



November 20, 1986
**Record of Conversation between Comrade J. Batmunkh
and Kim Il Sung**

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Summary:

Kim Il Sung and Jambyn Batmunkh discuss North Korea and Mongolia's relationships with China and the Soviet Union, among other issues.

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- English Translation

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

November 20, 1986 Pyongyang

On reception of Comrade J. Batmunkh by comrade Kim Il Sung

On November 11, 1986, at 10am, General Secretary of the Korean Workers Party, DPRK President comrade Kim Il Sung received the General Secretary of the MPRP [Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party], Chairman of the Presidium of the Great Khural of the MPR [Mongolian People's Republic] J. Batmunkh. After that, a one-on-one conversation took place between comrades J. Batmunkh and Kim Il Sung.

To summarize the core points discussed between J. Batmunkh and Kim Il Sung at the time:

Kim Il Sung: From my point of view, we had a detailed conversation yesterday so I do not have to say anything else at the moment. If comrade Batmunkh you have something to say to me then I am happy to listen now.

J. Batmunkh – Yes. Yesterday I was telling you about our country's domestic situation, foreign policy, international relations and our two countries' friendship, cooperation, and afterwards I listened to your news. Today I would like to clarify some points of yesterday's information, focusing on a few things.

I think, comrade Kim Il Sung, you know our country's situation, our country is small. A positive international situation is vital for building socialism successfully. Therefore, we try to maintain good relationship with our neighboring countries. Having the opportunity to meet with you and discuss things openly is of great significance for me. Since the people's revolution triumphed in our country, Mongolia, we have maintained good, fraternal relations with the USSR. We, our party, government and people attach great importance to this relationship.

Our relationship with other fraternal countries is also successfully developing. We strive to create this kind of relationship with other neighboring countries. One of the important questions for our country is the relationship between our two neighbors, the USSR and the PRC. We are happy that in recent years the relationship between these two countries has experienced some improvement. The Sino-Mongolian relationship was good in the 1950s. Because of the peculiar situation in China in the 1960s, Sino-Mongolian relations deteriorated. Time has passed, all this has become history now. However, renewing the development of Sino-Mongolian relations is important for our two countries' people's common interest.

Our government warmly received Comrade M.S. Gorbachev's initiative in Vladivostok to normalize relations with the PRC. I hope Kim Il Sung you heard about M.S.Gorbachev's discussion of the withdrawal of a considerable number of Soviet troops from Mongolia. Soviet troops helped us to protect our country's border, strengthening our independence and sovereignty ever since the people's revolution won in Mongolia and until today, in the course of 60 years. Mongolian-Soviet armed forces fought together against Japanese militarist aggression, and protected the People's Republic of Mongolia's independence in 1939. They were also jointly involved in the battle to liberate China's Northeast in 1945.

The situation on the Asian continent is still very unsettling and it is still very important to protect countries' independence. I am talking here about the situation of all of Asia. However, we agreed to the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Mongolia in order to establish trust between countries and create a healthy atmosphere for all on the Asian continent.

Our country has a 4700 km border with the PRC. This long border is difficult to protect with our own forces. So our government considered this difficulty, and invited limited number of Soviet troops to its territory.

As was clear to everyone, this was a defensive measure to protect our own security not to destroy or invade others. Our government informed about this circumstance more than once.

Recently there has been improvement in Mongolian-Chinese relations. Trade between the two countries has been increasing albeit slowly. Border trade is revived. We are beginning to communicate along the lines of culture, sports and public organizations. In 1984 we examined the Mongolian-Chinese border and concluded a protocol. There is no border dispute between our two countries. Although there have been some positive effects, there has been no restoration of political relations. There are no relations between two parties. If the Chinese side follows straightforwardly the principle of mutual respect, we think that there could be a greater improvement than this. Our government respects the Chinese people who have many thousands years of history and cultural heritage, and is willing to improve and normalize our relations. This is our party's core principle.

We also wish that the PRC normalizes relations with other Asian socialist countries of Southeast Asia. The continuation of this abnormal situation between socialist countries is of no benefit to socialism. There could be some contradiction between countries. But it is important to manage them through political means to the benefit of Asian and world peace, and socialism.

You probably know that the MPR has proposed to create a mechanism on the principle of confidence-building, non-use of force, non-interference in internal affairs in relations between countries of Asia Pacific. When he make this proposal, we have in mind to make our own contribution to the initiatives advanced by the USSR with respect to the Asia Pacific, and the proposals advanced on many occasions by your government with respect to the unification of Korea. Our state is working along all possible lines in order to implement these initiatives. We also understand that this question is difficult to implement. But if fraternal countries work together in this direction, it is entirely possible. From this position we support the non-aligned movement. [...]

Kim Il Sung – Thank you. Comrade Batmunkh, I am very happy that you have come to visit our country on my invitation. [...] I am in full agreement with what you said about China. I also understand that a lot of issues will depend on Sino-Soviet relations. When I recently met with Gorbachev in Moscow I spoke about this.

During the years of the «cultural revolution» the Chinese leaders made mistakes not only in relations with the USSR but also in relations with us. They used to criticize the USSR as “social imperialism”. During the “cultural revolution” the Chinese rulers installed loudspeakers along our border, inviting the people to “smash Soviet revisionists” and “smash Korean revisionists and Kim Il Sung”. It was the fault of the Chinese side that our relations worsened a lot in those years. Some of our leading comrades proposed to me to install loudspeakers on our side of the border in response. China is a great power with extensive territory and millions of people. If we put loudspeakers, the Chinese will put even louder loudspeakers. In a word, I counseled that we should be patient in order to break the endless [escalation]. I really was patient.

Our state is fighting with American imperialism. I was patient because if our relations with the PRC worsened, we would find ourselves among two enemies, and our situation would worsen further. After the “cultural revolution” Zhou Enlai came to our country in 1970 and made a step to improve relations. In recent years our relations successfully developed.

Chinese foreign policy is changing. For example, they agree that the USSR is a socialist country, and stopped talking about “socialist imperialism”. There are positive movements in Sino-Soviet relations. I believe this process will continue further. M.S. Gorbachev made important proposal in Vladivostok regarding relations with China.

I constantly meet with the Chinese comrades. They have not said anything bad about Mongolia. I think there are no serious obstacles to normalization of Sino-Mongolian relations. I sincerely hope that Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian relations will become normal soon.

It will facilitate normalization of Mongolian-Chinese relations if, with the exception of a part sufficient for the protection of the MPR border and security, Soviet military units in your territory were withdrawn (Kim Il Sung repeated this idea twice).

There are positive aspects in China's foreign policy. The Chinese government is against the "Star Wars" plan of the American administration. They are basing themselves [on the principle] that war is not needed for the pursuit of the "open doors" policy and the development of the country.

There are also unacceptable points in China's foreign policy. This is not a new thing. In general, the Chinese situation has had a complicated development. I told you that our relations with China are good. This does not mean that we agree with China on everything. We also have points of disagreement. We talk about things we agree on and refrain from touching the questions we have different opinions about. What's the point in talking about issues of disagreement? It would not be profitable to any of us if our relations with China worsened. The Chinese are saying that they will build "socialism with Chinese characteristics." When I meet with the Chinese I tell directly, if you think you can build socialism in your own way, well go ahead and try. I don't say if it is right or wrong.

We think that when we talk about questions of peace and security in Asia, it is essential to involve the PRC.

We wish for Sino-Vietnamese relations to normalize. In this matter, it is important for each to be patient and flexible in strengthening unity. Relations between the two countries are abnormal mainly because of the Kampuchean question.

I think it will probably require a long time for relations to normalize. This is because for as long as the Vietnamese troops remain in Kampuchea, the Chinese side has a tough position of not conducting any negotiations with Vietnam. In solving disagreements between these two, and in general, we should approach the matter from the position of what can be helpful, and [what can] strengthen unity.

Comrade Batmunkh you spoke clearly about the non-aligned movement. Our state has been in this movement for a long time, it acceded in 1975. Recently the non-aligned movement has not been able to play a great role in international life. Because of the many difficult internal problems of the member states, and problems in relations between them, the unity of the movement has not reached such a [high] level. An important goal is to erase the consequences of colonialism and to satisfy economic independence. There are many countries that have chosen the progressive role, such as Ethiopia, Angola, Tanzania, Benin, and Congo. There are many instances of the political leaders of developing countries visiting us. They ask our advice about building a new society. I say that we don't have that much experience compared to others, but we have built up a state destroyed in war. There are some people among the African political leaders who take a [walking] stick and travel a lot. I tell them – while you travel around with a [walking] stick, time is being lost and it will harm the people. Throw away the [walking] stick and take a shovel to lead the people [by example]. I tell them directly that this is how I began. These people say they will go back home and do things. But there are few that actually do anything. It is true that we need to influence non-aligned developing nations. In April-May 1987 Pyongyang will host a ministerial conference of the developing nations.

We will mainly talk about eliminating hunger and struggling with infectious diseases. We will also pay attention to directing the attention of their representatives towards the struggle conducted by the USSR in strengthening international security and fully prohibiting nuclear testing.

While not all non-aligned countries will participate, the majority will. At this conference, we are thinking to talk about problems of peace and security in Asia at the world. I will prepare for this conference well. It is a good thing to cooperate in the sphere of the non-aligned movement.

It is important to struggle against imperialism, and its perversion of the real situation and its slander. You probably heard that several days ago the capitalist press and radio spread rumors about me being poisoned. Could there be anything threatening to my life in our country? The people protect me. I am not in a hurry to rebut this slander. Truth confirms itself.