

**October 7, 1964**

**From the Diary of S. V. Chervonenko, Memorandum  
of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to  
China Stepan V. Chervonenko and Mongolian  
Ambassador to China Dondongiin Tsevegmid**

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**Summary:**

A conversation between USSR Ambassador to China Chervonenko and Mongolian Ambassador to China Tsevegmid, where Tsevegmid relates a discussion between Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Mongolian Council of Ministers Chairman Luvsan on the recalling of Chinese workers from the Mongolian countryside. Tsevegmid's opinion is that the Chinese would be willing to provide more aid to Mongolia if the country backed down from its strict Communist principles.

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[Excerpt]

From the diary of

S[tepan] V. Chervonenko

Top Secret

7 October 1964

Record of Conversation with the MPR Ambassador to the PRC [Dondongiin] Tsevegmid

[...] Tsevegmid said that on 30 September, as he was receiving the [Mongolian] delegation,[1] [CCP CC Foreign Minister] Chen Yi many times expressed his gratitude to the MPR government for sending a delegation to [participate] in the 15th anniversary of the PRC. When the Mongolian delegation arrived in Beijing, Chen Yi and other Chinese [officials] tried to create an atmosphere of exceptional warmth, they hugged, kissed, etc., said Tsevegmid.

[...]

Tsevegmid explained to me that the MPRP CC Politburo instructed [MPRP Council of Ministers Deputy Chairman Erdenechuluun] Luvsan to make use of his participation in the festivities in China to probe the position of the Chinese regarding their sincerity with regard to the MPR on a series of questions-territorial claims of the Chinese, sending of the Chinese workers to the MPR. [...]

Tsevegmid then informed [me] about the meeting between Zhou Enlai and Luvsan that took place on 3 October of this year (at this meeting, besides the two of them, only Tsevegmid was present).

In the beginning, said Tsevegmid, Zhou Enlai spoke to the effect that the disagreements between the MPR and the PRC were not the main thing, the main thing was unity. Zhou Enlai cited Mao Zedong's words to the effect that socialist countries could have disagreements, but that this was a secondary question, and in the struggle against imperialism socialist countries must be united, and this was the main thing. If imperialism attacked one socialist country, all socialist countries must come forward united in this struggle. To this, Tsevegmid said, Luvsan replied that Mongolia always spoke out and speaks out for unity on a principled Marxist-Leninist basis. Everyone knows, continued Luvsan, that with the help of the USSR, the PRC and other countries, the MPR achieved considerable successes; we must also live in friendship in the future. Then, Tsevegmid said, Luvsan, having noted the aid provided by China, pointed out that at a certain point in time the Chinese government began to take unfriendly actions toward the MPR. As an example he pointed to the recall of the Chinese workers. Now we were forced to mobilize youths from the countryside for the construction, and there, in the countryside, difficulties also appeared. Right away Luvsan passed on the request of the government of the MPR to the Chinese government to send to Mongolia no less than 10 thousand herders for 3-5 years. With this, Luvsan stressed that it would be preferable to have the PRC herders sent from the regions adjacent to the border of the MPR.

This would simplify the solution of many problems we had to face when workers were sent from various remote regions of the PRC (household and language difficulties, payment of transit across the entire PRC territory, etc). Tsevegmid commented that raising the question about provision of workers from the border regions was in essence a probe of the Chinese position on the question of Inner Mongolia, because

he was in fact talking about the Mongolian herders from Inner Mongolia.

Tsevegmid said that Zhou Enlai, apparently, was not ready to answer, and in connection with that he began to ask many secondary questions, thinking about an answer in the meantime. Then Zhou Enlai said that he understood the thought of Comrade Tsendenbal. After the establishment of the PRC, he continued, diplomatic relations were established between it and the MPR. In former times, before the victory of the revolution, there were questions between China and the MPR left over by history. But this was a thing of the past. We had a border and have exchanged documents to this effect; [we] exist as sovereign states. We, Zhou Enlai further said, also had a treaty on friendship, which had to be observed by both sides.

As far as economic aid was concerned, continued Zhou Enlai, China had provided it to the MPR for a long time. With this, said Tsevegmid, he reminded him that Tsendenbal visited the PRC three times and during the first and the second visits was received by Mao Zedong, who told Comrade Tsendenbal that "a country should be given aid until it becomes economically independent." At Mao Zedong's initiative, continued Zhou Enlai, we provided economic aid to the MPR, several treaties were signed (Tsevegmid said that at this time Zhou Enlai began to account in detail for the aid provided by China to Mongolia).

Then, Tsevegmid said, Zhou Enlai highlighted the question of the Chinese workers, stressing that various practical misunderstandings existed earlier, but the Chinese government did not pay attention to this because the ideological positions of both countries were generally the same. In recent times, continued Zhou Enlai, the question of the Chinese workers in the MPR became a sharp one, and this was explained by the ideological disagreements between the MPR and the PRC. We, Zhou Enlai said, strove not to transfer the inter-party disagreements to the inter-state relations; however we brought up our people in one spirit and you, in the MPR, in another spirit. Therefore when the Chinese workers met with the Mongolian workers, they had disagreements. This could take on an aggravated form, especially now, when the disagreements became open, because as a result of this the circle of people participating in the disagreements widened more and more. Already incidents had begun to occur (Zhou Enlai had in mind the murder of a Chinese worker at one of the construction sites in the MPR).

Under these circumstances, continued Zhou Enlai, the idea arose to return the Chinese workers to the motherland. We based ourselves on the fact that the departure of the Chinese workers would remove the ground on which our disagreements sprang up. If new Chinese workers were to be sent now and they were brought up in the spirit of our ideas, then this could lead to even greater disagreements than before, clashes may take place, [and] there might be even wider killings.

Your press was criticizing China, and what were the Chinese workers who do not agree with this criticism to do, especially since you already criticized the Chinese leaders[?] If herders were sent, this meant that the disagreements could spread even further, transfer to the countryside, and therefore the question about the sending of the Chinese workers should be temporarily postponed. Of course, said Zhou Enlai, this would to a certain extent harm the construction, but it was better to delay construction than aggravate relations between us. We were thinking about helping you, but there were difficulties in the current situation, stressed Zhou Enlai. You, he said unexpectedly, were a neighbor of the Soviet Union, which provides you with a lot of aid. Then Zhou Enlai began to say that the disagreements, however, would be gradually resolved, good relations would set in, and then the PRC would be able to provide aid to Mongolia. One must wait patiently, one must not lose hope that in the future we will live in friendship, but for now, while the disagreements had not been resolved, we had to act in such a way as not to deepen them, to strengthen friendship between the peoples. Tsevegmid said that Zhou Enlai time and again

repeated that the Mongolians had a right to ask for aid from the PRC, and China would necessarily help, but now was not the time and the right conditions for [aid] were not there, one would wait. We respected the idea of Comrade Tsedenbal about sending herders, said Zhou Enlai, but now was not the time to implement it. The Chinese government would study this question and give an answer through the ambassador of the MPR in the PRC. We would not look at this question as if it were a simple one, we would not leave it, stressed Zhou Enlai; [he should] pass this on to Comrade Tsedenbal.

Tsevegmid told me that Zhou Enlai invited the delegation to a dinner during which he talked about the necessity of living in friendship; although disagreements would persist for a long time, [he said that] the main thing was unity of our countries. The solution of all questions in mutual relations between China and Mongolia should be directed towards this. Zhou Enlai also said several times that the concrete questions raised (the payment for the transit of workers, etc.) were of a different character, they were secondary and this was not the main thing. Zhou Enlai hinted that the main thing was the nature of relations between the MPR and the PRC.

Tsevegmid remarked that Zhou Enlai was exceptionally polite and delicate with the Mongolian delegation; he tried in the course of the conversation not to allow the slightest aggravation and asked several times to convey his greetings and wishes to Comrade Tsedenbal.

When he received the delegation, Mao Zedong spoke about unity as being the main thing and also asked to convey his personal greetings to Comrade Tsedenbal. When the delegation was leaving for the motherland, said Tsevegmid, the Chinese leaders stressed many times at the airport that both countries were sovereign states and had to leave in friendship [and] respect each other, etc.

Summarizing all of the above, Tsevegmid expressed his thoughts to the effect that the Chinese in the conversations with the delegation tried to say carefully that they were ready to provide greater aid if the MPR departed from its firm principled position, which it took in the course of the current struggle in the communist movement. The MPR, the ambassador continued, probably very much stood in the way of the Chinese implementing their line among the countries of Asia and Africa, because the MPR's example was in many respects very unpleasant for the Chinese. Unfortunately, Tsevegmid remarked, we did not have enough strength yet, we would need to develop further our economy to really demonstrate in contrast the example of prosperity before the Mongolians from Inner Mongolia and before other Asian countries, which would further frustrate the plans of great Han chauvinism and vanguardism in Asia and on other continents.

Tsevegmid also told me that the statement by Mao Zedong in the conversation with the Japanese socialists very much undermined the authority of the PRC and of Mao Zedong personally, that even the nationalists who did not agree on all the questions of the internal and external policies of the MPR leadership, [who] expressed doubts in the policy of the MPR leadership with regard to the Chinese leaders, now speak about the above-mentioned statement of Mao Zedong with indignation and resentment.

[...] Informing about all of the above, we would like to stress that the current Chinese approaches with regard to the MPR are part of an important, well thought-out new round of cunning, more refined tactical steps and actions of the Chinese leadership, directed towards widening the "swamp" in the socialist camp and in the communist movement, towards the separation of fraternal countries from the USSR (they insistently tried to create an impression among all the delegations from the socialist countries that they were the "sincere protectors" of the unity of the peoples of the socialist camp, many times and at all levels declaring that, allegedly, "disagreements are not the main thing, nobody dies from discussions, the main thing is unity," etc.

[CCP CC Member] Peng Zhen had a conversation along these lines with a Polish delegation for over 4 hours on 6 October. [...] The Chinese are trying again to flirt with the Germans, telling them that, allegedly, "you are the forward post of the socialist camp in the West, and we-in the East, therefore, we must be united." The top leadership of the PRC stubbornly worked with the Romanian delegation, though, as ambassador [Ambassador Dumitru] Georgiu told us, no joint documents were being planned.

Taking all of this into consideration, we would suppose it expedient to, with an eye to the next few years, specifically look at the MPR question in terms of further securing its position as a loyal ally of the Soviet Union, of more effectively and systematically using it to frustrate plans of the Chinese leadership, especially of their play on racial and nationalist strings of so-called Afro-Asian unity. ([This should] include the question regarding measures for bringing closer to the CPSU, aside from Tsedenbal, other, especially authoritative, influential Mongolian leaders, so that the firmness of Soviet-Mongolian relations depended to a lesser extent on one or two persons who are currently in power.)

Perhaps the time is ripe to look at the question of a visit of the leadership of the CPSU to the MPR, timing it to some big action with regard to the MPR which would strengthen and develop our alliance with it. At the same time, one must not fail to take into account the necessity of weakening a certain Mongolian fear in connection with the great power chauvinist pressure from the Chinese, which shows through in the conversations of the Mongolian comrades with us.

The ambassador of the MPR Tsevegmid, for example, confidentially informed us that a partial mobilization is underway in the MPR (although for the Chinese and other foreigners they were inventing a version that under the pretext of mobilization into the army, countryside youths were being mobilized for industrial construction), that special posts had been installed on the Mongolian side to observe the actions of the Chinese on the border, etc. [...]

Ambassador of the USSR to the PRC

[Signature] S. Chervonenko

[1] A Mongolian delegation headed by Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers S. Luvsan visited China in September-October 1964 to participate in the 15th anniversary celebrations of the PRC's founding.