

**COMRADE MAO TSE-TUNG
ON "IMPERIALISM AND
ALL REACTIONARIES ARE
PAPER TIGERS"**

Renmin Ribao (People's Daily) Editorial Department

(October 27, 1958)

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING 1966

First Edition 1958
Second Edition (First Revised Translation) 1961
First Pocket Edition 1963
Third Edition (Second Revised Translation) 1966

HOW to assess the forces of revolution and the forces of reaction is still a major problem in China and in the whole world as well. A lot of people have never been able to do this correctly. Imperialism and its lackeys in all countries are like the setting sun in the western sky, while socialism and the national revolutionary movements which have its support are like the rising sun in the eastern sky. This is the characteristic of our times. The days when the imperialists could ride roughshod where they pleased are gone for ever and they are on their last legs. It is the reactionaries that should fear the revolutionary forces, and not the other way round. At present, there are quite a few people who still fail to see this, who still cherish blind faith and illusions, who still stand in awe of imperialism, U.S. imperialism in particular. They still remain passive in face of this problem. All progressives, all Marxists and revolutionaries must do some persuading among these people so as to help the broad masses gain revolutionary confidence and determination, revolutionary foresight and firmness. This is an indispensable spiritual condition for accelerating the triumphant advance of the revolutionary cause.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has often told us that in considering a problem, one must grasp its essentials and not be misled by superficialities. During the last thirty-odd years, at every crucial moment in the class struggle in our country, Comrade Mao Tse-tung has made a penetrating analysis of the situation of the struggle on the basis of the science of Marxism-Leninism, and has shown that all reactionaries are

Printed in the People's Republic of China

doomed and the revolutionary cause is bound to triumph. He uses the term "paper tiger" to describe imperialism and the reactionary forces which seem to be powerful but are actually weak; he uses the old saying "A single spark can start a prairie fire" to symbolize the new-born forces growing up day by day in the course of revolution, and on the basis of this estimation maps out his strategic plans. Comrade Mao Tse-tung's idea, that the forces of revolution are invincible and that the reactionary forces, though temporarily powerful, are bound to come to grief, has armed the Chinese Communists, educated and inspired the Chinese people and led us to our great victories. This wise thesis of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, that "imperialism and all reactionaries are paper tigers", has already been borne out by the victory of the Chinese revolution and will continue to be borne out by the successful development of the cause of revolution in China and the whole world.

The editorial department of the fortnightly *Shijie Zhishi* (World Culture) has recently collected and published excerpts from the articles, speeches and talks of Comrade Mao Tse-tung on the theme that "imperialism and all reactionaries are paper tigers". This is a matter of political significance. It is very valuable for the people's fight against imperialist aggression and oppression, especially that of U.S. imperialism. We publish here the material collected, with the addition of some important related materials and some stylistic changes and re-paragraphing.

The material falls into three parts. The first part deals with the idea that imperialism and all reactionaries representing the moribund forces have no future, and that their momentary rampancy means nothing but their last dying kicks. The second part points out that imperialism and all

reactionaries are outwardly strong but inwardly weak, and there is every reason for the revolutionaries to despise them, yet at the same time they must take full account of them in each specific struggle. The third part describes the essential features of the current international situation, in which the East wind prevails over the West wind, or in other words, the forces of socialism have surpassed those of imperialism. Although most of these articles, speeches and talks have already been published and only a small part has not appeared before, although they range over a period of twenty years and are published in the form of a collection of excerpts, they read like a fresh and integrated political essay. That is because the fundamental contradiction between imperialism and its lackeys on the one hand and the peoples of all lands on the other has not yet been resolved, and because, as U.S. imperialism is showing all its aggressiveness and threatening world peace with an atomic war, the oppressed and menaced people — pre-occupied by this tense situation — urgently demand the resolution of this contradiction. That is why readers are naturally interested in Comrade Mao Tse-tung's discussion on this question of whether or not imperialism and all reactionaries are paper tigers, which is the primary and major issue in the manifold problems relating to the resolution of this contradiction.

I

In *On New Democracy*, a work of historic significance published in January 1940, Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out that capitalism has reached the stage of decay and death while communism is "sweeping the world with the momentum of an avalanche and the force of a thunderbolt":

Communism is at once a complete system of proletarian ideology and a new social system. It is different from any other ideology or social system, and is the most complete, progressive, revolutionary and rational system in human history. The ideological and social system of feudalism has a place only in the museum of history. The ideological and social system of capitalism has also become a museum piece in one part of the world (in the Soviet Union), while in other countries it resembles "a dying person who is sinking fast, like the sun setting beyond the western hills", and will soon be relegated to the museum. The communist ideological and social system alone is full of youth and vitality, sweeping the world with the momentum of an avalanche and the force of a thunderbolt.

In *On New Democracy*, Comrade Mao Tse-tung further pointed out that the unbridled violence of all reactionaries representing the decaying forces means their last dying kicks:

The unbridled violence of all the forces of darkness, whether domestic or foreign, has brought disaster to our nation; but this very violence indicates that while the forces of darkness still have some strength left, they are already in

their death throes, and that the people are gradually approaching victory. This is true of China, of the whole East and of the entire world.

On June 17, 1945, addressing a memorial meeting for martyrs in the Chinese revolution, Comrade Mao Tse-tung declared that the more reactionary the reactionaries, the nearer they are to their doom:

All reactionaries try to stamp out revolution by mass murder, thinking that the greater their massacre, the weaker the revolution. But contrary to this reactionary wishful thinking, the fact is that the more the reactionaries resort to massacre, the greater the strength of the revolution and the nearer the reactionaries approach their doom. This is an inexorable law.

On November 6, 1957, at the meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. celebrating the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

The socialist system will eventually replace the capitalist system. This is an objective law independent of man's will. No matter how much the reactionaries try to hold back the wheel of history, sooner or later revolution will take place and will undoubtedly triumph. The Chinese saying, "Lifting a rock only to drop it on one's own feet", describes the behaviour of certain fools. The reactionaries in all countries are fools of this kind. Their persecutions of the revolutionary people will inevitably result in arousing the people to wider and more intense revolution. Did not the persecutions of the revolutionary people perpetrated by the Russian tsar and by Chiang Kai-shek serve only to stimulate the great Russian, and the great Chinese, revolutions?

In a speech entitled *New-Democratic Constitutional Government* delivered on February 20, 1940 before the Yen-an Association for the Promotion of Constitutional Government, Comrade Mao Tse-tung exposed Chiang Kai-shek's deceitful propaganda that he would establish a constitutional government and showed that in the end the reactionaries "always get the opposite of what they want":

The die-hards of the world may be die-hards today and remain so tomorrow and even the day after, but not for ever; in the end they will have to change. Wang Ching-wei,¹ for example, was a die-hard for a very long time, yet he could not keep on acting the die-hard within the anti-Japanese ranks and had to go over to the Japanese. Chang Kuo-tao,² to take another example, was also a die-hard for a very long time, but he, too, took to his heels after we held a number of meetings and struggled repeatedly against him. Actually, the die-hards may be hard, but they are not hard unto death, and in the end they change—into something filthy and contemptible, like dog's dung. Some change for the better and that is also the result of our repeated struggles against them— they come to see their mistakes and change for the better. In short, die-hards do change eventually. They always have many schemes in hand, schemes for profiting at others' expense, for double-dealing, and so on. But they always get the opposite of what they want. They invariably start by doing others harm but end by ruining themselves. We once said that Chamberlain was "lifting a rock only to drop it on his own toes", and this has now come to pass. Chamberlain had set his heart on using Hitler as the rock with which to crush the toes of the Soviet people, but since that September day last year when war broke out between Germany on the one side and Britain and France on the other, the rock

in his hands has fallen on his own toes. To this day he is still smarting from it. Similar instances abound in China. Yuan Shih-kai³ wanted to crush the toes of the common people but in the event hurt himself, and he died just a few months after becoming emperor. Tuan Chi-jui, Hsu Shih-chang, Tsao Kun, Wu Pei-fu and all the rest wanted to repress the people, but finally they were all overthrown by the people. Whoever tries to profit at others' expense will come to no good end.

On April 24, 1945, Comrade Mao Tse-tung delivered his famous political report *On Coalition Government* to the Seventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China. In the section headed "Our Specific Programme" he warned against the attempt of the Kuomintang reactionaries to carry out anti-popular conspiratorial activities by convoking a "national assembly", and predicted that by following this reactionary policy "they are putting a noose round their own necks" and are heading for destruction. Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

The steps our reactionary heroes are preparing to take in line with this splitting policy will probably lead them to destruction. They are putting a noose round their own necks and fastening it there, and this noose is the "national assembly". Their intention is to use the "national assembly" as a magic weapon, first, to prevent the formation of a coalition government, second, to maintain their dictatorship, and third, to prepare a justification of civil war. However, the logic of history runs counter to their wishes, and they will be "lifting a rock only to drop it on their own toes".

In a commentary *On the Danger of the Hurley Policy* that he wrote for the Hsinhua News Agency on July 12, 1945, Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out that the U.S. policy to-

wards China had created the crisis of civil war in China; he warned that the U.S. policy of antagonizing the Chinese people would result in "endless trouble" for the U.S. government and people:

. . . according to the selfsame Hurley, the Kuomintang government represented by Chiang Kai-shek seems to have turned into the Beauty and the Chinese Communist Party into the Beast, and he flatly declared that the United States would co-operate with Chiang Kai-shek only and not with the Chinese Communist Party. This, of course, is not just Hurley's personal view but that of a whole group of people in the U.S. government. It is a wrong and dangerous view. . . . If the Hurley policy continues, the U.S. government will fall irretrievably into the deep stinking cesspool of Chinese reaction; it will put itself in the position of antagonizing the hundreds of millions of awakened and awakening Chinese people and will become a hindrance to the War of Resistance in the present and to world peace in the future. . . . But one thing is certain. If the Hurley policy of aiding and abetting the reactionary forces in China and antagonizing the Chinese people with their immense numbers continues unchanged, it will place a crushing burden on the government and people of the United States and plunge them into endless trouble. This point must be brought home to the people of the United States.

In his concluding speech under the title *The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains*, made on June 11, 1945 at the Seventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

The U.S. government's policy of supporting Chiang Kai-shek against the Communists shows the brazenness of the U.S. reactionaries. But all the scheming of the reactionaries,

whether Chinese or foreign, to prevent the Chinese people from achieving victory is doomed to failure. The democratic forces are the main current in the world today, while reaction is only a counter-current. The reactionary counter-current is trying to swamp the main current of national independence and people's democracy, but it can never become the main current.

The reactionaries are bound to collapse and the revolution is bound to triumph. In his concluding speech at the Seventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Comrade Mao Tse-tung called on the people to build up confidence in the certain triumph of the revolution. He cited the ancient Chinese fable, "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains", to show that provided the revolutionary people have confidence, do not fear the reactionaries and have the determination to persist in the struggle to the very end, the revolution will certainly triumph:

Our aim in propagating the line of the congress is to build up the confidence of the whole Party and the entire people in the certain triumph of the revolution. We must first raise the political consciousness of the vanguard so that, resolute and unafraid of sacrifice, they will surmount every difficulty to win victory. But this is not enough; we must also arouse the political consciousness of the entire people so that they may willingly and gladly fight together with us for victory. We should fire the whole people with the conviction that China belongs not to the reactionaries but to the Chinese people. There is an ancient Chinese fable called "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains". It tells of an old man who lived in northern China long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man of North Mountain.

His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the two great peaks, Taihang and Wangwu, obstructing the way. He called his sons, and hoe in hand they began to dig up these mountains with great determination. Another grey-beard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, "How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you few to dig up these two huge mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?" Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away on their backs. Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too, will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can't these two mountains be cleared away?

In the commentary *Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle* that he wrote for the Hsinhua News Agency on August 14, 1949, Comrade Mao Tse-tung made a very penetrating analysis of the two entirely different kinds of logic governing the development of the reactionary forces and that of the people's forces. He also pointed out that progressives must organize forces in the struggle against the reactionaries and that they must educate, unite and win over all those who are

still wavering and vacillating so as to isolate the reactionaries completely:

How different is the logic of the imperialists from that of the people! Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again . . . till their doom; that is the logic of the imperialists and all reactionaries the world over in dealing with the people's cause, and they will never go against this logic. This is a Marxist law. When we say "imperialism is ferocious", we mean that its nature will never change, that the imperialists will never lay down their butcher knives, that they will never become Buddhas, till their doom.

Fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight again . . . till their victory; that is the logic of the people, and they too will never go against this logic. This is another Marxist law. The Russian people's revolution followed this law, and so has the Chinese people's revolution.

Classes struggle, some classes triumph, others are eliminated. Such is history, such is the history of civilization for thousands of years. To interpret history from this viewpoint is historical materialism; standing in opposition to this viewpoint is historical idealism.

The method of self-criticism can be applied only within the ranks of the people; it is impossible to persuade the imperialists and the Chinese reactionaries to show kindness of heart and turn from their evil ways. The only course is to organize forces and struggle against them, as in our People's War of Liberation and the agrarian revolution, to expose the imperialists, "irritate" them, overthrow them, punish them for offences against the law and "allow them only to behave themselves and not to be unruly in word or deed". Only then will there be any hope of dealing with imperialist foreign countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Only

then will there be any hope that those landlords, bureaucrat-capitalists, members of the reactionary Kuomintang clique and their accomplices, who have laid down their arms and surrendered, can be given education for transforming the bad into the good and be transformed, as far as possible, into good people. Many Chinese liberals — the old-type democratic elements, *i.e.*, the supporters of “democratic individualism”, whom Truman, Marshall, Acheson, Leighton Stuart and the like count on and have been trying to win over — often find themselves in a passive position and are often wrong in their judgements on the U.S. rulers, on the Kuomintang, on the Soviet Union and also on the Communist Party of China. The reason is precisely that they do not look at, or disapprove of looking at, problems from the standpoint of historical materialism.

It is the duty of progressives — the Communists, members of the democratic parties, politically conscious workers, the student youth and progressive intellectuals — to unite with the intermediate strata, middle-of-the-roaders and backward elements of various strata, with all those in People’s China who are still wavering and hesitating (these people will waver for a long time to come and, even after they have once become steady, will waver again as soon as they meet difficulties), give them sincere help, criticize their wavering character, educate them, win them over to the side of the masses, prevent the imperialists from pulling them over and tell them to cast away illusions and prepare for struggle. Let no one think that there is no more work to do now that victory is won. We still have to work, to do a great deal of patient work, before we can truly win these people over. When they are won over, imperialism will be entirely isolated, and Acheson will no longer be able to play any of his tricks.

II

In the editorial *The Turning Point in World War II* that he wrote for the *Liberation Daily*, Yen-an, on October 12, 1942, Comrade Mao Tse-tung analysed the essential nature of the reactionary forces which are outwardly strong but inwardly weak, and reminded the revolutionary people not to be deluded by superficial phenomena. He wrote:

Historically, all reactionary forces on the verge of extinction invariably conduct a last desperate struggle against the revolutionary forces, and some revolutionaries are apt to be deluded for a time by this phenomenon of outward strength but inner weakness, failing to grasp the essential fact that the enemy is nearing extinction while they themselves are approaching victory. The rise of the forces of fascism and the war of aggression they have been conducting for some years are precisely the expression of such a last desperate struggle; and in this present war the attack on Stalingrad is the expression of the last desperate struggle of fascism itself. At this turning point in history, too, many people in the world anti-fascist front have been deluded by the ferocious appearance of fascism and have failed to discern its essence.

The reactionaries are always boasting of their military strength which seems to be powerful. Among the people themselves, there is a certain number who, in varying degrees, fear the military strength of the reactionaries. This is the viewpoint that “weapons decide everything”. In his well-known treatise *On Protracted War* written in May 1938, Comrade Mao Tse-tung made a profound criticism of this viewpoint:

This is the so-called theory that “weapons decide everything”, which constitutes a mechanical approach to the ques-

tion of war and a subjective and one-sided view. Our view is opposed to this; we see not only weapons but also people. Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale. Military and economic power is necessarily wielded by people.

In August 1946, Comrade Mao Tse-tung gave an interview to the American correspondent Anna Louise Strong and put forward his famous thesis that all reactionaries are paper tigers. Following is the full text of the talk:

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

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

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

Mao: More than a year.

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

Mao: He can.

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

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

Strong: How long can the Communist Party keep on?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of course, I do not mean to say that the U.S. reactionaries have no intention of attacking the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is a defender of world peace and a powerful factor preventing the domination of the world by the U.S. reactionaries. Because of the existence of the Soviet Union, it is absolutely impossible for the reactionaries in the United States and the world to realize their ambitions. That is why the U.S. reactionaries rabidly hate the Soviet Union and actually dream of destroying this socialist state. But the fact that the U.S. reactionaries are now trumpeting so loudly about a U.S.-Soviet war and creating a foul atmosphere, so soon after the end of World War II, compels us to take a look at their real aims. It turns out that under the cover of anti-Soviet slogans they are frantically attacking the workers and democratic circles in the United States and turning all the countries which are the targets of U.S. external expansion into U.S. dependencies. I think the American people and the peoples of all countries menaced by U.S. aggression should unite and struggle against the attacks of the U.S. reactionaries and their running dogs in these countries. Only by victory in this struggle can a third world war be avoided; otherwise it is unavoidable.

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

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

All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful. In Russia, before the February Revolution in 1917, which side was really strong? On the surface the tsar was strong but he was swept away by a single gust of wind in the February Revolution. In the final analysis, the strength in Russia was on the side of the Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers. The tsar was just a paper tiger. Wasn't Hitler once considered very strong? But history proved that he was a paper tiger. So was Mussolini, so was Japanese imperialism. On the contrary, the strength of the Soviet Union and of the people in all countries who loved democracy and freedom proved much greater than had been foreseen.

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

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

On December 25, 1947, Comrade Mao Tse-tung delivered the report *The Present Situation and Our Tasks* at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. In this report, he said:

The Communist Party of China, having made a clear-headed appraisal of the international and domestic situation on the basis of the science of Marxism-Leninism, recognized that all attacks by the reactionaries at home and abroad not only had to be defeated but could be defeated. When dark clouds appeared in the sky, we pointed out that this was only temporary, that the darkness would soon pass and the sun break through. When the Chiang Kai-shek bandit gang launched the country-wide counter-revolutionary war in July 1946, they thought it would take them only three to six months to defeat the People's Liberation Army. They reckoned that they had a regular army of two million, more than a million irregulars and another million or more men in the military establishments and armed units in the rear, making a total military strength of more than four million; that they had taken time to complete their preparations for the offensive; that they had regained control of the big cities; that they had a population of more than 300 million; that they had taken over all the equipment of a million Japanese invading troops; and that they had received huge military and financial aid from the U.S. government. They also reckoned that the People's Liberation Army was tired after fighting for eight years in the War of Resistance Against Japan and was far inferior to the Kuomintang army in numbers and equipment; that the population of the Liberated Areas was only a little more than 100 million; and that in most of these areas the reactionary feudal forces had not yet been cleaned up and the land reform had not yet been

universally and thoroughly carried out, namely, that the rear area of the People's Liberation Army had not yet been consolidated. Proceeding from this appraisal, the Chiang Kai-shek bandit gang ignored the Chinese people's desire for peace, finally tore up the truce agreement signed by the Kuomintang and the Communist Party in January 1946 as well as the resolutions adopted by the Political Consultative Conference of all parties and launched an adventurist war. We said then that Chiang Kai-shek's superiority in military forces was only transient, a factor which could play only a temporary role, that U.S. imperialist aid was likewise a factor which could play only a temporary role, while the anti-popular character of Chiang Kai-shek's war and the feelings of the people were factors that would play a constant role, and that in this respect the People's Liberation Army was in a superior position. Patriotic, just and revolutionary in character, the war waged by the People's Liberation Army was bound to win the support of the people of the whole country. That was the political foundation for victory over Chiang Kai-shek. The experience of eighteen months of war has fully confirmed our judgement.

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When the reactionary Chiang Kai-shek clique launched the country-wide civil war against the people in 1946, the reason they dared take this risk was that they relied not merely on their own superior military strength but mainly on the U.S. imperialists with their atom bombs, whom they regarded as "exceptionally powerful" and "matchless in the world". On the one hand, they thought U.S. imperialism could meet their military and financial needs with a stream of supplies. On the other hand, they wildly speculated that "war between the United States and the Soviet Union is in-

evitable" and that "the outbreak of a third world war is inevitable". This dependence on U.S. imperialism is the common feature of the reactionary forces in all countries since World War II. It reflects the severity of the blows world capitalism received in World War II; it reflects the weakness of the reactionary forces in all countries, their panic and loss of confidence; and it reflects the might of the world revolutionary forces — all of which make reactionaries in all countries feel that there is no way out except to rely on U.S. imperialist support. But, in fact, is U.S. imperialism after World War II as powerful as Chiang Kai-shek and the reactionaries of other countries imagine? Can it really pour out a stream of supplies for them? No, that is not so. The economic power of U.S. imperialism, which grew during World War II, is confronted with unstable and daily shrinking domestic and foreign markets. The further shrinking of these markets will cause economic crises to break out. The war boom in the United States of America was only temporary. The strength of the United States of America is only superficial and transient. Irreconcilable domestic and international contradictions, like a volcano, menace U.S. imperialism every day. U.S. imperialism is sitting on this volcano. This situation has driven the U.S. imperialists to draw up a plan for enslaving the world, to run amuck like wild beasts in Europe, Asia and other parts of the world, to muster the reactionary forces in all countries, the human dregs cast off by their peoples, to form an imperialist and anti-democratic camp against all the democratic forces headed by the Soviet Union, and to prepare for war in the hope that in the future, at a distant time, some day, they can start a third world war to defeat the democratic forces. This is a preposterous plan. The democratic forces of the world must

defeat this plan and certainly can defeat it. The strength of the world anti-imperialist camp has surpassed that of the imperialist camp. It is we, not the enemy, who are in the superior position.

In the article *Revolutionary Forces of the World Unite, Fight Against Imperialist Aggression!* which he wrote for the journal *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy* in November 1948, Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out: "It will be a very great mistake to overestimate the enemy's strength and underestimate the strength of the revolutionary forces."

Since the victory of World War II, U.S. imperialism and its running dogs in various countries have taken the place of fascist Germany, Italy and Japan and are frantically preparing a new world war and menacing the whole world; this reflects the utter decay of the capitalist world and its fear of imminent doom. This enemy still has strength; therefore, all the revolutionary forces of each country must unite, and the revolutionary forces of all countries must likewise unite, must form an anti-imperialist united front headed by the Soviet Union and follow correct policies; otherwise, victory will be impossible. This enemy has a weak and fragile foundation, he is disintegrating internally, he is alienated from the people, he is confronted with inextricable economic crises; therefore, he can be defeated. It will be a very great mistake to overestimate the enemy's strength and underestimate the strength of the revolutionary forces.

On January 18, 1948, in the directive *On Some Important Problems of the Party's Present Policy* which he wrote for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to be issued within the Party, Comrade Mao Tse-tung told us that strategically, with regard to the whole, we should take the enemy lightly, while at the same time we should carefully

study and perfect the art of struggle and must take the enemy seriously with regard to each part, each specific struggle:

Oppose overestimation of the enemy's strength. For example: fear of U.S. imperialism; fear of carrying the battle into the Kuomintang areas; fear of wiping out the comprador-feudal system, of distributing the land of the landlords and of confiscating bureaucrat-capital; fear of a long-drawn-out war; and so on. All these are incorrect. Imperialism throughout the world and the rule of the reactionary Chiang Kai-shek clique in China are already rotten and have no future. We have reason to despise them and we are confident and certain that we shall defeat all the domestic and foreign enemies of the Chinese people. But with regard to each part, each specific struggle (military, political, economic or ideological), we must never take the enemy lightly; on the contrary, we should take the enemy seriously and concentrate all our strength for battle in order to win victory. While we correctly point out that, strategically, with regard to the whole, we should take the enemy lightly, we must never take the enemy lightly in any part, in any specific struggle. If, with regard to the whole, we overestimate the strength of our enemy and hence do not dare to overthrow him and do not dare to win victory, we shall be committing a Right opportunist error. If, with regard to each part, each specific problem, we are not prudent, do not carefully study and perfect the art of struggle, do not concentrate all our strength for battle and do not pay attention to winning over all the allies that should be won over (middle peasants, small independent craftsmen and traders, the middle bourgeoisie, students, teachers, professors and ordinary intellectuals, ordinary government employees, professionals and enlightened gentry), we shall be committing a "Left" opportunist error.

On November 18, 1957, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said in his speech at the meeting of representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow:

When Chiang Kai-shek attacked us in 1946, many of our comrades and the people of the whole country were deeply worried about whether the war could be won. I myself was also worried about this. But of one thing we were confident. At that time the American correspondent Anna Louise Strong came to Yen-an. In an interview with her, I discussed many questions, including Chiang Kai-shek, Hitler, Japan, the United States, and the atom bomb. I said that all the reputedly powerful reactionaries were merely paper tigers. The reason was that they were divorced from the people. Was not Hitler a paper tiger? Was Hitler not overthrown? I also said that the Russian tsar, the Chinese emperor and Japanese imperialism were all paper tigers. As we know, they were all overthrown. U.S. imperialism is not yet overthrown and it has the atom bomb. I believe that it also will be overthrown. It is a paper tiger too. Chiang Kai-shek was very powerful; he had more than four million regular troops. We were then in Yen-an. What was the population of Yen-an? Seven thousand. How many troops did we have? We had 900,000 guerrillas, all cut off from one another in scores of base areas by Chiang Kai-shek. But we said Chiang Kai-shek was only a paper tiger and we would certainly defeat him. For the struggle against the enemy, we developed over a long period the concept that strategically we should despise all our enemies, but that tactically we should take them all seriously. This also means that with respect to the whole we should despise the enemy but that with respect to each and every concrete question we must take them seriously. If with respect to the whole

we do not despise the enemy, we shall be committing the error of opportunism. Marx and Engels were only two persons. Yet in those early days they declared that capitalism would be overthrown throughout the world. But in dealing with concrete problems and particular enemies we shall be committing the error of adventurism unless we take them seriously. In war, battles can only be fought one by one and the enemy forces can only be destroyed one by one. Factories can only be built one by one. The peasants can only plough the land plot by plot. The same is true of eating a meal. Strategically, we take the eating of a meal lightly: we know we can finish it. But in the actual process of eating, we do it mouthful by mouthful. It is impossible to swallow an entire banquet in one gulp. This is known as a piecemeal solution. In military parlance, it is called smashing the enemy forces one by one.

III

On November 18, 1957, in a speech at the Moscow meeting of representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties, Comrade Mao Tse-tung analysed the current international situation and pointed out that the socialist forces were surpassing the imperialist forces and that the East wind was prevailing over the West wind:

It is my opinion that the international situation has now reached a new turning point. There are two winds in the world today, the East wind and the West wind. There is a Chinese saying, "Either the East wind prevails over the West wind or the West wind prevails over the East wind." It is characteristic of the situation today, I believe, that the

East wind is prevailing over the West wind. That is to say, the forces of socialism are overwhelmingly superior to the forces of imperialism.

A day earlier, on November 17, Comrade Mao Tse-tung stated in an address to Chinese students studying in the Soviet Union:

The way the wind is blowing in the world has changed. In the struggle between the socialist and the capitalist camps either the West wind prevails over the East wind or the East wind prevails over the West. The world now has a total population of 2,700 million; the socialist countries account for nearly 1,000 million, the independent, formerly colonial countries account for more than 700 million, and the countries now struggling for independence or for complete independence and the capitalist countries with tendencies towards neutralism have 600 million. The population of the imperialist camp is only about 400 million and, what is more, is internally divided. "Earthquakes" will occur in it. Now it is not the West wind that prevails over the East wind but the East wind that prevails over the West wind.

On November 6, 1957, speaking at the meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

In addition to staking their fate on oppressing the people at home and in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the imperialists pin their hopes on war. But what can they expect from war? In the past half century, we have experienced two world wars. After World War I, the Great October Socialist Revolution took place in Russia. And after World War II, revolutions took place in Eastern Europe and in the

East. If the imperialist "heroes" are bent on starting a third world war, the only result will be to hasten the complete destruction of the world capitalist system.

On February 27, 1957, Comrade Mao Tse-tung delivered his speech *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* at the 11th Session (Enlarged) of the Supreme State Conference. In Part 10 of his speech, under the sub-heading "Can Bad Things Be Turned into Good Things?", he said:

People all over the world are now discussing whether or not a third world war will break out. On this question, too, we must be mentally prepared and do some analysis. We stand firmly for peace and against war. But if the imperialists insist on unleashing another war, we should not be afraid of it. Our attitude on this question is the same as our attitude towards any disturbance: first, we are against it; second, we are not afraid of it. The First World War was followed by the birth of the Soviet Union with a population of 200 million. The Second World War was followed by the emergence of the socialist camp with a combined population of 900 million. If the imperialists insist on launching a third world war, it is certain that several hundred million more will turn to socialism, and then there will not be much room left on earth for the imperialists; it is also likely that the whole structure of imperialism will utterly collapse.

In given conditions, each of the two opposing aspects of a contradiction invariably transforms itself into its opposite as a result of the struggle between them. Here, the conditions are essential. Without the given conditions, neither of the two contradictory aspects can transform itself into its opposite. Of all the classes in the world the proletariat is the one which is most eager to change its position, and next

comes the semi-proletariat, for the former possesses nothing at all while the latter is hardly better off. The present situation in which the United States controls a majority in the United Nations and dominates many parts of the world is a temporary one, which will eventually be changed. China's position as a poor country denied her rights in international affairs will also be changed — the poor country will change into a rich one, the country denied its rights into one enjoying its rights — a transformation of things into their opposites. Here, the decisive conditions are the socialist system and the concerted efforts of a united people.

On June 28, 1950, after U.S. imperialism blatantly launched an aggressive war in Korea and invaded China's territory of Taiwan by armed force, Comrade Mao Tse-tung made the following statement at the Eighth Session of the Central People's Government Council:

The Chinese people have long declared that the affairs of each country throughout the world should be conducted by its own people and that Asian affairs should be conducted by the people of Asia and not by the United States. U.S. aggression in Asia will only arouse widespread, resolute resistance from the people of Asia. As recently as January 5 of this year Truman stated that the United States would not interfere in Taiwan. Now he has given the lie to his own statement, and he has torn up all the international agreements regarding non-interference by the United States in the internal affairs of China. Thus the United States has revealed its true imperialist visage and this is useful to the people of China and of all Asia. There is no reason whatsoever for U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of Korea, the Philippines, Viet Nam and other countries. The sympathy

of the people throughout China, as well as of the people throughout the world, is with the victims of aggression, and most decidedly not with U.S. imperialism. The people will not be bought by imperialism, nor will they be intimidated by it. Imperialism is outwardly strong but inwardly weak, because it has no support among the people. People throughout China and the world, unite and fully prepare to defeat all provocations by U.S. imperialism!

On February 14, 1955, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said at the reception given by the Soviet Embassy in China to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance:

With the co-operation between our two great countries, China and the Soviet Union, I am convinced that the aggressive plans of imperialism will be smashed.

It is plain for all to see that with the great co-operation between China and the Soviet Union, there are no imperialist plans for aggression which cannot be smashed. They will undoubtedly all be smashed. Should the imperialists start a war of aggression, we will, together with the people of the whole world, certainly wipe them off the face of the earth.

On September 8, 1958, at the Supreme State Conference, Comrade Mao Tse-tung stated:

The present situation is favourable for the people all over the world fighting for peace.

The general trend is that the East wind is prevailing over the West wind.

U.S. imperialism invaded China's territory of Taiwan and has occupied it for the past nine years. A short while ago it sent its armed forces to invade and occupy the Lebanon. The United States has set up hundreds of military bases in

many countries all over the world. China's territory of Taiwan, the Lebanon, and all the other military bases of the United States on foreign territory are so many nooses around the neck of U.S. imperialism. The nooses have been fashioned by the Americans themselves, and by nobody else, and it is they themselves who put these nooses round their own necks, handing the ends of the ropes to the Chinese people, the peoples of the Arab countries and all the peoples of the world who love peace and oppose aggression. The longer the U.S. aggressors remain in those places, the tighter the nooses round their necks will become.

To achieve their ends of aggression and enslavement of the peoples of all countries, the U.S. imperialists have been creating tension in all parts of the world. They calculate that they will always benefit from tense situations, but the fact is that the tension created by the United States has led to the opposite of what they desire. It serves to mobilize the people of the world against the U.S. aggressors.

If the U.S. monopoly groups persist in their policies of aggression and war, the day is bound to arrive when the people of the whole world will hang them by the neck. The same fate awaits the accomplices of the United States.

On September 29, 1958, Comrade Mao Tse-tung returned to Peking after a tour of inspection in several provinces in the Yangtse valley. In an interview with a Hsinhua News Agency correspondent he said:

Imperialism will not last long, because it consistently commits all sorts of evil. It persists in grooming and supporting reactionaries in all countries who are against the people. It forcibly occupies many colonies and semi-colonies, and it has set up many military bases. It threatens the peace with

atomic warfare. Thus, imperialism has forced more than 90 per cent of the people of the world to rise against it or prepare to fight it. But imperialism is still alive and kicking, still riding roughshod over Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the West the imperialists are still oppressing the people of their own countries. This situation must change. It is the task of the people of the whole world to put an end to the aggression and oppression perpetrated by imperialism, and especially by U.S. imperialism.

NOTES

¹ Wang Ching-wei was a notorious Kuomintang leader and pro-Japanese traitor. He openly surrendered to the Japanese invaders in December 1938 when he was vice-chairman of the Kuomintang and chairman of its People's Political Council. In March 1940 he became president of the puppet central government then formed in Nanking. He died in Japan in November 1944.

² Chang Kuo-tao was a renegade from the Chinese revolution. In early life, speculating on the revolution, he joined the Chinese Communist Party. In the Party he made many mistakes resulting in serious crimes. The most notorious of these was his opposition, in 1935, to the Red Army's northward march and his defeatism and liquidationism in advocating withdrawal by the Red Army to the minority-nationality areas on the Szechuan-Sikang borders (Sikang was originally a province but was annulled in 1955. Now one part of it is under the jurisdiction of Szechuan Province and the other under that of Tibet Autonomous Region); what is more, he openly carried out traitorous activities against the Party and the Central Committee, established his own bogus central committee, disrupted the unity of the Party and the Red Army, and caused heavy losses to the Fourth Front Army of the Red Army. But thanks to patient education by Comrade Mao Tse-tung and the Central Committee, the Fourth Front Army and its numerous cadres soon returned to the correct leadership of the Central Committee of the Party and played a glorious role in subsequent struggles. Chang Kuo-tao,

however, proved incorrigible and in the spring of 1938 he slipped out of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region and joined the Kuomintang secret police.

³ Yuan Shih-kai was the head of the Northern warlords in the last years of the Ching Dynasty. After the Ching Dynasty was overthrown by the Revolution of 1911, he usurped the presidency of the Republic and organized the first government of the Northern warlords, which represented the big landlord and big comprador classes. He did this by relying on counter-revolutionary armed force and on the support of the imperialists and by taking advantage of the conciliationist character of the bourgeoisie, which was then leading the revolution. In 1915 he wanted to make himself emperor and, to gain the support of the Japanese imperialists, accepted the Twenty-one Demands with which Japan aimed at obtaining exclusive control of all China. In December of the same year an uprising against his assumption of the throne took place in Yunnan Province and promptly won nation-wide response and support. Yuan Shih-kai died in Peking in June 1916.