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The Secret Negotiations of N.S. Khrushchev and Mao Zedong, July-August 1958

By Alexander V. Pantsov and Nikita Yu. Pivovarov

Translated by Steven I. Levine and Gary Goldberg

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The year 1958 began auspiciously for the leaders of the USSR and the PRC, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev and Mao Zedong. On March 16, elections for the fifth session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR took place in which the “indissoluble” bloc of the communists and non-party persons received 99.6-percent of the vote. On March 27, at the first session of the Supreme Soviet, Khrushchev received the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, conjointly with the office of First Secretary of the CPSU CC.¹ Under the leadership of the communist party, the Soviet people, it seemed, were enthusiastically building communism, striving to fulfill the task assigned them by Khrushchev in early November 1957: in the next 15 years not only to catch up with, but to overtake the United States in production of the most important kinds of products.² In May, Soviet scientists launched into orbit the third artificial earth satellite.

In China, Mao Zedong also strengthened his position. In January-March 1958, he presided over three important conferences of the top party cadres at which he overcame the resistance of those who had opposed “the blind rush forward” in economic construction (Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, and others). The result was affirmation of the “Great Leap” in production: “three years of persistent labor, ten thousand years of happiness.”³ The whole country must “firmly follow the policy of ‘more, faster, better, more economically,’” put forward by Mao Zedong on December 12,

¹ See *Zasedaniia Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR piatova sozyva (pervaia sessiia): 27-31 marta 1958 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet* (Meetings of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Fifth Term [First Session]: March 27-31, 1958: Stenographic Report) (Moscow: USSR Supreme Soviet Press, 1958), 7.

² See *Pravda* (Truth), November 7, 1957.

³ *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo di er jie quanguo renmin daibiao dahui di yi ci huiyi huikan* (Second Session of the Second National People’s Congress of the PRC) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1959), 260.

1957.⁴ On February 18, at an enlarged meeting of the Politburo in the presence of 119 top-level cadres, Mao Zedong announced the party's new policy for economic construction.⁵ And in May, at the Second Session of the Eighth Congress of the CCP, the official formula for the general line was adopted: "Make every effort, striving forward to build socialism more, faster, better, more economically." The Chinese people were presented the task of "catching up with England in 15 years or less in the production of the most important kinds of industrial products."⁶

Soviet-Chinese friendship grew stronger by the day. In China, 2,419 Soviet specialists were working, and several thousand Chinese students were studying in the USSR.⁷ On January 18, 1958, an agreement was concluded in Moscow between the governments of the USSR and China to jointly carry out the most important kinds of research in the fields of science and technology.⁸ As before, the Soviet Union was actively engaged in building Chinese industrial enterprises. On May 2, 1958, the premier of the State Council of the PRC Zhou Enlai sent N.S. Khrushchev a message asking the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR to provide technical assistance in 1959 for the construction of 48 projects in the sum of almost 400 million rubles. Four of the 48 projects would be entirely planned and constructed by Soviet design organizations. The members of the Presidium of the CPSU CC all approved Zhou's request and tasked Presidium member Anastas I. Mikoyan and chairman of the State Planning Commission

⁴ *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), December 12, 1957. For evidence that Mao was the author of this slogan, see Pang Xianzhi and Feng Hui, eds., *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), vol. 3 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2001), 262; Pang Xianzhi and Jin Chongji, eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan (1949-1976)* (Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2003), 766.

⁵ See Pang and Jin, *Mao Zedong zhuan (1949-1976)* (Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), vol. 1, 766; Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), vol. 3, 299.

⁶ *Vtoraia sessiia VIII Vsekitaiskogo s'ezda Kommunisticheskoi partii Kitaia* (Second Session of the Eighth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party) (Beijing: Izdatel'stvo literatury na inostrannykh yazykakh, 1958), 68.

⁷ See Shen Zhihua, "A Historical Examination of the Issue of Soviet Experts in China: Basic Situation and Policy Changes," *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, vol. 29, no. 2-4 (2002): 379, 398.

⁸ See I. F. Kurdiukov et al., eds., *Sovetsko-kitaiskie otnosheniia 1917-1957. Sbornik dokumentov* (Soviet-Chinese Relations, 1917-1957. Collection of Documents) (Moscow: Izdatelstvo vostochnoi literatury, 1959), 390-391.

of the USSR Iosif I. Kuz'min with drafting an appropriate response.⁹ On May 7, they approved Khrushchev's response in which the Soviet leader invited Chinese friends to Moscow for negotiations.¹⁰

On May 26, 1958, Khrushchev met with a Chinese delegation in the context of a conference of representatives of communist and workers parties from member countries in the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). The Chinese delegation comprised Deputy Chairman of the CCP CC Chen Yun, Politburo and CC member Li Fuchun, and minister of foreign trade Ye Jizhuang. The conversation lasted an hour-and-a-half and focused largely on political questions: normalization of relations with Yugoslavia, negotiations with Great Britain and the United States on nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, and economic aid to the GDR.¹¹ Only at the end of the conversation did Chen Yun make a request that equipment for an electric power station be increased from 350,000 kilowatts to 950,000 kilowatts. Khrushchev made no concrete promise, but merely noted that the question would be examined "at a meeting [of the Presidium] of the CPSU CC."¹²

⁹ "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS 'Pis'mo Chzhou En'laia po voprosu ob okazanii pomoshchi KNR v stroitel'stve promyshlennykh predpriatii po vtoromy piatiletnemu planu'" (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU "Zhou Enlai's Letter on the Question of Providing Assistance to the PRC in Constructing Industrial Enterprises in the Second Five-year Plan"), Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (here and hereafter RGANI), collection 3, inventory 14, file 207, sheets 82-83.

¹⁰ "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS 'O provedenii peregovorov ob okazanii tekhnicheskoi pomoshchi KNR v stroitel'stve 48 promyshlennykh predpriatii'" (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU "On Conducting Negotiations on Providing Technical Assistance to the PRC in Constructing 48 Industrial Enterprises"), RGANI, collection 3, inventory 14, file 207, sheet 89. During the negotiations, the final number of projects was reduced from 48 to 47. The Chinese themselves eliminated from the list of enterprises five projects, and then designated construction of two shops as independent projects and added two new ones. See "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS 'Ob okazanii Sovetskim Soiuzom tekhnicheskoi pomoshchi Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respublike v stroitel'stve i rasshirenii 47 promyshlennykh predpriatii'" (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU "On Providing by the Soviet Union Technical Assistance to the People's Republic of China in the Construction and Expansion of 47 Industrial Enterprises"), RGANI, collection 3, inventory 14, file 231, sheet 1.

¹¹ The question of economic aid to the GDR was examined two days later at a session of the Presidium of the CC CPSU. See A. A. Fursenko, ed., *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU, 1954-1964), vol. 1: *Chernovye protokol'nye zapisi zasedanii. Stenogrammy* (Draft Official Notes of the Meetings. Stenograms) (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003), 310-11.

¹² "Zapis' besedy N. S. Khrushcheva s chlenami delegatsii kompartii Kitaia na Soveshchani predstavitel'ei kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii stran-uchastnits SEV" (Notes on N. S. Khrushchev's Conversation with Members of a Delegation from the Communist Party of China at a Conference of Representatives of

Whether this question was decided is unknown (in any case, it was not discussed at Presidium sessions), but in April-June 1958, with aid from the USSR to the PRC, factories for producing antibiotics, radio components, and complex wireless radio receivers were set up in China. And on July 15, 1958, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR ratified a Treaty on Trade and Navigation with the PRC.¹³

Cooperation developed in various fields, including the military. On June 30, 1958, members of the Presidium of the CPSU CC confirmed a directive of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR concerning negotiations with a Chinese military delegation on questions of cooperation right up to 1967. The Soviet military engaged in discussion of a rather broad range of issues – from the production of artillery weapons, armored vehicle technology, and engineering fortifications to means of defense against weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, the Chinese comrades were given access to view several secret innovations, including encryption machines and medicaments to treat radiation sickness. However, the representatives from the Soviet Ministry of Defense had to avoid exchanging views on innovations in the field of bacteriological weapons and the organization of work in decryption. Most important, the Ministry of Defense was forbidden to discuss with the Chinese questions relating to the military utilization of radioactive substances or to demonstrate working models of atomic weapons and missile technology for naval vessels.¹⁴

The formal reason for refusing a dialogue on questions regarding the actual creation of an atomic-powered PRC navy was that the USSR had already provided assistance to the Chinese in making an atomic bomb. In the spring of 1957, Khrushchev had decided to provide China the requisite technology, to assist the Chinese in

Communist and Workers Parties from Member Countries of COMECON), RGANI, collection 52, inventory 1, file 571, sheets 119-23.

¹³ *Pravda* (Truth), July 16, 1958.

¹⁴ "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS 'Ob obmene mneniyami s kitaiskoi voennoi delegatsiei uchenykh i spetsialistov po nekotorym voprosam proekta osnovnykh polozhenii perspektivnogo plana razvitiia nauki i tekhniki KNR na 1956-1967gg.'" (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU "On Exchange of Views with a Chinese Military Delegation of Scientists and Technicians on Several Issues in a Draft of Basic Positions of the Projected Plan for Development of Science and Technology in the PRC in 1956-1967"), RGANI, collection. 3, inventory 14, file 22, sheet 8.

establishing a nuclear center in the vicinity of Beijing, and to task Soviet scientists with teaching Chinese specialists how to make a nuclear weapon.¹⁵ In May 1957, Soviet atomic scientists arrived in China, and that same October a formal Soviet-Chinese protocol was signed regarding Soviet assistance to the PRC in building its own atomic bomb.¹⁶ During the very next month, the Chinese requested assistance in building atomic submarines, and received agreement to do this in the future.¹⁷ And in January 1958, the Soviet side transferred two operational R-2 tactical ballistic missiles (the American code name was SS-2 Sibling) to the Chinese, capable of delivering ten kiloton nuclear weapons.¹⁸ “We looked upon this as a no-brainer,” Khrushchev recalled, “in our common interests it was necessary to create defensive means and accomplish this through our common efforts.”¹⁹

Overall, it seemed that everything was going well. Indeed, on May 20, the Chinese embassy in Moscow expressed its firm confidence that in 1958, Sino-Soviet relations would develop swiftly.²⁰

In this optimistic environment, on April 18, 1958, the minister of defense of the USSR Rodion Ya. Malinovsky, after consulting with the CPSU CC, sent a telegram to his counterpart, the minister of defense of the PRC Peng Dehuai, in which he expressed his “great hope that in the period 1958-1962 China and the USSR could jointly construct a powerful long-wave radio station that would provide long-distance connections.”²¹ Both

¹⁵ See E. A. Negin and Yu. N. Smirnov, “Delilsia li SSSR s Kitaem svoimi atomnymi sekretami” (Did the USSR Share Its Nuclear Secrets with China?), in *Nauka i obshchestvo: istoriia sovetskogo atomnogo proekta (40-50 gody): Trudy mezhdunarodnogo simpoziuma ISAP-96* (Science and Society: The History of the Soviet Atomic Project [40s-50s]. Proceedings of an International Symposium, ISAP-96), vol. 1 (Moscow: Izdat, 1997), 306.

¹⁶ See Nie Rongzhen, *Inside the Red Star: The Reminiscences of Marshal Nie Rongzhen* (Beijing: New World Press, 1988), 696; Sergei Goncharenko, “Sino-Soviet Military Cooperation,” in Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance 1945-1963* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 157-58.

¹⁷ See Li Mingjiang, *Mao's China and the Sino-Soviet Split: Ideological Dilemma* (London: Routledge, 2012), 41-43.

¹⁸ See John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 212.

¹⁹ N. S. Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast'. (Vospominaniia v 4-kn.)* (Time. People. Power. [Reminiscences in 4 vols.]), vol. 3 (Moscow: Moskovskie novosti, 1999), 74.

²⁰ See Li, *Mao's China and the Sino-Soviet Split*, 39-40.

²¹ Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast'* (Time, People, Power), vol. 3, 73.

the USSR and China needed it to maintain contact with submarines operating in the Pacific Ocean. The USSR was ready to support 70-percent of the cost of the station, figuring that China would cover 30-percent.²² The overall cost of the project was estimated at 110 million rubles.²³ “Why did we want to build the radio station ourselves?” Khrushchev explained. “At that time, it would have been difficult for the Chinese to build a complex facility in the requisite time. The military were pressing us to begin the construction as soon as possible.”²⁴

Unexpectedly, the Chinese side refused. Neither Mao nor Peng Dehuai were opposed to the station as such. The Chinese military themselves, in negotiations with Soviet generals back in November 1957, had raised the question of constructing such a station.²⁵ On January 6, 1958, Admiral Vasilii I. Platonov, senior military adviser to the commander of Chinese naval forces, even proposed, in preliminary form, to Admiral Xiao Jinguang, Chinese naval commander, a draft agreement to jointly build such a station in China.²⁶ But the Chinese did not want the station to be a joint Soviet-Chinese undertaking, moreover one basically constructed with Soviet funds; they only wanted technical assistance from the USSR in its construction, and to invest their own resources so as to remain independent. On April 24, Mao Zedong informed all relevant Chinese departments of this, after which, on May 10, the question of the radio station was discussed at the Military Commission of the CCP CC. On June 4, 1958, Peng Dehuai discussed this question with the chief military advisor Lt. General Nikolai I. Trufanov. On June 5, Peng sent a report to Mao Zedong and the CCP CC, saying that “the Soviet side insists on the original idea that the construction should be jointly invested by the two sides.” “The Soviet side will not quickly accept the opinion of our side,” he noted,

²² See “Report, Peng Dehuai to Mao Zedong and the CCP Central Committee (Excerpt),” <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/report-peng-dehuai-mao-zedong-and-ccp-central-committee-excerpt>.

²³ See Yan Mingfu, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2015), 457; Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1998), 255.

²⁴ Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast'* (Time. People. Power), vol. 3, 74.

²⁵ See Li, *Mao's China and the Sino-Soviet Split*, 45.

²⁶ See Yan Mingfu, *Qinli Zhong Su guanxi: Zhongyang bangongting fanyizu de shinian: 1957-1966* (Personal Experience of Soviet-Chinese Relations: Ten Years of the Translators' Group in the CC General Affairs Department: 1957-1966) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2015), 132.

suggesting that “[we] may permit the Soviet experts to come to China to conduct some technical work.” He advised that the question of investments and utilization of the station be deferred to the future.²⁷ Mao agreed, but he emphasized that “the money must be paid by China, not by the Soviet side. For joint use.” He added, “This is not my personal opinion, but the opinion of China.”²⁸

On June 12 and July 21, Peng Dehuai wrote twice to Malinovsky that China did not agree to construction of the station if it was not built using Chinese investments and would not be the sole property of the PRC. The Chinese agreed only to a financial loan and technical assistance from the USSR.²⁹ The upshot was that the Soviet side had to accept the Chinese conditions.³⁰

At the time, Khrushchev did not understand why Mao did not want direct Soviet investments and joint ownership of the station. It was not until many years later that he understood the problem:

We were all worked up then, having exaggerated the international interests of the communist parties and socialist countries. We all thought that our navy, the Chinese, and generally all the military assets of the socialist countries served a single purpose: to be prepared to repulse an attack if imperialism unleashed a war against us...We underestimated the nationalist feelings of the Chinese leadership. Mao was offended by our proposal, his national feelings were wounded, China’s sovereignty was wounded. Evidently, he felt that we were somehow worming our way into China this way.

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And so, it was. And the bitter aftertaste remained in Mao’s mouth.

²⁷ “Report, Peng Dehuai to Mao Zedong and the CCP Central Committee (Excerpt).” See also: Wang Yan, ed., *Peng Dehuai nianpu* (Chronological Biography of Peng Dehuai) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1998), 680; Xiao Jingguang, *Xiao Jingguang huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Xiao Jingguang) (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo chubanshe, 2013), 303.

²⁸ Mao, *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy*, 245-46; See also Yan, *Qinli Zhong Su guanxi* (Personal Experience of Soviet-Chinese Relations), 132.

²⁹ See Li, *Mao’s China and the Sino-Soviet Split*, 43. By this time, Malinovsky had already suggested splitting the expenses for construction of the station in half. See Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 303.

³⁰ See Mao, *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy*, 480; Xiao, *Xiao Jingguang huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Xiao Jingguang), 303.

³¹ Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast’* (Time. People. Power), vol. 3, 73-74.

Meanwhile, on June 28, 1958, Moscow received a secret telegram from Zhou Enlai, premier of the State Council of the PRC, with a new request: to provide China assistance in constructing many ships for the navy including both submarines and surface ships, including high-speed vessels.³² Here Khrushchev made another mistake.

It so happened that the request came at the time when he and other Soviet leaders of the country, the army, and the navy, having decided that in contemporary war the main weapon would be missiles, came to the mistaken conclusion that surface navy ships had less of a role in military strategy. “The main thing,” he explained to Mao Zedong two weeks later, “is that we subjected the doctrine of the navy to criticism in light of changing military technology...We have stopped building cruisers...Who needs cruisers now with their limited firepower given the existence of missiles. I told Eden³³ in London that their cruisers [–] are floating steel coffins.”³⁴ On March 25, 1958, the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted a resolution reducing the naval fleet, by which 250 vessels were to be scrapped, including heavy and light cruisers and destroyers. Three-hundred-seventy-five ships were kept in service and many officers were put into the reserves.³⁵ Therefore, Khrushchev reacted skeptically toward Zhou’s request. Nevertheless, on July 15, he brought it up for consideration by the Presidium of the CPSU CC. It is not clear how the discussion went. In Khrushchev’s words, when the Soviet leaders received the letter, they “began to think about it” but they found it difficult “to give an answer.”³⁶ “We want,” he said to Mao:

to discuss with you the direction we should take in building our naval fleet...We wanted to discuss this with comrades Zhou Enlai and Peng

³² See Fursenko, *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1955-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU. 1955-1964), vol. 1, 1038; Li Ping and Ma Zhisun, eds., *Zhou Enlai nianpu* (Chronological Biography of Zhou Enlai [1949-1976]), vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1997), 149; Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 457-458; Li, *Mao’s China and the Sino-Soviet Split*, 43.

³³ Anthony Eden (1897-1977) was prime minister of Great Britain in 1955-1957.

³⁴ V. M. Zubok, “Peregovory N. S. Khrushcheva s Mao Tzedunom 31 iiulia – 3 avgusta 1958 i 2 octiabria 1959 g. (Conversations of N. S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong, July 31 – August 3, 1958 and October 2, 1959), *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* (Modern and Contemporary history), no. 1 (2001): 113-14.

³⁵ See A. N. Bolosov, “Postanovlenie SM SSSR o sokrashchenii flota” (Resolution of the Council of Ministers USSR on Reduction of the Navy), https://flot.com/news/dayinhistory/?ELEMENT_ID=5685&print=Y.

³⁶ Zubok, “Peregovory N. S. Khrushcheva s Mao Tzedunom 31 iiulia – 3 avgusta 1958 i 2 oktiabria 1959 g.” (Conversations of N. S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong, July 31 – August 3, 1958, and October 2 1959), 112-13.

Dehuai...It would be good to redeploy our fleet, located in the Black and Baltic seas. It is not needed there, and if we build anything in that region, it would only be small submarines...I said that China has an extensive seacoast, open seas from which it would be easy to wage submarine warfare against America, therefore, it would be good to discuss with China the question of making use of these opportunities.”³⁷

Later, he recalled how Soviet leaders had in mind the possibility of “a base for our submarines on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, on Chinese territory,” and in exchange providing the Chinese “a base on our territory” if they wanted to “have their submarine fleet in the Northern Arctic Ocean.”³⁸

The view was expressed “to write a confid[ential] letter to Mao Zedong.”³⁹ Mikoyan was tasked with drafting it, and two days later, on July 17, he sent it to the members of the Presidium.⁴⁰ The draft was streamlined. Its main idea was the imperative of conducting “a meeting of the two countries at the highest level on the question of building up the Chinese naval fleet.”⁴¹

However, for some reason the letter was not confirmed by the Presidium. Khrushchev entrusted the ambassador of the USSR to China Pavel F. Yudin to “play the role of a letter.” Yudin was on leave in Moscow at the time.⁴² Judging from documents in RGANI, Nikita Sergeevich discussed this with Yudin on the eve of the Presidium meeting of July 15, and then at the Presidium meeting on July 18, instructing him, upon his return

³⁷ Ibid., 112-14.

³⁸ Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast'* (Time. People. Power), vol. 3, 75.

³⁹ Fursenko, *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU. 1954-1964), vol. 1, 316.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 316; A. A. Fursenko, ed., *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium CC CPSU. 1954-1964), vol. 2: *Postanovleniia 1954-1958* (Resolutions 1954-1958) (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003), 862.

⁴¹ “Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS, ‘Ob ukazaniiakh sovposlu v Pekine dlia peredachi kKitaiskim druž’iam’” (Resolution of the Presidium CC CPSU “On Instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Beijing for Transmission to Chinese Friends”), RGANI, collection 3, inventory 14, file 225, sheet 14.

⁴² See Zubok, “Peregovory N. S. Khrushcheva s Mao Tzedunom 31 iuliia – 3 avgusta 1958 i 2 oktiabria 1959 g.” (Conversations of N. S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong July 31 – August 3, 1958, and October 2, 1959), 112, 114; Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 458; Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), 389.

to China, to explain to Mao at once the position of the Soviet leadership “on a number of issues of foreign affairs and questions of interest to both sides.”⁴³

Yudin’s forthcoming conversation with Mao Zedong would not be easy, and the leaders of the USSR understood this. That is why, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR suggested that Yudin, in addition to speaking with Mao, also meet with the minister of foreign affairs of the PRC Chen Yi and, through him, warn the Chinese leadership against undertaking a military campaign against Taiwan on July 23-24 (information about the planning for such an action came through channels from the American news agency UPI on July 17), Khrushchev and Mikoyan requested that Yudin not be burdened with additional information or requests.

Returning to China on July 21, that same evening Yudin requested an audience with Mao Zedong. Mao received him right away in the CCP CC residence in Zhongnanhai (“Central and Southern Seas”), in the “Swimming Pool Pavilion,” with his retinue of deputies, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and Chen Yun as well as the general secretary of the CCP CC Deng Xiaoping, Peng Dehuai, and Chen Yi.

Initially all went well. Mao listened to Yudin with a smile, and judging from the ambassador’s subsequent reports to Moscow, Mao expressed the thought that a military conflict with the West was inevitable, but he recognized the “wisdom” of the CPSU CC in trying to deescalate international tensions. Then he declared that a new world war would break out in seven years and announced his plan to mobilize the entire population of China in a militia and supply them with rifles. Then, in a jocular tone, he complained that the PRC did not have its own atomic bomb. Yudin and Mao also devoted a lot of attention to the USSR’s and the PRC’s relations with President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito. Mao jokingly called Tito “a hooligan.”

The joking stopped, however, as soon as Yudin began talking about Moscow’s position on constructing the fleet. He said the following: instead of helping with the construction of the Chinese naval fleet, the USSR proposes to construct a joint Soviet-

⁴³ “Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS ‘Ob ukazanniiakh sovposlu v Pekine dlia peredachi kitaiskim druz’iam’” (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU “On Instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Beijing for Transmission to Chinese Friends”), sheet 14.

Chinese fleet through united efforts (50-50) that would be based in ports along China's coast and act in the interests of both states.⁴⁴ When the interpreter Yan Mingfu⁴⁵ pronounced the words "build a joint fleet," the look on Mao's face changed sharply. "A-a-a!" burst from him. "Does that mean you again intend to build a cooperative?" Subsequently, Khrushchev would assert that Yudin had mixed everything up. "When I was speaking with him, I was afraid that he might not be understanding me correctly. I ask him, 'Is this issue clear to you?' He says, 'It's clear.'"⁴⁶

It's hard to say if Khrushchev's defense was accurate. On one hand, both at the Presidium of the CPSU CC and in Mikoyan's draft letter, there really was reference to the need "generally to exchange views [with the Chinese at the highest level] on con[structing] the army [and] the fleet."⁴⁷ On the other hand, it is not known what Khrushchev actually said to Yudin on July 15 and 18. Whatever it may have been, Mao was evidently displeased with the ambassador's words. He asked Yudin what fleet he was talking about (large, medium, or small) and who would be in charge of it, but the ambassador did not know how to reply. Then Mao asked his comrades-in-arms what exactly was there in Zhou Enlai's telegram to Khrushchev of June 28, 1958. Zhou replied that "the letter contained a request for assistance in building a nuclear-powered submarine fleet as well as defensive shore fortifications." However, Yudin continued to talk about building a joint fleet and even added that the relevant bases of the joint naval fleet could be built not only in the USSR and China, but also in Vietnam.

Overall, Mao responded favorably toward joint bases in Vietnam, but when Yudin again touched upon the question of a Soviet-Chinese fleet, he exploded. "You are no different than Stalin. You think that Chinese are savages covered with hair who are

⁴⁴ See Mao, *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy*, 255; Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 458-59; B. N. Vereshchagin, *V starom i novom Kitae. Iz vospominanii diplomata* (In Old and New China: Reminiscences of a Diplomat) (Moscow: IDV RAN, 1999), 119-121; Shu Guang Zhang, "Sino-Soviet Economic Cooperation," in Westad, *Brothers in Arms*, 207.

⁴⁵ Yan Mingfu (1931-2023) – director of the translators' group in the General Affairs Department of the CC CCP.

⁴⁶ Zubok, "Peregovory N. S. Khrushcheva s Mao Tzedunom 31 iul'ia – 3 avgusta 1958 yu 2 oktiabria 1959 g." (Conversations of N. S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong July 31 – August 3, 1958, and October 2, 1959), 114.

⁴⁷ Fursenko, *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU. 1954-1964), vol 1, 316.

unable to accomplish modernization themselves and can only listen to you. What is it that you are talking about after all? Of building a cooperative or something else?" He added even more: "First we must resolve the principal question: are we in charge and you are helping us or perhaps it is only a joint venture and if we do not agree to joint management then you will not help us, that is, you will shamelessly force us to accept it?"

Yudin was so frightened that, to all questions, he only responded, "Khrushchev proposed receiving Zhou Enlai and Peng Dehuai in Moscow."⁴⁸ He was sweating heavily. He tried to calm down an infuriated Mao, but all his efforts were entirely in vain. It seemed Mao Zedong was out of control. He began to recall humiliations that he and China in general had endured from Stalin and the USSR in the past, referring to the Soviet military base in Lüshun (Port Arthur) and saying that Stalin had not trusted him (Mao) as the leader of the Chinese people. He even spoke critically of the work of Soviet citizens and military specialists in the PRC. He recalled Mikoyan's visit to the CCP's military base in the village of Xibaipo during the civil war in China in 1949, saying that Mikoyan had behaved like "an inspector," who tried to instruct the Chinese leaders. Returning to the theme of cooperatives, he recalled that of all the joint enterprises in the past, the only successful one was a factory in Guangzhou that produced canned pineapples.

At the end of the conversation, Mao requested that Yudin inform the CPSU CC of everything that he had just said in detail, but not to depict things as if tension had arisen in the relations between the two fraternal parties. Moreover, he added that it would be good for him to meet Khrushchev and discuss many questions, including a treaty in case of war, but that it would be difficult for him to leave China right now. Therefore, he would like the Soviet leader himself to come to Beijing for three days.

Yudin later informed Moscow that Mao spoke verbosely and nervously and that he (Yudin) got the impression that the Chinese friends were making special preparations

⁴⁸ Quoted from Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 459-60; Vereshchagin, *V starom i novom kitae* (In Old and New China), 120-21; Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), 390-91; Mao, *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy*, 250.

for talks and gathering facts that would underline the incorrect attitude of individual Soviet leaders toward China. Sergei F. Antonov, the minister counselor of the Soviet embassy in Beijing, who participated in the discussion, noted that Mao's indignation was based on some sort of misunderstanding that had no basis in reality.

After his meeting with Yudin, which lasted from 10:00 p.m. on July 21 until 1:10 a.m. on July 22, Mao was unable to calm down. He felt so wounded that, in his own words, he lost sleep and his appetite.⁴⁹ Even if the ambassador had relayed Khrushchev's proposals in the manner that Nikita Sergeevich depicts in his own reminiscences, even then Mao would have a basis for taking umbrage. Khrushchev understood this, as usual, only many years later: "Again, we touched upon sensitive chords of a state upon whose territory alien conquerors had long exercised dominance...Yes, and generally we evidently presented these proposals to China in vain...But what's done cannot be undone. I understand that in such matters great punctiliousness is necessary. Now I understand this circumstance very well indeed."⁵⁰

When Yudin and those accompanying him departed (in addition to Sergei F. Antonov, the counselor of the USSR embassy Boris N. Vereshchagin was also present at the meeting), Mao Zedong continued to discuss the situation for an entire hour with the number two man in the state, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) Liu Shaoqi.⁵¹ He was not wholly satisfied with what he had said to the ambassador and decided to meet him again to express his indignation at the Soviet Union's great power policy toward China. "Their real purpose," Mao explained his indignation to his personal physician, "is to control us. They're trying to tie our hands and feet. But they're full of wishful thinking, like idiots talking about their dreams."⁵² He ordered his interpreter to tell his (Mao's) secretary Ye Zilong to bring a small tape

⁴⁹ See Mao, *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy*, 250; Zubok, "Peregovory N. S. Khrushcheva s Mao Tzedunom 31 iuliia – 3 avgusta 1958 i 2 oktiabria 1959 g." (Conversations of N. S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong, July 31 – August 3, 1958 and October 2, 1959), 111-16.

⁵⁰ See Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast'* (Time. People. Power.), vol. 3, 76.

⁵¹ See Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), 391.

⁵² Quoted from Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao. The Reminiscences of Mao's Personal Physician Dr. Li Zhisui*. Tr. Tai Hung-chao (New York: Random House, 1994), 261.

recorder to tomorrow's meeting. He wanted to record the conversation just in case Khrushchev tried to wriggle out of it. (Skipping forward, nothing came of this because of problems with the tape recorder. The inexperienced person responsible for recording failed to capture the meeting.)⁵³

Yudin also did not rush to bed. Returning to the embassy, he met with several embassy officials and drafted a message to the CPSU CC. But, according to a witness, "the hour was late, so the message was not sent until the morning."⁵⁴ That was appropriate since in the morning an invitation for another meeting arrived.

That day, Mao rose unusually early, altering his traditional daily regimen of going to bed around 5:00 a.m. and sleeping until 2:00 or 3:00 p.m.⁵⁵ (Perhaps he hadn't slept at all?) Then at 11:00 a.m. in the presence of the areopagus of Chinese leaders he met with Yudin again. This time, over five hours, the Chairman of the CCP CC taught the Soviet ambassador good manners. In reality, of course, everything he said was intended for Khrushchev, and he again requested that Yudin convey all the details and nuances of the conversation to the leader of the CPSU. "Don't whitewash my words," he warned him.⁵⁶

Mao recounted all the offenses the Chinese communists had suffered at the hands of the leaders of the CPSU. "You don't trust the Chinese, only the Russians," he asserted. "Speaking of that, how about putting everything under joint operation: the army, navy and air force, industry, agriculture, culture and education?" Then he spoke at length about Stalin, how he had insisted upon establishing four joint enterprises on the territory of the PRC, established control over Manchuria and Xinjiang, and did not trust Chinese right up until the beginning of the Korean War in 1950. Mao explained that earlier Stalin had supported the mistaken "Wang Ming lines"⁵⁷ and "didn't allow us to

⁵³ See Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 460-61.

⁵⁴ Vereshchagin, *V starom i novom Kitae* (In Old and New China), 121.

⁵⁵ On Mao's daily regimen, see Alexander V. Pantsov with Steven I. Levine, *Mao: The Real Story* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 364, 541.

⁵⁶ Mao, *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy*, 256.

⁵⁷ Reference is to the political lines of Wang Ming (1904-1974), one of Mao's main intraparty opponents, whom Mao labeled as a "left opportunist" (for his policy in the early 1930s) and a "right opportunist" (for his policy in 1937-1938).

make revolution” (Mao compared Stalin’s “very serious” mistake with that of Grigorii E. Zinoviev who had opposed the October Revolution in 1917), while demanding that he (Mao) reconcile with Chiang Kai-shek. Stalin had also slighted Mao during his visit to Moscow in December 1949-February 1950. Citing Khrushchev, he even asserted that Stalin planned to break off relations with the Chinese Communist Party. And then he again criticized Mikoyan, saying that he, coming to China, always (not only in 1949, also in 1956 when he attended the Eighth Congress of the CCP), treated the Chinese leaders like a father treated his sons. Then he expressed his displeasure with a number of Soviet specialists and advisors who also displayed contempt toward Chinese.

He made it perfectly clear that he viewed the Soviet proposal for a “joint fleet” as no accident but rooted in the same Russian great power attitude toward China. “Comrade Khrushchev abolished the ‘cooperatives’ and restored trust,” he asserted. “Raising the question of ownership this time suggests to me the return of Stalin’s practice.” For “cooperative,” he noted, “involves a question of ownership, and it will be 50 percent by each side according to your proposal. You made me so angry yesterday!” Mao even threw the following retort in the ambassador’s face: “You may call me a nationalist, the emergence of a second Tito. Should you say so, I can well answer that you have extended Russian nationalism to the Chinese coast.”

In conclusion, Mao requested that Yudin tell Khrushchev that “he may come if he agrees with me, and not come if not, as we shall have nothing to talk about. No, not even half a finger of condition will be allowed.”⁵⁸ But he added that the visit could take place in three months or half a year.

That same day Yudin informed Khrushchev via the High Frequency line of his conversations with Mao. An eyewitness recalls, “In his conversation with the ambassador on the High Frequency line, he [Khrushchev], rather agitated, expressed bewilderment and asked what was going on with Mao Zedong.” (The Chinese were listening in on the High Frequency line, and Khrushchev probably wanted Mao to know of his reaction.) The next day Yudin sent an encrypted, eight-page telegram. He cited

⁵⁸ Mao, *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy*, 250-58.

verbatim almost everything Mao had said. Fearing a “clash between Khrushchev and Mao, he only deleted the sentence that if Khrushchev did not agree with him (Mao Zedong), he need not come.”⁵⁹

On July 24, Yudin’s encrypted telegram was examined by the Presidium of the CPSU CC. Judging from the working notes of the session, everyone was surprised: “During Stalin’s time we ourselves objected to concessions. Astounded regarding Com. Mikoyan.” The question of advisers and specialists even caused offence that was understandable: we help the Chinese, and they are dissatisfied. A letter to the Chinese side was drafted proposing either “to get rid of” the advisors or reduce their numbers, and Presidium member Mikhail A. Suslov, along with director of the International Department of the CC Boris N. Ponomarev and first deputy minister of foreign affairs of the USSR Vasilii V. Kuznetsov were tasked with “drafting an aide-memoire to the ambassador of the USSR in the PRC Com. Yudin for discussion with Chinese friends.”⁶⁰

Khrushchev did not want to get involved with relations with Mao Zedong then and didn’t have the time. In mid-July, tensions in the Near East increased. On July 14, an antimonarchical revolution occurred in Iraq and King Faisal II, an ally of the United States, was killed, a republic was established in the country, and proponents of collaboration with the USSR came to power. The anti-Soviet military bloc known as CENTO (the Baghdad Pact) created by the Americans and the English in 1955 began to disintegrate. This worried the president of Lebanon, the Maronite Christian and US ally Camille Chamoun who was embroiled in a civil war against Sunni Muslims dissatisfying with his authoritarian rule and receiving support from the Lebanese communist party and the USSR. He urgently requested help from the president of the United States Dwight Eisenhower, who sent a landing force to Beirut on July 15.⁶¹ Two days later, the British, responding to a request from King Hussein of Jordan, the cousin of King Faisal II,

⁵⁹ Vereshchagin, *V starom i novom Kitae* (In Old and New China), 127-28.

⁶⁰ Fursenko, *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU. 1954-1964), vol. 1, 326, 1042; vol. 2, 889.

⁶¹ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President. 1958* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Federal Register, 1959), 553-57.

whose fate he did not wish to share, carried out a landing in Amman. All of this terribly upset Khrushchev who feared American aggression in Iraq. Needless to say, he did not want to get drawn into a war in Iraq, but he also did not want to yield to the Americans. On July 19, he sent urgent messages to Eisenhower, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, chairman of the French Council of Ministers Charles de Gaulle, and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru proposing they meet in Geneva (or wherever convenient) on July 22 to take measures “to stop a developing military conflict.” He also wanted UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld to take part in the conference.⁶² On July 22, Eisenhower wrote him that it would be better not to have a summit meeting, but to turn the question over to the UN Security Council.⁶³ The next day, Khrushchev proposed that the heads of the USSR, USA., Great Britain, France, and India take part in the session of the Security Council. He was not concerned that India was not a member of the Security Council. He proposed a new meeting date of July 28.⁶⁴

Therefore, Nikita Sergeevich decided not to go to China, and informed Mao Zedong via Yudin that “if you are dissatisfied with the proposal, we want to listen to you. If it remains in force, the request for the fleet. Then you [can] send competent prop[osals] [*sic; this is how the message appears in the original text. – A.P. & N.P.*].”⁶⁵

After receiving this news from Moscow, at 9:00 p.m. that evening Yudin met with Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping since Mao did not want to see him anymore. Judging from Yudin’s message to Moscow, the Chinese leaders alleged that Mao was sick (“he has a high fever”).⁶⁶ Yudin in turn informed the Chinese comrades of Khrushchev’s

⁶² Fursenko, *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU. 1954-1964), vol. 1, 1039; *Background of Heads of Government Conference: 1960: Principal Documents, 1955-1959. With Narrative Summary* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, 1960), 263-66.

⁶³ See *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower: 1958*, 560-64; *Background of Heads of Government Conference: 1960*, 267-70.

⁶⁴ See *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, vol. 3: 1958 (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 999-1000; *Background of Heads of Government Conference: 1960*, 267-70.

⁶⁵ Fursenko, *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU. 1954-1964), vol. 1, 326.

⁶⁶ If this was true, evidently, the emotional conversations with Yudin negatively impacted the health of the Chairman of the CC CCP. Although, more likely, the Chinese were twisting the truth. “A high fever” did not stop Mao from speaking with Liu, Zhou, and Deng for forty minutes before their meeting with Yudin, and an hour later spending forty-five minutes with them discussing the results of the meeting. The next day, July 25, Mao first spoke with a candidate member of the Secretariat of the CC CCP and one of his personal

“bewilderment” regarding the Soviet side’s supposed political conditions regarding the question of helping build the Chinese navy and said that Khrushchev could not come in the near future because he had a forthcoming trip to New York for a meeting of heads of government in connection with the Near East situation. Zhou and Deng made no reply, but Liu Shaoqi reminded him that the PRC opposed the creation of a joint fleet because it presented a political problem. Yudin continued to assure them that the question of building the Chinese fleet was a practical matter. The results of the meeting made it clear that the Soviet diplomat had failed to convince the Chinese leaders.⁶⁷

The Chinese not only managed to make a stenographic record, but also succeeded in tape-recording this conversation, which lasted just forty minutes. And just 15 minutes later, Liu, Zhou, and Deng met with Mao. The discussion of the results took two-and-a-half times as long as the conversation with the ambassador itself. As for Yudin, he sent Khrushchev 65 pages of detailed records of all his conversations – with Mao on July 21 and 22, and with Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping on July 24 – four days later, on July 28.

Meanwhile, on July 26, the chairman of the State Commission of the USSR on Foreign Economic Relations Semen A. Skachkov sent extensive information to the CPSU CC on the economic ties of the USSR and PRC on the period up to 1965. From the document it followed that back on June 12, the State Planning Commission of the PRC had sent a list of 159 new industrial projects to Moscow for approval, intended to be built through efforts by the Soviet Union. It included 27 metallurgical factories, 19 chemical factories, 15 coal pits and mines, five oil refineries, and 18 defense plants. The overall volume of the supply of complete Soviet equipment in 1959-1965 would amount

secretaries Hu Qiaomu, and later even conducted an enlarged session of the Politburo. See Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), 393.

⁶⁷ See, for instance, Vereshchagin, *V starom i novom Kitae* (In Old and New China), 128-129; Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 469; Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), 393; Li and Ma, *Zhou Enlai nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Zhou Enlai [1949-1976]), vol. 2, 154; Liu Chongwen and Chen Shaochou, eds., *Liu Shaoqi nianpu 1898-1967* (Chronological Biography of Liu Shaoqi 1898-1967), vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1996), 435; Yang Shengqun and Yan Jianqi, eds., *Deng Xiaoping nianpu 1904-1974* (Chronological Biography of Deng Xiaoping 1904-1974), vol. 3 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2009), 1444.

to about 11.2 billion rubles (including 900 million rubles that were allotted to atomic industry). The overall scale of exports of products from the USSR to the PRC in this period was fixed at 27-30 billion rubles. At Mikoyan's instruction, Skachkov's information was sent personally to Khrushchev.

That same day, Suslov, Ponomarev, and Kuznetsov presented to the members and candidate members of the Presidium for their consideration a draft oral message from Khrushchev for Yudin to deliver to Mao in a new conversation. The Soviet ambassador was requested, in part, to say that Khrushchev "was extremely surprised and, to be frank, even insulted" by the interpretation of the issues relating to "construction of the PRC's naval fleet." The document emphasized that the Soviet leadership invited a delegation headed by Zhou Enlai to discuss questions relating to rational utilization of capital investments in military naval construction. "There is no basis for talking about either 'joint ownership' of the fleet or of some sort of 'concessions,'" asserted the authors of the draft. "We have helped and are ready to help you [Chinese comrades] in the future in building a military naval fleet for the PRC. There should be no doubt about this on your part." The draft also touched upon the question of building a radio transmission station, and Mikoyan's "incorrect" speech at the Eighth Congress of the CCP as well as of Soviet advisers and specialists. At the same time, agreement was expressed about a Khrushchev-Mao meeting, but only after tension in the Near East subsided and resolution of "urgent matters in the country." The draft was examined by the members of the Presidium, but not approved. Khrushchev probably understood that it would be better for him to come to see Mao himself than once more to send a "living" letter in the person of Yudin.

Resolution of the situation in the Near East influenced Khrushchev's decision. On July 25, Eisenhower replied to him again, saying that July 28 was too soon to convene a meeting of the UN Security Council.⁶⁸ Instead of a meeting of the Security Council, on July 28, a meeting of the members of CENTO took place in London, at which the

⁶⁸ See *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower: 1958*, 565-66; *Background of Heads of Government Conference: 1960*, 273-74.

question of aggression against Iraq was not on the agenda. That is precisely why Khrushchev decided to visit Beijing after all and talk things over with Mao. On July 28, he sent Eisenhower a third letter saying he considered his response an attempt to delay a summit meeting.⁶⁹ On the same day, the Presidium of the CPSU CC adopted a resolution “considering expedient a trip by Com. Khrushchev to the PRC to meet with leaders of the CCP CC on issues of interest to both sides.”⁷⁰ Khrushchev immediately informed Yudin of this using the High Frequency line, and Yudin hastened to ask Zhou Enlai “at which time it would be convenient [for Mao] that he [Khrushchev] arrive.”⁷¹ Considering that sessions of the Presidium usually began around 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. and that Khrushchev could contact Yudin no earlier than in an hour, Yudin’s meeting with Zhou Enlai was arranged with incredible speed: Zhou Enlai received Yudin at 6:00 p.m. Moscow time (11:00 p.m. in Beijing). Peng Zhen, mayor of Beijing and deputy general secretary of the CCP CC, took part in the meeting.

Learning of Khrushchev’s desire to come, Zhou replied that Mao was resting not far from Beijing in the Yellow Sea resort town of Beidaihe (Mao was “overstrained,” Zhou explained) and asked the ambassador to wait for an answer until he (Zhou) had gone to see the Chairman. On the night of July 29, Mao, via Zhou Enlai, gave his consent. It was decided that Khrushchev would fly to China on July 31. The Chinese expressed their desire that “the visit remain secret from world public opinion until after Khrushchev left Beijing.”⁷²

After receiving the ambassador’s message, on that same day, July 29, the Presidium of the CPSU CC reaffirmed that Khrushchev’s visit to the PRC was “expedient,” and approved a 12 person list of those who would accompany him. It included

⁶⁹ See *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, vol. 3: 1958, 1003-5; *Background of Heads of Government Conference: 1960*, 275-20.

⁷⁰ “Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS ‘O poezdke t. Khrushcheva v KNR’” (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU “On Com. Khrushchev’s Visit to the PRC”), RGANI, collection. 3, inventory 14, file 230, sheet 3.

⁷¹ Quoted from Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, NJ, 2008), 93.

⁷² D. A. Volkogonov just writes that the Chinese expressed the desire that the visit be secret. See D. A. Volkogonov, *Sem’ vozhdiei: galereia liderov SSSR* (Seven Leaders: A Gallery of Leaders of the USSR), vol. 1 (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), 412. Judging by the documents in RGANI, this is not wholly accurate.

Malinovsky, Kuznetsov⁷³, Ponomarev, first deputy chief of the General Staff of the armed forces Aleksei I. Antonov, chief of the General Staff of the Navy Fedor V. Zazulia, deputy chairman of the State Commission on Foreign Economic Relations Ivan V. Arkhipov, director of the Far Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Mikhail V. Zimyanin, his deputy Viktor I. Likhachev, interpreter Nikolai T. Fedorenko, Khrushchev's senior aide Grigorii T. Shuisky, Khrushchev's aide Oleg A. Troianovsky, and an official in the CPSU CC Ilia S. Shcherbakov.⁷⁴ Several persons in Khrushchev's personal bodyguard headed by Nikifor T. Litovchenko traveled with the delegation. It is remarkable that at the same session, another important decision was made: Khrushchev was supposed to take with him to Beijing a proposal on providing technical assistance in the construction and expansion of 47 industrial enterprises in the PRC.⁷⁵

The TU-104 with the Soviet delegation on board touched down at Beijing's Nanwan airport at 4:00 p.m. on July 31. To greet Khrushchev, Mao came specially from Beidaihe.⁷⁶ Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping accompanied him to the airport. Yudin was not among them. On the morning of July 31, obviously feeling extremely anxious, he took to his bed with a severe spasm of his cerebral blood vessels and temporary paralysis of his right side. There was also no enthusiastic crowd; the ceremony was modest without an honor guard, red carpet, hugs, and kisses. Mao and Deng escorted Khrushchev and Ponomarev to an airport building, a room for honored guests, where at a long table the first, very brief, conversation took place. (See [Document No. 1.](#))

⁷³ In the resolution of the Presidium, first deputy minister of foreign affairs of the USSR Kuznetsov was named as acting minister: probably to give additional weight to the Soviet delegation. But a formal decision to appoint Kuznetsov to this position was not taken. Gromyko remained as minister in Moscow in the event of unexpected negotiations with Western leaders.

⁷⁴ See "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS 'O poezdke t. Khrushcheva v KNR'" (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU "On Com. Khrushchev's Visit to the PRC"), RGANI, collection. 3, inventory 14, file 231, sheet 5.

⁷⁵ "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS: 'Ob okazanii Sovetskim Soiuzom tekhnicheskoi pomoshchi Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki v stroitel'stve i rasshirenii 47 promyshlennykh predpriyatii'" (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU "On Providing by the Soviet Union Technical Assistance to the People's Republic of China in the Construction and Expansion of 47 Industrial Enterprises), sheet 1.

⁷⁶ See Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), 395; Li, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, 258, 261.

The protocol record does not convey the atmosphere of the conversation. Judging by the reminiscences of eyewitnesses, Mao began to humiliate Khrushchev right away, although cautiously at first. Knowing that grain was in short supply in the USSR, he turned the conversation to the Great Leap in the PRC, boasting of unprecedented grain harvests (the harvest had not yet been gathered, but Mao was certain of success). This is what an eyewitness, Vereshchagin, the counselor of the USSR embassy, recalled. “He said that, evidently, there will be very large reserves of grain in China, and that the Chinese government will even have some difficulty in how to deal with these reserves.” Then he did not refrain from “taunting” Khrushchev, asking, among other things, “Won’t you suggest what we might do?” “We have never had a surplus of grain,” Khrushchev snapped back and suddenly blurted out, “The Chinese are not idiots. They will figure out what to do.” Mao was tongue-tied, for a moment, then, getting hold of himself, he laughed. Then the others laughed, too.⁷⁷ In his reminiscences, Fedorenko softens Khrushchev’s reply: “Frankly speaking, we have never had a grain surplus. On the contrary, we have always had a shortage. Therefore, I find it difficult to suggest anything useful to you.”⁷⁸ This is what Yan Mingfu, another eyewitness, writes, “It would be good if you gave it [the grain] to us.”⁷⁹ (It is doubtful that Nikita Sergeevich wholly believed Mao. Moscow was closely following implementation of the Great Leap and making far from optimistic deductions. In a political note of July 17, 1958, the minister counselor of the Soviet embassy in Beijing Sergei F. Antonov reported, for example, “a certain degree of tension” in the Chinese economy, beginning to feel an acute shortage of raw materials, of materials and production capacity.)

⁷⁷ Quoted from Vereshchagin, *V starom i novom Kitae* (In Old and New China), 129-30.

⁷⁸ Quoted from N. Fedorenko, “Vizit N. Khrushcheva v Pekin” (N. Khrushchev’s Visit to Beijing), *Problemy Dal’nego Vostoka* (Far Eastern Affairs), no. 1 (1990): 123.

⁷⁹ Quoted from Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 471. This response is confirmed by another Chinese interpreter, an employee of the chancellery of foreign affairs of the State Council of the PRC, Li Yueran. See Li Yueran, *Waijiao wutai shang de Zhongguo lingxiu* (Leaders of New China in the Diplomatic Arena) (Beijing: Waiyu jiaoxue yu yanjiu chubanshe, 1989), 150. It is true that he mistakenly attributes this sharp question to Liu Shaoqi who, judging from the record of the conversation at the airport we publish here, did not take part in this conversation.

After the initial conversation, a cortege of automobiles headed for Zhongnanhai, the residence of the CCP CC that was the former imperial palace complex in the center of Beijing. Here, in Huarentang, the Hall of Cherished Compassion, the pavilion where ceremonial sessions of the CC and the government were held, on that same day of July 31 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., a “small group” conversation between Khrushchev and Mao took place: only Ponomarev and Deng Xiaoping were included (the latter at the time played the role of the chief Chinese expert on Sino-Soviet relations.)⁸⁰

The conversation turned out to be stressful. Mao was chain-smoking and blowing smoke in Khrushchev’s face. He continually lost his self-control, jabbing his finger in front of his interlocutor’s nose and shouting. He had no intention of forgiving Khrushchev, although he listened to his explanation. (“I apologized as much as I could,” Nikita Sergeevich would say later.)⁸¹ Mao was furious, and as he had done with Yudin, he poured out all his accumulated resentment and anger from the time of the Stalinist humiliations onto the Soviet leader. And he did this even though Khrushchev responded to each of Mao’s claims that Yudin had reported to Moscow. Khrushchev asserted that with regard to the question of the navy, the ambassador had confused everything and that the CPSU CC “had never had and does not have in mind creating a joint fleet,” lied that he had not seen Malinovsky’s letter to Peng Dehuai concerning the radio transmission station (“it had not been discussed in the CC”), sharply condemned Stalin, expressed surprise at Mikoyan’s arrogant behavior, noting that “if several unnecessary moments had occurred, then not only he is guilty, but we all slip up, and he offered to recall all of the specialists, saying “this is a pimple on a healthy body.” Evidently, he was offended about the question of the specialists: “We were very troubled by your remarks about our workers.” However, it seems the conversation ended on a positive note. Noting that China was “encircled” by many “nails” (he had US military bases in mind),

⁸⁰ See Alexander V. Pantsov with Steven I. Levine, *Deng Xiaoping: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 193.

⁸¹ Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast'* (Time. People. Power). vol. 3, 75.

Mao praised the Soviet Union: “We are all alive thanks to your rockets.” Immodestly, Khrushchev agreed.⁸²

At the same time, when at the conclusion of the conversation Ye Zilong told Mao that tables in an adjacent room had been prepared for a banquet, the Chairman interrupted him, waving his hand, “We’re not going to eat!”⁸³ After Khrushchev’s departure, he invited Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, Lin Biao, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, Chen Yi, director of the International Liaison Department of the CCP CC Wang Jiaxiang, deputy minister of defense Huang Kecheng and candidate member of the Secretariat of the CC Hu Qiaomu to a meeting. The topic, of course, was the discussion with the Soviet leader, but what specifically was said is unknown.⁸⁴

Meanwhile, Khrushchev and his entourage were taken to a resort village located in a northwestern district of the Chinese capital, in an exquisite park in the foothills of Yuquanshan (Jade Spring Mountain). But Nikita Sergeevich was unable to have a good sleep. It was terribly hot in Beijing, even at night, and the dacha had no air conditioning. Moreover, he was plagued by mosquitoes. The next day, August 1, he had to rise early even though they had agreed with Mao at the conclusion of the first discussion to meet after 4:00 p.m. At the last moment, the Chairman had switched the time to 10:45 a.m. (in Moscow that was 5:45 a.m., and Khrushchev was undoubtedly suffering from jet lag.) Obviously, he had infuriated Mao – so much so that Mao changed his daily regimen again. Moreover, wishing to humiliate his Soviet guest, the Chairman decided to conduct the negotiations in a swimming pool, around which, half an hour before his second conversation with Khrushchev, he met with his Chinese interpreters in order to

⁸² Zubok, “Peregovory N. S. Khrushcheva s Mao Tsedunom 31 iulia – 3 avgusta 1958 i 2 oktiabria 1959” (Conversations of N. S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong, July 31 – August 2, 1958 and October 2, 1959), 111-26.

⁸³ Quoted from Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 498.

⁸⁴ See Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976), 397.

admonish one of them, Li Yueran, who from Mao's perspective had not conveyed the full range of the passions that were gripping him.⁸⁵

Mao greeted Khrushchev in a white dressing gown and slippers on his bare feet. Next to him stood Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, Chen Yi, Lin Biao, Peng Zhen, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Wang Jiaxiang, director of the General Affairs Department of the CC Yang Shangkun, and Hu Qiaomu, all dressed to the nines. Khrushchev and the other Soviet guests (Malinovsky, Kuznetsov, Ponomarev, and the minister counselor Sergei F. Antonov, acting for Yudin) were also dressed officially. So were the interpreters, stenographers, and bodyguards.

Khrushchev, exhausted from lack of sleep and tormented by mosquitoes, shook Mao's hand and asked, "Did you sleep at all?" "Something is weighing on my heart," Mao replied, "I was unable to sleep." Seated by his host in a wicker chair, Khrushchev complained, "Comrade Mao Zedong, I quarreled with you, but even your mosquitoes are on your side."⁸⁶ Mao observed that it was a hot day and invited his guest to swim in the pool after the negotiations. Khrushchev agreed.

On this second day of the talks, international affairs were the main topic of conversation. (See [Document No. 2.](#)) From the Soviet record, which like those of the first and the next discussion, was made by Fedorenko and the third secretary of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs Anatolii I. Filyov, it is evident that the atmosphere was fully relaxed, anti-imperialism brought the communist leaders together. Both hated America, Great Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, and their leaders. They discussed the situation in the Near East in detail and were heartened by the victory of leftist forces in Iraq. They joked a lot. And only at the end did Mao lightly touch upon his claims to Khrushchev, who at once reminded the Chinese leader of the Soviet advisors. It was obvious that this question continued to bother him, and Khrushchev exacerbated his grievance.

⁸⁵ See Li, *Waijiao wutai shang de Zhongguo lingxiu* (Leaders of New China in the Diplomatic Arena), 154; Li Yueran, *Zhong Gu waijiao qin liji: Li Yueran huiyilu* (Personal Historical Notes on Chinese-Soviet Relations: Reminiscences of Li Yueran) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2002), 185; Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 501.

⁸⁶ Quoted from Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 499.

After this Mao said, “We’ve had our talk for the day,” and again proposed that Khrushchev relax in the pool.⁸⁷

Mao had been in his swimming trunks all morning. Taking off his robe and slippers, he dived into the pool. Khrushchev, of course, had not brought swimming trunks with him, therefore, he undressed, handed his suit to his bodyguard, and flopped into the water in his satin undershorts. As is well-known, Mao was an excellent swimmer. Khrushchev swam rather poorly, floundering in the water; one could hardly call him a swimmer. He felt humiliated in the water. (“I am a miner, just between us, not much of a swimmer, and I got tired,” he said subsequently.) One of his bodyguards threw him an inner tube, and he climbed into it. Meanwhile, Mao continued talking as he swam. One of the interpreters also dived in and began swimming between them. The other interpreters and stenographers began running around the pool from one leader to the next. It was an amusing picture. Khrushchev recalled,

I swam and swam, and was thinking, to hell with you, I am getting out. I climbed onto the ledge and dangled my legs. Now I was above and he was swimming below. The interpreter did not know whether to swim with him or sit next to me. He was swimming, and I was above, looking down at him. He was looking up at me and saying something about communes, about their communes. I had already caught my breath and answered him about the communes. “Well, we shall see what comes out of your communes.” I felt much better once I had sat down.⁸⁸

Of all the Chinese leadership only Marshal Zhu De swam with Mao and Khrushchev; none of the Soviet guests did. The bizarre swimming pool talks concluded at 4:30 p.m.⁸⁹

Mao’s insults continued the next day, August 2. At 3:00 p.m. when Khrushchev and his entourage were sleeping after lunch, Zhu Ruishan, the official from the

⁸⁷ See *ibid.*, 505; Li, *Waijiao wutai shang de Zhongguo lingxiu* (Leaders of New China in the Diplomatic Arena), 156; Li, *Zhong Su waijiao qin liji* (Personal Historical Notes on Chinese-Soviet Relations), 187.

⁸⁸ Quoted from E. Safonova, “Davaite, tovarishchi, zaletim v Pekin” (“Comrades, Let’s Fly to Beijing!”), *Ogonek* (Small Light), no. 14 (1999): 27. See also M. Romm, *Ustnye rasskazy* (Oral Tales) (Moscow: “Kinokontsern”, 1991, 154; Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 505-8; Li, *Waijiao wutai shang de Zhongguo lingxiu* (Leaders of New China in the Diplomatic Arena), 156-58; Li, *Zhong Su waijiao qin liji* (Personal Historical Notes on Chinese-Soviet Relations), 87-88; F. M. Burlatsky, *Nikita Khrushchev* (Moscow: RIPOL CLASSIC, 2003), 185-86.

⁸⁹ See Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), 399.

translators' group in the General Affairs Department of the CCP CC who was on duty in the resort village of Yuquanshan, received instructions by phone from Ye Zilong, secretary to the Chairman of the CCP CC, that in 30 minutes he should bring the Soviet guests to Mao Zedong, who wanted to speak with Khrushchev again. Zhu Ruishan panicked: even if he quickly woke Khrushchev and the others up, waited until they were dressed and the cars were at the gate, that would take no less than ten minutes, and the trip from Yuquanshan to Zhongnanhai would take at least thirty-five minutes. Nevertheless, he informed Litovchenko that Mao was again ready to receive Khrushchev. Khrushchev was not happy, but courteously agreed to go.⁹⁰

The Soviet delegation arrived at Zhongnanhai at 5:00 p.m. This time Mao awaited them in the Yiniantang Hall (Pavilion of Health and Longevity), in the Fengzeyuan (Garden of Abundant Reservoirs), not far from his own home – Mao lived in the Quxiang shuwu Pavilion (Pavilion of Chrysanthemum Fragrance). In addition to the Chairman himself, the same 12 leaders of the party were present. The discussion continued until midnight.⁹¹ Again, the talk was about international affairs, NATO, CENTO, and SEATO (founded in 1954, a military-political bloc known as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), relations with the USA and Japan, and the situation in the Near East. They also expressed their views on the situation in Latin America, and preparations for a third world war. According to the Soviet record of the conversation, they also discussed domestic problems in the two countries. Specifically, Mao spoke at length to Khrushchev about the successes of the Great Leap. This time the Soviet guest did not wish to dispute his host and even praised him, calling the Great Leap Marxist, a creative development of theory. (See [Document No. 3](#).) Again, they joked a lot. As Yan Mingfu recalled, “Overall the conversation occurred in a friendly atmosphere, each side sought points of congruity while maintaining differing opinions, and openly expressing their own views.”⁹² At the conclusion of the discussion it was decided to make an announcement of the talks to the

⁹⁰ See Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 508-9.

⁹¹ See Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong [1949-1976]), 399.

⁹² Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 511.

whole world, to sign and publish a communiqué, so that, as Khrushchev said, the imperialists would have a headache.

The final meeting, on August 3, took the same form as the two preceding ones, also in Zhongnanhai, but this time in the hall Qinzhengdian (Hall of Diligent Government). It was the briefest – from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.⁹³ They spoke again about the international situation, touched in passing on the political situation in the United States where there would be a presidential election in the next year, and again took Stalin to task: Khrushchev, in particular, asserted that the dead dictator had “suffered from senility.” At the conclusion of the meeting a communiqué was signed.⁹⁴ That same day, Malinovsky and Peng Dehuai signed an agreement on constructing a radio transmission station on Chinese terms.⁹⁵

Naturally, the communiqué said that

in an atmosphere of exceptional cordiality and warmth, the sides thoroughly discussed and established complete unity of views on current and important problems of the present international situation, questions of further strengthening friendship, alliance, and mutual assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the People’s Republic of China, as well as on joint struggle for the peaceful resolution of international problems and the defense of peace in the whole world.⁹⁶

The communiqué had been coordinated beforehand on August 2 and sent by High Frequency line to Moscow for approval by the CPSU CC. That same day the members of the Presidium were polled and approved the text of the document without a single comment.⁹⁷ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC praised the communiqué in the

⁹³ See Pang and Feng, *Mao Zedong nianpu (1949-1976)* (Chronological Biography of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976), 401.

⁹⁴ Zubok, “Peregovory N. S. Khrushcheva s Mao Tszedunom 31 iulia – 3 avgusta 1958 i 2 oktiabria 1959 g.” (Conversations of N. S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong July 31 – August 2, 1958, and October 2, 1959), 126-28.

⁹⁵ See Li, *Mao’s China and the Sino-Soviet Split*, 46. This agreement, however, was not implemented because two years later Khrushchev recalled all the Soviet specialists from China and the Chinese had to build the station on their own.

⁹⁶ *Pravda* (Truth), August 4, 1958.

⁹⁷ See “Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS ‘Proekt Kommunique o vstreche N. S. Khrushcheva s t. Mao Tszedunom’” (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU “Draft Communiqué on the Meeting of N. S. Khrushchev with Com. Mao Zedong”), RGANI, collection. 3, inventory 14, file 232, sheet 18.

highest terms, emphasizing in a memorandum sent to all Chinese missions abroad on August 8 “the comradely and sincere exchange of views” that had taken place during the recent talks.⁹⁸

In reality, far from everything had gone smoothly. A characteristic detail. Mao and Khrushchev, heading for Nanwan airport, where the plane was waiting for the Soviet guests, sat in separate automobiles.⁹⁹ It was not “cordiality” and “warmth” that satisfied Mao Zedong, but the fact that he was able to demonstrate to the Soviet leader all his displeasure and contempt. On the way back to Beidaihe, Mao told one of the members of his entourage of “sticking a needle up to his [Khrushchev’s] ass.”¹⁰⁰

As for Nikita Sergeevich, on board his TU-104, he diplomatically telegraphed his gratitude to Mao Zedong for the “cordial, friendly reception,” expressing his “complete satisfaction with our joint effort and the results of our meeting.”¹⁰¹ In Moscow on August 4, he assured the members of the Presidium of the CPSU CC that “the trip was useful . . . it was fruitful, good” and “the talks were sincere.”¹⁰² But needless to say, he could not but realize that Mao did not respect him. The swimming pool talks, manifestly “politically incorrect,” were especially humiliating. In the plane on the way home, he was constantly irritated, and venting his displeasure on Malinovsky, told him that “the political organs of the military were too enthusiastic about ‘studying’ the military works of Mao Zedong, had published his book in a massive print, and required officers to make abstracts from it as if Mao had won the Second World War, and not us.”¹⁰³ Staff members of the Soviet embassy in the PRC immediately sensed the leader’s mood and after the departure of the Soviet delegation told the Soviet employees working on

⁹⁸ Quoted from Li, *Mao’s China and the Sino-Soviet Split*, 48.

⁹⁹ See Li, *Waijiao wutai shang de Zhongguo Lingxiu* (Leaders of New China in the Diplomatic Arena), 158.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted from Li, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, 261.

¹⁰¹ *Pravda* (Truth), August 4, 1958.

¹⁰² Fursenko, *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU, 1954-1964), vol. 1, 327. In the official resolution of the Presidium on the results of the Khrushchev trip, it was also noted that it was “fruitful and useful.” Fursenko, *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU, 1954-1964), vol. 2, 889.

¹⁰³ S. N. Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev: Reformator* (Nikita Khrushchev: The Reformer) (Moscow: “Vremia”, 2010), 602.

nuclear weapons in China, “Khrushchev has left and you can start packing your travel bags.”¹⁰⁴

Khrushchev obviously nursed his grievance, but before undertaking unfriendly steps, he tried to demonstrate that he was paying heed to Mao’s views. On September 5, the Presidium approved a draft letter of the Soviet leader to Zhou Enlai regarding the Chinese navy. The text was entirely friendly. It said that the Soviet government considered it “our duty to provide extensive assistance” to the PRC in “building and strengthening” its naval fleet. In this connection, to be sure, Khrushchev insisted upon negotiations regarding this question, offering to hold them in October-December, 1958 in Moscow.¹⁰⁵

At the same time, he tried again to convey to the Chinese side the essence of the Soviet proposals on joint utilization of military objectives. At a meeting with the Chinese ambassador Liu Xiao in Crimea at state dacha No. 1 in Nizhny Oreanda not far from Yalta on September 16, 1958,¹⁰⁶ during the height of the Taiwan crisis¹⁰⁷ Khrushchev asked Liu to convey to Mao that he should intensify bombardment of the offshore islands of Jinmen and Mazu that were under Guomindang control, “giving them hell with the artillery.” Moreover, he promised help with aviation, sending the requisite number of TU-16 bombers armed with rockets. The planes, however, would remain the property of the USSR and even the crews would consist of Soviet officers, although they would operate wholly under Chinese command. In other words, Khrushchev was proposing an

¹⁰⁴ Quoted from E. A. Negin and Yu. N. Smirnov, *Delil'sia li SSSR s Kitaem svoimi atomnye sekrety* (Did the USSR Share Its Atomic Secrets with China?), 312. However, we may suppose that the departure of the Soviet atomic specialists was linked to the completion of work on starting up the first atomic reactor and cyclotron in the PRC, the official ceremony of opening these took place on September 27, 1958.

¹⁰⁵ “Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS “Proekt otvetnogo pis'ma t. Chzhou En'-laiu po voprosu voennomorskogo flota” (Resolution of the CC CPSU “Draft of Letter of Reply to Com. Zhou Enlai on the Question of the Navy”), RGANI, collection 3, inventory 14, file 240, sheet 27.

¹⁰⁶ For Liu Xiao’s recollections of this meeting see Liu Xiao, *Chushi Sulian banian* (Eight Years as Ambassador to the USSR) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 1998), 74-76. Liu Xiao, however, does not provide details about this meeting.

¹⁰⁷ The Taiwan crisis was provoked by Mao Zedong to distract Chinese society from the failures of the Great Leap. At the end of August 1958, he issued an order to begin the artillery bombardment of the offshore islands of Jinmen (Quemoy) and Mazu (Matsu) in the Taiwan Strait that were in the hands of the Guomindang.

old formula: Soviet technology that the Chinese would only utilize. This, naturally, could not but evoke another burst of indignation in Beijing.

Nevertheless, on October 7, Zhou Enlai replied to Khrushchev's letter of September 5, informing him that a delegation headed by the political commissar of the Chinese navy Su Zhenhua would be prepared to arrive in Moscow in a week, on October 15.¹⁰⁸ The delegation spent more than three months in the USSR, and on February 4, 1959, Su Zhenhua signed an agreement with the Soviet side on the provision by the Soviet Union of technical assistance to the PRC in building ships for the naval fleet. But the Soviet government only agreed to help in building conventional missile submarines and torpedo cutters. It refused to help in building atomic-powered submarines. Again, Mao was exasperated.¹⁰⁹

But Khrushchev was no longer bothered by Mao's mood. On October 30, 1958, he had already insisted that trade with the PRC "be curtailed somewhat, not sharply."¹¹⁰ Moreover, in 1958, the number of Soviet specialists in China was cut almost in half to 1,285.¹¹¹ On December 1, during an emotional eight-hour-long conversation in the Kremlin with the American senator Hubert Humphrey, Khrushchev informed him that he condemned the domestic policy of the Chinese leadership which, at that time had failed

¹⁰⁸ "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS 'Pis'mo t. Chzhou En'laia ot 7 oktiabria 1958 g.'" (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU "Letter of Zhou Enlai of October 7, 1958"), RGANI, collection 3, inventory 14, file 247, sheet 11.

¹⁰⁹ See "Sulian yu Zhongguo he wuji: 1949 nian zhi 1960 nian yuanzhu yu zhi" (The USSR and the Chinese Nuclear Weapons: Assistance and Limits), https://news.cctv.com/military/20090310/106782_1.shtm14; "Mao Zedong yu Su Zhenhua shangjiang" (Mao Zedong and Admiral Su Zhenhua), <https://blog.wenxuecity.com/myblog/45870/200911/38105/html>.

¹¹⁰ See Fursenko, *Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954-1964*. (Presidium of the CC CPSU. 1954-1974), vol. 1, 337. The Soviet side, to be sure, was in no hurry to adopt official resolutions cutting back on trade until corresponding steps on the part of Chinese leaders. Only after a delegation from the PRC headed by deputy minister of foreign trade Li Zheren arrived in Moscow in early January 1959, informing the Soviets of plans to reduce PRC exports to the USSR from 5.6 to 4.2 billion rubles did the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the USSR revise the plans. A decision was made to curtail the export of rolled iron ferrous metals (from 506,000 to 350,000 tons) and petroleum products (from 932,000 to 751,000 tons.) See "Postanovlenie Prezidiuma TsK KPSS 'O vzaimnykh postavkakh tovarov SSSR i Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki v 1959 g.'" (Resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPSU "On Mutual Supply of Products of the USSR and the Chinese People's Republic in 1959"), RGANI, collection 3, inventory 14, file 274, sheet 41.

¹¹¹ See Shen, *A Historical Examination of the Issue of Soviet Experts in China*, 397.

miserably.¹¹² There was no Great Leap for Mao Zedong, a catastrophe was brewing in the PRC. Serious imbalances were occurring in development of the national economy and soon interruptions in production began to be felt everywhere.¹¹³

In other words, the year 1958 that had started out so well, ended badly both for Mao and for Soviet-Chinese relations. And in the following year, on June 20, 1959, Khrushchev dealt Mao Zedong a new blow: he announced that he was annulling the agreement to provide China technology for producing nuclear weapons.¹¹⁴ “They were denouncing us so hard . . . how could we at the same time like obedient slaves supply them with an atomic bomb?” he said subsequently.¹¹⁵

Overall, the tangible result of the secret talks between N.S. Khrushchev and Mao Zedong in July-August 1958 was the consistent and rather rapid deterioration of Soviet-Chinese relations. It would not be long before public, mutual polemics in the press and a rupture of inter-party relations occurred.

After Khrushchev’s return to Moscow all the records of his talks with Mao Zedong were efficiently edited on August 11, 1958, and the next day, on instructions from the director of the General Affairs Department of the CPSU CC Vladimir N. Malin, were distributed to members and candidate members of the Presidium of the CPSU CC for their information.

Apart from the communiqué that was published on August 4, 1958, the day after the talks, all other Russian-language documents on Khrushchev’s talks with Mao in July-August 1958 – the record of the conversation at the airport and four talks at Zhongnanhai – were maintained in secret for a long time, initially in the archive of the

¹¹² See Wu Lengxi, *Shinian lunzhan: Zhong Su guanxi huiyilu (1956-1966)* (Ten-year Polemic: Reminiscences of Soviet-Chinese Relations [1956-1966]) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1999), 191.

¹¹³ See Pantsov with Levine, *Mao*, 461.

¹¹⁴ See “Records of Meeting of the CPSU and CCP Delegations, Moscow, July 5-20, 1963,” in Westad, *Brothers in Arms*, 379; Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2: *The Great Leap Forward 1958-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 225-226; Shu Guang Zhang, “Between ‘Paper’ and ‘Real Tigers’: Mao’s View of Nuclear Weapons,” in John Lewis Gaddis, ed., *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy Since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 208.

¹¹⁵ Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast’* (Time. People. Power), vol. 3, 97.

Politburo of the CPSU CC (the so-called Section VI of the General Affairs Department), and after the change of government in 1991 in the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation.

In the early 1990s, Dmitrii A. Volkogonov, a member of the commission on organizing the documents in the Archive of the President, was given access to these documents and for some reason copied only two of them: the Soviet record of the first (July 31) and the fourth (August 3) in Zhongnanhai, and cited them in 1995, in his book *Seven Leaders*.¹¹⁶ After his death on December 6, 1995, in accordance with his will, these copies, along with other documents from his personal archive, were donated to the Library of Congress of the United States (there they were housed in the manuscript division in a collection titled “Papers of D. A. Volkogonov, 1887-1995,” on microfilm No. 17).

These copies became accessible to readers in January 2000 and were first published in part by the historian David Wolff in August of that year.¹¹⁷ The following year another historian, Vladislav M. Zubok, first published the Soviet records of these two talks in full: in Russian in the journal *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* (Modern and contemporary history) (in the beginning of the year), and in English translation in the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* at the end of the year.¹¹⁸ On July 6, 2023, the historian Olga A. Chagadaeva published several excerpts from the second conversation of Khrushchev and Mao Zedong in Zhongnanhai (from August 1) in the journal *Rodina* (Motherland).¹¹⁹

As for the Chinese records of Khrushchev’s conversations with Mao, made by staff members of the translators’ group in the General Affairs Department of the CCP CC Zhao

¹¹⁶ Volkogonov, *Sem’ vozhdiei* (Seven Leaders), 412-413.

¹¹⁷ See David Wolff, “‘One Finger’s Worth of Historical Events’: New Russian and Chinese Evidence on the Sino-Soviet Alliance and Split,” *CWIHP Working Paper*, no. 30 (August 2000): 51-59.

¹¹⁸ See Zubok, “Peregovory N. S. Khrushcheva s Mao Tzedunom 31 iuliia – 3 avgusta 1958 i 2 oktiabria 1959 g.” (Conversations of N. S. Khrushchev with Mao Zedong July 31 – August 3, 1958, and October 2, 1959, 111-28; Vladislav Zubok, “The Mao-Khrushchev Conversations, July 31 – August 3, 1958, and October 2, 1959,” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, no. 12/13 (Fall/Winter 2001): 244-72.

¹¹⁹ O. Chagadaeva, “Mao Tsedun – Nikite Khrushchevu: Amerika staraetsia vygliadet’ sil’noi, no na dele ona idet uzhe k starosti” (Mao Zedong to Nikita Khrushchev: America is Trying to Look Strong, But It Is Actually Already Headed Toward Old Age), *Rodina* (Motherland), no. 7 (2023): 52-57.

Zhongyuan and Yan Mingfu, as well as by the staff member of the chancellery of international affairs of the State Council of the PRC Li Yueran, and housed in one of the Chinese archives (obviously in the Central Archive), from them, too, only two have been published – the first conversation from July 31 and the fourth from August 3. They were reproduced in 2015 in the reminiscences of Yan Mingfu.¹²⁰ That same year, however, the Soviet records of all four conversations in Zhongnanhai were published in the PRC in Chinese translation. The publication was arranged by the historian Shen Zhihua, using documents from the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation. For some reasons, Shen did not translate and did not include in the publication the Soviet record of the conversation at the airport.¹²¹

Thus, the Soviet records of Khrushchev's conversations at the airport (July 31, 1958) as well as the second and third conversations at Zhongnanhai (August 1 and 2) have not been published in English translation. At present they are housed in the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI) to which they were transferred in 2009 from the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation in the personal archive of N.S. Khrushchev. There is no doubt, however, that all three documents are of enormous interest to scholars of the history of Soviet-Chinese relations as well as of international relations in general. They will also be of interest to general readers.

The published documents are printed from the typed originals. All the errors in punctuation have been corrected.

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¹²⁰ See Yan, *Yan Mingfu huiyilu* (Reminiscences of Yan Mingfu), 471-98, 511-15; Yan, *Qinli Zhong Su guanxi* (Personal Experience of Chinese-Soviet Relations), 139-57, 166-69.

¹²¹ See Shen Zhihua, ed., *Eluosi jiemi dang'an xuanbian: Zhong Su guanxi: 1945-1991* (Selected Documents from the Declassified Russian Archives: Chinese-Soviet Relations: 1945-1991), vol. 8 (Shanghai: Dongfang chuban zhongxin, 2014), 127-77, 181-84.

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Document Appendix

Document No. 1

Record of Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and Mao Zedong, July 31, 1958

RGANI, f. 52, op. 1, d. 498, l. 43. Contributed by Alexander V. Pantsov and Nikita Yu. Pivovarov and translated by Steven I. Levine.

CONVERSATION OF

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV WITH MAO ZEDONG

July 31, at the airport

MAO ZEDONG proposes to discuss the sequence of the meetings and suggests the expediency of a small group meeting initially.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV agrees.

They concur that Cdes. Khrushchev, Mao Zedong, Ponomarev, and Deng Xiaoping will take part in the conversation.

MAO ZEDONG expressed the view that after the small group meeting, they convene a larger group.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV accepted the proposal.

1958¹²²

RGANI. Collection 52. Inventory 1. File 498. Sheets 43. Typescript. N.S. Khrushchev' Copy.

Document No. 2

Record of Conversation between the Soviet and Chinese Delegations in Zhongnanhai, August 1, 1958

RGANI, f. 52, op. 1, d. 498, ll. 78-107. Translated by Gary Goldberg.

SECOND CONVERSATION OF N.S. KHRUSHCHEV WITH MAO ZEDONG

August 1, 1958, in Zhongnanhai¹²³

¹²² Written in pencil.

¹²³ The conversation actually took place in the Swimming Pool Pavilion in Zhongnanhai. An interesting detail: evidently Fedorenko and Filyov were embarrassed to indicate this.

Present [at the meeting]:

Cdes. Khrushchev, Malinovsky, Kuznetsov, Ponomarev, and Antonov.

Cdes. Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, Chen Yi, Lin Biao, Peng Zhen, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Wang Jiaxiang, Yang Shangkun, and Hu Qiaomu.

N.S. Khrushchev and Mao Zedong briefly recalled past meetings before the start of the conversation.

MAO ZEDONG. In 1954 you asked us for Chinese, but then refused.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, we asked, but then refused because, as it turned out, there was no labor force shortage. The problem was in a poor organization of labor. Right now we even have a surplus of a workforce.

MAO ZEDONG. Possibly I somewhat disappointed you then. It is hard to assimilate Chinese. They even want to be buried in their homeland after death. They bring emigres who live in America and the countries of Southeast Asia to be buried in China. But, if you want, we can give you 100 million people. However, if they remain in the USSR, then what good will [is it if] they form a bloc.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Chinese workers have worked in our Siberia. They worked three years and went to China, and right now all have returned to the USSR.

MAO ZEDONG. What I have said relates to history. Now, after the socialist reforms, people have changed.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Many Chinese even married in our [country] [*u nas*]. It was Stalin who previously did not permit [them] to marry.

They switch to international questions.

MAO ZEDONG. Today I would like to raise questions of the international situation, methods of work, and relations between our Parties to a broader audience. Marxism-Leninism is the foundation of our Parties. This is common, but historically there are some differences between both Parties as well as between nations. These are minor but nevertheless differences. In important questions our Parties hold to common principles, of course. Even with the liquidation of nations, Parties, and countries minor differences will remain. The Chinese comrades sitting here are also not free of differences. One cannot say that there have been no disputes between us, but they became friends because they quarreled and battled. Don't be afraid, we won't battle with you.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV (jokingly). We are ready for battle, but the forces here are unequal.

MAO ZEDONG. On the other hand, your minister of defense is here.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. But you have Lin Biao.

MAO ZEDONG. I would like to exchange views on the international situation. The capitalist world is experiencing many difficulties. Outwardly it is strong, but it is like the

old Chinese hero San Bianhu,¹²⁴ who could only strike three blows, after which he lost all his strength. We are saying this completely reasonably. Hitler¹²⁵ launched only three blows. Chiang Kai-shek¹²⁶ also launched a few blows. America and Japan were strong only initially.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Don't attack Japan. We have a Japanese here – Fedorenko, who will be the Soviet-Chinese representative in Japan.¹²⁷

MAO ZEDONG. Good. We will give him our credentials.

The Americans in Korea tried to test our forces. They conducted a partial mobilization, but managed to collect only seven divisions. They had few people, and moreover their soldiers were pampered: they eat chocolate in the foxholes and drink milk. However, the combat capability of the U.S. cannot be ignored.

As concerns Britain, its forces are weaker. Its whole army constitutes 50-60,000 men. But its main strike forces are four groups of forces – 60,000 in the Middle East, 50,000 in West Germany, 12,000 in Britain proper, and 12,000 in Singapore. The rest of the troops are scattered throughout the whole world. As is evident, the main forces are concentrated in the Middle East and the FRG. There are few troops in Singapore and Britain itself, counting the troops which are suppressing [Northern] Ireland. It turns out that the troops are mainly in the middle, but there are few of them around the edges.

The main forces in the U.S. are also of three or four groupings. This is in the U.S. proper, Europe, and the Pacific Ocean. A small part of US forces is in Lebanon. As we know, America has a total of 19 divisions of ground forces. If a war starts, America will be seized by a panic. The same will also happen with Britain because there are few troops in Britain, and Singapore and the Far East are open. Only a reserve in West Germany of 50,000 men is left. At the present time the Americans plan to leave Lebanon. This threatens the British troops in Jordan being left in the air.

The air forces in Lebanon are targeted against the USSR. The West has high hopes for Turkey, which has 12 divisions and cavalry. Turkey is stronger than Britain in ground

¹²⁴ The interpreter did not understand what Mao Zedong wanted to say or did not catch what he had said. Mao was actually comparing the capitalist world to “the hero of the ‘three-edged ax’” (*san banfu yingxiong* 三板斧英雄). He had in mind the legendary general of the Tang dynasty Cheng Yaojin (589-665) who knew only three battle blows with his ax. In contemporary Chinese, the expression “san banfu” means “only three tricks”.

¹²⁵ Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) — chancellor of Germany (1933-1945), the ideologist of Nazism.

¹²⁶ Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) headed the Republic of China in 1928-1945, and later was the president of Taiwan.

¹²⁷ Nikolai Trofimovich Fedorenko (1912-2000) was appointed ambassador to Japan back on June 15, 1958. Prior to this, from 1955 on, he had worked as deputy minister of foreign affairs. It is curious that on May 4, 1958, in the course of a conversation with acting chargé d'affaires of the PRC in the USSR Chen Chu (1917-1999), to a question about “appointment of the Soviet ambassador to Japan” (probably the question was when and who would be appointed ambassador) Fedorenko replied that he did not possess such information.

forces but there is a big panic in Turkey. One group of Turkish forces is targeted against Bulgaria, another against Armenia, and a third against Syria and Iraq.

Britain, the U.S., and France still have not recognized Iraq, but Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, the FRG, Italy, Greece, and Japan already have.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We can congratulate one another.

MAO ZEDONG. We have therefore gathered here.

There have been so many military campaigns during the time which has passed since the Second World War. These were first of all Korea and events in the Middle East. This time events in the Middle East developed very well. When could we have so denounced America like this before? During the First World War the United States did not take part in combat operations and was slow, referring to the principles of equality, etc.¹²⁸ During the Second World War with fascism America also entered the war only two-three years later.¹²⁹ After the second war the situation had changed and forced the Americans themselves to be more active. Their strategic course changed. This was evident from the example of Korea and Lebanon. In Korea they waged war supposedly against aggression and in the eyes of the peoples of the world to some degree they seemed defenders of security since they responded to the attack of Kim Il Sung.¹³⁰

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV (jokingly). We don't know who began [the war]. The Chinese should know, Zhou Enlai knows.

ZHOU ENLAI. According to our information the Soviet comrades also know.

MAO ZEDONG. They do not know, but the Americans know. It was hard to catch the Americans then. Now it's easy to catch them. No one touched them in the Middle East. However, they announced that indirect aggression exists in Lebanon and in Jordan. They brought all their forces located in Europe, in the Mediterranean Sea, Africa, and the Pacific Ocean into combat readiness without mobilization; moreover, all these preparations occurred in the open. It was published in newspapers and on the radio what units were being moved and to where. But then a secret order was issued, as a result of which open radio communications between troops was sharply reduced beginning 15 July. The order was cancelled as of 29 July and communications were again conducted by radio, with the exception of the region of NATO, the Mediterranean Sea, and the western part of the Pacific Ocean; the state of combat readiness in their countries and the eastern part of the Pacific Ocean was cancelled. There is no need to keep the secret in the western and southern parts of the Pacific Ocean.

How many troops were they able to collect as a result of all this fuss? A total of 12,000. Their troops are deployed in three places right now – in Lebanon, on ships of the

¹²⁸ The United States entered the First World War on April 6, 1917, four months earlier than China (the Republic of China declared war against Germany and Austro-Hungary on August 14, 1917).

¹²⁹ The United States entered the Second World War on December 8, 1941.

¹³⁰ Kim Il Sung (1912-1994) – Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the DPRK in 1948-1972, president of the DPRK in 1972-1994.

Sixth Fleet, and partially in Turkey. A total of only one battalion was sent from the Pacific Ocean region via Singapore. Right now, it is in India. As is evident, they can move their troops only in battalions. It was announced that four divisions stationed in the US will be transferred, but it is apparent right now that they have remained in place.

In the West America is often depicted as Uncle Sam, the Soviet Union in the form of a bear, and France in the form of a young woman. In my view all these symbols correspond to [their] content. America is trying to look strong, but it is actually already heading toward old age, to decline, although as a country the U.S. has existed for 170 years. The bourgeoisie has already grown old. No one is panicking like the American bourgeoisie, except perhaps Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee,¹³¹ in spite of their outward strength and in spite of the fact that the Communist Party there is weak. McCarthyism, the [House] Unamerican Activities Committee, etc. are evidence of this. America is experiencing fear more than Britain, the FRG, and Italy. In Italy, for example, the Communist Party is strong, but the bourgeoisie of this country is not particularly afraid. America fears the future even more than Japan.

This time America has completely exposed itself in the Middle East. In spite of all the assurances of Eisenhower and Dulles¹³² their Sixth Fleet has already been off the coast of Lebanon for a month. It was written in your newspaper that the American ships were anchored there because America was stretching [its] paws toward the Middle East. I think that this is absolutely correct. Otherwise, they would have waited at least a day after the events in Iraq, but they decided to act immediately. The revolution in Iraq occurred at three or four in the morning, but Eisenhower discussed this question already the same day and came to the conclusion that without sending troops there the entire [Middle] East would be lost.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. They made the right decision for themselves.

MAO ZEDONG. Their nerves are not in order. They themselves understand very well that their forces are limited, but in that event what can there be? Therefore, they decided to give the appearance that they are strong and seem to intend to fight. In fact, they have managed to collect a total of only 12,000 troops. They had an intention of swallowing Iraq, then the entire Middle East, but they didn't think there would be such a storm, such a wave would rise against them.

Our ambassadors in India, Burma, and the other countries of Southeast Asia express dissatisfaction in their reports that during the recent events these countries behaved more cautiously, with more restraint, than during the Suez Crisis.¹³³ I don't agree with such an assessment. In fact, four countries of Northern Europe, the Netherlands, Canada, and Luxembourg opposed the American aggression. [Those] who

¹³¹ Syngman Rhee (1875-1965) – president of the Republic of Korea in 1948-1960.

¹³² Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969) – thirty-fourth president of the United States in 1953-1961. John Foster Dulles (1888-1959) was secretary of state of the United States in 1953-1959.

¹³³ Reference is to the second Arab-Israeli War of 1956-1957 during which the forces of Israel, Great Britain, and France attacked Egypt, whose president Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970) had nationalized the Suez Canal on July 26, 1956.

supported America were Britain, Lebanon, rather the President of Lebanon alone, the King of Jordan, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Australia. A total of seven countries, including the United States. And who recognized Iraq, the members of the Baghdad Pact, first of all. There are many surprises in the world – the question of attacking Iraq was discussed at a conference of the Baghdad Pact in London, but as a result the recognition of Iraq occurred. During a trip to the FRG Dulles tried to put pressure on the West German government, but as soon as he left the FRG recognized Iraq.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. West Germany has big interests in this region.

MAO ZEDONG. The United States is the most undemocratic country, the most dictatorial state. The U.S. has not consulted with anyone in its actions, except Britain. But Britain could not immediately follow America and therefore it introduced its own troops into Jordan with a delay. I think that Britain is glad that America had the initiative in this matter, but if the Americans leave Lebanon, then it will be difficult for Britain in Jordan.

We have closely studied your letter to De Gaulle¹³⁴ and paid attention to the fact that the French announced the dispatch of their warships to the shores of Lebanon. They denied that this was a show of force and asserted that the warships were sent there to check how French people were living there, as if it was necessary to send two warships for this. It seems to me that France also wanted to get involved in this matter, but the Americans did not want this. When the Eisenhower Doctrine¹³⁵ was announced, Dulles said that it would be better for him to act in the Middle East without Britain and France, which were in bad odor [*pakhnut*] after Suez. And at that time the Americans only permitted Britain to take part, and turned down the French. Therefore, De Gaulle had to change [his] tone.

The American troops have not yet left Lebanon. A President has already been elected there¹³⁶ and there are rumors that the Americans leave Lebanon, but the British are worried about it, therefore the Americans say that they will leave their logistical units in Lebanon to help the British.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Who says so?

MAO ZEDONG. The press says so.

I think that these rumors are true, the Americans are planning to leave there. Obviously, after this they will seek, if not a conference of heads of government and not the convening of a conference within the framework of the Security Council, then an extraordinary session of the UN. Earlier there was no hope of this, although the Soviet

¹³⁴ Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970) was chairman of the Council of Ministers of France in 1958-1959, then (1959-1969) President of the French Republic.

¹³⁵ The Eisenhower Doctrine was proclaimed on January 5, 1957. According to this doctrine, any country subjected to armed aggression could request economic and/or military assistance from the United States. Putting this doctrine into force, Eisenhower sent troops to Lebanon.

¹³⁶ Reference is to Fuad Chehab (1902-1973) who succeeded Camille Chamoun (1900-1987), whom the Americans had persuaded to retire, as president of Lebanon.

Union also offered such an initiative. I don't know whether my information is correct, but the U.S. position with respect to the convening of an extraordinary session of the UN is not very active, it seems. What will a delay give them? They are doing everything to delay since they want first of all to withdraw at least half of their troops from Lebanon. Their reputation might be improved from this. Then they will say "we are doing everything to normalize the situation, and do not plan to attack Iraq." At the present time a new President has already been elected in Lebanon and Hammarskjöld¹³⁷ is trying to increase the number of observers there.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. This would then mean US recognition of the Iraqi method. We are in favor of them welcoming this method.

MAO ZEDONG. I think that Lebanon will go its own way, but not the American [way]. Chehad has been elected President there. He is a Christian, but a Muslim should have been in this position. There are many middle [*promezhutochnye*] forces besides pro- and anti-American forces in Lebanon. For example, if Chamoun was clearly pro-American then Chehad takes a middle position. Why wouldn't Lebanon go its own way? The national revolution in Lebanon suffered no damage, now a split is occurring in the country into those who are for and who are against America. By the fact that the Americans revealed themselves in Lebanon, they did well. It will be interesting for us to know what the British will do in Jordan with their 60,000 troops. The British are acting desperately, like madmen.

They have the same sentiments right now as before: they take up arms as soon as their interests in the Middle East suffer defeat. Their actions right now are like how they acted in Suez, without even consulting with their allies.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. No, they have sought advice.

MAO ZEDONG. They sought advice, but they did not come to agreement.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. The question here is more complex. They have possibly come to agreement with the distribution of roles so as not to give a political win to the socialist camp, but to pull away the opposition forces during the Suez Crisis to the side of the U.S.

MAO ZEDONG. This is one of the possibilities. Another is also possible. The U.S. does not want to act together with the British and French forces, as was evident from the very beginning of the implementation of the Eisenhower Doctrine. It would mean a clash of their interests.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Right, this is taking place. It is apparent to everyone that Britain and France are obvious colonizers. When the U.S. acts together with them, the state of affairs are clear to the Arab peoples. This discredits the Eisenhower Doctrine.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, this time Britain and France got into trouble, and therefore all the initiative was in the hands of the U.S. just now. Events have developed like the steps

¹³⁷ Dag Hammarskjöld (1905-1961) – Secretary General of the UN in 1953-1961.

of a ladder – first the U.S., then Britain, then France wanted to get involved, but it was not allowed. Madmen often act very crudely. They don't reckon with the consequences, although they try not to be presented as aggressors, but the whole world in fact considers them as aggressors. However, if this question were put to a vote in the UN, they would get a majority by pressuring such countries as Canada and Japan. This is also understandable by virtue of the class nature of the countries which are members of the Security Council. "Our friend" Chiang Kai-shek and the former representative of Iraq will unquestionably vote for them. The remaining votes will be obtained by lobbying the other delegations.

Never before, except during the Korean War, have they suffered great damage and acted in the role of "defenders". How didn't they take into account this time that they exposed themselves! The Americans grabbed at the draft Japanese resolution like a drowning man for a straw. The U.S. ambassador in Japan¹³⁸ expressed his appreciation about this to the Japanese MFA. This is not new. We have already seen how the Americans are paying their respects to the Japanese, which had not happened before.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Evidently Japan is acting on the advice of the U.S. and therefore now the Americans are thanking them for their vigorous actions. The Japanese motion gave the U.S. an opportunity to save face and withdraw its troops from Lebanon without condemnation. The motion was American, but was offered by the Japanese.

MAO ZEDONG. This proves that the power of the U.S. is limited, that they are faced with many difficulties and the overall situation in the world is not developing in their favor. They are isolated, but their main difficulty is few people. Their population is 170 million, but their army is 2.6 million men, of which 800,000 are ground forces, that is, up to about one-third for the Army, and the Navy and Air Force. I agree with you that the navy isn't needed except for intimidation but the Air Force can still be used. There are many logistical units in America, but only 19 divisions can fight in forward positions, that is, less than 300,000 men. Earlier they said that there are more than 20,000 men in one American division, but it is as though they have been reduced to 12,000.

MALINOVSKY. Previously a division consisted of 17,000 men. Right now, they have made five-tailed ones [*pyatikhvostki*], that is, a mobile division of 12,000 men.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Cde. Malinovsky just returned from Germany, where he spent [his] leave and should know these things.

MAO ZEDONG. The Americans had to move the 24th Division from Germany to Lebanon.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. And they violated the neutrality of Austria when doing this.

MAO ZEDONG. The Americans' cards are completely exposed right now. In our opinion, the Americans don't want to fight in Lebanon and Iraq. We are in harmony with the U.S. on this question.

¹³⁸ Douglas MacArthur II (1909-1997) was U.S. ambassador to Japan in 1957-1961.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We have our representative in the American government – Dulles. Better to deal with a fool than with a smart person.

MAO ZEDONG. I don't say this as a joke. He is not a bad person, and is to our advantage.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. That's why we drank with him in Geneva.¹³⁹

MAO ZEDONG. But Eden was very jealous at the time.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Eden is the smartest one of them.

MAO ZEDONG. Things are bad for Eden right now.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, he went behind a storm cloud.

MAO ZEDONG. Macmillan's¹⁴⁰ situation is also not good. He is still not at a dead-end, but is heading for this.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, at least in damage. He will evidently seek talks with the Soviet Union, a meeting before the elections in the expectation of getting votes in the elections. Otherwise, the results of this meeting would be used by the Laborites in Britain and the Democrats in the U.S.

MAO ZEDONG. Does the possibility of such a meeting exist?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, but somewhat later – before the elections to the British Parliament. Macmillan is interested in speaking to the public as an advocate of conciliation with Russia. And then the Conservatives might get a majority.

MAO ZEDONG. What is your opinion of De Gaulle?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. A poor person, a pro-fascist.

MAO ZEDONG. Really worse than Guy Mollet?¹⁴¹

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Both are bad.

MAO ZEDONG. In my opinion, he is better because he might have differences with America and Britain.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. That's correct, and we should use this in international policy. He is more to our advantage in this respect than Guy Mollet. But De Gaulle represents the most reactionary forces inside the country.

MAO ZEDONG. How to speak, the most reactionary forces [?]. Were there previously fewer reactionaries in the country?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Guy Mollet is nevertheless a socialist and he was forced to reckon with the workers, but De Gaulle is free. He relies on the military and big bourgeoisie. He will conduct a more audacious policy.

¹³⁹ Apparently, the reference is to the summit meeting in Geneva on July 18, 1955.

¹⁴⁰ Harold Macmillan (1894-1986) was prime minister of Great Britain in 1957-1963.

¹⁴¹ Guy Mollet (1905-1975) was chairman of the Council of Ministers of France in 1956-1957.

MAO ZEDONG. This is right. How long can De Gaulle hold out, in your opinion?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It is hard to say right now, the forces are still not determined. But the Communists are mobilizing all the forces to say “no” when voting for a new constitution.¹⁴² If the constitution is not ratified, De Gaulle is overthrown, but it is not excluded that the Gaullists will seek a military coup. France is heading for an aggravation of the class struggle. This is the weakest spot in NATO right now.

MAO ZEDONG. I don't completely agree. The Communists of France should vigorously oppose De Gaulle, but in their long-term interests it is better to keep De Gaulle in power. As you see, I have pro-fascist sympathies. In case De Gaulle is overthrown sympathies toward him will remain in the people. The new government will be unstable and then De Gaulle will again come to power. It would be better if he stayed, but not for long, for three or five years. Let the Communist Party of France temper itself in battle with him. For before this it had to wage a fight only with the liberals. It is hard to develop Communists without pressure and repression. Let all poisonous herbs grow in the country, and more. From the point of view of international politics De Gaulle is more to our advantage, first because he is more friendly toward us and, second, because he is accustomed to seeking conflict with America and Britain. The people of France will then get a lesson. It's a pity that De Gaulle is one [person]. It would be good if there were two [of him]. One could be overthrown, and the other put [in power].

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We are considering De Gaulle's positions in international affairs and using [them] in our policy.

MAO ZEDONG. We both oppose and support De Gaulle. Our newspaper *Renmin ribao* [People's Daily] published critical articles against De Gaulle. Pravda also criticized [him].

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV (jokingly). This doesn't concern us, this is a Party publication.

We even had a misunderstanding. A Politburo member of the CPF expressed dissatisfaction with our policy for insufficiently criticizing De Gaulle.

MAO ZEDONG. They need to be told: the more reactionary De Gaulle is, the better.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We are acting somewhat differently: we don't oppose De Gaulle very much so as not to interfere with the development of relations through government channels. We think that this question is domestic. It is better not to reproach the French Communists for following Moscow. The French Communists agree with us on these questions. We ourselves are not opposed him, but speeches by Duclos and Thorez¹⁴³ were published in our press to correctly orient our Party and the public.

¹⁴² The constitutional referendum was held in France on September 28, 1958. 79 percent of the French people voted in favor of a new Constitution in which power was concentrated in the hands of the President.

¹⁴³ Jacques Duclos (1896-1975) and Maurice Thorez (1900-1964) were leaders of the French Communist Party in 1964-1975 and 1930-1964 respectively.

We turned to the PCF Politburo about what aid they needed. The French Comrades said exactly what I said just now.

MAO ZEDONG. I would like to add to what [you] said. From the point of view of the domestic situation in France the coming to power of De Gaulle is also beneficial. It is necessary to prepare for a referendum possibly not providing the opportunity to overthrow him; then the reasons for the seizure of power by the reactionary bourgeoisie headed by De Gaulle will need to be explained to the French working class. It needs to be said that this is an unavoidable phenomenon. If he is overthrown right now then he might come again.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Possibly they will vote for him, [as] the forces in the country have not been determined. The situation in Algeria is completely out of control, but inside France the Communists think that they can control the elections.

MAO ZEDONG. Hitler's coming to power was also unavoidable. Since poisonous herbs exist it is because they are not detected. We do not ask them, but they rise to the surface themselves. This gives us the opportunity to eliminate them when they are completely grown. Of course, as a result of Hitler's campaign you had victims, but as a result of this there also appeared East European countries of people's democracy, and Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia were added. Wasn't this useful? I was talking with the Japanese. They kept apologizing for Japan committing aggression in China. But I said that it was not necessary to apologize. If the Japanese had not occupied half of China, I would not have come to Beijing. As a result of Japan's attack all the people of China were aroused to fight and therefore the Japanese left and we came.¹⁴⁴ One doesn't write this in the newspapers, although such thoughts are also slipped in.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. This is historically correct.

MAO ZEDONG. Maybe it will be hard for all the people of France to understand, but it is necessary for French workers and the Party not to fear De Gaulle coming to power. The sufferings will be temporary for the people.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, preparations are necessary in a moral sense. But it is also necessary to mobilize all the forces to rebuff De Gaulle and temper the working class in the struggle.

MAO ZEDONG. Then in case of defeat the Party won't experience fear and pessimism won't be allowed.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I agree with this analysis. I remember when Zhou Enlai and Ho Chi Minh discussed the question of Vietnam with me in Moscow, then Ho Chi Minh thought that the French would smash him, and asked for help with volunteers, as was done in Korea. Then Zhou Enlai said that it [was] better not to do this. We agreed, but did not say anything to Ho Chi Minh so as not to prevent him from mobilizing [his]

¹⁴⁴ Mao announced this on September 4, 1956 in a meeting with former lieutenant-general of the Japanese army Endo Saburo (1893-1984).

forces. As a result, Ho Chi Minh defeated the French.¹⁴⁵ As you can see, we formed a plot with Zhou Enlai against Ho Chi Minh. It might also be that France, having mobilized forces, can smash De Gaulle without going through a bloody school.

MAO ZEDONG. Our comrades are often prevented from seeing the essence of the question by [their] outer character. The case with Ho Chi Minh is just an example of this. The French then seemed strong, but as a result it turned out that they suffered defeat at Dien Bien Phu.¹⁴⁶ In other words, they seemed outwardly stronger but in essence they turned out to be weaker.

ZHOU ENLAI. Yes, I recall how we came to agreement in Moscow. The French then made big concessions in Geneva, more than we had suggested and ceded much territory to Ho Chi Minh. This also showed their weakness, but we should thank Mendes-France¹⁴⁷ for this.

MAO ZEDONG. Whoever foresaw during Hitler's attack on Moscow that then there would appear a socialist camp from the Elbe to the Kurile Islands, to the 38th Parallel in Korea and the 17th in Vietnam [?]

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV (jokingly). Maybe you're proposing a monument to Hitler?

MAO ZEDONG. I would like to set up a monument to Hitler, Chiang Kai-shek, and Dulles. Our teachers are the theory of Marxism-Leninism and fascism. When both teachers teach, people become smarter more quickly. Both teachers need to be molded. We alone – China – could not have molded the people this way if there had been no Chiang Kai-shek and Japan.

But who foresaw that Nehru, U Nu, Sukarno,¹⁴⁸ and Nasser would head the new nation states?

¹⁴⁵ The President of the DRV Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969) was only able to discuss this with Khrushchev and Zhou Enlai in Moscow, in March 1953, after the funeral of Stalin. To be sure, up till now there is no documentary evidence confirming Ho Chi Minh's visit to Moscow at this time, but it is known that Zhou Enlai, who at the time was in Moscow, on March 13, 1953, two days after a conversation with the new leaders of the CPSU, including Khrushchev, sent a telegram to the chief of the group of PRC political advisors in Vietnam Luo Guibo (1908-1995) and the CC of the Vietnam Workers' Party saying that "the question of supplying military technology to Vietnam can be resolved." Li Ping and Ma Zhisun, eds., *Zhou Enlai nianpu [1949-1976]* (Chronological Biography of Zhou Enlai [1949-1976]), vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1997), 289. Therefore, Zhou Enlai must have discussed Vietnamese subjects in Moscow.

¹⁴⁶ The battle of Dien Bien Phu took place between March 13 and May 7, 1954.

¹⁴⁷ Pierre Mendès-France (1907-1982) was chairman of the Council of Ministers and minister of foreign affairs of France in 1954-1955. On July 21, 1954, he concluded the Geneva peace agreement that ended France's colonial war in Indochina.

¹⁴⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was prime minister of India in 1947-1964; U Nu (1907-1995) was prime minister of the Union of Burma in 1948-1956, 1957-1958, and 1960-1962; Sukarno (1901-1970) was president of Indonesia in 1945-1967.

Marx¹⁴⁹ had some adventurist sentiments. He thought and said that soon will come the day of the victory of the world proletariat, but this prediction did not develop and then he spoke again about a new deadline.

Lenin's¹⁵⁰ prediction was correct. I also did not think that the victory of the revolution in China would happen so quickly. The situation is completely different right now than during Marx and Lenin. The forces of the United States of America are weak, in spite of outward appearances. This is evident in the Middle East. We have won a definite victory, the enemy has retreated.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. The victory in the [Middle] East can have very great consequences. I agree with your analysis, but you counted only the infantry forces of the U.S. and Britain, for the West is not competing with us in the numbers of troops; they are relying on atomic weaponry – aircraft, missiles, and bases. The correlation of manpower is not being taken into account. In modern war, when there will be no front, the correlation of forces is determined by the quantity of atomic and hydrogen bombs and means of transporting them. It is necessary to take into consideration not only the ground troops in Lebanon and Jordan, but even that they have brought in the Sixth Fleet with hydrogen weapons. Large forces have been concentrated to restrain the U.S. position. It is not by chance that the commander of the Sixth Fleet¹⁵¹ made a provocative speech against us and tried to show that the Soviet Union could be wiped out. We made a statement through TASS and ridiculed the statement of this commander, and at the same time announced maneuvers in three places, and sent Grechko and Meretskov¹⁵² to the Turkish and Iranian borders.

MAO ZEDONG. We little know these names.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. One is a young marshal, the other is old. Meretskov, for example, is ill and can hardly stand on his feet, but is a famous person. He was Chief of the General Staff before the War, commanded in the Finland campaign, and fought the Japanese in Manchuria. His name is entirely suitable for such an announcement. In addition, we had arrangements with the Bulgarian comrades about our bomber aviation under Marshal Skripko¹⁵³ taking part in their maneuvers. We didn't announce our maneuvers beforehand, but in the West they noted that the announcement was not coincidental. We did this in order to tie down [*skovat'*] the 6th Fleet. Therefore, the Americans had to send troops to Turkey to support the Turkish government. We said earlier that we can destroy Turkey with missiles without any troops. Then after this the

¹⁴⁹ Karl Marx (1818-1883) was the founder of Marxism.

¹⁵⁰ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) was the leader of Bolshevism, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR/USSR in 1917-1924.

¹⁵¹ Vice-Admiral Charles R. Brown (1899-1983) commanded the American navy's 6th Fleet in 1956-1958.

¹⁵² Andrei Antonovich Grechko (1903-1976) in 1958 was the first deputy minister of defense of the USSR and commander-in-chief of the USSR's ground forces; Kirill Afanas'evich Meretskov (1897-1968) was the aide for higher education institutions to the minister of defense of the USSR.

¹⁵³ Nikolai Semyonovich Skripko (1902-1987) was an aviation marshal.

NATO commander¹⁵⁴ also calmed down the Turks, saying, don't be afraid, if they attack you the U.S. will come to your aid on the 50th day. What, will they come to the funerals, and that they are probably afraid of landing in a contaminated zone? The Turks got in touch with us after this. The President and Prime Minister expressed this desire.¹⁵⁵ Zorlu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs,¹⁵⁶ was opposed, but we criticized him in the press. We have reliable documents in our hands that Turkey, Iraq [*sic; this is an obvious typo; it must be Iran. – A.P. & N. P.*], and Pakistan agreed on joint attacks on Iraq and asked only for US naval support, but the U.S. did not advise [this], because the people of Iraq were united and its borders are mountainous; this mission [could] not be accomplished right away and the war might become protracted. The source of this information is reliable.

MAO ZEDONG. We are familiar with the statement of the commander of the 6th Fleet, but when was Norstad's speech?

MALINOVSKY. During the Syrian crisis.¹⁵⁷

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. The correlation of forces in the Arab [Middle] East is not in favor of the West. The prestige of the U.S. has suffered. They should have had to fight to punish the Arabs in order to justify the Eisenhower Doctrine and save its face, but did not fight and recognized Iraq. They thereby suffered a moral defeat and admitted that there was no more Eisenhower Doctrine. Events in Iraq put an end to it. The Arabs understood that they could get to the same place as Lebanon and Jordan have come, but they also understood that it was better to go the Iraqi route, that is, not to drag things out, [but] to immediately chop off the heads of the reactionary clique.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, they made a revolution in an hour.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It is interesting how the Iranians and Turks felt when Feisal's head was cut off,¹⁵⁸ for the Americans did not lift a finger and killed the hope that they would come to the aid of the reactionary forces.

We won three battles without a war: first – Suez; second – Syria, and third – Iraq. How can we not rejoice at this?

MAO ZEDONG. That's why we are meeting here to congratulate one another.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. There are three Communists in the Iraq government. It is not yet clear how events will develop. Nasser is in favor of turning Iraq to his path. This is no danger to us. But one also cannot give up. One cannot allow the union of Iraq and the

¹⁵⁴ Lauris Norstad (1907-1988) was an American general and Supreme Allied Commander of NATO's combined armed forces in Europe in 1956-1963.

¹⁵⁵ Mahmut Celâl Bayar (1883-1986) was the president of Turkey in 1950-1960; Ali Adnan Ertekin Menderes (1899-1961) was prime minister of Turkey in these years.

¹⁵⁶ Fatin Rüştü Zorlu (1910-1961) was minister of foreign affairs of Turkey in 1957-1960.

¹⁵⁷ Syrian crisis, that is the exacerbation of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the United States on account of Syria, occurred in 1956-1957.

¹⁵⁸ Faisal II (1935-1958), the king of Iraq, was not decapitated. He was shot.

UAR,¹⁵⁹ as was done with Syria. The political parties in Iraq need to be preserved and democratic freedom created.

MAO ZEDONG. This is the best option.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, the maximum program. The minimum program is if they unite with the UAR. This is not a defeat, but it will mean a move from class struggle to a national one. [We] need not give up. And I met with Nasser at his initiative.

MAO ZEDONG. How long did he spend in Moscow and where did he arrive from?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. He flew in from Yugoslavia, and spent a day with us. Here is the history. He finished his visit in Yugoslavia¹⁶⁰ and left for Egypt on a yacht. The revolution in Iraq occurred during this time [*sic; actually it was on July 14. – A.P. & N.P.*]. He did not know anything about it, and only boasted that he knew everything. The Yugoslav ambassador¹⁶¹ visited me and passed on a request of Nasser and Tito¹⁶² to give a Soviet aircraft so that Nasser could go to Egypt. This was done on Tito's advice; otherwise, the Americans could grab Nasser on the yacht. He was correct here. When Tito passed to Nasser that the Russians were giving [him] a plane, after two hours the Yugoslav ambassador again asked me to receive him and said, "Nasser want to fly to Moscow for a conversation". Tito did not like this. Nasser arrived at night.¹⁶³ At night we Russians sleep, not like the Chinese. A meeting with Nasser was set for 10 a.m. the next day and we talked until 5 p.m.¹⁶⁴ We only took a break for two hours. He wanted to consult with Fawzi, his minister of foreign affairs.¹⁶⁵ This is a smart man. We talked again in the evening and Nasser flew out at 4 a.m. I advised him to fly not through Yugoslavia, since he was afraid, they would shoot him down, but via Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Nasser says, "Right, but how [can we] get permission for an overflight?"

MAO ZEDONG. Did they fly along this route earlier?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We were afraid that Iran would not give permission in a day. We arranged with Nasser that we would talk with Iran, but he [would talk] with Iraq and with Saudi Arabia. If Saudi Arabia would not give permission for the overflight, then he would be able to fly via Iran and Iraq and directly to Syria. Nasser was afraid the Iranians would shoot down his plane. But we calmed him down, [saying] that this could not happen, otherwise there would be war. When the MFA summoned the Iranian

¹⁵⁹ The United Arab Republic was formed on February 1, 1958. It consisted of Egypt and Syria. Syria left the UAR in 1961, but the name UAR was retained by Egypt until 1971.

¹⁶⁰ Nasser made an official visit to Yugoslavia on July 2-12, 1958.

¹⁶¹ Reference to Veljko Mićunović (1916-1982), who was the Yugoslav ambassador to the USSR and the Mongolian Peoples' Republic in 1956-1958.

¹⁶² Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) was president of Yugoslavia in 1953-1980.

¹⁶³ Actually, it was early morning, July 17, 1958.

¹⁶⁴ The conversation took place in a diplomatic dacha in Khoroshyovo, a small town outside of Moscow.

¹⁶⁵ Mahmoud Fawzi (1900-1981) was foreign minister of Egypt in 1952-1964.

ambassador to Zorin¹⁶⁶ he was shaking like in a fever, fearing that we were planning to declare war since there had previously been an announcement about exercises.

MAO ZEDONG. I would also have become pale in such an event.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. When Zorin told the ambassador that a commission was flying to Egypt to coordinate questions connected with Soviet-Egyptian agreement and the USSR was asking that permission be granted for the overflight of an aircraft, the Iranian ambassador was so happy that he immediately ran to the Embassy and permission was given at 10 p. m. But Saudi Arabia did not give permission for the overflight. Nasser wanted to fly without permission. I objected and said this would be a bad precedent since it would show that we did not respect the sovereignty of the countries of the Middle East. We would tie our hands with this and could not protest violations of the neutrality of Austria. When the pilot of the aircraft reported that Nasser wanted the aircraft to fly right across Saudi Arabia, we ordered him to fly to Damascus. As a result, nothing bad happened. A representative of Iraq came to Damascus and Nasser held a conference. I am confident that this conference was against us. Nasser met there with Aref, a deputy chairman of the government,¹⁶⁷ an extreme opponent of cooperation with Communists.

When I talked with Nasser, I told him to advise the Iraqi government in his name so that they announce after the revolution that they were keeping all the treaties with the West and would continue supplies of oil. This is to our advantage, the illusion is needed for the West, but then the industry could be gradually nationalized. If this were done right away then there might be a war, but right now the West is satisfied since the oil continues to come and the coup in Iraq is an internal matter. Nasser was pleased with this advice.

MAO ZEDONG. Well thought-out.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. But the representative of Iraq in the UN¹⁶⁸ even overreached and said that it seemed that they were not leaving the Baghdad Pact. But this was unfavorable for us. Nasser wanted to weaken the influence of the Communists in the country before the arrival of our ambassador. Right now, the Iraqi government is mainly getting advice from Nasser. They don't know our point of view. If our ambassador were there, he could tell the prime minister our point of view. Evidently Nasser wants to become a monopolist. Iraq needs weapons. We agreed to furnish them, but Nasser said: give the weapons to me, and I will pass [them] to Iraq. We still had not received an official telegram and had not discussed the question and given a reply. We wanted to give weapons directly to Iraq, which would make it independent of Nasser.

MAO ZEDONG. Was this feasible in practice?

¹⁶⁶ Valerian Aleksandrovich Zorin (1902-1986) was deputy minister of foreign affairs of the USSR in 1947-1955, 1956-1960 and 1963-1965.

¹⁶⁷ Abdul Salam Arif (1921-1966) was minister of internal affairs in Iraq in 1958. He was president of Iraq in 1963-1966.

¹⁶⁸ Ismat T. Kittani (1929-2001) was acting delegate of Iraq to the UN in 1958-1959.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, through Syria, with Nasser's knowledge. We are not against Nasser. But we wanted the weapons to go directly to Iraq. We have a private struggle with Nasser right now, but it is not the main thing. At worst, we could agree to the transfer of weapons via Nasser. The main thing is to preserve Iraq. In any event the matter will be in our favor.

MAO ZEDONG. It is entirely possible that Iraq will unite with the UAR.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, but the Communists cannot be thrown under Nasser's bus right away. Communists have great influence in Iraq right now. The revolution occurred according to the plan of the CC of the Communist Party of Iraq. Qasim is a good person,¹⁶⁹ but Nasser doesn't like him and therefore it is possible that Naguib's fate awaits him.¹⁷⁰

MAO ZEDONG. A request to talk about Naguib.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Naguib headed the revolt against the King of Egypt and was the President. Nasser overthrew him and now keeps him under house arrest.

MAO ZEDONG. Naguib wasn't a pro-American figure?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. No. He did not agree with Nasser in everything. Therefore, it is possible that Nasser will not trust Qasim because he sympathizes with the Communists.

MAO ZEDONG. They are already writing about this in the Western press.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Therefore, it is possible that they will put Aref in his place. Qasim has long been associated with the Communist Party. Back in 1956 we had a report that Qasim had proposed a plan for a coup. The plan came down to the King and Prime Minister¹⁷¹ having to come to his unit. He wanted to make use of this and kill them both. But the plan was not carried out because the King arrived alone and Qasim was afraid that the revolt would be doomed to failure if the Prime Minister was not removed. We did not advise carrying out this plan then since we didn't trust the report and thought that was a British provocation. But Qasim then did not carry out the coup not on our advice, but because there were no conditions. Now he has obtained the ability since his unit was sent to Jordan via Baghdad. How the situation will develop further is hard to say. Nasser will evidently achieve his goal. Apparently, the Communists will not be able to withstand him.

MAO ZEDONG. Isn't there a strong Communist Party there?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It is not excluded that it will be decapitated. Class consciousness is still at a low level.

¹⁶⁹ Abd ul-Karim Qasim (1914-1963) was prime minister of Iraq in 1958-1963.

¹⁷⁰ Mohamed Naguib (1901-1984) was the first president of Egypt in 1953-1954. He was replaced by Nasser.

¹⁷¹ Nuri al-Said (1888-1958) headed the government of Iraq on several occasions, including 1954-1957 and 1958.

MAO ZEDONG. There are 60,000 Communists of the six million population of Iraq. Isn't this enough?

B. N. PONOMAREV. No, there are about 2,000 Communists there during the underground, according to information of the leadership of the Iraqi Communist Party.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Right now we are trying for our ambassador to get there quicker.

MAO ZEDONG. What is going to happen if they don't accept the ambassador?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. They will accept [him], but they want to delay the time of arrival.

B. N. PONOMAREV says that there is already a report about Iraq's agreement to the appointment of the Soviet ambassador.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Very good. It is possible that this is the result of our instruction to one Embassy official in Egypt, who was appointed Soviet [counselor] in Baghdad, to find his way to Baghdad through Syria and find [the reason] for the delay in the reply. This was done to avoid Nasser.

MAO ZEDONG. You spoke very well. We have essentially already switched to the question of the method of work. Your method is good since it is flexible. You have used the anti-Soviet statements of Norstad in your favor. You have successfully held maneuvers just now. When both sides have atomic weaponry, they are afraid that they, too, might be destroyed. I said back in Moscow that both sides are afraid.¹⁷² It is impossible that they are not afraid. Otherwise, it turns out that I alone am afraid. Another question is who is more afraid. I began to think on this question several years ago. I think that the West is more afraid. I had an opportunity to verify my assumptions in many events. There were sometimes when they developed not in favor of my convictions, but it seemed more that my opinion was justified.

In a conversation with Gromyko, I then asked him about the spirits of Western diplomats. He replied that these shady people look upbeat, but really feel their weakness. I think that this judgment is well-founded.¹⁷³

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Look, they started a war in Egypt, but did not bring it to an end. Twice [they] were on the edge of war – this is Syria and Iraq.

¹⁷² Mao spoke about this in Moscow at the conference of representatives of communist and workers' parties on November 18, 1957. See O. Borisov [O. B. Rakhmanin] and M. Titarenko, eds., *Vystupleniia Mao Tsze-duna ranee ne publikovavshiesia v kitaskoi pechati* (Speeches of Mao Zedong Previously Unpublished in the Chinese Press), vol. 2 (Moscow: Progress, 1975), 88-101.

¹⁷³ Reference is to Mao's conversation with minister of foreign affairs of the USSR Andrei Andreevich Gromyko (1909-1989) in Moscow on November 19, 1957. See Shen, *Eluosi jiemi dang'an xuebian: Zhong Su guanxi: 1945-1991* (Selected Documents from the Declassified Russian Archives: Chinese-Soviet Relations: 1945-1991), vol. 8, 344-56.

MAO ZEDONG. Right. Then in the conversation I was told that a statement about sending volunteers was made from tactical considerations. Gromyko did not know how to explain to Nasser if in fact volunteers would have to be sent. I asked him what is a limited war and could volunteers be sent in this case. He then replied that a war would arise if volunteers were sent. Is this correct? I doubt this. We tested doing this in Korea.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. In a conversation with me Nasser said that if the U.S. attacked Iraq, then Egypt would automatically enter the war. I did not advise him and cited the Chinese experience as an example. Officially China did not fight with America, but won the war.

MAO ZEDONG. There were a million and a half of our men there.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I told Nasser that his entire army could fight in Iraq, pretending to be volunteers. Nasser did not agree with me.

MAO ZEDONG. In my opinion, our enemies agree with this means of waging war. In their opinion in general it is better to fight with volunteers, but not with countries. In my opinion, in general it is better not to send volunteers. But if there is a war, then it can be done. They say that the use of volunteers in war is an innovation of China and the Soviet Union, but in fact the Americans thought this up. For example, in China both you and the Americans helped Chiang Kai-shek. So, actually, the use of volunteers is everywhere an accepted system. If there is a conference of heads of government then it would be good to advise Dulles to switch to this system.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I will tell Dulles that Mao Zedong suggests this, and I support [this].

MAO ZEDONG. Dulles won't support this suggestion. Our friendship with him is not deep.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. But sometimes points of view coincide.

MALINOVSKY. There is a fine point on the question of the use of volunteers of how to use atomic weapons in a war. Atomic weapons need to be used against warring countries, but how is it to be when those fighting are not countries but volunteers [?] The use of such a weapon against them is inhumane. This would have a deterrent value for unleashing an atomic war.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. According to international law atomic weapons cannot be used since the country from which the volunteers came is not in a state of war.

In a conversation with me Nasser stubbornly sought [to find out] whether we would declare war if combat operations began there. I told him that you are the President, you can decide such questions personally, but I cannot without the government, I need to consult. (Ironically). It seems I convinced him. He understood that I didn't want to give [my] word. I said that it is early to decide such a question right now, maybe the war can be won without shooting. Everything will depend on the conditions. Nasser asked me to give him bombers and rockets. We didn't give [them] to him, saying that it will be better for him if the bombers and rockets were only in our hands. Then he

asked me to give him medium-range missiles. I asked what, in your opinion, is medium range [?] He replied, 60-70 kilometers. I said that for us medium range is 2,000-2,500 kilometers.

Nasser suggested announcing our meeting himself. He said: in the West they meet and announce but why can't we? We agreed to publish a communiqué. This was very useful.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, it was very useful.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Then through his correspondents Nasser instigated that Khrushchev declared such and such. This was all untrue.

MAO ZEDONG. The assertions of the journalists were not categorical.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Before leaving for Beijing, I received Indian journalists.¹⁷⁴ They asked me: is it true that I made such statements to Nasser[?] I avoided this question, saying neither yes nor no, let them think about it.

MAO ZEDONG. I think that it is necessary to fight all the time and have the correct tactics of fighting. I think that the situation is favorable for us. When I talked about correlation of forces between the capitalist camp and us, I intentionally avoided the question of missile weaponry. You made a good addition to this question. Yesterday I asked you about the quantitative difference between the inventory of our missile weaponry between them and you. You replied that the difference is not great.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, the difference is chiefly qualitative.

MAO ZEDONG. You also said that the production of missiles is very expensive.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, expensive, but it is necessary to produce [them], and we will produce [them].

MAO ZEDONG. Then in the event of war we will get missiles from you.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. By that time you will have your own.

MAO ZEDONG. Our country is poor, it is hard to say whether we will have missiles.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Who said your country is poor? The wealth of your country is people. Your country is growing like a Herculean [*bogaytrsky*] child.

MAO ZEDONG. Is it not?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We have one another's backs. We are looking forward and therefore we do not fear for our rear. You are looking forward and you do not fear for your rear since we are covering you. This is good.

MAO ZEDONG. For which we also built a specialized steel plant in Qiqihar.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. This is good. Build a nuclear submarine yard.

¹⁷⁴ Khrushchev granted an interview to Indian journalists on June 29, 1958. See *Pravda* (Truth), August 5, 1958.

MAO ZEDONG. We will build [one] without fail. With your aid we will turn into winged tigers but, on the other hand, we have a claim against you.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. You threw burrs into our garden in a friendly manner.

MAO ZEDONG. You want us to clean.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. No matter, we'll walk in slippers.

MAO ZEDONG. Maybe you still haven't figured it out yet. This is not a burr but the gold.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We aren't taking another's gold. Even Lenin said that when we win, we will use the gold to decorate the public latrines.¹⁷⁵

MAO ZEDONG. Then we'll built it together.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Right. So it will be. Communism cannot be national, Russian, Chinese, or Yugoslav.

MAO ZEDONG. What will happen to the UN then?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It will fly up to the sky.

MAO ZEDONG. I would suggest making a floating city on ships and then sending representatives from all countries there.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Right. And then there should be a single center organizing and coordinating the economic efforts. Whom are you sending to the ship [?]

MAO ZEDONG. I will float myself. Here, by the way, yesterday you did not agree with me on the question of advisers.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. You're being disingenuous, you are taking advantageous positions. You want to have our advisers and criticize us for them.

MAO ZEDONG. Then we will send no one to the ship.

LIU SHAOQI. We are telling you our comments concerning the advisers just to your face and to no one else.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It is better if I expressed comments about Chinese advisers and Mao Zedong listened.

MAO ZEDONG. Yesterday you said that you were in a disadvantageous position; why did you then make the first socialist revolution?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. And this is also our fault, for this are we paying back to the Chinese?

MAO ZEDONG. Lenin made this.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. But he died.

¹⁷⁵ See V. I. Lenin, "The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory of Socialism," in V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 33, trans. David Skvirsky and George Hanna (Moscow: Progress, 1973), 113.

MAO ZEDONG. And he left you to figure it out. But Lenin is everywhere. When is he right now? Maybe above the American 6th Fleet?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. In the Middle East. The 6th Fleet is a mirage. If it had no USSR on [its] left flank it would be insolent, but right now it is afraid, although it shouts.

MALINOVSKY. A strong enemy never shouts.

MAO ZEDONG. Right. And here the Americans shout to the entire world.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Like in a forest – whoever fears to go alone either sings or whistles.

I think we need to step up our policy in the Mediterranean Sea. As I already said yesterday Albania needs to be made more active. Missile weaponry, missile-carrying aircraft, a submarine fleet, torpedo boats, and good coastal equipment are needed to be there. Then we'll see how the 6th American Fleet behaves.

MAO ZEDONG. What is the position of Yugoslavia in connection with the events in the Middle East [?]

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. [Their] position is not bad. Insufficient, but not bad. Tito is acting according to the proverb "Both pray to God and do not interfere with the Devil." He is pursuing such a policy because he doesn't want to break with the U.S. I told Nasser: you are friends with Tito, suggest to him that he make a statement that the USSR, Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria – the countries having common interests in this region – adopt joint measures in the event of a threat to peace in this region to create the impression that we have supposedly already come to agreement. I said to Nasser that then there will be no war, but [I] am not confident that Tito will go for this. That's what kind "your friend" is.

MAO ZEDONG. Did Nasser manage to come to agreement with Tito on this question?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Of course not. It is impossible to come to agreement with Tito about this, but I have thrown a burr on their path.

Conversation transcribed by

N. Fedorenko

A. Filyov

RGANI. Collection 52. Inventory 1. File 498. Sheets 78-107. Typescript. N.S. Khrushchev's Copy.

Document No. 3
Record of Conversation between Soviet and Chinese Delegations in Fengziyuan,
August 2, 1958

RGANI, f. 52, op. 1, d. 498, ll. 108-150. Contributed by Alexander V. Pantsov and Nikita Yu. Pivovarov and translated by Steven I. Levine.

THIRD CONVERSATION OF N.S. KHRUSHCHEV WITH MAO ZEDONG

August 2, 1958, in Fengziyuan¹⁷⁶

Present [at the meeting]:

Cdes. Khrushchev, Malinovsky, Kuznetsov, Ponomarev, Antonov;

Cdes. Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, Chen Yi, Lin Biao, Peng Zhen, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Wang Jiaxiang, Yang Shangkun, Hu Qiaomu.

MAO ZEDONG speaks briefly about the development of the PRC economy. He provides information on the production of steel and ferrous metals.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV says that the increase in the production of cast iron in the Soviet Union this year will be 4,700 thousand tons; he observes that generally in the Soviet Union the production of steel exceeds that of cast iron since scrap is also used in the smelting of steel.

MAO ZEDONG says that in China for now it is the reverse.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV notes that such a situation will exist in China until such time as China had more machines. Generally, more cast iron is produced in the initial period of industrialization, and later more steel.

They switch to international issues.

MAO ZEDONG. Today we can talk about NATO, the Baghdad Pact, and SEATO. These are undoubtedly aggressive organizations by nature. Westerners say these are defensive organizations, but we consider them offensive. I think that the propaganda of both sides correctly reflects their interests. They cannot call these pacts offensive, and we cannot call them defensive. How should we assess the situation factually? I remember that I spoke about this in Moscow and adduced the example of the encapsulation of tuberculosis that inhibits the penetration of bacilli. The same with these pacts. They are created to protect the capitalist countries against penetration by communist "bacteria" and the downfall of capitalism. Sometimes their side engages in sorties as occurred in Hungary.¹⁷⁷ Without our counterattack they would have established their system in Hungary and unleashed a struggle in other people's democracies, that might also have caused huge shocks. Speaking of sorties, I have in mind a convenient case for them that might set them thinking why not attack and liquidate us. But in other respects, they act more realistically, since they know that there is no chance that counterrevolution in the USSR and in China would succeed. From the

¹⁷⁶ Actually, the conversation took place in Yiniantang Hall in Fengzeyuan Garden.

¹⁷⁷ Reference is to the anticommunist disturbances in Hungary in the autumn of 1956, that were suppressed by Warsaw Pact troops.

lesson of Hungary, we can strengthen people's power in the people's democracies. Our strength is growing. From this perspective the pacts are defensive against the communist "bacteria." You said then that the organism that had tuberculosis is not strong. That means, in any case, that the communist "bacteria" will penetrate these countries. Do you remember this conversation?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I remember it well.

MAO ZEDONG. I think what was said then is correct. These pacts have long since been rather weak. Events in the Middle East have demonstrated the lack of unity in their ranks.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Now when they cut off Faisal's head in Baghdad, the Americans say to the Turks and the Iranians, "When the same thing happens to you, we will help you," that is, they will come when the Shah's head is cut off. I think this is weak consolation for the Shah of Iran. SEATO is also a weak organization; it is pretty much in the same situation as the Baghdad pact, behind whose back Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and the countries of North Africa are battling against colonialism.

MAO ZEDONG. In other words, the Baghdad pact is squeezed between these countries on one side and the socialist camp on the other. This dividing line is very fine. It is being attacked from two sides, moreover, the foundation of the dividing line is fragile. This foundation – Turkey, Iran, Pakistan; and in the East, Thailand, Pakistan, the Philippines, where the situation is likewise fragile.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. In Thailand, for example, an interesting situation has developed. The parliament has come out against military bases. This is typical. The situation is fragile even in the Philippines.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes. The deputy mayor of Manila was in Beijing.¹⁷⁸ One could sense that he was very dismayed. He said there were many military bases in the country, and that in case of war there would be a disaster. He tried to learn our intentions. He was sent to China by the president of the Philippines.¹⁷⁹ The Americans tried to abort his trip, but they failed. In conversation with me, he wanted to know whether we would sell machinery to Filipinos. Evidently, the U.S. is not providing them technology. We also know that the leader of the opposition party in the Philippines parliament also intends to visit China.¹⁸⁰

CHEN YI. It is unlikely that the U.S. will succeed in placing the Philippines under its full control.

MAO ZEDONG. There's little hope of this in Thailand either. This wall is fragile. Its weakness comes on the one hand, from its being surrounded on one side by India,

¹⁷⁸ Jesus M. R. Roces (1918-1998) – vice-mayor of Manila in 1952-1959.

¹⁷⁹ Carlos Polestico Garcia (1896-1971) – president of the Philippines in 1957-1961.

¹⁸⁰ Diosdado Macapagal (1910-1997) – president of the opposition Liberal Party of the Philippines in 1957-1961.

Burma, Ceylon, and Indonesia, and by the PRC on the other. Of the three pacts, NATO is in the best position since its members are located more closely together, more compact. As for the Baghdad pact and SEATO, they have enemies on all sides, strong enemies. These, in the first place, are peoples fighting for their national independence in the Middle East and in Southeast Asian countries. There is also a fourth pact – the Pan American Union – but it is growing weaker every day.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Agreed.

MAO ZEDONG. Therefore, we often talk now of the struggle in unison for national liberation in the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Earlier the movement in Latin America did not appear so distinct. There was a time when we emphasized the movement for national independence in countries of Asia and Africa but left Latin America out of view. Now we place Asia, Africa, and Latin America in one rank. In my view Latin America has already stood up.

In addition to these contradictions, there is also a serious conflict between Canada and the United States of America. You obviously know this better.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. The U.S.A. tries to suppress Canada economically. This provokes counteraction from the Canadian bourgeoisie. Therefore, there's been a change of ruling parties in Canada. A conservative party has come to power which opposes the dominance of U.S. monopolies.¹⁸¹

How do we assess the pacts? The ones closest to us are NATO and the Baghdad Pact. The largest, aggressive forces, it seems, are collected in NATO. The most fervent anticommunists are there. At present this pact is weakened. If one considers preparations for a summit meeting, there is no unity among them. De Gaulle occupies a somewhat special position. This is not yet a split, but neither is it concord. The foundation of the pact is unstable. The U.S. and England demanded the creation of defensive pacts, pointing to several phenomena that took place. The postwar situation frightened them – the defection from capitalism of a whole number of countries, the outbreak of war in Korea, the Berlin blockade, the war in Vietnam. They believed that the socialist countries undertook active military measures to enlarge their sphere of influence. Then they began talking about creating defensive organizations and created three pacts. New events occurred thereafter. The war in Korea ended. The Soviet Union and the countries of people's democracy undertook a series of measures aimed at peace and co-existence. We shut down a military base in Finland,¹⁸² concluded a peace treaty with Austria,¹⁸³ withdrew our troops from there and undertook other measures. Through all these measures we succeeded in convincing the Laborites who say we have no warlike intentions. This is important, because it was the Laborites who organized NATO and established military bases in England. Now they say we are not an aggressive

¹⁸¹ Reference is to the election of March 31, 1958, when the Progressive Conservative Party won a majority in the lower house of the Canadian parliament.

¹⁸² The Porkkala Soviet base in Finland which operated from 1944 was liquidated in early 1956.

¹⁸³ Reference is to the Austrian State Treaty signed on May 15, 1955.

country; this is a success for us. Even in the United States they say that we will resolve our disputes with capitalism not by war, rockets, or hydrogen bombs, but ideology. To be sure, they don't say "ideology," although this is what they have in mind, but point to economics and the possibility of the Soviet Union competing in world markets. Consequently, the elimination [*ustranenie*] of small nations by communism is weakening [*sic; this is an obvious typo; instead of ustranenie it must be ustrashenie that is the intimidation. – A.P. & N.P.*]. For example, Norway and Denmark's refusal to host missile bases in their countries is of great significance.

MAO ZEDONG. This is very important. The countries of Northern Europe – Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland could become a zone of peace.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Juridically this is still far from being so. Norway and Denmark are still in NATO. But we have already sufficiently influenced the peoples of these countries, weakening their sympathy towards America and reassuring them about us. A movement toward weakening NATO is occurring. Holland and Belgium are also weak links.

MAO ZEDONG. And Luxemburg.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, this is the scariest adversary.

MAO ZEDONG. It is also a link.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Greece is a member of NATO only formally. It has a conflict with the Turks and the English.

MAO ZEDONG. There are reports that in the past few days more than a thousand persons have been arrested in Cyprus.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. A struggle over this island is going on. The Turks want to divide it between themselves and England. Greece wants the island returned to it. There will be no reconciliation in this struggle.

In Turkey strong anti-American moods have appeared, the opposition democratic party has been active in connection with the events in Iraq.

The U.S., the main conductor of these aggressive pacts, burdens these countries with large military budgets that drain their economies. America only provides military assistance. If they give one dollar of aid, the recipient must add five of their own. The U.S. renders help to no one to develop their economy. If they give help, it is only foodstuffs for consumption. They fear development of the economic potential of these countries. The American imperialists cannot give money from fear of competition.

One observes strong opposition to the U.S. even in the main capitalist countries of NATO. These countries want to tear free from dependency and develop their economic ties independently despite the embargo. I will cite a concrete example. We are negotiating with Krupp about their selling us several chemical factories. Soon it is likely that we will sign an agreement for the purchase of equipment for two enterprises. The Krupp firm monopolizes a certain method of producing plastics in bulk. Even the U.S. has

bought a chemical factory from them. Part of the equipment being sold to us is embargoed. Therefore, the representatives of the firm say: let's write into the contract that such-and-such equipment we will make according to your blueprints. We are ready to do this, but, of course, there are no such blueprints. The Germans do this to pacify the U.S. Here's NATO for you. If we continue to play our cards right, we will break up these pacts. But, in addition to clever policies, we also need military potential. Only wisdom and strength will avert war. Our successes in recent years have impressed the West. I think that certain developments in Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, and even in Pakistan and other countries are the result of the influence of Chinese economic growth. The development of the economy, of culture, and increase in the standard of living in the PRC will have a decomposing impact throughout the East.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, these are the communist "bacteria."

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. And no pacts can help against them.

Now we are commencing a struggle for West Germany, A competition between the two Germanys is underway. The standard of living of the population of East Germany is higher than ours, but I think we must make it higher than the FRG. Therefore, we declined payments for the upkeep of our army to provide an opportunity for the GDR to further increase its economic potential. We likewise provide more orders to the GDR to increase the utilization of its cadres and its labor force.

We need to elevate Albania to make it attractive for the Arab world and demonstrate the superiority of a socialist economy. Of course, that example is not especially significant since Albania is a very small country.

MAO ZEDONG. Are the Albanian people of Arab descent?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. No, but they are Muslim.¹⁸⁴

It is very advantageous for us to welcome delegations from India, Pakistan, Indonesia and other Asian countries to our southern republics – Turkmenistan, Tadzhikistan, Uzbekistan since they have a high standard of living and of agriculture. Trips there by foreign delegations give us a strong weapon. If previously they came to condescend toward us, we are now able to do this to them. The capitalists, evidently, will be afraid to send their own people to us. If we can achieve our program of housing construction, of food and chemical production, and we will achieve this while simultaneously fulfilling our program of heavy industry, that, evidently will take ten to fifteen years, then we will be first in the production of many of the most important products.

MAO ZEDONG. Per capita consumption?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes. That by itself will dissolve the blocs.

¹⁸⁴ Khrushchev was mistaken. Muslims are barely 60 percent of the inhabitants of Albania.

The launch of the sputniks shook the West, given that an illiterate Russia achieved such a high level in forty years.

Therefore, it makes no sense to get rid of the pacts through military means. Our strength lies in economic and cultural development.

MAO ZEDONG. Correct.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Finland was an anti-Soviet advance post. Now the strongest force in their parliament is the communists.

The Finnish communists requested our help to strengthen their authority among the people. They have unemployment, friends asked us to provide construction workers opportunities to work. We proposed to the Finnish government that Finland construct an electric power station costing about 250 million rubles for us on the territory of the Soviet Union, according to Soviet specifications and with our equipment. A thousand Finnish workers, who will be working for a socialist state, will be employed in construction. This help the Finnish communists with their work among the masses. The Finnish bourgeoisie, as in other countries, fears an economic crisis. We say that we can give them orders, but in payment we propose they take our machines and raw materials. This strengthen our positions and the positions of the Finnish communists.

Norway also asks us to employ some of their labor force. We should build a hydraulic electric power station near our border with Norway. We may award the construction to Norwegian workers. This is also a means of influence.

The Austrian government has asked us to link our economy more closely with that of Austria. We promised to consider it.

Right now, we are floating a trial balloon in Turkey. The Turks and the Iranians fear us like the devil fears incense, but we have not refrained from trying to break them apart. They are poor as church mice. Very likely the poorest countries are Turkey, Greece, Spain, then Iran and Italy.

I think the situation in the socialist countries is very good. The capitalist world is not ready for war. History is on our side. The pace of economic development in the socialist countries is outstripping the capitalist countries. America is left behind, they are even regressing, certainly no rapid development.

MAO ZEDONG. Our program for rapid development in agriculture – forty points – was planned to take twelve years. Now we figure that five years will be enough to complete it. Two and a half years have gone by. We think we may even overfulfill our goals. We will surpass England in steel, if not this year, then next year, although publicly we say we will in fifteen years. In coal we are already catching up with England this year. Last year we produced 5,400 thousand tons of steel, this year it will be about 11 million tons, and next year from 25 to 30 million tons. Production in England next year will probably be at the level of 25 million, if there is no contraction due to a recession.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Those are stupendous achievements. I must say we have seen prospects ourselves, fast tempos, but what you are doing will be a real shock to your neighbors if you fulfill your plans, and you will.

MAO ZEDONG. We always employ a comparative method in our work. Socialism can be built in different ways – at slow or fast tempos. We think the tempo we have chosen is better and we will achieve it.

Most important for the country is steel and grain. One way to develop industry is according to the principle: less, slower, worse. According to another: more, faster, better. We chose the second method and, as in war, we mobilized the entire nation to fulfill the plan. The people are full of enthusiasm and fight successfully to make it a reality.

The grain question is very important for China. China is a very poor country. We have put forward the slogan “Struggle and work hard for three years,” starting this year. Then, after three years, we will have 1,000 or 1,500 kilograms of grain per capita. For now, we will not publish these figures.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. One to one-and-a-half tons per capita? That is really a lot!

MAO ZEDONG. In the press we write that in three-to-five years we will have one ton or about one ton per capita. In fact, in three years we will have more than a ton. One can choose to go long and slow, or one can go faster and better. We chose the second path.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. This is a Marxist, creative development of theory. Any illiterate could grasp this theory, since they could see what came earlier and what has come now. This will have a strong impact both on the West and on the intelligentsia. Here we can introduce a good comparison. India became independent only two years later than China.¹⁸⁵ But look at the pace of development of these countries. When we were in India, I looked around and became convinced they were just marking time, no tempo. At the time I said to Nehru: look at the scale of the Chinese. Nehru asked for our help in building an airplane factory. I told him there was no such thing as a single factory building airplanes. For that one needed dozens, perhaps hundreds of factories. He wanted to have one factory, and China is building hundreds.

If we make wise use of our strength and maintain unity, then no NATO, SEATO, or Baghdad pacts will be terrifying. It’s interesting how the Americans judge this. We wrote Eisenhower a letter requesting help in developing the chemical industry.¹⁸⁶ We did not count on getting help. It was a propaganda gesture. Eisenhower gave a good reply.¹⁸⁷ We did not publish it, because this took place at the time of the events in Iraq when we needed to print bad letters, not good ones. We will print it later. Now we have many

¹⁸⁵ In fact, India pronounced independence in 1947 whereas the Chinese Communist Party seized power in 1949.

¹⁸⁶ The letter was written on June 2, 1958. See *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*, vol. 3: 1958, 846-49.

¹⁸⁷ Eisenhower answered on July 14, 1958. See *ibid.*, 849-50.

proposals from American firms about supplying equipment for the chemical industry. We will sign agreements with them.

MAO ZEDONG. This is good.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Several firms agreed to take our raw materials, and if there wasn't enough by way of payment for the equipment, they promised to extend us credit. Eisenhower could not extend us government credit, but the firms could. Although we were not counting on receiving their credit, we do not refuse it.

MAO ZEDONG. I am acquainted with Eisenhower's letter to you on this matter. It was published in the American press.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, but they didn't publish our letter. It would have been more favorable for us had they published our letter so Americans could know about the opportunity of earning money from us.

MAO ZEDONG. We didn't understand why you wanted to receive credit from them. But now it's clear.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It's a tactical matter. But if they extend credit to us, we'll buy something from them.

MAO ZEDONG. That will be proper.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We wanted to secure opportunities for more favorable propaganda, since the Americans assert that we are developing only heavy industry, and that we don't care about consumer goods industry. The development of the chemical industry provides an opportunity to produce both goods for defense as well as consumer goods. Therefore, we requested that the Americans help us develop industry to satisfy the people's needs. If they had responded negatively, then we would have told both our people and theirs that they don't want an improvement in our living standards and are trying to weaken our potential. This is the main point of the letter – to obtain a propaganda advantage. When I was in Germany, I said the Americans are giving aid to Tito, but not to us. But this doesn't bother us, we know they won't give it to us.

MAO ZEDONG. You have explained the situation well. We are satisfied with your measures to develop your own forces and to undermine the strength of the enemy.

In the East there is another region formally not united into a bloc. This issue concerns Com. Fedorenko. I am speaking of Japan, Taiwan, and Korea.

ZHOU ENLAI. And South Vietnam.

MAO ZEDONG. There is a possibility of organizing them into a bloc NEATO [Northeast Asia Treaty Organization], hitched to the American chariot. Whether it will be possible to knock together such a bloc or not depends on Japan. The difficulty for Japan of creating such a bloc is it would offend China. As for Taiwan and Korea, that is a long-standing insult. Japan faces a different problem – whether to stand with Taiwan or with

us. It's already been three months since we severed all commercial ties with Japan.¹⁸⁸ We're prepared to stick to this position for another three months. Japan is upset by this and has already been trying to alter this position via four or five channels. Special representatives from the Japanese Socialist Party have come to Beijing regarding this issue. The Japanese have also tried to persuade us to abandon this policy by enlisting the help of Com. Nesterov, the chairman of your All-Union Chamber of Commerce.¹⁸⁹ We think we can negotiate with them on this, but there's no hurry. We stipulate the following conditions:

First – Japan accepts responsibility for the PRC flag incident in Nagasaki.

Second condition – not to conduct any hostile activity vis-à-vis China, and not create any kind of “Two Chinas” situation. In the past three months, Kishi has behaved very rudely towards us, cursing us for severing commercial relations.¹⁹⁰ We advised him to trade with the U.S. and Chiang Kai-shek, since we can manage without trade with Japan. Considering this we think it imperative to put forward this political condition.

Third condition – not to place obstacles in the restoration of relations between China and Japan. It's likely that we will not succeed in restoring diplomatic relations right away, but it is important that there be no obstacles from their side. We suppose that they can live without us, of course, but that it's harder for them than for us.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. The conditions are different. China can live without Japan, but it is harder for the Japanese.

MAO ZEDONG. Moreover, this is connected not just with China, but also with the countries of Southeast Asia. The Chinese living there have also cut off commercial relations with Japan and declared a boycott of Japanese goods.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. This is serious pressure.

LIU SHAOQI. Reference is to the Chinese bourgeoisie who control the economy of these countries.

ZHOU ENLAI. This refers to the Chinese living in Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, partly in Burma, the Philippines, and in South Vietnam.

MAO ZEDONG. Formally these are representatives of one country, but actually of two.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. In a word, if one sums up our policy in the East and West, it boils down to developing economic relations with all countries, developing cultural ties,

¹⁸⁸ On May 2, 1958, a visitor to the Japanese department store Hamaya in Nagasaki tore down the flag of the PRC that was displayed at an exhibit of stamps and paper cutouts mounted by the Japan-China Friendship Association. The Japanese government took no actions since it did not recognize the PRC and maintained diplomatic relations with the Republic of China on Taiwan. In response, the PRC severed all commercial and cultural relations with Japan.

¹⁸⁹ Mikhail Vasil'evich Nesterov (1892-1971) was the chairman of the Presidium of the All-Union Chamber of Commerce in 1944-1970.

¹⁹⁰ Nobusuke Kishi (1896-1987) was the prime minister of Japan in 1957-1960.

and having more contacts. We will gain more from this. But we must be careful that they don't send spies; we must not be simpletons. In a word, we need to launch a peaceful economic offensive and give them a fright.

MAO ZEDONG. Sometimes this is absolutely necessary.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Now our main antagonist is the U.S.A. They are far from us. Their positions are somewhat different in comparison with European states, but their bases are in Europe near us. We say to the Western powers: your bases are located close to us, but ours, too, are not far away. To the Turks we declare: Your friends – the U.S. – are far away, but we are close by, and if necessary, we will destroy you just with missiles, without employing aviation and the navy. We issued the same warning to the FRG and England. They understand our warning. It's for real. If they attack us, nothing living will remain, we don't want to attack.

MAO ZEDONG. It's necessary, moreover, to convey this thought: if you unleash a war, then we will crush you.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Correct.

MAO ZEDONG. It needs to be said clearly, who will perish in war – we or they.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, capitalism will perish. This will be the last war unleashed by the capitalists.

MAO ZEDONG. We need to be prepared for war. First, we need to be spiritually prepared. Our people are engaged in peaceful construction. We need to explain to them not to be afraid of war. War is terrible, but if it is unleashed, there is nothing to fear. We say to the imperialists: If you really want to fight, go to it. We don't have atomic bombs, only grenades, but the Soviet Union has atomic bombs. When it comes to fighting, we will hold nothing back. We have just begun to construct, if you destroy this, then we will start again after the war, and then we will build better and more calmly since there will be no capitalism. That would be the case if the imperialists unleashed a war. But we don't want war.

Right now, in our country we will introduce universal military training to teach the entire population how to handle weapons.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I think in general that is correct. But one should not induce hysteria in our adversaries, and create the apprehension that China is preparing for war. Our policy is to have an army and be ready for war, but not to give our adversary an opportunity to accuse us of the desire to unleash a war.

MAO ZEDONG. We undertake this only for defensive purposes. We can show any of the capitalists how things stand with us. We will give weapons to all the cooperatives, and we will say: look if you attack us, things will go badly for you. We don't need someone else's land. We have enough people. Don't provoke us.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. This year we didn't have an air force parade. To be more precise, we staged it as a sporting event, but didn't include either bombers or fighters. This produced a good impression.

MAO ZEDONG. You have two parades: November 7 and May 1. We don't have a parade on May 1, but only on our national holiday October 1.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We should think it over and perhaps do as you do. May 1 is the international laborers' holiday, and November 7 is our national holiday. Direct logic. We need to think it over.

MAO ZEDONG. I think we can guarantee another seven years of peaceful coexistence, and perhaps fifteen.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Ten years is enough and then we can say: there will be no war.

MAO ZEDONG. I am judging on the interval between the first and second world wars. The gap was twenty years. It's been thirteen years since the Second World War, there are seven years left. In my view, peace is secure for another seven years, that is, until 1965, and in seven years our strength will grow significantly.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Then everything will be different. Then the imperialists will tremble at once as soon as they hear of our meeting.

MAO ZEDONG. If we succeed in maintaining the peace for seven years, then perhaps the term will extend for up to twenty years or longer.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Look at Dulles' policies. At first his policy was called a policy of "rollback." The idea was to roll communism back to its prewar borders. Whom did they succeed in rolling back? No one. Then Dulles pursued a policy of "containment." Whom did they contain? Now they've lost Iraq.

ZHOU ENLAI. They've contained themselves.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, they lost Nasser. Now there is nationalism in Egypt. It is our gain.

MAO ZEDONG. France has lost Morocco and Tunisia.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. A war is going on in Algeria. The war of colonial peoples is on an upswing, and not in decline. Our successes will stimulate the struggle of colonial peoples for their independence. I think our cause is going well. Eisenhower is reassuring the Shah of Iran: if you suffer the fate of Faisal, we will come to your rescue. But by then the Shah would be in his grave. Very good "support."

MAO ZEDONG. There's no way to help Iraq. Faisal is in the grave.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, that help would be a poultice for a corpse.

MAO ZEDONG. In the past few weeks important events have also occurred in Latin America. In the first place, the landing of American Marines in Haiti.¹⁹¹

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It's still early to draw a conclusion, but do you think we may be at the start of a period when the bourgeoisie who, during the period of their struggle against feudalism employed democratic slogans to win the support of the people and parliament, are now discarding these freedoms, refusing the support of parliament, and transitioning to dictatorship.

MAO ZEDONG. I think so.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. A very interesting phenomenon. The sores of capitalist society are now so blatant that the bourgeoisie can no longer mask their rule via parliament.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, especially true of the U.S.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. What about France, de Gaulle?

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, to all intents and purposes there is already no parliament there.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. In Guatemala, American troops chased out a legal president,¹⁹² and now they have landed in Lebanon.

MAO ZEDONG. The bourgeoisie use parliament when it suits their purpose. But when they have no other choice, they turn parliament into a pure formality. Under de Gaulle, parliament has become consultative, not a legislative organ. The parliamentary system in America is especially a formality, since Congress only discusses the budget and supplementary appropriations. It possesses the right only to discuss issues, how much to add or reduce dollars for one measure or another. What the government says is what counts.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, an interesting phenomenon.

MAO ZEDONG. Now let us talk about tension. Whom does it benefit? Of course, the West is responsible for tension. Westerners think it is good for them. But I think that if the West continues to exacerbate tension for a certain time, they will soon find that it benefits us, since the communist "bacteria" will spread everywhere. The bourgeoisie cannot justify military appropriations therefore it leads to tension. Recently tension culminated in the events in the Middle East, but this was of greatest benefit to the people because everyone could see what was going on. During the first week of the events in the Middle East, it seemed there was a threat of war. It's clear to us that America is afraid of war, and England is even more afraid. However, initially it seemed they were ready for war, and this shocked people like Nehru. The peoples of the world were upset by events in the Middle East, and Nehru and others like him were dismayed.

¹⁹¹ The reference is to an attempted military coup d'état in Haiti on July 28-29, 1958. Mao was mistaken. It was not U.S. Marines who landed in Haiti, but eight adventurers among which were five Americans.

¹⁹² The reference is to a CIA operation codenamed PBSuccess of June 18-27, 1954, the result of which was the pro-American dictator Carlos Castillo Armas (1914-1957) came to power.

The prolongation of tension for a longer period is not advantageous to the West. I think it would be better for us if the American troops remain there for a long time.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Agreed, let's propose that to Dulles.

MAO ZEDONG. It would be good if they stayed there another half year. This would not be a bad propaganda theme. Otherwise, if they withdraw their troops, they might again appear to be peace-loving. It wouldn't be bad to keep their troops there.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I think the question can even be put differently. Dulles must stay in power a while longer. Then he will think up a new Lebanon for us. For example, Venezuela.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, I agree. The events in Venezuela show that the capitalist world is aging, and we are on the upswing.¹⁹³

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Today I read Eisenhower's response.¹⁹⁴ He gave us a good opportunity to answer him in the manner the Zaporozhians answered the Turkish sultan. There is such an old model in diplomatic correspondence. You're not acquainted with it? I can send it to you if you want. There, for example, is such a reply to the sultan. (Following an excerpt was cited.)¹⁹⁵

MAO ZEDONG. So, ask Eisenhower to do the same.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Today I already dictated a draft reply to Eisenhower on the model of the Zaporozhians.¹⁹⁶ He places small countries under his protection and says we don't take them into account because they have few divisions, and we have many. I have not yet consulted with comrades in the Presidium, but I think perhaps it would be worth proposing to include Iraq, Sweden, Norway, and perhaps an Asian country, Cambodia for example, among the participants in the conference.

MAO ZEDONG. Cambodia and Sweden are good countries.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. And Norway, too, though it is a member of NATO, but the premier there is a good person.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ The reference is to the Venezuelan democratic revolution of January 22, 1958 against the military dictator Marcos Peres Jimenez.

¹⁹⁴ The reference is to Eisenhower's letter to Khrushchev of August 1, 1958. The President of the United States was considering meeting the heads of states of the members of the Security Council. See *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents*. Vol. 3: 1958, 1018-1019; *Background of Heads of Government Conference: 1960*, 281-82.

¹⁹⁵ Judging from Mao's rejoinder, Khrushchev evidently quoted the following sentence: "Such a day for us, like for you, kiss on our ass for this!" The Zaporozhian Cossacks demanded nothing else from the sultan, they simply spoke crudely to him.

¹⁹⁶ This response was sent to Eisenhower on August 5. Khrushchev proposed convening a session of the UN General Assembly. See *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower: 1958*, 577-79; *Background of Heads of Government Conference: 1960*, 282-84.

¹⁹⁷ Einar Henry Gerhardsen (1897-1987) was leader of the Norwegian Labor Party, premier of Norway in 1945-1951, 1955-1963, and 1963-1965.

To be sure, there's no way of knowing what may come of it. It's not even known if there will be a conference. Our interest lies in the process of struggling to hold the conference, and not in the meeting itself as such. I agree with you that we need not be distressed about tension, since it doesn't exist between us, but between the socialist and the capitalist countries.

MAO ZEDONG. Lenin said that the world must still expose itself to education for several years. He was thinking of war, since war is the greatest lesson, it requires the mobilization of all the nation's forces, above all, spiritual. War can awaken the consciousness of the people. There is no war right now, but the danger of it. In current circumstances, with the existence of the hydrogen bomb, the emergence of conflict, as in Lebanon, immediately makes people anxious. In conversation with Com. Yudin, I cited the following arguments in our favor.

First – the imperialists have few troops.

Second – they lack unity in their countries. Thus, for example, there is the contradiction between the Laborites and the Conservatives, disagreements among members of the American government, and so forth.

Third – lack of unity among allies, Canada, France, and Japan are dissatisfied with U.S. actions.

Fourth – the upsurge in the movement for national independence and peace. The contemporary movement for peace is not just the Stockholm Congress,¹⁹⁸ but also those who entered the arena after the events in Iraq. Even the prime minister of Japan had to admit that the revolution in Iraq was a people's revolution. The potential upsurge of the national-liberation struggle in the East is unlimited. Therefore, in connection with events in the Middle East, many people have come forward who had not been involved in the movement of the proponents of peace. The demand for peace and condemnation of war – these are powerful threats to imperialism. The imperialists are beginning to sense this is not to their benefit. They are trying to do something that will enable them to emerge dry from the water. In Eisenhower's response to your letter, there is, for example, the notion that there is no danger of war now; he decided not to say anything more on this subject, but it's obvious that he himself is more than anyone else scared of war.

Fifth – under the banner of the struggle for peace the revolutionary movement is advancing. We can affirm that peace movement is developing against imperialism and colonialism. As you can see, all that is needed are the right conditions for the struggle to flare up. Who would have thought there was so much gunpowder in Iraq. However, a revolution took place and the king's head was cut off.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. And Nuri al-Said's, more than a thousand men were removed.

MAO ZEDONG. This is a bourgeois-democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism – one of the allies of our revolution. Struggle is taking place wherever the people are oppressed. Such events benefit progressive forces in Western countries. This

¹⁹⁸ The Stockholm Congress for disarmament and international cooperation took place July 16-22, 1958.

leads not to an exodus from communist parties as happened after Hungary, but, on the contrary, aids their growth.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, this opens things up.

MAO ZEDONG. In the eyes of broad public opinion, the imperialists appear unjust; truth is not on the side of the U.S. For example, the German Democratic Republic sent a note to the FRG protesting West Germany providing a base for sending troops to the Middle East. The FRG authorities were forced to reply that their side had done nothing wrong, that the Americans were the guilty party. The reply itself is revealing. Earlier West Germany would not have replied to any sort of communication from the GDR, but ignoring such an appeal now was impossible. Even Tito felt compelled to denounce U.S. aggression.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. The U.S. is now supporting Yugoslavia's candidacy for the chairmanship of the UN General Assembly. They even have an agreement about this. In the past, Czechoslovakia proposed Nosek for the post of chairman of the General Assembly.¹⁹⁹ Yugoslavia promised to support their candidate. Now, when the Yugoslavs were reminded of their promise, they said they would not support Nosek's candidacy since they had their own candidate – Popovich.²⁰⁰ It's difficult to say which of these two Popoviches is worse: the one who was ambassador to you,²⁰¹ or the one who is being proposed for the post of chairman of the General Assembly. Both are dung.

MAO ZEDONG. Comparing the period that followed the First World War with the period that came after the Second, it's impossible not to note the relative calm and stability after the first war, although after it the Soviet Union did come into being.

There were major events after the first war: the miners' strike in England, revolution in Morocco and revolution in China. However, the strike ended, and revolution in Africa suppressed. In China, Chiang Kai-shek triumphed as a result of the Northern Expedition, and he organized a purge of the Guomindang, in other words, repression against communists. However, these events did not cause any great tremors in the world.

After the Second World War, it was relatively calm for only the first two years. In July 1947 [*this is a typo; the year must be 1946. – trans.*], Chiang Kai-shek launched his attack against the CCP. In 1949, we were victorious. In 1950, the war in Korea began and lasted for exactly three years, and then there was war in Vietnam. It's true that at first in Vietnam there was initially the possibility of a compromise with France, but later events likewise led to war.

The difference between the periods after the First and Second World Wars was that after the first war England maintained its colonial domination in India, and Holland in Indonesia. The liberation of India was a result of the Second World War. New

¹⁹⁹ Václav Nosek (1892-1955) – minister of foreign affairs of Czechoslovakia in 1945-1953 and minister of labor and social affairs in 1953-1955.

²⁰⁰ Koča Popović (1908-1992) was minister of foreign affairs of Yugoslavia in 1953-1965.

²⁰¹ Vladimir Popović (1914-1972) – was Yugoslav ambassador to the PRC in 1955-1958.

sovereign states came into being, apart from India there were also Indonesia, Ceylon, Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia. There is a national liberation war in Algeria. Imperialism suffered a defeat in Suez, unlike anything after the First World War. Even if the Americans withdraw their troops from the Middle East, it will still have been an unprecedented event in comparison with the period after the First World War, since it would signify a public admission by a big country of its mistake.

The level of tension after the Second World War, in its proximity to war, is like nothing before. This testifies to the fact that the capitalist system is unable to maintain its dominance. I agree with you that we should not yield an inch of the socialist camp and we will fight for peace within our present borders, extending from the Elbe to the 38th parallel in Korea and the 17th parallel in Vietnam.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. In these borders for now.

MAO ZEDONG. We will strive for a peaceful period of another seven years and look to fifteen.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Then the imperialist world will be shaken by failures, its strength will be depleted as the result of events like those in Iraq.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, such events will take place in a zone lying between us and the U.S. This is the widest zone in the world.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Iran, for example, is also a weak place in the imperialist camp.

MAO ZEDONG. And Thailand.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. And Pakistan.

MAO ZEDONG. And Saudi Arabia.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. The earth there is probably shaking right now.

MAO ZEDONG. Latin America is also a weak spot.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We should direct our efforts there to divert the attention of the imperialists away from Europe and Asia and tie a knot. There is much combustible material there.

MALINOVSKY. Nixon's trip is especially revealing.²⁰²

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, he was received badly. It's evident that Eisenhower is something of a nervous wreck. During Nixon's visit to Venezuela, the last country he visited, they had to send in a Marine detachment to rescue him.²⁰³ What happened in Iraq is a repetition and continuation of the events linked to Nixon's trip. It will be easier for us to attend to our affairs and harder for Eisenhower.

²⁰² U.S. Vice-president Richard M. Nixon (1913-1994) made a tour of Latin American countries in April-May, 1958.

²⁰³ On May 13, 1958, Nixon's automobile cortege was attacked by a crowd in Caracas, the capital of Venezuela.

Following a break

MAO ZEDONG touches upon a question of the nature of party congresses in the PRC, saying that in China the congress is a permanent organ, delegates are elected to five-year terms, and meet in session once a year.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It is like a party parliament.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes. The last session of our Congress went well; we summed up our experience in the past period, and worked out a current formulation for the party's general line.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Our congress should take place in 1960. Obviously, it would be better for us to convene our congresses after five years, since our economic plans are based on five years.

It's very good that we changed our industrial policy and untied our hands; we came through a big struggle against the anti-party group.²⁰⁴ Now we are preparing for a major reform of middle and higher schools. This will be a very big deal. We will have a Central Committee Plenum in the fall on this issue.²⁰⁵

MAO ZEDONG. Combining study with tempering the labor force is absolutely essential.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Now middle school prepares people for entry into higher educational institutions. However, only a small part of those who graduate enter the institutions, although everyone attending school is prepared for this. Middle schools should train literate persons for work in production. Maybe it should not be a ten-year course, but seven or eight years. After finishing school, all the graduates must go into production: factories, mills, collective farms. At the production sites trade schools will be established that will provide supplementary education for entry into institutes and the opportunity to acquire a profession. Not everyone will study there, however, only those who want to. From among those who graduate from these schools, party, trade union, and Young Communist League organizations will select the best to send to the institutes. In such a system, everyone will prepare to take part in labor activity. Mothers now sometimes tell their children, if they are poor students, "If you're a bad student, you will remain an idiot, and wind up working in a factory." The result is lack of respect for physical labor. As if everyone working in a factory is an idiot. But in the new system, everyone will be trained to work. It is more democratic. At present there are few children of workers and peasants in our institutes of higher education. This is

²⁰⁴ On June 29, 1957, a plenum of the CC CPSU named three members of the Presidium as participants in the anti-party group: Georgy Maximil'ianovich Malenkov (1901-1988), Lazar Moiseevich Kaganovich (1893-1991), and Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov (1890-1986), who opposed Khrushchev at a session of the Presidium, June 18-21, 1957. It was said that Dmitry Trofimovich Shepilov, a candidate member of the Presidium and minister of foreign affairs, sided with the group.

²⁰⁵ This plenum took place on November 12, 1958. It approved a draft Theses of the Central Committee of the CPSU and Council of Ministers of the USSR "On Strengthening the Links of Schools with the Life and Further Development of National Education in the Country."

understandable, because the intelligentsia are better able to prepare their own children for admission to institutes, they have more opportunities for this. We will uproot this system when everyone must first go to the factory, at which there will be a public selection, when the problem will be solved not by parents, but by the working collective. At present, many young people don't know what direction they should take, what specialty they should study. The result is that when they graduate from an institute of higher education, they feel dissatisfied and do not want to work in the field they studied. In the new system, people will try out their own abilities, and define their own interests. There will be a better selection for study in the institutes. The question of school reform is being actively discussed now in party organizations. Later we will open it up for broad discussion. We think this will be a very correct measure. It will enable us to choose the best of the best for the institutes. We will be guided by the principle of accepting into the institutes only those with a minimum of two years of labor.

MAO ZEDONG. A good measure. Perhaps workshops should be established in the institutes where students could acquire practical experience.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I haven't finished talking. Workers and peasants will study in the institutes of higher education; they will study and work. From their workday they will allocate some time for study, perhaps 20-50 percent of their time. For their final courses, they will be relieved more, perhaps entirely. The institutes of higher education will be attached to the factories and mills.

MAO ZEDONG. Right.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. These will be highly qualified specialists.

MAO ZEDONG. Work is the best training.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It tempers people.

MAO ZEDONG. Book learning alone is no good. In the new system students will not have to get support from their family because they will have income from their labor. Labor education should also take place in middle school.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We also think that agricultural institutes of higher learning should be attached to the state farms so that students may work and study.

MAO ZEDONG. Now we have sent students from all the institutes of higher learning to work in the countryside.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We have, for example, the Timiriazev Agricultural Academy. Students there are mostly from Moscow. After graduation they are ready to work as floor-polishers, but not to leave Moscow. Why do we need such specialists? But when the agricultural institutes of higher learning will be closer to production, then workers and peasants will go there, and we will have good specialists. It will be a vitally important selection.

MAO ZEDONG. Perfectly right.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Now there is intellectual ferment around this issue. One can't help but note an interesting phenomenon. After our successful launch of sputniks, the Americans sent their professors over to us to study our system of education. On returning to America, they gave very high marks to our system of education, and a year later . . . we are reorganizing it.

ZHOU ENLAI. A good reorganization. We are heading in the same direction.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. If you want, we can send you the Central Committee letter on this question, which we sent to party organizations down to the municipal level.²⁰⁶

MAO ZEDONG. We would very much like to receive it.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Then I will send it.

MAO ZEDONG. We are now studying the question of reorganizing the schools. We are experimenting.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. From the letter you can acquaint yourself with what we are doing, although your conditions are different.

MAO ZEDONG. The main thing is to combine education with work.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. The anti-party group attacked us because of our intention to reorganize the schools. Molotov, for example, said, "Khrushchev needs to change everything – the situation in agriculture, the management of industry and construction, now he is getting to the schools," This is a man who is afraid of everything new.

MAO ZEDONG. He is separated from the masses.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, but an honest man.

MAO ZEDONG. I doubt he is truly honest.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. He is devoted to the working class; he's our own man, but a fool. Sometimes a fool is more dangerous than an enemy. It's easy to spot an enemy, but harder to spot our own fool.

Now we are reorganizing the schools, we will strengthen our forces and the cadres will be better and cost the state less.

MAO ZEDONG. We held an All-China conference on national education, prepared a draft resolution, and distributed it to the provincial party committees for comment.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Reference is to N. S. Khrushchev's note of June 5, 1958, on the system of national education in the USSR. It was examined at a session of the Presidium of the CC CPSU on June 12, following which it was distributed to all the members and candidate members of the CC, to members of the Central Auditing Commission, to the CCs of the communist parties of the republics, regions, and municipalities. See Fursenko, *Presidium CC KPSS. 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU. 1954-1964). vol. 2, 835.

²⁰⁷ Probably reference is to the conference on questions of national education of March 7, 1957, in Zhongnanhai, at which Mao delivered a major speech. See Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong wenji* (Collected Works of Mao Zedong), vol. 7 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1999), 245-48.

Our general direction is pretty much like yours. It's necessary that students don't only bury themselves in books, but that they study half-time and work half-time.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. After the Hungarian events, the most trouble came from the institutes of higher learning. Probably because the people there are not connected with work.

MAO ZEDONG. We have already attached most of the institutes of higher learning to factories even before the official decision to implement a system of student participation in labor. Thanks to this, we have achieved in several months what previously took several years.

Our cadre workers also take part in labor. The directors of enterprises and factory engineers also must spend time working at the machines.

ZHU DE. Divisional commanders spend some time as soldiers.

MAO ZEDONG. For a period, the commanders should be subordinate to the soldiers they command. When all the commanders spend some time in their place, then they will understand the needs and the moods of the fighters. At some time, all our commanders were once soldiers. But that was long ago, they have already lost touch with a soldier's life. I served as a soldier for half-a-year. But this was long ago. Perhaps our minister of defense will command me to become a soldier, then I would change my work habits. That wouldn't be bad.

ZHOU ENLAI. It has also been decided that all ministers, starting in August of this year, engage in actual production work for not less than two months a year.

PENG DEHUI. In our army we have the practice of holding meetings of commanders at four levels. At the highest-level meetings, army, corps, divisional, and regimental commanders participate. At the lowest-level meetings, it is battalion commanders and below. At these meetings they engage in criticism of each other, without regard to their service position.

MAO ZEDONG. At a meeting of the highest command staff about two thousand persons participate, the meeting lasts for almost two months, and they criticize Marshal Peng Dehuai and me as chair of the Military Commission. Holding such meetings was the initiative of our minister of foreign affairs Chen Yi. A long time ago, we commanded those who were at the conference. Let them command us for at least a while and state what they found painful. We consciously gave them the opportunity during eight weeks to "swear at" us. They did criticize us, but not only us, but almost all those, especially those, with more defects.

PENG DEHUI. As a result of the criticism at the conference, some commanders now say, that it was good that they were sworn at. Thanks to this, others understood that their criticism of the lower ranks was sometimes incorrect.

MAO ZEDONG. We implement a similar system with respect to cadre workers up and down the line. In essence, first, all must engage in physical labor; second, we give the lower ranks an opportunity to criticize their superiors. This is useful because not only

do we engage in criticism, but we are in a position where they can criticize us. We call this a movement to correct style. The English call this "purification."

The movement to correct style is conducted everywhere, all 600 million are involved. Without it, it would be impossible to implement the Great Leap. The masses would not participate in making decisions targeted at achieving the Great Leap in the development of our country. It is unlikely they would be so enthusiastic in achieving the targets were our cadres not closer to the masses because of this movement. All workers in the central apparatus must spend two months annually at the grass roots level. This will not harm the work of the government; on the contrary, it will be useful.

We involve the masses in the broadest discussion of issues such as the elimination of superstition, of games of chance, and of theft.

PENG DEHUI. This is a very good method for dealing with disciplinary problems. We have done away with detention cells in the army, because there is no one to put in there.

MAO ZEDONG. Many decisions were made at a recent military conference, including a special decision that under daily circumstances all commanders should dress the same as soldiers.²⁰⁸ Wearing dress uniforms is permitted only on national holidays and other ceremonial occasions. On ordinary days there should be no distinction in dress between officers and soldiers. By doing this, we are restoring the practice we had during the revolutionary war. After the end of the war, for a time officers were remote from their troops by virtue of the difference in their material position and for other reasons.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. After the revolution, our party undertook several elements of such a rectification of work style. Lenin, for example, did volunteer work on weekends, and everyone did this. Ranking cadres were sent to work on the shop floor, and shop workers were elevated to work in offices. This was essential for increasing the percentage of workers in our administration.

MAO ZEDONG. We have resolved that all members of the CC must spend a minimum of four months a year in productive labor, in the countryside. We must free ourselves from working only with documents. We must be present at the grassroots. Many conferences can be held locally. For example, we can convene an All-China conference on irrigation where this would be appropriate, or a conference on agriculture where there has been a good harvest. It makes no sense to hold these conferences in Beijing. Beijing, in my view, is the most boring place; I am thinking of the CC. You can see nothing from here. This year we held plenums in Nanning and Chengdu,²⁰⁹ and a session of the [party] congress in Beijing. In the second half of the year, we also intend to meet in the provinces.

²⁰⁸ Reference is to an enlarged meeting of the Military Commission of the CCP CC that took place in Beijing from May 27 to July 22, 1958.

²⁰⁹ A conference of leading party cadres in Nanning (the Guangxi-Zhuang autonomous region) took place in January 1958, and a conference in Chengdu in March of that same year. Plans for the Great Leap were discussed.

PENG DEHUI. Our fighters will spend two months helping the peasants. Not only does this not harm military training, on the contrary, it helps them do better.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Our marshal does not agree with this.

MALINOVSKY. When the CC decides, we always provide help.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We often employed the army in harvesting, especially in the virgin lands in recent years. But last year and this year we decided not to.

MAO ZEDONG. One can institute a system in which military units help in agriculture for two months a year. This will not harm their military training.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It's obviously impossible for us to do this. It would impact the acquisition of a high level of technology, and the collective farms would refuse such help.

MAO ZEDONG. One can have enterprises attached to the military units in which the soldiers can engage in work.

MALINOVSKY. Soldiers' service is itself work.

MAO ZEDONG. Military training alone is one-sided. After demobilization it's hard for them to reenter normal life. We have now, but not yet everywhere, agricultural enterprises attached to the military units where the soldiers take part in labor.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We had an experiment in which agricultural enterprises were attached to military units, especially in the Far East. But it did not catch on.

PENG DEHUI. Our military units everywhere are implementing a system in which they are responsible for supplying their own vegetables, fruit, and so forth.

MAO ZEDONG. Military units are tasked with supplying their own meat and vegetables for half the year.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We have military construction units that perform construction for military purposes. We cut back sharply on their numbers, because their labor turned out to be more expensive than that done by qualified workers. In such units there was low labor productivity and low-quality work, since the soldiers lacked experience. The cost was increased by the need for many administrators: insofar as these military units required instruction in military affairs, they needed officers; but insofar as they were engaged in construction work, they needed qualified engineers. We wound up with many officers and few workers. It turned out to be a bad deal for the state to construct things this way, so we decided to give it up.

ZHU DE. We demobilized forty divisions. All those demobilized went into production and became qualified workers.

MAO ZEDONG. Regular military units should spend some time in productive labor.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Military service is for two to three years. This is how long it takes to train them properly. After three years, we demobilize the fighters and take in

new ones. In such a case, the army is only a school, not service. During this time, we won't make them into workers or fighters. This would be very costly for the state.

MAO ZEDONG. We don't expend state funds on this. The fighters themselves are earning money.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. What about feeding, providing uniforms, and pay for the officers? Moreover, a Red Army man will do three times less work than a worker and can only perform unskilled labor.

MAO ZEDONG. We also have them do only unskilled work: they grow vegetables, build roads, construct irrigation systems.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Obviously, this question depends upon the level of mechanization. You, evidently, have a surplus of labor as we did twenty to thirty years ago. Now we only use machines to work in the fields. In such a situation, excess labor would become a costly extravagance. When we built the Moscow-Volga canal, all the earth work was done with shovels, back then the more laborers the better. Now everything is done with machines; there are few people. If the construction is done by soldiers, it will be more expensive than machines and a qualified work force.

MAO ZEDONG. For an army, the main thing, of course, is military training, participation in labor is a secondary matter.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. When we built the subway in Moscow, we regularly employed many Saturday and Sunday volunteers. Everyone took part, Kaganovich and Bulganin volunteered on Sundays.²¹⁰ I was secretary of the Moscow Committee and also took part. We worked with shovels. Now if we went there, the builders would not let us in, because we would only spoil things. These days the subway is built with power excavators, not shovels.

MAO ZEDONG. Nevertheless, I think that even after ten thousand years, cadres should engage in labor.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. There will be no fighters then.

MAO ZEDONG. But there will still be cadres.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We now face the following issue – apparently, we now often must employ permanent cadres in the army to operate certain kinds of weapons. For example, to launch rockets. How could one assign a soldier to do this; he would burn himself up and the rocket would not be launched. And this is an expensive business. Engineers are required. Or service on submarines. Can one teach a soldier how to do this in two years [?] For these purposes engineers and technicians are needed, using them will cost less. I think that for certain kinds of military purposes we will have to transition to a system of career military service.

²¹⁰ Kaganovich oversaw construction of the Moscow subway as first secretary of the Moscow Municipal Committee of the AUCP(b) in 1931-1934. Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bulganin (1895-1975) was chair of the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet in 1931-1937.

MAO ZEDONG. This is specialization.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes. How much does a rocket or a hydrogen weapon cost? This is gold and one needs gold cadres to operate them.

MAO ZEDONG. Such cadres are necessary and must always focus on their specialty. But this involves a small number of people. However, it is still possible to have them raise vegetables.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Such vegetables will be very expensive. No one will buy them in the market.

MAO ZEDONG. You can invite a specialist agronomist to supervise them. Here, for example, is Com. Fedorenko. He is a literary specialist, but his weakness is that he doesn't know how to grow vegetables.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. And we won't assign him to that task – he will screw up.

MAO ZEDONG. He could learn, and you could invite a specialist and assign a hundred persons like Com. Fedorenko to him. He was and will remain a literary scholar, but he will also learn how to perform auxiliary tasks. His main work is literary studies – so this will be a useful add-on. In our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, there are 900 people. These, strictly speaking, are the upper stratum of the intelligentsia; they never had to engage in physical labor. We sent three hundred of them to the countryside for three years. They will return at the expiration of this period, and another three hundred will take their place. In this way, in the space of nine years they will all have graduated from the school of labor.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. We did something of the sort in the past to proletarianize the intelligentsia, the apparat. We sacked the old officials and put workers and peasants in their place. This was a temporary revolutionary measure.

I think this is how things will go for us: more and more people will have a chance to get a higher education. That way we will be able to solve the cadre problem in the state apparat in a more democratic fashion and change cadres more often. There will be many cadres then. Some will go into production and others will stay in place. The democratization of the state administration is likely to occur in this manner.

MAO ZEDONG. It's not very good to do the same thing one's whole life.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. So, what can be done? You are not going to train Marx in the institutes. Mankind has produced only one Marx. No one can substitute for Lenin either. Thus, it seems that a certain number of people will have to do the same work continuously. For example, Com. Mao Zedong, would it be better for you to be sent to a collective farm and made to grow cucumbers and to govern the state?

MAO ZEDONG. Cucumbers can be grown part-time.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. But you would have to concern yourself with affairs of state at the same time.

MAO ZEDONG. During that time, I can abstain from affairs of state.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. These are words. Now we will have the first major clash between the Soviet Union and China.

MAO ZEDONG. One can raise cucumbers when there are no particularly important matters. During events in the Middle East, for example, I will not do it.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. But you need to harvest the cucumbers at that time.

MAO ZEDONG. I will not be spending all my time on the cucumbers.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I will tell you about myself. The Presidium decided to make me a good offer. According to a resolution of the Presidium, members of the Presidium older than sixty should work five-hour days; the others work from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with a one-hour lunch break. According to this resolution, the working day for me, Mikoyan, and Kuusinen²¹¹ is from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. I say, how cunning, the protocol has made me an invalid, but I still must work for ten hours. I have already worked today; I dictated a response to Eisenhower. I am supposed to have three months of leave per year: two months in the summer and one in the winter. But I would trade these three months for one actual month such as all citizens enjoy. What sort of leave is this? The mail keeps coming in as usual. I bathe in the sea, and the telephone and the High Frequency radio link are on the shore. I go for a swim, and they say, "Moscow is calling." According to the protocol, for one quarter of the year I do nothing. But they go off and vacation normally, but this is how my leave is spent.

MAO ZEDONG. My situation is different. I tear myself away and don't read any mail or listen to any reports. During my leave I will travel around the country and won't even read the newspapers. Now here is Zhou Enlai who was on leave. For a month we sent him nothing and left him alone. This is when there are no particularly important matters at hand and there is someone who can stand in for him. But during the events in the Middle East we sent for him. During the Hungarian events it was also impossible to take a leave.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. And what about during the events in Egypt, Syria, Indonesia? It would be good to get away from it all, and grow mushrooms, for example.

MAO ZEDONG. In January next year, I will resign my post as head of state. Presently, I combine two posts: head of state and chair of the party. I will retain only the latter. And I will devote only half-time to those matters. I will travel around the country more and spend less time in Beijing.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I am not a believer. But I want to say that we are conscious of our highest debt to the country. If even they free you from all your duties, then no one will free you from your responsibility for China, for the Communist party. Then what?

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, perhaps.

²¹¹ Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan (1895-1978) was first deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers in 1955-1964; Otto Vil'gel'movich Kuusinen (1881-1964) was secretary of the CC CPSU in 1957-1964.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. You shouldn't grow cucumbers.

MAO ZEDONG. No, it's still possible.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Then come to my dacha. I have them there. You can grow cucumbers.

MAO ZEDONG. I must be somewhere where I can swim, and where there's no phone. At your place, I will not even speak to Beijing by phone.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I concede that this is possible for a week if everything is in order. But read a newspaper, keep up with events and don't step away from your affairs.

MAO ZEDONG. When I was in Canton, I didn't read the central newspapers.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. In my view, people engaged in politics are hopeless, like alcoholics. Everything draws them to politics.

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, that's true. But it's necessary to find time to travel in the provinces.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Very good.

MAO ZEDONG. I am ready to leave Beijing for four months of every year and become a tramp.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Me too.

MAO ZEDONG. Then, let's do it. We'll both be tramps.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, to some extent.

MAO ZEDONG. We have a resolution according to which we must be tramps for no less than four months.

ZHOU ENLAI. I even overfulfill this, since I left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and turned things over to Chen Yi.

But we must admit that you have more concerns relating to international affairs than we do.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Not necessarily.

ZHOU ENLAI. We are not in the UN, have diplomatic relations with just ten countries or so.²¹² But you here in Moscow have more than sixty diplomats.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Yes, all diplomatic affairs come before the Presidium of the CC. Sometimes not a session of the Presidium, but a collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ZHOU ENLAI. That's because the authority of the Soviet Union is higher, and each question must be resolved seriously. Things are calmer with us. We have relations with

²¹² Zhou Enlai consciously spoke an untruth. Although the PRC really wasn't a member of the UN, at that time it had diplomatic relations with thirty-eight states. Zhou, of course, must have known this.

only a few capitalist states and are in no hurry to establish them with others. Better if that happens later. Even if Japan satisfies our three conditions, we will not open any posts there so as not to create a situation of "two Chinas." In the future, until we establish diplomatic relations with Japan, we will not have semi-official trade relations with it as we did before. Nor will we renew an agreement with Japan on fisheries. We will conclude a treaty and agreement only with the government when we establish diplomatic relations. We will gradually resolve the issues at a governmental level. This will provide us more active positions. Earlier we thought that the development of semi-official relations with Japan would facilitate the establishment of diplomatic relations, but it turned out that it merely pacified the Japanese side. Now because of the breach Japan has more difficulties. We, however, have not experienced special problems. The breach with Japan provides an opportunity for the Japanese people and trading companies to exert pressure on the government. Now we can exert pressure on Japan from two sides: officially from your side and unofficially from ours. Our government has approved this approach toward Japan.

FEDORENKO. Perhaps the Chinese comrades have some suggestions for the Soviet ambassador to Japan?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Perhaps consider having one of the Chinese comrades become a Soviet citizen and sending him to work as a counselor in our embassy in Tokyo.

MAO ZEDONG. But he wouldn't look like a Russian.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. That doesn't matter. The main thing is for him to have a Soviet passport. We have Soviet Chinese.

CHEN YI. Yes, we can think about this. But it would probably make the Japanese apprehensive.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. It would be desirable that this person know Russian.

MAO ZEDONG. It would be hard to find someone who knows Russian and is knowledgeable about Japanese affairs. Moreover, it wouldn't fool the Japanese. It can't be excluded that embassy employees would accidentally divulge it.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. That is out of the question.

ZHOU ENLAI. This would make extra trouble for you. Right now, our newspapers and journals circulate in Japan, the embassy can read them to know what our policy is.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Such a person would be an advisor to our ambassador.

MAO ZEDONG. Still, it would be better if Fedorenko were also our ambassador.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I want your adviser for our ambassador, and you want our ambassador to be your adviser.

MAO ZEDONG. Then we would be able to reduce our staff by one ambassador.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. I am making a serious proposal.

ZHOU ENLAI. It will be difficult to find someone who knows both Russian and Japan. As a rule, those who are knowledgeable about Japan are known in Japan.

MAO ZEDONG. This would only make trouble for the Soviet ambassador.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. The Japanese would not welcome him anyway. For example, the Swiss ambassador in Moscow is Russian, the son of a Russian factory owner who fled to Switzerland back in the day.²¹³

MAO ZEDONG. Lenin once said that an Englishman was a representative of the Soviet Union.²¹⁴

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. In Geneva during a meeting of heads of government, Eden's interpreter was Russian. Why can't a Chinese be a staff member of the Soviet embassy in Japan?

MAO ZEDONG. It's possible in principle, but practically speaking, whom would we send?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. That's something for you to think about.

ZHOU ENLAI. We agree that someone who knows contemporary Japan should be sent to work there. It's not enough to send one person to the embassy. Our policy toward Japan often changes, and he would have a hard time finding his bearings. It will be better if we inform the Soviet embassy in Japan of our steps via Moscow.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV indicated his agreement.

We must resolve the question of a communiqué. We could do this tomorrow before we depart for Moscow.

MAO ZEDONG expresses his agreement, saying the document can be signed an hour before take-off.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. How will we sign the document: two, three, or four?

MAO ZEDONG. The two of us.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Good. We will say who participated in the meeting.

MAO ZEDONG. Good. How many names will be mentioned from your side?

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Will we mention the military participants?

MAO ZEDONG. Yes, the ministers of defense. We will mention as many comrades from our side as you do from yours.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Mentioning the military participants will impart a somewhat different tone to the Communiqué. Our side will name four comrades: Malinovsky, Kuznetsov, Ponamarev, and chargé d'affaires Antonov.

²¹³ Alfred Zender (1900-1983) – Swiss ambassador to the USSR in 1957-1961.

²¹⁴ The reference most likely is to the English writer Herbert G. Wells (1866-1946) who visited the Soviet Union in 1920.

How will we sign the Communiqué: on a party or party-government basis?

ZHOU ENLAI. We will not indicate the nature of the delegation. We will write:
“Communiqué on the meeting of Coms. Mao Zedong and Khrushchev.”

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Will we indicate at the end “First Secretary of the CPSU CC, etc.
or not?”

MAO ZEDONG. We can.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV. Good. May the imperialists’ heads ache while we raise
cucumbers.

MAO ZEDONG suggests ending the meeting at this point.

Conversation transcribed by

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