

**August 6, 1964**

**Record of Conversation from Premier Zhou's  
Reception of the North Korean Ambassador Pak  
Se-chang**

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**Summary:**

Zhou Enlai and Pak Se-chang discuss American military actions in Vietnam, as well as Kim Il Sung's planned trip to Indonesia.

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Chinese

**Contents:**

Translation - English

## Foreign Ministry Top Secret Document

Record of Premier Zhou Enlai Meeting with Pak Se-chang, DPRK Ambassador to China  
(Premier has yet to review)

Time: 4 p.m., 6 August 1964

Place: Xihua Hall, Zhongnanhai

Persons attending the meeting: Yao Guang, Director, 2nd Asian Affairs Department;  
Ge Buhai, Deputy Director, Protocol Department

Translator: Li Xiangwen

Recorder □ Tao Bingwei

Pak: Comrade Premier, I am really grateful that you found time in your busy schedule today to see me.

Zhou: We are fraternal countries, so I should do so. Comrade Ambassador, you must understand the situation in Vietnam.

Pak: I do.

Yao: This morning, I handed over the government statement to Comrade Ambassador.

Zhou: There flew over 60 sorties, with bombing and strafing for four of them. Five aircraft were shot down, and another three were damaged. One airman was captured. Even the United States has admitted the shoot-down of two aircraft. The other three aircraft possibly fell into the sea, or they could have been recovered from the water. From 12:30 to 4:30, for four hours, coastal bases were bombed. Our side's losses were not great. The US side mainly used old propeller aircraft, as well as a small number of old jet aircraft. At present the United States has a plan, which is to throw onto the front line things soon to be scrapped and write them off. This can be seen in Vietnam.

After the bombing, US Defense Secretary McNamara said that the retaliatory actions had ended and that subsequent actions would depend on Vietnam's actions. This action is an outright fabrication of the US side. There was no dispatch of forces on the Vietnamese side. The People's Daily has already reported this in detail.

On 2 August there was a first dispatch of military forces; the Vietnamese took action in self-defense. The opposite side suffered no injury; the Vietnamese side had damage to one ship. The second one, in contrast, was entirely planned beforehand by the US side. At that time there were no Vietnamese ships there.

The Workers Party of Vietnam held a meeting, appraised the situation, and notified us today. They recognize that this action is a first probing attack, including an overall plan of action of maximum deployment to Vietnam and Laos.

The goals of this first US probe are: 1) to save itself from defeat in South Vietnam, engaging in a retaliation to confuse and poison the public's mind; 2) to probe its allies (including dependent countries) for their reactions; 3) to probe Vietnam for its power to resist; 4) to probe relations between China and Vietnam for China's reaction; and 5) to probe the socialist camp for its reaction. In addition there is another, which is to obtain electoral advantage. This last goal has been achieved. Johnson has used this, conducting bipartisan talks and obtaining Goldwater's agreement.

On the other hand, it has been a major exposure, proving the failure of the United States.

Does this boost South Vietnam's morale? It is complete bunk. If the United States were to stop for a day, it could make South Vietnam lose hope all the more.

In Laos, they cannot firm up the situation inside the country. Moreover a faction in Laos caused an uproar. Phoumi Nosavan, the top military official was arrested and could have been put under house arrest. Phouma went to Luang Prabang. In short, contradictions on the right have already surfaced.

Even Chiang Kai-shek's gang, which most hopes to expand the war, believes that the US attack against North Vietnam cannot continue.

Is the United States probing the reaction of allied countries? The majority of them oppose it, with only Britain completely following along. France opposes it. Nor does Japan, wishing for a peaceful resolution, approve of it. West German for its part says that this issue has nothing to do with it. Thailand, although expressing support, is not so positive. Even India expresses regret.

Naturally, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as well as public opinion around the world, are opposed. Cambodia, Pakistan, and Ghana have all spoken on it. Japan's leftists are also opposed. The current of opposition is likely to continue developing. I believe that the US fabrication and plotting are likely to be further exposed and come under the attack of the whole world.

As for probing Vietnam's strength, the fact is quite clear. Vietnam has resisted very well this time, having downed US aircraft while suffering few losses on its side.

What about probing China? We have said it. We certainly must give support. We cannot sit and observe without going to the rescue. Today's newspapers all reflected this attitude.

I believe that the socialist camp and other leftist countries absolutely will respond one after the next.

In the leading revisionist state, the Soviet news agency TASS has already issued a statement. But even the West believes that this statement is moderate. In fact, the Soviet Union is now engaged in double-dealing, having already agreed to take this issue to the United Nations for resolution.

The issue of Indochina should not be discussed by the United Nations. Even Sihanouk opposes discussion by the United Nations.

The Soviet Union in the Security Council supports the US proposal and speaks of wishing to invite the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) representative to join the discussion. This issue lies, at root, within the bounds of the Vienna Conference. By no means does it belong in the United Nations. The DRV of course holds firm in opposing this UN discussion. For the past several days such telegrams have arrived.

The Soviet Union's proposal is fundamentally unreasonable, completely acknowledging the US accusation. The United States has turned into the plaintiff; Vietnam, on the contrary, has become the defendant. This, once again, is an exposure. In reality, this is an attempt of two countries -- the United States and Soviet Union-- to settle the issue.

According to the estimates of our Vietnamese comrades, as seen at present, following this action there is likely to be a halt for a time. Nor does it appear that the United States will soon expand the war into North Vietnam. The United States is proceeding step by step, in line with the election in that country. At times, however, the United States is also capable of taking risks. Because of this, we do not rule out the possibility of the United States conducting provocations.

Vietnamese comrades are now actively making preparations. We, too, are now actively making preparations and increasing our vigilance.

At present, such is the situation in Vietnam. I was going to have the Foreign Ministry inform Comrade Ambassador, but today Comrade Ambassador has come and I have used this opportunity to discuss matters. Comrade Ambassador, please communicate this to Premier Kim and the Korean Party Center.

Pak: I will report right away. Today, in coming to meet Comrade Premier, I first convey the personal and entire concern of our Party Center and Cabinet for Comrade Premier and gratitude for arranging in detail the matter of Premier Kim's visit to Indonesia. Premier Kim instructed me to express our thanks directly to Premier Zhou. At present, the situation in Vietnam is tense. Our Party Center and Cabinet are highly worried for the safety of our Premier while he is on his visit overseas. Moreover, as our leader has never visited a capitalist country, I have been particularly instructed to hear the considerations and views of Comrade Premier.

Zhou: I heard that you and Vice Minister Zeng Yongquan discussed the situation yesterday. I have been giving this matter my attention. Today, having researched the situation and materials in their entirety, my sense is that US action probably will pause for a time. Of course, one cannot say that the United States will not act again. But in this the United States is likely to go through a period of observation. Last night we made two types of estimate. One is a pause, and one is a continuation for two or three days. This morning, having studied various materials, I judged the situation to be of the first type.

The United States is taking this issue to the Security Council. We, of course, oppose this. But from an international point of view, this will simmer down. As the United States has already proposed this, in doing so again they must find an excuse and must really be occupied with the matter, as the old fabrications no longer work. On my previous trip to Pyongyang, I talked about this issue. The United States in the Security Council, having put forth a proposal, will also require a political solution.

We, too, endorse a political resolution, but we must convene the Geneva Conference. Only in convening the Geneva Conference can we resolve the issue. One can estimate that following the election, with the United States in South Vietnam and Lao having come to grief, the United States only then is likely to agree to hold such a conference. At present the United States has yet to resign itself to the situation.

So, as for Vietnam, there is likely to be a period of calm. But we must make active preparations while giving the enemy no pretext. If the enemy should engage in provocation, only then will we counterattack within the bounds of self-defense. The Vietnamese side, too, is preparing to act in this way. As for the situation in all of Southeast Asia, tension is unlikely to grow some eight, nine or 13 months before elections in the United States.

From this estimate of the situation, Premier Kim's trip abroad is formally guaranteed. Of course, we cannot be careless but must increase our vigilance. We are researching and preparing in detail the organization work, every step of it, to ensure no problem should emerge in the flight. In the event of any difficulty, one side can contact the

other at any time. We also have a vice minister responsible for this matter, and the embassy is indeed in daily contact with the Foreign Ministry. And I daily check on the situation and can inform you at any time through the Foreign Ministry. Before departure, should we encounter hindrance coming from imperialism and its vassal countries, we will inform you as necessary, and at that time still have time to change the itinerary

If en route there arise any difficulties, we can consider the following: either do not go or take a detour by an aircraft of Pakistan. It is legal for Pakistan's aircraft to fly on international routes. Pakistan these days is better for us than imperialism. Comrade Ambassador, are you in contact with Pakistan's ambassador to China?

Pak: No.

Zhou: The Foreign Ministry can make an introduction, and you can talk with him. Our aircraft have flown before to Indonesia without incident. The leg of the flight from Beijing to Rangoon is no problem, as Burma has a relatively good attitude toward us. So, the problem is from Rangoon to Jakarta, having between those two points to fly along the coast of Thailand and Malaya. Although flying in international waters, we have notified them in the past and it was still fine. If this time there should emerge any problem here, we can consider not going or changing our route. From Guangzhou or Shanghai we could fly one of Pakistan's Boeing aircraft for a direct flight to Dhaka, then fly in international waters to Jakarta. Boeing aircraft, made in the United States, are faster than the Ilyushin IL-18. We have flown in them; they are very safe. From Guangzhou to Dhaka takes at most three hours, it is another three hours from Dhaka to Jakarta. This is just a thought, as the route from Rangoon to Jakarta is not necessarily a problem. However, we have made preparations and are now making arrangements.

As for the issue of security following arrival in Jakarta, Ambassador Yao Zhongming has already returned and arranged matters. He is in contact with the DPRK ambassador to Indonesia and Comrade Aidit. Together with Indonesia, our embassy and overseas Chinese will make every effort to protect Premier Kim. We believe that Comrade Aidit will actively help. They were a great help last time when President Liu and Comrade Chen Yi went.

Please, Comrade Ambassador, give your Center the following three situation reports:

(1) Judging from the political situation, we feel that this foreign visit will not be obstructed.

(2) Each day I intend to pay attention, take note, and take part in all issues related to this foreign visit. We must all be involved in this, from the Premier's departure until his return. In the event a problem should occur, we can consider the two previous approaches discussed. One would be not to go; another would be to fly instead to Pakistan for a detour.

(3) For security in Indonesia, the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), our embassy and overseas Chinese will do their utmost to protect Premier Kim. Sukarno has invited the Premier, and he must also take responsibility to guard him. While in Indonesia, if the situation is good, Premier Kim go out and look around. If the situation is not good, then for the reason of ill health, he can hold many discussions, take many breaks, and spend little time touring the regions. In this way, his security will be more assured.

Our thinking is only for reference. Everything still requires hearing from Korea's Party Center and Premier Kim's decision.

Pak: Once again, Comrade Premier, I thank you for finding the time, busy as you are, to meet me. I will report today to Pyongyang everything concerning the situation reports that Comrade Premier has discussed.

Copies: Politburo Standing Committee; Each Comrade of the Secretariat; Chen Yi; He Long; Rongzhen; Boda; Confidential Affairs Bureau; General Office, CPC Central Committee

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