

April 25, 1969

Telegram Number 1797/1800, 'Chinese Foreign Policy'

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Summary:

The French Ambassador to London reports that China is eager to open up diplomatic relations with Italy and Canada and to enter into negotiations with the United States.

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Chinese Foreign Policy

The Head of the Far East Department of the Foreign Office notes that the Beijing leaders are absorbed by the 9th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, giving them little time to focus on foreign policy.

Nonetheless, China does seem to be pursuing a more conciliatory line, as shown for example by the commercial agreement with the Yugoslavs, so to better fight Soviet influence and to probably prepare for a renewal of the dialogue with the Americans. Our interlocutor does not exclude the possibility of new border incidents with the USSR, since the Chinese know that the Soviets, already harshly criticized by many communist parties, cannot afford too strong a retaliation, as long of course as the incidents do not go exceed a certain scale. The Beijing government does possess therefore a certain margin of maneuver in regard to its borders, and it would be surprising if it did not use that margin to create difficulties for the USSR.

Moreover, China wishes to establish diplomatic ties with Canada, Italy and maybe other countries, which would strengthen its position for eventual discussions with the United States. On this issue, the Foreign Office believes that the Canadian Foreign Minister was careless by claiming *urbi et orbi* that his country is ready to recognize the Beijing government even if this means a break with Taiwan. Canada, it is noted here, is thus weakening its position in its negotiation with Beijing and risks causing some dissatisfaction in America.

Our interlocutor feels that we will have a clearer view of Chinese foreign policy when Chinese ambassadors, who had returned home to be re-educated, will come back to their posts.

Signed Geoffroy Chodron de Courcel