

**August 2, 1972**

**Note from State Secretary Freiherr von Braun,  
'Meeting of MP Dr. Schröder with Mr. Foreign  
Minister in Hinterthal on July 30, 1972'**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Trip report on Dr. Gerhard Schröder's visit to China and an agreement signed by the Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister expressing interest in normalizing relations with West Germany.

**Credits:**

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German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Note from State Secretary Freiherr von Braun

St.S. 323/72 confidential

August 2, 1972[1]

Subject: China

here: Meeting of MP Dr. [Gerhard] Schröder with the Foreign Minister in Hinterthal on July 30, 1972

Dr. Schröder has brought a document along from Beijing[2] he showed to the Foreign Minister. It is a short paper signed by himself and the Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister[3] (in German and Chinese) which has the following content (text from memory)[4]:

1. The member of the German parliament Dr. Gerhard Schröder, who visited the People's Republic of China in the time from ... until ..., has informed the Chinese government about the desire of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany to normalize relations between both states and establish diplomatic relations. The Chinese government notes this desire with interest and shares it for its part. It should be envisaged to resume soon talks about the normalization of relations at a third location.

Signed Schröder

Signed Deputy Foreign Minister

During the return flight, Dr. Schröder has shown a photocopy of this document to me as well, and he asked me to immediately forget about its content and existence.

2. Foreign Minister [Walter] Scheel has asked Dr. Schröder not to use this document, unusual both in its form and content, in public. Instead the two gentlemen have agreed [on this version]: Dr. Schröder has recognized in Beijing that there exists the common opinion of the Chinese and the West German government that relations should be established soon.[5] [The foreign minister] has asked Dr. Schröder to express himself that way also during the press conference scheduled for Monday, July 31.[6]

3. Dr. Schröder said it is better to hold the agreed talks in London. The Chinese representative in London[7] was pointed out to him as a better partner for talks. He also thinks the German representative in London[8] as a higher-ranking ambassador would be a more suitable intermediary. On the return flight Dr. Schröder had repeated that [suggestion], but added he can also understand if we want to continue the apparently initiated talks in Paris at that location.

4. Dr. Schröder recommends the immediate resumption of talks. He talked about "in the coming days". In any case, the subject should be finalized before the dissolution of the Federal Parliament[9] [in Bonn] in order to avoid it becoming an issue during the electoral campaign.

5. Dr. Schröder informed that Prime Minister Zhou Enlai is willing to invite Foreign Minister Scheel to Beijing soon after the matter of establishing relations is settled.[10]

Otherwise I want to note the following from the travel report of Dr. Schröder:

6. Anti-Soviet sentiments were identifiable from talks of the Chinese in a more implicit way, for instance: because of the difficult neighbor situation in the West, China has now also established relations with the United States[11] and wants to expand them.

7. Overall the atmosphere was characterized by sovereign calmness, no hectic neither in conversations nor in the program. Zhou was amazingly well informed about Germany. The fact that he lived one year in Berlin, Kantstraße, as a student in 1922 (and, by the way, not in Göttingen) had still a very good impact on his understanding for the German problems.

8. The industrial sites he [Schröder] was shown were surprisingly modern (a plant in Anshan with eleven furnaces – Rheinhausen [in the West German Ruhr District] has [only] six-); a petrochemical factory near Beijing was presented to him as one of the most modern worldwide; the bridge in Nanjing is a masterpiece, boat traffic in Shanghai was very intensive.

9. A special impression on him left the spiritual state of the army. Its triptych goes like this: Fatherland, Work, Modesty. It would be the ambition of all male youth to serve in the army.

Herewith to Mr. Dpol.[12]

von Braun

VS-Bd. 10099 (Office of the Minister)

[1] Submitted to VLR I Schönfeld on August 7, 1972 who noted in handwriting for VLR Hallier: "Federal Chancellery has asked for briefing before next cabinet meeting."

Submitted to the secretary [female] of Foreign Minister Scheel, Frohn, who noted in handwriting: "Photocopy made for Federal Chancellery."

[2] The CDU Member of Parliament [Gerhard] Schröder visited the People's Republic of China from July 14 to 28, 1972 upon invitation by the Chinese People's Institute for Foreign Affairs. There he had meetings with, among others, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, the Deputy Foreign Ministers Qiao Guanhua and Zhang Wenjin, and with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade Li Chiang. See [Gerhard] Schröder, Mission [ohne Auftrag: Die Vorbereitung der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Bonn und Peking, [[Mission without Orders: The Preparation of Diplomatic Relations between Bonn and Beijing]] Bergisch Gladbach: G. Lübbe, 1988], p. 40-44 and p. 49ff.

[3] Qiao Guanhua.

[4] For exact wording see Schröder, Mission, p. 55.

[5] It was reported in the press on July 20, 1972 that CDU deputy Schröder stated a day ago before a meeting with Prime Minister Zhou Enlai in Beijing that "he has the impression that 'both sides want close relations'. He responded with a clear 'no' to the question whether in his opinion the Chinese would set preconditions to the resumption of a recognition dialogue." See the article "Schröder met Zhou Enlai twice", Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, July 20, 1972, p. 1.

[6] On July 31, 1972, CDU deputy Schröder summarized at a press conference the course of his visit to the People's Republic of China between July 14 and 28, 1972. He stated on his talks with Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua: "Obviously we have discussed with special thoroughness status and development of German-Chinese relations. Both sides came in Beijing to the joint conclusion that there exist no obstacles to a soon-to-be establishment of diplomatic relations. These positions were put in writing and signed." See Schröder, Mission, p. 57f.

[7] P'ei Chien-tsang.

[8] Karl-Günther von Hase.

[9] On the announcement by Federal Chancellor [Willy] Brandt of June 25, 1972 to hold early parliamentary elections in November see document 186, footnote 6.

[10] State Secretary Freiherr von Braun noted on August 2, 1972: "I note the following from the phone conversation between the Foreign Minister and myself: The problem of a resumption of relations with China has to be treated with extreme caution. The Chinese have to make a move, not us. We have to take very much into consideration that no damage is done by a hasty establishment of relations. Not just the Soviets but also our Western friends are very sensitive. [Austrian] Foreign Minister [Rudolf] Kirchschräger has warned before all too quick actions and referred to the very problematic Romanian experiences. Pakistani President [Ali Zulfikar] Bhutto has not had the experiences he hoped for with the Chinese. It would be a major Chinese objective in Europe, though, to create trouble and disputes on the European continent." See VS-Bd. 9878 (I B 5); B 150, File Copies 1972.

At the same day, State Secretary [Paul] Frank instructed [FRG] Ambassador Ruete in Paris to look up "immediately" Chinese Ambassador Huang Chen and declare the following: "The Federal Republic has issued a request on ... (enter current date in Paris) to the government of the People's Republic of China through its diplomatic representative in Paris, whether it can agree to hold talks about the establishment of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the FRG. The FRG Government has not yet received a response from government to government. In the meantime, the Chairman of the FRG parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, Dr. Schröder, has informed the FRG government about his talks in Beijing. In this context the willingness of the People's Republic of China government to establish relations with the FRG without preconditions was mentioned. Insofar as (dans le mesure ou) the FRG government can assume that the message sent to Dr. Schröder in Beijing resembles the message supposed to be directed to the FRG government, the latter is proposing to hold necessary talks in Paris at a point in time convenient to the government of the People's Republic of China." See wire instruction Nr. 1030; VS-Bd. 9878 (I B 5); B 150, File Copies 1972.

[11] President Nixon visited the People's Republic of China from February 21 to 28, 1972. See [AAPD] document 47, footnotes 6 and 7.

[12] Submitted to Department Head von Staden on August 3, 1972 who instructed to forward it to VLR I Berendonck "eyes only". Submitted to Berendonck on August 3, 1972.