

The Sino-Soviet Alliance and Nationalism: A Contradiction

by Yang Kuisong*

Professing the same ideology and advocating internationalism have long characterized the Communist parties of different countries. However, Party members in almost every country are nationalist by nature. In other words, while they are Communists in dealing with national problems, they tend to be nationalists when it comes to international relations. Consequently, despite the fact that each is Communist and that their common interests would appear to far outweigh those that serve to align non-Communist countries, their alliances are no whit closer than those of their non-Communist counterparts. On the contrary, disagreements and clashes between two Communist countries are often fiercer and more frequent than those between non-Communist countries. Relations between China and the Soviet Union after 1949 are a classic illustration of this principle. Previously, the heated confrontations between the two Parties from the late 1950s have been the focus of public attention. In actuality, conflicts triggered by nationalism were already obvious in the early days of the PRC in the negotiations between the two parties on an official alliance between the two countries.

I

The revolution led by the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) owed its success partly to the party's use of the idea of "class struggle" mobilize and organize the impoverished masses and partly to rallying the nation under the banner of independence and national equality and uniting all those forces dedicated to national salvation. Thus the CPC leadership realized that after 1949 the key to consolidating the new regime consisted in

- (1) internally, whether it was able to satisfy the aspirations of the impoverished populace for achieving emancipation and becoming masters of their own country, and
- (2) externally, whether it was able to win national independence and equality with other nations.

Of course, (1) presented no problem to a revolutionary Communist party like the Chinese Communist Party. But (2) was not an issue in which the Chinese Communist Party alone had the final say.

Strictly speaking, achieving true national independence was not a hard task for the new regime. The basic reason for China's past semi-independent status was that she had been unable to wrest free of the bonds of unequal treaties. Given that abolition of all unequal treaties and re-establishment of diplomatic relations with countries across the world was a basic plank of New China's foreign policy, in theory it should not have been too difficult to abolish or nullify the treaties concluded with and privileges conceded to other countries that

constituted an impediment to complete independence. The new Chinese government followed precisely this approach to foreign relations. However, the biggest obstacle to New China's pursuit of full national independence was none other than her relations with the Soviet Union. The most important of all the unjust treaties bequeathed by the old to the New China was the August 1945 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance. According to the treaty, China was forced to renounce its sovereignty over Outer Mongolia by acceding to the latter's independence, concede the Soviet Union Port Lüshun in NE as a naval base, and run jointly with the Soviet Union the Changchun Railway which stretched between Manchuria and Dalian.¹ It is evident that handicapped by its special relations with the Soviet Union, the Chinese Communist Party failed to tackle the Soviet Union about the unjust treaty and the privileges the Soviet Union drew from it the way the new Chinese government thrashed it out with other governments. But such a complication involving China and the Soviet Union stood out as a most exacting touchstone exposing whether the new Communist regime in China could live up to its pledge that it would have the Chinese nation "stand up."

Needless to say, Moscow was completely aware how, under the circumstances, the straits the CPC was in and the challenges faced by the new regime in China had to take up in relation to this issue. Just before the establishment of the PRC, from January 30 to February 8 of 1949, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, a member of the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party (Bolshevik), was on an official but clandestine visit to Mao Zedong and other Chinese Communist Party leaders at Xibaipo, a village in Fuping, Hebei Province, where the CPC Central Committee was staying temporarily. His visit was especially for an exchange of views with the Chinese Communist leaders on issues that might claim immediate attention after the foundation of the new People's Republic. In the course of his talk with Mikoyan, Mao Zedong probed with seeming casualness an issue raised by "a female social activist of bourgeois extraction": "Once the revolutionary force achieved the seizure of power in China, it would seem meaningless for the Soviet Union to retain Port Lüshun as its military base. Therefore its return would certainly be extremely important to China." On the same occasion, Mao openly expressed his desire for the re-integration of Outer Mongolia with China. To all this the response from Stalin was quite clear-cut. In one of his cables to Mao, he wrote: "In view of the impending seizure of power by the Chinese Communists, the Soviet Union has come to the conclusion that it will annul the agreement on an equal footing and withdraw its military forces from Port Arthur as soon as the US military presence in Japan is evacuated after the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan. However should the Chinese Communist Party prefer an immediate withdrawal of the Soviet armed forces from Port Arthur, the Soviet Union would be ready to comply." As for Outer Mongolia, Stalin expressed the firm belief that she would never forsake the independence she had won. This was indeed a *de facto* rejection of Mao's proposal.²

One of the primary motives, it is obvious, that impelled the Soviet Union to use Port Lüshun as a concession and to control the Changchun Railway had been not only to preempt the US endeavor to turn Northeast China into an important bridgehead for its invasion of the Soviet Union but also to deter the military threat from Japan, an old enemy of Russia. Since the foundation of the New China was in itself a deterrence to both the United States and Japan, the Soviet military presence in Northeast China was no longer necessary. On the other

hand, to enable New China to regain her sovereignty over Outer Mongolia would have meant that China would physically wedge a portion of her territory into the hinterland where the European and the Asian section of the Soviet Union were linked. This would certainly not strike the Soviet Union as a good idea. Inferentially Stalin was averse to promptly handing over management of the Changchun Railway, being alert to possibly unfavorable public opinion in the Soviet Union. In the last analysis—to borrow his words—the Changchun Railway was built with money from Russia's coffers.

Differences of opinion showed definitely in Mao's talk with Mikoyan and were hard to mitigate through further communication. A few months later, at the end of June 1949, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party secretly sent a delegation headed by Liu Shaoqi to Moscow. Addressing the contention with the Soviet Union, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party again told Moscow —through its delegation—about the disquiet in China over the Soviet military presence in Port Lüshun, the separation of Outer Mongolia from China, and the actions taken by the Soviet Union, after the conclusion of WWII, to appropriate and transshipping to the Soviet Union the machinery and equipment of the factories Japan had built in Northeast China during WWII. The Chinese delegation made a point of setting forth its claims in very mild terms and was especially careful in of the wording in which it couched its opinion of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance concluded between China's Nationalist government and the Soviet Union: the Chinese delegation in Moscow contended that since the prospective government of New China was about to start "weaving a new fabric of diplomatic relations," it would not only ignore but nullify all the treaties signed between the Nationalist government and other countries. Thus, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party evidently cherished the hope that the Soviet Union would agree to conclude a new pact with New China. However, being fully mindful of the special relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Liu Shaoqi chose to use deliberately roundabout and inoffensive language when he addressed the issue in a report he sent to Stalin. He wrote that after the establishment of its diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, the new Chinese government would be willing either to announce its total acceptance of the existing Treaty of Friendship and Alliance and let it stay valid, or "to conclude a new treaty of friendship and alliance between the Soviet Union and New China, which, while being based on the spirit of its predecessor, would differ from the latter in wording and content in accordance with the new developments." Of course, as Liu hastened to add in his message to Stalin, the existing treaty could continue in its present form until the time was ripe for a replacement.³

After the PRC was founded on October 1, 1949, its diplomatic activities, including a comprehensive overhaul of all the treaties the Nationalist government had concluded with various capitalist countries, were rapidly placed on the agenda. In these circumstances the question of how to deal with the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance formerly signed between the Nationalist government and the Soviet Union once more became a top priority. Mao Zedong was manifestly in favor of China's starting to "weave a new fabric of diplomatic relations." Whether or not the Treaty was an unequal one, the agreements and protocols consequent upon that treaty contained unequal provisions that disadvantaged China; these had long elicited an angry reaction from students and democratic political parties in China. To

make an exception for the Soviet Union would inevitably diminish the political stature of the CPC. Following his decision to visit the Soviet Union as soon as possible, Mao repeatedly signified to Moscow his intention to sign a new pact with the Soviet Union.⁴ However, no outright response came from Stalin. Fraught with misgivings about the possible futility of his visit, Mao would not even include any top party or government officials in his retinue when he traveled to Moscow. As New China's paramount leader, Mao departed for Moscow with only one secretary, one translator, and a couple of staff members who worked for his office. This suffices to reveal that he regarded his visit to Moscow as a forlorn attempt.

II

Mao arrived by train at the northern railway station in Moscow at noon on December 16, 1949. Meeting him at that railway station were V. M. Molotov, vice-president of the USSR Council of Ministers, N. A. Bulganin, a marshal of the Red Army, and several Soviet officials. That Stalin, the highest leader of the USSR, was not present at the railway station struck most Chinese people showed insufficient courtesy and respect. Particularly disturbed by this event were the intellectuals and notables who had been inspired by the nationalist fervor epitomized in the slogan, "The Chinese people have stood up!" Their views soon appeared in a General Press Administration bulletin saying, "most people were surprised by Stalin's choosing not to be present at the railway station in Moscow to greet Mao Zedong. In Shanghai, industrial and business circles and some old of those from the old society were chagrined. Some insisted that Mao Zedong's visit to Moscow 'was an affront to China's dignity'."⁵

On the evening of Mao's arrival in Moscow, Stalin interviewed him in the reception room of the chief office in the Kremlin; present on the occasion were all members of the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party. This was a preliminary official talk between the two sides. It started as soon as their meeting began, and Mao took the initiative in referring to the issue of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance concluded between Nationalist China and the Soviet Union. Stalin responded pointblank, signifying that it would be best to leave the treaty as it was for the time being. He said, "As is well known, that treaty was concluded between the Soviet Union and Nationalist China in accordance with the Yalta Agreement. The most important provisions of that treaty are transplants from the Yalta Agreement—provisions that cover the Kurile Islands, the southern part of the Sakhalin, and Port Arthur, among other issues. In other words, it would be natural for us to think that the conclusion of that treaty was acceded to by both the United States and Britain. Given such a background, it has already been agreed upon within the scope of our small cohort that no change whatsoever should be made in any provision of that treaty, because a change in even merely one of the provisions of that treaty would be enough to provide America and Britain with a legal pretext for modifying such provisions of that treaty as concern the Kurile Islands and the Sakhalin." Since in Stalin's opinion, the key element of inequality adversely affecting China, as embodied in that treaty, consisted solely in the issue of the Soviet military presence in Port Lüshun, he believed a withdrawal of the Soviet armed forces from that port would suffice to silence the protests from the capitalist world. The unpalatable option of redeeming China's sovereignty but risking the Soviet loss of the Kurile Islands and the southern part of Sakhalin placed Mao in a dilemma.

As a devoted internationalist, he said he could understand—though he was surprised by—Stalin’s revelation, and expressed himself willing to give up his original proposal for a new pact.⁶

Stalin was, of course, aware that Mao was despondent. To remove Mao’s misapprehensions about the Kremlin, he was later invited to walk along with Stalin to the latter’s birthday celebration, where Stalin and Mao shared the tremendous ovations from the audience. Furthermore, Mao was accorded the honor of being the first of the distinguished guests present at the ceremony to deliver a congratulatory speech. However, Mao was well aware that if his visit to Moscow failed to secure anything of benefit to China, that would certainly reflect lamentably on both him and the new Chinese government. Therefore, he continued to press for agreements with the Soviet Union on a range of subjects, eg loans, trade, air transport, etc. Moreover, in order to enhance the impressiveness of the signing ceremony, Mao planned to summon Premier Zhou Enlai to Moscow. What Mao did not expect was Stalin’s indifference towards Chinese customs in relation to etiquette. In Stalin’s view, the impressiveness of the ceremony would not be so much enhanced by the presence of Premier Zhou Enlai as by that of Mao Zedong as chairman of the People’s Republic of China.⁷

Mao was eventually angered by Stalin’s attitude. Accounts given in retrospect by Mao indicate that in the days following Stalin’s lack of response he repeatedly flared up and shouted at the Soviet liaison officials. However wide the gap between his later memories and the actual timing and ferocity of his outbursts, one thing is certain: Mao believed his dignity was very much hurt.⁸ But this was not just a matter of a personal affront; rather, it reflected to a considerable extent the injury to national pride.

In the wake of the magnificent state banquet held on December 22, 1949 in honor of Stalin’s birthday, Mao’s presence in Moscow seemed no longer traceable. This piqued the curiosity of foreign press, which was keen to follow developments between China and the Soviet Union. In the meantime the report entitled “Instances of Narrow Nationalism” carried in the *Bulletin* No.50 released on January 1, 1950 by the General Press Administration under the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party seemed to have struck a sensitive political nerve with Stalin. On being briefed on Britain’s intention to step up its efforts to establish diplomatic relations with New China, Stalin finally came to realize that friendship with Mao Zedong and New China was far more realistic than being overly concerned about possible reactions from America and Britain. Consequently, on January 1, 1950 he himself drafted a news release about a press conference in name of Mao Zedong, unexpectedly including in it the Soviet Union’s readiness to settle such issues as the existing Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between Nationalist China and the Soviet Union, loans to New China, trade with New China and so on. On reading the “news release,” Mao was pleasantly surprised and readily consented to have the “news release” come out in his own name.⁹ He promptly sent a cable to the national leadership, urging them to spread the content of the “news release” to the Chinese people. The greatest advantage China could elicit from the prospective conclusion of a new pact with the Soviet Union in place of the old one consisted in that it would “place the People’s Republic in a better position to corner the capitalist countries and make all countries unconditionally recognize New China. Replacement of the old treaty by a new pact would deter capitalist countries from taking rash action against China.”

Moreover he pointedly instructed Zhou Enlai to hold a special State Council session prior to his departure for Moscow to make the explicit announcement that the purpose of his visit to Moscow was to carry on negotiations with the Kremlin for concluding and signing a new pact. Besides, Mao further instructed, he should call a special conference to be attended by all the members of the presidium of the Chinese Central Government who were in Beijing at that time expressly to tell them about the content of the “news release.”¹⁰ The sharp contrast between this behavior and Mao’s low profile on his arrival in Moscow two weeks earlier clearly indicates the degree to which he had been heartened by these developments.

III

Despite this, the differences between China and the Soviet Union had not been truly resolved. This was because contrary to China’s expectations, the Soviet Union did not see the conclusion of the new pact as implying that it would relinquish its privileges in the Northeast.

The two sides formally entered into the negotiation for the new pact on January 23, 1950. The Soviet Union took the lead in presenting a draft. On the 24th, after a day of tense internal discussions, the Chinese side emerged around midnight on January 24 when Ge Baoquan, attaché of the Chinese Embassy in Moscow, was authorized to deliver to the Soviet side a modified version of the draft as revised by Mao, Zhou, and senior high officials. This differed from the original Soviet draft only in some clauses of secondary importance.¹¹ However, differences emerged over the agreements and protocols consequent upon the treaty. At the second session, Zhou brought forward three significant proposals formulated following receipt of a cable from Liu Shaoqi on the Changchun Railway and consultation with Mao on the issue. The proposals comprised: (1) The Soviet Union should give up control of the railway, which had been an irritant to relations on six occasions in the past.¹² From the point of view of its current management and the response of the Chinese people, the Soviet Union had nothing to lose. This would strengthen solidarity between the two countries. (2) China should take over Port Lüshun and the Changchun Railway if a peace treaty with Japan were not signed within three years. (3) The Chinese Government should take over all such enterprises in Dalian as were vicariously run by or leased to the Soviet Union.

China’s claims far outran the expectations of the Soviet side and left them considerably shaken. However having decided to improve the relations between China and the Soviet Union, Stalin listened carefully to the summary—given by Zhou Enlai—of public opinion and popular sentiment in China and, after balancing the pros and cons, determined in the end that there was no choice but to accept the Chinese claims. The Chinese side now lost no time in appointing Zhou to take charge of drawing up “The Sino-Soviet Agreement with Regard to Port Lüshun, Dalian, and the Changchun Railway.” However, the draft prepared under the direction of Zhou Enlai differed dramatically in content from its Soviet counterpart, even though the Chinese acceded to the Soviet request that during the transitional period preceding the transfer of the control back to China of the Changchun Railway both China and the Soviet Union take turns to head the management of the railway. The differences between the two drafts consisted of the following points:

- (1) The Chinese side was for an inclusive overhaul of all the agreements and protocols

consequent upon the "Treaty of Friendship and Alliance" signed between Nationalist China and the Soviet Union.

(2) The Chinese side proposed that the Soviet Union renounce its privilege of leasing Port Lüshun as a naval base and all its rights to and interests in both Dalian and the Changchun Railway and that the Soviet Union proclaim officially its intention of transferring all the aforesaid privileges and obligations back to the People's Republic of China.

(3) The Chinese side claimed that all the properties in both Dalian and Port Lüshun that were for the time being either under the vicarious control of or on lease to the Soviet Union be taken over by the Chinese Government.

(4) The Chinese side addressed to the Soviet Government the request that it return to China without compensation the Changchun Railway and all properties belonging to it either immediately on the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan or once this agreement had been in force for three years.

(5) In the context of the Chinese side's consent to the Soviet military presence in China until the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan, the following passage should be included in the agreement: "Should the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan be somehow or other impeded and should no new pertinent agreement have been signed after this agreement had been in effect for three years, the Soviet Government should immediately withdraw its military presence from Port Lüshun."¹³

Since the Soviet side had already avowed its willingness to take the Chinese version of the draft agreement into consideration, it now found it difficult to turn down the Chinese claim for a complete retrieval of her national interests in Northeast China. Consequently, wanting to make a virtue of necessity and gain Chinese goodwill, the Soviet side generously pledged that the Soviet military presence in Port Lüshun would be withdrawn in three years at the latest, that the Chinese Government would be entitled to immediately take over both the municipal administration of Dalian and all the enterprises in Dalian still vicariously controlled by the Soviet Government, and that the Changchun Railway and all the properties belonging to it would be handed over without recompense to the Chinese Government in three years at the latest. The only reservation the Soviet side felt strongly attached to was that the Chinese Government should pay for all the military installations and related facilities the Soviet Government had constructed in the naval base in Port Lüshun. Moreover since the Changchun Railway had been serving as an indispensable channel through which the Soviet military presence in China acquired its supplies, the Soviet side would request of China that the following preferential treatment be granted by the Chinese Government to the Soviet Government after the return of the Changchun Railway to China:

(1) All supplies and raw materials transported via the Changchun Railway between the Soviet Union and Port Lüshun in the three successive years after the signing of this agreement be exempted from all levies and taxation.

(2) All the supplies and raw materials referred to above be immune from inspection by the Chinese customs.

(3) The Soviet Government be entitled to transport without any restraint its military forces and supplies via the Changchun Railway. The freight costs thus incurred by the

Soviet Government should be calculated at the same rate as that for the Chinese armed forces and military supplies via the same railway.

Zhou Enlai accepted both (1) and (2) but unexpectedly insisted on the inclusion of the following proviso:¹⁴ “The Chinese Government is entitled to transport without any restraint its armed forces and military supplies from Manchuria through Chita, Novosibirsk, and Alma-Ata to reach Yining City (in Xinjiang) and be also entitled to move without any restraint its armed forces and military supplies either via the railway running between Siberia and Turkestan-Siberia or via the railway running between Alma-Ata and Xinjiang to come back to China. The train freightage thus incurred by the Chinese government should be calculated at the same rate as that by the Soviet armed forces and military supplies via the same railways.

Without doubt, the motive behind Zhou’s move in asking for the inclusion of this proviso in the agreement was not that the Chinese government really felt the need for transporting its armed forces or military supplies around in such a manner. Zhou’s move was nothing but a political ploy to cope with the nationalist pressure from within China. He needed to have equality between China and the Soviet Union explicitly demonstrated in the textual wording of the new pact. But Mikoyan, who headed the Soviet side, was completely baffled by Zhou’s move and protested, “As China’s ally, the Soviet Union has agreed to transfer unconditionally to China an enormous amount of interests in the form of all properties belonging to the Soviet government in the Changchun Railway, Dalian, and Port Arthur. In contrast, the Chinese side would not even budge when the Soviet side made the request that the Soviet government be accorded the freedom of moving its armed forces via a specific railway in China. If the Chinese side persists in denying us such a concession, I don’t know what sort of allies our two countries can be expected to become.”¹⁵

The confrontation over military transport was a classic reflection of the historic sentiments and national standpoints of the two sides. For nearly a century, China had suffered acutely from invasions perpetrated by the imperialist powers. Virtually every successful political leader was unavoidably deeply conscious of this tragic history and highly sensitive to matters that might adversely affect China’s dignity and national interests, whereas Russia has never in her history been a colony or semi-colony. Therefore Russians used to look down upon weak or small countries, be preoccupied with the interests Russia had seized by force, and take it for granted that a weak or small nation ought to show heartfelt gratitude for any pittance it might receive. Accordingly the Soviet side in the negotiation was blind to the Chinese thirst for national equality and their strong to achieve equality in order to wipe out the humiliations of the past century. Needless to say, Zhou’s adherence to the principle that the two countries treat each other equally did affect the Soviet side to some extent.

The Chinese leaders were extremely cautious in dealing with domestic nationalist pressures. This is evident from the cable sent on February 8, 1950 by Zhou Enlai to the Politburo of the CCP Central Committee. At that time the negotiation between the two sides had ground to a halt. The cable, beginning with an account of the talk between Stalin and Mao Zedong on January 22, 1950, reports in detail on all the important issues tackled by the two sides since the negotiation officially started on January 23, 1950. What is stressed in the cable is that the negotiation was, from the very beginning to its consummation and throughout all its phases, including the process of preparing the treaty draft, masterminded by the

Chinese side. However the bulk of official archives published so far have clearly indicated that the draft of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance was not drafted by the Chinese side. The cable's allegations that Mao's guidance directed the course of the negotiation and that the initiative taken by the Chinese side prevailed throughout the negotiation were obviously intended to sooth internal nationalist concerns.¹⁶

IV

The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance was signed on February 14, 1950. Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and their retinue left for China on February 16, 1950. Forcing Stalin to agree to the signing of a new pact between New China and the USSR and the unconditional transfer from the Soviet Union to China of the Changchun Railway and Lüshun was of course a huge success. It not only surpassed what Mao had expected to achieve at the outset of his visit but sharply contrasted the difficulties encountered during the initial days of his stay. Buoyed with the triumph the Chinese went back to Beijing. One can imagine their sentiments. What is totally unexpected is that over the next couple of years the Chinese leaders diametrically reversed their evaluation of their successful trip to Moscow. Mao could never forget the rancor he had felt at Stalin's initial refusal to conclude a new agreement. Even more intolerable, however, were the issues of concluding the subsidiary agreements and running joint ventures.

It has been widely alleged that in the course of the negotiation in Moscow both Mao and Zhou had at first rejected Stalin's proposal for signing subsidiary agreements between the two countries but "had to succumb to Stalin's insistent plea in the end because they were most wary of impairing the solidarity between the two countries." But as a matter of fact both Mao and Zhou had not at the outset objected at all to Stalin's proposal that limitations be imposed on any attempt by another country to gain access to Northeast China and Xinjiang because both saw the proposal as conducive to fortifying New China's border defense, even though they knew that the proposal—as the Soviet side intended it—was solely for guaranteeing security to the USSR's Central Asia area and Far East Territory. Actually, it had not occurred to Mao or Zhou at that time that Stalin's proposal and the subsidiary agreements consequent upon it would affect China's interests and image.¹⁷ It was only after they returned from Moscow to Beijing that they gradually came to realize that the subsidiary agreements tended to give the general public the impression that Northeast China and Xinjiang appeared to be treated as the Soviet Union's sphere of influence, because, rather than the Chinese side taking the initiative in proposing to sign the subsidiary agreements, it was the Soviet side— or so it was understood by the general public in China—that was the true originator of the subsidiary agreements and also because such subsidiary agreements answered Soviet rather than being Chinese demands, despite the nominal equality of the two countries.

It is difficult for us to ascribe the change in Mao's attitude toward the subsidiary agreements simply to his nationalistic sentiments; a spectrum of complicated factors was doubtless at work. One can say that the change in Mao's attitude clearly illustrates the possible effect of heightened nationalist sentiment.

Here the term "Sino-Soviet joint ventures" refers to the corporations founded on the

principle that “the two shareholders own the same number of shares and enjoy equal rights in any of such corporations.” Among such corporations were the Sino-Soviet Civil Aviation Joint-Stock Company, the Sino-Soviet Xinjiang Petroleum Joint-Stock Company, the Sino-Soviet Xinjiang Non-Ferrous Metals and Rare Metals Joint-Stock Company, and the Sino-Soviet Ship-Building Joint-Stock Company. The establishment of these joint ventures was initiated by the CCP Central Committee, rather than “under Stalin’s pressure.”¹⁸ The move in question was first mentioned in a cable sent to Mao and Zhou in Moscow by Liu Shaoqi in the name of the CCP Central Committee. Doubtlessly both Mao and Zhou concurred in pushing ahead with the move. Therefore in a session of the negotiation with presence of Mao, Zhou, and Stalin, Mao advanced the proposal for running joint ventures together with the Soviet Union in very explicit terms.¹⁹ Later on Zhou put forward to the Soviet side concrete schemes for such joint ventures. Then the Soviet side accepted Zhou’s schemes. Afterwards the two sides reached a consensus on all the draft agreements drawn up on the basis of Zhou’s schemes,²⁰ and these agreements were officially signed successively after Mao and Zhou were back in China. The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party officially signified its approval of all these agreements. Consequently *The People’s Daily* carried a special editorial illustrating the significance of this pattern of cooperation between China and the Soviet Union.²¹

However, given that China was victoriously expelling foreign capital and securing complete national independence, bringing in Soviet capital did not go down well with a large portion of the intellectual public. In cities such as Beijing and Nanjing, vast multitudes of students launched demonstrations in opposition to the act. There is no doubt that such developments irritated Mao and other Chinese top leaders. In the meantime, Stalin kept urging China to build more joint ventures— such as a canned food factory and a rubber plantation—using Soviet capital, and in due course Mao had had enough, leading inevitably to the dissolution of the Sino-Soviet joint ventures. What ensued was Mao’s indiscriminate enmity toward all manner of attempts at introducing foreign capital into China. From a conversation several years later in which he sharply criticized the earlier moves for creating Sino-Soviet joint ventures it is evident that the predominant factor underlying these changes in Mao’s attitude was his keen sense of national dignity. He once told the Russians: the Sino-Soviet joint ventures came about because of pressure from Stalin. Why was the USSR so keen on the four “co-operatives”? It was because “You don’t trust the Chinese, only the Russians. You think Russians are superior and Chinese inferior, only capable of botching everything up. That’s how the joint ventures happened.” But cooperatives inevitably involved ownership issues. Why did ownership have to be split down the middle? Because the Soviets wanted to be in control and wanted concessions. What other motive could they have had?²²

The Chinese leadership moved from voluntary agreement to and active of support of Sino-Soviet joint ventures as a means to to revive and develop the Chinese economy, to equating cooperatives with racial prejudice and infringement on China’s sovereignty and blaming their establishment on pressure from Stalin. This furnishes a classic illustration of the evolution of the nationalistic sentiments of Mao and his close companions. Despite its ancient and glorious culture, China had been the victim of repeated imperialist aggression and oppression. In such circumstances, its renaissance and rise could not but be closely linked to

its nationalist revolution. Any party and leadership that had brought the revolution to victory would inevitably possess a strong sense of national dignity and pride. This was especially so where such a nation had step by step succeeded in achieving national unity, creating a powerful central government, bringing about national economic revival, blotting out its past humiliation and downtrodden status, and emerging in the international community as a nascent independent country. Popular nationalist sentiment was naturally especially strong in these circumstances. However, the century and more of mortification and impoverishment remained an open wound. The more fervently the Chinese population wished to defend national dignity and assert national self-confidence, the more likely they were to overly sensitive and to over-react. Mao Zedong's reaction to the Sino-Soviet joint ventures can be seen as falling into this category.

**YANG KUISONG is Professor at East China Normal University. His fields of study include modern Chinese history and Chinese diplomatic history. Among his representative works are Mao Zedong and Moscow: Weal and Woe (Nanchang: Jiangxi People's Press, 1999) and A Exploration into the Xi'an Incident: A Study on the Relations between Zhang Xueliang and the Chinese Communist Party (Taipei: Dongda Publishing Corporation, 1995).
E-mail: yks@vip.sina.com.*

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Notes

1. See Modern Chinese History Teaching and Research Group, Department of History of Fudan University, *Selected Materials of Modern Chinese Diplomatic History (1840-1949)*, II, vol. 2, Shanghai People's Press, 1977, pp. 261-272.
2. See Leodovski, "Mikoyan's Secret Mission to China," in *Mao Zedong's Exchanges with Stalin and Khrushchev*, translated into Chinese by Peng Zhuowu, Beijing: Oriental Press, 2004, pp. 24-27.
3. *Manuscripts of Liu Shaoqi since 1949*, Central Documentation Press, 1998, pp. 15-16
4. "A Summary of Transcript of the Talk between Lavrentiev and Wang Jiaxiang on November 10, 1949" and "Transcript of the Talk on November 10, 1949 between Zhou Enlai, Chinese Premier Foreign Minister and Roschin, the Soviet Ambassador to China," in an unpublished collection of the Sino-USSR relation archives compiled (and translated) by Shen Zihua et al., henceforth referred to as The Sino-USSR Relation Archives.
5. "Instances of Narrow Nationalism," the General Administration of Press *Bulletin* no.50, January 1, 1950. Cf. The Sino-USSR Relation Archives.
6. Minutes of Talks between Mao Zedong and Stalin on December 16, 1949, translated into Chinese from Soviet by Zhang Musheng, quoted in "Part of the Soviet Archives Concerning the 1950 Negotiations between China and the Soviet Union in Connection with the Conclusion of a New Pact between the Two Countries," compiled and annotated by Shen Zihua, *Literature on the History of the Chinese Communist Party*, 1998, no.5.
7. T P. F. Yudin, Minutes of a Talk with Comrade Mao Zedong on March 30, 1956, translated by Li Yuzhen, quoted from *International Social Science and Economy*, 1995, no. 2.
8. For details concerning the ferocity and time of his outbursts when he stayed in Moscow, please refer to Yang Kuisong, *Mao Zedong and Moscow: Weal and Woe*, Nanchang: Jiangxi People's Press, 1999, pp. 295-299.
9. *Writings of Mao Zedong since the Foundation of People's Republic of China*, I, Central Document Press, 1987, p.206.
10. *Ibid.*, p.213
11. Wu Xiuquan, *Reminiscences and Nostalgia*, the CCP Party School Press, 1991, p.237. Cf. The Sino-USSR Relation Archives.
12. Here the phrase "an irritant to relations on six occasions" refers to the political role played by the railway in such events as the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, the negotiation in 1924 between China and Russia for an understanding about the program intended for seeking solutions to issues pending between the two countries, the Zhongdong Railway Incident in 1929, the Soviet Union's transfer in 1935 of its ownership of the Zhongdong Railway to Manchukuo (which existed between March 1932 and September 1945 as a Japanese puppet regime in Northeast China), and the talks between Nationalist China and the Soviet Union in 1945 for the conclusion of a friendship and alliance treaty between the two countries. In all these events the Changchun Railway had been used as a pawn to vitiate the relations between China and Russia.
13. A Cable on February 8, 1950 from Zhou Enlai to Comrade Liu Shaoqi and the Politburo of the CCP Central Committee and A Cable on January 26, 1950 from Vishinky to Stalin on the Negotiation with Zhou Enlai. Cf. The Sino-USSR Relation Archives.
14. A Cable on February 8, 1950 from Zhou Enlai to Comrade Liu Shaoqi and the Politburo of the CCP Central Committee.
15. A Report to Stalin on February 1, 1950 by Vishinsky on the Progress of Negotiation with Zhou Enlai, *Literature on the History of the Chinese Communist Party*, 1998, no. 5.
16. A Cable on February 8, 1950 from Zhou Enlai to Comrade Liu Shaoqi and the Politburo of the CCP Central Committee.
17. On February 10, 1950, the Soviet side presented to the Chinese side a draft of subsidiary agreements. Mao only made two changes in that draft. First, Mao changed the sentence "The two parties involved have arrived at the following agreements" into "The two parties involved have concurred in the subsidiary agreements." Secondly, he changed the term "concession" to "right to secure concession." Cf. "The Report to Stalin on February 1, 1950 by Vishinsky on the Progress of Negotiation with Zhou Enlai," *Literature on the History of the Chinese Communist Party*, 1998, no. 5
18. Minutes of the Talk on July 22, 1958 between Mao Zedong and P. F. Yudin, Ambassador of the USSR to Beijing.
19. Minutes of the Talk between Mao Zedong and Stalin on January 22, 1950.
20. A Report to Stalin on February 3, 1950 by Vishinsky on the Progress of Negotiation with Zhou Enlai.
21. "A Welcome to Sino-Soviet Economic Cooperation That Is Conducive to the Economic Reconstruction in China," *The People's Daily*, April 5, 1950.
22. The Talk between Mao Zedong and P. F. Yudin, Ambassador of the Soviet Union in Beijing on July 22, 1958.