

August 6, 1977

**Notes on a Meeting held in the Great Hall of the
People in Peking on Saturday 6 August 1977**

Citation:

"Notes on a Meeting held in the Great Hall of the People in Peking on Saturday 6 August 1977", August 6, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, S-0987-0007-06, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section. Obtained for CWIHP by Charles Kraus.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/118488>

Summary:

Hua Guofeng and Kurt Waldheim discuss China's domestic policies and foreign policies.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

CONFIDENTIALAR/mh
19 September 1977
bef. fil : RA/FMG
RA
11/18

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

NOTES ON A MEETING HELD IN THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE
IN PEKING ON SATURDAY 6 AUGUST 1977

Present : Chairman HUA Kuo-feng
Mr. HUANG Hua, Foreign Minister
Mr. HO Ying, Vice-Foreign Minister
Mr. KAO Tsien-chung, Deputy Chief of Protocol
Mrs. HO Li-liang, Deputy Chief of the International
Department of the Foreign Office

The Secretary-General

Mr. Tang Ming-chao
Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed
Mr. Albert Rohan
Mr. Rudolf Stajduhar

After an exchange of courtesies, Chairman Hua gave an account of the situation in China. He said that the last year had been a very important one. Chairman Mao and his close comrade in arms Chou En-lai had died. They had led the Chinese people for almost half a century, had founded the Communist Party, created the Red Army, established the People's Republic and liberated the Chinese people. Their death had plunged China into deep grief. In this regard, condolences expressed by the Secretary-General and other friends in the UN had been much appreciated. As these veteran leaders of the Communist Party passed away, the Chinese people were concerned about the future and about the succession in the leadership.

China had also suffered from natural disasters. There had been six earthquakes in three different regions. Whereas in the mountain areas the losses had been relatively small, they were very serious in the industrial centers. After the earthquake, many countries had offered assistance. The Chinese Government had thanked them but had declined these offers; the Chinese themselves had set out to remedy the damage cause by the earthquakes. The people and cadres had done a good job and production was now restored.

In the course of this year, the "Gang of 4" had been seeking to gain control of the leadership. China's foreign friends knew very little about these events. The Party Central Committee had led the Chinese people in smashing the "Gang of 4" and the situation had improved afterwards. In Shanghai for instance, the "Gang of 4" had for 10 years tried to build a power base. However, there had been demonstrations against them and their few followers were soon "submerged" in the masses. After the smashing of the "Gang" no more troubles were expected in Shanghai.

The situation in China was now excellent and this should be credited to Chairman Mao who had denounced the "Gang of 4" and had taken measures to prevent them from usurping power. After Chou En-lai's death, they had requested the Premiership. Chairman Mao had learned of this and had appointed him (Hua Kuo-feng) as acting Premier and later as Premier and First Vice-Chairman of the Party. This was unusual since there had been no Vice-Chairman before and it was done to prevent the "Gang of 4" from usurping the leadership after Chairman Mao's death. The Chinese people owed to him that the situation was now as good as it was and that the "Gang of 4" had been smashed.

They also owed a lot to the Communist Party. The Third Plenary Meeting of the 10th Central Committee would be held shortly. This was going to be a victory meeting. Credit had also to be given to the army and to the Chinese people. People were now rejoicing; wine, liquor and crabs were out of stock and jokes were making the rounds concerning the "4 crabs with one sting".

Industrial and agricultural production was low compared to levels in industrial countries. It was, however, much higher than in pre-revolutionary times. The Chinese people were making great efforts to institute the forms of organization described by Chairman Mao and were full of confidence. These efforts were based on the principles of independence and self-reliance. The Chinese Government did not exclude contacts with friendly countries and was ready to learn from the advanced science and technology of its friends abroad. But ultimately, the Chinese people would have to depend on their own strength.

With regard to the international situation, Chairman Hua said that he did not want to discuss foreign policy with the Secretary-General since the Minister for Foreign Affairs had already done so at great length. In the past, there had been good co-operation with the Secretary-General and the United Nations. The affairs of the United Nations were difficult to handle. Great changes had taken place in the recent years and the manipulation of the United Nations by the big powers had broken down.

However, the super-powers still had considerable influence in the United Nations. In the future, the conflicts over certain issues would become even greater. The Secretary-General knew the Chinese views on many of these issues. The late Prime Minister Chou En-lai had had discussions with him and had at that time expressed the hope that the United Nations would become more fair and just towards the oppressed nations.

The Secretary-General replied that China had been confronted with both political and natural problems and he was happy to hear that the Chairman had been able to resolve these problems. He had brought back stability to China and that was of the greatest importance for the United Nations and for the international community in general. The world needed a strong China. The self-reliance the Chinese people had shown after their natural disasters could serve as an example for other countries. The progress made in the fields of agriculture and industry since pre-revolutionary times had been admirable.

Turning to international affairs, the Secretary-General pointed out that China was one of the most powerful countries in the world and would have great influence on its future shape. While the UN certainly had shortcomings, the people working there were of good will and looked forward to close co-operation with the Member States. The UN was trying to do its best and if solutions could not always be found, this was not the fault of the organization but of many of the Members States, especially the most powerful ones. There was rivalry, competition and self-interest; but there were also efforts to remedy these shortcomings and to reform the Charter. Every assistance that the Chinese Government could give in this respect would be appreciated. The Secretary-General added that he wished to pay tribute to the way in which the Chinese Government had supported his work and the activities of the United Nations.

Chairman Hua said that he wished to stress one point: China would never seek hegemony, not even when wealth and economic strength had been achieved. The Chinese Government was for the equality of all states and it respected small countries. Its opposition to "hegemonism", imperialism and colonialism had been constant and open. He added that he was convinced of the good co-operation between the Chinese Permanent Mission and the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General expressed his gratitude for this co-operation and underlined the great value he attached to the work of Under-Secretary-General Tang Ming-chao and his other Chinese colleagues in the Secretariat.

With reference to the role of the big powers, the Secretary-General said that there were encouraging tendencies in the United Nations. The Third World, and especially the Non-Aligned countries, now played a bigger role and the super-powers were no longer able to dominate the organization. This was most encouraging for the future.

After an exchange of views on agricultural problems and the methods used by the production brigade in Tachai, the Secretary-General complimented Chairman Hua for the success in developing agricultural land with simple technology.

The Chairman replied that other countries should "emulate the Chinese experience", albeit with methods adapted to their specific requirements.

The Secretary-General inquired whether there was any technical co-operation with Western countries.

Chairman Hua said that while no foreign investment was admitted and no loans from abroad were accepted, the Chinese Government had introduced foreign industrial equipment from Western countries such as France, the Netherlands, the USA, the UK. There were good relations with France, UK and also with Austria, FRG and the Nordic countries.

The Secretary-General mentioned that France was attempting to mediate between the super-powers. He had perceived this clearly when he had talked to President Giscard d'Estaing in Paris some weeks ago.

Smiling broadly, the Chairman said that as to mediating between the super-powers, the French Government was surely only engaging in wishful thinking. In the Chinese view, the US had its vested interests to protect and the USSR was striving towards hegemony. These policies were irreconcilable.

The Secretary-General interjected that there were balancing factors. The European Community, for instance, was very important. He had heard that a delegation from the European Community had been in Peking.

The Chairman replied that there was a trend of thought towards appeasements of which Mr. Sonnenfeld's speech was typical. However, this would only lead to a slackening of vigilance. Some accused China of being a war-monger, but the Chinese Government thought that conditions favouring war were growing. This was the "law of development", the logic of history. There was much fuss made about détente. But in reality, détente led only to an increase of tension.

The Chairman then pointed out that the developments in Africa were not the sole responsibility of Africans. Behind the disputes between Egypt and Lybia, and between Ethiopia and Somalia, there were other forces.

The Salt Agreement had not brought any restrictions of armaments since the ceiling provided for in fact exceeded the present figures. China welcomed the limitation of nuclear weapons. It was, however, not in favour of some countries using the nuclear monopoly as a basis for threat and blackmail.