

Memorandum of Conversation: Premier Zhou Receives Indian Ambassador to China Parthasarathy

Time: 30 September 1958, 10:30 p.m.

Location: Beijing Hotel reception room

Accompanying Attendees: Vice Premier Chen Yi, Director Zhang Wenji

Translator: Pu Shouchang

Recorder: Zhao [illegible]zhong

Ambassador: I received a letter from Mr. Menon; he had received the letter I sent him, and wanted me to thank you.

Premier: Has Premier Nehru already returned to New Delhi?

Ambassador: Our premier will return to Delhi on 2 October; he just arrived in Yadong today. Has the Premier seen Mr. Menon's second speech? This was a very important speech, [and] many of its key points are ones that the Premier and I have discussed; I sent it to him by telegram.

Premier: [We] thank Mr. Menon very much; he has made great efforts at the United Nations.

Ambassador: Right now some things are happening behind the scenes, but it is still difficult to say that it has reached a specific stage. Mr. Menon and [British Foreign Secretary Selwyn] Lloyd have spoken many times; it seems that the British also want to help a bit, but as I see it their attitude is still very vague, and not satisfactory. Mr. Menon will continue to fight at the United Nations. Mr. Menon said in his report to me that the atmosphere in the U.N. General Assembly is changing; only four countries voiced opposition during the discussion of India's motion concerning China's right of representation at the United Nations, and many representatives of the countries that voted no later stated to Mr. Menon that they hoped the issue of China's seat at the United Nations could be resolved.

Premier: Yes, this shows that many people still cannot do publicly as they wish.

Ambassador: Even Latin American countries have taken this stance in private. Besides this, there is another thing worth noting; in the past, American newspapers attacked ferociously when India raised the issue of China's representation, but this time they were relatively restrained. But currently finding a way forward is still a problem.

Premier: Most people want peace, and demand rational resolution of issues; most people oppose activities that will spark war.

Ambassador: Mr. Menon had one or two questions he wanted me to ask the Premier to help clarify the Chinese government's position, so that Mr. Menon can better do [his] work. Mr. Menon wanted to know about the Warsaw talks; can the Premier tell me if anything new is happening in the Warsaw talks?

Premier: There are no new changes in the Warsaw talks. The America[ns] have not changed their position at all; America is under the delusion that it can fool world opinion with the so-called "ceasefire" issue, when in fact they can only cause some people to have a hazy understanding for a time, but these people will understand the truth of the matter sooner or later. If America wants to do a "ceasefire" plot, let them, we are bound to make things clear. The issue could not be more clear; for us to liberate Taiwan, the Penghu and [other] coastal islands, and punish Jiang Jieshi's army, is a matter of China's internal affairs. These kinds of things have also happened a lot in other countries, and no one believed they would endanger peace and security. The Indonesian government took military action against a rebel army; the rebel army in Indonesia had a so-called "government," but no one said Indonesia had endangered peace and security. The revolution in Iraq overthrew the imperial government and established a republic, but didn't America later recognize it? Why do they want to come and interfere when China punishes Jiang Jieshi's army? On the matter of coastal islands, we absolutely cannot accept this kind of unreasonable so-called "ceasefire." Similar things have happened so many times in other countries, why do [they] want to bully China? There is no war between China and America; we have stated over and over that we are willing to peacefully confer with America about the two countries' dispute in the Taiwan region and not resort to armed force, and [we] continue to have talks in Warsaw. Many people in the world hope there will be no war between China and America; [they] should raise this [point] with America, because it is America who wants to use military force to interfere in our liberation of coastal islands, to expand its invasion and hinder our liberation of Jinmen [Quemoy] and Mazu [Matsu]. [If people want to] demand that armed force be abandoned, [they] should also demand that America abandoned armed force. The basic problem is having America blaze the trail. If America persists in its "ceasefire" plot, there is no option but continued disagreement; if America takes further military action, then America must take responsibility for the war it began. Of course, up to this point America has only invaded China's territorial waters and airspace, but this is very dangerous; they have already trespassed within 12 nautical miles of China, sometimes even within three nautical miles, and moreover have done so together with Jiang Jieshi's warships; the American air force provides an escort for Jiang Jieshi's warships, and has also trespassed into our airspace many times. America has assembled forces not only from Japan but from other military bases, not only strengthening its navy in the Taiwan Strait, but also actively equipping Jiang Jieshi's troops with new weapons. Jiang Jieshi's launch of Sidewinder missiles with F86 fighter jets, which we announced yesterday, is proof [of that]. This shows that America intends to play with fire at the brink of war [trans. note—that is, do dangerous things that will lead to an excuse for war]. The matter is very clear; if [people] want to ask that force be abandoned, they must ask America. The way to clear out the source of the problem is for America to withdraw its troops. We are prepared on two fronts; the first is continuation of negotiations, and the second is dealing with American provocations to war. America understands that whatever they come at us with, we will come back [at them] the same way; the danger does indeed exist. America wants to create a serious situation, then use that situation to fool world opinion into demanding a "ceasefire," but the Chinese people will not be fooled, nor will they be frightened; on the contrary, the Chinese people will fight even more determinedly, mobilize even better, and people across the nation will be even more spirited in their determination. That is the reason we celebrated National Day on a larger scale this year.

Ambassador: Has China made any formal suggestions in the Warsaw talks?

Premier: Our suggestions are the same as those we discussed with the Ambassador last time. They propose a "ceasefire," we propose withdrawal of troops. The first point in our suggestions was that China and America announce they will not resort to war and threats of armed force against each other, but peacefully negotiate — this is a basic principle; second, America withdraws its troops from the Taiwan region; third, the two sides continue to talk about issues related to the two aforementioned points. We explained very clearly as soon as the Sino-American talks began, that Taiwan, Penghu and other coastal islands are Chinese territory, and China has a right to liberate its own territory and require that American troops withdraw from Chinese territory. We have also stated — as we discussed with the Ambassador last time — that if, when we recover Jinmen and Mazu, Jiang Jieshi is willing to withdraw of his own accord, we can [agree to] not pursue and attack. Liberation of Taiwan could be a second step. We also brought this up in talks.

Ambassador: I don't want to go back over matters that have already been discussed; I learned about the two separate steps in earlier talks, and moreover it is not like there is no connection between these two steps.

Premier: But America hasn't realized this at all; on the contrary, it proposes a "ceasefire."

Ambassador: There is now an idea, which is to first have a "ceasefire," or rather cease hostile actions, because it will take time to resolve the issues; first have Jiang Jieshi's troops withdraw from Jinmen and Mazu, [leave] the status of these islands temporarily undetermined, and resolve it in later negotiations.

Premier: This is a British idea, and completely impossible to accept. As [we] said last time, the premise must be that first, Taiwan, Penghu, and other coastal islands are China's territory. Second is that the American army must withdraw, just as the American army should first withdraw from Lebanon; then specific issues can be specifically resolved. Now America demands that we "cease fire" on the coastal islands issue; that is absurd, this kind of idea is the "two Chinas" idea. Ambassador Nehru and I have spoken a lot about this idea of America's in the past. During the Eden administration, Britain recognized that the coastal islands were Chinese and should be returned to China, but [said] that the Taiwan issue should be resolved separately. This already contains the idea of "two Chinas," and we had stated already then that we absolutely could not accept it. The Lloyd government has taken a step backward compared to the Eden government, because he has said publicly that in regard to the coastal islands, Jiang Jieshi's army can be called upon to withdraw, but the status of the coastal islands is undetermined. As for resolving Taiwan with separate approaches like "United Nations trusteeship" and "neutralization," this is the "two Chinas" plot; Lloyd's activities in New York were ill-intentioned.

Ambassador: I said last time, and would still like to emphasize now, that China must exercise sovereignty over the coastal islands. Since there is this kind of idea now, I had to come and clarify again the position of the Chinese government.

Premier: Britain's idea absolutely cannot be considered; we also know that Lloyd is deliberately spreading this kind of atmosphere and is involved in these kinds of activities in the United Nations.

Ambassador: Right now this kind of idea is still in a very vague stage; it can't be said to [be at the point of] any new motions being proposed.

Premier: Lloyd knows China will not accept it; he's peddling it to others, and doesn't yet dare to bring it out in public. The Macmillan government is a step backward compared to the Eden government, even if Eden's ideas couldn't be accepted either. Actually, Eden was still a step away from the Labor Party, and we didn't agree with the Labor Party's ideas at all. That is because they all scorn China's sovereignty; they want America to use Jiang Jieshi to threaten [us], and become a perpetual bane to China.

Ambassador: Say that the first step was completed in accordance with China's plan — that is, Jiang Jieshi's army had withdrawn from the coastal islands, and China had sovereignty — how does the Chinese government envision later negotiations?

Premier: [As] Mr. Menon has also said, if America recognizes that Taiwan, Penghu and the coastal islands belong to China, and recognizes China's sovereignty over these islands, the issue is very easy to resolve; China and America could continue to negotiate the issue of how America would withdraw troops. The issue of China and Taiwan is a domestic affairs issue; we can always find a way to resolve it.

Ambassador: Mr. Menon asks whether [you] can tell him about the progress of China's negotiations with Jiang Jieshi; of course, this needs to be kept absolutely secret.

Premier: The Chinese government and Jiang Jieshi are in indirect negotiations, but these are often sabotaged by America. America is afraid that if we and Jiang Jieshi agree, they'll be shown the door. Of course Jiang Jieshi is also very crafty; what he wants is to drag America into the mud and [have it] fight in his place — Mr. Menon has also mentioned this in a speech. And if America has other plans, he has other plans too. This is where the complexity of the problem lies. One issue is that of an international dispute between China and America, one issue is a domestic affairs matter between the Chinese government and Jiang Jieshi. America has grown dizzy in the middle, shuttling hither and thither, unable to find a way out. As Chairman Mao says, America has stuck its head into the noose of the Taiwan Strait; should it stick its head further in, or withdraw from the noose? [Trans. note—"sticking its head further in" refers to the expansion of American protection from Taiwan (further away from the mainland) to offshore islands like Jinmen and Mazu.] America is now going back and forth between the two [options]; it looks like America will not change at present, so let's just let it keep going back and forth. America has two aircraft carriers in the Taiwan Strait region called "Midway" and "Prowler;" fine, we will just let them "prowl" "midway." Please tell Mr. Menon that we are very grateful for his kindness, but there is no hurry. We are Easterners, we all understand the personality of the Easterner, which is not one for [anxious] hurry. Last time regarding the issue of American criminals, Hammarskjöld came to say that releasing the American pilots would improve Sino-American relations; at the time he also said repeatedly that he had absolutely nothing to do with the affair of the two spies Downey and Fecteau. Later we did as Hammarskjöld said and released the American pilots; even the American newspapers admitted this. We released both the American pilots before August 1955. Now three years have gone by, and China and America have negotiated for two and a half years, but the result is there are no signs of the relationship taking a turn for the better; on the contrary, America has directed Jiang Jieshi to concentrate one-third of his army in Jinmen and Mazu. When Mr. Menon came to China later, he also said that if some more American criminals were released, Sino-American relations could take a turn for the better; we accepted this suggestion, released even more criminals, and reached an agreement with America. We now have only four criminals left, but what does America do? It still detains many Chinese. On my second trip to India, Nehru also said prior to his visit to America that [we should] release more American criminals; I told him there was no advantage to releasing more, and [we] could not release any more. Actually, recently Dulles has not been using the issue of the criminals anymore, but rather some newly proposed things. Eisenhower even says that withdrawing troops from Jinmen and Mazu would be another Munich; this is extremely absurd. The Swedish foreign minister also expressed disagreement with this statement. Dulles said that Jinmen and Mazu should be turned into West Berlin; [this] is even more obviously intending to create "two Chinas." Dulles also said that China cannot enter the United Nations because China has committed at least five major crimes. [I] assume that the Chinese crimes he is referring to are, first, the Korean War, and second, Vietnam. On the issue of Vietnam, we did not enter the war, and he still charges us with it; in fact, in Geneva we even helped with negotiations to resolve the Vietnam issue, a point that Dulles acknowledges in the very same speech. The third charge is that we liberated our own territory, Tibet; it is no wonder, then, that America opposed India liberating Kashmir. The fourth was liberating the Yijiangshan [Ichiangshan] Islands, and the fifth is this time with Jinmen and Mazu. In the future [when we] liberate Taiwan, that will be the sixth major crime.

Vice Premier Chen: In America's eyes, the biggest charge [against us] is our liberation of China. In that case, Washington's liberation of America was a crime, and Lincoln waging the Civil War, using armed force to resolve an internal conflict, was also a major crime.

Premier: Regardless of whether America gives up its "ceasefire" plot, we will continue to fight, either with civilian or with military [organizations]; this is something they have forced on us. So there is no need to hurry now. They say "ceasefire" in order to fool the people of the world. In fact, they are playing with fire, not wanting to "cease fire." They are now using things like "use of armed force" to fool people; we have already explained clearly to people that not using armed force refers to international disputes. If America does not cancel the ceasefire proposal, we can only continue to fight; there is no room for compromise.

Ambassador: I want to make it clear to the Premier that India will not be involved in any compromise activities. I brought up this kind of idea [people] have now in order to seek clarification of China's position.

Premier: It was just in order to help Mr. Menon clarify our position that I have put this issue somewhat more clearly.

Ambassador: There is another small question, which is that there was an argument in Western newspapers, prior to August 23rd, about which of the two sides took more military actions. In this respect, the Premier once said that Jiang Jieshi's troops were increased from 30,000 to 70,000, but could [you] bring up more facts, so that Mr. Menon can better raise this issue [?]

Premier: This question must be answered in two parts. First, Jiang Jieshi's troops in Jinmen and Mazu frequently carry out destructive [activities] against us. Of course, it wasn't necessarily major sabotage every time; [it] was especially directed against the two nearby cities, Xiamen and Fuzhou. In 1955 [they] bombed Fuzhou; [they] frequently dispatch spies, disrupt the passage of commercial ships, and do damage to our fishing vessels and fishermen. We have noted down these debts. We warn them, we will mete out punishment; as [I] said last time with the Ambassador, debts must always be paid. [Even] Dulles admits that the problems

have existed for nine years already; there are nine years' worth of accounts to be tallied. Secondly, they have been doing it for nine years; we have only been taking punitive action for 40 days. Why in nine years has Western public opinion not come out and said anything of Jiang Jieshi's actions, isn't that due to American toleration of Jiang Jieshi? Now we punish Jiang Jieshi's army and Western newspapers raise a hue and cry, isn't that because America is involved? If it weren't for American interference, we would have recovered these islands long ago. Didn't the Indonesian government take military action in Sumatra and Sulawesi? Thus the key to the problem is still America. I want to take this opportunity to ask the Ambassador to thank Menon; he worked very hard at the United Nations for the restoration of China's legal seat, and supports our just struggle, but please tell Mr. Menon not to be anxious. America is being truculent and unreasonable, and isolating itself; when America senses that it is isolated, they might change course. By the way, [I] will tell the Ambassador a piece of news, and please also tell Mr. Menon: the Norwegian government has asked us whether we would agree for Hammarskjöld to come and mediate; we have already formally answered them that under the circumstances of our United Nations seat still being usurped and 600 million Chinese people not having their own representative, we do not wish to have any contact with the United Nations, so we do not think it appropriate for Mr. Hammarskjöld, as Secretary General of the United Nations, to come get involved in this matter. This is not a problem with Hammarskjöld himself, even less a refusal to accept the Norwegian government's concern; we are very grateful for Norway's support of us in the United Nations. Please convey that point to Mr. Menon as well.