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Appendix to 'Some New Phenomena in the Chinese Pursuit to Differentiate Socialist Countries'

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Some new phenomena in the Chinese pursuit to differentiate socialist countries

In 1981 again the emphasis in the strategy employed in Chinese foreign policy was placed on obstructing, isolating and, at the same time, discrediting the Soviet Union, and China resorted to every means in this pursuit. The Chinese leadership continued its aggressive and fierce anti-Soviet propaganda campaign. An essential element in the Chinese strategy is the endeavor to break the unity of socialist countries and to turn them against the Soviet Union and one another. The Chinese leaders exerted great, renewed efforts to rally forces that oppose the socialist world system, and to create their united front, which they did in partnership with international imperialism that even implied strategic coordination and cooperation in many aspects. These efforts are not new, they have been characteristic of the Chinese leadership for a long time. This policy line will be adhered to as long as the Chinese government remains in Maoists' hands.

The policy of the Chinese leadership aimed to treat socialist countries with differentiation, and to distance them from the Soviet Union and the socialist community yielded certain degree of success in the case of a number of countries (Romania, Yugoslavia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea). Their endeavors, however, have failed in the case of socialist countries that closely coordinate with one another. Due attention needs to be paid to the fact that Albania's turning against China delivered quite a severe blow to the attempt aimed at establishing a world system based on Maoist ideology. The real significance of this should be made a subject of further thorough analysis.

The 6th plenum of the CCP CC dealt with foreign policy only to a limited extent. It was formulated as a concrete task that China was to continue efforts to fight against imperialism, hegemony, colonialism, and racial discrimination, and act in defense of world peace. "Relations, economic and cultural exchanges are actively developed [by China] with every country in the world, in accordance with the five principles of peaceful coexistence."

However, such statements only serve as a façade to conceal the real objectives of Chinese policies. Much illustrative of this fact is the Chinese understanding of fighting against "all types of imperialism and hegemony", which also includes fighting against "Soviet social-imperialism and hegemony", moreover, the latter is a central element in the Chinese strategy. The foreign policy objectives (aggressive and actively anti-Soviet attitude; acting against peace, detente and disarmament; creating tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, drifting them towards conflicts of war; developing political, economic as well as strategic and military cooperation with the United States, Western European countries, and Japan; striving for regional hegemony in Asia, etc.) pursued by China in the 1970s are still valid despite the statements, seemingly opposite in meaning, formulated by the 6th plenum.

Chinese plans and ambitions related to socialist countries are to be placed in this general context.

The Chinese activities to differentiate socialist countries, and distance them from the Soviet Union concur with and are implemented alongside similar activities by leading imperialist countries.

I Division of socialist countries into groups

The Chinese leadership divides socialist countries into three distinct groups depending on three factors: what objectives to be pursued by China have been set in the case of a given country; the relationship of a given country with the Soviet Union

and the community of socialist countries; the domestic and international situation of the given country. This was also stated at the consultation held in Moscow in 1981 for the representatives of the International Departments of Central Committees of communist parties of socialist countries that maintain close cooperation.

The first group includes countries China has a hostile attitude towards: the Soviet Union, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Laos, Cuba and, in reality, the Mongolian People's Republic as well. Open, ruthless attacks are launched against these countries by the Chinese leadership, country-to-country relations are purposefully deteriorated and strained in certain situations, and even military adventures have been readily undertaken on a number of occasions (SRV) or undermining work is done in order to bring about a turning point favorable for China (Laos).

The second group includes countries in the case of which China tends to see an opportunity to win over or to neutralize at the least: the People's Republic of Hungary, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the People's Republic of Poland, the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The Chinese leadership took initiatives towards these countries, emphasized its interest in the outstanding achievements these countries attained in the economic, scientific, cultural and other fields, thus indicating that the development of relations solely depended on the attitude these countries displayed, on their positive response to Chinese initiatives.

The third group includes countries such as Romania, Yugoslavia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that support China's foreign policy and international activity, and maintain many-sided relations (party-to-party relations and relations military in nature) with China. The Chinese leadership has attempted, not only in one instance, to use Romania among these countries in order to promote Chinese objectives related to countries in the second group.

The long-recognized truth holds for all three country groups: the Chinese attitude towards a given country and the development of relations depend on how it [China] can use the given country to assert its [China's] nationalist objectives. Countries belonging to the third group accepted Chinese initiatives made in the field of political, cultural, sports, and other relations, what's more, went ahead [of the Chinese initiatives with their own] of them (while these countries also had to face a significant decline in economic relations). At the same time, countries in the first and second groups shaped their relations with China on solid fundamental principles, and coordinated their activities closely, also in terms of timing.

II The evolution of relations in 1981

According to information, the ties with socialist countries and the question of policy to be conducted towards them were on the agenda discussed by the party and state leadership on a number of occasions as part of the debate on the general orientation in foreign policy – and as part of the power struggle, one might add. Already at the end of 1980, Chen Yun proposed that a more flexible policy needed to be adopted towards the Soviet Union while relations maintained with the United States developed, so that both powers could be used to meet Chinese interests. Relations with socialist countries needed to be improved in order to reach this goal. These proposals were swept aside by Deng and his group as not being topical at the time. With the shifting power relations within the Chinese leadership and the changes in China's international position, Chen Yun's proposals may again be brought to the foreground. In this case Chinese initiatives aimed at widening relations are to be expected to increase. Undoubtedly, the evolution of Chinese-American relations may impact this process; the deterioration of relations (if influenced by various factors, the United States refuses to subordinate the Taiwanese question to its [US] general strategic interests) may force China to expand relations with our countries.

In the past few months we may have experienced a certain degree of decline in Chinese initiatives, which is due to more attention being paid to domestic problems and the ongoing struggle within the leadership. However, there is no doubt that another fact also played a role: socialist countries that coordinate closely averted attempts aimed at dividing and differentiating, consequently the Chinese leadership could not present any results of the efforts exerted in the case of the above mentioned first two groups of countries. Naturally all this does not imply at all that the policy of differentiation has been abandoned by China.

In the case of the Soviet Union, hostility and severely anti-Soviet tones were maintained, and were even strengthened in certain periods (escalating events in Poland, positive turn of events). Especially significant roles were taken in this regard by Premier Zhao Ziyang and Foreign Minister Huang Hua. The Chinese leadership was perceptibly confused by the composed attitude the Soviet Union displayed in the strained international situation; it [the Chinese leadership] was surprised and forced to take a defensive position by the Soviet initiatives to improve the international situation, and more specifically, the situation in the Far East, and to resume border negotiations in terms of bilateral relations. The uncertainty of the Chinese leadership was indicated by the hesitant standpoint regarding the discontinuation of the clearing system, and by the postponement of the decision, which is eventually favorable for the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. The Chinese proposal for the structure of trade and quotas in 1982 also suggests that trading with the Soviet Union is considered favorable for China too.

In the case of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam China continues to display hegemonist arrogance and aggressiveness. Chinese provocations along the borderline are everyday routine. The possibility of another Chinese adventurist attack cannot be precluded although the probability of such an incident is currently low. The extension of active support to rebels in Cambodia and Laos, and the exertion of political and diplomatic pressure are the primary forms that Chinese actions against Vietnam currently take.

In the case of Laos, the Chinese cannot come to terms over their loss of positions, and the strengthening of relations between Laos and Vietnam (and for that matter over the deepened relations of Laos with allies in the socialist community). Support is extended to political exiles and subversive forces for their undermining work against the legitimate government in Laos.

In the case of the Mongolian People's Republic the Chinese leadership has not introduced any fundamental changes in its policy, which is continued to be actively anti-Mongolian by acting against the Soviet military presence in Mongolia, and inciting Chinese minority groups living in Mongolia to political subversion and economic sabotage. At times gestures are made as if China was ready for a dialogue, and bent on the improvement of relations, willing to agree to border control, and to increase trade to a certain extent.

The Republic of Cuba is one of the main targets of hostile Chinese propaganda. Joining in the anti-Cuba hysteria fuelled by leading circles in the United States, China fiercely attacks Cuba for its support extended to the national liberation movement in Central and South America, and for the close cooperation Cuba has developed with the Soviet Union. There is no doubt that in the Chinese view Cuba is the main obstacle and rival to China's political expansion in Latin America. Paradoxically, trade between the two countries is developing dynamically, which is favorable for Cuba.

Apart from a firm, consistent and principled policy of the above mentioned socialist countries, the best way to counter and interfere with the hostile Chinese policy is collaboration within the community of socialist countries, and information activity to

unveil the Chinese policy. The Chinese leadership is to be made aware that the community of socialist countries will respond unitedly with a coordinated policy to their [Chinese] actions against the Soviet Union, Vietnam, Laos, Mongolia and Cuba.

In sharp contrast to the attitude towards the above countries, China pays distinguished attention to and expresses willingness to maintain friendly ties with Romania, Yugoslavia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. At the same time, however, there are significant differences in the way China judges these three countries.

The Chinese are trying to use Romania as a Trojan horse against the rest of the Warsaw Pact countries. The Chinese expect that our Romanian comrades would be pleased and flattered to have the "unselfish" friendship of such a huge country as China in their nationalism-driven efforts at achieving "autonomy". There are frequent exchanges of visits by high level party and state delegations, exchanges in the field of culture and sports are regular, and contacts have been established in military relations. At the same time it can be stated that despite high level exchanges, the two countries have not yet reached the level of political coordination. Romania is extremely disappointed by the significant drop in trade with China.

It is noteworthy that the Chinese leaders refrain from popularizing the "Romanian model" even in the heat of friendship as they perceive Romania's domestic problems clearly.

Yugoslavia is acknowledged by China as a partner in anti-Soviet activities. China regards this country to be interesting and important on account of the Yugoslav foreign policy that significantly distances the country from the Soviet Union and the socialist community; the leading role Yugoslavia has arrogated to itself in the Non-Aligned Movement; its domestic and economic policies ("Yugoslav model"). China attaches great significance to the Non-Alignment Movement that, in Chinese views, may withdraw the majority of countries in the developing world from the Soviet sphere of influence or may at least neutralize these countries. For this very reason, China encourages the policy of keeping "equal distance from the power blocs". Noteworthy is the fact that the Yugoslav economic model based on decentralization and workers' self-management is rejected, and considered inadaptable by leading Chinese economists. Chinese-Yugoslav trade relations declined significantly, and quotas, which were significantly reduced compared to 1980, were only fulfilled approximately to one third.

Despite a number of difficulties and unresolved issues that strain relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, special significance is attributed to the relationship by both countries, although for differing reasons. Owing to Kim Il-sung's cult of personality, Korea disapproves of the deconstruction and criticism of Mao Zedong's personality cult; Korea is averse to the deepening ties between China and the United States, and the situation of the Korean minority as well as territorial disputes with China are still unresolved problems, although no reference to these issues is made in public these days. Zhao Ziyang's recent visit to Korea apparently did not lead to finding a solution to these problems. Currently China is put in an extremely uneasy situation by the inflexibility of the DPRK's leadership, the personality cult of Kim Il-sung, and their justified hostile attitude to the United States. China keeps track of the development of Soviet-Korean relations with suspicion and jealousy; China is aware that the DPRK is much more of a natural partner for the Soviet Union than for China in the economic field.

Close ties maintained with these three countries provide the ground for China to demonstrate that it wishes to have a good relationship with socialist countries, and consequently the responsibility for poor or restricted relations with the rest of the socialist countries lies with them and especially with the Soviet Union. Party-to-party

relations with Romania, Yugoslavia and Korea create an opportunity for the Chinese Communist Party to expand its positions in the international communist and workers' movement, and for using these [positions] to launch assaults against the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other parties that consistently follow Marxist-Leninist principles (and it should be added here that relations maintained with so-called Eurocommunist parties and some other communist parties also serve this purpose).

From the view point of Chinese politics, the most numerous group of socialist countries that China aims to win over, distance from the Soviet Union, and use them to attain Chinese political goals consists of countries in the second group as described in section I.

In the three-year period following the 3rd Plenum of the CCP CC held in December 1978, these countries were the targets of a massive offensive launched by China in the political and diplomatic spheres: many attempts were made by China to enhance the frequency of political contacts, to take up interparty contacts as well as contacts with trade unions and other organizations, to establish and institutionalize links in the field of culture and sports. Only some of these initiatives were taken in Beijing; in our experience the majority of tasks were delegated to Chinese representations operating in fraternal countries. In comparison to previous years, the activity of these representations can be described as extraordinarily intense: numerous initiatives were taken to involve institutions and individuals (very often going round foreign ministries and thus breaking the rules and customary procedures). Special attention was given, and still is given, to scientific and cultural institutions as well as members of the intelligentsia. In a number of countries, China devotes special attention to the management system and organizational issues of the national economy.

Leading Chinese economists make a distinction between "Stalinist", "Yugoslav" and "Hungarian" models.

It needs to be mentioned that some of the internationally celebrated anniversaries (anniversaries related to Chopin, Bartók, Liszt) were also celebrated with great publicity in China in an attempt to demonstrate that China kept track of such events in socialist countries and wished to take its part in the celebration. Undoubtedly, this was also part of their tactics to undermine cohesion.

Below I would like to deal with Chinese initiatives related to the Peoples' Republic of Hungary specifically. As part of their policy to differentiate and split, Chinese leaders devoted intense attention to our country, and embarked on a number of initiatives (relations with trade unions, cultural and sports exchanges, contacting institutes of the [Hungarian] Academy, etc. Our Party's Political Committee passed a resolution in 1978, which prescribes it as imperative to exchange information with our friends on fundamental issues regarding relations with China, and to ward off any attempts aimed at differentiation. On the basis of this, we declined every Chinese initiative that might have impaired our common cause.

Special note should be taken of China's focus on the Hungarian economic management system. In our judgment, the Chinese leadership, taking into account the objective rules of development for once, has clearly realized that China can only follow the socialist road of development, and adheres to the distorted model of "Chinese socialism". Being aware of the insufficiencies and failures of this model, Chinese leaders seek the experience and practice of socialist countries with an intention of adapting them to Chinese conditions in an attempt to improve the situation. Leading Chinese economists seem very much focused on the Hungarian practice as a subject of study.

China obviously goes about appreciating the Hungarian practice in the same way as the West does: it is praised but at the same time it is compared to the practice of

other socialist countries (first of all that of the Soviet Union) with the intention of prompting other socialist countries to develop a "grudge" on mention of the Hungarian example. We have a firm position on this issue: in our country we have a socialist economic management system, which was originally developed with the experience of Soviet comrades taken into account, and was adapted to the specific characteristics of our country. We do not think that our practice can be automatically adaptable in other countries; we would rather not consider our practice as a "model". Relevant to us is what Comrade Brezhnev said commenting on our country at the 26th congress as well as the observations made by Comrade Tikhonov during his recent visit to Hungary.

A group of Chinese economists, as guests of the Chinese ambassador, visited Budapest in 1979. Such mutual exchange visits between our countries and China have become routine practice. We have made it possible for them to study our economic management system upon their request. After a delegation's return to China, it was initiated on a number of occasions that Hungarian economists would be welcomed to visit (on similar conditions). We have not given a definite reply, and no exchange visit will take place for the time being.

Concerted Chinese efforts failed: in none of the socialist countries did China manage to have a breakthrough that would be suited to their interests or to establish new, institutionalized relations that could be used to disadvantage other countries. The coordinated attitude of relevant socialist countries turned out to be an efficient counter-weapon by stressing our position that all initiatives at the expansion of relations will only be considered if China takes similar initiatives towards all socialist countries including the Soviet Union. However, it is a fact that initiatives were taken by China, and socialist countries were forced to adopt a defensive and evasive attitude.

The Hungarian experience may be unique and incidental, but mention needs to be made that we have occasionally faced insufficient exchange of information about Chinese steps. There is some delay in forwarding information regarding Chinese steps, sometimes we might be able to receive information quicker here, in this circle. All embassies and ambassadors have been put in a difficult position by cases when information from Chinese sources has been provided by our headquarters in a number of instances although our friends could also provide the same information to us here locally. However, we would like to stress that these phenomena are exceptions, but they have occurred (e.g. seeking contacts with the party of Czechoslovakia, visit of Chinese party functionaries at the Chinese embassy in Berlin, etc.).

III Our tasks

We think that in terms of Chinese endeavors to differentiate and split, the tasks defined last year at the Moscow conference held for the representatives of international departments of party central committees of closely coordinating socialist countries are unchanged and topical: we must firmly stand up, in every field, against Beijing's policy to differentiate; the efficiency of coordination between the foreign ministries and foreign representations of socialist countries needs to be enhanced.

At the same time, we constantly need to examine opportunities for forcing the Chinese leadership into a defensive position by depriving them of the privilege of taking initiatives in shaping relations. The scope and limits of such initiatives, of course, need to be defined on the basis of consultations by our relevant forums. A lesson to learn was provided by Soviet comrades through their well-considered activity and proposal for the resumption of talks discontinued in 1979, measures aimed to strengthen trust in the Far East, and willingness to resume border talks.

These proposals have apparently confused the Chinese leadership, and forced them to maneuver and reveal their intentions.

The reconstruction of Chinese plants which had been built with socialist assistance may provide an opportunity to increase our activity. We need to study the economic and financial side of our involvement in the reconstruction. If involvement seems favorable, we should take initiatives, after close coordination, to take part in the reconstruction of plants that have been built by our countries.

The practice of small steps needs to be continued on the basis of close coordination. More intense attention should be paid to carefully selected Chinese intellectuals with a positive attitude; publicity of our work in building socialism needs to be intensified in China, in accordance with the proposals approved at the Interkit consultations held in Moscow in 1981. It is our interest to prevent that the Chinese society should receive information about our countries from western sources. We need to explore opportunities to release books, films, and TV productions here [in our countries] even on a commercial basis. We must make use of opportunities to invite Chinese artists and athletes to participate in international cultural or sports events, within frameworks that serve our interests. Whoever from China visits our countries will be inevitably influenced by what is seen, and this should be our general starting point.

It also needs to be considered how it is possible to give an official form to an existing practice: currently personalities in the field of science and culture or politically important personalities from our countries pay informal visits to China as guests of our embassies, and visits of the same character are paid by the Chinese to their foreign representations in our countries. These visits need to be formalized if China is ready to include the Soviet Union.

(Information provided by the embassies of fraternal countries was also used in this report.)