

**April 25, 1956**

**Talk by Mao Zedong at an Enlarged Meeting of the  
Chinese Communist Party Central Committee  
Politburo (Excerpts)**

**Citation:**

"Talk by Mao Zedong at an Enlarged Meeting of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Politburo (Excerpts)", April 25, 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mao Zedong wenji (Selected Writings of Mao Zedong), vol. 7 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1999), 27. Translated by Neil Silver.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/114337>

**Summary:**

Mao speaks to the Central Committee Politburo about the need to develop an atomic bomb to avoid being "bullied," but stresses that this can only happen if economic development increases simultaneously.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

**Original Language:**

Chinese

**Contents:**

Transcript - Chinese

Translation - English

毛泽东在中共中央政治局扩大会议上的讲话（节录）  
1956年4月25日

我们现在还没有原子弹。但是，过去我们也没有飞机和大炮，我们是用小米加步枪打败了日本帝国主义和蒋介石的。我们现在已经比过去强，以后还要比现在强，不但要有更多的飞机和大炮，而且还要有原子弹。在今天的世界上，我们要不受人家欺负，就不能没有这个东西。怎么办呢？可靠的办法就是把军政费用降到一个适当的比例，增加经济建设费用。只有经济建设发展得更快了，国防建设才能够有更大的进步。

一九五〇年，我们在党的七届三中全会上，已经提出精简国家机构、减少军政费用问题，认为这是争取我国财政经济情况根本好转的三个条件之一。第一个五年计划期间，军政费用占国家预算全部支出的百分之二十。这个比重太大了。第二个五年计划期间，要使它降到百分之二十左右，以便抽出更多的资金，多开些工厂，多造些机器。经过一段时间，我们就不但会有很多的飞机和大炮，而且还可能有自己的原子弹。

这里也发生这么一个问题，你对原子弹是真正想要、十分想要，还是只有几分想，没有十分想呢？你是真正想要、十分想要，你就降低军政费用的比重，多搞经济建设。你不是真正想要、十分想要，你就还是按老章程办事。这是战略方针的问题，希望军委讨论一下。

Talk by Mao Zedong at an Enlarged Meeting of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Politburo (Excerpts)

25 April 1956

We still don't have the atomic bomb. But in the past we didn't have airplanes or artillery either. We relied on millet and rifles to defeat the Japanese imperialists and Chiang Kai-shek. Now we're already stronger than we were in the past, and in the future we'll be even stronger than now. Not only are we going to have more airplanes and artillery, but also the atomic bomb. In today's world, if we don't want to be bullied, we have to have this thing. What should we do? The reliable way would be to cut military expenditures by an appropriate amount and increase economic development spending. Only if the pace of economic development increases can there be greater strides in defense construction.

In 1950, at the Third Plenum of the Seventh Party Congress, we already raised the issue of retrenching state organizations and cutting military expenditures, believing that this is one of the three conditions [necessary] to achieve a fundamental turnaround in our country's financial and economic condition. During the first five year plan, military spending constituted thirty percent of our total state budget. This proportion is too large. During the second five year plan, we need to reduce this to about twenty percent, so we can squeeze out more funds, open more factories, and produce more machinery. In time, not only will we have more airplanes and artillery, but we'll also probably have our own atomic bomb.

This leads to a question. Do you really want an atomic bomb, are you totally committed to wanting it, or are you only partially committed to wanting it, and not totally committed to wanting it? If you really want it, if you are totally committed to wanting it, you'll cut the proportion of military expenditures and concentrate more on economic development. If you really don't want it, if you are not totally committed to wanting it, you'll just continue along the same path, doing things as usual. This is an issue of strategic policy. I hope the [Central] Military Commission will discuss it.