

October 4, 1960

**Main Points of Chairman Mao's Conversation with
Premier Abbas on September 30, 1960**

Citation:

"Main Points of Chairman Mao's Conversation with Premier Abbas on September 30, 1960", October 4, 1960, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRCFMA 107-00240-08.

Translated by David Cowhig.

<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/117904>

Summary:

Mao Zedong expressed Chinese support of the Algeria revolution against French colonialism to the Provision Government of the Algerian Republic President Ferhat Abbas.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Henry Luce Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Main Points of Chairman Mao's Conversation with Premier Abbas on September 30, 1960

Main Points of Chairman Mao made the following points in his conversation with Premier Abbas

1. The Algerian people have already bravely carried out a six-year-long war of national liberation. You have opened up a national liberation battlefield on the shores of the Mediterranean and in the West. All the peoples of the world who demand liberation, and first of all the peoples of the African continent will turn first of all to you to learn from your example. We admire your righteous struggle, the Chinese people all deeply admire you. The national character and righteousness of your struggle has won support from the people of the entire world. You are not alone in your struggle. The Chinese people support you. All of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America fighting imperialism support you as well as some western countries [missing period in transcribed text; possibly text missing as well]

2. The revolutionary peoples support you. You have many friends. De Gaulle too has many friends; that is, the countries of NATO. Chiang Kai-shek of China is also his friend. They long ago recognized one another and established diplomatic relations while we have established diplomatic relations with you. We have not gotten into contact with the French government and they have not gotten into contact with us. One day they may reach out to us, but we have two conditions: one is that they must cut off diplomatic relations with Chiang Kai-shek and another is that they cannot interfere with our support for you. If they make interfering with our assistance to you a condition for establishing diplomatic relations then we certainly won't do it.

3. Although you face many difficulties today but you do have a future. The future belongs to you and not to the imperialists. You must cope with French imperialism and with U.S. imperialism as well. You will see that they face many difficulties. France needs to support an 800,000 strong military and spend 3 billion Francs a day. If that continues for a long time, they will collapse. Although the United States is larger, it controls too much territory and faces the opposition of people everywhere. You have what you need to hold out for a long time as long as you are determined to hold out for a long time, are determined to keep fighting for a long time, and are able to conserve your forces. If you do this, you will be able to limit your losses and even grow stronger. If your banner of national liberation does not fall for ten or twenty years, you will have an excellent chance of winning. As long as you stick to your guns, I don't think that you can be defeated over the short term.

4. We endorse your call for a referendum on national liberation and the withdrawal of French troops. You will need to be cautious on the matter of the United Nations sending in troops however. The case of the Congo is worth studying. It seems that when the United Nations took the place of Belgium but it would have been better if Belgium had stayed there. This is because Belgium is just one country with a reputation that is rotten to the core. They will be easier to handle. The United Nations, however, is many countries, with the United States as the principal country. If they are asked to come, they will not leave. Liberating a nation is no easy thing. Liberation is not a simple matter of making Belgium leave. Although the US invasion of the Congo taught the Congolese people a lesson, in the end the Congolese people will be victorious.

5. In short, only a protracted struggle will be advantageous. If the struggle is not protracted, then the conditions will not be right for negotiations. The French government today is not willing to negotiate with you but the day is bound to come when they will want to talk. The will be when you have developed your strength so that your position in the correlation of forces is several times greater than it is today. Chiang Kai-shek too, at the beginning, was unwilling to negotiate with us. Later he did

talk with us and signed a ceasefire agreement and a political agreement. But he tore them up later. By spring 1949, after we had already destroyed most of Chiang's forces, he really did want to negotiate with us. We wanted him to send representatives to Peking for talks. The condition that we made for talks was the same one that France gave you. That is give up all your weapons and surrender. He was not willing to accept that condition so we crossed the Yangtze and liberated the entire country. What you need to do to De Gaulle is to make him suffer in order to force him to sit down and negotiate with you.

6. We fought for twenty-two years. We had lost many battles and had only 20,000 troops left from the 300,000 we had started with. Later, we were able to restore our forces largely through political issues. That means that although we were fighting a military struggle it would be better to call it a political struggle. Paying attention to political issues is essential. Among these, the most important is how to unify your side, the struggle to win over the majority, and making the enemy fall apart. Our previous policy was that the scope of attack should be 5 percent and generally not exceed 8 percent. We fought the Japanese for eight years but we did not kill any of the Japanese whom we captured. Not only did we not kill them, we did not mistreat them, did not insult them, did not steal their things, but instead educated them. We suggest that the scope of your attacks should not be large, probably no more than 5 percent or ten percent, no matter whether you are attacking French people or attacking Algerian people. In the past, we had Chinese traitors and now you have Algerian traitors too. There are big, medium and small Algerian traitors; that is some have committed a big crime while others have committed only a small crime. You need to distinguish among them and only execute a very small number of them. Some of them you can imprison while others can be sent for forced labor. You will need to do more work with French people that you capture. Capture several hundred or several thousand of them every year and then, once you have educated them, release them. Hold on to the ones you have not been able to educate and continue to educate them. Divide them into groups and send them back one after another. Naturally, some of them will keep fighting you. If you happen to capture them, then send them back. If you capture them a third time, then send them back again. This way you will build trust and so the soldiers who fight you on the battlefield will be willing to give up their weapons. In this way, the scope for building solidarity is larger and the scope of attack is smaller and so the number of people sympathizing with us grew. You will need to keep educating your cadres every day for a long time so that they will understand the great importance of winning over the majority and to making the enemy fall apart.

This is China's experience. You will have to decide which parts of it are useful to you and which are not. You have your own specific characteristics. We don't want you to blindly copy our experiences.