

February 01, 1989 Diary of Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze

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Summary:

Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's aide records his thoughts as they arrive in Beijing to meet with Chinese officials.

Credits:

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Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

1 February 1989

... We will [...] fly to Beijing and accomplish one little historic task—agree on the Soviet-Chinese summit. [We] will repair the thread broken off thirty years ago, and will start weaving a new one—in accordance with the laws of the time.

“Moscow-Beijing, Moscow-Beijing, the people are going, going forward...” [reference to a popular Soviet song of the 1950s]. My young and silly voice, shouting out this song, is within the engine noise. “Stalin and Mao are listening to us, listening to us, listening to us...”

We successfully overthrew Stalin, while Mao was spared by the Chinese. Deng turned out to be a lot smarter than their “gang of four” and our ideological bandits.

Seven hours of flight, and five hours difference—there is enough time for thoughts and work. I am amending, on E.A. [Shevardnadze’s] request the text of his statement at the meeting of the *aktiv* at our embassy and, for the nth time, ponder that the “party of the perestroika” has no clear program, and what it does have has been castrated with the knives of resistance.

We arrive after nine in the evening. Many [one word unclear], many Chinese, many hopes.

Way through a night city. Attempts to make out in the darkness signs of the Chinese well-being. One can clearly see hints of a large building boom and expedited bicyclization of the population. The street before the embassy—in the 1960s and the 1970s the anti-Revisionist street—houses, as before, one-story, fangzi-like houses [fangzi, from Chinese for “house,” is a Russian word for a low-built wooden house], while the Embassy itself shines in the night with its crystal lump of post-Stalinist Renaissance.

The future, however, refuses to fall into hands. The forward group—G. Kireev, Iu. Miakotnykh—reports: the work on the joint statement on Kampuchea stumbled over three points. In their words, their content and tone are such that if we kept them, conceding to the Chinese, a break with the Vietnamese would be unavoidable.

Especially unacceptable is the point proposed by the Chinese about the creation of the four-party coalition government under the leadership of [Prince Norodom] Sihanouk.

I recalled the meeting with Qian Qichen on Rue de Grenelle in Paris.

- We accepted your proposal on the joint statement on Kampuchea, he said then.

He said it with some special emphasis, highlighting “your proposal.”