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Information about a Meeting of Comrade Erich Honecker with Comrade Song Jian, on 20 May 1986

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Summary:

Erich Honecker and Song Jian discuss increased cooperation between China and East Germany on matters of science and technology, and recent technological improvements in East Germany. Honecker also provides the East German perspective on the current nuclear situation.

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German

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Information

About a Meeting of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED and Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, Comrade Erich Honecker, with the State Commissar and Director of the State Science and Technology Commission of the PR China, Comrade Song Jian[1], on 20 May 1986 [in Berlin][2]

At the beginning, Comrade Song Jian forwarded the most cordial greetings from the General Secretary of the CCP, Comrade Hu Yaobang[3], and the President of the PR China, Comrade Li Xiannian[4], which Comrade Erich Honecker returned in cordial fashion.

Comrade Song Jian emphasized he has held very useful talks and that a new agreement on scientific-technological cooperation will be signed. This will launch a new phase of cooperation. It is a great pleasure to make all efforts in this regard in order to implement the policy of the party in both countries.

Comrade Erich Honecker replied it is good that fruitful talks were held. The PR China and the GDR have much to offer for mutual benefit in the scientific-technological area. Achievements in the field of science and technology are attentively monitored in the GDR. The guest has the opportunity to become familiar with our results [in this regard]. He [Erich Honecker] does agree with the statement that this agreement will launch a new phase of cooperation.

Comrade Song Jian expressed he is very pleased with the program of his stay, it is excellent. This way he can become familiar with the great successes in combines and factories which have been achieved in recent years.

Comrade Erich Honecker explained comprehensively the decisions by the XI [SED] Party Congress. A major focus lies on maintaining and securing the peace in a time characterized by the danger of a nuclear inferno. Questions of peaceful coexistence are in the forefront of all action. This is a question not just important to the GDR, but it is affecting the existence of all humankind. The departure of the United States from the principles of cooperation and the move towards confrontation has resulted in a dangerous situation. Everywhere, in the Middle East, in South Africa, in Latin America, conflicts have exacerbated. The control over nuclear weapons systems is hardly possible. Just one technical error can today generate a disastrous war. This is why it has been welcomed that issues of long-range and medium-range missiles are discussed between Comrade [Michail] Gorbachev and [U.S. President Ronald] Reagan. The insight that there can be neither winners nor losers in a nuclear conflict can only be welcomed. Thus it was correct that both sides have underlined the importance to prevent any kind of war between them. Now it is showing in Geneva[5] that there exists no willingness on the side of the United States to make concrete agreements along these principles. The act of piracy in Libya[6] is demonstrating the intended escalation. The unwillingness to come together on a Mediterranean conference is also preventing the resolution of problems concerning the situation in the Middle East and in South Africa.

The implementation of the SDI[7] program is continuing with intensity. Agreements

between the United States, Great Britain and the FRG have further exacerbated the situation. Apparently this is not about a missile defense, but about a first strike strategy. Especially in Europe, the intensification of state terrorism is also showing in embargo policies. Overall one can thus not talk about an improvement of the international situation but rather about an aggravation.

The GDR is in favor of a reduction in confrontation because there is no alternative to peaceful coexistence. This is why the Party Congress has affirmed 5 principles of foreign policy which Comrade Erich Honecker explained in detail. The people of the GDR do completely understand and support this policy, since without peace there is no chance to continue with the [GDR] build-up project, namely the policy of a union between economic and social policy. After 1945 the GDR has been rebuilt from ruins. Today it is a socialist state in pursuit of happiness and prosperity as the main focus of its actions.

Then Comrade Erich Honecker explained the measures taken to prepare the general elections and the appeal by the National Council of the National Front.

In this context, he analyzed the results achieved over the last 5 years, the results from the intensively expanded reproduction, especially the development of the national income, the main goal of scientific-technological work, the measures towards automatization, and the tasks deriving from the decisions of the Party Congress for the period between 1986 and 1990 and in part beyond up to the year 2000. Comrade Erich Honecker explained the role of the combines and their responsibility when outlining the goals of economic policy. It was explained through individual examples what targets the combines have achieved especially in preparation for the Party Congress.

Only through science and technology it is possible to maintain the standard of living and its further development. Despite the widespread crisis in the capitalist countries, there are conditions existing to secure further growth rates and thus continue the agreed social policy [of the GDR]. Now the residential construction program was dealt with in detail. 2.4 million apartments have been built in 15 years. There is the target to provide every citizen of the GDR until 1990 with a classy apartment. Here one has to see that in 1945 in many cities, particularly in Berlin, there were just ruins. Back then nobody could have ever imagined that e.g. Berlin could once become as beautiful as it is today. Annually more than 30,000 apartments are newly constructed or modernized in Berlin. In this context Comrade Erich Honecker informed about the recently completed Ernst Thälmann [\[8\]](#) Park. Previously this was the worst part of Berlin with a gas plant polluting the environment. Now there you have more than 1,400 apartments, schools, child care facilities, playgrounds, many stores and a Ernst Thälmann Monument. Currently Berlin's first planetarium is getting built there.

The introduction of productive wages was mentioned as an important element of social policy. This principle entails a system of wages linked to performances. In this context issues were also discussed pertaining to the supply of the population, as well as tasks of agriculture in order to yield high achievements in plant and animal production.

Extensively explained were measures to promote the youth and sports, in addition the socialist system of education was outlined.

In conclusion, Comrade Erich Honecker stated we will use all our power to solve all conflicts peacefully. However, we in the GDR are not pacifists. There is active support for the liberation movement in the developing countries. Yet it is always the starting point that problems cannot be resolved through wars. This is why the GDR actively and in principle is supporting the proposals made by Comrade Gorbachev.

Cooperation between the GDR and China has developed well. In recent times many delegations have met for mutual visits. On this foundation relations have developed well at all levels. The GDR Ministers who have been to China stated they are deeply impressed about the development there. The GDR is determined to continue on the path of cooperation for mutual benefit and in the interest of further development of socialism and the securing of peace.

Comrade Song Jian said the extensive analysis of the international situation, and the outline of requirements to secure the peace, presented by Comrade Erich Honecker are making him happy. After his return he will inform the responsible people in his country very detailed about this important meeting.

In principle China is against SDI and thus the star wars plans of the United States because this is about the militarization of space. Party and Government of the PR China have publicly stated that there are no contacts whatsoever with this program. Also, the PR China has energetically protested against the piracy act of the United States in Libya. He [Song Jian] is a scientist by training and just from this perspective alone he can evaluate the U.S. machinations very well. In the words of Comrade Erich Honecker he has sensed the justified concerns regarding the securing of peace, and he has noticed the firm intentions to secure a peaceful development by all means.

Comrade Erich Honecker has painted a very beautiful picture of how things are supposed to be in the future. He [Song Jian] has especially felt with admiration how they think about the future here in the GDR without neglecting the present.

Comrade Erich Honecker is an internationally renowned revolutionary who is deserving of utmost respect, especially because the GDR has achieved extraordinarily important successes at the highest level because of his effort and his example.

There are also such revolutionaries educated in the 1920s and 1930s in the Central Committee of the PR China and in the Government. They are firmly in control. He can assure that they will use every opportunity to study the experiences of the Government in the GDR. Here the decisions by the XI [SED] Party Congress are very interesting. Obviously the problems in China are somewhat different, but basically there are the same objectives.

China is a vast country with a large population and a very low per capita production of 300 \$ annually. This is resulting in a still very low standard of living. Also for that reason questions of science and technology are receiving the utmost attention. China as well will have to master high technology, otherwise it cannot have a say in the world any more.

In this context many developments in the GDR are very important to the PR China. In particular it has to learn from the industriousness of the people in the GDR.

In conclusion, he thanked very cordially for the reception and wished Comrade Erich Honecker very best health and further successes.

[1] Born 1931. Director of the PRC State Science and Technology Commission 1985-1998.

[2] This is a document originating from the SED Central Committee founding its way to MfS Main Department XVIII.

[3] 1915-1989. General Secretary of the CCP 1982-1987.

[4] 1909-1992. President of the PRC 1983-1988.

[5] Location of U.S.-Soviet negotiations on intermediate nuclear forces.

[6] U.S. airstrikes on Libya on 15 April 1986.

[7] Strategic Defense Initiative, a program for a U.S. space-based missile defense system.

[8] Named after the leader of the Communist Party of Germany between 1925 and 1933, Ernst Thälmann (1886-1944). He was interned in a concentration camp since 1933 and murdered there in 1944 on Adolf Hitler's order.