

May 16, 1989

**Notepad of Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze, 16 May
1989**

Citation:

"Notepad of Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze, 16 May 1989", May 16, 1989, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Hoover Institution Archive, Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze Papers: Notepad 15.05.1989. Translated by Sergey Radchenko.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/121776>

Summary:

Teimuraz Stepanov-Mamaladze notes on discussions between Gorbachev and Li Peng, covering a wide range of foreign policy issues for the two countries. Li Peng discusses China's relations with the US, Japan, India, and the DPRK. Both sides discuss the demilitarization of the Sino-Soviet border. Concludes with a note on the hunger strike in Tiananmen Square.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

16 May 1989

Talks with Deng Xiaoping.

Li Peng.

Normalization has taken place. The past has been done away with. The path to the future has been opened. However, when closing the past, Deng read a lecture about the territorial conquests of tsarist Russia.

[Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Li Peng]

M.S. [Gorbachev]: The problems of joint adaptation to NTP [unclear, Russian acronym]. The time dictated the appropriate policy to us. Our countries need a favorable external environment in order to settle domestic issues. Our political thinking was born as a response to the most complicated internal and external political circumstances. It dictates the move to a new stage of Soviet-Chinese relations. One needs some agreement about the functioning of this mechanism. I would like to hear from your, com[rade] Li Peng, how you intend to build economic, scientific-technical [and] trade [relations with us]. I think trade will soon freeze at the high point. Trade is trade. This is the lowest form of cooperation.

Li Peng: On the international situation. Express satisfaction [three word fragments]. Modernization in the four spheres will demand a lot of time from us. The new international order can be built upon the five principles of peaceful coexistence, about which we have spoken of for a long time and [in accordance with which we] act. We have cut down the army by one million men. The factors of instability:

- 1) Nuclear weapons
- 2) Ecology
- 3) Poverty

About our relations with the USA, Japan, India.

With the USA, everything comes down to two questions:

[1] Taiwan.

[2] Policy of some circles in the USA of interfering in our internal affairs: on human rights, on the Tibet question. We do not think that capitalism has a patent for human rights.

Japan. Caused the greatest damage to China. But we cannot but take into account its economic power and its aspiration to be a center of political power.

India. There is a lot in common [with China]. Relations are not normal. There have been no contacts between the top leaders in the course of 26 years. Rajiv Gandhi gave us a signal that India will not support the Dalai Lama group.

DPRK. Close, friendly relations, and between leaders-particularly good. How can one work out relations with South Korea? We do not intend to establish political diplomatic relations but trade-economic [relations]-indirect for now-will become direct. Here we are behind you.

[Gorbachev]: I thought it is we who are falling behind.

[Li Peng]: Bilateral [Sino-Soviet] relations. You asked: do we intend to develop them? Our answer is yes! There is no return to the allied relations of the [19]50s. The world has changed, and it will not be profitable either to us, or to you, or to the world. [We have?] mutually helpful economic complexes. Our main resource is the working force. Very highly qualified working cadres have appeared. Advantages have appeared both in the traditional and in the new spheres of industry. I don't know about you, but we have a shortage of capital investment. Does comrade Masliukov have any proposals?

Masliukov: There are proposals. There are no means [money].

Gorbachev: Means are created by people.

Li Peng: The question of the border. The "gap" of the joint communiqué. Let our ministers fill it. We want for the border between our countries to be peaceful and secure. There is no need to station forces in the region of our border. [Only] the minimum level. 3/4 of the forces. You, without having publically declared this, intend to remove that part as well.

[Gorbachev]: I'll give the floor to comrade Masliukov. Perhaps, he will organize a breakthrough for us?

Masl[iukov]: In per capita terms, the Soviet Union is 3.5 times behind the United States. We are conducting a struggle with the bureaucrats. It would not be bad for the Chinese government to also organize such struggle. For the traditions of the Chinese bureaucracy are stronger.

[Gorbachev]: Why? Ours is 70 years old. Their bureaucracy is 40 years old.

Masliukov: I mean the thousand-year old history of the Chinese bureaucracy. In four spheres-energy, transport, metallurgy, and production of consumer goods-[we] could be useful to you. I am concerned by your unwillingness to cooperate in the manufacture of high-tech products.

[Gorbachev]: I want to answer two questions. We are for maximally quick détente in external affairs, up to the complete demilitarization of the Sino-Soviet border. There is a movement from the military to the human. Our people would welcome this. The second breakthrough is the border. I would like to stress our aspiration to close this question as soon as possible. Perhaps we should come up with such formula for the "gap" in the official communiqué: to instruct the ministers [to consider this question], i.e. to raise the level.

Masliukov's counterpart: Does the Soviet Union agree to accept our working force for preparing and processing wood? The second question: are you prepared to accept our experts for the production of soya? The limits of its production in China have been reached.

[Gorbachev]: Our approach: we sign contract on given sites. So that you don't look like sellers of working force, and we-like buyers.

Hunger strike on the Tian'anmen square. "Democracy is our common dream."

Proposal by E.A. Shevardnadze to go and talk to the students.

Call from Sodiko [Stepanov-Mamaladze's wife].