

September 2, 1958

**Mao Zedong, 'Fight for National Independence and
Do Away with Blind Worship of the West'**

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Summary:

Brazilian journalists Mariudim and Mme. Dotere speak with Mao about the prospects of stemming imperialism in Latin America, and countering Western influence. The reestablishment of diplomatic relations between China and Latin American countries, particularly Brazil, was also discussed.

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FIGHT FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND DO AWAY WITH BLIND WORSHIP OF THE WEST*

(September 2, 1958)

Chairman Mao Zedong (hereinafter referred to as Mao): I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. We were having a meeting, and I was unable to meet you earlier.

Mariudim (hereinafter referred to as M): It is a great honor to be received by you, no matter how long we have had to wait.

Mme. Dotere (hereinafter referred to as D): Thank you for your reception, even though our wait was a long one. Moreover, our wait has given us time to read more materials and to stay longer in China.

Mao: What materials have you read?

M and *D*: Some of your writings, including "On New Democracy."

Mao: I said in that book that after the outbreak of the Second World War it was no longer possible for more countries like Kemal Ataturk's¹⁸⁷ Turkey to emerge. The bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi-colonies either lined up on the imperialist front or on the anti-imperialist front. There was no other choice. But in fact this view only fits with the case of some countries, and is not applicable to India, Indonesia or the United Arab Republic. The latter are neither imperialist countries nor socialist countries; they are nationalist countries. There are quite a number of such countries in Latin America too, and there may be more in future.

D: The book "On New Democracy" is very important for a country like Brazil.

Mao: This book deals with the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Its viewpoint is generally correct; some supplement is necessary only at a few places, such as I have mentioned.

M: Can the third position of the nationalist countries be maintained for long?

* This is the gist of an interview given by Mao Zedong to the Brazilian journalists Mariudim and Mme. Dotere.

Mao: Nothing can be maintained permanently, neither imperialism nor socialism. This is because there will be advance to the higher level of communist society. The third position can be maintained for a fairly long period, as long as it is still necessary.

D: Is it right for the nationalist countries to adopt a position of neutrality?

Mao: Yes, it is. These countries stand neither on the imperialist side nor on the socialist side. They adopt a neutral position, without participating in either bloc. This suits their present circumstances.

D: Can they maintain normal relations with both sides at the same time?

Mao: We think they can. But the imperialist countries do not like their neutral position, because their neutrality was obtained by shaking off imperialist domination. The neutrality of the nationalist countries is a position of independence, sovereignty and freedom from control. We in the socialist camp welcome the neutral position of these countries, because it is favorable to the cause of peace and unfavorable to the imperialist plans of aggression and war. We regard as our friends the independent countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and also those countries which have not yet achieved or are fighting for independence. We support them.

What is the population of Latin America?

M: About 100 million.

Mao: 100 million friends. The population of Brazil occupies 60 percent of that of Latin America. Yours is a big country. The population of Brazil is likely to grow. You have a vast territory, about the same area as China. There is a bright future for your country.

M: We hope China will help us industrialize.

Mao: So long as you wish we are always willing to do so. We are always willing to give a helping hand to all Asian, African and Latin American countries whenever they need one.

D: Latin America is important for the United States. The latter is retreating in defeat from different parts of the world. That is why it is putting more pressure on Latin America.

Mao: Latin America is a rear area of the United States. Countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America have all been or still are rear areas and warehouses of imperialism. Now there is rebellion in the rear, and many countries have broken away from imperialist domination.

D: The Latin American countries are beginning to do so, but with much difficulty.

Mao: They may first achieve a state of semi-independence and then gain complete independence, like many countries in Asia and Africa, some of which

have won independence, some are semi-independent and fighting for complete independence, and others are still subjected to imperialist rule.

M: We wish to know, Chairman, your views on the establishment of diplomatic relations and carrying out of trade between China and Latin American countries.

Mao: If Brazil and other Latin American countries wish to establish diplomatic relations with China, we welcome them all. Doing business without establishing diplomatic relations is all right, so is the conducting of ordinary exchanges of visits without doing business. The social systems of China and Latin American countries are different, but we have many points in common. First, we both want independence. It is not only you who have the problem of independence; we have it too. We still face the Taiwan problem, and the United States is still threatening us. Even if we recover Taiwan, the U.S. menace will continue to exist. This is our major point in common. Secondly, both our economies are not developed. Your desire for economic development is pressing, and so is ours. All Asian, African and Latin American countries is facing this common historical task of fighting for national independence and developing national economies and cultures.

M: Does the U.S. embargo hurt China?

Mao: We are not adversely affected. On the contrary, it has brought us a lot of advantages.

M: Are you, Chairman, optimistic or pessimistic about the international situation?

Mao: The present international situation is excellent. It is very difficult for the Western countries to realize their aim. Their aim is to rule all places that can be ruled, but they meet resistance everywhere. The colonialist countries band together and call themselves "Western countries." Geographically speaking, Brazil is also a Western country, but politically the so-called Western countries are in fact merely the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, West Germany, the Netherlands, etc. The sun of the Western world is the setting sun in the evening, while that of Asia, Africa and Latin America is the rising sun in the morning. Imperialism is always trying to intimidate people, and sometimes raise a hand to strike others. We must not be intimidated or scared by them. Adoration of the West is a kind of blind worship, of superstition, which is shaped by history, but this blind worship is being gradually done away with. It is also a kind of superstition to describe the West as advanced. On the contrary, it is backward. Of course, the Western countries have some possessions, but no more than some steel and some atomic bombs. In fact, this is nothing terrible, because they are politically backward,

corrupt and vulgar. That's why we despise them. Lenin once said something about advanced Asia and backward Europe. What Lenin meant at the time was the democratic movements in China and other Asian countries, and he foresaw that Asia would run ahead of Europe. Now, on top of the socialist camp and the national revolutionary movements in Asia, there are the national revolutionary movements in Africa and Latin America. All these are advanced, while the Western world is backward. Dulles and his ilk may not accept this remark. Perhaps they will say: "This is simply boasting. We have steel and atomic bombs, so how can we be backward?" I say: Although they possess steel and atomic bombs, they are in the hands of backward people—the monopoly capitalists. They may bluff and bluster for a short while, but they will break down in the end.

It is a major task to do away with blind worship of the West. It should be carried out everywhere, in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In our country, too, we shall continue to wipe out this blind worship. What I mean is that strategically we should despise imperialism as a paper tiger, as something of little account. But tactically and in each concrete task, we must attach importance to it and deal with it seriously. Imperialism will change from a real tiger to a half-real and half-fake tiger, and finally to a completely fake tiger, or paper tiger. This is a process of transformation of a thing to its opposite. Our task is to accelerate this process. For a time before the conclusion of this process, the tiger may live and still be able to bite people. Therefore, we must deal the tiger blow after blow and pay attention to the art of boxing, and must not be careless.

The people in the Western countries do not agree with the ways of their governments, either. When I say the United States is bad, I mean its ruling clique, while the American people are very good. Many people among them have not yet awakened, but they surely will.

D: We believe that your explanation is very helpful to Latin America.

Mao: We pay a great deal of attention to the situation of the Latin American people. We are very interested in stories such as Nixon's visit to eight Latin American countries.

M: He received a very bit "welcome" there. Dulles, too, received a similar welcome in Rio de Janeiro.

Mao: The people of Latin America are rising. They look down on Nixon and Dulles, who are but paper tigers in their eyes. Nixon and Dulles are falling behind. The Latin American people are much more capable than they.

(From the verbatim record approved by Mao Zedong.)