

February 10, 1965

**Record of the Fifth Contact between Premier Zhou
and Vice Premier Chen Yi and Kosygin (1)**

Citation:

"Record of the Fifth Contact between Premier Zhou and Vice Premier Chen Yi and Kosygin (1)", February 10, 1965, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 109-03957-06, 121-135. Translated by Stephen Mercado.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/165487>

Summary:

Zhou and Kosygin discussed the conflicts in Vietnam. They discussed in details of providing logistic and political supports to North Vietnam.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Henry Luce Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Foreign Ministry Top Secret File

Level: Top Secret Document 87

Record of the Fifth Contact between Premier Zhou, Vice Premier Chen Yi and Kosygin (1)

(Premier and Vice Premier Chen have yet to check and approve)

Time: 3: 20 p.m., 10 February 1965

Place: Arriving from Vietnam, on the way from the airport to the Diaoyutai State Guest House

Part 1: Record of Conversation of Premier and Kosygin

Part 2: Summary of Conversation of Vice Premier Chen and Andropov

Part 3: Summary of Other Comrades' Conversations

Part I: Record of Conversation of Premier and Kosygin

(Interpreter: Yan Mingfu)

Summary of Conversation

1. Kosygin said that they discussed in Vietnam the issues of the military situation and the economy and drew up some measures. They will give Vietnam ground-to-air missiles and send Soviet military officers as instructors. The artillery, tanks, and ground-to-air missiles that they provide to Vietnam are all free of charge. The Premier suggested transporting these things a bit faster and that our railway could help transport them. Kosygin said, please prepare it, and once we return will immediately do this.

2. Kosygin said that Vietnam will be allowed to delay all loan repayments and that all interest has been completely cancelled. The interest comes to about fifty million new rubles. We are also giving Vietnam six fishing vessels and sending crewmen to serve as instructors.

3. Kosygin said that we need to make every effort so that war does not break out. The Premier indicated that one must use struggle; only then can one make the other not dare to fight. Kosygin said that this matter requires us together to coordinate with one another. The Premier indicated that we can keep one another informed.

4. Indonesia has also invited him to pay a visit but that he is not going this time, indicating that very soon he needs to hold a Central Committee Plenum.

5. Premier said to Kosygin that the United States, other than itself invading Vietnam, also let South Vietnam's puppet army invade North Vietnam for the first time, giving Vietnam the right to counterattack. Exactly how this right is exercised is Vietnam's affair. However, no matter what, the invading US army and the South Vietnam puppet army will fall into a state of passivity forever.

Kosygin (hereafter, simply Kosygin): We had a fine trip this time.

Premier Zhou (hereafter, simply Zhou): The time was a bit short.

Kosygin: That's right. There was little time, and everything was done in a hurry. It

used to take a very long time to talk. The conversations would be long. One lived far away, and also one did not regularly meet.

Zhou: You also had never gone there before.

Kosygin: I had never gone there before, never gone there before. I also have never come here before.

Zhou: Is this your first time to come to the Orient?

Kosygin: No, I have been to Korea. I have not come here before.

Zhou: Tomorrow when do you go to Korea?

Kosygin: At ten o'clock in the morning, or something like that. If you have nothing scheduled, then it is that time. Of course, a couple hours, an hour late or an hour early, will not affect anything.

Zhou: This is very quick.

Kosygin: We need to inform the Korean comrades, so there it is.

Zhou: Our airport is far from downtown. Is the one for Hanoi also relatively far?

Kosygin: We did not fly directly to Hanoi but landed at some other area's military airport, then took a small airplane.

Zhou: I have been there.

Kosygin: Large aircraft cannot land at Hanoi's airport.

Zhou: I changed planes once on the way. Pyongyang's airport is also relatively far from the city.

Kosygin: It is not so far away. Moscow's airport is fairly distant, and it cannot be right next to the city. The city has many high-rise buildings. Our central airport was originally right next to the city, but now it has been turned into a heliport. Moscow now has three airports.

Zhou: The city airport originally near the stadium is at present a heliport?

Kosygin: That's right. You go there to catch a helicopter, and then take the helicopter to another airport. On one side of the airport a hotel has been built. All the travelers can go to that hotel. So, within the airport there is a hotel of twelve floors where the travelers can stay. It was recently finished. There you can buy tickets for a helicopter flight to any airport. If you do not do that, then you go to Bykovo Airport. Taking a car there will take you more time than flying from Moscow to Leningrad.

The Americans have made the situation a little more complicated there in bombing Vietnam.

Zhou: Just this morning, we learned that they bombed Con Co Island at 10:50.

Kosygin: That is an island in North Vietnam.

Zhou: There is Dong Hoi and Vinh Linh. The island of Con Co is east of Vinh Linh, north of the 17th parallel.

Kosygin: They are wildly arrogant.

Zhou: This time they let South Vietnam's puppet air force fly the planes and go bomb. Since August last year, there have been many sorties, all of which were air forces of the United States going into North Vietnam. This last time, on the 8th, the White House also announced it. Johnson himself agreed and let South Vietnam cross the border. Air Force Chief Nguyen Cao Ky himself piloted an aircraft and participated. Hit in four places by North Vietnamese anti-aircraft fire, he had some flesh wounds but did not die. He flew from Da Nang. This happened on the 8th. Yesterday, on the 9th, he went to Saigon and received a medal. Last night we finally understood the entire situation. So, the day before yesterday, on the 8th, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) statement did not mention it. Yesterday, on the 9th, our morning statement also did not mention it. We finally knew about it last night. Therefore, at our mass meeting this morning, All-China Federation of Trade Unions Chairman Comrade Liu Ningyi spoke, bringing up this issue, which is that the United States, other than itself violating and wrecking the Geneva Accords, also let South Vietnam's puppet army invade North Vietnam for the first time. That then gives the DRV the right to counterattack, not only against the invading US army, but also against the South Vietnamese puppet army, the right to counterattack their invasion. Exactly how they exercise this right is a matter for the DRV. However, even so, the invading US army and the South Vietnamese puppet army are now in a passive position. Indeed, they themselves are in a passive position. Why do they approve the actions of the South Vietnamese puppet army? They transported Hawk ground-to-air rockets to Da Nang on the 8th. Did you know that the US sent ground-to-air missiles there?

Kosygin: We already knew. Moscow sent a cable informing us. A cable came. They are now, of course, adopting this kind of large-scale provocation. But, with such provocation, on the contrary, they have lost a lot.

Zhou: Indeed, they stand exposed before the entire world. There is not a single country that supports them.

Kosygin: Nobody supports them.

Zhou: The British government at first supported them but has since become passive. Some of the Labor Party's members in Parliament were the first to question their own government.

Kosygin: This is Wilson?

Zhou: It is Wilson's government. It is not Wilson himself who stated it, but his foreign secretary.

Kosygin: It is the same thing.

Zhou: A Labor Party member, a member of Parliament, questioned why they must support it. They showed their colors. There was also one in Australia who expressed support.

Kosygin: We must take measures.

Zhou: Yes.

Kosygin: We will teach them a lesson. If possible, we will find a way. We discussed there the military and economic issues and formulated some measures. We are giving them ground-to-air missiles. We are sending our military officers to serve as instructors, have them be able to grasp it. We are sending them as a unit. In the first period, after the instructors and officers arrive, if they do not learn, then, if necessary, we will let our people fight. After they have taught them, they will leave.

Zhou: In South Vietnam, the United States now has already transported the missiles.

Kosygin: Now we can go all out.

Zhou: That's right.

Kosygin: They helped us.

Zhou: When we talked that night, I also said that they could give and that we also could give.

Kosygin: Under the present circumstances, there is nothing that can block us.

Zhou: That's right. We are completely within our right.

Kosygin: We will send them supplies. We will give them artillery, tanks, and ground-to-air missiles. We will give them free of charge.

Zhou: Send them a little faster. Our railway could help transport them.

Kosygin: Please make preparations. We will handle this as soon as I return. We will also send military officers. We have no need to change their uniforms. Our military officers will wear their own uniforms. (Kosygin in speaking at this point looked at the Premier.)

Zhou: Indeed, they now have given us this right.

Kosygin: Of course, we must make every effort to see that war does not break out.

Zhou: However, we must struggle; only then can one make another not dare to fight. If you beg him, if you fear him, he will be fiercer.

Kosygin: We do not at all fear them. We do not at all fear their intentions. The problem is not there. The problem is where it is unnecessary, we need not be rash. Where it is necessary, we then do it this way.

Zhou: We have the opportunity to vituperate him, mobilize the people of the entire world.

Kosygin: Yes, we should conduct joint action. As we discussed the last time, we have to work together in this matter.

Zhou: We can keep one another informed. Your government made a statement, and we ran it today in the newspaper.

Kosygin: Your statement can also be published on our side.

Zhou: Not the entire text. What we ran is your full text. We published both Korea's statement you're your statement. This morning we obtained Albania's statement. At noon today we obtained those of Mongolia and Bulgaria.

Kosygin: I think that all the democratic countries will do it this way.

Zhou: Cuba has a speech.

Kosygin: Has Comrade Guevara left?

Zhou: Guevara already left yesterday.

Kosygin: Does he go right back to Cuba?

Zhou: No. There are two of them, one is Aragones and the other is Cienfuegos. They want to take a southern route to return to Cuba. Guevara also wants to visit East Africa.

Kosygin: Korea has sent us word, inviting us to visit. We have decided to go there for two or three days. Of course, we are pressed for time now. It is because we have come to this area, and we do not frequently come here. Vietnam's living conditions are exceptionally difficult. The peasants work heroically.

Zhou: The standard of living in the countryside will be lower than ours. They are very thrifty and simple.

Kosygin: I was going to see a commune but ran out of time. Living conditions are difficult, of course. Still, the comrades are all doing all they can there.

Zhou: They have the enemy to the south of them there. You understand that a very large number of their cadres came from the south and that their families are still in the south. Since the 1954 Geneva Accords, a large part of the armed force withdrew to the north.

Kosygin: We have also examined what we can do economically. We will let them delay repayment of all the loans, and we have cancelled all the interest.

Zhou: That is good.

Kosygin: It is all free of charge. It must be about 50 million.

Zhou: New rubles?

Kosygin: Yes. We have decided to help them economically. In addition, we will give them arms free of charge. Other than that, we see their difficult food situation, the lack of protein. Therefore, we are preparing to give them six fully-equipped fishing vessels, and we are presenting them at no charge. We are also going to send

crewmembers there. After they are finished giving instruction, they will return. The ships will be left with the Vietnamese. We will also leave them all the fishing gear. This type of fishing vessel can go on the high seas. These are a short distance away. Of course, Soviet fishermen sail this kind of ship to US coastal waters to fish. They are very close. They will thus fish quickly and catch many fish.

Zhou: One can catch many fish in the deep sea.

Kosygin: Any depth will do. We have every kind of fishing gear. We will give it to them.

Zhou: How many tons are they? Are they medium size?

Kosygin: Yes, medium size. Their ability to navigate the seas is strong. They have no limitations. There is no problem sailing them on the high seas.

Zhou: They cannot at present go very far.

Kosygin: Nor do they need to go very far. There is no need. This, on the contrary, is a good point. In the Soviet Union, in a year a ship's production is from 30,000 to 40,000 quintals. Because Vietnam is at a short distance away, it can therefore increase production. We will give them good nets. The fishing gear is all made of synthetic materials.

Zhou: Annual production is from 30,000 to 40,000 quintals?

Kosygin: That is one ship's production volume. That is the situation in the Soviet Union, because we go very far. The Soviet Union goes to very distant areas to fish.

Zhou: If you do not run so far, you can produce a bit more.

Kosygin: They are side by side. Our ships in general go out for three months. We have also adopted some other economic measures. This morning we signed all these accords. To the extent of our capabilities, we will realistically give help.

Zhou: Your communique... [ellipsis in original]

Kosygin: These issues are not written in the communique.

Zhou: Of course.

Kosygin: This is a political communique, so it would not be convenient. I said that there is no need to write these things. This is doing it a bit more modestly. The communique is politically very sharp. You can see it. If you think it necessary, we can announce it.

Zhou: This evening will you broadcast?

Kosygin: We can give you a copy. I have not discussed with them the issue of what time to announce it, because the time is very short. Perhaps Kuznetsov knows. You can take a look before we announce it. You know, it is colder here than it was there.

Zhou: That's right. We think it is still warm here. Pyongyang's climate and here are about the same.

Kosygin: I went to Pyongyang four years ago. It was 1961.

Zhou: It was at the time of that party congress, right?

Kosygin: No, that time Kozlov went.

Zhou: You two did not go together.

Kosygin: I went with a delegation before that congress. Moscow asked me to go. Moscow comrades examined and considered it, saying that if I agreed, then go. Since people asked, I agreed to go for two or three days.

Zhou: Originally, foreign news agencies reported that Brezhnev wanted to go.

Kosygin: That is not right. He had not prepared to go. We had not mentioned the issue. They are simply guessing there.

Zhou: Various forms of speculation.

Kosygin: That's right. What time is it now?

Zhou: It is 4:01. Hanoi time is an hour behind us, so it is now three o'clock there. Pyongyang time is an hour ahead of us here. It is five o'clock now in Pyongyang.

Kosygin: The time here is the same as in Irkutsk. Your time in the summer does not change?

Zhou: It does not change.

Kosygin: We also do not change. The Poles and Czechs change the time. They take the sun as the standard. This way, they say that you can save on lighting, electricity, and fuel. Of course, I do not much believe in it. I say that they cannot economize.

Zhou: It looks more or less the same to me.

Kosygin: A power station peaks in the morning and in the evening. They say that changing the time in the area of electric power cuts the peak. In the past we also did this. Later we grew fed up with it. People were all dissatisfied.

Zhou: There is no end to change.

Kosygin: People were not satisfied. They had simply become used to change. They went through everything. This square is very good, really beautiful (points to Tiananmen Square).

Zhou: This evening, please come here to dine (points to the Great Hall of the People).

Kosygin: Thank you. What time?

Zhou: At seven o'clock.

Kosygin: Have you not given thought to state-to-state relations?

Zhou: Did you not suggest that we discuss it? Let us discuss it.

Kosygin: When can we talk?

Zhou: Here are two options. If you are leaving tomorrow early, then we talk today, from six to seven o'clock. If you delay your departure tomorrow, you will want to rest today, because you have become tired these past few days. We will then talk tomorrow. The time is up to you.

Kosygin: I do not have to leave at 10 o'clock, because Pyongyang has not answered us. We can leave at another time. From here, the trip takes only two hours.

Zhou: We will talk tomorrow morning.

Kosygin: I am not yet ready to go to Korea. Having come here, I want to see a few things and prepare a few things. These past few days have been like a movie, with something scheduled every minute on the program, one thing following another.

Zhou: I understand, because I also have had such an experience.

Kosygin: Now, then, tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. You need how much time?

Zhou: I would say a couple hours.

Kosygin: Well, then, it is fine for us to fly at one o'clock, arrive there at three o'clock, then talk a bit with them. We will inform them that we are flying from here at one o'clock. Would this be convenient?

Zhou: All right.

Kosygin: I will speak with my own comrades about the communique that we just signed over there and tell them to give it to you.

Zhou: Thank you.

Kosygin: I have still not prepared how to speak with the Korean comrades. This is something sudden. I must prepare and consider it.

Zhou: Three persons familiar with Korean affairs from your Foreign Ministry and International Department have already arrived here. Your embassy told us. Therefore, your comrades who went to Vietnam will stay here.

Kosygin: That is because there was previously no such thought. I also received an invitation, one inviting us to go to Indonesia. We talked with them. We cannot go. It is not possible this time. First, if we go to Indonesia, we certainly must consider some grave matters. Second, there is no possibility of this for us now. Soon we will have to hold the Central Committee Plenum. In addition, there are also many things to do in the Council of Ministers. So, we thanked those comrades and told them that we will again make use of their invitation the next time but that we will not visit now.

Zhou: Also, one cannot travel everywhere at once.

Kosygin: Guevara already has been traveling abroad for more than two months.

Zhou: He started out from the United Nations.

Kosygin: The last time you traveled was also for more than two months.

Zhou: It was during December and January, and a bit of February, so two and a half months, a few dozen days. No need to worry, it is a bit easier going abroad than being in China. Our Party Secretary Comrade Deng Xiaoping represents me. He is vice premier. As you understand as a premier, matters at home are much more complicated than those outside.

Kosygin: This time they are coming from morning until night. The reason why is that time is short. What you say is right. There are many matters at home.

Zhou: You return home, and the telephone finds you there.

Kosygin: That's the way it is. One's own labor organization should think it through and let people have a chance to focus on the big issues.

Zhou: That is right.

Kosygin: Otherwise, little things pile up.

Zhou: This is an issue of how one works.

Kosygin: Especially under our conditions, because the entire economy is run by the government. A capitalist has nothing to do with these things.

[...]