



MAO TSE-TUNG

TALK WITH
THE AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT
ANNA LOUISE STRONG

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The present English translation of *Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong* has been made from the Chinese text given in the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Volume IV, published by the People's Publishing House, Peking, in September 1960.

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This pamphlet contains two articles by Comrade Mao Tse-tung: "Some Points in Appraisal of the Present International Situation" and "Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong".

"Some Points in Appraisal of the Present International Situation" was written to counter a pessimistic appraisal of the international situation at that time. In the spring of 1946, imperialism headed by the United States of America, together with the reactionaries in various countries, was daily intensifying its anti-Soviet, anti-Communist and anti-popular activities and trumpeting that "war between the United States and the Soviet Union is inevitable" and that "the outbreak of a third world war is inevitable". In these circumstances, since some comrades overestimated the strength of imperialism, underestimated the strength of the people, feared U.S. imperialism and feared the outbreak of a new world war, they showed weakness in the face of the armed attacks of the U.S.-Chiang Kai-shek reactionary gang and dared not resolutely oppose counter-revolutionary war with revolutionary war. In this document Comrade Mao Tse-tung was combating such erroneous thinking. He pointed out that if the forces of the people throughout the world waged resolute, effective struggles against the forces of world reaction, they could overcome the danger of a new world war. At the same time, he pointed out that it was possible for the imperialist countries and the socialist countries to reach certain compromises but that such compromises do "not require the people in the countries of the capitalist world to follow suit and make compromises at home", and that "the people in those countries will continue to wage different struggles in accordance with their different conditions". This document was not made public at the time and was circulated only among some leading comrades of the Central Committee. It was distributed at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in December 1947. Since the comrades present unanimously agreed with its contents, the full text was later included in "A Circular on the Decisions Made at the Central Committee Meeting of December 1947", issued by the Central Committee in January 1948.

"Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong" is a very important statement made by Comrade Mao Tse-tung on the international and domestic situation not long after the conclusion of World War II. Here, Comrade Mao Tse-tung put forward his famous thesis, "All reactionaries are paper tigers." This thesis armed the people of our country ideologically, strengthened their confidence in victory and played an exceedingly great role in the People's War of Liberation. Just as Lenin considered imperialism a "colossus with feet of clay", so Comrade Mao Tse-tung regards imperialism and all reactionaries as paper tigers; both have dealt with the essence of the matter. This thesis is a fundamental strategic concept for the revolutionary people. Since the period of the Second Revolutionary Civil War, Comrade Mao Tse-tung has repeatedly pointed out: strategically, with regard to the whole, revolutionaries must despise the enemy, dare to struggle against him and dare to seize victory; at the same time, tactically, with regard to each part, each specific struggle, they must take the enemy seriously, be prudent, carefully study and perfect the art of struggle and adopt forms of struggle suited to different times, places and conditions in order to isolate and wipe out the enemy step by step. On December 1, 1958, at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held at Wuchang, Comrade Mao Tse-tung stated:

Just as there is not a single thing in the world without a dual nature (this is the law of the unity of opposites), so imperialism and all reactionaries have a dual nature — they are real tigers and paper tigers at the same time. In past history, before they won state power and for some time afterwards, the slave-owning class, the feudal landlord class and the bourgeoisie were vigorous, revolutionary and progressive; they were real tigers. But with the lapse of time, because their opposites — the slave class, the peasant class and the proletariat — grew in strength step by step, struggled against them and became more and more formidable, these ruling classes changed step by step into the reverse, changed into reactionaries, changed into backward people, changed into paper tigers. And eventually they were overthrown, or will be overthrown, by the people. The reactionary, backward, decaying classes retained this dual nature even in their last life-and-death struggles against the people. On the one hand, they were real tigers; they ate people, ate people by the millions and tens of millions. The cause of the people's struggle went through a period

of difficulties and hardships, and along the path there were many twists and turns. To destroy the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism in China took the Chinese people more than a hundred years and cost them tens of millions of lives before the victory in 1949. Look! Were these not living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers? But in the end they changed into paper tigers, dead tigers, bean-curd tigers. These are historical facts. Have people not seen or heard about these facts? There have indeed been thousands and tens of thousands of them! Thousands and tens of thousands! Hence, imperialism and all reactionaries, looked at in essence, from a long-term point of view, from a strategic point of view, must be seen for what they are — paper tigers. On this we should build our strategic thinking. On the other hand, they are also living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers which can eat people. On this we should build our tactical thinking.

For the necessity of despising the enemy strategically and taking full account of him tactically, see *Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1954, Chapter 5, Section 6, and "On Some Important Problems of the Party's Present Policy", Section 1, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1961, Vol. IV.

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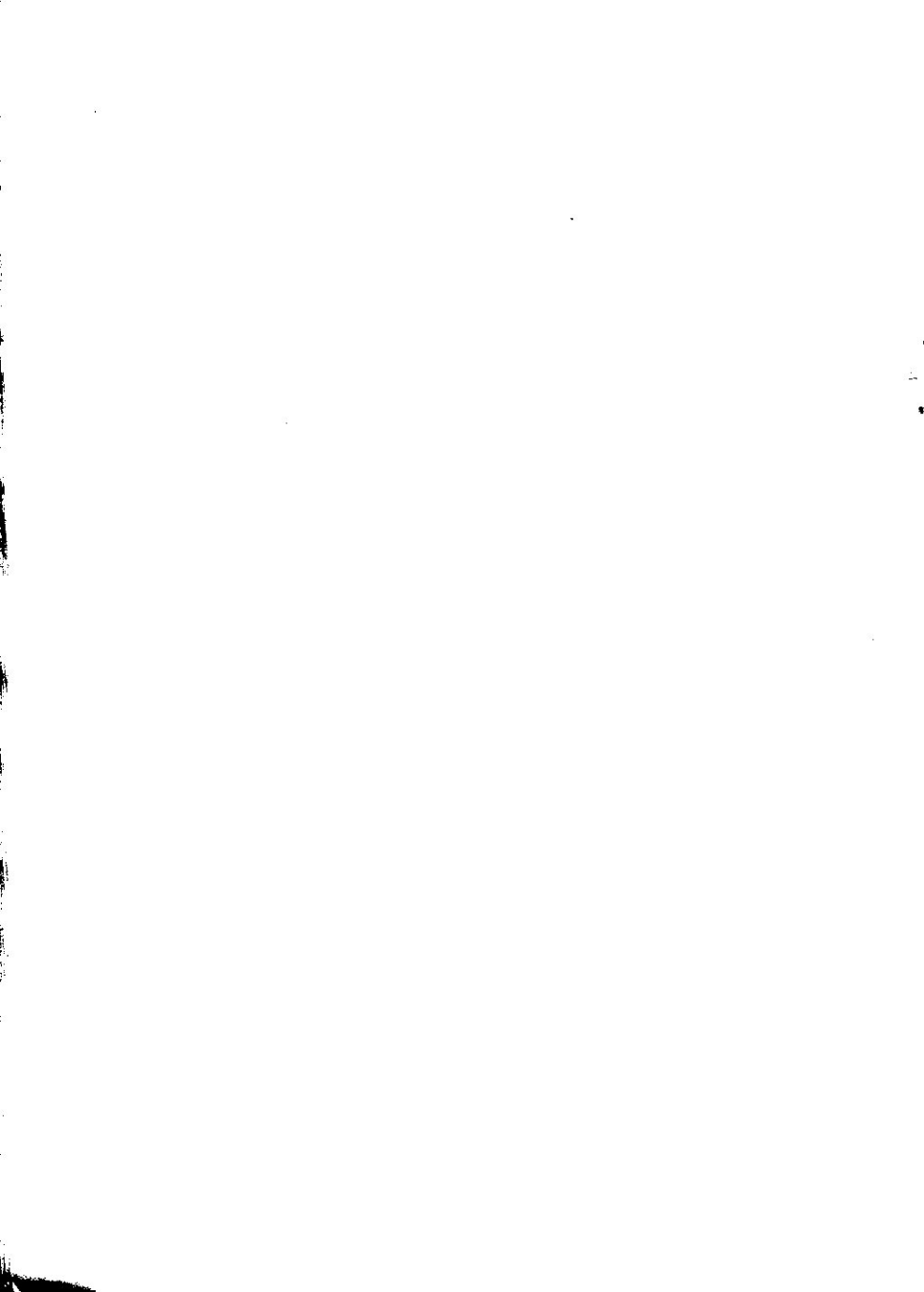
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SOME POINTS IN APPRAISAL OF THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

April 1946

1. The forces of world reaction are definitely preparing a third world war, and the danger of war exists. But the democratic forces of the people of the world have surpassed the reactionary forces and are forging ahead; they must and certainly can overcome the danger of war. Therefore, the question in the relations between the United States, Britain and France and the Soviet Union is not a question of compromise or break, but a question of compromise earlier or compromise later. "Compromise" means reaching agreement through peaceful negotiation. "Earlier or later" means several years, or more than ten years, or even longer.

2. The kind of compromise mentioned above does not mean compromise on all international issues. That is impossible so long as the United States, Britain and France continue to be ruled by reactionaries. This kind of compromise means compromise on some issues, including certain important ones. But there will not be many such compromises in the near future. There is, however, a possibility that the trade relations of the United States, Britain and France with the Soviet Union will expand.

3. Such compromise between the United States, Britain and France and the Soviet Union can be the outcome only of resolute, effective struggles by all the democratic forces of the

world against the reactionary forces of the United States, Britain and France. Such compromise does not require the people in the countries of the capitalist world to follow suit and make compromises at home. The people in those countries will continue to wage different struggles in accordance with their different conditions. The principle of the reactionary forces in dealing with the democratic forces of the people is definitely to destroy all they can and to prepare to destroy later whatever they cannot destroy now. Face to face with this situation, the democratic forces of the people should likewise apply the same principle to the reactionary forces.

TALK WITH THE AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT ANNA LOUISE STRONG

August 1946

Strong: Do you think there is hope for a political, a peaceful settlement of China's problems in the near future?

Mao: That depends on the attitude of the U.S. government. If the American people stay the hands of the American reactionaries who are helping Chiang Kai-shek fight the civil war, there is hope for peace.

Strong: Suppose the United States gives Chiang Kai-shek no help, besides that already given,¹ how long can Chiang Kai-shek keep on fighting?

Mao: More than a year.

Strong: Can Chiang Kai-shek keep on that long, economically?

Mao: He can.

Strong: What if the United States makes it clear that it will give Chiang Kai-shek no more help from now on?

Mao: There is no sign yet that the U.S. government and Chiang Kai-shek have any desire to stop the war within a short time.

Strong: How long can the Communist Party keep on?

Mao: As far as our own desire is concerned, we don't want to fight even for a single day. But if circumstances force us to fight, we can fight to the finish.

Strong: If the American people ask why the Communist Party is fighting, what should I reply?

Mao: Because Chiang Kai-shek is out to slaughter the Chinese people, and if the people want to survive they have to defend themselves. This the American people can understand.

Strong: What do you think of the possibility of the United States starting a war against the Soviet Union?

Mao: There are two aspects to the propaganda about an anti-Soviet war. On the one hand, U.S. imperialism is indeed preparing a war against the Soviet Union; the current propaganda about an anti-Soviet war, as well as other anti-Soviet propaganda, is political preparation for such a war. On the other hand, this propaganda is a smoke-screen put up by the U.S. reactionaries to cover many actual contradictions immediately confronting U.S. imperialism. These are the contradictions between the U.S. reactionaries and the American people and the contradictions of U.S. imperialism with other capitalist countries and with the colonial and semi-colonial countries. At present, the actual significance of the U.S. slogan of waging an anti-Soviet war is the oppression of the American people and the expansion of the U.S. forces of aggression in the rest of the capitalist world. As you know, both Hitler and his partners, the Japanese warlords, used anti-Soviet slogans for a long time as a pretext for enslavement of the people at home and aggression against other countries. Now the U.S. reactionaries are acting in exactly the same way.

To start a war, the U.S. reactionaries must first attack the American people. They are already attacking the American people — oppressing the workers and democratic circles in the United States politically and economically and preparing to impose fascism there. The people of the United States should

stand up and resist the attacks of the U.S. reactionaries. I believe they will.

The United States and the Soviet Union are separated by a vast zone which includes many capitalist, colonial and semi-colonial countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. Before the U.S. reactionaries have subjugated these countries, an attack on the Soviet Union is out of the question. In the Pacific the United States now controls areas larger than all the former British spheres of influence there put together; it controls Japan, that part of China under Kuomintang rule, half of Korea, and the South Pacific. It has long controlled Central and South America. It seeks also to control the whole of the British Empire and Western Europe. Using various pretexts, the United States is making large-scale military arrangements and setting up military bases in many countries. The U.S. reactionaries say that the military bases they have set up and are preparing to set up all over the world are aimed against the Soviet Union. True, these military bases are directed against the Soviet Union. At present, however, it is not the Soviet Union but the countries in which these military bases are located that are the first to suffer U.S. aggression. I believe it won't be long before these countries come to realize who is really oppressing them, the Soviet Union or the United States. The day will come when the U.S. reactionaries find themselves opposed by the people of the whole world.

Of course, I do not mean to say that the U.S. reactionaries have no intention of attacking the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is a defender of world peace and a powerful factor preventing the domination of the world by the U.S. reactionaries. Because of the existence of the Soviet Union, it is absolutely impossible for the reactionaries in the United States and the world to realize their ambitions. That is why the U.S. reac-

tionaries rabidly hate the Soviet Union and actually dream of destroying this socialist state. But the fact that the U.S. reactionaries are now trumpeting so loudly about a U.S.-Soviet war and creating a foul atmosphere, so soon after the end of World War II, compels us to take a look at their real aims. It turns out that under the cover of anti-Soviet slogans they are frantically attacking the workers and democratic circles in the United States and turning all the countries which are the targets of U.S. external expansion into U.S. dependencies. I think the American people and the peoples of all countries menaced by U.S. aggression should unite and struggle against the attacks of the U.S. reactionaries and their running dogs in these countries. Only by victory in this struggle can a third world war be avoided; otherwise it is unavoidable.

Strong: That is very clear. But suppose the United States uses the atom bomb? Suppose the United States bombs the Soviet Union from its bases in Iceland, Okinawa and China?

Mao: The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the U.S. reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible, but in fact it isn't. Of course, the atom bomb is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapon.

All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful. In Russia, before the February Revolution in 1917, which side was really strong? On the surface the tsar was strong but he was swept away by a single gust of wind in the February Revolution. In the final analysis, the strength in Russia was on the side of the Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers. The tsar was

just a paper tiger. Wasn't Hitler once considered very strong? But history proved that he was a paper tiger. So was Mussolini, so was Japanese imperialism. On the contrary, the strength of the Soviet Union and of the people in all countries who loved democracy and freedom proved much greater than had been foreseen.

Chiang Kai-shek and his supporters, the U.S. reactionaries, are all paper tigers too. Speaking of U.S. imperialism, people seem to feel that it is terrifically strong. Chinese reactionaries are using the "strength" of the United States to frighten the Chinese people. But it will be proved that the U.S. reactionaries, like all the reactionaries in history, do not have much strength. In the United States there are others who are really strong -- the American people.

Take the case of China. We have only millet plus rifles to rely on, but history will finally prove that our millet plus rifles is more powerful than Chiang Kai-shek's aeroplanes plus tanks. Although the Chinese people still face many difficulties and will long suffer hardships from the joint attacks of U.S. imperialism and the Chinese reactionaries, the day will come when these reactionaries are defeated and we are victorious. The reason is simply this: the reactionaries represent reaction, we represent progress.

NOTES

¹ To help Chiang Kai-shek start civil war against the people, U.S. imperialism gave his government a very great amount of aid. By the end of June 1946 the United States had equipped 45 Kuomintang divisions. It had trained 150,000 Kuomintang military personnel -- army, naval and air forces, secret agents, communications police, staff officers, medical officers, supply personnel, etc. U.S. warships and aircraft transported to the

front against the Liberated Areas 14 Kuomintang corps (41 divisions) and 8 regiments of the communications police corps, or over 540,000 men in all. The U.S. government landed 90,000 of its marines in China and stationed them at such important cities as Shanghai, Tsingtao, Tientsin, Peiping and Chinwangtao. They guarded the lines of communication for the Kuomintang in northern China. According to data disclosed in *United States Relations with China* (The White Paper), released by the State Department on August 5, 1949, the total value of various kinds of U.S. aid given to the Chiang Kai-shek government from the time of the War of Resistance Against Japan to 1948 was more than 4,500 million dollars (the overwhelming bulk of U.S. aid given during the War of Resistance had been hoarded by the Kuomintang for the ensuing civil war against the people). But the actual amount of U.S. aid to Chiang Kai-shek far exceeded this total. The U.S. White Paper admitted that U.S. aid was equivalent to "more than 50 percent of the monetary expenditures" of the Chiang Kai-shek government and was of "proportionately greater magnitude in relation to the budget of that Government than the United States has provided to any nation of Western Europe since the end of the war".



毛泽东
和美国记者安娜·路易斯·
斯特朗的谈话

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