

November 18, 1963

Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi, and Head of Pakistan's Delegation Participating in the PRC's National Day Celebration, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani

Citation:

"Record of Conversation between Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi, and Head of Pakistan's Delegation Participating in the PRC's National Day Celebration, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani", November 18, 1963, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 105-01188-03, 24-35. Obtained and translated by Christopher Tang.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/121573>

Summary:

Conversation between Zhou Enlai and Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, representing Pakistan. The two discuss, at length, their criticisms of United States imperialism, pointing to, among other things, Algeria and French Indochina as examples of imperialism's impending fall. Zhou then explains to Bhashani the importance of holding an Afro Asian Conference before the upcoming Non-Aligned Conference, which Zhou views as an attempt by Nehru and Tito to "destroy the Afro-Asian Conference." Conversation concludes by discussing the Kashmir conflict.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Zhou Enlai: We feel very happy that you are able to stay in China for more than 40 days. Your illness caused you to stay here, which, at first, must have had you concerned!

Bhashani: Even though the current climate is not completely suitable for my health, it is not a major concern. Most important is that my whole life I have been engaged in the struggle against imperialism, and it thus makes me very happy to see that your country has eliminated not only the political influence of imperialism, but also its economic influence.

Zhou: Thank you for your praise. What we have done is still very little, we must still continue to work hard.

Bhashani: I agree that there remains a large amount of work to be done, but because you have already eliminated imperialism's political and economic oppression, you have achieved enormous accomplishments in many areas. In addition, I am particularly pleased with changes in your moral standards. In the past, all previous Pakistani governments allowed imperialism to oppress our people politically and economically. I am pleased that Pakistan's current government has already eliminated much of imperialism's influence on politics and the economy. Particularly fortunate is that they have developed friendly relations with China.

Zhou: We have both dealt with defending our national independence, opposing imperialist interference in our domestic affairs, and combating imperialist interference in Asian affairs and tasks. This has caused our bilateral relations, over the past several years, to achieve great development, and establish an intimate connection. This is something that makes us very happy.

Bhashani: You perhaps know, a few of my colleagues and I carried out struggle against imperialism for over 50 years. India and Pakistan were split in 1947; at that time, the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress reached a compromise. The foundation of the compromise was that regions where the Muslim population was a majority would return to Pakistan, and areas where the Hindu population was a majority would return to India. Afterward, why was American imperialism—the world's worst kind of imperialism—able to force Pakistan to reach an agreement with it? It is only because of the Kashmir issue. Because of this issue, the US was also able to make Pakistan participate in SEATO and CENTO. Because of the Kashmir dispute, the US is able to impress influence upon Pakistan and India and oppress their people.

□At present, imperialism wants to completely destroy Pakistan by standing on India's side and helping it engineer an attack on Pakistan. The real problem in Kashmir is that the Kashmiri people should have the right to self-determination. Now we appeal to the Chinese people in the hopes they will provide moral support. I firmly believe that in order to eliminate imperialist oppression, the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America must unite together. I do not want war to break out between India and Pakistan, or between India and China. I believe disputes between Afro-Asian countries should all be resolved through negotiation, and should not permit imperialist exploitation. I am willing to donate my remaining life for the sake of world peace, Afro-Asian unity and, in the end, eliminating imperialism.

Most regrettable is that Nehru was once my very intimate colleague; he too observed 17 years in prison. Now, however, he unites with the world's most fiendish imperialism to destroy Afro-Asian unity. I sincerely believe that the most important barrier thwarting Asian, African and Latin American progress is imperialist oppression; therefore, if we do not eliminate imperialism, it is impossible for us to progress and prosper.

□ I am old, perhaps I will not have another chance to come to China; I hope you and your country's government can fully work together with Ayub Khan's government and his representative General Raza. I believe General Raza is always willing to work hard for Afro-Asian unity and world peace. If you have things to tell the Pakistani people, you can relay them through General Raza.

□ Regarding the struggle against imperialism, your Chairman, Party, and people have done much analysis. Your ultimate victory in the struggle against imperialism will amply prove the correctness of your analysis. I have already occupied much of your time, but before we conclude, I would like to understand your opinions on how Asia, Africa, and Latin America can develop their anti-imperialist struggle and eliminate imperialist, political, and economic influence.

Zhou: I am so happy to hear your very impassioned words. We can see that in our way of looking at things, we have a large number of similar perspectives. First, both of our countries have similar tasks of struggle with other Afro-Asian countries; these are: safeguarding national independence, opposing imperialism and combating neo-colonialism. The worst of all is US imperialism. On this point, I am very happy you have a similar outlook. If we say that old-style colonialism used armed occupation, interference, partitioning of land, divide and rule, and other tactics to control Afro-Asian countries, the tactics of US imperialism far exceed those of the old-style colonialists. The most important tactic is the US's use of "double-dealing." Just now you said that, on the one hand, the US wanted Pakistan to enter SEATO and CENTO and told Pakistan that, upon doing so, the US would support Kashmir's right to self-determination in the United Nations; and yet, the US now, in fact, supports India, has increased its military aid to India, and stirs up trouble between Pakistan and India, and between India and China. These are precisely tactics of "double-dealing." They treat China this way as well; on one hand, using armed force to occupy Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait, and supporting Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek]-its running dog expelled by the Chinese people; on the other hand, their negotiations with us in Warsaw are a scheme to have us compromise and accept their aggression. It is the same in Asia and Africa: the US uses the Peace Corps to feign peace, and then establishes military bases everywhere, interferes in the internal affairs of Afro-Asian countries, incites armed conflict between Afro-Asian countries; all of this has the aim of interfering, to the extent that it now exploits the partition of Bengal between Pakistan and India to incite Bengal to separate from both countries and establish its independence. This is a plot to provoke a new conflict between India and Pakistan.

□ The US also uses these dual tactics toward its "tools" in Asia. When it feels its "tools" are not acting appropriately, it substitutes tactics; like with South Korea's Syngman Rhee, the recently killed Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother in South Vietnam, and, the third to have his turn, will be Taiwan's Jiang Jieshi.

□ So, from over a decade of lessons we can see that US imperialism is the worst and most untrustworthy. Certainly there are other types of imperialism; according to what you say, there is Indian imperialism; in other regions there is also French imperialism; there are indeed many cunning forms.

Bhashani: But US imperialism is the worst, as they also corrupt the people's morality.

Zhou: I completely agree with your viewpoint, US imperialism is the worst. There is another reason, Britain and France are already in decline, their colonial systems are being dismantled. In the regions they controlled, national movements are developing like wildfire; in the near future, they will all be able to obtain independence. Regarding the French, the best proof lies with Indochina and Algeria. As for the British, numerous Afro-Asian countries, including Pakistan, have all achieved independence. African countries are the same.

□US imperialism is the worst because when it seizes upon an area, it will stubbornly refuse to release; only if the local people rise up in resolute struggle can they be driven out. Even if they are driven out, they will try to return and interfere just as before. Only after they are again defeated will they be compelled to give up; but, as before, they will not necessarily withdraw completely; if they are able to control one piece of land, they will control it-they have done just this in China. After they were compelled to leave Mainland China, they simply incited the Korean War and exploited the Korean War to occupy China's Taiwan-today, as before, they forcibly occupy Taiwan.

Bhashani: One of imperialism's tactics is engaging in hypocritical propaganda. In Pakistan, for example, it distributes thousands of leaflets, which say "China's communes violate the wishes of the peasants and are imposed by force on the people," "Thousands upon thousands of people don't have any food to eat, and they are thus fleeing to Hong Kong," etc., etc. They are completely fabricated.

Zhou: Therefore, you cannot trust US imperialism, and it is imperative to devise a way to cast off its control. When the US controls a country, it destroys that country's independence and its economy. Consequently, we propose that opposing imperialism necessarily means opposing the United States as the leader of imperialism; on this battle line, we must unite with the over 90% of the world's people that are amenable to opposing the US's warlike and aggressive policies. Certainly this cannot be completed quickly, but instead requires a very long struggle.

□US imperialism wants to dominate the entire world and first it wants to forcibly occupy the vast intermediate zone between the socialist and imperialist camps; certainly, this first includes the regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Second, it wants to completely suppress its allied countries into full compliance; these include, Western European countries, Australia, Canada, etc. At the same time, it wants to collapse the socialist camp. Several socialist countries in the East do not obey it, including China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam; therefore, it wants to isolate us by adopting policies of control. This is its global strategy. Its ambitions are great, exceeding those of any imperialists in history. Its stomach is only so big, but it wants to swallow down everything; this is doomed to fail. Don't pay attention to how strong it is in appearance, in reality it is weak. Don't regard it as frightening; that way, the people of the world that suffer its oppression can eliminate their fears of America.

□In dealing with US imperialism, the more frightened of it you are, the more it will bully you. You need to state that you are not afraid of it, and then it will instead have to think things over. You cannot erroneously believe that China has nothing to fear since it is large and thus cannot be swallowed. We look at Cuba, only 90 nautical miles away from the US, resolutely opposing US imperialism, and the US cannot do anything about it; this is because Fidel Castro has said, we must fight to the end without a single person surrendering. Cuba does not allow the United Nations and the US to come to Cuba for inspections, and up to now they have never been able to enter.

□Why does the US not dare to invade Cuba? If it invaded Cuba, 7 million Cuban people would rise up in war and would not surrender; all of the people of Latin America would all rise up, as would the entire world's forces of opposition to the US. The US would only sink down into encirclement by the people of Latin America and of the entire world. In such a context, how would it be able to dominate the world? This is Kennedy's most important consideration and it is also US imperialism's fundamental weakness.

□In South Vietnam, the US provides South Vietnam with munitions, but the South Vietnamese people will resolutely not surrender. This result forces the US to replace

its running dog by killing Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother. If the US is able to engineer a coup d'état once, it will certainly do so again and again. South Korea has already proven this point and South Vietnam will also prove it.

□These two places have caused the US to proceed without a path. The US has over 50 military bases throughout the entire world; not counting smaller military bases, it has over 2300 large military bases. Being so scattered, how can you control the entire world? Wherever it goes, it offends the local people. Just as Bhashani said, wherever it goes it destroys that region's local moral order; how could it not encounter the peoples' resistance. Therefore, things are steadily worsening for the US.

□This is the case not only politically, but also economically as its problems are steadily mounting. At present, the US's annual military budget is a record \$60 billion USD. Its national debt exceeds \$300 billion; its gold reserves are \$10 billion less than in 1949-that is, they have a value of only \$15.6 billion, yet the value of US currency circulating abroad is \$25 billion. Therefore, its internal gold reserves are still not enough to correspond with US currency exchanged abroad. Furthermore, every year the US dollar accrues a deficit, rather than a surplus; last year's deficit was \$2.2 billion, while the first half of this year's deficit was \$2.1 billion, and the second half of this year could see continued increase. Therefore, the US is not doing so well. Next year, its foreign aid budget will be reduced. Kennedy originally requested \$4.5 billion, but after a lengthy debate, the Senate only approved \$3.7 billion. Why did the Senate fight so vehemently over \$800 million? Because the US is not doing well.

□Consequently, the US cannot give much money to India. In the past, it was only you that resisted India's aggression; now, our two countries both resist their aggression-are you scared of India?

□India manufactures a great many rumors, saying that the Sino-Indian border is again becoming tense, and that China is again concentrating troops there. American newspapers say that Indian propaganda is unreliable and that these reports are designed to attract more US aid.

Bhashani: Indian propaganda says that the government of old China acknowledged the McMahon line.

Zhou: No, I have a letter to give to the leader of every country, with an attached map; I can give you a copy. The so-called "McMahon line" comes from the time when the British ruled the continent; the Foreign Minister of the Indian colonial authorities, [Sir Henry] McMahon, went behind the back of the Chinese central government representative to exchange views secretly, and sign an agreement, with the representative of the Tibetan regional government. At the time, the representative of the Chinese central government absolutely did not know of the so-called McMahon line; the government of old China also never acknowledged this line. Jiang Jieshi also did not acknowledge the "McMahon line." Jiang Jieshi ruled for 22 years and never acknowledged it; today Jiang is in Taiwan, and still does not acknowledge it. The US State Department, at one time, also indicated that it did not acknowledge it. Last year following the Sino-Indian border conflict, The Times in Britain issued a map and admitted that the "McMahon line" differed from the traditional and customary line of demarcation. The "McMahon line" is not only at the Sino-Indian border, but also extends to the Sino-Burmese border; yet, China and Burma have already settled their border, and during Sino-Burmese border negotiations we did not discuss the "McMahon line," nor did we acknowledge it. [Prime Minister of Burma] U Nu agrees with this, [President of Burma] Ne Win also agrees with this. Nehru, however, wants to carry forward the traditions of the Great British Empire.

□The US wants to exploit the Sino-Indian border issue to control India; this is true. First, this is disastrous for the Indian people and will make them even poorer; food will be

even more insufficient, and will require increased imports from the US. But imported US weapons cannot become food to eat, and if we actually do go to war, these military supplies, arms, ammunition, etc. will also become problems. Their threat to us is real, but if we reach an agreement with India, it will be impossible for the US to incite a war between us. Therefore, we agree with your outlook that we must regard the US as the worst kind of imperialism. We must together engage in struggle against the US, and oppose their aggression and oppression.

□ For the sake of Afro-Asian unity, Afro-Asian countries should resolve their disputes through peaceful means, without resorting to violence; we must oppose any foreign interference, strive for the complete independence of each country, and establish the independence of the national economy. Only after we strive to realize these tasks, can we truly cast off imperialist control; this is our common task and the bond of our friendship.

□ But China too has not yet entirely cast off the oppression of imperialism. China is independent, and that is good. It has driven out the imperialism, which is also good. But, as the US is still forcibly occupying Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait, how can we say we are completely independent? Furthermore, the US still implements an economic embargo against us; we must, therefore, oppose the aggression and oppression of imperialism. There is one benefit to the US treating China this way: when they oppress us, it only leads to our self-reliance and gives us our own initiative.

□ Certainly, the countries of Asia and Africa do not all face the same circumstances; they cannot all use the same methods of opposing US imperialism, they cannot all cast off imperialism's control in the same period of time, nor reach the same level. Pakistan has its own circumstances, and you should consider your actions in accordance with these circumstances. We have told your Foreign Minister and Ambassador Raza, if I or Marshal Chen Yi have the chance to come to Pakistan, we certainly would be delighted to exchange ideas with President Ayub Khan. Each country's circumstances are different, its methods are also different, and we cannot all demand the same standard. Our goal, however, is identical.

□ At present, there is a mutual action we can undertake—namely, convening the Second Afro-Asian Conference. In a joint statement, President Ayub Khan and President Sukarno pledged their complete support for it. We should convene the Second Afro-Asian Conference promptly. This Conference can not only carry on the spirit of the Ten Principles of the Bandung Conference, but can also solidify them. The [original] Afro-Asian Conference called for the need for mutual support between Afro-Asian countries. We have done this, but not specifically enough. We should stipulate that when any country is faced with imperialist interference, we must unanimously unite in opposition. We are opposed to US imperialism, or any other kind of imperialism, interfering in the general affairs of Afro-Asian countries. On economic matters, we can also go a step further in establishing mutual aid and cooperation. You just now mentioned how to build independence and a national economy. This requires a certain amount of time and mutual aid; even though our strength is limited, and less than that of the developed, Western countries, if we unite together and mutually support one another, we can establish economic independence.

Bhashani: I want to bring to the attention of the Chinese government a particular issue in East Pakistan—namely, the floods and windstorms that plague that region every 2 to 3 years. West Pakistan's major issue is soil salinization. From every place I have visited, I have seen that you have achieved great success in these kinds of matters; I hope that you are able to send some experts to Pakistan to assist us, or perhaps present your experiences to our own experts.

Zhou: We have the same issues of flooding, soil salinization, etc. We have uncovered a few methods, and we are currently implementing them. If the Pakistani government

requests our assistance, we will absolutely try our best to help. However we must make clear that, at present, our strength is limited; we hope that within not a long period, perhaps 5 or 10 years, we will have strengthened our developmental forces. At that time, we can provide even more assistance to Afro-Asian countries. In short, we cannot wait until after imperialism dies to develop economically. The two aspects to the issue are: we will struggle against imperialism on the one hand, and we will mutually assist in the establishment of independence and a national economy on the other hand. Strengthening economic development is itself the strengthening of the forces of struggle against imperialism.

□At present, it is very important to hold the Afro-Asian Conference because Nehru and Tito are currently convening the Non-Aligned Conference and are trying to destroy the Afro-Asian Conference. You and us, we are both aligned countries. Now the world is changing; your alliance is meager, since the US is assisting India. Our alliance is also very interesting; instead of opposing India, our ally assists India in attacking us. On the surface, you are an aligned country, but in reality you are non-aligned. On the surface, India is non-aligned, but in reality it is aligned not only with the US, but also with the USSR. The world is currently in the midst of changes. Therefore, I must say, convening the Afro-Asian Conference is more important than the Non-Aligned Conference. We must persuade President Sukarno, the Prime Minister of Ceylon, and President Nasser to convene the Afro-Asian Conference first; at the same time, we must persuade the leaders of other African countries.

□The second thing is that Afro-Asian countries must regularly interact; only by enhancing our understanding of one another will we be able to mutually support each other. At the recent [November 1963] Games of the New Emerging Forces [GANEF] in Indonesia, everyone was able to be together and this enhanced understanding; just as when Sukarno visited Pakistan and, along with President Ayub Khan, issued their famous communiqué.

□There is another issue: we have consistently advocated that the Kashmir issue should be settled through direct Indo-Pakistani bilateral talks. At present, not only do you face the Kashmir issue, but we too are faced with the so-called Ladakh issue. India not only wants to invade and occupy, but it also wants to occupy the Aksai Chin region-namely, their so-called Ladakh. They have not yet fully occupied Kashmir, they currently occupy a section of it; as for the Aksai Chin, they have never entered it though, at present, they want to occupy it all-this was precisely the reason sparking last year's conflict. You want us to support the position of Kashmir's right to self-determination, but in fact our actions already go beyond this. We have settled the Sino-Pakistani border question with you; the people of the world understand this, and it indicates that we acknowledge that this region belongs to you. Even though there remains something left unsaid, this is only because of the stipulations of international law-Ambassador Raza knows this; but we will talk again after the sovereignty jurisdiction issue has been settled.

□But how can Kashmir realize self-determination, anyway? Using armed force is not an option; there stands only one method; it can be resolved only through negotiation. Aren't you opposed to an Indo-Pakistani war? What about a Sino-Indian war?

□Nehru has placed us on the same battle line; this is something Nehru brought about himself. Even though on the surface you belong to SEATO and CENTO, and we belong to the socialist camp, on the border issue we stand on the same battle line. Our concrete actions offer benefit than abstract statements. Why? If we were to say that we support self-determination for the people of Kashmir, India would simply suggest self-determination for the people of the Aksai Chin region in Xinjiang; following that, it would raise the issue for Tibet. These are both our territory, why should they have self-determination? This is a separate matter. In fact, the right to national self-determination is stipulated explicitly in the United Nations Charter and the UN has also adopted a resolution of abstract principles. We have consistently supported

these abstract principles of national self-determination, but settling these issues requires relying on concrete measures. Therefore, the two of us opposing India's aggression together is most concrete and effective.

Bhashani: Regarding the issue of right to self-determination, in reality it is Nehru's government that first raised it to the United Nations; Pakistan did not raise the issue to the UN. After the Conference of Asian Countries, I went to India and Nehru said to me: "Look, the Kashmir issue was originally very easy to resolve, but now, your government's alignment with the West and its carrying out a reactionary foreign policy, has made the problem irresolvable." After I returned to Pakistan, I put forward to my government the execution of an independent foreign policy; but now, Nehru has already gone back on his word.

Zhou: This is all Nehru's excuse; your friend is unreliable. He is our friend too. Ambassador Raza knows all of this as well; early when he first came to China as your ambassador, he told us Nehru was untrustworthy. At that time, I responded with exactly the same kinds of words you just used. The facts prove that Nehru's words are all nonsense; reading the records of his talks with reporters one finds that for everything he says, several days later it has completely changed. An Asian politician once told me, Nehru's thinking is the same as the British. Nehru himself also said, "Rather than say I am Indian, it would be better to say I am like an Englishman." You believe that after spending 17 years in prison he could really be opposed to imperialism? This is precisely where Britain is more cunning than the US-one the one hand, he was in prison, on the other hand, he was also praised as a capable and clever man; Mountbatten even became friends with him. Therefore, even though Nehru was imprisoned, he absolutely does not hate Britain, and merely puts forth that he wants independence. What he wants is to establish a Great Indian Empire; his ambitions are immense. You likely have read his book *The Discovery of India*, right? Still not clear?

Chen: We do not really believe in your friend Nehru.