

**August 6, 1946**

**Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong**

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**Summary:**

Mao Zedong says that "all reactionaries are paper tigers" and discusses the Chinese Civil War. He also introduces the theory of the "intermediate zone," when he states that "the United States and the Soviet Union are separated by a vast zone which includes many capitalist, colonial and semi-colonial countries in Europe, Asia and Africa."

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Chinese

**Contents:**

Transcript - Chinese  
Translation - English

斯特朗问：你觉得中国的问题，在不久的将来，有政治解决、和平解决希望没有？

毛答：这要看美国政府的態度。如果美国人民拖住了帮助蒋介石打内战的美国反动派的手的话，和平是有希望的。

问：如果美国除了它所已经给的以外不再帮助了[2]，那末蒋介石还可以打多久？

答：一年以上。

问：蒋介石在经济上可能支持那样久吗？

答：可以的。

问：如果美国说明此后不再给蒋介石以什么帮助了呢？

答：在现时还没有什么征象，表示美国政府和蒋介石有任何在短时期内停止战争的愿望。

问：共产党能支持多久？

答：就我们自己的愿望说，我们连一天也不愿意打。但是如果形势迫使我们不得不打的话，我们是能够一直打到底的。

问：如果美国人民问到共产党为什么作战，我该怎样回答呢？

答：因为蒋介石要屠杀中国人民，人民要生存就必须自卫。这是美国人民所能够理解的。

问：你对于美国是否可能举行反苏战争如何看法？

答：关于反苏战争的宣传，包括两个方面。在一方面，美国帝国主义确是在准备着反苏战争的，目前的反苏战争宣传和其他的反苏宣传，就是对于反苏战争的政治准备。在另一方面，这种宣传，是美国反动派用以掩盖当前美国帝国主义所直接面对着的许多实际矛盾，所放的烟幕。这些矛盾，就是美国反动派同美国人民之间的矛盾，以及美国帝国主义同其他资本主义国家和殖民地、半殖民地国家之间的矛盾。美国反苏战争的口号，在目前的实际意义，是压迫美国人民和向资本主义世界扩张它的侵略势力。你知道，希特勒和他的伙伴日本军阀，在一个长时期中，都曾经把反苏的口号作为奴役本国人民和侵略其他国家的托辞。现在美国反动派的做法，也正是这样。

美国反动派要掀动战争，首先必须进攻美国人民。他们已经在进攻美国人民了，他们从政治上、经济上压迫美国的工人和民主分子，准备在美国实行法西斯主义。美国人民应当起来抵抗美国反动派的进攻。我相信他们是会这样做的。

美国和苏联中间隔着极其辽阔的地带，这里有欧、亚、非三洲的许多资本主义国家和殖民地、半殖民地国家。美国反动派在没有压服这些国家之前，是谈不到进攻苏联的。现在美国在太平洋控制了比英国过去的全部势力范围还要多的地方，它控制着日本、国民党统治的中国、半个朝鲜和南太平洋；它早已控制着中南美；它还想着控制整个大英帝国和西欧。美国在各种借口之下，在许多国家进行大规模的军事布署，建立军事基地。美国反动派说，他们在世界各地已经建立和准备建立的一切军事基地，都是为着反对苏联的。不错，这些军事基地是指向苏联。但是，在现时，首先受到美国侵略的不是苏联，而是这些被建立军事基地的国家。我相信，不要很久，这些国家将会认识到真正压迫它们的是谁，是苏联还是美国。美国反动派总有一天将会发现他们自己是处在全世界人民的反对中。

当然，我不是说，美国反动派不想进攻苏联。苏联是世界和平的保卫者，是阻碍美国反动派建立世界霸权的强大的因素，有了苏联，美国和世界反动派的野心就根本

不能实现。因此，美国反动派非常痛恨苏联，确实梦想消灭这个社会主义国家。但是在目前，在第二次世界大战结束不久的时候，美国反动派如此大吹大擂地强调美苏战争，闹得乌烟瘴气，就使人不能不来看看他们的实际目的。原来他们是在反苏的口号下面，疯狂地进攻美国的工人和民主分子，和把美国向外扩张的一切对象国都变成美国的附属物。我以为，美国人民和一切受到美国侵略威胁的国家的人民，应当团结起来，反对美国反动派及其在各地的走狗的进攻。只有这个斗争胜利了，第二次世界大战才可以避免，否则是不能避免的。

问：这是一个很好的说明。但是如果美国使用原子炸弹呢？如果美国从冰岛、冲绳岛以及中国的基地轰炸苏联呢？

答：原子弹是美国反动派用来吓人的一只纸老虎，看样子可怕，实际上并不可怕。当然，原子弹是一种大规模屠杀的武器，但是决定战争胜败的是人民，而不是一两件新式武器。

一切反动派都是纸老虎。看起来，反动派的样子是可怕的，但是实际上并没有什么了不起的力量。从长远的观点看问题，真正强大的力量不是属于反动派，而是属于人民。在一九一七年俄国二月革命以前，俄国国内究竟哪一方面拥有真正的力量呢？从表面上看，当时的沙皇是有力量的；但是二月革命的一阵风，就是沙皇吹走了。归根结蒂，俄国的力量是在工农兵苏维埃这方面。沙皇不过是一只纸老虎。希特勒不是曾经被人们看作很有力量的吗？但是历史证明了他是一只纸老虎。墨索里尼也是如此，日本帝国主义也是如此。相反的，苏联以及各国爱好民主自由的人民的力量，却是比人们所预料的强大得多。

蒋介石和他的支持者美国反动派也都是纸老虎。提起美国帝国主义，人们似乎觉得它是强大得不得了，中国的反动派正在拿美国的“强大”来吓唬中国人民。但是美国反动派也将要同一切历史上的反动派一样，被证明为并没有什么力量。在美国，另有一类人是真正有力量的，这就是美国人民。

拿中国的情形来说，我们所依靠的不过是小米加步枪，但是历史最后将证明，这小米加步枪比蒋介石的飞机加坦克还要强些。虽然在中国人民面前还存在着许多困难，中国人民在美国帝国主义和中国反动派的联合进攻之下，将要受到长时间的苦难，但是这些反动派总有一天要失败，我们总有一天要胜利。这原因不是别的，就在于反动派代表反动，而我们代表进步。

Strong: Do you think there is hope for a political, a peaceful settlement of China's problems in the near future?

Mao: That depends on the attitude of the U.S. government. If the American people stay the hands of the American reactionaries who are helping Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi] fight the civil war, there is hope for peace.

Strong: Suppose the United States gives Chiang Kai-shek no help, besides that already given, how long can Chiang Kai-shek keep on fighting?

Mao: More than a year.

Strong: Can Chiang Kai-shek keep on that long, economically?

Mao: He can.

Strong: What if the United States makes it clear that it will give Chiang Kai-shek no more help from now on?

Mao: There is no sign yet that the U.S. government and Chiang Kai-shek have any desire to stop the war within a short time.

Strong: How long can the Communist Party keep on?

Mao: As far as our own desire is concerned, we don't want to fight even for a single day. But if circumstances force us to fight, we can fight to the finish.

Strong: If the American people ask why the Communist Party is fighting, what should I reply?

Mao: Because Chiang Kai-shek is out to slaughter the Chinese people, and if the people want to survive they have to defend themselves. This the American people can understand.

Strong: What do you think of the possibility of the United States starting a war against the Soviet Union?

Mao: There are two aspects to the propaganda about an anti-Soviet war. On the one hand, U.S. imperialism is indeed preparing a war against the Soviet Union; the current propaganda about an anti-Soviet war, as well as other anti-Soviet propaganda, is political preparation for such a war. On the other hand, this propaganda is a smoke-screen put up by the U.S. reactionaries to cover many actual contradictions immediately confronting U.S. imperialism. These are the contradictions between the U.S. reactionaries and the American people and the contradictions of U.S. imperialism with other capitalist countries and with the colonial and semi-colonial countries. At present, the actual significance of the U.S. slogan of waging an anti-Soviet war is the oppression of the American people and the expansion of the U.S. forces of aggression in the rest of the capitalist world. As you know, both Hitler and his partners, the Japanese warlords, used anti-Soviet slogans for a long time as a pretext for enslavement of the people at home and aggression against other countries. Now the U.S. reactionaries are acting in exactly the same way.

To start a war, the U.S. reactionaries must first attack the American people. They are already attacking the American people - oppressing the workers and democratic

circles in the United States politically and economically and preparing to impose fascism there. The people of the United States should stand up and resist the attacks of the U.S. reactionaries. I believe they will.

The United States and the Soviet Union are separated by a vast zone which includes many capitalist, colonial and semi-colonial countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. Before the U.S. reactionaries have subjugated these countries, an attack on the Soviet Union is out of the question. In the Pacific the United States now controls areas larger than all the former British spheres of influence there put together; it controls Japan, that part of China under Kuomintang rule, half of Korea, and the South Pacific. It has long controlled Central and South America. It seeks also to control the whole of the British Empire and Western Europe. Using various pretexts, the United States is making large-scale military arrangements and setting up military bases in many countries. The U.S. reactionaries say that the military bases they have set up and are preparing to set up all over the world are aimed against the Soviet Union. True, these military bases are directed against the Soviet Union. At present, however, it is not the Soviet Union but the countries in which these military bases are located that are the first to suffer U.S. aggression. I believe it won't be long before these countries come to realize who is really oppressing them, the Soviet Union or the United States. The day will come when the U.S. reactionaries find themselves opposed by the people of the whole world.

Of course, I do not mean to say that the U.S. reactionaries have no intention of attacking the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is a defender of world peace and a powerful factor preventing the domination of the world by the U.S. reactionaries. Because of the existence of the Soviet Union, it is absolutely impossible for the reactionaries in the United States and the world to realize their ambitions. That is why the U.S. reactionaries rabidly hate the Soviet Union and actually dream of destroying this socialist state. But the fact that the U.S. reactionaries are now trumpeting so loudly about a U.S.-Soviet war and creating a foul atmosphere, so soon after the end of World War II, compels us to take a look at their real aims. It turns out that under the cover of anti-Soviet slogans they are frantically attacking the workers and democratic circles in the United States and turning all the countries which are the targets of U.S. external expansion into U.S. dependencies. I think the American people and the peoples of all countries menaced by U.S. aggression should unite and struggle against the attacks of the U.S. reactionaries and their running dogs in these countries. Only by victory in this struggle can a third world war be avoided; otherwise it is unavoidable.

Strong: That is very clear. But suppose the United States uses the atom bomb? Suppose the United States bombs the Soviet Union from its bases in Iceland, Okinawa and China?

Mao: The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the U.S. reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible, but in fact it isn't. Of course, the atom bomb is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapon.

All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful. In Russia, before the February Revolution in 1917, which side was really strong? On the surface the tsar was strong but he was swept away by a single gust of wind in the February Revolution. In the final analysis, the strength in Russia was on the side of the Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers. The tsar was just a paper tiger. Wasn't Hitler once considered very strong? But history proved that he was a paper tiger. So was Mussolini, so was Japanese imperialism. On the contrary, the strength of the Soviet Union and of the people in all countries who loved democracy and freedom proved much greater than had been foreseen.

Chiang Kai-shek and his supporters, the U.S. reactionaries, are all paper tigers too. Speaking of U.S. imperialism, people seem to feel that it is terrifically strong. Chinese reactionaries are using the "strength" of the United States to frighten the Chinese people. But it will be proved that the U.S. reactionaries, like all the reactionaries in history, do not have much strength. In the United States there are others who are really strong -- the American people.

Take the case of China. We have only millet plus rifles to rely on, but history will finally prove that our millet plus rifles is more powerful than Chiang Kai-shek's aeroplanes plus tanks. Although the Chinese people still face many difficulties and will long suffer hardships from the joint attacks of U.S. imperialism and the Chinese reactionaries, the day will come when these reactionaries are defeated and we are victorious. The reason is simply this: the reactionaries represent reaction, we represent progress.