

May 9, 1958

**Memorandum of Conversation with Deputy Minister
of Foreign Affairs of the PRC Zhang Wentian**

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Summary:

Record of conversation between S.F. Antonov and Zhang Wentian, regarding Chinese plans to influence Japanese politics. Additionally, Zhang comments on the close relationship between Poland and Yugoslavia.

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Memorandum of Conversation
with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC ZHANG WENTIAN
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I visited Zhang Wentian at his invitation. Zhang Wentian informed me of tactical changes that the Chinese comrades are undertaking in their policy toward Japan.

Zhang Wentian noted that recently the Kishi government [headed by Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, wartime chief of the Japanese munitions industry and Class-A war criminal suspect until 1948] has occupied a very bad position toward the PRC. The Japanese government had blocked the fulfillment of the "fourth" non-governmental trade agreement in order to please the Jiang Jieshi clique and the Americans. Not long ago, the national [Chinese] flag was torn off the building of a Chinese exhibition in Japan [in Nagasaki]. Recently, the Japanese side has rudely violated the Chinese-Japanese (non-governmental) fishing agreement; Japanese fishing vessels are entering forbidden zones. Leading figures in Japan often make statements inimical to the PRC, emphasizing that Japan can trade with the PRC, but does not plan "to recognize Communist China."

Therefore, said Zhang Wentian, we decided "to counterattack against Japan." Taking into account the upcoming elections to the Japanese Diet [legislature], the Chinese intend to pressure the Kishi government and support the Japanese socialists and communists. They are trying to prevent the liberal-democrats from reaching a two-thirds majority in the Diet, which would allow them to change the constitution ... [A description of propaganda and trade measures to be taken follows.]

The Japanese, said Zhang Wentian, think that we cannot get on without them. Of course, he continued, we need steel, but we, in case of need, can turn to the fraternal countries, who will help us. Curtailing the import of the indicated goods from Japan will be a significant blow ... [Cultural and social exchanges will also be curtailed.]

When asked about recent articles in the Chinese press containing sharp criticisms of the Japanese government, Zhang said that "that is only the beginning." We, he continued, aim the principal blow at the Kishi government. We will use a different approach to the Japanese socialists and various minor political groups, since they are in the opposition. In this manner the Chinese friends count on helping to isolate Kishi. According to the Chinese comrades, the above-mentioned measures will be useful for the Japanese Communist Party.

Touching on the upcoming elections in Japan, Zhang Wentian expressed the opinion that the socialist party cannot come to power and that, in all probability, the present government will remain. He said that at present it is important to fight to prevent Kishi from getting two-thirds of the Diet seats. However, underlined Zhang, even if Kishi gets two-thirds, we will continue our battle with him.[1]

The Chinese comrades hope that the indicated measures will help the forces in Japan who are openly for friendship with the PRC. Zhang said that contemporary Japanese monopolistic capital is "secretly imperialistic." If you don't pressure it, he said, using a Chinese saying, "It will raise its tail [podnimet khvost]." In the past, said Zhang, we made many friendly steps towards Japan, but the Japanese interpreted this as meaning that we couldn't get on without them. Therefore, we have to show that things are otherwise. Zhang underlined that the basic course of fighting for Japan [za Japoniiu] is not changing and that at present we are only talking about a change in the tactical line.

Of the above, Zhang asked that I inform the Soviet government so that "they know in Moscow what measures we are taking and what goals we are pursuing."

Then Zhang told of the article in today's Pravda, "The unity and cohesion of the Marxist- Leninist parties is the guarantee of the future victories of the world socialist system."

Speaking of the reaction of the diplomatic community in Beijing to the latest session of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and reactions of the fraternal parties, Zhang noted, that the Polish ambassador Kiryliuk sympathizes with the Yugoslavs. He is very close to the Yugoslav ambassador V. Popovic. These two ambassadors, said Zhang, are perfect for the Chinese saying, "They walk in the same pants." According to Zhang Wentian, Kiryliuk recently talked with the deputy foreign minister Zeng Yongquan. During this conversation Kiryliuk said that he is not a theoretician and therefore he will not judge the substance of the answer given to the Yugoslavs, but he does not like the form of the answer. Considering the above remarks of the Polish ambassador, Zhang Wentian said that after the events in Hungary and Poland, Kiryliuk openly espoused revisionist positions and his views were identical with those of the Chinese right.

Zhang Wentian also said that of late, however, Kiryliuk has become more careful and behaves himself a bit better than before.

Present for the conversation were the Asia Section Head of the PRC Foreign Ministry, Zhang Wenjin and the interpreter Fang Quan and the Embassy attache A. A. Brezhnev.

Temporary USSR Charge d'affaires in the PRC S. Antonov

[1] For a contrasting view of the May 1958 Diet elections from the inside of the U.S.-Japanese relationship, see Michael Schaller, *Altered States* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 135 -137.