

September 30, 1965

Minutes of Chairman Mao Zedong and Chairman Liu Shaoqi's Meeting with the Indonesian Delegation

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Summary:

Chairul Seleh of Indonesia met with Mao and discussed nuclear power, Indonesian economy and industry, Chinese-Indonesian relations, and imperialism.

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Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Chairul Saleh: President Sukarno wishes Chairman Mao good health forever; he wishes that you would lead not only China but also all the emerging anti-imperialist forces.

Chairman Mao [Zedong]: I am dying. Some people hope that I will die soon. Now many people say that Mao Zedong's health is collapsing, he cannot work well, nor can he speak clearly. Other people say that he can still speak clearly, but he cannot walk well. I think there is some truth in it.

Chairul Saleh: We are not included in the type of people Chairman just mentioned.

Chairman Mao: That's good. It is not logical to say that I will go on living for a very long period of time according to the theory of dialectics. According to formal logic, the big assumption is that all human beings live and die. The small assumption is that a certain person, for example Zhang San [i.e., John Doe], is human and therefore he will die at the end of the day.

Chairul Saleh: That is inevitable.

Chairman Mao: Because the big assumption has a history of hundreds of thousands of years. It is evident that all ordinary human beings must die eventually.

Ali Sastroamidjojo [Chairman of the PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia, the Indonesian National Party)]: But the ideals of human beings never die.

Chairman Mao: That's right. Now the population of the world has grown again. It used to be 2.7 billion, now it is 3.2 billion. The population of Indonesia has also grown.

Chairul Saleh: Indonesia's population at present has surpassed a hundred million.

Chairman Mao: Yes, your land can feed a larger population than that of the United States or the Soviet Union. There are only a few populous countries in the world: Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Japan, China—there are only five altogether in Asia. In the Americas, only the United States has a population of more than 170 million. I heard there has been a small growth recently, which made it up to 180 million. In Europe, there is only one (populous) country, the Soviet Union. It has a population of 220 million. There are all together seven populous countries in the whole world: one in the Americas, one in Europe, five in Asia. It is wrong to assume that Asians are incapable. More people need more food, more clothes; and now the world is not peaceful, so we need military forces and moreover, the atomic bomb. Do you want to build atomic bomb?

Chairul Saleh: We would love to.

Chairman Mao: You should build one.

Chairul Saleh: We do not agree that nuclear weaponry should be dominated by a few big powers.

Chairman Mao: That's right. Two big countries in the world want to monopolize nuclear power, but we won't listen to them. We still create our own. However, we are currently at the beginning stages. The Americans sent out a message threatening that they will destroy our nuclear reactors. That will be the end of the world. Some people say, reactors can be destroyed, but ideals cannot be destroyed. Even if the first batch of nuclear reactors were destroyed, people with ideals could build a second

batch.

Chairul Saleh: Yes, new ones could be built.

Chairman Mao: It was the Secretary of Defense of the United States who said that.

Chairul Saleh: Modern technology can no longer be monopolized by imperialists.

Chairman Mao: Yes, there should be no monopoly. All [technologies] should be freely communicated.

Chairul Saleh: Therefore we are very happy. Chairman Mao just said that China was only at the beginning stages of nuclear technology development. But for us, China creating its own atomic bomb is an event with great significance. We are greatly encouraged by this event spiritually and materially. This event will further encourage all the Newly Emerging Forces to build a new world.

Chairman Mao: You have to build up your agriculture and light industry first. And you need to find the raw materials to build an atomic bomb. Is there any in your country?

Chairul Saleh: I believe there is. Our current geographical survey has shown some positive signs. Now we are vigorously conducting surveys and making use of the natural resources.

Chairman Mao: Do you have iron mines or coal mines? The resources in your country are richer than those of my country. You have huge amount of petroleum and rubber, both of which are rare in the world.

Chairul Saleh: That is true. Therefore we sent an economic delegation to China for the purpose of learning from China and fostering closer collaboration between the two countries. Developing iron industry and heavy industry are the most important tasks for Indonesia. We don't have large-scale ironmaking and steelmaking industries. In that aspect, we would be glad to build up these industries as soon as possible, if China is willing to offer us help.

Chairman Mao: This is totally workable. We surely can help you unconditionally.[\[1\]](#)

Chairul Saleh: Thank you very much.

Chairman Mao: Producing coke is not that difficult either.

Chairul Saleh: We have all kinds of resources for developing steel industry. There are iron mines in Indonesia, as well as tin, nickel and iron rocky soil mines with significant output. We can exchange rocky soil with China. Rocky soil can be used to build up aluminum and aircraft industries. We are equipped with very good resources in this aspect, and we have great amount of reserves. Currently, Indonesia can only produce some raw materials. But we do not have industries that can refine these raw materials. Therefore, we urgently need to build some industries for processing and refining raw materials.

Chairman Mao: You can get started with a five-year plan, which should include training of personals for science and technology research, and geographical survey. No need to rush; just take one step at a time. We suffered because we were impatient

in the earlier years. Now, our situation has been improved. But we have made many mistakes and there remain many shortcomings. It is wrong for you to assume that China is good at everything. That is not true.

Chairul Saleh: Yes. Learning from our friends' experience is very important. It is science in itself.

Chairman Mao: Yes, we need to be honest and truthful.

Chairul Saleh: Yes. However, this does not undermine our respect and high regards for the great accomplishments China has achieved in such short period of time.

Chairman Mao: All in all, the situation has somehow improved when compared with Old China. But China is still backward when compared with the economically advanced countries in the world. The United States look down upon us. Great Britain looks down upon us. France, West Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union—all these countries look down upon us. Their disdain can be justified because they have their own advanced technology. For example, the United States and the Soviet Union have plenty of atomic bombs. If they decide to drop these bombs, there would be a high level of casualties. Therefore, they bully us; and they bully you.

Chairul Saleh: Maybe they are more advanced than us with regard to technological development. But ideologically and ideationally, they are not necessarily more advanced than us.

Chairman Mao: Yes. That is well said. Their ideals are imperialism and revisionism respectively. We are against imperialism.

Chairul Saleh: For Indonesia, anti-imperialism is not a pure principle, but something everyone can feel in daily life. It is the same for all developing countries. Anti-imperialism is not just a theoretical stance, but also their everyday life. Imperialism imposes pressure on the people.

Chairman Mao: Yes, they oppress us, and we oppose them. Take the example of Japan. Japan used to be a big imperialist country, hasn't it? It "educated" you, "educated" us, and "educated" many other countries! Now Japan wants to revive imperialism. It wants to target against us. We also need to get prepared to tackle with their ambitions! Japan needs your petroleum, rubber and tin!

[\[ii\]](#) "Unconditional" seems to be a cliché in Maoist language at the time. There is ambiguity in the sphere in which Mao offered "unconditional" support to Indonesia. In the context of the conversation, Mao's offer could be interpreted either narrowly (steel industry) or broadly (which would include nuclear assistance).