



Mao Tse-tung
INTERVIEW
WITH A *NEW CHINA DAILY* CORRESPONDENT
ON THE NEW INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

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**INTERVIEW
WITH A NEW CHINA DAILY CORRESPONDENT
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September 1, 1939

Correspondent: What is the significance of the Treaty of Non-Aggression Between the Soviet Union and Germany?^[1]

Mao Tse-tung: The Soviet-German non-aggression treaty is the result of the growing socialist strength of the Soviet Union and the policy of peace persistently followed by the Soviet government. The treaty has shattered the intrigues by which the reactionary international bourgeoisie represented by Chamberlain and Daladier sought to instigate a Soviet-German war, has broken the encirclement of the Soviet Union by the German-Italian-Japanese anti-Communist bloc, strengthened peace between the Soviet Union and Germany, and safeguarded the progress of socialist construction in the Soviet Union. In the East it deals a blow to Japan and helps China; it strengthens the position of China's forces of resistance to Japan and deals a blow to the capitulators. All this provides a basis for helping the people throughout the world to win freedom and liberation. Such is the full political significance of the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty.

Question: Some people do not realize yet that the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty is the result of the breakdown of the Anglo-French-Soviet talks, but think that the Soviet-German treaty caused the breakdown. Will you please explain why the Anglo-French-Soviet talks failed?

Answer: The talks failed purely because the British and French governments were insincere. In recent years the reactionary international bourgeoisie, and primarily that of Britain and France, have consistently pursued the reactionary policy of "non-intervention" towards aggression by fascist Germany, Italy and Japan. Their purpose is to connive at wars of aggression and to profit by them.

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Thus Britain and France flatly rejected the Soviet Union's repeated proposals for a genuine front against aggression; standing on the side-lines, they took a "non-interventionist" position and connived at German, Italian and Japanese aggression. Their aim was to step forward and intervene when the belligerents had worn each other out. In pursuit of this reactionary policy they sacrificed half of China to Japan, and the whole of Abyssinia, Spain, Austria and Czechoslovakia to Italy and Germany.^[2] Then they wanted to sacrifice the Soviet Union. This plot was clearly revealed in the recent Anglo-French-Soviet talks. They lasted for more than four months, from April 15 to August 23, during which the Soviet Union exercised the utmost patience. But, from start to finish, Britain and France rejected the principle of equality and reciprocity; they demanded that the

Soviet Union provide safeguards for their security, but refused to do likewise for the Soviet Union and the small Baltic states, so as to leave a gap through which Germany could attack, and they also refused to allow the passage of Soviet troops through Poland to fight the aggressor. That is why the talks broke down. In the meantime, Germany indicated her willingness to stop her activities against the Soviet Union and abandon the so-called Agreement Against the Communist International^[3] and recognized the inviolability of the Soviet frontiers; hence the conclusion of the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty. The policy of "non-intervention" pursued by international and primarily Anglo-French reaction is a policy of "sitting on top of the mountain to watch the tigers fight", a downright imperialist policy of profiting at others' expense. This policy was initiated when Chamberlain took office reached its climax in the Munich agreement of September last year and finally collapsed in the recent Anglo-French-Soviet talks. From now on the situation will inevitably develop into one of direct conflict between the two big imperialist blocs, the Anglo-French bloc and the German-Italian bloc. As I said in October 1938 at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of our Party, "The inevitable result of Chamberlain's policy will be like 'lifting a rock only to drop it on one's own toes'." Chamberlain started with the aim of injuring others only to end up by ruining himself. This is the law of development which governs all reactionary policies.

Question: In your opinion, how will the present situation develop?

Answer: The international situation has already entered a new phase. The one-sided situation in the second imperialist war which has existed for some time, in other words, the situation in which,

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as a result of the policy of "non-intervention", one group of imperialist states attacks while another sits tight and looks on, will inevitably be replaced by a situation of all-embracing war as far as Europe is concerned. The second imperialist war has entered a new stage.

In Europe, a large-scale imperialist war is imminent between the German-Italian and the Anglo-French imperialist blocs which are contending for domination over the colonial peoples. In this war, each of the belligerents will brazenly declare its own cause to be just and that of its opponents unjust in order to delude people and win the support of public opinion. Actually this is a swindle. The aims of both sides are imperialist, both are fighting for the domination of colonies and semi-colonies and for spheres of influence, and both are waging a predatory war. At present, they are fighting over Poland, the Balkans and the Mediterranean littoral. This war is not at all a just war. The only just wars are non-predatory wars, wars of liberation. Communists will in no circumstances support any predatory war: They will, however, bravely step forward to support every just and non-predatory war for liberation, and they will stand in the forefront of the struggle. With Chamberlain and Daladier practising intimidation and bribery, the social-democratic parties affiliated to the Second International are splitting up. One section, the reactionary upper stratum, is following the same old disastrous road as in the First World War and is ready to support the new imperialist war. But another section will join with the Communists in forming a popular front against war and fascism. Chamberlain and Daladier are following in the footsteps of Germany and Italy and are becoming more and more reactionary, taking advantage of the war mobilization to put the state structure in

their countries on a fascist footing and to militarize the economy. In short, the two big imperialist blocs are feverishly preparing for war and millions of people are facing the danger of mass slaughter. Surely all this will arouse movements of resistance among the masses. Whether in Germany or in Italy, Britain or France, or anywhere else in Europe or the world at large, if the people do not want to be used as imperialist cannon-fodder, they will have to rise up and oppose the imperialist war in every possible way.

Besides these two big blocs, there is a third bloc in the capitalist world, headed by the United States and including a number of Central and South American countries. In its own interests, this bloc will not enter the war for the time being. In the name of neutrality, U.S. imperialism is temporarily refraining from joining either of the

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belligerents, so as to be able to come on the scene later and contend for the leadership of the capitalist world. The fact that the U.S. bourgeoisie is not yet prepared to discard democracy and a peace-time economy at home is favourable to the world peace movement.

Badly hit by the Soviet-German treaty, Japanese imperialism is facing a future beset with still greater difficulties. Two factions within Japan are fighting over foreign policy. The militarists are contemplating an alliance with Germany and Italy for the purpose of gaining exclusive control of China, invading Southeast Asia and expelling Britain, the United States and France from the East; on the other hand, one section of the bourgeoisie would prefer to make concessions to Britain, the United States and France in order to concentrate on plundering China. At present, there is a strong tendency towards a compromise with Britain. The British reactionaries will offer Japan the joint partition of China plus financial and economic help, in return for which Japan will have to serve as the watchdog of British interests in the East, suppress the Chinese national liberation movement and contain the Soviet Union. Therefore, whatever happens, Japan's basic aim of conquering China will never change. The possibility that Japan will launch large-scale frontal military offensives in China may not be very great, but it will step up its political offensive to "use Chinese to subdue Chinese"^[4] and its economic plundering of China to "sustain the war by means of war",^[5] while keeping up its frantic "mopping-up" campaigns^[6] in the occupied areas; moreover, it will work through Britain to force China to surrender. At a favourable moment it will propose an Eastern Munich and, with some relatively big concessions as bait, will try to coax and bully China into accepting its terms for surrender, so as to attain its aim of subjugating China. No matter what cabinet changes the Japanese ruling class may make, this imperialist aim will remain unchanged until the Japanese people rise in revolution.

Outside the capitalist world there is a world of light, the socialist Soviet Union. The Soviet-German treaty enables the Soviet Union to give greater help to the world movement for peace and to China in her resistance to Japan.

This is my appraisal of the international situation.

Question: In these circumstances, what are the prospects for China?

Answer: There are two possibilities. One is perseverance in resistance, unity and progress, which would mean national rejuvenation. The other is compromise, a split and retrogression, which would mean national subjugation.

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In the new international situation, as Japan comes up against increased difficulties and China firmly refuses to compromise, the stage of strategic retreat will end for us and that of strategic stalemate will begin. The latter stage is one of preparation for the counter-offensive.

However, stalemate along the front means the reverse of stalemate in the enemy's rear; with the emergence of a stalemate along the front lines, the struggle behind the enemy's lines will become intense. Thus the large-scale "mopping-up" campaigns the enemy has been conducting in the occupied areas -- mainly in northern China -- since the fall of Wuhan will not only continue but will be intensified from now on. Furthermore, since the enemy's main policy at present consists in his political offensive to "use Chinese to subdue Chinese" and in his economic aggression for "sustaining the war by means of war", and since a Far Eastern Munich is the objective of British policy in the East, the danger of the surrender of the greater part of China and of an internal split will increase enormously. China is still far weaker than the enemy, and unless the whole country unites in an arduous struggle, it will not be able to build up strength for the counter-offensive.

Therefore, the most serious task for our country is still perseverance in the war, and there must be no slackening.

Beyond any doubt, China must on no account miss the present opportunity or make a wrong decision but must take a firm political stand.

In other words: First, firm adherence to the stand of resistance to Japan and opposition to any moves towards compromise. Determined blows must be struck at all the open or undercover Wang Ching-weis. China must firmly reject any blandishments, whether from Japan or from Britain, and must never take part in an Eastern Munich.

Second, firm adherence to the stand of unity and opposition to any moves towards a split. Strict vigilance must be maintained against such moves whether they stem from the Japanese imperialists, from other foreign countries, or from the capitulators at home. All internal friction harmful to the War of Resistance must be sternly checked.

Third, firm adherence to the stand of progress and opposition to any retrogression. Whether in the military, political, financial or economic sphere, or in party affairs, or in the field of culture and education, or in the mass movement, every theory, every institution, every measure harmful to the war must be re-examined and effectively changed to serve the War of Resistance.

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If all this is done, China will be able effectively to build up her strength for the counter-offensive.

From now on the whole country must make "preparation for the counter-offensive" its over-all task in the War of Resistance.

Today, it is necessary on the one hand earnestly to sustain our defence along the front lines and vigorously to help the fighting behind the enemy lines and on the other to institute political, military and other reforms and build up tremendous strength, so that when the moment comes, the whole might of the nation can be thrown into a large-scale counter-offensive for the recovery of our lost territories.

NOTES

[1] The Treaty of Non-Aggression Between the Soviet Union and Germany was signed on August 23, 1939. [p. 263]

[2] Aided and abetted by the "non-intervention" policy of the British and French governments, fascist Germany and Italy committed a series of acts of aggression and achieved their purpose. Italy began her armed aggression against Abyssinia in October 1935 and occupied the whole country in May 1936. In July 1936 Germany and Italy started their joint armed intervention in the internal affairs of Spain and supported the fascist Franco in his rebellion against the Popular Front Government. After a prolonged war with the German and Italian interventionists and Franco's rebel troops, the Popular Front Government was defeated in March 1939. German troops occupied Austria in March 1938 and invaded the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia in October. In March 1939 the whole of Czechoslovakia came under German occupation. [p. 264]

[3] The Agreement Against the Communist International was concluded between Japan and Germany in November 1936; Italy joined it in November 1937. [p. 264]

[4] "Using Chinese to subdue Chinese" was a sinister device of the Japanese imperialists in their aggression against China. To create divisions within the country, they cultivated various Chinese elements to serve as their stooges. After the outbreak of the war, they not only employed the openly pro-Japanese clique within the Kuomintang headed by Wang Ching-wei but also made use of Chiang Kai-shek's clique, in order to check the Communist Party which was the most resolute in resisting Japan. In 1939, they ceased attacking Chiang Kai-shek's troops and gave him political encouragement in his anti-Communist activities. [p. 266]

[5] "Sustaining the war by means of war" refers to Japan's policy of ruthless plunder of the Chinese areas under her occupation to meet the expenses of her aggressive war. [p. 266]

[6] "Mopping-up" campaigns were the Japanese aggressors' euphemism for their barbarous policy of triple atrocity -- burning all, killing all and looting all. [p. 266]
