

## **September 4, 1958**

### **Anastas Mikoyan's Recollections of his Trip to China**

#### **Citation:**

"Anastas Mikoyan's Recollections of his Trip to China", September 4, 1958, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Provided to the National Security Archive/Svetlana Savranskaya by Sergo Mikoyan. With permission of the National Security Archive. Translated by Sergey Radchenko. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/121774>

#### **Summary:**

Anastas Mikoyan gives a very detailed summary of his trip to China, to secretly hold talks with Mao Zedong. Begins with a summary of his trip, and choice of delegation members, and his living conditions while visiting with Mao. Describes talks with Mao, which covered a large range of topics, including Mao's divergence of opinion on American imperialism as compared to Stalin's, the CCP's lack of influence in China's cities, and Stalin's advice to arrest two Americans, including Sidney Rittenberg, who were "obvious American spies." Mao does not agree, eventually arrests spy suspects, and Mikoyan notes that after Stalin's death, USSR admitted to having no rationale or evidence for the spy allegations.

#### **Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

#### **Original Language:**

Russian

#### **Contents:**

Translation - English

Version 1

Draft.

(Dictated on 4 September 1958)

At the end of 1948 there was an exchange of opinions with Mao Zedong about his visit to Moscow. Such a visit was appropriate, and there was readiness to receive him to discuss questions regarding the Chinese revolution and Sino-Soviet issues.

At the time military operations of the Chinese Communists were developing at a fast pace and in the favorable direction; decisive battles were being fought in northern China, and it was clear that a revolutionary government would be formed in the liberated territory. Therefore, at a meeting of the CC [Central Committee] Politburo, when the question of replying to Mao Zedong concerning the timing of his visit was being discussed, Stalin expressed the consideration that it was probably inappropriate to have Mao Zedong visit now, when he is in the role of a party leader [because] he, probably, would need to come incognito. This would pull him away from leading events on the ground at a decisive moment. It would be more appropriate to postpone his visit by a few months, i.e. until the moment when the Chinese revolutionary government is formed, in which case he would be able to come as the head of the Chinese revolutionary government. But so as not to postpone the discussion of current questions of interest to the Chinese comrades, it was deemed appropriate to send one of the Politburo members to China for discussion of necessary questions with Mao Zedong and the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party.

At this meeting on January 14, 1949 Stalin dictated a draft telegram to Mao Zedong (attached), where he expressed the motives for the appropriateness of the delay of his visit to Moscow until a government is formed in China, where it was said that the CC VKP(b) [All-Russia Communist Party (Bolsheviks)] was ready to send a responsible member of the Politburo to discuss questions.

After some time we received the agreement of Mao Zedong to this proposal. Stalin proposed that I go to China, to which I, of course, gave my agreement.

In order to have minimal difficulties during the talks in China and be better prepared I jotted down a list of possible questions, which the Chinese could raise before us, thought about possible answers on my part and asked Stalin, not at the meeting, but one-on-one, to hear me out as to what questions could be raised by the Chinese, and how I plan to answer them, and whether it would be correct, and how to do it better. I motivated it by the fact that it would be difficult to continuously ask for Moscow's instructions every time the Chinese raise a question before us during the talks. It would be good, for those questions that can be foreseen, to have a position ahead of time, whereas the unforeseen and other questions can be agreed upon through the cypher communications, and resolved in the course of the discussions.

Stalin agreed and we discussed with him for more than an hour these 17 questions, which were jotted down by me. This list of questions survived (attached).

The Chinese, of course, gave their agreement to my visit and pointed out the place of possible landing of the Soviet plane (former Japanese aerodrome, captured by the Communists near Shijiazhuang).

It was agreed that no one should know about my trip to China. I left on January 26, 1949 from Moscow on the Si-47 plane.

Stalin was personally interested in who would be my interpreter. He was afraid lest

this be a politically unreliable person. Therefore he entrusted [Georgii] Malenkov to find a reliable Chinese interpreter through the CC apparatus. CC offered the candidacy of [E.] Kovalev who was a worker in the CC apparatus [responsible] for China. I asked him to come over so as to talk to him and receive his agreement to the trip to China. He began to refuse. First, he said that he does not speak Chinese fluently and proposed that instead of him I take c. [Nikolai] Fedorenko, who used to work in the USSR Embassy in China. I did not know c. Fedorenko at the time, whereas Malenkov gave a good recommendation for Kovalev and I decided to insist on the trip of Kovalev instead of replacing him with Fedorenko, otherwise Stalin could incorrectly judge this and treat it with suspicion. I started to ask what other motives Kovalev had for refusing the trip, other than his knowledge of Chinese. I thought that he was objecting out of modesty – probably he knew the language. Then he started to cite some kind of family circumstances, that he wanted to get married or something like that. I said that this cannot be ruled out, that we are going on a trip of no longer than one week, and he'll have the time to do that. Then he started saying that he cannot fly in an airplane. I began to shame him, a young worker of the CC: how can a young party member keep his face when refusing this matter, [when] an older comrade is planning to fly and is not afraid. After considerable pressure he, at last, was forced to agree and was marked down to come along with me.

Then Stalin proposed to take along the former Minister of Railways [Ivan] Kovalev who was at some point removed from that position for some household omissions (it seems, the building of a dacha). Stalin proposed then to judge him in the court of honor but it was later cancelled. Stalin asked to take him along so that he learns something, and later send him to China as our representative with the Chinese CC.

Kovalev was poorly prepared politically, and did not have the appropriate experience and preparedness, but he was a good man. This is how it was done.

In China there were two doctors at the time, attached to Mao Zedong – workers of the Soviet army. They treated Mao Zedong and his wife and maintained the liaison. They had a small radio, through which they maintained liaison with Khabarovsk. One of these doctors, the Communist Terebin [Andrei Orlov], who had the main role, later died in an air crash while returning from a vacation in Sochi.

The other doctor was Mel'nikov, who was not a party member, and did not have great significance. They had a cypher. They could encode and decode [messages], and we had to use that.

On the way we spent the night in Chita, where we arrived at 6 in the evening. The secretary of the Oblast Committee Golubov greeted us. At 1am we flew onward.

Stalin proposed a pilot for this responsible trip, a talented civilian pilot, now major general Grachev. The Siberian route was then poorly equipped. Grachev was an experienced, talented pilot and delivered us in Khabarovsk all and well. We were greeted by [Rodion] Malinovsky, the head of the [military] district, and by others.

I was travelling under the banner of a trip for fishery-related affairs in the Kurile Islands and Kamchatka, formally. This is what I told Malinovsky and the others. So they knew that from the port I took the direction of Port Arthur. I did not tell them but they guessed about [the real purpose of] my trip.

It was agreed that in Port Arthur no one must know about my trip except for the commander of the aviation corps because Belov was instructed not to inform.

When we arrived in Port Arthur, we were put up at a former Japanese dacha. We had to wait for 24 hours, while communications were being established.

At the time we were supposed to fly across the Zhili bay in the vicinity of the city of Sh..... [sic], which is to the Southeast of Beijing (400-500 km). The Soviet fighter planes accompanied our plane until the territory of Eastern China. At the time there was an American naval airbase in Qingdao, with radar, which we were to fly by at [the distance of] 100 km. Therefore, there was a danger that they could intercept and down us. Moreover, at the time Taiyuqin [sic; ed. note—perhaps Taiyuan] was encircled (so to speak), the Americans were providing the besieged with help and American planes flew to this region across the liberated Chinese territory.

Therefore we hedge-hopped so as to avoid the orbit of the locator rays, so that the Americans do not capture a Soviet plane over Chinese territory. It was agreed that there would be a fire burning on the aerodrome. We searched briefly, waited, then, finally, fire was lit, and Grachev landed very successfully. There were Chinese guerillas on the aerodrome. The aerodrome was not operational but the landing strip was in order. We were met on the aerodrome by the doctors, Zhu De, Ren Bishi, Shi Zhe. The plane was immediately dispatched to the region of Dalian, as it was feared that the Americans would bomb the plane on the aerodrome. We agreed that when it was necessary the plane would fly to the same place.

From there, in a trophy Willys [Jeep], captured by the Communists from the Chiang Kaishekists, we proceeded to the main headquarter of the party CC and the revolutionary committee – Xinxibo [sic, should be Xibaipo]. This was about 160-170 km from the airport, in a mountain canyon. Approximately half the road the landscape was more or less flat, very dusty. They said that it had not rained for about two months, it was dry. It was not cold, a bright winter sun was shining. They said that it was the Chinese New Year, which will last for 5-6 days, and the Chinese had the custom of paying visits from village to village. Especially all the married girls visit their parents on this day. A large crowd of bypassers was lightly dressed. Clothes made from white calico, pants and shirt. The majority – barefooted. There was a lot of dust, so many had their mouths and noses protected by gauze masks. Many carried children in their arms. Very rarely we came across coaches with a horse or one buffalo. This was a rare exception. I was struck by the fact that there were family cemeteries everywhere with coniferous, evergreen trees planted over. And this is when China is lacking land. The lack of common cemeteries and the existence of family cemeteries does damage to the peasantry. This is a fact that strikes.

In one of the towns near to Xinxibo [sic, Xibaipo], which we passed, I was struck by another fact. At the point of entry of the town, there are 7-8 lavatories on either side of the gates, made from baked brick, which belong to private owners. The profit is that the owners use the feces from these lavatories to fertilize fields. The more the fertilizers the better the harvest. So in pursuit of fertilizers they built a lot of lavatories, more than needed, and this is striking. On the market they were selling some kinds of nut, winter varieties of pear, some sweets from nuts and peanuts. Nothing more. The poverty was great, and there were a lot of people.

On the way we stopped for a break. Com. Zhu De treated us. We prepared tea in an ordinary tin teapot. We drank tea and ate the local winter varieties of pear, very juicy. With tea we were served Chinese-made candy instead of sugar. The Chinese drink tea without sugar, and the candy were carried especially for us. We were served black tea, and not green, which the Chinese usually drink.

In the afternoon we arrived at our destination, [and] I was taken to a peasant house where Mao Zedong lived. Houses had flat roofs, with about two rooms, with a yard, which was surrounded by a tall fence in the oriental style. [Mao's] house was made of clay, the yard was small, 1-2 trees had been planted, so one could walk about. This is where Mao Zedong met us.

He worked in one room, which was something like his office, where members of the Politburo gathered. This is where we had our first meeting. Windows had no glass. There was oiled paper, and the whole village was like that. Therefore the rooms were lit badly. Instead of the door there was a curtain, a kind of a quilted blanket, which had to be raised in order to enter. It left many gaps, therefore such a curtain does not protect from cold that much. His rooms were unheated. He went about in a half-length coat (sheep skin on the inside, cloth on the outside), also warm trousers.

I had to sit and talk with a coat over my shoulders – it was that cold.

The adjacent room had Mao Zedong's family – wife and daughter, whom we saw and became acquainted with in the evening, when [we?] were invited to a supper together with the members of the Politburo.

A different house was reserved for us – two rooms. I was in one room, c. Kovalev was in the other one. Then, the main work was to put together telegrams and cyphers. These houses are like Korean fanzas. The heating is under the floor. In addition, they added pig iron stoves inside the rooms, so that we don't feel cold due to not being accustomed. It was comfy, good, warm. I stayed there for 9 days. I had a plan to finish matters in 7 days and to leave but when the time for departure came, Mao Zedong started to ask that I stay for another 2-3 days, so that we have more conversations, although in essence everything was finished and one could sense it, but in view of Mao Zedong's insistence I informed Moscow and received agreement to stay for another two days, as Mao Zedong requested.

I was struck by one circumstance in the conditions of work and livelihood of the leading comrades of the Chinese Communist Party.

In Moscow we suffered from Stalin's habits. He went to bed at 4-5 o'clock in the morning. During the summer he got up a bit earlier, 12-2 in the afternoon, in the middle of the day, but usually – at 6 or 7 in the evening. But as our [government] agencies work normally, and as Stalin invited us every day to join him for supper at night, and we had to be at work at least by 11-12am, so it was a big burden.

One can go without enough sleep for 1-2 days but it's impossible systematically. We suffered a lot, because one could not fail to come to work. On the other hand, one could not fail to come to Stalin, or to leave early. We had an inescapable, difficult situation. I never supposed that the Chinese comrades are in the same situation here, in the mountains. But it turned out that Mao Zedong stays up until 4-5 in the morning, gets up at 2-3 in the afternoon. Therefore he said that the conversations will take place daily starting from 4 in the afternoon, and in the morning the talks will be conducted by Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and others, on various questions.

I finished conversations with Mao usually at night, at 12-1 o'clock at night, I had the most regular living pattern [rezhim], which one could never attain in Moscow. I got up at 8-9 in the morning, often walked about in the mountains. Our village was in a mountain canyon. There were about 10 minor villages within the radius of half-a-kilometer.

One of the meeting was scheduled for ten in the morning. I waited for Zhou Enlai for about half an hour, did not know what the problem was. After arrival he immediately began to apologize: he was late because he only finished his conversation with Mao Zedong at 5 in the morning and did not get enough sleep, he just barely got up. I asked him – is this the first time or is it a common phenomenon? He said that this is how it usually was. I understood the situation of Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and others, and thought how difficult it was for them to handle this pattern [rezhim].

Members of the Politburo Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De (Taibi /?/) [sic], [and] Ren Bishi were present at conversations with Mao Zedong.

On our part, both Kovalevs were present at conversations. There was an embarrassment with our interpreter [E.] Kovalev. As soon as we began the conversation with Mao Zedong, suddenly the interpreter Kovalev could not interpret, started stammering. I asked what the problem was. He said that Mao Zedong spoke with a Beijing dialect [sic, in fact Hunan], and he studied the Shanghai [dialect]. I was in a silly situation. It was good that Mao Zedong's secretary was Shi Zhe, who met us at the aerodrome. He knew Russian wonderfully. True, he had a strong accent, and it did not come out too well in Russian, but the meaning was conveyed excellently. He lived in Russia for almost 16 years, worked in the organs of the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs, sic, in fact NKVD]. In Moscow he left a Russian wife and two children. So he became the interpreter, which was, of course, inconvenient. We did not have our own interpreter, as Stalin had wanted. But there was no loss, because Shi Zhe was an honest interpreter.

I instructed Kovalev to write down the content of the conversations. But he had no experience. Therefore, no full record of the conversations was left.

During the conversations with Mao Zedong, we were constantly served tea in Chinese ceramic cups with tin lids. Mao Zedong continuously walked about the room, sipped the tea and when the tea ran low the servant added [more] tea. The others were served tea as well. He smoked a lot. He was calm [and] reserved. Sometimes he got carried away, spoke with inspiration. The first two days he introduced [us] to the course of history of the Chinese revolution and the fractional struggle within the Chinese Communist party. Then, in later meetings, he also occasionally returned to these questions of the history of the Chinese Communist Party, how difficult it was for him to struggle against the leftist and the rightist deviations, how the party was broken due to the activity of Wang Ming, and the army was decimated, how the mistakes were then corrected, how these fractionists destroyed the cadres of the Chinese Communists, and that he barely made it out alive, he was arrested, they wanted to destroy him, but since the time when they managed to expose Wang Ming and Wang Jiaxiang, he is working well with his comrades, put an end to the destruction of the party cadres, he was and remains a supporter of tolerance within the party, one should not expel from the CC for differences, one should not prosecute. For instance, Wang Ming who played a bad role is on the CC and stays in the region of CC headquarters, though he does not do any work but in fact he remains a member of the CC.

He spoke in great detail about the mistakes of Wang Ming. It seems that he wanted to check, how we feel about him, whether we are attempting to rely on him and to listen to his advice.

Before my departure from Moscow Stalin told me about their [Mao's] differences with Wang Ming, and that one should not meet with him. I did not want to meet with Wang Ming and did not make any attempt to do it.

Then the conversation turned to the theme of contemporary questions. The main things that deserved attention at the time, was recounted by me in cyphers to the CC. We had a small radio, one person did the encoding, so we had a very limited volume of exchange. We reported the main things that could interest our CC, and had a great significance for our Politburo.

On some questions I asked for instructions from Moscow, and, one should say, that I precisely immediately received responses to my questions. Later, when I returned, comrades told me that at the meetings every day Stalin read my cyphers aloud and they were discussed, therefore in essence every time, when this was needed, I

received necessary answers to questions.

Regarding the question of attitude towards the Americans and the English there were divergences in the conversations between the advice given by Stalin before [my] departure and the opinion of Mao Zedong. And it was already clear that Mao Zedong was more correct here than Stalin. And now this is all the more clear. Stalin used to say that one should not immediately sharpen relations with the Americans, that the Chinese Communists should direct the sharp points of [their] weapons against the English, because they are a colonial power, which is occupying Chinese territory – Hong Kong, and are, of course, pursuing imperialistic interests, which are at variance with the Chinese national interests.

American imperialism, by contrast, has almost no colonies, especially in China. It acts by other means: dollars, economic and political enslavement, and not by means of direct colonial robbery.

From the general point of view, this argument is correct. Moreover, Stalin added [Franklin D.] Roosevelt reasoning, who spoke out against colonial powers and colonial possessions, who believed that colonies should be liquidated, so that there is economic competition, free trade and so on. This corresponded to the interests of the Americans, as America appeared on the world market when all colonies had already been distributed, and with the liquidation of the colonial system, the Americans could find their way into all markets, which is what happened outside the borders of the socialist camp. Now America is squeezing out and taking over positions of the French, the English, and other imperialist states. Stalin based himself on this concept. When he told me about this in Moscow, I thought he was saying the right thing. But when I spoke about this to Mao Zedong, he brought forward other, more convincing arguments and first and foremost one particularity that Stalin did not take into consideration and which was taken into consideration by Mao Zedong.

Mao Zedong said that in general this is, perhaps, correct, but keeping in mind the concrete situation of China, this will be incorrect, because American imperialist supports Chiang Kaishek, invested so much money in Chiang Kaishek's reactionary regime, that the Americans are unlikely to reconcile themselves to Chiang Kaishek's defeat, they will continue to support him. Therefore the Chinese Communists must direct their sharp points against American imperialism, because this is the greatest danger. They did not consider the English to be the main danger.

The argument that England is occupying Hong Kong is a serious one. But the Chinese did not want to take it, they wanted to leave it for a time, to exercise patience with England's possession of Kong Kong, they believed the English will treat them better. This will deter the English. Stalin was trying to get the Chinese to defeat Chiang Kaishek and capture Hong Kong.

Our discussion continued well so I did not engage in sharp argument, and when he recounted his position, and I did not insist on mine, because [his] arguments in this particular case were correct.

On a series of other questions, on which I will touch below, I thought then and think today that Mao Zedong did not have a completely correct position but [then] adopted a more correct position. This concerns, first, that to my question when Mao Zedong thinks to capture the main industrial centers of China – Nanjing, Shanghai, etc. – he said that he was not in a hurry to do that, it seems that he said that one needed 2-3 years for attaining victory (compare with the cyphers that reflect this).

With this he cited the argument that they were avoiding taking large cities, but are trying to capture countryside regions. For instance, they do not want to take

Shanghai. Shanghai is a large city but the Chinese Communist Party has no cadres. The Communist Party is mainly made up of peasants, in Shanghai the Communist organization is weak. Finally, Shanghai is a province, it uses imported materials and fuel. And if they capture Shanghai, there will be no supply of fuel, the industry will stop, there will be unemployment, which will worsen the situation of the population. They need to prepare cadres, which they started at one point. When the cadres are ready they will occupy Shanghai and Nanjing. I challenged him: first, the faster they occupy the cities the better – cadres will grow up in the struggle. Sooner or later the question about materials for Shanghai will come up. But the occupation of Shanghai will seriously weaken Chiang Kaishek, give a proletarian basis to the Communists.

Secondly. It seemed to me that Mao Zedong did not pay sufficient attention to the significance of the proletarian layer in the membership of the Communist Party, and [his] attention to the city and to the working class was weaker than to the peasantry, that these were old mistakes, when the Communist Party and the Army were operating in the mountains, far from workers' centers, but now the time has changed, but the attitude towards workers remains the same.

Perhaps add:

One can see from the memoranda of conversations that, for instance, Mao Zedong "stressed with satisfaction that the Communist Party enjoys undivided loyalty in the countryside, it has no competitors there. In this the Communists were aided by Chiang Kaishek by his policy with regard to the peasantry. Cities are a different matter. Here, whereas among the students, the Communist Party has strong influence, among the working class the Guomindang is stronger than the Communist Party. For instance, in Shanghai, after the victory over Japan, when the Communist Party operated legally, its influence extended to about 200 thousand workers out of 500 thousand – the rest followed the Guomindang."

Characteristic in this respect was also this statement by Mao Zedong: "The Chinese peasants are more conscientious than all American and many English workers."

Further, guided by Stalin's instruction, I was trying to persuade Mao Zedong not to postpone the formation of a revolutionary government of China, to create it quickly, on the basis of a coalition, which will be profitable. Say, after the capture of Nanjing or Shanghai, to proclaim the new revolutionary government of China. This would be profitable in the international respect, after this they would act not as guerillas but as a revolutionary government, and this would facilitate the subsequent struggle with Chiang Kaishek.

Mao Zedong believed that one should not be in a hurry to create a government, he said that they were better off without a government, if there is a government, there will be a coalition, and this means that one has to hold oneself to account before other parties for one's actions, and this will introduce complications, and for now they were acting as a revolutionary committee, which did not depend on parties, though they maintained liaison with them. This helped to clear the country from the counterrevolutionary elements. So they were not in a hurry to move to Beijing, but I was telling him that it was necessary to move to Beijing as soon as possible. He insisted in this matter (compare the record with the cypher).

I should note that Stalin told me before my departure that one should take along a specialist in secret bugging devices, because he assumed that the Americans before they leave Beijing, will leave a spy network, and will have secret bugging devices in the buildings occupied by the government, and everything that will be said at the meetings will be known to them. In order to prevent this from taking place, he sent with me two specialists in uncovering the presence of bugging devices, and also disguised time bombs. A few days after the talks began I introduced our specialists



Levkin and Podovinnikov. Mao Zedong was very glad, thanked Stalin, saying that in terms of uncovering bugging devices they had no experience whatsoever.

Just about that time Beijing was liberated, so then I offered that before the government moves to Beijing, our specialists would go to Beijing and check all the offices, which were to be taken over by the government, from the point of view of presence of bugging devices.

Mao Zedong sent his eldest son with them. He was brought up in Russia and spoke good Russian. He went to Beijing with our comrades to check the government buildings.

Stalin always had a spymania, thought there were spies all around, that they can get into every place, do anything; he feared that there were American and English spies close to the Chinese leadership, and he gave me the instruction to find out if there were any Americans or Englishmen near the Chinese. He instructed me to check seriously, to find out, and to report. I asked our two comrades who were there. They said that there were two Americans, one of whom – [Sidney] Rittenberg – worked in the editing office of the central [publishing] organ of the Chinese Communist Party CC, had been with the Communist Party for several years – 2 or 3 years, and the other – professor – lived in some city and conducted scientific work (medicine or agriculture). They both benefited from good attitude of the Chinese leadership, enjoyed trust, etc.

I conveyed this information to Moscow. I received an instruction from Stalin to report to Mao Zedong about this and advise to arrest the Americans as obvious spies. I, of course, carried out everything to the letter. Mao Zedong asks: where did we get this, he knows them as honest people. I began to challenge [him], he said: how do you know they are spies, we don't have [such] information, this cannot be true – in a word [I] was trying to persuade him, etc. I could never persuade him, and I reported to Moscow about this, and received a new instruction, to insist. I went for the second time, the Chinese were not pleased, did not understand us, why we had to interfere in their concrete affairs, why we were more interested than the Chinese themselves. This made an unfavorable impression on them. On the other hand, I had a firm instruction from Stalin. This introduced some kind of coolness into our conversations, but other conversations were in a very good, comradely tone.

The Americans were not arrested before my departure. But then they thought that Stalin would get offended, and arrested them. And only after Stalin's death we informed the Chinese that we don't have any information and any rationale for keeping them under arrest.

Of course, I said that there was an instruction from Moscow but did not complain about Stalin, but defended my position myself. But all of that left an unfavorable impression [nepriyatnyi osadok] on Mao Zedong. I was not sure about my own rightness, but I had to do what I had been instructed to do by the CC.

About Port Arthur

Mao Zedong said that he had been visited by one woman – a bourgeois politician – who raised the question to the effect that when the revolutionary government of China comes to power, the Soviet Union will not have any reason to keep the military-naval base at Port Arthur, and that for China to return this base would be a great thing.

Mao Zedong said that this is incorrect, that we are Communists and this does not rule out, but actually allows, that there be a Soviet base in Port Arthur. Therefore, they,

the Chinese Communists, stand for keeping this base in place. The American imperialism sits in China for oppression, but the Soviet Union sits in Port Arthur for protection from Japanese fascism. When China is sufficiently strong that it can protect itself from Japanese aggression, then the USSR will itself no longer need the base in Port Arthur.

Stalin, in my opinion, understood this opinion perfectly well. He said that we consider that one does not need a base in Port Arthur if the government of China is Communist. In his telegram for Mao Zedong dated February 5, 1949, he declared:

"... With the coming to power of the Chinese communists, the situation in the country cardinally changes. The Soviet government has made a decision to cancel this unequal treaty and withdraw its forces from Port Arthur as soon as the peace with Japan had been signed and, as consequently, American forces leave Japan. But if the Chinese Com[munist] Party considers it expedient to have the forces withdrawn immediately, the USSR is prepared to carry out this wish of the CCP."

Mao Zedong insisted on his way, though I knew even before that he was incorrect but I thought that, maybe, he is doing it for tactical reasons.

About Xinjiang

This question also has interest (check the telegram on this matter).

Mao Zedong introduced the proposal to build a railroad between China and the USSR across Xinjiang or, as Ren Bishi offered, across Mongolia. Later, when this question was being discussed in Moscow, Stalin expressed himself to the effect that the road should be built across Mongolia, because it was already a people's republic, and it was shorter and cheaper, and in second turn, to build the road across Xinjiang.

\*\*\*

Mao Zedong said all the time that they were waiting for instructions, leadership, and help from the CC CPSU. I replied that the CC of our party cannot interfere in the activity of the CC of the Chinese Communist Party, each of our parties is independent, we can only offer advice, when we are asked for it, but we cannot give instructions.

Mao Zedong persevered, he said that he was waiting for instructions and leadership from our CC, because they have little experience, he purposefully understated his role, his significance as a Marxist and as a leader, he said that he was just Stalin's pupil, that he does not attach significance to his theoretical works, as he did not bring anything new to Marxism, etc.

This, I think, was an oriental manner of showing timidity but this did not correspond in reality to what Mao Zedong was, and what he thought about himself. I understood it then, and understand it now, and Stalin understood this well, when this was reported to him.

During the daytime there were several conversations on economic, financial [and] agricultural questions, on questions of China's transport. We wanted to find out what is happening in China, how they manage... [sic, the remainder of the document is missing].