

## REPORT ON PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE PEACE TALKS

*April 17, 1949*

Friends,

I have specially requested you to assemble here today. Although we've been here more than twenty days, I'm very sorry I haven't had a chance to call on you separately and seek your advice, because I've been extremely busy. Yesterday, we invited friends staying at the Peking Hotel and Hotel Wagons-Lits for a talk. And today we've invited professors from the universities and other friends who have arrived from Hongkong to seek advice from you all.

There are a great many problems that ought to be discussed, but today I can only report to you on the recent peace talks. I've given this kind of report a good many times in the past, but I believe that this time the peace talks will be different from the previous ones. In our previous talks with Chiang Kai-shek, it was like "asking the tiger for its skin", as Mr. Tan Kah Kee aptly put it in a telegram to me in 1946.<sup>426</sup> But we had to hold the talks because the people were longing for peace, persons like Mr. Tan Kah Kee and Mr. Zhang Xiruo<sup>427</sup> were few, and the general public had not yet seen through Chiang Kai-shek's peace swindle. Today the situation has changed. It can be said now that if you endorse the Agreement on Internal Peace drawn up in the current peace talks, we have the confidence and the strength to see that it is carried out, whether through peace or war. We will use every possible peaceful means, but if they prove unsuccessful, it will be carried out just the same — through war. This change is due to the growth of the Chinese people's strength, the development of the democratic movement in the Kuomintang areas and the heroic fight of the People's

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A report made to some of the patriotic democratic personages who were going to take part in the New Political Consultative Conference to be convened in Beijing and some of the professors in universities there.

Liberation Army. You know more about the democratic movement than I do, so today I'll only talk about the military victories.

Chiang Kai-shek dared to tear up the resolutions of the Political Consultative Conference and go to war because he had armed strength and U.S. aid. At the time he had clear superiority in arms. He had a regular force of 4,300,000 men constituting 248 brigades. None of these brigades had suffered losses in the War of Resistance because Chiang was passive in that war. When the fighting began to get heavy in July 1946, he thought that he could wipe out the People's Liberation Army in a few months. But after two years and nine months there has been a complete change. In the first two years, the war proceeded steadily, and we eliminated 1,500,000 enemy troops each year. In the third year there was a sudden turn of events and in seven months (up to January this year) we eliminated more than two million enemy troops. This sudden change was brought about by the Jinan, Liaoxi-Shenyang, Huai-Hai and Beiping-Tianjin campaigns.<sup>428</sup> Now Chiang Kai-shek's troop strength, including that of rear establishments such as military academies and logistical and other support units, amounts to 2,200,000 men, and his regular army units have only something over 1,000,000 men. Quite a few of those units have been destroyed and then built up again, so their combat effectiveness is especially low. Thus even Chiang knows that the battle is lost, that his counter-revolutionary schemes have been defeated.

Meanwhile, the People's Liberation Army has been growing in strength. Two years and nine months ago, the People's Liberation Army had 1,200,000 men and now it has grown to more than 4,000,000 men. Moreover, the majority have been equipped with U.S. arms. U.S. imperialism has given us much equipment (there was no need to write receipts of course), and Chiang Kai-shek has been a fine director of the transport corps. A majority of our men are captured enemy soldiers, who came over; we call them "liberated soldiers".<sup>511</sup> In some units they account for as much as 80 per cent of the total, while the lowest is 50-60 per cent and the average 65-70 per cent. With respect to prisoners, the conversion process is one of "capture, check-up, assignment, education and participation in fighting". In other words, as soon as captured soldiers come over, they are assigned to a unit, acquire education through the "outpouring of grievances"<sup>518</sup> and then participate in fighting. At the time of the battle against Huang Botao,<sup>429</sup> it went so far that troops captured in the morning went into battle for us in the afternoon. Many of the soldiers liberated then have now become

platoon leaders or company commanders. This is rare in world military history and would be impossible in the absence of effective political education.

Even our commanders did not foresee the present high level of democracy among our troops. Although Comrade Mao Zedong proposed the establishment of democratic centralism among our troops as early as in the Jinggang Mountains period, its development today goes beyond our expectations. In the "three evaluations" movement, the revolutionary soldiers' committees can criticize cadres and recommend lower-level officers. Those who are correctly recommended can be commissioned, and in the majority of cases they are. How is it that this can be done? It is possible because the soldiers understand very well that an officer must not only be courageous in battle but also have wisdom. Whether or not he is a likable chap is of secondary importance. So most of the recommendations made by the soldiers are correct. This is cadre evaluation. Second, there is the evaluation of Party members. Make Party members known so that the masses can criticize them when necessary: this ensures genuine supervision of the Party by the masses. Third, there is the evaluation of military achievements. The masses are the clearest on who has shown merit and, naturally, their evaluations are likely to be the most appropriate. Only thus is it possible to be fair in giving rewards and punishments. With the expansion of democracy and the strengthening of discipline, the officers say that the troops are easy to lead now, while the men say that the officers' work style has improved.

Our military forces are democratic not only in the political but also in the military sense. Sometimes we even allow the men to discuss battle orders. Each combat group holds "Zhuge Liang meetings", on the principle of the old saying, "Three cobblers with their wits combined excel Zhuge Liang the master mind." Orders from the upper levels cannot be very specific, and when they get down to the company level, the combat groups hold Zhuge Liang meetings to discuss how to carry them out. This gives full play to the men's initiative and creativity. It is especially important today when we are engaged in close combat. In the Huai-Hai campaign, the enemy's defence works were scattered all over like stars in the sky or pieces on a chessboard, but in a single night the situation changed and our defence works surrounded theirs. Our soldiers had found a way to penetrate the enemy's defences, destroy them and set up our own defence works. In fighting, we have to use explosives, but to be effective these inanimate, material

things must be used by living people. Without the soldiers' courage and wisdom, explosives are of no avail. Our soldiers have both courage and wisdom and there is no citadel they cannot demolish. Even if it is of solid concrete, when one catty of explosives is insufficient, we will use five, ten, one hundred or two hundred — ultimately it can be destroyed. If rock in mines can be blasted apart, why not defence works? The enemy calls this the "homemade airplane". The effectiveness of this homemade airplane depends on the rank and file, and not only on the commanders. Wang Yaowu asked us why the Kuomintang troops were defeated in every place to which Chiang Kai-shek fled, while we won victories everywhere with Chairman Mao just sitting in northern Shaanxi day after day. This is because the people have awakened, because our troops are led by the Chinese Communist Party, because they belong to the masses, to us all. The People's Liberation Army today is stronger than we ever imagined. So the enemy cannot but admit defeat.

With things going this way, the reactionary Nanjing government had no option but to put forward peace proposals on January 1.<sup>430</sup> Although their proposals were hypocritical and their conditions unacceptable, we took them up all the same. The people want a genuine peace, and so do we. In a statement on January 14, Comrade Mao Zedong specified eight conditions, conditions for a real peace.<sup>431</sup> Chiang Kai-shek refused to accept them, but after Tianjin was liberated, he had to step down<sup>432</sup> and let Li Zongren<sup>438</sup> take his place. This shows that a peace faction has already begun to split off from the Nanjing ruling clique. Li Zongren accepted the eight conditions as the basis for talks and dispatched his personal representatives<sup>433</sup> to Beiping, and finally we received the delegation from the Nanjing Kuomintang government.<sup>434</sup>

Why did we do this? Because today victory is certain, there is not the slightest doubt about the outcome of the war — it is merely a matter of time. What we should think about now is how to use peaceful means to attain victory, so that we can minimize damage to the nation and conserve more manpower and materials, that is, more material forces for our future peacetime reconstruction. China is very backward, with modern industry accounting for only around 10 per cent of the national economy, and it will require tremendous efforts to modernize our country.<sup>435</sup> In the war, the Chinese people have already paid a very great price, and on the battlefield both the enemy's and our own casualties and the masses' losses have been very heavy. For

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example, in the Huai-Hai battlefield, several hundred villages were completely destroyed and we are now undertaking relief work. Of course, it would be best if such losses could be stopped right now. But it takes two parties to reach a peace agreement. Since Li Zongren has expressed his willingness to accept our conditions, at long last there is a possibility for peace, which we should grasp and promote. We see not only the growth of the people's strength but also the splits among the enemy. We must encourage the development of the peace faction's strength and win its co-operation. After helping Chiang Kai-shek to fight three years of civil war, the United States also admits defeat, and it now wants some kind of peace so that its secret agents can infiltrate the institutions of the people's state and work inside them. This also spurs the willingness of the Nanjing government to hold peace talks. The unbridled extortions of the Kuomintang reactionary clique have gone beyond what the Shanghai bourgeoisie can tolerate, so even they want peace. In addition, large numbers of government employees and teachers and professors in the Kuomintang-ruled areas are also a factor for peace, the gold yuan notes<sup>436</sup> having really made it impossible for them to carry on. The present peace talks are the result of all the above factors. After more than ten days of discussion, we have given a final peace plan to the Nanjing delegation to be forwarded to its government.

The Agreement on Internal Peace has eight sections with twenty-four articles. The central problems are the takeover and the reorganization. Of course there is still a gap between the Nanjing delegation and us, although they do have one good idea, namely, that the defeat of the Kuomintang and the victory of the People's Liberation Army is a certainty. They acknowledge their mistakes, admit their defeat and are therefore willing to hand over political power and the armed forces. But although the Nanjing delegation has this understanding, the Nanjing government still does not, not to mention those fellows in Guangzhou and Xikou.<sup>437</sup>

Concerning the takeover. In today's revolution, we must definitely not allow the reactionaries to win ultimate victory because we compromise half way through, as was the case in the 1911 Revolution<sup>143</sup> and the Northern Expedition.<sup>117</sup> Historical experience proves that if a revolution cannot be carried through to the end, it will certainly fail. Today we must under no circumstances repeat that course. The Nanjing delegation says that historically the dispute between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party has been one between brothers, but

we took strong exception to that. It cannot be called a quarrel between brothers. Could the struggle between Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shikai have been a quarrel between brothers? No, it was a struggle between revolution and counter-revolution. And the same has been true of the struggle between us and the Kuomintang over the past twenty years. But the argument between the Nanjing delegation and us over a common basis for peace and democracy might be considered an argument between brothers. On such occasions, we must stick strictly to principles and must never obscure right and wrong.

The reason why we insist on using the People's Liberation Army to take over political power is that this is a question of whether or not the revolution will be carried through to the end. After the Revolution of 1911, the warlord governors<sup>519</sup> and their like remained in place and the only thing that changed was the flag. At the time of the Great Revolution,<sup>461</sup> after the expeditionary armies got to the lower reaches of the Changjiang River, even the Kuomintang said, "The armies were moving north while politics was moving south." Thus the revolution changed its character. Zhang Zhizhong<sup>321</sup> quoted the proverb "the overturned cart ahead is a lesson to the carts behind". Well, the lesson is precisely this: if once again we just change flags and let all sorts of reactionaries go on oppressing the people and churning out gold yuan notes, the people will go on suffering as before and they will certainly condemn us. That would not be acting responsibly towards the people. Unless we overthrow the old order, we cannot set up a new revolutionary order. Where there is no People's Liberation Army, the nature of the regime will not change, the reactionary armies will not be reorganized and production will not resume.

But taking over is not simple either; it will require time and qualified personnel, and we must do it in an organized fashion. The takeover will occur first in the cities and later in the countryside. As for qualified personnel, the Communist Party cannot provide them all, and public figures in all walks of life must participate in the work. Once the Changjiang River is crossed, I'm afraid the Peking Hotel and Hotel Wagons-Lits will be emptied. We are worried that the work may not be done well; still we can't shirk our responsibility. In the future coalition government things will be the same. As we are short of personnel, we can't take over all places at once. First we will take over in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Hubei and Shaanxi Provinces and the Longdong region; the rest will have to wait. The Nanjing delegation hopes that we will go slow on crossing the Changjiang River.

When I handed over the draft of the peace agreement to them, they asked whether it included any articles about crossing the Changjiang, and when I said no, they were pleasantly surprised. But I said that although there was nothing in the draft about “crossing the river”, there was something about “takeover”. As a matter of fact, crossing the Changjiang is simply taken for granted. Many of the places to be taken over are south of the river, and, besides, historically the Changjiang River has never prevented China’s unification. Nanjing and Xikou still have not completely severed connections; they are like a “severed lotus root still joined by fibres”. The Nanjing delegation says that they will wait for us to do the severing, but first we want them to sever connections politically; we can do it militarily. They cannot possibly oppose our crossing the Changjiang because, obviously, if they recognize our right to take over, they must recognize our right to cross the river too. But they always want us to go slow. As for those fellows in Guangzhou and Xikou, they hope to divide the country and rule south of the river. We pointed out that if we delayed crossing the Changjiang, we would just be sheltering Guangzhou and Xikou and allowing them a breathing spell. There is no way the Nanjing delegation can challenge this point.

Now about reorganization, that is, reorganization of the armed forces. Without it, we cannot eradicate the factors which make for civil war. But we must not be impetuous, and the conditions should be lenient. Our conditions for reorganization are even more lenient than what the Nanjing delegation has proposed. For example, they suggested disbanding troops and demobilizing them, while we proposed assembling them for training and regrouping. Comrade Mao Zedong has specially emphasized this point. At first glance, this seems to go against the wishes of the people, so it’s necessary to explain the matter further. As soon as the more than 2,000,000 Kuomintang troops heard of disbanding, they would be badly shaken, each man worrying about his own future, and then there would be disturbances everywhere to the detriment of the people’s interests. We must take a responsible attitude towards the people. Therefore, we propose that in the initial period Kuomintang troops should assemble and go through training without any change in their numerical strength, formations and designations and be treated the same as the Liberation Army soldiers (four and a half cattles of millet per person per day). Comrade Mao Zedong has said, “The number of troops they report will be the number we accept.” Payment of inflated rations for a few months won’t amount

to much. We will not discriminate against them the way the Kuomintang formerly discriminated against the Eighth Route Army. Then it will be admitted that we are magnanimous and the Chinese people will have nothing to apologize for. If the Kuomintang troops still stir up trouble, they will be firmly dealt with. After being assembled and trained, the soldiers will become politically conscious while the officers will obtain political education, and they can be accepted into the People's Liberation Army. But we must not be hasty, and after they have been assembled, we should treat them on their merits and wait for their awakening. Some will awaken quickly, others slowly, but we believe that the majority can change over. Of course, there may also be some trouble-makers.

Only with the takeover of political power and the reorganization of troops can we achieve genuine peace. These points are covered by sections four and eight in the Agreement on Internal Peace.

The Nanjing delegation argued vigorously about the first section, which deals with the punishment of war criminals. We respect their opinion: we will refrain from presenting a list of war criminals, and the phrases "chief culprits" and "arch criminals" have been deleted. Moreover, we say, "All war criminals, no matter who they are, may be cleared of the charge and treated with leniency, provided they show by actual deeds that they are really sincere in distinguishing right from wrong and are determined to make a clean break with their past, thus facilitating the progress of the cause of the Chinese people's liberation and the peaceful settlement of the internal problem." Some people ask what we will do about Chiang Kai-shek. If he can meet this requirement, he will be treated accordingly.

Concerning sections two and three on abrogating the bogus constitution and the bogus constituted authority, there wasn't much argument. But naturally this too will not be easy to accomplish.

About sections five and six on confiscating bureaucrat-capital and reforming the system of landownership. We have explained the confiscation of bureaucrat-capital as referring to bureaucrat-capital acquired during the rule of the Kuomintang in Nanjing. Small enterprises that are not harmful to the national economy and the people's livelihood will not be confiscated. If there is private capital stock and investigation proves that it was not transferred from bureaucrat-capital, it will all be honoured. Otherwise, too many enterprises would be involved and production would be affected.

Concerning the seventh section on abrogating traitorous treaties. We are very careful about this. Some foreign treaties must be abrogated, others need revision, while still others can be retained.

With respect to foreign relations, we have a basic stand: we uphold China's national independence and the principle of independence and self-reliance. Ever since the Opium War, China has been oppressed by foreign invaders. Many martyrs have shed their blood and laid down their lives for our nation's liberation, but this oppression could never be thrown off. Today the Chinese people have stood up, and they feel proud and elated! This is the result of the people's struggle led by the Chinese Communist Party. Japanese imperialism was defeated in China, U.S. imperialism is being defeated. Although U.S. imperialism is still strong, it is strong only in appearance but weak in reality. To combat U.S. imperialism, we have used both pen and sword. We fought a battle of words with Marshall<sup>356</sup> for a year, and ultimately he left in defeat. Imperialism is a paper tiger; if you show that you can be tough, it will become soft; if you are soft, it will be on your back. On questions of principle, we are firm — absolutely firm. There is no question that we must adopt a serious attitude towards U.S. imperialism and let it know that China cannot be bullied, that no country may interfere in China's internal affairs. To this end we have struggled for more than a hundred years. We must not seek foreign aid without being self-reliant. If foreign aid holds benefits for China, of course we want it; but we cannot be dependent on it. We should not be dependent even on the Soviet Union and the New Democracies. If we only relied on aid from abroad, what could we accomplish? One of the main causes for Chiang Kai-shek's defeat is that he relied on foreign aid for everything. This is another case of learning from the overturned cart ahead. We are willing to cooperate with all countries that treat us as equals. We don't discriminate against foreigners or engage in provocation, but we must take a firm stand, otherwise we will become wholly dependent upon them. The Chinese Communist Party started out with the lofty aim of overthrowing the warlords and the imperialists. At the time there were only some fifty members (among them the heroic martyr Comrade Li Dazhao, who gave his life here in Beiping<sup>128</sup>), but anything new is only a sprout in the beginning, and all new things are precious because these sprouts are filled with unlimited vitality and will grow into mighty trees. This is a law of nature. And all decadent things, however big, must gradually die out, and there's nothing terrifying about them. We take

a firm stand, but we must also be very careful and handle problems according to the principle of “on just grounds, to our advantage and with restraint”. In this connection, we should remember the years of the May 4th Movement when we were combating feudalism. At that time we were very resolute in opposing feudalism and raised the slogans of overthrowing Confucius and fighting against the feudal family system. But today we realize that if there is anything good in what Confucius says, we can quote him for our use. And if our parents come and stay with us, we should take care of them. We must make a clean break with feudalism and take a firm class stand, but at the same time we must have an analytical approach. We must do likewise with respect to imperialism.

With regard to military matters, the stationing of U.S. troops in China is unjustifiable under any circumstances. We are telling them to withdraw — this is the demand of the whole Chinese people. U.S. affairs are not our business, but if American troops don’t withdraw from Chinese territory, we have the right to wipe them out. And we will not be frightened if the United States sends large contingents of troops. China cannot be intimidated. The Chinese are an ancient people and a heroic people. They have two strong points: they are brave, and they are industrious. What a fine people! It is no wonder we love them! (Of course other peoples have their good points too, and we certainly recognize that.) This is the source of our self-confidence. If U.S. armies actually dare to invade China and occupy our big cities, we will use the countryside to surround the cities, and all their supplies (including toilet paper and ice cream) will have to be brought in from the United States. Moreover, they will have to bear the burden of the cities and be responsible for their provisioning. The American people’s standard of living is high, and they are not willing to fight. After Russia’s October Revolution, the United States also sent troops to intervene, but the only result was “voluntary withdrawal”.<sup>438</sup> That was because they couldn’t stand the hardships. We have defeated the army of the Japanese aggressors; are we going to be afraid of U.S. soldiers?

Politically, we stand for national independence and equality. The U.S. Congress is wrangling over whether or not to recognize China. Actually, it’s not worth making such a fuss about. Even if they recognize us, there is still the question of whether we will recognize them. Nevertheless, we don’t engage in provocation. Although we have not established diplomatic relations with the United States, we will protect

its nationals. The U.S. Consul-General in Tianjin sent us a letter in his official capacity. We returned it, saying, "Sorry, we can't have any dealings with you because we have no diplomatic relations." Later he wrote simply as a railway employee, and we allowed him to register as a foreign resident. Actually, it's not that the United States doesn't want to have dealings with us; Leighton Stuart<sup>376</sup> ran around everywhere trying to establish contact. Fu Jingbo<sup>439</sup> is always writing from Hongkong to Deng Yingchao and me and to others. But the Americans use dual tactics, and at the same time they try different methods to sound us out, to find out what the Chinese Communists are really after. That's not hard to discover: all they need do is listen to a speech or read a few statements and they'll know. As for the future, after peace has been achieved, we'll manage things practically and realistically. The embassies of the various countries are still all there; we are not going to cut off contact, nor will we be in a hurry to establish diplomatic relations with them. If we press for recognition, we will lose the initiative. If the imperialists want to establish diplomatic relations with us, they will have to conduct negotiations with us according to the principle of equality. Politically we aren't anti-foreign, and militarily we don't engage in provocation. "On just grounds, to our advantage and with restraint" — is there anything we need fear?

Economically, if there is an opportunity for trade, we will take it. Foreign trade should be developed; it is mutually beneficial. We don't recognize the privileges of the imperialists, but the problems involved are complex and cannot be solved instantly.

Culturally, the imperialists have many institutions of aggression like schools and colleges, hospitals and churches. These must all be taken over by the Chinese, but we must not be hasty — we must move prudently, step by step. These cultural institutions have a bad aspect, but they also have a good one. For example, take the hospital of the Peking Union Medical College. When we get sick, we too can go there for treatment. We can transform these institutions from within and change them into national ones.

Let me add a little more concerning the eighth section. Before a coalition government is established, we can permit the Nanjing government to continue to exist for a time. At first we thought we would use the Revolutionary Military Commission to direct it, but the Nanjing delegation felt that would not be good, so we dropped this demand and put the two on a par. If the Nanjing government signs the peace agreement and keeps its word, we pledge ourselves to propose to the Pre-

paratory Meeting of the New Political Consultative Conference that the Nanjing government be allowed to participate in the Conference. Of course, whether or not the proposal will be accepted is another matter.

The Nanjing delegation has expressed its willingness to accept these eight sections with twenty-four articles. We are holding the Nanjing government to a reply before the twentieth. If they don't accept, then we'll definitely fight our way across the Changjiang River on the twentieth. Even the Nanjing delegation says that if we don't cross the river, then the people in the south will not be able to endure their lot any longer. So there must be no procrastination; if we were to delay any longer, we would fail the people there. Of course, after we've crossed the river, they can still sign the agreement, if they are willing to. In a word, the door is open. The Nanjing delegation thinks we must have weaknesses, since we are always seeking peace. First, seeing that we are going to take over the country, they think that we are afraid of further destruction and that we are prepared to "spare the rat to save the vase on which it sits". Second, they assume that, facing the surging Changjiang River, we must be afraid of losing too many lives. Hence they are always trying to bargain. Actually, they are aware of only one aspect, but not the other. Peace doesn't necessarily mean that nothing will be destroyed, and war doesn't necessarily mean that everything will be smashed. There is always something that isn't smashed; and if we advance somewhat sooner, they may not even have time for destruction. What we are trying to do is to have as little destruction as possible. Therefore, we are not afraid of war. We tell them frankly that if they choose war, they're done for. But with peace, they still have a way out. Naturally, there won't be any division into new Southern and Northern Dynasties, but rather transformation.

Friends, China's new-democratic politics involve the co-operation of four classes. Even landlords, after a few years of labour, can become peasants. In the past, because the circumstances were different, we were divided. But now, we find ourselves in circumstances favourable to unity and we can work together. Those who are not Communists can work as well as we do, or even better. There are no born Communists. My forebears were "Shaoxing aides";<sup>440</sup> any talk of my having had "lofty ambition even when young" is nonsense.

The provisions of the Agreement on Internal Peace with its eight sections and twenty-four articles will certainly be carried out, whether

through war or by peaceful means. The use of peaceful means will require more effort than war, and we hope that everyone will help. I hope that you will make suggestions in group discussions or in a larger forum. We have been in the countryside for a long time and are unfamiliar with the cities, so I hope you will all give us as much advice as you can.