



**T**he last summits between the Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev and the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Mao Zedong played a significant role in political and psychological preparations



war on us." Khrushchev continues: "One again, we touched on sensitive chords of a state whose territory had long been dominated by foreign conquerors. After this [summit] I began to understand much better what motivated Mao in this conversation... I understand that a



neutral India and the PRC. This war revealed a real discrepancy between Soviet foreign policy and Chinese interests. The official Soviet record provides necessary correction to Khrushchev's memoirs:<sup>31</sup> what the Soviet leader remembered was "rude" and "awkward" manners of Chen Yi. The record shows that these epithets fitted Khrushchev more than anyone else in the talks, especially providing possible refinement of his expressions by Russian interpreters who wrote the transcripts. Volkogonov, commenting on the October summit of 1959, wrote: "Khrushchev in Beijing did not show flexibility, tact, wisdom, and his 'revolutionary diplomacy' collided with its counterpart."<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, the Russian transcripts show Khrushchev as much more confident of himself in comparison with the 1958 summit, and prepared to attack the Chinese as Mao had assaulted the Soviets more than a year earlier. Wearing the mantle of a world statesman, Khrushchev preferred this time to disapprove of Mao's brinkmanship as illogical, unnecessary and contradicting Soviet policy of "détente." From Mao's angle, Khrushchev practiced a double standard, since he himself was doing approximately the same thing with different means with regard to West Berlin.

Even during the first conversation in July 1958, Khrushchev's patience had begun to wear thin under the barrage of Mao's pricking, unnerving comments. In October 1959 he was considerably more short-tempered. Contrary to his claims in the memoirs, he had learned nothing about the Chinese motivations, and was not even prepared to listen. At one point Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi hinted to him openly that the Chinese belligerence towards India was dictated by the desire to take revenge for the century of humiliation at the hands of European great powers. He tactfully omitted Russia. But this useful hint was ignored by Khrushchev. He was incensed by Chen Yi's repeated use of the word "time-servers" in connection with the Soviet leaders. There might have been a problem of language and translation involved: for Khrushchev this word was synonymous with "opportunist," a deadly ideological label for a good communist. It is not clear what the word exactly meant in Chinese context.

Khrushchev rushed to give a rebuff: "What a pretty situation we have: on one hand, you use the formula [the communist camp] 'led by the Soviet Union,' on the other hand, you do not let me say a word. What kind of equality can we talk about?" Later Khrushchev and Suslov repeated this argument in Moscow, expecting to get support from his colleagues.

The October 1959 summit presents a different Mao in comparison with 1958; the Chinese leader was less forceful and somewhat mellow. Perhaps the disastrous consequences of his Great Leap Forward forced Mao to take a lower profile, and provided more room for his politburo colleagues at the meeting. At the same time he was clearly in command and must have enjoyed when his colleagues, one after another, attacked the Soviet leader. At some point, when the altercation between Khrushchev and Chen Yi degenerated into a brawl, Mao must have realized that

things had gone too far. He intervened with reassuring calm tone to bring the stormy meeting to a civilized conclusion.

C s s t S s: T S S

Whether Mao expected an open Sino-Soviet split soon or not, he obviously did not want to be blamed for it. After Khrushchev's departure, in a conversation with Soviet chargé S.F. Antonov, the Chinese leader struck a very conciliatory tone. He pointed out that the Sino-Soviet differences constituted only "half a finger" out of ten. Mpenlre h-0.008 tak0.0 it.01 Tw(prepare 4ati-0plitlearly) MoscooTJ24Oeeareyhjer\

ideological choice would be unbreakable. It seemed much more solid than the ties that emerge between countries on the ground of sober pragmatic interests."<sup>35</sup> The truth that Mao had decided to shake off the fraternal embrace was





have parted ways now, who did not support this proposal by Stalin either. After Stalin's death we immediately raised the issue of liquidating the joint companies [smeshannie obschestva], and today we do not have them anywhere.

Mao Zedong: There were also two half-colonies—Xinjiang [Sinkiang] and Manchuria.

N.S. Khrushchev: The abnormal situation there has been liquidated.

Mao Zedong: According to the agreement, there was even a ban on the residence of citizens of third countries there.<sup>4</sup> You also eliminated these half-colonies.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, since it contradicted basic communist principles.

Mao Zedong: I am in absolute agreement.

N.S. Khrushchev: Even in Finland, a capitalist country, we liquidated our military base.

Mao Zedong: And it was you personally who liquidated the base in Port Arthur.

N.S. Khrushchev: It could not be otherwise. This was even more correct with regard to a socialist country. Even in capitalist countries this causes nothing but harm. We liquidated joint ownership in Austria; we sold it to the Austrian government. This bore its fruits. Otherwise there would have been a constant source of conflict with the Austrian government. We had good, warm meetings when we received a delegation from Austria. Earlier we would not have been able to hold such meetings. The fact that we have good relations with a neutral capitalist country is advantageous for all socialist countries.

Our course is crystal-clear. We render assistance to former colonies; there is not a single clause in our treaties that would cloud our relations or contain encroachments on the independence of the country which we assist. In this lies the strength of the socialist camp. When we render assistance to former colonies and do not impose political conditions, we win over the hearts of the peoples of these countries. Such assistance is provided to Syria, Egypt, India, Afghanistan, and other countries. Recently we agreed to sign a treaty with Argentina. This will strongly affect the minds of people in Latin America and particularly in Argentina. We agreed to provide equipment for the oil industry in the amount of \$100 million. This is directed against the United States, so that South Americans would not feel completely dependent on the US and would realize that there is a way out.

Mao Zedong: This is right.

N.S. Khrushchev: How could you think that we would treat you in such a way as was described in the conversations with cde. Yudin? (Joking.) Now I am launching an attack.

Mao Zedong: What is a joint fleet? Please, clarify.

N.S. Khrushchev: It displeases me to speak about it, since the ambassador is absent.<sup>47</sup> I sent him the instruction, talked with him separately and then at the Presidium. When I talked with him, I feared that he might misunderstand me. I asked: "The issue is clear for you." He said: "Clear." But as I can see, he did not tell you the essential thing from what I

said to him.

Mao Zedong: Is that so? [Vot kak?]

N.S. Khrushchev: As I can see, these issues are as far from him as the moon is from the earth. This is a special issue, in which he is not involved.

The issue about the construction of the fleet is so complicated that we have not passed a final judgment on it. We have been dealing with it since Stalin's death. We sent Admiral [Nikolai] Kuznetsov into retirement, freed him from military service, because, in case we had accepted his 10-year program of naval construction, then we would have ended up with neither a Navy nor money. That is why, when we received the letter from com. Zhou Enlai with the request of consultation and assistance in the construction of a navy, it was difficult for us to give an answer.

Mao Zedong inquires about the cost of this program.

N.S. Khrushchev gives an answer.

We were asked to build cruisers, aircraft carriers, and other big-size vessels. One cruiser is very expensive, but [there is the] construction of ports and the places of anchorage for the fleet. It's many times more expensive. We discussed this program and rejected it. But, most importantly, we subjected to criticism the very doctrine of the Navy in the light of the changed situation with regard to military technology.

In 1956 we convened a conference of seamen at Sevastopol, where [Klementi] Voroshilov, [Anastas] Mikoyan, [Georgy] Malenkov, [Gen. Georgy] Zhukov and I were present. The seamen reported on how they planned to use the Navy in war. After such a report they should have been driven out with a broom, not only from the Navy, but

also routed the Japanese Navy with the help of the air force.

The question is where one should invest money.

When we received your letter, we began to think—to send the military [to China], but they have no unanimous viewpoint on naval construction. We already discussed this question three times and one last time decided to give them a month deadline for presenting their proposals. What kind of navy does one need under modern conditions? We stopped the construction of cruisers, [and] tossed the artillery turrets that were already finished into the smelting furnaces. And they had the value of gold. We have several cruisers under construction in docks [na stapeliakh]. Within our General Staff, people are divided into two camps: some say—toss them away, others say—we should finish them and then should stop building. Upon my return I will have to decide on this. The military advisers split into two groups. I did not have a firm opinion on this: to end the construction—investments are lost, to finish—more expenses are needed. One does not need them for war. Before I left for vacation, [Defense Minister Marshal Rodion] Malinovsky asked me to look into this question. At the Military Council for Defense I spoke against finishing the cruisers, but did not do so decisively. Malinovsky cajoled me, I decided to support him. We held a session of the CC Presidium, and many distinguished marshals and generals spoke there categorically against [terminating construction]. We then decided to postpone the question until Malinovsky returned from vacation and to discuss it once again. I think that at this time we will decide to throw them in the furnace [vagranka].

What kind of consultation under such circumstances could our military have given you? Therefore we said to ourselves that we must get together with the responsible Chinese comrades to discuss and resolve this issue. We could not rely on the military alone since they lack themselves any precise point of view. We wanted to discuss jointly with you which direction we should take in the construction of the Navy. For instance, I cannot say today which point of view on this question the head of the Naval Headquarters has [shtaba voenno-morskikh sil]. If we send him [to the PRC], one cannot say which opinion he would express—his own or ours. Therefore we wanted to discuss this with comrades Zhou Enlai and Peng Dehuai, with military and civilian officials. We did not want to impose our point of view and we are not going to; you might have disagreed with us on which kind of navy we should build. We are still in the exploratory phase.

Who today needs cruisers with their limited firepower, when rocketry exists[?] I told Eden in London that their

did not think to build a joint plant or a joint fleet. We do not need anything like this.

Mao Zedong: Yudin spoke not once about the creation of a joint fleet and said that the Black and the Baltic Seas do not have outlets, that to operate the Navy from Murmansk is not easy, that the road from Vladivostok is blocked by Japan, etc. He also pointed out that the Chinese coastline is very extended. According to Yudin, the USSR produces atomic submarines. His entire speech boiled down to the creation of a joint fleet.

N.S. Khrushchev: We build our Navy and can use it. This is a formidable weapon. It is true that it will be difficult to use it, but so will it be for the enemy. War in general is a difficult business.

Mao Zedong: I asked Yudin, who would have ownership of the fleet—the Chinese, the USSR, or both countries jointly[?] I also emphasized that under current conditions the Chinese need the fleet as Chinese property, and that any other ownership is out of question. In case of war we will deliver everything to the Soviet Union. Yet, Yudin insisted that the fleet should be a joint one. For the third time Yudin was received by cde. Liu Shaoqi and other comrades. At this conversation Yudin repeated what he said previously. Our comrades spoke against the joint fleet. He changed the formula and instead of a “joint fleet” started talking about “joint construction.” Our comrades criticized this statement as well, and said that we understood this to mean joint ownership of the fleet. Then Yudin began to speak about “joint efforts” to create the fleet.

N.S. Khrushchev: This is also my fault. I should not have instructed Yudin, who does not command the issue, to inform you. But we did not want to write a letter on this question. We wanted to inform you orally.

Mao Zedong: We understood it as follows: if we want to obtain [Soviet] assistance, then we must build a joint fleet aimed primarily against the US. We understood that Khrushchev wanted to resolve the question about a joint creation of the Navy together with Chinese comrades, having in mind also to draw in Vietnam.

N.S. Khrushchev: I said that, when the war begins, we would have to use the coast widely, including Vietnam.

Mao Zedong: I already said that, in case of war, the Soviet Union will use any part of China, [and] Russian sailors will be able to act in any port of China.

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Deng Xiaoping: The issue stemmed from the analysis of the maritime coast of China and the Soviet Union. Yudin said that China has a good coast, and the Soviet Union's coast is bad, thus one needs a joint fleet. Then Mao Zedong said—is this a cooperative?

Mao Zedong: A cooperative consists of two parts.

N.S. Khrushchev: Everything is absolutely clear. I expressed my opinion. I believed that Chinese friends held us in better esteem. Therefore I believed it was necessary to get united [ob'ediniatsia]. We did not encroach on the sovereignty of China. We had one approach in the Party. I believe that you adhere to the same principle.

Mao Zedong: In this case I cease to worry. [ia spokoen]

Another scenario would have been [to build] a joint fleet. If the fleet were not a joint one, then there would be no assistance.

N.S. Khrushchev: Did Yudin say that?

Mao Zedong: No, he did not. I am telling you the essence of his words.

N.S. Khrushchev: But this is your inference!

Mao Zedong: And the third scenario means that we withdraw our request, because the second scenario does not suit us. Even if in the next ten thousand years we do not have atomic submarine fleet, we will not agree to build a joint fleet. We can live without it [oboidemsia].

N.S. Khrushchev: You did not write about the atomic submarine fleet in your letter.

Mao Zedong: Yes, we did not write about it. We posed the question about the equipment of the fleet with atomic weapons. Yudin spoke about the atomic submarine fleet.

N.S. Khrushchev: That is why I am saying: which kind of fleet to build, we have to discuss. Who will give you advice—[commander of the Soviet Navy Admiral Sergei] Gorshkov? I am not sure he gives you good advice. When he gives you advice, you may consider that it is we who are advising you. Then you sort it out and may say—they gave the wrong advice.

Mao Zedong: For us there is no question of building a large-size fleet. We only spoke about torpedo boats and submarines with rocket launchers. This is laid out in our letter.

There is a second issue—on the construction of a radar station in China.

N.S. Khrushchev: I would like to finish the business on the navy, and then [talk] about the station. I consider that this part of the instruction Yudin misrepresented. Perhaps he did not formulate it carefully and gave occasion to misinterpret him.

Mao Zedong: But there were 7 to 8 persons present. I said then that it was not a cooperative. Everyone just gasped with surprise when they heard this proposal. Because of that I lost my sleep for a night.

N.S. Khrushchev: And I—the next night. I agree to take upon myself part of the blame. I am the originator [pervoistochnik]. I explained to Yudin, he misperceived me

and misrepresented it. Yudin is an honest man and he treats China and you personally with a great deal of respect. We trust Yudin and believe he could not deliberately distort it. He is an honest member of the CC and does everything to strengthen the friendship between our countries. All this is a result of a misunderstanding flowing from his misperception of the instruction. I want to say that I had premonitions myself, and I repeated 2-3 times if all was clear, because I gave him instructions on a matter in which he was not involved at all. And I have a problem with you [ia k vam v pretenzii]. If you see that the matter goes beyond the boundaries of communist attitudes, then you should have had a good sleep, told yourself it was a misunderstanding, and tried to clarify this once again. (Jokingly.) You see, I am pressing you hard [ia k vaetveen our countrieone

, and the. An. I aow66.GoTwlp us\*-0c25(e)]Til. Khrushchev: And here 7 to 8 persons present, a good sleep, told was a bluff







Mao Zedong: The direction of the newspaper was erroneous, and now the situation is rectified.

N.S. Khrushchev: This is your business. We also considered the direction of the newspaper to be erroneous. I think the business with Mikoyan is resolved.

Mao Zedong: He is a good comrade. But the ratio in him spawned our remarks. We would like him to come.

N.S. Khrushchev: Among us in the Presidium there is no differences of opinion about our relations, [about relations] between our Parties. We all take joy in your





**DOCUMENT N . 2**  
**F I C s**  
**N.S. K s M Z ,**  
**H Q , 3 A s 1958**

Present at the meeting: cdes. Khrushchev, Malinovsky, Kuznetsov, Ponomarev, Antonov

Cdes: Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Chen Yun, Lin Biao, Deng Xiaoping, Peng Dehuai, Peng Zhen, Chen Yi, Wang Jiaxian [?], Huang Kecheng Sheng, Yang Shang, Hu Qiuomu.

[Mao Zedong:] I would like to clarify two small, but important issues.

military bases are drawn up close to our borders. But their main bases are located far from us, in America. It is difficult for bombers to reach them. But now, with the availability of missile weapons, the correlation of forces has been equalized. We are currently going through difficulties in testing long-range missiles. For this our territory is insufficient.

Mao Zedong: Could you launch them in the direction of the North Pole?

N.S. Khrushchev: But this is exactly the short distance, and in case of war we will fire across the Pole. That is why the Americans offer inspections of the Arctic Zone, so they could detect our missile bases and secure themselves.

Mao Zedong: I read the reply by Eisenhower to your proposal on prevention of surprise attack. It seems to be a decent answer, he seems to be ready to convene a conference of experts on this issue. They are obviously afraid of a surprise attack.

N.S. Khrushchev: I have not seen this letter yet.

Mao Zedong: I would like to agree with you regarding the departure of the delegation. Perhaps we should change the farewell ceremony, to convene the public at the airport, line up the guard of honor, invite the diplomatic corps.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yesterday we seemed to have agreed to arrange the same kind of departure as the arrival. Let our agreement be firm. Thus we will give fewer pretexts for idle gossip [krivotolki]. Otherwise they will write in the West that the arrival was secret, because they did not expect the talks to be successful, that perhaps there were some contradictions between China and the Soviet Union, that then they met, reached agreement and decided to stage a pompous farewell ceremony. Let them better try to solve the riddle, let the very fact of the meeting have an effect.

Mao Zedong: I thought it necessary that your arrival would be in secret so that the imperialists could not use your absence for delivering a surprise attack.

N.S. Khrushchev: I do not think they would have dared to do this; the correlation of forces is not in their favor. Now they had to swallow another bitter pill—to recognize Iraq. But even if they had been prepared for war at 50 percent readiness, they would not have started it even then.

Mao Zedong: Yes, England, of course, would not have started it.

N.S. Khrushchev: Both France and Germany would not have dared it. They know that we can reduce them to dust. The British during the Second World War suffered from German "V-1" and "V-2," but now these would be toys in comparison with [our] missiles. Everyone knows it.

Mao Zedong: But they have bases everywhere. In Turkey alone more than 100 bases.

N.S. Khrushchev: No, there are fewer bases in Turkey, and even they all are now in our cross-hairs [u nas podpritselom]. They intend to build bases in Greece, but there it is even easier: one can push the boulder from the

mountain in Bulgaria—so much for the bases. Even America itself is now under threat of attack.

We should be grateful to our scientists for the creation of the transcontinental missile.<sup>51</sup>

**DOCUMENT N . 3**  
**M C s**  
**N.S. K s t t t M Z ,**  
**B ,**  
**2 O 1959**

Present at the conversation: Cdes. M.A. Suslov and A.A. Gromyko.

Cdes: Deputy Chairmen of the CC CCP Liu Shaoqi, Zhao Enlai and Lin Biao; Members of the Politburo Peng Zhen and Chen Yi; Member of the Secretariat Wan Xia Sang.

be no war. We do not want war over Taiwan.

Mao Zedong: Taiwan is an internal PRC issue. We say that we will definitely liberate Taiwan. But the roads to liberation may be different—peaceful and military. Zhou Enlai declared at the Bandung conference in 1955 that China is ready to conduct negotiations with the US. In effect, since then there have been talks between Americans and us, first in Geneva, then in Warsaw. At first, the representatives at these talks met once a week, then once every two weeks, and recently once a month. Both sides do not want to derail the talks. For a while the Americans attempted to derail the talks. We declared that it was bad and set the terms for its resumption. The Americans declared that they were also in favor of continuing the talks, but they could not accept the “ultimatum” schedule. We disagreed. Then, after our shelling of the off-shore Chinese islands Quemoy and Matsu, the talks resumed. We Chinese always put forth the following idea at the talks: Americans, please, leave Taiwan, and after that there will not be any problems between us. We would then begin resolving the remaining issues with Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] on the basis of negotiations. Jiang Jieshi does not want the Americans to leave. The US, in turn, is afraid that Jiang Jieshi may establish ties with the PRC. There were military actions in this region but they did not constitute war. In our opinion, let Taiwan and other islands stay in the hands of the Jiang Jieshi-ists [Chiang Kai-shekists] for ten, twenty and even thirty years. We would tolerate it.

N.S. Khrushchev: I would like to say that at the first lunch meeting at the Soviet embassy in the USA, Eisenhower said that they, the Americans, had been negotiating with the PRC for a number of years and there were no results, and that the Chinese did not even agree to liberate five Americans that were in confinement in the PRC, and this complicated the situation and seriously irritated the American people. Moreover, Eisenhower told me, let all the Chinese that live in the US leave, if they like, we will not hold them back. Eisenhower also told me that there was no use for me to go to China.

Mao Zedong: China cannot be equaled with Germany, not only because the population of Taiwan is considerably smaller than the population on the Chinese mainland, but also because China was not a defeated country at the end of World War II, but among the victorious powers. Germany was divided into two states as a result of the Potsdam Agreement. In Korea, the 38th parallel was also established per agreement between Kim Il Sung and us, on one side, and Americans on the other. Vietnam was divided into North and South in accordance with the Geneva agreements. As for Taiwan is concerned, there was no decision on it at any international conference. The appearance of Americans on Taiwan arouses discontent not only in socialist countries, but also in England, in the US itself and other countries.

N.S. Khrushchev: Eisenhower understands this. But the problem is that he must first recognize the Chinese



business, but I am speaking about it as an ally.

Mao Zedong: We informed you about our intentions regarding Taiwan a month ahead, before we began shelling the off-shore islands.

N.S. Khrushchev: He reported to us not about your policy on this issue, but about some separate measures. We expressed our position, and now it is your business, whether to agree with us or not. We do not quite understand your policy in international issues. The issues of international policy we must coordinate. You perhaps should think if it is necessary to exchange opinions through the channels of foreign ministries on major political issues where we have no agreement.

Mao Zedong: As I already said, we informed you about our intentions through your General Staff. However, I would like to know what is your opinion on what we ought to do.

N.S. Khrushchev: We stand for relaxation of tensions. We only wanted the people to understand that we stand for peace. It is not worth shelling the islands in order to tease cats.

Mao Zedong: This is our policy. Our relations with Jiang Jieshi and with the Americans—are two different things. With the United States we will seek to resolve issues by peaceful means. If the United States does not leave Taiwan, then we will negotiate with them until they go from there. The relationship with Jiang Jieshi is our internal question and we might resolve it not only by peaceful, but also other methods. As far as the creation of the Far Eastern republic is concerned, and also the fact that at some point Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were separated from the Soviet Union, you should keep in mind that in these cases there was no foreign intervention.

N.S. Khrushchev: The issue of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Poland, Georgia, Armenia - this is an issue of a completely different nature. This is an issue of national self-determination. As for the Far Eastern republic, it was part of Russia.

Mao Zedong: The Taiwan Question is very complex.

N.S. Khrushchev: We have a common understanding of the question of Taiwan. At the present time there is only [a difference on] the question of tactics. You always refuse to work out a policy on this question that we could understand. You might think that we interfere into your internal affairs, but we only express our considerations. In this regard I would remark that we do not know what kind of policy you will have on this issue tomorrow.

Mao Zedong: We do not want war with the United States.

N.S. Khrushchev: One should not pose the issue this way. Neither you nor I want war—this is well known. The problem is that not only does the world public opinion not know what you might undertake tomorrow, but also even we, your allies, do not know it.

Mao Zedong: There could be two ways here. The first of them—to do what the Americans demand, i.e. to provide a guarantee on the non-use of force regarding Taiwan. The

Americans long ago posed the question and told us about it via Eden as early as March 1955. The second way is to draw a clear line between our relations with the United States and the relations with the Jiang-Jieshi-ists. As to the relations with Jiang Jieshi, here any means should be used, since the relations with Jiang Jieshi are our internal matter.

After a one-hour break the exchange of opinions resumed.

Mao Zedong: What should we do?

Zhou Enlai: We should continue.

Mao Zedong: To do what the Americans propose is not too good for us. And the Americans do not want to reciprocate, to do what we want.

N.S. Khrushchev: You are leaving us in an awkward position. You frame the question as if we support the position of Americans, while we stand on our Soviet communist position.

Mao Zedong: Perhaps we should postpone this question indefinitely. Everyone sees that we are not close to the United States and that the United States, not us, send[s] its fleet to our coast.

N.S. Khrushchev: One should keep in mind that we also are not without sin. It was we who drew the Americans to South Korea. We should undertake such steps that would allow the Americans to respond with their steps in the direction of a relaxation of the situation. We should seek ways of relaxing of the situation, to seek ways to ameliorate the situation. You know that when the events in Hungary took place, our hand did not waver to deliver a decisive crack-down on the counterrevolution. Comrade Liu Shaoqi was then with us and we together resolved this question. If it becomes necessary again, then we will carry out one more time our internationalist communist duty, and you should have no doubts about it. We would think that one should work out a whole system, a staircase of measures, and in such a way that people would understand us. After Stalin's death we achieved a lot. I could tell about a number of points on which I disagreed [with Stalin]. What did Stalin leave for us? There were [anti-aircraft] artillery around Moscow that was ready to open fire any moment. We expected an attack at any minute. We succeeded in liquidating such a situation and we are proud of this. Keep in mind that we achieved [the present-day] situation without giving up on any principled positions. We raised this issue also because we do not understand your position, do not understand in particular your conflict with India. We had a dispute with Persia on border issues for 150 years. 3-4 years ago we resolved this issue by transferring to Persia some part of our territory. We consider this issue as follows: five kilometers more land we have or five kilometers less—this is not important. I take





against the Soviet Union. Stalin forbade opening fire in response, and the instruction to open fire was sent only after some time. As Stalin explained, it might have been a provocation. Of course, it was Stalin's mistake. He simply got cold feet [on strusil]. But this case is absolutely different.

Zhu De: Hindus crossed the McMahon line that tears away 90 thousand square kilometers from China.

Chen Yi: After the revolt in Tibet there were several anti-Chinese, anti-communist campaigns in India. There were demonstrations against our Embassy in Dehli and the consulate in Calcutta; their participants reviled the leaders of the PRC and shouted anti-Chinese slogans. We did nothing like that, and the Indian Ambassador in the PRC had not the slightest pretext to claim [that we] were unfriendly.

N.S. Khrushchev: Our Soviet representatives abroad had much more fallen on them than yours. Since the establishment of our state not a few of Soviet ambassadors were killed abroad. And in the Soviet Union only a German ambassador was killed in 1918. True, at some point the windows in the embassies of the United States and Federal Republic of Germany were broken, but we organized it ourselves.

Chen Yi: Speaking of the effectiveness of efforts to pull Nehru to our side, our method will be more efficient, and yours is time-serving [opportunism-prisposoblenchestvo].

N.S. Khrushchev: Chen Yi is Minister of Foreign Affairs and he can weigh his words. He did not say it at random. We have existed for 42 years, and for 30 years we existed alone [as a socialist country] and adjusted to nothing, but carried out our principled communist policy.

Chen Yi (in great agitation and hastily): The Chinese people evoked pity for a long time and during many decades lived under oppression of British, American, French and other imperialists. The Soviet comrades should understand this. We are now undertaking certain measures to resolve the conflict with India peacefully, and just one fact testifies to this, that perhaps Vice President of India Radhakrishnan will come to us in mid-October. We also have a certain element of time-serving. You should understand our policy correctly. Our line is firmer and more correct.

N.S. Khrushchev: Look at this lefty. Watch it, comrade Chen Yi, if you turn left, you may end up going to the right. The oak is also firm, but it breaks. I believe that we should leave this issue aside, for we have a different understanding of it.

Zhou Enlai: Comrade Khrushchev, even the Hindus themselves do not know what and how it occurred on the Indo-Chinese border.

Lin Biao: During the war between the Soviet Union and Fascist Germany, the Soviet Army routed the fascists and entered Berlin. This does not mean that the Soviet Union began the war.

N.S. Khrushchev: It is not for me, a lieutenant-general,

to teach you, comrade Marshal.

M.A. Suslov: Comrade Lin Biao, you are trying to compare incomparable things. During the Patriotic War millions of people were killed, and here is a trivial incident.

Zhou Enlai: The Hindus did not withdraw their troops from where they had penetrated. We seek peaceful resolution of the conflict and suggested and do suggest to resolve it piece by piece.

N.S. Khrushchev: We agree with all that you are doing. It is what you have done before that we disagree with.

Zhou Enlai: The Hindus conducted large-scale anti-Chinese propaganda for 40 years until this provocation. They were the first to cross the border; they were the first to open fire. Could one still consider under these circumstances that we actually unleashed this incident?

N.S. Khrushchev: We are communists, and they are





period from 15 October until 1 December.

N.S. Khrushchev: I would also like to express an idea that has materialized just now with regard to the question of the visit of the Vice President. Would there be no bewilderment, if it were the Vice President, and not the President and Prime Minister [i.e., Nehru], to come to the PRC?

Zhou Enlai: The Hindus themselves offered the candidacy of Radhakrishnan. The President and Prime Minister of India sent us best wishes on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PRC. In reply to the address we will remind them again about the invitation of Radhakrishnan to come to the PRC.

Mao Zedong: "Pravda" published only an abridged version of Zhou Enlai's letter to Nehru, and the TASS announcement was published in full. Perhaps we now stop discussing this issue and shift to Laos?

N.S. Khrushchev: Good, let us do this, but I have not a slightest interest in this matter, for this is a very insignificant matter, and there is much noise around it. Today Ho Chi Minh came to see us and had a conversation with us about Laos. I sent him to you, for you should be more concerned with this. During the events in Hungary and Poland cdes. Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai came to us. Cde. Liu Shaoqi and I held different, sometimes diametrically opposed positions. During several days we could not work out a common opinion. Our positions shifted, but then we reached agreement and resolved the matter well.

Mao Zedong: We are against an escalation of fire in Laos.

N.S. Khrushchev: We are also against it.

Liu Shaoqi: The Minister of Defense of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has a plan to expand the struggle in Laos. Ho Chi Minh is against this plan, against an expansion of military activities. We support his stand.

N.S. Khrushchev: We should not expand military actions in Laos, for in this case the Americans will come. Then they will stand on the border with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and will certainly undertake provocations against the DRV. Therefore, they will be located in the immediate vicinity of the DRV, while we are removed quite substantially from the DRV. If the situation gets complicated there, the Americans could very quickly crush the DRV and we would not have time to undertake anything. In our opinion, we should advise the Vietnamese comrades not to expand military actions in Laos.

Mao Zedong: Here we are in a complete agreement with you. We are in general against not only expansion of military actions in Laos, but also for preservation of the status quo in the area of Taiwan. I would like to repeat that in August 1958, when we began shelling the off-shore islands Jimmen [Quemoy] and Matsu, we did not intend at all to undertake any kind of large-scale military actions there.

Present at the conversation were Provisional Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR in the PRC, S.F. Antonov, Attaché

of the Far Eastern Division of the Foreign Ministry of the USSR, R.Sh. Kudashev, and from the Chinese side— interpreters Yan Min Fu and Li Yue Zhen. The conversation was recorder by S.F. Antonov and R.Sh. Kudashev.

Signature: S. Antonov, 3 October 1959

R. Kudashev, 3 October 1959

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, f. 52, op. 1, d. 499, ll. 1-33, copy in Volkogonov Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Translation from Russian for CWHIP by Vladislav M. Zubok (National Security Archive).]

Vladislav M. Zubok is a senior fellow at the National Security Archive.

<sup>1</sup> Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan [Selected diplomatic documents of Mao Zedong] (Beijing: The Central Press of Historical Documents, 1993); Nan Nianlong et al., *Dangdai zhongguo waijiao* [Contemporary Chinese Diplomacy] (Beijing: Chinese Social Science Press, 1989); Shi Zhongquan, *Zhou Enlai de zhuoyue fengxian* [Remarkable Achievements and Contributions of Zhou Enlai] (Beijing: CCP Central Academy Press, 1993); Zhang Shu Guang and Chen Jian, "The Emerging Disputes Between Beijing and Moscow: Ten Newly Available Chinese Documents, 1956-1958," *CWHIP Bulletin* 6-7 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 148-163.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Kramer, "The USSR Foreign Ministry's Appraisal of Sino-Soviet Relations on the Eve of the Split, September 1959, 6-7 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 170-185; Odd Arne Westad, "Mao on Sino-Soviet Relations: Conversations with the Soviet Ambassador, CWHIP Bulletin 6-7 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 157, 164-169; "A New Cult of Personality": Suslov's Secret Report on Mao, Khrushchev, and Sino-Soviet Tensions, December 1959 CWHIP Bulletin 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 244-248; Chen Jian, "A Crucial Step towards the Breakdown of the Sino-Soviet Alliance: The Withdrawal of Soviet Experts from China in July 1960," CWHIP Bulletin 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 246, 249-250; M.Y. Prozumenschikov, "The Sino-Indian Conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Sino-Soviet Split, October 1962: New Evidence from the Russian Archives," CWHIP Bulletin 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 251-257, 258-261; Vladislav Zubok, "'Look What Chaos in the Beautiful Socialist Camp!': Deng Xiaoping and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1956-1963," CWHIP Bulletin 10 (March 1998), pp. 152-162; "Deng Xiaoping's Talks with the Soviet Ambassador and Leadership, 1957-1963," CWHIP Bulletin 10 (March 1998), pp. 165-173.

<sup>3</sup> Dmitri Volkogonov, Sem Vozhdei: Galereia liderov SSSR. Kniga 1 [Seven Leaders. The Gallery of the Leaders of the USSR. Volume 1] (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), pp. 412-

415.

<sup>4</sup> Odd Arne Westad, "History, Memory, and the Languages of Alliance-Making" in: Odd Arne Westad, Chen Jian, Stein Toenneson, Nguyen Vu Tung and James G. Hershberg (eds.), *77 Conversations Between Chinese and Foreign Leaders on the Wars in Indochina, 1964-1977*, Working Paper no. 22 of the Cold War International History Project (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars May 1998).

<sup>5</sup> See details in: Zhang Shu Guang and Chen Jian, "The Emerging Disputes," pp. 155-159, 163.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan D. Spence asserts that "the Soviets were making China pay dearly for aid in industrial development, and one reason China needed an even greater agricultural surplus was to meet the terms for repayment of Soviet loans," *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), p. 575. The Note of Yu.V. Andropov to the CC CPSU, 17 May 1958, Russian State Archive of Contemporary History [Rossiiskii Gosudarstrenni Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii] f.5 op. 49, d. 128, l. 60.

<sup>7</sup> "From the Diary of Yudin. Record of conversation with comrade Dzu De on 22 February 1958 and on 24 March 1958", RGANI, f. 5, op. 49, d. 128, ll. 40, 44-45.

<sup>8</sup> E.A. Negin, Yu.N. Smirnov, "Did the USSR share its atomic secrets with China?" *Science and Society. History of the Soviet Atomic Project (40's - 50's): Proceedings of the International Symposium at Dubna, 14-18 May 1996*, pp. 306-308.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Feodor V. Mochulsky, Moscow, 9 July 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Feodor V. Mochulsky, Moscow, 9 July 1992.

<sup>11</sup> William Taubman, "Khrushchev Vs. Mao: A Preliminary Sketch of the Role of Personality in the Sino-Soviet Split," *CWHIP Bulletin* 8-9 (Winter 1996-97), p. 248.

<sup>12</sup> See more in Vladislav Zubok and Constantin Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 213-220.

<sup>13</sup> William Taubman, "Khrushchev Vs. Mao," pp. 246, 247.

<sup>14</sup> Harrison E. Salisbury, *The New Emperors: China in*

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published in "A New Cult of Personality": Suslov's Secret Report on Mao, Khrushchev, and Sino-Soviet Tensions, December 1959, CWHIP Bulletin 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), p. 248

<sup>35</sup> Negin, Smirnov, Op. cit., p. 304.

<sup>36</sup> Troyanovsky, Op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>37</sup> Grinevsky, Op. cit., pp. 125-129, 131, 149-150, 162-163.

<sup>38</sup> Unedited Version of the Stenographic Report on the Session of the CC Plenum, 4 May 1960, Afternoon session, RGANI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 451, pp. 20-21.

<sup>39</sup> Troyanovsky, Op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>40</sup> See Ilya V. Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 1996), pp. 4-5.

<sup>41</sup> Records of Vladimir Malin at the CC Presidium, 13-14 October 1964, *Istochnik* 2, (1998), p. 128.

<sup>42</sup> Report of the CC CPSU Presidium at the October CC CPSU Plenum (draft), by D. Polyansky, *Istochnik*, 2 (1998), p. 114.

<sup>43</sup> Georgi Arbatov, *The System: An Insider's Life in Soviet Politics* (New York: Times Books, 1992), p. 115.

<sup>44</sup> Valentin Falin, *Politische Erinnerungen* (München: Droemer Knaur, 1993), p. 239, and the Russian-language version *Bez skidki na obstoiatelstva: politicheskiie vospominaniia* [Making no allowance for circumstances: political reminiscences] (Moscow: Respublika-

*Sovremennik*, 1999), p. 302.

<sup>45</sup> Pavel Yudin was Soviet ambassador to the PRC in 1950-1958.

<sup>46</sup> For Chinese records of these conversations see Chen Jian and Shuguang Zhang, eds., *Chinese Communist Foreign Policy and the Cold War in Asia: New Documentary Evidence, 1944-1950*; with a preface by Warren I. Cohen (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1996).

<sup>47</sup> Reference to the Lebanon Crisis of 1958. One day after the violent overthrow of the pro-Western government of Nuri al Said in Iraq on 14 July, US President Eisenhower sent US marines to Beirut in support of the Government of President Camille Chamoun's regime.

<sup>48</sup> This was stipulated in secret agreements attached to the Sino-Soviet Treaty for Friendship and Cooperation signed in Moscow on 14 February 1950.

<sup>49</sup> Yudin fell ill on 30 July.

<sup>50</sup> Editor's Note: Reference to the 1956 Soviet military suppression of the Hungarian Revolution.

<sup>51</sup> Editor's Note: Inter-continental ballistic missile, or ICBM, first tested by the USSR in 1957.

<sup>52</sup> Editor's Note: Artificial satellites, first launched by the USSR in October 1957.

<sup>53</sup> 22 October 1958, REAT MC-16 (Taiwan), FRUS 1958-1960 China, p.421.



## Le Duan and the Break with China

### Introduction by Stein Tønnesson

The decision of the Cold War International History Project to publish Christopher E. Goscha's translation of Secretary General Le Duan's long 1979 statement about Sino-Vietnamese relations is a significant event. Until now, few Vietnamese documents of this kind have been made available to scholars. The latter tend therefore to analyze the two Indochina Wars and their role in the Cold War as a power game between Western powers, the Soviet Union and China, and to overlook Vietnamese perspectives. Goscha's translation brings one such perspective into the scholarly debate.

Goscha, a researcher with the Groupe d'Etudes sur le Vietnam contemporain (Sciences Politiques, Paris), consulted the document in the People's Army Library in Hanoi, copied it by hand, and translated it into English. He did so with full authorization. The text is undated, and the author's name is just given as "Comrade B." The content implies, however, that it was written in 1979, most probably between the Chinese invasion of northern Vietnam in February 1979 and the publication of the Vietnamese White Book about Sino-Vietnamese relations on 4 October of the same year.<sup>1</sup> It seems likely that the text was composed shortly after Deng Xiaoping's decision on 15 March 1979 to withdraw the Chinese troops from their punitive expedition into northern Vietnam, but before the defection to China of the veteran Vietnamese communist leader Hoang Van Hoan in July 1979.

How can we know that the man behind the text is Le Duan? In it, "comrade B" reveals that during a Politburo meeting in the Vietnamese Workers' Party (VWP, the name of the Vietnamese Communist Party from 1951 to 1976) he was referred to as Anh Ba (Brother Number Three), an alias we know was used by Le Duan. The document also refers frequently to high level meetings between Chinese and Vietnamese leaders where the author (referred to in the text as "I," in Vietnamese *toi*) represented the Vietnamese side in an authoritative way that few others than he could have done. We know Le Duan did not write much himself, and the document has an oral style (a fact that has made its translation extremely difficult). It thus seems likely that the text is either a manuscript dictated by Le Duan to a secretary, or detailed minutes written by someone attending a high-level meeting where Le Duan made the statement.

The document can be used by the historian to analyze: a) Le Duan's ideas and attitudes, b) the situation within the socialist camp in 1979, c) the record of Le Duan's relations with China in the period 1952–79.

From a scholarly point of view it is safest to use the text for the first and the second purposes since the document can then be exploited as an artifact, a textual residue from the past that the historian seeks to

reconstruct. As such it illuminates the views and attitudes of Vietnam's top leader in the crisis year 1979, and also some aspects of the situation within the socialist camp at that particular juncture. To use the text as a source to the earlier history of Le Duan's relations with China (the topic addressed in the text) is more problematic, since what Le Duan had to say in 1979 was deeply colored by rage. Thus he is likely to have distorted facts, perhaps even made up stories. As a source to events in the period 1952–79, the document must therefore be treated with tremendous caution, and be held up against other available sources. Two similar sources, resulting from the same kind of outrage, are the official white books published by Vietnam and China towards the end of 1979.<sup>2</sup> A third source, with a series of documents from the years 1964–77, is Working Paper No. 22, published by the Cold War International History Project in 1998, *77 Conversations Between Chinese and Foreign Leaders on the Wars in Indochina, 1964–1977*, edited by an international group of historians: Odd Arne Westad, Chen Jian, Stein Tønnesson, Nguyen Vu Tung, and James G. Hershberg. This collection contains 77 minutes of conversations—or excerpts of such minutes—between Chinese, Vietnamese and other leaders in the period 1964–77 (presumably taken down during or shortly after each conversation, but compiled, excerpted and possibly edited at later stages). The collection includes several conversations in which Le Duan took part. The editors of the *77 Conversations* write that the minutes have been compiled from "archival documents, internal Communist party documentation, and open b-0.037 Tw[(Paper .of W)74(

the purpose of justifying his own actions vis-à-vis China and ensuring support for maintaining a hard line towards Chinese pressures, possibly fighting another great war. Le Duan speaks of himself as “I,” (*toi*) identifies each of his interlocutors on the Chinese side by name, and expresses his emotions towards Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping and other Chinese leaders. The author really likes the word “I”, and uses it even when referring to his talks with Ho Chi Minh. This is surprising since using *toi* in relation to conversations with the Uncle (Bac), would probably be considered arrogant, even for people who worked closely with him. The proper term in that connection would perhaps be “Chau”<sup>5</sup> Throughout the document, it is Le Duan who does everything. The style is oral. It seems possible that the one who wrote down the text later deposited the document in the Army Library.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the refreshing directness of the text, there is one thing the author almost does not do. He does not speak openly about internal disagreements among the Vietnamese leaders. The only other leaders mentioned by name are Ho Chi Minh and Nguyen Chi Thanh, who had both passed away long before 1979. There is not a word about Vo Nguyen Giap, Pham Van Dong, Nguyen Duy Trinh, Xuan Thuy, Hoang Van Hoan, or any of the others who had played prominent roles in Hanoi’s tortuous relations with Beijing. Internal disagreements on the Vietnamese side are only mentioned on one occasion. Le Duan claims that everyone in the Politburo always was of the same mind, but that there had been one person who rose to question the Politburo, asking why Le Duan had talked about the need to not be afraid of the Chinese. On that occasion, says Le Duan, the one who stood up to support Anh Ba, was Nguyen Chi Thanh (the army commander in southern Vietnam, who had often been considered a supporter of Chinese viewpoints before his untimely death in 1967). The “comrade” asking the impertinent question was no doubt Hoang Van Hoan, and the fact that he is not mentioned by name may indicate that Le Duan’s statement was made before this party veteran defected to China in July 1979.

As a background to the analysis of the text, we should first establish what is generally known about Le Duan’s life (1907–86) and career. He came from Quang Tri in Central Vietnam, and based his party career on political work in the southern half of Vietnam. In the 1920s he became a railway worker, joined the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) at its foundation in 1930, and spent the years 1931–36 in a French prison. During the Popular Front period in France, he was free again to work politically and in March 1938 became member of the ICP Central Committee.<sup>7</sup> In 1940 he was arrested once more, and belonged (with Pham Hung and Nguyen Duy Trinh) to the group of party leaders who spent the war years 1941–45 at the French prison island Pulo Condore.<sup>8</sup> He was released in 1945 and during the First Indochina War he served as secretary of the Nam Bo (southern region) Party Committee (from 1951 the Central Office for South Vietnam; COSVN), with Le Duc Tho as his

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dichotomy in his moral universe was that between fear and courage. He seems to have despised those who did not "dare" to fight. If it had not been for the Vietnamese, he claimed, there would not have been anyone to fight the Americans, because at the time the Vietnamese were fighting the US, the rest of the world were "afraid" of the Americans. The same kind of moral pride comes out in Le Duan's account of a meeting he had with Zhou Enlai in Hanoi, just after the latter had received Kissinger in Beijing. Le Duan says he told Zhou that with the new Sino-American understanding, Nixon would attack "me" even harder, but "I am not at all afraid." Later in the text, he comes back to the claim that "It was only Vietnam that was not afraid of the US." He also identifies the fearful. The first person to fear the Americans was Mao, he claims. The famous statement about the "paper tiger" is not present in

struggle for national liberation. This is not like the olden days, he says, when Vietnam stood alone against China. Now the whole world is closely knit together: "... this is a time where everyone wants independence and freedom. [Even] on small islands, people want independence and freedom. All of humankind is presently like this. ... To harm Vietnam was [is] to harm humanity, an injury to independence and freedom. . . Vietnam is a nation that symbolizes independence and freedom."

1979

The next use that can be made of the document is for throwing light on the situation in the year when it was written. 1979 marks the main turning point in the history of the international communist movement. By 1977–78 it was at



the Vietnamese White Book) tells about Sino-Vietnamese relations in 1963–65, and what we know from Chinese sources. According to Le Duan’s account, it was Mao who wanted to build roads into Vietnam, and to send troops there, while he himself wished only for material assistance. In all accounts based on Chinese sources, the request for roads and volunteer troops came from the Vietnamese side, and was expressed by Le Duan and Ho Chi Minh.<sup>22</sup> This is also confirmed by some of the 77 Conversations. Le Duan’s claim that “I only asked that they send personnel, but they brought guns and ammunition” does not seem to stand up to the evidence. After the Chinese engineer





to go to China twice to talk with them [the Chinese leadership] about [the course of events] in southern Vietnam. As for the Soviets, I did not say anything at all [about the situation in southern Vietnam]. I only spoke in general terms. When dealing with the Chinese, I had to say that both were fighting the US. Alone I went. I had to attend to this matter. I had to go there and talk with them many times in this way, with the main intention to build closer relations between the two sides [meaning Chinese and Vietnamese]. It was precisely at this time that China pressured us to move away from the USSR, forbidding us from going with the USSR's [side] any longer.<sup>33</sup>

They made it very tense. Deng Xiaoping, together with Kang Sheng,<sup>34</sup> came and told me: "Comrade, I will assist you with several billion [presumably yuan] every year. You cannot accept anything from the Soviet Union."

I could not allow this. I said: "No, we must have solidarity and unity with the whole [socialist] camp."<sup>35</sup>

In 1963, when Khrushchev erred, [the Chinese] immediately issued a 25-point declaration and invited our Party to come and give our opinion.<sup>36</sup> Brother Truong Chinh and I went together with a number of other brothers. In discussions, they [the Chinese] listened to us for ten or so points, but when it came to the point of "there is no abandonment of the socialist camp,"<sup>37</sup> they did not listen ... Deng Xiaoping said, "I am in charge of my own document. I seek your opinion but I do not accept this point of yours."

Before we were to leave, Mao met with Brother Truong Chinh and myself. Mao sat down to chat with us, and in the end he announced: "Comrades, I would like you to know this. I will be president of 500 million land-hungry peasants, and I will bring an army to strike downwards into Southeast Asia."<sup>38</sup> Also seated there, Deng Xiaoping added: "It is mainly because the poor peasants are in such dire straits!"

Once we were outside, I told Brother Truong Chinh: "There you have it, the plot to take our country and Southeast Asia. It is clear now." They dared to announce it in such a way. They thought we would not understand. It is true that not a minute goes by that they do not think of fighting Vietnam!

I will say more to you comrades so that you may see more of the military importance of this matter. Mao asked me:

—In Laos, how many square kilometers [of land] are there?

I answered:

—About 200,000 [sq. km.].

—What is its population? [Mao asked]:

—[I answered]: Around 3 million!

—[Mao responded:] That's not very much! I'll bring my people there, indeed!

—[Mao asked:] How many square kilometers [of land] are there in Thailand?

—[I responded]: About 500,000 [sq. km.].

—And how many people? [Mao asked].

—About 40 million! [I answered].

—My God! [Mao said], Szechwan province of China has 500,000 sq. km., but has 90 million people. I'll take some more of my people there, too [to Thailand]!

As for Vietnam, they did not dare to speak about moving in people this way. However, he [Mao] told me: "Comrade, isn't it true that your people have fought and defeated the Yuan army?" I said: "Correct." "Isn't it also true, comrade, that you defeated the Qing army?" I said: "Correct." He said: "And the Ming army as well?" I said: "Yes, and you too. I have beaten you as well."<sup>39</sup> Did you know that?" I spoke with Mao Zedong in that way. He said: "Yes, yes!" He wanted to take Laos, all of Thailand ... as well as wanting to take all of Southeast Asia. Bringing said: (af24)dey do nots importandare to nd.Southeas





When I returned from China, I met Uncle [Ho]. He asked me:

—This was your first time to go abroad, isn't that right?

—Yes, I went abroad for the first time.

—What did you see?

—I saw two things: Vietnam is very brave and they [the Chinese] are not brave at all.

I understood this from that day on. We [the Vietnamese] were entirely different from them. Courage is inherent in the Vietnamese person, and thus we have never had a defensive strategy. Every inhabitant fights.

Recently, they [the Chinese] have brought several hundred thousand troops in to invade our country. For the most part, we have used our militia and regional troops to attack them. We were not on the defensive, and thus they suffered a setback. They were not able to wipe out a single Vietnamese platoon, while we wiped out several of their regiments and several dozen of their battalions. That is so because of our offensive strategy.

The American imperialists fought us in a protracted war. They were so powerful, yet they lost. But there was a special element, that is the acute contradictions between the Chinese and the Soviets. [Because of this,] they have attacked us hard like this.

—Vietnam fought the Americans, and fought them very fiercely, but we know that the US was an extremely large country, more than capable of amassing 10 million troops and bringing all of its considerably powerful weapons in to fight us. Therefore we had to fight over a long period of time in order to bring them to de-escalation. We were the ones who could do this; the Chinese could not. When the American army attacked Quong Tre, the Politburo ordered troops to be brought in to fight at once. We were not afraid. After that I went to China to meet Zhou Enlai. He told me: "It [the attack in Queng Tre] is probably unparalleled, unique. In life there is only one [chance,] not two. No one has ever dared to do what you, comrades, have done."

... Zhou Enlai was the Chief of the General Staff. He dared to speak, he was more frank. He told me: "If I had known before the ways which you comrades employ, we would not have needed the Long March." What was the Long March for? At the beginning of the march there were 300,000 troops; and at the end of the Long March there were only 30,000 remaining. 270,000 people were lost. It was truly idiotic to have done it in this way ... [I] speak as such so that you, comrades, know how much we are ahead of them. In the near future, if we are to fight against China, we will certainly win ... However, the truth is that if a different country [other than Vietnam] were to fight against China, it is not clear that they would win like this [like Vietnam].

... If China and the USSR had been united with each other, then it is not certain that the US would have dared to

fight us. If the two had been united and joined together to help us, it is not certain that the US would have dared to have fought us in the way in which they did. They would have balked from the very beginning. They would have balked in the same way during the Kennedy period. Vietnam, China, and the USSR all helped Laos and the US immediately signed a treaty with Laos. They did not dare to send American troops to Laos, they let the Lao [People's Revolutionary] Party participate in the government right away. They did not dare to attack Laos any more.

Later, as the two countries [the USSR and China] were



Why so? Because during the June 1960 conference in Bucharest, 60 Parties rose to oppose China, but it was only I who defended China.<sup>54</sup> Our Vietnamese people is like that. I will go ahead and repeat this: However badly they behave, we know that their people are our friends. As for





