

1952

Speeches/Documents

Title: LET US UNITE AND CLEARLY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE ENEMY

Author: Mao Zedong

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Description: Salient points of a speech delivered at the thirty-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

We have been simultaneously waging war, holding negotiations and working towards stability for a whole year.

The war situation in Korea became stable after July last year, but at the time we were not sure whether the financial and economic situation at home could be stabilized. We had said, "Prices are basically stable and revenues and expenditures are almost balanced," meaning that prices could not yet be stabilized and that revenues and expenditures were not yet balanced. Expenditures were in excess of revenues, and that was a problem. That is why the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party convened a meeting last September and called for increased production and strict economy. In October, I repeated this call at the Third Session of the First National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference. The subsequent campaign to increase production and practice economy brought to light rather serious cases of corruption, waste and bureaucracy. In December the movement against the "three evils" was launched, and this was followed by the movement against the "five evils". Both these movements have come to a successful conclusion, the situation is now perfectly clear and general stability has been achieved.

Last year, what we spent on the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea more or less equalled our expenditures for national construction; it was fifty-fifty. This year it will be different. It is estimated that the outlays for war will come to only half last year's figure. Our troops are fewer in number but they are better equipped. For more than two decades we fought without an air force and we were always on the receiving end of enemy bombing. Now we have an air force of our own, and anti-aircraft guns, artillery and tanks too. The war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea is a big school for large-scale military exercises, and such exercises are better than a military academy. If the fighting continue, through next year, all our land forces will have had their spell of military training in Korea.

In this war we were confronted with three problems at the start: first, our ability to fight, second, our ability to hold out and, third, our ability to feed ourselves.

The problem of our ability to fight was solved within the first two or three months. The enemy had more artillery, but their morale was low; they were rich in metal but poor in morale.

The problem of our ability to hold out was also solved last year. Our answer was to dig tunnels. We constructed two tiers of defence works. When the enemy attacked, we got into the tunnels. Sometimes the enemy occupied the positions overhead, but what lay below remained in our hands. When they were in our positions, we counter-attacked, inflicting heavy casualties on them. We used this homespun method to collect foreign guns. The enemy was entirely at a loss as to how to cope with us.

It was quite some time before the problem of food supplies, that is, the problem of ensuring provisions, was solved. At first we did not know that tunnels could be dug to store grain in. Now we know. Each division has grain reserves for three months, its own storage area and a meeting hall to boot, and our men are making a go of life in the tunnels.

Today, our policy is clear and definite, our positions are secure, our provisions ensured, and every soldier knows that he must fight to the end.

Just how long will the fighting go on, and just when will the negotiations draw to a close? I say negotiations will continue, fighting will go on but there will be a truce.

Why is it that there will be a truce? A thirty years' war or a hundred years' war is highly improbable, because a long war is very much against the interests of the United States.

First, the war costs lives. They fought on to hold some ten thousand prisoners of war, only to lose over thirty thousand more lives. After all, they have far fewer men than we.

Second, the war costs money. They are spending far more than ten billion U.S. dollars a year. We spend very much less, and this year we are going to cut our expenditures to half last year's. The money that came from the settling of accounts in the movements against the "three evils" and the "five evils" can see us through another eighteen months of war. And all the money that comes from increased production and the practice of economy can be used for national construction.

Third, they are confronted with insuperable contradictions at home and abroad.

Fourth, there is the strategic problem too. The focus of U.S. strategy is in Europe. They did not anticipate that we would send volunteers to aid Korea when they dispatched forces to invade it.

With us, things are easier to manage. In internal affairs we are masters of our own house. But we are not the chief of staff of the United States. The United States has its own chief of staff. So on the question of whether the Korean war will continue, we and the Koreans have only half the say.

In a word, under the pressure of the general trend, the United States will find it against its interest to refuse to come to a truce.

All the talk about the imminence of a third world war is just to scare people. We must strive to gain a period of ten years for building our industry and laying solid foundations.

We must close our ranks and clearly distinguish between ourselves and the enemy. It is because of the unity of the whole nation and the co-operation of all those present and of all the democratic parties and people's organizations that we are strong today. It is of vital importance that we unite and distinguish between ourselves and the enemy. Dr. Sun Yat-sen was a man of integrity, but why did the Revolution of 1911 he led end in failure? The reasons were: first, failure to distribute land; second, failure to recognize the necessity of suppressing counter-revolutionaries; and, third, failure to wage sharp struggles against imperialism. Apart from distinguishing between ourselves and the enemy, there is the need to distinguish between right and wrong within our own ranks. Compared with the former, the latter is

secondary. For instance, with most of the embezzlers, it is just a matter of right and wrong, for they are different from counter-revolutionaries and can be reformed.

It is necessary to carry out education among the democratic parties and in religious circles so that they will not be taken in by the imperialists and stand on the enemy's side. Take Buddhism for example. It has not much contact with imperialism and its ties are chiefly with feudalism. As the struggle against feudalism involves the land problem, it affects the monks, and those who come under attack are the abbots and elders of the monasteries. Once this small number is overthrown, ordinary monks like "Lu Chih-shen" [1] will be emancipated. Though no believer in Buddhism, I am not against forming an association of Buddhists to get them united and enable them to distinguish clearly between the people and the enemy. Will the united front be abolished some day? I for one am not for its abolition. We should unite with everyone provided he truly makes a clear distinction between the people and the enemy and serves the people.

Our country has a bright future and is full of hope. In the past we wondered if the economy could recover in three years. As a result of two and a half years of hard struggle, it already has, and what is more, planned construction is under way. Let us all unite, clearly distinguish between ourselves and the enemy and strive for the steady progress of our country.

NOTES

1. A character in the classical Chinese novel *Water Margin*, who is an ordinary Buddhist monk before he joins the peasant army on Liangshan Mountain.

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According to the source, the following text contains the main points of a speech made by Mao at the thirty-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee of the First National Committee of the CPPCC.

Notes

1 The "Fourth Battle" of the Korean War began in April 1954 and ended with the halting of the "summer offensive" of the American troops in late June of that year. The two sides remained deadlocked on the 38th parallel. On July 10, 1951, preliminary negotiations for an armistice began.

2 See text Oct. 23, 1951, and particularly note 5.

3 See text Nov. 1951-Mar. 1952, source note.

5 Mao was referring here to the historical examples of two major periods of warfare in Europe in the seventeenth century (Thirty Years' War) and the mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth century (Hundred Years' War.)

In the Korean War armistice negotiations began in July 1951; with regard to the issue of the repatriation of prisoners of war, the American side proposed the principle of "voluntary repatriation." In April 1952, on the basis of this unilaterally presented and accepted principle, the American side refused the repatriation of some 10,000 captured Chinese Volunteers who, the Americans claimed, had signed letters of intent indicating that they did not wish to be repatriated. Mao is here referring to the Chinese estimate that over 30,000 U.S. troops had died in the conflict from April, up to the time of this speech, i.e., early August 1952.

6 See text Sept. 21, 1949, note 1, and text Oct. 1, 1949, note 3.

7 Sun Yat-sen, a.k.a. Sun Wen, Sun Zhongshan (1866-1925). A revolutionary at the turn of the century and ultimately a leader of the 1911 Revolution, which overthrew the Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China, Sun became, for the short period between January 1912 (when the provisional Government of the Republic was established) and the ascendancy of Yuan Shikai, the provisional president of the Republic. In August 1912, on the reorganization of the revolutionary organization, the Tongmenghui, into the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party), Sun became its executive director. Sun was the chief spokesman of the principles of bourgeois democracy embodied in his nationalist principles of revolution during the early period and his "Three People's Principles" formulated in the 1910s and early 1920s. Sun was, however, deeply disillusioned by the failure of the 1911 Revolution to bring about a truly democratic society and government and the lapse of China into a period of civil war among warlords. In addition to organizing a military effort against the warlord factions and to unify China (an effort that failed in his own time and had only partial success ultimately), Sun also, in his last years, revised his Three People's Principles and introduced the strategic formulation of alliance with the Soviet Union, a united front with the Communist Party, and a sort of primitive economic and social government alliance with workers and peasants. He also directed, just before his death, the early stages of the reforming of the Kuomintang and the formation of an antifeudal (i.e., antiwarlord), anti-imperial united front between the KMT and the CPC. This did not come to complete fruition. More for reasons of his later activities than his leadership in the Revolution of 1911, Sun is respected as a pioneer revolutionary and a socialist thinker by the Chinese Communists. For more on Sun's life, see H. Boorman et al., eds. (1970), III, pp. 170-189. 8. For a more detailed analysis by Mao of the failure of the 1911 Revolution see "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party" (SW, II, pp. 305-334); and for Mao's contrast between the "Old Three People's Principle" and the "New Three People's Principle," see "On New Democracy" (SW, II, pp. 363-369). 9. Mao's sentence here is somewhat garbled, and there is some uncertainty as to what he means by the phrase *di er zhong jixian*. Here, as in SW, we have translated it as "secondary distinction," conveying an ordinal sense. This follows the clue provided by Mao's fundamental theory, espoused in the article "On Contradictions" (August 1937, SW, I, pp. 311-347, especially pp. 331-334, 343-345), in which Mao says that the "principal contradiction" and the "principal aspect of a contradiction" must be distinguished from the rest. Here, however, as clearly indicated by the title of this document, Mao is moving away from the fundamentally epistemological theory of contradiction to the politically practical theory of contradiction that he would eventually put forward splendidly and in its completed form in the article "On Correctly Handling Contradictions among the People" (Feb 1957, SW, V, pp. 384ff). Here Mao speaks of two categories of contradictions; contradictions "between the enemy and ourselves" and "contradictions among the people." The distinction between these two categories is not one of ordinance but of character; thus each has to be dealt with in a manner appropriate to its nature. If we were to interpret this statement here in this way, and to see this document as an important expression of Mao's progression from epistemological conviction

to practical application, then the phrase *di er zhong jiexian* should not be translated as "secondary distinctions," but as "distinctions of a second type," forecasting Mao's idea of "contradiction among the people." Furthermore, even then, "right-and-wrong" distinctions, when considered in the broad sense of the term, have to transcend categories. They can be of secondary importance only when they are confined to a specific, narrower meaning; i.e., Mao is not talking of "right-wrong" distinctions in general, but of the specific "right-wrong" distinctions among the people which he delineates in the preceding sentence. 10. Lu Zhisen is one of the colorful heroes of the Ming dynasty novel "Shuihu zhuan" (variously translated as Water Margin or All Men Are Brothers). Lu was an oppressed Buddhist monk who rebelled against the hierarchy of his temple and joined the rebel-bandits at Liangshan. 11. The Chinese Buddhist Federation was eventually formed in 1953, with local branches in many provinces and municipalities and in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and among minority nationalities in Sichuan and Yunnan. Its headquarters was in Beijing. 12. See text Feb. 18, 1951, note 13.