

July 31, 1958

**First Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and
Mao Zedong, Hall of Huaizhentan [Beijing]**

Citation:

"First Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and Mao Zedong, Hall of Huaizhentan [Beijing]", July 31, 1958, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), fond 52, opis 1, delo 498, ll. 44-477, copy in Dmitry Volkogonov Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Translated by Vladislav M. Zubok.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/112080>

Summary:

Mao Zedong and N.S. Khrushchev discuss a joint navy, use of China's coastline and advisers in both countries.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

FIRST TALK

Of N.S. KHRUSHCHEV with MAO ZEDONG

31 July 1958 in Huairan Hall [in Zhongnanhai, the Chinese leadership compound]

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

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev agrees.

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: These issues can be easily solved, and cooperation between us will last forever; therefore we can sign an agreement for 10,000 years.

He suggests to move to the discussion on the question of interest.

N.S. Khrushchev: We received information from Yudin[1] on his conversations with you.[2] Judging by it, there was a lot there that was exaggerated [nakrucheno]. Therefore, I would like to talk to you, so that everything would become clear.

Mao Zedong: Good.

N.S. Khrushchev: I will not do well on the issues where, according to the messages on the conversation with your ambassador, we have common views. These are issues relating to the international situation, the assessment of the events in the Middle East [na Blizhnem I Srednem Vostoke],[3] the Yugoslav question. We also support your declaration where you say that we cannot have issues that might generate different viewpoints. We take great joy in the successes of your Party and the PRC. I believe you take joy in ours.

Mao Zedong: Yes.

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

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

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev: I was one of the members of the Politburo who said it straight to Stalin that we should not send such a telegram on the concession to Mao Zedong, because it would be wrong as a matter of principle. There were also other members of the Politburo, with whom I have parted ways now, who did not support this proposal by Stalin either. After Stalin's death we immediately raised the issue of liquidating the joint companies [smeshannii obschestva], and today we do not have them anywhere.

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: I am in absolute agreement.

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

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

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

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

the US and would realize that there is a way out.

Mao Zedong: This is right.

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev: It displeases me to speak about it, since the ambassador is absent.[4] I sent him the instruction, talked with him separately and then at the Presidium. When I talked with him, I feared that he might misunderstand me. I asked: "The issue is clear for you." He said: "Clear." But as I can see, he did not tell you the essential thing from what I said to him.

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

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

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

Mao Zedong inquires about the cost of this program.

N.S. Khrushchev gives an answer.

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

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

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

position with regard to the Navy[?]" Then we built a correct relationship sacked Kuznetsov from the Navy.

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

The question is where one should invest money.

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

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

Who today needs cruisers with their limited firepower, when rocketry exists[?] I told Eden in London that their cruisers are just floating steel coffins.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: I asked Yudin, who would have ownership of the fleet the Chinese, the USSR, or both countries jointly[?] I also emphasized that under current conditions the Chinese need the fleet as Chinese property, and that any other ownership is out of question. In case of war we will deliver everything to the Soviet Union. Yet, Yudin

insisted that the fleet should be a joint one. For the third time Yudin was received by cde. Liu Shaoqi and other comrades. At this conversation Yudin repeated what he said previously. Our comrades spoke against the joint fleet. He changed the formula and instead of a "joint fleet" started talking about "joint construction." Our comrades criticized this statement as well, and said that we understood this to mean joint ownership of the fleet. Then Yudin began to speak about joint efforts to create the fleet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: That is correct.

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

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

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

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

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

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

cable asking for assistance in building the fleet. He assured us that this request would get a positive decision.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: That is why I lost sleep.

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: A cooperative consists of two parts.

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

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev: Did Yudin say that?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev: Times are different now.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: This is fair.

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: But that is how Stalin's cable read. Therefore I believe that the relationship between the Parties was incorrect. After the victory of our Revolution,

Stalin had doubts about its character. He believed that China was another Yugoslavia.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: This is the right direction.

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev: Aircraft have more potential. We are ready to give China what we have. TU-16s have lost their significance as bombers, but they are still good as rocket-carriers for sea approaches [na morskikh podstupakh]. In general, the

bombing aviation is in crisis. The military is confused. And for fighters there is a substitute rockets.

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

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

Mao Zedong says it would be good to avoid war.

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: About 90%.

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

Mao Zedong: They are afraid of a big war.

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: There will be no joint fleet?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: Now I am calm.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: We will need it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: We welcomed your speech, for it reflects [the spirit of] equality. The speech of cde. Mikoyan was not so bad either, but the ratio of good and inappropriate was 9 to 1. This concerns the tone of the speech that was somewhat didactic [pouchitelnim]. Some delegates of the Congress expressed dissatisfaction, but we

were too shy to tell cde. Mikoyan about it. When we say that the Chinese Revolution is the extension of the October Revolution this is the unquestionable truth. But there are many things that the Chinese themselves should speak about. There was something in Mikoyan's speech resembling the relationship between father and son.

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

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev: I am surprised.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev: Among us in the Presidium there is no differences of opinion about our relations, [about relations] between our Parties. We all take joy in your successes as if they were ours. We think that you treat us similarly. We nurture no doubts about this. Now on the specialists. I believe they are like a pimple on a healthy body.

Mao Zedong: I disagree with such a formula.

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

Mao Zedong: It is more than 90% correct.

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

Mao Zedong: One should take advantage of both ways.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: The same can be said about China.

N.S. Khrushchev: We do not take a license only for follies for the Russians. This is an international quality, it can strike all the nations. But the conditions are unfair for us.

You can bring complaints about the follies of our specialists, and we do not have your specialists. Therefore, it turns out that only we commit follies.

Mao Zedong: History is to blame for this.

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

Mao Zedong: You made a revolution first.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: This not your fault.

Perhaps the state security apparatus and the military staff should be blamed.

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

Mao Zedong: We need specialists in technology.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: Absolutely correct.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev: Who should be responsible for those who are beyond this sharp line? Khrushchev, not

Mao Zedong. There are no fair conditions. You are in a more favorable position.

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: This issue existed for a long time, but we, for instance during the events in Hungary, [6] consciously avoided to put it forward. We did not put it forward

at the time when Soviet military advisers had to be recalled from Poland either. The criticism concerns a negligible number of people and, specifically, the method of their assignment [komandirovaniia].

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: No, you may stay as long as you want. Regarding the time of our next meeting there could be a contradiction between us. You work during the day, and I sleep during the day. One could meet in the afternoon after 4.

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

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

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

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

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

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

N.S. Khrushchev: Molotov then objected also to covering the GDR. I believe we should discuss the issue about the reinforcement of Albania. It needs a fleet. On what basis we could do it—cooperation or some other, we will discuss it with [Albanian

leader] Enver Xoxha. This is a complicated issue. Maybe some kind of cooperation will be necessary. Please do not blame us for it.

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

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

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

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

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

Mao Zedong: We all live because of your missiles.

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

I believe that the situation in the GDR is good.

Mao Zedong: I am of the same opinion. Cde. Dong Biwu characterized the situation there in a similar way.

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

This was the end of the meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

