

**August 23, 1969**

**Telegram from Aurel Duma to Corneliu Manescu  
Concerning the Conversation with Zhou Enlai**

**Citation:**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/117757>

**Summary:**

Telegram from Aurel Duma detailing his meeting with Chinese premier Zhou Enlai. Enlai remarks that China believes Soviet citizens to be unhappy with the anti-China stance taken by the USSR. He also discusses Soviet interventions in Chinese territory, specifically Xinjiang.

**Credits:**

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Romanian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

No. 56 349 23 August 1969, Beijing

Strictly confidential

Urgent

During the reception organized on 22 August of this year on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Romania's liberation, Premier Zhou Enlai sent his greetings to the Central Committee of the RCP and sent thanks for the reply to the message of the Chinese Communist Party addressed to the 10th Congress of the RCP and wished Nicolae Ceausescu, Ion Gheorghe Maurer and the other Romanian party and state leaders new successes in the fight for building the nation and defending the national independence and sovereignty. He stated that the Chinese government and people support this fight and consider it just.

[...]

With regard to Sino-Romanian relations, the premier stated:

"Smaller or larger clashes occurred at the Sino-Soviet border, permanently or systematically. The Soviets are pursuing several aims: intimidating China, internationally portraying China as the aggressor and convincing the Soviet people of the Chinese threat. According to our opinion, all these will turn against them. As far as we know, the Soviet people are unhappy and concerned by the anti-Chinese actions organized in the Soviet Union. We noticed on different occasions, for example, during the presence of the delegation in Khabarovsk at the meeting of the Joint Sino-Soviet Commission regarding the navigation on border waterways, that the Soviet population and even the Soviet soldiers have a friendly attitude towards China.

The Soviets often talk about negotiations with China, but in practice they proceed in a different way. They prearranged incidents, even during the workings of the Joint Commission, concerning navigation on border waterways. The scope of these incidents was to delay the workings of the Commission. We made a great effort towards reaching an agreement at least in technical matters, which was obtained. According to the maps attached to the Sino-Soviet treaties, the region where the last incident occurred-Xinjiang-belongs to China. The Soviets do not recognize this anymore; with the help of 50 tanks they interrupted circulation in that particular passage, which belongs to China and connects to Chinese districts. Under these conditions, the Chinese leadership continues to take measures and to treat these conflicts with gravity. Only internal preparations and a stern opposition could temper the Soviets. We are intensely preparing to defend ourselves, but we are not excluding the idea of negotiations and we will not be the first to attack. The problem is that the Soviets have not shown honesty regarding the issue of negotiations.

We are currently preparing an answer to the Soviet declaration [made in] June, which was addressed to the State Council of the People's Republic of China by the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union.

Besides this declaration, sent through a verbal note, we have not received any other messages from the Soviet leadership."

Referring to the 20th anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, the premier stated:

"As of now, no concrete plan of action in this regard has been established, since the Fight! Criticize! Reform! movement prevails in everything. Such a plan will be

discussed in the near future, but for now we don't even know the site [for celebrations] of this anniversary."

In my interventions I talked about the significance of the act of 23 August 1944,<sup>1</sup> about the domestic and foreign policy of the RCP and the government of the Socialist Republic of Romania, particularly underlining the special documents adopted at the 10th Congress of the RCP.

During the discussions the atmosphere was relaxed, close and friendly, and the premier was kind and in good spirits.

(ss). A. Duma

1. Editor's Note: Romania officially declared war on Nazi Germany on 23 August 1944.