

September 19, 1958

Letter, N. Khrushchev to the CPSU CC Presidium

Citation:

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Summary:

Proposed text of a letter from Nikita Khrushchev to Mao Zedong, reiterating Soviet support for the People's Republic of China in the event of a nuclear attack on the PRC.

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TO THE CPSU CC PRESIDUM

Having familiarized myself with the record of the conversation [between] Cde. Gromyko and Cde. Zhou Enlai which was held in Peking on 7 September, I believe that we ought to express our attitude toward the views expressed by the Chinese friends on the question of Soviet support in the event of an atomic attack on the PRC (see point 3 of the record of this conversation, pp. 8-9). I think that Cde. Zhou Enlai expressed these views to find out how we would react to this.

I am submitting a proposal to prepare a letter to Cde. Mao Zedong on this question.

If the CC Presidium agrees, then such a letter ought to be prepared. I attach my ideas to the text of the letter.

N. KHRUSHCHEV

19 September 1958

Ideas for the text of the letter to Cde. Mao Zedong

Dear Cde. Mao Zedong!

Dear comrades and members of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China!

Cde. Gromyko has informed us of the conversation with Cde. Zhou Enlai which was held in Peking on 7 September. He reported that in his conversation Cde. Zhou Enlai expressed such an opinion in connection with the situation in the region of the Taiwan Strait. (Briefly repeat Zhou Enlai's statements. See pages 8-9 of the record of the conversation).

We have thought much about this question and have decided to tell you our opinion. We highly value the internationalist policy of the Communist Party of China and deeply respect the leaders of the Communist Party of China who firmly take Marxist-Leninist positions. We have no differences with you. We have developed the best mutual understanding on the question of the struggle for unity, for internationalism, and for Marxism-Leninism. This has in fact been displayed many times. (Reference might be made to some facts). This was manifested during the Conference of Fraternal Parties when drafting the Declaration, and also in the consideration of other questions. This was manifested during the assessment of the SKYu [Yugoslavian] Platform, in the struggle against revisionism. (Other examples might be cited).

We are deeply convinced that our Parties will continue to firmly take Marxist-Leninist positions and keep our efforts in contact for the benefit of the international Communist movement.

We cannot allow such a phenomenon and create any illusion in our enemies that if the PRC is attacked by America or Japan or anyone else whatsoever (the most probable enemies are the US and Japan) that the Soviet Union would remain aside as an observer. If an enemy not only knows this, but even suspects [this], then it would create a very dangerous situation. And we should have a firm agreement on this. Our Parties lead great socialist countries which are building socialism and Communism. And we have held and will firmly hold positions of unbreakable unity, and will join our efforts in the ideological struggle against revisionists, against all who would like to retreat from Marxism-Leninism (give the reasoning). We will give aid to

all fraternal Communist Parties of both the socialist countries as well as the Communist Parties of capitalist countries in order to hasten the victory of the working class in the entire world. It is necessary to right now speak at every turn of the enormous increased strength of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, and if circumstances require, then we should demonstrate that our friendship is unbreakable, that we are relentless in the fight against any aggressor.

It would be a great calamity for the Communist working movement if when atomic bombs fall on the People's Republic of China and China paid with the lives of its people and we, the Soviet Union, having a terrible weapon which could not only halt but defeat our common enemies, did not warn that these means would be put in play. This would be a crime before the world working class, and a retreat from the holy of holies, the teachings of Marxism-Leninism.

Thank you for your magnanimity that you are ready to take the blow on yourselves without involving the Soviet Union. But we want you to understand us correctly, that this is not the main thing right now. The main thing is to preserve unity, a correct understanding of the tasks which ensue from the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, and the solidarity around which this idea of all fraternal Communist Parties in order not to create any fissures which could be used by an enemy to isolate the socialist countries as they have been seeking to do with respect to Yugoslavia. An enemy needs to be warned that an attack on the People's Republic of China is war with the entire socialist camp, that an attack on China is an attack on the Soviet Union. We are also confident that China will perform its fraternal revolutionary duty with respect to the Soviet Union. And if we understand this and construct our policy, use our efforts and our economies, making use of the good, favorable geographic position of our countries, the borders of which adjoin one another, then this will be a powerful shield for protection against enemies. Now it is impossible to say that this is a shield which only protects us from capitalist encirclement. We have escaped from this situation and right now the imperialists already fear encirclement by the socialist countries.

We ask that you understand us correctly, in a fraternal way, and we would like for you to know our opinion on this question.

with Communist greetings.

N. KHRUSHCHEV

Dictated by Cde. Khrushchev

19 November 1958

recorded by Zakharova