

March 3, 1969

Polish-Soviet Talks in Moscow

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Summary:

Gomulka and Brezhnev discuss Sino-Soviet border skirmishes. Brezhnev claims the Chinese are preparing for their Congress and trying to "cement the moods of enmity toward the USSR." They also discuss the possibility of improved Sino-American ties.

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

Polish-Soviet Talks in Moscow March 3-4, 1969 Secret Brezhnev: Events on the Sino-Soviet border. Yesterday, at 11 o'clock our local time, a group of many Chinese made it to our island on the Ussuri River. This island is 1 km long, and is not inhabited. The Chinese often sent their fishermen and lumberjacks to this island. Our border guards always pushed them out without using weapons. They intended to do so this time, as well. They went there in two armored vehicles. But, this time the Chinese opened fire, also artillery, from the shore. 42 men on our side died. This was an organized trap, they even killed our wounded ones. A regular battalion of the Chinese army took place in the battle by wearing camouflage. Our people moved with greater force and pushed the Chinese out. 30 people were killed on the island and remained there, the other ones were pulled to their side. They did not accept our protest note. We published a communiqué in the press stating that there were dead and wounded. They are holding demonstrations (we have information that they were already staging protests even before the incidents on the island!). They are creating these tensions on purpose since they are getting ready for their Congress and they want to cement the moods of enmity toward the USSR. So, such is a political sense of their provocations....

Gomulka: ...The recent events on the Sino-Soviet border can be examined through the prism of China's internal needs and can be connected with the CCP Congress. This was obviously a conscious provocation. But, despite the internal significance of this incident it also has external repercussions. This is some kind of an offer from China to America, a signal that there is no possibility for an understanding between China and the USSR. This is an offer extended to [US President Richard] Nixon so he can take advantage of it all, especially all the more since Nixon has not yet decided what direction to take in his policy. We should put ourselves in Nixon's shoes. He can see that the Chinese are able to go as far as to carry out provocations against the USSR. This is an incentive to come to an understanding with America. This is how Mao Zedong must be reasoning. This also increases China's prestige. In addition, let's not forget about the fact that of what Western politicians such as [the leader of the Christian Social Union Jozef] Strauss, [the West German Chancellor Willy] Brandt, and others are saying. They are also counting on the Sino-Soviet conflict. They don't hide this either. (Kosygin: the Czech and Romanian newspapers also praise China). I would not get too dramatic about this since this is one of the elements of their policy. The border incidents do not mean that China would like to unleash a war. They will try to use this for their anti-Soviet propaganda at home. □ Mao and his group realize that given their [old] age, they will eventually have to leave the stage. They want to create such conditions which would cement a clear direction in the minds of the Chinese nation. This is why they continue to instigate the anti-Soviet sentiments, and they are carrying out provocations. All of this will create great difficulties for us, since all of this is taking place under the banner of Marxism-Leninism in the Chinese version, that is, Maoism. To the outside, the Chinese are portraying themselves as the spokespersons of the revolutionary socialism. Mao is able to reach many people who do not see China's policy of great-power chauvinism. To many, this is some kind of socialism. For example, they are saying in Czechoslovakia that this is socialism in a different form. Of course, this is why the enemies are thinking, but this is what they are writing in Romania and Yugoslavia despite the fact that the Chinese had always attacked Yugoslavia. The issue is not that simple....

Brezhnev: I deem our meeting as very interesting. We discussed many important issues. There are some issues which I can comment on right now, but there are some which I need to study more. □ The fundamental issue is that of the unity of the socialist commonwealth. The point is so we do not create any tendencies that go against this unity. If we are united, then we can exert influence on the international events, on issues of war and peace. Our unity is also a good example for other communist and workers' parties, as well as for other progressive forces around the world. The opponents had been attacking the Soviet Union for the past 50 years. They had especially begun the witch-hunt after the [CC CPSU] 20th Congress, then regarding the events and issues connected with Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the conflict with China, and Romania's different position. Our fundamental task is not to allow for bad moods and negative tendencies to take place within the socialist camp...