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Record of Conversation between Polish Delegation and PRC Leader Mao Zedong, Beijing

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Summary:

Mao Zedong briefs Aleksander Zawadzki on China's socialist transformation.

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Beijing, 10.16.1959

SECRET

The Embassy of
the People's Republic of Poland
in Beijing

2421/50/59

President of the State Council of the PPR
Cde. Alexander Zawadzki

Enclosed I am sending you two copies of the minutes which reproduce the conversation of the Party-Governmental Delegation of the PPR under your leadership with Cde. Mao Zedong on the basis of the notes of Chinese comrades who read them to me.

Stanisław Flato [Signature]
(Councilor of the Embassy)

[SECRET]

Official Minutes from the Conversation between Cde. Zawadzki and Cde. Mao Zedong which took place in Beijing on 10.14.1959

While greeting the delegation, Cde. Mao thanked them for their arrival and stated that the arrival of the delegation, which displayed so many warm feelings and kindness towards China, is an expression of assistance and support for China. We understand each other and we mutually support each other.

While spending some time in China the delegation must have surely noticed that not everything was fine here; there are mistakes and difficulties. However, this is only one of the ten fingers, the remaining nine are the achievements. [The situation looks] similar in Poland. The achievements, however, constitute a clear predominance and that is why we have courage and certainty in fighting the difficulties. There are progressive and backward elements in the Chinese situation; sometimes [they are] very progressive and [sometimes] very backward. The Chinese comrades have been occupied with construction for ten years. One can distinguish three periods. The first three [are] the years of reconstruction. The second one [is] the 5-year plan. Currently, under the third one, they are gradually beginning to work out their own experiences and to draw conclusions from them. Previously, in the liberated territories, they only had partial experiences. At the time they were carrying out a democratic, not a socialist revolution. They were never involved in the building of socialism. Cde. Mao is now 66 years old. Ten years ago he was 56. Until that age he had never occupied himself with either a socialist revolution or the building of socialism. This also applies to other members of the CC and the Party. Many new phenomena came into being after the liberation. A democratic revolution transformed [itself] into a socialist one; the construction of socialism had begun. In the first three-year period they did not have any experience at all; in the 5-year plan they could only copy Soviet experience. After 7 years had passed since the liberation, in the second half of 1956, they began to think about their own experiences and it was at that time that, for the first time, they came out with the

slogan "more, faster, better and frugally." At the time it [the slogan] was put forward on a trial basis. It turned out that [it was] not a simple process. There were those who did not approve of this slogan [because] the pace was too great for them. There was a moment when no one dared to come out with this slogan. In this way, the pressure on the cadres also arose, and among them no one dared to stick out their neck anymore.

Hungarian incidents, and those in Poland, took place. They made a huge impact on China. You took control of the situation in Poland. Unfortunately, they did not control it [the situation] in Hungary and the reaction caused turmoil. A civil war took place in Hungary. There was Nagy. There were also many small Nagys in China. Part of the Chinese intelligentsia in industrial plants and universities is an intelligentsia of the bourgeoisie heritage. This is the Right inside of the Party. These people were allowed to say their views. They took advantage of this in order viciously to attack the Party. In reality, they did not want socialism, but a restoration of capitalism. This was a harsh struggle. One can say that we also had a civil war, but not by means of rifles, but by tongues. The entire nation took part in the discussion. We convinced the people by [using] arguments and facts. The Americans called it brainwashing. About 450,000 Rightists were exposed after the fight. They were given the "cap" of Rightists. But, in the last two years some of them improved. In the course of the next 7-8 years, every year they [the Chinese] will "be taking off the cap" of about 10 per cent of the Rightists. Therefore, they count on the fact that about 80 per cent will be able to be educated. 10-20 per cent will not be able to change. After the struggle they went back to the slogan "a lot, quickly, well, frugally." The process, then, took such a course: the first stage of 1956 - affirmation, 1957 - negation. In 1958 they once more came out with this slogan. In other words, affirmation, negation, and again affirmation.

The year 1958 is the first year of the 5-year plan (the second plan). This slogan developed into the general line of the Party and according to its formulation from the 2nd session of the VIII Congress it currently sounds [as follows]: "While intensifying all forces, energetically strive forward in accordance with the principle of building socialism a lot, fast, well and frugally." There is no subject in this sentence. But it is clear to everyone - the whole nation united under the leadership of the Communist Party. The principle of the simultaneous development of the following branches of the economy: industry and agriculture; heavy and light industries, central and terrain industry, fall under the understanding of the general line; subsequently the principle of the parallel development of small and big enterprises as well as modern ones and those using traditional methods were also added [to the above]. There are a great number of the latter ones. Until today, China does not possess a sufficient number of machines. Similarly, small, medium and big irrigation mechanisms are being built simultaneously. The result of this policy is such that while during the 5-year plan the building of a factory lasted on average 2 years, now it takes less than a year. As a result of carried out savings, the investment costs of the half finished facilities were reduced to 1/3 [of the cost] while at the same time the same quality was kept. These methods were carried out by the masses. The CC summed [them] up.

This also applies to the people's communes. Their form was created by the masses. The CC summed [it] up and propagated it. One could not do anything under the Chinese conditions without this form [the people's commune]. Every year natural disasters afflict the country. One cannot tackle them without creating larger organizational units. The communes also allow [us] to exploit the resources which have not been able to be exploited before. The average commune equals about 50 of previous cooperatives. For example, in the mountainous terrains, a cooperative could not exploit coal, iron, or forests. The communes can exploit them while the communes on the plains can, in turn, ensure them food. A bigger unit also builds bigger irrigation mechanisms as well as social mechanisms and small industrial plants. However, the issue of the name is less important. One can call these organisms a cooperative or a commune.

A commune does not only occupy itself with agriculture, but also with education, industry, etc. After all, even the "Paris Commune" was not a commune. If Lenin were alive, he would be very interested in the issue of the communes and he would like to organize them. However, there was a lack of experience at that time. Also, the formulas, which were somewhat wrong, were created. They did not predict the farmsteads, the division was to take place according to needs. At once, the communist principle [was evident here]. The Chinese comrades studied the issue of the communes at that time in Soviet Russia.

Currently, there is collective and individual ownership of the means of production. And here they also use "the walking on 2 legs." However, individual ownership occurs to a small degree. Most of all, there is collective ownership. About 80 per cent of a peasant's income comes from collective sources; the rest [comes] from individual sources (farmsteads, secondary production). The income from individual production will gradually decrease after a few years.

One should not think that after the general line has been established, everything will be fine. Again, the issue became whether the general line of the commune and the great leap are good things or not. There was a stormy period. There were those who wanted to improve the general line, the great leap and the commune. At the moment there are about 190 members and deputies of members in the CC. Nine of them are coming out against the general line of the great leap and the communes. In the materials delivered to the fraternal parties of socialist countries, there was a mention of 4 of them. The rest were exposed later. Among the responsible workers, in the positions higher than manager of a department in the central institutions of the government and the party [there are] around [number missing], and therefore, about 3500 people are hesitant or are going against the line. There are fewer of them in the country [lit. terrain], from about one to two per cent. There are even fewer of them among the people, about one per cent of the people in the countryside. But because this population numbers 560 million, then even that one per cent constitutes over 5.5 million people. This 5.5 million people is against the [Party] line, the great leap and the commune. As a result, they do not want socialism. This is a reflection of two ways of fighting. Those people recruit themselves, most of the time, from among the richer owners of middle-sized farms. The landowners and kulaks [rich peasants] do not have any respect in the village. The rich owners of middle-sized farms constitute 20 per cent of the countryside population. Their consciousness has been increased and the majority of them are in favor of socialism. Only one small group, we remind you, one per cent, is against it. They think that the commune is worse than a cooperative, a cooperative is worse than a group of mutual assistance, and the group is worse than individual economy enterprise [trans. note- Gospodarka can also mean farming]. In other words, they want a restoration of capitalism; they feel constrained, and they cannot trade and enrich themselves by using old ways. They think that the great leap is tiring. They want a slower pace; they are saying that a system of free bills [welfare] is not good because it helps the lazy ones. However, the poor, petty farmers and the poorer owners of middle-sized farms want the commune and the leap. They are settling accounts with the rich and they are showing that it is precisely the richer owners of middle-sized farms who are lazy. Thus, even the latter are coming to the conclusion that they should not be lazy, but to start plugging away; to take part in physical work. They are convincing them with arguments and facts. The richer owners of middle-size farms constitute a part of cadre workers of the commune in brigades (i.e. the brigadiers). One should remove them, but continue to pull them to one's side. They should not be taking managerial positions in the communes, because they vacillate. This provokes certain disorder.

A discussion is currently taking place in the countryside, in the army, and in universities. They will finish it in three months this year. The Party line will surely win in this discussion and there will be quiet for a few years. However, after a few years there will yet again be another disorder. A part of the population surely does not feel comfortable under today's circumstances. They want to take advantage of these shortcomings in order to create disorder. There will be high tide and [then] a

low tide. This is the correctness of the class fight and the fight of two paths, isn't it? Such a fight will still last from 20-50 years in China. China is a sea of petty bourgeoisie. The higher strata of it [the petty bourgeoisie] will feel uncomfortable. Besides, there are elements of landowners and rich peasants [as well as] the opposition elements of the intelligentsia. We have to be prepared that they will attack us.

Naturally, this conversation should not evoke any pessimistic moods in [our] listeners. Generally speaking, the situation is satisfactory. The issues, problems and difficulties are temporary in nature. There is a great enthusiasm for work and a very great discipline among the masses.

China is a poor country, the life of the nation is poor, as well. The people know that in order to change this state of affairs they have to unite and work intensely. Several decades are needed for building socialism in China and to transform it [China] into the leading cultural nation that has modern industry and rich scientific knowledge. This much is needed in order to surpass England in production per capita. The population of England constitutes 1/13 of that in China. However, as far as global production, only ten years will be sufficient. As far as coal production, China has already surpassed England. This year's plan of steel production forecasts 12 million tons. They [China] will reach 13 million. If this is the case, then next year they will produce 18 million, and in the year after next they can go up to 22 million. This is how much England has today. Until the great leap there were 18 bigger and medium-size steel mills working in China. In the last 2 years there were 26 medium-size steel mills built. A medium-size steel mill produces 150 to 500 thousand tons [of steel] annually. Besides, 300 small steel mills exist in China which produce 100,000 tons annually. One can build a medium-size steel mill in a year. Afterwards, one can rebuild it. A steel mill of 150 thousand [tons] can be easily rebuilt to that of 300,000 [tons of output]. The one of half a million [tons can be rebuilt] into one million [tons]. And this is how a medium-size steel mill is transformed into a big one.

Generally speaking, China needs time, peace and friends. There was already much talk about time. When it comes to peace, comrades should not have any fears. China will not begin a war. They will not fight either with India or Taiwan. Americans are sitting in Taiwan. They supplied Jiang Jieshi with rocket weapons [missiles] How to fight with them? China does not want to conduct a war with them. The matter is of a different nature ever since the Americans occupied Taiwan. China is going to militarily occupy neither Taiwan nor even Quemoy and Matsu [Jinmen and Mazu]. They [Chinese] don't want to cause any ill fortune. They [Chinese] are firing at Quemoy, but this is not equal with occupying it. Jiang Jieshi wants the islands to be fired upon. Otherwise, it would be difficult for him to get money from Americans, who, besides, want to remove him from the position. Jiang Jieshi is 99% pro-American, but nevertheless he still has this 1% [of being Chinese?]. The US wants [to have] a 100% serf in Taiwan. Not occupying Taiwan in the next 20-30-40 years is not a serious problem. The PRC is against 2 Chinas and he [Mao] agrees on this with Jiang Jieshi. The issue of China differs from the German issue. Germans were defeated during the war. China was on the side of the allied [powers]. Germany is divided on the basis of international treaties. Returning Taiwan to China was predicted by the Cairo agreement between Roosevelt, Churchill and Jiang Jieshi. There is no such international treaty which would talk about not returning Taiwan to China.

The China matter cannot be compared to those of Korea or Vietnam either. The 38th parallel is the result of the Potsdam Treaty as well as the war in Korea. The Korean Army and the Chinese Volunteers signed the ceasefire and recognized the 38th parallel. The 17th parallel in Vietnam was also formed due to the Geneva Accords. As far as the issue of Taiwan, there was no such division. Taiwan is to return to China according to international agreements. There are currently talks taking place in Warsaw. When will their result be?-we will see. It seems that the unification will be

accomplished. If not in four, then in 40 years.

When it comes to China-India matters, these were just tiny incidents on the border. The Indian bourgeoisie began these incidents for its own purposes: it wants to attack the CP of India, to receive a loan from the US, and to decrease China's influence, since the influence of China exists in India. The Indian bourgeoisie became frightened, especially after Tibet's return to the motherland, and it [India] is now conducting an anti-China campaign in order to decrease its influences.

Our common goal is the struggle for peace. Now we cannot talk about eternal peace. For now, we are talking about peace for 10-15 years. This is possible. Nuclear war is not a good thing. The possibility of avoiding it exists.

The issue of friends. Socialist countries - these are our friends. Such countries have to be united. Besides, one should achieve unity with friends from capitalist countries. China cannot operate without friends. Therefore, they [Chinese] need time, peace and friendship.

We should get to know each other better, understand [each other] and get close [to each other].

Cde. Mao asks that greetings be passed on to Cde. Gomułka and other comrades from the leadership upon return. The PUWP delegation, headed by Cde. Morawski, was hosted in China in April. It conducted insightful examinations and got to know the situation [in China] very well. Upon return this delegation told the truth about China to the Polish people and the Party. Their work was very good and fruitful. Cde. Mao is asking that greetings be passed on to Cde. Morawski and other members of the delegation.

China is in [financial] debt as far as the area of commerce between our countries is concerned. They have not carried out their plan of export so well. They have obligations in this field and they must maintain confidence in them. Cde. Mao is pleased with the invitation of Cdes. Liu Shaoqi and Po I-po [Bo Yibo] to Poland. China has received great assistance from Poland in construction, industry and sea shipping, and they are very grateful for it.

In [his] reply, Cde. Zawadzki emphasized the sympathy and support of the Polish people and the Party for China. He stated that we considered the line of the CP of China as the correct one. He reminded us of the assistance [from China] in our difficulties in 1956. Currently, Poland has already put those difficulties behind us. After the III Congress the Party has been consolidated and it has a close-knit and uniform leadership. Here, Cde. Mao stated that he was also of this opinion.

The conversation lasted 2 hours and 20 minutes.