

**August 7, 1972**  
**Ambassador Pauls, Washington, to Foreign Office,**  
**'German China Policy'**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

A message from West German Ambassador Pauls about German-Chinese relations and the possible problems it could pose for the German-American relationship.

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German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Ambassador Pauls, Washington, to Foreign Office

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Telex Nr. 1876

Sent: August 7, 1972, 10:00 hours[1]

Received: August 7, 1972, 15:32 hours

Subject: German China Policy

The German China policy is closely monitored by political circles [in the U.S.] while the public is hardly taking notice. Many are of the opinion that an opening of relations will look the more obvious the earlier it is done. A long waiting time, however, would pile up problems both from East and West. Criticism coming from Moscow and Pankow[2] are seen as propaganda efforts without political substance. All communist states would have relations with Beijing, and likewise most of the Western states. Thus it would be a contradiction in itself to criticize West Germany for wanting to do the same what others have already carried out for quite some time. The thought of a German-Chinese plot against Moscow would be too ridiculous to warrant even a refutation. However, one is of the opinion [here in the U.S.] the longer one [the FRG] is waiting, the more Moscow and the GDR will create a bogeyman in order to put pressure on Bonn in the complicated discussions to be expected about the intra-German modus vivendi.

These observers hold the opinion that the West German government would weaken its entire position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, if the impression comes up it would shrink from a normalization with China because of consideration for Moscow. The Russians are impressed by firmness, while softness encourages them to exert new pressures. Especially among Far Eastern experts in the State Department, there exists a school of thought inclined against an establishment of German-Chinese relations, due to the thinking that the United States will be ever more left alone with Taiwan. I am always arguing against this you cannot demand from us of all countries (we are not a Pacific country at all and never established relations with Taiwan) that we hold back our own interests in order to do the Americans a favor in Taiwan, while the European powers still playing a role in the Pacific, like England and France, did follow their interests and went to Beijing a long time ago[3], and Japan is now doing the same with accelerated speed[4]. Except for Spain, we are the only European state that has no relations with China; and the Americans can hardly criticize others since they send an ambassador after the President of the United States has visited Beijing for a week.[5] Especially in the State Department, one expects us not to recognize Taiwan as a part of China when we establish relations. Instead we should enforce that we establish relations actually without conditions or constraints, or at least recognize that Beijing is the only government of China while leaving open what overall scope[6] of China is stipulated by this or that government [in Beijing or Taipei]. Since we never had recognized Taiwan, we could argue to Beijing that for our establishment of relations Taiwan does not have to play any role.

The longer the problem of an establishment of German-Chinese relations is pending without a solution, the more I am seeing the danger that, what currently are just American "thoughts", might turn into a "request" posed to us. Then a situation would emerge where we, due to the close German-American alliance relationship, could not just simply ignore the requests raised by Washington. In order to preempt such potential developments, it seems to me to be in our interest to implement what is obvious as soon as possible. There will be no criticism in Congress, with the exception of three or four Senators and a dozen House members. The press would register the event only briefly, without devoting much comments to it. Only in a few rightwing Republican papers in New York and Chicago there would be some short-lived criticism.

[signed] Pauls

VS-Bd. 9878 (I A 5)

[1] Submitted to Department Head von Staden on August 8, 1972 who noted in handwriting: "In my opinion very important."

Submitted to VLR I Berendonck and Thomas on August 8, 1972.

[2] For reactions by the USSR and the GDR about the visit of CDU Deputy Schröder in the People's Republic of China see [AAPD] document 209, footnote 4 and 5.

[3] Great Britain and the People's Republic of China established relations on January 6, 1950 on the level of representations. On March 13, 1972 relations were elevated to the ambassadorial level.

France and the People's Republic of China established diplomatic relations on January 27, 1964.

[4] During a visit by Prime Minister Tanaka to the People's Republic of China from September 25 to 30, 1972 the announcement over the establishment of diplomatic relations was made on September 29, 1972. See on this document 337, footnote 3.

[5] President Nixon visited the People's Republic of China from February 21 to 28, 1972. See on this document 47, footnote 6 and 7.

[6] The passage "or at least ... overall scope" was highlighted by Department Head von Staden. He noted in handwriting "This against Berlin!"