

**October 12, 1972**

**Department Head van Well to Foreign Office, 'China  
Visit by the Foreign Minister'**

**Citation:**

"Department Head van Well to Foreign Office, 'China Visit by the Foreign Minister'",  
October 12, 1972, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Institut für Zeitgeschichte, ed., Akten  
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rtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1972. 1. Oktober bis 31. Dezember 1972  
(München: Oldenbourg, 2003), 1527-1529. Translated by Bernd Schaefer.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/119644>

**Summary:**

Report on a West German Foreign Ministry delegation to China lead by Walter Scheel  
exploring the possibility of opening diplomatic relations. In meetings with Chinese  
Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei they discuss detente, Chinese mistrust of the Soviet Union,  
and the CSCE.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

**Original Language:**

German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Department Head van Well, currently Beijing, to Foreign Office

Z B 6-1-15245/72 confidential

Telex Nr. 125

Citissime

Sent: October 12, 1972, 17:30 hours[1]

Received: October 7, 1972, 13:53 hours

Subject: China Visit by the Foreign Minister[2]

here: further talks on October 11

Reference: Telex No. 119 from October 11, 1972[3]

1) During a tight program in the afternoon and the request for a night session on October 11, the Chinese expressed their utmost interest in extensive talks with us. Two delegation talks of about 2.5 hours each were held in the afternoon and on late evening. In between, Chinese Foreign Minister Ji hosted a banquet for our Foreign Minister, delegation, and German and foreign correspondents. Special talks for working groups were scheduled for the morning of October 12; there our proposals are supposed to be discussed. The Minister will meet at the same time with Foreign Trade Minister Pai Hsiang-kuo.[4]

2) International issues were at the center of the second and third talk on October 11. The Chinese, in particular Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei and his assistant Chang Wen-ding, as well as the head of the newly established Western European Division [in the Chinese Foreign Ministry], Wang Tung, stated their intensive interest in statements by our Foreign Minister regarding preconditions and implementation of our detente and European policy. They asked detailed questions, allowing the conclusion of a [prior] extensive studying of problems. During the course of the conversation a real dialogue developed, especially about opportunities and limits of detente policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. The Chinese displayed profound mistrust with regard to trustworthiness of any agreement with the Soviets. They voiced doubts whether in the context of MBFR [Mutually Balanced Forces Reduction] a useful concept of "balance" could ever be found. Rather the Soviet Union would gear toward further expansion, and agreements could be at best of temporary use. For instance, they [Chinese] would not be against the Moscow Treaty [signed in August 1970 between USSR and FRG and ratified by the FRG in May 1972]. However, permanent vigilance is needed. The Chinese implicitly implied that in Europe as well the best protection is always your own defense effort. Themselves they are prepared; even if the Soviet Union would simultaneously increase its troops stationed near the Chinese border from one to four million, they [Chinese] would have no fear.

3) Regarding the CSCE, the Chinese remarked it would only make sense if all states could participate with equal rights, and the principle of peaceful coexistence would also be applied to the states of Eastern Europe. They emphasized, according to their analysis, the CSCE is supposed to be abused for a strengthening of influence spheres of the superpowers.[5] In contrast, they mentioned with not one single word the option of a Chinese participation. The Foreign Minister had explained before that from our side we do not believe in aggressive intentions of the Soviet Union, since the Soviet potential is already apparently over-stretched through current challenges (investments, armament, consumption). A policy of peace requires the elimination of the causes of tension.

He would agree with the Chinese that this policy can only be successful, if it is based upon a credible (nuclear) potential of deterrence.

[signed] van Well

Section I B 5, Vol. 660 A

[1] Submitted to VLR Count [Graf] Matuschka von Greiffenclau on October 12, 1972.

[2] Foreign Minister Scheel visited the People's Republic of China from October 10 to 14, 1972. See here also documents 331 and 333.

[3] See document 328.

[4] For the conversation between Foreign Minister Scheel and the Chinese Minister for Foreign Trade Pai Hsiang-kuo on October 12, 1972 in Beijing see document 333, footnote 3.

[5] Chinese Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei explained in this context: "This is why we say the root cause of tensions in Europe is the intention by both superpowers to divide up their spheres of influence. They continue to wrestle about influence spheres in Europe, so that they can do in the European countries whatever they please. We would like to hope that the Soviet leaders have changed. However, we know social imperialism. They continue with the old policy of the czars, namely expansion abroad. And this policy is even more dangerous. [...] Now the assertion is spread around as if we advocate against detente in Europe. It is said China is concerned about an advent of detente in Europe. Then the Soviet Union would consolidate its forces in order to move against China. This is why China, as it is said, would wish for tension in Europe. This is completely baseless. [...] The leadership clique of the Soviet Union did always claim it wants detente in Europe. Its actual objective is that others recognize realities, first in particular the Soviet influence sphere in Eastern Europe. First the others are supposed to recognize the territories the Soviet Union has gained around Germany, and then the Soviet Union will undertake an expansion against the West. Currently it is preaching a lot about renunciation of force. In reality, however, the others would have to give up their means of self-defense, so that the Soviet Union can attack as it pleases. The Soviets are aware that the events in Czechoslovakia have taught us a lesson. How does one have the right to commit an act of aggression against an alliance partner? We also have drawn lessons from our own experiences. Therefore we think that for them agreements can play only a temporary role, as long as it is beneficial to them. We are of the opinion that with the signing of a couple of treaties and agreements the problem cannot be solved. And in particular, one may not sleep carefree on high pillows just because of the existence of some treaties." See the memorandum by Department Head Freiherr [Rüdiger] von Wechmar, [FRG Federal Government] Press and Information Office, about the talks of Foreign Minister Scheel in the People's Republic of China; VS-Bd, 9882 (I B 5); B 150, File Copies 1972.