

October 05, 1958
Meeting Minutes, Zhou Enlai's Conversation with S.F. Antonov on the Taiwan Issue (excerpt)

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Summary:

Speaking with Soviet Charge d'Affaires Antonov, Zhou Enlai analyzes the American response to the Chinese bombing of Jinmen Island.

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Chinese

Contents:

- English Translation

The entire situation has already changed at this point. Dulles's press conference published on 30 September reveals some changes in America's position. Although Dulles's talks with reporters do not clearly indicate [America's new position], he expressed ambiguously that if China commits to a cease-fire, America can persuade Jiang's troops to withdraw from the offshore islands [under his control]. Apparently America intends to carry out basically a policy to help Jiang slip away from Jinmen.

After Dulles made this suggestion, Jiang Jieshi became very upset. Jiang knew the content of Dulles's talks in advance. Thus, he gave a speech on 29 September, and another on 1 October, stating that the Americans had done a disservice to him. Two days later, when he talked to British reporters from *The Times* [of London], Jiang asked Britain to advise America not to be fooled [by the communists]. This is really funny.

Last night the Indian ambassador [to Beijing] hurriedly informed me of V. K. Krishna Menon's plan [at the United Nations]. Menon believes that current changes in the situation have already become a tendency. Thus, he is planning to make a general speech at the UN meeting, including a suggestion that Jiang's troops withdraw from the offshore islands and a request to us to stop fighting against Jiang. Britain attempted to mediate this affair in the past, but we refused it. Dag Hammarskjold of the UN intended to talk to us through Norway, [but] we also turned it down. Even though America was not willing to invite India [to mediate] before, it had no choice but to invite Menon this time. Menon was unwilling to come himself, if America did not send an invitation to him, or if he was unsure about the situation. At the present, since Menon feels certain about the situation because America has asked for his help, he is planning to deliver this proposition. Our assumption is as follows: after Menon makes his proposition, it will be accepted by UN members, and then by most countries in the world. Through this approach, the UN can put pressure on Jiang Jieshi and meanwhile ask us to make compromises. Thereby, America can maneuver between Jiang and us to make a bargain.

We calculate that America has three cards to play:

First, to defend Jin[men]-Ma[zu]. America's proposition on 18 September requested our cease-fire on Jinmen, we rejected it immediately. We have been ever since condemning America's occupation of Taiwan. America now attempts to expand its occupation to Jinmen-Mazu, we must oppose it firmly. America dares not engage in a war merely for the sake of Jinmen, because the American people and its allied countries oppose it. Moreover, if America wants a war for Jinmen, we are prepared to fight against it. In addition, the Soviet Union supports us. After our rejection, America took back its first card, that is, defending Jinmen and Mazu.

Its second card is about "two Chinas." America's proposition on 30 September had a central point of lining up China with the Soviet Union on the one side, and Jiang Jieshi with the United States on the other side. It puts forth a "two Chinas" scheme and pushes us to accept the status quo. We firmly oppose it now, and will continue to oppose it.

The third is to freeze the Taiwan Straits. America intends to persuade Jiang's troops to withdraw from the offshore islands as an exchange to freeze the situation in the Taiwan Straits, requesting our renouncing the use of force on Taiwan, or our accepting America's occupation of Taiwan as legitimate and "two Chinas" as "an existing fact." America may not play its third card at once. As soon as Dulles's meeting with press caused Jiang Jieshi's big complaints, Dulles wrote to Jiang for explanation and comfort. At the same time, Eisenhower informed the Democratic chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that America could not yield to force. He, however, also said that if Communist China ceased fire, [America] could reconsider [the situation there]. It shows that America is still wavering, though it wants to get away from Jinmen-Mazu.

According to the above calculations, I told the Indian ambassador yesterday that we did not want Menon to deliver his proposition to the UN. We cannot trade a settlement of Jinmen-Mazu for a recognition of America's occupation of Taiwan as legitimate and acceptance of the existence of so-

called “two Chinas.”

Meanwhile, some Asian and African countries are suggesting that the Eight-nation Committee can draft a statement about the Taiwan situation. I also told the Indian ambassador yesterday that we believed that the Asian and African countries could hardly issue such a joint statement since there existed two different positions among themselves. I said to him it was better not to have this kind of joint statement. If the statement mentioned a cease-fire, it would benefit America; we had to oppose it. If the statement criticized both America and China, it would be unable to tell right from wrong, we had to disagree as well. A just statement should include the following major points: to recognize firmly that Taiwan is China's territory, and that no foreign countries are allowed to intervene; America should withdraw from the Taiwan Straits; no creation of “two Chinas”; China and America should continue their talks. Obviously, some countries that follow America will not agree to these points. Thus, if the Asian and African countries cannot issue a just statement, it is better for them not to issue any joint statement.

Moreover, this morning Comrade Chen Yi met diplomatic envoys from eight concerned Asian and African countries that have diplomatic relations with China. Regarding these countries' discussion about issuing a joint statement, he clarified the above position of the Chinese government and made further explanations.

I talked to you on 30 September [about our policy toward Taiwan]. Originally, our plan had two steps: the first was to recover the offshore islands; the second to liberate Taiwan. Later, after we began shelling Jinmen, our bombardment played a role to mobilize the people of the world, especially the Chinese people. Thereafter, many countries launched and joined a new anti-American movement on a much larger scale than that after the Lebanon event. The situation already becomes clear. America knows that we do not want to fight a war against it. When it escorted Jiang Jieshi's ships, we did not fire [on them]. We have no intention to liberate Taiwan immediately. We know that America does not want to fight a war against us over Jinmen either. It strictly restrained its air and naval forces from entering our territorial waters between three and twelve miles from our coast. Currently America works on how to persuade Jiang's troops to withdraw from Jinmen-Mazu to prevent its forces from being pinned down in this region.

As I said to you on 30 September, we realized that it was better to keep Jiang Jieshi on Jinmen-Mazu. After the Central Committee's discussions, we still believe that it is the best to keep Jiang Jieshi on Jinmen, Mazu, and other offshore islands. It is extremely beneficial [to us] that Jiang stays at Jinmen and Mazu, and America continues to intervene. It will educate the people of the world, especially the Chinese people. We will not let America go, when it wants to get away from Jinmen and Mazu. We demand that America withdraw its armed forces from Taiwan. Under this circumstance, if we need tension, we can shell Jinmen and Mazu; if we want relaxation, we can stop shelling. As Comrade [Liu] Shaoqi said to you, [we can] have small-, or medium-, or large-scale shelling of Jinmen. We can have shelling while negotiating, and we can stop shelling anytime we like. This is advantageous for us. So we are not going to recover these offshore islands in the near future. We will take back them together with the Penghus and Taiwan later.

Thus, we decided to issue a “Message to the Compatriots in Taiwan” in the name of our defense minister. [It indicates that] we will suspend our shelling for seven days from 1:00 p.m. on 6 October so as to allow Jiang's troops to transport their logistic supplies easily. Our suspension of bombardment, however, has a precondition that no American ships provide escort. Moreover, [it] suggests a direct negotiation with Jiang Jieshi searching for peaceful solutions to the conflicts between both sides. Since our shelling is actually a punitive operation against Jiang's troops, we can slow it down as long as Jiang is willing to cooperate [with us]. If he is not, we will continue to punish him. Therefore, we will always be in a positive position.

Our purpose in publishing this “Message to the Compatriots in Taiwan” is to deepen the conflicts between America and Jiang. Jiang's current garrison on Jinmen, about 80,000 men under the command of Chen Cheng, is the main strength of Jiang's forces. Jiang Jieshi wants to defend

Jinmen to the last and drag America down to the water. Chen Cheng, however, wants to save these troops. If we bottle up the troops on Jinmen, it is easier for America to encourage Chen to persuade Jiang to withdraw his troops from the offshore islands. If we let these troops stay on Jinmen, Jiang and Chen can use them to drive a hard bargain with America. In our message to the compatriots [in Taiwan], we warn them that America will abandon them sooner or later. There is no need to fight for America's interests between the two Chinese sides. Although we can possibly fight for thirty more years, it is better [for both sides] to talk for solutions.

To be sure, [on the one hand,] Jiang Jieshi will likely hold a press conference [as soon as we publish our message], accusing us of attempting to cast a bone between him and America, saying that he will never sit down with the Chinese Communists for negotiations, and so forth. In his mind, however, Jiang can figure out himself that there is a lot behind this, and that he can make a further bargain with America. This is his old trick. On the other hand, Americans will also criticize the Chinese Communist attempt to drive a wedge between them and Jiang. But, meanwhile, they will suspect in their minds that we suddenly let up pressure on Jinmen, almost blockaded to the death, because there might be a tacit agreement between us and Jiang. The louder Jiang yells, the more suspicious the Americans will become.

Therefore, we cause a new dilemma for America, and it does not know how to cope with it. America is facing a very difficult situation right now. It originally planned to persuade Jiang's troops to withdraw [from Jinmen]. If it again suggests withdrawal, Jiang Jieshi will say that America abandons him. If America stops persuading Jiang to withdraw, we will achieve our goal.