

June 28, 1954

Record of the First Meeting between Premier Zhou and Prime Minister U Nu

Citation:

"Record of the First Meeting between Premier Zhou and Prime Minister U Nu", June 28, 1954, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 203-00007-03, 37-45. Translated by Jeffrey Wang. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/112438>

Summary:

Zhou Enlai and U Nu first talked about the decision made on the Geneva Conference regarding the armistice in the Korean Peninsula and the role of the US in it. Then they talked about the elements that complicated the Sino-Burmese relations and the need for building mutual trust and signing a non-political agreement. They also discussed the principles they would have in a joint statement before the signing of this potential agreement.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Record of the First Meeting between Premier Zhou and Prime Minister U Nu
(Not Yet Approved)

Time: 28 June 1954, 4:00-7:15 p.m.

Accompanying personnel from China: Qiao Guanhua, Pu Shoucang (Responsible for translation and documentation)

Accompanying personnel from Burma: Acting Foreign Minister U Kyaw Nyein

U Nu: Could your Excellency discuss the situation at the Geneva conference for a bit?

Zhou Enlai: (The discussion between Premier and U Nu was roughly what the Premier told [Jawaharlal] Nehru). The situation of the Geneva conference is as such. Does Prime Minister U Nu have any other questions he would like to ask?

U Nu: Yes. First I have one or two questions regarding the Korea issue. According to what your Excellency said, the discussion regarding the Korea issue has already ended at the Geneva conference. Then, what is the end result after the door is closed on the Korea issue? Syngman Rhee once clamored and said that should there be no result ninety days after the Geneva conference then he will unify Korea by force. Does your Excellency believe he will realize this threat? If he is indeed serious, then what would be the consequence?

Zhou Enlai: The Korea issue was not removed from the conference agenda, the Korea issue is still hanging there. The Korean people are requesting unification, therefore, the Korea issue will not be discussed now; it will be discussed in the future. At the last discussion regarding the Korea issue, I once mentioned a question; which is if the Korea issue was handed to the jurisdiction of the United Nations then will China be excluded from future discussions [on the Korea issue]? At that meeting, no one answered my question. However, the next day Mr. Eden told me, the Korea issue must be discussed and it will also be unthinkable to exclude China [from the discussion on the Korea issue]. He also said Smith told him to tell me that this time no agreement was reached on the Korea issue, but China will not be excluded in future discussions. Militarily, Syngman Rhee persisted in his clamoring. Last year prior to the ceasefire in Korea, Syngman Rhee once violated the agreement and forcibly detained large groups of prisoners of war in an attempt to sabotage the ceasefire. However in the end, the Korean War still halted. Without the help of the United States, Syngman Rhee will not even dare to clamor. Will the United States want to continue the fight? If the United States wanted to continue the fight, then why would the United States halt the Korean War? The United States encouraged Syngman Rhee to continue his clamoring apparently to produce a situation of tension; this is to make it convenient for the United States to establish military bases all over the place and export arms to foreign countries. The possibility of Syngman Rhee taking risks by himself is there; it is not entirely impossible; but that possibility is very small. If the United States wants to continue the fight, will other countries be willing to fight alongside with [the United States]? If the United States fights [a war] alone then it will face even greater failure.

U Nu: If it is already impossible to obtain an agreement at the Geneva [conference], and if it is also impossible to obtain an agreement within the United Nations, then what will be the consequences? The stalemate in Korea cannot last like this forever!

Zhou Enlai: Bringing the Korea issue to the United Nations and finding a solution there is even more unlikely. This is because at the Geneva conference there was also the participation of non-United Nations member countries. Will [we] never be able to find a solution to the Korea issue? That is not necessarily true. If the Indochina war stopped, will the Korea [situation] continue to be tense? The American policy of tension has already failed all over the place, if related countries request to continue the discussion on the Korea issue then the discussion on the Korea issue will

continue. It is not permissible to have the Koreans in prolonged states of instability. Therefore, related countries must find other methods to hold meetings and discussions.

U Nu: The United States is currently trying to organize a South East Asian Treaty [Organization] that is in the likes of the North Atlantic Treaty [Organization]. Some countries are not interested in this; however there are some other countries that expressed their interest towards [a South East Asian Treaty Organization]; [countries and people] such as the Philippines, Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-Shek. It was said that Australia is willing to join [such an organization]. If such an organization is established, then will the United States be more daring in stirring up trouble in Korea? In Indochina the United States could not do as it pleases because France is tired of fighting; therefore if the United States can collude with some underlings such as Thailand, will [the United States] stir up trouble in Korea?

Zhou Enlai: Prime Minister U Nu's thought is permissible. The United States suffered failure in Indochina, therefore it wants to produce conflict in another place, so to produce a situation of tension; this place could possibly be Korea. However, we remember, in the past during the Korean War the United States once had many helpers but in the end they were still greatly devitalized. If the United States continued the fighting; whether or not its main helpers such as the United Kingdom, France, Canada and Australia will still help [the United States]; it is very possible. Other helpers; even if they send troops it will not be much and so cannot solve the issue. Like this, the United States will be entangled in Korea again; the American people will not allow the large military burden on their backs; not to mention November this year the United States will hold elections. Judging from a military perspective, if the United States wants to fight again, they will suffer greatly. During the last period of the Korean War before the ceasefire, a drastic military change occurred; four of Syngman Rhee's divisions were wiped out; the line held by these four divisions was breached. If this kind of situation continued to develop, then the front will be shifted drastically to the south. Although this kind of military change occurred, the Chinese and Korean side still agreed to the ceasefire. The above is my [text illegible], [text illegible] my inference is definitely completely correct.

U Nu: The Americans once bragged, American commanders did not obtain victory in Korea because they could not bomb mainland China, they said if they are able to freely bomb mainland China then victory can be obtained quickly. If American leaders are able to find a way to have the American people bomb mainland China then will the United States stir up trouble in Korea? I think your Excellency must be familiar with this kind of American exaggeration; how much truth is in this [kind of exaggeration]?

Zhou Enlai: If the United States bombs mainland China, then that would be the overture to a world war. Has the United States decided to take that risk? The United States frequently wants to bluff people, but in the end it does not scare others; on the contrary [the Americans] would scare themselves. Prime Minister [Jawaharlal] Nehru once told me during this meeting that the United States is the most scared country in the world. We are prepared for risks that the United States [might take]. Prior to the cease fire of the Korean War, at that time Eisenhower had just been inaugurated, we were preparing for an offensive [by the] United States. We know that it wouldn't work if the American forces conducted a frontal assault on [our] front. Therefore, we once reinforced two [text illegible]'s coast; in the end the United States knew we made preparations so [the Americans] didn't dare to invade. We were also prepared for bombardment by the United States against mainland China, but that would expand the war. We are also prepared for an [text illegible] by Chiang Kai-Shek against the mainland; we welcome him to do so, because then we can dissolve his army. We imagined all sorts of [possibilities] and made preparations. The United States knows this. Therefore, although the Korean War has halted, we have not relaxed our preparations. This is necessary because only by doing this can [we] guarantee peace.

U Nu: Now I will ask a question regarding Indochina. Now Indochina obtained a military solution, that is to say an armistice. However what if France and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam reached an agreement but Bao Dai does not accept, what will be the situation then? Under American influence, Bao Dai might possibly not agree.

Zhou Enlai: This is possible. Under American influence, Bao Dai might possibly not agree. But here we must see two kinds of situation: First, Bao Dai's power is not like Syngman Rhee's power; most of the power is still in the hands of the French, if France wants to stop [fighting] then Bao Dai cannot obstruct that. Second, Bao Dai still isn't completely under the control of the United States, therefore the United States still have to take the French attitude into consideration. If France agrees to an armistice then Bao Dai will be unable to sabotage [the armistice]. We will see that, even with sabotage by Syngman Rhee, the Korean War will still stop. If after the French military leaves Vietnam and Bao Dai conducts sabotage [of the armistice], then there will be changes within Bao Dai's army. Your Excellency knows of Ho Chi Minh's influence in Vietnam. This is not to say that there will be no difficulties after an armistice agreement has been reached. On the contrary, there will be difficulties; therefore everyone's effort and influence both inside and outside of the conference will be required to support the armistice.

U Nu: Are the elections in Laos and Cambodia held by themselves, or are they conducted under outside supervision?

Zhou Enlai: It is mainly by themselves. The Laotian foreign minister told me that the Kingdom of Laos already has a constitution, but it is being prepared for revision. The foreign minister of Laos also said that the constitution of the Kingdom of Laos can be revised with discussion after the elections. Now everyone seems to think that if war had just stopped within a country, it is best to establish an international supervisory organization. However this kind of organization can only be of an assisting [nature], it cannot [take over primary tasks].

U Nu: Now [let us] discuss the relationship between China and Burma. The Burmese communist party has gone underground, and it is now combating the government. We know that China did not assist them. However they often brag that they received assistance from the Chinese government. They once paid off Chinese merchants who purchase [text illegible]; then [the Burmese communists] would take them to communist controlled areas and point out for some people that these are representatives sent by Chairman Mao. They are using this method to raise their own credibility. However we know there are some people who once crossed the border to China. Some Burmese communist leaders have done that before. A Kachin military officer is currently receiving training in Yunnan. In addition there is a communist leader by the name He Zai Ya (transliteration) who is also receiving training in China. For all of this we only have intelligence, no evidence. However we can bring up one piece of evidence. A unit of Kachin people troops once revolted in a place near the border between China and Burma; and then they escaped to China. Ten months later, one of them secretly entered Burma, we detained him. Later on, he [confessed] after he escaped into China he was arrested by Chinese communists; then he was sent to Kunming to receive political and military training. In the end he was sent back to Burma; the instruction he received was to stir up the people to oppose the government. It was hinted to him, if there is a need, arms can be provided to him. We are very concerned by this. We did not directly or indirectly assist your enemies. There are also no military bases [of foreign countries] within Burma. We also halted American aid. Even though we have internal disturbance, we still sent powerful forces to fight against Guomindang [Kuomintang] forces. [This is because] we do not want China to have any misunderstandings and think that we are harboring Guomindang forces and allowing them to build bases in Burma to attack the mainland. Apart from communist countries, we are the first country to recognize China. We also usually support China's admission to the United Nations. I hope to use this pleasant meeting

to appeal to you, please take measures to prevent the above described unpleasant incident.

Zhou Enlai: While I was in Geneva, I have already heard bits and pieces about these issues as it was mentioned by the Burmese government's diplomatic [channels]; later on Mr. Menon told me some [information on these incidents] on behalf of Prime Minister Nehru. These few days I also talked with Prime Minister Nehru about these issues. Therefore before I came here, I knew beforehand that the Burmese government has some suggestions for the Chinese government.

U Nu: It is a friendly complaint.

Zhou Enlai: Regarding these issues, the joint statement from China and India has already cleared these issues by principles. Yesterday at a reception for journalists in Delhi I also said that all of this can be applied to the relationship between China and Burma. In the joint statement from China and India it mentioned the agreement between China and India on trade and transportation between Chinese Tibet and India. That agreement stipulated five principles, that is: mutual respect for territorial sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, mutual and equal benefits, and peaceful coexistence.

What I said at the journalist reception in Delhi is: Revolution cannot be exported, at the same time, a country's people's expressed common will cannot tolerate outside interference. According to the above described five principles, countries with different social systems can get along peacefully and conduct friendly cooperation. Prime Minister U Nu, please study the joint statement from China and India. Tomorrow we can also issue something regarding the relationship between China and Burma; this will be beneficial to improving relations between our two countries.

Just now, Prime Minister U Nu said many specific things, many of which are rumors, and many [others] are misunderstandings. There are a lot of overseas Chinese in Burma, the situation is complex. Regarding this, your Excellency knows more details than me. Among these overseas Chinese, there are some Taiwan elements that conduct provocation and produce rumors. The overseas Chinese issue is complicated. China's expatriates in the south sea [region] should all abide by the host country's laws. However the situation is complicated, many things must be discussed with the host country. Problems often arise from this. There are many minority people where the border connects between China and Burma; these people have many relatives and friends living on both sides of the border; interaction between these people is common. It is inevitable that there are [text illegible] elements among these people. On this matter, a certain number of issues often arise.

Third, most countries in the world have communist parties, although their principles on revolution are the same, but they must match local conditions so to obtain the approval of the people, otherwise they will not be able to obtain the approval of the people. Therefore although the beliefs are the same, affairs are conducted separately. [For example,] the Chinese communist party conducts affairs based on principles acknowledged by everyone and according to actual conditions in China. Otherwise, mistakes will be made, and the approval of the people will be unobtainable. According to the experience of the Chinese communist party, revolution cannot be exported, exportation will necessarily fail. Communist parties from various countries must depend on themselves for success, they cannot expect outside assistance. Of course, those that conduct provocation will continue to say what they have said in the past. Some misunderstandings are caused by the three kinds of reasons as listed above which complicated the relationship between China and Burma. We should establish trust for each other. We are willing to see Burma independent with the freedom to choose the system approved by the majority of the people; [we are also] willing to conduct friendly cooperation with Burma. This is the

usual policy of the Chinese government, which is reaffirmed by this time's joint statement from China and India. [We should] not allow rumors and misunderstandings to create estrangement between our two countries, on the contrary, [we] should eliminate misunderstandings. We do not oppose the Burmese government's friendly complaint; we are also willing to provide friendly response in order to clarify what is true and what is not. The relationship between our two countries for the past few years has been generally good. We acknowledge, Burma is the first among South East Asian countries to recognize China, we are also thankful for Burma's support for us in the United Nations. Burma's opposition to American aid and opposition to the United States' building of bases in Burma are all worth commendation.

I think the Burmese government will also acknowledge that Li Mi's forces which are hostile to China, are currently trying to build bases in Burma's border regions while receiving American assistance. The Chinese government believes that since these forces are within the borders of Burma, therefore [the Chinese government] is waiting for the Burmese government to take measures and eliminate these forces. We have never made any unhappy remarks within documents or in public; rather we have taken an attitude of tolerance and patience. In international relations, it is rare to see such a friendly attitude. We know the difficulties of the Burmese government therefore we adopted an attitude of patience; this explains we have adopted great respect and endurance towards Burma.

All of this explains that the friendly relation between our two countries is with foundation. We should continue to strengthen this friendly relation. If we produce an announcement according to the principles mentioned by the joint statement from China and India then we can eliminate misunderstanding; and make unpleasant affairs not occur.