

**January 5, 1963**

**Record of Conversation from Chairman Mao's  
Reception of Indonesian Deputy Chief Minister  
Suban Delhi**

**Citation:**

"Record of Conversation from Chairman Mao's Reception of Indonesian Deputy Chief Minister Suban Delhi", January 5, 1963, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-01792-06, 76-84. Translated by David Cowhig.  
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/117919>

**Summary:**

Conversation regarding Sukarno's recent illness, Asian-African unity against imperialism, and the situation in West Irian, among other issues.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Henry Luce Foundation

**Original Language:**

Chinese

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Secret document 35

Ministry of Foreign Affairs document

Record of Conversation from Chairman Mao's Reception of Indonesian Deputy Chief Minister Suban Delhi

(Not reviewed by the Chairman)

-- West Irian issue, Malaysian federal issue,  
-- The second Asian-African Conference, Sino-Indian relations and the Colombo Conference

Date: Evening of January 5, 1963

Location: Hangzhou

Chinese participants: Premier Zhou Enlai, Vice Premier Chen Yi,

Accompanied on the Chinese side by Vice Governor of Zhejiang Province Wu Xian, Vice Minister Zhang Hanfu, Ambassador Yao, Deputy Director Ge Buhai  
Accompanied on the Indonesian side by Ambassador Sukarni

Interpreter: Chen Lishui

Notetakers: Ni Liyu, Cheng Ruisheng

Chairman Mao: Have you been to China before?

Deputy Chief Minister Suban Delhi: Yes, the last time I visited China was in October 1959. I wish Mao Zedong eternal health.

Chairman Mao: Are you well?

Suban Delhi: During my visit to China I can get some rest.

Chairman Mao: We are a very friendly country. How is President Sukarno?

Suban Delhi: After being treated by the Chinese medical team, he is back in good health.

Chairman Mao: What illness did he have?

Suban Delhi: Kidney stones. We had consulted with physicians with many countries. They all said that they wanted to do surgery. President Sukarno does not believe in it. We thank Premier Zhou for sending a medical team to take over medical care for President Sukarno. Especially at this critical juncture of the present struggle, we need President Sukarno's leadership more than ever. The entire Indonesian nation thanks the Chinese government for curing President Sukarno.

Chairman Mao: The countries of Asia and Africa must unite. There are many Asian and African countries and there are many people in them. They need leaders who are healthy and determined in the struggle.

Suban Delhi: Many Asian and African countries have achieved nominal independence, but it is hard to say whether they will have a bright future. Imperialism and colonialism want to use various methods to destroy Afro-Asian solidarity.

Chairman Mao: This is very true.

Suban Delhi: President Sukarno has said that many tests lie ahead.

Chairman Mao: Yes. You still haven't solved the West Irian issue yet, have you?

Suban Delhi: It is now close to a final settlement.

Chairman Mao: You sent in some troops.

Suban Delhi: Yes. Indonesia wants to recover West Irian and had no alternative but to send in troops. We couldn't win through diplomatic struggles alone. During the past twelve years we have been asking the Netherlands to negotiate, but Netherlands didn't want to talk about it. Later we sent a parachute troops.

Chairman Mao: In the end you had to send in troops.

Suban Delhi: Indonesia now controls West Irian, but there still needs to be a formal transfer, which is scheduled for May 1 this year.

Chairman Mao: That is coming up soon.

Suban Delhi: On January 1 of this year, the Indonesian flag rose over West Irian. But we must also be vigilant and not let West Irian become a second Congo. Recovering West Irian is an arduous struggle.

Chairman Mao: You asked Pakistan to send troops but didn't ask India for troops.

Suban Delhi: Pakistan sent over a thousand soldiers, but they didn't accomplish much.

Vice Premier Chen Yi: How many troops do you have in West Irian?

Suban Delhi: We already sent in over 1,800 soldiers. But we are also prepared to surround West Irian with 75,000 troops and have sent warships to surround West Irian. If imperialism causes trouble, we will land our troops.

Chairman Mao: How big is West Irian?

Suban Delhi: It is three-and-one-half times the size of Java. The struggle to recover West Irian is toughening the Indonesian people. The Indonesian people have become more revolutionary. The struggle against the Netherlands has been very beneficial. We became independent in 1950, but 90% of the economy was still in the hands of foreigners. And the army was still the army of the Netherlands. Now we have recovered 80% of foreign economic enterprises, and have established our own army. Even the United Kingdom and Australia admire our army. If there had been no struggle against the Netherlands, we would not have what we have today. We would not have the leadership of President Sukarno. Indonesia would have been controlled

by reformists and conservatives.

Chairman Mao: That is the Masyumi Party.

Suban Delhi: Yes, the Masyumi Party and the Indonesian Socialist Party. These parties are nominally Indonesian parties but they act as if they are Westerners.

Chairman Mao: They are not fighting for national independence, but against national independence. We must have an independent politics, an independent economy, and an independent culture.

Suban Delhi: Other Asian and African countries will also suffer the same difficulties as Indonesia. Among Asian countries, only China and Indonesia are revolutionary. Among African countries, only Ghana, Guinea and Mali are revolutionary. Most other Asian and African countries are still groping their way forward.

Chairman Mao: Some countries in the Middle East are gradually becoming more aware.

Suban Delhi: Yes, but they are still groping their way forward. It is not easy for Indonesia to move forward on the revolutionary road. It has been afflicted with subversion and rebellion. 1957- 1960 was the most difficult period.

Chairman Mao: There were assassination attempts too. That is also a kind of subversive activity.

Suban Delhi: There have been five attempts on President Sukarno's life.

Chairman Mao: There was one last spring.

Suban Delhi: Chairman Mao sees far ahead. You early on urged President Sukarno to be vigilant.

Chairman Mao: It is good for him to be careful.

Suban Delhi: President Sukarno is often together with the people. Recently we have strengthened our protection of the President. However, the enemy is conspiring. There are even plots against the president's children. This has only gone to make the Indonesian people even more united. Indonesia is surrounded by the British Commonwealth and Southeast Asia Treaty Organization countries. They all want to bring Indonesia over to their side. But they not only cannot pull Indonesia in, but the countries around Indonesia are being influenced by Indonesia. The imperialists are afraid. The imperialists know that Indonesia will grow stronger.

Chairman Mao: Are you clear understanding of the issue of Malaysian federalism?

Suban Delhi: The imperialists used Rahman to oppose Sukarno. After rebellion broke out in Indonesia, the United Kingdom and Malaya wanted to send armed Indonesian rebels to Malaya. Now they say that the Malaysian Federation will include Borneo (North Kalimantan) and attempt to invade other parts of Kalimantan.

Chairman Mao: I heard that they also want to take Sumatra away from Indonesia.

Suban Delhi: Yes, Rahman wants to incorporate Sumatra into Malayan territory. When the rebellion occurred in Indonesia, Rahman sent people to Sumatra. I can honestly say that we support the Brunei uprising.

Chairman Mao: We have issued a statement supporting it. We must defeat this reactionary plan of the Malaysian Federation. People say that there are two factions in the British Conservative Party. One group advocates the autonomy of Brunei, and the other advocates joining Brunei to the Malaysian Federation.

Suban Delhi: Fortunately, the Indonesian nation has become much stronger. Although the Masyumi Party and the Indonesian Socialist Party still exist, they are isolated. We have not arrested them but we have isolated them and do permit them to engage in any activities. We have been too tolerant of them.

Vice Premier Chen Yi: Did they commit the five assassinations?

Suban Delhi: Yes.

Chairman Mao: They are the running dogs of imperialism.

Suban Delhi: We were happy to recover West Irian without a fierce battle. If we do need to fight, the situation in Indonesia will change. The subversives will be re-energized, they will look for pretexts and make propaganda claiming that President Sukarno is responsible for the suffering of the Indonesian people. However, recent events in Asian and African countries have brought difficulties.

Chairman Mao: Is it possible for the Asian-African Conference to be held soon?

Suban Delhi: I think the preparatory meeting for the Second Asian-African conference can be held at the beginning of this year. But India has said that it is opposed. Myanmar and Ceylon have wavered because of India's opposition. But now the attitudes of Myanmar and Ceylon have changed. They used to be closer to India but now they are closer to Indonesia. We hope that India will no longer oppose it. If India is still opposed, it will not participate.

Chairman Mao: It will be best if India participates.

Suban Delhi: We also hope that India will participate.

Chairman Mao: If it does not come, then there is nothing to be done about that. India may not participate now but it will in the future. Will Japan participate?

Suban Delhi: It seems that it may participate. Japan is pro-Western, and India is actually pro-Western but is not willing to admit to it.

Chairman Mao: That's the same thing.

Suban Delhi: India being pro-Western just tells everyone that India is only superficially a non-aligned country and that it actually does not like peace and neutrality. Pakistan supported Indonesia's struggle to regain West Irian but not India. The relationship between President Sukarno and Ayub Khan is much better than the relationship between President Sukarno and Nehru.

Chairman Mao: We are the same and no wonder about that. One is a country that participates in military blocs, and the other is a country that appears to be

non-aligned. India has also done a lot of bad things in Africa for example in the Congo.

Suban Delhi: The Prime Minister of Ceylon also told us that dealing with India is not easy. India looks down on the small country of Ceylon.

Chairman Mao: Indonesia is not a small country and Pakistan is not a small country. Pakistan is very afraid of India.

Suban Delhi: Now India is being torn apart. There are many domestic contradictions. This shows that India is not strong and that its prestige is declining. I borrow the words of President Sukarno: We thank Chairman Mao for giving India a lesson.

Chairman Mao: This time India has not transferred a large number of troops from the India-Pakistan border. India has Kashmir surrounded on all sides.

Suban Delhi: If the Indian army fought the Pakistani army, it could not win.

Premier Zhou Enlai: The Pakistani army is stronger than the Indian army.

Suban Delhi: The Pakistani army has a goal. The Indian army not only has to occupy the entire Kashmir, but also to occupy the whole of Pakistan. President Ayub Khan has said that India has not given up on the annexation of Pakistan.

Vice Premier Chen Yi: India has recently called for a confederation.

Suban Delhi: There was also discord between India and Myanmar.

Chairman Mao: The relationship between India and Ceylon was also a problem for a time.

Suban Delhi: None of the countries in the region are unhappy about China teaching India a lesson. Although some countries do not say anything, they are happy in their hearts. Ceylon Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike used to worship Nehru in the past. At the Belgrade meeting, Nehru gave a speech, and PM Bandaranaike supported it. But at this Colombo meeting, PM Bandaranaike told me personally that India was to blame for the Sino-Indian border conflict. Before this Sino-Indian conflict broke out, Nehru visited Ceylon. At that time, PM Bandaranaike advised him not to provoke China. Nehru, however, boasted that the Chinese army could be cleared out within five days. (Everyone laughs)

This was taken as a joke at the Colombo meeting. Everyone said that India is a defeated country in the military but still insisted on China's unconditional surrender. How could this be possible? Now although India's prestige has been declining, it is still arrogant but has just become an empty shell. The situation is now developing well. Both Myanmar and Ceylon are willing to get closer to Indonesia. Therefore, we ask that Premier Zhou support the recommendations for a Colombo Conference. When I discussed the matter with State Chairman Liu Shaoqi, he suggested that teaching India a lesson once was not enough. Perhaps India will require a second and a third lesson. Nonetheless, we still hope that China will support the convening of the Colombo Conference of the support this gives to the Asian and African countries. We are very grateful to the Chinese government for the support it has given. India is not happy about the Colombo meeting.

Chairman Mao: Is India unhappy?

Suban Delhi: India looks down on the countries participating in the Colombo Conference and thinks that they are all just small countries.

Premier Zhou Enlai: That is big country chauvinism.

Suban Delhi: But India does realize that if there is no Colombo meeting the question arises, how will it maintain its dignity? The United States cannot help and the United Kingdom cannot help. Only the Asian and African countries can help it maintain the dignity it needs politically. The lesson that China gave to India will help India return to supporting Asia-Africa solidarity. For this, President Sukarno thanked Chairman Mao.

Chairman Mao: This is not necessarily true. India has its own economic and political reasons for what it does. India is economically dependent on the United States. It accepts billions of dollars for it.

Suban Delhi: There are many precedents in history. In Iraq, in Egypt, and Syngman Rhee in Korea all lost power that way.

Chairman Mao: There is also Chiang Kai-shek.

Suban Delhi: The way we see it, India needs a social revolution. The Indian revolution will come sooner in India than in Pakistan.

Chairman Mao: Yet the Indian revolution still lacks leadership.

Suban Delhi: Yes. There is no unity within India and there are many contradictions. But on the other hand, if there were really to be a revolution in India, it would have a great impact on Asia-Africa solidarity and politics.

Chairman Mao: There won't be an Indian revolution in the near future.

Premier Zhou Enlai: The conditions are not ripe.

Suban Delhi: They are maturing.

Premier Zhou Enlai: India may have to go through a period of turmoil in order for leaders to emerge.

Suban Delhi: The Indian people now have been discussing the future of the Indian ruling class. In the past, they had illusions about Nehru. They thought that Nehru was great, and now that fantasy has been shattered.

Chairman Mao: Nehru will imprison anyone who opposes him. A lot of people have been locked up already.

Suban Delhi: Nehru has anyone who criticizes him locked up. This is a sign of weakness. Now China and Indonesia must consider what will happen if India does not fall. My thinking is: there are many advantages, but it can also cause turmoil, create difficulties, and affect other Asian countries.

Chairman Mao: India will face many difficulties unless it reforms. India is not on the path of African-Asian solidarity. It is on a pro-Western path. Being pro-Western mostly

means being pro-American.

Suban Delhi: We face very difficult problems. Fighting India just once is not enough.

Vice Premier Chen Yi: If they come, we will fight them. If they do not come, it wouldn't be good for us to go fight them.

Premier Zhou Enlai: Nehru's mind is pro-Western. Afghan Deputy Prime Minister Naim told me once that Nehru has a British imperial mindset. I told him that he was right about that. Our Foreign Ministry has just received a memorandum from the India saying that they will submit the Sino-Indian border issue to the International Court of Justice. There is also a "representative" of Chiang Kai-shek clique on the International Court of Justice. India does not seek out Asian and African countries, but instead looks to the West.

Suban Delhi: Will India negotiate?

Premier Zhou Enlai: It is hard to say. Possible but difficult. India won't drop its talk of negotiations because the Asian and African countries and the Indian people demand them. But more important is that the U.S. is saying that if you negotiate, you won't get US assistance. After a US newspaper mentioned this, Nehru announced preconditions for negotiations and would not discuss them.

Suban Delhi: Our military attaché in India is now making arrangement to visit Indian generals. He told us that he can't arrange to see them directly. He can only see them with the help of the military attaches from the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. Now United States has many different views about India. Some people think that the Indian army can't defeat China now and won't be able to do so in the future unless the U.S. generals command their forces.

Premier Zhou Enlai: On the Korean battlefield, the U.S. military also had a test of strength with China. Procrastination is the most likely outcome.

Suban Delhi: The current Sino-Indian conflict is unfortunate but it has helped to strengthen Asian-African solidarity. This is because although India had not taken the lead in opposing imperialism and colonialism for a long time, its prestige had remained very high. The situation is different now. President Sukarno hopes that China will seize the opportunity of the decline of India's prestige and become more active. He suggests that Chinese leaders visit African and African countries. President Sukarno hopes that a Chinese leader will visit Indonesia this year as well as other Asian and African countries.

Premier Zhou Enlai: Chairman Mao, State Chairman Liu Shaoqi, Vice Premier Chen Yi or I, whichever one of us takes on that assignment, will do it next year.

Suban Delhi: Now that India's prestige has fallen, Asia has lacked a leader. In the past, the West liked to use India counter China. Now it has doubts about whether India can counter China.

Chairman Mao: That has become more difficult. (Laughter)

Suban Delhi: I don't want to take up any more of Chairman Mao's time. We hope that the friendship between China and Indonesia will continue to grow. We will encounter many difficulties in the future and we will need China's help.



Chairman Mao: We support you. We will support everyone in Asia, Africa and Latin America who oppose imperialism and colonization. The only ones we will not support are the running dogs of the imperialists.

Suban Delhi said to the Chairman as they walked together to the door: The Indonesian people hope to see Chairman Mao in Indonesia someday.