

September 19, 1969

**Notes Kept during the Verbal Report given to the
First Secretary of the CC of the PLA, Comrade Enver
Hoxha, on 19 September 1969, by Comrade Rita
Marko**

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Summary:

The Albanian Party leadership discusses recent meetings with the Chinese Communist Party, the state of Sino-Soviet relations, and the funeral of Ho Chi Minh.

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TOP SECRET

Notes kept during the verbal report given to the First Secretary of the CC of the PLA, comrade Enver Hoxha, on 19 September 1969, by comrade Rita Marko, the head of the delegation that visited the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to participate in the funeral of President Ho Chi Minh, as well as the People's Republic of China

Comrade Enver invited to the meeting the following comrades to listen to comrade Rita Marko: Mehmet Shehu, Haki Toska, Hysni Kapo, Ramiz Alia and Xhafer Spahiu. Comrade Enver immediately gave the floor to comrade Rita Marko.^[1]

COMRADE RITA MARKO: When we arrived in Hanoi, the Vietnamese leaders welcomed us. The Politburo member who had been in Albania, Hoàng Văn Hoan, had come to the airport. They speak well about him, but he is said to be ill. When I asked him about his health, he told me that he is not ill. Hoàng Văn Hoan seems to be pro-Chinese, a good man. On the way from the airport to the house where our delegation would be staying, we were informed that the funeral ceremony would take place in two days' time, at 10 o'clock. However, suddenly, in the evening they informed us that it would be the following day and one hour earlier, at 9 o'clock, due to the great heat.

A member of the Central Committee accompanied us on the way from the airport to the house. Later we laid a wreath at the building where they had placed Ho Chi Minh's coffin. We took note of the very rough situation everywhere, [as] people everywhere had a look of suffering in their faces, even the cadres who were accompanying us.

The Chinese delegation led by Li Xiannian arrived in the afternoon. Upon arriving at the airport, he immediately requested to meet with us. We agreed to arrange the meeting at their embassy because it was a good and secure place. Li Xiannian asked me how I am doing health-wise, and then conveyed the invitation of the Chinese party and government leadership to send a party and government delegation to them on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China. He told us that they would not have a large 20th anniversary celebration, but they expect an Albanian delegation to visit them on this occasion.

The Vietnamese had informed us of the change to the program of the funeral ceremony of Ho Chi Minh ahead of our meeting with the Chinese delegation, and therefore, when Li Xiannian began the conversation and started telling us when Ho Chi Minh's funeral would take place, I interrupted him and informed him that they told us that it would take place the following day, at 9 o'clock, and so the Vietnamese comrades perhaps were unable to inform you of this change, about which they may inform you later. Their ambassador in Hanoi immediately went outside to clarify this matter.

Li Xiannian told me that during the ceremony our two delegations would come face to face with the Soviets and the delegations of other revisionist countries. For you, he continued, it is easier, but we have diplomatic relations with all of them, so it will happen that we will have to shake hands. I replied that, in my personal opinion, it is not right for you to meet with the Soviet delegation, because all the situations that have transpired so far have shown that the revisionist leaders of Moscow are enemies. Li Xiannian interrupted me, telling me that it is not so, that we are the representatives of two countries that have diplomatic relations, so it is normal to shake hands with each other, and that there is nothing harmful about this. A member of the delegation behind him, who was a military guy, intervened in the conversation and said that we will not take the initiative to shake their hands, but if they try to shake ours, then we will do it. I replied again that even this course of action is not right, that, in this line of thinking, you contradict yourselves. The discussion of this issue lasted for about 20 minutes.

Among other things, Li Xiannian emphasized that the same thing has happened four or five years ago with comrade Manush Myftiu. So I interrupted: Since that time, has the situation in the Soviet Union perhaps changed for the better for you to take this step? On the contrary, many things have happened since then, and we are now very clear what the Soviet revisionists are, therefore I personally do not agree that you meet with them.

After the discussion about this issue, Li Xiannian informed me that he had been charged by the Party Central Committee to propose to us that, before we return from

Vietnam to Albania, our delegation pay a visit to Beijing.

On the morning of the 9th of September, the day of the funeral of Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese invited all the heads of delegations to the rally podium. I want to point out that, if seen from the outside, the Vietnamese acted in a correct manner with us at all times and showed respect to our delegation. On one side of the podium they had placed prince [Cambodian royal Norodom] Sihanouk after the Chinese, then [Vietnamese politician and prime minister] Phạm Văn Đồng, then the head of the Romanian delegation, [Vietnamese party official] Lê Thanh Nghị, after whom it was me, and then the Bulgarian, and so on. On the other side, first was [Soviet party official Alexei Nikolayevich] Kosygin and after him the others. I followed attentively the conversations and everything that was happening during the ceremony, but at the podium where the heads of delegations were standing, I could not hear or see anything. Before we got on the podium, all the delegation heads were gathered in a room, but Kosygin was not there, and neither was Li Xiannian. Inside, they had placed a large portrait of Ho Chi Minh, and around him people paid respects and lit candles.

The funeral service opened with a speech by [Vietnamese party official] Lê Duẩn, who was very cold with us, and then the band played funeral marches. There were a lot of people in the square where the ceremony was held, [and] they had gathered schoolchildren there. As soon as the ceremony began, everyone started wailing. It was very touching. The ceremony was simple. It did not last for more than an hour.

Once the ceremony was over, Lê Duẩn was first to go down the stairs and took Kosygin with him. Immediately after Lê Duẩn, Phạm Văn Đồng went down and took Li Xiannian with him and left him near Kosygin. So Kosygin and Li Xiannian found themselves in front of each other. We were paying close attention to see how Li Xiannian would react. Kosygin moved towards Li Xiannian, extending his hand to him and smiling, but [Li] just stood frozen, did not even move his head, looked shaken, immediately turned his back to him and did not respond to the extended hand, and then left.

Following the ceremony, we were received by Phạm Văn Đồng. Very differently from Lê Duẩn, he said good things to us about our party and government, about comrade Enver and comrade Mehmet, thanked us for the assistance we have given them, etc. We also said good things about their war and expressed the grief of our people about the death of Ho Chi Minh. When we separated, he said we will fight to strengthen friendship and unity between the two sides and gave his wishes for our comrades. I spoke to him about the work our party conducts in strengthening mutual friendship, [and] took photos, and then he walked us out with his arm around my neck. His behavior was correct and made an impression on us.

When we were about to leave Hanoi, [the hosts] took care to say goodbye just as they had welcomed us. Li Xiannian came to the place that had been assigned for us at the airport. I did not poke and ask him why he changed his mind and did not shake hands with Kosygin. He volunteered this himself, telling me that before the rally, as you saw, I was face to face with Kosygin but did not shake his hand, as you told me. I told him that I did not see it, that in terms of greeting Kosygin it had been merely my personal opinion. Only, I continued, when you were going down the stairs of the podium, I noticed that the newspaper correspondents moved a great deal towards you. They are enemies, he said.

Then he told me that he had gone on an outing in Hanoi after the rally and the fact that the Vietnamese were not preparing at all for a situation of war had made a big impression on him. I also noticed this situation, I told him. The truth is that the revolutionary ethos has declined a lot in Vietnam, a result of the Paris talks, [and] there is no mobilization, and responsible for this are the Vietnamese leaders, who are also under other foreign influences, forces that work towards blunting the revolutionary ethos of the Vietnamese people. The other member of the Chinese delegation, a military guy, told us that in China [they] are making war preparations and that we would see this for ourselves.

We traveled to Beijing together with the Chinese delegation that participated in the funeral of president Ho Chi Minh. At the airport there, we were received by Kang Sheng and the members of the Politburo of the [CCP] Central Committee Yao Wenyuan and Xie Fuzhi, the candidate members of the Politburo of the [CCP] Central

Committee Liu Hsien Çuan, Van Hsin Tin, Kuan Jen Nun, and Li Çuan [sic; proper spellings unknown. Candidate members to the Politburo in 1969 included Ji Dengkui, Li Xuefeng, Li Desheng, and Wang Dongxing], as well as some other members of the [CCP] Central Committee, and other high-level functionaries. Immediately, Li Xiannian took Kang Sheng to the side, and it looked like they both discussed about what happened between Li and Kosygin the day of the rally in Hanoi. I waited until Kang Sheng was finished, and then they took us to the villa where we would be staying. Among the comrades who had come out to greet us at the airport were also the chief and the deputy chief of the General Staff. The latter accompanied us during all the visits of our delegation in China, as well as the conversations with Kang Sheng.

We had barely taken the time to relax in Beijing when the Chinese leaders rushed to prepare a program of visits. They proposed that we see Beijing's metro on the first day, telling us that it had not yet been inaugurated, [and that] no one else had seen it yet. "You Albanians are the first to visit it," he said to us, and then added that after the metro [we] would visit the metallurgical complex and have lunch with comrade Kang Sheng.

The meeting between Zhou Enlai and Kosygin took place on September 11, exactly at 11 o'clock, when we were eating lunch with Kang Sheng, which having started at 12.30, thus knowing nothing about this meeting. During lunch, Kang Sheng enthusiastically toasted to our party and our country, and there was no further conversation. After we ate, Kang Sheng proposed that we go to the room for talks. At first, he spoke to us about the problems addressed at their Ninth Congress, the lessons that they have drawn, and he stressed that, after the [C]ultural Revolution, the Ninth Congress marks a great turn in the entire work of their party. Further, he briefly touched on the importance of the speeches of comrade Mao Zedong and Lin Biao at the congress, the internal situation in China, and how they have currently mobilized all forces for war. Then, he spoke about the internal situation in China, about the successes they have achieved, about the telegrams that we sent to their congress, which, as they customary put it with the formulas, "have been a great assistance and inspiration for the Chinese people and Communist Party." We have attained many successes during and after the Ninth Congress, continued Kang Sheng, emphasizing that [we] published the documents of the Ninth Congress before they did, and thanking us for this. Our ambassador in Tirana has informed you about the main content of the speeches delivered at the congress by comrade Mao Zedong, he added, because we have always spoken openly with you and have informed you about everything, whereas with the other parties we have not spoken.

The Ninth Congress is the most important event for China and marks a demarcation line between two stages in the history of our party, the one before the congress and the one after the congress, Kang Sheng said. We are now drawing the general picture of the lessons of this congress. We have drawn the general picture of the lessons of Mao Zedong about the existence of class struggle in our society, about contradictions and their resolution through a continuous revolution. In the resolution of these contradictions, we have found great strength in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, as one of the forms of class struggle. These issues have been clarified, he concluded, in comrade Lin Biao's report.

The Congress, Kang Sheng further added, also solved a very important problem, that of ensuring the continuity of the lessons and the ideas of Mao Zedong through the election of comrade Lin Biao as the successor of Chairman Mao. This way, we have ensured the continuity of the ideas of Mao Zedong for hundreds of years. At the congress, we also approved the party statute, where the ideas of Mao Zedong are briefly summarized. Kang Sheng said that that the statute is now simpler and easier to understand than the earlier versions, [and that] secondary things have been removed from it, that it is one of the best documents that our party has ever had until now. It established that the building of our party will be carried out on the basis of Marxism Leninism and the ideas of Mao Zedong. On the basis of the statute approved by the Ninth Congress, we elected a Central Committee with 170 members and 109 candidates, its Politburo and the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the Party Central Committee. With this congress, continued Kang Sheng, our party has grown stronger, in ideological unity as never before, [and] it is growing fitter from the organizational perspective when it comes to the issue of cadres.

The documents of the Ninth Congress state that the proletarian Cultural Revolution has not yet achieved the final success, therefore the party and all workers of China are fighting massively and with determination to implement the movement "struggle - criticism - transformation," fighting to purge the class ranks, to build the party organizations at the base level, and [fighting] against the theories of Soviet revisionists and of Liu Shaoqi. Profound work along this line is being carried out everywhere in factories and workplaces.

According to the information we have, the Soviet Union is not only continuing provocations against us, but it is also concentrating troops on the border with us, Kang Sheng noted, so on the basis of the situation that has developed, we have called on the party and the people to prepare for war and are working concretely in this direction. On the one hand, the Soviet revisionists propagate in a major way as if China will attack the Soviet Union; on the other, they are themselves concentrating many troops around the Chinese border, continuing provocations and surveys. The measures they have undertaken show clearly that they wish to enact armed aggression, because China has become the biggest obstacle on their imperialistic road but they face difficulties in the political, economic, and organizational spheres, and so they cannot immediately launch the war. Nevertheless, all of their enterprises combined do not scare the Chinese people.

During our delegation's stay, they took us to visit an exhibition they have opened in Beijing, where [they] document, one by one, the Soviet Union's armed provocations against China.

Finally, Kang Sheng turned the conversation to where it hurts them. He explained that the quarrel amongst Soviet leaders themselves is a big one. Similarly severe are the disagreements between them and the leaders of other revisionist countries, who do not want a war with China. With seemingly great difficulty, he said that now that we are discussing these things, Kosygin may have arrived here for talks from Irkutsk, at the airport in Beijing.

How is such a thing possible? Who invited him? I intervened. We do not know anything, Kang Sheng cut me off, we will get clarity later on this issue, but the Soviets sent a letter to us a while back through our embassy in Moscow, a letter to which we still have not responded. With this letter, they propose to have talks between both sides. I [Marko] intervened again: So he departed Hanoi, passed through all of those countries, and after arriving in the Soviet Union, how is it possible that he is now here? He said, We are only mentioning this meeting to you. We will not publish it. Even if you do not publish it, I [Marko] interrupted him, you cannot keep it a secret, [and] the Soviets will publish [information about] this meeting. It is clear that they kept this thing a secret from us, considering that Kosygin had begun talks with Zhou Enlai at 11 o'clock at the airport, whereas we had started lunch at 12:30. When I repeated the question about how something like this could be possible, Kang Sheng moved onto something else, saying that the Soviets face many difficulties and therefore are forced to ask for meetings. We should not make these difficulties easier for them, I emphasized After the invasion of Czechoslovakia, their authority has plummeted, he continued, and they are propagating against China in a big way, so we must keep vigilant with them.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: But vigilant how? They are strange! With this meeting, they extend their hand to the Soviets. On the one hand, they say that the Soviet revisionists have big contradictions in [their] leadership; on the other hand, they meet with them.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: Our Central Committee, he continued, does not permit us to fall for their provocations and has determined that the disagreements we have with the Soviets on the border issues should be resolved through talks. We do not want to go to war for a single day against the Soviets, but this does not depend on us, so we are preparing for war so that we can be prepared, and we have warned them that we will fight if they bomb our bases. Nevertheless, we support talks with them. We have also had talks with the Americans for a long time. But this is not the same thing, I interrupted him, [because] the talks with the Americans are at the ambassador level, and are continuing them for 14 years, whereas what is taking place here in China today is a high-level meeting.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: How did Kang Sheng react to your interventions?

COMRADE RITA MARKO: He tried to avoid answering, but there was a difference from Li Xiannian, although it was understood that he knew everything that was being discussed with Kosygin. Nevertheless, he kept trying to evade my interventions.

After he finished speaking about the political matters, Kang Sheng said that Huang Yongsheng, the chief of the General Staff, would speak on military matters. He was present in the talks and later took the floor, informing us that the Soviets are making intensive preparation efforts along the Chinese border and in Mongolia, where they have concentrated until now 69 divisions, thus adding around 29 divisions in a short period of time. They have also brought there some 1,500 airplanes, increasing their number to 3,000-4,000. They have built new airports and missile bases, and are now intensively working on the construction of transport routes. Earlier, in the Far East, the Soviets would allow the movement of foreigners through trains. They have now very much limited this mode of transportation, replacing it with air transportation. It is understood that this due to preparations and trainings of the various armed units that have built up significantly along the border areas. All these preparations are directed against our country, he continued. Border conflicts are continuing, [and] this clearly shows that the Soviets are preparing to attack China, but we think that they have not yet completed these preparations, they have not mobilized to the extent that is necessary to begin the war. Within the country, then, the Soviet revisionists have great difficulties, he repeated, as Kang Sheng also said.

They also have difficulties in the international arena, as they have not properly fixed relations with the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany, so they are afraid of fighting on two fronts.

The small border conflicts that the Soviets are engaged in at this time may become more intense in the winter, we think — said Huang Yongsheng — but the conditions to begin a general war against China have not yet matured. With tens of divisions that they have amassed, they cannot attack us, because China is not Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the possibility is not ruled out that they adopt a wrong decision about the war, because it is known that in war there are also things that do not depend on the will of the people, said the Chief of the General Staff of the Chinese Army, but such a decision could cost them dearly. He later added that Nixon also claimed that the Soviet leadership may adopt the wrong decisions because it lacks military leadership.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: It is precisely the military leadership that the Soviet revisionists do not lack. The Soviet Union has at the head of the army marshals who are among the most capable from any other armies.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: Guided by Mao's teachings, continued the Chinese Chief of Staff, we are also preparing to withstand a surprise attack by the Soviets against our nuclear bases, or from the ground, or an immediate attack in both directions. They might provoke us at the border; they might attack us from the air also. Whatever kind of bombing or attack the Soviets carry out against our country, we will consider this a war and will not remain passive like the Vietnamese. That is why we are working and preparing for the worst-case scenario; if they attack us, we will immediately take initiative.

Then the Chief of Staff said that Kosygin has come here for talks, but we still do not know what he has laid out.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: It does not seem likely to me that the Soviet Union has concentrated 70 divisions on the Chinese border; it has 150 divisions in total, [and] some of them are occupied within the country, [while] there are many divisions in Europe. What about the reserves? One cannot go to war without the reserves.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: China cannot be attacked with 70 divisions.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: When the Chief of Staff said that we do not know how the talks between Kosygin and Kang Sheng are going, to fix this, he spoke again, saying that if the Chinese had not accepted the talks for their part, the Russians might have lied, saying that we support talks but the Chinese do not want them. I took this opportunity to point out to them that what you are saying is baseless, that you are contradicting what you have said before. The Soviet revisionists, I continued, do everything that can be done against us, lying also, but nevertheless we should not make any concessions to them.

After this, the Chief of Staff said that we are not attacking the Soviets, but if they touch us, we will fight.

I had one more thing, he continued. According to the information we have, the commanders of the four main regions of the Soviet Union bordering China, with the exception of one, have been replaced. One of them was the deputy commander of the Radio-Technical Troops of the Soviet Union.

Kang Sheng took the floor again and said that the Albanian comrades are interested in these issues, so this why we are telling these things to you. Then he added that Kosygin's arrival will not be published, and we are only informing you about this, and that we [the Chinese] will not inform other sister parties. It appeared like the Chinese leaders were very concerned about how they would present this meeting to us. Then Kang Sheng expressed [their] great joy about our successes, pointed out the work carried out in Albania now about revolutionizing schools, about our experience, etc., and further emphasized that their ambassador in Tirana has apparently informed them that this year our agriculture has grown significantly and would satisfy all of the country's grain needs. He also said, later on, additional good things about our party and our country.

Finally, on behalf of the Chinese Central Committee and Government, he communicated to us the invitation to send an official delegation. Since we are so busy, we will not have a large celebration. We will not invite others, and on this point we have informed our friends that whoever wants to come, we welcome you. However, you the Albanians, should a delegation of any rank, and therefore as the close friends that we are, we are inviting you once again and please inform comrades Enver Hoxha and Mehmet Shehu about this.

When Kang Sheng finished, I asked him once again what was discussed in this meeting with Kosygin, but he replied that he did not know anything. Nevertheless, we are familiar with the situation, I told him. Kang Sheng only said that Kosygin has asked for it to be published as if he arrived in Beijing from Hanoi, not from Irkutsk, and shut down this discussion here, with the justification that he was "tired."

They held a dinner at the house where our delegation was staying because Zhou Enlai was coming over. We were told that the house had been occupied since the time of the Cultural Revolution but we have now reserved it for you. Kang Sheng, Li Xiannian, and almost all the others who had met us upon arrival at the airport attended the dinner. Ahead of the dinner, they told us that Zhou Enlai had been very busy but, in fact, as he himself told us, he had been sleeping that afternoon. I mention this because we tried three times to meet with the friends of our embassy in Beijing, but they turned us back saying that Zhou Enlai was coming to meet us, but he did not, for the reason that I explained.

At dinner, Zhou Enlai began the conversation by telling us that we would also visit Nanjing, where I have had talks with Chiang Kai-shek, and you will see the bridge there. Later, when we were served pork, I did not feel like eating so I did not serve myself from it. You do not eat it, Zhou Enlai said. No, I said to him, I do eat it but today I am very full and cannot eat. Whereas I eat a lot of it, said Zhou Enlai, and opened the conversation with a discussion about pork, to then lead to Kosygin. He told Kang Sheng that the Soviets have accused us [the Chinese] of breaching the supply contracts about pork and that we have created difficulties for them on this account, etc., etc. I told him that the Soviet revisionists were the first to break the contracts, the first to always launch accusations against us, and the Soviet revisionists are used to doing all the time against all those who do not do their bidding, in fact, Kosygin, Brezhnev, and the other Soviet revisionist leaders, as well as all their comrades everywhere, are ready to do anything against those who do not follow their lead. So Zhou Enlai deliberately opened the conversation with the discussion on pork, just to get it started. Then, he went on to explain that the Soviets also accuse the Chinese of not supplying timber, but Zhou Enlai emphasized that we have not breached any of their contracts, on the contrary, they are the ones who have breached them. For this reason, we have not entered into any new contract with them, ever since then and also not this year. I took the opportunity to let them know our point of view, telling them that we have not split with them on account of pork, but that there are more profound issues, very important issues between us, as we know. Throughout the entire conversation at dinner Zhou Enlai spoke loudly.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: Did Zhou Enlai not say anything about how and why Kosygin came to China?

COMRADE RITA MARKO: He did not give us a proper overview, [and] all that I am relaying he shared one after the other, in an unsystematic manner. I told them that you know them on your own, that the Soviet revisionists are capable of doing everything against us, let alone breach contracts or remove specialists from our countries. This is why I do not find the meeting you had with Kosygin to be appropriate. Then Zhou Enlai jumped in and said, we have also been talking to the United States for 14 years. I mentioned to him again that, in my personal opinion, it does not seem appropriate that you met with Kosygin on these issues, on which another way could have been found. You are too extremist, he told me, with a hurt look in his face. I asked the translator to repeat these words to me once more to make sure that I had not misunderstood them, and after the translator said that he had not made any mistakes, I replied to Zhou Enlai that I am not an extremist but a revolutionary who speaks openly. He immediately turned to Kang Sheng with the words: How then to explain Stalin's meeting with Ribbentrop? We have been talking to the United States for 14 years; have we perhaps made concessions to the Americans during this time? I intervened again and told him that you yourself, when you were in Tirana, told us that you put forward a third-rank person to talk to the Americans, a person who does nothing, and then in this concrete situation I do not think that your meeting with Kosygin serves us. Have Soviet leaders perhaps been less fascist than the Germans when Stalin met with them? Zhou Enlai [asked]. It was clear that he was very hurt. Nobody is saying that, I replied.

It should be noted that during this dinner, which he hosted, he did not raise a single toast to us.

After we finished eating, around 9:30 or 10 p.m., Zhou Enlai got up and invited us to go for talks. He suggested we bring along with us whomever we wanted from the members of the delegation, but he brought along all the Chinese individuals who were at the dinner. The conversation began on other issues from those discussed at the dinner, like the issue of the delegation to be sent to their celebration. We welcome the delegation you will send to us on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the proclamation of our Republic, he said. Please tell comrade Enver and the other Albanian comrades to send a delegation to us; we have also made this proposal through the ambassador. We have today prepared a letter in which we express our wish also to invite the comrade of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Poland, so create the possibility for him to come to China. I do not know if he is in Albania or not, Zhou Enlai said. I do not know, I said, but I will inform the leadership.

Then, he began the conversation by saying that after attending the funeral ceremony for Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi, since you are our friends, you came to us in Beijing so we would like to inform you that Kosygin passed through here, and we had a meeting with him at the airport. Of course, Comrade Enver and the other Albanian leading comrades will ask you about this meeting, so I would like to briefly inform you about this issue.

Four and a half years ago, after Kosygin went to Hanoi, he passed through Beijing on his way to the Soviet Union and also met with Chairman Mao, who told him back then that we would continue the polemics with you for another 10,000 years, but we will maintain state relations. On this occasion, we talked to him then about trade issues, but later our relations became more and more strained, not only on trade issues, but in all other aspects, getting to the point of the current provocations. Current relations between our two countries are so aggravated that they have reached a very low point. This issue is familiar both to your earlier ambassador Vasil Nathanaili and to the new one. Even our trade contradictions [sic] with the Soviet Union have broken down. Thus, in 1969 we did not enter into any trade agreements with the Soviets, with the exception of some very small, insignificant agreement. Our two countries are very critical of each other in the press and in the diplomatic arena. When we name the Soviet revisionists by name in speeches, their diplomats leave; when we do not mention them, they do not leave.

[Marko:] That is what we want, I intervened, for the revisionists to leave from our places so that we can keep these clean.

Then, Zhou Enlai explained that earlier there were no incidents at the border, but now

there are major border incidents such as in Zhenbao, Xinjiang, etc., where there have been armed clashes. Encouraging these conflicts, he continued, the Soviets are transferring large military forces to the Far East. Although the border delegations of the two sides meet occasionally, the problems are not resolved, and our governments continue to exchange reciprocal notes without achieving any results. The Soviets had made a proposed to have talks with us, but not a complete one. We made a clear and concrete proposal on June 13th. After this, they sent us a document, to which we did not reply because Brezhnev and then Gomułka praised American imperialism in their speeches that were published at that time.

By assessing the situation that has emerged, we set ourselves the task of making political and military preparations and we have openly stated that we will fight to the end against all enemies. It was at this point that Zhou Enlai said that in Lin Biao's report at the Congress, it was said that the Soviets had asked by phone to hold talks with us. Kang Sheng also told us about this, adding that the telephone operator, on his own initiative, did not allow them to get through. We criticized the telephone operator, who should not have acted on his own initiative, Kang Sheng told us, [whereas] he should have reported to the leadership, but, on the other hand, we praised him for the revolutionary spirit and the hatred he expressed, which reflects the hatred of all our masses towards them. Then, Zhou Enlai said that they will reply to their note. He added: Keeping in mind their entire path, we think that there is nothing to talk to them about, that in the current situation the Soviet revisionists seek contacts with them. Up until I was in Hanoi, Zhou Enlai continued, we avoided contacts with them, but as soon as the Soviets learned that I was going to Vietnam to attend Ho Chi Minh's funeral, they hurried to take advantage of this occasion, and this is why they immediately suspended talks with the Japanese Foreign Minister and sent their delegation led by Kosygin in order to meet with me in Hanoi. Since our delegation returned quickly to Beijing, the Soviet delegation stayed in India, where they held talks with the government officials there. The Soviet delegation arrived in Hanoi on September 6th, whereas I think that the Albanian delegation arrived on September 8th. There, based on your proposal, Li Xiannian, taking into account your opinion, did not respond to Kosygin's greeting.

[Marko:] When I said that this was the correct position, Zhou Enlai did not speak.

On the afternoon of September 9th, the Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs went to at Li Xiannian and informed the Chinese delegation about the Soviet request for a Sino-Soviet meeting at the prime ministerial level. When you left for Beijing, Zhou Enlai told us, we had just considered the Soviet proposal and, after talking to Mao Zedong and Lin Biao, we replied through the Vietnamese that we could have a meeting at the airport in Beijing. But when our response arrived in Hanoi, Kosygin had left Vietnam [and] he received our response late. The Vietnamese informed us that the Soviets were also willing for him to come from Irkutsk, but they proposed that it be publicly announced as if he had come from Hanoi. On instructions from Chairman Mao, we accepted the meeting with Kosygin and talked to him for three and a half hours, and after we had lunch, he left. There is a reason for their hurry to have this meeting. Zhou said: We wanted to know why they asked for it so urgently. I want to emphasize, he continued, that the talks had nothing to do with the party; they were talks along the state channel. At this meeting, the Soviets asked that the most urgent problems between us be resolved.

Before we had the talk, we put forward two important conditions for the Soviets: first, that we will continue the theoretical polemics against them, but this should not hinder relations between our two sides; secondly, as for the rumors circulating in the Soviet Union that you will bomb our atomic bases, we warn you and want you to know that in such a case, you will have entered into a war with us. And for this reason we are mobilizing the people for war.

The whole world is now saying that the Sino-Soviet border is a very tense situation and that a war between the Soviets and us is almost about to start. These words circulate because of the news broadcast by the Soviet Union itself and the American and Japanese news agencies. However, Zhou Enlai said, the situation at the border is not as tense as it is made out to be. We said to Kosygin that we are willing to talk about resolving the border problems. But because the talks can take a long time, before this problem is definitively settled, it would be good to find a temporary

solution, as we have done with India and other bordering countries. To this end, we propose to maintain the status quo at the border, to avoid armed conflicts between the two sides, not to open fire on each other, not to violate the airspace, not to obstruct water navigation, and that the troops of both sides should leave the regions which need to be discussed. We put forward to them that inhabitants of some border regions be allowed to enter into the territory according to their needs and pasturing. These were our proposals for the temporary solution of the border problem, Zhou Enlai said at the conclusion of this topic.

Kosygin was generally in agreement with our proposals and promised to report everything to the Politburo. We also told him that we would report to Chairman Mao Zedong. By taking these measures, we think that we will reduce the tension that exists at the border between our two countries, he added.

Then, he continued, we talked to Kosygin about issues related to trade and rail and air transportation and told him that for our part, we would respect the agreements. We also talked about the reciprocal exchange of ambassadors. These were the main topics of the conversation we had.

In our opinion, said Zhou Enlai, the Soviets will not change the plan of deploying their armed forces near our border, so we must prepare and continue mobilizing the masses for war, because they can try to deceive us, so a surprise attack on their part cannot be ruled out. We know that there are also adventurous people in the leadership of the Soviet Union, people who make the wrong calculations. By attacking first, they think that they have the advantage and will win. The Americans have said the same thing. There is no unity within the Soviet leadership, he added. In the chaotic situation they have put themselves in, they may make the wrong decision. This forces us to always be vigilant. Nevertheless, there is also the possibility that the tension decreases. If this proves to be the case, even for a short time, we think that it will be useful for us. And this can be achieved, he said, because the Soviets preach so much about peace, [and] the Soviet people do not support war. The decrease in tension between our two countries, continued Zhou Enlai, will influence Soviet revisionists to demobilize their forces. These situations are in our favor, because they help us by giving us time.

What do you think about these issues?

[Marko:] This is how you judge these issues, I replied, we said what we think, which is not in agreement with you.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: It would be beautiful if they could also deceive the Americans this way, to demobilize, as the Chinese naively think, so that we gain time, mobilize, become stronger. Is it possible to disarm the imperialists and the revisionists?

COMRADE RITA MARKO: Before the Soviet delegation departed for Hanoi, Zhou Enlai told us, the Soviets had requested that the plane that would take the delegation to Vietnam pass through China - a large plane with 700 seats, which would also transport the supplies for embalming Ho Chi Minh, but we did not allow it, demanded as a condition that there would also be a Chinese pilot and radio operator. They did not agree to this, so the plane passed through India, etc.

When Zhou Enlai expressed the opinion that if the Soviets come to an agreement with the Chinese they would demobilize, that they were for peace, etc., I stressed once again what the Soviet revisionists are, that we know them very well. Yes, they have disagreements within the leadership, Zhou Enlai said. Even better, I again intervened, we should work towards having these disagreements increase, in order for them to be divided even further and so that we can gain from this situation, so I think that this meeting was mistaken and it has served them. He did not like that.

Nevertheless, he again took the floor began elaborating on this issue, explaining that the first reason why the Soviets were forced to have this meeting is so they can put pressure on the United States, which demand great concessions from the Soviet Union. He then addressed the issue of West Berlin, for which nothing has been done and will not be done, spoke about the Paris conference on Vietnam, where talks are not going the way the Soviets want, about Nixon's visit to Romania and not to the Soviet Union, etc. All these [issues] have greatly preoccupied the Soviet Union, and therefore, with this meeting, the Soviets want to achieve something big before now

going to the UN on the eve of the General Assembly meeting.

The second reason, Zhou Enlai continued, is that there are great internal difficulties in the Soviet Union. It keeps around one million soldiers along the Chinese border and in Mongolia. The Warsaw Pact forces are supported by the governments of the respective countries, whereas the supply of food, clothing, and so on, to the Soviet army in the border area with China is very difficult. The same situation exists for housing. There are two paths they must choose, either to go to war against us, or to ease the tension. Winter is now approaching, [and] winter is very harsh in the place where they have their forces. They only have seven divisions in barracks in Mongolia. Plus, they cannot place the big machines they have either in the barracks or in tents.

The third reason, Zhou Enlai continued, is that there are stupid people in the leadership of the Soviet Union. There are different opinions within the Soviet leadership on the issue of war; some are for war, some for peace. This was also apparent in Kosygin's facial expressions, said Zhou Enlai. Kosygin himself is for the lowering of tension, because being a great economist, he is well aware of the severe consequences of war.

[Marko:] Kosygin is a vile wolf, I interrupted him, before being an economist, [and] he is in the first place a political man, because on economic issues there are plenty people who can help him; he is a revisionist ideological leader willing to do anything, and it is therefore not coincidental that they bring him out on stage constantly.

Zhou Enlai then said that the Moscow meeting proved that the Soviet Union had lost the authority that it once had and could not move the conductor's baton as it did before, that many other parties condemn [the Soviet Union] for the steps it takes in connection with increasing the tension on the border with us. Only those parties that receive material assistance from the Soviet Union now support it in its adventures against China.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: Zhou Enlai seems like a smart man, but from what he has discussed with Rita, he sounds like a great fool. He does not hide it at all, and almost openly says it, that he agrees to help the Soviet Union.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: The possibility that the Soviets will lie to us cannot be ruled out, Zhou Enlai again emphasized, therefore we are making great preparations to face the most difficult scenario. We will prove [it] with facts in case they take concrete actions.

There are divergences within the Soviet leadership, [and] we will continue our polemics with them, said Zhou Enlai, but at the same time we will also hold talks on the issues I mentioned.

Among other things, this meeting also helped us with intelligence gathering.

[Marko:] I intervened at this point and said, but are the Soviet revisionists stupid, on their part, and do they perhaps not even try to gather intelligence against you?

That is correct, he said, these things are reciprocal, dialectical, but one should consider it carefully, because it is not like you say, he said to me. There was a debate here between us, him insisting on his opinions and I in mine, emphasizing to him that they make and will make every effort to get out of the difficult situations in which they find themselves.

Zhou Enlai then spoke about the internal situation of the Soviet Union and the state of its relations with its allies. Under these circumstances, he continued, [the Soviet Union] will try to get out of this situation, therefore we must be vigilant. Again I [Marko] pointed out that precisely under these difficult circumstances for them, this meeting does not seem right to me, but Zhou Enlai told me that I am not approaching this issue dialectically.

Chairman Mao, he emphasized, says that peace can turn into war, but this requires a process, just as peace talks can begin after the conclusion of war. It may happen that today you are talking, but tomorrow war breaks out. Even in the talks that are held, like the ones we had, there are still elements of war, because we do not agree with them on many things, so this is also a war.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: With this they show that they fully agree with the Vietnamese who are having talks with the Americans in Paris.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: We must make efforts to avoid war, said Zhou Enlai.

At the dinner he hosted, he did not toast to us, though he tried to say a few kind words [about us]. When Zhou Enlai told us about the talks he had had with Kosygin, I told him that we are not up to date on the news, so we want to know why this meeting is kept secret. Kang Sheng denied what he had told us in the conversation we had with him and emphasized that he was only talking about not saying that Kosygin came to China after arriving in Irkutsk, but to say that he had come from Hanoi.

Early in the morning, since we were leaving early, Kang Sheng came to say goodbye along with two other members of the Politburo of the Central Committee, Xie Fuzhi and Yao Wenyuan. Kang Sheng said to us that Zhou Enlai was very busy with work, however, at 6 o'clock in the morning, he asked me by phone to apologize to you that last night at dinner he forgot to toast us. When we went to the airport with Kang Sheng, we found there Li Xiannian and some others waiting to say goodbye to us. Li Xiannian told us the same thing as Kang Sheng. From Beijing we went to Nanjing and then to Shanghai.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: Zhou Enlai "forgot" to make a toast because he and his friends are predisposed to forget. What did you see during your visits outside of Beijing?

COMRADE RITA MARKO: Everywhere, even in the enterprise, there was talk of war. [Albanian ambassador] Xhoxhi [sic] Robo also noticed this.^[2] They speak like this all around Beijing, he told us. This was the impression we had at the military unit that we visited. In Nanjing, also, everyone spoke only about war preparations, even the Politburo member who received us there, and then they speak about their formula "struggle criticism - transformation."

Preparing for war is their first task everywhere in China. The entire Chinese economy is now mobilized to serve this purpose. The other Politburo member working in Shanghai spoke to us this way as well. There, they took us to visit a ship building plant, where they produced parts for submarines, one of which we visited while still not finished, and we also visited a military ship equipped with torpedoes. There is also a submarine base there. The plant looked very big, [and] they told us that 7,500 workers work there.

As far as we noticed, wherever we went outside of Beijing, the people we talked to did not say a single word about Kosygin's meeting with Zhou Enlai, in fact they would not get into it at all, whereas for our part, when we talked to them, we used every opportunity to speak to them, including during car rides, to tell them what the Soviet revisionists are, but the answers they would give us were general.

Our view is that the Chinese leaders, although they talk a lot about the war, are predisposed to have talks with the Soviet revisionists, to get closer to them.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: The Chinese leaders are entirely predisposed to help the revisionist traitors of the Soviet Union, [and] they support friendly relations with the Soviet Union done quickly and on a large scale.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: They had only a meeting and already agreed to exchange ambassadors, to resolve border issues, etc. The prime ministers of two big states do not meet for nothing.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: Zhou Enlai puts forward in a meeting with Kosygin all those issues that serve to strengthen the Soviet Union's position vis-à-vis the American imperialists. The Chinese leaders do this consciously. They know that the position of the Soviet revisionists within the country is weak, but with their efforts, they help them consolidate their situation and thus further aggravate their rule over the Soviet people. With this they also helped the Soviet Union regain its prestige, which had been battered, both in front of the satellites and in front of all the other parties. So, at a time when this prestige has been battered by the Soviet adventurist revisionist policy toward China, the Chinese leaders hold a meeting, and with this create the illusion that the Soviet Union somehow does not pursue an adventurist policy, but that it is trying to find a solution to the disputes. This is a form of assistance they provide to the traitors in Moscow.

What else can be understood from this meeting? It turns out that the steps taken by the Chinese leaders will cement the position of the Soviet revisionist adventurists,

[and that] they will also help “lower the pressure” on China so that it can have the opportunity to reduce military spending. What the Chinese say that they will be armed to the teeth is hogwash. But also, as long as they think of working to achieve the “disarmament” of the Soviet Union and entering into an alliance against imperialism together with the Soviet revisionists, this means that the Albanians, who do not follow them down this path, are not realists, but extremists. This is the essence of this tendency that is becoming apparent in them.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: This is their assessment of us. With their attitude, the Chinese leaders are telling the Vietnamese that we have also chosen your path, [that] we have told you this indirectly so far, and now we have come your way.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: When Zhou Enlai told you that with this meeting the Chinese wanted to gather intelligence on the Soviets, you, comrade Rita, rightly told him that the Soviet revisionists also tried to gather intelligence about you. This did not sit well with Zhou Enlai, because it let them know that we assume that the Soviet revisionists want to use this meeting to test where the Chinese stand, to take their pulse.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: I also stressed that Kosygin is not an economist, like he said, but an ideological leader and one of the oldest.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: This stance of the Chinese leaders does not surprise us.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: Zhou Enlai asked me if we know [Soviet party official and Central Committee Secretary Konstantin Fedorovich] Katushev, who was part of this Soviet delegation together with Kosygin. I replied that we do not know him. After that, he openly emphasized that Kosygin is for peace.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: So, with what they are doing, the Chinese leaders think that they will tame the “hawks” and thus remove the risk of war for China, [and] the situation, according to them, will evolve towards the improvement of their relations with the Soviet Union. Then, the conclusion is that only one common enemy remains for both sides, American imperialism. With this, Zhou Enlai wanted to tell you, comrade Rita, that you in Albania also avoid the hawks. And you will do this, he thinks, whether you like it or not, because we keep you fed, just as [Soviet party official Anastas] Mikoyan once told us. They think that the Albanians are sectarians, against our policy.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: In any case, the Chinese were very careful with us.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: Our line is correct, therefore our party and government delegation, led by comrade Haki, which goes [to China] on the occasion of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, should openly express, as we have always done, our views on these issues, whether they like it or not. This does not really hurt us, and it should not make us violate the principles.

But, of course, tactfully, we must let them know that our party thinks that this meeting is not right, not opportune, and that it does not serve Marxism-Leninism.

They should be reminded of what they said to comrade Rita Marko, that we think like “extremists.” This is not true because we think and behave according to the Marxist-Leninist path, and only from this perspective we deem the meeting of Zhou Enlai with Kosygin like an opportunistic stance, a mistaken tactic.

We should tell to the Chinese leaders that in principle we are not against talks, but not just any talks, at any level, and with anyone. We are not for meetings of this level with Soviet revisionists, as they did in this case. There are moments when one should have talks, where and why one should talk, but at different levels, which must always be determined correctly, based on real conjunctures and so that they bring us a real benefit and not to the enemies.

Talks always have a political character. And our main political stance is to fight to the end against the imperialist and Soviet revisionist enemies. For us, politics is in every instance and always in the foreground.

If they start talking about the risk of war, you can tell them that we do not have information on the size of Soviet forces concentrated on the Chinese border [and that] you may know this better than we do, therefore we may be mistaken in our assessments in this matter. However, we think that with those forces, as you describe

them, that the Soviet revisionists now have on the Chinese border, and in the current situation in the world and within the Soviet Union itself, [the Soviet Union] cannot currently attack China. We are one hundred percent with you on matters like you needing to be armed, being ready for war, and always staying vigilant, but we think that the Soviet Union cannot attack China in the current conjuncture, because the war with [China] would be extremely dangerous for the Soviet Union, [would be] to its disadvantage, and would lead to certain defeat.

We can also tell the Chinese leaders that our opinion is that this meeting you had with Kosygin in Beijing helped the Soviet revisionists. Comrade Rita Marko reported to us about Kosygin's conversation with you. Related to this, our party thinks that now, on the eve of the UN meeting, this meeting helped the Soviet Union.

Comrade Zhou Enlai described the condition in the Soviet leadership as weak, lacking unity. We fully agree with this assessment; however, the meeting you had, in our opinion, helped them improve their difficult situation.

Comrade Zhou Enlai says the Soviet Union has lost authority vis-à-vis the allies. This is also very true. But, in our view, the meeting in Beijing with Kosygin came to the aid of Soviet revisionist leaders.

This meeting also helped the Soviet Union's lost authority within the international communist movement. It gives Soviet revisionists a trump card, that ostensibly the patience of the Soviet Union and its policy of rapprochement and negotiation [are] correct. This stance may cause disillusionment among some immature Marxists-Leninists, so we think that the meeting could negatively affect the world communist movement.

Comrade Zhou Enlai told comrade Rita Marko that with this policy we could disarm the Soviet revisionists. He has also said that this, as well as their tendency for "peace," and so on, would give us time to prepare. This is a tactic. Gaining time is an important issue, but without breaking our political principles.

It should be pointed out to the Chinese leaders what history has shown that whoever is a fascist and determined to commit aggression is not deceived by tactics, therefore we think that even the step you took, agreeing to have this meeting, will not deceive the Soviet revisionists in order to disarm them. We are convinced that the Soviet social-imperialists will never disarm, not in front of us, and not in front of American imperialism, as we are clear that American imperialists will never be disarmed of their own free will.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: It may also be borne in mind that they have so far correctly assessed the Paris talks as an effort hatched by Moscow, but with this meeting that they had, [they] indirectly justify the meeting of the Vietnamese with the Americans.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: I think that all this should be pointed out to the Chinese leaders, but always keeping in mind that discussions should not be aggravated, therefore we should speak tactfully and in a friendly manner with them — though we know how we are boiling on the inside, especially as it concerns this scoundrel.

We must always go by the principle of expressing openly and in a friendly manner our opinions to friends. How much our stance will help our Chinese comrades, we do not know, but with this effort we make it clear once again that we cannot simply follow their wagon, we can never approve something that is wrong. Only, as I emphasized, we should tactfully put forward everything that we will say to them. Let us tell them that we consider this position of theirs as a tactic on your part, but that in our opinion it is wrong and time will prove it to be wrong.

Once you have done this, you can then talk about our friendship, about the progress that both of our countries have achieved, etc.

Now we have to think and find ways to tell them.

These issues should be reported to the Chinese leaders either by our delegation that will go to Beijing, of course if they raise this problem, or we can tell the Chinese ambassador here and then this weight is off the shoulders of the delegation. If they raise this topic of conversation, [Albanian party official] Haki can tell them, but if they do not speak [on this] at all, then how can they be told? If our delegation that will go to Beijing requests a meeting, they may say that they are very busy, or it may be that

no talks take place at all.

COMRADE RAMIZ ALIA: I think that they will definitely have a meeting with our delegation.

COMRADE HAKI TOSKA: If there are meetings, we can raise this topic of conversation with them, emphasizing that the fight against imperialism cannot be separated from the fight against revisionism, etc.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: In the event that there is a meeting, our delegation should follow, as always, the tactic we have ordinarily followed — first to speak are the hosts.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: Our delegation is not going there for talks, but to take part in the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, so it may happen that even if there is a meeting with them, the Chinese may think that they have spoken to us about this issue once so they may not touch on these subjects again, [instead] speak to us about other things, like machinery, submarines, etc.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: Then Haki should tell them that comrade Rita, as soon as he returned to Albania, informed us about the meeting he had with you and [Haki] uses this opportunity to put forward our point of view.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: Plus, they expect an answer from us. Zhou Enlai himself told Rita in the beginning that [they] would inform [us] about this issue because comrade Enver will ask you about it.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: So we have two options to present our views to the Chinese leaders: one is for our delegation that will go now on the occasion of the 20th anniversary to tell them, the other option is to call the Chinese ambassador in Tirana, who should be told that comrade Zhou Enlai has talked to comrade Rita Marko about the meeting he had with Kosygin and our view on this [matter] would be put forward.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: Our delegation can also tell them, but definitely very carefully, because we must keep in mind the big interests, the just ones, the socialist ones, as well as the internal political and economic interests. It is a fact that since we treat these problems this way, this means that we are not in agreement with them. We have also not agreed with the Chinese leaders in the past, but we later thought that the relations between the two sides had improved, [that] our contradictions and disagreements had toned down compared to what they had been before. However, as Zhou Enlai presents issues, it turns out that the disagreements between us are very pronounced, [and that] they are about the [party] line, so in case they continue to go down this path, we will undoubtedly clash with them, because we do not agree on things that are essential issues, on issues related to the [party] line that are among the most fundamental.

We also have to keep in mind the fact that, when we had disagreements between us in the past, when we have been very prudent we have noticed that they have backed off. We have always defended our line, but we have supported China, the Chinese Communist Party, the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong. We will do this again, but at the same time, without the slightest concession, we will strike against all of their distortions.

The issue arises that it can be inferred, and it will definitely be inferred, that there are contradictions between our two sides. It now depends on the predisposition of the Chinese leaders for us to determine our position. In case they take action against us, we will definitely and immediately react. But they may be afraid of our stance and, from what we have noticed, ideologically, they are very afraid of us. The revisionist group in China is very afraid of our Marxist-Leninist party and may try to avoid the clash, so I think it will not further aggravate the situation, although it will continue to carry on its work. For our part, as always, we will fight to keep our [party] line unspoiled, [and] we will preserve the principles, will even drop bombs, but we will continue to maintain ties with them, we will try to benefit as much as possible from these ties in the interest of the great question of socialism and of our country. This means that we should obtain the [industrial] objects that we have contracted with the Chinese, because we anticipate that in bad times ahead we will resist, even if alone, though we might not be alone.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: Might Xhemal Shehu who is going with this delegation in his role as a corps commissar, be authorized to request a meeting with someone from the officers of the Chinese headquarters in order to speed up the delivery of military supplies based on the contracted agreements?

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: They have already told us before that they are very busy, so perhaps we make a mistake to request this meeting. Even so, what would Xhemal do with them?

MEHMET SHEHU: After the meeting, Haki might tell them, for example, that comrade commissar Xhemal Shehu wants to meet with some officer of their Ministry of Defense to talk about the military supplies to be possibly sent to us as soon as possible, since the Soviet Union is a threat to us.

COMRADE RAMIZ ALIA: It seems to me that this request would not do, because Xhemal Shehu is not an employee of the Ministry of Defense, [but] he is a corps commissar, so he should not engage in talks at the state level.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: The talks that our delegation will have with the Chinese will focus on political issues, not economic ones, and therefore there is no way for Xhemal to raise with them issues related to the supply of military materiel. After all, see how the situation unfolds. If there are favorable circumstances, do not let this issue get lost. I am not well informed, but it seems to me that the Chinese are not obstructing our military supplies.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: They are a bit behind with the tanks and the heavy artillery, comrade Enver.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: Ok, let the comrades who will go there act in accordance with how they see the situation.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: When I spoke to the Chinese leaders about the situation in our country and the successes we have achieved this year, Kang Sheng said— not unintentionally, in my view—that the Chinese ambassador in Tirana has informed him that this year Albania has had an abundant harvest and will supply its own bread. For this reason, I asked at the end of the talks to make a clarification on this issue, and I explained to them the issue with this information. Then Kang Sheng intervened and said to me: do you perhaps need our help with grain? I did not have this in mind, I replied, I just wanted to clarify this issue.

When Zhou Enlai spoke about foreign affairs, he said that Ceaușescu had the audacity to declare that he had organized the meeting with Kosygin, when in fact it was organized through the Vietnamese. I took the opportunity to tell them what kind of a man Ceaușescu is.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: So let us approach this issue carefully with them.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: It is important for us that they clearly understand that they cannot pull a fast one with us.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: These people are not yet strong enough to come out openly. We have often said many things to Zhou Enlai, nevertheless, later on, when we would meet, he said that they have only helped us a little.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: Back then he also had their man guy on his side, and nevertheless he did not dare go further, [but] now he no longer has him, so I think it will be harder for him.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: It seems that Zhou Enlai has concentrated all affairs in his hands, [and] deals with all sectors, including the party, the military, etc.

COMRADE ENVER HOXHA: The Chinese leaders do not think correctly about issues of strategy and tactics.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: Since they managed to have this meeting at the Beijing airport, I do not think they will stop on their path; the people of this group have thought about it and attempt to go further. We saw the evolution at the aerodrome. In the beginning, Zhou Enlai greeted Kosygin coldly but when saying goodbye, they exchanged warm handshakes.

COMRADE HAKI TOSKA: Also, although it was the Soviets who asked for the meeting, Zhou Enlai did not present anything about what Kosygin put forward in this meeting.

COMRADE RITA MARKO: He told us that he raised the issue of contracts.

COMRADE MEHMET SHEHU: We are clear that he did not just raise this. I imagine that Kosygin might have said to Zhou Enlai that “if you continue with your current attitude, it will be to your detriment and ours, [so] understand us comrades, we want to be united, both our countries build socialism, let us focus on what unites us and not on what divides us ... etc.” We know very well what the Soviet revisionists say in these kinds of meetings.

[Produced using stenography]

[Signed]

[1] Translator’s note: Given the top-secret nature of the document, access to it was limited to Politburo members, according to a handwritten instruction from 30 September 1969 contained in the file. In his remarks, Marko speaks both from his point of view, as well as the Chinese, often within the same paragraph. To avoid confusion, [Marko] has been inserted in parts where Marko refers to himself. Moreover, some pronouns have been modified to clarify, for example, that “we” refers to the Chinese when Marko adopts their point of view.

[2] Translator’s note: Xhorxhi Robo’s first name is routinely misspelled in Albanian documents.