

December 12, 1956

Memorandum, Chen Yun to N. A. Bulganin

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Summary:

Chen Yun explains why China cannot purchase as many military supplies from the Soviet Union as original proposed.

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Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

On 30 April 1956, our government proposed to the USSR that [China] would order a total of 890 million rubles worth of military supplies [from the USSR] for the year of 1957. As large areas [of China] have suffered severe flood this year thus encountering a shortage of material supplies, however, [we] have to reallocate materials that have originally been designated for export so as to meet the needs of our domestic supply and, therefore, to reduce our export for next year. In order to maintain the balance between our import and export for the year of 1957, we have no other alternatives but to reduce purchases of foreign goods. As we have calculated, however, we cannot afford to cut down such items as complete sets of equipment and general trade items so as to avoid casting an adverse effect on the ongoing capital construction. Therefore, we have decided that our original order worth 890 million rubles of materials from the USSR for 1957 be reduced to that of 426 million rubles.

We understand that our reduction of purchase orders of Soviet military materials will cause the Soviet Government some problems. But [our request for the change] is an act against our will. [We] wish that the Soviet Government will accept our request. Provided that you accept our request, we will dispatch Tang Tianji,[1] our representative with full authority in military material orders, to Moscow for the purpose of conducting negotiations with the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade. We will also submit a detailed list of orders which are reduced and verified to the Soviet Economic Office to China soon. We look forward to hearing from you.

[1] Tang Tianji was deputy director of the People's Liberation Army's General Logistics Department.