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**Vice Chairman Ye Jianying's Speech at the Closing
Session of the Central Work Conference**

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Summary:

Ye Jianying praises Mao Zedong, offering a historical overview of his achievements, and says that Hua Guofeng "is raising Chairman Mao's banner high and continuing his legacy."

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VICE CHAIRMAN YE JIANYING'S SPEECH AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE CCP
CENTRAL COMMITTEE WORK CONFERENCE

(Transcript of Audio Recording, 22 March 1977)

Comrades, today marks the end of the Central Committee work conference. Chairman Hua will make the closing speech, and he wants me to say a few words. I would like to share the following views for your reference.

Chairman Hua personally convened this Central Committee work conference to bring up a few major things that the Central Committee urgently needs to do for advanced discussion and study by comrades in charge of the various provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and military regions, ministries and commissions of the Central Committee and state organs, as well as general headquarters of the Central Military Commission and the various services and arms of the military, so as to achieve consensus in thought and unite the country in striving to do this year's work well. It is the feeling of everyone including myself that this meeting had gone very well from the beginning to the end. The atmosphere was good and everyone had the same thinking and understanding on the tasks to be accomplished this year as well as the steps involved. The late Chairman Mao frequently convened Central Committee work conferences and enlarged meetings of the Central Politburo. Whenever he had any plans or work arrangements in mind, he would use this method to have proper discussion and consultation with comrades in charge of the provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, achieve consensus in opinion by embracing democracy, and enable everyone to start work when they return home. This was a method that Chairman Mao frequently used, and it is a good tradition and work practice that he left behind. Such meetings have not been held for a long time due to the disruption caused by the Gang of Four

It has been more than five months since Chairman Hua assumed the triple posts of Party Chairman, Chairman of the Central Military Commission and Premier of the State Council. The spring season is coming to an end, and Chairman Hua is losing no time in convening this Central Committee work conference. It is indeed timely, given that spring is the season of new beginnings. This conference has focused on the exposure and criticism of the Gang of Four and everyone has shared their experiences and views on this through big and small meetings as well as written and oral speeches. Everyone spoke freely and enthusiastically, with many people airing their views and others chiming in. The meeting had a very democratic and lively atmosphere. This was a situation that had not been seen ever since the disruption caused by the Gang of Four. At the start of the meeting, Chairman Hua made an important speech, as did Comrades Li Xiannian and Yu Qiuli. Comrades Su Zhenhua and Qin Jiwei gave reports of the work in the respective regions that they were leading. I fully endorse Chairman Hua's speech as well as the speeches made by Comrades Xiannian, Zhenhua, Qiuli, Jiwei and others. They were all very good speeches.

I would first like to talk about the main issues discussed at this conference.

First, Chairman Hua and the Central Committee decided to hold this conference in order to gather the heads of the various provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and military regions here in Beijing to jointly discuss the big issues concerning our country and plan the various work to be done by the Party, government and military for this year. We also wanted to get people at various levels in touch with one another, so as to make it easier to carry out various work. This is a very good practice and method, and it is a fine tradition of the Party. Chairman Hua has continued this tradition and he said that from now on, such meetings would be held several times a year if possible, and that we would fully embrace democracy, achieve centralism on the basis of democracy, and promote democracy under

centralized guidance through these meetings, so as to implement democratic centralism correctly. So long as we persist in upholding democratic centralism, we would be able to achieve what Chairman Mao described as a lively political situation that embraced both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, as well as both unity of purpose and individual ease of mind. If we can keep this going, and everyone throughout the whole Party can give their support, then there is great hope for the cause of our Party and socialism.

Chairman Hua has chosen to uphold and emphasize the great banner of Chairman Mao. He is wise and decisive, and dares to abandon the old and embrace the new. He has proven himself to be a wise leader of our Party. He will be able to lead our Party, our military and our people for at least the last quarter of the 20th century and relentlessly advance the proletarian revolutionary cause started by our great leader and mentor Chairman Mao. This meeting has further shown us that Chairman Hua is Chairman Mao's good student and successor, and our good leader. Everyone has read Chairman Hua's speech at this conference. The work plans put in place by the Central Committee and actual work conditions over the last five months or so show that he has a good idea of the outline of these plans.

Second, the conference summed up the experiences in the exposure and criticism of the Gang of Four, and studied the issue of how to further deepen the struggle of exposing and criticizing the Gang of Four. It demanded that our Party achieve complete political, ideological and organizational victory in the eleventh major line struggle.

Third, the conference discussed the national economic plan for this year and enabled everyone to have a clear understanding of the situation, be certain about the direction and be determined and confident in accomplishing and surpassing the various goals proposed for this year's economic plan.

Fourth, regarding the 11th Party Congress and the 5th National People's Congress that would be brought forward to the later half of the year, it is necessary to convene them after smashing the Gang of Four as this is the wish of the whole Party, military and the people, as well as the world's revolutionary masses. Chairman Hua is personally overseeing the setting up of the Party school, which would hold theory classes and conduct research on the history of our Party. This is a big affair for our Party, and our cadres, especially our veteran cadres including myself are all striving to learn the works of Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao in order to raise our theoretical standards. The more experience one has, the more important it is to learn theory and use it as a weapon to organize the experiences. Chairman Mao proposed the principle of "three dos and three don'ts" and the first is to learn Marxism and Leninism. There can be no revolutionary action without revolutionary theory. Our Party, since its founding in 1921, has a history of 56 years and it launched 22 years of revolutionary war under the personal command of Chairman Mao and conducted 27 years of socialist revolution and construction under his personal leadership. Hence, it is extremely important for us to study the history of our Party. Our veteran comrades who had fought alongside Chairman Mao in our revolution over the decades and who were personally involved in the revolutionary war as well as the socialist revolution and construction, have a wealth of knowledge and experience and they are very familiar with our Party's history. If our generation of older comrades do not study and compile our history, it would be even more difficult for the next generation to do so. Hence, Chairman Hua's proposal to grasp theory and study Party history is very wise and extremely important.

In his speech, Chairman Hua had given a complete and accurate explanation of the few major issues outlined above, and he repeatedly stressed that we must do good work on all fronts and resolve the various issues. The most fundamental among them is to raise Chairman Mao's great red banner high and resolutely defend it. This has become even more important with Chairman Mao's demise and the crushing of the

Gang of Four. We must raise Chairman Mao's banner even higher and be even firmer in our proletarian stand.

I would next like to make a few additional points about the Central Politburo's battle with the Gang of Four. The Gang of Four was a minority in the Central Politburo but we must see that one of them was the Vice Chairman of the Party, one was a member of the Politburo Standing Committee, another was an ambitious schemer who rode roughshod over others in the name of the Chairman, while another was a provocateur who controlled the propaganda apparatus. Even though they were few in number, they had considerable strength. But it did not matter, for we were still able to push through the correct opinions of the majority during the Central Politburo meetings. Since Chairman Mao became gravely ill, a so-called liaison called Mao Yuanxin emerged, and he relayed the situation during the Central Politburo meetings to Chairman Mao and conveyed his instructions. Comrades in the Central Politburo were mindful of Chairman Mao's health and the overall situation at the time and showed restraint in the face of this abnormal situation, so long as principles were upheld. This dragged on until the death of our great leader Chairman Mao. After his demise, the whole Party, military and people nationwide as well as the world's revolutionary masses were full of sorrow. While we were immersed in grief, the Gang of Four felt that it was time to seize power and they launched their frenzied and evil attempt to usurp power. Thus, the Central Politburo's tussle with the Gang of Four reached a climax, and all the comrades in the Central Politburo, with the exception of the Gang of Four, were of one mind and had the same understanding, and it was the determination of everyone to fight the Gang of Four. After Chairman Mao died, objective circumstances called for "hitting the rat even if it meant breaking the vase" (toushu jiqi). An ancient Chinese saying goes: if you want to hit the rat that is stealing food from the agate bowl, you have to smash the bowl in order to kill the rat. The agate bowl is a precious thing and the old saying was that one had to spare the rat in order to save the bowl. The Central Politburo led and presided over by Chairman Hua acted according to the favorable circumstances and the situation in the struggle and unanimously moved to deal a fatal blow to the Gang of Four. Comrades in the Central Politburo were united on this issue but in order to do this, we could not get too many people involved, and the less the better. Chairman Hua personally resolved to take action on the 6th of October. At this juncture, I would like to talk about Unit 8341. This concerns Comrade Wang Dongxing. Comrade Dongxing made a note in the margins of this paragraph in my speech that "Vice Chairman Ye and various comrades in the Central Politburo were also involved in the execution of Chairman Hua's wise decision" and he asked not to be mentioned alone. I had already explained earlier that the Central Politburo was of one mind in the struggle against the Gang of Four, but we could not have too many people taking part in the actual operation. Chairman Hua resolved to do it himself and personally discussed with Comrade Wang Dongxing the plan to call in the troops, specifically Unit 8341. Comrade Wang Dongxing shouldered this heavy responsibility on his own and he personally planned the operation and spoke to everyone individually to assign and explain the tasks. The upshot was that he quietly accomplished this important task without leaking any information, firing a single shot or causing a single drop of blood to be spilled. If there had been just one person who leaked the news or one detail that had been overlooked during the process, it would have scuttled the whole operation. This was a highly dangerous and risky move, and the heroes of the Unit 8341, under the direct leadership and instruction of Chairman Hua, have secured a great achievement for the Party, the country and the people. We can say that if future generations were to ask the Party about this episode in its history, we would cite the following words of Chairman Mao: The best views are to be found on the most dangerous peaks (Comrade Wang Dongxing interjects at this point: Vice Chairman Ye was personally at the scene to direct the operation. He and Chairman Hua jointly commanded the operation, so if anyone deserves credit, it should be Vice Chairman Ye who was personally on the ground to direct the operation.)

The struggle to expose and criticize the Gang of Four is a protracted and grueling endeavor, and we cannot afford to let our guard down at all. There is still a remaining

group of the Gang of Four's followers who are carrying out acts of sabotage and stirring up trouble. According to recent reports from the public security department, there was a spate of incidents in Beijing's Xicheng District concerning the "Ten Reactionary Slogans", and when the Taiyuan Railway Bureau held a mass rally of ten thousand people to denounce the Gang of Four, one individual suddenly jumped onto the stage and snatched the microphone to yell that Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao, Jiang Qing and Yao Wenyuan were revolutionaries. Also, in Changsha city, another counterrevolutionary outlaw viciously attacked Chairman Mao, Premier Zhou and Chairman Hua with slogans and pamphlets, and openly cheered for the anti-Party usurper Wang Hongwen. It seems that remnants of the Gang of Four's followers are still active and have not been thoroughly purged. We cannot think that the country can now have stability and unity and we can now safely pursue development just because the Gang of Four had fallen. We must remain very vigilant and achieve victory not only in political thought but also in our organization before we can call it a total victory. We must deeply and thoroughly condemn the Gang of Four's crimes of bringing calamity to the country and the people from the political, ideological and theoretical standpoints, and correctly manage the two different types of contradictions and the Party's policies from an organizational standpoint. We must thoroughly expose and criticize the Gang of four and remove their diehard and remaining supporters. We must reform the majority of those who had made serious mistakes, reinforce our Party's organization and purify our ranks. We must be thorough and achieve total victory in this struggle against the Gang of Four.

Let me talk about one more issue. The late Chairman Mao had once told us that he did two things in his life. One was to defeat Jiang Jieshi and drive him to Taiwan as well as defeat Japanese imperialism and force the Japanese imperialists out of China. The other was to successfully launch the Proletarian Great Cultural Revolution. For more than half a century, Chairman Mao led our Party in fighting 22 years of revolutionary war and executing 27 years of socialist revolution and construction. Chairman Mao summed up many of the highly valuable experiences in the world in philosophy, political economy, scientific socialism, military affairs as well as literary and art theory, and he was well versed in Marxism and made a great contribution to the Chinese people and the people of the world.

Chairman Mao lit the flames of the Chinese revolution at Jinggangshan and then organized and commanded the 22 years of revolutionary war to defeat Japanese imperialism, end Jiang Jieshi's reign, and establish the People's Republic of China. After this victory, American imperialists invaded Korea and Chairman Mao fulfilled his internationalist duty by leading us in the war to resist America and support Korea, and we fought as one with the Koreans to repel American imperialism. During the process of socialist revolution and construction, Chairman Mao discovered that individuals in authority such as Liu Shaoqi were going down the capitalist road. With the bold vision of a proletarian revolutionary, he personally launched and led the unprecedented Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, in which the masses nationwide were mobilized to implement the four democracies and launch a direct struggle against the capitalist roaders as well as individuals in authority such as Liu Shaoqi who were embracing the capitalist line and overthrow them. This was something that no other national leader would have done or dared to do.

After the Second World War, thirteen socialist countries have emerged to form the socialist bloc, but the majority of the leadership in these countries, especially the revisionist camp of Khrushchev, all became defenders of the status quo after taking supreme power in the Party and the country. They embraced revisionism and sought to reinstate capitalism. During this time, Chairman Mao raised the Marxist-Leninist banner high and led the world's true revolutionary masses in a direct confrontation with the modern revisionist camp headed by Khrushchev. This struggle profoundly influenced and boosted the morale of the world's revolutionary masses.

Chairman Mao accomplished more than a few things in his illustrious life. Why had he

chosen to speak about only these two? My understanding is that he had raised a question about the proletarian cause that he started and continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. He asked if the dictatorship of the proletariat could be reinforced, if we could continue the struggle and revolution under the condition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and if there were others who would succeed and fulfill his cause. Now it seems that he had three considerations. The first was to seriously choose the right successor and to ensure that there would be people who would inherit his proletarian revolutionary cause. Chairman Mao had personally resolved this issue when he was alive, and made the right decision to choose Comrade Hua Guofeng as the leader of our Party. Practice has shown that Chairman Mao made the right choice. The second consideration was for the Central Committee led by Comrade Hua Guofeng to continue Chairman Mao's legacy and lead the people of the country to reinforce the dictatorship of the proletariat, and continue our socialist revolution and construction. Now we can all put our minds at ease. The third consideration concerned sabotage by domestic and external reactionary forces. Domestically, if a capitalist roader stood up to oppose revolutionary cause personally led by Chairman Hua, and if this person held power and got his or her way, it would hurt the proletarian revolutionary cause started by Chairman Mao. Externally, imperialism, particularly Soviet revisionism and socialist imperialism, has ambitions of global aggression and expansion and is of course also plotting to sabotage China. Chairman Mao saw that most of the thirteen socialist countries that had emerged after the Second World War had become revisionist and he reckoned that the Soviet revisionists would one day use military force in aggression and expansion against China and to wreck our socialist construction. What should we do then? How do we stop the destruction caused by domestic capitalist roaders who are in power? How do we triumph over the military intervention of Soviet revisionism and socialist imperialism? Chairman Mao thought of the solution and thus spoke solemnly and earnestly on the two things that he had accomplished in life, one of which was to topple Jiang Jieshi's rule and defeat Japanese imperialism. This was a military affair and this was war. This war was won, in the words of Chairman Mao, by trusting the masses and relying on them to conduct the war, thus this was the people's war. In future, should the American and Soviet hegemonies, especially the Soviet revisionists, militarily intervene in our affairs and derail our socialist construction, we would have to use Chairman Mao's method in launching a protracted people's war to defeat the aggressors. If in the way forward, we see individuals in authority who are going down the capitalist road, and the emergence of new Liu Shaoqis who oppose Chairman Hua and the Central Committee led by him, we would have to follow Chairman Mao's teaching and use the method of the Great Cultural Revolution to mobilize the masses in using the four democracies to purge these capitalist roaders throughout the ranks. In short, domestic attempts at sabotage can be countered with the method of the Great Cultural Revolution, and external attempts can be thwarted with the method of the people's war. This would ensure that our country continues the revolution and continues to progress in the direction outlined by Chairman Mao and under the leadership of Chairman Hua.

Let me say it one more time, Chairman Mao accomplished far more than these two things in his illustrious life. But why did he choose to talk only about them? Chairman Mao did so because the question of whether our Party, our military and our country can reinforce the dictatorship of the proletariat, and whether it can continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat mainly hinges on whether the people in power are socialist or capitalist roaders and whether our defense capabilities are sufficient to resist the incursion and sabotage of socialist imperialism. As long as the people in power do not go down the capitalist road and continue to follow Chairman Mao in making revolution, and as long as our defense capabilities are able to defeat imperialism, particularly Soviet revisionism and socialist imperialism, ensure our country's security, and buy time for peaceful development, then our proletarian revolutionary cause can continue to progress under the leadership of Comrade Hua Guofeng, the rightly chosen successor of Chairman Mao.

Chairman Mao summed up the history of his great, honorable and correct struggle of

more than half a century, and he used the two things mentioned above to caution that we must uphold the proletarian revolutionary line and prevent the rise of revisionism, as well as be alert for war and defend the security of our socialist motherland. This is his greatest, most profound and most valuable political legacy to our Party, our military and our people nationwide. According to Chairman Mao's legacy, if revisionism were to emerge domestically, and if there were capitalist roaders among those in power, we could use the method of the Great Cultural Revolution under the leadership of Chairman Hua to mobilize the entire nation in using the four democracies to overthrow these capitalist roaders in power, stop the enemy within from inflicting damage, and enable our country to continue marching down the socialist road. If there were external enemies, for instance the Soviet revisionists and socialist imperialists, who launched an attack on us and used military force to sabotage our socialist revolution and construction, we would have to use the method of the people's war that Chairman Mao used in defeating Chiang Kai-shek, Japanese imperialism and American imperialism to mobilize the entire nation in defeating and eliminating the invaders, and to stop external enemies from wreaking havoc, so as to enable our country to continue marching down the socialist road. Such was the wisdom and greatness of Chairman Mao and his incredible foresight, that he gave us the survival kit on how to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Where in the world can you find another national leader who dares to launch a cultural revolution and personally lead the movement to oust the capitalist roaders from within? No you can't, and that is why Chairman Mao's greatness is without parallel in the world. We must follow his teachings and thwart the attempts by external forces to disrupt and sabotage us, as well as continue marching down the socialist road under the wise leadership of Chairman Hua until we achieve victory. This is what we can be sure of.

Chairman Hua is raising Chairman Mao's banner high and continuing his legacy, and he is keeping a close watch on the work on all fronts. After this Central Committee work conference, he will be gathering the comrades in the various military regions together to study issues concerning our military affairs. Chairman Hua has a good grasp of the politics, the Party line, foreign policy, the literature and the arts, and military affairs, and he has a thorough and correct understanding of all the issues. Chairman Mao personally wrote to Chairman Hua saying, "My mind is at ease knowing that you are in charge." If Chairman Mao can rest assured, our whole Party, military and people nationwide can be even more confident that we have a wise leader in Chairman Hua. Even though there will be twist and turns as we move forward, we have reason to believe that our future is bright and that our victory is assured.