

February 1, 1961
**Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Poland, 'A
Summary of the Conversation between Ochab and
Comrade Deng Gang'**

Citation:

"Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Poland, 'A Summary of the Conversation between Ochab and Comrade Deng Gang'", February 1, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 109-02311-01, 1-3. Translated by Lu Sun.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/117038>

Summary:

Edward Ochab and Deng Gang discuss the "difficult" situation in China following the Great Leap Forward.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

A Summary of the Conversation between Ochab and Comrade Deng Gang

To the Foreign Ministry and the International Department of the Central Committee of the CCP:

On the evening of 31 January [1961], [Aleksande] Zawadzki, the chairman of the Polish State Council, set up a banquet to entertain delegates of different countries who came to Poland to attend the celebration activities, along with public figures from the Polish press. [Jozef] Cyrankiewicz, [Edward] Ochab, [Stefan] Jędrzychowski, [Marian] Spychalski, Zambrowski, and other leaders of the party and government attended the reception. At the banquet, Zawadzki and Ochab took the initiative to contact our delegate, and made warm and friendly conversations with our delegates in succession.

Zawadzki first extended his welcome and joy to our journalist delegation for visiting Poland. He said, "We should greatly develop and strengthen the cooperation and friendship between journalists in China and Poland." Secondly, he said that he read in the newspaper PAP (Polska Agencja Prasowa) the journalist Shen-chai-er-bi-ci's [sic] reports on the People's Commune in the countryside and city of China. Among these reports are described "the great imitative spirit and patriotism of Chinese masses." He thought the articles were written "in a beautiful and insightful way." The People's Commune was "described as a positive and good phenomenon."

Ochab mentioned to our delegation, "We request Polish newspapers and magazines to report more about China." Among such requests was to ask the "People's Forum" to introduce religious issues in China, intending to influence Polish people with the introduction of Chinese people's attitude toward religion. He said, "In order to solve the religion problem in Poland, and to liberate people from religious superstitions thoroughly, [we need to do] a lot of work patiently. Our party decided to actively solve the religion problem, rather than let it take its own course."

Ochab mentioned that: "China needs to develop at high speed in order to narrow the gap between itself and developed countries. Poland needs to develop rapidly as well."

Ochab said from many reports written by Polish journalists and the embassy, he knew that the situation in China was difficult. "Due to natural disasters, you are facing big challenges in material supplies. We are very concerned about how the Chinese comrades overcome difficulties of food supply."

Comrade Deng Gang said: "Due to a two-year consecutive natural disaster, we do have some difficulties, which was mentioned in the recent Ninth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CCP."

Ochab said: "Because the Chinese newspapers and magazines did not publish, we don't know what kind of measures the Chinese government is taking to overcome food difficulties. Has the Chinese government conducted negotiations with other countries, and signed additional treaties?"

Deng told Ochab that before leaving Beijing, he had not known that China signed any treaty with other countries. Deng said: "We are confident that we could rely on our own efforts to overcome this temporary difficulty." He also said: "The Chinese people had undergone much more severe periods and we all survived." Ochab continued to say: "Undoubtedly to us, a great nation like China could overcome any kind of difficulty in the longer term, but we are concerned about how the Chinese government will overcome the short-term difficulty that it is faced with right now. American imperialists attempt to take advantage of the food shortage that the

Chinese government encounters, and launch the so-called aid-China 'humanitarian' movement. Their motive is totally obvious. Whatever the imperialist conspiracy is, the Chinese people always need to come up with measures to overcome difficulties, get through the hard times, and persevere to the first crop harvest period of this year."

Deng told Ochab that at the end of May and beginning of June, new crops would be gathered and taken to threshing ground. Ochab said: "We have four months to survive this difficult period. We hear that it is difficult for China to deliver goods to Poland. We hope the Chinese comrades won't get upset about it. If it is difficult to deliver goods now, it is okay to delay one period. Because we are better off than China, our problem can be much more easily solved. Both of our industry and agriculture over-fulfilled the plan in 1960. Due to serious disasters, China has a graver situation to deal with. We hope the Chinese government will overcome this temporary difficulty either with its own reserves or foreign assistance."

Deng expressed his gratitude toward Ochab for his concern over the Chinese situation, and said: "We believe we could overcome the difficulty."

Ochab said: "I am discussing with other comrades, it is not only an issue of moral concern, but of material concern as well. We are negotiating with other countries to see their attitudes toward the Chinese predicament and what will be further steps to take. We should all help China overcome difficulties, because it is not an issue of China alone, but it involves countries of the whole socialist camp. Not only do Polish people cherish deep friendship toward Chinese people, but peoples of all socialist countries all cherish profound sympathy toward Chinese people."

Based on Chinese development experience, Deng talked about the meaning of agriculture in the national economy and mentioned that agriculture was the foundation of the national economy.

Ochab expressed that this piece of experience was quite helpful for Poland to solve its own agricultural problem. He felt very happy for Chinese comrade's proposal on agricultural issues.

Ochab mentioned that, with the rapid development of China, the Soviet Union and China, the two socialist powers, would definitely surpass the United States. However, it would take twenty years for Poland to overtake the United States in aspect of the per capita GDP.

When Deng expressed his thanks for the hearty conversation with Ochab, Ochab said: "When we were in Moscow drafting the joint statement, we had many, sometimes very difficult, talks with Chinese comrades. Even though we had these difficulties, we were glad that we finally signed the joint statement. We hope in the future we will carry out this statement seriously together. To us, what matters are not the quarrels which happen between brothers occasionally, but cooperation and mutual trust forever."

This report hasn't been checked and approved by Comrade Deng Gang yet.

Chinese Embassy in Poland
1 February 1961