

October 8, 1956

**Note from N. Khrushchev to the CPSU CC Presidium
regarding conversations with Yugoslav leaders in
Yugoslavia**

Citation:

"Note from N. Khrushchev to the CPSU CC Presidium regarding conversations with Yugoslav leaders in Yugoslavia", October 8, 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, APRF, Fond 52, Opis 1, Delo 349, List 64-113. Published in "Istochnik" (Moscow) No. 6, 2003, pp. 38-57. Translated by Gary Goldberg.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/113692>

Summary:

Khrushchev describes his conversations with Josip Broz Tito during his visit to Yugoslavia. They discussed the issues of U.S. aid to Yugoslavia, the Turkish and Greek conflict over Cyprus, the expansion of contact between Soviet and Yugoslav workers and the path to socialism. Tito appeared uneasy and was dissatisfied with relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

TO THE CPSU CC PRESIDUM I had a number of conversations with Com. Josip Broz Tito and other leading Yugoslav workers during [my] stay in Yugoslavia. On the day of [my] arrival in Belgrade, 19 September, Com. Tito hosted an evening dinner at which Coms. Edvard Kardelj, Aleksandar Rankovic, Koca Popovic, Mose Pijade, Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo, Petar Stambolic, M. Todorovic, and Ivan Gosnjak were present. I gave the Yugoslav comrades some facts about the state of affairs in the Soviet Union, about the successes and, in particular, the current year's harvest, the progress of purchasing animal husbandry products - butter and milk - and the prospects for the future. All this evoked approval and good comments from the Yugoslav comrades. In the process, several comrades interjected phrases such as "there's no such situation in Yugoslavia," they have little bread, etc. I even sensed some envy.

Vukmanovic-Tempo's remark was typical when during dinner I asked him whether he was coming on the hunt to which Tito had previously invited me and Vukmanovic said that he couldn't go because his main hunt was for wheat. During the conversation the Yugoslavs said several times that things were going poorly for them with bread and that they needed to bring bread into the country, hinting at a desire to receive wheat from the Soviet Union. I did not react and did not express a readiness to [make] a favorable decision about this question. Evidently, having exchanged opinions among themselves, they didn't touch on this issue further during dinner and the subsequent conversations. Obviously they had agreed among themselves not to be troublesome and not to touch on this subject for the time being. I decided to dispel possible doubts in order that an unpleasant impression not be left with the Yugoslav comrades that we had a good harvest and, knowing their difficult situation with bread, we were not reacting to their hints, and so that they did not form the opinion that we wanted to put them in a position somewhat dependent on us. During the trip to Brioni when Tito and I were alone in the car I told him that if things were going badly with them with supplying the population with bread, we could consider this question; and if it were put before us, then I think that it would be decided favorably. Tito received this with satisfaction. Right there Tito said to me that some time ago he had sent a letter to U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower. In Tito's words, in this letter he raised the question of the US halting military aid to Yugoslavia completely. At this point he said that military aid was essentially no longer being furnished. In this same letter, said Tito, they (that is, the Yugoslavs) had pointed out that, considering that at the present time in the US there was a big discussion about questions of giving "aid" to Yugoslavia, and also that a number of American political leaders were categorically opposed to furthering such aid, Yugoslavia did not want to complicate the situation of the American government and did not want this "aid" to disrupt the friendly relations between the US and Yugoslavia. In this connection he favored replacing the "aid" with normal commercial relations, in particular intending that Yugoslavia receive wheat on the basis of goods exchanges. Tito then said that some days ago he had received a brief reply to this letter from Eisenhower. Eisenhower reportedly replied that in view of his workload he could not write a detailed letter on the issues involved and promised to do this later. He thanked Tito for his words about Yugoslavia desiring to maintain good relations with the US. As regards giving Yugoslavia "aid," Eisenhower reserved the right to reply later, considering the current political situation in the US. Tito also said that recently he had sent a long letter to Turkish President Celal Boyar [Translator's note: an endnote corrects this to Bayar]. He wrote this letter, Tito said, at the request of the Greeks. Tito reportedly tried in this letter to demonstrate to the Turks the Greek reluctance to quarrel with the Turks about Cyprus. In so doing, he expressed the opinion to Boyar [sic] that the Cyprus question could be mutually resolved by the Greeks and Turks through peaceful means without the intervention of a third country (Tito had Britain in mind). Tito said that he had received a reply letter from Boyar [sic]. The Turkish reply, as he expressed it, was worthless. Obviously Adnan Menderes had written the letter. There were many arguments in this letter that Cyprus was Turkish land and that the question could be resolved only by transferring Cyprus to the Turks. Tito said that during his stay on the island of Corfu (Greece) the Greek king and prime minister had approached him on this question: how would Yugoslavia react if Greek-Turkish relations became further aggravated? I replied to the Greeks, said Tito, that in this event relations between Yugoslavia and Greece would be even stronger and closer. This made the Greeks very happy, said Tito. It ought to be said that in the course of the conversation with Tito we had no differences regarding issues of the current international situation but, on the contrary, there was a complete uniformity in our views. On the morning of 20

September we took a train from Belgrade to Osiek where the hunting establishment was located. On the way we looked at the Kokograd state-owned poultry farm and the Bele state-owned cattle-breeding establishment. There was something useful here worthy of attention and discussion. For example, management is done rationally at the cattle-breeding establishment - 1000 pigs are attended to by one person and the cost of feed for one kilogram of additional weight is 4.7 kg a year on average. □ I was interested in these results and asked the Yugoslavs to share their experience, saying that we could send our cattle breeders there for this purpose. This was greeted with great satisfaction by the Yugoslavs. They were pleased to see that we are not boasting of our achievements but noting theirs and, although not great, it is still a positive experience. □ I think that it would be useful for us to develop and expand contacts between Soviet and Yugoslav agricultural workers as well as between workers of other sectors of the economy. □ It should be noted that hunting is organized in an interesting fashion where we were in Yugoslavia. Tito said that besides the fact that Yugoslav managers sometimes come to these hunting areas to relax, many people come here from abroad and pay a lot of money to hunt. For example, for a dead deer they pay \$1400 and \$2000 a shot. Tito said, we get a lot of hard currency from rich foreigners from hunting and the main thing, he said, is that we use hunting as a way to establish contact with foreign political and public figures and representatives of business circles. □ It seems to me that we need to think about this in order to organize some hunting establishments as well, for example in the Crimea and in the Caucasus, where we could invite guests and businessmen. If this is thought advisable then we could invite two or three Yugoslav workers who know this business to communicate their experience in managing the hunting business. □ Returning to Brioni we stopped at Zagreb on the way, where we visited an international market. We saw the Yugoslav, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Soviet, Chinese, Romanian, East German, Indian, West German, and Italian pavilions. The market was generally well-organized, and Yugoslav industrial items were extensively represented. The Czechoslovak and West German pavilions stood out from all the countries whose pavilions we saw. There were many interesting models presented in the East German pavilion, but it seemed to me that the German comrades from the GDR could have presented better machines and other items. The Romanian pavilion looked meager. But they could have displayed good models. Much of what we saw at the Romanian pavilion could not have been displayed better. □ On Sunday, 23 September, Tito was invited to the ceremonies on the occasion of the launching of a 10,000 ton ship built at a shipyard in the city of Pula. Tito asked me what I thought of the suggestion to visit these ceremonies with him. I agreed and we went together. After the conclusion of the ceremony of the launch of the steamship, the shipyard management gave a lunch at a hotel. Shipyard activists and managers of the city of Pula were invited to the lunch. There were 200 people in all. There was a good, festive mood among all present. The director of the shipyard spoke at the conclusion of the lunch. After his speech the shipyard managers asked Com. Tito to speak. Tito told them: ask Com. Khrushchev whether he will consent to speak. They turned to me and I agreed. □ In my speech I talked about the enormous importance for our countries and the cause of peace of the elimination of the abnormal, unfriendly relations and the restoration of friendly relations between our countries. But this does not mean, I noted in my speech, that everything is going smoothly with us, as along a smooth road, with no hills or pebbles. We have questions that need to be talked over and opinions exchanged. I said that our enemies will try to find any cracks in order to hurt us. □ Speaking about the intrigues of the imperialists, I used August Bebel's expression about how one ought to regard praise from enemies. I said that the CPSU CC Presidium had charged me with making a report about ideological work to the CC Plenum and that, as the speaker and CC Secretary, I had to clear up and clarify a number of questions regarding relations between our Parties that I could not fail to talk about at the CPSU CC Plenum. In doing so, I pointed out that there are various interpretations on the question of ways to build socialism and stated how we understood this question. I said that it is impossible to look at socialism as a commodity at a grocery store where one could come in and say give me a kilogram of Yugoslav socialism and another person [give] me [a kilogram] of Soviet. We Communists have one path to socialism and communism, that path which the teachings of Marxism-Leninism indicate. There can be a variety of solutions to the

specific problems of building socialism, [consisting of] various methods in different countries and at different stages, but there should be consensus and a common approach at the root. Right here I pointed out that our enemies are trying to use this issue. Com. Tito spoke after me. His speech was somewhat nervous. He said that they no longer praise them in the West, but if they sometimes give praise then this is obviously an advance payment, unjustifiably forming their expectations for the future. He said: I agree that there is one path to socialism but there can be different methods and different forms. Tito talked much and warmly about the Soviet Union, stressing that the USSR has great achievements, especially in recent years. He said that the Soviet Union is helping Yugoslavia develop its economy and in particular will help with wheat, and this aid is being offered without any conditions. (Later I told Tito in a conversation that we never abandon our friends in trouble [but] share the latter. Tito took this very well). Tito also said in his speech: having recently been in the Soviet Union, I myself have seen the enormous successes in the construction of socialism, and I have seen the unity of the Soviet people around the Communist Party. Tito spoke warmly, with spirit. Tito told me after his speech that we needed to talk. He said, I feel that relations between our countries have become colder than they were before my trip to the USSR. I said many people write in the Western press that relations between our countries are reportedly worsening again, but this is the usual hogwash of bourgeois journalists. Tito said in reply: no, you've begun to treat us worse. I want to talk with you, he continued. We should talk only one on one, either here or in the Crimea. Tito said, you understand this is difficult for me. You probably know what kind of upbringing many of our people have received. This was said with annoyance. However, after lunch and on the next day, in spite of the fact that the situation was suitable, Tito made no attempts to talk with me about these questions. On 24 September we had an outing on a yacht, drove to the city of Kopar near Trieste and spent an entire day together and had an opportunity to talk, but evidently he did not want to. When we were sailing on the yacht along the Yugoslav coast, I told Tito that they had good access to the Mediterranean and a good coastline for defense. I continued, we have very long borders, and many personnel are needed to provide a defense for all the borders of the USSR. I then said that we were helping Bulgaria strengthen its borders with capitalist countries, Turkey and Greece. Tito said that we need to cut Greece off from the imperialist countries and get the Greeks to become our friends. Tito continued, we think that the Yugoslav border is also your border, and you should also defend it like your border. For your borders are the common borders of the socialist countries, the borders of socialism. I agreed with him, saying that we should strengthen our borders, look ahead and be concerned that all the countries of socialism get stronger. Tito eagerly supported this. It needs to be said that Tito's mood was very nervous and often changed. From time to time some concern appeared on his face and some aloofness and restraint in the conversation. This mood also often changed to a happy one, and he began to joke and converse jovially. I explain this by the fact that he evidently had questions that concerned him and deeply worry him. Obviously he has questions on which he does not agree with us, but he restrains himself, does not raise them, fearing that we will react to them heatedly, and this might lead to a worsening of our relations, which the Yugoslavs obviously do not want.