department of State, Central Files, 661.62A/1-862), see Europa Archiv, Folge 3/1962, pages D59-70, or Moskau Bonn, pages 876-877. A translation of the memorandum is attached to Kohler's memorandum to Rusk. For Kroll's account of receiving the memorandum, see Lebenserinnerungen eines Botschafters, pages 537 ff. (We would need to think over, give good arguments, and show the advantages to West Germany of improving relations with us. There is no need to try to get them to withdraw from there. Evidence of an objective nature is needed - economic or political. Then this document is powerful for a person who chooses how to decide. If we simply pull [them] toward us, it's - every bird likes his own nest. If this document is of such a nature, it's pressing [them] to join our own "gang." But we need to demonstrate this objectively). We can say: We know what your allies are saying. If we make concessions, this means concessions if they are subordinated to common sense and they will sign a peace treaty. They are afraid that West Germany will leave. Accordingly, they are applying pressure not in the interests of Germany but in their own interests in order to restrain Germany. But they're not providing a solution to the problem with the continuation of the Cold War. They themselves see that this is an absurdity, that it is impossible to come to an agreement, that the balance of power right now is not right. Accordingly, an exploitation of the revanchist and nationalistic sentiments of West Germany is going on in order to inflame its revanchist ambitions and for a takeover. But they themselves know that a danger will be revealed in this, that if war is unleashed then all countries will suffer and West Germany will suffer most of all. We can say: The last conversation between the Chancellor and the Soviet ambassador, where he said that war cannot be permitted because of West Berlin - (he said, how he said it) - this is a correct understanding. So if this is understood correctly, then correct conclusions need to be drawn from it. The correct conclusion is to normalize relations with us so that West Germany becomes an active force in the solution of these unresolved questions, and to create normal conditions, etc. You can work on this [because] your deadline is still far away. In a word, I'll return about 24 or 25 December. It should be done by this time. This document should be [ready] before I return from Ukraine. And then I would give it [to Kroll] if this document seems attractive. Recorded by N. Gavrilov 12/XII 61