

June 14, 1974

**Cable from Ambassador Pauls to the Foreign Office,
'China - Federal Republic'**

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Summary:

West German Ambassador to China, Rolf Pauls, summarizes the current status of relations between China and West Germany and recommends increasing political contacts and political relations.

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Ambassador Pauls, Beijing, to Foreign Office

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RE: China - Federal Republic [of Germany]

here: Telex report No. 206 of May 15, 1974 - POL 320.10 CHN[1]
Telex report No. 213 of May 17, 1974 - POL 322.00 CHN[2]

I. 1) On the Chinese side, China's relationship with us is embedded in a political world view determined by [both] ideology and pragmatic considerations. With regard to the relationship with the Federal Republic, the latter are supposedly given priority. For the Chinese, good bilateral relations with the Federal Republic have no absolute intrinsic value.

The Federal Republic has a quite exactly circumscribed significance in the Chinese world view. The Federal Republic is relevant to China as an important link of a uniting Europe, and as a barrier against expansionary efforts of the Soviet Union in Western Europe. At the same time, the Federal Republic looks especially endangered in Chinese eyes. Currently, this is to be the case [from the Chinese perspective] less so by a military attack from the Soviets, but rather by revolutionary-subversive forces who -as the Chinese see it- could take advantage of the unresolved German question for their own purposes. The Chinese are convinced that the German question will be resolved some day. One has told us here repeatedly that one views the division of the nation as artificial. In long-term perspective, the Chinese ask themselves only under what auspices this reunification will occur some day.

2) The Chinese demonstrate understanding for our foreign policy, its necessity, and its priorities. They welcome the Federal Republic's alliance and Western European policy. They are convinced of the imperative of NATO and a further deployment of U.S. forces in Europe. They want European unification to make rapid progress. As it showed recently very clearly during Pompidou's visit in Beijing[3], regarding the unification issue China is not toeing the same line France did propagate previously.

On the Chinese side there even exists to a certain extent an "understanding"[Verständnis][4] for the German Ostpolitik. One is not against any bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union as such. Even the Chinese are also negotiating with her.[5] However, this happens with delaying tactics. The Chinese are afraid to again agree on "unequal treaties"[6] if they attempt to settle on a compromise with the large neighbor in the North already by today - this is from a state of inferiority vis-a-vis the Soviet Union in terms of power politics. For that reason, the border negotiations with the Soviet Union are conducted in a delaying mode; and one is unwilling to accept an Asian collective security system[7].

Under similar auspices, the Chinese are critically viewing the currently ongoing large-scale multilateral negotiations in Europe, CSCE and MBFR. However, if Western Europe wants to negotiate with the Soviet Union already today, then only -in Chinese opinion- with utmost vigilance.

The new federal government [in Bonn] will be judged from Beijing by this yardstick.

3) As a highly developed country of the Second World, the Federal Republic can in Chinese opinion help the “developing country” of China to make up its technological and scientific gaps. German products and achievements are held in high regard here. An evidence behind this fact is our excellent rank (No. 4) we occupy in the Chinese balance of trade. In 1973 alone, the volume of trade increased by 50 percent.[8] Apparently Beijing also wants to avoid to become too dependent on Japan concerning its imports. Therefore we see this “diversification” in trade, from which especially Western Europe, and here primarily the Federal Republic, is benefitting.

II. 1) For us, the future relevance of the China factor in global policy cannot be assessed with absolute certainty. It is quite possible that the country will face inner turbulences after the end of the Mao Zedong era. There is only one thing hardly to expect: That China will again voluntarily depart from the foreign policy course that has moved it within close reach of parity in global policy with the two “big ones”. This way China has, within the framework of global policy, not just become relevant to the foreign policy of any other country. Furthermore, the People's Republic of China is a power of the first order to be factored in any assessment of global political developments.

2) China is situated at the other end of the Eurasian continental land mass and thus in the back of the continental hegemon, the Soviet Union. Today it is already tying down significant military resources of the Soviets: one million soldiers, more than one quarter of the Soviet armed forces. There exists no contradiction in the fact that until today the Soviet Union did not have to withdraw any forces from the “European front” in order to build up its overall, still defensive potential along the borders with China.

Europe should “take into consideration, when defining its common foreign policy, the antagonisms between the two great powers of the communist world and maintain in its relations a balance vis-a-vis both powers” (joint report by the chiefs of mission from the EC states in Beijing from February 14, 1974).

This is also supposed to apply to the foreign policy of the Federal Republic, and also to outlining a common China policy of the European Community - which needs to be done.

3) From this situation derived the need for dialogue with the Chinese. We should increase political contacts on all levels. So far there has been an imbalance in mutual diplomatic visits. Chinese officials with cabinet rank have so far not yet come to the Federal Republic. We should not turn this into a matter of prestige, and especially not refrain because of that from increasing contacts with the Chinese leadership from our side. The situation in China is just the way it is, and thus different. Currently the domestic situation here is even difficult. Obviously high-ranking officials cannot afford to be absent from the theater of domestic events. In addition, during this hardly transparent period of “late Maoism” there might exist the concern to become personally too much identified with a certain political line of thought. It is a different matter in this context when it comes to visits here. The sequence of Western European politicians, who were guests here in recent years, has undoubtedly contributed towards the affirmation of Zhou Enlai's foreign policy. The “moderate” forces of China are behind this foreign policy. I have no doubt that within the government - maybe even in the Army - there do exist circles that grant major consideration to the cooperation with Western Europe, and thus with us as well.[9]

4) China is for Europe, and thus for the Federal Republic, not a dangerous partner. Civilizations and social systems are completely different. According to statements by its leading officials, China will be primarily concerned with its own development for still at least 30 to 50 years. The realization is growing that the Chinese revolutionary model is not an export article. The so-called “Maoists” in Europe are not recognized. For a considerable time still, this country will be unable in operative terms to conduct

a truly "global" policy. The focus of Chinese foreign policy clearly is on the Asian-Pacific region. Conflicts of interests with Europe are hardly possible.

5) Thus overall the development of political relations between the Federal Republic and China appears to be even more important than the economic ones. We also should try to avoid the impression that we are primarily interested in business. This would only play into the hands of "ideologues" here who have their pre-fabricated thoughts about the "capitalist" world. We also have to take into account that currently there still is a generation in power here that has not had the best of experiences with the Europeans. A high esteem of the latter does not exist.

Thus it is even more important to correct those impressions. This can only succeed if we have a clear foreign policy concept that makes an impression on the Chinese.

[signed] Pauls

VS-Bd. 9914 (312)

[1] Ambassador Pauls, Beijing, outlined the domestic situation of the People's Republic of China: "The current domestic political movement in Beijing has so far not adopted a 'new cultural revolution' according to the 'model' of the 1960s. [...] This does not mean, however, that the domestic situation in China is stable. Without doubt, it even has lost some stability during the course of the campaign. In my opinion, the decisive cause behind this movement is the fact that Mao and his close circle just do not let things settle down in this country. The domestic slow-down since about 1969 must again have appeared as a 'slouching' towards a 'revisionist state' in the eyes of the old revolutionary and his entire political group. The latter primarily defines itself through ideological considerations. For that reason, there is this new mass campaign to criticize Confucius and Lin Biao. As it always gets emphasized by the Chinese, also in private, this was initiated by Mao himself." See Section 313, Vol. 100091.

[2] Ambassador Pauls, Beijing, analyzed the baseline of Chinese foreign policy. He noted that the People's Republic of China has grown into a dimension which might "dictate her a course on the global political stage. This dimension is characterized by China's antagonism vis-a-vis both 'superpowers'. In addition, there are the specific relations with the Third World and - this sequence is of importance - a rather ambivalent attitude towards the Western industrial nations (except for the United States). There can be no doubt that the People's Republic of China, which first had entered global politics as a junior partner of the Soviet Union, is focussing all her energies today to steer an independent course between the two real big ones." It would bear resulting political, economic, and military burdens, "because one is fully aware of the significant global political situation. For the first time in centuries, with China a country outside the European cultural sphere has risen to the level where the contest for global hegemony takes place." At the same time, the Chinese government is eager "to define itself as a country of the Third World. In particular Mao is viewing global political events as a global class struggle. Therefore the Chinese leadership is time and again tempted to apply those recipes to foreign policy that helped her to be successful in domestic policy. [...] As rather ambivalent appears [...] China's relationship with those industrial states who are no longer playing, given their political, economic, and military potential, at a level that would allow them to join the really big game for power in the world. Here the Chinese see a far-reaching congruence of interests. China needs scientific and technological impulses for its development. Those are obtained best through partial and sectoral collaboration with those countries the Chinese subsume under the term 'Second World'." See Section 313, Vol. 100100.

[3] [French] President [Georges] Pompidou visited the People's Republic of China from September 11 to 13, 1973.

[4] Corrected from "communication" [Verständigung].

[5] At a meeting on September 11, 1969 at Beijing Airport, Prime Ministers [Alexey] Kosygin and Zhou Enlai agreed about the resumption of talks to settle differences in opinion about the boundary lines in the Amur and Ussuri region. The talks began in October 1969 and were interrupted in July of 1973. On December 20, 1973 [FRG] Ambassador [Ulrich] Sahn transmitted this information by the Chinese embassy in Moscow regarding the status of negotiations: "During the entire period until today there would not have been made any progress. Each side insisted on its positions. Actual border negotiations would not even have started. [...] The Chinese would be ready to recognize the 'unequal treaties'. They would maintain the position, however, that the borders were much further changed on the Russian-Soviet side than stipulated in the treaties. This way the Soviets held Chinese territories in their possession on a scale of 'many million square kilometers'." See the written report; Section 313, Vol. 100101.

On June 25, 1974 the leader of the Soviet negotiation delegation, Ilychev, again arrived in Beijing for talks, which were subsequently adjourned without result in August 16, 1974. Ambassador Pauls, Beijing, reported on this: "As we have heard from the Soviet embassy here, the Soviets have again offered to the Chinese to negotiate about the boundary lines from the Mongolian border to Vladivostok. The border was supposed to be drawn in essence along the navigable channels of the Amur and Ussuri rivers, by which the Chinese would come into possession of a couple of islands. As a procedure, the Soviet side would have proposed a general agreement with subsequent determination of boundaries, section by section, through a border commission. The Chinese would have rejected the Soviet proposal and demanded an agreement about the entire boundaries (even west of Mongolia). Before that, the Chinese would have demanded the Soviet Union has to withdraw its forces from the border unilaterally. The latter demand would be unacceptable to the Soviet side and non-negotiable, unlike the first demand. [...] This round of border negotiations as well has not led to any rapprochement between respective positions. However, the negotiations were not aborted but just postponed again. A soon-to-be agreement is unlikely, since there are no indications that the Chinese will modify their current position," See telex No. 342 from August 21, 1974; Section 313, Vol. 100101.

[6] The borders between Russia and China were regulated in the Treaties of Aigun and Tianjin (1858) and the Trade Agreement of Beijing (1860). Territories north of the Amur and south of the Ussuri rivers fell to Moscow. In dispute remained in particular the borderline in the region of Xinjiang/Turkestan which was only partially regulated by the Treaty of Ili respectively St. Petersburg (1881). While the Chinese government insisted on considering the treaties as "unequal" and therefore in need of re-negotiation, the USSR referred to the validity of the treaties and held the position that an open border question does not exist. See on this the memorandum by LR I [Erwin] Wickert from March 20, 1963; Section II A 3, Vol. 62.

[7] See on this proposals by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, [Leonid] Brezhnev, to establish a collective security system in Asia; [AAPD] document 45, footnote 12.

[8] With a trade volume of 286 million dollar in 1972 the Federal Republic was ranked fourth in Chinese foreign trade after Japan, Hong Kong, and Canada. In 1973 the overall volume increased to 460 million dollar and the Federal Republic was again ranked fourth in the People's Republic of China's foreign trade with Western industrial states, after Japan, the United States, and Hong Kong. See written report No. 372 by Consul General Breuer, Hong Kong, from April 9, 1974; Section 313, Vol. 100103. See also the note by Section 313 from August 1974; Section 313, Vol. 100104.

[9] Ambassador Pauls, Beijing, reported on June 15, 1974 about a conversation with Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua on European policy and bilateral relations: "I made clear that European policy of unification has gained new impulses from events of recent weeks. Also, there exist good prospects for overcoming the problems of the relationship between the EC and the United States. All that was noted with satisfaction by my Chinese interlocutor. When talking about the bilateral German-Chinese relationship, the Deputy Foreign Minister agreed that relations are developing satisfactorily in the areas of economy, culture, science, and technology. Yet he was of the opinion that there exist further opportunities to expand the bilateral

relationship, specifically in the political area. I used this opportunity to indicate that the Federal Chancellor, who had been already invited by the Chinese side in his previous capacity as the Minister of Finance, would still like to visit China some time. Qiao noted this with visible interest and asked whether we already have concrete thoughts about the timing. It would be important for the Chinese leadership to know, especially with regard to domestic obligations of the Chinese leadership. After my reply that a visit of the Federal Chancellor to China could come in late 1974 at the earliest, Qiao stated I just had given a very important information. He will report to his government immediately, and one would still have to coordinate with regard to a specific date. I remarked we would obviously like, before a visit by the Federal Chancellor to China, to see visits of the Chinese friends to the Federal Republic. Particularly welcome would be Foreign Minister Ji Pengfei and he, the Deputy Foreign Minister, himself. The Deputy Foreign Minister reacted with a friendly laughter and said they are aware to be 'deeply indebted to the Germans '. They will very thoroughly examine whether such a visit will be possible after all." See telex No. 274; VS-Bd. 9914 (312); B 150, File Copies 1974.