

March 31, 1964

**Record of Conversation from Chairman Mao's
Reception of the Military Delegation from the
Kingdom of Cambodia**

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Summary:

Mao and Lon Nol discuss Chinese-Cambodian ties, Cambodia's relations with Vietnam and Thailand, and US policy in Southeast Asia.

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Chinese

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Request Department leadership after reading pass to the Second Consular Affairs Department.

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Record of Conversation from Chairman Mao's Reception of the Military Delegation from the Kingdom of Cambodia
(not reviewed by Chairman Mao)

Time: 4 pm, March 31, 1964 (Tuesday)

Location: Zhengzhou, Henan Province

Attendees: General Luo Ruiqing, General Xu Guangda, Governor Wen Minsheng, Political Commissar He Yunhong

Interpreter: He Zhenliang

Notetaker: Zhou Shida

Chairman Mao: How many days have you been in China?

Lieutenant General Lon Nol: We have been here for twenty days. It is a great honor to be received by the Chairman today.

Chairman Mao: You are very strong. Your country, including your people and the government, dare to fight the imperialists who are bullying you. You do not accept the control of the United States.

Lon Nol: That has been our consistent course of action.

Chairman Mao: We are very much approve. We very much approve your policy...

The whole world is paying attention to you. I noticed that you have stopped US military assistance and expelled the US military assistance mission. Did you make them all leave?

Lon Nol: Yes.

Chairman Mao: This was not easy.

Lon Nol: We are determined to do so.

Chairman Mao: Well, those people are spies and are harmful to countries like yours.

Lon Nol: US assistance has always been a pretext to force us to accept their conditions and to accept their views.

Chairman Mao: Not only that. Your country is smaller than India, but you dare to fight against the powerful and win the support of the people of the world who oppose imperialism. In the present world, people need to fight imperialism as a matter of survival.

Lon Nol: Yes.

Chairman Mao: In the country next to yours lived Ngo Dinh Diem. The United States gave him a lot of assistance, but he did not obey the United States completely. He did not expect the Americans to kill him.

Lon Nol: When we announced neutrality and established relations with China, they began to insult us. There was a Preah Vihear Temple Incident in our country. Thailand made territorial demands on us. South Vietnam also demanded our islands. They made attempts to foment armed rebellion in Siem Reap, but they all failed.

Chairman Mao: If you are vigilant, they will not be able to defeat you.

Lon Nol: They now want to organize a Free Cambodia Movement and to persuade Cambodians living in Cochinchina to join this movement.

Chairman Mao: Is that in southern Vietnam? Do they want to replace the Cambodian government? Are they armed?

Lon Nol: They supplied weapons but they couldn't persuade many people to join.

Chairman Mao: Nobody is joining them?

Lon Nol: The residents of this area see themselves as Cambodians and don't want to get hurt joining in activities that are being done in interests of the United States and of Vietnam.

Chairman Mao: You can go there to do work persuading them not to participate in anti-government movement.

Lon Nol: According to estimates, there are one million Cambodians in south Vietnam.

Chairman Mao: Are there really that many?

Lon Nol: The south Vietnamese government declared that they are all south Vietnamese, so according to the law, they are longer a Cambodian, but south Vietnamese. But behind the south Vietnam stands the U.S.-support south Vietnamese regime which wants to use these people to serve the south Vietnamese regime by creating a movement to oppose us. They say that they are going to liberate our Cambodia because they claim that we are getting closer and closer to the Communist Party. There are more and more abuses there so already four thousand people have fled across the border to Cambodia. We are watching this movement very carefully. Even if they send just a few hundred people in to Cambodia, that might create a pretext for a Thai and south Vietnamese intervention, claiming that another Cambodian government and that they are intervening to help a friendly "government". Even though these Cambodians now all have Vietnamese citizenship, they (referring to the south Vietnamese regime) are also call them the Free Cambodians. We say that before becoming a Free Cambodian, they need to become Cambodians first.

Chairman Mao: Are Cambodians similar to the Thai, the Laotians and the Vietnamese? For example, what are the language differences?

Lon Nol: There are some linguistic differences. In fact, some people with centrifugal

characteristics made some changes in the written scripts of our countries, but these are only revisions. We believe that we are blood relations with most of these peoples.

Chairman Mao: Do your people live in Thailand as well?

Lon Nol: There are still many people who speak Cambodian in Thailand. When the International Court of Justice of The Hague ruled that the Preah Vihear Temple belong to us, Thailand announced military control in eight provinces. The so-called Free Khmer control two of them, south Vietnam controls one and Thailand controls one. They fomented a conspiracy in Siem Reap. According to their plan, Thailand was about to send troops to interfere. We are full of confidence that we can defend our just cause. South Vietnam and Thailand cannot find many Cambodians to participate in this movement. Therefore, they still do not have enough soldiers. The problem now is that our brothers have been abused in south Vietnam. Four thousand people fled to Cambodia and their homes have all been destroyed.

Chairman Mao: Now south Vietnam is in great chaos. They oppress you and oppress the people of south Vietnam as well.

Lon Nol: The situation is like this. The Vietnamese in south Vietnam sympathize with North Vietnam. People who are legally south Vietnamese but ethnically Cambodian sympathize with Cambodia.

Chairman Mao: They do not support the south Vietnamese government. No matter whether it is Ngo Dinh Diem or the current government, they all suppress, exercise dictatorship over and collude with the American who oppress their own people. Wherever the Americans go, nobody there can be happy. Our The Americans used to control China. Chiang Kai-shek brought them in. They supplied most of the weapons and ammunition. We didn't have any arsenal and couldn't manufacture our own weapons then. Several of them (referring to General Luo, etc.) fought some battles. We rely on confiscated weapons to win. It was as if the United States had sent weapons to us and then rushed Chiang Kai-shek to Taiwan. After the liberation, we created an air force and a navy. We defeated an air force without an air force and we defeated a navy without a navy.

We don't get any foreign assistance and without assistance we defeated the ones who got assistance. This is how the world changes. In our country, people are not very happy with Americans. The US government is not happy with us. We say that we are aggressors. They made a resolution at the United Nations. They say that first, we have invaded China and second, that we invaded [North] Korea. During the Korean War we sent the People's Volunteers. They are called in the United Nations Army composed of sixteen countries. We cooperated with Premier Kim Il Sung of Korea. Their weapons were far, far better than ours were but we drove them out of the northern Korea and they were forced to negotiate an armistice with us. The more you fear the Americans, the fiercer they become. If you do not fear them, you will not have a problem. You are the same way. You are not afraid of the Americans. You expelled the US military aid delegation. If you act that way, they will behave.

Lon Nol: Indeed, at least in terms of work, Americans do not dare to pull nonsense like they do in other countries when they are in Cambodia.

Chairman Mao: Pay attention to spies, secrets activities and covered operations. I have talked with your Prince Sihanouk about and told him he should pay attention to these undercover activities.

Lon Nol: Yes, they are very rich and don't care about money.

Chairman Mao: After returning home, please say hello to Prince Sihanouk for me and wish him good health. We support his policies and those of his government. The last time I saw him, I said that your government won't collapse. That would be bad not only for you but for us as well. We did not realize that you did not need US military assistance. Now it turns out that you don't need it and you are doing fine without it.

Lon Nol: We rejected all their assistance, including their military, economic and cultural assistance.

Chairman Mao: I have expelled them. The Americans hadn't expected it.

Lon Nol: They thought they could threaten you.

Chairman Mao: They thought that that their assistance was indispensable. They thought that without them, we could not survive.

Welcome all friends and please convey the friendly wishes of the Chinese people and the government to the people of your country.

What have you seen in China?

Lon Nol: We been treated very well. Everywhere people treat us warmly like their own brothers. We have been in China for 21 days. We have visited cultural facilities, places of interest, and organizations related to the people's livelihood such as people's communes. We also saw many things related to national defense. I also saw a lot of things. I saw a lot of factories under construction and saw some defense industrial factories and general factories. We went to a tourist city.

Chairman Mao: Hangzhou.