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To cite this article: Chen Jian (2008) Bridging Revolution and Decolonization: The “Bandung Discourse” in China's Early Cold War Experience, *The Chinese Historical Review*, 15:2, 207-241, DOI: [10.1179/tcr.2008.15.2.207](https://doi.org/10.1179/tcr.2008.15.2.207)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1179/tcr.2008.15.2.207>



Published online: 19 Jul 2013.



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BRIDGING REVOLUTION AND DECOLONIZATION: THE “BANDUNG DISCOURSE” IN CHINA’S EARLY COLD WAR EXPERIENCE

Chen Jian

THE years 1954-1955 witnessed visible changes in Beijing’s representation of China’s international policies. After its establishment in 1949, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) appeared as a “revolutionary country” on the international scene, challenging the legitimacy of the existing international system controlled by Western imperialist powers—and the United States in particular. Mao Zedong and his comrades made it clear that a primary mission of the “new China” was to destroy the “old world” in which China had been a humiliated member during modern times.¹ In the context of the PRC’s revolutionary foreign policy, its international discourse, reflecting the Cold War’s bipolar structure, was dominated by a class-struggle-centered language; and its attitudes toward non-Western, nationalist countries combined harsh criticism with tactics and actions designed to neutralize them in the Cold War confrontation.²

In 1954-55, a “Bandung discourse,” a discourse that was with features significantly different from the class-struggle-centered language governing the PRC’s external behavior in its first five years, emerged in Beijing’s representation of its international policies. At the Geneva Conference of 1954, the PRC delegation led by Zhou Enlai took the initiative to meet with delegates from

¹ See, for example, Mao Zedong, “On People’s Democratic Dictatorship,” “The Bankruptcy of Historical Idealism,” and “The Chinese People Have Stood Up,” *Mao Zedong xuanji* [Selected Works of Mao Zedong] (hereafter *MXJ*), (Beijing: Renmin, 1965, 1977), 4:1473-86, 1519-20; 5:342-46. See also Zhou Enlai, “Our Foreign Policies and Tasks,” *Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxuan* [Selected Diplomatic Papers of Zhou Enlai] (hereafter *ZWJWX*), (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1990), 48-57.

² In the early years of the PRC, for example, Beijing’s leaders characterized Vietnam, Malaya, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and India as being dominated by “reactionary forces.” Liu Shaoqi to Stalin, “Report on Strategies of National Revolutionary Movements in East Asia,” August 14, 1949, *Jianguo yilai Liu Shaoqi wengao* [Liu Shaoqi’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic] (hereafter *LWG*), (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 2005), 1: 50-53.

Britain, France, Laos and Cambodia.³ In late June 1954, during an interval of the conference, Zhou visited India and Burma to meet with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Burmese Prime Minister U Nu, and together with them, introduced the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,” also known as the Pancha shila.⁴

In the wake of the Geneva conference, Beijing actively supported and, then, participated in the Bandung conference of leaders from 29 Asian and African countries in April 1955. The PRC delegation headed by Zhou made extensive efforts to have dialogues with leaders from other countries. The basic tone of Zhou’s conference presentations seemed reconciliatory compared with the revolutionary language that Beijing had adopted in the previous years. Towards the end of the conference, Zhou announced that Beijing was willing to negotiate with Washington for reducing “tensions in the Far East” and solving the problems between China and the United States.⁵

Scholars of China’s international history and Cold War history have long paid attention to these changes in Chinese foreign policy in 1954-55. A prevailing interpretation is that the changes reflected Beijing’s intention and action, at least for the moment, toward adopting a more moderate line in China’s external policies for the purpose of “expanding the new China’s space for activities on the international scene.”⁶

This article is to argue that the emergence of the Bandung discourse should not be treated as a radical departure in China’s external relations. The PRC’s

³ For discussions, see Chen Jian, “China and the Indochina Settlement of the Geneva Conference of 1954,” in Mark Lawrence and Fredrik Logvall eds., *The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict and Cold War Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 240-62; Zhai Qiang, *China and the Vietnam Wars* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Chapter 2.

⁴ The Five Principles or “Pancha shila” included (1) mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, (2) non-aggression, (2) non-interference in other country’s internal affairs, (4) equal and mutual benefit, and (5) peaceful coexistence.

⁵ Zhou’s speech at the Asian-African conference, April 23, 1955, ZWJWX, 134.

⁶ See, for example, Zhang Baijia, “Transforming Self, Influencing the World: Basic Trends in the Development of 20th-century Chinese Diplomacy,” *Zhongguo shehui kexue* [Social Sciences in China], no. 1, 2001: 12-14; Niu Jun, “The Shaping of the New China’s Diplomacy and Its Features,” *Lishi yanjiu* [Historical Research], no. 5, 1999: 39-41; Mineo Nakajima, “Foreign Relations: From the Korean War to the Bandung Line,” Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank ed., *Cambridge History of China*, 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 283-92; Kuo-Kang Shao, *Zhou Enlai and the Foundations of Chinese Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1996), 211-37. Shu Guang Zhang’s recent study on the Chinese experiences at Geneva and Bandung is based on the support of newly declassified Chinese diplomatic documents, but his interpretation fits the framework of the above cited earlier studies on the subject. See Shu Guang Zhang, “Constructing ‘Peaceful Coexistence’: China’s Diplomacy toward the Geneva and Bandung Conferences, 1954-55,” *Cold War History*, 7, no. 4 (November 2007): 509-28.

performance at Geneva and Bandung must be understood in the context of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership's overall perception of how "revolutionariness" should be defined in Chinese foreign policy, and how the definition evolved in the mid-1950s—in the context that Beijing's leaders reflected on how better to translate foreign policy challenges into sources of sustained domestic mobilization, and, for this purpose, how to pursue China's centrality in international affairs and expand China's influence in the non-Western world.

The CCP's Early Vision of China and the "World Revolution"

IN a conceptual sense, the PRC's foreign policy was made on the basis of the CCP's comprehension of the changing modern world and China's position in it in the formative years of the Chinese revolution. In order to understand the context in which the Bandung discourse entered the PRC's foreign policy representation, it is necessary first to explore the evolution of the CCP's analyses of the "world proletarian revolution" and its connections with the Chinese revolution.

Since its establishment in 1921, the young CCP had persistently followed the lead of the Soviet Bolshevik Party and the Comintern in forming its analysis of the international situation facing the Chinese revolution. In a series of early CCP documents, the Chinese Communists regarded the "world revolution" as a unified course by the oppressed classes in various countries in the world. Accordingly, they believed that (1) the interests of the Chinese revolution were fundamentally compatible with those of the world revolution, and (2) the interests of the Chinese revolution were subordinate to and, therefore, should serve the interests of the world revolution.⁷ These understandings accorded with the fact that the CCP was then a branch of the Comintern, and that the CCP's establishment would have been impossible had the Comintern not offered direction and support.⁸

Even when the young Chinese Communists firmly took China's own revolution as a subordinate part of the world revolution, they had tried to identify some of the specific characteristics of their revolution due to China's unique conditions. By 1923, the CCP leadership had identified that "considering China's economic and political situation, and given the sufferings and requests of various social classes (workers, peasants, industrialists and businessmen) in Chinese

⁷ "Resolution on the World Situation and the Chinese Communist Party," July 1922; "Resolution on Joining the Third International," July 1922; "Declaration of the Second Congress of the CCP," July 1922, *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji* [Selected Works of the CCP Central Committee] (hereafter ZYWJ), (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao, 1988), 1:59-60, 67, 99-117.

⁸ See, for example, Tony Saich, *The Origins of the First United Front in China: The Role of Sneevliet (Alias Maring)*, Brill Academic Publishers, 1991; Yang Kuisong, *Zhonggong yu Mosike de guanxi, 1920-1960* [The CCP's Relations and Moscow, 1920-1960], (Taipei: Dongda Tushu, 1997), Chapter 1.

society, what in urgent need [in China] is a *national* revolution.”⁹ In the CCP’s early representation of its tasks, a highlighted theme was the connections between the Chinese revolution as one occurring in a “semi-colonial and semi-feudal” country and the struggles for national liberation by the oppressed peoples in the colonies of Western powers. The Chinese Communists emphasized that “China’s proletarian class must *simultaneously* carry out the national liberation movement and such complicated struggle as class movement,” and that “our mission is to wage a *national* revolution to liberate the oppressed Chinese nation and, *on the basis of it*, to strive for serving the world revolution, so as to liberate the oppressed nations and classes in the whole world.”¹⁰ Even in its infancy years, when the CCP depended heavily on the Comintern’s tutelage, the Chinese Communists already began to define the missions of the Chinese revolution by trying to comprehend the connections as well as distinctions between the “world revolution” and China’s “national revolution.”

Beginning in the late 1920s, in the wake of the CCP’s setbacks following Jiang Jieshi’s bloody anti-Communist coup in April 1927, Mao and a group of his comrades moved to the countryside, where they organized the Red Army and, by mobilizing the revolutionary peasantry, waged a violent “Land Revolution.” Challenging the notion that a Communist revolution had to be carried out by urban proletarians, Mao found the necessity and possibility—within the Chinese context—of creating a rural-centered pattern of Communist revolution. Supporting this idea in Mao’s conceptual realm were both pragmatism and romanticism. On the one hand, Mao sensed that China’s social conditions—characterized by an overwhelming rural population and insufficient development of urbanization and industrialization—precluded an urban-centered communist revolution; on the other, he perceived that China’s backwardness in development made it easier for a revolution carried out by the peasants—who were the most oppressed and, therefore, the most revolutionary group in society—to succeed.¹¹

But the CCP’s rural revolution—still following class-struggle-centered strategies and policies—was poorly carried out in southern China. Facing the attacks of the Nationalist troops, the Chinese Red Army was pressed to the verge of elimination by the time of the “Long March.” It was the outbreak of China’s war against Japan that provided the CCP with unprecedented space for development. Holding high the banner of nationalism during the war years, the

⁹ “Draft Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party,” June 1923, The United Front Department of the CCP comp., *Minzu wenti wenxian huibian* [A Collections of Documents on Nationality Issues], (Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao, 1991), 21-22; “Declaration of the Third Congress of the CCP,” June 1923, *ZYWJ*, 1:166;

¹⁰ “Declaration of the Third Congress of the CCP,” June 1923, *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji*, 1:166. Italic is author’s.

¹¹ See, for example, Mao, “Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society,” “Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan,” “Why Can the Red Political Power Exist In China?” and “A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire,” *MXJ*, 1:3-11, 13-46, 49-58, 101-11.

CCP, its military forces, and its base areas expanded significantly. Mao, who by then had firmly seized the CCP's leadership role, asserted that "we must take over China" after the end of the war.¹²

The CCP's rapid expansion during the war years allowed—or even encouraged—Mao and the CCP leadership to consider how to develop new political, military and diplomatic strategies and tactics to promote the revolution.¹³ The dissolution of the Comintern in 1943 also allowed Mao and his comrades to perceive the meanings of the Chinese revolution in terms that they had not developed in the past. In particular, Mao and his comrades began to consider how different patterns of Communist revolutions—by reflecting the specific conditions and circumstances of different countries—should develop in the world revolution in the postwar era.

At the CCP's seventh congress, held in Yan'an in April-June 1945, Mao delivered several speeches. In the main speech, entitled "On Coalition Government," the CCP chairman emphasized that "the two world wars represent two completely different eras." In defining the new era that would emerge after World War II, he presented a series of non-class-struggle-centered observations, contending that after the end of the war, "the struggles between the anti-Fascist masses and the remnants of the Fascists, between the forces for democracy and the forces against democracy, and between national liberation and national oppression will prevail in most parts of the world."¹⁴

Thus we see that new ways of thinking were emerging in Mao's and the CCP leadership's conceptualization of the world revolution and China's position in it: While Mao and his comrades remained loyal to the international Communist movement, they had nurtured a new tendency toward constructing new meanings for the Chinese revolution in ways that did not necessarily accord the existing mainstream discourse of the Moscow-centered world revolution. It was against this background that Mao introduced the "intermediate zone" theory.

Mao and His "Intermediate Zone" Theory

IN retrospect, the end of China's war against Japan in August 1945 created new conditions for major changes in the CCP's external relations. After Japan announced its unconditional surrender on August 15, Mao and the CCP leadership acted immediately to secure political power in China. Yet big power politics was more complicated than what CCP leaders could have imagined. In order to fit China into the Yalta system that the Soviet leader Josef Stalin had worked out with the Americans without consulting with his Chinese comrades, Moscow

¹² Cited from Yang, *Zhonggong he mosike de guanxi*, 519.

¹³ For a more detailed discussion of how, toward the end of World War II, the CCP strived in political, military and diplomatic fronts for "taking over" China after the end of the war, see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, Chapter 1.

¹⁴ Mao, "On Coalition Government," *MXJ*, 3:1030-31

recognized Jiang as China's legitimate leader and pressured the CCP to negotiate with him to avoid a civil war.¹⁵ Mao and the CCP, relying heavily upon the support from Moscow in their plans to compete for power, had no other choice but to follow Stalin's instruction to pursue compromises with Jiang.¹⁶

This experience was of critical importance in the shaping—or reshaping—of Mao's and the CCP's overall vision of the connections between the Chinese revolution and the Moscow-led “world revolution.” The CCP still depended upon support from Moscow to form a grand strategy in competing with the Nationalists for China's political power, and the escalation of the Soviet-U.S. confrontation provided the CCP with the much-needed space to carry out this strategy.¹⁷ In the meantime, Mao and his comrades developed a stronger sense than ever before that the missions of their revolution must be defined in ways different from what had been dictated by Moscow because of China's unique domestic and external conditions.

Thus, along with the worsening of the Cold War and the Chinese civil war, Mao and his fellow CCP leaders introduced in late 1946 a series of new ideas about the post-war world situation, which the CCP's propagandists would later characterize as Mao's “intermediate zone” theory. A distinctive feature of the theory was that Mao and his comrades now tried to perceive the emerging Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States from a China-centered perspective.

In an interview in August 1946 with Anna Louise Strong, a left-wing American journalist, Mao introduced the “intermediate zone” thesis. He noticed that a global confrontation had been emerging between the United States and the Soviet Union. He argued that between the two big powers existed a vast “intermediate zone” in Asia, Africa and Europe, and that the U.S. imperialists could not directly attack the Soviet Union until they had managed to control the “intermediate zone,” including China. As a result, concluded Mao, although the postwar world situation seemed to be characterized by the sharp confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States, the principal contradiction in the world was represented by the struggles between peoples in the intermediate zone and the reactionary American ruling class. These struggles, emphasized Mao, would determine not only the direction of the global confrontation between the two superpowers but also the fate of the entire world.¹⁸

¹⁵ Odd Arne Westad, *Cold War and Revolution: Soviet-American Rivalry and the Origins of the Chinese Civil War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), Chapters 2-3.

¹⁶ For more detailed discussions of how Stalin pressured Mao and the CCP to negotiate with Jiang, see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 26-29.

¹⁷ For discussions, see Westad, *Cold War and Revolution*, esp. Chapters 4 and 7; Niu Jun, *From Yan'an to the World: The Origin and Development of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2005), Chaps 10-11.

¹⁸ Mao, “Talks with Anna Louis Strong,” *MXJ*, 4:1191-1192.

In early 1947, an important article, published in the name of Lu Dingyi, the CCP's propaganda chief, provided additional definition of the "intermediate zone" theory.¹⁹ Lu argued that the postwar confrontation on the world scene was between the "anti democratic forces" headed by Washington and the "peace-loving and democratic forces" headed by Moscow. Therefore it is true that the international situation in the postwar era had been bipolarized. However, as the United States was separated from the Soviet Union by the intermediate zone in Asia, Africa and Europe, Washington's anti-Soviet global strategy was primarily designed for "international expansion in the intermediate zone." Lu emphasized:

After the end of the Second World War, the principal contradiction in world politics exists not between the capitalist world and socialist Soviet Union, nor between the Soviet Union and the United States, but between the democratic and anti-democratic forces in the capitalist world. More concretely speaking, the principal contradictions in today's world are those between the American people and American reactionaries, between Britain and the United States, and between China and the United States.²⁰

It is interesting to note that, despite Mao's and his comrades' recognition of the sharp conflicts between the superpowers, they emphasized that the real thrust of the American-Soviet confrontation lay in the competition over the intermediate zone, and the process and outcome of the competition would be decided by the struggles between the peoples of the intermediate zone and the reactionary U.S. ruling class, rather than between capitalist America and the socialist Soviet Union. It should be further noted that, as Mao and his comrades viewed it, since China occupied a crucial position in the intermediate zone, the development of the Chinese revolution would play a central role in defining the path or even determining the result of the global Cold War.

The introduction of the "intermediate zone" theory was of critical importance in understanding the conceptual journey of Mao and the CCP leadership that would eventually lead them to adopt the Bandung discourse. There is no doubt that the "intermediate zone" theory mirrored the CCP's commitment to transforming the existing international order by challenging the United States as a dominant Western imperialist power. It also demonstrated that the CCP's external policies already possessed a very strong "lean-to-one-side" feature even

¹⁹ Lu Dingyi, "Explanations of Several Basic Problems Concerning the Postwar International Situation" *Renmin ribao* [People's Daily], January 4 and 5, 1947. Mao revised and approved the article before its publication.

²⁰ Ibid; see also Mao's conversation with Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai, November 21, 1946, *Mao Zedong nianpu, 1898-1949* [A Chronological Record of Mao Zedong], (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian), 3:150-51.

before the PRC's establishment.²¹ Yet, in a more fundamental sense, the "intermediate zone" theory revealed a powerful tendency toward Chinese ethnocentrism in Mao's and the other CCP leaders' definition of the postwar world situation. While Mao and his comrades contended that whether or not the United States would be able to control the intermediate zone would be determined by the result of the struggles between China and the United States, they virtually meant that the "principal contradiction" in the postwar world was of a Sino-American nature. This Chinese ethnocentrism, as the discussions in the following pages shall reveal, served as a crucial point of departure for Mao and his comrades to develop a China-centered vision of the "world revolution" by highlighting its connections with the worldwide process of decolonization in the CCP's terms.

The Beijing-Moscow "Division of Labor" Agreement

THE victory of the Chinese Communist revolution in 1949 allowed Mao and the CCP leadership to reenvision the missions of the "world revolution" by emphasizing the notion of an "Eastern revolution." They believed that the Chinese revolution's rural-oriented model should transcend China and be applied to other parts of the intermediate zone, serving as an example of universal significance to other "oppressed peoples."²² Against this background, the Chinese and Soviet Communists worked out a "division of labor" agreement over promoting revolution in different parts of the world.

In late June-August 1949, Liu Shaoqi, the CCP's second in command, led a high-ranking delegation to visit Moscow. This was an important event that the CCP leadership had planned since 1947. In order to prepare for discussions with Stalin and other Soviet leaders, the CCP leadership drafted a comprehensive report on the Party's policies toward important domestic and international issues for Liu to submit to Stalin.²³

The basic tone of the report was extremely pro-Soviet. The report emphasized that the new China would "stand firmly on the side of the Soviet Union and other People's Democratic Countries in international affairs against new dangers of war and for world peace and democracy." In describing the CCP's

²¹ On the eve of the PRC's establishment, Mao formally announced that the "new China" would lean toward the Soviet Union in international affairs. See Mao, "On People's Democratic Dictatorship," June 30, 1949, *MXJ*, 4: 1477-1478.

²² See, for example, Liu Shaoqi, "On Internationalism and Nationalism," *Renmin ribao*, November 7, 1948; Si Mu, "The International Significance of the Victory of the Chinese People's Revolutionary War," *Shijie zhishi* [World Affairs, Beijing], December 1949, 19-21; Lu Dingyi, "The Worldwide Significance of the Chinese Revolution," *Lu Dingyi wenji* [A Collection of Lu Dingyi's Works], (Beijing: Renmin, 1992), 432-39.

²³ For discussions of the CCP's preparation of the report, see Shi Zhe, "Liu Shaoqi in Moscow," *Chinese Historians*, 6, 1 (Spring 1993):70-71; for the text of the report, see *LWG*, 1:1-22.

views of the world revolution and China's position in it, the report stated that "the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the headquarters of the world Communist movement, and the CCP is only the headquarters of one front of the movement. In accordance with the principle that the interests of a part must obey the interests of the whole, the CCP obeys the decisions of the Soviet party, despite that there now exist no such organization as the Comintern and the CCP is not a member of the Cominform by the parties in Europe." The report even went so far as to claim that "on certain issues, if any difference in opinion appears between the CCP and the Soviet Party, the CCP, after making explanation of its opinion, is prepared to obey as well as to implement the decisions of the Soviet Party."²⁴

While this pro-Soviet tone apparently reflected the CCP's needs to gain substantial support from the Soviet Union for China's post-victory reconstruction (and this was a major goal of Liu's visit), it was also compatible with Mao's "lean-to-one-side" announcement, which the CCP chairman delivered at the time that Liu just arrived in Moscow.²⁵ But the report was also for deepening Stalin's understanding of the essence and significance of the Chinese revolution. In describing the experience of the Chinese revolution, Liu emphasized:

During the course of the Chinese revolution, the Chinese Communists have been successful in the following fields: the organization of the anti-imperialist national united front, introduction of land reform, adoption of the strategy of surrounding cities through prolonged armed struggle in the countryside and then seizing the cities, reliance on underground and legal activities in the cities as a supplementary tactic to the armed struggle in the rural areas, and construction of a Marxist-Leninist party in such a backward country like China. In all respects, the experience of the Chinese revolution may be of great utility to other colonial and semicolonial countries.²⁶

Liu's message obviously caught Stalin's attention. At a meeting with Liu on July 27, the Soviet leader reportedly made a rare apology to the Chinese comrades for his "mistaken hindrance" of the Chinese revolution as the result of his "limited knowledge" about China; he also stressed that there were many things that the Soviets could learn from the CCP.²⁷ This was Stalin's gesture to show the Chinese of his willingness to acknowledge the uniqueness of the Chinese revolution.

Within this context Stalin and Liu discussed the roles that the Soviet Union and the CCP respectively should play in promoting Communist revolutions in the world. At one point the Soviet leader mentioned that "the center of the [world]

²⁴ *LWG*, 1:11, 16-17.

²⁵ Mao, "On People's Democratic Dictatorship," June 30, 1949, *MXJ*, 4:1477-78.

²⁶ *LWG*, 1: 3-4.

²⁷ Jin Chongji et al. *Liu Shaoqi zhuan* [A Biography of Liu Shaoqi] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), 651-52; Shi Zhe, "Liu Shaoqi in Moscow," 82-83.

revolution has moved from the West to the East, and has now moved to China.”²⁸ In further exchanges, Stalin reasoned that since the Chinese had greater influence in the colonial and semicolonial countries in the East, it would be easier for the CCP than the Soviets to help promote the revolutions there. As a result of these discussions, Liu and Stalin reached a strategic “division of labor” agreement: While the Soviet Union would continuously play the leadership role in directing the world revolution and take the main responsibility in promoting revolutions in the West, the CCP would play a major role in promoting revolutions in the East.²⁹

In retrospect, this “division of labor” agreement between the Soviet and Chinese Communists had major political implications. The CCP’s implementation of this agreement resulted in China’s support to Ho Chi Minh’s Vietminh in the war against the French colonialists and, in October 1950, China’s military intervention in Korea. When policymakers in Washington gave more attention to the “threats” posed by revolutionary China, the Cold War in East Asia intensified.

In a broader sense, the Sino-Soviet “division of labor” agreement laid the ideological foundation for the PRC to enter a strategic alliance with the Soviet Union in February 1950.³⁰ More importantly, the agreement meant that Stalin had accepted that indeed there existed special connections between the world revolution and the decolonization trend in the non-Western world, and that China, because of the virtue of its own history and modern experience, occupied a more proper position than the Soviet Union in playing a major role in linking the world revolution with decolonization, especially in East Asia. This endorsement offered new legitimacy to the CCP’s endeavor to signify the experience of the Chinese revolution by emphasizing the universality involved in it for the “oppressed peoples” in other non-Western countries. It also confirmed to Mao and his comrades that the “revolutionariness” of the PRC’s foreign policy could and should be defined in ways that would more tightly link together the discourses of “revolution” and “decolonization.”

Against this background Liu Shaoqi delivered his famous speech at the opening session of the Unions of the Asian-Oceanic Region in November 1949.³¹ Liu stated that the Chinese revolution was an integral part of the Moscow-led world revolution. He contended that the victory of the Chinese revolution greatly enhanced the world revolution by serving as a successful model for the national liberation movements in other colonial and semi-colonial countries. He thus concluded that the path of the Chinese revolution was “the path that the people in

²⁸ Jin et al., *Liu Shaoqi zhuan*, 651; Shi Zhe, “Liu Shaoqi in Moscow,” 84.

²⁹ Shi Zhe, “Liu Shaoqi in Moscow,” 84-85.

³⁰ For accounts of Mao’s visit, see Pang Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976* [A Biography of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 2003), Chap 2; Shi Zhe, *Zai lishi juren shenbian* [At the Side of Historical Giants, revised version] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), 385-423.

³¹ Liu, “Speech at the Opening Session of the Unions in the Asian-Oceanic Region,” November 16, 1949, *LWG*, 1: 160-69.

many colonial and semi-colonial countries must adopt in order to pursue national independence and people's democracy."³²

On the basis of the above discussions, Liu raised a bold yet crucial point: that the national liberation movements in the non-Western world could and should play a decisive role—more decisive than the role by the proletariats in industrial countries—in overturning the global reign of Western imperialist and colonial powers. Liu contended that more than half of the world's population lived in the Asian-Oceanic region, and that the Western powers had based the construction of their own "civilization" as well as their reactionary rules at home upon the exploitation of the peoples in the colonies and semi-colonies in the East and other parts of the world. Consequently, the realization of national liberation of the colonies and semi-colonies would not only result in the collapse of the worldwide domination of Western imperialism but also lead to the emancipation of the peoples in Western powers themselves. Liu concluded that such was "the path that we must follow, so that the colonies and semi-colonies will win liberation, and the laboring people in various imperialist countries will achieve emancipation."³³

Thus we see that by the time of the PRC's establishment, Mao and the CCP leadership had come to a firm understanding of the profound connections between decolonization and revolution. Supporting this understanding was the CCP leadership's determination to challenge the Western imperialist-dominated international system and institution, as well as their confidence in the significance and universality of the experience of the Chinese revolution. Through the Beijing-Moscow "division of labor" agreement, Mao and his comrades not only won Stalin's acceptance of the necessity and possibility of overthrowing capitalism's global reign through promoting the process of decolonization but also made the Soviet leader endorse the PRC's crucial role in bridging decolonization and revolution. All of this formed the foundation on which the PRC appeared as a radical revolutionary country on the world scene.

China and the Korean and French-Indochina Wars

IN its first five years, the PRC persistently presented challenges to the United States and other Western powers. In accordance with Mao's "lean-to-one-side" statement, the PRC signed with the Soviet Union a treaty of strategic alliance in February 1950. Eight months later, Mao and the Beijing leadership decided to send Chinese troops to Korea, entering a direct military confrontation with the United States that would last until July 1953.³⁴ Beginning in summer 1950,

³² Ibid., 162-63, 164.

³³ Ibid., 161-62.

³⁴ For discussions, see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

Beijing dispatched military and political advisers to support the Vietnamese Communists in a war against the French colonialists.³⁵ With the PRC entering international affairs in such dramatic ways, East Asia was turned into a main battlefield of the Cold War.

Underlying China's intervention in Korea and involvement in Indochina were profound political, strategic and ideological causes. Security and geopolitical concerns certainly played an important role. Korea and Vietnam are China's neighbors; they once belonged to China's spheres of influence. For Beijing's leaders, allowing Korea and Vietnam to be controlled by hostile imperialist forces meant grave threats to China's security interests. Yet Beijing's leaders made the decisions on Korea and Indochina primarily for turning pressures created by external crises into dynamics for enhancing the CCP's control of China's state and society. Indeed, China's intervention in Korea and Vietnam represented a crucial step by Mao and his comrades to realize the universal value of the Chinese revolution, revealing their aspiration of reviving China's central position in East Asian international affairs.³⁶ By using China's resources to support the revolutions in Korea (a former colony) and Indochina (still under France's colonial rule), Mao and his comrades encountered two actual cases in which the themes of "revolution" and "decolonization" were intimately interwoven.

China's revolutionary foreign policy created great pressures for the Chinese Communist state. The Korean War resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers, forced the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars on military purposes at the expense of China's economic reconstruction, prevented the CCP from "liberating" Taiwan, and made Beijing, at least in the short term, more dependent upon Moscow for military and other material support. China's confrontation with America worsened, and the PRC was excluded from the United Nations, a status that would exist until the early 1970s.

However, from Beijing's perspective—and especially from Mao's perspective—China's interventions in Korea and Indochina brought about considerable gains to the young Communist regime. China's war experience in Korea bolstered Mao's plans for continuing the revolution at home after its nationwide victory. During the Korean War years, the Communist regime found itself in a powerful position to penetrate into almost every area of Chinese society through intensive mass mobilization under the banner of revolutionary nationalism. Three nationwide campaigns swept through China's countryside and cities: the movement to suppress counterrevolutionaries, the land reform, and the "Three Antis" and "Five Antis" movements.³⁷ When the war ended in July 1953,

³⁵ For discussions, see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the cold War*, Chap 4; Zhai Qiang, *China and the Vietnam Wars*, 1-2.

³⁶ For discussions along these lines, see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*; and Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, Chap 4.

³⁷ The "Three Antis" movement was designed to deal with corrupt Communist cadres; the "Five-Antis" movement was for regulating the national bourgeoisie class. For

China's society and political landscape had been altered: organized resistance to the new regime had been destroyed; land in the countryside had been redistributed and the landlord class eliminated; the national bourgeoisie was under the tight control of the Communist state, and the "petit-bourgeoisie" intellectuals experienced the first round of Communist reeducation. Consequently, the CCP effectively deepened its organizational control of Chinese society and dramatically promoted its authority and legitimacy in the minds of the Chinese people.

The Chinese experience in Korea and Indochina also greatly boosted the CCP's status in the international communist movement. Mao and his comrades were more confident to claim that the model of the Chinese revolution indeed was relevant to promoting revolutions in East Asia. From Beijing's perspective, the cases of Korea and Indochina proved that "revolution" not only was closely related to the process of decolonization but also provided the most effective means to destroy the global reign of Western capitalism. In the Chinese-Soviet agreement of "division of labor" of summer 1949, the CCP remained a junior partner vis-à-vis Moscow in the grand design of promoting the world revolution. The Korea and Indochina cases highlighted the significance of the "revolutions in the East," thus strengthening the subtle yet persistent sense of superiority on the part of Mao and his fellow CCP leaders—a development that became more obvious after the death of Stalin in March 1953.

Mao's China was a revolutionary country, but Mao and his fellow CCP leaders were willing to adjust their strategies and policies in accordance with the changing situations they were facing. During the Korean War, Mao and the Beijing leadership repeatedly adjusted China's war aims. Early in the war, Mao and his comrades had hoped that China's intervention would lead to a glorious victory over the "U.S. imperialists and their lackeys." However, the cruel reality on the battlefield (that the Communist forces lacked air support and reliable logistical supply) forced the CCP leaders to tailor China's war aims in accordance with its limited war capacities.³⁸ In Vietnam, China provided substantial support to the Vietminh from 1950 to 1954, but when the Vietnamese Communists asked Beijing to send Chinese troops to participate in Vietminh's military operations, Beijing's leaders refused, mainly for fear of overextending China's international commitments.³⁹ While adhering to their revolutionary principles, Beijing's leaders

discussions, see Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank, eds., *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 14: 88-91.

³⁸ For discussions, see Chen Jian, "China's Changing Aims during the Korean War," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 1, 1 (Spring 1992): 8-41.

³⁹ Telegram, CCP Central Committee to the Chinese Military Advisory Group, July 22, 1952, The Editorial Group for the History of Chinese Military Advisers in Vietnam, ed., *Zhongguo junshi guwentuan yuanyue kangfa douzheng shishi* [A Factual Account of the Participation of Chinese Military Advisory Group in the Struggle of Assisting Vietnam and Resisting France] (Beijing: Jiefangjun, 1990), 58.

also demonstrated a degree of flexibility in managing the Korea and Indochina crises. As it later turned out, this flexibility was of critical importance for Beijing to have dialogues with non-Western countries and some capitalist countries while, at the same time, remaining a “revolutionary country.”

When the Korean War ended in 1953 and the Indochina War reached the final stage in 1954, Beijing’s leaders encountered a critical juncture in making China’s domestic and international policies and strategies *in light of* the Chinese experiences in Korea and Indochina. The key issue, as the CCP leaders perceived it, was how to bring China’s “revolution after revolution” to a new height at home. Mao and his comrades would have to devote more attention and resources to promoting the “socialist revolution and reconstruction” domestically; yet continuously upgrading China’s international status was also highly relevant, especially as Mao and the CCP leadership understood that, by responding to the Chinese people’s “victim mentality,”⁴⁰ they could turn China’s international gains into a powerful source of domestic mobilization. Against this background, China attended the Geneva Conference in 1954.

Geneva as a Turning Point

THE Geneva conference of 1954 brought the PRC into a new arena of international diplomacy. Beijing’s experience during the conference drove Chinese leaders to revisit their perceptions of and attitudes toward countries in the intermediate zone, thus leading to subtle yet significant changes in Beijing’s ways of challenging the existing international system.

Central in the background of the Geneva conference was the major powers’ need to make peace after the end of wars in Korea and Indochina. On September 29, 1953, Moscow—now under a post-Stalin leadership—proposed a five-power foreign ministers’ meeting including representatives from the PRC to examine “measures of relaxing international tension.” Beijing quickly expressed full support to the proposal. From late January to early February 1954, the foreign ministers from the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain, and France met in Berlin, and they agreed to convene a conference in Geneva to discuss issues related to “reaching a peaceful settlement of the Korea question” and “restoring

⁴⁰ In defining the Chinese “victim mentality,” I point out: “While it is common for non-Western countries to identify themselves as victims of the Western-dominated worldwide course of modernization, the Chinese perception of their nation being a victimized member of the international community is unique, because it formed such a sharp contrast with the long-lived Central Kingdom concept. The Chinese thus felt that their nation’s modern experience was more humiliating and less tolerable than that of any other victimized non-Western country in the world.” Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 12.

peace in Indochina.” The four powers and China, as well as other related countries, would attend the conference.⁴¹

Beijing’s leaders regarded the Berlin conference as a big “international victory” for the socialist camp in general and the PRC in particular, and quickly decided that China would attend the Geneva Conference. Underlying the decision were a series of domestic and international considerations. First and foremost, Mao and his fellow CCP leaders foresaw that China’s presence at Geneva would highlight the fact that the PRC, after being excluded from the international community since its establishment, had indeed emerged as a major world power.⁴² This was particularly important for them largely because of crucial domestic considerations. Ever since the birth of the PRC, “We the Chinese people have stood up”—the announcement that Mao made at the PRC’s formation—had played a central role in legitimizing the revolutionary programs that Mao tried to carry out in China. In 1954-55, when Mao and his comrades were contemplating introducing the first five-year plan, as well as shifting China’s resources to the “liberation” of the Nationalist-controlled Taiwan, they fully understood that if they were able to present a strong case of advancement in the PRC’s international status to ordinary Chinese—who, informed by their own unique “victim mentality,” had been so interested in the revival of China’s central position in the world—they would be more capable of promoting the Party’s mass mobilization plans at home.

Behind Beijing’s decision to attend the Geneva conference were also practical political and security considerations. After the end of the Korean War, many leaders in Beijing felt that for promoting China’s “socialist transformation and reconstruction,” at least for the moment it was in need of a more peaceful outside environment. For them, this did not mean that China would stop sporting revolutions abroad; rather, this was to create better conditions for China to serve as a supporting base for the world revolution.⁴³ On the Indochina issue, Beijing’s leaders saw the prospect of America’s direct military intervention there as a major

⁴¹ See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, XVI: 415.

⁴² In a Chinese Foreign Ministry document entitled “Preliminary Assessment of and Preparation for the Geneva Conference,” completed in later February, Zhou and his colleagues contended that the Geneva conference was a great opportunity for the PRC to break up the “blockade, embargo and rearmament policies” against the PRC by the United States and other imperialist and reactionary forces in the world, so the PRC not only “must actively participate in the Geneva conference” but also “must make it a success.” Li Ping and Ma Zhisun et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976* [A Chronological Record of Zhou Enlai] (hereafter *ZNP*), (Beijing Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), 1:356-357.

⁴³ See, for example, Zhou’s Speech on Diplomatic Issues, October 18, 1954, Fujian Provincial Archive, 101-5-542-54.10.18.

potential threat. They thus were willing to prevent the American intervention through a diplomatic settlement at Geneva.⁴⁴

This was the heyday of the Sino-Soviet alliance. In preparing for the Geneva conference, Beijing's leaders placed great emphasis on constructing a joint Chinese-Soviet strategy. In a historical perspective, this effort represented also an outgrowth of the Beijing-Moscow "division of labor" agreement that the two sides had reached five years before. In the first three weeks of April, Zhou twice visited Moscow to discuss the Chinese-Soviet strategy at Geneva. These discussions resulted in a consensus between Beijing and Moscow: although Washington would do everything possible to sabotage the conference, the Communist side should try to pursue a peaceful solution in Indochina.⁴⁵

There existed, however, important differences between the Chinese-Soviet "division of labor" agreement of 1949 and the Beijing-Moscow consensus on the Geneva conference. It was clearly defined in the 1949 agreement that Beijing would play a major role in promoting revolutions in the East under the condition that Moscow would remain the commander-in-chief of the world revolution. In the 1954 consensus, Beijing already achieved a status of equality (or even a self-perceived status of superiority) vis-à-vis Moscow. Second, the 1949 agreement was largely based on the assumption that revolutions in the West were at least as important as revolutions in the East. In comparison, the 1954 consensus placed greater emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the momentum of the "Eastern revolution," which was supported by the vision that East Asia represented one of the weakest links in the chain of international imperialism/colonialism.

As Geneva would be the PRC's diplomatic debut, the Chinese inevitably would have to deal with delegates from different countries. Beijing's leaders felt compelled to come up with a more comprehensive understanding of international politics, especially that conducted by big powers. In this respect, they were informed by the united front approach—one that contained methods and strategies about the necessity and possibility of identifying and isolating the most dangerous enemy—that the CCP had so successfully developed in carrying out revolutions at home. In forming China's strategies at Geneva, they thus paid special attention to the differences among Western countries, and how the Communist side might take advantage of these differences. Zhou and his colleagues found that "the opinions of the United States, Britain and France are far from identical on Korea and many other international issues; indeed, the contradictions among them sometimes are very big." All of this, as Zhou and his colleagues viewed it, had created space for

⁴⁴ For more detailed discussions, see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, Chap 4.

⁴⁵ Zhou to CCP Central Committee, April 23, 1954, 206-00048-08, PRC Foreign Ministry Archive (hereafter FMA); Shi Zhe, *Zai lishi juren shenbian*, 480-86; ZNP, 1:355; see also Ilya Gaiduk, *Confronting Vietnam: Soviet Policy toward the Indochina Conflict, 1951-1963* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford, Calif.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2003), 22-24.

the PRC to “increase difficulties” for its enemies and to “strengthen its diplomatic activities and international position.”⁴⁶

In retrospect, this new understanding of the differences between Western countries created the much needed space for Zhou to act in sophisticated and flexible ways toward non-Communist participants in Geneva. At the conference, Zhou actively pursued all kinds of working relationships with the leaders from Britain and France, including Anthony Eden, Georges Bidault, and Pierre Mendes-France.⁴⁷ These activities were crucial for the Geneva conference to reach a breakthrough on the Indochina issue; they also widened the horizon of Beijing’s international vision and activities.

As the conference went on, Zhou found himself in face of the challenge concerning how to deal with representatives from such countries as Laos and Cambodia. In pre-conference exchanges between the Vietminh and Beijing and Moscow, the Vietnamese persistently stated that Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were all integral parts of the “Indochina Revolution.” They thus argued that the Laotian and Cambodian problems must be resolved as part of a general settlement on Indochina by recognizing the “resistance forces” in Laos and Cambodia.⁴⁸ Zhou, without sufficient knowledge of Indochina’s history and political situation and bound by desire to enhancing Chinese-Vietnamese solidarity, endorsed this Vietminh stand.⁴⁹

Zhou’s views on this issue, however, changed significantly during the conference, especially when he found that the Vietminh’s unyielding attitudes toward Laos and Cambodia blocked the conference from making progress toward a settlement on Indochina. In order to find ways to avoid the conference’s total failure, Zhou took the initiative to meet with the representatives of the Laotian and Cambodian royal governments, spending much time on learning about the actual situations in Laos and Cambodia. He realized that big differences existed between Vietnam and the two other countries in that “the national and state boundaries between the three associate countries in Indochina are quite distinctive.” Furthermore, he learned that indigenous Communist forces were weak in Laos and Cambodia, and that “the royal governments in these two countries are regarded as the legitimate governments by the overwhelming majority of their people.” The position of the Laotian and Cambodian royal governments in Beijing’s overall analysis of Indochina’s political scenario thus changed subtly. Toward the late

⁴⁶ ZNP, 1:356-357; Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976* [A Biography of Zhou Enlai] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), 154-56.

⁴⁷ See, for example, PRC Foreign Ministry Archive ed., *1954nian rineiwa huiyi* [The Geneva Conference of 1954] (hereafter *1954nian*), (Beijing: Shijie zhishi, 2006), 235-314.

⁴⁸ Xiong Huayuan, *Zhou Enlai chudeng shijie wutai* [Zhou Enlai’s Debut on the World Scene], (hereafter *shijie wutai*), (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), 81-82; see also *FRUS*, 1952-1954, XVI:755-756.

⁴⁹ Telegram, Zhou to Mao, Liu and CCP Central Committee, May 9, 1954, *1954niai*, 119-21; Xiong, *Shijie wutai*, 98.

phase of the conference, Zhou told the Laotian and Cambodian representatives that the PRC was not their enemy but, rather, could become their friend.⁵⁰

As far as its immediate impact is concerned, Beijing's new understanding of the situations in Laos and Cambodia led to one of the most important shifts in Chinese-Soviet-Vietminh strategies toward the Indochina issue at Geneva. Starting in mid-June, Zhou cooperated with the Soviets to form and implement a new strategy toward Indochina. According to it, Vietnam would be divided into two "concentration zones" for the two contending sides, and Laos and Cambodia would be treated as two independent political entities in the general settlement for Indochina. Accordingly, the Chinese and Soviets pushed their Vietnamese comrades to accept a new line in favor of withdrawal of all foreign forces from Laos and Cambodia, including the Vietminh "volunteers."⁵¹ Largely because of Beijing's and Moscow's success in persuading the Vietnamese Communists to accept this new strategy, the Geneva conference reached a settlement on Indochina on July 20, 1954.⁵²

In a deeper sense, experiences like the above also pushed Beijing's leaders to develop a series of "new thoughts" about how to expand the PRC's international influence and upgrade its international status through developing new and stronger ties with non-Western countries. From Beijing's perspective, such a new line would contribute in one way or another to the destruction of the global reign of Western colonialism, therefore it was by no means a compromise of the PRC's revolutionary principles. This was exactly what Zhou tried to convey to Ho Chi Minh at an important meeting in Liuzhou in early July. The Chinese premier emphasized that there existed "no contradictions" between "trying to neutralize or even unite with the nationalist forces" and thus settling the Indochina issue peacefully and "fulfilling the mission of the international communist movement."⁵³

What Zhou and the CCP leadership had learned in Geneva opened the door leading to a major shift in Beijing's general attitudes toward non-Western countries in international politics. During an interval of the Geneva conference in late June, Zhou visited India and Burma. In New Delhi, Zhou and Nehru touched upon a wide range of issues. In addition to Indochina, Zhou and Nehru discussed the necessity and possibility of establishing a "peace zone" in East and South Asia. Zhou favored the idea, emphasizing that although China and India had different political and social systems, they had similar historical and modern experiences—both had glorious cultures and histories, both had suffered from the oppression of

⁵⁰ Zhou to Mao, Liu and CCP Central Committee, cited from Jin et al., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 168-69.

⁵¹ Xiong, *Shijie wutai*, 90-91; ZNP, 1:383-84.

⁵² For more detailed discussion, see Chen Jian, "China and the Indochina Settlement of the Geneva Conference of 1954."

⁵³ Zhou to CCP Central Committee, 18:00, July 4, 1954, 206-00019-03, FMA, 23-24; and Xiong, *Shijie wutai*, 141-42.

Western colonialism, and both had achieved independence or liberation from Western powers. Therefore, the relationship between China and India should be established on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence. Zhou particularly stressed that this relationship might also serve as the model for the relations between other Asian countries. In order to convince Nehru that China was sincere in pursuing “peaceful coexistence,” Zhou told him that although he believed in revolution, he also believed that revolution could not be exported from one country to another. “If the people favor one system, it is useless to try to overthrow it; and if the people oppose one system, it is useless to try to defend it.”⁵⁴

Toward the end of Zhou’s visit, he and Nehru signed a joint Chinese-Indian statement, in which the two premiers emphasized that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence should serve as the foundation of relations among all countries, as well as the foundation of international relations in a general sense. Then, Zhou visited Burma and signed a similar statement with Burmese Prime Minister U Nu. What would later be known as the textual core of the “Bandung discourse” in China’s external relations came into being.

For the Chinese leaders, the most important meaning of these statements was that they represented a series of new basic codes in conducting international affairs and politics, ones that were fundamentally different from the dominant codes and norms created by Western powers. The reality that the PRC was the initiator of these principles, as Beijing’s leaders viewed it, would further justify its claim to China’s centrality in international relations.

Almost immediately Zhou acted to use the new language of peaceful coexistence to promote China’s ideas and international status. In the later stage of the Geneva conference, Zhou repeatedly used a new concept—“new Southeast Asia type countries”—in describing and defining the kind of nation-states that China and the socialist camp should support. In Zhou’s telegrams to Beijing, he defined the “new Southeast Asia type countries” as those that, on the one hand, would not attach themselves to any military alliances formed by Western powers and, on the other, would persist in the process of pursuing national liberation and independence. The models of the “new Southeast Asia type countries,” according to Zhou, were India and Burma. Zhou believed that it was possible—even desirable—for the PRC and the socialist camp to develop good relations with these countries.⁵⁵ In meetings with representatives of the royal governments of

⁵⁴ Xiong, *Shijie wutai*, 128-29; see also Zhou’s conversation with U Nu, June 28, 1954, FMA 203-00007-03.

⁵⁵ “Conversation with Chou Enlai (Zhou Enlai),” June 25 1954, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 26: 371; Zhou to Mao, Liu and the CCP Central Committee, July 15, 1954, *1954nian*, 320.

Laos and Cambodia at Geneva, Zhou advised them that it would be in their countries' best interests to become "new Southeast Asia type countries."⁵⁶

That the concept "new Southeast Asia type countries" was created and used at the Geneva conference reflected, from another angle, Zhou's and the Beijing leadership's efforts to come up with a new theoretical understanding of the larger meanings of the Chinese experience at Geneva. The absence of the class-struggle feature in the concept clearly indicated Zhou's awareness of the East-West-confrontation-centered Cold War discourse's limits either in narrating the complexity of international affairs in the changing Cold War world or in illustrating and defining the ideological, strategic and political missions of the PRC's international policies. By creating the new concept, Zhou apparently meant to bring about fresh theoretical space that would allow the PRC to persist in the revolutionariness of its international policies while, at the same time, permitting it to explore ways best serving the PRC's presence on the world scene. Probably because of the ambiguity in its expression, Beijing stopped using the concept "new Southeast Asia type countries" after the Geneva conference. Yet the basic ideas contained in the concept sustained in Beijing's strategic thinking, forming a point of departure of the entry of the more-refined Bandung discourse into the representation of the PRC's international policies.

Mao's New "Intermediate Zone" Thesis and the Shaping of the Bandung Discourse

CHINA'S presence at Geneva set up a larger and more significant stage for its diplomatic activities, which, as a senior Chinese diplomat put it, "established the PRC's unchallengeable position as one of the Five Powers while, at the same time, greatly expanding its influences in politics, diplomacy, economic affairs, and culture."⁵⁷ From Mao's perspective, though, China's biggest gain from attending the conference was not in the diplomatic field but in domestic areas as it offered a powerful and convincing case to enhance the legitimacy of the societal transformation plans the CCP was to carry out. In the second half of 1954, the delegation of the British Labor Party, the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev (as well as leaders from other Communist countries), Indian prime minister Nehru, and Burmese prime minister U Nu, among others, visited China. All of this allowed the CCP to tell the Chinese people that both China's friends and enemies had recognized—in different ways and expressions—that indeed "the Chinese people have stood up."

In the wake of Geneva, the Chinese leaders announced on several occasions that the PRC's diplomacy was based on the Five Principles and, therefore, was

⁵⁶ Zhou's conversation with Tep Phan, June 20, 1954; Zhou's conversation with Sananikone, July 18, 1954, *1954nian*, 316-19, 332-35.

⁵⁷ Li Kenong's summary report on the Geneva conference, July 1954, cited from Xiong, *Shijie wutai*, 174-75.

“diplomacy of peace.” However, when Beijing was going all out to promote the Five Principles, new tensions emerged in the Taiwan Strait, and China and the United States were brought to the verge of another direct military confrontation only a few months after the conclusion of the Geneva conference.

In late July, almost immediately after Geneva, Mao dispatched a telegram to Zhou, who was then still traveling in East Europe, sternly criticizing the premier’s “mistake of failing to raise the Taiwan issue” before and during the Geneva conference.⁵⁸ On July 23, *Renmin Ribao* (People’s Daily) published an editorial essay, emphasizing that “we the Chinese people must liberate Taiwan.” The Taiwan issue thus entered the center of the chess board of international confrontation.

In the ensuing months, the Taiwan Strait saw a major international crisis. In order to demonstrate that Beijing was determined to “liberate Taiwan,” Beijing’s leaders ordered the PLA to shell the Nationalist-controlled Jinmen (Quemoy) islands in early September 1954. Meanwhile, for the purposes of coping with the serious threats that the Nationalists had presented to the safety of such major mainland ports as Shanghai and the maritime transportation routes off East China coasts, the PLA made preparations to attack and occupy Nationalist-controlled Yijiangshan and Dachen islands off Zhejiang province. In response to the escalating tension in the Taiwan Strait, Washington began talks with the Nationalists toward signing a treaty of mutual defense. In order to deter and penalize the discussions between Washington and Taipei, Beijing announced in November its decision to sentence eleven Americans, who were captured during the Korean War after their airplane carrying out reconnaissance tasks over Chinese territory was shot down, to lengthy imprisonment. On December 5, Washington and Taipei formally signed the treaty of mutual defense. In internal discussions, policymakers and military planners in Washington even considered the possibility of using nuclear weapons to manage the Taiwan crisis. Before U.S. Congress approved the U.S.-Taiwan treaty, the Chinese acted to carry out large-scale amphibious landing operations on Yijiangshan in January 1955.⁵⁹

In a glimpse, it seems odd that the Chinese leaders, while loudly advocating the Five Principles, initiated the Taiwan Strait crisis. One may argue that this was not contradictory as the Five Principles dealt with state-to-state relations, and the Taiwan issue, from Beijing’s perspective, was a domestic one. However, since the U.S. Seventh Fleet had been in the Taiwan Strait ever since the outbreak of the

⁵⁸ Telegram, CCP Central Committee to Zhou, July 27, 1954, cited from Pei Jianzhang et al., *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaoshi* [A Diplomatic History of the People’s Republic], (Beijing: Shijie zhishi, 1994), 337.

⁵⁹ For discussions of the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1954-1955, see Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 167-170; see also Gordon H. Chang and He Di, “The Absence of War in the U.S.-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence?” *American Historical Review*, 98 (December 1993): 1500-1524.

Korean War, which had already internationalized the Taiwan question, Mao and his comrades knew clearly that by shelling Jinmen and attacking Yijiangshan they would bring about escalating confrontation between China and the United States, as well as widespread tension in East Asia. So what is revealed here is that Beijing's advocacy of the Five Principles did not change the PRC's basic ways in coping with international imperialism in general and U.S. imperialism in particular.

As far as the motives underlying Mao's and the Chinese leadership's management of the Taiwan crisis are concerned, two points should be emphasized here. First, profound domestic reasons were behind Beijing's decision to use radical means to place the Taiwan issue on the chessboard of international confrontation. In China's domestic developments, 1954-55 represented a crucial turning point. With the introduction of the first Five-Year Plan and plans to collectivize China's rural communities, Mao and the CCP leadership were eager to build the foundation of a socialist society in China. In search for means to mobilize the ordinary Chinese people for this new stage of Mao's "revolution after revolution," Mao, informed by his Korean War experience, sensed that by emphasizing the continuous existence of external threats would help create a powerful source of intensive domestic mobilization. Mao emphasized in late July 1954:

Now in front of us is a war, namely, the war against the Jiang Jieshi bandit clique in Taiwan. We are therefore facing the task of liberating Taiwan. To highlight this task is not only for the purpose of breaking up the military treaty between America and Jiang; it is also, and more importantly, for the purpose of raising up the political consciousness and political alertness of the people of the whole country, so that the people's revolutionary enthusiasm will be stirred up, thus promoting fulfilling the task of socialist reconstruction.⁶⁰

Beijing's management of the Taiwan Strait crisis also revealed that the Five Principles did not form the entire foundation of China's international policies, and these principles did not necessarily apply to China's relations with the United States. In conversations with the British Labor Party delegation, and Nehru and U Nu, Mao said that "it is possible for countries with different social systems to coexist peacefully," and that he was willing to improve relations with the United States.⁶¹ These statements, however, actually revealed Mao's intention to use the united front strategies that he had learned to master for winning over the middle elements and isolating the principal enemies in the Chinese civil war. In a series

⁶⁰ Telegram, CCP Central Committee to Zhou, July 27, 1954, ZNP, 1: 405.

⁶¹ See, for example, Mao's conversation with the British Labor Party delegation, August 24, 1954, *Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan* [Selected Diplomatic Papers of Mao Zedong] (hereafter MWJWX) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1993), 159-60.

of inner-Party meetings, Mao stressed that “we should unite with all of those who are in favor of peace, so as to isolate those war-likes, namely, to isolate the American authorities.”⁶² In a meeting with Harry Pollitt, chairman of the British Communist Party, Mao explained that Beijing had been working on countries in Asia and Africa, so that they would be turned into allies in the struggles of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, and that “in the end the United States will certainly be isolated.”⁶³

Even when Mao said that Beijing was in favor of relaxing international tension, and that China’s reconstruction required an international environment of peace and stability, a deep and consistent belief on his part remained that revolution would never emerge in peaceful settings. In a conversation with Nehru, for example, Mao raised a question and then answered it: “Is it more advantageous to make people feel safe, or is it more advantageous to make them live in tension everyday? A situation of tension will help awaken the people, and will make them prepare to resist pressure. That is conducive to revolution.”⁶⁴ It certainly is revealing to see that even at the time that China became the initiator and advocate of the Five Principles, Mao did not—and never meant to—abandon his fundamental belief on how revolution should be made.

Mao’s basic understanding of the international situation after Geneva was most clearly revealed in his renewed interest in the “intermediate zone” concept. Beginning in July 1954, almost ten years after the concept’s initial introduction, Mao again used “intermediate zone” in illuminating and defining the international structure and situation. In early July, he pointed out at a CCP Politburo meeting that the capitalist world was, indeed, divided. “The biggest ambition of the United States at the moment is to castigate the intermediate zone, including the entire area from Japan to Britain, and to make all these countries cry while castigating them.”⁶⁵ In August 1954, in a conversation with the delegation of the British Labor Party, Mao used the “intermediate zone” concept to describe the position of such capitalist countries as Britain, which was sandwiched between the Soviet Union and China on one side, and the United States on the other:

So-called anti-communism is not an entirely true thing. In my opinion, the United States is using anti-communism as a pretext to serve its other purposes. First of all, it is for the purpose of occupying the intermediate zone stretching from Japan to Britain. The United States is situated in North America, on one side of this intermediate zone, and the Soviet Union and China are on the other side of the zone. The objective of the United States is to occupy the countries in this vast intermediate zone, so as to bully them, to

⁶² Mao’s speech at a Politburo enlarged meeting, July 7, 1954, *Mao Zedong wenji* [Selected Papers of Mao Zedong] (hereafter *MWJ*), Beijing: Renmin 1998), 6: 332.

⁶³ Mao’s conversation with Harry Pollitt, April 29, 1955, *MWJ*, 205-06

⁶⁴ Mao’s conversation with Nehru, October 23, 1954, *MWJ*, 6:369.

⁶⁵ Mao’s speech at a Politburo enlarged meeting, July 7, 1954, *MWJ*, 6: 334.

control their economies, to establish military bases on their territory, and to see to it that they are increasingly weakened, and Japan and Germany included.⁶⁶

Although neither Mao nor Zhou directly used the term “intermediate zone” in their conversations with Nehru and U Nu, they treated India and Burma as belonging to the intermediate zone. Meanwhile, Mao and Zhou also repeatedly emphasized that both China and these countries belonged to “Eastern countries,” and both shared similar cultural and historical traditions as well as humiliated modern experiences at the hands of Western powers. In these narratives, such capitalist countries as Britain, France and Japan, which were part of the broader “intermediate zone” according to Mao’s definition, were often listed together with the United States and became countries that “followed the United States” and represented the worldwide forces of imperialism and colonialism.⁶⁷

If we compare Mao’s “intermediate zone” concept of the mid-1950s and that of the late 1940s, there exist at least two visible differences. First, in the late 1940s, Mao regarded the areas between the United States and the Soviet Union in Asia, Africa, and Europe as belonging to one vast intermediate zone without making further distinctions. In comparison, when Mao re-introduced the concept in the mid-1950s, he already demonstrated some traits of what would later be known as his “two intermediate zones” ideas—while treating the nationalist countries that were then completing the process of decolonization in Asia and Africa as the zone’s main components, he included such capitalist countries as Britain and Japan as unique parts of a broad intermediate zone. In Mao’s views, in dealing with the intermediate zone members that had been colonies and semi-colonies of Western powers, it was important to go beyond neutralizing them in international politics to push them toward supporting or even participating in revolutions against the capitalist West, thus making them a part of the world revolution. In dealing with such capitalist countries as Britain, the socialist countries should try to neutralize them in the Cold War environment.⁶⁸

Second, compared with the “intermediate zone” ideas of the late 1940s, Mao’s reintroduction of the concept was accompanied by a much stronger desire for Beijing to play a central role in international affairs. As discussed earlier, Mao’s intermediate zone thesis of the late 1940s was with a tendency toward “leaning to one side,” and, in spite of Mao’s China-centered ambition, the CCP

⁶⁶ Mao’s conversation with the British Labor Party delegation, August 24, 1954, *MWJWX*, 159-60.

⁶⁷ Mao’s four conversations with Nehru, October 1954; Mao’s conversation with U Nu, December 11, 1954, *MWJ*, 6:361-71, 374-83.

⁶⁸ It is here we see a prelude to Mao’s introduction of his “Two Intermediate Zones” thesis in the early and mid-1960s, when the global process of decolonization was approaching its conclusion. In a longer view, we may take these of Mao’s ideas of the mid-1950s as an early version of his “Three Worlds” theory formally introduced in the 1970s.

was then the “younger brother” of the Soviets, and the world revolution had Moscow as its indisputable center. By the mid-1950s, both China and the world had changed profoundly. The PRC’s experiences during the Korean War and at the Geneva Conference made Mao and his comrades more convinced than ever before that the Chinese revolution indeed had universal significance. This confidence, combined with the emerging leadership vacuum in the international communist movement after Stalin’s death, greatly enhanced Mao’s belief in that Beijing was the only qualified candidate for the top leadership role in the world revolution. For Mao and his comrades, it was the PRC’s overall capacity of revolutionizing the worldwide process of decolonization—a capacity that was not possessed by Moscow—that had enabled Beijing’s centrality in the world revolution.

All of this shaped the context in which China attended the Bandung conference and the Bandung discourse entered Beijing’s representation of China’s international policies. The idea of this conference was first introduced in April–May 1954, at a meeting by the leaders from Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan. When the idea was transformed into plans, whether or not the PRC should be invited to attend the conference caused serious differences among several Asian countries. Beijing’s leaders understood that given China’s potential influence among non-Western countries, its presence at the conference alone would place it at the spotlight and make it a central actor. Therefore, in meeting with Nehru and U Nu in June 1954, Zhou expressed Beijing’s endorsement of the conference and China’s intention to attend it.⁶⁹

Beijing’s leaders quickly formed a special task force to make China’s plans for the conference. In the “Plans to Participating in the Asian-African Conference,” which Zhou personally revised and approved, the conference was defined as one “not attended by Western imperialist countries, but held by the majority of countries in Asia and Africa.” The Plan pointed out that the conference occurred in the context that “the struggles by peoples in Asia and Africa for national independence are rapidly developing,” and that among its participants were “such socialist countries as the PRC and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, as well as many countries in favor of peaceful neutrality.” The Plan thus elaborated that China’s presence at the conference would “create favorable conditions for expanding the forces for peace in Asia and Africa, as well as in the entire world.” According to the Plan, China’s basic principles at the conference should be “to strive for expanding the united front for world peace, promoting national independence movements, and creating conditions for establishing and enhancing

⁶⁹ Telegram, PRC Foreign Ministry to various Chinese embassies, December 25, 1954, PRC Foreign Ministry Archive ed., *Zhongguo daibiaotuan chuxi 1955nian yafei huiyi* [Chinese Delegation Attending the Asian-African Conference of 1955], (Beijing, Shijie zhishi, 2007), 25.

our country's ties and diplomatic relations with various Asian and African countries."⁷⁰

In accordance with these principles, the PRC delegation headed by Zhou decided that it would treat China's attendance of the conference as by itself a great victory of the PRC's diplomacy, and would avoid making any radical statements at the conference. Instead of "discussing the question of communism," the Chinese delegation would emphasize that China shared with other Asian and African countries in history, culture and the modern experience of suffering from imperialist and colonialist aggression, so as to make sure that the conference would be successful.⁷¹

The Nationalist regime in Taiwan understood that the appearance of the PRC delegation at the conference would mean a major success for Beijing, and it was also worried that the balance between Beijing and Taipei in their competition for international recognition might change. Consequently, Taiwan's intelligence services planned and carried out one of the most serious assassination plots during the Cold War era, taking Zhou as the target. For reasons not yet completely clear, Zhou escaped the assassination attempt, and traveled to Indonesia safely.⁷²

The basic tone of the Chinese delegation at Bandung had been set in advance, but Zhou's personal charisma and diplomatic skills refined the tone. Zhou carefully avoided using ideological languages in describing China's domestic and international policies. At private meetings, he repeatedly stressed that Beijing favored peace, and that China would not export revolution to other countries. In public presentations, he carefully avoided running into any direct conflict with dissenting voices, creating a public image that he was the person most eager to seek the conference's success. On April 19, when Zhou was scheduled to deliver the main speech at the conference's plenary session, he sensed a tense atmosphere prevailing in the conference hall due to participants' deep suspicion of Beijing's motives. He decided to distribute his speech notes among participants and to prepare another speech placing greater emphasis on the PRC delegation's desire to "seek common grounds in spite of differences." Thus he made the following statement:

⁷⁰ "Plans for Participating in the Asian-African Conference," April 5, 1955, 207-0004-01(1), 8, FMA.

⁷¹ "Plans for Participating in the Asian-African Conference," April 5, 1955, 207-0004-01(1), 5; "Preliminary Working Plans for Participating in the Asian-African Conference," January 16, 1955, 207-0005-2 (1), FMA.

⁷² On declassified Chinese documents on the "Kashmir Princess Incident," the failed attempt by the Nationalist intelligence agents to assassinate Zhou, see PRC Foreign Ministry Archive ed., *Zhongguo daibiaotuan chuxi 1955nian yafei huiyi*, 144-260; see also Steve Tsang, "Target Zhou Enlai: The 'Kashmir Princess Incident' of 1955," *The China Quarterly*, 139 (September 1994).

The Chinese delegation has come here to seek common grounds, not to create division. Is there any reason to believe that there is common ground among us? Yes, there is. In modern history the overwhelming majority of Asian and African countries have suffered and are still suffering from the calamities caused by colonialism....We have to admit that among our Asian and African countries, we do have different ideologies and different social systems. But this should not prevent us from seeking common ground and being united. Many independent countries have appeared since World War II. One group consists of countries led by Communist Parties and the other of countries led by nationalists....Both of these groups have freed themselves from colonial rule and are continuing their struggle for complete independence. Is there any reason why we cannot understand and respect each other and give each other support and sympathy? There is every reason to make the Five Principles the basis for establishing friendship, cooperation and good-neighbor relations among us.⁷³

Almost all of Zhou's biographers and students of Chinese diplomatic history agreed that this was one of the most important and successful speeches that Zhou had ever made. It was this speech that offered a central text for the Bandung discourse in Chinese diplomacy. The speech, first and foremost, delivered a crucial statement concerning China's self-identity in the changing world. Zhou made it clear that China, on the grand scale of history's development, was one of the Asian and African countries standing on the opposite side of the global reign of imperialism and colonialism. Although Zhou did not use revolutionary terms to fashion the speech, the context in which it was delivered made it profoundly revolutionary: indeed, the central message that Zhou delivered was that, by introducing a new set of international norms and codes of behavior legitimized by China's shared experiences with other Asian and African countries, Beijing entitled itself to present a fundamental challenge to the existing international system and order controlled by Western imperialist and colonial powers. Thus on the afternoon of April 19, 1955, when Zhou gave up a nap and prepared the speech, he thoroughly illuminated and annotated the basic ideas contained in Mao's new "intermediate zone" statement.

Applying the "Bandung Discourse": Beijing's Split with Moscow and Continuous Confrontation with Washington

IN the wake of the Asian-African conference, the "Bandung discourse" entered the mainstream representation system of China's international policies. As far as its effect is concerned, the discourse did not reduce the confrontation between China

⁷³ Zhou's supplementary remarks at the Asian-African Conference, April 19, 1954, ZWJWX, 120-25.

and the United States, and it created new complications in the relationships between Beijing and Moscow. Consequently, it enhanced China's identity as a revolutionary country while, at the same time, leading to subtle changes in the dominant theme of the global Cold War.

After the Geneva Conference, China and the United States carried out consular-level talks in Geneva. With Zhou announcing at Bandung that China was willing to sit down and negotiate with the United States, the Chinese-American ambassadorial talks began. However, due to all kinds of barriers, the talks did not achieve any substantive progress, except for reaching the agreement on retrieving students and civilians. By the end of 1957, with the departure of the U.S. ambassador, the talks were interrupted.

Entering 1958, along with the radicalization of China's political and social life accompanying the rise of the "Great Leap Forward," Beijing, both in practice and in representation, even abandoned the "moderate" tone in its foreign policy. In late August 1958, when the Great Leap reached its height, Mao ordered the PLA to shell the Nationalist-controlled Jinmen islands. In response, Washington dispatched the Seventh Fleet to escort Nationalist supply convoys. Top U.S. policymakers and military planners discussed the possibility of using nuclear weapons as a means to cope with the crisis if it went out of control. China and the United States were once again brought to the verge of a direct military confrontation. Mao argued in the Chinese leadership's internal discussion that the tension emerging in the Taiwan Strait would offer the CCP the much needed means to justify the unprecedented mass mobilization for the Great Leap:

Besides its disadvantageous side, a tense [international] situation can mobilize the population, can particularly mobilize the backward people, can mobilize the people in the middle, and can therefore promote the Great Leap Forward in economic construction.... Although there is no war right now, a tense situation caused by the current military confrontation can also bring about every positive factor into play.⁷⁴

In the meantime, however, Mao ordered the PLA not to fire on American vessels and agreed to resume the Chinese-American ambassadorial talks in Warsaw, so that the crisis would not spin out of control. In early October 1958, Mao suddenly ordered a stop to the shelling of Jinmen, announcing that Taiwan had been made a "noose" on the neck of the U.S. imperialists. All of this led to the end of the Taiwan Strait crisis, the overall confrontation between Beijing and Washington continued, and the Chinese-American ambassadorial talks became a symbolic forum for each side to issue stern criticism of the other side.

⁷⁴ Mao's Speech to the Supreme State Council, September 5, 1958, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao* [Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1993), 7: 386.

The revolutionariness of the “Bandung discourse” was also demonstrated in the subtle development of Beijing’s relations with Moscow. After Bandung, when it became clear the Beijing and Moscow held different views concerning how peaceful coexistence should be pursued in the Cold War environment, the hidden differences between Chinese and Soviet leaders in defining “revolution” and in comprehending the relationship between “revolution” and “decolonization” began to surface.

Since the PRC’s establishment, Beijing’s strategic alliance with Moscow had served as a corner stone of Chinese foreign policy. Although the “intermediate zone” thesis that Mao introduced in the late 1940s contained elements not compatible with Stalin’s analysis of postwar international structure, they were overshadowed by the thesis’s “leaning to one side” tendency. The Soviet Party’s 20th Congress and the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization campaign, while causing great turmoil within the international communist movement, complicated the relationship between Beijing and Moscow. Mao criticized Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization, claiming that it not only “exposed the problems” [jie le gaizi 揭了盖子] but also “made a mess” [tong le louzi 捅了漏子].⁷⁵

The Polish and Hungarian crisis of 1956 provided Mao and the CCP leadership with a major opportunity to apply the “Bandung discourse” to relations among socialist countries. For Mao and his CCP comrades, the crises emerging in Poland and Hungary were not of the same nature: they saw the crisis in Poland as basically anti-Soviet and the one in Hungary as essentially anti-Communist. In the meantime, they believed that both crises originated in Moscow’s “big-power chauvinism.” When the Soviet leaders informed the Chinese on October 19-20 that the situation in Poland had been highly unstable and that Moscow was preparing to intervene militarily, Mao, almost intuitively, told Pavel Yudin, Soviet ambassador to China, that if the Soviets indeed used military means to cope with the Poles, Beijing would regard it as naked interference with Poland’s internal affairs. Mao thus asked Yudin to convey an urgent message to Moscow: If the Soviets dispatch troops to solve the Polish crisis, China would use the most severe language to protest publicly.⁷⁶

On October 23-31, a top-level CCP delegation led by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping visited Moscow to discuss with the Soviet leaders about how to cope with the Polish and the Hungarian crises. The meetings of the two sides covered matters in two aspects. For managing the crisis situation, the two sides exchanged intelligence information and consulted with each other on strategies and policies. Although the two sides were not always identical in opinion, they finally agreed to solve the Polish crisis through discussion and consultation, and to settle the

⁷⁵ Wu Lengxi, *Shinian lunzhan* [Ten Year Debates] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), 6.

⁷⁶ Wu, *Zhinian lunzhan*, 39-40; Shi Zhe, *Zai lishi juren shenbian*, 551-52.

Hungarian crisis by using the Soviet Red Army to suppress the “reactionary rioters.”⁷⁷

In exploring the origins of the crises and identifying ways to prevent similar crises from happening in the future, Liu and Deng led the discussion toward reassessing the negative impact of “big power chauvinism” as a legacy of the Stalin era. Liu emphasized that, while it was unwise to try to abandon the banner of Stalin, it was necessary to criticize Stalin’s big-power chauvinism. He particularly pointed out that the tensions between the Soviet Union and Poland, Hungary and other East European countries had been caused by Stalin’s and the Soviet leadership’s practice of imposing their wills upon the leaders of these countries.⁷⁸

Against this background, Liu introduced to Khrushchev “a big suggestion” from Mao concerning how to bring about a fundamental solution to the tensions between Moscow and East European countries: “It is our hope that the Soviet Union may treat other socialist countries with a sense of equality, allowing these countries to be independent and self-reliant.” Liu also told the Soviet leaders that Mao believed that “the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence can and should also be carried out between socialist countries.” Liu thus proposed that Moscow should issue a statement, declaring that all socialist countries were equals. Khrushchev and his comrades were reluctant to make such a declaration at first. However, facing pressure from Liu—and knowing that they were particularly in need of the support from Beijing at the moment—the Soviet leaders finally conceded.⁷⁹ On October 30, the Soviet government formally issued the “Declaration on Developing and Enhancing the Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and other Socialist Countries,” in which Moscow promised to base the Soviet Union’s relations with other socialist countries on the Five Principles.

In Liu’s and Deng’s discussions with the Soviet leaders, they repeatedly emphasized that the Soviet Union should remain the “center” of the international communist movement. However, when they criticized the Soviet Union’s big-power chauvinism and made the Five Principles as what should guide relations between socialist countries, they already demonstrated a strong sense of moral and political superiority vis-à-vis the Soviet leaders—indeed, what was implied here was that the legitimacy of Moscow’s “central position” in the international communist movement should rely upon Beijing’s support and recognition. In retrospect, this probably was exactly why Mao and the CCP leadership brought the Bandung discourse into the international communist movement.

After the Polish and Hungarian crises, Beijing and Moscow found that they were in discord on whether “peaceful coexistence” should be guiding socialist

⁷⁷ See discussions in Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the cold War*, Chap 6.

⁷⁸ Shi, *Zai lishi juren shenbian*, 558-59.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

countries' relationships with capitalist countries, including the United States. When Khrushchev initiated the de-Stalinization campaign, he also introduced the notion that it was possible for socialist countries to have "peaceful competition" with capitalist countries. Mao disagreed from the beginning. However, given that Beijing was then loudly favoring the Five Principles and that Beijing's overall relations with Moscow remained very close, Mao and his comrades did not criticize Khrushchev on this matter.

In November 1957, Mao visited Moscow for the celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution. In a style that Mao had been accustomed to at the CCP's inner-Party meetings, he gave a lengthy speech without written notes at a meeting attended by leaders of Communist and workers' parties from socialist countries. In discussing the question about peace and war, Mao argued that it was neither possible nor desirable to pursue peaceful coexistence with the imperialist countries. Touching upon the question of nuclear warfare, Mao stressed that the Communists should not be frightened by such a war started by the imperialists but, rather, should know that such a war, although carrying a high price, would bring the imperialist system to its grave.⁸⁰ Khrushchev and his colleagues immediately interpreted Mao's statement as a deliberate challenge to Khrushchev's emphasis on "peaceful competition" with Western imperialist countries.

After Mao returned to Beijing, he further criticized Moscow's attempt to pursue "peaceful coexistence" with the United States and other Western imperialist and colonialist countries. He pointed out that differences already had emerged between Beijing and Moscow on the question concerning war and peace after the Twentieth Congress, and that the differences had since become wider and deeper. He reasoned that while it was not wrong for the Five Principles to be taken as a general guideline for international relations, it was mistaken for the Communist parties to use these principles to direct all aspects of their international policies. This, according to the chairman, was not only because such imperialist countries as the United States would be unwilling to abide by the Five Principles; this was also because socialist countries should support the world revolution, as well as the national liberation movement in colonies and semi-colonies. "All in all," contended Mao, "as this is a question concerning proletarian internationalism, how can peaceful coexistence be taken as the general policy line of a Communist party?"⁸¹

What Mao had done here clarified how the Bandung discourse might remain a revolutionary way of representation in China's international policies. He made it clear that if the PRC were to remain a revolutionary country, it should not take peaceful coexistence but, rather, should take support of the world revolution and

⁸⁰ Mao's speech at the Moscow Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, 6:635-36.

⁸¹ Wu, *Shinian lunzhan*, 152-53.

the struggles for national independence and liberation in colonies and semi colonies as the essence of China's international practice. All of this caused profound differences between Beijing and Moscow. When Khrushchev and his colleagues also made it clear that they were unwilling to yield to the radical Maoist discourse on revolution and war, the relationship between Moscow and Beijing was in deep trouble.

Concluding Remarks

THE central argument of this paper is that the introduction of the "Bandung discourse" and its inclusion in the PRC's representation of its international policies did not represent a "retreat" by the Chinese Communists from a revolutionary foreign policy that they had adopted in the first five years of the People's Republic. Despite the introduction of the Bandung discourse, the PRC remained a revolutionary country.

Indeed, in order to understand the overall identity of the PRC as a revolutionary country and its embrace of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence," it is essential to comprehend the ways in which the PRC's revolutionariness was defined. The key here is to place the discussion into a proper historical context. Mao's China was a communist country, yet it was different from the Soviet Union in an important sense: While the Soviet Union was established on the ruins of the czarist Russia, China's modern history was said to have suffered from the aggression and incursion of Western imperialism/colonialism. Throughout the course of the Chinese Communist revolution, Mao and the CCP leadership had perceived the Chinese revolution not only as an integral part of the "world proletarian revolution" but also as a central component of the struggles by the oppressed peoples in the non-Western world against the domination of Western imperialism and colonialism. The latter feature provided the Chinese Communist revolution's rural-centered pattern—one that was drastically different from the prevailing theories of orthodox Marxism-Leninism—with unique justification and, as a result, legitimacy. It also helped fashion the CCP's claim that the Chinese revolution represented an example of universal significance for promoting anti-imperialist/colonialist national movements, as well as for spreading Communist revolutions, in the non-Western world.

As discussed in this paper, in the late 1940s, when the Cold War was emerging on a global scale, Mao introduced his "intermediate zone" theory—he claimed that between the United States and the Soviet Union existed a vast intermediate zone mainly composed of oppressed non-Western countries (including China), that before the U.S. imperialists could attack the Soviet Union they first had to control the intermediate zone, and that, as a result, Asia was made a central arena of the Cold War. Mao's China was a revolutionary country not only in that it was determined to overthrow capitalism/imperialism's global reign

but also in that it intended to create a new world order defined by the oppressed nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Thus, in a unique way, Beijing linked the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist movements in non-Western countries to the world revolution. It is here one finds an important cause underlying the Sino-American confrontation, as well as an important potential cause eventually leading to the Sino-Soviet split. Not surprising at all, a direct consequence of Mao's and the CCP leadership's specific definition and representation of the Five Principles was that a significant feud became created between Beijing and Moscow, resulting in profound division in the international Communist movement.

In this context, Mao and his comrades viewed Bandung as a great opportunity that would allow them to explore the possibility of establishing a broad anti-Western-imperialist/colonialist "united front" among the "oppressed nations" in the non-Western world. The "Bandung discourse"—especially its emphasis upon "peaceful coexistence" between countries with different political and social systems—created some space in a tactical sense in the PRC's dealings with such Western countries as UK and France; more importantly, however, it allowed Beijing to link—in its own ways—communist revolution and decolonization.

In conclusion, the PRC's challenges to the existing international system—which revealed the essence of the revolutionariness of Chinese foreign policy under Mao—combined championing world revolution with promoting the global process of decolonization, playing a key role in bridging the two important historical trends in the postwar world. From Beijing's perspective, therefore, the Bandung discourse enhanced, rather than weakened, the PRC as a revolutionary country on the international scene. As far as its impact upon the orientation and development of the global Cold War is concerned, that the PRC's revolutionary international behavior was enriched by the Bandung discourse transformed not only the concept and reality of the international Communist movement but also the actual composition of the decolonization processes in non-Western countries. Consequently, the theme of the Cold War also experienced subtle yet profound changes—largely because of China's influences, the Cold War was made a phenomenon much broader and more complicated than the mere confrontation between the capitalist West and the socialist East.

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