

November 9, 1957

**Addition to Memorandum of Conversation between
Czechoslovak Parliamentary Delegation and Mao
Zedong, 29 September 1957**

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Summary:

The Head of the Czechoslovak delegation and Mao Zedong agree that relations between the CSSR, PRC, and USSR are politically strong but require economic improvement, according to Khrushchev. Mao discusses the socialist revolution and its varying levels of support in China amongst the different demographics within the Chinese social structure. Mao also discusses the three basic goals which guide Chinese foreign policy.

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Prague

Beijing, 9 November 1957
Secret!
[Send by] courier!

Notes
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Addition to memorandum of conversation between Czechoslovak parliamentary delegation and the Chairman of the PRC, c. Mao Zedong, from 29 September 1957
Simultaneously attached as 1 copy to CC of CP of Czechoslovakia and please return

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Ambassador Bušniak
Secret!

Notes from a conversation between Czechoslovak parliamentary delegation and Chairman of the PRC, Mao Zedong, from 29 September 1957

M [Mao Zedong].: Relations between our countries are very close and friendly.

F [head of Czechoslovak delegation].: Political relations between CSSR, the PRC, and the USSR could not be better, as c. Khrushchev suggested during his visit to the CSSR. Our economic relations could be improved.

M.: The CSSR is a great and accomplished country, powerful in its industry, and it has helped us very much.

F.: Our help to the PRC is modest, and must develop further.

M.: China is several decades worth of development behind you. We are on the path to further development, but our program must progress further. The program now is to carry out a revolution. To the extent that we can tidy up our (political) path, we can carry out the (technical) revolution further. The political revolution and the fundamental economic revolution (a change in the relations of production) required several decades. The technical revolution is a challenge requiring several decades.

F.: To help you in these complicated tasks it is necessary to liquidate the consequences of colonial oppression.

M.: Our development is only now beginning. Only now are we beginning to advance. In the political area previously we finished the revolution. China only has 12 million workers (before the revolution there were 4 million). Besides this there are 6 million craftsmen. The bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia is made up of about 6 million families, so imagine approximately 30 million people. This last group in its

orientation is politically better than, for example, the feudal [elite] or the Shanghai [elite], but worse politically than the workers and small-scale peasants. In a way [they are like] the middle class (with the right to vote). The structure of Chinese society, as you can see, is somewhat flawed. And it includes university [professors] and middle-school teachers, researchers, technicians, specialists in the organization of the economy, artists, writers, doctors, and so on.

Without the Shanghai [elite], the [feudal] estate, and the representatives of bureaucratic capital, one can calmly move forward. But without this middle class you cannot progress, as they include numerous writers, teachers, doctors, and so on. The scientific intelligentsia is important and must be subject to the ideology and discipline of the communist party. Their knowledge and level of high culture is greater than that of communists, who are uneducated, without culture, and ignorant of specialized science. Therefore the matter is difficult and complicated and from our point of view they must be handled.

In the countryside you have 510 million peasants, and 90 million local inhabitants. Our primary community is in the countryside. And some 400 million of the peasants are from the lower-middle peasantry. 85 to 90 % of the inhabitants of the countryside are in favor of socialism. Therefore what is to be the concrete form of community for the inhabitants of the countryside supporting socialism—the [work] team? They are poor, with little land, working primarily by hand. Therefore the work team is [the appropriate form of organization]. 10 % of the inhabitants of the countryside are against socialism, representing approximately 50 million people. Among them are [the former] estate members, kulaks, and the wealthy middle peasants. Among them however are some lower-middle peasants and very poor peasants; on the other hand a small portion of the former estate owners are for socialism.

The breakdown for the whole of China is that 90 % of all the inhabitants are for socialism, and 10 % are against. One can say that the foundations of socialism are firm, but the construction of socialism requires the following:

1. Of the 90 % of those who are for socialism, most of them are from the broad middle stratum. Opposition to this 90 % has endured among the intellectual workers.

2. We have 30 million people who belong to groups of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia. These groups can be divided into leftists, centrists, and rightists. Among the leftists you have that portion of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia who do not have membership in the party but are supportive of the communist party platform. The percentages for these groups can be broken down in the following way: leftists—10 %; rightists—10 %; centrists—80%. We must address the need to handle carefully their transformation, as all culture, technical knowledge, and numerous other areas are in their hands. With what means can we accomplish this? According to the path expressed by the slogan “Let all flowers blossom, let all rival schools [debate]...” We put forth this slogan according to the notion of “letting all flowers bloom and schools of art [debate]” including rival schools in the areas of science and technology. The rightists (the rightists include 30 million bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia, as noted above) adopted this slogan and began intensively to make use of it. The rightists enlarged this slogan, however, into the area of politics, and adopted the slogan of “Let bloom...” into indeed significant blossoms. We supported the widening of the slogan into the political realm, and quite a bit blossomed.

The rightists presently pose questions about the following main problems: Is China moving along the path to socialism or capitalism? Are we putting into practice the leading role of the communist party [in society] or not? Are we putting into practice

the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie? Does democratic centralism or bourgeois democracy better meet the needs of China? Is the policy of the PRC toward the socialist camp correct or not? Is our policy of unity with all peace-loving states correct or not? And for us communists there is the basic problem: Have we done our revolutionary work in the past correctly or not? Further we discussed with the rightists issues concerning whether our construction [of socialism] is correct or not, and the primary aspects of our successes and failures. We have agreed in discussion about all these problems. All attacks and insults against our party and against our [socialist] construction were addressed. The rightists were enthusiastic that their programs and insults achieved such publicity. At that time we did not listen to or respond to them. This lasted one month. Never did our comrades respond in a heavy [fashion] or unbearably to them. Several comrades at that time could not sleep and even shed tears in rage. We consulted each other, and prepared to counter the charges. And so began the opposition to the attacks. The rightists were revealed. The centrists first of all moved to the right, as many people were convinced that the arguments of the rightists were true. In response to our counter-charges, again the centrists attacked our party. Without this discussion and polemics we would not have won over the centrists for the party. In schools and councils we won over the centrists, isolated the rights, and united with the leftists. At present we are enlarging our presence in factories and in the countryside. In factories [we are] in unity with part of the bourgeois intelligentsia and with the thoughtless workers. In the countryside [we are in unity] with what remains of the estate owners and the kulaks, and part of the wealthy-middle peasantry. Many people think the following: if we say what we think, they'll call us counter-revolutionaries; don't say [what we think], and we'll get into trouble. We respond: always say what you think, and you will not be called a counter-revolutionary. When the discussion addressed the organization of the party there was a more authoritative response. We are having a discussion among all the people. This will last one year, that is, from May 1957 to May 1958. This discussion among all the people will be led [by the party], as we do not want it to lead to anarchy. So as to definitively win over the centrists, we must correct our mistakes and failings in our work.

F.: The calculations of the Chinese comrades are highly intelligent. We know that physical force does not work. At the time of the 20th Congress we also engaged in a great discussion. You yourself saw that many people were not friendly. Many were against us politically. The wisdom of the CC of China resides in the fact that they rely on links to the workers and peasants, including between the peasantry and the great masses of the agricultural proletariat. In the CSSR we also won over half the countryside to socialism. Now we have also won over fully the intelligentsia. A portion is reactionary, but the majority who choose between capitalism and socialism, choose socialism. We marvel at the Chinese comrades.

M.: Thank you for acknowledging this.

Lenin said that the overthrow of a class by force takes a long time. The reason for this is that the [upper] class possesses a higher cultural, technical, and economic level than the other classes. Technology and knowledge belong to them. Some 3 million people run the schools, offices, and administrative work sections.

The rightist element in our party is about .05 %, and among youth 1-2 %. They especially look upon [our] authority as evil in literary circles. The workers are extremely good, and among peasants, except for the wealthy middle peasants, the situation is also good. Among the students some 60 % are bourgeois, from the feudal elite, or similar families. It will require some 5-10 years for their full transformation.

F.: Some 60 % of our students are from worker and peasant backgrounds.

M.: For us it is just 20 %. The students are constantly moving [forward], and are not that far removed from international standards.

F.: Our youth are obviously in all things a treasure.

M.: We have recently discovered some 50,000 rightist elements. We thought our investigation would reveal 150,000. We'll deal with them as need be. Why did we not hurry regarding the removal of the rightists from the ministries? Those removed would not become a problem to anyone. But after the struggle, within several months you would see, possibly, that they were gone. Many professors and scientists in their work at the lower levels are rightists, under the control of the masses. Those sent, for example, to work a plough become closer to us in labor than those who think.

The road of political thought and speech must be cleaned up, and therefore we will organize a nation-wide discussion [to do this].

The party is essentially stable. The central, provincial, and regional party organs in every party are firm. Up to 90 % of our cadres in the local and central party organs are stable. The army is united.

At Beijing University the rightist element is at 4 %. In Beijing there are 34 higher schools with some 110,000 people, of whom 80,000 are students, and the rest are professors and teachers and support personnel. Our revolution can be compared to the process of dredging a river. Before you dredge the river it is not clean, but you cannot see what is on the bottom until you are done. Now we begin to see what is on the bottom. Many comrades did not see what was on the bottom, maybe 10 % of the inhabitants, who are not friendly to socialism, who cloudy the water. The Yellow River is very dirty, but in an analysis of the water you find out that it contains just 3 % sand and earth. This 3 % of dirt makes the entire river such that you cannot see the bottom.

Of the 10 % who are against socialism, some 7-8 % of them can be persuaded [to change their views]. 2-3 % is truly opposed, and convincing [them] is difficult.

F.: You stand now on experienced and firm foundations and you have before yourself a beautiful future.

M.: Of those who have been evil to us, Dulles would be very glad to restore relations with us. In general he has done us a great service. All that he has done so that we are not allowed into the United Nations has been a great service to us. Great Britain wants to recognize us. But we have not had such success with France and West Germany. We won't establish relations with them for some 10-20 years. Do not suppose that after the experience of just one five-year plan, we will rush into such things. As I have informed everyone, we first must put things into order in our own house. They want to establish relations with us so primarily in order to contact the rightist elements. And in terms of trade, we do not have things to export. After the experience of one or two five-year plans we will trade with them. Our foreign policy is guided by the following principles:

1) Firm ties to the socialist countries;

2) Friendship with the Asian, African and South American countries, and the countries of Northern Europe;

3) Struggle against the western capitalist states and do not grant them our

recognition. The western imperialist states are guided by the principle of struggle against us; also between us and Dulles in all things there is full agreement.

Recorded by: J. Bušniak