

October 10, 1945
**Record of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador in
China Apollon Petrov and Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and
Wang Ruofei**

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Summary:

Mao discusses negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek and the political and military position of the Chinese Nationalist Party.

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Contents:

- English Translation

Record of conversation between Soviet Ambassador in China Apollon Petrov and Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Wang Ruofei. October 10, 1945.

On October 10, in connection with Mao Zedong's departure for Yan'an, I invited him to dinner. Zhou Enlai and Wang Ruofei were also invited to the dinner. From our side the dinner was attended by: Embassy counselor cde. Miklashevskii, military attache major general [Nikolai] Roshchin and first secretaries cdes. [Nikolai] Fedorenko and [Andrei] Ledovskii. Both before and during the dinner there was a conversation regarding various questions.

To my question how cde. Mao Zedong appraises the results of the talks between Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi] and CCP representatives, Mao replied: "One cannot say that these results are excellent. One cannot say that they are good. But one cannot also not say that they are perfectly bad. The results are a little better compared to the London conference of [foreign] ministers."

Mao Zedong said that the communique on the talks will be published on October 12, having stressed with this that this is already a success for the CCP. "The communique," he noted - "will give us some support in propaganda if the GMD breaks its promises."

Speaking further about the course of the negotiations, Mao Zedong stated that they were conducted in two stages. During the first stage they were conducted normally for the most part but at that point the American Ambassador [Patrick] Hurley interfered and the publication of the communique was disrupted. At that point the second stage begins. It is characterized by the fact that the talks proceeded slowly, with difficulty and tensions. Chiang Kai-shek's representatives pursued the line of dragging out the talks. Seeing such a situation, the Communists who at first maintained a reserved position with regard to the GMD, went on the attack both along political and military lines.

In political terms, Yan'an began sharp criticism of the GMD, using all means of propaganda. In military terms, the CCP resorted to a serious military operation, as a result of which 7 divisions of General Yan Xishan were wiped out. The aim of the aforesaid measures was in putting pressure on the GMD and in forcing it to be more conciliatory in the talks, which was achieved. As a result of the discussion, an agreement was reached on a whole series of questions, but the future will tell how it will be implemented by the GMD. Some questions were left unresolved and they will be the subject of further talks. The talks will continue after his, Mao's, departure for Yan'an. In order to continue the talks, on the part of the CCP, cde. Zhou Enlai will remain in Chongqing.

To my question what the situation is like in Yan'an and whether they know about the course and the results of the talks, Mao Zedong replied that comrades in Yan'an have been informed but not fully and for them the question of the 20 divisions is still not entirely clear. At the same time, this is the most important question, because this is the main concession made by the CCP.

Mao Zedong said that he hopes to persuade [them] and to prove that concessions are necessary and inevitable in the interests of the task at hand. Besides, Mao said, we (the delegation) have another substantial argument, with which we will be able to persuade comrades to accept the decisions that have been reached. It amounts to the following: the concessions on the reorganization of the CCP forces is a formality. We agreed to reduce the number of divisions to 20 but this does not mean that we will cut and weaken our armed forces. Neither in any of the documents nor in the conversations did we specify the composition and the size of our divisions. Therefore, we can form divisions of any composition – they can be 15 thousand, 20 thousand, 30 thousand strong – that is, as big as we need.

To cde. Roshchin's question whether Chiang Kai-shek will agree to this, Mao Zedong replied that a special military commission will be set up [to deal with] these questions, comprised of representatives of the General Staff, the Ministry of the Military, and the 18th Army Group.

To cde. Roshchin's question whether Chiang Kai-shek will provide supplies for the CCP forces,

Mao replied that the CCP will strive for this but it does not count on success.

Then I asked about Chiang Kai-shek's behavior after his return from Xichang. Mao Zedong replied that Chiang Kai-shek's attitude towards him visibly changed for the better: he became even more courteous, soft, conciliatory, more sincere. This time he agreed to publish the communique on the preliminary results of the talks.

Mao Zedong then said that in the conversations that he had with him one-on-one, Chiang Kai-shek declared that "the fate of the country is in our hands" (i.e. in the hands of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong) and [""] if we cannot come to an agreement amongst ourselves, we will be committing a crime before the future generations." In the same conversation Chiang Kai-shek declared that "it would be better if the CCP did not have its own armed forces. In the future it could even take political power in the country, using just political means." Mao Zedong replied that the Communists never rejected the nationalization of the army (if this is what Chiang Kai-shek means when he speaks about the CCP relinquishing armed forces) but on the condition that the CCP were allowed to occupy the sort of position in the political life of China as occupied, for instance, by the Democratic Party in the U.S.A.

Then I asked Mao Zedong what political group does Chiang Kai-shek currently rely on, and which one has the greatest weight in his circle. Mao Zedong replied that on this question one cannot say that Chiang Kai-shek relies on any one political group in external or in internal policy, and this is explained by the fact that for now he still has no deep ideo-political determination or, as we say, the central link, around which the rest would grow. In internal politics Chiang Kai-shek himself does not know what road to take: whether [to take] the road of dictatorship or the road of democratization of the country. In external policy, Chiang Kai-shek does not know whom to orient towards: the USA or the USSR. He does not dare to orient fully towards the USA due to the USSR's international influence. Even less can he fully orient himself towards the USSR. His attitude towards the CCP is determined by the following factors: the strength of the CCP, the USSR's international weight, the situation in Xinjiang, and the presence of the Red Army in Manchuria. In resolving questions of foreign policy, Chiang Kai-shek resorts to the help of the "Political Sciences" group; with this group he solves the questions connected to relations with the USSR. In internal politics and, especially, in the struggle against us, he uses the CC and Whampoa groups. In solving other questions, he uses everyone. Therefore, one cannot conclude that Chiang Kai-shek relies on any one political group.

To my question what sort of policy, in Mao Zedong's opinion, Chiang Kai-shek will pursue in the future, he replied that this policy will have a dual character: on the one hand, on the surface he will strive towards compromise but, on the other hand, he will continue preparations for the military advance against the Communists. This preparation is being undertaken and it can be finished soon, and then Chiang Kai-shek will probably try to dictate his own conditions to the Communists on territorial, military, and political questions. Mao Zedong declared that the Guomintang [Kuomintang] forces will try to force the Communists out of the regions occupied by them and therefore the forces of the CCP are also intensively preparing to counter them on three main directions. Then Mao noted that if Chiang Kai-shek does not implement the agreements that had been reached, then, for considerations of political character, the Communists will have to wipe out several select Guomintang divisions, for example, 7-8 divisions of Hu Zongnan, which the Communists will do.

To cde. Roshchin's question what, concretely, will the Communist forces do if Chiang Kai-shek consistently implements his plan of advance on Manchuria and encircling of the Communist forces with the aim of cutting them off from the roads that lead to Manchuria, cde. Mao Zedong replied that the Communists are not afraid of a military attack on the part of the GMD, that Chiang Kai-shek does not have enough strength to break the Communists and that in case if Chiang Kai-shek undertakes a military attack against the Communist areas, the CCP will handle the Guomintang forces.

Zhou Enlai said in this connection that Chiang Kai-shek's military forces are scattered across

different regions. For example, Hu Zongnan's army is spread across a huge territory. His 16 armies are deployed from Xinjiang to Manchuria. Only the main forces of two armies crossed the Yellow River and are headed in the direction of Taiyuan. The forces of the 11th region are concentrated in two areas – one group of up to 11 divisions is concentrated in the direction of the Beiping-Haikou railroad, and the second - in the region of Suizhou with the task of deployment towards the North. His detachments are also spread around Shandong. He will need time to concentrate these forces into a powerful fist.

To cde. Roshchin's question whether it could happen that Chiang Kai-shek will move his forces under the cover of advance American detachments, which had landed in Tianjin and Beiping, and that the Tianjin-Pukou and Beiping-Hankou railroads become the main directions of the movement of the Guomindang forces, Mao Zedong replied that this would be an open interference by the USA in China's internal affairs and this is the only thing that the CCP is worried about. Mao Zedong immediately turned to those present with the question: will the Americans openly attack the CCP forces?

I and cde. Roshchin replied that for now it is difficult to say that the Americans would openly interfere in China's affairs, as it is not advantageous for them due to considerations of international character. They will only lose from this.

After this, Mao Zedong asked how one should act in case if the American forces begin to land in the territory occupied by the Communists.

I replied that in this case one should try to settle the situation by peaceful means and by all means avoid military skirmishes with the Americans. Com[rade] Roshchin added that at the same time one should report such facts in the press and to conduct propaganda against open interference by the Americans in Chinese affairs.

To my question whether it was possible to transfer the Guomindang forces to Manchuria, Mao Zedong replied that this undertaking by Chiang Kai-shek will face many difficulties, the main of which is the presence of Communist forces in Northern China. The Guomindang forces can come into Manchuria only in case Chiang Kai-shek agrees with the CCP on all unresolved questions. Otherwise, the CCP will not allow the Guomindang forces into the North.

To cde. Roshchin's question when, in Mao Zedong's opinion, Chiang Kai-shek will be able to complete the preparation of his forces for putting pressure on the Communists, he replied that by their estimates, the preparation will be finished by mid-November and that in November one may expect the main pressure from Chiang Kai-shek. By this time, Mao Zedong added, we will also have finished our preparation.

To my question how in general the Guomindang side behaved during the talks, Mao Zedong replied that the GMD representatives were not prepared for the talks. They did not have their own drafts, prepared ahead of time, and so the initiative and the leading role belonged to the Communists, who introduced thought-through and developed proposals. The role of the Guomindangists was in attempting to do their best to reject the CCP proposals. An active role was played by the American Ambassador [Patrick] Hurley, who was Chiang Kai-shek's constant consultant.

Ambassador of the USSR in China A[pollon] Petrov