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Memorandum of Conversation between Anastas Mikoyan and Zhou Enlai

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Summary:

Anastas Mikoyan and Zhou Enlai discuss Chinese Communist Party contacts with the US, recognition of the coalition government, and the Chinese attitude toward foreign property.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

On 1 February 1949, during the day, Mao Zedong's deputy Zhou Enlai, member of the Politburo Zhu De and interpreter Shi Zhe visited me and informed me that yesterday's tense conversation very much exhausted Mao Zedong and he feels unwell and asks to have another conversation a day later, and today to continue discussion of foreign policy questions with Zhou Enlai, and of military questions in the evening.

In the course of 4 hours Zhou Enlai recounted the history of the CCP's relations with foreign powers, mainly with Americans, principles and practical questions of foreign policy with the exception of [relations with] the USSR and people's democracies, with which one must carry out a policy of friendship and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutuality.

From our sides comrades I[van] Kovalev and E. Kovalev were present at the conversation.

CONTACTS OF THE CCP WITH THE USA

In his detailed information about foreign relations of the CCP Zhou Enlai stated that during the war they had no foreign contacts until 1944. In 1944 American general [Joseph] Stilwell sent a group of American observers to Yan'an, which was there from April 1944 to March 1946, until the fall of Yan'an, and from that moment our contacts with the external world began. Already then, in accordance with Mao Zedong's instructions, we followed a policy of not allowing the Americans' intervention in our internal affairs. We followed the same policy with regard to [Truman's envoy to China George] Marshall. For example, we declined to participate in the Sino-American mediating commission, in which the decisive vote belonged to the USA. In this case we demanded to follow the decisions of the Council of Foreign Ministers' Moscow meeting in October 1945.

In the course of negotiations with Marshall we made out that the Americans wanted to establish control over our forces. We signed an agreement with the Americans on the reorganization of the army (February 1946), inasmuch as this was profitable to us. Subsequently the agreement was breached, the civil war flared up and our representative office left Nanjing. From that time we started to expose the USA vigorously. Although we broke relations with the Americans, they time and again attempted to establish contacts with us through those persons who had something to do with us. But we limited ourselves to hearing about the Americans' decisions to establish contacts with us.

As for our relations with the UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration], despite the fact that we suffered more losses than the Guomindang-ists we received from it merely 2% (50 thousand tons) of all its supplies to China. In spite of this we received many valuable goods. The ammonia fertilizers supplied by the UNRRA were used by us to produce ammunition. There were many intelligence agents among the workers of the UNRRA, but there were also those who helped us.

Further Zhou Enlai said that the military clashes with the Americans had taught us a lot. It is known that even before Japan's capitulation Americans tried to create their own bases in China. With the arrival of the Sov[iet] forces in Manchuria Japan

capitulated. The USA gradually began to recall their observers, and then forces from China, continuing however to help the Guomindang in the military respect. In the clashes with the Guomindang-ists we killed several Americans who participated in the Guomindang operations. The first case of such a nature dates back to the talks between Mao Zedong and Jiang Jieshi in Chongqing in 1945. [American forces in China Commander Albert Coady] Wedemeyer, having learned about the killing of an American soldier, presented us with an ultimatum, but we declared in reply that we knew nothing about the killing. The second case happened in the vicinity of Tianjin, when a group of Americans, under the pretext of looking for their lost people, conducted intelligence gathering. Our forces opened fire on the group. We immediately broadcasted this case on the radio but the Americans denied it. The third case happened on the road between Tianjin and Beijing [Beijing] when the Americans intentionally drove into our zone. In the firefight one American was killed. Marshall protested to us. The fourth case happened in the area of Qingdao, when, in a firefight with a group of intelligence agents, one American was killed and three were captured. Americans again protested to us, then came to negotiate and signed a document, recognizing their responsibility in this affair. The fifth case relates to last year, when an American intelligence plane wanted to land an American major general on the territory of the liberated area. We captured this general and he has been in Shandong since the month of May 1947, without admitting being a general. The Americans pretend that they don't know about this case. The sixth case of a clash with the Americans relates to the area of the Tianjin airfield, where the Americans worked as the Guomindang's instructors. Our guerrillas blew up military objects on the airfield. After this the Americans recalled their representatives.

Summarizing the aforesaid, Zhou Enlai said that we must not provoke the Americans, but if they come out against us we will deliver them decisive rebuffs. In our press we curse the USA because this educates the masses (workers, peasants, students) in the spirit we need.

Further Zhou Enlai said that in the course of the 3 postwar years the USA undermined its authority in China. As a whole, the people hate the Americans, though there are some people, even among the progressive elements, who fear the powers of the USA.

Continuing, Zhou Enlai stated that, in relations with the Americans, a new problem emerged when our troops took Mukden [Shenyang] last year. The foreign consulates located there (American, English and French) hinted to us that they have no intention of evacuating and would like to establish de facto relations with us. We understand that these consulates remained for intelligence gathering against us and the USSR. We have no desire to see them in Mukden [Shenyang], therefore we are taking measures to isolate them, creating for them unbearable conditions, so as to force them to leave Mukden. In the future we will raise the question of a consular network on equal footing. Generally, Zhou Enlai said, we will grasp the Americans firmer because "we are fighting them, and not other powers." The Americans are undermining our regime and we should isolate the USA in our own country.

ON RECOGNIZING THE COALITION GOVERNMENT

Further Zhou Enlai turned to the question of the diplomatic recognition of the future coalition government headed by the communists, but before that he asked to explain why the Soviet Ambassador [Nikolai] Roshchin departed for Canton.

With regard to the question of Roshchin's move with the Guomindang government to Canton I explained that this is fairly reasonable since China so far only has one government, to which our ambassador is accredited and it is natural that he moved together with the Chinese government to Canton, having left a part of the Embassy personnel in Nanjing. In essence this will not only not hamper our common cause but, on the contrary, aid it.

Then Zhou Enlai continued on the question of recognition of the future coalition government by foreign powers. In accordance with the CCP data, received through the democratic leaders, the Americans and the English intend to recognize the new government headed by the communists. One of the cited proofs is the fact that, in their opinion, the ambassadors of the countries did not leave Nanjing and did not follow the Guomindang government, which moved to Canton.

The first option

The CCP strives toward immediate recognition of the new government by the main foreign powers. In this case it is necessary for the USSR to recognize the new government first; according to their information, the Americans and the English want to get ahead of the Sov[iet] Union in this matter so as to put it into an unfavorable situation in the eyes of the Chinese public.

The second option

Not to strive toward immediate recognition of the new government. If a foreign government declares its desire to recognize, not to refute it and not to give agreement, continuing this tactic for approximately one year. After this, to strive toward recognition. The advantages of such an option are such that, having free hands, the new government could with more ease put pressure on all things foreign in China, ignoring the protests of foreign governments against the actions of the new government, aimed at limiting the rights and drawing [sic] foreign citizens and foreign governments. At the same time they would like to know the opinion of our CC whether one must establish diplomatic relations between the USSR and the new Chinese government after a year together with other countries or they could be established immediately after the formation of the coalition government.

I promised to report all of this to our CC, which will discuss it and reply.

ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN PROPERTY

In yesterday's conversation, Zhou Enlai said, Mao Zedong, speaking about foreign enterprises, stressed that it is necessary to apply a cautious position with respect to them, inasmuch as their capital is closely intertwined with China's interests. He reminded that the 6th Congress of the CCP made the decision on the confiscation of foreign capital and property, which was then approved by the Comintern. In principle

this decision also remains in force now, but its implementation must be conducted in more flexible forms. Zhou Enlai asked that I recount my attitude toward the position, put forward by Mao Zedong on this question.

I replied that on the question of foreign property we have an opinion that one should nationalize Japanese, French and, where possible, English property. With regard to the American property one must carry out a cautious policy, so as to create an impression among the Americans that their interests will be taken into account by the new government. When the government headed by the communists takes control over the situation in China, one could discuss this question again and resolve it depending on the situation and on the behavior of the Americans. After this statement of mine, Zhou Enlai recounted the preliminary draft of the CCP position, recounted above, in accordance with which, [they] do not intend to nationalize foreign property for the time being.

PRINCIPLES OF FOREIGN POLICY

Then Zhou Enlai, in accordance with the points expounded earlier by Mao Zedong, recounted the following principles of their foreign policy:

1. To conduct a policy of independence, without provoking foreign powers at the same time.
2. To protect the life and property of foreigners (keeping quiet for the time being about their privileges) with the exception of Japanese property, which has all been already confiscated by the Guomindang, this [provision] remaining in force.
3. With regard to the existing consulate and diplomatic representative offices before the establishment of diplomatic relations, to carry out a line of not liquidating them, protecting their life and property, taking away their right to conduct their activities, at the same time creating unbearable conditions for the consulates of the Western powers in Mukden so that they leave it and in the future not to allow them to be restored in Mukden and Harbin. As Zhou Enlai expressed himself, to strive for shutting off Manchuria with an Iron Curtain from the foreign powers except for the USSR and people's democracies. In order to create the appearance of equal attitude, Soviet consulate organizations also must formally end their activities, continuing their functions unofficially.
4. To close down all newspapers and journals published by foreigners. This means that the Soviet consulates in Tianjin and Shanghai, in order to continue the publication of their newspapers, must formally appoint as the heads of these publications some kind of democratic Chinese [persons].
5. To prohibit further entry of foreigners, missionaries and journalists into China (with the exception of [those] friendly-disposed), to introduce mandatory registration of missionary organizations, hospitals, schools, cultural and scientific institutions, foreign aid organizations, putting them under control and limiting their activities within a certain framework, protecting their life and property. To limit land property of foreign

churches with their villas [sic, probably “to their villas”], confiscating the remaining land. In foreign missionary schools the directors must be Chinese, and the textbooks—from among the number approved by the government, religion must be taught on a voluntary basis. To deport foreigners accused of espionage and of breaking the law, and in some cases to send [them] to jail through the court.

6. To keep foreigners employed at Chinese state institutions, with the exception of reactionaries and hostile persons.

7. To prohibit activity of foreign telegraph and information agencies inside of China. At the same time they ask us to hint to them what modus could be created for the [ITAR-]TASS, which, let’s say, could exchange information with Chinese state agency on the basis of a treaty or otherwise taking into account our experience with the countries of people’s democracies.

8. To forbid all foreigners to carry weapons, except for diplomatic workers.

9. To de facto isolate the American military attaches remaining in Beiping [Beijing] and Tianjin by supplying [our] own officers to them, take away their opportunity to move anywhere and take up any activities.

10. To encircle the Qingdao base, occupied by the Americans, breaking all of its contacts with the surrounding territory; without resorting to military actions to strive toward Americans’ departure; to do the same with other coastal points where the Americans will leave behind or land their forces. In all cases when the Americans disturb the order or come out against [our] forces or authorities, to suppress them using weapons when necessary.

11. To put all of the customs under [our] own control, taking them completely from under the direction of foreign powers. To keep customs tariffs unchanged for the time being. To cancel the privileges, given to the Americans by the Guomindang, decreeing that entry of internal ports is allowed only with the government’s permission.

12. To forbid foreigners to use radio stations on China’s territory.

13. To establish control over foreign enterprises, banks and their accounting and in case of their breaching established laws, to make them bear responsibility, even as far as closing [them] down.

Talking about foreign trade Zhou Enlai said that first and foremost they will establish trade relations with the USSR and with the countries of people’s democracies. They will give their goods to these countries in the first place, and the remnants—to the capitalist countries.

To my question whether they are considering trade with Japan, Zhou Enlai said that they had not discussed this question yet, but it should be thought through and we should be consulted.

To my question whether the party will take the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for itself Zhou Enlai answered in the affirmative, [saying] that the minister in any case will be a communist, and his deputies—one a communist and one non-party person. In this connection Zhou Enlai said that they have created a special commission in Tianjin, which studies various foreign political documents for the eventuality of [us] being prepared for [creating a] future Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The conversation ended at this.