

August 30, 1945

**Record of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador
in China Apollon Petrov and Zhou Enlai**

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai discusses the agenda for upcoming talks with Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Nationalist Party.

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Translation - English

Record of conversation between Soviet Ambassador in China Apollon Petrov and Zhou Enlai, August 30, 1945.

After the exchange of greetings and a short chat on general subjects, I and Zhou Enlai had the following conversation.

Responding to my question about the prospects of the talks between the GMD and the CCP, Zhou Enlai declared that, by all indications, Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi] is firmly intent to attain the solution to the Communist problem. "Our first observations," Zhou Enlai said, "give us a reason to believe that the Guomintang [Kuomintang] leadership can make certain political concessions although, of course, it is difficult to expect any sort of a radical solution to China's main internal political problem. We cannot count on excessive concessions from Chiang Kai-shek. Under any circumstances any of his formulas will always favor the interests of the Guomintang regime more than the opposition party. Already now Chiang Kai-shek is trying to soften the sharpness of the reaction of the extreme "right" group within the GMD, stating that "his solution of the communist problem may only be profitable to the Communists on the surface but in reality it will inevitably lead the CCP and its armed forces to liquidation."

Then cde. Zhou Enlai told me that the GMD appointed four people to conduct the talks: Zhang Zhizhong, Zhang Qun, Wang Shijie and Shao Lizi. From the CCP the talks are attended by cde. Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Wang Ruofei. As a result of the exchange of opinions the two sides adopted the following agenda and the order of negotiations:

1. General questions of the reconstruction of the countryside
2. Urgent questions
 - 1) Acceptance of Japanese capitulation
 - 2) Disarming of the Japanese army
 - 3) Settling of the disputed questions between the forces of He Yingqin and the CCP.
3. General political questions
 - 1) Question of the National Congress
 - 2) Question of the inter-party conference
 - 3) Question of the coalition government
 - 4) Question of the liberated areas
 - 5) Question of the army

It was agreed to have the following order of meetings and negotiations:

- 1) Chiang Kai-shek holds preliminary talks with Mao Zedong.
- 2) Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Wang Ruofei meet with Zhang Zhizhong, Wang Shijie, Zhang Qun and Shao Lizi.
- 3) Simultaneously there may be conversations between Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong.
- 4) Zhou Enlai and Wang Ruofei hold meetings with Zhang Zhizhong, Wang Shijie, Zhang Qun and Shao Lizi on concrete questions with subsequent reporting to Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek.

On August 29, besides the general conversation between Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, there was a meeting between Zhou Enlai and Zhang Zhizhong, Wang Shijie, Zhang Qun and Shao Lizi, in the course of which some of the main questions were discussed in a preliminary manner.

"Zhang Zhizhong," Zhou Enlai said, "declared to me that in connection with the end of the anti-Japanese war the Chinese forces will be reorganized into a national defence army. The overall number of divisions of the future army should be 20 (or 40 corps).

With this, he said, it is also planned to reorganize the communist forces. To my question as to how many divisions, in their opinion, the communist forces should have, Zhang Zhizhong replied that this question has not been studied yet, though it has already been firmly decided that the command and the supplies should be unified for the Guomindang and the Communist forces."

Then, during the talks of the two sides, the question of the Special region was touched upon.

"Zhang Qun noted," Zhou Enlai said, "that the national government intends to turn the Special region into a separate province with the preservation in it of an appropriate administrative system. To my question as to how it was decided to dispense with the liberated areas in the enemy's rear, Zhang Qun replied that this question has not been discussed yet."

Then Zhou Enlai said that Zhang Qun presented him with three points of view concerning the convention of the National Congress.

"There exist the following considerations," said Zhou Enlai, "concerning the preparation an the convention of the National Congress.

- 1 - To cancel previous elections of the delegates of the National Congress.
- 2 - To hold new elections of the delegates.
- 3 - To keep the old and to elect new delegates."

With this Zhang Zhizhong stressed that the [two] parties, the GMD and the CCP, must achieve complete understanding on this question ahead of time in order to avoid the pressure of the big party (the GMD) on the small party (the CCP), and also the possibility of unrest that the small party can instigate against the big party. One should participate in the government, not overthrow it."

Besides this, the question of the coalition government was touched upon. "Zhang Qun," Zhou Enlai noted, "declared that the question of naming the government is a matter of a formality. Therefore, as a consequence, there is no need to use the term 'coalition government'["]. At the present time, Zhang Qun pointed out, the question of the character of such government is under study: we have two types of governments - English and American, in which, with the preservation of the leading role of one of the parties, one also allows for the participation in the government of the opposition party. To speak more concretely, one is talking about the creation of a special government organ under the Supreme National Defence Council or about the formation of a government of the war cabinet type to run the country during the "transitional period", which, the Guomindang's opinion, is the name given to the time after the end of the Japanese capitulation and [before?] the convention of the National Congress.

The preliminary discussion with Zhang Zhizhong, Wang Shijie, Zhang Qun and Shao Lizi, stressed Zhou Enlai, even in the form of those orienting and approximate hints, gives one the reason to believe that Chiang Kai-shek, seemingly, decided to make certain concessions on some political questions. However, now it is too early to draw final conclusions, because the negotiations have just begun.

"In this connection," Zhou Enlai noted, "we are faced with the task of the greatest importance. Our party, having for 18 years conducted a military struggle against the Guomindang reactionaries, is now facing a problem of historic significance: we must make a sharp turn from military struggle to peaceful construction. And, it should be said, not just the wide party masses but also the leading cadres of the CCP are not entirely ready to make a U-turn in their work. The end of the war and the Japanese capitulation became for us very sudden and unexpected events. We had absolutely

no idea that the finale to the war would come so quickly.

Therefore, for us, Zhou Enlai pointed out, it would be extremely valuable to receive from you information and observations necessary for orienting us with the aim of objective appraisal of the existing situation in China and adopting appropriate practical measures.”

I noted that I consider c[omrade] Zhou Enlai so skilful in the party and political affairs that he can probably himself correctly appraise the current situation in the country and make the right decisions.

Then Zhou Enlai asked me a range of questions concerning the content and the interpretation of several articles of the Soviet-Chinese treaty of friendship and alliance. I made appropriate explanations within the limits of the real meaning of the paragraphs and the sections of the treaty and agreements. To his question as to whether there are any unpublished documents, signed during the Moscow talks between China and the USSR I replied that there are no such documents.

N[ikolai] Fedorenko was present at the conversation.

Ambassador of the USSR in China A[pollon] Petrov.