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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, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Poland, and Mongolia on 17 April 1970 in the Embassy of Poland'

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Summary:

A report on the current domestic situation of China and their foreign policy.

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Embassy of the GDR in the PR China
Beijing, 27 April 1970

Note

about the Club Meeting of the Ambassadors and Acting Ambassadors of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Poland, and Mongolia on 17 April 1970 in the Embassy of Poland

On Domestic Developments in the PR China

The Hungarian Ambassador informed about a conversation with a Professor from Peking University. From that conversation the following was gained: Chen Yi^[1] worked in a "re-education camp for officials" in the north of Beijing near the Great Wall. However, he was said to have kept all his functions.

At Peking University there exists still a kind of concentration camp^[2] for "bad elements" where also the former President Lu Ping^[3] is said to be interned. Another camp of the university is at Lake Poyang, in 50 kilometers distance from Nanchang, [capital of] Jianxi Province. Professors, who had returned from there, told that living conditions in the villages in this region are extraordinarily bad. It is even happening that parents are selling their daughters (the price for a girl is equal to a price for a pig). Furthermore, the old tradition is preserved that parents marry their daughters and select a husband for them.

There were plans to begin with lectures at the university in the next academic year. Studies will be substantially shortened, the number of students will be significantly reduced (from previously 10,000 down to 2,000). Some departments will be completely or partially abolished, including law, history, and some natural sciences. Last year a high-ranking official declared that studies in [Chinese] native language are not necessary since it isn't already mastered anyways.

According to incomplete overviews, during the "Cultural Revolution" about 200 professors and instructors from Peking University are said to have committed suicide.

Instruction in secondary schools is continuing, however foreign language lessons have been drastically reduced. They are taught irregularly since there is a shortage of teachers.

The young people, who went to villages, have mostly run out of money and have to write letters with requests to their parents. The food situation is bad. They are chased from one campaign to the next, where one is beginning while the other has not been finished yet. For instance, all were called to plant vegetables behind the house; the vegetables had just begun to grow, when they had to start with building shelters and trenches at the same location.

Enrollments of new students for the coming academic year run through recommendations by the commune, with special consideration given to their behavior at work in the village. There is no more a direct path from secondary school to university. All young people have to perform a countryside labor stint beforehand.

Furthermore, the Hungarian Ambassador informed about a conversation between Hungarian diplomats and the 1st Secretary of the British Embassy, Laughton. The latter provided the following assessment of economic developments in China (based on material from Hong Kong).

Estimated production numbers for the year 1969:

Coal 230 to 250 million tons
Steel 12 to 13 million tons
Electrical energy 16 billion Kilowatt
Oil 12 to 13 million tons
Chemical Fertilizers 10 to 12 million tons
Vehicles 35,000
Tractors 30,000 to 35,000
Grain 190 to 195 million tons
Cotton 2 to 5 million tons
Pigs 170 million
Textiles 7.5 million

The current population size is estimated to be 705 million people.

British-Chinese trade comprises of 88 million Pound Sterling, it is supposed to grow in 1970.

In addition, the Hungarian Ambassador reported that on 17 April in the morning the station "Radio of the Activists of Combat Forces of the People's Liberation Army" made a declaration in this vein: There are so-called moderate opportunists within the Party who want to harvest the fruits of the Cultural Revolution. In economic areas they undertake steps to undermine the economy. They are corrupt and amoral, but they cannot be eliminated in one strike. They are sending their people into the economy in an organized fashion. They attempt to overthrow the Center of the Party with Mao, Lin, and Jiang Qing. Activists of the Combat Forces of the People's Liberation Army are fighting under the command of the Party Center, and they are not afraid to give their lives for Mao, Lin, and Jiang Qing. The fight for solidifying the results of the Cultural Revolution. The class struggle must be fought until the end in the economic area.

Here the Bulgarian Ambassador asked the question whether one can conclude from the broadcasts of this station that there exists in the leadership an opposition group against Mao, Lin, and Jiang, whether there are differences within the leadership, and whether this might be an illegal radio station.

[Czechoslovak Ambassador] Comrade Kohoušek remarked that in his opinion it must be legal army station, otherwise it would not be able to broadcast for this long.

Regarding the assessment of Maoism, the Soviet Acting Ambassador provided the following definition of Maoism as analyzed by Soviet academics: Maoism is Sinicized social-chauvinism with social-militarism at its core.

The Hungarian Ambassador informed that on 13 April a leading Hungarian official made a presentation to Mongolian cadres, where he stated, among else, that the Chinese leadership is responsible for the split of the International Communist Movement. Since 1963 the Chinese leadership has begun to conduct open political struggle against the CPSU, the Soviet Union and the other fraternal parties and countries. It is doing so on a petit-bourgeois-nationalist platform. Now the Hungarian side is possibly expecting a reaction by the Chinese to this speech.

The Soviet Acting Ambassador continued with an assessment of the campaign "preparation for a war": You cannot keep the population constantly on the edge this

way, you have to come up with something new. Currently there are not many articles in the press about this movement. Apparently the options are exhausted. Now one is devoting more attention to economic matters. However, currently there is no economic program in sight yet. There are indications for an upcoming extension of work day hours. Currently a campaign is running against the inner "counter-revolution", probably this one is supposed to replace the other campaign. Reports about this new campaign are coming from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other places. For instance, at an activist meeting in Heilongjiang Province it was noted that "rightist deviations" had occurred, the laws of the PRC had been violated, and that unresolved wage questions were reasons behind strikes. It was declared one is not afraid by diversionary activities coming from the enemy, but one has to fear that "Revolutionary Committees" had been infested by these tendencies. The repressions against the "counter-revolution" are continuing. In Heihe Administrative Division of this province a public sentencing took place, where in numerous cases life-long prison sentences were handed down.

According to a report by the Mongolian Ambassador, the Nepalese Ambassador had told him in a conversation that in his opinion the Chinese are not preparing for an attack against the Soviet Union. At a cocktail for the occasion of the wedding in the [Nepalese] royal family, Zhou Enlai indicated he isn't expecting a war despite "preparation for a war" and shelter construction.

On 6 April 1970 Radio Heilongjiang reported about the re-organization of the Communist Youth Association in Hulin Prefecture. Radio Liaoning reported on 5 April that in the city of Benxi new base organizations of the party were formed everywhere, but that the new party committees are doing rather badly. In "study seminars" they learned about the subject that the party is the "highest form of organization of the proletariat". Therefore they have to guide and direct everything, even the Revolutionary Committees, the People's Militias, the Communist Youth Association and other "red" organizations. The Party Committees are supposed to perform the most important tasks, the Revolutionary Committees and other organs and organizations have to deal with running routine tasks.

As the Hungarian Ambassador reported, by a Vietnamese source (a talk in which [GDR Ambassador] Comrade Hertzfeldt participated as well) it was said, according to rumors there was a meeting of the [CCP] Politburo or Central Committee held recently, where party and state functions were supposedly assigned. Among else, individuals were said to have been appointed to posts with functions like Central Committee Secretaries (maybe also a 1st Secretary), Ministers, et cetera.

On the Foreign Relations of the PR China

The Hungarian Ambassador reported that Indonesian functionaries living in Beijing have filed a request to enter Hungary, most recently a group of four people (among them Sugiri^[4]) who are familiar to the Hungarian comrades from trade union activities. One of them told the following during his individual visit to the embassy: Many Indonesians in Beijing want to leave for socialist countries. There are different groups among the Indonesians living in Beijing: 1. Supporters of Ajitorop^[5] who want to remain in Beijing since they currently do not see an option to return to Indonesia; they support Chinese positions and receive Chinese support; Ajitorop is currently staying in a Beijing hospital. 2. Another group with Djawoto^[6] is currently living at other locations in the PRC, not in Beijing; Djawoto is receiving the most support from the Chinese side; about 45 people are belonging to this group which does not want to return home. 3. A group of about 12 people with Sugiri at its top; Sugiri is currently in Romania; this group is arguing against the positions of the first group, stating one has to return home and fight there; the Chinese are not giving support to this group and try to send members of this group to the countryside; the people in charge of the first group are against leaving to socialist countries.

China - Afghanistan

As the Hungarian Ambassador informed, the Afghan Ambassador was called at night for 12:30AM to a farewell visit with Zhou Enlai where he had a conversation with him for 30 minutes. Zhou gave an alert performance. Among else, he stated relations with Afghanistan are fine and he is hoping for their further improvement, especially in scientific-technological cooperation. He has the hope to cooperate with the new Afghan Ambassador as well as he did with the old one. China is eager to have normal and good relations with all Asian countries. China is not an aggressor and is attacking neither small nor large countries; it is occupied with economic problems and wants to improve the domestic situation. However, China is prepared for potential attacks.

China - Japan

The Soviet Acting Ambassador said the Soviet comrades have received information from Washington that Japanese diplomats and correspondents there are talking about Japan having recently intensified its contacts with China; and that there have been such contacts between the Japanese and Chinese ambassadors in Paris. The latter two had already met three times during the first months of 1970. In the near future major steps are to be expected by Japan towards China, especially in the trade sector.

China - Palestine

As the Acting Soviet Ambassador reported, the Supreme Commander of the PLO^[7] told the Soviet Ambassador in Syria that he considers Arafat's^[8] visit to China as both suspicious and demonstrative. So far Arafat has not yet reported about his visit, and he is currently propagating Chinese ideas. The UAR^[9] Ambassador in Beijing told the Acting Soviet Ambassador in Beijing, Arafat had received from the Chinese the ridiculous sum of 100,000 Yuan, presumably for his own pockets but not the organization [PLO].

PR China - Bulgaria

The Bulgarian Ambassador informed about a talk with a ranking employee of the Chinese Foreign Ministry division in charge [of Bulgaria] named Wang, who previously had been working in the Chinese Embassy in Bulgaria and is showing interest in having talks. Regarding travel within the country [China], Wang said the Chinese are currently occupied with the Cultural Revolution, but after the Cultural Revolution there will be again opportunities for travel provided. One by one China will again send Ambassadors to all the countries. Currently it is still difficult to find suitable candidates, since the movement "Struggle - Criticism - Reorganization" as well as the purge has not been finished yet. After complaining about the alleged Bulgarian "Two-China-Policy", he still added that, in spite of ideological differences, China will develop its economic and political relations with Bulgaria. In the opinion of the Bulgarian Ambassador, this is showing a new element in Chinese foreign policy.

A Norwegian diplomat said in a conversation with a Bulgarian diplomat that the Chinese Foreign Ministry was heavily criticized because all new ambassadors sent out in 1969 are career diplomats. This is why they suddenly stopped the sending of ambassadors in the summer of 1969.

PR China - DPRK^[10]

The Bulgarian Ambassador reported about the talk of a Bulgarian diplomat with a Pakistani diplomat. The latter thought about Zhou Enlai's Korea visit that Zhou's first

foreign visit to Korea is just a gesture towards the Koreans. Even during the Cultural Revolution there had been no big differences between China and Korea, currently one is seeing a reduction in Korea's relations with the Soviet Union. A Norwegian diplomat told a Bulgarian comrade that Korea is now ideologically closer to Beijing than Moscow. The Korean position is now difficult because Korea is closer tied to China.

As the Mongolian Ambassador reported, the DPRK Ambassador has told him in a conversation that "among the friends there are different opinions about Zhou Enlai's visit to the DPRK". Reasons for the visit were the increasing role of Japan in Asia and the threat of war coming from South Korea. Those questions had been repeatedly discussed with the Chinese side, and as a result the PRC sent Zhou to Korea. Asked about the question of Chinese volunteers in the case of a war, the DPRK Ambassador responded that Zhou had declared if there will be a war, China will stand on the side of the DPRK. Specific forms of this support were not mentioned. The DPRK is pursuing an improvement of relations [with China] in all areas, it will also improve relations with the Soviet Union. Soon a high-ranking delegation will travel to Moscow. The Bulgarian Ambassador added there are rumors that there are differences between the Chinese and the Korean text of the [final] communique [concluding Zhou's visit]. (The Czechoslovak Ambassador added on Zhou's Korea visit that China is supposedly eager to create a pro-Chinese bloc of socialist countries, in which maybe also Vietnam could be included. Similar moves are also possible towards Cuba and Romania. Currently the Chinese are proceeding with more flexibility and do not publicly demand the complete acceptance of Chinese ideas.)

PR China - Soviet Union

As a Pakistani diplomat said in the above mentioned conversation with a Bulgarian diplomat, the Chinese are displeased that the Soviet Union published already before receiving the [Chinese] Agrément the name of the prospective new Soviet Ambassador. In the Chinese Foreign Ministry the Pakistani diplomats were told, the Soviet Union was not supposed to do that.

As the Acting Soviet Ambassador informed, the Agrément for the new Soviet Ambassador has not yet been received.

As the Polish Ambassador informed, Zhou Enlai said during the farewell meeting to Pakistani Ambassador Kaiser (according to an information from the French Ambassador) that relations with the Soviet Union are gradually improving. There is certain progress in Chinese-Soviet negotiations, the Soviet Union has withdrawn its forces at some segments of the border. (Here the Soviet Acting Ambassador interceded that the Soviet side cannot see any progress, except for the fact that there are actually no incidents at the border).

PR China - Great Britain

In a talk with the Polish Ambassador, the British Ambassador in Beijing stated that Great Britain is pleased with its trade with China. There have been talks about the restoration of the British Embassy's building [\[11\]](#); the Chinese side is willing to completely restore the building if the British side is paying a certain amount.

PR China - Romania

According to an information from the Bulgarian Ambassador, the Romanian press said in the context of the recently signed trade agreement between the PR China and Romania that: "socialist Romania will do everything to increase cooperation with the PR China in all areas. The Agreement is an extremely important document outlining the further expansion of economic cooperation".

(The Czechoslovak Ambassador interjected here that during Manescu's [\[12\]](#) stay in Prague no controversial issues were discussed; no coordination was achieved on the question of a meeting of [Warsaw Pact] Deputy Foreign Ministers since Manescu declared such a meeting would be useless).

The Romanian trade attache in Beijing did not permit the Bulgarian trade attache to have a look at the agreement.

(Referring to the rising trade between China and Romania, the Hungarian Ambassador added there are indications for a joint anti-Soviet foundation of the Chinese-Romanian "cooperation").

PR China -USA

As the Bulgarian Ambassador reported, the Chinese-American talks [in Warsaw] are supposed to be held elsewhere in the future. The United States is said to have offered a commitment not to use nuclear weapons against China first, if China does not get [militarily] active in the Taiwan question.

Mongolia - PR China

The Mongolian Ambassador said the current trade negotiations underway between Mongolia and the PRC are difficult. Negotiations have started on 16 April 1970. The Chinese side proposed several changes from the agreement of the previous year. So far the issue of prices for goods has not been mentioned, just the "mutual benefit" was emphasized. Trade of goods is supposed to occur on the basis of Yuan vs. Tugrik, balancing at the end of the year on the basis of British Pound Sterling. Regarding this replacement of the Ruble, the Chinese side explained: "Calculating with Rubles is your [Mongolian] business, we are calculating it our way." The previous calculation for transit goods based on Rubles had been converted by the Chinese to Yuan. A representative from the Ministry for Foreign Trade named Ming Ho declared that in the future trade will be exclusively conducted on the basis of Yuan vs. national currencies. The Mongolian trade delegation also noted that the Chinese side had increased rates for their goods.

International Problems

DRV [\[13\]](#) - Cambodia -Indochina

Assessment by the Soviet Acting Ambassador: Sihanouk [\[14\]](#) is currently very active, on 11 April he received the Ambassador of Cuba and the Ambassador of the UAR. He was rather pessimistic when talking to the Soviet Acting Ambassador, along this line: Lon Nol [\[15\]](#) is strengthening his positions. If you do not help, the situation will get even worse for us. Currently there are almost no armed clashes between Vietnamese and Cambodian forces, both sides are trying to avoid them. In Cambodia they had been staging a strong anti-Vietnamese campaign with mass arrests for "collaboration with the Vietcong", and with house searches and physical terror. The French Ambassador told the Soviet Acting Ambassador, according to information from the French Embassy in Cambodia, there would exist within the Lon Nol Clique a group of military leaders who advocate a more moderate position against the Vietnamese forces, and who have already established contacts with the Vietnamese side. As the French Embassy in Cambodia is assessing, Lon Nol is not in a hurry over the declaration of a Republic (then Hungarian Ambassador is adding here he is familiar with a similar assessment by the British).

The Czechoslovak Ambassador said, according to information he received from Hanoi,

the "United Front of the Peoples of Indochina", currently promoted by Sihanouk, had been proposed in Beijing by Pham van Dong[16] and Sihanouk had accepted it. The Chinese are showing much restraint here. The Ambassador continued that it might be not that bad if we ourselves do not rush with a statement because this makes an U.S. intervention harder. Even other countries, for instance England, have not arrived at a decision. The British Ambassador in Cambodia has been already officially recalled, but he is still in the country because one wants to avoid at this moment to have a new Ambassador turn in his accreditation letter. The Czechoslovak Ambassador also informed that the Czechoslovak Embassy in Cambodia currently does not accept invitations from the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sihanouk has brought his 16-year old son, who lived in Prague for eight years and speaks fluent Czech, to Beijing. In a conversation, Mrs. Sihanouk[17] voiced the concern she is fearing for the safety of her son if he encounters pro-Lon-Nol elements. A return to Czechoslovakia depends on whether the Czechoslovak side can guarantee his safety. Mrs. Sihanouk energetically rejected during the talk all accusations against her husband that he had betrayed the country [Cambodia] and sold it to the Vietnamese. According to the Czechoslovak Ambassador, it looks like this campaign is causing much concern for Sihanouk.

The Bulgarian Ambassador reported about a talk with a Pakistani diplomat, according to which the Pakistani Embassy in Washington received an assessment that Sihanouk has moved completely to Chinese positions; so that is not very likely he will receive support from the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. The United States are doing everything not be dragged into the conflict.

The Mongolian Ambassador reported that on the 7th of April he had met Sambath[18], a Sihanouk supporter and the Cambodian Ambassador at the United Nations, who is currently in Beijing. Sambath stated on the basis of past Sihanouk statements that they will continue the previous policy of neutrality. Then he claimed: "Who does not support us, is also not supporting the struggle of the Vietnamese people".

The Polish Ambassador informed about a talk with the French Ambassador. The latter said France is dissatisfied about the coup in Cambodia, that Lon Nol is not a politician, and Sirik Matak[19] is not capable. Both are unable to form a regular government, while on Sihanouk's side there are many serious and good personalities with whom Sihanouk can form a good government.

The British Ambassador said in a talk with the Polish Ambassador that behind Lon Nol are parts of the Army, the national bourgeoisie and the majority of the intelligence.

On the 16th of April, the Vietnamese Ambassador told the Polish Ambassador there are difficulties in holding the planned Four-State Indochina Conference in the near future; because the entire Laotian leadership is fighting at the front, there is bad communication, and Souphanouvong[20] might not even know about this proposal yet. The DRV seems to be very strongly interested in such a conference. The Chinese would rather want to postpone this conference further.

(Intercession by the Soviet Acting Ambassador: Sihanouk said on the 5th of April the conference will be held soon. Remark by the Czechoslovak Ambassador: Such a conference might not be possible in Guangzhou because of the Fair). There do exist certain differences in opinion between China and the DRV here. It is possible that the DRV will have consultations about the Indochina issue both here and in Moscow.

In a conversation with the Polish Ambassador, the 1st Secretary of the South Vietnamese[21] Embassy directly asked about the position of the Polish government on Cambodia. Similarly direct questions also came from the Africans [diplomats]. It is possible, the Polish Ambassador surmised, that the Chinese specifically coordinate such questions. The Chinese are having Sihanouk in their hands, their influence on

Sihanouk seems to be growing with every day. Though it is still hard to tell to what extent Sihanouk will move along here. Sihanouk is in need of material support, which he so far hardly has received from the Chinese; the Chinese are delivering mostly propaganda. We must not leave Sihanouk any longer just under Chinese influence. It should be possible for us to become more active, especially in propagandist terms. The Czechoslovak Ambassador added here that voices are on the rise who are demanding an official statement by the socialist countries. The current situation makes it easy for the Chinese to mobilize all the others against us.

DRV-Yugoslavia

As the Czechoslovak Ambassador informed, the DRV has already some time ago allowed the Yugoslav Ambassador in Beijing to assume its post as the Yugoslav representative in the DRV. Now only the Koreans are left who do not have official contacts with the Yugoslavs.

The Bulgarian Ambassador informed that, in the context of an invitation to the Bulgarian Embassy, the Korean Embassy did not inquire whether Yugoslavia is also invited. In contrast, the Vietnamese frequently called in to ask the question who else has received invitations; which means, this issue still its a matter of concern to the DRV Embassy.

Signed [Kahlenbach]

Kahlenbach

2nd Secretary

CC:

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

[1] Chen Yi (1901-1972). Foreign Minister of the PRC 1958-1972.

[2] Term in the German original: " eine Art Konzentrationslager".

[3] Lu Ping (1914-2002). President of Peking University 1957-1966. Vice Minister of Seventh Ministry of Machine Building 1975-1982.

[4] An Indonesian trade unionist, Sugiri left the PRC for Eastern European countries, such as Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary and Romania.

[5] Jusuf Ajitorop, Member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI).

[6] Djawoto (1906-1992), Indonesian Ambassador to the PRC who remained in China after the 1965 events in Indonesia. Emigrated to the Netherlands in 1981.

[7] Palestine Liberation Organization.

[8] Yasser Arafat (1929 - 2004), in 1970 Chairman of the PLO.

[9] United Arab Republic (= Egypt).

[10] Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

[11] The building had been ransacked and burned down by Red Guards on 22 August 1967. It was restored in 1972.

[12] Manea Manescu (1916-2009). In 1970 Chairman of the Economic Council of Romania.

[13] Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

[14] Norodom Sihanouk (1922-2012), in 1970 deposed former Prime Minister of Cambodia and Cambodian opposition leader in exile with residence in Beijing.

[15] 1913-1985. 1966/1967 and 1969-1971 Prime Minister, 1972-1975 President of Cambodia.

[16] 1906-2000. Prime Minister of the DRV from 1955 to 1976 and the SRV from 1976 to 1987.

[\[17\]](#) Norodom Monineath Sihanouk (born 1936 as Paule Monique Izzi). Wife of Norodom Sihanouk.

[\[18\]](#) Huot Sambath, 1964-1968 Secretary of State in Cambodia's Foreign Ministry, 1968-1970 Cambodian Ambassador to the UN, 1970-1975 Sihanouk's Ambassador in Yugoslavia, 1976 executed in Tuol Sleng prison in Phnom Penh.

[\[19\]](#) Sisowath Sirik Matak (1914 - 1975). 1969-1971 Deputy Prime Minister, 1971-1975 Prime Minister of Cambodia.

[\[20\]](#) Prince Souphanouvong (1909 - 1995). In 1970 Chairman of Neo Lao Hak Xat, the communist "Pathet Lao".

[\[21\]](#) The Embassy of the Republic of South Vietnam, the representation of the Vietcong in China.