

April 28, 1969

**Mao Zedong's Speech at the First Plenary Session of
the CCP's Ninth Central Committee**

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Summary:

Mao speaks about the importance of a united socialist China, remaining strong amongst international powers.

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What I am going to say is what I have said before, which you all know, and I am not going to say anything new. Simply I am going to talk about unity. The purpose of unity is to pursue even greater victory.

Now the Soviet revisionists attack us. Some broadcast reports by Tass, the materials prepared by Wang Ming,[i] and the lengthy essay in *Kommunist* all attack us, claiming that our Party is no longer one of the proletariat and calling it a "petit-bourgeois party." They claim that what we are doing is the imposition of a monolithic order and that we have returned to the old years of the base areas. What they mean is that we have retrogressed. What is a monolithic order? According to them, it is a military-bureaucratic system. Using a Japanese term, this is a "system." In the words used by the Soviets, this is called "military-bureaucratic dictatorship." They look at our list of names, and find many military men, and they call it "military." [ii] As for "bureaucratic," probably they mean a batch of "bureaucrats," including myself, [Zhou] Enlai, Kang Sheng, and Chen Boda.[iii] All in all, those of you who do not belong to the military belong to this "bureaucratic" system. Therefore it is called the "military-bureaucratic dictatorship." I say, let them talk, talking about all of this. Whatever they want to say, let them say. But there is a characteristic in what they say, that is, they never scold us as a bourgeois party. They label us a "petit-bourgeois party." On our part, we call theirs a bourgeois dictatorship. They are restoring the bourgeois dictatorship.

We are talking about victory, this means that we must guarantee that we should unite the vast masses of the entire country to pursue victory under the leadership of the proletariat. The socialist revolution must continue. There are still unfinished tasks for this revolution to fulfill, such as to conduct struggle, to conduct criticism, and to conduct transformation. After a few years, we will probably need to carry out another revolution.

Several of our old comrades have been stationed in the factories for a period. I hope that when you have opportunities in the future you should go down to have a look again, and to study the problems existing in various factories. It seems to me that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution must be carried out. Our foundation was not solid and stable. According to my observation, not in all factories, not in an overwhelming majority of the factories, but in quite a large majority of the factories, the leadership is not controlled by true Marxists, or controlled by the masses of the workers. Among those who led the factories in the past, I cannot say that there were no good people. There were good people for sure. Among party committee secretaries, assistant secretaries, committee members, there were good people; and among party branch secretaries, there were good people. But they followed Liu Shaoqi's lines, which emphasized material incentives and put making profits as the top priority, while at the same time failing to promote the proletarian politics, but instead pursued a system of bonuses. In some factories, they have been liberated now, and they have participated in the new leadership, combining the three elements.[iv] But in some factories, this has not been done. There are indeed bad elements hiding in the factories. For example, the February Seventh Factory, which repairs railway locomotives and carriages at Changxindian, is a big factory, with 8,000 workers and, if you include them, several tens of thousands of workers' family members. In the past, there once existed nine Guomindang district branches, three Sanmin zhuyi Youth League[v] organs, and eight [Guomindang] secret service organs. Of course, a careful analysis of the situation is needed here. In those days, it wouldn't do if one refused to join such a thing called Guomindang. Some of them are old workers. Are we going to get rid of these old workers? We should not do that. We should make distinctions between those big and small cases. Some of them were only nominal members of the Guomindang, and they were forced to join it. They only need to talk [to clarify the situation]. Some of them were in relatively more responsible positions. A small minority of them were deeply involved and have done bad things. We must make distinctions between these different cases. Even for those who have done bad things, we should also make distinctions among them. Leniency to those who confess, and severity to those who resist. If they conduct a satisfactory

self-criticism, we should let them keep their jobs. But, of course, we should not allow them to stay in the leadership. If we do not give these people jobs, what will they do at home? What will their children do? Further, old workers usually are skillful, although some of them are not so skillful.

I have brought up this example to point out that the revolution has not been completed. Therefore, all members of the Central Committee, including those alternate members, should pay attention to conducting your work in a very careful style. In dealing with things like this, you should be very careful. It is not good to be crude and careless, which often leads to mistakes. In some places, many people have been arrested. This is not right. You have arrested so many people, why did you do so? Have the arrested committed homicide, arson, or poisoning? It is my opinion that if he has not committed any of these crimes, you should not arrest him. As for those who have mistakenly followed the capitalist path, it is even less necessary for you to arrest them. In the factories, they should be allowed to work, and should be allowed to participate in the mass movement. They have committed mistakes, and have committed the mistakes in the past. They either joined the Guomindang, or did some bad things, or have committed mistakes in the recent past, that is, have committed the mistake of following the capitalist path. You should allow them to be with the masses. If you do not allow them to be with the masses, that is not good. Some of them have been detained for two years, detained in the "cattle pens."^[vi] As a result, they know nothing about what is happening in the world. When they come out and listen to other people, they find the language the other people use is different. They are still talking in the language of two years ago. They have been separated from life for two years. We should help these people and should hold study sessions for them. We should tell them about history and tell them about the history of the advance of the Great Cultural Revolution in the past two years, so that they gradually will awaken.

We should unite together for one purpose, that is, to consolidate the proletarian dictatorship. This should be solidly carried out in every factory, every village, every office, and every school. In the beginning, we should not spread this out too widely. We may spread it out, but should not stop taking charge of it when it has been spread out. We should not just do this for half a year or a little bit longer, and then have no one take charge of it. The experiences must be summarized factory by factory, school by school, and office by office. Therefore, Comrade Lin Biao emphasizes in his report that this must be done factory by factory, school by school, commune by commune, party branch by party branch, and working unit by working unit. There is also the question of rectifying the [Communist] Youth League, which should be done League branch by League branch.

In addition, there is the question of being prepared for war, which I have mentioned in the past. We should be prepared for war year by year. People may ask: What if they do not come? No matter whether they come or not, we should be prepared. Do not wait for the Party Center to distribute materials even for manufacturing hand grenades. Hand grenades can be manufactured everywhere, can be manufactured in every province. Such things as rifles and light weapons can be manufactured in every province. I am talking here about being prepared in a material sense. But what is more important is to be prepared in a spiritual sense. To be prepared in a spiritual sense is to be prepared for war. Not only [members of] our Central Committee, but also the majority of the people of the whole country, should have such spiritual preparation. Here I do not mean to include the enemies of the [proletarian] dictatorship, such as landlords, rich peasants, reactionaries, and bad elements. This is because these people are quite happy to see the imperialists and revisionists invade our country. They suppose that if the invasion occurred, the world would be turned upside down, and that they would come out on top. We should also be prepared for dealing with this situation. In carrying out the socialist revolution, we should also carry out this revolution.

When others invade our territory and attack us, we shall not invade others' territory. We must not invade others' territory. I say this because we should not be provoked.

Even if they invited me to come out, I will not come out. But if they invade my territory and attack me, I will deal with them. My response depends on whether they come on a small scale or a large scale. If it is a small-scale invasion the fighting will be waged on the border. If it is a large-scale invasion, I am in favor of giving up some land. China is not a small country. If there is no benefit waiting for them, they will not come. We must let the whole world see that when we are fighting the war we have both reason and advantage in our hands. If they do come, I think it is more advantageous to us, as we will have both reason and advantage in our hands. It is easy for us to fight [an invading enemy] since he will fall into the people's encirclement. As far as such things like planes, tanks, and armored vehicles are concerned, experiences everywhere prove that they are easy for us to deal with.

In order to achieve victory, we must have more people. Isn't this correct? [We must have] people from all backgrounds, no matter to which "mountain stronghold" they used to belong or in which province they used to work, either in the north or in the south. Is it better to unite with more people or to unite with fewer people? It is always better to unite with more people. Some people may have different opinions from ours, but that is not a relationship between us and the enemy. I simply do not believe, to take a specific example, that the relationship between Wang Xiaoyu[vii] and Yang Dezhi[viii] is, as some people say, one between us and the enemy. Is the relationship between you two one between us and the enemy, or is it one among the people? In my opinion, it is a quarrel among the people. The Central Committee has been somewhat bureaucratic, and has failed to pay enough attention to you. On your part, you never bring this matter to the Central Committee for discussion. Shandong is such a big province, and there are contradictions among the people. Would you two please take this opportunity to have a good discussion? In my opinion, there are such contradictions among the people in East China too. There is also the case of Shanxi province, which involves problems among the people too. You support one faction, and I will support another faction. But is this endless quarreling necessary? There are also problems in Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan provinces. Every province has some problems, but, compared with the situation of last year or the year before last, things are already much better. You, comrade, isn't your name Xu Shiyu[ix]? When we were in Shanghai the year before last, during the three months from July to September, all under the heaven was great chaos. Now life is a bit better. What I am talking about is the whole situation. In Nanjing, where you are, there emerged a so-called "Red Headquarters." [x] You have worked on them and they became cooperative. In the end, the "August 27th" [xi] and the "Red Headquarters" are united together.

I believe that the main problem still lies in how we conduct our own work. Did I make two statements in the past? The problems of the localities lay in the army, and the problems of the army lay in its own work. You are not enemies of life and death, why should you treat each other like that? If personal gratitude or hatred is involved, it is not such a big matter and so much weight should not be put on it. All in all, I find no injustice in your previous life or hatred in you present life [to make you unyielding enemies]. You simply encounter one another, and find some differences in your opinions. Others have either criticized you or opposed you, and you have attacked back. Consequently, contradictions emerge. Those who oppose you are not necessarily bad people. One person in Beijing whom many have wanted to overthrow is Xie Fuzhi.[xii] He then adopted a method: he told all organizations which hoped to overthrow him that there was nothing wrong with them, and that the organizations which favored him were not necessarily good.

Therefore, what I want to say is what I have said in the past, that is, to unite together to achieve even greater victories.

There is concrete content in this statement. It concerns what we are going to do, what kind of victory we are going to pursue, and how we should unite together.

I still have faith in those old comrades who have committed mistakes. Originally, we had a long list, including thirty-odd names, and we thought that it was good if all of

them could be elected to the politburo. Later someone put forward a shorter list with less than twenty names, and we felt that list too short. The majority held a position in between. They oppose both the longer list and the shorter list, favoring a medium list with some twenty-odd names. So we can only elect representatives [from them]. This is not to say that all those alternate members of the Central Committee are not as good as full members of the Central Committee in terms of their political consciousness, working ability, virtue, talents and seniority. This is not the real question. There is unfairness involved here. Do you think that everything is so fair? In my view, there are many things that are not so fair. There are many things that are not so just.

Everyone of us should be prudent and cautious. No matter who one is, an alternate member of the Central Committee, a full member of the Central Committee, or a member of the Politburo, everyone should be prudent and cautious. We should not forget who we are when there is a sudden inspiration. Since the time of Marx [the communists] never talk about who should take larger or smaller credit. We are Communist Party members, and we belong to the part of the masses which is more conscious than others, and we belong to the part of the proletariat which is more conscious than others. So I am an advocate of this slogan, that is: "First we should not be scared by hard work; second we should not be scared by death." And I do not favor the slogan: "Even if I have not achieved anything, at least I have worked hard; even if I have not worked hard, at least I have made myself tired." This slogan is an opposition to "First we should not be scared by hard work; and second we should not be scared by death." You see, how many of us have died in the past? All the old comrades who remain here today are lucky survivors who have survived by chance. Comrade Pi Dingjun,[xiii] how many were with you when you worked in the Hubei-Henan-Anhui base area? How many survived? There were many people there at that time, but not many alive today. At that time, in the Jiangxi Soviet Area, the Jinggang Mountain Soviet Area, the base areas in northeastern Jiangxi, western Fujian, western Hunan and Hubei, and northern Shaanxi, the wars resulted in tremendous sacrifices. Not many old comrades survived. This is what we call "first we should not be scared by hard work; second we should not be scared by death." For many years, we did not have any salary, and there was nothing like the eight-tier wage system. We had only a fixed amount of food, which at best we could get three qian of cooking oil, five qian of salt, and one-and-a-half jin of rice.[xiv] How about vegetables? How could we get vegetables everywhere the troops passed through? Now we have entered the cities. It is a good thing for us to enter the cities. Without entering the cities, they would still be occupied by Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek].[xv] But it is also a bad thing for us to enter the cities because it has made our Party no longer pure.

Therefore, some foreigners and reporters say that our party is being rebuilt. Now, we ourselves have also put forward this slogan, that is, Party-rectification and Party-rebuilding. The Party needs to be rebuilt. Every Party branch needs to be rectified with the supervision of the masses. The whole thing must go through the masses. It should not just involve a few Party members. The masses outside the Party should attend the meetings and should participate in providing comments. A few individual Party members are really not good, and they should be advised to leave the Party. A very small number of Party members may need to be disciplined. This is included in the Party's constitution, isn't it? It also needs to be passed by the Party branch meeting and should be approved by the superior Party committee. All in all, we must adopt prudent methods. This should be done, and this must be done. However, this should be done in prudent ways.

It seems that this national congress is a very good one. In my opinion, it is a congress of unity and a congress of victory. We use the method of issuing communiqués [to announce the convening of the congress], and the foreigners cannot get our news. They say that we are holding a secret meeting. We are both open and secret. It seems to me that the reporters in Beijing are not so good. Probably we have uprooted almost all of the traitors and special agents who were hidden among us. In the past,

when there was a meeting, its content were leaked out immediately, appearing in Red Guards papers. After the downfall of Wang [Li], Guan [Feng], and Qi [Benyu],[xvi] and Yang [Chengwu], Yu [Lijin],[xvii] and Fu [Chongbi],[xviii] they no longer know anything about the activities of our Central Committee.

More or less that is what I want to say. The meeting is adjourned.

[i] Wang Ming (Chen Shaoyu) was one of the leaders of the “international section” within the CCP in the 1930s. Since 1956, he had lived in the Soviet Union and frequently published books and articles criticizing Mao Zedong. He died in Moscow in 1974.

[ii] Mao Zedong refers to the new Central Committee elected at the CCP’s Ninth National Congress, held from 1 April to 24 April 1969.

[iii] All of them were members of the CCP’s Politburo Standing Committee.

[iv] The three elements were revolutionary masses, revolutionary cadres, and PLA representatives. Please refer to note 5 for explanations of the “three-in-one” combination.

[v] The Sanmin Zhuyi Youth League was the Guomindang’s youth organization. Sanmin zhuyi was Sun Yat-sen’s political ideology and philosophy, sometimes translated as the “Three Principles of the People.”

[vi] The “cattle pens,” unofficial prisons created by the “revolutionary masses” to detain “bad elements,” widely existed during the Cultural Revolution, especially between 1966-1969.

[vii] Wang Xiaoyu was then chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Shandong province and a member of the CCP CC.

[viii] Yang Dezhi was then vice chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Shandong province, commander of the PLA’s Jinan Military Region, and a member of the CCP CC.

[ix] Xu Shiyu commanded the PLA’s Nanjing Military Region and served as chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Jiangsu Province. At the Party’s Ninth Congress, he was elected a member of the Politburo.

[x] The “Red Headquarters” was a “revolutionary rebel organization” in Jiangsu Province.

[xi] The “August 27th” was another “revolutionary rebel organization” in Jiangsu Province, opposed to the “Red Headquarters.”

[xii] Xie Fuzhi, then chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Beijing City, was elected a member of the Politburo at the CCP’s Ninth Congress. He died in 1973 of cancer.

[xiii] Pi Dingjun, then vice chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Fujian province, vice commander of the PLA’s Fuzhou Military Region, was a member of the CCP CC.

[xiv] One jin is equal to half kilogram and is composed of sixteen qian.

[xv] Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] ruled the Chinese mainland from 1927-1949 as the leader of Nationalist China.

[xvi] Wang Li, Guan Feng, and Qi Benyu were all members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group during the early stage of the Cultural Revolution. Wang and Guan were arrested in August 1967, and Qi was arrested in February 1968.

[xvii] Yu Lijin was political commissar of the Chinese air force until his purge, together with Yang Chengwu and Fu Chongbi, in March 1968. He would be rehabilitated after Lin Biao’s death.

[xviii] Fu Chongbi was commander of the People’s Liberation Army’s Beijing garrison headquarters until his purge, together with Yang Chengwu and Yu Lijin, in March 1968. He would be rehabilitated after Lin Biao’s death.