

September 13, 1959

Record of the Second Conversation between Comrade Liao Chengzhi and Ishibashi Tanzan

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Summary:

During a conversation with Ishibashi Tanzan, Liao Chengzhi claimed that "preconditions are needed for further cooperation" to promote Sino-Japanese friendly relations. To eliminate mistrust, Liao Chengzhi asked Japan to abolish the U.S. military bases.

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Record of Conversation between Comrade Liao Chengzhi and Ishibashi Tanzan
(not yet reviewed by Chairman Liao)

Date and Time: 13 September 1959, 9am

Interpretation and Minutes: Lin Liyun

Liao: Premier Zhou told me to send his regards to you. How is your health?

Ishibashi: Thank you. I had written a letter to Premier Zhou before I came here, in which I mentioned three things. I would like to talk about this today. The first thing is to boost Japan-China relations and contribute to the peace of the Far East and the world.

Liao: I hope you can discuss these issues directly with Premier Zhou. But today I can share my personal views first. Regarding the first thing you mentioned, I think we should promote friendly relations if China and Japan engages in cooperation and it is necessary that we do so. But preconditions are needed for further cooperation, for instance equality and mutual benefit, and an environment of peaceful co-existence. At the same time, both sides should eliminate factors that pose a threat. On the Japanese side, this should be abolishing the military bases. China and Japan should boost friendly relations and support each other on this basis. We should be clear about the things we can realize.

Ishibashi: Both sides should not harbor suspicions about each other and should eliminate mutual mistrust.

Liao: We agree very much with this point. But the issue lies in what the root of this mistrust is.

Ishibashi: The root of this mistrust lies in the people's state of mind.

Liao: This is not just an issue of the "state of mind", but also has a material basis. The United States does not like the existence of the People's Republic of China and it has built a network of military bases around China, and is attempting to subvert the People's Republic of China.

Ishibashi: The United States can't possible do this sort of thing?

Liao: Whether it can or cannot is another issue. But that is how US policy works. In 1946, that is, after World War II, we had dealings with the United States. At that time I was also part of it, thus I have a clear understanding of US policy. In 1946, the United States went all out to support Chiang Kai-Shek in attacking us, and attempted to wipe us out. As Chiang Kai-Shek was corrupt to the core, he was spurned by the Chinese people and had no choice but to flee to Taiwan. The United States loathes the existence of the People's Republic of China. It built many military bases around us, started the Korean War and imposed economic sanctions on us. The United States establishes military bases in foreign countries and uses these bases to interfere in the domestic politics of other countries. For instance, it makes use of its military bases in Japan to interfere in Japan's domestic politics and makes use of its military bases in the Philippines to interfere in the Philippine's domestic politics. It's the same case in Thailand and Pakistan. As for countries like Indonesia, Myanmar and Malaya that refused to let the United States establish military bases, the United States is in fact

also hoping to interfere in their domestic politics. We see the United States government as our number one enemy. We are at odds with them. After China was liberated, the United States had bombed the eastern part of China. During the Korean War, it bombed the northeastern part of China. One wonders how many Chinese were killed by these bombings. Even if we can forget our differences with Japan, we cannot forget our differences with the United States, and we can never forget.

Ishibashi: If that's the case, then we can't realize peace!

Liao: No. So long as the United States gives up its policy of invasion, we can realize peace.

Ishibashi: But this can't be realized quickly.

Liao: It is indeed as you have said, more haste less speed. But so long as we work hard in the long term to resist the United States' invasion, we will be able to realize it.

Ishibashi: Could you be exaggerating the threat from the United States? The more China goes against the United States, the worse the deadlock, isn't it?

Liao: We understand that Mr. Ishibashi is being benevolent. We think that the American people are good and we can learn some things from American culture and science. Only a portion of the Americans insist on a policy of invasion, for instance the late Dulles, the forces pulling the strings behind the US State Department and the American ambassador to your country Mr. [Douglas] MacArthur II. To negotiate for peace with these people is like asking a tiger for its hide. We can only go against such people. Even if China were the only country in the world to oppose the United States, we must still do so. There is a benefit to this, which is to make the United States aware that at least China is resisting it. We will never give way to the United States.

Ishibashi: The policies of the American and Japanese governments will change as the demands of the people change. The American government may also change its policy.

Liao: Perhaps there's such a possibility, but we won't know until the time comes. We Chinese people have fully learnt the lesson from former US President Truman. He started the Korean War with us. After Truman stepped down, Eisenhower took office. Eisenhower's policy and Truman's policy were one and the same. The American people's anti-war protests are growing louder by the day, but to date, we have yet to see the American people's demands wield any influence on American policy. With time, the American people's anti-war protests will grow louder and the Dulles Doctrine may gradually fade away. But most importantly, before this glorious day arrives, China must resolutely maintain its fight against the United States even if it is isolated. We think that this is our contribution to world peace, but we are not asking the other countries to do the same.

Ishibashi: Don't be so quick to be enemies with each other. It isn't good to create an atmosphere of war.

Liao: The United States is precisely the one who is creating the atmosphere of war. It openly claimed to wish to deal with us with atomic bombs and intercontinental ballistic missiles (I.C.B.M). In 1946, the American Hurley asked Chairman Mao in Yan'an if "China were afraid of the atomic bomb". Chairman Mao answered: To us, the atomic bomb is nothing to be fearful about. We can fight to the end so long as we have our guns and millet. The United States even organized events such as the

so-called "political negotiation meetings", and its aim was to buy time to deploy Chiang Kai-Shek's main forces to the northern part of China, so as to destroy us from north to south. At that time, we estimated that the war with the United States and Chiang may go on for five to ten years, but because Chiang Kai-Shek's bloc was rotten to the core and spurned by the people, it disintegrated very quickly. Since then, the United States has adopted a hostile attitude toward us.

Ishibashi: I am not too familiar with such a situation...

Liao: Currently, the Taiwanese people are also vigorous in their resistance toward the United States, e.g. the February 28 Incident. Thus, Chairman Mao also said, the fourth instance of cooperation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party may not be impossible. The situation has changed greatly. It's very necessary to eliminate the mistrust among all the various countries. We harbor no animosity toward the Japanese people. To be honest, the Chinese people dislike the Nobusuke government. The root cause is that the Chinese people and the Chinese government harbor a hatred toward the United States, and this hatred is due to the United States establishing a network of military bases around China. How can we feel secure about countries that cooperate with the United States? The Chinese people are willing to work with the Japanese people to contribute to world peace. We also hope to focus on our development. We need at least 50 years for development. The United States claims that China will engage in invasion in order to hide its own acts of invasion. China does not need to invade anyone, and our belief forbids us from doing so. At the same time, we Chinese people have suffered much from the invasion of the imperialists. We will not invade others. It is a fact that the United States has invaded China. China did not establish its line of defense in Honolulu, but the United States extended its line of defense to Taiwan.

Ishibashi: Why is there a need for it to do so?

Liao: The aim of the United States in establishing military bases in other countries is to obtain their power. For instance, the United States first pushes out the United Kingdom. The United States claims to be anti-communist, but because it is also afraid of war, a war was not ignited. The real aim of the United States in establishing military bases is to attempt to seize the power of the burgeoning intermediate territories for itself. The United States attempts to make use of Japan strategically by building bases there, making Japan its base to launch an invasive war. The Chinese people can see this very clearly. We must be prepared to counter the war conspiracy of the United States anytime. But on the other hand, we also cannot give up striving for peace. When Harriman visited the Soviet Union last year, he proposed coming to China to understand the views of the Chinese government. To that, we said, there is no such need at present. This can be considered again in the future when the time is right. In the end, he went back. We think it is better this way.

Ishibashi: I've heard about this as well.

Liao: About US policy, there are two future possibilities. First, it may start a war. War is also something we want to avoid, but on the issue of war, the initiative is not with us but the United States. We will not invade the United States, but if the United States starts a war, we will resolutely strike back, and be prepared at all times. The second future possibility is that the United States is unable to start a war due to pressure from the people of the world, and peace prevails for the long term and further becomes lasting world peace. We think the world is heading toward the second possibility right now.

Ishibashi: We are all willing to work hard for peace, it looks difficult to achieve peace but it's not impossible. If Japan and China have the determination to work together, then this will greatly facilitate world peace.

Liao: If China and Japan can work together, then we can ensure the peace of the Far East.

Ishibashi: At least we must eliminate the mistrust between the two countries, and not be full of suspicion.

Liao: I agree with this view, but the problem lies with Nobusuke.

Ishibashi: China is too preoccupied with the issue of Nobusuke.

Liao: Nobusuke listens to the United States more.

Ishibashi: That is his personal issue. Not all Japanese are like him.

Liao: We also think that not all Japanese are like that. It is said that the Nobusuke clique may not be unanimous in their views as well.

Ishibashi: It's better not to be preoccupied with the issue of Nobusuke. Even if Nobusuke is like what you said in his words and deeds, we cannot oppose him like you do.

Liao: Is there a possibility that Nobusuke will change his policy?

Ishibashi: He must made to change, and he is also willing to change.

Liao: Chairman Mao had once wanted us to compile Nobusuke's hostile words and deeds toward China. We compiled almost two volumes, some of them were what he said and did while overseas, others were what he said and did domestically.

Ishibashi: In Japan, his hostile words and deeds toward China are not obvious.

Liao: Nobusuke may change under the pressure of Mr. Ishibashi and the Japanese people. But he is a so-called "unassailable character". It is difficult to tell which of his words are true and which are false. Hence when you said that Nobusuke will change his policy, we find it hard to believe before we see the evidence.

Ishibashi: That is also true. If that is the case, on the Sino-Japanese issue, the main obstacle is the issue of Nobusuke, is that right?

Liao: Yes. Honestly speaking, we hope that Japan can change its current policy toward China.

Ishibashi: Taiwan has ties with Japan too, thus we can't sever them immediately.

Liao: When my father was working under Mr. Sun Wen (Sun Yat-sen), Chiang Kai-Shek was my father's subordinate, therefore I know very well what he is like. Shortly after Japan surrendered, there were still large numbers of Japanese troops in Mainland China. During then, Chiang Kai-Shek wanted to attack the Communist Party, thus he was forced to say some good things to Japan. Later, Chiang Kai-Shek became fervently anti-Communist and was opposed by the people. As a result he lost power quickly and fled to Taiwan. Thus, the Chinese people cannot accept it when your country says that you have ties to Chiang Kai-Shek.

Ishibashi: But the Japanese all think this way.

Liao: China must be careful about one trend, and that is the conspiracy to create two Chinas. Do you understand that in Japan, there is the so-called Taiwan independence alliance, the [Thomas] Liao Wenyi clique?

Ishibashi: I don't.

Liao: The magazines in your country often discuss the issue of two Chinas. Chiang Kai-Shek is in poor health. On the issue of his successor, his subordinates are all fighting over it, and it creates a dangerous situation of the fragmentation of power. When the United States and Japan were concluding their treaty, the premise was the concluding of a treaty by Japan and Taiwan. This is already an open secret. Nobusuke claims to want to be friendly to Taiwan, saying that Japan wants to abide by "international credibility". This is precisely what hurts the Chinese people and the Chinese government the most. From China's perspective, such a way of doing things is just an attempt to create two Chinas. When I was visiting Japan, Mr. Sugimichisuke had told me that he hoped to establish relations with both China and Taiwan and the same time. I replied saying that he will gain nothing from straddling two boats with one foot.

Ishibashi: That's a clever analogy.

Liao: Nobusuke is also attempt to have two Chinas, i.e. he is maintaining relations with Taiwan on the one hand and building some sort of relationship with us on the other. We will absolutely not tolerate the existence of two Chinas. On this issue, there is no room for consideration. We will only establish relations with those who sever relations with Chiang Kai-Shek. The Taiwan issue is China's domestic political issue, thus it is our own business whatever method we use to resolve the Taiwan issue. During the Delhi meeting [sic] [Asian-African Conference] in 1955, the Japanese representative wanted us to support Japan in reclaiming Okinawa. If China treated Okinawa as an independent country, then Japan, then public opinion in Japan would definitely condemn China. We would never do that. We supported Japan in reclaiming Okinawa. Nobusuke views the relationship with Taiwan with great importance. Not even [Shigeru] Yoshida had been to Taiwan, much less Mr. Hatoyama and Mr. Ishibashi, while Mr. Nobusuke was the first among the post-war cabinet prime ministers to visit Taiwan. Premier Zhou had told our Japanese friends that we understand Japan's situation very well. This has various meanings, but to have us acknowledge Japan's existing ties with Taiwan is not something we can do. As for the specific solution, please explore it with Premier Zhou.

Ishibashi: The Taiwan issue truly puts Japan in a spot. Taiwan has ties with Japan.

Liao: Is there also an issue of trade interests?

Ishibashi: It's not an issue of interests. Before China resolves the Taiwan issue, Japan cannot seek to sever ties with Taiwan because of old ties.

Liao: On the issue of Taiwan, I hope you can also talk to Premier Zhou. But it won't do to straddle two boats with one foot.

Ishibashi: I did not think of it that way.

Liao: Under current circumstances this issue is an obstacle. The United States is still engaging in intimidation and continuing to expand its bases.

Ishibashi: How is the Soviet Union's policy?

Liao: The Soviet Union has ties with the United States, and it participates in the United Nations. Looking at these two points, it has its own policies that it should take. The United States chides China for being an invader. China is neither establishing relations with the United States nor in a hurry to join the United Nations.

Ishibashi: How did the Korean War break out?

Liao: At that time, China had only been liberated for two years. It was still trying to recover in terms of its economy and there were difficulties. The United States judged that China was unstable and thus it thought that as long as it embroiled China in a great war, it could topple China. When American soldiers landed in Incheon, we had twice sent warnings to the United States via the Indian ambassador to China. At that time, we made it clear that if the United States pressed on toward the Yalu River, we would adopt resolute measures, but the United States ignored our warning in the end, and they encroached on the Yalu River and thus we had no choice but to send troops. At that time we did not have much equipment. Whatever we had were American equipment seized from Chiang Kai-Shek's military. We used American equipment to deal with the American military. Although we were still reviving the economy, and there were difficulties, we expressed determination. As long as the country is in danger, we will have to take resolute measures. We are on our guard against the United States. We are willing to promote Sino-Japanese friendly relations and to eliminate mistrust. As for how to resolve these issues, we wish to listen to your views.

Ishibashi: The current state of Sino-Japanese relations is of no benefit to both countries.

Liao: Does Mr. Ishibashi have any more views to share?

Ishibashi: I have a very clear understanding of your views after today's discussion. We shall stop the discussion here today.

Liao: I will definitely convey your views to Premier Zhou.

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