

May 31, 1956

**Memorandum of Conversation from Premier Zhou
Enlai's Reception of Ambassador R.K. Nehru**

Citation:

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Summary:

Premier Zhou Enlai and Ambassador Nehru discuss the Korean ceasefire, the role of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Committee, the Sino-American ambassadorial talks, and the situation in Indochina.

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[...]

Minutes of Conversation between Premier Zhou Enlai and Ambassador Nehru
(not yet approved)

Time: 31 May 1956.

Location: Yiheyuan [The Summer Palace]. Chinese observers: Deputy Minister Yuan, Pu Shouchang (translator and recorder). Indian observers: Ambassador Nehru's wife, Attaché Singh.

Ambassador Nehru said that Premier Nehru will go abroad on 20 June and will not return to India until 22 July. This time Premier Nehru will be visiting many countries in Europe as well as America; he will be meeting with the leadership of many countries, and thus would be happy to know of Premier Zhou's responses to certain issues.

Ambassador Nehru said that he would discuss these issues in order of their geographical location.

First, the issue of Korea. Last month the Chinese foreign ministry sent an official letter to the Indian Embassy, in which it mentioned the development of the Korean situation and questions related to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, and suggested holding a meeting. Ambassador Nehru said that he received a reply from the Indian government last week; in this reply, the Indian government expressed its thanks to the Chinese government, and put forward India's view, which is, if this issue is brought before the United Nations General Assembly, India will advocate against taking any actions that undermine the Korean ceasefire agreement. India also cares about the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission issue; it has advised Switzerland and Sweden not to withdraw their personnel from the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission; in fact, India made this suggestion to Switzerland and Sweden eighteen months ago. As for [China's] suggestion to hold a meeting, India cannot take the initiative, because that is the affair of the two militaries and the relevant Geneva Conference countries.

Premier Zhou said, The British chargé d'affaires has already given us notice of the resolution made by the sixteen countries of the United Nations Command. This notice contained three main points: first, it is not yet the time to hold a meeting; second, the U.N. Command will state its position on the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission issue in the armistice talks; third, [he] hopes that the Korean ceasefire can be cemented. In addition, the U.N. Command made some unreasonable criticisms of us. These kinds of criticisms don't hold water; in fact, every point they mentioned were [things] for which the U.N. Command ought to take responsibility. We thank the Indian government very much for informing us of its views. With regard to the U.N. Command, we will give a reply; we will inform India of it when we do so. With regard to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission issue, we will once more exchange views with Switzerland and Sweden; we will express to them that since a meeting on the Korean issue cannot be held now - although we persist in our suggestion - we should first consider Switzerland and Sweden's difficulty and find a fitting solution. When we have agreed on a solution with Switzerland and Sweden, we will inform India of it as well.

Ambassador Nehru said that the second issue he wished to discuss was Japan. Premier Zhou's invitation letter to Prime Minister Hatoyama had already been conveyed by the Indian embassy in Japan on 28 May. Prime Minister Hatoyama's response was that due to the domestic situation in Japan and the fact that Kono Ichiro [the Agriculture and Forestry Minister] had only just returned to Japan, he hoped that the matter of Premier Zhou's invitation could be considered top secret in New Delhi, Beijing and Tokyo. Prime Minister Hatoyama also said that he would act according to his judgment and choose a suitable opportunity to respond to Premier Zhou's

invitation.

Ambassador Nehru said, The third issue concerns Indochina. He said that two or three days ago he had pressed India about whether [they] had received an answer from the prime minister of Laos regarding Premier Zhou's invitation. He received a cable yesterday; it is said that no response has yet been received. On the Vietnam side, the International Commission [trans. note-- presumably the International Control Commission (ICC)] has received the two chairmen's letter of 10 May. The International Commission has already decided to continue carrying out its duties, and hopes that the two sides of North and South Vietnam can soon reach an agreement about the next step.

Ambassador Nehru said, The final issue is the Sino-American talks in Geneva. Premier Nehru very much hopes that the talks can reach a successful conclusion. Premier Nehru will see the leadership of many countries in London, Washington, Paris and elsewhere, so he would be happy to know of Premier Zhou's views on this issue and advice he might give Premier Nehru. Ambassador Nehru said, Two questions are discussed in the talks: the first is the question of releasing a statement, and the second is the question of the two sides' nationals returning to their countries. I have already told Premier Nehru everything that Premier Zhou said regarding these questions last time. Premier Nehru understands China's position very clearly. Ambassador Nehru said, [I] heard that at the 46th meeting, China proposed a new draft, but America rejected this draft, and raised the issue of the thirteen American criminals. Ambassador Nehru said that last time, he mentioned Premier Nehru's general estimate of the situation, for example: Premier Nehru had pointed out that this is an American election year, and conflicting trends are developing there; in America, it is generally thought that America's Asia policy is unsuccessful, while on the other hand there are also some who demand a tougher stance. Premier Nehru once said that he has no advice to offer as yet, but since he will be talking with Eisenhower and others, if Premier Zhou has any opinions or suggestions to tell [him], Premier Nehru would very much appreciate it.

Premier Zhou said, Concerning the issue of Indochina, we have already got the two chairmen's letter; we would also very much like to know the different sides' reactions - of course, mainly the reactions of Ngo Dinh Diem and France. France formally supports the implementation of the Geneva Agreement, and states that it hopes to cement the peace in Indochina. But France has already withdrawn its troops from Vietnam's south, and doesn't have much of an effect on Ngo Dinh Diem. As for Ngo Dinh Diem, we only know from the news that he replied to the two chairmen, but we haven't yet seen the formal document. [We] guess that he is unwilling [to have] the election. As to whether he's proposed any provisional measures, we're not yet clear. While North and South Vietnam have not reached any new agreements, the International Commission must continue to take responsibility, and ensure peace in Vietnam; there will be difficulties in this, and Ngo Dinh Diem will not cooperate completely with the International Commission.

Premier Zhou said, As for Laos, [as] I told the Ambassador last time, we are willing to lend a helping hand to improve the situation in Laos. But the Laotian prime minister has still not responded, so we have not yet had a chance to do something [for them].

When discussing the Sino-American talks, Premier Zhou said, We did indeed propose a draft; it was a synthesis of several previous drafts. In the new draft, we reiterated that the two countries of China and America should resolve their dispute in the Taiwan region through peaceful negotiation, and that neither should resort to threats or armed force against the other. In the new draft, we also proposed that within two months, the two countries' ambassadors should seek out and determine real and feasible ways to realize the two sides' common desires, including a meeting of the Chinese and American foreign ministers. Premier Zhou said, Tomorrow the Foreign

Ministry will give the Ambassador a copy of our draft.

Premier Zhou said, We stipulated a timeframe in order to seek and determine ways [of realizing the two sides' goals], and to prepare for a meeting of the Chinese and American foreign ministers. Ambassador-level talks between China and America have already been put off for ten months; if [we] don't stipulate a time limit, the United States might delay further, in order to delay it past the election. If [we] don't stipulate a time limit, then after the statement is released, America won't seek any ways [to realize the goals]; it won't solve the problem either, much less hold a meeting of the foreign ministers. That way, America could delay the talks for another ten months. America did not completely reject our new draft at all; it just raised an objection at the last meeting regarding the time limit we stipulated. There will be another meeting today, and we will give the American side an answer based on what [I've] just said. As for the thirteen American criminals, America brings them up at every meeting as a matter of course. But America does not respond to any of the questions we are pursuing, like the Chinese who are imprisoned in America, Chinese overseas students who are prevented from returning home, etc. America has used the method of Taiwan entry permits to prevent Chinese students' return to China, and has now added something else: it does not issue passports to Chinese students' children who are born in America, in order to prevent Chinese students from returning to China. These kinds of disagreements concerning the return of each side's foreign nationals have now become the usual conclusion of every meeting. Western news reporters say that the talks have already turned to this topic; that's not necessarily true. The reason they report this is that following every meeting, the American side talks to them about the thirteen American criminals, and avoids mention of how discussions of the second item on the agenda are going.

Premier Zhou said, We had wanted to get some more information through today's meeting and [talk] to the Ambassador after researching all the information, but it is also all right to [just] have some contact to start with today. There will not be any big developments at today's meeting, but [we] can get a clearer view of America's intentions. If there are any changes after today, [we] can speak with the Ambassador again.

Premier Zhou said, We guess that America's attitude is, that if an agreement is to be reached, the statement must be one that is most beneficial for America. America could use this kind of statement to say to the American people that the situation in the Taiwan region is already frozen, and there will be no more changes to it. Formally, America says that the two sides of China and America can maintain their own viewpoints, but that is empty talk; in fact, [it] wants to freeze the status quo in the Taiwan region. The American government wants to get a statement that says something of this sort, in order to make it smoothly through the election year. But that sort of statement is one to which we absolutely cannot agree; it is equivalent to accepting American rule over Taiwan, equivalent to asking the Chinese people to announce that they will bind their own hands and feet. Whereas America could continue to expand its military base on Taiwan and step up the arming of [Taiwan], without any restrictions. This is both wanting to continue with interference and to perpetuate invasion; both wanting to infringe on Chinese sovereignty and to destroy Chinese territorial integrity. This completely undermines the Five Principles. If we agreed, we would also be undermining the Five Principles. This is not peaceful coexistence, it is accepting invasion. If America cannot get this kind of statement, it is prepared to continue delaying until the election year is over. It looks like America does not plan to break off the talks. America has a third idea as well: it wishes the statement to say that the two countries of China and America will use peaceful means to resolve the dispute in the Taiwan region, and not resort to threats or armed force; as for the issue of seeking ways [to reach the goals], it is America's wish that the statement neither mentions a time limit, nor specifically stipulates that ways would include meetings between the Chinese and American foreign ministers. After releasing such a statement, America would put off ambassador-level talks until after the election, thus in reality still freezing the status quo in the Taiwan region. This is

something we cannot agree to. If a statement is to be released, it must stipulate a time limit, and specifically explain that ways [to reach goals] include meetings between the Chinese and American foreign ministers. If a time limit is not stipulated, then even if the statement specifically explains that ways [to reach goals] include meetings between the Chinese and American foreign ministers, American can still delay; the result will still be a freezing of the status quo in Taiwan. Premier Zhou said, What [I've] just talked about is the sticking point in the talks.

Ambassador Nehru said he thanked Premier Zhou very much for all [Zhou] had told him, and that he would convey it to Premier Nehru. He said, Today Premier Zhou has reiterated China's stance, and this stance is one that Premier Nehru completely understands and can fully appreciate. He asked, Does Premier Zhou have any advice he would like to give Premier Nehru?

Premier Zhou said, This requires some further thought. Luckily there is still some time before Premier Nehru sets off; [I] will arrange to talk with the Ambassador again around 10 June.

Ambassador Nehru said, Last time Premier Zhou talked about the issue of Hong Kong and the British government's attitude. [The ambassador] had already given Premier Nehru a detailed report on this, and Premier Nehru had taken note of all that Premier Zhou had said. Ambassador Nehru asked whether there had been any changes in the situation since the last time they spoke.

Premier Zhou said, There has been no change. We suggested establishing relations with the Hong Kong government, but the British government has still not replied. As to the issue of allowing traffic to pass through Hong Kong and Guangzhou, [we] discussed it for a long time, but have still not resolved it. The Hong Kong government continuously brings up difficult questions; it can't really say it's unwilling to allow traffic to pass through, so it does all it can to delay. For example, the Hong Kong government says that once traffic is allowed through, there will be more people going to Hong Kong than coming from it, which would increase Hong Kong's population. We say that we would only issue passports to two types of people: first, to those going to other countries via Hong Kong, and second, to those going to Hong Kong for travel. We would not issue passports to people who wanted to move to Hong Kong; if someone went to Hong Kong and wanted to stay there, they would have to get the agreement of the Hong Kong authorities. It can be seen from this that we have shown a lot of consideration for the Hong Kong authorities' opinions. There are no more objections that the Hong Kong authorities can make on this issue, so it has come up with a new subject [to be addressed], stipulating that only Chinese people from Guangdong Province can go to Hong Kong; people from other provinces can't. This way of dividing Chinese people into two types is unacceptable to us. Since this issue can't be resolved, the Hong Kong authorities again raised a new issue - that is, sending certain Chinese people who are living in Hong Kong back to the Mainland. We said, This is a separate issue from allowing traffic through; [we] can first allow passage of traffic, then look into which people can be sent back to the Mainland. There are a lot of issues like this, all small issues completely unconnected to allowing traffic through; we cannot help but suspect that the British government has another reason for doing this, that it is due to outside pressure. Anything that improves the Sino-British relationship meets with opposition from certain quarters, so the British government delays.

Ambassador Nehru said, According to reports in the Hong Kong newspapers, the restrictions on Chinese [performing] arts troupes entering Hong Kong have already been lifted, and Chinese arts troupes have been invited to Hong Kong to perform.

Premier Zhou said, This has not yet been agreed upon. Last time I spoke to the Ambassador about inviting a British parliamentary delegation [to China]. Members of

the British House of Commons have also raised questions on this matter. [British Prime Minister] Eden has replied that it is not yet the time for a parliamentary delegation to visit China; this is clearly also due to outside pressure, it's not like something a nation that stresses diplomacy would say.

Ambassador Nehru said that he had already reported to Premier Nehru on this matter [Trans. note—text is cut off here].