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## 'BURY' REMARK MISUNDERSTOOD

History Shows Problem  
of Translating Russian

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WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department apparently is burying one of the celebrated Communist adages of the cold war, Nikita S. Khrushchev's threatening "We will bury you."

Diplomatic historians report that while the former Soviet premier didn't deny saying it, he always maintained the words had been misunderstood, and did not represent a threat of violence.

The complexities of translation cloud the question.

This diplomatic scholarship was produced at the request of Sen. J. W. Fulbright, D-Ark.

### ACCOUNT ASKED

Curious about the origin of the phrase attributed to Khrushchev, Fulbright wrote Secretary of State William P. Rogers to ask for an account of its history.

Back it came, a letter from an acting assistant secretary, H. G. Torbert Jr., tracing the quotation to a reception at the Polish embassy in Moscow on Nov. 18, 1956.

"According to western journalistic accounts," the department said, it was there that Khrushchev, in a belligerent mood, remarked: "We will bury you."

Khrushchev already had made intemperate remarks about Britain, France and Israel, then involved in the Suez

Canal crisis, department historians reported, and as a result many Western diplomats had walked out.

### NOT REPORTED

"Since the 'we will bury you' remark was not reported to the department officially, it may be that it was made after Western officials had left the room," Torbert wrote.

In any event, the phrase was not in the official Soviet text of the premier's remarks.

Three years later, back at the Polish embassy, Khrushchev was explaining.

"Khrushchev did not so much deny the remark as complain that he had been misunderstood," the department reported. "Addressing himself to the non-Communist countries, he said 'Mind, we shall not dig your grave in the physical sense.'"

"What I meant was not a physical burying of anyone at any time," Khrushchev said at the National Press Club in Washington on Sept. 16, 1959, "but a change in the social system in the historical development of society . . ."

### PROBLEM NOTED

It is at this point that diplomatic scholars discern a translation problem. Reports Torbert:

"In the question addressed to him, the verb 'to bury,' was translated by the Russian words 'zakopat v zemlyu,' which has only the literal meaning of 'to bury in the ground.' However, the word he claimed he used was 'khoronit,' which has both a literal and a figurative meaning in Russian."

An authoritative Russian dictionary, Torbert reported, says it means: "To consider obsolete, perished, unnecessary or to bury in oblivion."

Diplomatic impact of these disclosures will be slight, since Khrushchev has left the Kremlin and is, presumably, khoronit.