

December 21, 1957

**Memorandum of Conversation with the Chairman of
the Shanghai Office of the Energy Construction
Industry, Zheng Toshen, at the residence of the
General Consul of the CSSR**

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Summary:

Discussion of a Czechoslovak expert, Oldřich Havlíček, who was working in China as Coordinator of Construction at an energy plant in Shanghai. Havlíček was sent home after he had an affair with a married Chinese woman, Ms. Zhen. The Czechoslovak authorities become involved when Ms. Zhen's husband sends letters of complaint to the CSSR ambassador in Beijing, the CSSR general consul in Shanghai, and to the People's Court in Shanghai.

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Translation - English

Excerpt from memorandum

Of a conversation with the chairman of the Shanghai office of the Energy Construction Industry, comrade Zheng Toshen, which took place on Saturday, 21 December 1957, at the residence of the General Consul of the CSSR.

Present for the Chinese side was c. Dang Xingbo, leader of the Committee on Foreign Trade.

Present for the Czechoslovak side were comrades Fierlinger and Kubis.

The conversation was conducted through Chinese translators, in English.

1. Part of the discussion concerned the work of the Czechoslovak experts.
2. Part of the discussion concerned the case of c. Oldrich Havlicek.

As background c. Fierlinger presented to c. Zheng detailed information about the work of c. Havlicek and his stay in the Chinese People's Republic.

C. Havlicek came to work in Shanghai in February 1955 as the Coordinator of Construction for the expansion of the Chapei energy plant in Shanghai. At the conclusion of his work he returned to Czechoslovakia in November 1956. He came back to Shanghai in March 1957 with the goal to help with the removal of defects in the steam boilers and electric turbines in Shanghai. At the conclusion of this work he became the Coordinator of Construction for the building of power plants in the Shanghai region. He returned to Czechoslovakia for good as a result of a series of complaints about marital relations, which were provided against c. Havlicek by Chinese citizen c. Zhu Yaobao.

The Shanghai office of the Energy Construction Industry views c. Havlicek as a valuable and hard-working expert. His work was extremely important and he thoroughly resolved numerous practical problems. He was well-organized and had good relations with the collective of Czechoslovak experts. He always collaborated well with the Chinese comrades and helped them fulfill their duty to improve their technical level. C. Havlicek did fine work in the construction of the Chapei electrical energy plant in Shanghai. Upon his arrival in Shanghai he thoroughly and effectively figured out the situation of the workers, raised their technical level, and organized construction work at the plant. During the time of construction there was excellent technical collaboration between the Czechoslovak experts and the Chinese comrades, and this was the result of Havlicek's work. C. Havlicek helped raise the technical level of the Chinese workers. He organized educational sessions for the Chinese technicians and workers, even when this was not called for on the part of the Czechoslovak side in the contract. He organized a course for 87 Chinese comrades in three areas, and another course for 40 more Chinese comrades. In all c. Havlicek in collaboration with the Czechoslovak experts worked with more than 400 local comrades in Shanghai. In this way c. Havlicek performed a great service toward the raising of the technical level of the Chinese electric power plant industry. C. Havlicek made great sacrifices for the sake of construction work, and worked day and night in collaboration with the Chinese comrades. From March 1957 he organized and led the group of Czechoslovak experts. He devoted significant attention to the education of 129 Chinese comrades in the introduction, running, and maintenance of Czechoslovak energy equipment. The Chinese comrades who completed the training organized by c. Havlicek today work independently and their work is very good. Because of their experience, the planning goals for energy construction in Nanding were completely fulfilled. [Relations] between the Chinese and Czechoslovak comrades were very pleasant. The aid granted to energy construction in the People's Republic of China was great. There were no evident deficiencies in this work.

The only deficiency was in his private life. He had a relationship to a Chinese woman, Zhen Peilu, who was married with two children.

C. Havlicek admitted that he met Mrs. Zhen Peilu at a dance in the cultural club in the spring of 1956. At the conclusion of the entertainment they went to his room. C. Havlicek and Ms. Zhen often met at several more dancing evenings organized by the Chinese side. They attended together other cultural events and dances. In the summer of 1956, the Chinese side informed us, relations between c. Havlicek and Ms. Zhen became intimate. The Chinese side attempted through various means to warn c. Havlicek that the further development of their relationship would have a unfavorable influence on the Czechoslovak construction collective and recommended that he end the relationship. C. Havlicek through an interpreter replied that there had not been any intercourse and that it was a normal friendship. Relations between c. Havlicek and Ms. Zhen continued and developed further. Ms. Zhen began to visit c. Havlicek at his place and would often stay there through the night. According to the statement of Ms. Zhen intimate relations with c. Havlicek began in the summer of 1956 (kissing, then intimate relations). This information was given by Ms. Zhen to the director of the administrative office of construction after the departure of c. Havlicek in November 1957. The Chinese side was anxious to prevent Ms. Zhen from having access to the hotel where Havlicek was staying. The organization where Ms. Zhen worked undertook a series of conversations and advised her to abstain from relations with c. Havlicek. The Chinese side did not inform the [Czechoslovak] general consul, as they feared that c. Havlicek would be sent home to Czechoslovakia before completing his work. The Ministry of Energy in Beijing and the Shanghai office recommended a transfer of Ms. Zhen to work in Beijing. Ms. Zhen did not agree to the transfer to Beijing, and provided many reasons justifying her need to stay in Shanghai.

Upon the return of c. Havlicek to Shanghai in March 1957 his relations with Ms. Zhen continued and became even more frequent. Ms. Zhen did her best to obtain permanent legitimate access to the Picardie Hotel, where c. Havlicek was staying. When the hotel administration denied her legitimate access, c. Havlicek angrily came down to the gate and brought her upstairs himself. Ms. Zhen came to the hotel some 20 to 30 times and several times stayed through the night. C. Havlicek would often take her to his room. In May of 1957 the Chinese comrades ascertained that relations between c. Havlicek and Ms. Zhen had become a serious [matter], and quickly requested the Ministry of Energy again to transfer Ms. Zhen to Beijing. At that time c. Havlicek gave Ms. Zhen many valuable presents, such as clothing, consumer goods, and cash, ranging in value from 300 to 700 yuan. The money Ms. Zhen received from c. Havlicek she spent quickly. The Chinese comrades and her relatives warned her about the impropriety of the situation, and rebuked her for accepting gifts from a foreign expert. Her relations with c. Havlicek continued, although there were no problems with labor morale.

On 5 October 1957 c. Havlicek had a conversation with the director of the Shanghai office of electric energy industry, c. Yu Kuang. He frankly told c. Havlicek that Ms. Zhen was not a good person, that she wanted his money, that the brother of Ms. Zhen was a member of the Guomindang, and that from a political point of view a relationship between c. Havlicek and Ms. Zhen was incorrect. He insisted that c. Havlicek break off his relationship to Ms. Zhen, or the spouse of Ms. Zhen would write a letter to the Czechoslovak ambassador in Beijing and make a complaint in court. He also referred to the negative influence the relationship was having on both the Czechoslovak and Chinese workers, who had begun to take notice of the relationship between c. Havlicek and Ms. Zhen. To this c. Havlicek complained about the surveillance of Ms. Zhen, and said that before the 4 October 1957 conversation he had with Ms. Zhen and the trade union leaders and the Shanghai administration of the Ministry of Energy he was not aware of the importance and the consequences of their relationship. At this conversation Ms. Zhen and and C. Havlicek were informed of everything. And at this discussion with the chairman of the Shanghai administration of construction in the energy industry, c. Havlicek became angry, and

during the discussion said that he planned to return to Czechoslovakia. Ms. Zhen, in response to conversations with the authorities over the course of three days, reacted by changing her mind over the proposed transfer to Beijing, and resigned from her position in Shanghai. According to the testimony Ms. Zhen's request to change her work was done in agreement with c. Havlicek. Subsequently c. Havlicek went to work at the power plant in Nanding. Freed from her employment responsibilities, Ms. Zhen often went to the Hotel Picardie to teach English to several of the Czechoslovak comrades, in exchange for money. When the administration of the hotel refused to grant her access to the residents, she would request the help of c. Havlicek in Nanding by telephone. C. Havlicek routinely intervened with the administration of the hotel and continuously mentioned [the threat of] his premature exit home to Czechoslovakia. The administration of the hotel would not allow Ms. Zhen access to the hotel in response to the intervention of c. Havlicek, and Ms. Zhen went to Beijing to request employment of the Ministry of Energy.

In Beijing Ms. Zhen met with c. Havlicek. Before the arrival of Ms. Zhen in Beijing she gave to c. Havlicek the address of the residence of her spouse in Beijing, Mr. Xingdela. C. Havlicek wrote to this address several letters to Ms. Zhen, which wound up in the hands of Ms. Zhen's husband. When Ms. Zhen arrived in Beijing at 4:00 in the morning, her husband was waiting for her at the train station. In response to his query about the purpose of her trip to Beijing, she responded that she had come for the purpose of obtaining a divorce. She refused to stay with her husband in Beijing, even though he continued to be willing to forget about everything. In Beijing Ms. Zhen met with c. Havlicek, who promised her further support and that they would live together. Ms. Zhen came to Beijing every month for three days. During this entire time her husband expected her to come to her senses and return to him. When Ms. Zhen petitioned for a divorce, he presented his complaint to the People's Court in Beijing, which referred the matter to the corresponding People's Court in Shanghai. The spouse of Ms. Zhen sent a letter of complaint to the CSSR ambassador in Beijing, as well as to the CSSR general consul in Shanghai and to the People's Court in Shanghai. Upon c. Havlicek's arrival from Beijing to Shanghai the chairman of the Shanghai administration of the construction of energy conducted a discussion with c. Havlicek with the participation of c. Vokálek. C. Vokálek at this time declared that the entire affair does not require further discussion, because the letter received by the ambassador from the spouse of Ms. Zhen spoke of the unsubstantiated trip of c. Havlicek to Czechoslovakia. At this discussion C. Havlicek claimed the Shanghai administration of energy construction took the step toward initiating the letter [of complaint] of the spouse of Ms. Zhen, which was sent to the Czechoslovak ambassador in Beijing, the general consulate in Shanghai, and the court. He said that he will be destroyed [by this] at home. He could not function, sleep, or work. The Chinese side is trying to convince the husband of Ms. Zhen, but his complaint stands. The husband remains adamant. C. Havlicek told his translator that only one course remains—to throw himself from a window. The translator informed the leading Shanghai administration about the danger to c. Havlicek and remained with him for an entire night to calm him. The CSSR general consul will inform us of further developments.

The situation is now the following: the Shanghai administration of energy construction has attempted for some time to persuade the husband of Ms. Zhen by all means (the chairman of the Shanghai administration, the trade union organization, relatives and friends of Ms. Zhen), but the complaint against c. Havlicek stands. The husband of Ms. Zhen has written to the CSSR ambassador in Beijing, the general consul in Shanghai, and the Shanghai People's Court with a request to speed up the discussion about the complaint against c. Havlicek. At present, however, the husband of Ms. Zhen is waiting for the re-development of relations between he and his wife. He said that there are three paths toward the resolution of the problem:

1. Insist on the legal resolution of his complaint and the judgment against his wife and c. Havlicek, and then establish a new family.

2. Wait for the further development of family relations and then make the complaint or let this complaint stand.

3. As Ms. Zhen is intelligent and can manage to re-establish the previous relationship between her and her husband, eventually things will come into order. The husband will take a different path and wait two months to see how it develops.

The current state of affairs is approaching these further conditions. So far, the employment of Zhu Jaopao has been liquidated and he has been transferred to other work. Mr. Zhu has begun work in the provincial location of Xian, on problems which Ms. Zhen will be sent from Beijing [to address] alongside her husband. To the extent that reconciliation does not work out, the Chinese side will in frustration make further efforts at persuasion, as relations in Shanghai will not be easy. C. Zhen suggested the following direction until February, and then after that depending on the development of affairs further steps will be considered in order to conclude the matter.

Shanghai, 21 December 1957

Signed:

L. Kubis, v.r.

Verification:

J. Fierlinger v.r.