

November 10, 1978

Hua Guofeng's Speech at the Opening Session of the CCP Central Work Conference

Citation:

"Hua Guofeng's Speech at the Opening Session of the CCP Central Work Conference",
November 10, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Hubei Provincial Archives SZ1-4-791.
Translated by Caixia Lu.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/121688>

Summary:

Hua Guofeng assesses developments in China since the Chinese Communist Party "smashed the Gang of Four" in 1976. He calls for the CCP to continue to follow the path laid down by Mao Zedong, and comments on China's economic policy and foreign policy.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Speech at the Opening Session of the Central Committee Work Conference
(10 November 1978)

Hua Guofeng

Comrades,

This Central Committee Work Conference is now in session. The participants of this work conference include the chief members in charge of the various provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and military regions, as well as the chief members in charge of the Central Party, government and military departments and the mass organizations. In total, we have more than 210 comrades with us. The Central Committee informs that the agenda for this meeting is as follows:

One, discussion of how we can further enforce and carry out the policy of having agriculture as the foundation of our state, and the issue of how to increase our agricultural output as quickly as possible. There will be two documents issued at this meeting. One is a discussion paper on the decision to accelerate the development of the agricultural industry. Another is a discussion paper on the "Regulations on the Work in the Rural People's Communes (Draft for Trial Use)".

Two, reaching an agreement on the arrangements for the national economic plans for 1979 and 1980. The National Planning Conference has already discussed the issue and prepared a document to be distributed to everyone at this work conference.

Three, discussion of Vice Chairman Li Xiannian's remarks during the State Council's theoretical work conference.

This conference is a very important one. The Central Politburo has decided that we should discuss one issue before proceeding to deliberate on the abovementioned items, and that is on the shift in the emphasis of the whole Party's work to socialist modernization from next January as guided by the overall Party line and mission for the new period, and mobilizing the whole Party, military and people of all ethnicities to unite as one, marshal all our energies and spare no effort in striving for the acceleration of our country's progress toward socialist modernization. This is an issue that concerns the big picture and is the central idea of this conference.

The Politburo Standing Committee and the Central Politburo are of the unanimous view that it is absolutely necessary to keep up with domestic and external developments, promptly and decisively end the large-scale nationwide mass movement to expose and criticize the Gang of Four and shift the emphasis of our whole Party's work to socialist modernization. This decision by the Central Committee has profound implications for implementing the three-year and eight-year programs as well as the twenty three-year outline for developing our national economy, achieving the modernization of our industrial, agricultural, defense, scientific and technological sectors and reinforcing the dictatorship of the proletariat in our country.

It has been two years since our Party smashed the Gang of Four. Broadly speaking, we have mainly done five things over the past two years. The first was to issue a call and guide our whole Party, military and people to more consciously raise high and defend the great banner of Chairman Mao, acquire a complete and accurate grasp of Chairman Mao's system of thought and launch a major political revolution at the national level to expose and criticize the Gang of Four in order to liquidate these counter-revolutionary revisionist forces once and for all. The second was to convene the Party's 11th National Congress and the 5th National People's Congress, declare the victorious conclusion of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, mark a new

period of development in our socialist revolution and construction, draw up a new party charter and state constitution, stipulate the overall Party line and mission for the new period, elect the new party and/or state leadership organizations, and formulate the three-year and eight-year plans for developing the national economy as well as the twenty three-year outline. The third was to do rectification work on all fronts as well as adjust and strengthen the leadership at all levels, so as to comprehensively and correctly carry out Chairman Mao's proletarian revolution, enable work on all fronts to progress from restoration to development and bring the national economy onto a path of sustained leaps in growth. The fourth was to convene the 5th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, major nationwide conferences in the agricultural, industrial, scientific, commercial and military realms and national congresses for the trade unions, youth league and women's federation so as to unite all forces that can be united and bring all positive factors into play. The fifth was to cultivate an international anti-hegemonic front, develop friendly relations with various countries in the world and open up new dimensions in our foreign diplomacy based on Chairman Mao's Theory of the Three Worlds. We can certainly say that we have fundamentally reversed the adverse situation caused by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, cleared the biggest obstacles that have prevented us from moving forward, achieved stability and unity, determined the direction in which we would proceed and cut a broad path for the New Long March. Looking back at the past two years, it is clear that our struggle, which was about keeping a close grip on the movement to expose and criticize the Gang of Four and making it the emphasis of the Party's work, had in turn impacted the overall situation, and victory in this fight will lead to changes in the big picture.

The question to ask now is, where are we currently in the movement to expose and criticize the Gang of Four? A proper appraisal of the movement's progress is an important basis for us to propose a shift in the emphasis of our Party's work.

During these two years, the movement to expose and criticize the Gang of Four has achieved robust and healthy progress. This major political revolution, which unfolded among a population of 800 million and was led by the Central Committee, drew lessons from the positive and negative experiences of previous movements. It proceeded in a very orderly and steady manner, and was very successful. The struggle to expose and criticize the Gang of Four saw three major campaigns combining exposure, investigation and criticism, each with its own emphasis. The Central Committee considers this movement a great victory from a nationwide perspective. First, we have thoroughly investigated all those who were involved in the Gang of Four's conspiracy to usurp Party and state power as well as their links to capitalist factions. Second, we have linked theory to practice by censuring the counter-revolutionary revisionist line and the reactionary ideological system propagated by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, and fundamentally distinguished the correct line from the wrong. Third, we have embarked on the rectification of our leadership at all levels and removed key members who were involved in the Gang of Four's conspiracy to seize power. We have adjusted and strengthened the leadership in some instances, at the same time helped cadres who had made political errors during the eleventh line struggle acknowledge their mistakes and be determined to correct them. Fourth, we have achieved good results in redressing the many cases of injustice that were caused by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. Fifth, the Party's traditions and practices of seeking truth from facts and adopting the mass line approach, which were distorted by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, have now been restored and developed. Sixth, we have achieved stability and unity and strengthened our sense of organization and discipline. Thus, at the national level, the large-scale mass movement to expose and criticize the Gang of Four will be able to complete its historic mission and come to a victorious conclusion by the end of this year.

Even with victory at the overall level, there would still be some local regions and work units that may have to end their movements slightly later, but with a clear situation, strong determination and the right methodology, they would not need too much time

to change the picture and resolve the issues. As for unresolved issues in the movement to expose and criticize the Gang of Four, for instance the redressing of grievances and unjust cases or implementation issues concerning some cadre and economic policies, we should continue to do scrupulous work and resolve them properly. The in-depth and systematic repudiation of the counter-revolutionary revisionist line and the reactionary system of thought propagated by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four from an ideological and theoretical approach is a long-term task. Also, on the fight against class enemies and capitalist roaders, each region can adopt measures suitable to their local conditions, and there will be no nationwide mass movement for this. The rectification of the Party and its practices demands a gentle approach that takes into account the work of various units, and there will also be no nationwide movement for this. In short, although there are still some important tasks ahead as outlined above, the large-scale nationwide mass movement to expose and criticize the Gang of Four should end by this year.

Chairman Mao had said that our revolution is like a war; we must immediately set new tasks for ourselves upon gaining a victory. This will ensure that our cadres and the masses are always full of revolutionary fervor and keep complacency in check, because there would be no time to feel proud even if we wanted to. With new tasks ahead, everyone would be thinking hard about how to accomplish them, and there would be continuous development. This development would have its phases, with every phase always having a beginning and an end. When major issues in a given phase have been resolved, we would enter a new phase and begin a new process. This is consistent with the dialectic method.

Our proposal to shift the Party's work emphasis is made in consideration of the fact that the mass movement to expose and criticize the Gang of Four is coming to a victorious conclusion. At the same time, we are faced with the severe task to achieve socialist modernization, which urgently demands that we mobilize the whole Party and nation to focus their attention on it.

Our overall Party line and mission for the new period reflects the demands of history and the hopes of the people, and they also represent the latter's fundamental interests. The greatest concern of our people and what the international community is also paying close attention to is whether we will fulfill our overall Party line and mission in the new period, realize the objectives of our three-year and eight-year national economic plans as well as our twenty three-year outline, accelerate the socialist modernization process and significantly improve the lives of our people on the basis of expanding production quickly.

In the last two years, our agricultural industry was hit by severe natural disasters, but we managed to achieve relatively good results through the hard work of all. Grain production this year is expected to be between 580 billion to 590 billion jin. Development of the industrial sector is also relatively swift. The total industrial output value grew 14.3% last year, and is still expected to grow by more than 14% this year. Steel production can be expected to increase by more than 7 million tons this year, with the total production expected to exceed 31 million tons, thus ending the situation in which production levels fluctuated twice in over a decade. Coal production is expected to exceed 600 million tons while oil production will exceed 100 million tons. But we should see that such developments in the national economy are illustrative of a recovery, and there are still numerous issues associated with the production and work situations in many local regions and work units, as well as the economic and cultural lives of the broad masses. The people have strong views on this. The 1985 plan and the twenty three-year outline have set ambitious goals, but time is running short and we have a very difficult task ahead of us. If we do not steel our resolves now and make great efforts to shift the Party's work emphasis to socialist modernization, and if we do not keep a very tight rein on this, we will fail to attain the goals of our national economic plans and the four modernizations will likely come to naught. This is of course a kind of risk and I am just giving the extreme

scenario here. But if we do not raise the issues and understand them right now, we will make grave mistakes.

Developments in the international situation also demand that we seize this opportune moment to greatly accelerate the pace of socialist modernization. We have embarked on our diplomatic work with significant results with Chairman Mao's Three Worlds Theory as the guiding principle. This year, our leaders have conducted visits to North Korea, Romania, Yugoslavia, Japan, various Southeast Asian countries and many other countries and signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with Japan, all of which have had huge international impact. Developments in many areas have exceeded our expectations, with various Third World countries now hoping that China can quickly establish itself as a socialist modern power, while Second World countries show a strong tendency to strengthen their links and conduct more business with us. On the one hand, this tendency reflects the fact that these countries are mired in an economic crisis and need the Chinese market to emerge from it. On the other hand, it reveals that they are deeply pressured by the Soviet hegemony and thus keenly feel the benefits of having a strong China in the east. Even the United States has requested to develop its relations with us and engage in more trade. Capitalists in Eastern Europe, Japan and North America have seen the emerging environment of stability and unity in our country and are all fighting to do business with us. Such a favorable situation is unprecedented since the founding of our nation. For us, this raises the issue of making full use of such a situation to absorb foreign technology and capital in order to greatly speed up our development and catch up with the world's advancements, all on the premise of maintaining our autonomy and self-reliance. This is precisely an important aspect of implementing Chairman Mao's policy to harness all direct and indirect positive factors domestically and externally to serve our socialist cause. The Soviet Union had successfully made use of the capitalist economic crisis during their development of socialism in the 1930s. It would be a misstep if we fail to make good use of the favorable international conditions today. We should also be aware that the heated contest between the Soviet Union and the United States is likely to evolve into war one day. Soviet revisionists will not rest until they have destroyed us, thus we have to adequately gauge the risks in this aspect and be prepared for the worse. We must be prepared for danger even in times of peace and accelerate our development before war breaks out so that we are well prepared, and we must not rely on luck and lull ourselves into a false sense of security.

The domestic and international situations fully show that we must no longer tarry in shifting the emphasis of our Party's work to socialist modernization. In the early years of our nation's founding, particularly after the basic completion of the socialist transformation, Chairman Mao had repeatedly instructed the Party to shift the emphasis of its national work to the areas of economic and technological revolution, and to harness the energies of the people to build a strong and advanced socialist economy. Under Chairman Mao's leadership, our Party had already begun to advance the socialist cause, though this was later derailed by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. Now we have cleared this obstacle, we should resolutely and decisively complete this strategic shift of the Party's work and achieve this great historical mission that the whole Party and people have placed upon us to turn an impoverished and backward China into a modern, prosperous, strong and progressive socialist China. It is very obvious that we would not have achieved this victory today had we not focused our energies and kept a firm grip on the exposure and criticism of the Gang of Four in the last two years. It is equally clear that given the new circumstances, if we do not shift the emphasis of our whole Party's work to socialist modernization, we would be squandering an opportune moment and cutting ourselves off from the masses, and our cause would not progress. From next January, Party Committees at all levels will have to execute the campaign to shift our work emphasis and dedicate the bulk of their attention to keeping a firm grip on the socialist modernization process. They must simultaneously work on the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, production struggle and scientific experiment and with production struggle at the core, direct the energies and wisdom of the people to unite as one in the

valiant push to swiftly develop our national economy and resolutely achieve the great dream of socialist modernization.

During this conference, we will deliberate on the issues concerning the shift of the Party's work emphasis in the first two to three days, namely whether it is appropriate to implement the shift from next January, what are the other problems that need to be resolved, and how will the Party Committees at various levels implement this shift in their work. Also, along with this shift, what major issues would we have to take note of next year? How will the Party's ideological and organizational development, agricultural, industrial, commercial, technological, cultural and educational, military and political work, as well as work of the trade unions, youth league and women's federation adapt to this shift? I urge everyone to engage in some brainstorming to come up with ideas and share them freely so that we can tap the collective wisdom and execute this shift well. After this, the conference will further discuss the three items on the agenda mentioned earlier. These discussions will also revolve around the central theme of the shift in the Party's work emphasis to socialist modernization.

This conference is expected to last for more than 20 days and will be broken up into six groups. The name lists for these groups have already been distributed to everyone.