

November 18, 1957

**Excerpt from the Unedited Translation of Mao
Zedong's Speech at the Moscow Conference of
Communist and Workers' Parties**

Citation:

"Excerpt from the Unedited Translation of Mao Zedong's Speech at the Moscow Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties", November 18, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI: fond 10, opis 1, delo 32, listy 1-91. Reproduced in N.G. Tomilina (ed.), *Nasledniki Kominterna: Mezhdunarodnye Soveshchaniya Predstavitelei Kommunisticheskikh i Rabochikh Partii v Moskve* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2013). Translated by Sergey Radchenko. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/165747>

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

MAO ZEDONG (translation): Comrades, allow me to say a few words. I think that I will be allowed to continue my statement. I will sit and talk now, because a few years ago I suffered a very serious brain illness. The last two years have been better. It is still a little hard to stand and talk, and so in this respect I am becoming a bureaucrat (lively reaction in the hall). I ask, comrades, to forgive me for this.

I want to touch on two questions: the question of the situation [and] the question of unity.

I see and feel that we are now in a time of a new turning point. Two winds are blowing now: the East Wind and the West Wind. China has a saying, it goes like this: "Either the East Wind prevails over the West Wind, or the West Wind prevails over East Wind." Who defeats whom? The October revolution, realized 40 years ago, signified a turning point for the entire human kind. One may ask why is it that now, too, we see a turning point? When Hitler was being fought against, for the first year or two of the war against Hitler, Hitler's wind gained the upper hand. The Soviet Union surrendered a large part of [its] territory.

In the period between the autumn and the winter of 1942 the Soviet comrades during this time [sic] raised a banner: "Our motherland is in a moment of danger!" One can see from this that then, at that time, Hitler had the upper hand, and the Stalingrad battle became exactly that turning point. From that time on Hitler became to decline, and the Soviet Union increased each day, until Berlin, and this was also a turning point.

In my opinion, the Stalingrad battle was the turning point of the entire Second World War.

Last year and, in general, in recent years, Western countries conducted themselves in a fairly rabid manner. They utilized some internal questions of our camp, especially the Hungarian events, smeared our faces in black, and black clouds started to fly in our skies.

On the question of the Suez events, thanks to just one telegram from the Soviet Union, the war stopped.

Why did the Western countries always try, and still try, to smear our faces in black, in my view? In general, they are trying to do this in relation to Communist parties [sic].

Their aim has been reached in part. For example, Fast, the American, this cynical traitor to Communism, ran away. Some others also fled Communist parties. This really gladdened the imperialists.

I must say that we also were gladdened by this: what ill does it do us, when traitors run away from us.

This year - in 1957 - the situation fundamentally changed. Our skies are brightly-lit. The Western skies are full of black clouds. We are able to sleep more or less peacefully, but they are in panic. The launch of two sputniks does not give them an opportunity to peacefully sleep.

The conference in Moscow with the participation of representatives of sixty-eight Communist and workers' parties is an unheard-of event in history. History had never had such a solemn event. I believe that [John Foster] Dulles did not sleep several days, as he should have. Well, he'll have to take Luminal.

However, one should also note that in our camp, too, inside the 68 Communist and workers' parties, also inside nations, there is a certain number of people who still believe that American is strong, that the Americans are strong. They say: look, they, after all, have a considerable amount of steel; we have less than they do. Also, they have airplanes and cannons.

Many newspapers, journals, and radio stations, in particular "The Voice of America" and "[Radio] Free Europe", exaggerate, spread rumours. Judging by these rumours, it is as if America became magical, and so a real mask is created for fooling the people.

We must expose this fraud. I said that we are at a turning point. I can cite the following ten points for substantiating my point of view and to substantiate as to whether they are stronger than us or we [stronger] than they. What will happen in the end? Will the East Wind prevail over the West Wind or the West Wind over the East Wind.

First - the struggle against Hitler. At the time how much steel did Roosevelt and Churchill have in their hands? About 70 million tons. Unfortunately, they were unable to swallow Hitler, they were not capable [of doing it]. But they had to think of something to deal with him. So they chose the method of travel. They travelled all the way to Yalta, and there they asked for help on the part of the Soviet Union. How much, one asks, did Stalin have in his hands then? He had, in all, 18 million tons. As Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev told me, after two years of war, there was only a half left from these 18 million tons, i.e. the people who had 70 million tons asked for help from a person who had only 9 million tons. And with what conditions? That was to give to the Soviet Union, to the Red Army, everything east of the Elbe. And, finally, this region completely rid itself from the Western system and turned to the socialist system. This event is very convincing, I think.

The quantity of material means does not decide everything. The main thing are the people and the system. There was also a conversation about Japan at the Yalta conference. And here, too, they were incapable, they could not swallow Japan, they also turned to the Communists for help. With what conditions? All of Manchuria, half of Korea, the entire island of Sakhalin and the Kurile islands. Here, too, they were forced to make concessions with the aim of allow their sputnik, monopoly capitalism, to enter Japan.

Second, the Chinese revolution. In 1949 the Chiang Kai-shek forces were so badly beaten by our forces that they began to scream to be saved. And [Chiang Kai-shek] went to his father, Truman, and said to him: "Send some armies to me." What did Truman tell him? Truman said: "Oh, my son, I cannot give you a single soldier." Could Truman in that case have said even two words? Say what? Say something to the effect that if the Communists occupy the southern part down from the Yangtze River, then you [the Americans] will not sit by idly. Truman again said to him: "No, I can't say that, one has to keep this in mind. The Communists are strong" (lively reaction in the hall).

And so, what then? Chiang Kai-shek left him, and is now in Taiwan.

Third. The war in Korea. One division of the American army had 800 cannons, and the Chinese forces had 30 cannons across three divisions. And what happened in the end. It was like people chasing ducks. In the course of several weeks they were chased away several hundred kilometres from the Yalu River, to the south of the 38th parallel. Then the Americans concentrated all of their forces and organized a counterattack. In that case, we, together with comrade Kim Il Sung, retreated to the 38th parallel and held the positions we had. This is about how the war went in Korea for about three years.

The American planes were like bees then. We had no planes. Then we said: let's agree on an armistice. The Americans said: OK. But where are the talks to be held. They said: let's hold these talks on one of the American ships. We offered to do it on our territory in Kaesong. They said: good. And it turned out that they came to talks every day under white flags, and returned also under hundreds of white flags. The talks lasted for more than a year. It became uncomfortable for them to come and leave every day under white flags, and so they offered to move the place of talks to a different place, to Panmunjom. We said: OK. After this the talks continued again for a year and a half. And again they came to our territory under white flags. They did not want to sign these talks [sic].

Finally, in 1953, when we managed to break through the front 311 kilometres from the 38th parallel, the Americans became scared and signed immediately. No matter how strong [we] were then, there was no steel. Well, then, one had to put an end to this affair.

One should say that, in fact, three countries participated in that war: North Korea, China, and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union did not send warriors there, just supplied weapons. And what about the enemies? There were 16 countries.

4. The Vietnam War. There, too, the enemy forces were crushed by Ho Chi Minh's forces to such an extent that they could not make their way to the lavatory, and then... [sic]. (Laughter). And the French stopped fighting. The Americans insisted that the war must be continued, because they had a lot of steel. At the time the French also had an idea and found a good method - they turned to the Americans: if you want to fight, send your own forces. And the Americans told the French: we told you to fight. To fight does not mean sending an army. If an army were to be sent, we would not tell you. As a result, there was the Geneva Conference, and more than half of Vietnam was gifted to our Ho Chi Minh.

5. Events connected to the Suez Canal. Two imperialist countries imposed an attack, [and] fought for one or two days, just because our Soviet brothers came out with some words, and everyone pulled their arms back. You can see what is stronger: steel or word. How much steel did they have, how many cannons stood by, and the Soviet comrades said a word...

Why, if you are really strong, did you start to retreat when faced with a word?

Of course, there is a second factor here, i.e. the voice of the entire world. All peoples, peoples of the entire world spoke out against this war, spoke out in support of the people.

6. It is Syria. They, in fact, already made their plan and decisively tried to impose a war. There are Syrian representatives among those present here. Again, it happened like this. The Soviet people spoke out, said a few words, and appointed one commander, Rokossowski; [after] they did these two things, [the enemy] started saying: let's conduct ourselves more intelligently.

But, of course, it is too early to say that the question is completely resolved, [we] must be vigilant. There can be disorder there in the future but now there are no military actions there.

7. It is the launch of our two sputniks. How much steel is there in the country, which had launched the sputnik? 51 million ton. You say America is stronger than the Soviet Union, that the advantage is on their side but why did they not want to launch even a single potato? (Laughter). After all, you have more than 100 million tons of steel. They boasted too much. At first they developed a plan, they made a progressive plan.

[Now, they say]: Apologies, it has to be renamed. The progressive plan has to be renamed an outdated plan.

From the aforesaid seven points, one can come to the following conclusion: we have led the Western world far behind.

Is it close or far now? Maybe I am an adventurist, or maybe I have adventurism, but I would say, nevertheless, that the Western world has been forever left behind.

They are people who say that the Americans will catch up in the end, they will at one time also launch a sputnik. Well, this may be right. Comrade Khrushchev's report also noted that they will launch a sputnik. But now they are having an argument: when, in a year, two, or in five years, will they catch up with the Soviet Union. One, two, or five years - I am not interested in this. After all, you are behind. Besides, one cannot think that our Soviet comrades, in particular comrade Khrushchev, will sleep twenty-four hours a day, all the time, during the day and in the evening. Suppose in a year, two or three they'll catch up, but only with the current level of the Soviet Union. During this period, the Soviet people will go far ahead.

I think, comrades, that I should move to some questions inside our country. This year our country has already produced 5200 thousand tons of steel. In five years' time we'll have ten or twelve million tons of steel. In another five years, we'll have twenty or twenty-five million tons of steel. Add another five years, and we'll have the capability to produce 40 to 45 million tons of steel, that is, in the course of four five-year-plans, we'll be able to reach the level of 40 to 45 million tons of steel.

Perhaps here today I over-praised our country, and at the next such a conference, you'll have the full right to criticize me as a subjectivist. But, still, I do not accept that I am a 100 percent subjectivist. I speak about it on fairly solid ground. Many Soviet people, specialists, helped us in the work. The Chinese are an industrious people. China, speaking in political terms and from the point of view of the population, is a big country but in economic terms, it is a small country.

The Chinese, i.e. our people, do not want to stop at what they have achieved. They are doing their best to turn their country into a great power.

Com[rade] Khrushchev told us that the Soviet Union will overtake America in fifteen years. Well, then, I can also say in a preliminary way that in fifteen years we, too, possibly, will overtake England.

In the conversation with comrades [John] Gollan and [Harry] Pollitt, I asked them how they are getting on. They said that England now has 2 million tons [sic]. They told me that in fifteen years at most, if stretched, England can reach the level of 30 million tons. Though I don't know if there is subjectivism here. It is comrade Pollitt's fault. This is not because of my subjectivism if it does not turn out this way.

And what will China have in fifteen years' time? China, possibly, will have 40 million tons. Calculate: doesn't it show that the advantage is on our side? In this case, our camp already has two such countries: the Soviet Union, which will overtake America in fifteen years, and China, which will overtake England in fifteen years.

In the end, what is the bottom line of the speech? We need to have a fifteen year period of peace. Whatever one says, the aim is to use all means to strive for the fifteen year peaceful period. In this case, we'll really be undefeatable in the whole world, and no one will dare to fight against us.

But now we have to take into consideration the circumstance, that there is rabid militarism, and it plays with atomic and hydrogen bombs. They are playing, and we are also playing. In this case, one could deliver a destructive blow at one another, and, of course, there inevitably would be human loss. We should also base ourselves on the fact that one must always take into account the worst-case scenario.

Our party's Politburo called meetings several times, which repeatedly discussed this question that if they start a war now, well, then, we don't have atomic bomb, we just have grenades. But one should take into account that we have a head, and as for the atomic bomb, we can say that it is in the possession of our elder brother, the Soviet Union.

Can one estimate how many people would be lost in a future war? Possibly, it would be one third of the whole world's population of 2700 million, or just 900 million people. I think this is even too few if the atomic bomb are really dropped. Of course, this is very scary. But it would not be that bad even if it were a half. Why? Because we did not want it, and they are imposing a war on us. If we go to war, atomic and hydrogen weapons will be used. I personally think that the entire world will suffer, if a half of the human kind, or more than a half, die. I argued this question with Nehru. He is more pessimistic than I in this respect. I told him: if half of the human kind is destroyed, the other half will still remain, but imperialism will be destroyed completely, and there will just be socialism in the entire world, and in half-a-century or a whole century the population will grow again, even by more than a half.

In China, construction has not yet fully unfolded. If the imperialists impose war on us, we'll be read to stop construction. First, let's try [our] forces. Later, we can return to construction. We think that there is nothing bad for us in fearing war every day. Well, then, maybe I'll be able to pass on this apprehension to you.

I just made a small introduction in the way of addition regarding war. At the beginning I said that there are 10 points to substantiate my point of view. I aired just 7, there are 3 more. I want to finish recounting these 3 points.

The eighth point - England's retreat from a series of countries in Asia and Africa.

The ninth point - Holland's retreat from Indonesia.

The tenth point - France's retreat from Tunisia and Morocco, and also France has become powerless in Algiers.

One can ask in this case, who is stronger: the underdeveloped countries, or the advanced countries? Is India or England stronger? Is Indonesia or Holland stronger? Are the people of Algiers or of France stronger?

In my opinion, imperialism is like the sun at 5pm, and we are like the sun at 6 or 7 in the morning. And so there is the question of the turning point.

What is this turning point? [It is] that the Western countries have been forever left behind, and our side has taken the advantage. It is inevitable that the West Wind will not be able to prevail over the East Wind, because the West Wind is so weak. Inevitable, the East Wind will prevail over the West Wind, because we are stronger. That is, the question is being decided not by the amount of steel. The question is being decided by the attitude of the people. [...]