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Speeches/Documents

Title: OUR GREAT VICTORY IN THE WAR TO RESIST U.S. AGGRESSION AND AID KOREA AND OUR FUTURE TASKS

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After three years we have won a great victory in the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. It has now come to a halt.

To what was this victory due? Just now fellow members put it down to correct leadership. Leadership is one factor; nothing can succeed without correct leadership. But we won mainly because ours was a people's war, the whole nation gave it support and the people of China and Korea fought shoulder to shoulder.

We fought U.S. imperialism, an enemy wielding weapons many times superior to ours, and yet we were able to win and compelled it to agree to a truce. Why was the truce possible?

First, militarily the U.S. aggressors were in an unfavorable position and were on the receiving end. If they had not accepted the truce, their whole battle line would have been broken through and Seoul would have fallen into the hands of the Korean people. This situation became evident in the summer of last year.

Each belligerent calls his own battle line a bastion of iron. Ours is truly a bastion of iron. Our soldiers and cadres are resourceful and brave and dare to look death in the face. In contrast the U.S. aggressor troops are afraid of death, and their officers are rather rigid, not very flexible. Their battle line is not solid and is anything but a bastion of iron.

The problems facing our side were first whether we could fight, then whether we could hold our lines, later whether we could ensure the flow of supplies, and finally whether we could foil the germ warfare. These four problems came one after the other and were all solved. Our troops grew from strength to strength in fighting. This summer, we were already able to break through an enemy position with its front of twenty-one kilometers within an hour, fire several hundred thousand shells in a concentrated attack and penetrate the enemy area up to eighteen kilometers. If we had kept this up and mounted two, three or four more attacks, his whole battle line would have been cut to pieces.

Second, politically the enemy had many insoluble internal contradictions, and the people the world over demanded peace.

Third, economically the enemy spent vast sums in the war of aggression against Korea, and his budgetary revenues and expenditures were not balanced.

All these causes combined to force the enemy to come to terms. The first was the primary cause, and in its absence a truce with the enemy would have been difficult. The U.S. imperialists are very arrogant; if at all possible, they always refuse to talk reason, and will do so after a fashion only when driven into a tight corner.

In the Korean war the enemy suffered 1,090,000 in killed and wounded. Naturally we paid a price too. Nevertheless, our casualties were far fewer than anticipated and they became still fewer after tunnels were built. We grew stronger and stronger through fighting. The Americans failed to undermine our positions; on the contrary, their units were always wiped out by us.

Just now you all mentioned the factor of leadership. In my view, leadership is one factor, but the most important factor is the contribution of ideas by the masses. Our cadres and soldiers thought up all sorts of ways to fight the enemy. Let me give one example. In the first month of the war our losses in trucks were tremendous. What was to be done? While the leadership devised counter-measures, we relied mainly on the masses to come up with ideas. Over ten thousand people were posted on both sides of the highway to fire signal shots to warn of approaching enemy planes. On hearing these signals, our drivers would dodge or find places in which to hide their trucks. In the meantime the roads were widened and many new ones built so that trucks could run in both directions unimpeded. Thus the losses in trucks dropped from 40 per cent at the beginning to less than 1 per cent. Later on, underground storehouses and even underground auditoriums were built. While enemy bombs fell from overhead, we went on with our meetings underground. When they picture the Korean battlefield, people living in Peking feel it must have been very dangerous. True, there was danger, but it was not so terrible as long as everyone contributed ideas.

Our experience is that reliance on the people together with a fairly correct leadership enables us to defeat a better-equipped enemy with our inferior equipment.

The victory in the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea is a great one and has major significance.

First, together with the Korean people we have fought our way back to the 38th Parallel and held on there. This is very important. If we had not fought back to the 38th Parallel and our front lines had remained along the Yalu and Tumen Rivers, it would have been impossible for the people in Shenyang, Anshan and Fushun to carry on production free from worry.

Second, we have gained military experience. The ground, air and naval forces, the infantry, artillery, engineer, tank, railway, air defence and signal corps and also the medical and logistic units, etc. of the Chinese People's Volunteers have all gained practical experience in fighting the U.S. aggressor troops. This time we have taken the measure of the U.S. armed forces. If you have never taken them on, you are liable to be scared of them. We have fought them for thirty-three months and got to know them for what they are worth. U.S. imperialism is not terrifying, nothing to make a fuss about. Such is our experience, indeed an invaluable piece of experience.

Third, the people of the whole country have heightened their political awareness.

From the above three points a fourth can be deduced: a new imperialist war of aggression against China and a third world war have been put off.

The imperialist aggressors ought to bear this in mind: the Chinese people are now organized, they are not to be trifled with. Once they are provoked to anger, things can get very tough.

The enemy may resume the war, and even if he doesn't, he is sure to make trouble in all sorts of ways, such as by sending in secret agents to carry out wrecking activities. He has set up a vast network of secret services in places like Taiwan, Hongkong and Japan. But we have gained experience in the movement to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea, and so long as we mobilize the masses and rely on the people, we know how to cope with the enemy.

For us the present situation is different from that in the winter of 1950. Were the U.S. aggressors then on the other side of the 38th Parallel? No, they were not. They were on the other side of the Yalu and Tumen Rivers. Did we then have any experience in fighting the U.S. aggressors? No, we did not. Did we then know much about the U.S. troops? No, we did not. Now, all this has changed. Supposing U.S. imperialism does not put off its new war of aggression and says: "I'll fight!", then we can cope with it by relying on the first three points. But supposing it says: "I'll not fight!", then the fourth point will hold good. Here is proof of the superiority of our people's democratic dictatorship.

Are we going to invade others? No, we will invade no one anywhere. But if others invade us, we will fight back and fight to a finish.

The Chinese people adhere to this stand: we are for peace, but are not afraid of war; we are ready for both. We have the support of the people. In the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea, people fell over each other to join up. The conditions for enrolment were stiff, only one in a hundred was chosen. People said the conditions were stricter than those for choosing a husband for one's daughter. If U.S. imperialism wants to resume the fighting, we will take it on again.

War costs money. Yet the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea did not cost us too much. It went on for several years, but the expenses incurred were less than a single year's industrial and commercial taxes. Of course, it would have been better if we had not had to fight the war and spend this money. For construction in the country today calls for expenditure and the peasants still have difficulties. Last year and the year before last, the agricultural tax was a shade on the heavy side, and so this set some friends talking. They demanded a "policy of benevolence", as if they represented the interests of the peasants. Did we favour this view? No, we didn't. At that time we had to do our utmost to win victory in the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. For the peasants, for the people of the whole country, which was in their interest? To endure austerity for the time being and strive for victory? Or not to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea and so save a few coppers? Undoubtedly winning the war was in their interest. It was because the war required money that we collected a bit more in agricultural tax last year and the year before. This year it is different. We have not increased the agricultural tax and have put a ceiling on its volume.

Speaking of the "policy of benevolence", we are of course for it. But what was the policy of maximum benevolence? To resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. To carry out this policy of maximum benevolence sacrifices had to be made, money spent and more collected in agricultural tax. Just because more was collected, some people raised an outcry. They even claimed to represent the interests of the peasants. I just don't approve of such talk.

To resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea was to implement the policy of benevolence, and to carry on industrial construction today is likewise to implement this policy.

Policies of benevolence are of two kinds. One is concerned with the people's immediate interests. The other is concerned with their long-term interests, such as resisting U.S. aggression and aiding Korea and building heavy industry. The first is a policy of lesser benevolence and the second a policy of greater benevolence. Both must be taken into consideration and it is wrong not to do so. Where then is the emphasis to be placed? On the policy of greater benevolence. At present the emphasis in our policy of benevolence should be on the construction of heavy industry. Construction takes money. Therefore, much as the livelihood of the people needs to be improved, this cannot be done to any great extent for the time being. In other words, while we have to improve the people's livelihood, we must not try to do too much, and while we have to make some allowance for it, we must not make too much. To make allowance for the policy of lesser benevolence at the expense of the policy of greater benevolence is to go off the right track.

Now some friends put lop-sided stress on the policy of lesser benevolence; in effect, they wanted us to give up the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea, and now they want us to give up the building of heavy industry. We must criticize this erroneous view. It is also to be found in the Communist Party; we came across it in Yen-an. In 1941 we collected 200,000 piculs [1] of grain in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region, and some people began to yell that the Communist Party was not being considerate of the peasants. A few leading cadres in the Party also brought up this issue of the policy of benevolence. I criticized this view even then. What was the policy of maximum benevolence at that time? To overthrow Japanese imperialism. If we had slashed the amount of grain to be collected from the peasants, we would have had to cut down the size of the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. That would have been to the advantage of Japanese imperialism. So those who held this view were actually speaking on behalf of Japanese imperialism and doing it a service.

Now the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea has come to a halt. If the United States wants to resume the war, we will fight on. In that case, we will have to collect grain from the peasants, do work on them and persuade them to make their contribution. To act thus would be truly to serve the interests of the peasants. To raise outcries would actually be to serve the interests of U.S. imperialism.

There are major as well as minor principles. The people's standard of living in the whole country should be raised yearly, but not too much. If it had been raised too much, we could not have fought the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea, or at least not in such grim earnest. We have fought this war resolutely and earnestly and with all our might. Whatever was available at home the Korean front could have for the asking. That has been the case for the last few years.

NOTES

1. The picul, a weight for grain, was 150 kg. in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region, but the standard varied in different places.