

February 28, 1958

Conversation of Mao Zedong with Soviet Ambassador Pavel Yudin (Excerpt)

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Summary:

In a conversation with Soviet ambassador Yudin, Mao sees a prohibition of the use of hydrogen weapons as very likely, as the capitalist countries "[fear] fighting this kind of war." Further, he notes that the socialist countries have an advantage over Western ones in terms of conventional army size.

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Chinese

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毛泽东接见苏联大使尤金时的谈话(摘录)
1958年2月28日

我看，关于裁军问题和禁止原子武器问题迟早非解决不可，因为不能设想打起原子战争来会有什么结果。比如像西德这样的国家只要四个氢弹就可能完全毁灭，英国也要不了几个氢弹就够了。资本主义世界也是怕打这个仗的，所以最后会达成协议。社会主义制度和资本主义制度在这个问题上会妥协的，就像以前禁止使用化学武器一样，达成禁止使用氢武器的协议。这样，就会剩下常备军的问题。在这方面帝国主义是赶不上我们的。英国人就说，如果禁止了氢弹和原子弹，苏联用飞机和大炮打我们，我们一定要失败。所以他们要把禁止原子武器问题和常备军问题放在一起解决。依我看来，这些问题都会解决的。英国人知道我们不愿打仗，所以就要先装备起来再谈判，作出样子，好像是我们每天都可能进攻他们似的。资本主义世界处在矛盾中，一方面他们要不断地扩军、进行战争宣传，好维持自己的经济，而另一方面又怕战争。

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In my opinion, the issues of arms reduction and atomic weapons sooner or later will have to be resolved, since it is inconceivable to think that anything can come out of fighting an atomic war. For instance, a country like Western Germany would probably be totally destroyed by only four hydrogen bombs, and it would take only a few hydrogen bombs to deal with Britain. The capitalist world also fears fighting this kind of war, so, in the end, an accommodation will be reached. The socialist system and the capitalist system will compromise on this issue. Just like the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in earlier times, an accommodation will be reached to prohibit the use of hydrogen weapons. In this way, the issue of standing armies will be left over. Imperialism cannot match us in this area. As the British say, if the hydrogen bomb and the atom bomb were prohibited, and the Soviet Union used airplanes and artillery to fight us, we (sic) would surely be defeated. So they want to resolve together the issue of the prohibition of atomic weapons and the issue of standing armies. As I see it, these issues can be resolved. The British know that we don't want to fight a war. Therefore, they want to first arm and then negotiate, doing this as if we may attack them any day. The capitalist world is caught in a contradiction. On the one hand, to better support its economy, it wants to continually expand its military and carry out war propaganda. But, on the other hand, it fears war.