

December 3, 1956

**Cable from Zhou Enlai to Mao Zedong and the
Central Committee, 'Discussion with Nehru on the
Hungary Issue'**

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai reports on his discussion with Nehru concerning the events in Hungary.

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Discussion with Nehru on the Hungary Issue
(Top Secret)

To the Chairman [Mao Zedong] and the Central Committee:

I now report the part of my discussion with Nehru concerning the Hungary issue, as follows:

Nehru first described what he knew of the current situation in Hungary. He said the Hungarian workers were not enthusiastic in returning to work; returned workers are deliberately working slowly in factories and do not support the current government. He said his understanding of the situation in Hungary is based on reports to the government from India's ambassadors in Hungary and Yugoslavia. I told him that, to my knowledge, the situation in Hungary is taking a turn for the better. I said, we saw [János] Kádár in Beijing during the Eighth CPC National Congress; he is a good person. Nehru stated that he is placing [his] hopes on the Kádár government. Nehru believes that Hungary is in the process of correcting mistakes; when the Soviet Union sent troops at the invitation of the then-government of Hungary, after mass discontent broke out [into protests] on 23 October, it provoked enormous discontent among the people. The Soviets' dispatching troops actually worsened the situation. Kádár had wanted to negotiate with [Imre] Nagy, but Nagy ended up being sent to Romania by the Soviets after he left the Yugoslav embassy. Nehru believes this kind of situation is very disadvantageous to the Soviet Union. At present the majority of United Nations countries favor sending an observer group to Hungary to investigate the so-called Soviet removal of Hungarian youths incident; the Hungarian government has not yet given a response. It is said that [Dag] Hammarskjöld plans to go to Hungary to personally make contact with the Hungary government and discuss relief-related issues with the authorities; Hungary did not respond to this request either, and Nehru thinks this type of action could easily cause Hungary to lose the sympathy of the majority of United Nations countries, and even lead to the majority of United Nations countries refusing to recognize the current Hungarian government. After Nehru expressed his views, I gave him a detailed description of the Hungarian incident; I stressed that Hungarian leaders were biased in the process of correcting their past errors. Certainly there was some discontent among the masses, but what is more important is that Hungarian reactionary forces aided by Western countries carried out subversive activities, deceived the masses, and led the masses to turn to Western countries. The Nagy government's power was later usurped by reactionary elements. I said that at the time Nagy played the role that China's Wang Jingwei had played in 1927; we think that under those circumstances, Kádár was correct to withdraw from the Nagy government and form a new government. The Soviet Union had no choice but to send troops at the Kádár government's request to save Hungary's socialist system; it was the only thing to be done at the time—otherwise, the reactionary forces would have prevailed and Hungary would have returned to the reactionary rule of old. At the time there were concealed enemies in Hungary; Western countries sent reactionary elements back into the country, and Hungary's reactionaries carried out a terrible massacre of progressive democratic socialists in the country. The Hungarian People's Army was in a helpless state, so the situation in Hungary at that time was really precarious. If the Soviet Union hadn't sent troops, the consequences would have been unimaginable. Nehru agreed that Western countries had been conducting subversive activities during the chaos in Hungary. Nehru said he also believes that it will be very dangerous if Western countries remove Hungary from the socialist bloc. But on the other hand, Nehru said he always thought that the Soviets' dispatch of troops, and especially sending Nagy to Romania after he left the Yugoslav embassy, put the Soviet Union in an extremely disadvantageous and passive position in the face of world opinion. I immediately pointed out that under the circumstances at the time, there were only two roads for Hungary: either the West would take it, or the Soviet Union would send troops to save Hungary's socialist system, there was no other way; Yugoslavia was also extremely worried about the Hungarian situation. Yugoslavia had supported the Kádár government, but at the same time it shielded Nagy and thought it was wrong for the Soviet Union to send troops. Yugoslavia's

attitude toward the Hungarian incident is itself contradictory. The Chinese government does not agree with Yugoslavia's way of doing things on this point. I specifically told Nehru that this view of ours was not yet public; it was just being said to Nehru himself. I said, if the Chinese government were in the position of the Kádár government at the time, it would have either arrested Nagy or let him run off to a Western country; there was no other choice. I said, all the socialist countries will make progress as they inspect the flaws in their own domestic work and in their relations with each other, but if imperialist countries carry out subversive activities against us, then we socialist countries absolutely must stand together. Nehru did not make any objections to what I said. Finally Nehru stated that no matter what, Hungary should give a response concerning the United Nations sending an inspection group and Hammarskjold going to Hungary for talks. I did not object to this idea of Nehru's. I said only that I would convey his opinion to the Hungarian government.

The Central Committee is requested to consider conveying the above report to [our] Soviet comrades, and to the Kádár government via Ambassador Hao Deqing.

Zhou Enlai
3 December 1956
Bombay