

**October 7, 1954**

**Memorandum of Conversation from the Meeting  
between Premier Zhou Enlai and the Pakistan  
Women's Delegation (Excerpts)**

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**Summary:**

A conversation between Zhou Enlai and a Pakistani women's delegation on Sino-Indian-Pakistani trilateral relations, the Kashmir issue, and China's qualms about Pakistani membership in the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO).

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Chinese

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Premier Zhou [Enlai]... said, historically China and Pakistan have had contacts, and now we have developed a new relationship. We hope that this new relationship grows stronger by the day. Premier Zhou said that one point has to be made clear, that China is still a backward country in terms of economy and culture.<sup>[1]</sup> Although the New China has made many achievements, these achievements are insufficient; the phenomenon of backwardness still exists. So, when all [you] friends make visits, whether you are looking at factories, villages, schools or nurseries, you should at the same time visit progressive, backward and in-between locations. Only in this way can you see the whole picture of China's development. Premier Zhou also said, we Asian countries have been oppressed by Western countries; for the past century, Western countries have not let us develop. But now that Asian countries have all achieved their independence, we need to change our countries from backward ones into advanced ones. This is our common predicament, so between Asian countries there can be mutual understanding, mutual sympathy, mutual concern and mutual support.

Ms. [Begum] Nawaz said she had traveled all over Europe and the United States and joined in on "roundtable meetings" very early. At a 1931 roundtable meeting, she discovered that only 24 percent of India's wealth remained on that continent; the rest had all been pumped out and taken away. She said she knew that China, just like the Indian continent, had suffered major exploitation by Western countries, and thus she could understand China's post-independence difficulties. However, she said, China's organization capabilities are amazing. Then she changed the topic of conversation. She said that if we are to strive for the consolidation of Asia, and for peace in Asia and the world, we must seek out the danger point in Asia, and that is Kashmir. She said that if the Kashmir issue is not resolved, Asia cannot have peace. She said she had participated in politics for a long period, and in the past had worked together with [Mahatma] Gandhi and [Jawaharlal] Nehru. She said if Asian leaders sat down and conferred, the Kashmir issue could be peacefully resolved. She said Pakistan needs peace, and has no aggressive or expansionist intentions. She also said Nehru had once agreed to designate, together, a chief executive for Kashmir, but to this day it has not been done, and at the same time people like [former Indian Ambassador to China K.M.] Pannikar say that Pakistan, Ceylon, etc., are all part of India. She said that India criticizes Pakistan for accepting military aid from the United States, but India is, in the same way, accepting financial aid from the United States. If Pakistan also accepted financial aid but used this money to buy military arms, wasn't the result the same? She also said, India criticizes Pakistan for joining the Southeast Asian Treaty [Organization] [SEATO], but under the present circumstances, Pakistan has to seek a source of support. She said she knows Nehru is like Chairman Mao [Zedong] and Premier Zhou; all of them are great politicians-of course, Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou are even greater. She said Pakistan's only requirement on the Kashmir issue is to give the local people the right to self-determination. Pakistan is in favor of the Indian and Pakistani armies both withdrawing from Kashmir and allowing the local people to decide by vote. She also said if the Kashmir issue was resolved, she could guarantee that the canals and wealth issues could all be resolved. Lastly, she said that in this way China, Pakistan, and India could be united.

Premier Zhou said that we are fully in favor of Chinese, Pakistani, and Indian unity, especially Pakistan uniting with India and peacefully solving the Kashmir issue. This principle is right, and supported by the people. The government and people of China say the same thing to our Pakistani and Indian friends, to the Pakistani and Indian ambassadors, and to Premier Nehru: We hope that Pakistan and India unite in friendship and solve the Kashmir issue peacefully, without outside interference. The Chinese people know very well that nothing good comes of foreign interference. It is for this reason we cannot understand why Pakistan joined the Southeast Asian military bloc organized by Western nations. I once made this point directly to Ambassador [N.M.] Raza. The United States' goal in starting up the "Southeast Asia Defense Treaty" is to antagonize so-called communist nations, and mainly to antagonize China. The two countries of Pakistan and China are friendly, but Pakistan joined a bloc that is antagonistic to China. This is very upsetting to us. We have been friendly toward the government and people of Pakistan, and are still friendly now, so

we cannot understand why Pakistan joined an organization antagonistic to China.

Ms. Nawaz said she wanted to offer some background information to explain Pakistan's actions today. She said if India's politicians had had foresight, and allowed one-quarter to one-fifth of the people the right to self-determination, there wouldn't have been an Indo-Pakistani partition in the first place. Now that period of history is being re-enacted. Nehru has sufficient power; if he has foresight and is statesmanlike, he should be willing to sit down and talk until the issue is resolved. It was India, not Pakistan, which first brought the Kashmir issue to the United Nations and called for outside interference. At the United Nations, India promised a ceasefire, and also promised to grant the local people the right to self-determination, but after a few months it went back on its word. Now one simply cannot speak of a problem of outside interference, because the Kashmir issue has already become a dispute between two independent countries; if no one else mediates, it could lead to world war. As for SEATO, Pakistan persevered in refusing to sign unless the word "communist" was removed from the treaty, and as a result this word was removed. Now Pakistan has a daily-growing fear, because it sees India allying with China, while Pakistan grows even weaker; thus, it must seek a source of support. It is India that gave Pakistan no choice but to accept US military aid. India wants to isolate Pakistan in Asia. Therefore, as a last resort, Pakistan could only make friends with the enemy. Pakistan does not need military aid at all; Pakistan has ample resources-but now seventy-five to eighty percent of the budget is used for national defense, so we do not have funding to build the country. Lastly, she said that [when] China invited them on this visit, the Pakistani government did not hinder them in the least; they would not have come to China unless it was to advance the two countries' friendship, and their purpose in coming was to make India incapable of isolating Pakistan in Asia.

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Premier Zhou said that our invitation to the Pakistani Women's Delegation is an expression of friendship; we will also invite other delegations from Pakistan. This all expresses our friendliness toward Pakistan. There are no doubts on either side regarding this, and no barriers to our hopes of daily strengthening this relationship. This is what we said at the beginning [of our talk]. But there is an issue: if Pakistan wishes for China to understand Pakistan's feelings on the Kashmir issue, then why does Pakistan not understand China's feelings in opposing SEATO? China maintains a cool-headed and neutral stance on the Kashmir issue: We are willing to research this matter; we are not willing to enter into this matter. We are not willing to casually present an opinion before fully understanding the situation. Pakistan and India are both China's neighbor nations, and we respect them equally; we hope that these two neighbor nations of ours can resolve their issues themselves, and furthermore greatly wish they can come together. In regard to the Kashmir issue, we are staying cool-headed; we are absolutely unwilling to do anything to hurt the feelings of Pakistan or India.

Premier Zhou went on to say that the other issue is SEATO; this issue is rather complicated. When Pakistan was going to sign the military aid treaty with the United States, we once called the Pakistani government's attention to the United States' scheme. The United States takes China as its main hostile target in the East; thus any military agreement the U.S. signs with any Asian country is to surround China, to set up a springboard for aggression against China. But Pakistan still signed the agreement. Although we were opposed, we did not stress it at all; we didn't even make our protest to the Pakistani government public. This is because we want to preserve friendly relations among the people. But in terms of SEATO, Pakistan gave China an even greater difficulty. We have equal respect for all five nations of the Colombo Conference [Burma, Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan]; they made contributions toward stopping the war in Indochina. The end of the war in Indochina created the possibility of establishing a peaceful region in Southeast Asia. But the U.S. arranged another Southeast Asian Treaty to antagonize our country. Pakistan was the only one of the five Colombo Conference countries to participate. I acknowledge what Ms. Nawaz just said, Pakistan did not agree to the word "communist" in the treaty, but signatories acknowledge U.S. opposition to so-called "communist aggression." SEATO

cannot be explained as, when Pakistan is persecuted by India, Pakistan will receive American aid. On the contrary, when the U.S. fully-under any pretext-launches aggression against China, Pakistan must follow along with the U.S.; at the very least, it will have to consult with it. Thus we cannot keep from thinking this matter is serious. At Pakistan's National Day banquet, I made a speech that showed our friendly attitude. But SEATO has created new problems between our two countries.

Ms. Nawaz said she deeply appreciated Premier Zhou candidly presenting [his] opinions this way. She said Kashmir is not the only unresolved issue. After the Pakistani premier [Muhammad Ali Bogra] participated in the Colombo Conference and made contributions, [he] returned to the country to find that India intended to cause the starvation of all the people in the Punjab. Problems like this frequently emerge like thorns, so Pakistan is frequently in a state of fear. She said ninety-five percent of the Pakistani people, even one hundred percent, believe that China's United Nations rights and seat should be restored. She said the Pakistani government also believes this. Pakistan signed the Southeast Asian Treaty because it saw that India's friendship with China was growing, and the populations of India and China added together equal three-quarters of Asia's population; Burma and Indonesia were also getting closer to India. Because of this, Pakistan had misgivings. In addition, people like Pannikar were talking at length about Pan-Asianism. She said she understands China's feelings about SEATO; furthermore, [she] greatly appreciates China's forbearance, because China remained friendly to Pakistan after Pakistan signed the Southeast Asian Treaty, and also kindly entertained [the Women's Delegation]. She said the Pakistani government and people will not allow Pakistan to join with any country in aggression against China. [This] includes any treaty with such content; it would absolutely not be approved. Pakistan signed the Southeast Asian Treaty only for self-protection and to have others to ensure it.

Premier Zhou said that Pakistan desires peaceful coexistence, and that the policies of the Chinese government are the same. Also, the two countries' people all cherish peace and ask for friendship. This gives us a basis for mutual cooperation, and also ensures our mutual connections will be closer and our mutual relationship will develop further. There is no doubt about this. Secondly, Pakistan has always supported restoring China's lawful status and rights in the United Nations, and we offer our appreciation for that. As to the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan, in the past we have been immersed in domestic construction and thus do not understand it very well. [As we] have recently begun to participate in international peace activities, [we] have had a bit of dealings with this issue. Ambassador Raza has talked with me at length many times, Premier Nehru has also spoken with me about this issue, and today there is also this conversation. As a neighbor country to Pakistan and India, China cannot ignore this issue. The reason we pay attention to this issue is because we wish to promote the two countries of Pakistan and India sitting down and resolving the issue peacefully. I especially want to mention that just now I paid very close attention to the background information and views Ms. Nawaz gave. We are willing to continue paying attention to this issue in the days to come. Nehru will visit China at the middle of this month; when I see him, I will definitely tell him of our Pakistani friends' views.

Premier Zhou continued, bringing up what Ms. Nawaz had said of the growing closeness between China, India, Burma and Indonesia creating fear in Pakistan. Premier Zhou said [he] needed to explain a bit on this point. In one respect, the fear came out of the Indo-Pakistani relationship; China has never gotten involved in India and Pakistan's dispute over the Kashmir issue. If China's friendliness to India would be connected to the Indo-Pakistani struggle, then we wouldn't dare to speak about the Kashmir issue-we wouldn't even dare to listen. If it were that way, China would feel [itself] in great difficulty.

Lastly, Premier Zhou said, we think this issue is not a difficult one, and that there is a way to resolve it. We believe that Pakistan's government and people also support the

Five Principles in the Chinese and Indian premiers' joint statement. If [they] do support it, our two countries can also forge a treaty or release a statement. We believe Ambassador Raza would also be willing to move forward in this respect.

Ms. Nawaz said that firstly, Pakistan does support the coexistence of people with different views; the principle of coexistence is exactly that for which Pakistan is striving. Secondly, if Premier Zhou finds the time to research the Kashmir issue, Premier Zhou will stand together with bullied and humiliated Pakistan, because justice is on the side of Pakistan. Thirdly, she deeply appreciates Premier Zhou boldly endeavoring to make Pakistan and India sit down and peacefully resolve the issue, and she believes her mission in coming to China has been fulfilled. She said Premier Zhou misunderstood what she had just said about the strengthening of Sino-Indian friendship. She said she is not at all opposed to strengthening friendships between Asian countries; the problem is that India is on the one hand strengthening friendship with China, and on the other hand intending to cause the starvation of all the people in the Punjab. It has also delayed designating a Kashmir chief executive, and is not following the phases of the agreement to resolve the Kashmir issue. This inevitably led to suspicions on Pakistan's part.

Ambassador Raza broke in and said that coming together in accordance with the Five Principles is something that any peace-seeking person welcomes. Nehru has also brought [it] up with Pakistan; Nehru suggested to Pakistan that [they] sign a treaty of mutual non-aggression. If Pakistan doesn't agree, Nehru can announce publicly that India wants peace and Pakistan wants war. But now the Indian army is still occupying Kashmir, and besides, the canal and wealth issues are both still unresolved. But India wants Pakistan to sign a treaty of mutual non-aggression with it; [it] also says that negotiations can continue on unresolved issues, but [illegible] [we] have talked about these unresolved issues for seven years already; there should be a time limit. The people of the world say that Pakistan and India should obtain forgiveness and understanding. These good intentions might destroy Pakistan. If Pakistan has any faults, [we] hope they can be brought up directly. Pakistan does hope to sign a treaty of mutual non-aggression; what stance would Premier Zhou take under these kinds of circumstances? If a country caused the Korean War to continue, and also stirred up trouble in Indochina, but this country suggested signing a treaty of mutual non-aggression with China, what stance would Premier Zhou take?

Ms. Nawaz added, if the US on one hand occupied Taiwan and on the other hand suggested signing a treaty of mutual non-aggression with China, would China agree?

Premier Zhou explained in reply that there are two issues here that should not be tangled together. One is the issue of Sino-Pakistani relations, and the other is the issue of Indo-Pakistani relations. If the two problems are mixed up together, they will be very difficult to solve. In regard to the India and Pakistan dispute, China, as a friend and neighbor to the two countries, is willing to urge the two countries toward peaceful resolution; outside of this, [it] cannot take any other action. [If] the dispute between Pakistan and India has not been resolved, signing a treaty of mutual non-aggression is of course out of the question. But between China and India, and between China and Pakistan, there is no Kashmir issue. China and India released a statement based on the Five Principles; China can also release a statement with Pakistan based on the Five Principles or even more principles. Indo-Pakistani relations should not hamper the relationship between China and India or the relationship between China and Pakistan. Ms. Nawaz said she does not oppose friendship between Asian countries, but at the same time also mentioned that the strengthening of Sino-Indian friendship causes Pakistan fear. The Premier said that we could try to eliminate this fear: whatever we do with India, we are also willing to do likewise with Pakistan. Thus, Pakistan's fear is unnecessary. But on the other hand, we also want to make one point clear. If Pakistan believes that [by] coming together as allies with the U.S., it has a source of support in Asia, this is dangerous. If there are people who want to isolate Pakistan in Asia, we are opposed; we think that Asian countries should have

close interactions and mutual consolidation. If Pakistan feels isolated and seeks to ally with the U.S., then as Pakistan's friend we wish to point out this is dangerous. On this point, I once said to Ambassador Raza that asking for American aid is equivalent to starting a fire that burns one's own body. Just now Ms. Nawaz said that seventy-five to eighty percent of Pakistan's budget is used on military affairs. But American aid is all for spending, not for production. The U.S. will not only drag Pakistan into the fire and make it impossible for Pakistan to escape; it will also use Pakistan to ignite the fires of war. The Southeast Asian Treaty's main hostile target is China; although it is claimed to be defensive, in its main rider it recognizes that the US is opposed to so-called "communist aggression." After the US, under any pretext, launches aggression, Pakistan-despite being unwilling to participate-will have no choice but to participate, and Pakistan will thus be in an awkward position. Just now Ambassador Raza said, if Pakistan has any faults, they should be directly pointed out. I now say directly, China feels dissatisfied about Pakistan's participation in SEATO.

[\[i\]](#) Translator's Note: "Culture" here implies level of education as well as overall social development.