

**August 24, 1968**

**Telegrams from Romanian Embassy, Beijing, to  
Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22-24 August  
1968**

**Citation:**

"Telegrams from Romanian Embassy, Beijing, to Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22-24 August 1968", August 24, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Romanian Foreign Ministry Archives (AMAE), fond Telegrams, Pekin 1968, Vol II, pp. 272-274. Republished in Romulus Ioan Budura, coordinator, *Relațiile Româno-Chineze 1880-1974: Documente* [Romanian-Chinese Relations 1880-1974: Documents], București, Ministerul Afacerilor Externe [Foreign Affairs Ministry], Arhivele Naționale [National Archives], 2005, p. 901-902. Translated for CWIHP by Mircea Munteanu.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/113289>

**Summary:**

A series of three telegrams reporting on a reception held at the Romanian Embassy in Beijing on August 23, 1968. Premier Zhou Enlai attended the event and gave a speech condemning the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

**Original Language:**

Romanian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Telegram no. 74320, 22 August 1968

22 August 1968. Nr. 74 320

Top Secret

At 2200 hours on 22 August 1968, I was received by Cde. Chen Yi, Deputy Prime Minister of the Council of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs. As instructed, I informed him of the situation developing in Czechoslovakia.

Chen Yi thanked me for the information, stating that he will present it right away to the Chinese leadership.

Chen Yi also stated that, in addition to himself, Premier Zhou Enlai will also attend the cocktail reception which we are organizing on 23 August, wanting to congratulate us on the SR [Socialist Republic of] Romania's national day. He mentioned that Premier Zhou Enlai is prepared to say a toast, and that he will enunciate the position of the Chinese government regarding the Czechoslovak events. He stated that the Premier will criticize the imperialist invasion perpetrated by the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia.

After expressing his displeasure that there is no resistance [to the invasion] in Czechoslovakia, Chen Yi said the following:

'The Soviet leaders are accusing [Czechoslovak communist party first secretary Alexander] Dubcek that he is throwing himself in the embrace of the Western countries; in the embrace of West Germany. But who was the first to fall into the imperialist embrace? The Soviet leadersâ€"Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Kosygin.

The Soviets say that they are defending socialism in Czechoslovakia, but Khrushchev was the first to abandon socialism in the Soviet Union. They pretend that militarily occupying Czechoslovakia is done to protect peace in Europe. What peace is there to talk about when they started the war?

Between us there are certain differences of opinions, but we remain good friends; this is why we can openly say what we think. You defend Dubcek. But we must say that Dubcek followed in Khrushchev's footsteps and trusted the Soviets, which is why he failed.

During many discussions we had with Cde. Ion Gheorghe Maurer, with Cde. Emil Bondaras, with other Romanian leaders, we showed that one cannot trust the Soviet Union, that they are not friends in need.

You already know that you cannot always go down the same road with the Soviet leadership, which sets you apart from the Czechoslovak leaders, from Dubcek.'

Referring to the General Secretary Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu's speech of 21 August, Chen Yi stated that: 'I was very happy to hear that you took steps to protect your independence and national sovereignty. I am convinced that if you remain resolute, your cause will succeed. We are behind you.'

Considering the desire on the Chinese part that Premier Zhou Enlai give a speech at the cocktail [party] we are organizing on the occasion of 23 August, a speech in which he would express the position of the PRC regarding the USSR actions in Czechoslovakia, and considering that, initially, we did not envision speeches been

given, I ask that you reply with instructions as to how to proceed, if possible before 7-8 in the morning (Beijing time), 2-3 AM Bucharest time, and, in case the idea of speeches is accepted, what should my speech contain.

I should mention that Chen Yi told me of the Chinese leadership's decision to give this speech without asking if I was planning to give a speech myself on this occasion.

(ss) A. Duma

Telegram no. 74350, 23 August 1968

23 August 1968. Nr. 74 350

Top Secret. Flash.

The embassy reception on the occasion of the Romanian national day took place on the evening of 23 August.

1. Premier Zhou Enlai, two deputy premiers, the Chief of the General Staff, his deputy, several Chinese individuals with high positions, as well as a large number of employees from various [government] institutions attended the reception.

The Chinese took great care of us, had a very warm and friendly attitude. Their reactions to my speech were positive and they expressed satisfaction [with it].

2. The diplomatic corps was massively represented at the cocktail reception through chiefs of mission, first secretaries, military attaches, and economic counselors. The diplomats of the five socialist countries [involved in the invasion] were present in great numbers; the speeches were followed with a great deal of interest. The large majority of diplomats expressed their satisfaction with the position adopted by our party and government with regard to the issue of Czechoslovakia. They viewed the speeches given, the Chinese participation, as a very important event and a success for the embassy of the S. R. Romania.

As they left, I was congratulated by a large number of chiefs of missions (France, Guinea, Mali, Congo, Tanzania, UAR, Cuba, Holland, England, Yugoslavia, and others), for the principled, firm, and courageous position of Romania expressed in my speech, and [they] wished continued success for the Romanian people.

The diplomats of the five socialist countries and of Mongolia left the cocktail party at the first mention made by Premier Zhou Enlai of 'the Soviet revisionist clique.' The press correspondents from those countries remained.

3. The Czechs and Yugoslav diplomats were among the last to leave. The Czech charge d'affaires thanked us 'from the bottom of his heart' for the extremely valuable support we gave his country, the Czechoslovak embassy, for the way the cocktail reception was organized, and the speech I gave. He said that he did not place too much emphasis on the mention of 'the Czechoslovak revisionist clique' mentioned in Zhou Enlai's speech, since he believes what is important in the Chinese attitude is the support given the Czechoslovak people, and in the unmasking of the aggressive act.

The speech by Premier Zhou Enlai was focused primarily on the situation in

Czechoslovakia. He said that the Soviet Union committed 'a violent crime against the Czechoslovak people,' that this type of behavior is 'the most shameless, typical example of behavior by a fascist power,' and that the Chinese government and Chinese people 'condemn this crime of aggression' and are behind the Czechoslovak people. Comparing what was happening in Czechoslovakia with what Hitler did in that country, and what the US did in Vietnam, Premier Zhou Enlai stressed that 'Soviet revisionism degenerated into Social[ist]-Imperialism and Social[ist]-Fascism,' and that the US and the Soviet Union are trying to divide the world [among themselves].

Saying that 'Romania is facing the danger of foreign intervention and aggression,' Zhou Enlai stressed that the Chinese people are behind the Romanian people.

Zhou Enlai made no reference to the relations between our two [communist] parties, but stated that the RCP led the people in armed insurrection, and that 'the Romanian people, and their leadership, have enjoyed significant successes.'

At the end, he gave a toast in Cde. Nicolae Ceausescu's honor, mentioning the position of President of the Council of State, [1] and sent his congratulations to the government and people of Romania on behalf of the government and people of the PRC.

(ss) A. Duma

Telegram no. 74325, 24 August 1968

24 August 1968. Nr. 74 325

Top Secret. Flash.

On 23 August [1968], at 1800 hours (before the reception) I was received by Premier Zhou Enlai. Also present were Vice-Premiers Chen Yi and Li Xiannian. I passed along the information in your telegram Nr. 23/002617 (the declaration of the Grand National Assembly did not arrive yet, so I did not pass that along).

Premier Zhou Enlai reacted as follows to what I said:

'We consider that the events in Czechoslovakia are the inevitable result of the politics followed by the revisionist, Khrushchevite clique. Whatever Dubcek might be personally, one thing is clearâ€"his clique is revisionist.

We believe that there were objective conditions for the Soviet aggression to take place in Czechoslovakia. It is clear that, if the Czechoslovak people were organized to resist, the Soviets would have backed down. The Czechoslovak revisionist clique did not order [the people] to resist, and thus the forces were disorganized. Dubcek remained in the building of the Central Committee, where he was taken prisoner.

[Czechoslovak President Ludvik] Svoboda is unsure, he is not organizing the resistance, but the Czechoslovak people are resisting, and that is a good thing. It might be possible that a group of the current Czechoslovak leadership will organize the resistance, and another group will kneel before the Soviet revisionist clique.

In any case, in Czechoslovakia an unfavorable situation has taken hold for the time being.

You did not act like Czechoslovakia did.

You adopted a fighting stance, you begun a long time ago to carry out a position of resistance regarding the revisionist leadership of the Soviet Union, and now you adopted measures to defend the homeland, to be prepared for any possibility. We are behind you in your struggle to defend your independence and sovereignty.

Resist, if you have need, we'll give you cannons!'

In the end, Premier Zhou Enlai said that in his toast he will not mention Dubcek.  
(ss) A. Duma.

The Telegram was read by me to the entire Permanent Presidium.

(ss) G. Macovescu

[1] Translator's note: Ceausescu was not the President of the Council of State, a position held by Ion Gheorghe Maurer. He was the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party. This must have been an intentional misrepresentation by Zhou Enlai, given the cool relations between the CCP and the RCP. [back]