

June 29, 1954

Record of the Second Meeting between Premier Zhou and Prime Minister U Nu

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai and U Nu first talked about the decision made on the Geneva Conference regarding the armistice in the Korean Peninsula and the role of the US in it. Then they talked about the elements that complicated the Sino-Burmese relations and the need for building mutual trust and signing a non-political agreement. They also discussed the principles they would have in a joint statement before the signing of this potential agreement.

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Record of the Second Meeting between Premier Zhou and Prime Minister U Nu
(Not Yet Approved)

Time: 29 June 1954, 11:15-12:30

Accompanying personnel from China: Tong Qianri

Accompanying personnel from Burma: U Kyaw Nyein, U Myint Thein

Zhou Enlai: There is no agreement of a political nature between China and Burma. Between China and India there is an agreement related to trade and transportation between Chinese Tibet and India; in the preamble of that agreement, China and India both made an assurance of a political nature. However there is no agreement like this between China and Burma. This time [I] once talked with Prime Minister Nehru in Delhi. I said, the Chinese policy towards Burma is the same as the [Chinese] policy towards India; therefore if Burma is willing then I will initiate and bring forth an agreement with a [similar] nature; it will be beneficial to friendly relations and peaceful coexistence between China and Burma. Prime Minister Nehru replied and said this is a good idea, but the agreement will require time; the passage of this time through Yangon is brief, therefore why not issue a joint declaration prior to the signing of an agreement as a start; then decide what form should be adopted depending on the situation of the preparation work. I thought that view is excellent; therefore I reported [to you] the content of the discussion between me and Prime Minister Nehru. What is the view of Prime Minister U Nu?

U Nu: We should do as [suggested by Prime Minister Nehru]. We can first issue a joint statement and then consider signing an agreement.

Zhou Enlai: Good.

U Nu: Regarding the contents of the joint statement, I have the following six suggestions:

(1) Accept the five principles in the joint statement from China and India and include them into our joint statement.

(2) The two countries of China and Burma jointly declare, [we] will not participate in conspiracies to overthrow the legitimate governments of China and Burma.

(3) China and Burma will jointly issue an appeal, the targets [of the appeal] are Burmese communists and the Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] elements, but it is not necessary to explain specifics. We will appeal to them and tell them to give up incorrect thoughts and use peaceful ways to solve disputes.

(4) The two countries will solemnly assure that they will do everything within [their] powers to further peace in the world and especially in South East Asia.

(5) The border between China and Burma is not yet clear, in our joint statement we can express that we will take steps; but it is unnecessary to explain the specifics of these steps.

(6) In a letter from Nehru, he said during a discussion between your Excellency and him, [your Excellency] once said that if overseas Chinese have already obtained the citizenship of the host country then China will no longer view them as Chinese citizens; if they continue to maintain the identity of Chinese citizens then they should abide by the laws of the host countries and should not participate in the politics of the host country. I hope to include this into our joint statement.

Zhou Enlai: Just now Prime Minister U Nu agreed that a specific agreement will require preparatory work and consideration regarding its form; therefore it will require time. This is to say, specific issues need to be prepared in order to produce appropriate articles; this isn't something that can be solved by a hastily prepared

statement. It is also related to the laws of various countries, such as the issue of approving jurisdiction; this also isn't something that can be resolved by a joint statement issued by the prime ministers of two countries.

According to [the above], I will bring forth the following views towards the six points of suggestion from Prime Minister U Nu. In terms of general spirit, our views are mostly the same. However regarding certain points, I still have some opinion; now [I] will answer separately:

Regarding the first point and the fourth point, there is no problem; these two points are our common wishes and should be recorded down.

Regarding the second point, if Prime Minister U Nu's view is to say no interference in internal affairs then we can add a few lines in the joint statement about this principle. I do not agree with Prime Minister U Nu's suggested wording. If the prime ministers of two countries speak as such in the joint statement then it will give people an impression that this point has already become an issue, or there is already some truth in it, or that it takes two prime ministers to close the rumor; which would not be good. Although this is our first meeting, I will say frankly that [I] cannot accept Prime Minister U Nu's suggested second point. According to the reaffirmed five principles in the joint statement from China and India; we can say that it is appropriate for the relationship between China and Burma; we can even specially mention mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs and mutual non-aggression. China will not interfere with Burma's internal affairs. Burma will not interfere with China's internal affairs. China understands that Li Mi's forces pose a difficult problem for Burma, it is also a threat to Burma; the Burmese government did not subjectively allow them to be here. If the affair with Li Mi's forces must be [text illegible] just as Prime Minister U Nu suggested then it would not be good. Therefore, why don't we say, the principles of mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs and mutual non-aggression will be specially used in all relations between China and Burma.

Regarding the third point, according to Prime Minister U Nu's suggestion, is that the governments of our two countries will say to their people to not hope for outside assistance. To have the head figures of the government of our two countries say that in a joint statement is equal to admitting that the people of each other's countries have such a hope; which will become a serious issue. Not to mention the prime minister of one country appealing to the people of another country is also interference in [another's] internal affairs. Therefore this kind of wording must be [used] very carefully. Why don't we say the governments of the two countries acknowledge that the people of any country possess the right to choose their own country's system and life style; other countries cannot inference [in this]. The Chinese people already chose the current system, if the Jiang Jieshi elements stir up trouble then the Burmese government will not assist [them]. This kind of wording will allow the people of the two countries to have a clear understanding, and it will not involve internal affairs, therefore this kind of wording is beneficial for both sides.

Regarding the fifth point, the issue of the border between China and Burma is an issue left behind by history; it is especially an issue not resolved by the Guomindang [Kuomintang] era. I agree this issue needs to be resolved in the future. However, this issue is too specific, it is impossible to mention in a joint statement. According to my understanding, Prime Minister U Nu's meaning is that: Although [the issue of] the border between China and Burma has been dragged out for a very long time, the [two countries] have always been able to get along peacefully; the two countries hereby express they are gratified. As for how to write down this point with the appropriate wording, it can be studied.

Regarding the sixth point, the issue of nationality of overseas Chinese is also an issue

left behind by history. As for the existence of this issue, the new China cannot be held responsible. Just then Prime Minister U Nu quoted from Prime Minister Nehru's letter; [the quote] is correct. That is new China's direction on the issue of overseas Chinese.

Regarding this specific issue, the Chinese government is about to negotiate with the Indonesian delegation. Your Excellency knows that there are the most overseas Chinese in Indonesia. According to the above described direction and after the issue of overseas Chinese in Indonesia has been solved by specific stipulation with Indonesia, then we will solve the issue of overseas Chinese with other countries such as Burma using the same stipulation. Since currently there is no such stipulation, then the mentioning of this issue by the prime ministers of two countries will [cause] involvement in issues of internal laws of the two countries and international laws. My discussion with Prime Minister Nehru is the same as the discussion with the prime minister of Burma (especially since Prime Minister Nehru has already corresponded), now I can prove that is true once again. In the future we will solve issues according to this policy. I want to provide a suggestion for the other sixth point, which is according to the eighth point of the joint statement from China and India; the two countries of China and Burma will also express [willingness to] strengthen friendly relations between the two countries by frequent interaction. Does Prime Minister U Nu agree?

U Nu: Regarding the second point, if your Excellency agrees to mention again the two principles of mutual non-aggression and mutual non-interference in each other's affairs, then that is sufficient. The wording [issue] can be handled by people [responsible] for drafts.

Regarding the third point, if your Excellency does not like my suggested appeal, then other than what your Excellency has just suggested, I suggest to include what your Excellency said at the journalist reception in Delhi, which is: Revolution cannot be exported, at the same time, a country's people's expressed common will cannot tolerate outside interference.

Regarding the fifth point which is the border issue between the two countries, my meaning is to ambiguously mention it and only say that this issue has not yet been resolved and that steps will be taken in the future; rather than any mention of specific steps. Other than that, the suggestion mentioned by your Excellency just then can also be included.

Regarding the sixth issue, which is the issue of overseas Chinese, we can cancel it. I do not have a resolute view on this matter; I only like very much the view expressed by your Excellency. I agree with your Excellency's suggested sixth point.

Zhou Enlai: The second and third point can be drafted according to the views of both sides. Regarding the fifth point, which is the border issue, I am still wondering if it should be written down, because I am considering the issue of my own personal power. I personally believe, on principle, it should not be a problem. However the Chinese government has not yet placed the border issue between China and various countries onto the agenda. The Chinese government is so far not willing to touch this issue, because currently it is not possible to handle this issue. Before handling this issue, there is still a lot of work to be done, such as measuring, etc. If the Chinese and Burmese joint statement wants to mention this issue, then I will have to send a telegram back to my country and ask for instructions. According to the procedure of the Chinese government for handling matters, this kind of issue is handed to the Central People's Government Committee for discussion or decided by the Central People's Government Chairman.

U Nu: In the past when we [contacted] the Chinese government to resolve the border issue, we always received a similar answer, therefore the Burmese people are puzzled. They are thinking, does China have ambitions towards Burma's territory? Exactly for this reason, I suggested to ambiguously mention [the border issue] in the joint statement.

Zhou Enlai: I am not saying that this issue will not be resolved. I am saying that if this

issue is mentioned by the joint statement then I will be involved in issues related to my own personal power.

U Nu: All right, let us cancel this issue. Let us maintain contact between us, once your Excellency obtains power, please inform [us] by telegram. I will also frequently instruct my ambassador to provide specific suggestions to the Chinese government.

Zhou Enlai: Agreed

(At this time Qiao Guanhua and U Myint Thein leave the conference room to go to another room upstairs in order to draft the Chinese and Burmese joint statement)

U Nu: Burma's population is only eighteen million. And China's Yunnan province alone has sixteen million to twenty million people. Therefore, Burma's population is only equal to one of China's provinces. Burma does have some fears towards China, and hopes that China respects the territorial integrity of Burma. Your Excellency please forgive our fear [of China]. I want to bring forth an appeal to your Excellency (not mentioned within the joint statement), we believe that China is our big brother, we hope that China can take steps to eliminate our fear.

Zhou Enlai: Prime Minister Nehru once discussed this issue with me. He said that the small countries around the two countries of India and China have this kind of thought. In the past I knew a bit; this time after conversing with Prime Minister Nehru, I understood even more. Exactly for this reason, while I was at the journalist reception in Delhi, I specifically picked a question to answer. I said of all the countries in the world, regardless if they are large or small, strong or weak, regardless of [differences] in social systems, as long as they handle relations with each other using the five principles from the agreement between China and India, then they can all get along peacefully. This is also exactly what Prime Minister U Nu quoted just then.

Regarding this aspect, I can personally and frankly tell Prime Minister U Nu that the policy of the new China is the policy of peace. We are willing to [follow these five principles] of respecting each other's territorial sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference into each other's affairs, equal and mutual benefits, coexist peacefully and get along with all countries in the world; not to mention Burma and China are countries with a connection as relatives. China sees India and Burma as the same, India's population is second in the world with three hundred and sixty million [people], Burma's population is smaller but we did not differentiate because of differences in size between India and Burma. When we send out visiting delegations, we visit India and Burma at the same time. When we establish friendship associations, we establish Sino-Indian and Sino-Burmese friendship associations at the same time. [The above] proves that we see India and Burma as the same.

As for territory, China is already a large place with a large population. Our nation founding policy is to make our own country great. We do not have any territorial ambitions. Now that I am making this statement, Prime Minister U Nu can believe [in it]. In the past we have participated in very few international activities. This time participating in the Geneva conference is our first time. Reason being, we are already very busy with internal affairs, we cannot handle it all. We are willing to establish [relations] with our neighbors and get along peacefully with them. We are not willing to see our neighbors allow foreign interventionists establish military bases. Burma, India and Indonesia did not agree with the United States organizing an invasive bloc in South East Asia and oppose the United States' establishment of military bases; this proves that we have the foundation for friendly cooperation. After frequent interaction, then we can further our relationship of friendly cooperation.

Exactly because of [the above] point, just then I suggested another sixth point. We understand the feelings of the peoples and governments of small countries; we are willing to pay additional attention, because this can only be beneficial and not detrimental. In the past, China once invaded other countries during the old imperial era; for example east to Korea and south to Vietnam, and there was once conflict with Burma. Of course, in the past China was also once invaded by others. All of this has

already passed. Now the new China does not tolerate this kind of invasive policy, [we are] even opposed to this kind of thought. We enthusiastically hope that the countries around us become strong and that [we can] get along with them peacefully; this is beneficial to peace in Asia and the world.

To [sum it up] in a sentence, after many interactions, Burma will understand that although China is a large [country] with a large population, it is easy to get along [with China]. Our two countries are both Eastern peoples with relations of relatives; I believe [we] will get along very well. If difficulties do arise between us, then it can be solved immediately through diplomatic relations. If we pay attention to each other then there won't be matters that cause misunderstanding.

U Nu: I am very happy to hear what your Excellency has just said. Your Excellency's trip this time is very effective and eliminated a large portion of the Burmese people's fear towards China. Suppose if our first meeting can eliminate this much fear then the more interaction the more fear eliminated. Exactly for this reason, a year ago, I extended an invitation to your Excellency's ambassador; inviting your Excellency to visit Burma. Later on, when our minister [responsible] for land nationalization visited China, I told him to extend the invitation to your Excellency. He returned and said that, your Excellency told him that it might be possible after the ceasefire of the Korean [War]. Now it has finally been realized. Also exactly because of the same reason, I am happy that your Excellency, on the way to the presidential palace, invited me to visit China. I am currently seriously considering this invitation. After I receive the authorization from the cabinet, I will inform your Excellency by letter. Suppose if I were to go to China then I want to mention a request which is, after I visit various important cities as arranged by the Chinese government, the two of us should go on a trip to Yunnan. This is because if any disputes were to occur [between China and Burma] then it will begin in Yunnan. Nehru and I have done this before. In the border between India and Burma, there is an area inhabited by tribes, this kind of tribe is called [text illegible] Liang (transliteration), a part of them lives within India and another part of them lives within Burma. Nehru and I once went to see these two areas together.

Zhou Enlai: Regarding requests by visiting guests, we will of course attempt to satisfy [them].

U Nu: Thank you. I am never willing to say negative words about others. However the communist party within our country is not as intelligent as the Chinese communist party. Actually they should know that if they continue to conduct [text illegible] with the government then that will only push the government more towards the United Kingdom and the United States. Because with continued fighting, the government will need arms and we can only purchase arms from the United Kingdom and the United States. If they continue to conduct sabotage then the government will require funds and equipment for reconstruction. Which in turn, funds and equipment can only be obtained from the United Kingdom and the United States. If it wasn't for our resolute independent policy, we would have inclined towards the United Kingdom and the United States long ago. Not long after we obtained independence, and at that time the communist party has not stirred up trouble yet; the United Kingdom and the United States once sent representatives to ask us if we need assistance. We replied and said, if there is a need, we will pay, we cannot accept gifts. We have a lot of resources; we can use resources for exchanges. However, after the communist party started to attack, the situation changed. We needed arms and other things. Actually when the communist party conducts attacks, it is not the government that suffers, instead it is the people that suffer. The communist party bombs trains and rob villages. They will never be able to obtain power through this kind of method. I do not know what kind of assistance you can provide for us in this regard. However, the Burmese communist party respects the Chinese communist party very much. If you utter a sentence, they will listen.

Zhou Enlai: (Laugh) Then that will become interfering with [others] internal affairs.

U Nu: We welcome this kind of interference in internal affairs.

Zhou Enlai: I said just then that after Burma obtained independence, [Burma] was

unwilling to become a military base for foreign interventionists, [Burma] was unwilling to accept conditional aid. Towards [all of] this we feel admiration. Your Excellency once said that oppositional parties can bring forth opinion in elections and have the people make decisions; this is the principle of democracy. We are willing to see the country friendly to us become an independent, democratic, united and free country. According to the democratic principle mentioned by your Excellency, I believe that the internal issue within Burma can be solved. When I am saying all of this, I am speaking with the identity of a relative and a neighboring country; other than expressing friendliness there is no other meaning. Your Excellency said just then that there is no place to obtain arms, there is trade between China and Burma, and we can sell arms to you without condition. However, this will cause the United States to say that China wants to create a "Guatemala" in South East Asia, which will cause you difficulties.

U Nu: Yes and not only so, there are other difficulties. Our army received British training; if we purchased arms from China then we have many things that will require drastic changes. Our position is very special. You only need to consider the issue of whether or not the United States will intervene, if the United States won't intervene then everything will be well. Whereas we need to consider revolt from all sides, [revolt] by the communist party, [revolt] by Karen people, [revolt] by Kachin people, in addition to harassment by the Guomindang army.

Zhou Enlai: I have already said, policy of the revolution must be appropriate to local needs; it must be able to grow on the soil of the native country. This is the experience of the Chinese communist party. We once had failures before, although we obtained success now, but we will never forget the experience from past failures.

U Kyaw Nyein: I have once seen some [text illegible] regarding the mistake of Li Lisan's path. Later Chairman Mao entered the farm village and made peasants the foundation for strategic purposes. The Chinese communist party possesses their own experience, they did not plagiarize others.

Zhou Enlai: The issue is to rely on the largest number of people; it is not yet a strategic issue. The Chinese communist party is very against plagiarizing; therefore we once had a rectification movement. Regarding this aspect, we also have many documents for viewing. I want to ask about the situation of the Guomindang army, we are willing to know what other difficulties the Burmese government has regarding this aspect. If Prime Minister U Nu finds it inconvenient, [you] may say nothing.

U Nu: I can answer this question. When they were here in the past, we once reported to the United Nations; the United Nations decided they should pull out of Burma, but they did not comply. Therefore, we sent the army to fight with them, and then they escaped to Thailand. However there are some that secretly slipped back in. There are about seven thousand people that were pulled out of Burma. These people can't fight at all, they cannot beat anyone; they are only good at smuggling opium, robbing villages and raping women.

Zhou Enlai: They have already become professional bandits, but the United States is still using them. What is the attitude of Thailand on this issue? [Thailand] should be helping Burma, but Thailand seems to be helping the Guomindang army instead.

U Nu: No, Thailand is still helping us. Thailand agreed to be a member of the troop withdrawal committee. They are doing what they can to pull as many Guomindang troops out of Burma.

Zhou Enlai: After the Guomindang army was withdrawn to Thailand, what was the attitude of Thailand?

U Nu: These Guomindang troops are a threat to Thailand as well. Thailand cannot handle them because Thailand has internal disputes within their own country. Thailand's army is not as strong as ours.

Zhou Enlai: Are there Guomindang troops in the north eastern mountain areas in Burma which are inhabited by minority peoples? It was said in the past that they committed robbery there.

U Kyaw Nyein: According to our intelligence, there are not many Guomindang troops in the Kachin people area. They are mainly in the southern part, where Burma and Thailand meets. There are not many of them in the border region between China and Burma.

Zhou Enlai: Guomindang troops are Chinese, we are also very sad by how they trample the Burmese people. Our People's Liberation Army rushed to the border too slowly; otherwise it would have saved Burma a lot of trouble.