

February 6, 1982

Excerpts of Talks between Leading Comrades and Foreign Guests (No. 1)

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Summary:

A Chinese Communist Party digest summarizing recent meetings held between Zhao Ziyang and foreign counterparts.

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Premier Zhao Ziyang Talks about Our Foreign Economic Relations and Other Issues

Premier Zhao Ziyang on Hong Kong Issues

Premier Zhao Ziyang on Our Foreign Economic Relations and Other Issues

On October 11, 1981, when Premier Zhao received and was briefed by the preparatory team for the Cancun Summit, he gave a number of important instructions on the approach we should take in attending the meeting and on issues related to North-South relations and our foreign economic relations. Excerpts below:

I. This is our first appearance. We still stand with the Third World. We should be clear on the political issues. We do not believe that the developing countries have any favors to ask from the developed countries. Our profile should be no lower than that of France. We will not help the United States; we will put a little pressure on the US. We believe that isolating the US is advantageous so we should not play the role of mediator.

At the meeting we should criticize the United States but not necessarily by name.

II. Our speech should make several points clear:

1. The Third World demands a reform of the old order. That is necessary and in line with the general trend. We must uphold the principle that reform is needed. We need to be very clear on that point. In the phrase "necessary reforms", the word necessary may be omitted. The phrase "necessary reform", the word "necessary" can be omitted.

2. The North-South dialogue is not only beneficial to the South, but also to the developed countries. This is not necessarily about interdependence, but about the overall picture.

3. Improving North-South relations is conducive to peace and stability in the world. It is enough to mention the maintenance of peace and stability or security in the world, it is not necessary to highlight opposing hegemonism.

The improvement of North-South relations is essentially an anti-hegemony issue, but we do not need to go any further and we do not need to use the word. In speaking with the United States, Japan, Western Europe, you can bring up opposing hegemony, but don't talk too much about it. There is no need to speak of it openly. If they want to bring in the Soviet Union and are making the Soviet Union pay for it, then let them come in on the basis of mutual advantage.

There is no doubt that the resolution of the North-South issue is conducive to the struggle against hegemony, but bringing that up too much with the developing countries can lead to misunderstandings. That would make it look like our motive in solving north-south issues is that we want them to oppose Soviet hegemonism and merely serve the purpose of getting them on our side in the struggle against the Soviet Union.

You can mention that the Soviet Union is not participating in the conference and say that we have always spoken of "natural allies" but are boycotting the conference. You might say that the Soviet Union is unwilling to put up money for assistance since that is something that the Third World countries are demanding.

III. We have two conditions: one is to support global negotiations; second, as far as possible to solve a specific problem, don't let the conference be like the proverb "a man with a full stomach doesn't know what it is like to be hungry". Global negotiations may not be successful and solving specific problems is even harder.

To solve a specific problem, we have to talk. Although we should pay attention to general issues, we should try to solve some problems in specific areas. Some urgent problems can be solved as a matter of priority, but this is no substitute for global talks, but must be part of the global negotiating agenda. We can't just pay lip service to principles. Some specific issues, which are supported by the majority, we can support in principle. We should consider ways to promote global negotiations. As for what specific issues to address, let us discuss that. There are some things that developing countries are interested in that would be difficult for us to take a stand on

so we won't.

Regarding "the long-term goal of establishing a new international economic order, this should be closely tied to a short-term action program aimed at solving the short-term needs of the developing countries and gradually implement it." That section is inconsistent with the resolution of The Group of 77 countries which calls for a full and complete solution in a comprehensive, integrated and linked manner. Of course, solving all problems at once is not going to work. The most important thing is to give them full and complete support so that The Group of 77 won't misunderstand us and think that we can either just go our own way or support The Group of 77 on all issues.

The Five Principles should not be proposed by China, but they can serve as a form of our support for The Group of 77. We still have to support what The Group of 77 has come up with and justify it on the basis of what they have come up with. We can use it as the basis for creating new ideas but we will not be taking a leading role.

IV. The development of independent national economies of developing countries depends on the adoption by these countries of development strategies appropriate to their national conditions. This cannot become a prerequisite for reforming the international economic order. The term "premise" is unclear and confusing. It cannot be said that the South is in need of the North, but the South also needs to reform itself.

V. In response to the United States, which now talks about self-reliance, we need this time to clarify the relationship between self-reliance and international cooperation. We must clarify that self-reliance is not a closed door, not a lack of exchanges, and self-reliance is not does not mean an agreement to transfer the irrational and unequal relations in one country's economic system to another. That would actually frustrate self-reliance.

In the past, we interpreted self-reliance as not asking for help in anything. That is not correct. As long as we do not become dependent but instead make beneficial exchanges, that is also self-reliance. Moreover, to make favorable exchanges is self-reliance. What we called "self-reliance" before was in fact just closing ourselves off so that something bad outside would not affect us. The situation is different today.

China is a big country and should be economically independent, and should have an independent and complete national economic system, in this sense self-reliance is possible.

VI. Now, there is a big problem. Originally China considered itself to be a country that assisted third world countries. Now China does to international aid agencies and asks for help is actually taking a piece of the cake (aid funds from developed countries). This is a major policy. It is important not to push too hard. For example, we should not compete with the Third World for disaster relief. In the past one or two years, the Third World has gained some impressions of us:

1. China is a country very eager to improve relations with the United States;
2. China has not only reduced the economic aid it used to give out but now is asking the international community for money;
3. China is asking for help through multilateral assistance.

Don't go after every opportunity. Some things are not that useful to us or cannot help us solve our many problems we should let others have first crack at. That will help improve our image in the Third World. We should fight for IMF funds but on some other issues we should back off. China's population is just so very large that it is putting some pressure on the Third World. Several hundred thousand tons of grain isn't much to China but it is very significant to small countries.

Premier Zhao Ziyang on the Hong Kong Issue

On January 6, 1982, Premier Zhao Ziyang met with UK Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal Humphrey Atkins and discussed our attitude toward the Hong Kong issue in response to Atkins' questions. The content of the discussions follows:

Premier Atkins asked how you see the current relationship between China and Hong Kong and what you think about the future development of the region.

Premier Zhao said that at present we have no problems at all with Hong Kong. As you can see in the picture below, in terms of the movement of residents, what you call immigration, (laughter) the two sides are cooperating very well, which is good for maintaining social order in Guangdong and good for Hong Kong. I was in Guangdong before the sixties, and the situation is much better now.

The economic and trade situation is also very good. Recently, the general manager of Hong Kong Hopewell Industries Ltd., Mr. Wu Ying, is planning to invest in the construction of infrastructure in Shenzhen. I think the recent visit of your Governor to Shenzhen is related to this matter. I have not yet received a detailed report. They may discuss the future of Hong Kong and Shenzhen traffic problems and how to simplify (customs) inspection procedures, etc.

The future of Hong Kong is of particular interest to those who own real estate in Hong Kong. During his visit to China in April 1981, Lord Carling brought up the future of Hong Kong with Vice Chairman Deng. We have not yet studied and discussed this issue in detail, but you should be clear about our general position:

1. China wants to maintain its sovereignty. That has been our consistent position;
2. Maintaining Hong Kong's prosperity requires maintaining Hong Kong's status as a free port and as a trade and financial center. This situation will not change, otherwise, there will be no way to maintain Hong Kong's prosperity.

As to what methods and what forms we will need to accomplish this, that is a matter that needs to be studied very carefully. We have to listen to the views of people from all walks of life in Hong Kong and with yourselves at an appropriate time. At the end of September last year, Chairman Ye Jianying made clear our nine guidelines for Taiwan. We have set up a special zone in Shenzhen, and we will implement the policy provisions for the special zone, so that the Hong Kong community and you will see from this that China will solve the Hong Kong problem in the future.

As Vice Premier Wufei told you yesterday, although we do not have a concrete plan yet and have not yet considered this issue, it will not be delayed for long. At an appropriate time, we will contact the various sectors in Hong Kong and you to discuss this issue, and we will not delay until 1997 to consider making a decision. I cannot say more on this issue now.

Atkins said, Thank you for this. I think it has been very useful. The question really needs to be studied. The Hong Kong community in general, and the business community in particular, are particularly concerned about this issue. Hong Kong's prosperity is a very good thing for Hong Kong itself and for China. This problem does not need to be solved immediately, but we should not wait until 1997 to solve it. If we do not do anything before 1997, then that year, Hong Kong's laws, contracts will suspend all authority. That would create chaos.

Just as the Prime Minister said when presenting your views and position, we need to carefully study this question in the future.

Premier Zhao said, "Another important point is that before there is a concrete plan, both sides should not do things that are not conducive to maintaining the prosperity of Hong Kong.

Atkins said, I fully agree with the words of His Excellency the Prime Minister about maintaining the prosperity of Hong Kong. This is very important. We should support the confidence that has been built up there, and we should both work together to support and strengthen that confidence.

Premier Zhao said, as I said earlier, I have not received a detailed report on Governor MacLehose's visit to Shenzhen, but as I said, he said that when he returns, he will always encourage and promote more Hong Kong investments and Hong Kong businessmen to cooperate with Guangdong. We are very appreciative of his attitude.

Atkins said that was a very good thing, and he has our support in doing so.

Mr. Atkins said, when I meet with the press, may I say, "I fully understand that I strongly believe in keeping Hong Kong prosperous and maintain Hong Kong's position as a free trade port and a business center."

Premier Zhao said ``I think you might say that your understanding is that China in its consideration of the Hong Kong issue will consider Hong Kong's prosperity as well as maintaining it as a port and as a trade and financial center."

Atkins said, "Very well, I will say that it is my personal understanding, not that it is the Premier's own words."