

February 21, 1985
Géza Kótai, 'Memorandum for Comrade Mátyás Szűrös'

Citation:

"Géza Kótai, 'Memorandum for Comrade Mátyás Szűrös'", February 21, 1985, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archives of Hungary (MNL OL), M-KS 288 f. 32. cs. 1985/124 ó.e. Obtained by Péter Vámos and translated by Katalin Varga.
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119348>

Summary:

Summary of an informal Interkit meeting to discuss China's foreign policy and tension with the Soviet Union.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

Translation - English

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Prepared in 2 copies.

Budapest, 21 February 1985

Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party

Central Committee

International Department

MEMORANDUM

for Comrade Mátyás Szűrös

In response to the request of officials of the CzCP and the Mongolian PRP, the CPSU CC International Department organized a work session on 18 February for fraternal parties involved in the Interkit consultations. The Soviet delegation was headed by O. B. Rakhmanin, first deputy, the Vietnamese delegation was led by Vu Quang, head of the International Department, while other fraternal parties were represented by responsible deputies of international departments.

Comrade Rakhmanin informed the participants of the meeting that on the initiative of Comrade K. U. Chernenko the CPSU Political Committee held an extraordinary session to discuss how to achieve even closer cooperation between fraternal parties and their international departments amidst escalating international tensions. The Soviet decision to convene this meeting was made then, thus the meeting should be considered as contribution to the development of even closer cooperation.

Comrade Rakhmanin evaluated the Chinese domestic situation as still being complex, and said that tendencies with a harmful effect on the fate of socialism were gaining strength, "rightist revisionist transformation" was taking place in reality. A capitalist or semi-capitalist way of living has been adopted by 200 million Chinese today. China's foreign policy harms the international interests of socialism, and directly affects the security of the Soviet Union and its allies. The slogan of "new internationalism" is seriously harmful to the international communist and workers' movements.

Soviet First Deputy Premier Arkhipov's visit to the PRC was useful, although it proved that China still set unacceptable preconditions that prevent the normalization of political relations. Comrade Rakhmanin is convinced that the Chinese are mistaken in their opinion that economic and trade relations can be developed without the settlement of political relations. Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang's condition that the Soviet Union should refrain from criticizing domestic processes in China is unacceptable in the same ways as the condition that Mao Zedong set for Comrade Kosygin in 1965, when Mao demanded that the Soviet Union should "leave Asia alone and shift focus to Europe". Comrade Rakhmanin stated that the Soviet Union would not deliver the two nuclear reactors ordered by China, and proposed to hold another "economic Interkit" meeting in the first half of the year in order to coordinate economic cooperation with China. (It must be noted here that at this [Interkit] level it was the first time that official mention was made of ongoing talks about nuclear reactors. It is also noteworthy that in the fall of last year Comrade Rakhmanin repeatedly stated that Comrade Arkhipov's visit to China would not come to reality at all. The head of the China sub-department, Comrade Shabalin, who paid a visit to China in December, commented that the Hungarian economic exhibition in China was "miniature in size" compared to the variety and volume of technology put on display by Czechoslovakia.)

In the opinion of Comrade Rakhmanin, the Chinese principle of "one country, two systems" is a Chinese endeavor to undermine the Yalta system, the dangers of which are increased by China's territorial claims against the Soviet Union. The Chinese

"people's diplomacy" creates serious problems for the Soviet Union. Some of the population cannot comprehend why relations with China are poor.

The problem is aggravated by the proliferation of scientific "Sovietology" in China. Over 40 research institutions are engaged in studying the Soviet Union. On the other hand, Comrade Rakhmanin explained, some Soviet Sinologists lacked the appropriate objective attitude or adopt "indifferent objectivity" or practicality in their approach to the processes that were taking place in China. They doubt whether the CPSU pursues the right policy towards China. They evaluate the Chinese economic management reform more positively than the Chinese themselves. However, Soviet Sinologists should "not simply be scientists, but patriots and communists as well who are to adhere to the position of the party," as stated by Comrade Rakhmanin. He also commented that American and West German scientific circles even claimed that in the Soviet Union there was a confrontation between the orthodox and reformer lines regarding the Chinese question. We definitely reject this assumption.

Finally, he informed participants that after Comrade Arkhipov's visit to China, the CPSU CC passed a resolution that instructed the mass media to clearly point out China's anti-Soviet foreign policy, to condemn China's territorial claims against the Soviet Union, and to accentuate the negative consequences of the Chinese economic management reform.

In his contribution, the Vietnamese representative placed stress on China's great power ambitions, its expansionist and hegemonist foreign policy, its cooperation with imperialism, and its departure from the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the practice of domestic policies. The SED representative appreciated the significance of the resumption of Soviet-American talks, then pointed out that the policy aimed at the normalization of state-to-state relations between the GDR and China had been fully justified with time. Consequently, the GDR would continue to conduct a political dialogue with China. In this respect, he found Comrade Arkhipov's visit to Beijing extremely useful. In the light of the activity that the Chinese CC exerted in the international communist movement, he proposed that we should consider establishing low-level, informal contacts with the CCP.

Considering the "informal", working character of the meeting, and in line with the majority of delegations, the Hungarian contribution was restricted to providing brief information about developments that took place in bilateral relations since the last Interkit meeting. It also highlighted the significance of the visit by Comrade Pál Losonczi in terms of solidarity with socialist countries in Indo-China.

It is necessary to note here that our previous experiences also indicate that differences, which were perceptible earlier as well, have widened in the opinions formulated by Soviet official and scientific circles with a focus on China. There are differences in opinion regarding issues related to Soviet-Chinese relations on the one hand, and to issues of the economic reform China has introduced on the other hand. Comrade Arkhipov's visit to Beijing has presumably received more favorable response than expected, especially in circles that focus on economic relations and are engaged in scientific research. The experiences gained in the reforming of the Chinese economic management system obviously serve as arguments in debates conducted on this issue in the Soviet Union. There are indications that the practice of Soviet policy towards China is not completely identical with what is outlined in Comrade Rakhmanin's general overview. (Trade relations dynamically expanded in 1985 too, crossborder trade also increased, there are plans for a parliamentary delegation to visit China, the president of the Alliance of Friendly Societies of the Soviet Union is planning to visit Beijing, consultations have been scheduled for both deputies of the foreign minister, scientific and cultural relations are being resumed, the plan of a visit to Moscow by the Chinese foreign minister has also emerged.)

The SED proposal for the establishment of informal party contacts is actually an attempt to "legitimize" the GDR's practice that already existed at the beginning of 1984.

The meeting that lasted slightly over 4 hours passed a formal protocol note that includes facts and figures.

Géza Kótai