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Embassy of the GDR in the PR China, 'Note about the Club Meeting of the Ambassadors and Acting Ambassadors of Hungary, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Bulgaria, Poland, and Mongolia on 6 February 1970'

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Summary:

A report on the current domestic situation in China, as well as their foreign policy with countries throughout the world.

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Embassy of the GDR in the PR China
Beijing, 11 February 1970

Note about the Club Meeting of the Ambassadors and Acting Ambassadors of Hungary, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Bulgaria, Poland, and Mongolia on 6 February 1970 in the Embassy of the GDR

On Domestic Policy

The Acting Ambassador of Mongolia, Comrade Chuluunbaatar, informed about a conversation with the newly appointed DRV [Democratic Republic of Vietnam] Ambassador who had recently been received by Zhou Enlai. Zhou Enlai said China's economy is doing well. Compared to 1969, agricultural production is said to be 3 percent higher than in the previous year. There is sufficient food supply for the population. There are successes in some industrial branches.

The Soviet Acting Ambassador, Comrade Yelisavetin, talked about a meeting with the Counselor of the French Embassy about the situation in China. The French diplomat said the struggle against opposition forces in the country is continuing. Currently one is moving especially against Group 516^[1] which wants to revolt further. There are factional fights and patterns of poly-centrism in factories. They are now trying to move forward with rebuilding the party. Establishment of basic cells in factories and on the levels of counties and cities have been more or less completed. Now the establishment of party committees in the provinces is in the forefront. Regarding the war preparation campaign, he [French Counselor] said, behind this lies the objective of some "moderate" leaders to get the Army out of the factories and political activity as such, and instead keep it occupied with military matters. Comrade Yelisavetin considered this opinion as interesting. This campaign is also supposed to serve propaganda interests. Furthermore, work intensity is supposed to increase. The Chinese leadership is shifting major attention to the development of the economy. Economic conferences have been held at various levels.

The Mongolian Acting Ambassador reported about his talk with the Swiss Ambassador. The latter was of the opinion that large differences in opinion do exist between the Chinese leaders. One group wants to lead China out from its isolation. Its representative is apparently Zhou Enlai. The other group is obviously against this. For an example, he mentioned the delegations of Ambassadors last year, which was maybe thwarted by the other group. The Mongolian Acting Ambassador talked further about his conversation with the Mauritanian Ambassador who was also of the opinion that there are large differences of opinion within the Chinese leadership. For that reason the People's Congress would not have been convened yet. Zhou Enlai is holding the reins and would certainly assume power after Mao's death. He is said to be supported by fifteen people in the leadership, among them Li Xiannian^[2] and Chen Yi^[3]. On the 3rd of February a large meeting was held in the new Sports Forum where Kang Sheng^[4], Chen Boda^[5] and Jiang Qing^[6] were present. They had attempted to explain current policies since there is large discontent among the population because of the recent show trials. Recently also sometimes leaflets against Mao and Lin [Biao] had appeared.

The Soviet Acting Ambassador talked about a meeting with the Indian Ambassador. Among other things, the latter stated that, in one of the large show trials on 27 January, 19 people had been sentenced to death. Among them was a certain Zhou Jingfang, the former General Secretary of the Beijing Revolutionary Committee and previously a lecturer for philosophy at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He was sentenced for ties to the Movement 'May 16' (Organization 516).

The Bulgarian Acting Ambassador, Comrade Bossev, reported how the Cuban Ambassador assessed in a conversation the reemergence of Organization 516 as an indicator for new escalation of the situation in China. He [Cuban Ambassador] had seen slogans calling for the defense of Zhou Enlai. The Guinean Ambassador told Comrade Bossev that Guinean interns in China had reported there are still clashes between individual factions in the provinces.

Concerning the war preparations, a representative from the Chinese Foreign Ministry (Wang Mingxiu) told the Bulgarian 1st Secretary there is a real danger of war for China and it is coming from the Soviet Union. There are about one million Soviet soldiers amassed at the Chinese border. For that reason, the population is occupied with preparations for a war situation and mostly busy with building air raid shelters. Danger is also coming from U.S. imperialism, because the United States are still occupying Taiwan, which China will absolutely liberate.

The Cuban Ambassador told the Hungarian Ambassador, Comrade Halasz, war preparations would primarily serve domestic purposes to establish unity, to "unmask internal enemies" and to develop the economy with unpaid labor. Externally those [preparations] are to demonstrate the continuity of anti-Sovietism, and to exert pressure to negotiate on the Soviet Union as well as on the United States.

Furthermore the Cuban Ambassador informed that the Chinese side is dismissing several foreigners (translators) who up to now had lived in the Friendship Hotel. They only keep a few absolutely necessary interpreters and radio announcers. There is a split within the "Permanent Delegation of the Communist Party of Indonesia" present here [in Beijing], because many of its representatives are displeased with the Chinese position towards Indonesia.

Comrade Kohousek, the Ambassador of Czechoslovakia, added here there are about 100 Indonesians in Beijing, families as well as individuals. The Chinese side is demanding from them to go to [work in] the countryside. Thirty of them have already volunteered to move to the countryside. The others try to emigrate because the Chinese side will grant them to leave, if they succeed to obtain entry visas from other states. However, they are not allowed to leave via the Soviet Union. They are only permitted to use the French or Pakistani airline from Shanghai.

On Foreign Policy

Soviet-Chinese Negotiations

In his meeting with the DRV Ambassador, the Mongolian Ambassador had also touched on this issue. Zhou Enlai had told the DRV Ambassador about this topic that so far negotiations have been conducted without any result. China wants to establish normal relations with the Soviet Union on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. Zhou then quoted the well-known Mao line and applied it to the Soviet Union: "Who does not attack me, I will not attack". The Romanian Ambassador told Comrade Chuluunbaatar on this subject, the Soviet Union has a large territory and 34,000 square kilometers more or less are not an issue. So a general agreement should be possible. If the Soviet Union and China would sign a border treaty, it would constitute a great success for all socialist countries. The Soviet Union and the United States do not want to attack China. However, every country has the right to be prepared for a war. Those preparations in China would be undertaken primarily to pursue domestic objectives.

Comrade Yelisavetin said there are no news concerning the Soviet-Chinese negotiations. Last week five Soviet pilots were here in Beijing to bring the fifth aircraft for China along, as stipulated in the trade agreement. The Chinese side was in charge

of taking care of them here. Among else, they were invited to a film evening where the movie "Red Lantern" was supposed to be shown. However, they only showed excerpts from that movie and then a film about the bridge construction in Nanjing, which contained anti-Soviet attacks. The Soviet colleague from the Trade Section of the Embassy then left the movie theater together with the pilots. The Chinese minders shouted at him and attempted to differentiate by attacking him as an "official representative" while the pilots were called "representatives of the people". Nevertheless, they also had to return the pilots back home, because they protested on their own against those machinations. They declined any further invitations from the Chinese side because of this provocation.

Relations with Mongolia

The Mongolian Ambassador informed about his meeting with the Deputy Head of the 2nd Asian Department in the Chinese Foreign Ministry. He [Mongolian Ambassador] asked about Chinese principles of its policy towards Mongolia, and simultaneously about the prospects of [bilateral] relations. The Chinese official explained to him that the PR China is handling its relations with other states according to the principles of peaceful coexistence, as it had already declared many times in official documents. Mongolia is responsible for the current low level of relations with the PR China. The PR China wants to develop its relations with Mongolia as well on the basis of the five principles [of coexistence]. It is expecting initiatives from Mongolia to improve relations. Mongolia is saying one thing and doing another. The PR China will carefully watch the policy of Mongolia. The issue of sending the old, respectively a new Chinese Ambassador is under review. The "Soviet revisionists" have turned Mongolia into a "Soviet military base". Soviet troops are concentrated along the Mongolian-Chinese border. Asked about evidence, the Chinese representative replied the whole world is knowing about this, everywhere they are writing about it. The entire world does know as well that the Soviet Union wants to attack China. Asked about the war preparations, the [Chinese official] answered they are certainly not directed against Mongolia. The Mongolian Ambassador commented this statement was supposedly made to assuage the Mongolian side.

On Albania:

Furthermore, Comrade Chuluunbaatar informed about a conversation with the Albanian Ambassador. The latter responded with Chinese positions to questions about Chinese domestic and foreign policy. Regarding the war preparations, he replied China will attack no one, also not Mongolia. Referring to the New Year articles by the three [Chinese] newspapers where the PR China and Albania were named as socialist countries, the Mongolian Ambassador posed the question whether Mongolia is still a socialist country in the eyes of the Albanian Ambassador. The latter replied there are different interpretations of this issue. Everyone is viewing this subject his own way. Czechoslovakia he called a country that is now occupied.

On the European Security Conference:

On this issue the Albanian Ambassador commented there are many unresolved questions in Europe. A Security Conference will be another conspiracy by the superpowers to divide up Europe. Albania will not be participating. Responding to a respective question, he said he is not aware that already more than 20 European states have declared their willingness to participate and the conference location has been proposed already. Nonetheless, the conference will not yield a result. The central question in Europe is the German question. Albania has supported the GDR from the beginning, especially in the struggle against West German militarism. Now the Soviet Union, Poland and others are negotiating behind the backs of the GDR with West Germany, thus putting the GDR in jeopardy. China has trade relations with West Germany on the basis of companies, while the Soviet Union and others are

maintaining, respectively pursuing, political relations with West Germany.

The Polish Ambassador, Comrade Wisniewski, informed about a conversation with the French Ambassador about this subject. The French Ambassador is of the opinion the Soviet Union wants to sacrifice the GDR because of its own security interests in order to get hands free in the West. The Chinese are very well aware of European issues and are very much concerned with the German problem. Comrade Wisniewski said the French Ambassador's positions are similar to the Chinese ones and might be result of a coordination by both sides on this subject.

The Counselor of the French Embassy told Comrade Yelisavetin how at a dinner with French diplomats China's Deputy Foreign Minister Luo Guibo^[7] inquired in detail about issues of European security. He also said the Soviet Union wants to have its hands free in the West in order to turn actively against China. The French Counselor added, apparently the Chinese are afraid of detente in Europe.

The Bulgarian Ambassador informed about a visit by the Dutch Foreign Minister to Sofia. Concerning the European Security Conference, he said it must be well prepared in order to run successfully. Holland is not against a participation of the GDR on the basis of equality. A solution of the German question will be a long process. Nevertheless, Holland agrees with this question becoming part of the agenda at a European Security Conference.

Relations PR China - United States:

The Polish Ambassador told here about a conversation with the French Ambassador who said, among else, that the Chinese had already learned in 1965 that the United States will not attack China. Since that time, they have begun to change their overall policy; what it is now finding its expression with China no longer regarding the U.S. as its Enemy Number One. The most difficult issue between both sides is the Taiwan problem. The Chinese have realized that a demand for recognition of Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan is making the establishment of diplomatic relations with Western European countries impossible. This is why they already have shifted their position in this regard, and now they are just demanding the withdrawal of the U.S. fleet from the Taiwan Strait. You can read this in "Renmin Ribao" from 28 January 1969 where this demand was made in an article about the Nixon speech^[8]. According to the opinion of the French Ambassador, Chinese-American relations could rapidly improve if the Chinese would better understand Nixon's "New Asia Policy". Moreover, the Chinese do not like the so-called Vietnamization of the war in Vietnam and a larger role granted to Japan in Asia. Apparently those issues will be raised by the Chinese during the [U.S.-Sino] ambassadorial talks in Warsaw, in order to learn about the [New Asia Policy's] actual content and to sound out the intentions of the United States in more detail. Comrade Wisniewski added there is a significant improvement in tone towards the PR China in the U.S. press. In contrast, reports were published about discontent in Taiwan's population. For instance, there was a remark that the "Taiwanese Government" consists predominantly of Mainland Chinese while only one Taiwan Chinese is holding a government office. The American press is writing here that Taiwan has ten million people, while back then only two million had fled from the mainland to Taiwan.

Relations DRV - PR China:

On this issue, the French Ambassador told the Polish Acting Ambassador that allegedly Zhou Enlai would plan to visit Hanoi. There have been first contacts between Chinese and Vietnamese representatives to prepare for such a visit. The Chinese are displeased that after the death of Ho Chi Minh [in September 1969] the Vietnamese leadership has not adopted a clear position towards China. They think that pro-Soviet activities [in Vietnam] are pretty strong.

The Mongolian Ambassador informed that, in a conversation with the new DRV Ambassador, Zhou Enlai had especially praised the great victory and the fighting experiences of the Vietnamese people. In addition, he warned before the Japanese danger one always has to be vigilant against. He did not mention the [U.S.-Vietnamese peace] talks in Paris. The Czechoslovak Ambassador also reported about a talk with the new DRV Ambassador. Among else, the latter said the Chinese would not criticize the Vietnamese but, to the contrary, rather respect the opinion of the Vietnamese comrades and constantly ask them for their opinion. Multiple times the Vietnamese comrades (for instance Pham Van Dong^[9]) have stated how unity of the socialist camp is necessary and the split has to come to an end. The Czechoslovak Ambassador said the Chinese telegram to the 40th anniversary of the VWP^[10] is interesting, because it is signed by the [CCP] Central Committee but not by Mao personally. It is directed without names and anonymously to the VWP Central Committee. It also does not contain any kind of criticism of the Soviet Union. This could reflect the request of the Vietnamese side not to slander the Soviet Union in official documents.

Relations Poland - PR China:

The Polish Ambassador informed about a protest by the Chinese Ambassador in Warsaw. He protested against reports in the Polish press concerning the visit of [U.S. Vice President Spiro] Agnew to Taiwan. An image with Agnew and Jiang Jieshi had a caption saying 'representatives from both countries'. At the end of the protest, the Chinese Ambassador indicated both sides [PRC and Poland] should now resolve their problems on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence.

Chinese - Cuban Relations:

The Hungarian Ambassador talked about a meeting with the Cuban Ambassador. The latter said relations have worsened since 1960. There are no party relations any more. The Chinese side does not like Cuba's relations with the Soviet Union. There are hardly also any cultural relations left; only a few Chinese students are studying Spanish in Havana. The Cuban party is attacked with the support of press materials from Maoist groups abroad. The trade volume was between 130 and 140 million Dollars in 1969. The Chinese are buying Cuban sugar for prices above the world market rate. The main task of Cuban policy towards China is the improvement of trade relations, since an improvement of political relations is not possible in the near future. The great power chauvinism in the positions of the Chinese leadership is also reflected in the fact that they are demanding from Cuba to send a [new] Ambassador to China first. The Cuban Ambassador said Cuba will definitely not do such.

Relations Bulgaria - PR China

The Bulgarian Ambassador told that, in a meeting between the First Secretary of the Bulgarian Embassy with a representative from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, the Chinese representative again accused Bulgaria of creating "two Chinas". He added that China is not responsible for the current state of Chinese-Bulgarian relations. The Soviet Union has betrayed Marxism-Leninism, however the Bulgarian representatives would defend and follow the Soviet Union.

Regarding Yugoslavia, the official from the Chinese Foreign Ministry said China has not changed its position towards this country. Relations are developed on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. For China, Yugoslavia is not a socialist country. Criticism of Yugoslav revisionism is continuing, what was evidenced by the telegrams from the Yugoslav "Marxists-Leninists" for the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the PR China [on 1 October 1949].

On Algeria:

The Hungarian Ambassador reported on a conversation with the Algerian Ambassador about the situation in the Middle East. The latter said the UAR^[11] Ambassador had not informed about Zhou Enlai's letter. Relations with the UAR Embassy are not particularly good. The Algerian Ambassador criticized the situation in the UAR and in other Arab states. The leaders of these countries are afraid to provide arms to the people and expect others to do the fights for them. Back then Algeria had fought by and for itself. A political solution is anyway not possible; because first it does not correspond to U.S. interests to reopen the Suez Canal, and second because the UAR has lost an important source of revenue with the closure of the Suez Canal and is relying on the support from others. Algeria has promised the UAR aid if Nasser^[12] is beginning to fight right away. In 1967 Algeria supported the UAR with 40 MIG planes and 100 tanks. However, the UAR rejected the pilots and crews. Without social change in the UAR, there cannot a situation be created where the people will fight for their cause themselves.

On Pro-Chinese Groups Abroad:

Comrade Yelisavetin informed that in 1969 the Chinese leadership was eager to achieve an organizational consolidation of the Maoist groups abroad. This was about to beef up the numbers in these groups and solidify their social base in order to enable them to counter the communist parties of these countries. Last year the issue of convening a conference of these groups was discussed. Some of them were especially interested in such an endeavor, in order to get recognized this way by the Chinese leadership and receive according aid. However, apparently the Mao Group realized that such a meeting would be hardly representative, especially since the Moscow World Conference^[13] had been such a success for the Communist and Workers Parties. Now the largest pro-Chinese groups and associations have been commissioned with uniting the various groups in each respective country as one united organization. Now the Mao Group frequently orders representatives from those Maoist organizations to come to Beijing in order to educate them ideologically. Those organizations also receive more structural and financial support. In his opinion [Yelisavetin], there will not occur any conference of these groups yet.

The French Counselor was also of the opinion that a conference of those splittist groups is not going to happen any time soon. The French group that recently visited China would just consist of five members.

Concerning the convening of such a conference, the Mongolian Ambassador said the Romanian Ambassador had received the answer from the Chinese as well as from the Albanian side that for now such is not going to happen.

On Czechoslovakia:

The Czechoslovak Ambassador related the opinion of the comrades from the ČSSR Embassy about the recent "Renmin Ribao" article on Czechoslovakia. He said the article appeared rather late since the anniversary of Palach's^[14] death had been earlier. Either they did not want to bring this up at all, or they waited for a convenient moment which occurred with the end of the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KPC). Therefore the article must be viewed as a reaction to the decisions made by the KPC [at its meeting]. Apparently the Chinese side is displeased with the consolidation in Czechoslovakia.

Concerning the situation in the PR China, Comrade Kohousek opined the war preparations do signify the absolute loyalty to the course of the "IX [CCP] Party Congress" as well as its consequent implementation. This is also reflected in the

modified texts of the trade agreements proposed by the Chinese side to Czechoslovakia and the GDR.

On the GDR:

The Mongolian Ambassador said the Guinean Ambassador told him in a conversation Guinea will establish diplomatic relations with the GDR in late 1970 or early 1971.

Signed [Heribert] Kunz
3rd Secretary

CC:

1. [GDR] Foreign Ministry, Far East Department (2x)
2. Embassy Beijing

[1] The former "Cultural Revolution Group" was formed May 16, 1966 and dissolved in 1967. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution_Group. Later 'May 16' was defined as an alleged 'group' of radical leftist 'counter-revolutionaries' who were purged, persecuted or executed. Referred in the original document as Group 516 or Organization 516.

[2] 1909-1992. In 1970 Vice Premier of the PRC.

[3] 1901-1972. In 1970 Foreign Minister of the PRC.

[4] 1898-1975. In 1970 Member of CCP Politburo Standing Committee.

[5] 1904-1989. In 1970 Chairman of Cultural Revolution Group, Member of the CCP Politburo.

[6] 1914-1991. Wife of Chairman Mao and Member of the CCP Politburo.

[7] 1907-1995. In 1970 Deputy Foreign Minister of the PRC.

[8] President Richard Nixon's State of the Union speech before U.S. Congress on 22 January 1970.

[9] 1906-2000. Prime Minister of the DRV from 1955 to 1976 and the SRV from 1976 to 1987.

[10] Vietnamese Workers Party (Lao Dong).

[11] United Arab Republic, official name of Egypt 1958-1971.

[12] Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970), President of Egypt 1954-1970.

[13] International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties from 5 to 17 June 1969.

[14] Jan Palach (1948-1969) burned himself in Prague on 19 January 1969 to protest against the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent demoralization of the people.