MAO TSE-TUNG

PROBLEMS

OF

WAR AND STRATEGY
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The present English translation of Problems of War and Strategy has been made from the Chinese text given in the second edition of the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Volume II, published by the People's Publishing House, Peking, in August 1952. It is a careful revision of the first English edition published in June 1954, and endeavours to give a more adequate rendering of the Chinese text.
This is part of the concluding statement delivered on November 6, 1938 at the plenary session of the Central Committee (the sixth since the Party's Sixth National Congress). In his *Strategic Problems in the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla War* and *On the Protracted War* Comrade Mao Tse-tung had already answered the question of the leadership of the Party in the Anti-Japanese War. But some comrades, misled by Right opportunism, denied the Party's independence within the united front and so had doubts about or even opposed the Party's line on war and strategy. In order to correct this mistake, to enable the whole Party to understand more clearly the supreme importance of war and strategy in the Chinese revolution, and to mobilize it to work conscientiously for the line, Comrade Mao Tse-tung here re-examines the subject with special care from the angle of the history of China's political struggles, and points out the development of our military work and the specific changes in our strategic directives, thereby ensuring the Party's unity in its guiding principles and in its practical work.

Commission on the Publication of the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party
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VI. ALL-ATTENTION TO THE STUDY OF MILITARY PROBLEMS
I. CHINA'S CHARACTERISTICS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

The central task and the highest form of a revolution is to seize political power by armed force and decide issues by war. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, in China as well as in all other countries.

It may, however, be variously applied by the proletarian parties according to different circumstances. As to the capitalist countries, when there is neither fascism nor war, at home they have bourgeois democracy and no longer feudalism, while in external relations they oppress other nations but do not themselves suffer from foreign oppression. Owing to these characteristics, the task of the proletarian parties in the capitalist countries is to prepare for the final overthrow of capitalism by educating the workers and building up strength through a long period of legal struggle. It is a question of long legal struggle, of utilizing the legislative bodies as a platform, of staging economic and political strikes and of organizing the trade unions and educating the workers. The forms of organization are legal and the forms of struggle are bloodless, that is, non-military. On the question of war, the Communist Parties in capitalist
countries are opposed to the imperialist wars waged by their own countries; if such wars occur their policy is to bring about the defeat of their own reactionary governments. The only war they want is the civil war for which they are preparing. But a struggle of this kind, whether in the form of regular war or of armed insurrection, should not be launched until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless, until the majority of the proletariat are determined to take up arms and wage war and until the peasant masses are willing to give assistance to the proletariat. Moreover, when the time comes for launching insurrection and war, the first step will be to seize the cities and then advance on the countryside, not the other way round. All this has been done by the Communist Parties of capitalist countries and has been proved correct by the October Revolution in Russia.

The case of China is different. What distinguishes her is that she is not an independent democratic state but a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, deprived of democracy by feudal oppression at home and of national independence by imperialist oppression from the outside. Thus the Chinese people have no legislative body to make use of, nor have the workers any

legal right to organize strikes. Basically, therefore, the task of the Chinese Communist Party is not to go through a long period of legal struggles before launching an insurrection or war, nor to seize the big cities first and then occupy the countryside, but the reverse.

When there are no armed attacks launched by imperialism, the Chinese Communist Party either wages, together with the bourgeoisie, a civil war against the warlords, the lackeys of imperialism, as it did in Kwangtung\(^1\) and the Northern Expedition in 1924-27, or unites the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie to wage a civil war against the landlord class and the comprador bourgeoisie, who are also the lackeys of imperialism, as it did in the War of Agrarian Revolution of 1927-36. When armed attacks are launched by imperialism, the Party then unites all the classes and strata in the country that are opposed to foreign ag-

\(^1\) In 1924 Dr. Sun Yat-sen, in alliance with the Communist Party and the revolutionary workers and peasants, suppressed the revolt of the “Merchants Corps” in Canton, an armed force of the compradors and landed gentry in league with the British imperialists. Early in 1925 the revolutionary army, formed on the basis of Kuomintang-Communist co-operation, set out from Canton on an eastward expedition and, with the support of the peasants, defeated the troops of the warlord Ch’en Chiung-ming. Then it returned to overthrow the Kwangsi and Yunnan warlords entrenched in Canton. In the autumn it again advanced eastward and wiped out all the remnants of Ch’en Chiung-ming’s forces. These battles, in which the Communist Party and the Communist Youth League fought in the forefront, brought about political unity in Kwangtung and prepared the way for the Northern Expedition.
gressors to wage a national war against the foreign enemy, as in the present Anti-Japanese War.

All this shows the difference between China and capitalist countries. In China the main form of struggle is war and the main form of organization is the army. Such forms as mass organizations and mass struggles are also very important and necessary and must not be overlooked, but they are all employed to support war. All organizational work and struggles before the outbreak of hostilities are undertaken as preparations for the war, as in the period from the May 4 Movement (1919) to the May 30 Movement (1925). All organizational work and struggles after the outbreak of hostilities are co-ordinated with the war either directly or indirectly; for instance, in the period of the Northern Expedition all organizational work and struggles in the rear areas of the revolutionary army were directly co-ordinated with the war, while all those in areas under the rule of the clique of Northern warlords were indirectly co-ordinated with it. Again, in the period of the War of the Agrarian Revolution all organizational work and struggles inside the Red areas were directly co-ordinated with the war while all those outside them were indirectly co-ordinated with it. Furthermore, in the present period of the Anti-Japanese War all organizational work and struggles in the rear areas of the anti-Japanese forces and in the enemy-occupied areas are also either directly or indirectly co-ordinated with the war.
“In China, armed revolution is fighting against armed counter-revolution. This is one of the peculiarities and one of the advantages of the Chinese Revolution.”¹ Comrade Stalin’s statement is perfectly correct and holds good equally for the Northern Expedition, the War of Agrarian Revolution, and the present Anti-Japanese War. These are all revolutionary wars waged principally by the revolutionary people against counter-revolutionaries, and they differ only as a civil war differs from a national war, a war waged by the Communist Party alone from a war waged jointly by the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Such differences are by no means unimportant. They indicate the difference in the alignment of the main forces in the war, that is, whether the war is waged by an alliance of the workers and peasants only or by the workers, the peasants and the bourgeoisie; they indicate the difference in the target of the war, that is, whether the war is waged against a domestic or a foreign enemy, and in the former case, against the clique of the Northern warlords or against the Kuomintang; and they also indicate that the Chinese revolutionary war is different in content at the different stages of its history. But all these wars are cases of armed revolution against armed counter-revolution, all are revolutionary wars, and all are characterized by the peculiarities and advantages of the Chinese revolution.

The statement that the revolutionary war "is one of the peculiarities and one of the advantages of the Chinese revolution" fits in perfectly with the conditions in China. Almost from the very beginning, the main task of the party of the Chinese proletariat has been to unite the largest possible number of allies and to organize armed struggles according to circumstances against internal or external armed counter-revolutionary forces for national and social liberation. In China without armed struggle the proletariat and the Communist Party could not win a place for themselves or accomplish any revolutionary task.

For five or six years from its foundation in 1921 to its participation in the Northern Expedition in 1926, our Party did not fully grasp this point. At that time it did not understand the supreme importance of armed struggle in China, it failed to prepare for war or organize armed forces in earnest and it neglected the study of military strategy and tactics. During the Northern Expedition, concentrating its attention exclusively on the mass movement, it neglected to win over the armed forces, with the result that the whole mass movement collapsed the moment the Kuomintang turned reactionary. For a long time after 1927 many comrades kept on believing that the Party's central task was preparation for insurrections in the cities and work in the White area. It was only after our victory in repelling the enemy's third campaign of encirclement and annihilation in 1931 that some comrades fundamentally changed their attitude on this
question. But the attitude of the Party as a whole did not change, and there were still some comrades who did not think as we do today.

Experience has shown that China's problems cannot be settled without armed forces. An understanding of this point will facilitate victory in the Anti-Japanese War. The fact that in the Anti-Japanese War the whole nation rises in armed resistance should teach the whole Party to understand better the importance of this point, and every member of the Party must be prepared to take up arms and go to the front at any moment. Our present session has decided that the Party's main fields of work are in the war zones and in the enemy's rear, thus further providing an unequivocal direction for our efforts. This prescribes an excellent antidote against such tendencies among certain members as preference for the Party's organizational work or mass work over study of war or participation in fighting, and among certain school authorities as neglect to encourage the students to go to the front. In most parts of our country the Party's organizational work or mass work is directly linked with armed struggle, and neither is it nor can it ever be independent of or separated from the war. In some parts of our country which constitute the rear areas far away from the war zones like Yunnan, Kweichow and Szechuan or in other parts which are now occupied by the enemy like Peiping, Tientsin, Nanking and Shanghai, the Party's organizational work and mass work are also co-ordinated with the war, and they can
and must be adapted only to the needs of the front. In a word, the whole Party must pay attention to war, study military science and be ready to fight.

II. THE WAR HISTORY OF THE KUOMINTANG

It will be instructive to examine the history of the Kuomintang and see how much attention it pays to war.

Even at the early stage when he was organizing a small revolutionary group, Sun Yat-sen staged several armed insurrections against the Manchus.¹ The period of the Chinese Revolutionary League was especially full of armed insurrections,² which continued until the

¹ In 1894 Dr. Sun Yat-sen formed in Honolulu a small revolutionary organization, called the Hsing Chung Society or Society for China’s Regeneration. With the support of the secret societies, he staged two armed insurrections in Kwangtung province, one at Canton in 1895 and the other at Hweichow in 1900, against the Manchu regime which was tottering after its defeat in 1895 in the Sino-Japanese War.

² The Chinese Revolutionary League or the T’ung Meng Society was formed in 1905 through the merging of the Hsing Chung Society (see note above) and two other anti-Manchu groups—the Hua Hsing Society or Society for Building New China and the Kuang Fu Society or Society for Shaking Off the Foreign Yoke. Being a united front organization of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and a section of the anti-Manchu landed gentry, it put forward a programme of bourgeois revolution advocating “the expulsion of the Manchu barbarians, the recovery of China, the establishment of a republic and the equalization of landownership”. Dr. Sun Yat-sen, cooperating with the secret societies and a section of the armed
Manchus were finally overthrown by force in the Revolution of 1911. During the period of the Chinese Revolutionary Party he carried out an armed campaign against Yuan Shih-k'ai.\(^1\) The southward transfer of the navy,\(^2\) the northern expedition from forces of the Manchu government, staged a number of armed insurrections, notably those at Pinghsiang in Kiangsi and Liuyang and Liling in Hunan in 1906, at Hwangkang in Hupeh, Chaochow and Chinchow in Kwangtung, and at Chennan pass in Kwangsi in 1907, at Hokow in Yunnan in 1908 and at Canton in 1911. The last was followed in the same year by the Wuchang uprising which led to the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty.

\(^1\) In 1912, the Chinese Revolutionary League was reorganized into the Kuomintang and compromised with the clique of the Northern warlords headed by Yuan Shih-k'ai. In 1913 Yuan's troops marched southward to suppress the revolutionary forces in the provinces of Kiangsi, Anhwei and Kwangtung, and Dr. Sun's attempts at resistance were crushed. Realizing the mistake of the Kuomintang's policy of compromise, Dr. Sun formed in 1914 in Tokyo, Japan, the Chung Hua Ke Ming Party or the Chinese Revolutionary Party, an organization separate from the Kuomintang. This new party, an anti-Yuan Shih-k'ai alliance of the political representatives of certain sections of the petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, staged a minor insurrection in Shanghai in 1914. In 1915, when Yuan Shih-k'ai proclaimed himself emperor and Ts'ai Ngo and others started an expedition against Yuan, Dr. Sun took an active part in it.

\(^2\) In 1917 Dr. Sun Yat-sen went from Shanghai to Canton at the head of a naval force which had been influenced by his revolutionary propaganda. Using Kwangtung as a base and making an alliance with the clique of the South-western warlords, he set up a military government in opposition to the government in Peking which was controlled by the clique of the Northern warlords.
Kweilin\(^1\) and the founding of the Whampoa Military Academy\(^2\) were among Sun Yat-sen's subsequent military undertakings.

Under Sun Yat-sen's successor Chiang Kai-shek, the Kuomintang's military power reached its highest point. During all the three periods, the Northern Expedition, the civil war and the Anti-Japanese War, he has looked upon the army as his very life. The Chiang Kai-shek of the last ten years has been a counter-revolutionary. He created a huge "Central Army" for counter-revolutionary purposes. He has firmly grasped the vital point that whoever has an army has power and that war decides everything. In this respect we ought to learn from him. And in this respect both Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek are our teachers.

Since the Revolution of 1911, all the warlords have clung to their armies for dear life; they all subscribe to the principle: "Whoever has an army has power.''

\(^1\) In 1921 Dr. Sun Yat-sen planned a northern expedition from Kweilin, Kwangsi. But his plan was frustrated by the mutiny of his subordinate, Ch'en Chiung-ming, who was in league with the clique of the Northern warlords.

\(^2\) Established after the reorganization of the Kuomintang in 1924 at Whampoa, near Canton by Dr. Sun Yat-sen with the help of the Chinese Communist Party and the Soviet Union. Before Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal of the revolution in 1927, the Academy was run jointly by the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Comrades Chou En-lai, Yeh Chien-ying, Yun Tai-ying, Hsiao Ch'u-nu and others all held responsible posts in the Academy at one time or another. Many of the cadets were members of the Communist Party or the Communist Youth League, and formed the core of the Academy.
T'an Yen-k'ai, a clever bureaucrat who came into power several times in Hunan, was never the civil governor pure and simple but always insisted on being both the civil and the military governor. Even when he served as the Chairman of the National Government in Canton and Wuhan, he was at the same time the commander of the Second Army. There are many such warlords who understand this peculiar situation in China.

Certain political parties in China do not want an army, most important among them being the Progressive Party; yet even this party knows that it cannot get posts in the government unless it has the backing of some warlord. Thus Yuan Shih-k'ai, Tuan Ch'i-

1 An opportunist member of the landed gentry in Hunan, who successively advocated constitutional monarchy, participated in the Revolution of 1911 and joined the Kuomintang. His career reflected the contradiction between the landlords of Hunan and the clique of the Northern warlords.

2 A political party under the aegis of Yuan Shih-k'ai during the early days of the Republic.

3 Head of the clique of the Northern warlords formed during the last years of the Manchu dynasty. When the Manchu regime was overthrown by the Revolution of 1911, Yuan took advantage of the tendency to compromise on the part of the bourgeoisie then leading the revolution and jockeyed for the position of the president of the Republic with the support of the imperialists and on the strength of a counter-revolutionary army under his command. He formed the first government of Northern warlords representing the big landlord and big comprador classes. In 1915 he restored the imperial regime with himself on the throne and accepted the Twenty-one Demands of Japanese imperialism. An uprising in Yunnan province in December touched off a nation-wide revolt. Yuan was forced to abolish the imperial government in March 1916 and died shortly afterwards.
jui¹ and Chiang Kai-shek have one after another become its patrons, and the Political Science Group,² formed out of a section of the Progressive Party, has attached itself to Chiang.

A few small political parties with a short history, for instance, the Youth Party,³ have no army, and so count for nothing in spite of all their ballyhoo.

In foreign countries no bourgeois party needs to have armed forces under its direct control. But the situation is different in China, where owing to the feudal divisions in the country, the landlord or bourgeois blocs or parties which have guns, have power, and whichever has more guns has more power. In these circumstances the party of the proletariat should also understand clearly this essential point.

Communists do not and should never contend for personal military power like Chang Kuo-t'ao; they

¹ A henchman of Yuan Shih-k'ai and head of the Anhwei group in the clique of the Northern warlords. After Yuan's death he held power several times in the Peking government.
² An extremely right-wing group formed in 1916 by members of the Progressive Party and the Kuomintang. After the Northern Expedition, its pro-Japanese members collaborated with Chiang Kai-shek and helped him to build up a counter-revolutionary regime.
³ A group of fascist politicians formed the Chinese Etatiste Youth League, later renamed the Chinese Youth Party. Subsidized by the imperialists and the reactionary cliques in power, they were professional anti-Communist and anti-Soviet counter-revolutionaries. The word Etatistes is used to translate "Kuochia-ists" to distinguish them from the Kuomintang which is usually translated "the Nationalist Party". In theory the Chinese Etatistes also laid more emphasis on the state than on the people.
must contend for military power for the Party and for the people. As a national war of resistance is going on, we must also contend for military power for the nation. If we fall victim to infantilism on the question of military power, we shall achieve nothing. It is very difficult for the working people, who have been for several thousand years deceived and intimidated by the reactionary ruling classes, to awaken to the importance of having guns in their own hands. Now that the oppression of Japanese imperialism and the nation-wide resistance have pushed the working people into the arena of war, Communists should prove themselves the most conscientious leaders in this war. Every Communist must grasp this truth: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Our principle is: the Party controls the gun, the gun will never be allowed to control the Party. But it is also true that with guns in our hands we can build up the Party organizations, as the Eighth Route Army has built up a powerful Party organization in northern China. We can also train cadres, establish schools, develop culture and promote mass movements. Everything in Yenan has been brought about by the gun. Anything can grow out of the barrel of a gun. According to the Marxist theory of the state, the army is the main component of the political power of the state. Whoever wants to seize state power and to keep it must have a strong army. Some people ridicule us as advocates of the omnipotence of war; yes, we are advocates of the omnipotence of revolu-
tionary war, and this is good, not bad — indeed it is a Marxist concept. With the help of guns the Russian Communists brought about socialism. We shall bring about a democratic republic. Experience in the class struggle in the era of imperialism shows us that the working class and the labouring people cannot defeat the armed bourgeois and landlords unless they have guns, and in this sense we can even say that the whole world can be reshaped only with the gun. We are for the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war and, to get rid of the gun, we must first grasp it in our own hands.

III. THE WAR HISTORY OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

Although for a period of three or four years, from 1921 when the Chinese Communist Party was founded, to 1924 when the First National Congress of the Kuomintang took place, our Party failed to grasp the importance of making immediate preparations for war and organizing an army, and although in the period of 1924-27 or even later, it still lacked adequate understanding of this question, yet since 1924, after taking part in running the Whampoa Military Academy, it entered a new stage and began to see the importance of military affairs. Having helped the Kuomintang in the war of Kwangtung and the Northern Expedition, the
Party got hold of some armed forces. Having learned a bitter lesson from the failure of the revolution, the Party organized the Nanchang uprising, the Autumn Harvest uprising and the Canton uprising, and thus

1 Comrade Yeh T'ing commanded an independent regiment during the Northern Expedition of 1926. With Communists as its nucleus the regiment became a famous fighting unit, and was first enlarged into the Twenty-fourth Division after the capture of Wuchang by the revolutionary army and then into the Eleventh Army after the Nanchang uprising.

2 The Communist Party organized the famous uprising on August 1, 1927 in Nanchang, Kiangsi, to combat the counter-revolution of Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei and to carry on the revolution of 1924-27. With Comrades Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, Ho Lung and Yeh T'ing as the leaders, an armed force of more than 30,000 took part in the uprising. The armed forces withdrew from Nanchang on August 5 as originally planned, but suffered a defeat when approaching Chaochow and Swatow in Kwangtung province. Led by Comrades Chu Teh, Ch'en Yi and Lin Piao, a part of the troops later fought their way to the Chingkang mountains and joined forces with the First Division of the First Army of the Workers' and Peasants' Revolutionary Army under Comrade Mao Tse-tung.

3 In September 1927, the people's armed forces of Slushui, Pinghsiang, Pingkiang and Liuyang on the Hunan-Kiangsi border staged this famous uprising during the autumn harvest season under the leadership of Comrade Mao Tse-tung. These forces, organized as the First Division of the First Army of the Workers' and Peasants' Revolutionary Army, were led by Comrade Mao Tse-tung to the Chingkang mountains and established a revolutionary base there.

4 Under the leadership of the Kwangtung Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the workers and revolutionary soldiers in Canton jointly staged an uprising and set up a people's regime on December 11, 1927. They fought valiantly against the counter-revolutionary forces directly supported by imperialism, and failed only because the odds were overwhelming.
ushered in the new period of the founding of the Red Army. That was the crucial period in which our Party came to understand thoroughly the importance of the army. If in this period there had been no Red Army or the battles fought by it, that is, if the Communist Party had adopted the liquidationism of Ch'en Tu-hsiu, the Anti-Japanese War would never have been started or, at any rate, kept up for any length of time.

The emergency meeting of the Party Central Committee on August 7, 1927, combated political Right opportunism and enabled the Party to take a big stride forward. The Central Committee’s plenary session of January 1931 (the fourth since the Sixth National Congress), though nominally combating political “Left” opportunism, in actual fact continued the same mistaken policy. Although the two meetings differed in their content and historical role, neither paid much attention to the problems of war and strategy, and this showed that the Party did not yet centre its work around war. After the Central Committee moved into the Red areas in 1933, a fundamental change was brought about in this respect, but mistakes in principle were committed on military as well as all other major problems with the result that we suffered serious losses in the revolutionary war. On the other hand, in response to the war situation, the Tsunyi meeting of 1935 gave first priority to the question of war and fought mainly against military opportunism. So far we can confidently claim that in the struggles of the past seventeen years, the Chinese Communist Party
has forged both a firm Marxist political line and a firm Marxist military line. We have been able to apply Marxism to solve both political and military problems; we have trained, as a powerful framework, large numbers of cadres capable of running the Party and the state, and also large numbers of cadres capable of running the army. These are the flowers of revolution watered by the blood of countless martyrs, a glory that belongs not only to the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people, but also to the Communist Parties and the peoples of the whole world. Since in the whole world there are only three armies which belong to the proletariat and the labouring people, led by the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union, of China and of Spain, and since the Communist Parties in other countries have as yet no military experience, our army and our military experience are all the more to be treasured.

To carry through the present Anti-Japanese War to victory, it is extremely important to expand and consolidate the Eighth Route Army, the New Fourth Army and all the guerrilla forces led by our Party. On this principle the Party should dispatch to the front a sufficient number of its best members and cadres. Everything must contribute to victory at the front: the organizational task must be subordinated to this political task.
IV. CHANGES IN THE PARTY'S MILITARY STRATEGY IN THE CIVIL WAR AND THE NATIONAL WAR

The changes in the Party's military strategy are worth studying. I shall deal separately with the course of events in the civil war and in the national war.

As concerns strategy, the course of the civil war can be roughly divided into two periods. In the first period, the principal form was guerrilla warfare and in the second, regular warfare. But this regular warfare was of the Chinese type, regular only in the concentration of forces for a mobile war and a certain degree of centralization and planning in command and organization, while in other aspects it retained a guerrilla and primitive character; it cannot be classed with wars fought by foreign armies, or even with those fought by the Kuomintang forces. It was in a sense only guerrilla warfare on a higher level.

So far as our Party's military tasks are concerned, the course of the Anti-Japanese War can also be roughly divided into two strategic periods. In the first period, which includes the stages of strategic defensive and strategic stalemate, the principal form is and will be guerrilla warfare and, in the second period, which is the stage of strategic counter-offensive, it will be regular warfare. However, this guerrilla warfare differs considerably in content from that in the first period of
the civil war, because we now have what is to a certain degree a regular armed force, the Eighth Route Army, carrying out in dispersion the task of the guerrillas; and the regular warfare in the Anti-Japanese War will also be different from that in the second period of the civil war, because we can expect that, given up-to-date equipment, a great change will take place both in the army and in its operations. The army will attain a high degree of centralization and organization; the operations, losing much of their guerrilla character, will attain a high degree of regularity; what is now primitive will become more advanced, and the peculiar Chinese type of war will be changed into a type common to all countries. That will be our task in the stage of strategic counter-offensive.

Thus we see that in the two series of events, the civil war and the Anti-Japanese War, or in the four strategic periods, there will be altogether three changes of strategy. The first was the change from guerrilla warfare to regular warfare in the civil war. The second was the change from regular warfare in the civil war to guerrilla warfare in the Anti-Japanese War. The third will be the change from guerrilla warfare to regular warfare in the Anti-Japanese War.

In introducing the first of these three changes we encountered great difficulties. We had a twofold task. On the one hand we had to combat the Right tendency of localism and guerrillaism, which clung to guerrilla habits and refused to advance towards regular warfare,
a tendency arising out of a failure on the part of our cadre to appreciate fully the changes in the enemy situation and our own tasks. In the Central Red Area, this tendency was gradually corrected only after arduous ideological education. On the other hand, we had also to combat the "Left" tendency of over-centralization and adventurism, of over-emphasizing regularization, a tendency which arose because some of the leading cadres over-estimated the enemy, set themselves too big a task and mechanically applied the lessons derived from wars fought by foreign countries regardless of actual conditions. The tendency was corrected in the Central Red Area only at the cost of three long years (up to the Tsunyi meeting) of enormous suffering and heavy casualties. This was one of the achievements of the Tsunyi meeting.

The second change took place in the autumn of 1937 at the juncture of two different wars after the Lukouchiao Incident. At that time we faced a new enemy, Japanese imperialism, and had as our ally our former enemy, the Kuomintang, who still harboured hostile intentions, while the theatre of war was the whole expanse of northern China which was temporarily the front of our army, but was soon to become for a long time the enemy's rear. Introduced in such unusual circumstances, our change of strategy was an extremely serious one. Under such unusual circumstances, we had to transform the regular army of the past into guerrilla units, that is, in respect to their operation in dispersed formations, not their organization or discipline,
and the mobile warfare of the past into guerrilla warfare so that we could adapt ourselves to our new task and deal with the new enemy. But such a change, to all appearances a step backward, was necessarily very difficult to effect. Both underestimation and excessive fear of the enemy, tendencies likely to occur at such a juncture, did actually occur in the Kuomintang ranks. When the Kuomintang changed over from civil war to national war, it incurred many unnecessary losses mainly because it underestimated the enemy, and at the same time it felt an excessive fear of him, too; the conduct of Han Fu-ch'u or Liu Chih is an example of the latter tendency. But we effected the change fairly smoothly, both avoiding losses and achieving great successes. These successes were gained because, in spite of a serious controversy between a section of the army cadres and the Central Committee, the great bulk of our cadres accepted in time the correct guidance of the Central Committee and skilfully sized up the actual situation. We can easily realize that the change has an extremely important bearing on keeping up, developing and bringing to a victorious conclusion the

1 Han Fu-ch'u, a Kuomintang warlord, was for many years the ruler of Shantung. When the Japanese invaders, after occupying Peking and Tientsin in 1937, advanced southward along the Tientsin-Pukow railway, Han took flight all the way from Shantung to Honan without fighting a single battle. Liu Chih, who commanded Chiang Kai-shek's personal troops in defence of the Paoting area in Hopei, also fled before the Japanese without firing a shot.
Anti-Japanese War as a whole and also on the future of the Chinese Communist Party, if we call to mind the historical significance of the anti-Japanese guerrilla war for the future of China's national liberation. In its unusually extensive and protracted character China's anti-Japanese guerrilla war is without precedent, not only in the East, but perhaps in the whole history of mankind.

The third change, the change from guerrilla warfare to regular warfare against Japan, depends upon the war's future developments, which will most probably confront us with new conditions and new problems, and we need not discuss them now.

V. THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE ANTI-JAPANESE GUERRILLA WAR

As regards the Anti-Japanese War as a whole, regular warfare is the principal and guerrilla warfare the supplementary form, because regular warfare alone can decide the outcome of the war. As regards the country as a whole, of the three strategic stages, defensive, stalemate and counter-offensive, in the entire process of the Anti-Japanese War, the first and the last are stages in which regular warfare is the principal and guerrilla warfare the supplementary form. Only in the intermediate stage, when the enemy seeks to hold on to the occupied areas and we, while making prepara-
tions for the counter-offensive, cannot yet actually launch it, will guerrilla warfare become the principal form and regular warfare the supplementary form; although this stage may be the longest, it is only one of the three stages in the whole war. Thus taking the war as a whole, regular warfare is the principal and guerrilla warfare the supplementary form. If we do not understand this, if we do not see that regular warfare is decisive, if we neglect to build up a regular army or to study regular warfare and its direction, we shall not be able to defeat Japan. This is one aspect of the matter.

Guerrilla warfare, however, does play an important strategic role throughout the war. If we drop guerrilla warfare altogether, if we neglect to build up guerrilla units and guerrilla armies or to study guerrilla warfare and its direction, we shall not be able to defeat Japan. The reason is as follows: since the greater part of China’s territory will have become the enemy’s rear, unless guerrilla war is spread to the widest extent and kept up very stubbornly, the enemy, entrenched in the occupied area absolutely safe from attacks in the back, will launch increasingly fierce offensives and inflict heavy losses on our main forces on the main front, and we will find it very difficult to bring about a stalemate or even to keep up the armed resistance; even if things do not turn out as badly as that, there will be unfavourable results, such as inadequate strength built up for and lack of concerted action in our counter-offen-
sive and the possibility of the enemy making good his losses. If there is no widespread and stubborn guer­rilla war to remove these conditions when they arise, it will also be impossible for us to defeat Japan. Hence, though guerrilla warfare plays only a supplementary role in the war as a whole, it does play an extremely important role in strategy. To resist Japan and yet to neglect guerrilla warfare is undoubtedly a grave error. This is the other aspect of the matter.

Given one condition, a big territory, guerrilla warfare can be carried on anywhere; hence there was guerrilla warfare even in the past. But guerrilla warfare can be kept up only under the leadership of the Communist Party. That is why most guerrilla wars in the past ended in failure, and only in the big countries of modern times where Communist Parties have emerged, like the Soviet Union during its civil war and China at present, can they achieve victories. In the Anti-Japa­nese War, a division of labour between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party is necessary and proper under the present general conditions; and as a matter of mutual need, co-ordination and mutual assistance, the Kuomintang should carry on regular warfare on the main front while the Communist Party carries on guerrilla warfare in the enemy’s rear.

From this it can be readily understood how important and necessary it is to change our Party's strategic line from regular warfare in the second period of the civil war to guerrilla warfare in the first period of the Anti-
Japanese War. The advantages of this change can be summed up in the following eighteen points: (1) reducing the areas occupied by the enemy; (2) expanding the base areas of our own forces; (3) in the stage of defence, pinning down the enemy by fighting in co-ordination with the operations on the main front; (4) in the stage of stalemate, facilitating the rehabilitation of the troops on the main front by firmly holding the base areas in the enemy's rear; (5) in the stage of the counter-offensive, taking co-ordinated actions with the main front to recover lost territory; (6) expanding our forces in the most speedy and effective manner; (7) expanding the Communist Party to the greatest possible extent so that a Party branch can be organized in every village; (8) extending the mass movements as much as possible so that all the people behind the enemy lines, except those in his strongholds, can be organized; (9) creating organs of anti-Japanese democratic political power over the widest possible area; (10) developing extensively anti-Japanese cultural and educational work; (11) improving living conditions of the people over the widest possible area; (12) accelerating most effectively the disintegration of the enemy troops; (13) keeping up the spirit of the people and heightening the morale of our troops over the widest areas and with the most enduring effect; (14) giving the most extensive help possible to friendly armies and parties so that they become progressive; (15) adapting ourselves to the situation in which the enemy is strong and we are weak, so as to
reduce our losses to a minimum and win all possible victories; (16) adapting ourselves to the fact that ours is a big country and the enemy’s is small, so as to inflict the maximum losses on the enemy and reduce his victories to a minimum; (17) training large numbers of leading cadres in the most speedy and effective manner, and (18) solving the problem of provisioning in the most convenient way.

It is also beyond doubt that in the long course of struggle guerrilla units and guerrilla warfare should not remain as they are but develop towards an advanced stage, so that they will gradually change into a regular army and regular warfare. We shall, through guerrilla warfare, build up our strength and become a decisive factor in crushing Japanese imperialism.

VI. PAY ATTENTION TO THE STUDY OF MILITARY PROBLEMS

The conflict between two hostile armies can only be resolved by war, and China’s survival or extinction depends on her victory or defeat. Hence there must not be a moment’s delay in our study of military theory, of strategy and tactics and of political work in the army. Although our study of tactics is inadequate, comrades engaged in military work have in the last ten years achieved much and have made a number of discoveries based on Chinese conditions; the only weakness is that a general summing-up is still lacking. So far only a
few have taken up the study of the problems of strategy and the theory of war. Our study in political work has yielded first rate results and, in the wealth of our experience and the number of our excellent innovations, we surpass any country except the Soviet Union, but here again the weakness is that there is no adequate synthesis or systematization. To meet the demands of the Party and the whole country the popularization of military knowledge is an urgent task. We must now pay attention to all these things, but the theory of war and strategy is the key to everything. I think it is necessary to attract and direct the attention of the whole Party to the study of military problems through the study of military theory.
VI. PAY ATTENTION TO THE STUDY OF MILITARY PROBLEMS

The conflict between two hostile armies can only be resolved by war, and China's survival or extinction depends on victory or defeat. Hence there must not be a measurable delay in our study of military theory, strategy and tactics and of political work in the army. Although our study of tactics is inadequate, commanders engaged in military work here in the last ten years achieved much and have made a number of discoveries based on Chinese conditions; the only weakness is that a general over-estimation is still lacking. So far only...

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