

December 2, 1979

Conversation between Jambyn Batmunkh and Pham Van Dong

Citation:

"Conversation between Jambyn Batmunkh and Pham Van Dong", December 2, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mongol Ulsyn Zasgiin Gazryn Arkhiv: fond 1, tov'yog 28, kh/n 19 (1980 on), khuu 21-55. Obtained and translated by Sergey Radchenko with the assistance of Onon Perenlei. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/208466>

Summary:

In December 1979 Mongolian party and government delegation headed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Mongolia Jambyn Batmunkh visited Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos and had held talks with the leaders of these countries on issues pertinent to the Sino-Vietnamese war of 1979, Pol Pot's regime, situation in Indochina and Chinese foreign policy in Asia.

Original Language:

Mongolian

Contents:

Translation - English

RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE MPR PARTY
AND GOVERNMENT DELEGATION HEADED BY COMRADE J[AMBYN]. BATMUNKH AND
THE SRV PARTY AND GOVERNMENT DELEGATION HEADED BY PHAM VAN DONG

Discussions between the party and government delegation of the MPR, headed by the member of the MPRP Central Committee Politburo, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the MPR comrade J. Batmunkh and the SRV party and government delegation headed by the member of the VCP Central Committee Politburo, Premier of the SRV government comrade Pham Van Dong took place on 1-2 December 1979 in the Presidential Palace in Hanoi.

[...]

After exchange of protocol nature between the heads of the delegations comrades J. Batmunkh and Pham Van Dong:

Pham Van Dong: [...] Now I would like to talk briefly about the situation in our country. [...] On our road of socialist construction we are also now faced with one enemy. This is Chinese reaction. Because the SRV poses an insurmountable obstacle to Beijing's great power arrogant hegemonic policies, [they] are taking all kinds of measures to threaten us by force, to make us surrender.

The Chinese rulers, using the evil group of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary who have become their arms and legs, instigated a war on our Western border and were defeated. Then they began an adventurist aggression with a sizable military force against our state. In that war they were defeated with shame.

The Chinese war-mongers are madly preparing another aggression and have accumulated a sizeable amount of forces and hardware along our northern border. This testifies to the Beijing's rulers' ill intention of committing an aggression.

I will talk briefly as to how we appraise the situation.

We need to further raise our awareness. We must be armed with enthusiasm and ready to give a rebuff to the Chinese aggression whenever it comes. They will probably conduct new and new activities against us. Beijing has said time and again that they will teach us a "second lesson." We must be ready to deal a blow to their provocations in any part of our country. We are paying a special attention to the places where aggressors can invade. It is possible to invade us in our northern border region, then along the sea to Haiphong, along the Sino-Vietnamese border, and along the border with Laos. We pay attention to these regions and strengthen our defense. Besides, we pay attention to other places.

We have favorable conditions for preparation this time. Firstly, it is an important factor that we defeated them. Secondly, we obtained experience of dealing a blow to the aggressors. If they conduct any mad activities against our country this time, they will meet with even greater defeat. We are preparing our defense according to such views. In terms of the balance of power we have an advantage. Our state is stronger than ever. [...]

The Chinese rulers will probably again engage in adventurist activities against our state. But they will be defeated again.

Although the Vietnamese-Chinese discussions are underway, we think that they will not achieve any result.

Because of the Chinese interference in Kampuchea's internal affairs, the situation in Kampuchea is complicated and troublesome.

The Chinese instigated provocations on our Western border using Kampuchea's old regime and were defeated. They were shamefully defeated in Kampuchea. They did not think that they would be stricken that fast.

Now they are inventing the "Kampuchean problem", and use it to conduct hostile activities against our state. They tried to conduct activities against Vietnam from our southern and western sides. We completely frustrated these efforts. We defeated Pol Pot's regime and are destroying its remnants. We triumphed over the Chinese aggressive hegemonic policy in Kampuchea. They are doing everything to save the enemy of Kampuchea.

Beijing conducts activities against our country and Kampuchea by military, political and diplomatic means. A dangerous situation is developing in the border region of Kampuchea and Thailand. China, America and Japan are trying to exert pressure here jointly. By the means of providing help to the remaining Pol Pot muggers who had gone into Thailand, they try to restore the bloody regime in Kampuchea. We are paying a lot of attention to this.

Their diplomatic activities are evident from the resolution issued by the recent session of the UN General Assembly. They are trying to involve countries of Southeast Asia in activities against Kampuchea.

The enemy of Vietnam and Kampuchea has not given up weapons, it has not surrendered. The enemy of the Kampuchean people has not been completely destroyed. But the change that had happened in Kampuchea is a natural process. The situation cannot be changed now by any means. Kampuchea will develop further. Vietnam and Kampuchea will achieve successes.

The conditions in Laos are also special. It is clear that this is the result of China's aggressive hegemonic policy. [...]

Today Laos, like Vietnam and Kampuchea is an object of the Chinese hegemonic policy. [...]

In such conditions Vietnam co-operates with the Laotian people and further strengthens unity with them. The unity of our people is a firm foundation against the ill intentions of the Chinese hegemonists. That is why the Chinese hate the Vietnamese. But Vietnam is an insurmountable obstacle in the way of the Chinese rulers. [...]

Speaking about other questions connected to the conditions in the Southeast Asian countries, Thailand is getting ever closer to imperialism and the Chinese hegemonism. Thailand's government serves Beijing. When the Chinese rulers conduct activities against our state and Kampuchea, they use Thailand's territory. They supply weapons and help to the Beijing-[supported] Laotian and Kampuchean reactionary groups that pass through Thailand. This way Thailand's government creates conditions for the restoration of Pol Pot's regime and for the interference in Kampuchea's internal affairs by the imperialists and Beijing.

Thailand rulers are also colluding with the USA and Japan. Other Southeast Asian countries are falling under their influence. Beijing and the imperialist powers use all measures, all tricks to demand the pull-out of our forces from Kampuchea. It is clear

that if the Vietnamese soldiers are pulled out from Kampuchea, they [the Chinese and imperialists] will benefit. They know that the government of Heng Samrin today cannot defend the country with its own forces. That's why we oppose the intentions of the reactionary forces. Under such circumstances it is absolutely necessary to have the Vietnamese forces stationed in Kampuchea. [...]

The situation in other Southeast Asian countries is somewhat different from Thailand's. But they also support Thailand in some respects. They pursue a hypocritical policy. [...]

Our relations with the DPRK are not good. In the recent years the DPRK has been openly siding with China. On the one hand, this is an anti-Soviet [position]. Also they oppose Vietnam in some respects. Also we cannot count Romania among countries with which we have friendly relations. The Romanian leadership has fallen under Beijing's influence, shares opinion with them [the Chinese] on many questions of the international situation and stands on the anti-Soviet and anti-SRV position.

We generally have good relations with the newly developing countries. The Non-Aligned Movement has an even more important role. [...]

J. Batmunkh [...] I would like to ask two questions for clarification.

Chinese rulers talked about "giving a second lesson" and have accumulated a considerable force on the Sino-Vietnamese border. I would like you to clarify what the Chinese are actually doing on the ground in this respect.

And also could you clarify Thailand's policy, especially with regard to the Vietnamese-Thai relations?

Pham Van Dong: Deng Xiaoping let it be known time to time that he will "teach a second lesson" to our state. We think that this is empty bravado, and it is against international law. This shows again that the Chinese leaders are not our friends, but sworn enemies. In reality, it was not them who gave us a "lesson", but it was we who gave them a "lesson." However, we must always pay attention to what they have decided to do, be prepared and conscious. If the Chinese war-mongers again attack us, they will themselves learn the second lesson. This is internal information, and I am only letting you know, comrades!

Thailand is generally a neutral state.

Talking about the Vietnamese-Thai relations, Thailand pays attention to maintaining friendly relations with our state. We also take the policy of normal bilateral relations with it. Nevertheless, Thailand obviously supports the Chinese policy, and has become their arm and leg.

Thailand's territory is used by Beijing's and other countries' reactionary forces for activities against Kampuchea and against us. It supports the restoration of the bloody Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea. Judging from this, Thailand's position is clear. We reminded them about it. [...]

In economic terms, we have considerable difficulties. On top of not being able to overcome the harmful consequences of many years of war, we are suffering from bad weather. The state's economy is backward, material-technical base is weak. [...] The policy of the Chinese rulers worsens these difficulties. [...]

J. Batmunkh: There are these difficulties. Because the transit road through China is closed we could not give you cattle as aid. If your side considers this appropriate, we could supply some in form of meat products. The cows are ready.

Pham Van Dong: [...] As for cows, let them remain there for now.

Xuan Thuy: Let me add a few things about the Vietnamese-Romanian relations.

The Romanian Communist party proposed to our party to exchange opinions regarding existing differences. We accepted this proposal and when we participated in the recent RCP Congress, met 3 times at the level of Central Committee secretary. Our party delegation was received by N[icolae]. Ceausescu.

At these talks the Romanian side said it did not approve of sending Vietnamese forces to Kampuchea and demanded from us to pull out forces from Kampuchea. The Romanian leadership is trying to organize the anti-PRK [People's Republic of Kampuchea] [Prince Norodom] Sihanouk's group.

Because the regime of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary menaced our state, we counter-attacked. We explained to the Romanian side that we utterly destroyed the evil that aimed at exterminating the people of Kampuchea.

We said that the people of Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos have an age-old tradition in their friendly relations to provide fraternal help to each other.

We said that there is no so called Kampuchean question now, this is empty talk. This is a question that has truly been solved irreversibly. At the same time as the Romanian side blamed our state for aggression against Kampuchea, they did not even mention the Chinese aggression against Vietnam.

If the Romanian communist party stands on principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism, it must oppose the Chinese great power aggressive hegemonic policy and support the struggle of the Kampuchean people. However, we are surprised that this is not the case.

D. Gombojav: How is the current situation on the Vietnamese-Chinese border?

Pham Van Dong: The situation in the region of the Vietnamese-Chinese border is difficult. The Chinese are building military sites along the border. They frequently infringe the border and send in spies.

The Chinese are madly preparing for an aggression against us. They concentrate a lot of forces near the border and by means of this show of greatness try to intimidate our people. Chinese military planes conduct exercises along our border just as submarines conduct war preparations near Hainan Island. We are ready to give them a rebuff.

J. Batmunkh: [...] Mao Zedong and his group from early on did not approve of Mongolia's independence, had a covetous policy of conquering Mongolia.

- In 1936, when Mao Zedong was interviewed by the American journalist Edgar Snow, he said that "when the Chinese revolution wins, Mongolia will automatically join the Chinese union." Your "white book" mentioned that at the same time Mao told then same person about aggressive policy with regard to Vietnam.

- In the beginning of 1949 the Chinese [People's] Liberation Army was moving forward from Manchuria. The Soviet Union provided much aid to prepare this advance. In February of that year the first deputy Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers comrade A[nastas]. I[vanovich]. Mikoyan went to China to discuss questions of aid. But Mao, when talking about the liberation of his own country, raised the question of annexing Mongolia to China. [...]

Mao Zedong did not discuss this question with us. This is how he tried to decide the fate of Mongolians in our absence.

- In 1954 a delegation of the Soviet Union headed by comrade [Nikita] Khrushchev visited the PRC on the occasion of its 5th anniversary. At the time, the Chinese leaders again raised the question of annexing Mongolia. Khrushchev gave the same reply as Stalin did: "the fate of the Mongolian people cannot be decided in Moscow or Beijing, but only in Ulaanbaatar."

- In 1956 c[omrade] Mikoyan went to Beijing to explain the decisions of the 20th Congress.

Mao said: "You did two good things. Firstly, you criticized Stalin's cult of personality. This is a good thing. Secondly, you decided to overcome the harmful consequences of the cult of personality. This is also a good thing.

Stalin resisted joining Mongolia to China. Let us overcome this harmful consequence together." This is how deceitful they were.

Comrade Mikoyan replied: "We criticize the erroneous part of Stalin's activities. We do not criticize the correct part, there is nothing to criticize. In terms of Mongolia, Stalin pursued a correct policy."

In a Chinese school textbook printed in 1954 there was a map showing Mongolia's territory as a part of China. This map is still published.

Although at the time we proposed to define the border line between the two states, China did not give a reply.

In 1958 we gave the Chinese side a map with a clearly marked border line. Again no answer.

In 1962 we again raised the border question. This time the Chinese side could not help but agree. The reasons for agreement became clear. At the time China was carrying out an aggression against India, the world public raised much noise blaming China.

To decrease this noise, it was beneficial for them to agree to the question of determining the border with Mongolia. [...]

But this did not mean that they agreed to Mongolia's independence. It was only a measure to mask the invasion of India.

The above is confirmed by the fact that in 1964 one Politburo member of the CCP Central Committee said that "the conclusion of the border treaty between the PRC and the MPR is like scrapping meat from a living person."

In December 1962 [...] comrade Yu. Tsendenbal went to China to sign the border treaty. [...]

When he told [Zhou Enlai] that “we absolutely cannot agree to the publication of materials against the Soviet Union, other fraternal countries and the communist movement. The policy of your party and government is wrong”, Zhou Enlai jumped up, pounded the table, and became nervous. [...]

On 10 July 1964 Mao Zedong received a Japanese socialist party delegation and told them: “Mongolia must become a part of China. Only the Soviet leaders are putting obstacles to this.”

We have a 4700 km long border with China. When relations were good we cut down the number of forces. After relations worsened China amassed great force on the border, strengthened its forces. Therefore from 1962 we could not help but again organize border troops. [...]

Their propaganda campaign against our state has two main goals. Firstly, to slander the Soviet-Mongolian friendship, and, secondly, to do away with our independence.

It is clear that when recently Hua Guofeng visited some Western European countries, he had the aim of trying establishing a military alliance against the Soviet Union and the socialist comradeship and of obtaining military hardware.

It is clear that the evil actions of the Chinese leaders are not only dangerous for bordering states, but for the entire world. [...]