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Embassy of the GDR in the PR China, 'Note about the "Club Meeting" of the Ambassadors and Acting Ambassadors of Hungary, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Poland, Bulgaria, and Mongolia on 9 January 1970 in the Embassy of the PR Poland'

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Summary:

Ambassadors to China from Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria, and Mongolia discuss the situations in Guangzhou and Shanghai, Chinese preparations for war, Chinese anti-Sovietism in the New Year Editorial, and Chinese foreign relations.

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Embassy of the GDR in the PR China
Beijing, 10 January 1970

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Domestic Policy

On the Situation in Guangzhou and Shanghai

The Polish Acting Ambassador, Comrade Wisniewski, informed about his six-day trip to Guangzhou and Shanghai from where he had returned on 8 January 1970.

In contrast to the past, the streets of Guangzhou are nowadays less lively. You are seeing only a few stores and business is going badly. There are also significantly fewer craft workshops than there used to be. You can still see indications of "anarchism" in the city. For instance, Hotel "Dongfang" where he stayed was dirty and employees were very lazy. Army members had to maintain order in the hotel. For two days, Comrade Wisniewski lived in the hotel as the only foreigner. In addition to him, there were also about 20 soldiers staying there. On the third day the Albanian Army Band was accommodated. Before them, even more army members were checked in the hotel. The Albanians went into the 7th floor while the 6th floor was occupied by the army members. Thus the members of the Albanian ensemble were isolated from all other hotel guests.

Comrade Wisniewski had noticed how young people from Guangzhou were transported daily to the countryside. Supply of the population with food was very bad. The people waited in lines to buy rice and meat. This is going on for months now. Building of apartments is continuing on limited scale. Especially park areas are getting beautified, apparently in order to show something to foreigners during the Guangzhou Fairs. Compared to Shanghai, there are relatively few slogans in Guangzhou, but also some with anti-Soviet content.

In Shanghai there are slogans at every house, dealing with the New Year Editorial and the beginning of the 1970s decade. Furthermore, there are large wall newspapers attacking several tendencies in literature and the arts. Among else, there were attacks on the works of Lu Xun^[1] because they display admiration of foreign literature. Comrade Wisniewski also saw a poster where a Chinese worker is smashing the head of Comrade Brezhnev with a sledgehammer. Overall, the population is in a tired and unhappy mood. It looks as if people are already "used" to war preparations and are not getting impressed by them.

War Preparations

Comrade Wisniewski noted that the campaign of war preparations (construction of bunkers, tunnels, etc.) in Guangzhou and Shanghai is already coming to an end. In Guangzhou people were digging only sporadically. They have built tunnels under the city and in the mountains near Guangzhou and sealed them with iron doors. Riflemen nests have been set up right next to houses. He had no permission to leave the city. Everywhere there are strict checkpoint controls at the arterial roads. Apparently they primarily want to prevent people sent to the countryside to return into the city.

Comrade Wisniewski also noted that the units of the People's Liberation Army deployed at the outskirts are not undertaking military training. He had the impression they mostly have to maintain domestic order and exercise controlling functions.

During the flight to Shanghai the plane had stops in Nanchang and Hangzhou. Both airfields there are apparently used for military purposes since they have runways for jets. In Nanchang he was able to count 25 to 30 MIG fighters, in Hangzhou about 40. At the latter, the planes were standing behind sand walls as high as a house; apparently this was for both camouflage and protection.

In conclusion, Comrade Wisniewski informed that foreigners residing in Beijing, who are employed as translators, are currently busy with assignments for Mao Zedong. They have to translate for him works of utopian socialists and literature from the times before World War I and II, among those also speeches by Hitler.

Bulgarian Acting Ambassador Comrade Bossev informed about his talk with the Laotian Acting Ambassador who recently had been to Hong Kong. On his way there he frequently saw open trenches. On the rails he noticed freight trains with trucks. The Pakistani Military Attache had told Comrade Bossev that war preparations are going on in the entire country.

Army and People's Militia

Mongolian Acting Ambassador Comrade Chuluunbaatar talked about an article pertaining to the Chinese People's Liberation Army published on 1 October 1969 in the Hong Kong newspaper "Jung Wang". It had contained the following figures:

1. Strength of land forces = 110 divisions, this is about 1,330,000 men
2. Strength of tank units = 4 divisions, this is about 40,000 men
3. Strength of artillery = 20 divisions
4. Strength of pioneer units = 66 regiments
5. Strength of railway units = 11 divisions

Excluding the Air Force, Police and Security, the Army is said to have about 2,250,000 men.

Strength of military districts was listed as follows:

1. Shenyang: 316,000 men
2. Beijing: 270,000
3. Guangzhou: 248,000
4. Nanjing: 224,000
5. Jinan: 157,000
6. Kunming: 157,000
7. Fuzhou: 157,000
8. Wuhan: 113,000
9. Xinjiang: 113,000
10. Lanzhou: 113,000
11. Chengdu: 89,000
12. Tibet: 68,000
13. Inner Mongolia: 68,000

Comrade Chuluunbaatar voiced skepticism about these numbers as they appeared to be too low.

In a 1970 calendar for peasants, the members of the People's Militia were assigned with the following Three Tasks and Ten Demands:

- 3 Tasks:

1. Active participation in the socialist build-up and fulfilling the leading role in production;
2. Coordination of their actions with the ground forces and the naval forces of the People's Liberation Army in their border defense and in support of internal law and order;
3. Constant readiness to serve in the Army and to defend against an aggressor.

- 10 Demands:

1. To follow the leadership of the party
2. To observe and follow all the laws and instructions of the government
3. To obey all orders from above
4. To protect the interests of the masses
5. To unmask the crimes of bad elements
6. To be patient and modest towards others
7. To participate in political and military training
8. To participate in manual labor
9. To carefully deal with weapons and ammunitions
10. To preserve state secrets

In conclusion, Comrade Chuluunbaatar added that on 5 January [1970 some public] trial assemblies were held in Beijing at various locations, where overall 270 people had been sentenced. In 1969, a total of about 250 people had been sentenced at such gatherings.

Comrade Wisniewski said, 11 people were executed in the province in early January. Some large wall papers in Guangzhou had reported about this.

On the New Year Editorial

Comrade Yelisavetin stated the editorial from 1st of January is containing some new aspects. China's "Messiah Role" is emphasized. It is based on the assumption of the existence of only two socialist countries: China and Albania. For all other countries there applies the need for maintaining relations based on the Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The paragraph on the United States is just serving as a camouflage for the anti-Soviet tendency of the article. Malicious anti-Sovietism is not anything new, but it begs the question why it is on display just at this moment. Here Comrade Yelisavetin voiced the opinion that anti-Sovietism continued in China in various forms, also after the beginning of border negotiations. The national press gave voice to splittists who reveled in anti-Sovietism. Now it is looking as if the extremist forces in the leadership have again gained the upper hand. An indirect confirmation for this could be the new repressive measures, as expressed in sentencing various people in public trials on the 5th of January. In addition, the Chinese side apparently wants to exert pressure on the Soviet-Chinese negotiations.

The article is featuring boundless nationalism, under which auspices all old demands

are repeated. The demand to solidify the dictatorship of the proletariat speaks to the fact that this task has not been accomplished until today. The assignments to the Army are interesting, like strengthening of Revolutionary Committees, unity between Army and the people, support for industry and agriculture, support of the Left. Similar demands were part of the Directive for the [Army's] Political Main Directorate from 31 December 1969. It stands in contrast to the article about the "4 Good" from 13 December 1969, which had a stronger orientation towards modernization of the Army and technology. Now the study of Mao Zedong ideology is back to first place again. Assignments in the New Year's Editorial and the Directive might indicate that war preparations are primarily serving propagandistic purposes. If the Mao Group is really planning for a military adventure, then it also has to outline military tasks. On the other hand, the Directive and the New Year's Editorial might of course also serve the purpose of camouflaging such intentions. As it is known, there exist plans for war preparations in the provinces that require constant reporting about the status of fulfillment.

The New Year's Editorial again did not contain any concrete economic assignments, it also does not mention a [economic] plan. As far as the build-up of the party is concerned, there apparently is an orientation towards the establishment of base units in the sphere of production. For a later stage there are plans for the establishment of city and provincial committees.

Czechoslovak Ambassador Comrade Kohousek said, if the article is talking about "great victories" it is referring to fictitious victories in order for the Chinese leadership to mobilize the people. The article is giving Mao for the first time credit for having launched the struggle against "revisionism". It is claiming for the first time that the CCP, together with all other "Marxist-Leninists", has conducted this struggle. This is a kudos to the splittist groups. Maybe the Mao Group has the intention to organize its own activities for Lenin's 100th birthday^[2]. Comrade Kohousek reminded us that at Lenin's 90th birthday^[3] they had begun the struggle against the communist world movement with the pamphlet "Long live Leninism".

The Acting Ambassador of Bulgaria, Comrade Bossev, noted that the Mao Group is attempting with this article to differentiate within the Soviet party and government leadership by only attacking Comrade Brezhnev directly. This might have to be analyzed within the context of the upcoming [23rd] CPSU Party Congress^[4].

Foreign Policy

Soviet-Chinese Relations

Comrade Yelisavetin informed that the [border] negotiations had resumed in a small setting on 5th of January. For the Chinese side Qiao Guanhua participated as well. There is no change of the Chinese position.

Furthermore, Comrade Yelisavetin informed that in conversations with [Deputy Foreign Ministers] Qiao Guanhua on 14 December 1969 and with Yu Zhan on 29 December 1969 he had asked for abolishing all smallpox and cholera vaccination requirements for all Soviet citizens traveling to China. The Soviet side had waived the vaccination requirement for Chinese citizens already in February 1969. On 6th of January [1970] Comrade Yelisavetin was told in the Foreign Ministry by Li Lianjing that Soviet wives and children entering China "in the near future" will not have to present a health [vaccination] certificate. Comrade Yelisavetin expressed his surprise, as he had expected a general abolishment and had mentioned wives and children in his talk with Qiao Guanhua only as an example. Comrade Yelisavetin asked the representatives from the fraternal socialist countries to also file analogous requests with the Chinese side.

As far as trade is concerned, until today the Chinese side has not presented its proposals contrary to the promise made by Zhou Enlai.

DPRK

Comrade Halasz informed about the visit by Pak Song-chol, Foreign Minister of the DPRK, to Hungary. Among else, the Foreign Minister had emphasized the DPRK leadership wants to achieve the reunification of Korea by peaceful means and is therefore taking steps towards detente. He asked the socialist countries to demand in even stronger terms the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea. Regarding Korean-Chinese relations, he said that the Chinese side had broken off party relations. The DPRK wants to normalize state-to-state relations. However, this is depending on the Chinese leadership which was responsible for the deterioration of relations. During the "Cultural Revolution", China had exerted pressure on the DPRK and wanted to force it to toe the Chinese line.

Now a certain improvement in relations is already notable. The DPRK is also welcoming Soviet-Chinese negotiations. Also, Pak Song-chol asked for support in order to facilitate participation of a DPRK representative when the next United Nations General Assembly is discussing the Korean question.

In conclusion, Comrade Halasz called the visit very useful to Hungarian-Korean relations.

Comrade Bossev informed about a talk by one of his embassy employees with West German citizen Jürgen Bendel, a representative of "Wolf & Co." Company, who had worked for a few months in Pyongyang. Mendel told that his company had signed a contract in Korea over 5 Million Deutschmark for the construction of a shoe factory. Currently there are in negotiations over deliveries of other equipment in the amount of 50 Million Deutschmark. The same company had bought silver in the DPRK for 1 Million Deutschmark and signed a contract about the purchase of copper cathodes. [Bendel said] the DPRK had sold large amounts of gold in London and Paris right before the West German Deutschmark got appreciated, something the entire world had already expected. The DPRK did know nothing about this and [thus] suffered heavy losses.

Chinese - Czechoslovak Relations

Comrade Kohousek informed that Czechoslovakia had invited the PR China to participate as an exhibitor in this year's consumer goods fair in Brno. On 5 January 1970 Li Lianjing received the counselor from the Czechoslovak Embassy and explained the invitation had been discussed with officials responsible. However, the PR China is unable to participate because it is not prepared. In the future trade relations will improve. Yet this year there can be no progress made in this regard because the employees of respective bureaucracies are still busy with the "Cultural Revolution" and with "struggle, criticism, and transformation". There also will be an ambassador and some diplomats sent to Czechoslovakia, yet a date is not yet scheduled.

The conversation was very polite. At the end Li asked to convey to all employees at the Embassy best wishes for the new year.

Comrade Kohousek stated further that Czechoslovakia is very interested in Chinese pork exports because meat is scarce in Czechoslovakia. Talks of a 1970 agreement can already be defined as 'begun' since a few contracts have been signed already. It is questionable though whether Czechoslovakia will be able to fulfill all of the Chinese requests, especially with regard to trucks and rolled steel.

Chinese - Yugoslav Relations

Comrade Wisniewski informed he had seen two Yugoslav ships in Shanghai's harbor loaded with fertilizers and trucks. The Yugoslav Acting Ambassador told him they had been chartered by the Chinese, the artificial fertilizers would be coming from Austria.

Comrade Wisniewski said further that Radio Hong Kong reported on 4th of January the new Yugoslav Ambassador will arrive in Beijing in February.

Belgium

Comrade Bossev informed that about 2 months ago Belgium had told the Chinese government that it wants negotiations about the establishment of diplomatic relations with the PR China. The Chinese side requested in response as a precondition that the Belgian government has to support the Chinese demand for the release of 15 Million U.S. Dollars from the former "Chinese-Belgian Bank", which are currently deposited in the United States. The U.S. are said to be against the normalization of Belgian-Chinese relations.

Signed [Heribert] Kunz
3rd Secretary

CC:

1. [GDR] Foreign Ministry, Far East Department (2x)
2. Embassy Beijing

[\[1\]](#) (1881-1936).

[\[2\]](#) 22 April 1970.

[\[3\]](#) 22 April 1960.

[\[4\]](#) March/April 1971.