

**January 18, 1961**  
**Memorandum of Conversation with Comrade Zhou  
Enlai**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Zhou Enlai and the Albanian Ambassador discuss military and economic cooperation between Albania and China.

**Original Language:**

Albanian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

## WHAT COMRADE ZHOU ENLAI SAID TO US AT THE 17 JANUARY 1961 MEETING

I thank you for your kind words. I read the notes from your meeting with [CCP CC member] comrade Li Xiannian. The relations between our countries have continued to strengthen since the liberation and especially these past few years. Though you are a few thousand kilometers away, our work and interests coincide: Help each other and continue onwards. Though our countries are different - one has a large population and the other a small one - the very spirit of our struggles is the same. We admire you because we have three things in common: First, you are very dedicated in the fight against imperialism and revisionism; second, we are undertaking the same efforts towards building socialism and communism in our countries; third, in our relations we both stay faithful to proletarian internationalism and Marxism-Leninism and show perfect unity. We will never lose as long as we keep high these three flags. Hence, we have a responsibility to help you just as you help us by remaining steadfast on the shores of the Mediterranean. We must remain resolute on these three issues. If the others also fight for them, we must support them too.

In the socialist camp there have been countries which lie close to imperialism: Korea, Vietnam, Albania, Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany. Germany does not behave well towards you and us, but were they to go to war with Western Germany, we would help them. Tomorrow the [East] German delegation is coming here.

Within these next 10 days it is a good idea to arrive at some agreement in principle and choose the issues we will decide on.

I wanted to give you some clarification on issues you discussed with comrade Li Xiannian.

In relation to economic cooperation we must keep in mind three main issues: First, you have a right to ask from us and we will give you all we can, but do not thank us; second, ask from us depending on your immediate need. Ask today for what is imperative. Ask tomorrow for what can wait. If we have it, we will give it to you. While what we do not have, we will not say we will give to you because it would not be realistic. Third, we must manage our activities based on: a) proletarian internationalism, b) the current situation, and c) the course of action.

I read the notes from the meeting you had with comrade Li Xiannian and the list of issues. These could be grouped into:

- 1) Commerce for 1961.
- 2) Long-term commerce and cooperation for the years 1961-1965, including specialists, farming mechanization, grains, research, etc.
- 3) Military matters

My thoughts on the first issue:

For goods we must give you 20 million rubles, while you give us 9 million rubles. There is a deficit of 11 million. Last year's deficit was 10 million for a total of 21 million. We think that for this year this is easy to solve.

On the other hand, from last year to June of this year we have given and will give you 190,000 tons of grains. During 1961 we will also give you 2,000 tons of rice, 3,000

tons of fats and 6,000 tons of sugar. All these come up to 60 million rubles and are included in the loan without interest that we have given you. We think that you should pay off the loan around 1971, just as we have done with the other socialist countries. If by then you will have difficulty paying, we could exchange letters and postpone the due date. If in 1981 you will still have trouble paying, the date could, with your request, be moved again to a later date. And if even after that you will be unable to pay, it is possible that we could write it all off. In fact, in order to postpone the 1971 deadline, you could [at any point] from now write a letter from the Central Committee, but this fact should be kept between us.

We also have a request by you for 85 different articles at a value of 70 million rubles for 1961. We analyzed this request and can give you up to 60% of them. The other 40% we do not have. These last ones we will include in the new loan and not in the one for 55 million rubles. But these matters should be discussed with our Vice-Minister for Foreign Trade.

Hence, you should for 1961 use 21 million rubles of the previous loan and around 100 million rubles as a new loan. This can also be published in the press.

Thoughts on long-term trade and cooperation (second point):

In relation to this point we have the following issues: First, 100 million rubles for farming mechanization; second, grains for 1962-1963 at about 350,000 tons (including rice, edible fats, and sugar) or around 100 million rubles; third, for the next four years you have requested 125 industrial plants (17 non-interconnected plants, 25 smaller plants advised by [Vice Chairman of the Ministerial Council and Member of the CC ALP] comrade Abdyl Këllezi, and 85 works [previously to be given] by Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, etc.); fourth, you have requested from us [the substitution of] the Soviet specialists whose tenure is about to end; fifth, similar to along the activities by Soviet specialists on geological research, you request our specialists to also work in those areas.

The above five issues are complex and not easy like the ones discussed in the first point (trade for 1961).

Our thoughts are that from these five issues the grain issue is the easiest to deal with. If you cannot provide them [grains] on your own, we will give them to you. For the other issues, which are complex, we must understand (explain) these points:

- 1) Will the above mentioned plants by Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia be given or not? Is that final?
- 2) If they will not give them to you, is your work going to continue as previously planned or not?
- 3) We must analyze to see whether we are able to solve all your issues.

We think that, as you also mentioned, the Soviets, the Czechs and others might not keep their promises or drag out the deliveries. We think it is fair to think so. But, at the same time, we think that announcing this immediately could be very damaging. Is this a suitable course of action after the Moscow meeting?

If the Soviet Union and the other countries will not deliver the plants, how can we undertake delivering them to you? At the moment we can not express our opinion on that matter. We think that you could instead review your plans for the plants. For example: first, at the moment farming, irrigation, fertilizers, mechanization, etc. are

the most important areas for you; second, the farming products processing industry for increasing living standards; third, minerals industry, including petroleum, to ensure cheaper foreign currency; fourth, heavy industry, smelting, communications, etc.; fifth, the construction of an industry for repairing plants. Could you take a closer look at the above issues? Our thoughts could be immature since we do not know your situation extremely well. You know it much better.

Is China able to give Albania all the 125 works she is asking for and provide the mechanization of farming as well? Is her technological capacity able to give all you ask? On these matters we need a longer period of information exchange and better knowledge of the issues on our part. We cannot give you our complete thoughts within a period of ten days.

On long-term trade and economic cooperation we must decide on the course we should follow. At this moment we could decide the total sum of the loans we will give you. We could say that it will be used for the construction of the economy, construction of industrial works, mechanization of farming, grains, specialists, geological research, etc. But we cannot, at the moment, provide concrete details on how the loans will be used. This we will decide at a later date.

If you agree to all we said, I will notify our Central Committee so that the question of how many hundreds of millions of rubles [we will loan you] can be decided upon. Tell us how much you want. At this time we will sign just a non-specific agreement. We think that the presidents of the Planning Commissions should exchange thoughts and information so we can get a better idea on the above mentioned matters. Among the delegation that we will send to your [ALP] Congress will be a comrade who is knowledgeable in matters of economic planning to continue talks with you. On the other hand, you requested that we send advisors to our embassy in Tirana. We will send them. At your Congress you could mention that China will help you, but without mentioning specific activities. Later, when the issues with the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia have been clarified, a delegation can be sent that can finalize specific details on all the matters.

The military aid matter is also very complicated. You are a member of the Warsaw Pact. It is the Soviet Union's duty to help you. We think that it is inappropriate for us to interfere in this matter. Yet, this does not mean that if the Soviet Union does not give you aid, we will not either. We must make a list of the needs for half of the army, 17,500 personnel. But we do not have some of the things you need. We do not, for example, have MIG fighters and Type 19 planes and we still do not have enough tanks. We think that we could provide over half of your needs. We will also notify you later of what we do not have. We need to find out the shape and model of the military uniforms and who will sew them. But this is not the main thing. What is important is that you are a member of the Warsaw Pact.

We think that you should discuss this matter again with the Soviet Union. We will also talk to them so that the relations with Albania improve and that they help you on military matters, because they still utilize Albania as their own port. Your talks with the Soviet Union and ours with them are in the interest of both countries. If these talks are not successful, then we will help you with what we have. If the Soviet Union will get back to helping you, we will stop furnishing you [military aid] because you are a member of the Warsaw Pact. And this does not mean that we do not protect you.

If [First Vice-Chairman of the Ministerial Council and Member of the Political Bureau of the CC of ALP] comrade Koleka will give his opinion on these matters, I will notify our Central Committee.

In short, our opinion on the three issues is this:

1) For 1961 we can decide on the loan amount and the equipment and can sign the pertinent agreements;

2) For long-term trade and economic cooperation we think that at the moment we should decide the amount of funds so that your Congress is not impeded [in its work]. It would be helpful if you talked to the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia again to find out if they will deliver the promised plants. You should seek to resolve these issues with them and between us the work will continue unhindered;

3) As to the matter of [providing] 50% of the needs of the army (food and dress) we should calculate the necessary amounts and also start preparatory work on the other matters.

Aside from those matters, we should discuss the matter of the [loan] figures that you want altered. The Central Committee will notify you on this matter and I will also speak to the relevant organs.

(During the talks with comrade Koleka, Zhou Enlai also said this :)

- It is not possible for us to secure goods, works, etc. for you from Italy, France, Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, etc.

- We will defer to the Soviet Union on the military aid matters because we cannot deliver military goods without Soviet and other socialist countries' ships. We do not have ships of our own for this.

Note. The Chinese side in the talks was represented by: The Politburo of the CC of the Chinese Communist Party member and Vice-Chairman of the State Li Xiannian, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Tsen Yiu Zhian, Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade Li Chan, Vice-President of the Planning Commission Liu Min Fou, Vice-President of the State Economic Committee Chan Kuo Zhian, Vice-Chief of Staff Chan Chun Siu and the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Tirana Luo Shigao.

The Albanian side was represented by comrades: Mihal Prifti, Pupo Shyti and Shenasi Dragoti.

This report was compiled after the notes taken by the comrades attending the meeting were consulted and compared. Three copies of this report were printed. One copy was sent to Comrade Enver Hoxha, one copy is held by comrade Spiro Koleka, and the third copy is kept at the embassy by comrade Mihal Prifti.

The notes kept by our comrades during the meeting were destroyed.

The report was typed by comrades Mihal Prifti and Pupo Shyti.

Beijing, 18 January 1961