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**Showcasing the Chinese Version of Moderni-tea in Africa:
Tea Plantations and PRC Economic Aid to Guinea and Mali
during the 1960s**

By Gregg Brazinsky, July 2016



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**Showcasing the Chinese Version of Modern-tea in Africa:
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Gregg Brazinsky

Introduction

On 6 April 1962, a group of tea specialists departed Beijing for Guinea, a country in western Africa that had gained its independence from France just four years earlier. The group would spend 77 days in Macenta, a prefecture in the southeastern part of the country, surrounded by rain forests and known for its moist, humid climate. The region's long rainy seasons lasted for up to ten months per year. Lizards, snakes, and army ants could readily be seen slithering and crawling across its dirt roads and through its surrounding forests. It was not the most hospitable environment for newcomers unfamiliar with the terrain, but it was an ideal venue for cultivating tea, a crop which requires warm temperatures and moist air. The ultimate goal of the Chinese visitors was to set up a sprawling new tea plantation and processing plant that would occupy 60 hectares (150 acres). Plans called for Chinese technicians to supervise the creation of this new facility and train Guineans in the skills needed to run it before returning home and turning the project over to the host country.¹ If successful, the enterprise would constitute a major step in moving Guinea toward self-sufficiency in tea production—a goal it never achieved under French colonialism.

Through helping Guinea to produce its own tea, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was seeking not only to enable the country to achieve more genuine economic independence, but also to showcase the Chinese style of development projects. The establishment of a viable indigenous enterprise with Chinese help was intended to demonstrate the superiority of Beijing's approach to aid in Africa.

This kind of showcasing was a common feature of economic aid programs carried out by both the United States and its rivals during the Cold War. Its purpose was most often to create a small enclave of progress that could inspire faith in the particular vision of development being espoused. The United States most often employed this kind of showcasing to illustrate how technological prowess, market reform, and capitalist modes of distribution and production could

¹ For a basic summary of this project see "Work Report of the Tea Specialist Group Aiding Guinea," September 1962, PRC FMA 108-00805-03, accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121918>.

raise living standards and bring prosperity to the poorer nations of the globe.² If a showcase succeeded, then other peoples in newly independent, preindustrial countries would seek to emulate it thereby further expanding American influence.

Beijing's version of showcasing was of a somewhat different tenor than Washington's. The PRC could never compete with the United States when it came to showering African countries with financial largesse or introducing the most sophisticated technologies. It therefore tried to pedal an alternative version of modernity and development—one based on self-sufficiency and South-South cooperation. The Chinese argued that wealthier nations like the United States or the Soviet Union could never understand the needs of Africa the way another Afro-Asian country with its own history of anti-colonial struggle like the PRC could. They introduced aid projects that would yield immediate results and promote economic autonomy rather than dependence on Western technology. These projects sought to create a demonstration effect not through transferring expensive new equipment and spending large amounts of capital but through the comportment of Chinese technicians and aid workers who were expected to adapt to local living conditions and build sincere friendships with their colleagues in the host country. Ultimately this would insure that the newly independent African nations like Guinea forged stronger ties with China than with the United States or the Soviet Union.

This paper focuses on China's development of two tea plantations in Guinea and Mali during the 1960s. Before 1968, Conakry and Bamako were the first and third largest recipients of Chinese economic assistance in Africa respectively and both played important roles in China's program of aid to Afro-Asian countries.³ Yet, with the exception of Jeremy Friedman's recent work focusing on Sino-Soviet competition in the Third World, Chinese aid to these two countries has received little attention from scholars.⁴ Although a small number of studies in English about Chinese assistance to Africa during the 1960s and 1970s have appeared in recent years, these have mostly focused on Chinese aid to Tanzania and East Africa.⁵ Older studies of Sino-African

² On the role of this kind of showcasing in American development policy see Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 161.

³ "Intelligence Memorandum: Chinese Communist Aid to Sub-Saharan Africa," September 1968, Declassified Documents Reference Service (hereafter DDRS).

⁴ Jeremy Friedman, "Free at Last, Now What: The Soviet and Chinese Attempts to Offer a Road-map for the Post-Colonial World," *Modern China Studies* 22, no. 1 (2015). Friedman looks at Sino-Soviet economic competition in the Third World broadly but also sees Guinea and Mali as important venues of competition. The article does not, however, devote a lot of attention to specific Chinese projects.

⁵ Jamie Monson, *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Priya Lal, "Maoism in Tanzania: Material Connections

relations sometimes provide the basic details of Chinese assistance, but they were written long before a significant number of archival materials became available in China and are therefore limited in their depth.⁶ Several brief Chinese language articles on Beijing's aid to Guinea and Mali have also appeared in the last few years but these provide fairly cursory summaries and do not use the new materials from the PRC Foreign Ministry Archive (PRC FMA) which this paper is largely based upon.⁷

This essay uses China's tea plantation projects in Guinea and Mali to open a broader window on to the nature and objectives of Beijing's assistance to these countries. It argues that the PRC managed all aspects of these projects to assure that they embodied the Chinese vision of Sino-African economic cooperation and conveyed the virtues of China's approach to aid. Although these projects were small, the dreams that inspired them were grand. Analyzing their implementation sheds light on China's understanding of its global role and its special relationship to other Afro-Asian peoples. It is also important to remember that the Cold War was waged not only through the actions of high-ranking statesmen and large-scale interventions but also through much smaller efforts to transform local conditions and everyday life. Looking at these relatively small-scale Chinese aid projects offers a revealing glimpse of how Cold War competition was localized in what many considered remote and distant parts of the periphery. And it reminds us that the Cold War in the Third World was not simply a bipolar struggle, but a complex multilateral one in which multiple paths to modernity were opened and explored.

Guinea, Mali, and Cold War Rivalries

The end of French colonialism in Guinea and Mali brought both celebration and anxiety. On the one hand, political independence had been achieved and new nationalist leaders— Sékou Touré in Guinea and Modibo Keita in Mali—had the opportunity to break with the past and govern in accordance with their own principles. At the same time, both struggled with serious economic hardships after gaining independence. Touré had infuriated Guinea's former colonial

and Shared Imaginaries,” in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁶ See for instance Bruce D. Larkin, *China and Africa, 1949-1970: The Foreign Policy of the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Alaba Ogunswano, *China's Policy in Africa 1958-1971* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, reprint edition).

⁷ Li Hongxi, “20 shiji 60 niandaichu Zhongguo dui Fei yanzhu shulun: yi Jineiya wei li” (“A Study of Chinese Aid to Africa during the early 1960s with Guinea as an Example”), *Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi geren keti chengguoji* (2013): 378-390; Hong Hui, “20 shiji liuqishi niandai Guangdong sheng dui Feizhou guojia de yanzhu” (“Guangdong Province's Aid to Africa during the 1960s and 1970s”), *Dangdai Zhongguo shi yanjiu* 20, no. 3 (March 2013): 95-103.

master when he encouraged his countrymen to reject a French offer to join in a new union under which Conakry would have ceded control over its foreign policy to Paris in exchange for substantial financial aid. A vengeful Charles de Gaulle had then swiftly withdrawn all French personnel from the country and begun pressuring France's allies not to recognize or aid Guinea as a punishment for spurning his offer.⁸ The situation in Mali was even more dismal. A country with a population of 4 million and a literacy rate of only three-percent, Mali had virtually no skilled manpower, infrastructure or natural resources. It's major cash crop, peanuts, had to be transported over difficult terrain because the railroad that once connected landlocked Mali to the African coast via Senegal had fallen into disrepair.⁹ Like Touré, the new Malian president Modibo Keita placed a higher priority on achieving greater autonomy and independence than on maintaining good relations with the metropole. In 1960, he withdrew Mali from the French Community established by de Gaulle and, in 1962, he abandoned the Franc Zone, an arrangement in which former African colonies had used a common currency guaranteed by the French treasury. Yet Keita's policies discouraged foreign investment and within a short period of time, Mali's foreign debt began to skyrocket and production stagnated.¹⁰

The first place that Guinea and Mali turned to for help was the Soviet Union. Both leaders espoused "African socialism," by which they meant a new kind of socialism that drew on Africa's communal traditions.¹¹ With France and many of its allies hostile toward their agenda, Touré and Keita initially viewed Moscow as their most likely potential benefactor. Moscow initially succeeded at establishing a significant presence in both countries. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev decided to send technicians and material support to Guinea in 1960 because he considered it a "duty" to help an African country struggling to consolidate its independence.¹² The Soviets felt a similar obligation toward Mali. In early 1962 Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan visited Bamako and signed an aid agreement designed to assist in the implementation

⁸ Robert R. Rakove, *Kennedy, Johnson, and the Nonaligned World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 18-19.

⁹ National Intelligence Estimate Number 60-62, "Guinea and Mali as Exemplars of African Nationalism," July 1962, DDRS.

¹⁰ The literature on this is a bit dated but still contains accurate basic information. See David Leith Crum, "Mali and the U.M.O.A.: A Case Study of Economic Integration," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 22, no. 3, (September 1984): 469-486 (see especially 472-473); John N. Hazard, "Marxian Socialism in Africa: The Case of Mali," *Comparative Politics* 2, no. 1 (October, 1969): 1-15.

¹¹ Patrick Manning, *Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa, 1890-1995* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 152-53.

¹² Sergei Khrushchev ed., *The Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev, Vol. 3: Statesman* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 877-78.

of Mali's recently developed five-year plan. After the visit, the Soviets were highly optimistic that Mali would successfully follow the socialist model of development.¹³

Moscow's initial optimism about its prospects in West Africa proved unfounded. It did not take long before Touré and Keïta started to become disillusioned with the Soviets. Touré publicly announced his dissatisfaction with Moscow's aid programs in August 1961 after several of his ministers accused the Soviets of supplying inferior equipment and evincing an air of superiority in their interactions with locals. Then, in December, Touré expelled the Russian ambassador, Daniel Solod, on charges that he had helped to incite an anti-government protest.¹⁴ Moscow's falling out with Bamako was not as damaging or abrupt, but Keïta nevertheless became highly critical of Soviet aid in a short period of time. Within a year of Mikoyan's visit, the Malian president convened a meeting of socialist diplomats and complained about the high prices being asked for equipment.¹⁵ Although Soviet efforts to gain influence in West Africa were hardly at an end, Moscow's relative decline in the eyes of both Guineans and Malians created opportunities for other aid donors to step in and gain prestige through more successfully implementing their programs.

By the late 1950s, ideological and political relations between the PRC and the Soviet Union had begun to deteriorate and the two were already competing discreetly in Afro-Asian countries even if they did not always attack each other directly. Beijing kept close track of Soviet assistance to Guinea and Mali and was not disappointed that Moscow was having difficulty. Chinese officials viewed Moscow's setbacks in Guinea and Mali as emblematic of the fact that the Soviets could not understand and sympathize with Afro-Asian peoples in the same way that the PRC could. One Chinese official believed these failures resulted from the Soviet Union's "great power chauvinism, unscrupulousness, and double-faced saying without doing." This, according to the official, "had left a bad impression on every group in Malian society." President Keïta had complained openly that when Soviet technicians came to Mali they "want refrigerators, air conditioners and cars...you can see the vestiges of colonialism on them."

¹³ Friedman, "Free at Last, Now What," 284.

¹⁴ On Soviet policy toward the region and its limitations see Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 183-190, 220-226; Friedman, "Free at Last, Now What," 283.

¹⁵ Friedman, "Free at Last, Now What," 284.

Because of this, “Soviet prestige had already begun to decline and the people’s faith in the Soviets had been shattered.”¹⁶

In the meantime, the PRC had worked assiduously to establish its own position in Guinea and Mali. In May 1959, before Beijing and Conakry had even established official relations, the Chinese government supplied Guinea with 5,000 tons of rice to help alleviate food shortages after Touré severed ties with France. In 1960, the Guinean ambassador to the PRC requested more food aid and Beijing responded by providing an additional 10 million tons of rice despite the fact that China itself faced serious food shortages due to the failures of the Great Leap Forward.¹⁷ Touré offered strong public praise for China’s assistance, explaining that the French had tried to “starve us” but Beijing had provided rice. “In the future we don’t have to fear the French imperialists because we have China,” he explained.¹⁸ When the Guinean president visited the PRC in September 1960, he became the first African head of state to do so and made his country the first in Africa to sign an agreement on technical assistance and cooperation in China.¹⁹

Beijing was equally efficient at strengthening its presence in Mali. The two countries established relations soon after Mali gained its independence in 1960 and their leaders showed a great deal of mutual sympathy. Mali’s delegation to the 1961 Non-Aligned Conference in Belgrade expressed views that were highly supportive of the PRC and Zhou Enlai later expressed his gratitude for this.²⁰ Beijing decided to make Mali one of the focal points of its assistance programs and signed an “Economic and Technical Cooperation Treaty” with Bamako in September 1961. Plans were drawn up to send Chinese specialists in irrigation and rice planting among other areas.²¹

While China’s anti-imperialism, revolutionary enthusiasm and status as an Afro-Asian nation enabled it to swiftly establish a rapport with Guinea and Mali, these advantages by no means eliminated competition. Washington began seeking to engage Conakry and Bamako at almost exactly the same time that Beijing was getting its aid programs in West Africa off the

¹⁶ “1962 nian Mali jingji xingshi” (“Mali’s Economic Situation in 1962”), PRC FMA 108-00366-01.

¹⁷ Li, “20 shiji 60 niandaichu Zhongguo dui Fei yuanzhu shulun: yi Jineiye wei li,” 382.

¹⁸ Cited in Li, “20 shiji 60 niandaichu Zhongguo dui Fei yuanzhu shulun: yi Jineiye wei li,” 383.

¹⁹ Li, “20 shiji 60 niandaichu Zhongguo dui Fei yuanzhu shulun: yi Jineiye wei li,” 382.

²⁰ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi ed., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976* (Chronology of Zhou Enlai], vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1997), 433.

²¹ Meng Qingtao, “Zhongguo yuanzhu Feizhou yiwang” (“Recollections of Chinese Aid to Africa”), *Dangan chunqiu* (January 2012): 8-9.

ground. Although the Eisenhower administration had initially been wary of African independence movements, it slowly changed its policy after 1958 and invited Touré to the White House in 1959.²² The Kennedy administration was determined to expand significantly on these efforts. The new president was convinced that the United States could attract left leaning but formally neutral countries like Guinea and Mali if it showed sympathies for their aspirations. Kennedy's strategy was to establish personal rapport with the new generation of African leaders and offer limited economic aid to build goodwill toward the United States. During his first year in office, the president held two meetings with high-ranking Malian officials, one with Minister of State Jean-Marie Kone in July 1961 and one with President Modibo Keita in September.²³ In the course of these visits, Washington promised both leaders that economic aid and technical assistance programs would be forthcoming.²⁴ Once Touré made it clear that he was distancing himself from the Soviets, he too received an invitation to return to Washington and meet with Kennedy.²⁵

Beijing saw America's rejuvenated interest in West Africa as worrisome. Washington's growing involvement made the PRC feel a greater urgency to differentiate itself from its rivals in Africa. The Foreign Ministry expressed some of these anxieties in a report on the Kennedy administration's diplomacy toward Mali. American imperialists, it explained, "feigned benevolence but employed insidious two-faced methods that were crafty and covert." Although U.S. aid commitments to Mali were not large Washington was "throwing out a long line to catch a big fish" or, in other words, adopting a patient long-term strategy with the hope that it would reap a big reward. Under its strategy of "awarding small favors" the United States was "giving a few commodities as gifts and using them as bribes to curry favor." Unfortunately, the report continued, Malians "did not clearly recognize the danger" of American imperialism and "lacked vigilance." Instead, they "looked forward to the United States and West Germany giving them

²² Fore a record of Touré's meeting with Eisenhower see "Memorandum of Conversation," 27 October 1959, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Africa, Volume XIV* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1992), 698-702.

²³ For the meeting with Kone see "Call by Jean Marie Kone, Minister of State of the Republic of Mali, on the President," 12 July 1961, DDRS; "Briefing Memorandum on Mali" enclosed in "Memorandum for McGeorge Bundy," 7 July 1961, DDRS.

²⁴ "Call by Jean Marie Kone, Minister of State of the Republic of Mali, on the President," 12 July 1961, DDRS; "Briefing Memorandum on Mali" enclosed in "Memorandum for McGeorge Bundy," 7 July 1961, DDRS.

²⁵ On Touré's visit and Kennedy's efforts to court Guinea more generally see Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 67-69.

more aid and their fantasy about American imperialism was especially great.” Yet Mali’s receptivity to receiving aid from China’s rivals by no means meant that the PRC should abandon its efforts. Quite to the contrary, Malians still needed China’s “unselfish aid” which would help Mali “to solve its difficulties and set up a model that the Malian government can show to the public as an example to follow.”²⁶ It would be up to the PRC to demonstrate that its aid truly was more unselfish and more likely to bring about the results that Africans sought.

The Chinese Approach to Aid

Seeking to distinguish itself from its Great Power rivals and demonstrate the distinctive virtues of Sino-African cooperation, Beijing laid out a blueprint for Chinese aid projects in Africa that would serve as a guide for the tea plantations it built in Guinea and Mali. Chinese officials did not advocate any overall approach to economic development or call for African states to emulate the Chinese experience. They wanted instead to showcase the PRC’s commitment to assisting newly independent countries and encourage autonomy. Rather than endorsing the socialist or capitalist route to modernity, China’s aid projects promoted their own set of values and ideals. These included: self-sufficiency, hard work, anti-imperialism, and mutual cooperation among Afro-Asian peoples. The Chinese narrative of global modernity emphasized improving people’s livelihoods through greater egalitarianism and the conquest of imperialism rather than technological advancement or the growth of markets.

Zhou Enlai later codified the Chinese approach when he made his famous tour of ten African countries in 1963-1964. During the premier’s stop in Ghana in January 1964, he announced his Eight Principles of Economic and Technical Aid, which were targeted primarily at African countries. The Eight Principles were also formally written into the joint communiqué that Zhou signed with Malian President Modibo Keita several weeks later.²⁷ Taken as a whole, the principles created a model for Chinese aid that could have both a political and economic impact. Each of the principles specified different conditions and terms for Chinese economic assistance, stipulating that Beijing’s aid projects and the personnel involved in them would be different from those of its rivals.

²⁶ “1962nian Mali jingji xingshi” (“Mali’s Economic Situation in 1962”), PRC FMA 108-00366-01 .

²⁷ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi ed., *Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxuan* (Selected Works of Zhou Enlai on Diplomacy) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2000), 388-389, accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121560>.

Zhou's first principle was that Chinese aid would be based on "equal and mutual benefits." It should not be seen "simply as a one-sided grant but as something mutual." Second, Zhou promised that in awarding aid, the PRC would "strictly respect the sovereignty of the receiving country and would not attach any conditions or request any special privileges." The third principle stipulated that Chinese aid would be awarded in the form of interest free loans with a flexible time period for repayment. The purpose of such aid, the premier explained in the fourth principle, would not be to encourage dependence on China but rather to help recipient countries "embark on the road toward self-reliance and independent economic development." After devoting the fifth, sixth and seventh principles to describing the nature and form that Chinese development programs would take, the premier pledged in the eighth principle that experts sent by the PRC to help administer aid projects would have the same living standards as those of the recipient country. They would not make any special requests or enjoy special privileges.²⁸

These principles were also an argument in favor of greater Sino-African alignment. The premier's insistence that aid should be mutually beneficial reminded Africans that China itself was not a rich country but a victim of Western colonialism with which they waged a shared struggle to overcome the economic legacy of imperialism. Zhou's promise to respect the sovereignty of recipient countries was a veiled attack on the United States and the Soviet Union, whose aid programs, CCP officials always charged, were guided by self-interest. By stressing "self-reliance" and "independent economic development," the Chinese premier not only touched on what was still a very raw nerve for African countries but also sought to promote a system of economic exchange that could exclude the Great Powers. Finally, by insisting that Chinese technical experts adapt to local living standards, PRC aid projects would aspire to create a highly visible symbol of China's consanguinity with African nations.

Beijing believed this approach could best be implemented through aiding relatively small-scale projects that enabled recipient nations to become independent in the production of specific commodities. The PRC helped to build matchstick factories, textile mills, sugar refineries, and other basic manufacturing facilities in eight different Sub-Saharan African

²⁸ Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi ed., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2, 611-612.

countries during the 1960s.²⁹ In doing so, it aspired not to introduce the most cutting edge new technologies but to help Africans to make modest improvements in their living standards. Through setting up these turn-key projects and, after a brief period of time, turning over their management to Africans, the PRC sought to establish an alternative model of economic aid that led to greater autonomy rather than—as Beijing claimed was the case with Soviet and American aid programs in Africa—greater dependence.

Tea plantations and processing plants figured prominently among the aid projects that the PRC offered. This may well have reflected China's own unique relationship with both the plant and the beverage it was used to make. For centuries, China dominated global tea production. According to some accounts, the Chinese first began using tea for medicinal purposes almost five millennia ago. The tea plant itself was first discovered in China and the Chinese were the first to drink the beverage. It was also the Chinese who developed the techniques for hand manufacturing brick tea, which made trade and distribution possible. At the beginning nineteenth century, China still accounted for 96percent of global tea exports. It was only during the 1880s and 1890s that the Europeans were able to break up this near monopoly by introducing tea cultivation in their colonies.³⁰ Chinese tea production suffered setbacks during the early twentieth century as economic chaos that enveloped the country due to Japanese imperialism and civil war. But the CCP began seeking to revitalize tea production during the early 1960s and its efforts proved successful. By 1989, China had just about pulled even with India (which it would eventually surpass) to once again become the world's leading tea producer.³¹ As the PRC reestablished its position as a global tea producer, it naturally sought venues where it could underscore its successes in the area. Through setting up tea plantations in distant African countries, the PRC hoped to achieve recognition for both its longstanding expertise with the crop and its willingness to mentor other newly independent nations. These projects were therefore, from the outset, infused with a deep cultural and historical meaning that Chinese technicians aimed to reinforce when they arrived in Africa.

Cultivating Moderni-tea in Guinea and Mali

²⁹ "Intelligence Memorandum: The New Look in Chinese Communist Aid to Sub-Saharan Africa," September, 1968, DDRS.

³⁰ Dan M. Etherington and Keith Foster, *Green Gold: The Political Economy of China's Post-1949 Tea Industry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 22-25.

³¹ Etherington and Foster, *Green Gold*, 230-32.

Beijing first began to draw up concrete plans for setting up tea plantations in Guinea and Mali in 1962. The PRC had by then already agreed to fund these projects alongside others in the agricultural sector through providing interest free loans that could be used to buy equipment and pay for the salaries of Chinese specialists.³² The documentary record of these projects is far from complete. Many of the details about the budgeting, implementation, and overall success of many Chinese ventures cannot be known from available sources. Nonetheless, several official reports written by the PRC embassies in Bamako and Conakry as well as narrative summaries written by the leaders of Chinese tea specialist groups were among the documents declassified in 2009 by the PRC Foreign Ministry. Even if some details are missing, these reports reveal much about how the new tea plantations fit into China's overarching plans for African development and Sino-African economic cooperation. What becomes clear above all is that these tea plantations were about far more than simply helping Africans to produce a needed beverage. They were imbued with dreams of a new Africa whose people, leaders, and landscape were transformed to fit China's vision of post-colonial modernity. It was a vision in which independence, mutual benefit, and Afro-Asian solidarity trumped the transfer of technology and capital. The Chinese strove to showcase this vision through paying careful attention to the planning, implementation, and potential impact of these aid projects.

These efforts began in April 1962 when a survey team comprised of several tea specialists arrived in Guinea to assess the possibilities for helping the country set up its own tea plantations. The team labored intensively not only to complete its work but also to make the underlying vision of Sino-African cooperation a reality. The specialists first surveyed Sereidou, a sub-prefecture of Macenta where the French had cultivated a limited amount of tea during the colonial period. They spent roughly half of their time in Sereidou, assessing whether this would be a good region for the construction of a tea processing plant and conducting a small-scale training program in tea cultivation for local farmers. The feasibility of growing tea on a wider scale in Sereidou proved dubious because it was a mountainous area with shallow soils and few nearby villages to draw manpower from. The survey team managed to find a more suitable plot of land with richer soil, more reliable irrigation, and an electricity supply in close proximity to the town of Macenta (it was the name of both town and prefecture). Having found a more ideal location, the team's leader drew up a preliminary plan that envisaged gradual increases in

³² CIA, "Chinese Communist Activities in Africa," 30 April 1965, DDRS.

planting and production over a span of seven years as well as the construction of a new tea processing plant in 1965.³³ After the team briefed Guinea's Minister of Rural Economy on its findings, the Chinese embassy in Conakry wrote the Foreign Ministry recommending that the proposed schedule be followed and suggesting that two tea specialists and one interpreter be dispatched from the PRC to Guinea in March 1963.³⁴

Throughout their time in Guinea, members of the survey team paid close mind to their personal relations with Guineans. They seemed ever cognizant of the fact that they were part of a larger effort to showcase China's uniqueness as an aid donor and sympathy for newly independent peoples. This was reflected in the hands on, locally rooted approach that informed the team's work in training its Guineans counterparts. According to the report, techniques were imparted "in accordance with local circumstances." In Sereidou, the tea specialists set up a "skills learning group" with eight to ten members, the majority of whom were illiterate. To address this problem the specialists combined demonstration with lecturing while instructing the group in the techniques of seedling cultivation, tea growing, and tea production. With the introduction of Chinese techniques, the survival rate of cuttings (tea leaves that are replanted and grown into tress) increased from 18 percent to 70 percent. Members of the skills learning group also studied processing techniques that enabled them improve the quality of the tea they produced.³⁵

The process had not been without frustrations and the survey team warned that if more specialists were dispatched such frustrations would continue. Nonetheless, the team encouraged its successors to follow its model and "exercise patience and take the initiative." According to the report, Guinean officials "tended to forget things and were quick to lose their tempers." Moreover, when meetings were scheduled the Guineans had tended to arrive half and hour to an hour late. Nonetheless, Chinese officials were careful not to blame the Guineans for these problems, which they believed "arose under long-term imperial rule." In order to build good relations between China and Guinea, the report emphasized, "We should maintain a friendly and forgiving attitude toward them [Guineans], be proactive and tolerant in our work and not be impatient."³⁶ There was, of course, a somewhat ironic hint of condescension in how the report

³³ ["Work Report of the Tea Specialist Group Aiding Guinea," PRC FMA 108-00805-03.](#)

³⁴ Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Guinea, "Report on the Work Situation of the Tea Specialists Group in Guinea," 17 August 1962, PRC FMA 108-00805-03, accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121915>.

³⁵ ["Work Report of the Tea Specialist Group Aiding Guinea," PRC FMA 108-00805-03.](#)

³⁶ ["Work Report of the Tea Specialist Group Aiding Guinea," PRC FMA 108-00805-03.](#)

characterized Guineans; they were seen as immature and in need of China's guidance. The Chinese were nonetheless sincere in their desire to embody the ideals of Afro-Asian solidarity and mutually beneficial aid in their daily activities.

While the survey team strove to be generous, it also made clear that aid to Guinea's fledgling tea manufacturing enterprise was not only about Chinese helping Guineans but also about Guineans helping themselves. The Chinese emphasis on "self-help" here was, of course, not entirely dissimilar to that of their American rivals, who also stressed that aid recipients must actively contribute to the success of development programs. But while Washington's definition of self-help generally entailed internal reform and financial restructuring measures that facilitated participation in a liberal economic regime, China's definition of the term emphasized the development of autonomous capacities for production and management that could reduce dependence on former colonizers. The approach was flavored by a Maoist faith in man's capacity to overcome adversity through hard work, self-reliance, and revolutionary zeal.

The survey team emphasized the importance of "self-help" during its discussions with officials in Conakry. Initially Guinea's Minister of Rural Economy, Sory Barry, requested that the Chinese assume responsibility for nearly all aspects of establishing the new tea plantation and processing facilities. Citing his country's lack of experience at growing tea on its own, he requested that China "single-handedly take charge of the whole process" of setting up the new tea plantation. The Chinese, however, insisted that Conakry "take responsibility for the organization and leadership of the project."³⁷ Beijing would send technicians, tools, seeds, and other supplies but the Guinean government would have to invest in the labor needed to clear the land and build accommodations for employees.³⁸ Beijing hoped that through emphasizing shared responsibility, it would establish economic relations with Conakry that were starkly different than those imposed by French colonialists in earlier decades. Rather than becoming dependent on the metropole, Guineans would embrace a more self-reliant mentality and gain the capacity to organize the production of a key commodity for themselves. They would be able to exchange goods freely and equally with other Afro-Asian countries rather than skew their economic development toward the interests of the United States or its imperialist allies.

³⁷ ["Work Report of the Tea Specialist Group Aiding Guinea," PRC FMA 108-00805-03.](#) The quotation is from the ambassador's summary.

³⁸ ["Work Report of the Tea Specialist Group Aiding Guinea," PRC FMA 108-00805-03.](#)

When the survey team finished its work in Guinea, it was convinced that Chinese aid in general and a tea plantation in particular could have a significant impact. It reported favorably on the prospects for setting up the project in Macenta because of the project's potential demonstration effect both in Guinea and in other newly independent African countries. The team claimed that Guineans had an "urgent need to develop their tea industry" and that the project would be "low in cost but significant in influence at present."³⁹ This was precisely the type of aid project the Chinese believed they needed to implement. It fulfilled what they considered a critical African need, could bear immediate fruits, and could be done at a fraction of the cost of the aid projects being carried out by China's major rivals.

As plans were being finalized for the construction of a tea processing plant in Guinea, another team of Chinese aid technicians was already moving into Mali with similar objectives. Beijing had first agreed to dispatch a tea specialist to Mali as part of a team of seven agricultural experts when it signed the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement with Bamako in September 1961.⁴⁰ The specialists deemed Sikasso, a region located in Mali's southernmost corner known for its hot climate and heavy summer rains, the most opportune site for cultivating and processing tea. Their first step was organizing a training course on tea cultivation techniques and field management for Malian personnel. In 1962, Mali's Ministry of Rural Development recruited students from a range of areas and backgrounds for the course. They included agricultural technicians and educated rural youth with different knowledge and skill levels. While the initial plans were for six to eight week courses, the timeframe was eventually expanded to make sure that students received proper training regardless of their experience and education.⁴¹

Through launching this training course, Chinese specialists tried to steer Malians on the path toward self-sufficiency while showcasing the virtues of China's unselfish aid. Instructional techniques bore significant resemblance to those used in Guinea, emphasizing a "combination of theory and practice" with students both attending lectures and doing "hands-on work." The Chinese specialists saw "mixing lectures with practice and patiently helping" Malians as the best

³⁹ ["Work Report of the Tea Specialist Group Aiding Guinea," PRC FMA 108-00805-03.](#)

⁴⁰ Cable from the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries to Vice Premier Li Fuchun, "Regarding Instructions for the Exchange of Notes on the Chinese Agricultural Experts Going to Mali," 24 January 1962, PRC FMA108-00800-03, accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121653>.

⁴¹ "Work Summary for Training Malian Agricultural Personnel related to Tea," July 1963, PRC FMA 108-00888-04, accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121661>.

way to “cultivate their interest in learning, and their passionate interest in the profession.” In the process of instruction, the Chinese tried to adhere to “a consistent spirit of setting an example [as the best way] to motivate students.” The specialists made a deliberate show of laboring side-by-side in the fields with their trainees in order to serve as examples of the hard work that China sought to promote while fostering a sense of unity between Africans and Chinese.⁴²

The specialists explicitly connected the success of small-scale projects to larger geopolitical objectives. They saw assisting Mali with its fledgling efforts to cultivate and process tea as an opportunity to implement some of the central directives of Chinese economic aid policy. The guidelines by which the specialists strove to conduct the training called for efforts to: “Strongly support the Government of Mali’s elimination of imperialist economic forces, support them [Maliens in] developing their own technical skills, develop the agricultural economy, [and] promote friendship between China and Mali.”⁴³ As such, the training course fell in line with broader Chinese efforts to reduce foreign influence in Africa while deepening its own ties to the continent.

Before long the Chinese could boast that their training program was producing visible results. The specialists reported that by July 1963 there was already one trainee effectively managing a 70 hectare (173 acres) tea plantation and another who had succeeded at cutting and splicing over 12,000 seedlings. A group of trainees in Kita, a province in southwestern Mali, were even planning and designing a new tea plantation from scratch. Moreover, Malians seemed to be gaining greater confidence in their ability to cultivate tea independently. “Now we can cultivate tea on our own,” Mali’s Director of New Crops boasted upon seeing the work done by Chinese trainees in Kita.⁴⁴ After supporting the training program, Beijing aided in the construction of the Farako Tea Factory, which was named after a nearby river and opened officially in 1973.⁴⁵

Chinese tea projects in Guinea and Mali were implemented on slightly different terrain but shared a similar purpose. Economically, they promoted self-reliance by enabling the two countries to produce a new commodity on their own and reduce their reliance on outside powers. At the same time, these projects aimed to showcase the virtues of the PRC’s approach to aid

⁴² [“Work Summary for Training Malian Agricultural Personnel related to Tea.” PRC FMA 108-00888-04.](#)

⁴³ [“Work Summary for Training Malian Agricultural Personnel related to Tea.” PRC FMA 108-00888-04.](#)

⁴⁴ [“Work Summary for Training Malian Agricultural Personnel related to Tea.” PRC FMA 108-00888-04.](#)

⁴⁵ Deborah Brautigam, *Will Africa Feed China?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 38.

through demanding generosity and patience from Chinese technicians working on the ground in Africa. Their geostrategic purpose was to strengthen Sino-African friendship and encourage Afro-Asian resistance to Great Power hegemony. The key question that remained to be answered was to what extent these relatively modest aid projects could actually fulfill this ambitious agenda.

Reading the Tea Leaves

Beijing recognized that if it truly wanted to prevail in Africa, its aid programs needed to succeed at multiple levels. They needed to convey that China was not self-seeking like the other Great Powers and help Africans to thrive in areas where they were faltering. Chinese and American sources shed some light on both the relative popularity of these projects and their enduring impact. They make clear that the tea processing plants and other Chinese aid projects in Africa had their share of both triumphs and limitations.

When the tea specialists reported on their activities, they generally depicted Guineans and Malians as enthusiastic participants who eagerly embraced the Chinese agenda. Such reporting needs, of course, to be read with some measure of caution. The specialists had every reason to try to convince their superiors in the CCP that they had been highly successful in their tasks. At the same time, it is not unreasonable to assume that these reports contained some kernel of truth. Given the combination of poverty and anti-colonial sentiment that characterized these two countries it is easy to see why China's approach might have given their peoples genuine encouragement.

In both Guinea and Mali, African trainees and officials drew explicit comparisons between the Chinese and the French colonialists that cast the PRC in a highly favorable light. "The white people only talked about some theories and never lifted a finger. They called us stupid when we did not understand what they said," the specialists were reportedly told in Guinea. By contrast, "The Chinese experts showed [a] good attitude and they personally did the work and answered all the questions that we had, and we learned from them."⁴⁶ In Mali, trainees voiced similarly enthusiastic sentiments about both China and the work done by the technicians. Two Malians who had studied with the Chinese technicians explained, "The Frenchmen did not give us skills but used us as unskilled laborers... In our current studies [with the] Chinese experts [our teachers] are patient [about explaining] the technology to us. After a few months we have

⁴⁶ ["Work Report of the Tea Specialist Group Aiding Guinea," PRC FMA 108-00805-03.](#)

learned a lot of things.” Other trainees expressed a new admiration for the PRC. Several praised the course claiming, “. . .from the study [period] we have gained a deeper understanding of China. [If] we have a chance we must go to China to study further.” The specialists believed that the expression of such sentiments marked “a step further in the development of friendship between China and Mali.”⁴⁷ In these statements, Chinese officials and technicians found confirmation that their patient, hands-on approach to development was paying political dividends and helping to promote Beijing’s international objectives.

What makes these Chinese reports more credible is that they are corroborated to some degree by American reports. For Washington, Africa represented an increasingly important theater for its trilateral competition with Moscow and Beijing and American officials kept a close watch on Chinese activities while trying to diminish their impact. What made the Chinese presence increasingly worrisome to many American diplomats on the ground in Africa is that the PRC’s aid projects were generally being received with a good measure of affection on the part of Africans. Moreover, Chinese projects seemed to be making having a more immediate impact than American ones. Although most American officials did not report on the tea plantations specifically, their descriptions of China’s general success in Guinea and Mali are fairly consistent with how the situation was represented in Chinese reports with the obvious exception that Americans were dismayed rather than please by warming Sino-African ties.

Cables from the US embassy in Conakry to the State Department reported on the favorable reactions that Chinese aid was eliciting. In November 1964, the embassy reported that Guinea’s attitude toward the Soviets and European communist countries were “correct but somewhat cool” while its relations with China appeared “increasingly friendly.” The Chinese, it continued, had “been successful in presenting themselves as a ‘revolutionary’ nation fighting for economic independence and development.” Partially as a result of Beijing’s aid programs, Conakry had come to endorse Communist China’s entry into the United Nations and Guineans “constantly praise[d] the working techniques of the Chicoms.”⁴⁸ During a field trip to Macenta in late 1964, one USAID official found Guineans full of praise for Chinese aid projects but less enthused by American ones. He was told by local officials that Guineans “have more respect for

⁴⁷ [“Work Summary for Training Malian Agricultural Personnel related to Tea,” PRC FMA 108-00888-04.](#)

⁴⁸ American Embassy, Conakry to Department of State, 13 November 1964, Record Group (hereafter RG) 59, Subject Numeric Files 1964-1966, Box 2018, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park Maryland (hereafter NARA).

Chinese know-how than they do for American know-how.” This was attributable to the fact that “the Chinese live[d] in Macenta, whereas the Americans work[ed] from Conakry-which seems so far removed from everyday life.”⁴⁹

American official descriptions of the success of Chinese aid projects in Mali were similar in tone and content. In February 1965, the CIA issued a report entitled “Mali—[Beijing]’s Leading African Booster,” which explained that the “major leaders of Mali’s Marxist-oriented regime view Chinese aid and example as particularly suited to their country’s needs.” These leaders had consequently become more supportive of Beijing in the arena of international politics. Seydou Kouyate, the Minister of Economic and Financial Coordination, was quoted as saying that “it is inconceivable to speak of Chinese neo-colonialism.” The CIA also reported that Bamako had “already become the continent’s most enthusiastic public backer of [Beijing], even hailing the Chinese nuclear weapons program, despite its own adherence to the test ban treaty.”⁵⁰

While the tea cultivation projects may have achieved their intended political effects, however, their long-term economic impact was far more questionable. They could ultimately make only a small contribution to alleviating the economic distress suffered by Guinea and Mali. Moreover, despite its political savvy, the Chinese approach was often not farsighted enough. Chinese technicians generally set up factories or plants like the tea plantation and processing facility in Macenta but eventually turned them over to the host countries to manage. They therefore depended on the indigenous government gaining sufficient institutional capacity to arrange for the proper upkeep of the projects after the specialists left. But sometimes, this expectation was not completely realistic.

By the time China completed the Farako Tea Factory in 1973, Modibo Keita had long been overthrown and replaced by a military government. Chinese technicians finally turned the factory over to Malian management in 1976 but over the next decade and a half conditions at the factory deteriorated under indigenous administration. When a new team of Chinese experts from Zhejiang province visited the tea factory during the early 1990s, they were dismayed to find that the modest compound that housed their predecessors was now nothing more than a few rundown looking huts that had been taken over by snakes, bats and other local wildlife. The factory itself

⁴⁹ Roy A Harrell Jr., “Report on Field Trip, 25 November – 5 December, 1964,” 8 January 1965, RG 286, USAID Mission to Guinea, Executive Office, Entry# P645: Classified Central Subject Files, 1962-1970, Container 3, NARA.

⁵⁰ Mali—[Beijing]’s Leading African Booster,” 12 February 1965, National Security Files Box 94, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, Texas.

had fallen deeply into debt and the quality of tea leaves that it produced had deteriorated. Although the Chinese agreed to send a new team of experts to help manage the enterprise, they had difficulty making it competitive in a globalizing economy. By the turn of the century the size of the plantation had shrunken by 12 hectares and the factory still had no lines for electricity. It cost the factory almost three times what it cost to produce a kilogram of tea in China.⁵¹

Of course, the long-term limitations of Chinese aid projects in Africa were by no means unique. Washington and Moscow were, for the most part, no more successful than Beijing in stimulating the “jet propulsion” to modernity that the respected Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah believed the continent so desperately needed.⁵² Thus China’s failings did not engender anti-Chinese sentiment so much as they did a broader disillusionment with all visions of development, including those being pedaled by China. In both Guinea and Mali, the optimism and ambitions with which the two countries had greeted independence soon gave way to a sense of futility when it came to foreign aid and modernization. According a *New York Times* article from 1966, a joke about aid projects had become popular among Guineans: “West Germany will do the feasibility study. The Americans will furnish the equipment, the Russians will take payment in bananas, the Chinese will supply the labor. Touré will take the credit and the Guineans who take over will see to it that nothing works.”⁵³ Guinea’s failure to achieve greater economic independence was not China’s fault. It is, however difficult to dispute that Guinea never became the kind of effective economic showcase that could persuade others that Sino-African economic cooperation offered the best route to achieve this objective.

China’s dream of transforming the African continent through economic cooperation was not fulfilled during the Maoist era but it was never completely extinguished. During the last two decades, China has increased its influence and presence on the African continent far more forcefully and substantively than it did during the 1960s. Chinese aid to Africa has been far more diverse and complex than before; it now includes a combination of technical cooperation agreements, commodity-backed loans, humanitarian assistance, infrastructural capacity building,

⁵¹ Brautigam, *Will Africa Feed China?*, 52.

⁵² Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 91.

⁵³ *The New York Times*, 10 November 1966.

and foreign direct investment.⁵⁴ While the nature and scope of China's assistance to Africa have changed dramatically, echoes of China's Cold War era aid to Guinea and Mali can still be discerned. Agriculture remains an important component of China's economic aid portfolio in Africa. According to a recent white paper on Chinese foreign aid programs, the PRC set up 49 agricultural demonstration centers and dispatched more than one thousand agricultural technicians abroad between 2010 and 2012 with a significant portion going to the African continent.⁵⁵ At the same time, the similarities extend beyond the forms of aid being offered; the general ethos and principles that guide Chinese aid in Africa today are not without resonance to those that Zhou Enlai articulated decades ago. Beijing continues to believe that its aid programs have a unique, unselfish quality that sets them apart from those of the West and makes them more appropriate for the African context. It argues that while Western aid programs attach strings and political conditions, Chinese loan offers respect the sovereignty and integrity of African governments. "The Western approach of imposing its values and political system on other countries is not acceptable to China. We focus on mutual development not promoting one country at the expense of the other," one Chinese scholar claimed at the 2006 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in Beijing.⁵⁶

In the twenty-first century, China continues to face significant competition and resistance in its quest to deepen its influence in Africa. As Beijing, Washington, and others scramble to find opportunities and win loyalties on the continent, they remain attentive not only to the practical impact of their aid but also to the ideals and values that different aid projects convey. Aid projects continue to be arguments for specific (and competing) visions of African development. Indeed, what Americans fear most about Chinese aid to Africa is not its potential impact but what it represents. From Washington's perspective, when Africans decide to accept Chinese aid, it connotes a decision in favor of South-South cooperation instead of neoliberal developmentalism. While Beijing might view things in slightly different terms, it too continues to recognize the representational power of development projects. Today, China continues to ramp up both its aid and investment in Africa with the hope that Africans and Chinese might

⁵⁴ There is now a substantial literature on this. See for instance, Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (New York: Oxford, 2009); Howard French, *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants are Building a New Empire in Africa* (New York: Vintage, 2014).

⁵⁵ "Shouquan fabu: Zhongguo duiwai yuanzhu" ("Authorized Release: China's Foreign Aid") (2014), http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-07/10/c_1111546676_2.htm.

⁵⁶ Quoted in *New York Times*, 2 November 2006.

embrace a shared vision of futurity—a vision that can be readily encapsulated in a new building, a paved road, or perhaps even a single tea leaf.

Gregg Brazinsky is an Associate Professor of History and International Affairs at the George Washington University. His previous book, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans and the Making of a Democracy*, appeared in 2007. His forthcoming book, tentatively entitled, *Winning the Third World: Sino -American Rivalry during the Cold War*, will be published by the University of North Carolina Press in the spring of 2017. He is also the author of numerous journal articles, book chapters, and op-ed pieces. Currently he is working on two new projects: one focuses on cultural and economic relations between China and North Korea from 1950 to the present and the other focuses on American nation building in Asia. He is the director of the George Washington University Cold War Group (<https://www.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/programs/coldwar.cfm>).

Document Appendix

Document No. 1

Cable from the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries to Vice Premier Li Fuchun, 'Regarding Instructions for the Exchange of Notes on the Chinese Agricultural Experts Going to Mali,' 24 January 1962

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00800-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121653>.]

Degree of Confidentiality: Extreme

Confidential and Urgent

General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries

Regarding Instructions for the Exchange of Notes on the Chinese Agricultural Experts Going to Mali

Document #31
Signed by: Fang Yi

Vice Premier [Li] Fuchun:

In accordance [with the] request put forth to me [by the] Malinese economic delegation to China [on their] visit in September of last year [1961], our group of agriculture experts includes [the following people]: one [expert on] paddy rice, one [expert on] tea, one [expert on] sugar cane, two irrigation experts, [and] two representatives for a total of seven people. [They have] already arrived at the Malian capital Bamako on 2 January of this year. Since this is our country's first [delegation] sent to Mali [for] technical cooperation, the burden of cost for the experts, the [exact nature of] the tasks, the duration of work, and other issues have not yet been [fully] agreed upon. Therefore, we [have] drafted a [formal] letter [to be given to] our embassy in Mali [to use as the basis of] negotiations. The content of these note of exchange is in accordance with [the standard of] other nationalist countries' [*minzu zhuyi guojia*] policies. However [with regards to] the problem of which [side shall] bear the costs [associated with] travel, [when] taking into account Mali's economic situation and our foreign currency usage situation, [we have] changed the method [from that which was] used in the past. Our country shall bear the cost of the experts' travel to Mali [while the] Malinese will be responsible for the cost of the experts returning to China. See the attached draft.

If not [acceptable], please provide instructions.

Attached Documents: Regarding the Exchange of Notes on Chinese Agricultural Experts Going to Mali (1x)

General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries
24 January 1962

Document No. 2

Letter from the Ambassador Extraordinary of the PRC in the Republic of Mali to the Government of the Republic of Mali, 1962

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00800-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121654>.]

To Director XX [sic], Government of the Republic of Mali:

Your Excellency, Mr. XX [sic]:

[In] accordance with the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement made between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Mali, signed in Beijing on 22 September 1961, both sides have agreed that China will send five experts in agricultural aid to the Republic of Mali. [During the experts' residence in Mali] the agreed upon terms and benefits are as follows:

1. The Chinese government [will act] based on the requirements of the Government of Mali [by] sending five agricultural experts to the Republic of Mali [to] carry out technical guidance and to teach techniques.

2. The Chinese experts working period in the Republic of Mali will end in 196X [sic] (or the month of X [sic]).

3. After obtaining the consent of the Government of the Republic of Mali, the Chinese government may recall or replace Chinese experts with the required round-trip expenses [to be] borne by the Chinese government.

After obtaining the consent of the Chinese government, the government of the Republic of Mali may shorten or lengthen the time period which [any or all of] the Chinese experts is working in Mali. [The government of the Republic of Mali] may also require [an] exchange of experts with required round trip expenses to be borne by the government of the Republic of Mali.

4. The cost of the Chinese experts' travel to Mali and their wages during their work period in the Republic of Mali are to be borne by the Chinese government.

5. The cost of the Chinese experts' return to China and their living expenses during their work period in the Republic of Mali are to be borne by the government of the Republic of Mali.

6. The Chinese experts cost of living standard in the Republic of Mali will be in accordance with technical personnel at a similar level [of expertise]. This is determined as follows:

Grade 1 Monthly Remuneration XXX [sic]

Grade 2 Monthly Remuneration XXX [sic]

Grade 3 Monthly Remuneration XXX [sic]

The living expenses as described above are to be paid from the date of the arrival of the experts in the Republic of Mali until the date of their departure from the Republic of Mali.

7. During the Chinese experts' work period in the Republic of Mali, the Government of the Republic of Mali will provide the Chinese experts' accommodations, medical care, transportation, and necessary work facilities as required free of charge.

8. During the Chinese experts' work period in the Republic of Mali, the Government of the Republic of Mali will be held responsible for their safety.

9. During the Chinese experts' work period in the Republic of Mali they will enjoy the right to rest periods and vacation with the cost of living to be paid as usual during these vacation periods.

- (1) Every 12 months, they will get 1 month of leave
- (2) All of the Republic of Mali's statutory rest days.
- (3) All of the Chinese government's statutory rest days.

10. During the Chinese experts' work period in the Republic of Mali, they should respect the current system of laws and decrees of the Government of the Republic of Mali; and should maintain the secrecy level of all information provided to them.

11. After the Chinese experts' work period in the Republic of Mali has finished, the Republic of Mali will issue the experts with an Expert Working Certificate to certify that the experts [satisfactorily] completed work and met deadlines [while in] Mali. An identical copy of this certificate shall be submitted by the government of the Republic of Mali to the Chinese government.

If you would acknowledge your agreement to the aforementioned terms and conditions, I would be very grateful.

I offer you my highest respect and consideration.

Embassy of the People's Republic of China's in the Republic of Mali
Ambassador Extraordinary
XX XX 1962 [sic]

Document No. 3

Record of the State Council's Answer to the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries' Request for Instructions, 30 January 1962

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00800-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121655>.]

Degree of Confidentiality: Confidential and Urgent

Record of the State Council's Answer to the General Bureau for Economic Relations with
Foreign Countries' Request for Instructions

Report Number: Document #31

Report Date: 24 January 1962

Report Content: "Regarding Instructions for the Exchange of Notes on the Chinese Agricultural
Experts Going to Mali"

The [following] commentary [is the] written opinion [of the State Council]

Vice Premier [Li] Fuchun's Instructions as of 25 January [1962]:

"Comrade Premier Chen Yi's response is that he generally agrees [with the document]."
Remove the sentence "I am very grateful" on the third line of the fourth page of the attached
document. Add one word "if/as if" in front of "Your Excellency XXX". Also, add the sentence
"I would be very grateful" on the second line from the bottom.

([The] Premier, and Vice Premier Chen Yi [have] already marked up [the document]).
[The] Premier has the following adjustments to be made to the attachment, Article III shall be
changed to Article V, Article IV shall be changed to Article III, Article V shall be changed to
Article IV.)

Office of the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries
30 January 1962

Document No. 4

**Cable from the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries to the
Chinese Embassy in Mali, 'Regarding Amendments to the Exchange of Notes,' 30 August
1962**

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00800-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian
Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121656>.]

General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries

Already Sent [to] Mali
Signed by: Du Ganquan

Degree of Urgency: Urgent
Degree of Secrecy: Secret
Final Digits of Distribution Number: 62
External File #293

Regarding Amendments to the Exchange of Notes

[To the] Chinese Embassy in Mali:

The cable dated 17 August [1962] was received.

The group of industrial experts will go to Mali next month ([the] exact time [will be provided in] another report). Discuss with the Malian side regarding the issue of our experts' remuneration. The talks can be extended [and it is possible to put off] signing [the final agreement until] after the group of experts [has] gone [to Mali]. At this time, there is no need to make changes to Article IV of the annex.

General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries
30 August 1962

Document No. 5

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Mali to the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries, 'Regarding the Various Issues Concerning the Experts Coming to Mali,' 17 August 1962

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00800-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121657>.]

Rating: Urgent

From [the Embassy in] Mali

Copies Distributed: 62

Final [digits of the] #

External File #

Attachment

Subject: Regarding the [Various] Issues Concerning the Experts Coming [to] Mali

General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries:

1. The Director of the Malian Rural Economic Planning Department Office has suggested [a way in which] China and Mali [can] come more quickly finalize the agreement [regarding] industrial projects [covered by our] Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement. [He] hopes [that] we [will send our] industrial experts to Mali in the second half of the month of September.

2. Please inform [us regarding the] experts living conditions [and] salary, [as] Mali has not yet signed the [formal] Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement. With regards to sending the expert group[s] to Ghana, Mali [and other] black African countries [for the purpose of] economic aid issues, please consult the second line of Part IV of the attached document [as follows:] "...signed on this DAY, MONTH, in 1962," changed to "agreements to be signed in the future." Article Three, Item Two: "paid in local currency" with the word "local" changed for "Mali."

Embassy [of the People's Republic of China] in Mali
17 August 1962

Document No. 6

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Guinea, 'Report on the Work Situation of the Tea Specialists Group in Guinea,' 17 August 1962

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00805-03, 19-21. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Caixia Lu. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121915>.]

[...]

Subject: Report on the Work Situation of the Tea Specialists Group in Guinea

To the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries and the Ministry of Agriculture:

The work of the tea specialists group has come to an end and they are due to fly home on the 18th. A survey by the group finds that the 4 hectares of existing tea plantations in Sereidou are not doing too well as they have shallow soils unsuitable for growing tea. The area is also inconvenient for the transportation of tea, and there are few villages and a shortage of labor. Hence, it is inadvisable to further develop this place. The Guineans have suggested setting up a 60-hectare tea plantation in Macenta, and the tea specialists group figured that this site would have suitable conditions. Thus, the assistance originally pledged for the experimental tea station in Sereidou should be revoked and used for Macenta instead.

The tea specialists group reported its findings to Sory Barry, Minister of Rural Economy for the Republic of Guinea, who indicated that they had no experience in growing tea and hoped that China could single-handedly take charge of the whole process of setting up the new tea plantation in Mercenta, from cultivating the seedlings to planting and processing them. We were also asked to send experts to Mercenta and supply the tractors needed to till the land, tools needed on the tea plantation and equipment for processing the tea leaves.

On this issue, after discussions between my embassy and the tea specialists group, I would like to raise the following suggestions for reference:

1) We cannot wholly undertake the said project and can only provide assistance and guidance in the areas of seedling cultivation, tea-planting techniques and designing the tea processing plant. The Guineans should take responsibility for the organization and leadership of the tea plantation and processing plant. As the equipment required for this project is simple and does not require great investment, and there is no further need for major investment in the short term, it is best listed in the second batch of projects in our assistance to Guinea.

2) Based on the existing tea seedlings that Guinea has, we can transplant 3 hectares of tea during the rainy season next year. It is best to get two tea-growing specialists and one interpreter to come to Guinea in March to guide the tea transplantation and cultivation process.

This work is expected to take around four years. Depending on the situation, we can rotate or recall them in future.

3) On the issue of investing in the tea plantation and processing plant: The Guineans should take care of the costs of clearing the land for growing tea and constructing the tea plantation by themselves. The costs of hiring the specialists as well as setting up the tea processing plant and facilities can be paid using the loans. As for the tractors and tea plantation tools that the Guineans have requested for, if they make an official request for us to supply these in future, we can do so if it is technically feasible, and the costs can be paid with the loan.

4) In accordance with Guinea's development plans to plant 3 hectares of tea in 1963, 12 hectares in 1964, 17 hectares in 1965 and 28 hectares in 1966, the designing of the tea processing plant should begin in 1965 and construction should be completed in 1966. If we can provide some of the tea seedlings, the development process would probably be faster.

5) The tea variety that Guinea currently possesses is the large-leaved Assamese plant (*Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica*), which is suitable for producing black tea. But in Africa, it is the green tea that is widely consumed. My view is that we should voluntarily inform the Guineans about this so that they would not blame us in future should they be unable to sell the red tea that is produced. In case they request for seeds that are suitable for producing green tea, we should plan to supply some and it is best to prepare two hundred *jin* of seeds this year.

I hope to receive our domestic views on the above after the tea specialists have arrived in Beijing to give their report.

[Chinese] Embassy in Guinea
17 August [1962]

[...]

Document No. 7

Work Report of the Tea Specialist Group Aiding Guinea, September 1962

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00805-03, 24-30. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Caixia Lu. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121918>.]

Work Report of the Tea Specialists Group Aiding Guinea

In keeping with the spirit of the instructions given by the Central Bureau of Foreign Economic Relations on 2 April in response to our "Work Plan of the Tea Specialists Group Heading to Guinea", the tea specialists group left Beijing on 6 April and arrived in Guinea on 10 April. Upon arrival, the group briefed our embassy in Guinea and the embassy instructed: "In looking at the possibilities for development, do survey a few more places in Guinea so as to study and compare various options. Take the initiative and be proactive in matters of technical guidance." On 12 April, we paid a call to Sory Barry, Minister of Rural Economy for the

Republic of Guinea. The Guineans requested that we 1) survey the area of Macenta (including Seredou) that would be used for growing tea, and look for large tracts of land (ranging from tens to hundreds of hectares) to be set aside for the purposes of setting up a tea plantation; 2) assist them in drafting a development plan; 3) teach them the techniques of growing and producing tea. The specialists group arrived at the work location in Seredou on 25 April at the request of the Guineans and under the instruction of the embassy and returned to Conakry on 10 July, spending 77 days in total. During this time, our work was mainly conducted over two stages. During the first stage, we mainly spent our time in Seredou imparting our techniques, as well as surveying and studying the conditions for growing tea on a wider scale. In the second stage, we were in Macenta mainly to study the possibilities for tea production, conduct planning research for establishing a tea plantation and gather information on setting up a tea processing plant. Our report on our work situation is as follows:

1. The Current Situation of Tea Plantations in Seredou:

The experimental Cinchona (Quinine) station in Seredou has 22 employees in total and 150 or so workers. There are four substations under the main station, and there are 220 hectares of Cinchona trees and 4 hectares of tea in total. The station's primary business is the production of quinine, and it does not conduct agricultural and tea growing experiments and research work.

The existing 4 hectares of tea were grown by the French five years ago. There are certain problems with the site selection and the method of cultivation. The tea plantation has steep slopes and shallow soils, and there are no drainage facilities. There is relatively serious soil erosion and waterlogging and the tea shrubs are dying in large numbers, with current plant loss rates as high as 30-40%. The tea grown here is the large-leaved Assamese plant (*Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica*) with larger buds and leaves. The green leaves are rich in tannin and theine, and can be used to produce good quality black tea.

There is no one specifically appointed to manage the tea plantation, and nobody to till, weed and fertilize the land, or to prune the tea shrubs. The tea shrubs are left to grow naturally. As a result, they are tall and spindly with few branches and narrow crowns. Except in 1961 when the leaves were sunned to produce around 100 kilograms of very poor quality tea, the leaves had not been picked to produce tea since and there are no facilities for doing so. Looking at the current growth conditions of the tea shrubs, it is estimated that this 4-hectare plantation can produce around 10 piculs of dried tea annually, which is too little to warrant the construction of a mechanized tea processing plant.

The tea nursery at this station spans roughly 4 mou, and the seedlings were planted from last November to December. There is someone in charge of the nursery and it is relatively more carefully managed. The tea seedlings are growing well and they have some experience in this area. The person in charge of the nursery has also acquired some expertise in seedling cultivation.

2. Imparting of Techniques:

We have imparted some techniques in accordance with the local circumstances in Seredou after looking at the problems that the station is having with tea production and the specific conditions in the area. A skills-learning group with 8 to 10 participants has been set up at the No. 5 experimental substation, among which one participant had graduated from an agricultural high school, two had been to primary school, with the remaining being illiterate workers. As the members of this group did not receive much education, we sought to combine demonstration with instruction as much as possible when teaching them the techniques of seedling cultivation, tea growing and tea production, such as how to grow new plants from cuttings. In the past, the survival rate of their cuttings was only 18%, while our method of propagation by cutting (the general method) had attained a survival rate of 70% through experimentation. They felt that the method was simple with a high rate of survival, and they learnt the primary processing techniques for black tea, enabling them to produce relatively better quality black tea on their own.

3. Study and Research on the Feasibility of Growing Tea on a Wider Scale:

In the Seredou region, we surveyed most of the land within the experimental Cinchona (Quinine) station in which we examined and analyzed the climatic and soil conditions as well as the ease of commuting and transportation. We felt that conditions were less than ideal for growing tea on a wider scale (with only 4 hectares of unused land suitable for growing tea). The main reasons were:

- (1) There were few existing pieces of land that were huge enough. It would require huge investments and a lot of work to clear forested land for growing tea;
- (2) We were looking at high altitudes and steep slopes. Much of the land had relatively shallow soils, in which the tea shrubs would not grow well;
- (3) Large numbers of temporary workers would be needed for picking and processing tea, but this area was situated high up in the mountains, with few villages nearby and a low population density. This would pose some difficulties in manpower deployment;
- (4) The area was not convenient enough for commuting and transportation.

We also surveyed eight sites in the Macenta region, and after careful research and comparison, we deemed a 60-hectare tract of uncultivated land around Da-lei [sic] village 7 kilometers away from Macenta more suitable for growing tea.

Climatic conditions for the Macenta region: The annual average temperature is 23 to 25 degrees Celsius, with monthly averages varying by 4 degrees Celsius at the maximum. It is warm all year around and the annual rainfall is 2,416 millimeters. The annual average relative humidity is 78%. Looking at the above climatic conditions, this area seemed suitable for tea cultivation. However, if we look at the rainfall pattern throughout the four seasons, the region has distinct wet and dry seasons. The wet season lasts for eight months from April to November. During this time, the monthly rainfall varies from 123 to 528 millimeters, and this is suitable for growing tea.

The dry season lasts for four months from December to March the following year. During this time, the total rainfall is a mere 67 millimeters, and the monthly average rainfall is 15.5 millimeters. The temperature also reaches a high of 35.9 degrees Celsius. This is rather unfavorable for the growing of tea and anti-drought measures must be implemented to overcome the difficulties posed by the dry weather.

The piece of land that Da-lei-la [sic] has set aside for growing tea has an elevation of 500 meters and is a continuous, unbroken piece of land. It is relatively flat (with a slope of 3 to 5 degrees) and is a small alluvial plain. A big river and a small brook lie close to one third of its surroundings, which can be used for irrigation. According to measurements, the cultivable area is about 60 hectares with relatively deep alluvial soils, most of it measuring around 100 centimeters deep. The topsoil is sandy loam and the subsoil is clay loam. The soil is rich in organic matter and has a pH value of 4.5-5.5, which makes it suitable for tea cultivation. We think that there are several favorable factors for locating the tea plantation here:

- (1) This is a large continuous tract of land with flat terrain and suitable soil;
- (2) The land can be cleared mechanically (There are tractors available for use from the tractor-tilled farmland in Macenta). This saves a great deal of labor in comparison with clearing forestland;
- (3) There are water sources that can be used for irrigation;
- (4) The electricity supply is about 4 kilometers away, making it possible for the future tea processing plant to use electricity;
- (5) It is close to Macenta town and is convenient for commuting and transportation, making it possible to employ urban labor during tea-picking season in future.

4. Preliminary Plans for the Tea Plantation and Future Development:

We have drafted some preliminary plans for choosing a site, dividing up the plots and constructing roads according to the specific conditions of the tea plantation in Da-lei-la [sic] and given some advice on planting techniques. At the same time, we have drafted the following tentative yearly development plans based on the quantity of tea seedlings that can be cultivated given the current capacity of Seredou to produce 300 to 400 kilograms of tea seeds annually:

3 hectares of new tea to be planted in 1963
12 hectares of new tea to be planted in 1964
17 hectares of new tea to be planted in 1965
28 hectares of new tea to be planted in 1966

It is estimated that we will need four years to accomplish the plan of planting 60 hectares of tea and begin to produce limited quantities of tealeaves from 1966 onwards, with normal

production of the 60-hectare tea plantation expected to take place in 1969 and annual production of dried tealeaves estimated to reach 900 to 1,000 piculs.

5. Suggestions and Proposals on Future Assistance to Guinea:

Minister Sory Barry of the Ministry of Rural Economy expressed deep satisfaction after we reported our work situation to the Guineans and made the following requests regarding future assistance programs on tea cultivation:

1. That the Chinese take complete charge of establishing the 60-hectare tea plantation in Macenta, from seedling cultivation, tea planting to tea production as well as the setting up of the tea processing plant;
2. That they have no experience in growing tea and therefore request that we continue to send tea-cultivation experts to provide guidance. They also want us to supply the tractors for clearing the land as well as the equipment needed for tilling and maintaining the tea plantation, etc.

Taking the Guineans' requests and actual conditions into account, we had discussions with our embassy in Guinea and concluded that we should actively help the Guineans build up their expertise in future tea cultivation assistance programs. We propose that this should become the second project to be implemented after the cigarette and match factory project. This is because once we send our tea experts over to help with tea cultivation, it would signal the start of the program, while the tea processing plant would only be constructed 3 to 4 years later. This makes it low in cost but significant in influence at present, which fulfills the principle of making our investment go a long way. Concomitantly, the Republic of Guinea has set aside 50 million francs (about 500,000 renminbi) for the development of tea cultivation in its three-year national economic development plan. They have an urgent need to develop their tea industry. Conditions in Seredou are unsuitable for tea production and the assistance originally pledged for the experimental tea station there should be used in Macenta instead (with a change in location and not in content). To this end, we offer the following suggestions on specific matters and procedures regarding future assistance:

- (1) First, we should ask the Guineans to firm up their plans for developing the tea industry as well as the preparation work for organizing the leadership and establishing the tea plantation;
- (2) The Guineans should do this mainly by themselves. We cannot adopt the method of taking over the entire project. The Guineans have to resolve the issues of organizing the leadership to build the tea plantation as well as investing in labor to clear and cultivate the land, establish the office of the tea plantation and build employee accommodation all on their own;
- (3) Areas in which we can offer our help:

1. Send experts to give guidance in tea cultivation. In March 1963, we sent two technical experts with experience in seedling cultivation, tea growing and plantation management as well as one technician and one interpreter to work in Guinea for 2 to 4 years and we can rotate these personnel during this period. As we have been imparting the skills in planting and producing tea and consistently sending our experts over to Guinea, we do not need to accept the tea-growing apprentices that they wish to send to our country;

2. The tea variety that Guinea currently has is the large-leaved Assamese plant (*Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica*), which is suitable for producing black tea. Considering the fact that the Africans are accustomed to consuming green tea, we can supply 100 to 200 kilograms of tea seeds that are suitable for producing green tea to Guinea for trial planting before March next year;

3. Supplying part of the agricultural tools needed for clearing and maintaining the tea plantation:

(1) Two tractors designed to work at a depth of 40 to 50 centimeters. This was requested by the Guinean Minister of Rural Economy. After studying the request, our embassy thinks that we can supply these while we think that we can rent tractors from local tractor-tilled farmland to clear the land and there is no absolute need to supply tractors for the exclusive use of the tea plantation;

(2) Supplying agricultural tools for maintaining the tea plantation: 100 wide-blade hoes, 100 trench-hoes, 100 two-pronged hoes, 100 four-pronged rakes and 100 shovels;

(3) Pruning tools for tea shrubs: 50 sets of shears (50 sets of big shears, 30 sets of small shears and 20 sets of hedge shears);

(4) Tools for pest control: 10 foggers, 10 powder sprayers, and 5 high-pressure foggers.

The above equipment will be delivered in the first half of next year.

4. The designing of the tea processing plant as well as the complete set-up needed for the primary processing and refining of black and green tea is to commence in 1956, with construction to be completed in 1966.

According to the planned production target of 900-1,000 piculs of tea per annum, the suggested size of the plant is 1,500 square meters, with the construction cost at around 150 renminbi per square meter.

6. Some Reflections from Our Experiences

1. The Guinean people were friendly to us. When we were working in the villages, villagers we met would take the initiative to greet us or shake our hands in warm welcome whether we were travelling by car or walking. Local leaders also personally hosted us, such as the governor of Nzérékoré who personally arranged our accommodation. This was because they felt that our country was sincere in helping them. The grand reception that was accorded to President Touré during a visit to our country was recorded on film and widely screened in Guinea and there were exhibitions of our country's achievements in development, all of which had impacted the Guinean people so significantly that they think of friendship at the very mention of China. However, when we needed to understand some matters related to our operations, some of them were reluctant to tell us the facts. Before our arrival, the station manager of the Seredou experimental station had told the entire staff "not to answer the experts' questions directly and to direct them to the station manager for answering." Once, when we were doing a site survey near a village, the village chief invited us for a meal. During our conversation, we casually asked how many households and how much manpower there were in the village. The village chief replied: "I cannot give you an answer without orders from my superior." This created much difficulty for our work. Hence, it was important to pay attention to the method when trying to understand the situation on the ground. We had to rely more on our visual judgment as well as indirect understanding and analysis instead of asking direct questions. It was also possible to get a sense of the situation this way. In summary, the anti-colonialism sentiment in Guinea is stronger among African countries and they are basically friendly to us.

2. We must exercise patience and take the initiative in our work, and refrain from being impatient. In our interactions with the Guinean government and officers, we felt that they did not quite understand and observe the proprieties and they also tended to forget things and were quick to lose their tempers. We arrived in and left Conakry without Guinean government officers to acknowledge our presence, and when our comrades fell ill, no one came to take care of them. When meeting or working with them, we often had to wait for half an hour to an hour. We felt that this was a special characteristic of theirs that arose under long-term imperial rule. We should maintain a friendly and forgiving attitude toward them, be proactive and tolerant in our work and not be impatient. Only then can we build good relations and accomplishing our task.

3. Reliance on the leadership, organization, division of labor and unity are the guarantees for completing our work. When working overseas, we must rely on the leadership of our embassies. By complying with the embassy's instructions, we can accomplish our tasks smoothly, build good relations with the Guineans and avoid making mistakes in our work. We had established a party group so as to be well organized, have a proper division of labor, and study the problems as and when they arise and promptly address any weaknesses. Everyone engaged in frequent discussions and this promoted unity as well as helped us do our work well. Our work and work practices made a relatively good impression on the masses. They said: The white people only talked about some theories and never lifted a finger. They called us stupid when we did not understand what they said. The Chinese experts showed good attitude and they personally did the work and answered all the questions that we had, and we learned from them." These words showed that our work had some degree of impact among the masses and strengthened the friendship of both countries, and this prompted the embassy to make the following appraisal of our work group: "They did solid work despite the difficult living conditions." The above reflections can serve as reference for future experts heading to Guinea.

Document No. 8

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Mali to the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries, 'Regarding the Exchange of Notes for the Chinese Agricultural Experts Going to Mali,' 28 April 1962

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00800-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121658>.]

Rating: Urgent

From [the Chinese Embassy in] Mali

Copies Distributed:

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External File #1

Type: 1962.5.3

Attachment

Subject: Regarding the Exchange of Notes for the Chinese Agricultural Experts Going to Mali

General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries:

The cable dated 26 March [1962] was received. [In] handling of this communique, the [situation is] excellent [regarding the] notes of exchange for our agricultural experts [who shall be] going to Mali. However, regarding the exact conditions in Mali, there are some specific issues. Hereby follows a report of our opinions: Please respond whether these are appropriate as soon as possible.

1. Because the experts' food will be provided free of charge by the Malinese, suggest that Article 7, "Housing," be changed to read "Room and Board".

2. The exchange of notes only [refers to] the agricultural experts. [There is nothing about] the two translators or the rice transplant machinery operator's living expenses. Is it possible to issue an exchange of notes in which the living expenses are covered with first, second, and third degree [of experts] distinguished? In Article 6, the gradation of the living expenses is clearly divided [as follows]: Grade 1: Chief Engineer, Engineer; Grade 2: Technician, Technical Interpreter; Grade 3: Skilled Workers.

3. Our industrial experts will go to Mali in June but this exchange of notes, from start to finish, only specifies the five agricultural experts. Is it possible to have [the letters'] scope [expanded] to include industrial experts? Can the title of the exchange of notes be amended from "Dual Party Agreement that China Will Send Five Agricultural Aid Experts to the Republic of Mali" to "Dual Party Agreement that China Will Send Ten Skilled Technical Personnel to the Republic of Mali"?

Embassy [of the People's Republic of China] in Mali
28 April 1962

Document No. 9

Cable from the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries to the Chinese Embassy in Mali, 'Regarding the Exchange of Notes on the Conditions of the Experts' Work,' 21 May 1962

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00800-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121659>.]

Cable Sent by the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries

Already Sent [to] Mali

Signed by: Yang Lin

Degree of Urgency: Extremely Urgent

Degree of Secrecy: Top Secret

Number of Copies Distributed

External Distribution Document # 191

Regarding the Exchange of Notes on the Conditions of the Experts' Work

[To the] Embassy [of the People's Republic of China] in Mali:

The cable dated 28 April was received.

So as to ensure that the agricultural experts [which] we [will be] sending [to] Mali receive the same remuneration and conditions, the [previously] sent notes of exchange [regarding the] agricultural experts [going] to Mali will be subject to revisions. Please temporarily forgo negotiations with the other party. Wait until the negotiation of industrial projects and expert work groups going to Mali is again moving forward.

General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries
21 May 1962

Document No. 10

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Mali, 'The Duration of Employment for the Agricultural Experts Aiding Mali,' 10 January 1963

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00889-04. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121662>.]

Document Received by the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries

1963 Received [Cable] No. 302

The Duration of Employment for the Agricultural Experts Aiding Mali

[To the] General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries:

Regarding the ideological situation of our agricultural experts and translator comrades in Mali, over their past year [the situation can be] described as quite good. It's not bad. [They are] content with their work, they work tirelessly, and they work with their own hands. [Paying no attention to] their living conditions [or] working conditions [they have displayed] a truly selfless [dedication to their] labor [and have] achieved remarkable results. [They have] left a deep impression [on the] people of Mali and [the officials of] the Government of Mali. [They] receive praise from all [concerned] parties.

However, [they are] generally [unprepared to] stay [in Mali for] a long time [and their current] way of thinking [is] temporary. [They] have no plans to [stay] for a long time. According to the experts, prior to going abroad [they were under the impression the period of their] exchange [would be] from three months to half a year, then they could return to China. This type of thought mainly arises from the following reasons:

(A) Ideologically Unprepared: [Prior to] going abroad [they were] insufficiently clear about the conditions [which would be experienced during] the period of working abroad.

(B) Some comrades' family situations back home [have] impacted [their ability to] work.

(C) Mali's natural conditions such as the climate and living conditions are relatively poor.

(D) We have [done] ideological indoctrination work with the experts [but it has been] insufficient. Every time [any of] the experts returns [to China] from Bamako [the capital of Mali] individual interviews with every person is insufficiently widespread and frequent. Generally speaking, our daily ideological work is sufficient, carrying out a [policy of] adjusting [to conditions and] going deep work method (including going to Bamako on a monthly basis to report conditions to the Party Committee) to [effectively] grasp the ideological work. Therefore, although this kind of idea has been revealed it has no impact on the work. However, this ideology is long term.

At the end of November 1962, when the experts reported back to Bamako, the experts saw that the agricultural aid project agreement [which China] signed with Mali did not have a concrete work time [specified]. [They] thought [that if] there was no [concrete] working time [specified, then there was also no time specified for] going home [which caused them] to immediately bring the issue up to Director Du. During the second quarter of 1963, because the embassy extended to the third quarter, therefore the experts felt the embassy did not care about [scheduling] their time for returning home. [This caused them to be] emotionally volatile [and they began] sending letters to domestic bureaus [about the situation]. Director Du clearly explained to them that the rotation schedule is determined domestically and is not [related to] foreign aid [but they] did not listen.

At the end of November 1962, when the experts reported back to Bamako, the experts saw that the agricultural aid project agreement [which China] signed with Mali did not have a concrete work time [specified]. [They] thought [that if] there was no [concrete] working time [specified, then there was also no time specified for] going home [which caused them] to immediately bring the issue up to Director Du. During the second quarter of 1963, because the embassy extended to the third quarter, therefore the experts felt the embassy did not care about [scheduling] their time for returning home. [This caused them to be] emotionally volatile [and they began] sending letters to domestic bureaus [about the situation]. Director Du clearly explained to them that the rotation schedule is determined domestically and is not [related to] foreign aid [but they] did not listen.

Therefore, we propose the following suggestions:

(A) In the future when China sends experts abroad, [we should] clearly explain how long they will spend overseas. If unsure, please do not tell them any random time for their return so as to avoid breaking promises [and causing] their emotions and ideology to be compromised. Furthermore [I] hope that domestic departments will consider [a formal] rotation [schedule] for the experts and translators currently working in Mali.

(B) In order to politically and ideologically educate foreign experts, and strengthen and improve our political and ideological work with our foreign experts abroad, please send a full time management cadre promptly.

Please respond promptly to the above suggestions.

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Mali
10 January 1963

Document No. 11

Cable from the Chinese General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries et al, 'Regarding the Question of the Experts' Rotation,' 26 April 1963

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00889-04. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121663>.]

Cable Sent by the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries

Already Sent To: Mali

Addressed to: Du Pingquan, Wei Yunshi, Qian Zhengying, Li Jihuan

Copy: Year of the Rabbit [1963] No.

Degree of Urgency: Urgent

Degree of Secrecy: Secret

[19]63 Foreign Economic Relations Bureau Document No. 190

Regarding the Question of the Experts' Rotation

[To the] [Chinese] Embassy in Mali:

In order to better aid Mali, regarding the issue of rotating the experts, [after] undergoing research, Tang Yaozu cannot return to China until the two newly sent sugar cane experts have arrived in Mali and finished the transition. Other experts, such as Ma Fang, will continue their employment [in Mali]. We intend to rotate [the other experts] prior to the fourth quarter of this year. If individual experts' successors have not [been able to] deploy, then [those experts] cannot be rotated out [but] at that time permission will be given to return to China on leave. The experts' families in China are being properly taken care of by us. Besides, please do forward the consolation letter to our experts and encourage them to make persistent efforts and fulfill their duties. If you have any comments, please reply.

Please try to find out exactly how long the Malian side's need to have our experts stay, and the problem of arranging manpower, rotation, and vacations.

Additionally, according to the telegram of 24 April, Li Xiasheng was asked to return to China.

General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries
Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Hydraulic and Electric
Ministry of Agricultural Machinery
26 April 1963

Document No. 12

Cable from the Commercial Attaché, Chinese Embassy in Mali, to the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries, 25 July 1963

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00888-04. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121660>.]

Document Received by the General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries

External Document [Received by the People's Republic of China] #2129
([19]63) Mali Commerce [Top] Secret [Document] #104

General Bureau for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries:

- (1) Work Summary for Training of Malinese Rice Transplanter Machinists.
- (2) Work Summary for Training Malinese [Agricultural] Technical Personnel [related to] Tea.

(3) Work Summary for Training Malinese [Agricultural] Technical Personnel [related to] Sugar Cane

(4) Water Use Experts Work Situation and Reporting of Current Work Problems

Attachment Enclosed

Commercial Attaché [of the People's Republic of China] Embassy in Mali
25 July 1963

Document No. 13

Work Summary for Training Malinese Agricultural Technical Personnel related to Tea, July 1963

[Source: PRC FMA 108-00888-04. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121661>.]

Work Summary for Training Malinese [Agricultural] Technical Personnel [Related to] Tea

1. Policy Guidelines [for] Training [Course]:

In order to promote a friendly relationship between the two countries of China and Mali and to further develop economic and technological cooperation between both countries; in accordance with the Communist Party of China's overall foreign policy and foreign aid spirit, we [shall] resolutely implement the Sino-Malinese economic and technological cooperation agreement and Sino-Malinese Economic and Technological Cooperation Protocol by sending Chinese technical experts and technicians to Mali [for the purpose of] training Malinese technicians and for [overseeing] skilled work.

According to Mali's requirements and the Embassy [of the People's Republic of China in Mali]'s Party Committee instructions [this project is] in order to help Mali develop an agricultural economy and benefit the development of our technical aid [programs. The aforementioned in] combination with the actual situation and possible [situations is why we have] organized [a] technical personnel training class. [This class will] train a group of Malinese in new technological skills which are extremely important for [helping] Mali have independent economic development.

2. Training Work Overview

The [technical] training [course] for Malinese tea personnel was commissioned by the Development Department for [helping move development] in the Greater Sikasso Region forward. The Development Bureau's Director of New Crops, the Regional Director, the Agricultural Skills Consultant, the Director of the Sikasso Provincial Agriculture Department and our experts formed a leading group [working together] on specific teaching [goals] and daily work. According to Mali's existing tea cultivation situation and objective conditions, teaching content [will] mainly focus on tea cultivation techniques and field management. The combined

[total content of the course] on tea growing will be eight parts. So as to [properly] study critical content, [this will] include establishing new tea fields and management of existing tea fields. [In this way] each student will be able to become familiar with the key information.

This group of students [has been arranged by] the Ministry of Rural Development. [All of the students] coming to study [are from areas which are] preparing to develop tea [as a] new crop such as Sikasso and Pu-ni-ba-he-yi-da [sic]. Students have different backgrounds and different degrees [of pre-existing skills]. Some of them were agricultural technicians. Some of them were previously unemployed. Some of them are educated rural youth from villages and plantations. Because [they] come from many varied backgrounds [and have] differing levels of agricultural knowledge and French language skills, our teaching task [will be made] more difficult.

According to the characteristics of the students, our teaching method is to adopt a combination of theory and practice. A method of combining classroom lectures and practice [will be in effect]. Every aspect of tea leaf cultivation will be covered from the basics of agricultural knowledge [on up]. [Students will progress from the] shallow to the deep. [Their program will be] part lecture, part hands-on work, part study combining theory with practice so as to improve the students' rational knowledge and understanding [of the subject matter].

According to the original schedule, training courses were planned to take between six weeks and two months. As tea is a new crop in Mali, students come from a complicated variety of backgrounds with varying degrees of education, students' progress has been slower [than anticipated]. In order to make sure that students deeply understand tea production skills, [the new plan is for] training to take place for a total of five months from September 12, 1962 through to February 15, 1963.

3. Results of Training Work

The results of our training class have been remarkable. Not only [have we] promoted friendship between the two countries of China and Mali and promoted progress in [our work], but [we have also] achieved great victories in the struggle against imperialism and revisionism.

1. Political Implications: [by] teaching the Malinese technicians production skills we have had a great influence on political thought [and] given the Malinese people and government a deep impression. They deeply appreciate our sincerity. [They are grateful] that we selflessly teach them skills for developing their national economy. In the past, the French never taught them skills and technology. As the Director of New Crop Development said: "China's experts have busied themselves with a hundred tasks, [they] work tirelessly to teach us skills and develop our own skills. Our current mastery of these skills is the result of China's experts." Many students have proudly expressed: "they are Chinese experts [coming to] Mali to train the first batch of [Malinese] tea technicians." It is like this, the colonialists monopolized Mali's agricultural skills for a long time [but they] never trained [local] staff [and] their technical staff was extremely lacking in skills.

2. [With regards to] the aspect of anti-imperialist revisionism, our work style, work methods, and consistent style of hard work and responsibility [have] given them a very deep

impression. At the training class graduation, the New Crops Director said to the students: "[Because] you [have] received Chinese experts' help [therefore you] already understand many technical skills, [take these skills and] apply them to real world conditions [and you will perform] tea leaf work very well. The French say that us Malinese cannot grow tea, [but] you see that tea grows very well, if the French had come to help us with planting tea, they would not say the tea plants can grow, they would only say the seeds of the tea plants did not have a chance to germinate." The Trainees Sissokotode and Qusmane Konate told us: "in the past we learned techniques from Frenchmen. The Frenchmen did not give us skills but used us as unskilled laborers. The Frenchmen often held a whip. Whomsoever did not [do as they said] was lashed on [his] body. In our current studies [with the] Chinese experts [our teachers] are patient [about explaining] the technology to us. After a few months' time we have learned a lot of things." All of this clearly shows that they have a deep understanding of the [problems caused by] imperialism.

The Director of New Crops told us: "Our country has [hosted] many foreign experts, including experts from [other] socialist countries. It seems [to me] that [experts from] your country have the best performance." He also said: "Your [experts are not only] busy with work [but] also are [helping] train our technical staff. This kind of aid is not something which just any country would do."

3. Promoting the friendship between the two countries of China and Mali: Our working methods have not only given Malinese leaders and cadres at all levels a good impression of us but have also made the masses in Sikasso aware of how Chinese experts work hard [in] constructing [projects beneficial] to others. This expands our influence and enhances the friendship between us. Student Simeon SIDIHBE said: "During the study period the expert is always full of energy. [The expert] ceaselessly [strives] to inspire students. The experts and the students' [working relationship] is quite harmonious." [This time] we have trained 9 students. Of those [students] eight of them expressed: "from this study [period] we have gained a deeper understanding of China. [If] we have the chance we must go to China to study [further]." In everyday life we are very concerned about the students' education. The students also often come to our lodgings to visit and be friendly. This has been a step further in the development of friendship between China and Mali.

4. Promoting the ongoing development of the previously [completed] work: because the trainees are serious about learning, [they] have [all] gotten good results. Of the nine students [in the class], four of them have had outstanding results, three have had good results, while two have had acceptable results. At the same time, in studying practical fieldwork skills, four people have completely mastered the skills of tea garden management and 46 people can perform generalized work. All of the theoretical knowledge [which] they [have] studied and the practical experimental [work, when combined] will allow them to smoothly promote the development of 15 hectares of tea [under cultivation] this year. Using practical and theoretical techniques [from our class], trainee Qusman Konate is managing a 70 hectare tea plantation [starting] from arable land just sown through to seedlings [and eventually harvest]. This tea plantation is growing quite well. Trainee Kamite Jemaila studied fixed pruning and interpolation techniques. In July [he] progressed to cutting and splicing over 12,000 seedlings which [satisfactorily] meet all requirements. The problem of future development of tea seedlings has been resolved. Trainees

[who have gone to the] western province of Kita to work have planned and designed a new type of tea plantation. Their planned design is in line with the requirements. In early March we went to check the work accompanied by the Director of New Crops. At that time the Director of New Crops said, with great satisfactions, "this new tea plantation plan for cultivation is very good. This is all indicative of the [satisfactory] results of their study. Now we can cultivate tea on our own." All of this clearly shows that the training work not only reinforces professional work but also that the promotion of future development had a great start [with this].

4. Opportunities

1. Conscientiously Implement Foreign Economic Aid Policy and Embassy Committee [Directives]: "Strongly support the Government of Mali's elimination of imperialist economic forces, support them [in] developing their own technical skills, develop agricultural economy, promote friendship between China and Mali" are the guidelines by which we strive to conduct the training. During the training sessions, these guidelines ceaselessly serve as an indicator of our work and help the training proceed smoothly. [These guidelines] are essential to guaranteeing that basic victory is achieved.

2. Training work should [continue] according to Mali's actual current situation. For Mali [to successfully] develop tea as a new crop, students lack of knowledge in this area [must be remedied]. Trainees studying at the same time come from different backgrounds, have different cultural levels, [and] different levels of skills. According to these differences, it is not practical to ask them to learn too fast. Lectures should go from shallow to deep. Lectures [should be combined with] practical [hands-on] agricultural knowledge. Mixing lectures with practice and patiently helping them [develop] will cultivate their interest in learning, and their passionate interest in the profession.

3. In accordance with Mali's special features: should understand their difficulties, [should] assist in overcoming difficulties, [should help] create conditions. During our training period, [we] did not require the Malian side to provide any [technical] instruments or chemicals... At required pruning times there were no pruning shears and ordinary knives had to be substituted; without wall charts diagramming plants [the instructors had to] draw many pictures of [varying] conditions of tea plants to help the students understand [Because of] the spirit [which] we [displayed] in overcoming these difficulties, the Malian government officials are extremely satisfied.

4. During the entire teaching process, we implemented [a combination of] theory and practice, classroom teaching and field operations were combined so that students do [both] theory and practice [allowing them] to fully understand every unit [being] lectured [upon]. Complete review and going to the fields for practical operations made students proficient and skilled in technical knowledge and practical operation of a unit before continuing on to learn another unit. Individual trainees with relatively poor results were given extra lessons so that every student could be familiar with every aspect of technology [and effectively] use [that knowledge] during field practice.

1. From start to finish, the entire process of teaching and practical study has adhered to a consistent spirit of setting an example [as the best way] to motivate students. We have carried the entire training course according using pedagogical methods to move forward one degree at a time. During field operations we labored together with the students. Trainees' educational spirit is always full. No person was ever absent. For example, trainee Sissa Kotode attended lectures despite illness.

When [we] first started practical field work, some of the students were not very interested in being active participants. They sat on the sidelines and watched [but when] they saw that all of us labored together they were [emotionally] moved. Currently, at the tea plantation, we can see the trainees and the laborers working together.

5. Future Training Work Ideas

1. Consolidate and enhance the skill level of current students. Develop their ability to work independently. Train them to be able to train other personnel and workers. Expand technical skill.

2. Current workers [should receive] practical field training so that they are familiar with every single one of the technical aspects of tea plantation management. In this way [they will be able to] expand operations in the future for large scale development of tea [as a crop]. Expansion of the team of skilled technical workers [should be made] ready.

3. With the consent of the Government of Mali, [we should] continue to train groups of high level technical staff (who [already] have a basic knowledge of [both] French and agriculture).

4. [Regarding] Aspects of Teaching Technical Skills: In addition to imparting tea cultivation and tea field management techniques, we also must teach tea picking, primary processing technologies, and related tea research methodology.

Document No. 14

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Mali, 'The Two Notes Given to China by Mali,' 18 February 1964

[Source: PRC FMA 108-01057-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121664>.]

Cable Received by the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee

Request the 3rd Department Handle
Urgent
From the Mali Desk
Received (64) No.
Year of the Bull

The Two Notes Given to China by Mali

[To the] Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mali has forwarded [to us] two notes [from the] Malian Arts and Culture Commissioner. [In the] first [they say they] hope we will send [experts in] wood carving, ivory carving, and jewelry making to Mali to teach at the recently established National Institute of the Arts. [In the] other note [they] request [that] we gift them with audio equipment and lighting for them to use in performances in Mali at this year's Youth Week.

The Malian Arts and Culture Commissioner personally requested [of me that]:

1) [China send] one wood and ivory carving expert and one jewelry expert to Mali to work for three years. [The expert's] responsibility would be to professionally train up talented [individuals] in Mali. [The expert would also] study traditional Malian handicrafts in order to [be able to] make recommendations for future development and improvement.

2) [That China send] audio equipment including a microphone suitable for large meetings, a large set of speakers and amplifiers.

[With regards to] lighting equipment [their request is for] several colored spotlights. We consider these requests to be of little difficulty. If an expert can come to their newly established Institute of Arts as a teacher, this would also be a good thing. At the same time, the Malians have formally presented [this issue] via diplomatic channels. [It would be] inconvenient for me to refuse. Therefore [I] suggest that [the relevant people] back in China respond as quickly as possible to the Malians' requests.

Furthermore, he also indicated that [this would allow them] to better introduce the folk stories, history, and music of Mali [to the world] and hopes that we would sell them a vinyl recorder so they can cut records on their own. We think it might be difficult to provide such a machine from China and wonder whether we can offer some help in cutting their own records?

Hoping for your speedy reply.

[Chinese] Embassy in Mali
18 February 1964

Document No. 15

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Mali, 'The Matter of Sending Experts,' 14 May 1964

[Source: PRC FMA 108-01057-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121665>.]

Cable Received by the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee

Request the Foreign Aid Department Handle [this matter]

Level: Normal
[Received from the] Mali Station
Committee Received Document # [19](64) Year of the Dragon 175
Attachment

The Matter of Sending Experts

To the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee:

[Your] telegram [of] the 6th [has been] received. [After discussions with the] Malians, they still want our wood carving and ivory experts to come to Mali [for] work. [The] Mali Handicraft School [will have a school] break in June. [They] resume classes on 15 October [1964]. The Malian side requests our experts to arrive in Mali before October. [They] also hope [that the experts will] bring a French translator. Also, a jewelry expert is temporarily no longer requested to come.

[Chinese] Embassy in Mali
14 May [1964]

Document No. 16

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Mali, 'Regarding the Matter of Sending Handicraft Teachers,' 8 October 1964

[Source: PRC FMA 108-01057-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121666>.]

Cable Sent by the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee

Send Before:
Already Read:
Approved by: Chen Zhongjing
[...]
Category: Extremely Urgent
Attachment

Regarding the Matter of Sending Handicraft Teachers [to Mali]

To the [Chinese] Embassy in Mali:

[We have] received your cable of 11 September. [We have] been unable to choose a jewelry expert. Ivory and wood carving experts have been chosen. But choosing translators has been difficult. [They will] not be able to be sent this year.

Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee
8 October [1964]

Document No. 17

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in Mali, 'Regarding the Matter of Sending a Carving Expert,' 20 October 1964

[Source: PRC FMA 108-01057-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121667>.]

Cable Received by the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee

[Would the] Relevant Department Please Handle [this Matter]

Grade: Urgent

From [the Embassy in] Mali

[...]

Foreign [Culture Committee] Received [Document] #47

Type

Attachment

Regarding the Matter of Sending a Carving Expert

To the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee:

The Commissioner of the Malian General Administration of Advanced Arts [Training for] Youth [and I] discussed [the following]: Last year President [Seydou] Keita requested that Chinese jewelry and carving experts [come to Mali]. This year the Art Institute has already enrolled a group of professional students (who will split their time between studying and production). If the Chinese experts do not come, the class will not be able to be started. Therefore, [they are] hopeful that the experts will come. Regarding the question of translation, they said that after [the experts] come [they] can be taught Bambara. As they still hope that an expert can come this year, it would be acceptable to bring a translator who just graduated this year. If it absolutely isn't possible, they would consider having the expert come now and the translator come later. Please promptly [respond] by telegram.

[Chinese] Embassy in Mali
20 October [1964]

Document No. 18

Cable from the Head Office of the All China Handicraft Cooperative, 8 December 1964

[Source: PRC FMA 108-01057-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121668>.]

Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee of the People's Republic of China

Dispatch [19]64 No. 1831

Confidential

The government of Mali has again requested that [we] send experts in wood and ivory to teach at the Art Institute of Mali. [They've even] said that this matter was [already brought up] last year at the urging of President [Seydou] Keita. This year, the Art Institute has already enrolled a group of professional [quality] students. If the Chinese experts do not go, the class will not be able to start. Therefore, it is urgent that experts are sent before the year is out. The Art Institute does not have [teachers who are experts in] wood carving or ivory; [they] only have old handicrafts [specialists]. I've already obtained the consent of the Malians to send two skilled workers to the Institute. [We will] apply [the traditional] Master and Apprentice method in our work. Candidate selection is already underway [and the chosen candidates] will be transferred [to Mali] from [the appropriate] handicraft cooperative.

The Malians have not yet mentioned anything regarding remuneration for the two woodcarving experts. I would like [us] to enter into a written agreement with the Malians [but] they have not yet done so. The contract [template] we use will be in accordance with the General Bureau for Economic Relations' written agreement with Mali on Chinese foreign experts in Mali. The preliminary steps are as follows:

They will work overseas for a period of one-and-a-half years to two years. Their in-country clothing allowance, tool allowance, wages, and travel expenses shall be borne by our side with funds provided by the aid fund of the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee. During their time working in Mali, the cost of their living expenses and petty cash shall be borne by the Malian side and shall be paid in Malian currency. The Malian side is also responsible for providing room and board, medical care, office supplies, and transportation equipment.

Please advise whether or not the above is acceptable or not.

Head Office of the All China Handicraft Cooperative
8 December 1964

Document No. 19

Cable from the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee, 'Regarding the Issue of Sending Experts in Woodcarving and Ivory to Mali,' 12 December 1964

[Source: PRC FMA 108-01057-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121669>.]

Top Secret

Extract of Instructions from the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council to the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee

Report No. [19]64 1831
8 December 1964

Contents: Regarding the Issue of Sending Experts in Woodcarving and Ivory to Mali

Written Opinion

On 11 December [1964], Comrade Li Yimang said:

"[I] agree. Candidates selection should [treat both] political [appropriateness] and technical skill [as being] important. After going to Mali, oversight and leadership should be strictly under the [authority of the] Embassy [of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Mali's] Cultural Office."

Office of the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee
12 December 1964

Document No. 20

Cable from the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee, 'Regarding the Matter of Sending Experts in Woodcarving and Ivory,' 18 December 1964

[Source: PRC FMA 108-01057-03. Obtained by Gregg Brazinsky and translated by Marian Rosenberg. Accessible at <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121670>.]

Cable Sent by the Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee

Sent To:
Read By:
Approved By: Chen Zhongjing

Committee Dispatch [19]64 No. 89
Urgent

Regarding the Matter of Sending Experts in Woodcarving and Ivory

[To the] [Chinese] Embassy in Mali:

[According to your] cable [sent on] 20 October [1964], the two experts in woodcarving and ivory [have] already been selected. We consider a work period of one-and-a-half to two years to be appropriate. During [their] time in Mali, your Embassy [will be responsible] for [their] strict oversight. The Malian side will be responsible for assorted living expenses and [shall] provide room and board, medical care, office equipment, [and] travel equipment. Salary and round trip travel expenses will be borne by us. Please have your Embassy refer to our [country's] signed agreement with Mali [regarding] experts' [in-country] treatment and compensation.

Looking forward to your reply.

Foreign Cultural Liaison Committee
18 December [1964]