

February 15, 1963
**Memorandum of Chairman Mao Zedong's
Conversation with Prince Sihanouk**

Citation:

"Memorandum of Chairman Mao Zedong's Conversation with Prince Sihanouk", February 15, 1963, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 204-01509-03, 70-74. Translated by Neil Silver. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/117953>

Summary:

Mao Zedong and Norodom Sihanouk exchange views on capitalist and imperialist countries, particularly on India, the US, Thailand, Yemen, and Iraq.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

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(Not yet checked and approved by the Chairman)

Time: February 15, 1963 at 1:15 p.m.

Place: Qinzheng Hall, Zhongnanhai [leadership compound]

Present on our side: President [of the People's Republic of China] and his wife, Peng Zhen and his wife, He Long and his wife, Luo Ruiqing and his wife, Ji Pengfei and his wife, Yang Lin (Assistant Bureau Director, General Bureau for [Foreign] Economic Relations), Ambassador Chen Shuliang and his wife, Director-general [of the Foreign Ministry] Zhou Qiuye

Present on the Cambodian side: Madame Sihanouk, [Private Adviser to Prince Sihanouk] Penn Nouth, [Private Adviser to Prince Sihanouk] Son Sann, [Member of the High Council of the Throne and Commander of the Royal Air Force General] Ngo Hou and his wife, [Secretary of State for Home Affairs] Phurissara and his wife, [Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs] Huot Sembath, [Director of Public Services] Sisowath Essaro and his wife, Princess Mom, Ambassador Sirik Matak and his wife, Princess Mom, [Director of the Protocol Department of the Cambodian Foreign Ministry] Nay Valentin

Interpreter: He Zhenliang; Notetakers: Zhang Duanji, Feng Kexiang

Chairman Mao: How are you?

Sihanouk: Very well. Are you feeling well Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Mao: Very well.

Sihanouk: We Cambodians hold Mr. Chairman in the highest esteem. Therefore, I am very moved and very honored to be meeting with Mr. Chairman today. I am grateful to Mr. Chairman for receiving us.

Chairman Mao: I heartily welcome His Highness, the Prince, and your Madame. We are old friends.

Sihanouk: We met right here in 1956. Afterwards, Your Excellency, the Chairman, held a long talk with me at Beidaihe.

Chairman Mao: We also welcome the other friends. Some of them we have met before. Penn Nouth is also an old friend. There are also a lot of new friends who have come for the first time. We are very thankful to you. We feel very happy that you are standing your ground in Southeast Asia. Your country is developing, it is developing in all aspects, economically, politically and culturally. I hope you continue to consolidate and continue to develop. You mustn't fall from power. It would be awful [for you] to fall from power.

Sihanouk: We will do everything in our power and spare no sacrifice to guarantee that we will not fall from power and step down as Your Excellency, the Chairman, has just said. We believe that we are on the correct path, just as I said yesterday [in speaking with] Mayor Peng Zhen and the people of Beijing. Owing to the powerful support given to us by Chinese friends, we are able to resist the threats and insults

aimed at us by others.

Chairman Mao: It is imperialism, these reactionaries of various countries and revisionists that insult and undermine us, and that engage in subversion and wreckage, rumor-mongering, and slander. You're a kingdom, and Nepal and Afghanistan are also kingdoms, and all are friendly with us. The United States is a country with a presidential system, and they are most antagonistic toward us. India is also a country with a presidential system, and also opposes us. As I see it, the problem isn't form, but substance.

Sihanouk: I'm really happy to hear this from the mouth of a great person such as Your Excellency, the Chairman.

Chairman Mao: We've spoken about these issues before.

Sihanouk: Some republican theorists are always saying that a king and a prince such as I am is certainly bad, not as good a president. They say that a president belongs to the people, and is certainly good.

Chairman Mao: They belong to the capitalists and monopoly capitalists, and not to the people. Some countries with a presidential system are imperialist countries, reactionary countries. Indonesia is a presidential system, but they are good. You've been there, right?

Sihanouk: We get along well.

Chairman Mao: Thailand is a kingdom, but South Vietnam's Ngo Dinh Diem is a president.

Sihanouk: The Thai king has no power, those really holding power are [in] the military group, whether economically or even politically.

Chairman Mao: That is [Field Marshal] Mr. Sarit [Thanarat]. He's not well-intentioned toward you.

Sihanouk: He regards me as Thailand's number one enemy. Their newspapers print in large letters that I'm enemy number one. My reply to them is that I'm honored that you call me this. Thailand regards the Communist Party as the big enemy. If I'm enemy number one, that's even worse [i.e., I'm worse] than the socialist camp. I'm flattered to be considered even more important than the Khrushchev and Mao Zedong. But, since they call me this, I show my appreciation.

Chairman Mao: What is Ngo Dinh Diem's attitude? They're really busy internally!

Sihanouk: But they frequently send airplanes to bomb our villages. Recently they bombed one of our villages, killing fifteen of our people. Their excuse was that they mistook the position of the border.

Chairman Mao: Their airplanes make mistakes all over the place, even inside their country. They've burned a lot of villages, but, the more they burn, the more villages oppose them.

Sihanouk: Now all the South Vietnamese oppose Ngo Dinh Diem.

Chairman Mao: They oppose Ngo Dinh Diem and the United States. The United States has more than 10,000 persons [i.e., military advisers] in South Vietnam.

Sihanouk: They also take part in operations.

Chairman Mao: There is the U.S. air force and navy.

Sihanouk: The people say that the bombs butchering them are American bombs, and then [they] oppose the United States.

Chairman Mao: America is not in a good position there. The American president once said complacently that he'd eliminate [the problem] within eight months, later extended to five years, and now there's no time limit, no knowing in what year, in what month, [the problem] will be eliminated. The American president is pretty pessimistic. Such a large country is afraid of the people of South Vietnam, but the South Vietnamese people are not afraid of them. You're near them. You know the situation better.

Sihanouk: Your Excellency, the Chairman, knows the situation better.

Chairman Mao: It's not that Thailand doesn't have problems. They've brought in American forces, creating dissatisfaction among the Thai people against the United States and their own government.

Sihanouk: The Thai people are unhappy with Mr. Sarit's government [but] the reaction is still not strong enough. If it were another country, he wouldn't be able to hold on so long. If he were the premier of Cambodia, he wouldn't hold on for even two months. Though there aren't many Cambodians, they are fierce. They would never stand for the leaders of their country violating the interests of their own country, and the Cambodian people especially oppose imperialism and colonialism. Thailand has already become a colony of the United States, and is independent in name only. If you look what they do in the United Nations, this is very clear.

Chairman Mao: The people of Thailand are not yet politically aware, but the day will surely come when they'll awaken. Over the long run, the Thai people will not allow a government that oppresses the people and colludes with imperialism. Have you studied the coup in Iraq?

Sihanouk: No. I don't have the resources to study the origins of the coup.

Chairman Mao: It would be worthwhile to study it very well. Why did they have absolutely no knowledge of the activities of their opponents? There is a Communist Party there [but] it follows the revisionist road, and now several thousand people have been killed. They knew absolutely nothing about the activities of their opponents, [they were taken] totally off guard. If you want to study their mistake in being off guard, they were divorced from the masses, and the military forces were in the hands of their enemies. This experience is worth studying. We're also studying it. People were taking measures behind their backs, and they knew nothing about it. They had been mentally disarmed for a long time, and mental disarmament turned into physical disarmament, with the military in the hands of other people. The situation was also the same in Yemen. [Deposed Yemeni Crown] Prince [Muhammad] al-Badr has been here.

Chairman Liu: His relations with us are good.

Chairman Mao: Do you know this person?

Sihanouk: I don't know him.

Chairman Mao: Do you have embassies in Yemen and Iraq?

Sihanouk: No.

Chairman Mao: I hope you consolidate, continue to consolidate, continue to develop, [become] stronger and [become] more developed, and don't fall from power.