

November 5, 1955

**Minutes of Conversation between Chinese Premier
Zhou Enlai and the Newly Appointed Indian
Ambassador to China Ratan Kumar Nehru**

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai and the newly appointed Indian Ambassador discuss Nehru's health, the next Asian-African Conference, the Sino-American talks on Taiwan, the Macau issue, and the ambassador's previous experience in China.

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[...]

Abstract of Conversation: Premier Zhou Enlai [Discusses] Sino-American Relations and Other Issues with New Indian Ambassador R.K. Nehru

5 November 1955

Time: 3:30 p.m.

Location: Foreign Ministry

Chinese Accompanying Attendees: Assistant Minister Chen, Department Director Ke Hua

Indian Accompanying Attendees: Attaché Bahadur Singh

Premier Zhou: How is Prime Minister Nehru's health recently?

R.K. Nehru: Very good; there have been many important foreign guests visiting recently, so [he's] been very busy. Two or three days before I came to Beijing, Canadian Foreign Minister Pearson arrived in New Delhi for a visit, and soon there will be a Soviet delegation headed by Marshal Bulganin; later the King of Nepal, the King of Saudi Arabia, the King of Ethiopia and the King of Iran will also visit. Indonesian Vice President Hatta is visiting India now. On my way from Bombay to Hong Kong, I read a newspaper report on the boat that the West German Chancellor was also going to visit, but later I heard that he cannot, due to poor health.

Zhou: After the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, contacts between East and West, and between political leaders of all nations, have grown frequent, [and] this is in keeping with the Asian-African Conference's historic resolution; now India has become a center for contacts between East and West.

Has the Ambassador heard anything about the next Asian-African Conference?

R.K. Nehru: I haven't heard of any suggestions on this. Not long after the Bandung Conference, it was rumored that the next Asian-African Conference would be held in Egypt.

Zhou: Yes, during the Bandung Conference we discussed this question with Premier Nehru and a small number of others; the prime minister of Ceylon later publicized this news.

R.K. Nehru: Ceylon's prime minister publicizes any news, including some news that simply doesn't exist. [I] passed through Columbo on my way to Hong Kong this time, and it is said that Ceylon's minister is caught up in a domestic political dispute; I think this kind of dispute is completely worthless.

Your Excellency, is there any news about the Geneva Foreign Ministers' Conference?

Zhou: [I] don't know anything except what has been published in the newspapers. As we understand it, the two sides want to work out some positive results. Generally speaking, [for] the third item [on the] agenda - developing contacts between East and West - [they] ought to be able to reach an agreement. [For] the first item [on the] agenda, European security and the German question, and the second item, disarmament, there are difficulties. Development of contacts between East and West includes developing free trade and other forms of engagement, but what the Western countries are raising are some other issues.

R.K. Nehru: On my way through Singapore this time, I met with Britain's Commissioner General in Southeast Asia, Mr. Scott, and he told me that it is fairly likely there will be progress on the issue of trade; because there is a lot of pressure from various Western European countries, America might have to ease the tense situation, but [I] guess there won't be a very big improvement.

Zhou: This issue is also reflected in the ambassador-level talks between China and America. In the meeting on [November] third, the American side did not respond directly to our proposal concerning the second item [on the] agenda, nor did they refuse, but raised some issues. Now the American side is also in favor of discussing the embargo issue. Our draft of the meeting communiqué has already been given to Mr. Singh to pass on to Premier Nehru and Mr. Menon; perhaps the Ambassador has not yet had time to see it. The American draft of the meeting communiqué proposes: The two sides declare that they will not use aggressive^[1] force to achieve national goals. We cannot agree with this statement, because it implies that we cannot use force to deal with Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] and liberate Taiwan. We have made our position on the Taiwan issue clear time and again. America has occupied Taiwan by force and interfered in our domestic affairs; this is an international problem between China and America. How can this problem be solved? Only by the two sides sitting down to negotiate. If [we] just announce that the two sides will not use force, it is equivalent to us recognizing America's forcible occupation of Taiwan and interference in China's domestic affairs. On the other hand, China's relations with Jiang Jieshi are a domestic issue. Jiang Jieshi launched a civil war in 1946, but the Chinese people abandoned him and chose the New China. This issue must be completely resolved. The operation to liberate Taiwan is a matter of China exercising its sovereignty, [and] there are two ways it can be done: one is with the use of force, and the other is peaceful liberation. For the past six months, we have repeatedly stated that we will strive to peacefully liberate Taiwan.

Therefore, our conclusion is that there are two questions on the Taiwan issue; one is an international question and the other is a domestic question, and these two questions are often tangled up together. America also recognized that these are two questions, and advocated a ceasefire. We asked: "Is there a war between China and the United States?" [The American side]^[2] said no, and we asked: "Since there is no war, why [do you] want a ceasefire?" The American side could not answer. America said there was a war between Jiang Jieshi and ourselves; we asked if it was representing Jiang Jieshi in [these] talks. America does not dare to admit it; nor can we admit^[3] this point. The American [side] then said it would not discuss the question of Taiwan's status; it admitted that the question of Taiwan's status had been resolved in 1945 when the then-government of China took back Taiwan, and that Taiwan is a part of China. Then, the remaining issue is that of the tense situation created by America's invasion of Taiwan and interference in China's domestic affairs. There is an old saying in China: "The person who tied the bell [around the tiger's neck] must be the one to remove it."^[4] This problem can only be solved by the two countries of China and America sitting down for talks. This problem is very complicated; it is not one that can be solved with ambassador-level talks between the two countries, so we suggest a meeting of the two countries' foreign ministers. The American [side] cannot refute us in terms of logic or rationality, so it can only take the measure of delay, and comes for a meeting only once a week. America has its plot; it seeks to make us give up taking any actions toward Taiwan, to create a reality of two Chinas; we must be vigilant about this kind of plot. I have also spoken about this issue with Mr. Menon.

R.K. Nehru: We very much appreciate China's stance on the Taiwan issue, and are in sympathy with China. On my way through Hong Kong this time, I met with Governor Grantham. Based on what he said, and after speaking with Your Excellency, I have this impression: No matter what the pressure from America, the likelihood of peacefully resolving the Taiwan [issue] has increased. This is due to internal changes in Taiwan; recently a general revolted.^[5] I don't know if this kind of view is correct?

Zhou: First of all, [we] want to say thank you for India's support, and for the assistance given by the Indian government, Prime Minister Nehru and Mr. Menon. The likelihood of peacefully liberating Taiwan is increasing; this opportunity will not come too suddenly, but in the end it will come - it is just a matter of time; the reasons for that are, people all over the world demand that the tense situation be eased, Taiwan has many internal problems, and America's relationship with Jiang is abnormal, mutually suspicious and fearful. The recent Sun Liren [Sun Li-jen] incident is one example. Our policy[6] is on the one hand to show Jiang Jieshi's people a practical way forward, and on the other to pursue some positive results in talks with America. I have also spoken of this to Mr. Menon. Of course, there is another possibility: The world's people demand an easing of the tense situation, while America fears the easing of tensions in the Far East, because after the situation really is eased, it will be impossible for American arms dealers and big capitalists to reap major profits. Right now America is vacillating; the situation sometimes eases for a bit, and sometimes grows tenser; it seeks to use the Taiwan issue to create an impasse. Therefore, we have to prepare for the danger of war. Our policy[7] is to strive for what is good, for an easing of [tensions], and peaceful coexistence with America, but to prepare for the worst. Chairman Mao has spoken of these issues with Prime Minister Nehru.

R.K. Nehru: Thank you, Your Excellency, for clearly explaining the Taiwan issue and Chinese policy to me. Your Excellency has discussed these questions with my prime minister, so broadly speaking I know about them. On the overall issue, we sympathize with China; except for American special interest groups, everyone in the world with a brain sympathizes with China. Britain's argument is that the Chinese government's recovery of Taiwan in October 1945 based on the Potsdam Agreement and other international agreements was just a temporary solution, and that the question of Taiwan's status still awaits final resolution.

Zhou: On the Taiwan question, Britain is also plotting to create two Chinas; although the British government does not admit it, we must guard against its plot.

R.K. Nehru: This time with Governor Grantham, [I] also discussed the Macau issue...

Zhou: When Governor Grantham was in Beijing, I told him that China opposed the Portuguese authorities holding a month-long celebration in Macau. Grantham asked me: "Then could [you] agree to one day of celebration?" I said [we] could not agree to even one day, because this is a kind of insult and provocation to China on the part of Portugal. We hope very much for calm in China's south, but the Portuguese authorities provoke [us]; if we don't answer this kind of provocation, they can say the Chinese tolerated it, and Indians should tolerate it as well. So we oppose this kind of provocation not only for ourselves, but also for the Indian people and all the oppressed peoples of the East; for the Portuguese authorities to do this violates the spirit of the Asian-African conference.

R.K. Nehru: We thank China very much for its support on the Goa issue.[8]

Zhou: And we similarly thank India for its support on the Macau issue. Recently Prime Minister Nehru said in Parliament: Macau belongs to China, and must be returned to China in the end; he also said: China is too busy right now, and can't attend to these little questions.

R.K. Nehru: To my knowledge, Prime Minister Nehru discussed these issues with Your Excellency when he visited China. I was once responsible for managing the Goa issue, but this is a very thorny issue, and there are many difficulties; [I] hope there is another way to peacefully resolve it.

Zhou: The Macau issue and the Goa issue are similar in certain aspects. If Indo-Portuguese talks are successful and India reclaims Goa, it follows that the Macau issue can also be resolved in this way. If China can, at an appropriate time, reclaim Macau through Sino-Portuguese talks, it follows that the Goa issue can also be resolved in this way.

R.K. Nehru: Portugal is a fascist country, with no tradition of democracy; it refuses all suggestions to hold talks. [I'm] sure your Excellency noted the movement for the peaceful liberation of Goa not long ago. Many volunteers entered Goa, but [this] resulted in a bloody, brutal incident; we had to stop this movement, and if [we] had continued it, the Portuguese would have said we were interfering in their "internal affairs." Portuguese rule is the most reactionary; their rule in Africa is actually one that implements a system of slavery. There is no democracy within Portugal, either; some [public] figures that advocated democracy have all been arrested. Recently a famous woman author wrote a book opposing Portuguese policy toward Goa; she was arrested and imprisoned.

Zhou: Has the Ambassador been to China before?

R.K. Nehru: [I] went to Shanghai in 1947 to attend a meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. At the time, a Guomindang [Kuomintang] news bureau chief told me that Jiang Jieshi would be completely finished in a year; he said that although [Jiang] occupied the cities, the vast countryside was in your hands, and moreover that there was government corruption and inflation, and people had no way to survive.

Zhou: In 1947, Jiang Jieshi occupied Yanan, so he was swaggering and puffed up, thinking that victory was at hand; in fact, that was the beginning of his collapse. At the time, Jiang Jieshi occupied the cities, but his military strength was thus scattered, and that made it easier for us to attack him from various fronts. Besides that, his rule had no foundation; military power doesn't play the decisive role, and mainly it was that the vast masses of people opposed him.

So that the Ambassador can better conduct activities, [you] may present credentials tomorrow. Chairman Mao is not in Beijing now; Vice Chairman Zhu will accept the credentials. I think that when Chairman Mao returns he will certainly be happy to meet with the Ambassador.

R.K. Nehru: Thank you.

(Farewells)

[1] Or "invasive." (□□□□□□)

[2] The pronoun "he" (□) is used here, but later in the paragraph it becomes clear that "he" is a reference to the American side ("America has his plot").

[3] That is, recognize.

[4] That is, the person who created the problem must be the one to fix it.

[5] Phrasing here implies returning to our side (□□□□□□□□□□).

[6] In the informal sense; "guiding principles" is an alternative translation (□□).

[7] Ibid.

[8] Most of this sentence has been underlined by hand.