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*Chausseh*

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I thought you might be interested in a run down of the positions I have tried to emphasize in my conversations with Khrushchev together with his reactions.

(1) I have followed the practice of answering his long harangues, in which he shamelessly brags about his superiority over us militarily - particularly in the missile area - by saying simply that to me the question of his relative strength is immaterial. That we know of his strength and he knows very well that we are strong. Both of us know that whatever superiority either may have at a given time, that an attacker - whoever he happens to be - still will not have the power to inflict enough damage on the other's retaliatory power to avoid risking terrible destruction in return. Consequently, I said that either of us boasting of our attacking power serves no useful purpose in view of the strength and will to use that strength which exists on both sides. He would not accept this proposition in our first conversation but did in the final one yesterday.

(2) I emphasized that he was deceiving himself if he believed his claims that the policy of the Administration was not supported by an overwhelming majority of our people.

(3) I constantly emphasized that our leaders and our people were for peace. I told him that I thought that was the case with him and his people but I reiterated on several occasions that where two powers are as militarily strong and both for peace - as we are - it still does not assure peace. And that neither should ever put the other in a position where he is confronted with a back-to-the-wall, impossible situation which in essence means surrender of vital interest or resort to use of power.

(4) I countered his constant attacks on the adoption of the captive nations resolution by citing his recent statement in Poland declaring his intention to support revolution anyplace in the world; the radio broadcasts which advocated and approved the Communist attempt upon my life in Caracas; and the instructions given to the representatives of 51 nations, which met in Moscow in November, 1957, with regard to subversive actions in non-Communist countries. He blandly countered of course that his actions were different and justified in each case.

(5) I emphasized that where two powers of great military strength such as ours are concerned, neither one can expect to have things all his own way in negotiations. That when one takes a rigid position in effect that he must have his way or else, he is risking grave consequences because neither of the two powers of the strength that we each show can, in effect, be pushed around. On the two occasions that this point was made - once in public in my conversation with him at the Exhibition and the other in effect by the Ambassador, he charged that we were threatening him.



(6) When he embarked on his interminable harangues rewriting history in a way to put all the blame on our side or claiming the superiority and the inevitability of a Communist society, I tried to refrain from answering in kind and instead treated it in a jocular vein by stating that I knew very well that he had one point of view on such matters that we had another, that I could state mine in just as great detail as his but that he knew as well as I that he wasn't going to convince me and I wasn't going to convince him and I saw no purpose of engaging in such discussions.

On the minus side -- these impressions stand out.

1. There was no give whatever in his previously stated inflexible positions on Geneva, tests, disarmament, etc.

Toward the end of the conversation, I tried to show the unreasonableness of this attitude by asking why the President should meet with him either bi-laterally or in a summit conference if it was solely for the purpose of the President to come to the Conference to agree to his pre-announced and pre-determined position. In answer to my blunt question - "What would there be to negotiate?" He did admit at this point that neither he nor the President could be expected to come to a conference under such circumstances but when I asked what there was to negotiate he simply restated his previous statement.

2. A second minus impression which was perhaps the most depressing of the entire conversation was his rigid undeviating doctrinaire fanatical adherence to the traditional Communist line. Over and over again, on suggestion after suggestion, he charged everything and conceded nothing. Every thing we did was bad - everything he did was good. It got so ridiculous that in the last two hours of the conversation on several questions I jocularly needled him by saying "You are always right and we are always wrong. Is there ever a time when you can say you might be wrong?"

My major concern on this attitude is that I am convinced that he has deluded himself into believing practically all that he says in this context.

His outrageous bragging about his military strength may be in a different category. As you will note, the claims he made to me differ in some respect from those he had made in previous conversations, notably the one with Harriman. By shaking out all of the bragging not based on reality, there is no question but that he has convinced himself that he has an advantage over us first because of his military strength and, second, because of his ability and will to use that strength and to threaten to use it more freely than the free governments of an alliance.



On the basis of the conversations we participated in, I have very grave doubts that either a bi-lateral meeting with you or a summit meeting has any significant chance to make progress in solving basic differences. I think he will take almost exactly the same rigid positions in such a meeting as he did with us.

On the other hand, I am convinced that such meetings must be tried but with far greater emphasis than we have ever given before on a cold-blooded analysis of all the propaganda factors involved.

I recognize that it is possible that he might have looked upon yesterday's meeting as an opportunity for him to get himself in the best negotiating position possible prior to a meeting at a higher level but I still sense a cockiness combined with rigidity and fanaticism which would make changes in his positions the hardest going possible.

On the plus side there are a couple of factors which may not be too significant but which I think are worth mentioning with regard to the visit generally.

First, his general demeanor, except for two emotional outbursts - one directed at me in public and the other at the Ambassador yesterday - was for the most part relatively calm and he gave the appearance of trying to be mature and reasonable.

Second, the Ambassador and his senior staff members were encouraged by the generally favorable reaction of people to us personally. It is quite obvious that despite all of his propaganda against the American government and America's leaders, he has not gotten through to the people to any great degree on this line.

Finally, the very fact that the speech I made at the opening of the Exhibition was reprinted in PRAVDA is from a long range standpoint a potentially hopeful sign.

Looking back on the conversation, my main concern with regard to my own approach is that I may not have been tough enough. On the other hand, in my preliminary consultation with the Ambassador and with Kohler we felt it was wise to follow such a tack at this time so as to avoid any possibility that he could use any statement that I might make in conversation with him as an excuse for precipitating a further crisis at Geneva or elsewhere.



Above all, I am convinced that your reply with regard to the exchange of visits should be delayed for several days. An early reply which would give him reason to believe that you were anxious to have a meeting come what may would, in my opinion, assure the complete failure of the Geneva Conference. I am not sure that delaying the reply will effect a change in his position at Geneva but I think we at least ought to play this string out.

Upon my return I am convinced that from a long range standpoint our major hope is to get, under whatever circumstances possible, as many Soviet leaders and/or citizens to visit the United States.

On the other hand, I have grave doubts about the wisdom of trying to do this on a reciprocal basis. On several occasions, in my conversations I was shocked to find how naive and unsophisticated the United States visitors to the Soviet Union were. Generally they do not make a good impression and when they get into arguments with their hosts who are usually well indoctrinated Communists, they are way over their heads. We should not send people to the Soviet Union unless they are thoroughly familiar with our system and capable of explaining it and defending it. Businessmen, artistic groups, and many of our political representatives who go abroad are so hopelessly naive and unsophisticated that they are no match whatever for their hosts. They send their best, from a philosophical standpoint to the United States. We should make a more systematic selection and possibly have briefings for all who are being sent over in anyway to represent the United States.