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Information about the Meeting with Comrade O. B. Rakhmanin and First Deputy Head of International Department of CC

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Summary:

Contributor Rakhmanin discusses the domestic situation in China, current issues between China and the Soviet Union, and Franz-Josef Strauss' visit to China.

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Information

about the Meeting with Comrade O. B. Rakhmanin, Member of the CPSU Central Revision Commission and First Deputy Head of International Department of CC, on 29 January 1975 in Moscow

Further participants in this meeting were Comrade Kulik, Division Head in the CPSU CC, and three more staffers from the Department of International Relations. We had an exchange of opinions about a first analysis in both departments [for International Relations/socialist and non-socialist countries, BS] concerning results of the First Session of the IV National People's Congress [NPC] in the PR China. There was complete agreement about decisions made at this Congress. During the course of discussion, Comrade Rakhmanin made the following remarks in context of issues we covered:

I. On the Domestic Situation in the PR China in Light of the First Session of the IV NPC

Currently there exists a large stream of information or, better, disinformation about China's development coming mostly from the West. We must not to hurry at all. There are no indications whatsoever for substantial changes to the Maoist course. Two fundamental pieces about the 1st Session of the NPC are slated for early publication in Pravda :

1. on the constitution and the domestic situation
2. on foreign policy.

We have to assume that the NPC has elevated Maoism, militarism, and anti-Sovietism to the status of official state policy. This requires utmost vigilance on the side of our countries. NPC materials contain all the fundamental Maoist postulates.

The course towards militarization of the country is increasingly pursued and provides wide leeway for arbitrariness. With an emphasis on Preparation for a War and the explicit highlighting of anti-Sovietism, the basic orientation of the Chinese leaders' foreign policy is crystal clear.

For the analysis of each and any event in China, Marxist-Leninist criteria must always serve as exclusive guidelines. Applying them, one has to note that no significant social-economic changes in China are associated with the NPC Congress whatsoever. A simple comparison between the constitutions of 1954 and 1975 allows for clear political statements about the essence of changes. You have to see which society is solidified, which party represents the leading course , and of what kind of class character the changes actually are. The newly adopted constitution is socialist in form (i.e. just in phraseology) and counter-revolutionary in content. In other words, you must never forget that basically the identical Maoist practice is behind a more frequent use of socialist terminology. The military-bureaucratic regime has been strengthened further. In fact, many revisions of the new constitution are of monarchist character. Mao Zedong (resp. later his successor) is now de facto a triple Chairman: Chairman of the CC, Supreme Commander of the Army, and de facto Head of State (rights of the NPC have been curtailed and it got subordinated to the CC, i.e. to Mao Zedong as well). In a context of conclusions about the further expansion of military-bureaucratic dictatorship, it is important to view the new constitution as being in unison with the statute adopted by the X Congress. The army remains the main pillar of power in today's China.

Currently there is no clarity yet about the balance of forces in the army, and the current positions of individual forces in the leadership. There were differences in speeches by Zhou Enlai and Zhang Chunqiao at the NPC Congress but they are still difficult to decipher. Yet it looks obvious that the fact of Zhou Enlai's pronounced Maoist stance (i.e. more Maoist than Mao) is a result of his current unstable position. Experiences from CCP history teach us who is closer to God (i.e. Mao) will appear more confident (as in this case Zhang Chunqiao). Those in weak positions had always to act overbearingly Maoist. Right now Zhou Enlai has no firm support. He is in the preliminary stage of a second in the line of power ready to get fired like previously happened to Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao. The campaign Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius can turn against a concrete individual in the leadership. The U.S. is pleased with Zhou Enlai position of strength as they relate him to the activation of Chinese-American relations. Yet Zhou Enlai has not yet left the hospital. By no means Mao Zedong will hand over power to him. Because of Zhou's previous deviations of from orthodox Maoist positions, Mao harbors way too much mistrust against him. Concerning the recent appointments to the army's leadership (Ye Jianying: Defense Minister; Deng Xiaoping: Chief of General Staff; Zhang Chunqiao: Head of Political Main Administration): They demonstrate how Mao Zedong and his supporters do not permit a concentration of army power in the hand of one individual only (except for Mao himself). They want to maintain unconditional subordination of the army to the objectives of the Maoist Group, as the main pillar of military-bureaucratic dictatorship.

It is hard to say what are the positions of Deng Xiaoping. We have to closely follow his development. It is doubtful that he stands for independent positions of his own. In the 1950s Mao Zedong strongly promoted Deng Xiaoping as a deputy next to Liu Shaoqi. At some point he no longer warranted Mao's trust. Deng was disgraced but it was also Mao himself who saved him again. Zhou Enlai may hardly have saved Deng since the inimical relationship between both of them is very well known. Apparently Mao Zedong and the extreme leftists are pulling Deng's strings and can thus exploit him for their interests.

Zhang Chunqiao is in charge of organizational matters in the Maoist party. Wang Dongxing (candidate for the Politburo, former bodyguard for Mao, Deputy Intelligence Chief and close confidant of Mao Zedong and Kang Sheng) currently commands the CC Secretariat and the intelligence service. Hua Guofeng, the newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Public Security, is an active supporter of Mao Zedong.

There are some facts to testify that recent NPC decisions represent compromises to certain extent: The repeated delay to convene the IV NPC (e.g. there were posters in Liaoning Province where NPC decisions were welcomed in November 1974); the punctuated use of Marxist terminology; the demagogic emphasis on continuity in China's political development; the individual composition of the supreme bodies. Hence it will be a priority for China specialists to monitor closely the actual practice in the near future. We should not hurry to reach absolute conclusions. Even if possibly positive passages in NPC documents may not be ignored, one still has to interpret them more towards their potential: Some aspects could still be seized upon by healthy anti-Maoist forces in the future.

Since there are domestic conflicts in China, there obviously also do exist those representing certain anti-Maoist ideas. There is no reason, however, to hope for automatic self-destruction of the Maoist regime. To the contrary, we have to focus our energy attentively towards how we can shake the Maoist regime.

Right now there is a change of the guard in China. Fundamental Maoism has received a legal basis and justification. There is no reason to assume that there will be a substantially different policy in China after Mao Zedong's departure. The disease in China over the past 15 years has progressed too far. We must be very clear on the

insight that our adversary has not changed. Currently there is particular danger to slide to subjectivist and illusionary assumptions. The discussion of China has become even more complex - due to the abuse of Marxist and socialist phraseology, to mostly unknown facts about economic development and political practice, and due to widespread illusions. It is extremely important to conduct an energetic struggle against Maoism; in particular since we Marxist-Leninist parties are the only ones left to confront it (while bourgeois China specialists propagates the Chinese model). It is imperative to unmask Maoism as an anti-socialist, anti-Soviet, and militarist platform.

II. On current Soviet-Chinese Relations

There are no new elements in relations between both countries. From the Chinese side there are no changes whatsoever, neither in words nor in deeds. In this context we also have to see Zhou Enlai's remark in his speech before the NPC (to solve at least a small part of problems between Soviet Union and China). We must not overestimate this. 33,000 square kilometers of Soviet territory are just one of those small problems for the Chinese leaders. Right now there are no concrete Chinese initiatives whatsoever. Comrade Ilychev (Deputy Foreign Minister, head of the Soviet delegation for border negotiations with the Chinese) will return to Beijing soon without any new directives. He will again draw the attention of the Chinese to their destructive behavior, and the permanent public statements about internal negotiations in the international arena. Despite Soviet efforts to expand trade, there exist no substantial results to develop trade relations further. Taking all this into account, Comrade Rakhmanin commented on Soviet-Chinese relations that, as far as China is concerned, he is a strategic optimist but a tactical pessimist for the present and the near future. Currently they do not see any indications to come to a fundamentally different conclusion on the situation in China. Socialist fraternal countries will continue to move ahead in lockstep on the Chinese question. This also applies to individual issues of development in trade and economic relations. We must not permit the Chinese to achieve more political gains through targeted and differentiated exclusions of the Soviet Union, or other socialist fraternal countries, from particular economic or political initiatives than our countries achieve do with their own differentiated approaches. All relations by individual institutions of fraternal countries have to be transparent and easy to control.

III. About the Strauss Visit to the PR China[1]

Political background and objectives behind the special protocol treatment of the Strauss visit in China are obvious. Renmin Ribao published picture and announcement of the meeting between Mao and Strauss first under a headline referring to Chairman Mao and Chairman Strauss (later reports talked only about Mister Strauss). Apparently the Chinese leaders felt pressure to do this correction for reasons of protocol. Internally they spread this in wide parts of China's population: Strauss is not a fascist; according to CCP opinion only Social Democracy and Social-Imperialism are sources of fascism. The Strauss visit not only demonstrates where the Maoist leaders continue their search for allies. It also shows that positions of Chinese leaders and such people like Strauss are not only identical: They also coordinate concrete practical foreign policy steps.

IV. On the Next Internal China Meeting

As a potential date for the next internal China meeting, Comrade Rakhmanin mentioned the month of May. After that First Session of the IV NPC we first must study its material thoroughly. We are not thinking of doing these material pertaining to the NPC meeting. Such kind of material would need thorough monitoring of practical results coming from this meeting. Taking into consideration also preparations for upcoming Party Congresses by our fraternal parties, it would make sense for the next internal China meeting to deal with the following issues:

1. Damage caused by Maoism for socialism and the entire revolutionary movement. Here we need solid material, maybe in the form of theses, where we prove the damage caused by Maoism during the past 15 years.

2. Results of our joint struggle against Maoism (e.g. during the five years after the previous Party Congresses of our fraternal parties).

3. Operative discussion of developments on the Chinese question after the X CCP Congress, in particular in light of the NPC meeting.

Also the Soviet comrades informed that joint material of previous internal China meetings will be published in accordingly adapted and edited form (we [in the GDR] have the same material ready to print and will publish it after editing, and based on the Soviet manuscript, with Dietz Publishers according to a CC Secretariat decision). In conclusion, the Soviet comrades handed over material for internal use only: Five volumes with unpublished speeches, instructions and memoranda of conversations from Mao Zedong between 1950 and 1967 (in Russian). This material ought to be translated also for an internal circle of readers in our party [SED].

[signed]

Mahlow

[1] Franz-Josef Strauss (1915-1988) was Chairman of the conservative, strongly anti-communist Bavarian party CSU in West Germany. During his visit to China in January/February 1975 he became the first West German politician ever received by Mao Zedong. Rules of protocol and special venues selected for Strauss' visit surpassed those of any other Western politician during Mao's rule.