

**October 20, 1972**

**Embassy of the GDR in the PR China, 'Note about a  
Cocktail of Ambassador Hertzfeldt and his Wife at  
the Occasion of the 23rd Anniversary of the GDR on  
6 October 1972**

**between 17:00 and 18:00 hours in the Embassy of  
the GDR in the PR China'**

**Citation:**

"Embassy of the GDR in the PR China, 'Note about a Cocktail of Ambassador Hertzfeldt and his Wife at the Occasion of the 23rd Anniversary of the GDR on 6 October 1972 between 17:00 and 18:00 hours in the Embassy of the GDR in the PR China'", October 20, 1972, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PA AA, C 504/75. Translated by Bernd Schaefer. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/209825>

**Original Language:**

German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Embassy of the GDR in the PR China  
Beijing, 20 October 1972

#### Note

about a Cocktail of Ambassador Hertzfeldt<sup>[1]</sup> and his Wife  
at the Occasion of the 23rd Anniversary of the GDR on 6 October 1972  
between 17:00 and 18:00 hours  
in the Embassy of the GDR in the PR China

I. The highest Chinese guests at the Cocktail in the GDR Embassy in Beijing at the occasion of the 23rd Anniversary of the GDR between 17:00 and 18:00 hours were Yu Zhan<sup>[2]</sup>, Deputy Foreign Minister; Zhou Huamin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade; Wang Guoquan<sup>[3]</sup>, Chairman of the Chinese Society for Friendship Abroad (former PRC Ambassador to the GDR between 1957 and 1964).

II. In their demeanor, the guests from the PR China were clearly "relenting" and "mollifying". They were visibly eager to play down the tension of recent times - oral statement from Li Tingjue<sup>[4]</sup> and conversation Li Tingjue/Ambassador Hertzfeldt on 30 September in the Foreign Ministry of the PR China - and to "defuse" the situation.

1. In contrast to otherwise custom practice, the Chinese protocol emphasized pointedly to place Li Tingjue, Acting Main Department Head in the Foreign Ministry of the PR China, who joined the Cocktail (and being the conversation partner of Ambassador Hertzfeldt at the 30 September meeting aggravated by Li himself), not in the top group at the the presidium [for the event]. It looks like they wanted to convey the impression of a certain distancing from Li Tingjue's attitude at the 30 September meeting. It might warrant the conclusion that Li Tingjue "had to" show up [for the Cocktail] in order to be embarrassed.

2. Yu Zhan in particular, but also the other Chinese high-ranking guests, acted overall "cautiously" and "moderately". They avoided to insert any "contentious points" into the conversations. Even during the questions by Ambassador Hertzfeldt regarding the foreign policy orientation of the PR China in context of the fiercely anti-Soviet editorial from 1 October 1972, Yu Zhan gave his answers succinctly and pointedly "cautious" while avoiding any polemical or polemics-provoking elements: The editorial mentioned might broadly cover foreign policy, but this is just a formal matter. China's main tasks are of domestic political nature. Primarily this is about domestic developments; this is about to implement the socialist revolution and the build-up of socialism well.

With regard to foreign policy, China is mostly focused on Asia, and here especially on its neighbors, not so much on Europe.

Those remarks by Yu Zhan on above mentioned editorial, and his downplaying of the relevance of the foreign policy aspect in the article - which does actually contain fiercest anti-Sovietism -, could be potentially already signal a reaction by the Chinese side; namely to the widely-held negative, respectively disappointed, and characterized by cautiousness and reservations, attitudes of Afro-Asian representatives in Beijing towards the line of this editorial. (rapprochement between the PRC and the imperialists - United States, Japan, FRG<sup>[5]</sup> - and simultaneous escalation of anti-Sovietism).

After repeated questions from Ambassador Hertzfeldt, Yu Zhan eventually and de facto confirmed that the PR China is actually more focused on the "Second

Intermediate Zone", which are supposed to be the developed capitalist and imperialist countries.

3. It was notable that Yu Zhan really looked for an opportunity "to explain himself" on relations between the PR China and the FRG and the upcoming Scheel[\[6\]](#) visit[\[7\]](#). Despite Ambassador Hertzfeldt deliberately holding back with respective questions, Yu Zhan seized the first opportunity and asked what the GDR does actually mean by the term "Scheel Doctrine" (the Chinese side had explicitly refused to inform the GDR, and Ambassador Hertzfeldt did not want to provide the Chinese side with the opportunity to "substitute" official information with some non-binding and trivial remarks at our Cocktail, only to be able to tell us later on that an information about the Scheel visit and PR China-FRG relations were provided at our Cocktail). The term "Scheel Doctrine" had been deliberately used by Ambassador Hertzfeldt on 30 September at a meeting in the Foreign Ministry of the PR China, as well as by our press attache in a press talk with Chinese journalists and representatives of the press department of the PR China's Foreign Ministry on 6 October in the Embassy of the GDR. The pertinent explanation of the term given by Ambassador Hertzfeldt was noted [by the Chinese delegation at the Cocktail].

Subsequently Yu Zhan "swiftly" and "assiduously" took over the lead of the conversation to provide the following explanations and statements:

a) The GDR has conducted a tough and complicated struggle that has to be "acknowledged". However, nobody can avoid in the long run not to recognize the existence of the GDR. The process of international recognition of the GDR is proceeding well. The GDR does not have to be in any hurry in this respect, because once a breakthrough has been achieved, everything will follow in line automatically. The GDR can be optimistic on this issue, the PR Chinas is optimistic as well.

b) By establishing relations with the FRG, the PR China will by no means violate the interests of the GDR. Without resorting to polemics, but by just stating facts, Yi Zhan said that the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of Poland, and the Socialist Republic of Romania have also established diplomatic relations with the FRG. Why then should China not be doing the same?

c) Last year, the FRG had let the PR China know that it first wants to wait for ratification of the treaties with the Soviet Union and the PR Poland, and for first results of the "Ostpolitik in Europe", before establishing diplomatic relations with the PR China. The PR China did respect this and waited. Now the FRG is ready to establish diplomatic relations with the PR China. The PR China obviously cannot refuse this.

d) The GDR can use all these facts in its complicated struggle in third countries against the "Scheel Doctrine". Relations between the PR China and the FRG are as well putting the bankruptcy of the "Hallstein Doctrine"[\[8\]](#) on display. With his visit to China and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the PR China and the FRG, the FRG itself, respectively Scheel, is actually acting against their own theses. In fact, the FRG is establishing relations with states that have already recognized the GDR and had diplomatic relations with it for a long time. Thus the GDR is receiving compelling arguments which it can use to attack the FRG.

e) Also with regard to the West Berlin question, the PR China would be strictly adhering to the "actual position of the GDR" and to "what the GDR itself does welcome". (It is evident that Yu Zhan referred here to the Quadripartite Agreement[\[9\]](#) ; he adopted himself the formal terminology of a respective statement by the SED Central Committee, see ND[\[10\]](#), No. 258 (1971), 8 September 1971, p. 1: "The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany is welcoming the Quadripartite Agreement on Westberlin ...").

f) The PR China would consequently support the accession of the GDR (respectively of the GDR and the FRG) to the United Nations. Regarding a question by Ambassador Hertzfeldt in a different context about the position of the PR China on the U.N. membership of Bangladesh, Yu Zhan said the accession of the GDR and of Bangladesh to the United Nations are two fundamentally different issues. As soon as Bangladesh is demonstrating that it recognizes and implements the U.N. resolutions on Bangladesh concerning withdrawal of troops and return of prisoners of war, the PR China will review and potentially modify its position regarding support for a membership request by Bangladesh. The GDR, however, does belong into the United Nations.

g) Concerning the remarks made by Ambassador Hertzfeldt on refusals to provide information on the side of the PR China, Yu Zhan showcased an "explaining" and in part "regretful" attitude. Here he stated that the GDR is "attacking" the PRC. For instance, it was said "in a GDR newspaper" that the PR China is supporting the GDR only then when it has no other choice but doing so. (In this context, however, he did not refer any more to the oral statement made by Comrade Schneidewind<sup>[11]</sup> on 31 August, as it was mainly done on 30 September in the meeting between Li Tingjuen and Ambassador Hertzfeldt!). This [newspaper article] is hurting "feelings". Cases of strong attacks by the GDR are creating a situation for the PR China, where it is difficult to decide whether to support the GDR or not. For that reason, an information is hardly possible. "We should really have to understand" this.

The general response by Ambassador Hertzfeldt regarding the need for information according to the norms of international custom, without a spillover of ideological confrontation to state-to-state relations, was mostly accepted with a formal rebuke. Here Yu Zhan again attempted to accuse the GDR that it is her who is inserting ideological confrontation into state-to-state relations.

3. [sic] Regarding the question by Ambassador Hertzfeldt on potential consequences of a normalization of relations between the PR China and Japan on relations between the United States and Japan, and on the Security Treaty between both countries, Yu Zhan stated that through this development Japan has achieved a larger maneuvering space via-a-vis the United States. As far as the Security Treaty<sup>[12]</sup> between Japan and the United States is concerned: For instance, for the PR China and India Zhou Enlai and Nehru have signed an agreement<sup>[13]</sup> about the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. However, India is not following it, but rather acting with hostility towards the PRC. Therefore the agreement is not serving its purpose. It is the also the same pattern regarding the Security Treaty between the United States and Japan. It is not a bible, and the same applies to other agreements in the opinion of the PR China: What actually counts is always the actual, practiced policy, not a legal status codified on paper. Due to the pressure by the Japanese masses and Tanaka's<sup>[14]</sup> position, Japan wants to follow a policy which is friendly towards China. This must have an impact on the above mentioned [security] treaty.

4. Concerning pertinent questions on domestic [Chinese] developments, Yu Zhan replied the PR China has central economic planning (central five-year-plans and central annual plans). It is only that the plans have not been made public.

5. Due to bad weather conditions, China is not expecting an increase in agricultural production this year in comparison to last year.

6. He said he is not informed about a potential Session of the [National] People's Congress or other authoritative organs.

III. Remarks on the above mentioned conversation between Yu Zhan and Ambassador Hertzfeldt and the demeanor of the Chinese side at our Cocktail on 6 October 1972

1. The composition of the presidium as recommended by the Chinese side, and the conversation conducted by Yu Zhan in an explicitly factual, non-polemical, and tension-downplaying manner, created the impression that the Chinese side is considering a further aggravation of our relations as not conducive.

2. In the context of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the PR China and the FRG, the Chinese side is eager not to forfeit its "role" as a "guardian of interests of the GDR". In accordance with the "new situation", it is even eager to emphasize the latter.

3. The attitude of the PR China towards international treaties, as expressed by Yu Zhan, warrants deeper analysis in our opinion, especially with regard to the position of the PR China towards agreements in the process of the struggle for European security from the side of the socialist community of states, and in particular pertaining to treaties between the GDR and the FRG according to international law.

Signed Höfer  
H ö f e r  
3rd Secretary

[1] Gustav Hertzfeldt (1926-2005), GDR Ambassador to the PR China 1969-1973.

[2] 1921-1972. Deputy Foreign Minister of the PRC between May 1972 and May 1983.

[3] 1911-2004. Ambassador of the PR China to the GDR, Poland, Australia, and Italy.

[4] Spelling unclear. German original "Li Ting-tjüan".

[5] Federal Republic of Germany, this is West Germany.

[6] Walter Scheel (1919-2016), Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1969 to 1974.

[7] 10 to 14 October 1972.

[8] Named after Walter Hallstein (1901-1982), State Secretary in the West German Foreign Ministry from 1951 to 1958: The FRG will break diplomatic relations - respectively not establish them - with states that diplomatically recognize the GDR.

[9] Signed on 3 September 1971 by the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain, and France in Berlin.

[10] "Neues Deutschland" ("New Germany"), central SED Party Newspaper.

[11] Kurt Schneidewind (1912 - 1983), Head of the Far Eastern Department in the GDR Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[12] Signed on 8 September 1951 in San Francisco.

[13] Signed on 28 April 1954 in Beijing.

[14] Kakuei Tanaka (1918-1993), Prime Minister of Japan from 1972 to 1974.