

**June 10, 1977**

**Information on the Chinese Question for the  
Leaderships of the Fraternal Parties of the Socialist  
Countries**

**Citation:**

"Information on the Chinese Question for the Leaderships of the Fraternal Parties of the Socialist Countries", June 10, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA, DY 30, IV B 2/20/590. Translated by Bernd Schaefer.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/209708>

**Summary:**

A report on China's growing anti-Soviet policies since the death of Mao Zedong, the potential for a Sino-Soviet war, border disputes with the Soviet Union, and Chinese relations with the United States, Western Europe, Japan, Southeast Asia, and the "Third World." They also discuss the Soviet strategy in response to these events.

**Original Language:**

German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

10 June 1977[1]

4 copies

[Handwritten]

Comrade P. Markowski

[signed] EH[2]

13 June 1977

[Handwritten]

Comrade Mahlow

[signed] Mahlow

Confidential

### I n f o r m a t i o n

On the Chinese Question

for the Leaderships of the Fraternal Parties  
of the Socialist Countries

Following the tradition of regular exchanges of information with the fraternal parties on the Chinese question, the Central Committee of the CPSU wants to share some thoughts on the policy of the new leadership of the PR China in light of recent events.

One year has passed since the death of Mao Zedong. In this period to a certain extent positions and the political course of the Chinese leadership in succession of Mao Zedong have emerged. On the most important questions of Beijing's policy the picture has become clearer today.

Unfortunately one has to state that the leaders of the CCP do not show any intention to shed the bonds of Maoism, to subject the mistaken Maoist goals to a critical review, and to lead the country towards the path of socialist build-up. Events in China in September and October of last year are similar to a palace coup. Though it eliminate several politicians in addition to their supporters, this did not cause any fundamental changes in policy.

Mao Zedong has left a grave heritage behind. According to Mao's will, over the course of the last one and a half decade a foreign policy course was pursued which led China as a socialist state into a status of severe discredit. From friendship, cooperation, and understanding with the socialist countries, Beijing shifted to a policy of hostility and struggle against those and to an extensive collaboration with the forces of imperialism and reaction.

Already now it has become evident that Mao Zedong's death did not result at all automatically in the death of Maoism as an ideology hostile to Marxism-Leninism. It also will not result in such. The publication of the edition of the 5th volume of Mao Zedong's works, the actually programmatic article by Hua Guofeng on 1 May 1977, and his trendsetting speech on 9 May 1977 at the conference to promote the Daqing [3] experience - all these things are evidence for China's new leadership directly identifying itself with the course left behind by Mao Zedong. The leaders have made the commitment to keep China further on Maoist course. The politicians remaining in positions of power are still standing on a nationalist, great-power chauvinist, expansionist, and hegemonic platform.

I.

China is currently confronted with economic and political problems. However, those must still not lead to the impression as if this vast country is a giant with feet of clay.

It is evidently the objective of the Beijing leadership to further fuel the arms race and war preparations in China, already under way for a long time, with increasing speed. Even during the most turbulent domestic unrest and chaos, the arms industry gets protected and further developed by the Chinese leadership by any possible means. According to numbers of the United Nations, the PR China's military expenditures reached about 21 billion U.S. Dollars in 1976, this is almost half of the entire central state budget of the country. The Beijing leadership is unrelenting in its efforts to strengthen its missile and nuclear weapons potential and in developing ballistic medium- and long-range missile capabilities. In 1976 four nuclear tests were undertaken in China, while previously there only had been one per year. Currently the PR China has also made a substantial step forward in the area of strategic weapons.

The capitalist countries, especially the United States, the FRG, Great Britain and France, are not disinclined to support the development of Beijing's military-industrial potential in order to bolster China (of course within limits not dangerous to themselves, as they want to believe) as an adversary of the Soviet Union and the socialist community. They have opened the door wide to encourage travel to the PR China by nuclear scientists, missile builders, and experts from other corresponding areas among the Chinese population permanently living in these countries. To ever expanding scope, China is purchasing from capitalist countries technology and equipment useful for military purposes.

Beijing's foreign policy course cannot be viewed without considering the task enshrined in the 1975 Constitution of the PR China and reconfirmed by the new leaders: developing China into a great world power until the year 2000. This is about the material support to realize a strategy, which gets preserved as it had been outlined by Mao Zedong: with all its ambitions, its Greater Han objectives, and its territorial claims. The hegemonism of the Beijing leadership was on visible display in the propagation of the slogan of China as the "Bulwark of World Revolution". In April 1977 Li Xiannian<sup>[4]</sup>, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CCP and Deputy Prime Minister, expressed at the National Conference on Learning from Daqing Oil Industry Experience the loyalty of the Chinese leadership to the "grand objective propagated by Mao to overtake the United States economically by decades", to make China even more powerful and to "make an even greater contribution to mankind". Judging from the statements of China's current leaders, they are like Mao eager to make this "contribution" not in order to strengthen the peace but to fuel a new World War.

Without beating about the bush, the Chinese leaders are declaring: "War is inevitable, there is nothing like a detente."

For instance, on 9 May 1977 Hua Guofeng indulged at the National Conference on Learning from Daqing Oil Industry Experience in militaristic appeals like the following: "We must be absolutely prepared to conduct a war. You may not miss the right moment, the time is not waiting". Defense Minister Ye Jianying<sup>[5]</sup>, the Number Two in the country, expressed his gloating about the aggravation in relations between the USSR and the United States, and he prophesied this must "sooner or later lead to war". Juxtaposing the course of the socialist countries towards strengthening peace and further detente, Ye Jianying emphasized Beijing's course towards war: "We have to direct our focus on the fact that soon a war of major dimension will break out". In accordance with these objectives, the Chinese leaders are outlining the task to

develop a modernized arms industry. In an interview with the West German newspaper "Die Welt", China's Deputy Foreign Minister Yu Zhan<sup>[6]</sup> talked provocatively about alleged plans of an "expansionist policy by the Soviet Union" made up by Beijing. Furthermore he stated that Western Europe will be the "first object" of the Soviet attack, then next it would be the turn of the Middle East and the United States, and only then there will be the "attack on China".

The fantasies about a so-called "threat to the entire world" from the Soviet Union are getting repeated by the Chinese leaders at every meeting with visitors from capitalist countries. For instance, in an interview with the English journalist G. Hamilton, Deputy Prime Minister Li Xiannian talked about the "danger of Soviet imperialism" in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Simultaneously he stated Beijing's desire to see "Europe powerful and with a strong defense". He promised that "China will certainly not stand by idly, if the Russians will plan to undertake an expansion somewhere in the world". Statements of such kind were also been made later on. So, among others, Li Xiannian appealed in meetings with a delegation from U.S. Congress in April 1977 to the United States to not only keep their troops in Europe but also to increase them.

The fact deserves special attention that the current Beijing leadership is making corrections to the Maoist doctrine of "People's War", namely in the direction of replacing the defensive strategy with a new offensive concept. According to our information, Hua Guofeng, Ye Jianying, and Li Xiannian, demanded in March 1977 in their talks to Chinese scientists to accelerate the speed in the development of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, as well as regarding missiles.

The Beijing leadership is still opposing the proposals by the socialist countries for the non-use of force in international relations, the ban of nuclear tests, for disarmament et cetera. Busy with its active war preparations, China is stubbornly resisting any disarmament measures. The PR China is one of the few countries not having made any commitments regarding the ban or the limitation of developing and using weapons of mass destruction.

II.

Following the Maoist concepts of the "Three Worlds", which are denying the existence of the socialist community (again confirmed in Hua Guofeng's article from 1 May 1977), the entire foreign policy strategy of China is aiming at: the aggravation of contradictions between the socialist and imperialist states, especially between the USSR and the United States; the exploitation of conflict situations for the fueling of tensions; the inevitability of a new World War.

For a long time already, Beijing has thrown over board any class-based approach to assess the main forces active on the stage of international events. Now [China] is ever more openly conducting a policy of collaboration with all the reactionary forces to fight against the socialist community and to implement its own great-power objectives.

The PR China is eager to develop its relations with Western Europe on the basis of hostility towards real socialism. It is encouraging the reactionary circles of the Western European countries to torpedo the policy of detente and to seek increased confrontation with the socialist states. Without interruption, China's propaganda is claiming that the Helsinki Conference<sup>[7]</sup> yielded "no positive results" for the European situation, that Europe is remaining the "potential main crisis spot for a global catastrophe", and that the "threat" from the Warsaw Pact "has grown even more".

By any means, Beijing is supporting the military preparations and the arms race of the NATO countries. It is talking about the need for a stronger political unity of the states of the EEC [European Economic Community] and for those to follow a uniform line in foreign policy and defense in light of the "Soviet threat". This became clearly evident in Beijing's hostile reaction to the proposal by the member states of the Warsaw Pact to agree on a treaty on the renunciation of first use of nuclear weapons between the signatory states of the CSCE Conference. It also showed in Beijing's support for the positions of the NATO military clique on this question. The Chinese press has directed a stream of attacks against our new initiatives in the context of the Vienna negotiations on the limitation of forces and armaments in Central Europe<sup>[8]</sup> and against the positions of the USSR in these negotiations in general. It [Chinese press] justified and encouraged the intentions of the United States and other imperialist states to continue the arms race and to increase their military power.

Those facts from recent months demonstrate that Beijing continues to bank in its struggle against the positive tendencies in Europe on the most reactionary politicians of the Conservative Party in England, the revanchists of the West German CDU/CSU<sup>[9]</sup> and other forces. It is very telling in this regard how the Chinese leaders flattered the CDU politician Filbinger<sup>[10]</sup> and the leader of the English Conservatives, Thatcher<sup>[11]</sup>, during their visits to Beijing in April of 1977. Not the least, the reason behind the contacts between the Chinese leadership and representatives of ultra-rightist circles from Western European states is the intention to thwart any success of the Belgrade follow-up meeting of the signatory states of the Helsinki Final Act.

China is gaining ever greater importance in the plans of the imperialists to weaken the positions of socialism and to shatter the unity and uniformity of the socialist countries. In order to undermine the positions of global socialism, the dangerous tendencies are staying in place - namely towards further rapprochement, towards expansion in the sphere of "joint" or "parallel" international interests of Beijing and Washington, and towards forming a bloc between the leaders of the PR China and the most aggressive circles of the United States as well as of other Western powers and Japan. In meetings with American representatives, the Chinese leaders have repeatedly stated that an accordance between positions of the United States and the PR China on most international issues is much more important than questions of bilateral nature.

A certain division of labor between Beijing and Washington is beginning to emerge. Beijing is relieving the United States from any responsibility for the sabotage of the process of detente and from the continuation of the arms race. In its propaganda, China is framing the issue as if the United States are "forced" to increase their armaments in light of the "Soviet threat". Beijing is parroting the statements by the reactionary forces of the United States, which demand the development of even more powerful and destructive nuclear weapons. Without nuance, Beijing is appealing to the American administration to pursue a tougher course towards the USSR. The list of "Beijing-Washington Commonalities" is extending not only to European issues, but also to those of Asia, Africa, as well as the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Apparently their mutual interest is evident here regarding the preservation of the U.S. military presence and the undermining of the influence of the socialist countries in these regions.

In Beijing and in Washington questions are discussed concerning a "potential pressure campaign against the USSR" through joint actions. The de-facto partnership, the rapprochement, and the coordinated appearance by Beijing and Washington on many important international issues are especially evident in the United Nations.

In light of the strengthening of positions of global socialism in Asia, as a consequence of the victory by the peoples of Vietnam and Laos, it is telling how benevolent Beijing is positioning itself towards the Japanese-American military alliance, as well as the

efforts of Japanese capital to expand its positions in Southeast Asia and to bolster its relations with the ASEAN [\[12\]](#) countries on a foundation of anti-communism. The Chinese leaders are persistently continuing in their efforts to win over Tokyo's government circles for an anti-Soviet alliance. They are demanding to include in a treaty of peace and friendship with Japan a provision on the "joint struggle against hegemony", what is in fact a provision directed against the Soviet Union. As a Japanese news agency has reported, high-ranking Chinese military officials had several meetings in April 1977 with representatives of Japan's national Defense Agency where military problems were discussed. The Chinese leaders are going this far that they are advocating a restoration of the Japanese military potential and an alliance between China and Japan as part of an anti-Soviet and anti-socialist front in the East.

Beijing is completely and entirely maintaining its hostile attitude towards the socialist community. The Chinese leadership is continuing its splittist policy of the so-called "differentiated approach" and is pursuing it in an even more shrewd way than before. Beijing is seeing its mission in destroying the unity of the fraternal countries and in thwarting its coordinated foreign policy course through a "selective normalization" with some states, while maintaining its hostile position towards other states.

The Chinese side is attempting to suggest to some socialist countries that there exists "a real opportunity to develop a wide-ranging cooperation" with them, even though Beijing is maintaining its hostile course towards the socialist community in its entirety and vis-a-vis the USSR in particular.

In early 1977, the Chinese leadership was undertaking a propagandistic attack against several socialist states, which was actually coordinated with imperialism, in order to encourage the counter-revolutionary and anti-socialist elements in those states. Following in the footsteps of the Western anti-communists, Beijing openly sided with the traitors and renegades of most varied kind. (The imperialists' as well as Beijing's propaganda is of course keeping silent here about the fact that in the PR China 5 million of "dissenters" were physically destroyed during the years of the "Cultural Revolution"). The Chinese propaganda goes even so far as to portray the situation in the socialist countries as if they are "at the verge of collapse", that they are similar to a "volcano", and other things in that vein.

In its efforts to sow mistrust against collective organs of cooperation between the socialist states, Beijing is unrelenting in slandering the operations of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the organization of the Warsaw Treaty.

The Soviet Union has always opted for a normalization of relations with the PR China, and it has kept even more so the door open for a resolution of the problems that have emerged between the USSR and the PR China. Entirely exact and clear language was used at the XXV CPSU Party Congress [\[13\]](#) and the October Plenary Session of the CPSU Central Committee in 1976, it was also written down in other documents. However, the Soviet proposals were not met with a benevolent reception by the Chinese side. This was on display especially at the regularly scheduled negotiation sessions on issues of border regulation at the end of last and the beginning of this year. It shows that the Chinese side is persisting in sticking to its previous, unacceptable positions. During those negotiations, the PR China has repeated its unfounded claims to 1.5 million square kilometers of ancestral Soviet territory.

The Chinese delegation has categorically refused to address a review of the borderline. It is insisting on signing an agreement based on the unacceptable concept of the "disputed territories". An acceptance of this concept would mean that we agree to actually hand over those so-called "disputed territories" to China. The Beijing representatives are categorically declaring that they consider these areas as Chinese territory. They are portraying their proposal to call those territories

“disputed” as a certain concession to the Soviet side. Obviously the Soviet Union cannot agree to such demands.

Referring to the ideological differences in opinion between the PR China and the Soviet Union, the delegation of the PR China asserted that the “principled dispute” (this is how Beijing calls its reckless anti-Soviet campaign it is conducting) will not cease until the Soviet Union is “publicly admitting its mistakes” it has allegedly made during the past one and a half decades.

Today’s Chinese leadership is continuing to pursue the previous splitting course with regard to the communist world movement. Their attempts are noteworthy to newly consolidate and activate the Maoist groups and to use them as a weapon of Beijing on the international scene. Meetings of Maoists from several countries were held in Ludwigshafen[14] (FRG[15]) and in Rome. A meeting of the pro-Beijing groups from Latin America was held in Tirana. Maoist ideology is nurturing opportunism of all variations in other countries as well.

The Chinese leadership is seeking to reach agreement with the reactionary, rightist-nationalist regimes of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is playing into the hands of imperialist policy in these areas. It is displaying a hostile attitude towards the progressive forces in the developing countries.

The events in Zaire[16] are again reaffirming that Beijing is operating in an alliance with the imperialists in the fight against the national liberation movements. The line determining the PR China’s course in Africa shows that Beijing is not interested in a resolution of existing problems there in the interest of the peoples; and that Beijing is countering the solidification of the progressive regimes in Angolas, Ethiopia, and in other countries.

Beijing does approve of Sadat’s[17] pro-imperialist, anti-Arab policy. It is in fact supporting the Israeli expansionists in the Middle East, it is expanding the ties with the fascist Pinochet[18] Clique in Chile. The Chinese leadership does attempt to split and weaken the national liberation movement and to undermine its alliance with world socialism.

The course of Beijing’s leadership in the international arena is pursued in parallel to feverish war preparations. It does damage to the cause of peace, of socialism, and of anti-imperialist struggle. It constitutes a real danger for all countries and all peoples, among them also the Chinese people themselves.

III.

The events occurring after the death of Mao Zedong have confirmed the correctness of assessments made by the fraternal parties concerning Beijing’s domestic and foreign policy. As before, Maoism is still acting as the antipode of socialism. It is directly hostile towards the Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

The entire experience from the struggle against the anti-Leninist, anti-Marxist theory and practice of Maoism is showing that the source for success was, and remains, the close fraternal cooperation between our parties and the comprehensive coordination of actions pertaining to China’s direct Maoist policy, as well as to other issues related to this problem.

Under current conditions it is in particular essential to view the situation in China with clarity, because the processes unfolding in this vast country might result in long-term

consequences. The fraternal parties have to conduct the struggle for peace and detente under the conditions of an unstable Chinese policy, which can come with surprising turns and is in effect hostile towards detente. We are acting based on the unanimous conclusions of our parties, according to which reconciliation with theory and practice of Maoism could result in irredeemable doom to the socialist community of states and mankind in general. With coordinated work among the fraternal parties and all progressive forces, we can achieve that China will become an acceptable member of the global community based on the principles of peaceful coexistence. We are not giving up hope that the Chinese people themselves, tired of the voluntarist Maoist experiments, will raise their own voice and put an end to adventurism and Beijing's anti-socialist course.

However, one must not just sit and wait passively. The fate of world socialism in its entirety is depending on this very current issue affecting the vital interests of all socialist countries.

Pertaining to its relations with China, the Soviet Union is consequently and irrevocably pursuing the course commissioned by the XXV CPSU Party Congress. This course is consisting in confronting Beijing's war-mongering policy, in protecting the interests of the Soviet Union, the socialist community of states and the world communist movement, and in conducting also in the future the struggle against Maoism, namely a principled and unforgiving struggle. At the same time, the USSR is ready to establish its relations with China according to the principles of peaceful coexistence. And if Beijing should return to a policy based on Marxism-Leninism and abandon the hostile course vis-a-vis the socialist countries, and return to the path of cooperation and solidarity with the world of socialism - then [the USSR is ready to have relations] also according to the principles of socialist internationalism.

For the struggle for a socialist perspective for China, and for a change of the PR China's policy in the interest of socialism and peace, it is necessary in our opinion to counter Beijing's "differentiating policy" with the united and coordinated line our parties have worked out with regard to China. The events of recent years are showing this: the more consequently the coordinated policy of the fraternal parties on the China issue gets implemented, the more the Beijing leadership is forced to take it into consideration. Especially the unity and conformity of our parties and countries is unsettling the Maoists most.

We have achieved something in the struggle against Maoism, and we have gained sufficient experiences. A useful role in this regard is played by the regular meetings of representatives from the International Departments of the Central Committees of our Parties and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs on the China question, as well as the meetings of representatives from the foreign trade organs.

It is necessary in our opinion to deepen and perfect the proven practice of holding regular consultations to coordinate the activities of our representatives in third countries and in international organizations in order to refute Beijing's slanderous attacks. We could use more comprehensively our existing capacities of influencing representatives and the public of the third countries, primarily the developing countries- in order to unmask the policy of the Chinese leadership that is so damaging to the cause of peace and international security.

Still the task is lying ahead of our parties to decisively and consequently unmask the anti-socialist positions of the Chinese leadership within the country and in the international context, and to thwart the Maoists' ideological and political diversions.

[\[1\]](#) German translation of a Russian-language information from the CPSU Central Committee sent to GDR leader Erich Honecker, who shares it with Paul Markowski, Head of the Department of International Relation of the SED Central Committee, who



then shares it with his deputy Bruno Mahlow, the pre-eminent China expert of the Department.

[2] Erich Honecker.

[3] National Conference on Learning from Daqing in Industry. Daqing in Heilongjiang Province is the center of Chinese oil industry.

[4] 1909-1992.

[5] 1897-1986.

[6] 1921-1992.

[7] Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki from 30 July to 1 August 1975.

[8] "Mutual Balanced Force Reduction" (MBFR) negotiations.

[9] Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union.

[10] Hans Filbinger (1913-2007), Minister President of the West German State of Baden-Württemberg 1966-1978.

[11] Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013), Leader of the Conservative Party 1975-1990 and Prime Minister of Great Britain 1979-1990.

[12] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, founded in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines.

[13] 24 February to 5 March 1976.

[14] Meeting of 3,500 people at Congress of West German Maoist Group KPD/ML (800 members) on 5 February 1977.

[15] Federal Republic of (West) Germany.

[16] A conflict in Zaire's Shaba (Katanga) Province lasting from 8 March to 26 May 1977. The government forces of President Mobutu prevailed thanks to military support from Morocco, France, Belgium, the United States, and China. After his victory, Mobutu broke diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and Cuba.

[17] Anwar Sadat (1918-1981), President of Egypt 1970-1981.

[18] Augusto Pinochet (1915-2006), President of Chile 1973-1990.