

January 13, 1949
Ciphered Telegrams No. 50450, 50470, and 50490,
Terebin to Kuznetsov, transmitting a Message from
Mao Zedong to Filippov [Stalin]

Citation:

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Summary:

Mao responds to Stalin's telegrams regarding the Soviet response to the proposal for negotiations from the Chinese Nationalist government in Nanjing.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

[....]

"Comrade Filippov,

I received your telegram of January 10.

1. We think that the government of the USSR should give the following answer to the note by the Nanjing government proposing that the USSR accepts mediation in the termination of the civil war in China:

The government of the USSR has always wished, and still wishes, to see China as a peaceful, democratic and united country. But it is for the people of China itself to choose the way to achieve peace, unity and democracy in China. The government of the USSR, relying on the principle of noninterference in the other countries' internal affairs, cannot accept mediation between the two sides in the civil war in China.

2. We think that although the USA, England, and France, and especially the USA, are very willing to take part in mediation to terminate the war in China and thus achieve their goal--to preserve the Guomindang regime--the governments of these countries, especially the US government, have already lost their prestige among the Chinese public, and as the victory of the PLA nationwide and the downfall of the Guomindang regime is already in sight--it seems questionable whether they still wish to continue their assistance to the Nanjing government and thus further offend the PLA.

Only the USSR has a very high prestige among the Chinese people, so if the USSR in its reply to the note by the Nanjing government will take the position outlined in your telegram of January 10, it would make the USA, England and France assume that participating in mediation is an appropriate thing, and give the Guomindang a pretext for scolding us as warlike elements.

And the broad popular masses, which are displeased with the Guomindang and hope for an early victory of the PLA, would find themselves in despair.

If therefore it is possible for the USSR, in view of overall international relations, to make its reply along the lines which we are proposing, we would wish very much that you approve of our proposals. By doing so, you will help us enormously.

3. One should think thoroughly whether it is possible to let people from the Nanjing government, including war criminals, take part in peace negotiations with us. As of now we are inclined toward the following position: the unconditional surrender of the Nanjing government is necessary to give the people of China a real peace as soon as possible.

By starting the war, the Nanjing government committed a great crime--it has lost the confidence of the nation. To reach an early termination of war and a peace settlement the Nanjing government should surrender its powers to the people. It has no reason for procrastinating.

We think that if we now would start peace negotiations with people like Zhang Zhizhong or Shao Lizi and enter into a coalition government with these people, that would be the exact fulfillment of the US government's wishes.

And that would bring much dissent among the people of China, the democratic parties and popular organizations and even within the CCP, and would be very damaging for our current position of having all virtue on our side.

Starting from July 1946 we have been cautiously paying attention to the deceptive character of the negotiations which the US government and the Guomindang would inevitably start after the military defeat of the latter, and to the degree of influence which this deception has on the Chinese people.

We are deeply concerned by the fact that this deception will have a large influence on the people and make us start another political detour, i.e. to refrain from rejecting peace negotiations with the Guomindang. We are delaying the creation of the coalition government. Our principal objective is to make the Americans and the Guomindang put all their aces on the table, while we keep our aces until the last moment.

We have recently published a list of war criminals, 43 persons, unofficially (a statement by a person of authority). The PLA has not yet issued an order to arrest these war criminals.

On January 1 Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi] delivered his peace proposal. We gave an unofficial answer to this, too (an editorial article by a journalist). To sum up, we have left some room for a volte face, to see how the Chinese people and international opinion would react to the Guomindang's deceptive negotiations.

But now we are inclined towards rejecting the peace deception by the Guomindang with full righteousness, because now, as the balance of class forces in China has already changed irreversibly and the international opinion is also unfavourable to the Nanjing government, the PLA will be able to cross the Yangzi this summer and start the offensive towards Nanjing.

It looks like we do not have to make one more political detour. In the present situation this maneuver would be damaging rather than beneficial.

4. Thank you for asking for our opinion on such an important issue. If you do not agree with my opinion as expressed here or would introduce corrections, please let me know.

Mao Zedong
12 January 1949"

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