

June 28, 1957

Transcript of a CC CPSU Plenum, Evening

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Summary:

The CPSU politburo discusses the effects of Molotov's foreign policy on Soviet influence in the Middle East. Molotov is accused of being adventurous, leading to a loss in prestige for the Soviet Union when imperialist powers forced Egypt to withdraw from the Suez Crisis.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Suslov (chairing). Com. Kuznetsov has the floor.

Kuznetsov. ...How is it possible not to note-even our enemies recognize this-that since 1953, the Soviet Union has enjoyed huge successes in the area of foreign policy, while in 1953, the country was essentially on the brink of war? Friendly ties have been established and are being strengthened with many states on the basis of a struggle to consolidate peace. The international authority of the Soviet Union as the leading state in the struggle for peace and security, as the friend of all peoples who are fighting against the imperialists for their national independence and freedom, has grown immeasurably...

The steps taken by the Soviet Union in the Egyptian issue and on the whole throughout the Near and Middle East are exemplars of the realization of Leninist policy in international affairs.

What was the situation in the United Nations prior to 5 November of last year, as the English, French, and Israeli imperialists unleashed war on Egypt at the end of October.

Day and night the General Assembly meets; the [UN] Security Council meets and adopts many resolutions, but no concrete steps are taken against the aggressors. With the assent of the USA, the English and French imperialists had conducted things so as to deflect public opinion and make quick work of Egypt.

The delegations of Egypt and other Arab countries in the UN were in a very anxious state; help could only come from the Soviet Union. And the Soviet Union did not let them down. When on 5 November they found out in the UN about the letters sent by the Soviet government on 5 November to England, France, the USA and Israel, there was an effect that could not have been produced by the explosion of several hydrogen bombs. On 7 [November], military actions were halted, and after that the withdrawal of the aggressors from Egypt began.

Even the bourgeois diplomats, who of course are embittered against the USSR, said in conversations with us that from the point of view of diplomacy it was a step that was hard to overestimate. At the same time they noted with obvious envy that the Soviet Union, without a single shot, without any actual involvement, forced two imperialist plunderers-England and France-to cease military activities and withdraw their troops from Egypt.

Besides this, these actions by the Soviet government helped us to acquire many new friends and to strengthen ties with old ones.

I want to draw your attention to the fact that com. Molotov talks a lot about using contradictions in the capitalist camp. It is well known that before 1953, the Soviet Union in its position on many international issues pushed the USA, England, and France together. [People] simply stopped believing that [over] there, the USA, England, and France have serious differences on many problems...

Khrushchev. ...we stopped buying butter abroad. When Malenkov was Chairman of the Council of Ministers in 1953-1954, we threw away a lot of gold in order to buy butter [maslo], herring, fabric, and other products and goods. How much gold did we spend then, com. Malenkov-200-250 tons?

Voice: If not more.

Khrushchev. Can one really resolve state issues in such a way? We will give away all of the gold, and there will be no more butter. They must be resolved in another way.

I want to say the following. Everyone knows that we must help (by treaty) the German Democratic Republic [GDR], since it is our socialist stronghold, our front line

[perednii krai] in the struggle with the capitalist world. Politics has its logic. If the Germans in the GDR live worse than in the Federal Republic of Germany, then communists there will not be supported. For that reason, we must sell the GDR the necessary agricultural products. And we are doing this. Now we received a telegram in which the Germans are asking us to withhold shipments of butter and meat to them, since more has been prepared there than foreseen by the plan. That is a gratifying development.

This year for the first time, we celebrated the First of May without introducing a resolution on strengthening shipments of goods to the cities. Because everything that was stipulated in the plan is being supplied. This is the first time that has happened. And they try to depict that as a deviation! Oh, you... What makes you happy, if our successes distress you so?

Remember what sad results this policy led to, to the disruption of friendly relations with Turkey and Iran, our neighbors. It was literally a stupidity [glupost']. In our incorrect policy in relation to Turkey we helped American imperialism. The Turks used to receive Voroshilov like a brother; they named a square after Voroshilov. But when the Second World War ended, we wrote a note to Turkey [saying] that we were tearing up the friendship treaty. Why? Because you are not giving up the Dardanelles. Listen, only a drunkard could write such a thing. After all, no country would give up the Dardanelles voluntarily.

The issue of Iran. What did we do in Iran? We put our troops there and started to boss them around [stali tam khoziainichat']. And when the smell of gunpowder was in the air and we had either to fight or to leave, Stalin said we must leave before it's too late, and we left. We poisoned the Persians' mood. When the Iranian shah visited us, he said that they could not forget what we wanted to do. I do not remember who was the minister of foreign affairs then, but in any case, Molotov was one of Stalin's main advisers on issues of international politics.

Gromyko. Molotov was minister then.

Molotov. But the proposal was not mine.

Khrushchev. But you fully agreed with it. With our short-sighted policies we drove Turkey and Iran into the embraces of the USA and England, into the Baghdad pact.

Take the war with Finland. It was costly to us, and as a result of it we were disentangling ourselves for a long time. And the war in Korea, which exacerbated the international situation to the utmost.

There was a period in which, as a result of a series of incorrect foreign-policy steps, our relations with the people's democratic countries started to worsen.

After Stalin's death, Molotov once again became head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He kept trying to conduct his same policy, which could not but lead to the isolation of the Soviet Union and to the loss of many foreign-policy positions. How did Molotov enter the MID? Beria and Malenkov decided that. What guided them? I think that it is not accidental; everything was thought out. Essentially, the international policies of Stalin were Molotov's policies. Although it must be said that Stalin was much wiser and more flexible in his conduct of basic foreign policy than Molotov. The CC was forced to remove Molotov from leadership over foreign issues...

Molotov's policy could not but lead to a worsening of relations between states; it would have helped the imperialists unite their forces against the USSR. It is an adventurist policy. And he still has the gall to cite Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, teaching us Leninist foreign policy. He is an empty dogmatist (nachetchik) detached from [real] life...

Khrushchev. A little while ago when we were in Finland, I criticized Bulganin for his

incorrect statements. We came to a peasant's farm, went out onto a hillock; the farmer is showing us his lands, and everything is going well. Suddenly Bulganin says: here is an excellent observation point (laughter in the hall). I almost gasped [chut' ne akhnul]. Listen to what you're saying, I say. And he answers me: you are a civilian, and I am a military man. Well, what sort of military man are you! You should think before speaking. There is a saying: in the house of a hanged man you don't talk about rope.

Just imagine what it must have been for the Finns to hear such words. We fought against Finland, and then restored good relations; we came to visit as guests, they met us in a cordial manner, and it turns out that we have come to pick out command points. Is that friendship? It is obvious that that offends, insults them. The minister of foreign affairs and other Finnish officials were with us, and I don't know how they took that statement...

Khrushchev. Molotov said that allegedly we are not using the contradictions between the imperialist states in the interests of strengthening the countries of the socialist camp. But that is a slander. Remember our government's appeal to the United States with a proposal to speak out jointly against the aggression of England, France, and Israel in Egypt. Was that really not an example of our active policy of unmasking the imperialists? Having proposed joint action against England, France, and Israel to Eisenhower in order to avoid war in Egypt, comrades, we tore the veil [pokryvalo] off the aggressors. We also got a big trump for exposing the USA's policy. Before this, the Egyptians said that the Soviet Union was leaving them to the whims of fate, that only the USA was defending them in the Security Council. And suddenly we propose joint action. The Egyptian people rejoiced and thanked the Soviet Union.

Or remember our letters to Guy Mollet, Eden, and Ben Gurion. In those countries, one could determine the meaning of those letters even by the smell of the air (laughter in the hall), because within 24 hours the war was halted. And they tell us about an inability to use contradictions. Is that really not using contradictions?

Voice: At that moment Eden came down with a fever.

Khrushchev. Some wits at one of the receptions said: Eden came down with an inflammation of the [urethral] canal... The Suez canal, because at that moment he resigned and lay down in bed. (Laughter in the hall).

The foreign-policy steps of our party's CC during the Anglo-Franco-Israeli aggression and the counter-revolutionary putsch in Hungary averted the danger of the outbreak of a new world war.

What is the position of the Soviet Union now in the international arena? On all the core issues of international politics, including issues such as the problem of disarmament and the banning of atomic and hydrogen weapons, the initiative is in the Soviet Union's hands. With our peace-loving policy we have put the imperialist states on the defensive.

In my rejoinder I already spoke about the worrying case when Shepilov, as editor of Pravda, committed an outright forgery, having published a falsified photograph depicting Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Malenkov in the interests of servility toward Malenkov. In reality, there was no such photograph. There was a group photograph in which many persons were photographed. But Shepilov removed all of these people from the photograph and left only three people, wishing by this to aggrandize Malenkov and serve him. For that the Central Committee gave Shepilov a stern reprimand....