

**September 11, 1969**

**Note of Conversation between Ion Gheorge Maurer  
and Zhou Enlai on 11 September 1969**

**Citation:**

"Note of Conversation between Ion Gheorge Maurer and Zhou Enlai on 11 September 1969", September 11, 1969, Wilson Center Digital Archive, A.N.I.C., fond RCP CC—External Relations Division, file 72/1969, f. 31-34. Published in *Relatiile Romano-Chineze, 1880-1974 [Sino-Romanian Relations, 1880-1974]*, edited by Ioan Romulus Budura, (Bucharest, 2005), pp. 943-959. Translated by Madalina Cristoloveanu. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117760>

**Summary:**

Zhou Enlai describes his meeting with Aleksey Kosygin to Ion Gheorge Maurer. The Enlai and Kosygin agree that they will keep the status quo along the Sino-Soviet border, as to not let it come to violence. They also agreed verbally to rework the old border treaties, created in the imperial era. Enlai holds that there are too many differences between China and the USSR to work out easily, but Maurer states that it is a good start.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

**Original Language:**

Romanian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

## Note

concerning the conversation of Comrade Ion Gheorghe Maurer, RCP CC Permanent Presidium Executive Committee member, Socialist Republic of Romania Council of Ministers President, with Comrade Zhou Enlai, Chinese Communist Party Politburo Permanent Committee member, People's Republic of China Premier, which took place on 11 September 1969 at 4 p.m. in the car from the Beijing airport to the guesthouse.

Premier Zhou Enlai stated that, according to the previous agreement, he is ready to continue the discussions started on 7 September 1969 and proposed they begin as soon as they arrive at the guesthouse, so that the Romanian delegation, according to its wish, will be able to leave Beijing during the morning of 12 September. The premier mentioned that during the evening of the same day, after the conversations with the Romanian delegation, he will also have a conversation with the delegation led by Comrade Toi En Ghen, who expressed this wish.

Comrade president Ion Gheorghe Maurer agreed with the proposition.

Further, premier Zhou Enlai referred to Kosygin's visit to Beijing, stating the following:

"I said goodbye to Kosygin 15 minutes ago, after a three hour conversation that I had with him at the airport. He came to Beijing by making a great detour. This is because he didn't receive our consent to pass through China until pretty late, three hours after his flight's take-off. After receiving our consent, he continued his trip through the capital of one of the Central Asian republics. Having arrived here, he contacted Moscow, had consultations with the other leaders and later headed for Irkutsk, from where he arrived in Beijing.

The decision to come to Beijing demonstrates that the Soviets consider that Sino-Soviet relations are too strained and intend to ameliorate the situation in order to use this to attenuate the numerous internal contradictions in the Soviet Union.

As part of the conversation I had with Kosygin, several other problems were tackled, but, most of all, we discussed aspects of our bilateral relations, particularly the border conflicts.

I will discuss the conversation with Kosygin in greater detail during the exchange that we will continue at the guesthouse where Comrade Kang Sheng will also be present. Right now, I only want to present the main points of the discussions.

Regarding the border conflicts, we reached a verbal agreement which contains the main points of our position, that I described to you on 7 September, more exactly, as the maintenance of the status quo until a final solution is found for the problems at the border and avoiding clashes.

I added one more point to this: the withdrawal of troops by both sides from the contact areas.

We agreed that I will notify Comrade Mao Zedong and our Politburo about this agreement, after which he will notify the CPSU Politburo and, after approval by both leaderships, this will take the form of a written agreement.

I explained to Kosygin that in order to resolve the issues at the border, one has to recognize the inequitable character of the border treaties imposed on the Chinese and Russian nations by the imperial and tsarist regimes, under conditions in which

both nations were devoid of rights. I also explained to him that China has no territorial aspirations vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, but only wishes to settle the issues through an equitable treaty that will replace the unfair old ones. I told Kosygin that we wish to use the unfair treaties as a starting point of the negotiations and that during these we wish to find a solution, in the spirit of mutual understanding and concession, to the problem of the ownership of the currently disputed territories. This resolution has to account for the national sentiments of the inhabitants of the respective territories as well as for the economic activity that they have been conducting for generations.

I also agreed with Kosygin that we have a two-week deadline to exchange the drafts of the agreement on the discussed matters.

I showed Kosygin, as I told you on 7 September, that the flagrant violation of our land and air space, or the bombing of our nuclear facilities, will be considered acts of aggression and will mark the beginning of war.

Regarding the possibility that China will undertake a nuclear attack against the Soviet Union, I told him that not even the Western propaganda believes this idea, which is meant to incite the Chinese and Soviet nations against each other.

Kosygin did not attempt to defend the Soviet Union vis-à-vis the troop concentration at the Sino-Soviet border, including the Mongolian border, and did not even deny this fact. He refused to engage in conversations on this subject, proposing to leave aside those particular matters. His effort to avoid a polemical discussion was evident.

I told Kosygin that there are great differences between us in political and ideological matters that cannot be easily settled, but that they should not hinder the attenuation of tensions between states or the settlement of certain aspects of our bilateral state relations.

Kosygin also brought up the issue of aerial and railway transport as well as the subject of trade between our countries. He deplored the fact that there is no trade agreement between China and the Soviet Union, but only contracts and expressed his wish to start negotiations for concluding a trade agreement by 1970. He also solicited consultations and negotiations for a trade agreement over the extent of the upcoming five-year plan. He asked for the improvement of the balance of exchanges of goods, in which the Soviet Union is currently running a deficit.

I replied to Kosygin that the one responsible for the current state of trade relations is not China but the Soviet Union, which annulled a number of treaties, and used the example of the cancellation of the agreement on supplies of pork products (the Chinese side) and supplies of wooden products (the Soviet side). In regards to commercial exchanges for the future five-year plan, I told him that we are not ready for it.

Kosygin brought up the issue of Czechoslovakia, showing that the acts undertaken in this country were just, since it [the Soviet Union] was convinced of the fact that socialism in Czechoslovakia was at risk.

I replied that we cannot accept this point of view and that our opinion remains different than theirs."

Comrade president Ion Gheorghe Maurer intervened, showing that we have also expressed our point of view, which differs from the one of the Soviet leadership, in this matter.

Premier Zhou Enlai continued, pointing out: "I told Kosygin that there are many, very many, too many problems, which would take not three hours to discuss but three months."

Comrade president Ion Gheorghe Maurer expressed his opinion that, even though the problems are numerous and complex, the meeting between Zhou Enlai and Kosygin represents a good start that will possibly lead to a solution towards solving some of these problems.

The conversation lasted 40 minutes.

The translators were Ding Yuanhong, translator in the People's Republic of China MFA and Ion Dorobantu, First Secretary at the Socialist Republic of Romania Embassy in Beijing, Chinese translator.