# New Evidence on the Cold War in Asia

*[Editor's Note: With the following documents (and introductions), CWIHP continues its publication of critical new sources on the Cold War in Asia. In the first article, Vladislav Zubok (National Security Archive) introduces a remarkable set of conversations that took place between Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev and his Chinese counterpart, Mao Zedong, in the summer of 1958 and the fall of 1959. The minutes of these conversations allow the reader to be a fly-on-the-wall in the wide-ranging and colorful discourse between the two communist giants at a pivotal moment in their relationship—during the opening salvos of the Sino-Soviet split.*

*The documents were obtained by Zubok and former CWIHP director David Wolff from the Volkogonov Papers at the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.) in early 2000, following the opening of the papers to the public that January. Much like the rest of the Volkogonov Collection, these transcripts are fragments of a larger collection of documents on the communist summits, presumably located in the Presidential Archive of the Russian Federation in Moscow. Neither is the full set of the Russian records on the conversations between the two leaders available, nor has access been granted to all the supporting materials. Several important documents illuminating the context of these conversations, however, were published in previous issues of the* CWIHP Bulletin, *including, "The Emerging Disputes Between Beijing and Moscow: Ten Newly Available Chinese Documents, 1956-1958," introduction, translations, and annotations by Zhang Shu Guang and Chen Jian,* CWIHP Bulletin *6/7 (Winter 1995-96), pp. 148-163; "Mao on Sino-Soviet Relations: Two Conversations with the Soviet Ambassador," introduction by Odd Arne Westad,* CWIHP Bulletin *6/7 (Winter 1995-96), pp. 157, 164-169; William Taubman, "Khrushchev vs. Mao: A Preliminary Sketch of the Role of Personality in the Sino-Soviet Split,"* CWIHP Bulletin *8/9 (Winter 1996/97), pp. 243-248; A New "Cult of Personality": Suslov's Secret Report on Mao, Khrushchev, and Sino-Soviet Tensions, December 1959,"* CWIHP Bulletin *8/9 (Winter 1996/97), pp. 244, 248; and David Wolff,* 'One Finger's Worth of Historical Events:' New Russian and Chinese Evidence on the Sino-Soviet Alliance and Split, 1948-1959 *(CWIHP Working Paper No. 30, 2000).*

*Stein Tønnesson's introduction of the document "Comrade B on the Plot of the Reactionary Chinese Clique against Vietnam," highlights another crucial moment in the evolution of the Cold War in Asia: Presumably written by Vietnamese Workers' Party General Secretary Le Duan in 1979, after the Chinese military incursion into Vietnam, the document reflects the views of Vietnam's top leader on relations with Beijing and provides insight into the Sino-Vietnamese relationship at the height of the clash between the two communist regimes. The document was discovered and copied by Christopher E. Goscha (Groupe d'Etudes sur le Viet Nam contemporain, SciencesPo, Paris), with full authorization, in the People's Army Library in Hanoi and later translated into English for CWHIP.*

*Few archival documents have become available from the "other sides" on the Sino-Vietnamese conflict and the Indochina Wars, particularly from a Vietnamese perspective. Key archives in Beijing and Hanoi remain inaccessible to scholars, who are forced to rely largely on official government publications and internal "nebu" histories. Earlier efforts by CWIHP to provide perspectives and documents from the Chinese and Vietnamese side include the publication of* 77 Conversations between Chinese and Foreign Leaders on the Wars in Indochina, 1964-1977 *(CWIHP Working Paper No. 22), edited by Odd Arne Westad, Chen Jian, Stein Tœnnesson, Nguyen Vu Tung and James Hershberg (1998) and Zhai Qiang,* Beijing and the Vietnam Peace Talks, 1965-1968: New Evidence from Chinese Sources *(CWIHP Working Paper No. 18, 1997).*

*When the 1979 document was first presented by Tønnesson and Goscha at the conference "New Evidence on China, Southeast Asia and the Vietnam War," sponsored by the University of Hong Kong and the Cold War International History Project in January 2000 (see the conference report in this Bulletin), it sparked considerable controversy among some of the Vietnamese and Chinese participants. Several participants questioned the provenance and significance of the document, given its strong coloring by the author's animosity towards the Chinese leadership at the time. With the publication of the document, along with Tønnesson's careful introduction that speaks to the authenticity and significance of the document, CWIHP seeks to continue this important discussion and add one Vietnamese perspective on the history of the Indochina Wars and Sino-Vietnamese relations. Above all, the document—and the discussion engendered by its presentation—underlines the need for the further release of archival materials on this and other subjects from Vietnamese and Chinese archives. CWIHP welcomes the submission of other previously inaccessible documents that add to our understanding of Sino-Soviet-Vietnamese relations during the Cold War period.*—Christian F. Ostermann.]

# The Mao-Khrushchev Conversations, 31 July-3 August 1958 and 2 October 1959

**By Vladislav M. Zubok**

The 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 of the Sino-Soviet split. This was already obvious from the secondary sources, including Khrushchev's memoirs. More recently documentation from the CCP archives, published selectively in Beijing, added significantly to the picture.[1] Further documents from Soviet archives shed new light on the period when the Sino-Soviet friendship capsized and began to sink.[2] But transcripts of the summit talks were still not available. Russian historian Dmitri Volkogonov was the first to study these documents and cite from them in the mid-1990s. [3] It took the efforts of dedicated individuals and four years of time before these remarkable documents became part of the public domain as the Volkogonov Collection at the Library of Congress opened its microfilm reels of materials from the Russian Presidential Archive in January 2000.

This brief introduction cannot provide a comprehensive analysis of Sino-Soviet summits, but it attempts to place them into historical context. Several observations should be made in this regard for future, more substantial research. Disputed issues were at the center of the two Sino-Soviet summits. Also equally important was the broader context that Norwegian historian Odd Arne Westad called "history, memory, and the languages of alliance-making."[4] The ideological nature, discourse and rituals of the Sino-Soviet alliance-making defined the nature, discourse and rituals of the alliance-breaking. Finally, the clash of personalities added to the drama. Mao Zedong's pride and revolutionary ambitions contributed as much to the trouble in Sino-Soviet relations as Khrushchev's impulsive anti-Stalinism and defiant earthy character.

**Issues and personalities at the 1958 summit**

The Sino-Soviet summit of July-August 1958 was an unforeseen and secret affair. Nikita Khrushchev came to Beijing as a trouble-shooter, on the instructions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU Central Committee) Presidium, in response to a sharp reaction by Mao Zedong to two Soviet proposals. First, to build a short-wave radar station in China in order to help Soviet submarine and surface fleets operate against the US Navy in the Pacific. Second, to create a joint Sino-Soviet submarine flotilla, operating under the Soviet command. According to Chinese sources, the second proposal was in response to the Chinese request sent by Zhou Enlai to Moscow on 28 June, to provide technology and documentation for construction of Chinese nuclear submarines with SLBMs. On 21 July, Soviet ambassador Pavel Yudin laid out the Soviet "joint fleet" proposal to Mao. The next day Mao called him back and in the presence of the CCP leadership lashed out at the Soviets, accusing them of chauvinism and plans to dominate China.[5] The record of conversations between Khrushchev and Mao informs us about the final act in this dispute. Several important documentary links are, however, still missing, among them the exchange between the Soviet and Chinese military. Two additional memoranda of conversations exist, presumably on 1 and 2 August 1958, which were not found in the Volkogonov collection.

The major issue at the summit was Mao Zedong's profound dissatisfaction with the old model of the alliance according to which the USSR posed as "senior brother" and the People's Republic of China (PRC) had to be satisfied with the role of the "junior brother." Economic costs of Soviet industrial aid to China are cited as a reason for dissatisfaction. Indeed, Soviet data show that in 1958-1960 the PRC had to pay back 2.3 billion rubles on Soviet loans.[6] Nevertheless, in general economic terms, the Sino-Soviet alliance by that time worked exceptionally well for China. After Stalin's death, Nikita Khrushchev made a strong emphasis on the ideological, romantic foundations of the Sino-Soviet alliance, and on "fraternal, selfless" forms of assistance. Genuine euphoria about "friendship deeper than the see and higher than the mountains" spread in the USSR from the top leadership down to common citizens: there were far-reaching expectations of integration between the two communist giants in all fields. Even the pragmatic Vyacheslav Molotov, ousted by his rival Khrushchev, at that time shared this euphoric mood and submitted to the Central Committee a plan for further Sino-Soviet integration all the way into a giant "socialist confederation."

The Chinese leadership seemed to reciprocate these expectations. For instance, in February-March 1958 Zhu De urged Yudin to think about "tight coordination" of economic development of the Northeastern China and Soviet Far East, as well as about a common "ruble zone" and "an international bank of socialist countries."[7] In 1957, the Kremlin, prodded by the Chinese leadership, decided to help China become a nuclear power, i.e. to transfer nuclear know-how, help constructing facilities of the nuclear-industrial complex and, ultimately, to get a prototype device of the 1951 Soviet atomic bomb. On 18 June 1958, shortly before the dispute and Khrushchev's secret trip, a group of Soviet nuclear experts came to China to tell their colleagues "how to make nuclear weapons."[8] Against this context, the proposals on the construction of joint fleet and the

eagerness to pay for the joint radar station in China came indeed, as Khrushchev insisted at the 1958 summit, from the heart and had no strings attached. For the Soviets, from all indications, Mao's attack came as a bolt from the blue.

In retrospect, it is obvious that political and personal, not economic reasons, motivated Mao Zedong's behavior. In the view of a Soviet diplomat who worked in Beijing from 1951 until 1966 and was a keen observer of China, "the Chinese felt too tight in our embrace. They wanted to break out of our arms and go their own way."[9] About that time, Mao was getting ready to mobilize hundreds of millions of people for the Great Leap Forward. By its meaning and tone, this grandiose campaign was designed to resume the revolutionary process in China and the world, to surpass Stalin's "collectivization" and "industrialization" of the 1930's. The Chinese continued to take advantage of the large-scale assistance from the USSR and other "socialist countries." At the same time, however, they sought to demonstrate that they were no longer "pupils," but actually the leaders of the communist movement, since, by contrast to the Soviet "friends" who "marked time and made no headway," they moved "straight from socialism to communism."[10]

Readers of the transcripts will immediately see why American scholar William Taubman concluded that "the Sino-Soviet dispute was personal as well as political."[11] The huge contrast between the personalities of Mao and Khrushchev leaps into the eyes. In terms of experience and historical role, Mao was Chinese Lenin and a Chinese Stalin combined, both the leader of victorious revolution and a founding father of the post-revolutionary Chinese state. He was the driving engine behind the challenge to Soviet authority in the communist camp. It is well known that Stalin's calculating and mistrustful attitudes towards the PRC had upset and offended Mao. It is less understood that the amicable embrace by the Soviets under Khrushchev repelled Mao no less. As Mao explained, he had long wanted to challenge Soviet seniority, and only waited for an auspicious moment. From the record of the 1958 summit Mao comes out looking almost the same as in his stormy meeting with Yudin on 22 July: offended, irritable and peevish, as well as haughty and lecturing. As Khrushchev tried to explain the Soviet position, Mao constantly interrupted him with teasing and provocative remarks.

By contrast to Mao, Khrushchev led his country and its bureaucratic classes on the road towards "normalization," not revolution. Mao, like Stalin, had the right to say, "l'état est moi" [the state is myself], and sought to symbolize the dignity of power. Khrushchev, who sought to overcome the excesses of Stalinism, was the caricature of a communist potentate. He was an extrovert, big-bellied, nearly farcical figure. He never minced words. Mao, on the contrary, posed as a sphinx-like, philosophizing emperor. Khrushchev's thinking was earthy, Mao's was cosmic.[12] Taubman pointed out several personal characteristics of Khrushchev that explained his "allergic reaction" to Mao. Among them was his "shaky sense of self-esteem," "vaulting ambition and an extraordinary low level of culture," "impulsiveness and hyper-sensitivity to slight," and his racist sense of superiority over the "Oriental" Chinese. [13]

The contrast of personalities continued on the lower level of participants: between the pedantic head of the CPSU International Department, Boris Ponomarev, and the pithy, politically gifted Deng Xiaoping. According to Chinese sources, Deng , the CCP general secretary, played a particularly active role at the meeting. He "flew at the Soviet leader like a terrier. He accused the Russians of 'Great Nation' and 'Great Party' chauvinism.'" [14] There is not a word by Deng in the Soviet transcripts. Perhaps, Chinese version of the talks would one day help clarify this discrepancy. In any case, Deng was a witness to Mao's harangue at Yudin, and at the summit presented what Yudin had said on 21 June, since Yudin himself fell sick and could not be present—an awkward imbalance for Khrushchev. The Soviet leader would have gained a lot from the presence of Anastas Mikoyan, the most skillful Soviet trouble-shooter. Mao, however, singled him out for criticism as the one who "flaunted his seniority" at the 8th CCP Congress in September 1956. Perhaps Mao intentionally wanted to cut down Mikoyan who, after all, had worked side-by-side with Lenin and thus could upstage the new international revolutionary hierarchy which the Chinese revolutionaries planned to lead.

Mao's personal ambitions were closely related to his groping for ways to consolidate his fluid regime and revolutionary legitimacy into a solid form where communist ideology was combined with Chinese aspirations of national greatness. The documents highlight in particular Mao's pride that came to be inextricably linked to his determination to restore China's greatness. Soviet assistance reminded him daily of China's backwardness and dependence, and therefore nourished his elemental anti-Sovietism.[15] At the 1958 summit with Khrushchev, a theme of wounded pride was a major underlying issue. While Mao was disgusted with Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's crimes, he relished in the opportunity to evoke Stalin's ghost at every opportunity, in order to demonstrate that Soviet policy toward China had the original sin of "Great Russian chauvinism."

This jarred Khrushchev's ears. The Soviet leader, who in the previous years had invested so much into building Sino-Soviet friendship, could not understand why, instead of gratitude and respect, he evoked Mao's condescension.[16] In his memoirs, Khrushchev admits that the proposals to build the joint fleet and radar station were a mistake. The Soviets, he said, "got too excited at that moment [in 1958] and exaggerated the international interests of communist parties and socialist countries. We believed that both our Navy and the Chinese Navy, as well as all the military means of the socialist countries serve one goal: to be prepared for retaliation if imperialism imposes a

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 lot of tact is required in this kind of issues. *Now I came to understand this consideration especially well.* [Italics added - V.Z.]" [17]

In reality, this understanding must have dawned upon Khrushchev much later. Had he been just a bit more literate in the history and mentality of the "Middle Kingdom," he would have armed himself with a better strategy—to the extent the erratic Soviet leader was ever capable of strategizing. But the only source from which Khrushchev could cull explanations for Chinese motivations was his own Stalinist experience and his current context of fighting against "Stalinists" among his colleagues. And something told him that Mao was trying "to play Stalin" on him, which was absolutely intolerable, both for political and personal reasons.

The first conversation appears to end in a full agreement between the two leaders. "Dark clouds have passed away," Mao commented. But the summit did not resolve the crisis of the alliance, and brought into the open the mistrust between the two communist leaders. In his memoirs, Khrushchev downplays this, recalling that "the conversations were in a rather calm, friendly tone."[18] Yet, the transcript of the first conversation suggests the opposite. Particularly important was the exchange on Soviet advisers in China. It provides a new important insight into Khrushchev's decision in the summer of 1960 to recall all Soviet advisers from the PRC, and indicates that it was not so spontaneous as it looked. Other sources show that it marked the beginning of steep decline in Soviet efforts to assist China in creating its nuclear arsenal.[19]

From Khrushchev's memoirs we know that in the conversations that followed the leaders disagreed on the issues of war and peace in the nuclear age, and the meaning of the Soviet nuclear arsenal and missile technology for future joint policy of the Sino-Soviet alliance. The minutes of the concluding talks on 3 August, recently declassified and published below, hide the echoes of these disagreements behind the mutual assurances of unity.

**The Road to the 1959 Summit**

Khrushchev's mistrust of Mao grew during the Taiwan crisis, provoked by Beijing on 23 August 1958. As many Soviet sources indicate, Mao did probably not discuss his intentions regarding Taiwan and the off-shore islands of Quemoi and Matsu with Khrushchev during the 1958 summit. When the People's Liberation Army of China began shelling the islands, however, the Soviet leadership was convinced that the Chinese wanted to seize them to remove the threat to their coastline. Moscow was prepared to help its ally in this endeavor. As the Eisenhower Administration, particularly Secretary of State John F. Dulles, made threatening declarations that implied the use of nuclear weapons, Khrushchev sent a letter to Eisenhower on 7 September declaring that the Soviet Union would abide by the Sino-Soviet treaty of 1950 and would regard nuclear attack on its ally as an attack on itself[20].

These threats concealed the embarrassing lack of unity and coordination between the Chinese and Soviet leadership during the crisis. When it broke out, the Soviets tried desperately to learn about Chinese plans. On 6 September, Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko flew to Beijing, officially to coordinate Soviet and Chinese positions at the forthcoming UN General Assembly. But the reconnaissance attempts confused the Soviets rather than clarified the situation for them. On one hand, Zhou Enlai told Soviet envoys that there would be no war over the islands. On the other hand, the war hysteria in China was intensifing. At one point Zhou Enlai told Gromyko that the Soviet Union should stay out of the war in case the Americans used tactical nuclear weapons against the PLA. Khrushchev was uncertain about the real Chinese objective: to test his ally's loyalty or to drag him into a confrontation with the US without even informing him. After deliberating for almost twenty days, the Soviet leadership sent a special message to the CC CCP on 27 September, "thanking" the Chinese for their noble attitude, but affirming its intention to consider the war against China "a war with the entire Socialist camp."[21]

Once again, Khrushchev leadership failed to recognize the significance of the crisis in the light of Chinese domestic politics and Mao's urge to make China stand tall and fearless. As Soviet diplomat Fedor Mochulsky recalled, "it became clear to me, then just a young China specialist, that the [off-shore] islands were not the issue. The issue was domestic, not foreign policy." The war scare helped Mao Zedong and the Chinese communist authorities to mobilize the people for the "Big Leap Forward." The Chinese peasants toiled in the fields, while their rifles were stacked nearby. The war preparations also helped explain to people why they had to eat less and work harder. Unfortunately, Mochulsky's observations did not reach the Kremlin: the euphoric expectations among many Soviet officials fed the bureaucratic mood that impeded critical and objective observation.[22]

Mochulsky also recalled an episode in September 1958, when Soviet diplomats consulted with their American colleagues in search of a negotiated resolution on the disputed offshore islands. At one point they decided to inform the Chinese leadership that, if the PLA stopped shelling the islands, the US would attempt to persuade the Taiwanese regime to withdraw their troops from them. Mao Zedong'sa reaction came as a surprise: "We do not need any [of your mediating] mission with Americans! This is our business!"[23] On the contrary, the Chinese leadership intended to maintain the tension over the islands indefinitely, using it as "a means of educating all the peoples of

the world, first of all the Chinese people."[24]

In the fall of 1958, Khrushchev was still sympathetic to Chinese brinkmanship, despite his ally's bizarre methods. He was also in a risk-taking mood with regard to West Berlin, and must have believed that only a "shock therapy" with threats of the use of force could bring the West to the negotiating table on the German question. He did not believe that the United States would start a nuclear war—either over the Chinese offshore islands or West Berlin. Mikoyan recalled in his memoirs that it was the second time (the first was in November 1956, over the Soviet invasion of Hungary), when he sharply disagreed with Khrushchev and thought about resigning the leadership.[25] In November 1958, Khrushchev unleashed the "Berlin crisis" which to many in the world seemed to be synchronized with the Taiwan Crisis.

One year later the situation changed dramatically. By autumn 1959, Khrushchev seemed to be winning his risky game: first, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan traveled to the Soviet Union indicating his willingness to negotiate; second, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower invited the Soviet leader to visit the United States (the last such invitation had come to Stalin from Truman in March 1946). Khrushchev's trip to the United States in September vastly expanded his international recognition. From the UN podium, the Soviet leader presented a plan of general and complete disarmament. At the meeting a Camp David Eisenhower vaguely hinted to Khrushchev that the situation around West Berlin was "abnormal." This was enough for the Soviet leader, who celebrated the triumph of his personal diplomacy. His foreign policy adviser Oleg Troyanovsky recalls: "Khrushchev returned from the US in a good mood, confident that he [had] achieved substantial political results. As an emotional and impulsive person, he began to view his trip over the ocean as the beginning of a new era in US-Soviet relations. In particularly, he grew to believe that the Western powers would make concessions on the German problem."[26]

Khrushchev's optimism had another dimension to it: in the summer of 1959, the CPSU adopted the new party program of "construction of communism" to be achieved in twenty years. It was as risky a commitment as his promise "to catch up and surpass the United States." As some observers believed, it was Khrushchev's response to Mao's Big Leap in the race for the reputation of the most ambitious communist.[27] Such was the mood and baggage of achievements (real or imaginary) that Khrushchev brought with him on his trip to China on 1-4 October. This time his summit with the Chinese leaders took place openly, during the national celebration of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. He came not only as a leader of the communist superpower who could talk on equal footing with the US president, but also as a successful architect of peace and détente with the West.

By contrast, the leaders of the CCP, particularly Mao Zedong, had grave problems on their hands. Despite tremendous achievements and sacrifice, the Great Leap Forward fizzled out and led to the tremendous ecological disaster and, ultimately, to a three-year-long famine in the Chinese countryside. The number of famine casualties reached astronomical number—up to 20 and perhaps 30 million people. At the Wuhan conference of the CC CCP in December 1958, Minister of Defense Peng Dehuai criticized Mao's policies, and in August 1959 the CCP Plenum began to back off from the disastrous policies. In Tibet, the Great Leap Forward, in combination with the attempts to eradicate Lamaism, led to a rebellion in March 1959. Though the Chinese authorities suppressed it (with full Soviet support), the Dalai Lama fled to India, creating an international uproar and triggering a Sino-Indian propaganda war. As before, the Chinese leadership sought to use external tensions as a means to defuse the domestic crisis. On 25 August 1959, during initial skirmishes, the Chinese military killed several Indian border-guards who were positioned along the McMahon Line (established in 1914 between Great Britain and the Tibet authorities). Unlike India, China never recognized this line as the Sino-Indian border. [28]

The Sino-Indian conflict came at the worst possible time for Khrushchev who was about to leave for the United States on his "mission of peace" and with a message of disarmament. This time Khrushchev decided to distance himself from the PRC, and TASS released an official announcement calling on both sides to reach a negotiated settlement. On 13 September, the Chinese responded with an unpublished communiqué to the CC CPSU through party channels, criticizing its policy of "time-serving and concessions [*politika prisposoblenchestva i ustupok*] with regard to Nehru and the Indian government."[29] Soon Khrushchev would get these reproaches thrown into his face in person.

The thaw in US-Soviet relations and its implications for the Sino-Soviet alliance were the first irritants at the two leaders' talks in early October. Khrushchev's itinerary—he came to Beijing almost straight from Washington via Moscow—added insult to injury. As a witness recalls, "Khrushchev enraged the Chinese, when he went to America first, instead of China; This produced strong antipathy on their part. And when Khrushchev arrived, they could not conceal it."[30] Khrushchev noticed the cool reception, the absence of cheering crowds on his way, and probably decided to challenge the hosts for their lack of politeness and hospitality. As the transcripts of the talks reveal, this time the Soviet leader did not spare Chinese sensibility: he continuously referred to his recent talks with President Eisenhower at Camp David; suggested to release the remaining American prisoners in China, and criticized, in a quite undiplomatic manner, Chinese policies that had led to the Taiwan crisis.

The summit, however, survived the discussion of these issues and collapsed only over the sharp disagreements over the Sino-Indian war. Mao was enraged by Moscow's position of the middleman between the

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:[31] 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."[32]

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.

**Consequences of the Summits: The Soviet Side**

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. He even approved Khrushchev's plan of general and complete disarmament (it was not even mentioned at the summit in Beijing), and remarked that Khrushchev "spoke very firmly and correctly on the issue of Taiwan" during his talks with Eisenhower. He promised to refrain from war over Taiwan and "to wait for 10-20, and even 30 and 40 years" for China's control over the island. One could imagine, Mao continued, that the Taiwan crisis was "a tricky and mysterious affair." In reality, it was just "one link in the chain of difficulties that we created for the Americans. Another chain was the issue of Berlin put forth by the Soviet Union." All these issues "assisted in achieving some goals that you set in Europe." As to the Sino-Indian conflict, Mao said: "We would never go beyond the Himalayas. This is a dispute over insignificant patches of territory."[33] This was not the last time the Chinese leader turned to sweet talk in his conversations with Soviet representatives. But he was hardly sincere.

Khrushchev did not do so well protecting his flanks after the disastrous communist summit. Offense was the best defense for him. Even on his way to Moscow he began to complain that Mao was "an old galosh;" later he indiscreetly used this expression publicly. Khrushchev also authorized Mikhail Suslov, who accompanied him to Beijing, to prepare a report that for the first time contained an open criticism of the CCP leadership, and Mao Zedong in particular. The report cited "mistakes and shortcomings in the field of domestic and foreign policy of the Communist Party of China" and explained them largely "by the atmosphere of the cult of personality of cde. Mao Zedong." The report blamed Mao for coming "to believe in his own infallibility. This is reminiscent of the atmosphere that existed in our country during the last years of life of I.V. Stalin."[34] This, incidentally, reveals that the Soviet leader continued to rationalize Chinese challenge against the backdrop of his political experience. From that moment on, Mao became "another Stalin" to Khrushchev—the enemy of his course of de-Stalinization, the advocate of obsolete and disastrous policies.

Khrushchev's incautious steps caused negative reaction among Soviet officials and general public. The flywheel of Soviet euphoria regarding China could not be stopped so abruptly. As some recalled the spirit of the time, "it seemed that the friendship sanctified by the same

ideological choice would be unbreakable. It seemed much more solid than the ties that emerge between countries on the ground of sober pragmatic interests."[35] The truth that Mao had decided to shake off the fraternal embrace was completely irrational and unthinkable for the Soviet people, even the most intelligent of them. Therefore, after Khrushchev's trip to Beijing, public opinion was concerned that the Soviet leader, already well known for his capacity to be rude and unpredictable, might have damaged the Sino-Soviet friendship. Troyanovsky recalls that "back in Moscow, one could not help feeling in some circles of the society a new concern with the aggravation of the relations with China. I recall that about that time I received several calls from the people whose opinion I valued very much. They asked me to do whatever is possible to prevent a split with [China]."[36]

Other radical initiatives by the Soviet leader, who was still euphoric about the prospects for improving Soviet-American relations, did even more to antagonize him to a growing segment of Soviet officials and broader public. Even the rapid reduction of Soviet armed forces which was designed to turn swords into plowshares and to liberate resources for improvement of civilians' living standards, created for Khrushchev hosts of new enemies. Former Soviet diplomat Oleg Grinevsky believes that by the spring of 1960 a "new opposition" to Khrushchev emerged in the leadership and among the officials. Its mood was that it would be better to do everything to mend the alliance with the communist China, rather than to risk everything by aiming at an elusive friendship with Americans.[37]

The first casualty of the acrimonious summit in Beijing was another summit in May 1960 in Paris. It is said sometimes that Khrushchev just used the U-2 episode to wriggle out of the summit when he realized that the West was not ready for negotiations on the German Question. The available record reveals Khrushchev as, above all, willing to project image of toughness to the party elites. On 4 May, he told the CC Plenum that he planned an anti-American speech at the forthcoming session of the Supreme Soviet about the US spy plane. He warned that "perhaps we would not have a meeting on 16 May, this outcome is also possible." He explained that he and other members of the CC Presidium believed that the collapse of the summit "not only would not be a failure for us, but it would work to our advantage, since the situation is such that [hopes] for resolution of any questions at the meeting are weak." He added: "It would be difficult for Eisenhower to come [to Paris] after this." [38]

The October 1959 meeting in Beijing contributed to Khrushchev's mood in this case. Troyanovsky claims in his memoirs that Khrushchev was forced to confront Eisenhower after the U.S. President admitted the guilt for sending the spy plane into the USSR. "There is no doubt," he writes, "that had he not reacted with enough toughness, the hawks in Moscow and Beijing would have used this incident—and not without justice—as a testimony that the person who stands at the helm of the Soviet Union is ready to bear any insult from Washington."[39] Back in Beijing, Khrushchev had said: "We shot [down] several American planes and always said that they crashed by themselves. This you cannot brand as time-serving." Now Khrushchev decided to prove to the Chinese and anybody concerned that he was not a coward and opportunist.

Another casualty of the 1958-59 summits were the chances for a peace settlement in Laos, and perhaps in the Indochina in general. At the end of the October 1959 meeting Mao suggested to discuss the Laotian situation, but an angry Khrushchev was not interested. During the 1950s the PRC and the USSR had jointly kept the more belligerent among Vietnamese communists from expanding "revolutionary struggle" in the region. As the transcript reveals, they continued to understand that Stalin's mistake in Korea in 1950, that brought American military might there, should not be repeated in Indochina. For historians of the Vietnam War it may be of interest that both Khrushchev and Mao were pessimistic as to the ability of the communist forces in Vietnam to withstand US intervention. The Sino-Soviet duel, however, precluded any effective cooperation on this issue, and ultimately the Vietnamese were able to have their way. [40]

Suslov's report on the 1959 summit failed to arouse much discussion. As long as Khrushchev remained in power, the rest of the Soviet leadership did not have the nerve to discuss openly the reasons for the Sino-Soviet dispute that quickly turned into the split. But Khrushchev's colleagues had their opinion on what happened, and they expressed it in October 1964, when they sent Nikita Sergeevich into forced retirement. At that time, of course, the relations between the communist powers were already poisoned by years of mutual ideological and political hostility. CC Secretary Alexander Shelepin, speaking at the Presidium, said Khrushchev's policy vis-à-vis China was correct, but he had to be "more flexible in pursuing the line." "There is much that you have to be blamed for," he rebuked Khrushchev.[41] A more detailed opinion was in the undelivered Presidium report (prepared by Dmitry Polyanski, the Presidium member, in case Khrushchev would not surrender and prefer to fight at the CC Plenum). The report stated that "the main reason of the danger of the split is the subversive activity of the Chinese leadership that slid back to the position of great power nationalism and neo-Trotskyism. But there are some points for which Khrushchev has to be blamed. He is crude, haughty, and does not contain himself in conversations with the leaders of fraternal parties. He uses offensive expressions. He called Mao Zedong publicly 'an old galosh,' [the Chinese leader] learned about it and, of course, became enraged."[42]

These phrases, however, might not have been completely sincere either. Shelepin and Polyansky, among others (including Alexei Kosygin), still misunderstood the Chinese reasons and dynamics; they tended to believe that, without the factor of Khrushchev and after correction

of Soviet foreign policy, the Sino-Soviet rift could be mended. In January 1965, this group severely criticized Yuri Andropov, then the head of the CC International Department (for socialist countries) and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko for defending the course of "détente" and disregarding measures to improve relations and strengthen unity with our "natural" allies and our "class brothers" (meaning the Chinese).[43] These sentiments finally died off only by the end of the 1960's. There are still no archival documents available illustrating the painful reconsideration on the Soviet side. One may suggest that ultimately the Chinese challenge became, in the Kremlin's eyes, primarily a geopolitical challenge. The most perceptive among Soviet leaders began to see what Khrushchev had failed to see in 1958-59: how naïve and romantic the Soviets were in trying to hold in its fraternal embrace a giant country with unique history and culture. As Gromyko told to an assistant in 1978, when the question of German unity was discussed: "A united socialist China is enough for us."[44] According to this new Soviet convictions the Sino-Soviet alliance was doomed because of the geopolitical weight of China and political ambitions of Beijing. Khrushchev's impulsiveness, abysmal lack of culture and other personal qualities only played a secondary role.

The documents published below reveal that it is impossible to extricate great acts of history from their actors. In the situation, when personal sympathies and antipathies were as important and real as state interests, the two summits in Beijing became the important and necessary preludes to the split and fragmentation of the Sino-Soviet alliance and to the end of the world communist movement as it existed since 1917.

★★★

## DOCUMENT No. 1
## First Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong
## Hall of Huaizhentan [Beijing], 31 July 1958

Present at the meeting: Cdes. B.N. Ponomarev, Deng Xiaoping.

N.S. Khrushchev passes on greetings and best wishes from the members of the Presidium of the C[entral] C[ommittee of the] CPSU.

Mao Zedong thanks him. He says that cooperation between the leaders of the two parties facilitates decision-making on world problems.

N.S. Khrushchev agrees.

Mao Zedong: Without making forecasts for a longer time, one can say that our cooperation is assured for 10,000 years.

N.S. Khrushchev: In such a case we could meet again in 9,999 years in order to agree on cooperation for the next 10,000 years.

Mao Zedong: We have, however, certain differences of opinion. Such differences on specific questions were, are, and will be the case. If we compare this with 10 fingers, then our cooperation will [account for] 9 fingers, and the differences for one.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, we can have a difference in understanding.

Mao Zedong: These issues can be easily solved, and cooperation between us will last forever; therefore we can sign an agreement for 10,000 years. He suggests to move to the discussion on the question of interest.

N.S. Khrushchev: We received information from Yudin[45] on his conversations with you.[46] Judging by it, there was a lot there that was exaggerated [*nakrucheno*]. Therefore, I would like to talk to you, so that everything would become clear.

Mao Zedong: Good.

N.S. Khrushchev: I will not dwell on the issues where, according to the messages on the conversation with your ambassador, we have common views. These are issues relating to the international situation, the assessment of the events in the Middle East [*na Blizhnem I Srednem Vostoke*],[47] the Yugoslav question. We also support your declaration where you say that we cannot have issues that might generate different viewpoints. We take great joy in the successes of your Party and the PRC. I believe you take joy in ours.

Mao Zedong: Yes.

N.S. Khrushchev: I would like to touch on the issue that hit us squarely on the head [*ogoroshil*]. It is on the building of the Navy [*voenno-morskogo flota*]. You said that you spent a night without sleep. I also had a sleepless night when I received this information.

Mao Zedong: I was shocked, therefore I could not sleep.

N.S. Khrushchev: Never, did any of us, and above all as far as I am concerned, for it was primarily I who talked to Yudin, and only then he received the instructions from the CC Presidium, have had such an understanding of this issue that you and your comrades developed. We had not even an inkling of the idea about a joint fleet. You know my point of view. When Stalin was alive, I was against joint companies. I was against his senile foolishness [*starcheskoi gluposti*] regarding the concession on the factory for canned pineapples. I am emphasizing this–it was his senile stupidity, since Stalin was not so stupid as to not understand this. But it was the beginning of his sclerosis.

Mao Zedong: I also cited these examples and kept saying that Khrushchev liquidated this heritage.

N.S. Khrushchev: I was one of the members of the Politburo who said it straight to Stalin that we should not send such a telegram on the concession to Mao Zedong, because it would be wrong as a matter of principle. There were also other members of the Politburo, with whom I

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.[4] 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 constnat 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.[47] 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 from the [Soviet] Armed Forces.

You may remember, when we were returning from you in [October] 1954, we took a detour via Port Arthur to Vladivostok, and then to Komsomolsk [on Amur]. Then we made a brief trip on a cruiser, during which we held a small exercise. Admiral Kuznetsov was with us. During the exercise our submarines and torpedo boats attacked the cruiser. Not a single torpedo from the boats hit the cruiser. From the submarines only one hit the target. We feltt that if the Navy was in such combat readiness, then our country could not rely on its naval forces. This was the beginning of our critical attitude. After that we instructed Kuznetsov to make a report and prepare proposals. At the CC Presidium his proposals were not accepted. He grew indignant and became insolent, declaring: "When would the CC take a correct position with regard to the Navy[?]" Then we built a correct relationship–sacked Kuznetsov from the Navy.

Under Stalin we built many cruisers. During my stay in London I even offered [British Prime Minister Anthony] Eden to buy a cruiser. Today people scratch their heads how to use the Navy in war. Can you recall any large-scale sea battles during the Second World War? None. The Navy was either inactive or perished. The US and Japan were the strongest naval powers. Japan inflicted a serious defeat on the American Navy by its air force. The Americans then

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 cruisers are just floating steel coffins.

The question of naval construction is very complicated. Military officers ask, why then do the Americans keep building their Navy[?] I believe that the Americans, from their point of view, are doing the correct thing because the United States are located in America, and they are going to wage war in Europe or Asia. They need the Navy for transportation and support [*prikritiia*]. Otherwise they should renounce their policy and declare the Monroe Doctrine.

Mao Zedong turns to Deng Xiaoping and asks him for the records of conversations with Yudin. Deng Xiaoping passes to Mao Zedong the records of conversation.

N.S. Khrushchev: Such is now the situation with regard to this business. Therefore I talked with Yudin in such a way, instructed him to tell you about this situation. I asked him if everything was clear. He responded affirmatively. But he never dealt with the Navy, therefore he could only render the crux of the matter imprecisely. The CC CPSU never intended and does not intend to build a joint Navy.

Mao Zedong (irritated): I could not hear you. You were in Moscow. Only one Russian spoke with me–Yudin. Therefore I am asking you: on what grounds you can speak of "launching an attack" against me?

N.S. Khrushchev: I did not claim it. [*Ia ne v pretenzii.*]

Mao Zedong (with irritation): So who should be attacked–Mao Zedong or Yudin?

N.S. Khrushchev: Am I bothering you with my long explanation?

Mao Zedong: Not at all. You have said the main thing.

N.S. Khrushchev: For reasons that I mentioned we wanted your comrades to come for joint discussions of the issue of what kind of navy is needed, about its technical and combat use. Indeed, I spoke to Yudin in such a way—that cde. Mao Zedong had welcomed coordination of our efforts in case of war. You spoke about it in 1954 during our visit and during your stay in Moscow in 1957. Until now, unfortunately, we have not acted on this. Therefore I told Yudin to clarify the situation. It is obvious for us that one should build a submarine fleet and torpedo boats armed not with sea-to-sea missiles, but instead with sea-to-air [*vozdhushnimi*] missiles, because the main task of the submarine fleet would be not the struggle against the surface fleet of the enemy, but instead the destruction of its ports and industrial centers. So I talked with Yudin along these lines. It would be good to discard the fleet located in the Black and Baltic Seas. We do not need it there, and if something should be built in those areas, then it should be mid-size submarines. In this case, where can we build them? In the area of Murmansk, but reaching America from there is not easy. In England and Iceland they take measures to intercept us. Vladivostok is better, but there as well we are squeezed by Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands—they defend us, but also allow the enemy's submarines to monitor the exit of our submarines. I told [Yudin] that China has a vast coastline and access to open seas, from where it would be easy to conduct the submarine war with America. Therefore it would be good to discuss with China how to use these possibilities. More specifically–perhaps, on one of the rivers (Yellow River or another) we need to have a plant producing submarines in rather big numbers. We believed it would be necessary to talk about this, but we

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.

N.S. Khrushchev: I would not speak about "Russian sailors." Joint efforts are needed if war breaks out. Perhaps Chinese sailors would act, perhaps joint efforts would be necessary. But we did not raise the question about any territory or our base there.

Mao Zedong: For instance, if there were 100 men-of-war in the fleet, which part would be owned by you and by us?

N.S. Khrushchev: The fleet cannot be owned by two countries. The fleet needs to be commanded. When two are in command it is impossible to fight a war.

Mao Zedong: That is correct.

N.S. Khrushchev: You may disagree with us. We consider this, and we may say [now] that we are against it. If you had suggested this to us, we would have been against it as well.

Mao Zedong: If this is so, then all the black clouds are blown away.

N.S. Khrushchev: There were no clouds in the first place.

Mao Zedong: However, we spent a night without sleep. It turns out, that I missed my sleep in vain.

N.S. Khrushchev: How could Comrade Mao Zedong imagine that we might enforce this, going completely against party principles?

Mao Zedong: I even told my comrades that I could not understand this proposal from the principled point of view, and perhaps this was a misunderstanding. You eliminated the wrong that had been perpetrated by Stalin. I personally and some other comrades had doubts that perhaps this proposal might be one of the Naval Headquarters of the USSR. Your advisor (a sailor) advised us four times to send a cable asking for assistance in building the fleet. He assured us that this request would get a positive decision.

N.S. Khrushchev: Such advisers must be thrown out.

Mao Zedong: Advisers did not speak about a joint fleet.

N.S. Khrushchev: Anyway, they had no right. Their business is to give advice when they are asked for it.

Mao Zedong: The advisers suggested to ask the USSR for assistance. After this Zhou Enlai sent this request, having in mind the fleet with missile launchers.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yudin was not instructed to make this proposal. He was instructed only to pass an offer to discuss jointly the issue of constructing the submarine fleet. How could we have instructed Yudin to carry out negotiations on the construction of the submarine fleet? We know Yudin and trust him in party matters, but he is a poor fit for negotiations on atomic submarine fleet.

Mao Zedong: He said that we should send representatives for the negotiations about the joint creation of a navy. I asked him to inform that we cannot conduct such negotiations.

N.S. Khrushchev: He tried to give the correct account in essence [*po suschestvu*], but must have misperceived our instruction, misinterpreted it, and let it happen that we find ourselves in a mistaken relationship.

Mao Zedong: But Yudin said precisely this. And Antonov was present there. Whose pride is pricked now?

N.S. Khrushchev: As I can see your pride was very much pricked.

Mao Zedong: That is why I lost sleep.

N.S. Khrushchev: Our pride is touched as well. How could you have misperceived our policy?

Mao Zedong: Your representative made such an account. And I told him that I would disagree with such a proposal, would not accept, and declared: "You wage the war on sea and in the air, and we will stay as partisans [guerillas] on land [*mi budem na sushe partizanit*]."

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 [*na vas nasedaiu*].

Mao Zedong: I said that perhaps it was a misunderstanding, and I hope this is a misunderstanding.

N.S. Khrushchev: You should have gone to bed.

Mao Zedong: Several times the conversation was exclusively about the joint fleet, therefore I then launched a counterattack. Now you are counterattacking me. But wait, I will still attack you back.

N.S. Khrushchev: There is a law in physics: action produces equal counteraction.

Mao Zedong (crossly): I had my reasons. I said then that we could give you the entire Chinese coast, but we disagree with a joint fleet.

N.S. Khrushchev: We have plenty of coastline of our own, God help us to cope with it.

Mao Zedong: There is a forth scenario–to give you the whole coast. There is a fifth one–I am accustomed to fight guerilla wars [*ia privik partizanit*].

N.S. Khrushchev: Times are different now.

Mao Zedong: But we had no hope, having in mind that if we had given up on the coastline, we would have had only the hinterland [*susha*].

N.S. Khrushchev (jokingly): Well, let's trade our seacoasts, but better still let each of us stay with ours, we are accustomed to them.

Mao Zedong: I agree to give you the whole coast all the way to Vietnam.

N.S. Khrushchev: Then we should invite Ho Chi Minh. Otherwise he may learn about it, and would say that here Khrushchev and Mao Zedong plotted against him.

Mao Zedong: According to the fifth scenario, we would have given you Port Arthur, but we would still have had several ports.

N.S. Khrushchev: Now, do you really consider us as red imperialists?

Mao Zedong: It is not a matter of red or white imperialists. There was a man by the name of Stalin, who took Port Arthur and turned Xinjiang and Manchuria into semi-colonies, and he also created four joint companies. These were all his good deeds.

N.S. Khrushchev: You are familiar with my viewpoint. On the issue of Port Arthur, however, I think that Stalin

made the correct decision at the time. Then Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] was still in China, and it was advantageous for you that the Soviet Army was in Port Arthur and Manchuria. This played a certain positive role. But this should have been brought to an end immediately after the victory of People's China. It seems to me that in 1954, when we raised the issue about withdrawal of troops from Port Arthur, you expressed doubts whether it would be advisable, for you considered the presence of Soviet troops as a factor containing aggressive US ambitions. We asked you to study this issue. You promised to think. You thought and then agreed with us.

Mao Zedong: Yes.

N.S. Khrushchev: You then said that non-communists raised in your parliament the issue if this was in China's advantage. Did you speak about it?

Mao Zedong: Yes. But it was one side of the problem. Stalin not only committed mistakes here. He also created two half-colonies.

N.S. Khrushchev: You defended Stalin. And you criticized me for criticizing Stalin. And now—vice versa.

Mao Zedong: You criticized [him] for different matters.

N.S. Khrushchev: At the [20th] Party Congress [in February 1956] I spoke about this as well.

Mao Zedong: I always said, now, and then in Moscow, that the criticism of Stalin's mistakes is justified. We only disagree with the lack of strict limits to criticism. We believe that out of Stalin's 10 fingers, 3 were rotten ones.

N.S. Khrushchev: I think more were rotten.

Mao Zedong: Wrong. The essential in his life–his accomplishments.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes. If we speak of Stalin's accomplishments–we are also part of them.

Mao Zedong: This is fair.

N.S. Khrushchev: Stalin was and remains Stalin. And we criticized the scum and scab that accumulated, in particular when he became old. But when Tito criticized him, it's another thing. 20 years from now school-kids will search the dictionaries [to see] who Tito was, but everyone will know Stalin's name. And the dictionary will say that Tito was the splitter of the socialist camp who sought to undermine it, and it will say that Stalin was a fighter who fought the enemies of the working class, but committed grave errors.

Mao Zedong: Stalin's main errors regarding China were not on the issue of the semi-colonies.

N.S. Khrushchev: I know. He incorrectly assessed the CCP's revolutionary capabilities of the CCP, wrote courteous letters to Jiang Jieshi, supported Wang Ming.

Mao Zedong: Even more important is something else. His first major error was one as a result of which the Chinese Communist Party was left with one-tenth of the territory that it had. His second error was that, when China was ripe for revolution, he advised us not to rise in revolution and said that if we started a war with Jiang Jieshi that might threaten the entire nation with destruction.

N.S. Khrushchev: Wrong. A nation cannot be destroyed.

Mao Zedong: But that is how Stalin's cable read. Therefore I believe that the relationship between the Parties was incorrect. After the victory of our Revolution, Stalin had doubts about its character. He believed that China was another Yugoslavia.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, he considered it possible.

Mao Zedong: When I came to Moscow [in December 1949], he did not want to conclude a treaty of friendship with us and did not want to annul the old treaty with the Guomindang [Kuomintang]. I recall that [Soviet interpreter Nikolai] Fedorenko and [Stalin's emissary to the PRC Ivan] Kovalev passed me his [Stalin's] advice to take a trip around the country, to look around. But I told them that I have only three tasks: eat, sleep and shit. I did not come to Moscow only to congratulate Stalin on his birthday. Therefore I said that if you do not want to conclude a treaty of friendship, so be it. I will fulfill my three tasks. Last year, when I was in Moscow, in a conversation where [Soviet Premier Minister Nikolai] Bulganin was also present, we heard that Stalin had bugged us back then.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, I said it at that time. He had bugged us as well, he even bugged himself. Once, when I was on vacation with him, he admitted that he mistrusted himself. I am good-for-nothing, he said, I mistrust myself.

Mao Zedong: What kind of a fleet to build–this question does not exist for us. We will not build a fleet along the plans of Admiral Kuznetsov.

N.S. Khrushchev: We have not decided on the fleet ourselves.

Mao Zedong: We would only like to obtain assistance in the construction of the submarine fleet, torpedo boats and small-size surface ships.

N.S. Khrushchev: I agree. We should have a powerful submarine fleet armed with missiles, and torpedo boats armed not with torpedoes, but with missiles.

Mao Zedong: This was what we asked for in our letter.

N.S. Khrushchev: We believe one needs destroyers armed with missiles. We believe one should build a merchant fleet with the view of using it for military goals. We are building several rocket-carriers. We believe that we also should have guard-ships armed with rockets, minesweepers. And most important–the missile-carrying air force. I think that you need this in the first instance. You have further shooting range from the air. In the first instance we will need maritime defense. Artillery in Port Arthur makes no sense. Its capacity is severely limited. One needs coastal rocket launchers and rocket-carriers, or a mobile coastal defense. This is the direction we are taking in the fleet construction.

Mao Zedong: This is the right direction.

N.S. Khrushchev: I would suggest that rocket-carriers are needed in the first place. A submarine fleet is more expensive. With the help of rocket-carriers we can keep the enemy at a very respectable distance from our shores.

Mao Zedong: Absolutely correct. We already spoke about it in Moscow [in November 1957].

N.S. Khrushchev: Aircraft have more potential. We are ready to give China what we have. TU-16s have lost their significance as bombers, but they are still good as rocket-carriers for sea approaches [*na morskikh podstupakh*]. In general, the bombing aviation is in crisis. The military is confused. And for fighters there is a substitute–rockets.

Mao Zedong inquires about missile armaments of the USSR, America, England, its combat specifications and types.

N.S. Khrushchev gives answers to the questions by Mao Zedong.

Mao Zedong says it would be good to avoid war.

N.S. Khrushchev: That is why we keep the enemy in fear by our missiles. We wrote to the Turks that with 3 to 4 missiles there would be no more Turkey. 10 missiles suffice to wipe out England. In England they debate: some say that 9 missiles are needed to destroy England, others say, no, 7 to 8. But nobody doubts that, in case of nuclear war England will be destroyed. They only debate how many missiles one needs for this. When we wrote letters to Eden and [French Prime Minister] Guy Mollet during the Suez events [in November 1956], they immediately stopped the aggression. Now, that we have the transcontinental missile, we hold America by the throat as well. They thought America was beyond reach. But this is not true. Therefore, we must use these means to avoid war. Now we should save Iraq.

Mao Zedong: In my opinion, the US and England gave up on attacking Iraq.

N.S. Khrushchev: I think this is 75% true.

Mao Zedong: About 90%.

N.S. Khrushchev: This is the Chinese way. Here are our "disagreements."

Mao Zedong: They are afraid of a big war.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, they are very afraid. Particularly in Turkey, Iran, Pakistan. The revolution in Iraq stirs up these people [in these countries], and they may repeat the events in Iraq.

Mao Zedong: We will talk about the international situation tomorrow. I consider that on the maritime matters the question is resolved.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, without a fight and defeat for either side.

Mao Zedong: There will be no joint fleet?

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, and we never posed this question.

Mao Zedong: But three Soviet comrades still spoke about a joint fleet.

N.S. Khrushchev: Here are four Soviet comrades. And we are saying that there will be no joint fleet.

Mao Zedong: Let's not return to this question.

N.S. Khrushchev: This question does not exist. This was a misunderstanding.

Mao Zedong: Agree. Let's write it down–withdraw the question.

N.S. Khrushchev: I agree. Let's write it down: there was no such issue; there is no such issue; and there will not be any. This was the result of misunderstanding, misinterpretation of this issue by Yudin. I consider that the matter is exhausted.

Mao Zedong: Now I am calm.

N.S. Khrushchev: I am calm, too. Let us have sound sleep.

Now I would like to talk about the radar station. There was no CC decision on this question. Our military comrades say that one should have a radar station, so that, when needed, one could command Soviet submarines in the Pacific. I think these considerations are correct. I thought that on this issue we could get in contact with Chinese comrades in order to build such a station. It would be better that Chinese comrades agreed that we participate in the construction of this station via credit or in some other way. The station is necessary. We need it, and you will need it, too, when you will have a submarine fleet. The issue is exploitation [*ekspluatatsiia*]. I think that two cannot be masters at this station. Therefore we could agree on the basis of equality, so that you could via this station maintain communications with your submarine fleet. There is no question about ownership. It should be Chinese. I would like to reach an agreement on its exploitation on equal terms. You might exploit our stations in Vladivostok, in the Kuriles, the northern coasts. If there is no objection from your side, I think that our military should consider this matter. If the PRC disagrees, we will not insist.

Mao Zedong: This station may be built. It will be the property of China, built with investments of the Chinese government, and we could exploit it jointly.

N.S. Khrushchev: Not jointly, but only partially. For us it will be needed only in case of war and for training in peacetime.

Mao Zedong: Then we must change the formula in Malinovsky's letter.

N.S. Khrushchev: I did not see the letter. We did not discuss it in the CC.

Mao Zedong: Another cooperative venture [*kooperativ*]. The Chinese share is 30% and Soviet share–70%. We gave answer to Malinovsky in the same spirit you heard.

N.S. Khrushchev: I am not familiar with the correspondence on this issue. Perhaps this occurred as a result of the contacts between our military, and the contact went awry.

Mao Zedong: The second letter from Malinovsky, in July, contained a draft treaty on this issue. If in the first letter the Chinese share was 30%, in the second one the whole belonged to the Soviet Union.

N.S. Khrushchev: I suspect good intentions on the part of our military. We need this station. This is an expensive project. So they just wanted to help. But they ignored the political and legal aspects of the issue.

Mao Zedong: We sent our answer on behalf of Peng Dehuai, in which we said that we would build it, and the USSR may exploit it.

N.S. Khrushchev: The military told me that they thought they reached complete agreement with the Chinese comrades.

Mao Zedong: Here, you can see, the entire correspondence.

N.S. Khrushchev: I have not seen it. If it had gone through the CC then perhaps it would have not allowed such foolishness and would have offered to build it at our expense, but in the CC, we did not discuss it. But if you do not wish us to pay for it, then so be it.

Mao Zedong: But we represent socialist countries. We will build the station ourselves, and it should be exploited jointly. Do you agree?

N.S. Khrushchev: We do not need the station now. It costs many millions. Do not repudiate the money. Don't let friendship interfere with work. Under conditions of socialism we should carry the burden together. We may give credits for the construction. Part of it you can pay back, and part of it not, since you also need the station.

Mao Zedong: It is possible to build the station without any credit.

N.S. Khrushchev: It would be wrong. You do not need it now.

Mao Zedong: We will need it.

N.S. Khrushchev: But above all we need it.

Deng Xiaoping: We have already answered that we will build it ourselves and will exploit it jointly.

N.S. Khrushchev: Perhaps because of this our military told me that the Chinese agreed, but they ignored the Chinese nuance. They are wondering–what's the problem[?] Full agreement seemed to have been reached.

Mao Zedong: We agree to build at our expense, but exploit it jointly.

N.S. Khrushchev: I would suggest that credit is needed, assistance from our side.

Mao Zedong: If you insist on assistance, then we will not build the station at all.

N.S. Khrushchev: Now the issue about [Anastas] Mikoyan. We were surprised by your declaration, for all are convinced that you have the best possible relations with cde. Mikoyan. We do not think he could be suspected of disloyalty towards China, of some kind of attitudes that stand in the way of our friendship. He never mentioned it himself and we never saw anything like this. His speech at your [Party] Congress [in September 1956] was discussed at the CC Presidium and raised no objections. He was advised to show the speech to you, to introduce your remarks and proposals as an obligatory matter. In 1954, when I spoke here, I also sent you my report and asked for your remarks.

Mao Zedong: We welcomed your speech, for it reflects [the spirit of] equality. The speech of cde. Mikoyan was not so bad either, but the ratio of good and inappropriate was 9 to 1. This concerns the tone of the speech that was somewhat didactic [*pouchitelnim*]. Some delegates of the Congress expressed dissatisfaction, but we were too shy to tell cde. Mikoyan about it. When we say that the Chinese Revolution is the extension of the October Revolution—this is the unquestionable truth. But there are many things that the Chinese themselves should speak about. There was something in Mikoyan's speech resembling the relationship between father and son.

N.S. Khrushchev: I did not re-read recently these speeches, but I recall that I told him that a great deal of attention was devoted to international affairs. Perhaps he should not have done it, but Mikoyan provided some kind of explanation, and I agreed with him. If some unnecessary points crept into it, he was not the only guilty one. Then all of us overlooked them.

Now the issue of the displeasure about his stay in Xibaipo [in February 1949].

Mao Zedong: All that he did there was good, but his behavior was a bit haughty. He was like an inspector.

N.S. Khrushchev: I am surprised.

Mao Zedong: I am surprised as well. But to some degree it looked like lecturing of father to son.

N.S. Khrushchev: It is hard for me to explain this. You should have told him. Mikoyan knows how to listen, how to pay attention and draw conclusions.

Mao Zedong: Yes, he is a good comrade. We are asking him to come back to us.

N.S. Khrushchev: He is now on vacation.

Mao Zedong: We would welcome a trip by him to China at any time. We thought it necessary to state what we found inappropriate in his speech.

N.S. Khrushchev: His stay in China then [in 1949] was caused by Stalin's order. Stalin demanded from him reports every day, instructed him to sniff out everything, whether there were spies around you. Stalin was motivated by good intentions, but in his way, in Stalin's way. Then Stalin insisted on arresting two Americans, and you arrested them. After Stalin's death Mikoyan said that they were not guilty. We wrote you about it and you released them. You should keep in mind that, at that time, Mikoyan did not do what he wanted, but what Stalin wanted. For instance, [US journalist Anna Louise] Strong was evicted from Moscow, then she was rehabilitated. I believe Stalin did it to prevent her from going to China since he took her for a spy. Now Strong is going to visit China and the USSR. We have no objections, although she wrote stupid things about Stalin and your newspaper published them.

Mao Zedong: I did not read it, but people talk about it.

N.S. Khrushchev: I read and hear that this was the newspaper of the Chinese capitalists.

Mao Zedong: Yes, this newspaper was in the hands of the rightists.

N.S. Khrushchev: The article was directed against the USSR. We even thought to write to you about this, but then decided it was not worth it, if it was a capitalist newspaper.

Mao Zedong: The newspaper belonged to the rightists, now it is in our hands.

N.S. Khrushchev: We have no problems with this, but Strong was mistaken.

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 successes as if they were ours. We think that you treat us similarly. We nurture no doubts about this. Now on the specialists. I believe they are like a pimple on a healthy body.

Mao Zedong: I disagree with such a formula.

N.S. Khrushchev: We send thousands of specialists to you. Who can guarantee that all of them give 100% correct advice?

Mao Zedong: It is more than 90% correct.

N.S. Khrushchev: The specialists whom we send know the particulars of their field, but they do not deal with political matters. We cannot even demand that they know the particulars of our relations. If somebody knows about them, then he does not know his trade. So we wrote to you with a request to recall all the specialists. Then you could send your people to us for study.

Mao Zedong: One should take advantage of both ways.

N.S. Khrushchev: But then we have unequal conditions. We do not have your people and you are guaranteed that they do not commit follies.

Mao Zedong: We are not asking you for these guarantees.

N.S. Khrushchev: But you are placing us in an unequal position. We send specialists, they commit follies, and I have to make excuses.

Mao Zedong: You need not bring excuses. We must settle the matter.

N.S. Khrushchev: As if we have no other things to do.

Mao Zedong: We are talking here of several people. They are all communists.

N.S. Khrushchev: Not all of them. Some are not communists, and some we are expelling from the Party. But even this is not a guarantee against follies.

Mao Zedong: The same can be said about China.

N.S. Khrushchev: We do not take a license only for follies for the Russians. This is an international quality, it can strike all the nations. But the conditions are unfair for us. You can bring complaints about the follies of our specialists, and we do not have your specialists. Therefore, it turns out that only we commit follies.

Mao Zedong: History is to blame for this.

N.S. Khrushchev: And we have to answer for it?

Mao Zedong: You made a revolution first.

N.S. Khrushchev: And should we be blamed for this?

Mao Zedong: That is why you have to send specialists. You will still have to send them to London and other places.

N.S. Khrushchev: Then we will do this jointly and will share responsibility and follies between ourselves.

Mao Zedong: Our criticism concerns only the Soviets from the military field and from the state security, not from the economic field.

N.S. Khrushchev: All among us make mistakes, and among yourselves–nobody. Nobody is guaranteed.

Mao Zedong: These are small mistakes. There is no harm that they give sometimes inappropriate recommendations or suggest unsuitable options for construction.

N.S. Khrushchev: Why do you need advisers on state security? As if you cannot secure things yourselves? You see, this is a political matter.

Mao Zedong: Even as far as military advisers are concerned, we are talking only and exclusively about specific persons, and primarily this concerns the fact that the advisers were replaced often without clearing it with us. Only very few share blame for this.

N.S. Khrushchev: We do not know who works with you and who replaces whom. We cannot bear responsibility for this, we cannot control this.

Mao Zedong: This not your fault. Perhaps the state security apparatus and the military staff should be blamed.

N.S. Khrushchev: But why do you need military advisers? You won such a war, acquired such an experience. Of what use are they to you? Our advisers havebeen brought up under different conditions.

Mao Zedong: We need specialists in technology.

N.S. Khrushchev: Come to the USSR and study.

Mao Zedong: We are using this form as well and are sending people to you, but it would also be useful to have some specialists come here.

I am talking about individual cases, not about the recall of all of them.

N.S. Khrushchev: We would suggest to discuss this issue together. We were very alarmed by your observation about our workers. We would not like it to cause you to worry.

Mao Zedong: I agree with your opinion. On specific measures in this direction we can talk. We probably should allow most advisers to stay. Some of them we do not need. We will provide you with a list.

N.S. Khrushchev: We would like to get a list of all, so that there are no misunderstandings, since today one can do stupid things, tomorrow it will be another.

Mao Zedong: We are asking [you] to leave them, and you would like to take the advisers.

N.S. Khrushchev: We will do nothing without you.

Mao Zedong: The difference between our workers and your workers is only in citizenship.

N.S. Khrushchev: [I] agree that [it] is a temporary difference. The main thing is [to preserve] communist ties.

Mao Zedong: Yes. There are contradictions even inside nations. For instance, our working people from the north are not much welcomed in the south of China.

N.S. Khrushchev: I heard that you mentioned in the conversation with Yudin one of our specialists who suggested a caisson-free way of building bridges and who did not find support in our country. I would tell you who did not support him. [Lazar] Kaganovich. What kind of specialist is he? I asked him, why they did not support you? He says–this method has not been used anywhere. But the new is precisely new because it has never been used before.

I have spoken out [and said] everything I wanted. Even a good housewife that keeps things tidy has from time to time to remove fine dust with a damp cloth. And we, too, have to meet from time to time, so that not too much dust accumulates.

Mao Zedong: Absolutely correct.

N.S. Khrushchev: Therefore, when you proposed a meeting, we thought it would be necessary. At first we answered that I cannot come, because we thought there would be a meeting in New York. But when we received the answer from the Westerners it became clear that they were dragging their feet. So we came here immediately. This is the best meeting–useful and pleasant.

Mao Zedong: [It is] very good that we had this conversation. We should not set issues aside. I am proposing to meet and talk without any agenda, if anything comes up or even if there is nothing [urgent]. We always can find something to talk about. There are issues relating to the international situation, what we can undertake in this direction, the situation in some countries; you could inform us about some countries, [and] we could tell you from our side about others. But the issue of a "cooperative" came up suddenly and is an absolutely temporary phenomenon, but because of it I lost my sleep, quarreled with Yudin, did not let you sleep. But at least we struck a balance.

As to Mikoyan, he is a good comrade. All that he has done in China is well done. We will express to him our discontent on some issues, and if he takes it well—good, if he does not—that is also his business. But I had to draw the line in this matter. As to the advisers, we do not have and will not have any problems here. I told both Yudin and all your comrades that the advisers have been doing enormous and useful work and they do it well. We often give instructions along party and administrative channels to local authorities how they should deal with Soviet advisers. We emphasize the need to keep solidarity with them, we point out that they were sent to assist us. 99.9% and perhaps even more of them who stayed here for the last 7 to 8 years are good people and only some individuals do not take up their duties such as they should have done. For instance, from the group of [Soviet military advise] Petrushevskii. But this was his fault, not the fault of his people.

N.S. Khrushchev: But can't you see that I do not even know him[?]

Mao Zedong; Me, too, I have never seen Petrushevskii. Now there is a good leader of this group—Trufanov.

N.S. Khrushchev: I have known him since the defense of Stalingrad. He is not a bad general.

Mao Zedong: We appreciate having him. We do not need any advisers on state security.

N.S. Khrushchev: You may send yours. This is an internal political affair.

Mao Zedong: There was one man sent to the Main Political Administration [of the PLA of China]—we did not even invite him.

B.N. Ponomarev: You should have mentioned it to the ambassador, and he would have been immediately recalled.

Mao Zedong: I would like to draw a sharp line. The overwhelming majority consists of good workers. Our criticism only concerns some of them.

N.S. Khrushchev: Who should be responsible for those who are beyond this sharp line? Khrushchev, not Mao Zedong. There are no fair conditions. You are in a more favorable position.

Mao Zedong: Do you really want to recall them all?

N.S. Khrushchev: No. We are suggesting to discuss it. We believe that the cadres are not only our capital, but the common possession of communist parties. We must use them, in order to overthrow capitalism.

Mao Zedong: We are not posing the question about advisers. Perhaps we posed incorrectly the question about the shortcomings in the work of advisers?

N.S. Khrushchev: On the contrary, [it is] good that you said this, otherwise it would not have been [handled] comradely. There was this issue, and you kept silence.

Mao Zedong: This issue existed for a long time, but we, for instance during the events in Hungary,[50] consciously avoided to put it forward. We did not put it forward at the time when Soviet military advisers had to be recalled from Poland either. The criticism concerns a negligible number of people and, specifically, the method of their assignment [*komandirovaniia*].

N.S. Khrushchev: You acted wisely. I leave it to you to decide. Yesterday you needed advisers, today you do not. Indeed, you do not want Russians to walk around with Chinese in diapers. It has never been this way. You went through such a road of struggle.

Mao Zedong: I am talking about a negligible number of people. One adviser from the military academy, for instance, gave instructions to [Chinese] professors to base [their] studies only on the use of the experience of the Great Patriotic War.

N.S. Khrushchev: He is like a sausage—holds what he is stuffed with.

Mao Zedong: Perhaps we should change all the advisers into specialists?

N.S. Khrushchev: That's right. Leaving them with the right to advise. Let them work.

Mao Zedong: Yes, let them work, but in a slightly different way. Could you stay tomorrow?

N.S. Khrushchev: And you want to send us back expeditiously?

Mao Zedong: No, you may stay as long as you want.

Regarding the time of our next meeting there could be a contradiction between us. You work during the day, and I sleep during the day. One could meet in the afternoon after 4.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, this is a contradiction, but not a conflict.

Mao Zedong: Should we publish a communiqué about our meeting[?] Perhaps we should scare the imperialists just a bit?

N.S. Khrushchev: Not a bad idea. Let them guess what Khrushchev and Mao Zedong talked about in Beijing. From our side one could assign the work on the communiqué to comrades [Vassily] Kuznetsov, Ponomarev, Fedorenko.

Mao Zedong: From our side there will be comrades Wan Xia Sang and Hu Xao Mu. We can frighten the imperialists, and they should be frightened.

N.S. Khrushchev: That's right. Perhaps that is why Stalin did not want to reach a treaty with you, because he thought an attack on China was possible and did not want to get involved into this. We would have helped a little, but without full-scale involvement. But he did not tell anybody about this. We, for instance, had no treaty with Albania. During the discussion of the issue of the Warsaw Pact, Molotov suggested to exclude Albania. I asked Molotov why Albania should not be included. He said—would we fight for it? But if we do not defend [a country], they would capture it without fight.

Mao Zedong: Yes, this is a staunch, hard-boiled nation. They should be assisted.

N.S. Khrushchev: Molotov then objected also to covering the GDR. I believe we should discuss the issue about the reinforcement of Albania. It needs a fleet. On what basis we could do it—cooperation or some other, we will discuss it with [Albanian leader] Enver Xoxha. This is a complicated issue. Maybe some kind of cooperation will be necessary. Please do not blame us for it.

Mao Zedong: Yes, cooperation is needed with Albania, the GDR, Poland, Hungary, but hardly with Czechoslovakia. Do you have troops there?

N.S. Khrushchev: No. Only in Poland and Hungary. When I was in Hungary I offered [Janós] Kádár to withdraw the troops. He disagreed and only consented to the reduction of one division. They deployed our troops along the Austrian border, but the Austrians do not threaten us. I believe that the situation in Hungary is very good. Kádár is a good man.

Mao Zedong: In case of war we should definitely cooperate. Look how many military bases, how many nails are studded around us; in Japan, on Taiwan, in South Korea, [South] Vietnam, Malaya, etc.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes. And how many in Europe? Bases are all around.

[It is] good that we developed [the Soviet] economy, and our scientists helped us build missiles.

Mao Zedong: We all live because of your missiles.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, to a certain extent this is so, one can say without false modesty. This deters the enemies.

I believe that the situation in the GDR is good.

Mao Zedong: I am of the same opinion. Cde. Dung Bi U characterized the situation there in a similar way.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, we met with him in Bulgaria and in the GDR.

This was the end of the meeting.

The conversation was recorded by N. Fedorenko and A. Filev.

*[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, fond 52, opis 1, delo 498, ll. 44-477, copy in Dmitry Volkogonov Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Translation from Russian for CWIHP by Vladislav M. Zubok, (National Security Archive).]*

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## DOCUMENT No. 2
## Fourth Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong, Hall of Qinjendiang, 3 August 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.

First—on the ban of testing of atomic weapons. You stopped testing unilaterally, but in the West they continue to test. Do you think it is necessary to resume testing?

N.S. Khrushchev: They liberated us from our pledge by not ceasing their tests. We conducted our tests. Now we continue to work on atomic and hydrogen bombs. When necessary, we will resume testing, of course, if by that time there is no general agreement on the cessation of testing.

Mao Zedong: It is clear to me.

You said that a transcontinental missile flies through space. Doesn't it burn up when it re-enters the atmosphere?

N.S. Khrushchev: No, this issue is resolved.

Mao Zedong: How do you assess the fact that the US located its military bases around the Soviet Union?

N.S. Khrushchev: This is unfavorable for us. The

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 expected 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.[51]

Mao Zedong: And German scientists, too?

N.S. Khrushchev. No, they participated only in the very beginning. We could not entrust such an important matter to the Germans. Now they all returned to Germany and told their stories about what they had worked on. The Americans believed their stories and decided that we had no transcontinental rockets. When we announced that we tested it, they could not believe. But then we launched sputniks.[52] Now Americans already say that Russians themselves built the transcontinental rocket. The newspapers wrote that there are Germans working in America as well, but America did not launch the first sputnik.

Mao Zedong: I still think that your trip abroad for the summit of heads of the states is dangerous. I would advise you to declare that you nominate a deputy in your absence. We all are concerned when you leave the country.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, there is a certain risk there, particularly if the summit takes place in New York: there are many embittered Hungarians there, and other enemies. Conditions are better in Geneva. I recall an interesting story during the Geneva conference in [July] 1955.

According to the American Constitution, the President's bodyguards should run ahead of him during his movement in the streets. But the Constitution was developed when people still moved in horse-drawn carriages. Therefore, when Eisenhower came to Geneva and sat in a car, and his bodyguards ran ahead, this made everyone who met him laugh. Then everyone guessed how Khrushchev and Bulganin would behave. And we came to Geneva, sat into an open car and drove across the city. This surprised everyone, because they believed we would be afraid and would move around only in the armor-plated car. True, then we drove in the armor-plated car [*bronirovannaia mashina*], because, as the Swiss police informed us, there was some kind of a terrorist group, which plotted an attack.

Americans also wrote that Khrushchev would not dare to show himself to people in Hungary. But it is well known what happened during our trip in Hungary. We had to lay a wreath to the monument near the American embassy. I then suggested to Kádár to go to the monument through the crowd, so that Americans could see how people would "tear Khrushchev to pieces." After this they stopped writing that Hungarians were against the Soviet Union.

Mao Zedong: Stalin refused to go even to Geneva, but I had a different kind of danger in mind.

N.S. Khrushchev: It was a senile defect of mind.

We now do not consider possible the outbreak of war. From time to time we instruct our military to prepare, according to their data, an outline of the situation. Recently they reported that there were no grounds to believe in an

imminent threat of war.

Mao Zedong: Do you think [US Secretary of State John Foster] Dulles will remain in his position?

N.S. Khrushchev: No, he will probably go, although it is better for us if he stays. It is easier to deal with a fool than with a bright person.

Mao Zedong: In your opinion, will [Democratic presidential candidate Adlai] Stevenson become president?

N.S. Khrushchev: He is a more positive personality.

Mao Zedong: Most probably, if the Republican Party stays in power, then [Vice President Richard] Nixon will become President.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, most probably so. He would be worse than Eisenhower. Eisenhower entered the national [political] arena as a national hero, as a result of the war. As a politician he is not among the best; he lacks political experience. And even as a military officer, he does not shine brightly. At the end of the war the Germans almost defeated him in the Ardennes. Then [Winston] Churchill asked Stalin to come to the assistance of the Western allies.

Mao Zedong: You should not have assisted them then. Maybe as a result there would not have been a West Berlin, and perhaps not even a Western Germany.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, perhaps today we would have been guests of [French Communist Party leader Maurice] Thorez. But at that moment the situation was different. The Germans surrendered to the Americans without fighting, and offered strong resistance against us. The situation could have turned out in such a way that we would not have captured Berlin. Stalin then reached understanding with Eisenhower and he gave us an opportunity to capture Berlin. During the battle of Vienna, the Germans also ran away from us towards Eisenhower, but he did not accept them as prisoners. So, as you can see, Eisenhower was not devoid of a certain decency. But now he does everything that American monopolists recommend to him.

Mao Zedong says that everything is ready for signing of the communiqué.

N.S. Khrushchev: Good. Let's sign it.

This was the end of the meeting.

The conversation was recorded by N. Fedorenko, A. Filev.

*[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, f. 52, opis 1, delo 498, ll. 151-156, copy in Volkogonov Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Translated from Russian for CWIHP by Vladislav M. Zubok (National Security Archive).]*

## DOCUMENT No. 3
## Memorandum of Conversation of N.S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong, Beijing, 2 October 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.

Today, together with cde. M.A. Suslov and A.A. Gromyko, I paid a visit to Mao Zedong at his request in his residency.

Mao Zedong: We acquainted ourselves with the content of the message from Eisenhower to you, Cde. Khrushchev, which at your instruction was passed to us this morning.

N.S. Khrushchev: Good. Besides, we would like to acquaint you with the excerpt concerning China from my conversation in the US with President D. Eisenhower on 27 September 1959, and after that let us exchange opinions on the issue regarding my trip to the US and on the issues of relations with America. Most advisable would be if the above mentioned excerpt from my conversation with Eisenhower would be translated here orally by the interpreter.

The interpreters Yang Ming Fu and Li Yue Zhen translate orally the aforementioned excerpt from my conversation with Eisenhower.

The Chinese paid greatest attention to the issue of detention of 5 Americans in China, as well as the remark by Eisenhower about the reason for which the USSR did not take the same position on the Taiwan question as on the German question.

N.S. Khrushchev (after the translation ended): It is clear why Eisenhower was in a hurry to send his message to China.

Mao Zedong: As far as I understand it, the meaning of Eisenhower's observations can be summarized as follows: that moderate and restrained policy should be conducted.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes.

Mao Zedong: Eisenhower also says that 45 countries allegedly recognize Taiwan and there are smaller number of [countries that recognize] us, and [that] war is unnecessary. There are positive points in Eisenhower's dispatch, in particular his observation that one should not let war break out. We also do not want war.

N.S. Khrushchev: You understood this correctly. I would like to emphasize that there is a thought in Eisenhower's message which implies not removing forever, only postponing the resolution of the Taiwan issue. The main idea of the Eisenhower message is that there should

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 Revolution, and then the Chinese government. And recognize the Revolution is what he does not want.

Mao Zedong: Yes, this is true. The US understand[s] this, but they want to conduct talks in their direction. The US government hinted that the PRC should make a declaration on the non-use of violence in the Taiwan question. The Americans want to receive guarantees on the non-use of arms, but as for them, they intend to do there whatever they want.

N.S. Khrushchev: I did not even know that the PRC holds five Americans in captivity. Is this true? In the conversation with Eisenhower I only said that, as a matter of friendly advice, I could touch on this question in Beijing.

Zhou Enlai: On 1 August 1956, the Americans and we reached an agreement in Geneva according to which Americans who had long lived in the PRC (immigrants), could be returned to the US. However, we stipulated that if these people committed any crime, they could be arrested. Chinese law also stipulates that if a prisoner behaves well in prison, his sentence might be reduced. The second category of people on which agreement was reached to allow them the right of exit from the PRC were prisoners of war. A US plane shot down over China in the area of Andung, not in Korea. 18 US military personnel who were on this plane were taken prisoners. Subsequently we set them all free. You recall that the question of American prisoners of war was discussed by the United Nations, and that in 1955 UN General Secretary Dag Hammarskjold came to the PRC on this business. Following Hammarskjold , [French Prime Minister] Mendes-France also came [to discuss] the same question. Via the British, the Americans informed us that they would like to hold talks with the PRC. We agreed to it and the talks began. We took the initiative and released 13 American prisoners of war. Therefore at the conference in Geneva the Americans had no axe to grind with us. After this there were two more Americans, Fekto and Downey, who were in our prisons; they are the agents of the US Central Intelligence Agency and were caught red-handed. Their plane was shot down when they tried without landing to raise their spies onboard with a special rig. A Chinese court sentenced them to lengthy prison sentences: one to life in prison, the other to 20 years in prison. When Hammarskjold came to the PRC, he said that negotiations about the fate of these Americans was not part of his mission. The remaining three are people who lived permanently in China and were arrested for conducting espionage activities. We had overall something like 90 Americans. Most of them we released and now there are only five persons in prison in the PRC. All of them are spies, and, according to the Chinese law, they are subject to imprisonment. We believe that we, Chinese, let too many Americans go.

N.S. Khrushchev: This is the first time I am hearing about this. But if you want to hear my opinion, we, if we were you, would have acted differently. The Americans who are imprisoned in the PRC should, if you do not take the course on confrontation, either be expelled or traded for

counterparts. Lenin did it at his time and was correct. If one, so to say, would "tease geese," then, of course, the Americans should be kept in detention. At some point we exchanged [Mattias] Rakosi for one of the Hungarian spies we detained. In a word, in our opinion, the Americans that you hold in prison should better be set free.

Mao Zedong (with obvious displeasure and testily): Of course, one can set them free or not, and we will not release Americans now, but we will do it at a more appropriate time. After all, the Americans sent a large number of our volunteers [who fought in] Korea to Taiwan, and a great deal of the fighters from the PDRK [People's Democratic Republic of Korea] army they sent to South Korea.

N.S. Khrushchev: Good. This is your internal affair. We do not interfere. But your attitude and the fact that you probably took offense at us complicates the exchange of opinions. I would like to emphasize that I am not a representative of the US and not a mediator on behalf of the Americans. I am a representative of my own Soviet socialist state, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. If I touched on this issue, I did it only because I wanted to sort it out and to lay before you our point of view, since this issue stirs up the international situation.

Mao Zedong: That means it complicates life for the Americans.

N.S. Khrushchev: This issue also complicates our life. We have more substantial grounds to present our claims to the US. After all, they detain a big number of the so-called displaced persons [*peremeschennikh lits*]. The weakness of our position stems from the fact that many of these people do not want to return to the USSR. Of course, we did not discuss with the Americans the issue of setting free the Americans who are imprisoned in the PRC. I only promised Eisenhower to raise this question in the form of a friendly advice during my stay in the PRC. And the Americans raised this question only indirectly.

Mao Zedong: The issue of Taiwan is clear, not only will we not touch Taiwan, but also the off-shore islands, for 10, 20 and perhaps 30 years.

N.S. Khrushchev: Taiwan is an inalienable part, a province, of China, and on this principled question we have no disagreements. As for the five Americans, we would resolve it differently. You are saying that you will live without Taiwan for 10, 20, and even 30 years. But here the main issue is about tactics. The Taiwan question creates difficulties not only for the Americans, but also for us. Between us, in a confidential way, we say that we will not fight over Taiwan, but for outside consumption, so to say, we state on the contrary, that in case of an aggravation of the situation because of Taiwan the USSR will defend the PRC. In its turn, the US declare that they will defend Taiwan. Therefore, a kind of pre-war situation emerges.

Mao Zedong: So what should we do then? Should we act as the US says, that is declare the non-use of force in the area of Taiwan and move towards turning this issue into an international issue?

Zhou Enlai: As far as the Taiwan question is concerned, we should draw a clear line between its two aspects: relations between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan are an internal issue, and relations between China and America regarding the Taiwan issue this is the international aspect of this problem.

N.S. Khrushchev: This is clear, and this is how we spoke with Eisenhower, as you could see from the excerpt of the record of my conversation with the President. To be sure, every question has many sides to it. The main issue—what should be put in the beginning [*kakoe poloshit nachalo*]. A while ago Lenin created the Far Eastern Republic in the Far East of the Soviet Union, and Lenin recognized its [sovereignty]. Keep in mind that this republic was established on the territory of the Soviet Union. It was unbelievable, but Lenin temporarily put up with this. Later, as it ought to be, the Far Eastern Republic merged with the Soviet Union.

We do not have proposals regarding the Taiwan Question, but we would think you ought to look for ways to relax the situation. We, being your allies, knew about the measures you undertook on the Taiwan Question, and today I am hearing for the first time about some of the tenets of your position in this area. Should it be appropriate for us as allies to exchange opinions on all these questions that might involve not only you, but also your friends into events? We could search for ways to promote the relaxation of international tensions without causing damage to the prestige and sovereign rights of the PRC.

Mao Zedong: Our General Staff informed you about our intentions in the Taiwan Question through your chief military adviser whom we asked to relay everything to the USSR Ministry of Defense. I would like to clarify right away that we did not intend to undertake any large-scale military actions in the area of Taiwan, and only wanted to create complications for the United States considering that they got bogged down in Lebanon. And we believe that our campaign was successful.

N.S. Khrushchev: We hold a different opinion on this question.

Mao Zedong: Although we fire at the off-shore islands, we will not make attempts to liberate them. We also think that the United States will not go to war because of the off-shore islands and Taiwan.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, Americans will not go to war because of Taiwan and the off-shore islands. We are familiar with the content of the instructions that were given to [John Foster] Dulles when he went to a meeting with Jiang Jieshi. [53] If you are interested to see this document, we can show it to you. As for the firing at the off-shore islands, if you shoot, then you ought to capture these islands, and if you do not consider necessary capturing these islands, then there is no use in firing. I do not understand this policy of yours. Frankly speaking, I thought you would take the islands and was upset when I learned that you did not take them. Of course, this is your

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 relaxaing 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 Lenin's example, and he gave to Turkey Kars, Ardahan and Ararat. And until today area a part of the population in the Caucasus are displeased by these measures by Lenin. But I believe that his actions were correct. I am telling about all this to show you that for us this territorial issue was not

insurmountable. You have had good relations with India for many years. Suddenly, here is a bloody incident, as result of which [Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal] Nehru found himself in a very difficult position. We may say that Nehru is a bourgeois statesman. But we know about it. If Nehru leaves, who would be better than him? The Dalai Lama fled from Tibet, he is a bourgeois figure. This issue is also not clear for us. When the events in Hungary took place, then Nehru was against us, and we did not take offense at him, because we did not expect anything from him as a bourgeois statesman. But although he was against it, this did not prevent us from preserving good relations with him. If you let me, I will tell you what a guest should not say—the events in Tibet are your fault. You ruled in Tibet, you should have had your intelligence [agencies] there and should have known about the plans and intentions of the Dalai Lama.

Mao Zedong: Nehru also says that the events in Tibet occurred on our fault. Besides, in the Soviet Union they published a TASS declaration on the issue of conflict with India.

N.S. Khrushchev: Do you really want us to approve of your conflict with India? It would be stupid on our part. The TASS declaration was necessary. You still seem to be able to see some difference between Nehru and me. If we had not issued the TASS declaration, there could have been an impression that there was a united front of socialist countries against Nehru. The TASS declaration turned this issue into one between you and India.

Mao Zedong: Our mistake was that we did not disarm the Dalai Lama right away. But at that time we had no contact with the popular masses of Tibet.

N.S. Khrushchev: You have no contact even now with the population of Tibet.

Mao Zedong: We have a different understanding of this issue.

N.S. Khrushchev: Of course, that is why we raised this issue. One could also say the following: both you and we have Koreans who fled from Kim Il Sung. But this does not give us ground to spoil relations with Kim Il Sung, and we remain good friends. As to the escape of the Dalai Lama from Tibet, if we had been in your place, we would not have let him escape. It would be better if he was in a coffin. And now he is in India, and perhaps will go to the USA. Is this to the advantage of the socialist countries?

Mao Zedong: This is impossible; we could not arrest him then. We could not bar him from leaving, since the border with India is very extended, and he could cross it at any point.

N.S. Khrushchev: It's not a matter of arrest; I am just saying that you were wrong to let him go. If you allow him an opportunity to flee to India, then what has Nehru to do with it? We believe that the events in Tibet are the fault of the Communist Party of China, not Nehru's fault.

Mao Zedong: No, this is Nehru's fault.

N.S. Khrushchev: Then the events in Hungary are not our fault, but the fault of the United States of America, if I understand you correctly. Please, look here, we had an army in Hungary, we supported that fool Rakosi—and this is our mistake, not the mistake of the United States.

Mao Zedong: How can you compare Rakosi to the Dalai Lama?

N.S. Khrushchev: If you like, you can to a certain degree.

Mao Zedong: The Hindus acted in Tibet as if it belonged to them.

N.S. Khrushchev: We know. As you know, Nepal wanted to have a Soviet ambassador, but we did not send there for a long time. You did the same. This is because Nehru did not want that Soviet and Chinese ambassadors were there. This should not come as a surprise—nothing else can be expected from Nehru. But this should not be a grounds for us for breaking off the relations.

Mao Zedong: We also support Nehru, but in the question of Tibet we should crush him.

N.S. Khrushchev: Why did you have to kill people on the border with India?

Mao Zedong: They attacked us first, crossed the border and continued firing for 12 hours.

Zhou Enlai: What data do you trust more—Indian or ours?

N.S. Khrushchev: Although the Hindus attacked first, nobody was killed among the Chinese, and only among the Hindus.

Zhou Enlai: But what we are supposed to do if they attack us first. We cannot fire in the air. The Hindus even crossed the McMahon line. Besides, in the nearest future [Indian] Vice President [Savrepalli] Radhakrishnan comes to China. This is to say that we are undertaking measures to resolve the issue peacefully, by negotiations. In my letter of 9 September to Nehru we provided detailed explanations of all that had occurred between India and us.

N.S. Khrushchev: Comrade Zhou Enlai. You have been Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC for many years and know better than me how one can resolve disputed issues without [spilling] blood. In this particular case I do not touch at all the issue of the border, for if the Chinese and the Hindus do not know where the borderline goes between them, it is not for me, a Russian, to meddle. I am only against the methods that have been used.

Zhou Enlai: We did not know until recently about the border incident, and local authorities undertook all the measures there, without authorization from the center. Besides, we are talking here about three disputed regions between China and India. The Hindus were the first to cross the McMahon line and were the first to open fire. No government of China ever recognized the McMahon line. If, for instance, the Finns attacked the borders of the USSR, wouldn't you retaliate?

M.A. Suslov: We do not have claims against the Finnish government.

N.S. Khrushchev: That the center knew nothing about the incident is news to me. I would tell you, what I was against. On 22 June 1941 Germans began their assault

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 like Noah's Ark. You, comrade Zhou Enlai, understand it as well as I do.

M.A. Suslov: Noah's Ark in a sense that they have a pair of every creature.

Peng Zhen (in hasty agitation): Nasser has been abusing without reason the Soviet Union that delivers to him unconditional assistance. Here we should keep in mind the reactionary aspects of the national bourgeoisie. If you, Soviet comrades, can lash out at the national bourgeoisie, why we cannot do the same?

N.S. Khrushchev: Nobody says you cannot lash out—but shooting is not the same as criticism.

Peng Zhen: The McMahon line is a dirty line that was not recognized by any government in China.

N.S. Khrushchev: There are three of us here, and nine of you, and you keep repeating the same line. I think this is to no use. I only wanted to express our position. It is your business—to accept it or not.

Mao Zedong: The border conflict with India - this is only a marginal border issue, not a clash between the two governments. Nehru himself is not aware what happened there. As we found out, their patrols crossed the McMahon line. We learned about this much later, after the incident took place. All this was known neither to Nehru, nor even to our military district in Tibet. When Nehru learned that their patrols had crossed the MacMahon line, he issued the instruction for them to withdraw. We also carried out the work towards peaceful resolution of the issue.

N.S. Khrushchev: If this had been done immediately after the skirmish, the conflict would not have taken place. Besides, you failed to inform us for a rather long time about the border incident.

Liu Shaoqi: On 6 September I informed you through comrade [Soviet charge d'affaires in Beijing Sergei F.] Antonov about the situation on the border. Earlier we could not inform you, since we still had not figured it out ourselves.

Zhou Enlai: The TASS announcement was published before you received my letter to Nehru. It was passed to comrade Antonov on the afternoon of 9 September.

M.A. Suslov: It was probably done simultaneously, considering that the time difference between Moscow and Beijing is 5 hours.

A.A. Gromyko: The ambassador of India in the USSR told me that the Chinese letter not only fails to make things calmer, but also actually throws everything back.

M.A. Suslov: At the present moment the temperature has fallen and we can let this issue alone.

Mao Zedong (peevishly). The temperature has fallen thanks to your announcement?

M.A. Suslov: Not only, but also thanks to the decision of your parliament.

Liu Shaoqi: On 6 September I passed a message to you via comrade Antonov that within a week [we] would deliver retaliation to the Hindus.

M.A. Suslov: The decision of your parliament was considerably softer than your Note.

Peng Zhen: The delegates of the All-Chinese Assembly of People's Deputies asked me how one should understand the TASS announcement, was it that the senior brother, without finding out what was right and who was wrong, gave a beating to the PRC and India.

Wang Ixia-Sang: But the first who began to fire were the Hindus, not us.

N.S. Khrushchev: Yes, they began to shoot and they themselves fell dead. Our duty is to share with you our considerations on the incident, for nobody besides us would tell you about it.

Zhou Enlai: There could be disputes and unresolved issues between the CCP and the CPSU, but for the outside consumption we always underline unity with the Soviet Union.

Lin Biao: The Hindus began to shoot first and they fired for 12 hours, until they spent all their ammunition. There could be a different approach to this issue, one might admit, but the facts are facts: 1) the Hindus were the first to cross the border; 2) the Hindus were the first to open fire; 3) the Hindus sustained fire during 12 hours. In this situation there might be two approaches to the issue: 1) the Hindus crossed the border and we have to beat retreat; 2) the Hindus cross the border and we offer a rebuff.

Mao Zedong: The rebuff was delivered on the decision of local military organs.

Lin Biao: There was no command from the top.

Mao Zedong: We could not keep the Dalai Lama, for the border with India is very extended and he could cross it at any point.

M.A. Suslov: You should have known in advance about his intentions and plots.

Mao Zedong: We wanted to delay the transformation of Tibet by four years.

N.S. Khrushchev: And that was your mistake.

Mao Zedong: The decision to delay the transformations was taken earlier, after the Dalai Lama visited India [in early 1959]. We could not launch an offensive without a pretext. And this time we had a good excuse and we struck. This is, probably, what you cannot grasp. You will see for yourselves later that the McMahon line with India will be maintained, and the border conflict with India will end.

N.S. Khrushchev: This is good. But the issue is not about the line. We know nothing about this line and we do not even want to know.

Mao Zedong: The border issue with India will be decided through negotiations.

N.S. Khrushchev: We welcome this intention.

Zhou Enlai: On 22 January you suggested to Nehru to conduct talks on the border issues. Then he disagreed with this. Today he agrees.

Mao Zedong: You attached to us two labels—the conflict with India was our fault, and that the escape of the Dalai Lama was also our error. We, in turn, attached to you one label—time-servers. Please accept it.

N.S. Khrushchev: We do not accept it. We take a principled communist line.

Mao Zedong: The TASS announcement made all imperialists happy.

M.A. Suslov: Precisely on the contrary. This announcement and our recent measures promoted the relaxation of the situation. The imperialists would have been happy, had the relations between India and China been spoiled. We have the information that Americans approached Nehru and offered him their services regarding the conflict between India and China. Our steps cooled the hot expectations of the reactionaries.

Lin Biao: The whole issue is about who was first to shoot, not who was killed.

Zhou Enlai: It follows from your reasoning that, if burglars break into your house and you beat them up, then you are guilty.

N.S. Khrushchev: Why may you criticize us, and the senior brother may not censure you. At one meeting with cde. Yudin you, comrade Mao Zedong, very sharply criticized the CPSU, and we accepted this criticism. Moreover, you left the session at the 8th Congress of the CCP during the speech of comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan. This was a demonstrative gesture, and Mikoyan could have left also.

In fact, I can also pack my suitcases and leave, but I am not doing it. When the events in Hungary took place, comrade Zhou Enlai came to us and lectured us. He blamed us both for Bessarabia and for the Baltic countries. We received this lesson. It turns out that you may censure us, and we may not. There are even some members of the CC CPSU Presidium back home who say the following: there is a formula "the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union," but in reality one lacks even respect for observations of the CPSU. Aren't you talking to us too haughtily?

Mao Zedong: We expressed our observations to you in a confidential manner. And you this time expressed them in the same order. This is good. This will serve the right cause. But when you took a public stand (I have in mind the TASS announcement) this was not good.

A.A. Gromyko: The TASS announcement did nothing to push India away from the People's Republic of China (reads an excerpt).

Peng Zhen: We also must speak out. The Hindus were really the first ones to cross the border, to start shooting, they continued shooting for 12 hours. Comrade Mao Zedong has just said that nobody knew precisely what actually occurred on the Sino-Indian border.

N.S. Khrushchev: You do not tolerate objections, you believe you are orthodox, and this is where our haughtiness reveals itself. Chen Yi attached to us a label, and it is a political label. What ground does he have to do this?

Chen Yi: The TASS announcement was in support of India, in support of the bourgeoisie.

N.S. Khrushchev: You want to subjugate us to yourselves, but nothing will come out of it, we are also a party and we have our own way, and we are not time-servers towards anybody.

Mao Zedong: And what is then our way?

N.S. Khrushchev: We always believed and believe that you and we take one road and we regard you as our best friends.

Mao Zedong: I cannot understand what constitutes our mistake? Kerensky and Trotsky also escaped from you.

N.S. Khrushchev: The Dalai Lama escaped, and you are not guilty? Well, there were also similar mistakes and facts on our side. True, when we allowed Kerensky to escape from the USSR, it was our mistake, but one should keep in mind that this happened literally in the first days of the revolution. Lenin freed on parole generals Krasnov and Kaledin. As for Trotsky, it was Stalin who expelled him. Nehru may go over to the USA. He is among our fellow-travelers who go with us when it is to their advantage. When we delivered assistance to Nasser, we knew that he might turn against us. We gave him credits for construction of the high-altitude Aswan dam. This is tactics. Had we not given him this credit, Nasser would have ended up in America's embrace.

Mao Zedong: You only see our "threatening gestures," and fail to see the other side—our struggle to pull Nehru over to our side.

N.S. Khrushchev: We are not confident that Nasser will hold out with us for long. There is only a very fine thread connecting us and it can break off at any moment.

Chen Yi: I am outraged by your declaration that "the aggravation of relationship with India was our fault."

N.S. Khrushchev: I am also outraged by your declaration that we are time-servers. We should support Nehru, to help him stay in power.

Mao Zedong: The events in Tibet and the border conflict—these are temporary developments. Better that we end here the discussion of these issues. Could we assess the relationship between us as follows, that on the whole we are united, and some differences do not stand in the way of our friendship?

N.S. Khrushchev: We took and do take this view.

Mao Zedong: I would like to introduce a clarification—I never attended the session at the 8th Congress when comrade Mikoyan spoke. I would like to speak to Mikoyan personally.

N.S. Khrushchev: You skipped that session precisely because Mikoyan spoke there. Zhou Enlai once delivered to us a fair lecture. He is a good lecturer, but I disagree with the content of his lecture.

Liu Shaoqi: We never told anybody about our disagreements, not to even any fraternal party.

N.S. Khrushchev: This is good, this is correct. You gave us the first lesson, we heard you, and you must now listen to us. Take back your political accusations; otherwise we spoil relations between our parties. We are your friends and speak the truth. We never acted as time-servers with regard to anybody, even our friends.

Chen Yi: But you also lay two political accusations at our door, by saying that both the aggravations of relations with India and the escape of Dalai Lama were our fault. I believe that you are still acting as time-servers.

N.S. Khrushchev: These are completely different matters. I drew your attention only to specific oversights and never hurled at you principled political accusations, and you put forth precisely a political accusation. If you consider us time-servers, comrade Chen Yi, then do not offer me your hand. I will not accept it.

Chen Yi: Neither will I. I must tell you I am not afraid of your fury.

N.S. Khrushchev: You should not spit from the height of your Marshal title. You do not have enough spit. We cannot be intimidated. What a pretty situation we have: on one side, you use the formula "headed by the Soviet Union," on the other hand, you do not let me say a word. What kind of equality we can talk about? That is why we raised the question at the 21st Congress of the CPSU about the repeal of the formula "the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union." We do not want any Party to stand at the head. All communist parties are equal and independent. Otherwise one is in a false situation.

Mao Zedong (in a conciliatory manner): Chen Yi speaks about particulars, and you should not generalize.

Wang Jiaxiang: The whole matter is about wrong translation. Chen Yi did not speak of time-serving as some kind of doctrine.

N.S. Khrushchev: We shot down not only one American plane and always said that they crash by themselves. This you cannot brand as time-serving.

M.A. Suslov: Now you are moving toward negotiations between you and India. This is good.

A.A. Gromyko: Is there a need that the PRC makes a declaration that would promote a relaxation in the situation? I am making a reservation that I am saying this without a preliminary exchange of opinions with cde. Khrushchev.

Zhou Enlai: There is no need to make such a declaration. We informed the Hindus that Vice President Radhakrishnan might come to us at his convenience in the

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 10th 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 CWIHP by Vladislav M. Zubok (National Security Archive).]*

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

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[1] 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.

[2] 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.

[3] 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.

[4] Odd Arne Westad, "History, Memory, and the Languages of Alliance-Making" in: Odd Arne Westad, Chen Jian, Stein Toennesson, 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).

[5] See details in: Zhang Shu Guang and Chen Jian, "The Emerging Disputes," pp. 155-159, 163.

[6] 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

[7] "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.

[8] 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.

[9] Interview with Feodor V. Mochulsky, Moscow, 9 July 1992.

[10] Interview with Feodor V. Mochulsky, Moscow, 9 July 1992.

[11] 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.

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

[13] William Taubman, "Khrushchev Vs. Mao," pp. 246, 247.

[14] Harrison E. Salisbury, *The New Emperors: China in the Era of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1992), p. 156; Vladislav Zubok, "'Look What Chaos in the Beautiful Socialist Camp!', p. 156.

[15] In some ways this anti-Sovietism was as "natural" (or irrational, depending on the perspective) as the anti-Americanism of the French after the Second World War. As a historian comments on the latter, "the French, intellectuals especially, resented the very fact that they had been liberated by the Americans, resented their humilated postwar status and more particularly the need to go cap in hand to Washington for assistance with French reconstructions." Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), p. 195.

[16] William Taubman, "Khrushchev Vs. Mao," p. 247

[17] N.S. Khrushchev. *Vremia. Lyudi. Vlast (Vospominaniia v 4-kh knigakh_)* [Time, People, Power. Memoirs in four volumes] (Moscow: Moscow News, 1999), vol. 3, pp. 75-76.

[18] N.S. Khrushchev. *Vremia. Lyudi. Vlast (Vospominaniia v 4-kh knigakh_)* [Time, People, Power. Memoirs in four volumes] (Moscow: Moscow News, 1999), vol. 3, p. 74.

[19] Negin, Smirnov, Op. cit., pp. 312-313.

[20] Editor's Note: For Krushchev's letter to Eisenhower, see Department of State, ed. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960: China (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996), pp. 145-153.

[21] Vladislav M. Zubok, Constantin Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War. From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 225; "Record of Conversation with Chairman of the State Council of the PRC Zhou Enlai on 5 September 1958, RGANI, f. 5, op. 49, d. 133, ll. 1-8; "Record of Conversation of the Chairman of the State Committee for External Economic Ties in Beijing Com. S.Ia. Fomin with Deputy Secretary of the State Council of the PRC Com. Yan Fanji, 10 September 1958, RGANI, f. 5, op. 49, d. 128; "Khrushchev's Nuclear Promise to Beijing During the 1958 Crisis," Introduction by Vladislav M. Zubok: *CWIHP Bulletin* 6-7 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 219, 226-227.

[22] Interview with F.V. Mochulski, 9 July 1992.

[23] Interview with F.V. Mochulski, 9 July 1992.

[24] "Record of Conversation of Com. Mao on 2 October at the Meeting with the Six Delegations of Socialist Countries", RGANI, f. 5, op. 49, d. 128, l. 234-235, cited in Zubok, Pleshakov, Op. cit., p. 226.

[25] Anastas Mikoyan, *Tak bilo; razmishleniia o minuvshem_*[As It Was: Reflections on the Past] (Moscow: Vagrius, 1999), p. 598.

[26] Oleg Troyanovsky, *Cherez godi I rasstoiania* [Over Years and Distances] (Moscow: Vagrius, 1997), p. 219.

[27] Oleg Grinevsky, Tisacha I odin den Nikiti Sergeevicha Khrushcheva [One thousand and one day of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev] (Moscow: Vagrius, 1998), pp. 99-100.

[28] 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), p. 251.

[29] The text of the letter is cited by M.Y. Prozumenschikov, "The Sino-Indian Conflict," p. 251, but the words cited in our text came from the report of Mikhail Suslov at the CC CPSU Plenum, 18 December 1959, RGANI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 415, l. 30.

[30] Interview with F.V.Mochulsky, 9 July 1992.

[31] N.S. Khrushchev, *Vospominania: Vremia, Liudi, Vlast*, vol. 3, pp. 84-85.

[32] Volkogonov, *Sem vozhdei*, vol. 1, p. 415.

[33] From the diary of S.F. Antonov, "Record of conversation with Mao Zedong on 14 October 1959," RGANI, f. 5, op. 49, d. 233, ll. 86-95.

[34] RGANI, f. 2, op. 1, d. 415, ll. 43-44, translated and

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

[35] Negin, Smirnov, Op. cit., p. 304.

[36] Troyanovsky, Op. cit., p. 222.

[37] Grinevsky, Op. cit., pp. 125-129, 131, 149-150, 162-163.

[38] 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.

[39] Troyanovsky, Op. cit., p. 225.

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

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

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

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

[44] 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.

[45] Pavel Yudin was Soviet ambassador to the PRC in 1950-1958.

[46] 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).

[47] Reference to the Lebanon Crisis of 1958. One day after the violent overhtrow 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.

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

[49] Yudin fell ill on 30 July.

[50] Editor's Note: Reference to the 1956 Soviet military suppression of the Hungarian Revolution.

[51] Editor's Note: Inter-continental ballistic missile, or ICBM, first tested by the USSR in 1957.

[52] Editor's Note: Artificial satellites, first launched by the USSR in October 1957.

[53] 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.[1] 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.[2] 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 and restricted publications from China *and other countries"* (emphasis here).[3] The editors do not tell which of the minutes were written, excerpted and compiled in China and which in "other countries." It would seem possible that some of these minutes were used as background material for the preparation of the white books in 1979, at least on the Chinese side. This would mean that the sources just mentioned are not altogether independent of each other. This fact and the obscure origin of the 77 minutes means that they too must be treated with caution. Their main function may be to offer clues to what the historian should look for when given access to the archives of the Chinese and Vietnamese Communist Parties.

### Le Duan's attitude

What does the text reveal about its originator, Le Duan? A striking feature of the text is its directness and the way in which the author comes across as an individual. This is not the normal kind of party document, where individual attitudes and emotions are shrouded in institutionalized rhetoric.[4] Le Duan seems to have addressed himself to a small group of party leaders, with

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"*[5] 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.[6]

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.[7] 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 Poulo Condore.[8] 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 closest collaborator. After the Geneva agreement in 1954, which established the division of Vietnam along the 17th parallel, he is known to have sent a letter to the party leaders, objecting to the concessions made. In 1957, after Truong Chinh had stepped down as secretary general of the VWP and president Ho Chi Minh himself had taken over the party leadership, Le Duan was called to Hanoi where he became acting secretary general. He was the prime mover, in the years 1957–59, for resuming armed struggle in South Vietnam, and gaining Soviet and Chinese support for that policy. The decision of the 15th Central Committee Plenum in January 1959 to move to active struggle in the South was a clear victory for Le Duan, and at the VWP's 3rd Congress in 1960 he was elected secretary general. It took more than 15 years before the next (4th) Party Congress was held in 1976, and Le Duan died in office, half a year before the 6th Congress in 1986.[9]

Le Duan was clearly the second most powerful Vietnamese communist leader in the 20th century, after Ho Chi Minh, the founder of the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930 and President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam from its foundation in 1945 to his death in 1969.

Le Duan must be characterized as an indigenous communist leader. He had not, like Ho Chi Minh, traveled around the world during his youth. He had not, like Pham Van Dong, Vo Nguyen Giap and Hoang Van Hoan, worked closely with Ho Chi Minh in building the Viet Minh front and the National Liberation Army in the border region to China during the Second World War. He also did not belong to the group around Truong Chinh, who constituted the ICP's northern secretariat during the years from 1940 to the August Revolution of 1945. Ho Chi Minh's decision to leave the party leadership Le Duan in the years 1957–1960, and to endorse his formal election in 1960, must be interpreted as a way to ensure national unity. At a time when Vietnam was divided in two, and many southern cadres had been regrouped to the north, the safest way to ensure that the VWP remain a party for all of Vietnam was probably to make the leader of the southern branch the leader of the whole party. Presumably this was the motive behind Ho Chi Minh's choice. The relationship between Ho Chi Minh and Le Duan was never characterized by the same kind of warmth as that between the Uncle and other of his party nephews.[10]

Le Duan's text from 1979 shows that he combined an extremely strong national pride with an idea that the Vietnamese, as a particularly struggle-prone people, were playing a vanguard role in the world revolutionary struggle. The text does not reveal much admiration or respect for other nations than the Vietnamese, but it is deeply committed to the idea of national independence struggles, for all peoples, small and great. His pride comes out already in the first paragraph, where he says that after "we" had defeated the Americans, there was no imperialist power that would dare to fight "us" again. Only some Chinese reactionary figures "thought they could." The terms "we" and "us" here denote the big national we.

Le Duan's pride was of a moral nature, and the basic

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 this text. Mao is the one who always feared the Americans, discouraged the Vietnamese from fighting, and refused to offer support if this could entail a risk of US retaliation against China. When China had intervened in Korea, it was not a sign of courage; this was just something China had to do to defend its power interests.

Le Duan's admiration for courage reaches its crescendo in the following statement: "We are not afraid of anyone. We are not afraid because we are in the right. We don't even fear our elder brother. We also do not fear our. friends. Even our enemies we do not fear. We have fought them already. We are human beings. We are not afraid of anyone. We are independent. All the world knows we are independent."

On the basis of his moral distinction between courage and fear, Le Duan claims there was also a basic difference between Mao's military strategy and the strategy followed by the Vietnamese. The former was defensive, the latter offensive. The Vietnamese had not learned anything from the Chinese in terms of military strategy. The Chinese had always been very weak. They did little to fight the Japanese. After Le Duan's first visit to China (which he claims occurred in 1952), Ho Chi Minh asked him what he had seen. Two things, he replied: "Vietnam is very brave, and they are not brave at all." From that day on, Le Duan had sensed the basic difference between the Chinese and the Vietnamese: "We were entirely different from them. Within the Vietnamese person there is a very courageous spirit, and thus we have never had defensive tactics. Every person fights."

There is little in the text to indicate that Le Duan felt more respect or sympathy for the Soviet Union than for China, although the Russians caused less worry. He complained about the Sino-Soviet split, but his reason for doing so was that it strengthened US leverage in Vietnam. He complained that he had to explain so many things in China, going there "twice a year." Then he added that he had no such problem with the Soviets, since he just refrained from keeping them informed: "As for the Soviets, I did not say anything at all […] I only spoke in general terms."[11]

Another important aspect of Le Duan's thinking is his ideologically motivated distinction between, on the one side, "the Chinese people," and on the other reactionary Chinese figures. As has been seen he did not have much admiration for the Chinese in general, but he did not want to blame the whole Chinese people for the aggressive policies of their leaders: "We refer to them as a clique only. We do not refer to their nation. We did not say the Chinese people are bad towards us. We say that it is the reactionary Beijing clique."

Le Duan also distinguishes between individuals on the Chinese side, and here the criterion for judging people is their degree of understanding Vietnam. The one who understood the least was Chairman Mao, whom Le Duan seems to have thoroughly disliked: "… the most uncompromising person, the one with the Greater Han heart and the one who wanted to take Southeast Asia, was mainly Mao." He felt more sympathy both for Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. Le Duan claims that Zhou Enlai had agreed, in the 1960s, on the need for a united front of socialist countries to back the struggle in Vietnam, but that Mao had said it was not possible. Zhou had helped Le Duan to understand what was going on in China, and had arranged for much assistance to be given to Vietnam: "I am indebted to him." Hua Guofeng had not understood Vietnam, but then again Deng Xiaoping had shown more understanding. This is somewhat surprising since we know from *77 Conversations* that Deng was the one who most bluntly addressed the problems in the Sino-Vietnamese relationship in party-to-party conversations. Le Duan probably preferred Deng's straight, hard talk to Hua's evasiveness and Mao's eccentric allegories, Le Duan's admiration for Deng is confirmed by another source. In October 1977, he had told the Soviet ambassador in Hanoi that Hua Guofeng was one of those Chinese leaders who "does not understand us," but that Deng Xiaoping "treats Vietnam with great understanding." At that time Le Duan had predicted that Deng Xiaoping would win the Chinese power struggle and that this would lead Sino-Vietnamese relations to improve.[12]

That Le Duan retained some of his positive attitude to Deng in 1979 is surprising in view of the fact that it was Deng who had ordered the invasion of northern Vietnam. Le Duan claims that Deng had sincerely congratulated the Vietnamese in 1975, when Vietnam won its struggle for national unification, while some other Chinese leaders had been grudging. And in 1977, Deng had agreed with Le Duan about the need to start negotiations concerning border issues. Le Duan thought Deng was under pressure from other, less understanding Chinese leaders, and that he had to show resolve in relation to Vietnam to avoid accusations of revisionism: "…now he is rash and foolish. Because he wants to show that he is not a revisionist, he has struck Vietnam even harder. He went ahead and let *them* attack Vietnam" [emphasis added—*ST*].[13]

The final aspect of Le Duan's attitude to be addressed here is his staunch internationalism. This may seem strange in view of his almost parochially nationalist attitude, but he understood Vietnam as the vanguard in a world-wide

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 apex of its power, with some thirty Marxist governments world-wide. In 1979-80, international socialism entered a period of crisis that would reduce, in a matter of twelve years, the number of Marxist governments to only five (China, North Korea, Laos, Vietnam and Cuba). The "disastrous" events of 1978–80 did not only include the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the Chinese punitive expedition into Vietnam, and the commitment of the Soviet Navy to the South China Sea, but also the election of the cardinal-archbishop of Krakow to the papacy and the founding of the Solidarity movement in Poland, the dismantling of collectivist agriculture and introduction of market forces in China, the creation of a *de facto* US-Chinese alliance in East Asia, the establishment of an anti-communist Islamist regime in Iran, the crisis in Afghanistan leading to the Soviet invasion of December 1979, and the destabilization of several newly established Marxist regimes in Africa through anti-communist insurgencies. This meant notably that the guerrilla weapon was turned around to become "low intensity warfare," directed against socialist regimes. "Inverse Vietnams" were created in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia and elsewhere; Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet regime took on so many international commitments that it went into a period of classic economic over-stretch.

As of 1979, of course, neither Le Duan nor any other communist leader could see the approaching disaster. They were accustomed to success, and still deeply imbued with the fundamental Marxist belief that socialism represented a more advanced stage in human development than capitalism. The *White Book* published by the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry in October 1979 claimed that "today the revolutionary forces have grown, and are in a most favorable position."[14] The victory of the Vietnamese Revolution was still fresh in their minds, and had been followed by the establishment of socialist regimes in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa and, most recently, in Central America. US imperialism, claimed the white book, was sinking deeper and deeper into an irremediable and general crisis and could not even maintain its position in its apparently secure strongholds in Asia, Africa and Latin America.[15] The Soviet and Vietnamese communist leaders no doubt interpreted the trouble in Cambodia and Afghanistan, the introduction of market forces in China, and China's alignment with the US, as temporary setbacks from the general course of global evolution, which was bound to further strengthen the socialist forces. It was not till the mid-eighties that socialist leaders began to realize that the trend had turned against socialism.

What does Le Duan's text reveal about the Vietnamese leadership's assessment of the general situation in 1979, and its expectations for the future? It shows that the Hanoi leaders were preparing for a larger war with China, and that Le Duan felt confident that Vietnam could survive such a war since the greater part of the Chinese army would be compelled to remain posted along the Soviet border. Le Duan prepared his comrades for a new drawn-out national resistance struggle, and saw Vietnam as playing a crucial role in defending all of Southeast Asia against Chinese expansionism. He intended to utilize the traditional strongholds of the Indochinese Communist Party in the north central provinces of Nghe An, Ha Tinh and Thanh Hoa (where a disproportionate number of Vietnamese communist leaders had come from) as rearguard bases for the struggle against the northern enemy: "In the near future we will fight China. We are determined to win," Le Duan exclaimed, and this (most probably) was after the end of the Chinese punitive expedition. To bolster the determination of himself and his comrades, Le Duan resorted to his pride in his struggle-prone nation: "… the truth is that if a different country were to fight them, it is not clear that they would win like this.… we have never shirked from our historical responsibilities. … By guarding its own independence, Vietnam is also guarding the independence of Southeast Asian nations. Vietnam is resolved not to allow the Chinese to become an expansionist nation. The recent battle was one round only. … if they bring one or two million troops in to fight us, we will not be afraid of anything. We have just engaged 600,000 troops, and, if, in the near future, we have to fight two million, it will not be a problem at all. We are not afraid. We will make each district a fortress, every province a battlefield. We have enough people. We can fight them in many ways. We are capable of taking two to three army corps to fight them fiercely in order to surprise them; thereby making them waver, while we still defend our land. If this is so desired, then every soldier must [give rise to or produce a] soldier and every squad a squad."

It seems that Deng Xiaoping made a clever calculation in March 1979, when he decided to withdraw the Chinese troops, so the fight against Vietnam could be left to the Khmer Rouge, and China could concentrate on economic achievements.

**The record of Le Duan's relations with China**

The third, more difficult, utilization we can make of Le Duan's document is as a source to the author's relations with China and the Chinese leaders in the whole period from 1952 to 1979. In the absence of more reliable archival

sources, it is tempting to make an attempt, but one should have no illusions as to the accuracy of what Le Duan has to say.

Le Duan tells that he first visited China to gain better health in 1952. In his account he was struck by the fact that the region he visited (which would probably have been Guangxi or Guangdong) had not waged any guerrilla struggle against Japan during the Japanese occupation despite of its huge population. This fact is used in the text to draw the basic distinction between Vietnamese courage and Chinese pusillanimity. Le Duan claims that Ho Chi Minh confirmed the impression. This story probably has more to tell about Le Duan's attitude as of 1979 than about what his real impressions were at the time. We don't even know from other sources that he went to China at all in 1952.

What he tells about his reaction to the Geneva agreement in 1954 is more reliable. At that time he led the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN) in southern Vietnam, and there is little reason to doubt his disappointment at having to ask his comrades to refrain from any further struggle and resort to only political struggle or regroup north of the 17th parallel. In his 1979 text, he claims to have had an emotional outburst in front of Zhou Enlai (probably on 13 July 1971) when the latter came to Hanoi to explain the Sino-American honeymoon. Le Duan had then spoken about his feelings in 1954, when he had been in Hau Nghia (north-west of Saigon, where the famous Cu Chi tunnel system would later be dug out). And he says Zhou apologized, admitting his mistake.[16]

What is less certain, however, is if he blamed China already in 1954. At that time, China, the Soviet Union and the North Vietnamese leadership stood firmly behind the agreement, and Le Duan may well have blamed his own national leaders more than Beijing and Moscow. It probably took some time before Le Duan discovered the crucial role played by Zhou Enlai in persuading the DRV leaders to accept the 17th parallel as the dividing line between north and south Vietnam. The one most likely to have told him would be Pham Van Dong, who led the Vietnamese delegation in Geneva.[17]

The formative period for Le Duan's negative attitude to China may well have been the late 1950s, when he led the effort to gain Soviet and Chinese support for the renewal of armed struggle in South Vietnam. At that time, Mao was launching his Great Leap Forward, which plunged the country into a crisis that was not conducive to fulfilling international obligations. Le Duan no doubt saw this.

In his 1979 text he returns several times to how Zhou Enlai and Mao tried to prevent the Vietnamese from resuming the armed struggle in South Vietnam. However, Le Duan does not mention the fact that the Soviet Union also believed in the Geneva agreement and discouraged the Vietnamese from doing anything that could make it easier for France and the South Vietnamese regime to disregard their obligations.[18]

Le Duan's text is not devoid of contradictions. First he quotes Zhou as having said that whether or not the Vietnamese continued to fight was up to their own discretion. Then he accuses him of having "pressured us to stop fighting." The first claim accords well with Chen Jian's conclusion about China's Policy: "the Beijing leadership neither hindered nor encouraged Hanoi's efforts to "liberate" the South by military means until 1962."[19] The second assertion seems more dubious. Le Duan also claims that he defied Chinese advice and went ahead with building armed forces in South Vietnam: "…we were not of the same mind. We went ahead and clandestinely developed our forces." It was only when "we had already begun fighting that they then allowed us to fight." What Le Duan conveniently refrains from mentioning, is the difference between the views of the south-based cadre and some of the North Vietnamese leaders.

When coming to 1963–64, Le Duan turns the tables. The Chinese are no longer being accused of trying to temper the Vietnamese urge to fight, but instead of imposing themselves, building roads to facilitate the expansion of Chinese power into Southeast Asia, and sending troops to pave the way for controlling Vietnam. The main culprit is Mao.

We know of three occasions when Le Duan met Mao. The first was in 1963 in Wuhan, where Mao (according to the Vietnamese *White Book*) received a delegation from the VWP. During that meeting Le Duan claims to have understood Mao's real intentions and to have warned him that Vietnam could well beat Chinese forces. Mao allegedly asked him: "Comrade, isn't it true that your people have fought and defeated the Yuan army?" Le Duan said: "Correct." "Isn't it also true, comrade, that you defeated the Qing army?" Le Duan replied: "Correct." Mao said: "And the Ming army as well?" It is then that Le Duan claims to have added boldly: "Yes, and you too. I have beaten you as well [or "and I'll beat yours as well"]. Did you know that? … I spoke with Mao Zedong in that way," Le Duan asserts, and Mao just said: "Yes, yes!"

This is a tricky conversation to interpret. On the one hand it seems plausible that Mao asked the questions mentioned. Mao liked to tease people in such a way. But it seems highly unlikely that Le Duan would have challenged Mao so openly. From the *77 Conversations* it appears that Le Duan rather behaved like an obsequious servant in front of his master during his next two meetings with Mao (on 13 August 1964 and 11 May 1970).[20] In 1964 he said that "support from China is indispensable," and that "the Soviet revisionists want to make us a bargaining chip." In 1970 he asked for Mao's instructions, and ascribed Vietnam's successes to the fact that "we have followed the three instructions Chairman Mao gave us in the past," the first of which was "no fear, we should not fear the enemy."[21] The Le Duan that appears in some of the *77 Conversations* seems quite another person than the one who turns up in the 1979 account—but then the memory of one's own actions normally differs from others' perceptions at the time.

There is a big discrepancy between what Le Duan (and

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.[22] 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 troops and anti-aircraft artillery units had arrived, however, tension soon emerged between the two sides, and after Premier Alexei Kosygin committed the Soviet Union to substantially aiding Vietnam during a visit to Hanoi in February 1965, Vietnam assumed a more independent posture. The tone in the *77 Conversations* turns more sour from that time onwards. What Le Duan says about the late 1960s and the 1970s is more in line with what Chinese sources tell. By 1969, Le Duan claims to have summoned the military cadres to warn them that China had joined hands with the US imperialists, and that they had to study this problem, i.e., prepare themselves for future conflicts with China. Concerning Beijing's new line towards the US, Le Duan makes the same accusation as the Vietnamese White Book: "During that time, China made the announcement [to the US]: 'If you don't attack me, I won't attack you.' Thus they left the US with greater leverage in Vietnam." This, of course, makes sense. China really did emphasize its own great power interests to the detriment of North Vietnam.

The rhetorical highlight of Le Duan's text is the conversation he claims to have had with Zhou Enlai in Hanoi (probably in November 1971). Before Nixon went to China, says Le Duan, his goal was to disentangle the US from Vietnam with the help of China, while enticing China over to the US side in world affairs. Zhou Enlai allegedly told Le Duan: "At this time, Nixon is coming to visit me principally to discuss the Vietnamese problem, thus I must come to meet you, comrade, in order to exchange views."

Le Duan then claims to have answered: "Comrade, you can say whatever you like, but I still don't follow. Comrade, you are Chinese; I am a Vietnamese. Vietnam is mine; not yours at all." Le Duan again claims to have spoken harshly in the face of his Chinese interlocutor. This time the claim seems more reliable. It was much easier to speak harshly to Zhou Enlai in Hanoi in 1971 than to Mao in Wuhan in 1963. It would be interesting to see if Chinese reports about Zhou's November 1971 meetings in Hanoi carry traces Le Duan's nationalist credo.

**A remark on the need for archival research**

During the 1990s, the Sino–Vietnamese relationship improved tremendously. 1979 was the worst year, but China and Vietnam remained hostile throughout the 1980s, with troops massed on both sides of the border, no rails on the railways, no open roads. Relations gradually improved from the mid-1980s, and the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989 marked a huge step forward, paving the way for the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1991. On New Year's Eve 1999 (Western calendar), the two foreign ministers were able to sign a border treaty in Hanoi, and they renewed earlier promises to reach an agreement on the delineation of maritime zones in the Gulf of Tonkin before the end of 2000. This fulfils the tasks that Le Duan and Deng Xiaoping set for themselves in 1977, at that time without much hope of success. The railways are now open again, and border trade flourishes. Relations between the two countries, the two parties and the two armies have become more and more frequent, and the border provinces are playing a leading role in improving commercial and cultural ties. The Chinese and Vietnamese research communities also now communicate. This could be seen at the huge Vietnam Studies Conference in Hanoi 1998, where Chinese and Vietnamese social scientists discussed highly tendentious issues (such as ethnicity in the border region between the two countries) in the presence of researchers from other countries.

What will this mean for the study of the history of contemporary Sino-Vietnamese relations? When two countries improve their relationship, this normally entails studies of their difficulties in the past. How will Vietnamese and Chinese historians go about the study of their problematic historical relationship? One possibility is that each nation generates its own separate historical studies, that Chinese historians work in Chinese archives and write books in Chinese about China's Vietnam policy, and that Vietnamese researchers gain access to Vietnamese archives and write Vietnamese books about Vietnam's difficulties with the northern neighbor. A second possibility is a bilateral process, with groups of Chinese and Vietnamese historians working together to explore the history of their relationship, and issuing shared publications, preferably in both languages. This could be done in a highly formalized, closed manner, with trusted party historians on both sides forming a joint committee and gaining privileged access to sources screened by the two party leaderships, or it could be done more openly.[23] The third possibility is an open intellectual process, where all interested scholars gain access to Chinese and Vietnamese source material, and a number of competing books and articles are being published in Chinese, Vietnamese, English and other languages.

All three possibilities are premised on the assumption that Chinese and Vietnamese authorities become more self-assured than in the past, that they show more courage in giving up their fear of independent research, and allow access to key historical sources. At present—in January 2001, the intellectual climate in both countries seems instead to be hardening. This may prolong the current paradoxical situation, where scholars based outside China and Vietnam can have access to better sources than their colleagues on the inside, and are more free to publish accounts arousing general interest. The only way to ensure that scholars based in China and Vietnam can play a significant role in research-

ing the history of their mutual relations, in an international context, is to allow a new, more open intellectual climate, with declassification of documents, joint conferences, and encouragement of independent scholarship.

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## DOCUMENT
## COMRADE B ON THE PLOT OF THE REACTIONARY CHINESE CLIQUE AGAINST VIETNAM[24]

**Translated and annotated by Christopher E. Goscha**

Generally speaking, after we had defeated the Americans, there was no imperialist that would dare to fight us again. The only persons who thought they could still fight us and dared to fight us were Chinese reactionaries. But the Chinese people did not want it like that at all. I do not know how much longer some of these Chinese reactionaries will continue to exist. However, as long as they do, then they will strike us as they have just recently done [meaning in early 1979]. If war comes from the north, then the [northern central] provinces of Nghe An, Ha Tinh and Thanh Hoa will become the bases for the entire country. They are unparalleled as the most efficient, the best and the strongest bases. For if the Deltas [in the north] continued as an uninterrupted stretch, then the situation would be very complicated. Not at all a simple matter. If it had not been for the Vietnamese, there would not have been anyone to fight the USA, because at the time the Vietnamese were fighting the USA, the rest of the world was afraid of the USA …[25] Although the Chinese helped [North] Korea, it was only with the aim of protecting their own northern flank. After the fighting had finished [in Korea] and when the pressure was on Vietnam, he [this appears to be a reference to Zhou Enlai as the text soon seems to suggest] said that if the Vietnamese continued to fight they would have to fend for themselves. He would not help any longer and pressured us to stop fighting.

When we had signed the Geneva Accords, it was precisely Zhou Enlai who divided our country into two [parts]. After our country had been divided into northern and southern zones in this way, he once again pressured us into not doing anything in regard to southern Vietnam. They forbade us from rising up [against the US-backed Republic of Vietnam]. [But] they, [the Chinese,] could do nothing to deter us.

When we were in the south and had made preparations to wage guerrilla warfare immediately after the signing of the Geneva Accords, Mao Zedong told our Party Congress that we had to force the Lao to transfer immediately their two liberated provinces to [the] Vientiane government.[26] Otherwise the Americans would destroy them, a very dangerous situation [in the Chinese view]! Vietnam had to work at once with the Americans [concerning this matter]. Mao forced us in this way and we had to do it.[27]

Then, after these two [Lao] provinces had been turned over to Vientiane, the [Lao] reactionaries immediately arrested Souphanouvong [President of Laos, 1975-86]. The Lao had two battalions which were surrounded at the time. Moreover, they were not yet combat ready. Later, one battalion was able to escape [encirclement]. At that time, I gave it as my opinion that the Lao must be permitted to wage guerrilla warfare. I invited the Chinese to come and discuss this matter with us. I told them, "Comrades, if you go ahead pressuring the Lao in this way, then their forces will completely disintegrate. They must now be permitted to conduct guerrilla warfare."

Zhang Wentian,[28] who was previously the Secretary General [of the Chinese Communist Party] and used the pen name Lac Phu, answered me: "Yes, comrades, what you say is right. Let us allow that Lao battalion to take up guerrilla war".

I immediately asked Zhang Wentian: "Comrades, if you allow the Lao to take up guerrilla war, then there is nothing to fear about launching guerrilla war in south Vietnam. What is it that frightens you so much so that you still block such action?"

He [Zhang Wentian] said: "There is nothing to be afraid of!"

That was what Zhang Wentian said. However, Ho Wei, the Chinese ambassador to Vietnam at that time, [and] who was seated there, was listening to what was being said. He immediately cabled back to China [reporting what had been said between Le Duan and Zhang Wentian]. Mao replied at once: "Vietnam cannot do that [taking up guerrilla war in the south]. Vietnam must lie in wait for a protracted period of time!" We were so poor. How could we fight the Americans if we did not have China as a rearguard base? [Thus], we had to listen to them, correct?[29]

However, we did not agree. We secretly went ahead in developing our forces. When [Ngo Dinh] Diem dragged his guillotine machine throughout much of southern Vietnam, we issued the order to form mass forces to oppose the established order and to take power [from the Diem government]. We did not care [about the Chinese]. When the uprising to seize power had begun, we went to China to meet with both Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. Deng Xiaoping told me: "Comrade, now that your mistake has become an accomplished fact, you should only fight at the level of one platoon downward." That was the kind of pressure they exerted on us.

I said [to the Chinese]: "Yes, yes! I will do that. I will only fight at the level of one platoon downwards." After we had fought and China realized that we could fight efficiently, Mao suddenly had a new line of thinking. He said that as the Americans were fighting us, he would bring in [Chinese] troops to help us build roads. His essential aim was to find out about the situation in our country so

that later he could strike us, and thereby expand into Southeast Asia. There was no other reason. We were aware of this matter, but had to allow it [the entry of Chinese troops]. But that was OK. They decided to send in their soldiers. I only asked that they send personnel, but these troops came with guns and ammunition. I also had to countenance this.

Later, he [Mao Zedong] forced us to permit 20,000 of his troops to come and build a road from Nghe Tinh into Nam Bo [the Vietnamese term for southern Vietnam]. I refused. They kept proposing, but I would not budge. They pressured me into permitting them to come, but I did not accept it. They kept on pressuring, but I did not agree. I provide you with these examples, comrades, so that you can see their long-standing plot to steal our country, and how wicked their plot is.

—After the Americans had introduced several hundred thousand troops into southern Vietnam, we launched a general offensive in 1968 to force them to de-escalate. In order to defeat the US, one had to know how to bring them to de-escalate gradually. That was our strategy. We were fighting a big enemy, one with a population of 200 million people and who dominated the world. If we could not bring them to de-escalate step-by-step, then we would have floundered and would have been unable to destroy the enemy. We had to fight to sap their will in order to force them to come to the negotiating table with us, yet without allowing them to introduce more troops.

When it came to the time when they wanted to negotiate with us, Ho Wei wrote a letter to us saying: "You cannot sit down to negotiate with the US. You must bring US troops into northern Vietnam to fight them." He pressured us in this way, making us extremely puzzled. This was not at all a simple matter. It was very tiresome every time these situations arose [with the Chinese].

We decided that it could not be done that way [referring to Ho Wei's advice not to negotiate with the US]. We had to sit back down in Paris. We had to bring them [the US] to de-escalate in order to defeat them. During that time, China made the announcement [to the US]: "If you don't attack me, I won't attack you. However many troops you want to bring into Vietnam, it's up to you." China, of its own accord, did this and pressured us in this way.

They [the Chinese] vigorously traded with the Americans and compelled us to serve as a bargaining chip in this way. When the Americans realized that they had lost, they immediately used China [to facilitate] their withdrawal [from southern Vietnam]. Nixon and Kissinger went to China in order to discuss this matter.

—Before Nixon went to China, [the goal of his trip being] to solve the Vietnamese problem in such a way as to serve US interests and to lessen the US defeat, as well as to simultaneously allow him to entice China over to the US [side] even more, Zhou Enlai came to visit me. Zhou told me: "At this time, Nixon is coming to visit me principally to discuss the Vietnamese problem, thus I must come to meet you, comrade, in order to discuss [it with you]."

I answered: "Comrade, you can say whatever you like, but I still don't follow. Comrade, you are Chinese; I am a Vietnamese. Vietnam is mine [my nation]; not yours at all. You have no right to speak [about Vietnam's affairs], and you have no right to discuss [them with the Americans].[30] Today, comrades, I will personally tell you something which I have not even told our Politburo, for, comrade, you have brought up a serious matter, and hence I must speak:

—In 1954, when we won victory at Dien Bien Phu, I was in Hau Nghia [province]. Bac [Uncle] Ho cabled to tell me that I had to go to southern Vietnam to regroup [the forces there] and to speak to the southern Vietnamese compatriots [about this matter].[31] I traveled by wagon to the south. Along the way, compatriots came out to greet me, for they thought we had won victory. It was so painful! Looking at my southern compatriots, I cried. Because after this [later], the US would come and massacre [the population] in a terrible way.

Upon reaching the south, I immediately cabled Bac Ho to ask to remain [in the south] and not to return to the north, so that I could fight for another ten years or more. [To Zhou Enlai]: "Comrade, you caused me hardship such as this [meaning Zhou's role in the division of Vietnam at Geneva in 1954]. Did you know that, comrade?"

Zhou Enlai said: "I apologize before you, comrade. I was wrong. I was wrong about that [meaning the division of Vietnam at Geneva]."[32] After Nixon had already gone to China, he [Zhou Enlai] once again came to Vietnam in order to ask me about a number of problems concerning the fighting in southern Vietnam.

However, I immediately told Zhou Enlai: "Nixon has met with you already, comrade. Soon they [the US] will attack me even harder." I am not at all afraid. Both sides [the US and China] had negotiated with each other in order to fight me harder. He [Zhou Enlai] did not as yet reject this [view] as unfounded, and only said that "I will send additional guns and ammunition to you comrades."

Then he [Zhou Enlai] said [concerning fears of a secret US-Chinese plot]: "There was no such thing." However, the two had discussed how to hit us harder, including B-52 bombing raids and the blocking of Haiphong [harbor]. This was clearly the case.

—If the Soviet Union and China had not been at odds with each other, then the US could not have struck us as fiercely as they did. As the two [powers of China and the Soviet Union] were in conflict, the Americans were unhampered [by united socialist bloc opposition]. Although Vietnam was able to have unity and solidarity both with China and the USSR, to achieve this was very complicated, for at that time we had to rely on China for many things. At that time, China annually provided assistance of 500,000 tons of foodstuffs, as well as guns, ammunition, money, not to mention dollar aid. The Soviet Union also helped in this way. If we could not do that [preserve unity and solidarity with China and the USSR], things would have been very dangerous. Every year I had

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.[33]

They made it very tense. Deng Xiaoping, together with Kang Sheng,[34] 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."[35]

In 1963, when Khrushchev erred, [the Chinese] immediately issued a 25-point declaration and invited our Party to come and give our opinion.[36] 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,"[37] 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."[38] 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.[39] 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 people to live there. It was complicated [to that point].

—In the past [referring to possible problems stemming from the Chinese threat during these times], we had made intense preparations; it is not that we were unprepared. If we had not made preparations, the recent situation would have been very dangerous. It was not a simple matter. Ten years ago, I summoned together our brothers in the military to meet with me. I told them that the Soviet Union and the US were at odds with each other. As for China, they had joined hands with the US imperialists. In this tense situation, you must study this problem immediately. I was afraid that the military did not understand me, so I told them that there was no other way to understand the matter. But they found it very difficult to understand. It was not easy at all. But I could not speak in any other way. And I did not allow others to grab me.[40]

—When I went to the Soviet Union, the Soviets were also tough with me about China. The Soviet Union had convened a conference of 80 [communist] Parties in support of Vietnam, but Vietnam did not attend this conference, for [this gathering] was not simply aimed at helping Vietnam, but it was also designed to condemn China. Thus Vietnam did not go. The Soviets said: "Have you now abandoned internationalism [or] what? Why have you done this?" I said: "I have not abandoned internationalism at all. I have never done this. However, to be internationalist, the Americans must be defeated first. And if one wants to defeat the Americans, then there must be unity and solidarity with China. If I had gone to this conference, then the Chinese would have created very severe difficulties for us. Comrades, please understand me."

—In China there were also many different and contending opinions. Zhou Enlai agreed on forming a front with the Soviet Union in order to oppose the Americans. Once, when I went to the USSR to participate in a national day celebration, I was able to read a Chinese cable sent to the Soviet Union saying that "whenever someone attacks the USSR, then the Chinese will stand by your side."[41] [This was] because there was a treaty of friendship between the USSR and China dating from earlier times

[February 1950]. Sitting next to Zhou Enlai, I asked him: "In this cable recently sent to the USSR, you have agreed, comrade, to establish a front with the Soviet Union, but why won't you form a front to oppose the US?" Zhou Enlai said: "We can. I share that view. Comrades, I will form a front with you [on Vietnam]." Peng Zhen,[42] who was also seated there, added: "This opinion is extremely correct!" But when the matter was discussed in Shanghai, Mao said it was not possible, cancel it. You see how complicated it was.

—Although Zhou Enlai held a number of those opinions, he nonetheless agreed on building a front and [he] helped Vietnam a lot. It was thanks to him that I could understand [much of what was going on in China]. Otherwise it would have been very dangerous. He once told me: "I am doing my best to survive here, to use Li Chiang[43] to accumulate and provide assistance for you, comrades." And that there was [meaning that Zhou was able to use Li Chiang in order to help the Vietnamese]. My understanding is that without Zhou Enlai this would not have been possible at all. I am indebted to him.

However, it is not correct to say that other Chinese leaders shared Zhou Enlai's view at all. They differed in many ways. It must be said that the most uncompromising person, the one with the Greater Han mentality, and the one who wanted to take Southeast Asia, was mainly Mao. All of [China's] policies were in his hands.

The same applies to the current leaders of China. We do not know how things will turn out in the future, however, [the fact of the matter is that] they have already attacked us. In the past, Deng Xiaoping did two things which have now been reversed. That is, when we won in southern Vietnam, there were many [leaders] in China who were unhappy. However, Deng Xiaoping nonetheless congratulated us. As a result of this, he was immediately considered a revisionist by the others.

When I went to China for the last time,[44] I was the leader of the delegation, and I met with the Chinese delegation led by Deng Xiaoping. In speaking of territorial problems, including discussion of several islands, I said: "Our two nations are near each other. There are several areas of our territory which have not been clearly defined. Both sides should establish bodies to consider the matter. Comrades, please agree with me [on this]. He [Deng] agreed, but after doing so he was immediately considered a revisionist by the other group of leaders.

But now he [Deng] is crazy. Because he wants to show that he is not a revisionist, therefore he has struck Vietnam even harder. He let them go ahead in attacking Vietnam.—After defeating the Americans we kept in place over one million troops, leading Soviet comrades to ask us: "Comrades, whom do you intend to fight that you keep such a large [standing] army?" I said: "Later, comrades, you will understand." The only reason we had kept such a standing army was because of China['s threat to Vietnam]. If there had not been [such a threat], then this [large standing army] would have been unnecessary. Having been attacked recently on two fronts, [we can see that] it would have been very dangerous if we had not maintained a large army.

(B) [The meaning of this "B" in the original text is unclear] —In the wake of WWII, everyone held the international gendarme to be American imperialism. They could take over and bully all of the world. Everyone, including the big powers, were afraid of the US. It was only Vietnam that was not afraid of the US.

I understand this matter for my line of work has taught me it. The first person to fear [the Americans] was Mao Zedong. He told me, that is, the Vietnamese and Lao, that: "You must immediately turn over the two liberated provinces of Laos to the [Vientiane] [government]. If you do not do so, then the US will use it as a pretext to launch an attack. That is a great danger." As for Vietnam, we said: "We have to fight the Americans in order to liberate southern Vietnam." He [Mao] said: "You cannot do that. southern Vietnam must lie in wait for a long period, for one lifetime, 5-10 or even 20 lifetimes from now. You cannot fight the Americans. Fighting the US is dangerous". Mao Zedong was scared of the US to that extent …

But Vietnam was not scared. Vietnam went ahead and fought. If Vietnam had not fought the US, then southern Vietnam would not have been liberated. A country which is not yet liberated will remain a dependent one. No one is independent if only one-half of the country is free. It was not until 1975 that our country finally achieved its full independence. With independence would come freedom. Freedom should be freedom for the whole of the Vietnamese nation …

—Engels had already spoken on people's war. Later the Soviet Union, China, and ourselves also spoke [on this matter]. However, these three countries differ a lot on the content [of people's war]. It is not true that just because you have millions of people you can do whatever you like. China also spoke on people's war, however, [they held that] "when the enemy advances, we must retreat." In other words, defense is the main feature, and war is divided into three stages with the countryside used to surround the cities, while [the main forces] remain in the forests and mountains only … The Chinese were on the defensive and very weak [during World War II]. Even with 400 million people pitted against a Japanese army of 300,000 to 400,000 troops, the Chinese still could not defeat them.[45]

I have to repeat it like that, for before China had sent advisers to us [some of our Vietnamese] brothers did not understand. They thought the [Chinese] were very capable. But they are not so skilled, and thus we did not follow [the Chinese advice].[46]

In 1952, I left northern Vietnam for China, because I was sick and needed treatment. This was my first time abroad.[47] I put questions to them [the Chinese] and saw many very strange things. There were areas [which had been] occupied by Japanese troops, each with a population of 50 million people, but which had not [had] a single guerrilla fighter …

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 at odds with each other, the Americans were informed [by the Chinese] that they could go ahead and attack Vietnam without any fear. Don't be afraid [of Chinese retaliation]. Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong told the Americans: "If you don't attack me, then I won't attack you. You can bring in as many troops into southern Vietnam as you like. It's up to you."[48]

… We are [presently] bordering on a very strong nation, one with expansionist intentions which, if they are to be implemented, must start with an invasion of Vietnam. Thus, we have to shoulder yet another, different historical role. However, we have never shirked from our historical tasks. Previously, Vietnam did carry out its tasks, and this time Vietnam is determined not to allow them to expand. Vietnam preserves its own independence, and by doing so is also safeguarding the independence of Southeast Asian nations. Vietnam is resolved not to allow the Chinese to carry out their expansionist scheme. The recent battle [with China] was one round only. Presently, they are still making preparations in many fields. However, whatever the level of their preparations, Vietnam will still win …

Waging war is no leisurely walk in the woods. Sending one million troops to wage war against a foreign country involves countless difficulties. Just recently they brought in 500,000 to 600,000 troops to fight us, yet they had no adequate transport equipment to supply food to their troops. China is presently preparing 3.5 million troops, but they have to leave half of them on the [Sino-Soviet] border to deter the Soviets. For that reason, if they bring 1 or 2 million troops in to fight us, we will not be afraid of anything. We have just engaged 600,000 troops, and, if, in the near future, we have to fight 2 million, it will not be a problem at all. We are not afraid.

We are not afraid because we already know the way to fight. If they bring in 1 million troops, they will only gain a foothold in the north. Descending into the mid-lands, the deltas, and into Hanoi and even further downwards would be difficult. Comrades, as you know, Hitler's clique struck fiercely in this way, yet when they [the German Nazis] arrived in Leningrad they could not enter. With the cities, the people, and defense works, it is impossible to carry out effective attacks against each and every inhabitant. Even fighting for two, three, or four years they will still not be able to enter. Every village there [in the north] is like this. Our guidelines are: Each district is a fortress, each province a battlefield. We will fight and they will not be

able to enter at all.

However, it is never enough just to fight an enemy at the frontline. One must have a strong direct rearguard. After the recent fighting ended, we assessed that, in the near future, we must add several million more people to the northern front. But as the enemy comes from the north, the direct rear for the whole country must be Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh … The direct rear to protect the capital must be Thanh Hoa and Nghe Tinh. We have enough people. We can fight them in many ways … We can use 2 to 3 army corps to inflict a strong blow on them that will make them stagger, while we continue to hold our land. To this end, each soldier must be a real soldier and each squad a real squad.

—Having now fought one battle already, we should not be subjective. Subjectivism and underestimation of the enemy are incorrect, but a lack of self-confidence is also wrong. We are not subjective, we do not underestimate the enemy. But we are also confident and firmly believe in our victory. We should have both these things.

—The Chinese now have a plot to attack [us] in order to expand southwards. But in the present era nothing can be done and then wrapped up tidily. China has just fought Vietnam for a few days, yet the whole world has shouted: ["]Leave Vietnam alone!["] The present era is not like the olden times. In those days, it was only us and them [meaning the Chinese]. Now the whole world is fastened closely together. The human species has not yet entered the socialist phase at all; instead 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. That is very different than it was in olden times. In those days, people were not yet very aware of these things. Thus the sentence of Uncle Hò: "There is nothing more precious than independence and freedom" is an idea of the present era. To lay hands on Vietnam is to lay hands on humanity and infringe on independence and freedom … Vietnam is a nation that symbolizes independence and freedom.

—When it came to fighting the US, our brothers in the Politburo had to discuss together this matter to consider whether we dared to fight the US or not. All were agreed to fight. The Politburo expressed its resolve: In order to fight the Americans, we must not fear the USA. All were of the same mind. As all agreed to fight the US, to have no fear of the USA, we must also not fear the USSR. All agreed. We must also not fear China. All agreed. If we don't fear these three things, we can fight the US. This was how we did things in our Politburo at that time.

Although the Politburo met and held discussions like this and everyone was of the same mind, there was later one person who told a comrade what I said. That comrade rose to question the Politburo, asking for what reason does Anh Ba[49] once again say that if we want to fight the Americans then we should not fear the Chinese? Why does he have to put it this way again?[50]

At that time, Brother Nguyen Chi Thanh, who thus far was suspected of being sympathetic to the Chinese, stood up and said: "Respected Politburo and respected Uncle Ho, the statement of Anh Ba was correct. It must be said that way [referring to the need not to fear the Chinese], for they [the Chinese] give us trouble on many matters. They blocked us here, then forced our hands there. They do not let us fight …"[51]

While we were fighting in southern Vietnam, Deng Xiaoping stipulated that I *(toi)* could only fight at the level of one platoon downward, and must not fight at a higher level. He [Deng Xiaoping] said: "In the south, since you have made the mistake of starting the fighting already, you should only fight at the level of one platoon downward, not at a higher level." That is how they brought pressure to bear on us.

—We are not afraid of anyone. We are not afraid because we are in the right. We do not fear even our elder brother. We also do not fear our friends.[52] Of course, we do not fear our enemies. We have fought them already. We are human beings; we are not afraid of anyone. We are independent. All the world knows we are independent.

We must have a strong army, because our nation is under threat and being bullied . . . It cannot be otherwise. If not, then it will be extremely dangerous, but our country is poor.

—We have a strong army, but that does not in any way weaken us. The Chinese have several policies towards us: To invade and to occupy our country; to seek to weaken us economically and to make our living conditions difficult. For these reasons, in opposing China we must, first of all, not only fight, but also make ourselves stronger. To this end, in my view, our army should not be a force that wastes the resources of the state, but should also be a strong productive force. When the enemies come, they [the soldiers] grab their guns at once. When no enemy is coming, then they will produce grandly. They will be the best and highest symbol in production, producing more than anyone else. Of course, that is not a new story …[53]

—At present, our army shoulders an historical task: to defend our independence and freedom, while simultaneously protecting the peace and independence of the whole world. If the expansionist policy of the reactionary Chinese clique cannot be implemented any longer, that would be in the interest of the whole world. Vietnam can do this. Vietnam has 50 million people already. Vietnam has Lao and Cambodian friends and has secure terrain. Vietnam has our camp and all of mankind on its side. It is clear that we can do this.

… Do our comrades know of anyone in our Party, among our people, who suspects that we will lose to China? No one, of course. But we must maintain our friendly relations. We do not want national hatred. I repeat: I say this because I have never felt hatred for China. I do not feel this way. It is they who fight us. Today I also want you comrades to know that in this world, the one who has defended China is myself! That is true.

Why so? Because during the June 1960 conference in Bucharest, 60 Parties rose to oppose China, but it was only I who defended China.[54] 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 our side, we have no evil feelings towards China. Yet the plot of several [Chinese] leaders is a different matter. We refer to them as a clique only. We do not refer to their nation. We did not say the Chinese people are bad towards us. We say that it is the reactionary Beijing clique. I again say it strictly like this.

Thus, let us keep the situation under firm control, remain ready for combat, and never relax in our vigilance. It is the same with respect to China. I am confident that in 50 years, or even in 100 years, socialism may succeed; and then we will not have this problem any longer. But it will take such a [long] time. Therefore, we must prepare and stand ready in all respects.

At present, no one certainly has doubts any more. But five years ago I was sure there [were no] comrades who doubted] that China could strike us. But there were. That as the case because [these] comrades had no knowledge about this matter.[55] But that was not the case with us [Le Duan and the leadership].[56] We knew that China had been attacking us for some ten years or more. Therefore we were not surprised [by the January 1979 Chinese attack].

*[Source: People's Army Library, Hanoi. Document obtained and translated for CWIHP by Christopher Goscha (Groupe d'Etudes sur le Vietnam Contemporain, Sciences Politique, Paris).]*

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*Dr. Stein Tønnesson is the director of the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO).*

*Christopher Goscha currently teaches history at the American University and the International School of Paris. He is also co-director of the Group d'E'tudes sur le Viet Nam contemporain, SciencesPo, Paris. He has recently published "*The Borders of Vietnam's Early Wartime Trade with Southern China *(Asian Survey, 2000) and submitted his thesis on the "*Le Contexte Asiatque de la guerre franco-vietnamienne," *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, La Sorbonne.*

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[1] *The Truth Concerning Vietnamese-Chinese Relations over the Past 30 Years*, (Hanoi: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1979). The White Book was published also in foreign languages, and in the following we shall refer to the French version: *La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises durant les trente dernières années (*Hanoi: Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 1979)

[2] The Vietnamese White Book was countered by a similar Chinese publication: *On the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry's White Book Concerning Viet Nam-China Relations, (*Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1979.) According to the Chinese reply, the Vietnamese white book was an attempt to "distort, tamper with and fabricate history in an effort to convert the history between the two countries in the 30 years which was interwoven mainly with friendship and co-operation into one in which China tried to take control of Viet Nam" (pp. 2–3). Unfortunately, the Chinese found that the Vietnamese "lies" were "not worth refuting one by one." Thus the Chinese white book is less detailed and less interesting for the historian than the Vietnamese one.

[3] Odd Arne Westad, Chen Jian, Stein Tønnesson, Nguyen Vu Tung and James G. Hershberg, eds., *77 Conversations Between Chinese and Foreign Leaders on the Wars in Indochina, 1964–1977,* Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 22 (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1998), p. 6.

[4] A useful, meticulous study of Vietnamese official rhetoric, including Le Duan's official publications can be found in Eero Palmujoki, *Revolutionary Pragmatism and Formal Marxism-Leninism: An Analysis of Vietnam's Foreign-Policy Argumentation from the Fall of Saigon to the Collapse of the Socialist World System* (Tampere: PhD dissertation, 1995). The study includes a number of documents also from before 1975.

[5] This is based on Christopher Goscha's observation to the author that it would be surprising if Le Duan actually used the word "tụi" when speaking to Ho Chi Minh. Goscha points to the fact that Ho had long established a revolutionary and hierarchical family in which each member had (or did not have) his place (anh hai, ba, etc.) as part of a special cast.

[6] The arrogance displayed by Le Duan seems to confirm some of Bui Tin's allegations in his *Following Ho Chi Minh. Memoirs of a North Vietnamese Colonel* (London: Hurst, 1995). esp. p. 66. Bui Tin also says that "Le Duan scarcely ever seemed to write anything down. He just said what he thought on the spur of the moment. He also stammered a lot and was difficult to listen to. That was what everybody felt. They all became weary trying to understand what he was saying because he also spoke ungrammatically" (p. 105).

[7] William J. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam,* 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), p. 385, note 4.

[8] Ralph B. Smith, "Appendix: The Vietnam Workers' Party and its Leaders, "*An International History of the Vietnam War,* vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 263–271.

[9] On Ho Chi Minh, see Williams F. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh* ( New York: Hyperion, 2000)

[10] Ralph B. Smith goes as far as to claim that Ho Chi Minh and Le Duan were rivals. R.B. Smith, *An International History of the Vietnam War,* vol. 1, p. 129. Pierre Asselin makes the same claim, asserting that by 1965,

Ho Chi Minh had (due also to his rapidly deteriorating health) "for all intents and purposes been sidelined." Pierre Asselin, "Le Duan and the Creation of an Independent Vietnamese State", unpublished paper presented at the International Conference on Vietnamese Studies in Hanoi, July 1998, p. 2. Bui Tin (whose hero is General Giap) claims that Le Duc Tho, Le Duan and Pham Hung "progressively tried to neutralise Ho Chi Minh" as well as Pham Van Dong in their struggle to downgrade the role and reputation of Giap. Bui Tin, *Following Ho Chi Minh,* p. 32.

[11] Pierre Asselin claims that Le Duan "epitomized Vietnamese disrespect for the overlordship of both those countries" (the Soviet Union and China), and that his death in 1986 opened the door for improving Vietnam's relationship not only with China, but with the Soviet Union as well. Pierre Asselin, "Le Duan and the Creation…", p. 8. This seems an exaggeration in view of Vietnam's heavy dependence on the USSR between 1978 and 1986, but there may be a grain of truth in it. Soviet archives will show.

[12] Stephen J. Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia. Political Culture and the Causes of War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 181. Morris bases this information on Soviet archival sources.

[13] There may be some truth in Le Duan's impression. Although Deng Xiaoping had personally ordered the Chinese "self-defensive counterattack" against Vietnam, it was also he who called off the operation in March, after the Chinese had suffered more than 30,000 casualties. And Deng came under criticism afterwards for not having broken the fingers of the Vietnamese, but merely hurt them. See Richard Baum, *Burying Mao. Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 80.

[14] "Aujourd'hui, les forces révolutionnaires ont grandi et occupent une position des plus favorables." *La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises,* p. 58.

[15] Ibid.

[16] In the *77 Conversations* there are short excerpts of minutes from three meetings between Zhou Enlai and Le Duan in 1971 (7 March in Hanoi, 13 July in Hanoi, and November in Beijing). None of the excerpts include references to Geneva, but both Mao and Zhou had allegedly admitted earlier, when talking with Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong, that a mistake had been made in Geneva. See the 7 September 1971 conversation, *77 Conversations*, p. 180.

[17] See François Joyaux, *La Chine et le règlement du premier conflit d'Indochine, Genève 1954* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1979).

[18] See Mari Olsen, *Solidarity and National Revolution: The Soviet Union and the Vietnamese Communists 1954–1960* (Oslo: Institutt for Forsvarsstudier 4/1997), and Ilya V. Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996).

[19] Chen Jian, "China's Involvement in the Vietnam War, 1964–69," *China Quarterly* 142 (June 1995), pp. 356–387, especially p. 357.

[20] However, according to Bui Tin, Le Duan told his official biographers in an interview in 1983 that he had been better than Uncle Ho. Ho always said "Yes" to what Stalin and Mao told him. "As for me, I dared to argue with Khrushchev and Mao." Bui Tin, *Following Ho Chi Minh,* p. 43.

[21] *77 Conversations,* pp. 74 (note 117), 163–164.

[22] Chen Jian, " China's Involvement in the Vietnam War," pp. 368–369. See also *77 Conversations,* p. 85, where Le Duan tells Liu Shaoqi on 8 April 1965: "We want some volunteer pilots, volunteer soldiers…and other volunteers, including road and bridge engineering units."

[23] The comparison may perhaps be far-fetched, but an open kind of co-operation between Norwegian and Swedish historians has been initiated in preparing for the 100 years' anniversary in 2005 of the break-up of the Swedish-Norwegian Union.

[24] This document is a translation of a copy of the extracts of the original. It was copied by hand in the Library of the People's Army, Hanoi. The translator of this document, Christopher E. Goscha, had *full authorization* to do so. The text is attributed to "comrade B." It can either have been written by comrade B himself, or (much more likely) it is the typed notes of someone who listened to an oral presentation by comrade B. In the text, comrade B reveals that during a Politburo meeting he was referred to as Anh Ba (Brother Number Three), the alias we know was used by Secretary General Le Duan within the Vietnam Workers' Party (from 1976 "Vietnamese Communist Party"). Although the document is undated, it is clear from the text that it was written sometime in 1979, in the wake of the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. This is supported by another highly charged document, published in 1979 at the behest of the Vietnamese Communist Party, which chronicles Chinese perfidy and, not entirely surprisingly, mentions many of the same incidents which Le Duan describes in this document. See, *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese Relations over the Past 30 Years* (Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban in Thet, 1979) [hereafter cited as *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese].* The endnotes includes references to the page numbers of the French version of the same document: *La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises durant les trente dernières années* (Hanoi, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 1979). The translator would like to thank Thomas Engelbert, Stein Tønnesson for their invaluable suggestions and corrections. The translator is responsible for all errors.

[25] All ellipses indicated as such are in the original; translator's ellipses and comments are in brackets: […]

[26] The Geneva Accords of 1954 allowed the Pathet Lao, closely allied with the DRV, to maintain a provisional presence in the two Lao provinces of Phongsaly and Sam Neua. No similar concession was made to Khmers allied with the Vietnamese during the resistance against the French.

[27] *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese Relations* puts these high-level discussions on Laos in

August 1961. (*La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises,* p. 34.)

[28] Zhang Wentian was one of the members of the Chinese delegation who was present when comrade B made this remark. He was also then Deputy Foreign Minister, as well as a longtime member of the Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party. During the 1950s, he had been an alternate member of the Politburo in charge of relations with socialist countries.

[29] *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese Relations* puts the meeting, this way: "In an exchange of opinions with the Vietnamese leadership, the Deputy Chinese Foreign Minister, Zhang Wentian expressed his view that one could carry on with guerrilla warfare in southern Vietnam. But afterwards, in accordance with a directive from Beijing, the Chinese Ambassador to Hanoi informed the Vietnamese side that this had not been the official opinion of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, but rather a personal view." *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese Relations,* p. 40. (*La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises,* p. 31.)

[30] See *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese,* p. 60. (*La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises,* p. 47.)

[31] Le Duan is referring to the task of explaining the repatriation of southern cadres to the north. Le Duan forgets conveniently to mention that the Chinese helped the Vietnamese to win at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

[32] See *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese Relations*, p. 60, where the Vietnamese reportedly told the Chinese in November 1972: "Vietnam is our country, you comrades, are not to negotiate with the US about Vietnam. You have already admitted your mistake of 1954, now you should not commit the same mistake again". (*La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises,* p. 47.)

[33] One of Le Duan's close advisors, Tran Quyen, has recently circulated his memoirs in Vietnam, providing interesting details on Le Du An's policy towards the Sino-Soviet split and the divisions within the Vietnamese Worker's Party on this issue in the 1960s. Tran Quyen, *Souvenirs of Le Duan (Excerpts)*, undated, privately published, copy in the translator's possession.

[34] Kang Sheng (1903-1975), one of the PRC's top national security experts. He had been trained by the Soviet NKVD in the 1930s, and had become Mao's closest advisor on the problem of interpreting Soviet policies. Kang Sheng was Secretary of the Central Committee of the CCP in 1962, a member of the CCP Politburo from 1969; between 1973 and 1975 he was member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo.

[35] See: *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese Relations,* p. 43, in which the Vietnamese claimed that in exchange for renouncing all aid from the Soviet Union, Deng Xiaoping promised to make Vietnam China's number one priority in foreign aid. (*La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises,* p. 33.)

[36] See, *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese,* p. 43. (*La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises,* p. 33.) and also Tran Quyen, *Souvenirs of Le Duan (Excerpts).*

[37] In November 1966, the Soviets charged the Chinese with having abandoned the world Communist line adopted at the 1957 and 1960 Moscow Conferences. See also Tran Quyen, *Souvenirs of Le Duan (Excerpts).*

[38] *The Truth concerning Vietnamese-Chinese Relations* has Mao making this statement to a delegation of the Vietnamese Worker's Party in Wuhan in 1963. Mao is quoted by the Vietnamese as saying: "I will be the Chairman of 500 million poor peasants and I will send troops down into Southeast Asia." (*La vérité sur les relations Vietnamo-Chinoises,* p. 9.)

[39] This could also translate as "and I'll beat yours as well" or "I could beat your's as well."

[40] It is not exactly clear to the translator to whom Le Duan is referring by the "military."

[41] This appears to be a reference to the words relayed to the Soviets by the Chinese Ambassador to Moscow, on 14 February 1965, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. As Ambassador Pan Tzu-li told the Soviets: "…if the imperialists dare to attack the Soviet Union, the Chinese people, without the least hesitation, will fulfill their treaty obligations and together with the great Soviet people […] will fight shoulder to shoulder until the final victory..." Quoted by Donald S. Zagoria, *Moscow, Peking, Hanoi* (New York: Pegasus, 1967), pp. 139-140.

[42] Peng Zhen was member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CCP from 1951 to 1969.

[43] Li Chiang was Vice-Chairman of the Committee for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries within the Chinese State Council from 1965 to 1967. Between 1968 and 1973, he was Vice-Minister of Foreign Trade and from 1973 served as Minister of Foreign Trade.

[44] A reference to Le Duan's trip in November 1977.

[45] Le Duan forgets the fact that even fewer French had been able to rule Vietnam without too much trouble until March 1940.

[46] On Chinese advisors, see Qiang Zhai, *China & the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), and Christopher E. Goscha, *Le contexte asiatique de la guerre franco-vietnamienne: Réseaux, relations et économie* (Paris, thesis, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, La Sorbonne, 2000, section chinoise).

[47] While Le Duan traveled often to northern Vietnam during the war against the French, he is normally assumed to have stayed in southern Vietnam at this time, at the head of the southern branch of the party which became COSVN in the early 1950s. The translator doubts that Le Duan traveled to China in 1952. Ho Chi Minh did, but not Le Duan.

[48] On this, see the 2000 Hong Kong Conference paper by Chen Jian and James Hershberg, "Sino-American Signaling," presented at the Conference "China, Southeast asia and the Vietnam War, January 2000.

[49] This confirms that comrade "B" is the same person

as "Anh Ba." With the knowledge that Anh Ba is another name for Le Duan, comrade B, by extension, is Le Duan. From the events described in the text, this is certain and Tran Quyen, *Souvenirs of Le Duan (Excerpts),* confirms it.

[50] This may be a reference to Hoang Van Hoan. For a contending view, one must consult *A Drop in the Ocean (Memoirs of Revolution)* (Beijing: NXB Tin Viet Nam, 1986).

[51] See also Tran Quyen, *Souvenirs of Le Duan (Excerpts)*.

[52] Perhaps an allusion to the Soviet Union.

[53] This type of warfare had existed in China as well. And elsewhere in the world of guerilla warfare.

[54] This took place in June 1960. For more on Le Duan's position on this matter, see Tran Quyen, *Souvenirs of Le Duan (Excerpts).* After the Party Congress of the Romanian Communist Party in June 1960, the Soviets organized an on-the-spot meeting with the leaders of the foreign delegations present, during which Khrushchev severely criticized the Chinese, especially Mao whom he denounced as a "dogmatist" for his views on the question of peaceful co-existence. See Adam B. Ulam, *The Communists. The Story of Power and Lost Illusions 1948–1991* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), p. 211.

[55] This seems to be a stab at Hoang Van Hoan and no doubt others.

[56] This is probably a reference to the group of leaders listening to Le Duan's talk, and can be taken as an indication that the pro-Chinese comrades referred to above, were not part of the group listening. See also Tran Quyen, *Souvenirs of Le Duan (Excerpts)*.