

May 6, 1968

Cable from the CSSR Embassy, Peking, 'Thesis and Proposals for the Development of an Action Plan of the Communist Party and Government of Czechoslovakia regarding the Relations between Czechoslovakia and Chinese People's Republic'

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Summary:

Proposals for Communist Party action regarding the CPR activity, including overall objectives in the CSSR-PRC relationship, general foreign policy outlook, and specific measures like fighting against the theory of "two Chinas."

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SECRET [the stamp is crossed out]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[Illegible stamp no 023011]

P r a g u e

Thesis and proposals for the development of an action plan of the Communist Party and government of Czechoslovakia regarding the relations between Czechoslovakia [CSSR] and Chinese People's Republic [CPR], and the question of delivery [?]

1. Questions of relationship

A) Basic concept

1/ Illusions of a single-model, mutually coordinated development of all socialist countries and their more or less harmonious transit to communism have been shown to be unrealistic.

2/ There is a need to anticipate uneven development of socialism not only in socialist countries, but especially in various parts of the world. That goes, in particular, on the one hand for the widely differentiated progress in [east and central] European countries with the socialist systems /so far, with the exception of the Albanian People's Republic/, and, on the other, for the Asian socialist countries /leaving aside the different development in Cuba in Latin America/.

3/ It would therefore be desirable if conceptually our relations with CPR were tied in with our general relations with Asian countries with socialist systems.

4/ To explain the difference [between the two] on the basis of purely subjective and [therefore susceptible to emotions] factors (such as a cult of personality) would be unscientific[.] Foreign policy built primarily on this analysis would be, [as it has been so far] of little success and would cause harm to the cause of peace and progress in the world.

5/ CPR constitutes, besides SSSR and USA, the third world superpower with its own specific interests in assuming a hegemonic posture in the Third World[.] From an ideological and sociological point of view, it is making an effort to become an independent "revolutionary" power, different from the bourgeois democracies or the socialist democracies of our concept.

6/ Long term expansion in the industrial arena /unused sources of raw material, energy and labor force/ and predominant autarchy-like type of self-sufficiency system of an enormous country should a/o make possible, with corrections made in line to life's realities, that the current internal political course of "Chinese socialism" introduced by Mao would continue for a long time without fundamental changes [.] This could happen even if the leadership does change /due to death, retirement or a member's exclusion/ because the deeply ingrained traditional nationalism precludes almost certainly, or as far as can be foreseen, substantial changes in [CPR's] basic foreign policy concepts. (Possibility of positive changes in tactics, of course, exists, and should be encouraged.)

7/ Hopes for a foreseeable victory of "healthy Marxist-Leninist forces" in the fight against Mao's line, as well as a belief in an ongoing liquidation of the fundamental relationships among [Chinese] productive forces, are falling into the arsenal of propaganda. These forces are the only objective measure for qualifying the societal type of a state, and they cannot provide the basis for evaluation of the progress in CPR.

8/ Similarly unrealistic are the official Chinese illusions of the possibility of a victory of Mao's teaching in the Third World, and from there in the rest of the world. But political aggression of CPR serves the solution of internal problems. It shows that on issues, that could have for CPR dangerous and irredeemable consequences, the Chinese leadership proceeds soberly and with utmost caution. In this aspect there exists a difference between Chinese theories and practice that must be kept in mind when realistically judge the situation.

9/ The above conclusions naturally do not exclude unexpected serious [political] changes and turns in CPR. But [in discussing] general concepts, there is a need to consider existing situation and the likely development of the current course.

B) From the above follow these conclusions about our [foreign policy] concepts:

1/ CPR, as an Asian socialist power of the first rank that goes its own separate way, has to be regarded as a permanent and important actor in international relations. Attempts to diminish its global standing are in the long run unrealistic, and from the viewpoint of wise politics, harmful.

2/ Long-range obstacle to CSSR-CPR relations will continue the obvious ideological differences, [whose effects will be] multiplied by the intolerant attitude of CPR and the basically different stance of both countries in MKH and relations among countries of socialist systems as well as the most fundamental international issues (UN, disarmament, peaceful coexistence). In advancing international relations it would therefore be useful to separate them, as far as possible, from relations among political parties and not burden them with ideological questions and MKH.

3/ The basis of CSSR position vis-à-vis CPR should be an effort to:

a) [achieve] a step-by-step mutual normalization of our contacts, in order to remove or mitigate friction points and obstacles accumulated during the previous era, while avoiding creating new ones;

b) broaden mutual contacts in areas where they have a chance to succeed;

c) prepare to lead a considered dialogue (instead of the current "attack" monologues") about conflicting issues.

4/ While executing CSSR foreign policy in contacts with CPR, pursue the interests of socialist CSSR as well as the interests of the entire socialist and progressive world. Be also mindful that normalization efforts and gradual improvement of contacts with CPR advance all of the above aims.

C) Proposals for active measures:

- Actively support CPR as the exclusive representative of China and its fight against the theory of "two Chinas". This position is to be not only clearly announced, but also actively promoted in opportune situations. Consider the possibility that CSSR would

share in the usual formal initiatives in the UN as a co-author of [Chinese] appropriate resolutions.

- Follow similar policy in other international organizations, in conferences, in negotiations for agreements of global importance, and in discussions on basic international issues (especially about disarmament and the quest for a peaceful world).

- Inform CPR through diplomatic channels about CSSR's preparations for taking these steps and, dependent on the state of mutual relations, consider even the possibility of consultation [with China?]

- Assert the CSSR attitude regarding CPR's international standing in negotiations involving foreign policy, and include [this position], when appropriate, in the resulting agreed-upon agreements.

- Do not avoid stating CSSR standing on this issue even in CSSR [internal] documents and policy speeches, especially where they mention China.

- Try to make sure that information and propaganda materials (brochures) and exhibits do not give cause to Chinese rightful complaints in area.

- Critically evaluate the development of CSSR-CPR relations so far in order to become conscious of conflicting issues and to what extent they have been influenced by our positions;

- Give priority to efforts for normalization of relations and conditions for work of the representative offices of both countries[.] Here are major anomalies:

- a) Abusive signs on the walls of our representative office
- b) Limitations on the free movement of CPR representatives in CSSR
- c) Damaging the display vitrines on the walls of CPR's representative office
- d) Shortage of contacts between both [CSSR and CPR] representative offices and the ministries of foreign affairs and other institutions of [the two governments]
- e) Misuse of the display on the walls of our representative office (which is now preoccupied with issues involving [inappropriate] signs on the walls)
- f) The issue of (our) restriction of the distribution of unacceptable [printed] materials

- Fundamentally improve the quality of CSSR mass media, especially the press, by providing our own objective and serious coverage of CPR, and rejecting propaganda-oriented reports from foreign publications

- To that end, involve [the coverage of China] specialists in the [CSSR] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oriental Institute and other scientific institutions. Regarding the reporting by the Czechoslovak Press Office [CTK], it should send to China a new correspondent who could not only provide written reports but could also work for CSSR radio and TV. If that could not be done, these functions could be carried out by a special press officer in our representative office in Peking, as we have suggested previously.

- Use all opportunities for appropriate broadening of our contacts with the Chinese representative office; employ more of our own social events for movie presentations

(there is a need to send [to China] at least a minimal number of short films) and for showing movies at other, including foreign, social occasions to which are invited Chinese guests, and [strengthen the contacts] of the commercial section

- Try to achieve at least formal normalization in the implementation of cultural relations (by closing of annual protocols), where the primary obstacle is the issue of Chinese students; reconsider our fundamental position on this subject and, together with it, our tactics (for example, [develop] well formulated proposals for student exchanges with a guarantee by both sides that the students will not meddle in the interior policies of the host nation), and attempt to enliven contacts among academicians and in the arenas of health, railroad connections, and, depending on the CPR position, even sports.

- The best outlook for mutual contacts is in the commercial sphere, where both countries have been active for a long time[.] But it is exactly in this area where both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the representative offices play only a marginal role[.] This is due to a lack of clarity about the concept of mutual cooperation and the division of roles in commercial politics.

- We believe that CPR presents a long-term opportunity for mutually beneficial commercial exchanges, and especially so if it resumes economic growth following the end of the "cultural revolution". In the meantime, the increased [Chinese] trade with some countries of the socialist system is mostly the consequence of the decline in CPR-SSSR commerce.

- In view of the new decentralization of CSSR foreign trade and the continuation of CPR's central commercial decision-making, we must find a solution that would enable the maintenance and increase of the exchange of products with CPR (for example, by founding an organization for export and import involving China and other countries with similar problems).

- We also must remove our obstacles to greater trade (by implementing agreed-upon commitments) and by [improving] our problematic pricing system (that keeps busy the entire commercial section of our representative office).

- The small extent of VTS does not measure up to the possibilities and the state of technological progress in both countries. For our part, we need to actively search for new ways of cooperation that the Chinese side would be reluctant to turn down. Despite some difficulties (of financial type) there is a need to find new ways of broadening [cooperation], perhaps [with the help] of one central institution that could refund the losses of the participating enterprises.

II. Organizational character

1/ The material base of [CSSR] representative office [in Peking] is a given. A two-hectare complex of six [city] blocks, it is expensive to, maintain.

2/ The relatively cheapest way to ensure [the office] can function is by making maximum use of local Chinese maintenance personnel directed by a small group of good experts.

3/ The unavoidable minimum of Czechoslovak maintenance employees: a supervisor and a janitor, a garage man and a code specialist. (Presumably also: a secretary, a documents archivist, a purser, the head of the open protocol section and two cleaning persons [that can be drawn from] spouses or the office employees.

4/ Optimal direction and maintenance: [should be] provided by one center for all office sections (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MZO, Ministry of National Defense, the Press office) and, preferably, include an accountant ... a maintenance supervisor, a garage man, etc.

5/ The number of diplomatic employees will depend on the nature of their work and its organization. We recommend gradual shift from reporting to making more contacts with local Chinese actors. The reporting function should be substantially limited to recording and evaluating facts, and drawing from them conclusions as well as proposing appropriate measures. Analytical work should be essentially carried out in the [Prague] headquarters (rather than the representative office). Emphasis should be placed on speedy information, both coded and telegraphed. The messages should briefly summarize the facts and then focus on providing personal impressions and interpretation and proposing response measures. Useless information (such as "stylistic exercises", semi-annual instead of combined annual reports) should be dispensed with entirely. Reconsider the need for a complicated system for evaluation of the work of employees, especially their "grading" that cannot be effective because it is unavoidably subjective and therefore varies from one grader to another. More effective would be oral discussion of key questions and on this basis draw conclusion in the [headquarters], where could be applied [more broadly used uniform] evaluation standards.

6/ Assuming arrangement described in 5/ there would be currently and in the near future need to staff the representative office with its titular head and 4 diplomats, at least two of whom must be China experts who know Russian, and one a multilingual diplomat who speaks Russian, English and French and is capable of establishing contacts. The capabilities of the titular head of the office must be considered separately. Currently, he could be a career diplomat with a personality and linguistic talent and who is able to make and maintain contacts.

7/ The rest of the agenda - for example, propaganda, organizational work, cultural, scientific and eventually sports contacts - is perhaps at present too demanding. But if it became more achievable, it could be for some time handled by the current personnel.

8/ Connections with the [CSSR] central office basically work. It would be perhaps desirable to [provide] more information [about certain parts of China?] rather than of general nature. Instruction and evaluation letters [from the headquarters] are helpful; comments on formulation with which it's impossible to agree are useless.

We recommend to carefully watch in Prague for opportunities of using a member of the representative office as part of a delegation or a subject expert etc. Arrangements and corrections [involving the makeup of such delegations when they arrive in China] as a rule are not possible.

9/ A general proposal: effects of new [political] developments at home on the foreign service should be corrected where it no longer works [?].

Ambassador:

(Illegible handwritten signature)