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Diary of Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze, 3 February 1989

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The laying of wreaths at the monument of people's heroes on the Tiananmen Square-Square of the Gates of Heavenly Peace.

And here is the gate itself-the embodiment of the coat of arms of the People's Republic of China.

The second round of talks awaits us. It does not take long to walk to the site. We take up places in the "Xinjiang" hall and, again, contrary to expectations, hear the solemn singing of Qian Qichen:

- I propose to discuss the question of conducting the Soviet-Chinese summit.

What is happening? The text of the statement has not been agreed upon; he, in a tone of an ultimatum, demands from us to accept unacceptable demands and suddenly-summit! We agree to the time proposed by you-in the middle of May. We propose to begin the visit on May 16, and how long it lasts depends on the wishes of comrade Gorbachev...

E.A.: We mentioned the date of the visit yesterday: between May 15 and 18.

Qian: We agree. May 15 is a Monday. This will be the day of arrival. Therefore, the visit will take place between May 15 and 18. On behalf of the Chairman of the People's Republic of China comrade Yang Shangkun, I would like to convey an invitation to comrade Gorbachev. He will be welcomed by comrade Yang Shangkun, and received by comrade Deng Xiaoping. This will be the summit meeting. There will be talks with all other leaders of our country. The main question is about the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations. Naturally, the historical question will be explored as well, but one must look forward. Upon the completion of the visit, a joint informational communique will be published, the content of which can be discussed now, and later agreed upon through the diplomatic channels. In principle, we agree with comrade Gorbachev in that the summit means the restoration of ties between the two parties. These will be relations of a new type, built on a new basis.

Then again Qian Qichen read out seven points-the list of principles, upon which Sino-Soviet relations will have to be based.

Having thanked for having accepted and confirmed the date of the visit, E.A. says that he does not see differences of principle between the thought expressed by Qian Qichen and the documents passed to the Chinese side.

- The summit, he says, is the main event of the year.

Qian, agreeing to this, offers the following formulation of a statement for the press: "... agreed that the visit will take place in the middle of May..."

But why? The exact date of the visit was just agreed upon!

E.A.: But exact dates for all visits of Mikhail Sergeevich were announced [in the past]. And if we do not announce the exact date of his visit to China, this will cause questions.

Qian Qichen says that they will still have time to agree on this question.

And so, the main task, "the little historic task," for which we came here, has been completed. But, unwilling to stop at what had been achieved, E.A. refuses to look at the Gugong Palace [the Forbidden City], and continues the talks. Now their theme is trade-economic ties, border trade, joint enterprises and projects.

As the curtain came down on this round [of talks], the two sides informed each other about the attitude of each country towards various international and regional problems, and Qian Qichen solemnly stated:

- Your visit was successful.

We are taking the spacious and crowded (multi-bicycled, multi-wheeled) street of Heavenly Peace to the Zhongnanhai Palace (of the Northern Lake) [sic, actually Center-Southern Lake]. There, in a pearl-encrusted pavilion, we are greeted by comrade Li Peng, Premier of the State Council of the PRC, graduate of the M[oscow] [Power] E[ngineering] I[nstitute] of 1953 and an owner of a "red diploma" [i.e. perfect grades].

Disclosing a decent knowledge of the Russian language [he] invites us to a group photo ceremony, after which he takes E.A. to a niche, and, making himself comfortable there, falls into reminiscences about meetings with M.S. [Gorbachev].

- My first meeting with Gorbachev took place during the funeral of Chernenko. Our conversations then were different from those of the past.

By the way, it was then that this young-looking, round-faced premier of a billion-strong country told ours that China will not be "a younger brother."

On the theme of drawing a line under the past, Li Peng tells E.A.:

- The Chinese government attaches great significance to your visit, which must remove the last obstacles on the way to the summit and to the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations. In this connection-the Premier suddenly says-I support the idea of a joint statement on Kampuchea. Kampuchea is one of the hottest spots in the world. Gorbachev did a lot for the removal of hot spots in the world. We want for the Soviet Union to make an even greater effort for the liquidation of this hot spot.

And so, again, the question of the visit is tied into a tight knot with the Kampuchean problem. Why?

Li Peng explains: The Vietnamese have declared the withdrawal of their forces by September of this year. But we have information that they are dressing their soldiers into Kampuchean uniforms, [that they are] staying. We do not want to separate the internal and the external aspects of the settlement, as it happened in Afghanistan. We do not want a civil war to begin in Kampuchea after the withdrawal of forces, as can happen in Afghanistan. You recommended to us to establish contact with the Vietnamese, and we received [?] them. But they are conducting themselves dishonestly. We know the Vietnamese better than you; our experience of dealing with them is richer than yours.

Having recommended that we support Sihanouk in the joint statement, Li Peng logically turned to the topic of the summit:

- The Soviet Union and China have a common border-seven thousand kilometers. These are the biggest socialist countries, whose economies can complement each

other. In the normalization of relations, we must do without euphoria, so that it does not cause concern on the part of other countries. The Sino-Soviet summit is the meeting between Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping. Here, there are no problems for Gorbachev-he is the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and, of course, he will be re-elected by April. Deng Xiaoping, as he puts it himself, has moved to the "second line." But he remains the main architect of China's policy, and this title has been approved by a Plenum of the CC CCP [Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party]. The invitation comes from Yang Shangkun. The meeting with Zhao Ziyang will mean the restoration of party-to-party ties. This will just happen by itself, without statements and declarations. And, by our tradition, I will conduct the talks with Gorbachev. Perhaps, Deng Xiaoping himself will say what he would like to talk about. I suppose this will be global political questions. I will speak about bilateral relations. About the date of the visit. There are no problems here. We agree to publicize it. About the border issue. Negotiations have gone on for unacceptably long. There needs to be a breakthrough by the summit. One should solve the unsolved questions of the eastern border. Tomorrow is the culmination of your visit. In Shanghai you will meet with comrade Deng Xiaoping. The year of dragon expires shortly. This is the year when everything is overturned. After February 5, the year of snake will begin-a more moderate year. I hope that...

And E.A. hopes, having decided, for the final time, to take on the doubtful role of the lawyer of the Vietnamese:

- I do not doubt their sincerity, honesty and decency. We do not separate the internal and the external aspects of the settlement but there is one delicate question here: let the Khmers themselves take care of their internal problems. We will stress Sihanouk's role. But a coalition government is a very delicate affair.

And so, Li Peng formulated the Chinese conception of the summit. A joint statement on Kampuchea is inseparably built into it. And for as long as this is so, the work on its text continues in the Chinese "Boeing-737," which takes us to Shanghai. It continues in Shanghai-all night.