

June 19, 1975

**Cable from Ambassador Pauls to the Foreign Office,
'German-Chinese Relations'**

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Summary:

A cable from Ambassador Pauls about a conversation with Chinese Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua about developments in Europe and the Chinese assessment of the global situation after the end of the Vietnam War.

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Ambassador Pauls, Beijing, to Foreign Office

Telex Nr. 242

Sent: June 19, 1975, 08:00 hours[1]

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Re: German-Chinese relations

here: Conversation with Qiao Guanhua

1) On June 16 Chinese Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua welcomed me for a talk of about two hours concerning issues of mutual interest. The meeting was scheduled following my request, in order to inform in light of my upcoming home leave[2] the Chinese side about our assessment of important questions.

2) The Minister listened with visible interest to my explanations regarding developments in Europe after the referendum in Great Britain[3] and our desire for increased political collaboration. Further topics of our conversation dealt with the economic situation, our efforts towards detente, the Soviet position on Berlin, the Atlantic Alliance, our increased efforts to maintain security, the problems in the Mediterranean, and the Middle East conflict. Of all those issues, consequences of energy and resource problems for the economies of the European states and the political process of unification seemed to interest the Minister most.

Here, as in other cases, it showed again that the Chinese interlocutors are well informed about individual facts. However, they do not always comprehend causal links in a wider context and impacts in other areas. Even such an intelligent politician like Qiao Guanhua has apparently difficulties to understand the danger emanating from oil price developments on the European economies, and how they can result in a weakening of defense readiness through disruptions of the financial, economic, and social orders.

Another subject the Foreign Minister inquired about very extensively was armament-economic cooperation in Europe with regard to the acquisition of the F-16 fighter aircraft.[4] In his opinion, Europe should make efforts to increase arms cooperation in order to achieve an equal partnership with the United States. This would be important also because economies of the U.S. and Europe would be different; the United States would have a large domestic market while the market of the European Community would be smaller, the deterioration of the economic situation would affect Europe more than the United States, and the U.S. would have strong means at its disposal -through imposing tariffs and other protectionist measures- to counter the threats to its economy.

The Minister listened very attentively to my statements about European efforts to arrive at a satisfactory balance of interests between the United States and Europe in the framework of the OECD and other institutions. He revealed, however, that he is insufficiently informed about those, in his opinion, very complicated contexts.

I suggested to talk in detail during the upcoming visit of the Federal Minister of the Economy[5] also about the global economic context, especially with regard to the one-sided Chinese position concerning energy and resources issues.

3) Qiao Guanhua then gave an overview of Chinese assessments of the global political situation after the end of the Indochina War.[6] After the end of their engagement in Indochina, the United States would now have the opportunity to

regain the initiative and focus its energies on important areas. As an example, he referred here to the visit of President Ford to Europe[7]. On the other hand, in his opinion reactions in the West to the end of the Indochina conflict were too aggravated. The actual result of the conflict was unavoidable, only the timing had been open. It would be undisputed, however, that the resulting change in Southeast Asia and the reopening of the Suez Canal[8] have been beneficial to the Soviet Union. The naval maneuvers held by the Soviets several months ago, and other movements of their maritime forces in the Pacific[9], were just about to distract the world from the strategic area which, in Chinese opinion, is the only one that counts for the Soviet Union - namely Europe and the Middle East region situated at the latter's flank.

In Southeast Asia, Qiao Guanhua said, he can note that the countries are warned and vigilant towards Soviet ambitions. In principle China would be against bases on foreign territories. However, it would be wrong to close the eyes before the realities. Experiences in dealing with the Soviets tell you that they conduct an expansionist policy. After the end of the [Indo]China conflict and the reopening of the Suez Canal the Soviets now want to expand their sphere of influence in Asia. Diego Garcia[10] and the U.S. bases in the Philippines[11] must be seen in this context. China would give the advice not to let the tiger enter through the back door, when you throw out the wolf at the front door.

The Minister explained the United States would have held on too long, and with too much input, on Indochina. This way the Soviet Union was able to exploit the void created [by the U.S.] in South Asia and the Middle East to its own benefit. Without explicitly saying so, Qiao Guanhua indicated that currently China does not view the U.S. bases on the Philippines as an obstacle. Probably China also has let President Marcos know, he should not act hastily in his relations with the United States.[12]

Asked about the Korea problem and Kim Il Sung's statements during his visit in Beijing[13], the Foreign Minister said he does not agree with Japan's position which considers Korea as important for its own security. Previously there had been agreement between [Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku] Sato and the United States that Taiwan and Korea are relevant to Japan's security. Today Japan is only seeing Korea this way. However, this would be not correct. China cannot understand how a reunified Korea would threaten the security of Japan. North Korea would not strive for military subjugation of South Korea. Apart from that, he does not believe in the occurrence of a military conflict on the peninsula unless there happens an unforeseen event.

General Consulate receives copy directly.

[signed] Pauls

Section 303, Vol. 101356

[1] Submitted to VLR I Hellbeck on June 19, 1975.

[2] Ambassador Pauls stayed in the Federal Republic from July 2 to August 29, 1975.

[3] On the result of the referendum of June 5, 1975 about British EC membership see [AAPD] document 145, footnote 5.

[4] On the decision by Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway to purchase F-16 type fighter aircraft see document 132, especially footnote 8.

[5] Federal Minister [Hans] Friderichs visited Beijing from September 3 to 8, 1975 for the opening of the "Technological Exhibit of the Federal Republic of Germany 1975" (Technogerma 1975).

[6] On May 16, 1975 Ambassador Pauls, Beijing, reported the assessment that "Beijing's joy over the victory of the 'progressive forces' in Indochina" may be rather limited: "The Chinese have to be afraid that the Soviet Union, which with the support of its satellites got strongly involved in material terms in Vietnam, will want to gain decisive political influence at the Chinese Southern border. This is something Beijing must seek to prevent. [...] In Cambodia this is mostly dependent on domestic developments, especially which forces will prevail within the National Unity Front; since this will also decide about Cambodia's future foreign policy orientation. Here Beijing's chances do not look bad. Moscow currently still seems to be discredited in Cambodian eyes. Vietnamese hegemonic desires are faced with a traditional historic anti-Vietnamese Khmer attitude. Future bilateral relations between the People's Republic of China and Vietnam will be essentially determined by whether Moscow will succeed in maintaining its current political influence with Hanoi, or even increase it; whether Vietnam will act such independently in ideological and political terms in Southeast Asia that it will disrupt Beijing's sphere there; and whether the issue of territorial borders in the South China Sea will be resolved amicably between both countries." See written report No. 698; Section 303, Vol. 101542.

[7] President Ford stayed from May 28 to 30, 1975 in Brussels for the NATO Council meeting of heads of governments. He visited Spain on May 31 and June 1 and Austria on June 1 and 2, 1975. There he met in Salzburg with [Egyptian] President [Anwar al] Sadat. On June 3, 1975 Ford had meetings in Rome.

[8] See on the closing of the Suez Canal on June 6, 1967 [AAPD] document 29, footnote 16. The Suez Canal was reopened on June 5, 1975.

[9] On the Soviet naval maneuver "Okean 1975" see document 132, footnote 17.

[10] Since 1971 the United States expanded the Diego Garcia naval base in the Indian Ocean.

[11] Ambassador Eger, Manila, reported on May 9, 1975 on the thoughts of President [Ferdinand] Marcos: "The communist victories in Cambodia and Vietnam would change the balance of forces in Southeast Asia and in all of Asia. The United States is reviewing its foreign policy. Their lines of defense in this region will change and move the Philippines, as well as Indonesia and Australia, to the frontline. [...] The large U.S. military bases (Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base) could become targets of potential attacks with conventional or even nuclear weapons against the United States. The bilateral defense agreement between the U.S. and the Philippines would be of dubious value since it only becomes effective in case of external attacks; even more so, however, since it does not contain any guarantee of an automatic American counterstrike. [...] Given these circumstances, a fundamental reorientation of Philippine foreign and security policy would be essential". It would have to entail a "review of agreements with the United States also with regard to the military bases". See written report No. 260; Section 302, Vol. 101699.

[12] President Marcos stayed in the People's Republic of China from June 7 to 11, 1975. Ambassador Eger, Manila, reported on June 27, 1975 apparently "the Chinese leadership also warned very clearly before a too rapid drawdown of the American military presence". See written report No. 357; Section 301, Vol. 101699.

[13] President Kim Il Sung visited the People's Republic of China between April 18 and 24, 1975. For the communique of the visit see document 198, footnote 7.