

1949

Speeches/Documents

Title: Memorandum of Conversation of USSR Ambassador in China Com. N. V. ROSHCHIN with deputy chairman of the People's Government of China and the Commander in Chief of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) ZHU DE

Author:

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Source: *[Source: AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 42, por. 19, pap. 288, ll. 34-36; translation from Russian by David Wolff.]* "One Finger's Worth of Historical Events" New Russian and Chinese Evidence on the Sino-Soviet Alliance and Split, 1948-1959 by David Wolff Working Paper No. 30 pp.37-38

Description:

On 24 October at 1600 the Ambassador paid an official visit to the deputy chairman of the People's Government of China and Commander in Chief of the PLA, Zhu De in the reception hall Yinyangtang in Zhongnanhai [the Chinese leadership compound].

After questions of a protocol nature between the Ambassador and Zhu De there was a friendly talk in the course of which Zhu De stated the following.

I. Military operations on the fronts of the Chinese civil war are developing in a fully satisfactory manner. If they continue thus, then Sichuan province will be completely liberated towards the end of this year. In Sichuan among the local militarists there is a strong tendency to come over to the PLA and practical steps are being taken in this direction. The PLA's progress in Southeast China will be determined by the average hourly speed at which the PLA infantry units march, for there is no serious resistance. The PLA troops operating in Southern China are not able to use auto transport, because there is little gas. The GMD [Guomintang; Kuomintang; KMT] successfully removed all fuel to Hainan Island in advance and the PLA transport lacks "trophy" gasoline.

II. The preparation of new PLA units, in particular anti-aircraft units, is going forward in Manchuria and Northern China and soon five anti-aircraft regiments will be sent into the central and southern parts of China – Shanghai, Nanking, Hangzhou and others. In this matter, as in the PLA's movement into Xinjiang, the PLA command received large-scale, valuable aid from Soviet comrades.

III. Regarding further aid to China by the Soviet side, Zhu De especially mentioned Xinjiang, where in his words PLA units will settle right away to provide for themselves in order to be fully self-supporting and not harm the interests of the local Muslim population in Xinjiang.

In order to help the PLA to successfully carry out its spring seeding, in Zhu De's opinion, the Chinese government should agree with the Soviet government about sending the PLA powerful tractors, hoes, and other agricultural tools and machines, so that the army, on one hand, can clearly demonstrate to the local population the advantages of machine agriculture and, on the other hand, can feed itself. This will also be a valuable contribution to Sino-Soviet friendship and a demonstration of USSR help to China. Zhu De warned the Ambassador several times that his suggestion was personal in nature and that the government had not discussed this issue.

IV. Regarding the General Staff Zhu De stated that the General Staff was an extremely important institution, completely new in Chinese conditions. Presently General Xu Xiangqian,

the Chief of the General Staff, an old CCP [Chinese Communist Party] military worker, who before the Japanese invasion commanded troops of the fourth direction of the Chinese soviet [council] districts, is seriously sick and his functions are carried out by Nie Rongzhen. At present the PLA officers' corps does not have enough generals and officers to work in a General Staff since the war is continuing and victory is decided at the front, from where it is presently premature to recall generals and officers to work in a General Staff. However, soon the PLA Command will be obliged to bring back cadres for the General Staff from the fronts. The conversation with Zhu De continued for one-and-a-half hours and Embassy Advisor S. L. Tikhvinskii and the Head of the [Chinese] Foreign Ministry Yan Baohang. The conversation was interpreted by Embassy Advisor S. L. Tikhvinskii. USSR Ambassador in China N. Roshchin.