

**July 27, 1951**

**From the Diary of N. V. Roshchin: Memorandum of  
Conversation with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai on 24  
July 1951**

**Citation:**

"From the Diary of N. V. Roshchin: Memorandum of Conversation with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai on 24 July 1951", July 27, 1951, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 44, por. 13, pap. 322, ll. 44-57. Translated by David Wolff.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/118735>

**Summary:**

Discussion between Soviet Ambassador to the PRC Roshchin and Zhou Enlai regarding the conflict in Korea. Zhou states that the war effort is a drain on China's domestic economy, but that it will bounce back once the war is won. Also describes Chinese relations with capitalist countries. Notes that the CCP lacks technical specialists of any sort.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

From the Diary of N. V. ROSHCHIN  
Secret, Copy 1, 27 July 1951

Memorandum of Conversation  
with PRC Premier ZHOU ENLAI on 24 July 1951

On 24 July I visited Zhou Enlai ... [discussion of Dal'dok joint shipping enterprise]. Then a conversation developed during which I asked Zhou Enlai his opinion on the negotiations in Korea and on some questions regarding [Chinese] internal politics. Zhou willingly agreed and gave the following evaluation of the chances for the negotiations in Korea as well as on several Chinese internal politics questions.

After a year of war in Korea, said Zhou Enlai, the Americans have lost 150 thousand men and the war has cost 10-12 billion dollars and nonetheless they can't occupy North Korea and approach the borders of China ... [Describes the basic military stalemate in Korea and the negotiation positions, with emphasis on the issues of the 38th parallel and the withdrawal of foreign troops from the peninsula.] ... Then Zhou touched on the moods of the various groups of the population in China towards the Korean events and said that the laboring masses in China are full of determination to fight and drive off American troops out of Korea and liberate Taiwan island. [Detail on various groups within Chinese society and their reaction to the Korean War.]

Among the right-wing elements is a group of people, who in their time were closely tied to the Jiang Jieshi regime and with the Americans. Some of these people who carried out subversive work have been discovered. For each discovery we provided the democratic parties and groups with irrefutable evidence and they were unable to object to our repression of these elements. Others of whose subversive activities we still have no evidence have been isolated.

They are under observation. We are trying to determine if they are tied in any degree to the KMT [intelligence] agency ... [Chinese internal politics are discussed.]

Then I asked Zhou Enlai what are the fundamental problems facing the Chinese government. Zhou answered that there are two, both aggravated by continuation of the war. The first is enormous financial tension. Sixty percent of the budget goes to the war. At the same time, the economy demands urgent investment. The standard of living of the working class and intelligentsia is extremely low. However, added Zhou, if the war in Korea ends, then China will quickly escape from this situation, conduct a monetary reform, increase the budget for economic construction and raise the standard of living for workers and the intelligentsia.

The other huge problem is the acute lack of technical cadres. The Chinese revolution developed for many years in the village. Senior cadres have village and army experience. Among 5 million party members, 5 million soldiers and officers and 6 million [government] employees, there are almost no specialists with contemporary technical knowledge. The young, just out of higher education, lack experience and qualifications. The old KMT technical cadres do not have the level necessary for the industrialization of China. Without the war in Korea and the huge outlays on this war, the Chinese government would quickly deal with this problem by organizing courses, technical universities and study for many [Chinese] students in the USSR. However, so long as the war goes on, it will be hard to solve this problem and it will be a fundamental constraint on Chinese industrialization.

In closing I asked Zhou Enlai to give me an overview of Chinese foreign policy towards capitalist countries. Zhou said that China divides the capitalist countries into two groups. The first group holds India, Burma, Indonesia, the countries of the Arab League and others dependent on imperialist governments. The Chinese government

has friendly relations with them and contact with their representatives in Beijing has been established. China tries to use them in [China's] interest, sharpening the contradictions between them and the imperialist metropolises. In this group China will not establish relations only with Israel. Establishing relations with Israel will not bring anything substantial and besides, this can lead to a worsening of relations with the countries of the Arab League, who in a number of cases have supported the PRC.

In the other group are England, France, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, etc. With these countries China conducts the same policy that they conduct with China. China always willingly supports each friendly initiative and decisively rejects their inimical acts. Of these countries, England and France are afraid of over-exacerbating relations with China, fearing for the fate of their colonial possessions in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, if the war in Korea ends, they will want to broaden trade with China. China can sell them agricultural products, unnecessary materials (excluding strategic materials) and will buy tools and machines.

USSR Embassy First Secretary M. S. Kapitsa was present for the talk.

USSR Ambassador to the PRC N. V. Roshchin