

October 17, 1989

**Protocol #43 of the Meeting of the Politburo of the
Central Committee of the SED**

Citation:

"Protocol #43 of the Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED",
October 17, 1989, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BArch, DY 30, J IV 2/2A/3247.
Translated by Bernd Schaefer. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/122357>

Summary:

Egon Krenz, newly appointed General Secretary of the SED, reports on his recent visit to
China.

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Protocol #43

of the Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED on October 17, 1989

Members present: Honecker, Axen, Böhme, Dohlus, Eberlein, Hager, Herrmann, Jarowinsky, Kleiber, Krenz, Krolkowski, Lorenz, Mielke, Mittag, Mückenberger, Neumann, Schabowski, Sindermann, Stoph, Tisch

Candidates present: Lange, G. Müller, M. Müller, Schürer, Walde

Guest: H. Naumann

Excused: Kessler

Begin: 1000 hours

End: 1350 hours

Chair of Meeting: Comrade E. Honecker

Notetaker: Comrade E. Schwertner

1. On Current Issues

Report: W. Stoph

1. The Politburo agrees with the proposal of Comrade Willi Stoph to release Comrade Erich H o n e c k e r from the position of General Secretary and member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED for reasons of health.

2. The Politburo schedules the 9th Plenum of the Central Committee of the SED for Wednesday, October 18, 1989, in Berlin.

3. Comrade Egon K r e n z is proposed by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED as the new General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED.

[...]

5. Report about the Visit of the Party and State Delegation of the GDR headed by Comrade Egon Krenz to the People's Republic of China between September 25 and October 2, 1989

Report: E. Krenz

The report by the state and party delegation of the GDR about the visit to the People's Republic of China and participation in the festivities for the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1989 is noted.

6. Report about the Official Friendship Visit and Participation in the Festivities for the 40th Anniversary of the Foundation of the GDR by a Party and Government

Delegation of the People's Republic of China between October 2 and 9, 1989 in the German Democratic Republic

Report: G. Kleiber

1. The report about the visit is approved.
2. The conclusions are confirmed.

[...]

R e p o r t

about the Visit of the Party and State Delegation of the GDR headed by Member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, Comrade Egon Krenz, Deputy of the Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, to the People's Republic of China from September 25 to October 2, 1989

I.

The party and state delegation of the GDR headed by the Member of the Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, Deputy of the Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, Comrade Egon Krenz, paid a friendship visit to the People's Republic of China at the occasion of the 40th anniversary of its foundation upon invitation from the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

Members of the delegation were: Comrade Wolfgang Rauchfuss, Colleague Wolfgang Heyl, Comrades Horst Brünner, Johannes Chemnitzer, Jochen Willerding, Bruno Mahlow and the Ambassador of the GDR to the PR China, Comrade Rolf Berthold. The delegation participated in the official festivities for the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the People's Republic of China in Beijing. There Comrade Egon Krenz had meetings with Comrade Deng Xiaoping, Chairman of the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, and other leading representatives from the party and state leadership of the People's Republic of China.

The delegation was received by the General Secretary of the People's Republic of the Chinese Communist Party, Comrade Jiang Zemin (Appendix 1). During the meeting, Comrade Egon Krenz presented to Comrade Jiang Zemin the congratulatory telegram of the GDR party and state leadership to the Chinese leadership, as well as the friendship present from the Central Committee of the SED and the government of the GDR for the National Holiday of the Chinese people.

Official talks were held with a delegation of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government headed by Comrade Qiao Shi, Member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, and Member of the Discipline Control Commission of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (Appendix 2).

Comrade Wan Li, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman of the Permanent Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, received the GDR delegation for a meeting

(Appendix 3).

A wreath was laid at the memorial for the heroes of the people at Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

The delegation had a friendly meeting with Comrade Li Tieying, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman of the State Commission for Education of the People's Republic of China. Comrade Li Tieying asked Comrade Egon Krenz to forward cordial greetings and an invitation to a visit in the People's Republic of China to Comrade Margot Honecker. Comrade Krenz replied he will do so with pleasure.

During its visit to the People's Republic of China the delegation visited Sichuan and Zhejiang provinces. Friendly meetings and talks were held with the Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee Sichuan, Comrade Yang Rudai (Appendix 4), and with the Member of the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party and Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee Zhejiang, Comrade Li Zemin.

Comrade Egon Krenz visited the Soong Qingling Former Residence in Beijing and had a cordial encounter there with Comrade Kang Kaqing, widow of Marshal Zhu De, and other veterans of the Chinese Communist Party.

The members of the delegation, Comrade Wolfgang Rauchfuss, Deputy Chairman of the Minister Council of the GDR, Comrade Horst Brünner, Head of the Political Main Department of the National People's Army, and Comrade Jochen Willerding, Secretary of the Central Council of the Free German Youth, met for separate talks with the Minister for Material Economy, Comrade Liu Suinian, with the Head of the Political Main Department of the People's Liberation Army, Comrade Yang Baibing, and with the 1st Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth Organization, Comrade Song Defu.

The party and state delegation visited industrial factories and agricultural production sites. It made itself familiar with social achievements in the countryside and had many opportunities for direct contacts with Chinese citizens.

II.

The friendship visit to the People's Republic of China in 1986 by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, Comrade Erich Honecker, has opened up a qualitatively new stage of collaboration between both parties and states and new opportunities for comprehensive expansion of bilateral relations. It had also led to the emergence of mutual solidarity and support that is proving itself today, since both countries are rejecting the attacks of imperialism against the positions of socialism.

The visit of the delegation contributed to the deepening of the exchange of opinions and experiences on a high level, concerning socialist construction in both states as well as international developments and the further structure of bilateral collaboration. The delegation received high attention from the side of the Chinese leadership.

1. The visit occurred in a turbulent period for China both internationally and domestically. This is reflected in contents and results of the meetings. They were a manifest to further growing agreement about basic issues of international

developments and to the approach to tasks of social development. Special emphasis deserves the critical assessment of the imperialist strategy and its massive attacks on socialism.

2. The timely and open solidarity of the GDR with the People's Republic of China has further increased openness of the Chinese comrades towards the SED and collaboration between both socialist states. The Chinese side expressed its satisfaction that SED and GDR continue to stick with socialism, the leadership of the party and the latter's Marxist-Leninist unity. The visit opened up further opportunities for the expansion of collaboration between both parties and states and deepened mutual understanding. This created further favorable conditions for working towards solutions in the interest of both parties, and it furthered mutual support in international issues.

3. The delegation was able to convince itself that the current situation in the People's Republic of China is primarily characterized through intensive efforts by the party and state leadership to consolidate the socialist positions of power. The center [of these efforts] is the continuation of clarification processes within the party itself about causes and contexts of the complicated situation that has occurred in society. This process is not over. In meetings, as well as in official speeches at the 40th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, socialism was reconfirmed as the only possible option for China's successful development. References were made to its [socialism's] Chinese characteristics.

The policy of reform and opening towards the modernization of the country, as confirmed by the Chinese Communist Party's XIII Party Congress, shall be maintained, also with regard to the resolution of forthcoming acute societal, economic, and especially social tasks. The Chinese Communist Party struggles to secure a stable socialist development, emphasizing strict adherence to the Four Basic Principles: maintaining the socialist path, Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, leading role of the Communist Party, democratic dictatorship of the people. Comrade Jiang Zemin and our other conversation partners strongly insisted on the commitment not to allow an undermining of the leading role of the Communist Party and a hollowing out of socialist power. Openly they hinted at a possible decline of material living conditions for the people in the coming year. Apparently the Central Committee plenum scheduled for the end of October this year will be devoted to this entire problem.

4. The present foreign policy course of independence and autonomy will continue. Our meetings, as well as practical steps taken recently, have made it clear that the People's Republic of China is interested in socialist modernization of the country and economic relations with the developed capitalist industrial states. So it is viewing current tensions in bilateral relations [with the latter] as of only temporary relevance. This context also explains why it [the PRC] is refraining from an explicit mentioning of the FRG in the context of condemning the imperialist campaign of slander against the GDR.

III.

During the talks we carved out the joint responsibilities of the SED and Chinese Communist Party for strengthening the positions of socialism and the preservation of peace in the world.

In all meetings, the solidarity of SED and GDR with the People's Republic of China was valued extremely highly. Comrades Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Yang Shangkun, Qiao Shi, Wan Li, Yang Rudai and Li Zemin expressed in this context, the People's Republic of China completely understands the situation of the GDR in light of

recent imperialist attacks. The Chinese Communist Party is supporting the SED and the GDR government in all their efforts to continue construction of socialism, to preserve the sovereignty of the GDR and to reject all attempts to undermine socialist developments.

Comrade Jiang Zemin and all other conversation partners were impressed by the successes of the GDR in construction of socialism under very complicated conditions as an advanced post on the dividing line of two different systems of society. The socialist GDR would be an important factor for security in Europe and in the world. Preservation of stability and the strengthening of the GDR does not just correspond to GDR interests, but is also in the interest of the peoples of the world and the preservation of world peace. Comrade Deng Xiaoping stated: "We defend socialism together, you in the GDR, we in the People's Republic of China".

Comrades Qiao Shi and Wan Li and the secretaries of provincial party committees informed in detail about the events in May/June this year in Beijing. External and domestic factors had worked together and led to the situation of counterrevolutionary unrest in Beijing, endangering the socialist order in China. Imperialism hoped for a favorable opportunity to implement its strategy of peaceful change and ideological infiltrations together with domestic counterrevolutionary forces. As Qiao Shi and Wan Li emphasized, imperialism exploited in this process general societal tendencies facilitated through the neglect of life within the party and political-ideological work of the Communist Party. Mistakes by the former General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, Zhao Ziyang, had resulted in disorientation of the party and led to the danger of a split of the party. This way also the right moment to quell the unrest was missed. This now results in the main task to consolidate the Chinese Communist Party and strengthen its relations with the working class and other workforces. This is about the correct understanding of the linkage between the Four Basic Principles and the continuation of the policy of reform and opening. Here exaggerations and imbalances of developments have to be eliminated, like for instance the overemphasis of the role of the market as an element to regulate the economy. Attention is also required in order not to dismiss on one hand the achievements of 40 years of socialist construction, especially the last 10 years, and to perform at the same time constant critical assessment of its own work.

Comrade Yang Baibing, Head of the Political Main Department, explained the role of the People's Liberation Army in quelling the counterrevolutionary unrest in Beijing. It had passed its baptism of fire in both ideological and military regards. Active efforts are underway in the military to explain the changes in party leadership, especially in the function of General Secretary of the Central Committee, and to continue the review of cadres after the anniversary. He made the proposal to further expand relations between both armies.

The First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth Association, Comrade Song Defu, and [female] Comrade Kang Keqing emphasized with insistence the need to increase work with the young generation. Attacks against the communist structure of the Youth Association were successfully rejected in June this year. They praised the decisive role of the veterans of the party to quell the counterrevolutionary unrest. Like most of the other conversation partners, they emphasized the need for special attention to a communication of experiences from the older comrades. This has to be combined with the consequent continuation of the struggle against bourgeois ideology.

The partners assessed the economic situation of the country as contradictory. One had succeeded to achieve first tangible results during the period of regulation. Main problems, however, still exist through the insufficient efficiency of the industry. It results in lower government revenue in light of too much government spending. Though now to lower extent, there still exist inflationary phenomena and uncontrolled price increases. The harvest will reach about the level of the year 1988, what still

constitutes a good result above expectations in light of extreme weather conditions. As far as economic relations with the GDR are concerned, there was the unanimous opinion to expand them continuously in mutual interest.

All questions of continuation of the policy of reform and opening must always be viewed in the future from the perspective of self-perfection of socialism, according to Comrade Wan Li. Reforms in socialism must not lead to a restoration of capitalist conditions.

Regarding international issues, Comrades Qiao Shi and Wan Li emphasized the far-reaching importance of normalization of relations between the People's Republic of China and the USSR. The People's Republic of China follows with greatest interest the perestroika process in the Soviet Union and supports it. At the same time, the Chinese comrades expressed their hope that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will succeed in overcoming current difficulties through strengthening its leading role. There exists agreement on many basic issues of societal developments and the international situation. Certain differences of opinion and different views between those two largest socialist states are normal and should not impair bilateral relations. In this context, they referred to similarities regarding a couple of development problems and solutions for both the USSR and the People's Republic of China, especially with regard to economic developments.

The Chinese partners commented in the meetings on attempts by leading circles of imperialism to implement its strategy of peaceful evolution, political diversion and ideological infiltration vis-a-vis the socialist states in the current international situation. Based on some recent experiences, they emphasized that the struggle between socialism and capitalism is intensifying, although the tendency of political dialogue and expansion of options to maintain world peace is continuing. The current international developments demonstrate more clearly that the struggle against imperialism is a long-term one and merges ever closer with all basic questions of societal developments and the solution of global issues. This requires increasing political clearheadedness and revolutionary vigilance. The Chinese partners voiced concern about the development in the People's Republic of Poland and in Hungary. It would be necessary to find effective solutions to strengthen socialism and secure the socialist order of society.

The current policy of the United States of America and other Western capitalist states towards the socialist countries, especially vis-a-vis the People's Republic of China, was criticized and deemed as shortsighted and destructive. The People's Republic of China itself will do everything to continue relations with the capitalist countries based on its foreign policy, on independence and peace, and to develop relations towards mutual benefit. There will be no change concerning the policy of opening towards East and West.

With regard to the Cambodia issues, the known Chinese standpoint was reiterated. Concerning Afghanistan, there regret was voiced that the civil war is continuing.

IV.

Overall, the talks reflected the extraordinary dynamics in development of relations between the People's Republic of China and the GDR. The reputation of the GDR has further increased due to the GDR's clear position on the counterrevolutionary events in Beijing. The congruence in action of both parties and states to strengthen socialism, as expressed by the Chinese comrades, has special importance for the political-ideological work and international activity of our party.

Comrade [female] Li Shuzheng, candidate of the Central Committee and Deputy Head of the Department of International Relations of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, who constantly accompanied the delegation, informed in addition in very open fashion about the struggle by the leadership of the Communist Party of China regarding issues of strategy and tactics in past and present (Appendix 5).

The collective of the GDR Embassy has actively supported the delegation. Representatives of the mass media performed good work.