

**September 8, 1958**

**Speech, Mao Zedong at the Fifteenth Meeting of the  
Supreme State Council (excerpt)**

**Citation:**

"Speech, Mao Zedong at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Supreme State Council (excerpt)", September 8, 1958, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan (Selected Works of Mao Zedong on Diplomacy) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1994), 348-352. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117015>

**Summary:**

Mao speaks about the strategy behind the bombardment of nationalist-controlled Jinmen Island in the Taiwan Strait, stating that Taiwan is a "is a steel noose and it ties America's neck."

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Chun & Jane Chiu Family Foundation

**Original Language:**

Chinese

**Contents:**

Translation - English

I am going to discuss something we have talked about before. About the noose issue we discussed at the last meeting, did we not? Now I want to say that we need to place nooses on Dulles, Eisenhower, and other warmongers. There are many places where the nooses can be used on the Americans. In my opinion, wherever an [American] military base is located, [America] is tied up by a noose. [This happens], for example, in the East, in South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and Taiwan; in the West, in West Germany, France, Italy, and Britain; in the Middle East, in Turkey and Iran; and in Africa, in Morocco and other places. In each of these countries, America has many military bases. For instance, in Turkey there are more than twenty American military bases, and it is said that in Japan there are about 800. In some other countries, although there is no [American] military base, they are occupied by the troops [of the imperialists]. For example, American troops in Lebanon and British troops in Jordan.

Here I am focusing on two of these nooses: one is Lebanon, the other is Taiwan. Taiwan is an old noose since America has occupied it for several years. Who ties America there? The People's Republic of China ties it there. 600 million Chinese have a noose in their hands. This is a steel noose and it ties America's neck. Who tied America? The noose was made by America itself and tied by itself, and it throws the other end of the noose to mainland China, letting us grasp it. [America] was tied in Lebanon only recently, but the noose was also made by America itself, tied by itself, and the other end of the noose was thrown into the hands of Arab nations. Not only so, America also throws the [other end of the] noose into the hands of the majority of the people in the world. Everyone condemns America, and no one gives it any sympathy. The noose is held by the people and governments in many countries. In the Middle East, for example, the UN held meetings [on the Lebanon issue], but [America's] main problem is that it has been tied by the Arab people and cannot escape. At present, America is caught in a dilemma—is it better to withdraw earlier or later? If an early withdrawal, why did it come in the first place? If a late withdrawal, [the noose] will be getting tighter and tighter, and will become an encased knot. How can this be handled? Lebanon is different from Taiwan with which America has signed a treaty. The situation in Lebanon is more flexible as no treaty is involved there. It is said that one issued the invitation, and the other came, and [the noose] is hitched up. As far as Taiwan is concerned, this is an encased knot since a treaty was signed. There is no difference between the Democrats and Republicans in this case. Eisenhower agreed on the treaty and [Harry] Truman sent the Seventh Fleet there. Truman could come and go at will since there was no treaty during his time. Eisenhower signed the treaty. America is tied up [in Taiwan] because of the Guomindang's panic and request, and also because America was willing [to be tied up there].

Is it [America] tied up at Jinmen and Mazu? I think that it has also been tied up at Jinmen and Mazu. Why do I think so? Did not the Americans say that they had not made any decision yet, and that they would make the decision in accordance with the situation after the Communists landed there? The problem lies in the 110,000 Guomindang troops, 95,000 men on Jinmen and 15,000 on Mazu. America has to pay attention to them as long as these two large garrisons are on the islands. This concerns the interest and feelings of their class. Why do the British and Americans treat the governments in some countries so nicely? They cannot fold their hands and see these governments collapse. Today the Americans and Jiang are having a joint military exercise under the command of [Vice Admiral Wallace M.] Beakley, commander of the Seventh Fleet. Also is there is [Roland] Smoot,<sup>35</sup> the person who ordered the firing, which made the [U.S.] State Department and Defense Department unhappy. He is there, together with Beakley, to take the command.

To make a long story short, you [Americans] are noosed here. You may be able to get away if you take the initiative to leave slowly and quietly. Is there not a policy for getting away? In my view, you had a policy for getting away from Korea, and now a policy for getting away from Jinmen-Mazu is being shaped. As a matter of fact, those in your group really want to get away, and the public opinion also asks you to do so.

To get away is to extricate yourself from the noose. How can this be done? That is, the 110,000 troops should leave. Taiwan is ours, and we will never compromise on this issue, which is an issue of internal affairs. The dealing between us and you [the Americans] is an international issue. These are two different issues. Although you Americans have been associated with Jiang Jieshi, it is possible to dissolve this chemical combination. This is just like electrolytic aluminum or electrolytic copper, the combination will be dissolved when it is electrolyzed. Jiang Jieshi is [for us] a domestic issue, and you [Americans] are [for us] a diplomatic issue. [The two] cannot be mixed up.

America now attempts to dominate four out of the five continents, except for Australia. First of all, in North America, this is mainly America's own place, and its armed forces are there. The next is Central and South America where it intends to provide "protection," although it does not have garrisons there. Then, there are Europe, Africa, and Asia, to which [America] has given its main attention, and deployed its main force in Europe and Asia. I do not know how it [America] can fight a war with a few soldiers scattered everywhere. Thus, I believe that it focuses on occupying the intermediate zone. As far as the territories of our [socialist countries] are concerned, I believe that the Americans do not dare to come, unless the socialist camp encounters big trouble and they are convinced that the Soviet Union and China will totally collapse as soon as they come. Except for [the countries belonging to] our camp, America is seeking hegemony everywhere in the world, including Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and, also, Australia. Australia has linked itself with America through a military alliance and follows its orders. Is it better for America to try to control these places by utilizing the banner of "anti-communism" or by fighting a real war against communism? To fight [a real war] against communism means to dispatch its troops to fight us and fight the Soviet Union. I would say that the Americans are not so stupid. They only have a few soldiers to be transferred here and there. After the incident in Lebanon, American troops were transferred there from the Pacific. After they arrived in the Red Sea area, the situation changed unfavorably [in the Pacific], and they turned around quickly and landed at Malaya. They announced that [the troops] were taking a vacation there, and kept quiet for seventeen days. Later, after one of their reporters claimed that [America] was taking charge of the Indian Ocean, everyone in the India Ocean [area] expressed opposition. When we began our artillery bombardment, America came here since there were not enough [of its] troops here. It will probably better serve America's interests if it leaves such places like Taiwan in an earlier time. If it continues to stay, let it be noosed here. This will not affect the overall situation, and we can continue the Great Leap Forward.

We should strive to produce eleven million tons of steel, doubling last year's output. Next year another twenty million tons, striving to reach thirty million tons. The year after next, another twenty million tons. Is it not fifty million tons by then? Three years of hard efforts, fifty million tons of steel. At that time, we will occupy third place in the world, next only to the Soviet Union and the United States. The [steel] output of the Soviet Union reached fifty million [tons] last year. In three years, they can make it sixty million [tons]. If we make hard efforts in the next three years, it is possible that [our steel output] may surpass fifty million tons. In another two years, by 1962, it is possible [for us to produce] eighty to a hundred million tons [of steel], approaching the level of the United States (because of the impact of economic recessions, America's [steel output] will probably only reach a hundred million tons at that time). [At the end of] the second five-year plan, we will approach or even surpass America. In another two years, in seven years, [we may] produce a hundred fifty million tons of steel, and surpass America to become the number one in the world. It is not good for us to name ourselves as the most superior in the world, but it is not bad to become the number one steel producer. [We should also] make hard efforts in the next three years to [increase] grain production. The output of this year is between three hundred fifty to four hundred million tons. [The output] will double next year, reaching, probably, seven hundred fifty million tons. We should slow down a little bit the year after next, for we have to find outlets for [extra] grain. Food will

be grain's main outlet; but we also need to find other outlets in industry. For example, [using grain] to produce ethyl alcohol, and, through ethyl alcohol, to produce rubber, artificial fiber, plastic, and other things.

Let me talk a little bit more about the tense situation. You [Americans] cause the tense situation, and you think it advantageous to you, do you not? You may be wrong. The tense situation can mobilize the people in the world, making everyone blame you Americans. When a tense situation emerges in the Middle East, everyone blames the Americans. When tension comes to Taiwan everyone again blames the Americans. Only a few people blame us. The Americans blame us, Jiang Jieshi blames us, and Syngman Rhee blames us. Maybe there are some others [who blame us], but mainly these three. Britain is a vacillating element. While it will not be militarily involved, it is said that it has strong sympathy politically. This is because Britain faces problems in Jordan. How can it handle the situation in Jordan if the Americans withdraw from Lebanon because [the British] failed to show sympathy [to the Americans]? Nehru issued a statement, which basically echoed us, suggesting that Taiwan and other [offshore] islands should be returned to us, but hoping that a peaceful solution can be reached. The countries in the Middle East, especially Egypt and Iraq, warmly welcomed [our artillery bombardment] this time. They praise us every day, saying that we have done the right thing. This is because our [artillery bombardment] here has reduced the pressure the Americans put on them.

I think that we can tell the people of the world publicly that, in comparison, a tense situation is more disadvantageous to the western countries, as well as more disadvantageous to America [than to them]. Why is it advantageous to them [the people of the world]? Does the tense situation in the Middle East do any good for America? Does it do any good for Britain? Or is it more advantageous to the Arab countries and to the peace-loving people in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other continents. To which side is the tense situation in the Taiwan [Straits] more advantageous? Let us take our country as an example. Our country is now experiencing a nationwide mobilization. If during the Middle East crisis about thirty to forty million people participated in the rallies and protest parades, this time [during the Taiwan crisis] we will probably mobilize 300 million people [to participate in rallies and parades], educating them and toughening them. This event will also benefit our unity with all democratic parties<sup>36</sup> in China because all the parties now share a common goal. As a result, those who in the past had knots in their hearts, who were unhappy, and who were criticized will now feel a little bit more comfortable. If we can continue to handle the situation in this way, doing it again and again, we will all belong to the working class one day. Therefore, in my view, the tense situation caused by the imperialists eventually becomes advantageous to hundreds of millions of Chinese people who oppose imperialism, to peace-loving peoples all over the world, and to all social classes, all social ranks, and the governments [in various countries]. They now have to believe that America, always arrogant and aggressive, is no good after all. [The U.S. government] moved six of its thirteen aircraft carriers [to the Taiwan Straits]. Among these carriers, there are some big ones with the size reaching 65,000 tons. It is said that with 120 ships, it forms the strongest fleet in the world. It does not matter if you want to make it even stronger. It does not matter if you want to concentrate all of your four fleets here. I welcome you all. After all, what you have is useless here. Even though you move every ship you have here, you cannot land. Ships have to be in the water, and cannot come to the land. You can do nothing but make some threatening gesture here. The more you play, the more the people in the world will understand how unreasonable you are.