

November 24, 1973

Cable from Ambassador Pauls to the Foreign Office

Citation:

"Cable from Ambassador Pauls to the Foreign Office", November 24, 1973, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Institut für Zeitgeschichte, ed., Akten zur auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: 1973. 1. Oktober bis 31. Dezember 1973. (München: Oldenbourg, 2004). Translated by Bernd Schaefer.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/119993>

Summary:

A cable from Ambassador Pauls about a meeting between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and Federal Minister Genscher about Soviet expansionism and Europe's defensive readiness.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Ambassador Pauls, Beijing, to Foreign Office

strictly confidential

Telex Nr. 479

Sent: November 24, 1973, 09:30 hours

Received: November 24, 1973, 07:44 hours

Prime Minister Zhou Enlai received Federal Minister [of the Interior Hans-Dietrich] Genscher on Thursday night for an almost one and a half hour conversation.[1]

Mentioning his one-year stay in Berlin[2], Zhou directed the conversation soon towards the division of Germany and called the theory of two German nations an absurdity that some apply to Asia; China and the three Indochinese peoples are strictly against this. He would have sympathy for our efforts towards reunification; only with such a perspective you can mobilize a people. Zhou then began to talk about Berlin. He showed himself to be very well informed and very interested in particularities, like the electoral procedures and voting rights for Berlin deputies, Berlin's representation in the Federal Council [Bundesrat; House of German States], as well as activities by the Federal President and committees of the [FRG] parliament in Berlin. Responsibility for the "ugly reality of Berlin", for which Hitler was the cause, would today rest with the expansionists, our joint neighbor [Soviet Union]. In reply to Federal Minister Genscher's remark that we only want peace there, Zhou said objective developments would often be different from subjective desires. Whoever believes in detente, but neglects its own readiness for defense as a consequence, or who does not want to grant funds for troop deployments any more, is illusionary. In light of the strong concentration of forces in the East, one must not confuse detente with security. He understands that the European peoples wanted peace after two world wars. However, the objective of the current policy by the Soviet Union is not detente but expansion. Evidence for this are the border negotiations stalled for four years now, although China is ready to negotiate on the basis of the "unequal treaties" [3].

Zhou asked whether there exists agreement in Europe about the need to strengthen defense readiness. Federal Minister Genscher answered affirmatively and referred to the declaration by the French government from the 21st of November.[4]

Zhou then addressed Europe's relations with the Arab countries and said they ought to be improved. Minister Genscher referred to the recent successful visit by Foreign Minister [Walter] Scheel to the Middle East.[5] Zhou raised doubts about a united position of the nine EC countries and explained this with developments in the Netherlands.[6] The Federal Minister dismissed this through the reference to the joint EC resolution on the Middle East problem, "the first joint EC foreign policy action".[7]

Zhou emphasized the need to guarantee Israel's existence as a state "although the establishment of Israel was a political mistake". Likewise, the national rights of the Palestinians must be guaranteed. You may not provide a pretext to the expansionists in the North to militarily occupy Arab countries with the reasoning to further Arab interests.

Federal Minister Genscher did not react to Zhou's remark that the expansionists are active not just in the Middle East but also push towards South Asia.

At the end, Zhou referred to Khrushchev's quote of the term yellow peril used by the German Kaiser [Wilhelm II, 1888-1918] he [Khrushchev] had made during the visit of

[FRG Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer in Moscow in 1955.[8]

Zhou asked to return the greetings from Federal Chancellor Brandt and Foreign Minister Scheel forwarded to him by Federal Minister Genscher.

The meeting was held in a very relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Prime Minister Zhou conveyed an alert impression. According to a Chinese attendant, he spent more time for the conversation than originally planned.

[signed] Pauls

Sector 310, Vol. 104953

[1] Federal Minister Genscher visited the People's Republic of China from November 19 to 23, 1973 upon invitation by the Chairman of the State Commission for Sports and Physical Activity, Wang Meng.

[2] Zhou Enlai stayed as a student in Berlin in 1922.

[3]The borders between Russia and China were regulated in the Treaties of Aigun and Tianjin (1858) and the Trade Agreement of Beijing (1860). Territories north of the Amur and south of the Ussuri rivers fell to Moscow. In dispute remained in particular the borderline in the region of Xinjiang/Turkestan which was only partially regulated by the Treaty of Ili respectively St. Petersburg (1881). While the Chinese government insisted on considering the treaties as "unequal" and therefore in need of re-negotiation, the USSR referred to the validity of the treaties and held the position that an open border question does not exist. See on this the memorandum by LR I [Erwin] Wickert from March 20, 1963; Section II A 3, Vol. 62.

[4] On November 21, 1973 French Foreign Minister [Pierre] Jobert stated before the Western European Union Assembly in Paris: [French quote of statement]. See *La Politique Etrangere* 1973, Part II, p. 210. For the German version see *Europa Archiv* 1974, D 130.

[5] Foreign Minister [Walter] Scheel stayed from May 20 to 22 in Egypt, from May 22 to 24 in Jordan, and on May 24 and 25, 1973 in Lebanon. See documents 170, 173, 176, and 180.

[6] On the oil boycott imposed on the Netherlands see [AAPD] document 345.

[7] For the Middle East declaration by the Foreign Ministers of the EC member states from November 6, 1973 see document 363, footnote 3.

[8] In retrospect, Konrad Adenauer wrote about his conversation with the First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Soviet Prime Minister on September 10, 1955 in Moscow: "Khrushchev returned again to the subject of Red China. He called Red China the biggest problem. 'Imagine, Red China now has already more than 600 million people. Annually they add twelve more million. These are all people living from a handful of rice. What', and here he threw his hands up, 'what is supposed to come out of this?'" See [Konrad] Adenauer, *Erinnerungen [Memories]*, Vol. 2, [Stuttgart: DVA, 1965], p. 528.