**China-Soviet 2 ---- Soviet Experts Report to Gorbachev: Our Most Short-sighted Behaviour & Big Diplomatic Failure was to Make China Enemy**

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**Summary**

Sino-Soviet relations went from a honeymoon period to deterioration. The Soviet Union's short-sighted decisions led to the breakdown of relations between the two countries. The Soviet Union lost China, an important ally, which accelerated its disintegration. On the other hand China learned from the lesson, embarked on a unique development path, and achieved rapid economic development.

**The deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations can be said to be a huge mistake in the history of Soviet diplomacy**

At that time, the Soviet Union fell out with its once most important ally, which made the Soviet Union increasingly isolated on the international stage, blocked mutual assistance agreement with China, and ultimately affected the Soviet Union's own development.

It can be said that severing diplomatic ties with China was one of the most short-sighted decisions in Soviet foreign policy.

In May 1989, as the situation changed, Gorbachev realized that Soviet Union had to improve relations with China.

Gorbachev commissioned experts from the Stalin era to summarize the evolution of Sino-Soviet relations and its impact on the Soviet Union.

The conclusion of this document points out that becoming hostile to China was the most short-sighted behavior of the Soviet Union, and Soviet experts admitted that it was the biggest diplomatic failure.

**Sino-Soviet honeymoon period**

As World War II came to an end, the international situation quickly shifted towards a bipolar confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. This global division had a profound impact on China.

The United States' strategic focus in Asia was to support counter-revolutionary Chiang Kai-shek's regime in Taiwan, and this shift in external forces inevitably pushed the Chinese Communist Party to rely more on the Soviet Union.

On December 25, 1947, Chairman Mao pointed out: The strength of the anti-imperialist camp in the world exceeds that of the imperialist camp. Our advantage lies in the anti-imperialist camp which is headed by the Soviet Union.

In early 1949, with the visit of Soviet special envoy Mikoyan, Sino-Soviet relations quickly warmed up.

After in-depth communication in Xibaipo city, Chairman Mao successively proposed the policies of "starting a new business" and "cleaning up the house before inviting guests", further clarifying the position of alliance with the Soviet Union.

In June of the same year, Liu Shaoqi's visit to the Soviet Union and Liu Shaoqi's article "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship" published in the People's Daily newspaper openly announced the "leaning to one side" diplomatic strategy.

The Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance paved the way for subsequent economic and technical assistance, especially in the areas of company-corporate management and urban planning.

 The Soviet influence penetrated into China's economic structure.

In October 1954, Khrushchev's visit to China marked the official beginning of the "honeymoon period" in Sino-Soviet relations.

During this period, the two countries' cooperation in the political, economic, military and cultural fields became increasingly close.

Politically, the two sides supported each other in international affairs; economically, they have signed numerous cooperation agreements, promoting the rapid growth of bilateral trade; militarily, they have exchanged military personnel and provided military equipment, strengthening security cooperation; culturally, there has been constant exchange in science and technology, education and art.

Despite some frictions and discords along the way, Sino-Soviet relations generally maintained a tone of friendship and cooperation during this period, which provided important support for China's industrialization and modernization, while also giving a strong backing for China in the Cold War landscape.

In early 1955, the international situation was quite critical for China.

On January 28, a meeting between British Ambassador to Moscow Mr. Herter and Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov revealed the West's concern about tensions in the Asia-Pacific region.

Herter revealed that the New Zealand government will raise the issue of "China's military operations in coastal island areas" at the UN Security Council and emphasized the British government's concerns about tensions in the Taiwan region.

Molotov responded that the Soviet government has always been committed to the stability of the Far East and other regions in need of peace and is willing to support all measures that contribute to this goal.

Against this background, the Soviet Union not only provided important support to the People's Republic of China, but also negotiated with the Chinese government to take a series of measures to resolve the Taiwan issue.

This included a statement by the Soviet Foreign Ministry on December 16, 1954 strongly condemning the "Mutual Defense Treaty" signed between the United States and the Taiwan’s counter-revolutionary Chiang Kai-shek regime.

Immediately afterwards, on January 30, 1955, the Soviet Union's permanent representative to the United Nations submitted a letter to the President of the Security Council, requesting an emergency meeting to discuss the US's aggressive actions against China's Taiwan region, and attached a draft resolution.

The draft resolution made four recommendations:

1. Condemn the aggressive actions of the United States against the People's Republic of China;

2. Recommend that the US government take measures to immediately stop its aggressive actions and stop interfering in China’s internal affairs;

3. Recommend that the U.S. government immediately withdraw its land, sea, and air forces from Taiwan and other Chinese territories;

4. Call for a mutual cessation of military action in the Taiwan region in order to allow all non-Chinese armed forces to withdraw from the region.

The Soviet Union also proposed that Britain, the Soviet Union and India should initiate an international conference to discuss how to adjust the situation in Taiwan and surrounding islands.

The conference should invite China and the United States to participate, and may include countries such as Britain, France, India, Myanmar, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ceylon.

During this process, although Britain supported the US position and hoped that representatives of Chiang Kai-shek's clique would attend the conference, the Soviet Union firmly opposed it.

At the United Nations anniversary meeting in June 1955, Molotov's speech and Soviet Prime Minister Bulganin's statement at the Four-Power Summit clearly reflected the Soviet Union's position on the Taiwan issue.

At the same time, in order to reduce international tensions, the Chinese government also took a series of diplomatic measures to peacefully resolve the Taiwan issue in order to cooperate with the Soviet Union's actions.

**From cold to hot atmosphere in relations, the honeymoon is over**

From the Stalin era to the Khrushchev era, the Soviet Union's assistance to China's economic reconstruction and China’s industrial development has made an indelible contribution.

Especially during the implementation of China's first five-year plan , the technology and resources provided by the Soviet Union laid a solid foundation for China's industrialization.

However, as the Soviet Union and China had a fierce dispute over issues such as "long-wave radioissue " and "combined military fleet issue" in August 1958.

**TR. Soviet plan was to set up long-wave radio stations both on China's Hainan Island and in India, each assuming responsibilities for communicating with the Soviet submarine fleets in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean respectively.**

**TR. The Soviets put forth an idea about a "combined fleet." Soviet ambassador Iudin explained that he had just returned to Beijing from a Conference of the Politburo of the CPSU CC and was asked to report to Mao about the Conference. Iudin said that Khrushchev hoped the Chinese comrades would understand that due to geographical limitations, the USSR could not utilize its nuclear-powered submarine forces to their fullest extent. Iudin said: The Chinese coastline however, was very long and had good geographical conditions. Since the United States was the common enemy of the PRC and the USSR if future wars broke out, Khrushchev wished to discuss the possibility of establishing a combined fleet with the Chinese comrades, possibly including Vietnam as well.**

These 2 issues coupled with China's shelling of Kinmen Island occupied by Chan Kai Shek, the differences between the two countries continued to widen, gradually ushering in the Sino-Soviet "Cold War" and marking the end of the "honeymoon period" between the two sides.

In the late 1950s, Sino-Soviet relations faced severe tests in the struggle against American imperialism.

The Communist Party of China adhered to the principle of independence and self-reliance and resolutely resisted Soviet military and diplomatic pressure.

The contradictions were mainly reflected in two aspects: one was the difference in ideology, and the other was that the Soviet Union, with its "big brother" attitude, tried to make China submit to its global strategic layout on major international issues.

In 1958, the Soviet Union proposed to establish a Sino-Soviet long-wave radio station and a joint fleet within Chinese territory. This request involving China's sovereignty was firmly opposed by Chairman Mao and other Chinese leaders.

Chairman Mao once pointed out that the substantial breakdown in Sino-Soviet relations actually began at this time. The Soviet Union attempted to control China militarily, which China could not accept.

In August 1959, a conflict broke out on the Sino-Indian border, and the Soviet Union's pro-Indian stance made the conflict in Sino-Soviet relations public.

In September 1959, after visiting the United States, Khrushchev went to Beijing to attend the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the founding of New China.

During this visit, Khrushchev attempted to force China to promise not to use force on the Taiwan issue in order to improve Soviet-American relations.

This request was naturally rejected by the Chinese leaders, resulting in the talks ending in an unpleasant manner.

These events reflected the colding of Sino-Soviet relations, and a major turning point in the cooperation between the two major socialist countries due to differences in strategic interests and political positions.

**Short-sighted behavior was a big diplomatic failure**

The Sino-Soviet relationship went from a honeymoon period to a split, and it can be said that it went from getting better to being difficult to mend. There are many reasons for this.

It should be known that during the period when the Soviet Union provided aid to New China, the Soviet Union did not provide aid to China free of charge.

China had to offset the Soviet aid with agricultural products such as grain and light industrial products.

From a geographical perspective, the Soviet Union has shared a long border with China since its expansion to the Far East. Such proximity naturally could lead to frictions between the two countries over territorial and border issues.

In a global village, which country would be willing to have a powerful neighbor right on its doorstep?

Speaking of diplomatic style, the Soviet Union has always appeared on the world stage with its reckless and domineering attitude, which is undoubtedly intolerable for China.

Especially during the Khrushchev era, Khrushchev’s policies and measures made the Sino-Soviet contradictions increasingly acute.

In 1956, Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin ushered in the "thaw period" of Soviet politics, Soviet Union was attempting to shape itself as a global dominant actor alongside the United States.

The Soviet Union attempted to incorporate the other socialist camp countries into its global strategy and required these countries to align with the Soviet Union in diplomacy, which in essence was asking them to sacrifice their own interests to adapt to the Soviet Union's global strategy.

But what really brought Sino-Soviet relations to a freezing point was the Soviet Union's blatant violation of China's sovereignty.

In 1958, the Soviet Union not only forcibly demanded the establishment of a military long-wave radio station on Chinese territory, but also attempted to build a joint naval fleet with China, which was obviously a serious challenge to China's sovereignty.

These demands were firmly rejected by Chinese leaders, and Chairman Mao made it clear that these Soviet actions in 1958 were the root cause of the breakdown of Sino-Soviet relations.

Subsequently, the dispute between the two countries expanded from political ideology to military cooperation and national sovereignty.

The Soviet Union's attitude became increasingly tough.

In 1966, the Chinese Communist Party decided not to attend the 23rd Congress of the CPSU and officially announced the end the relations between the two parties.

The Soviet Union's revisionist line was openly criticized by China, and the Soviet Union was extremely dissatisfied with this.

 It even sent a large number of troops to the border area, escalating tensions on the Sino-Soviet border.

After the Zhenbao Island (China-Soviet) armed conflict in 1969, the military confrontation between the two sides became increasingly serious, and the Soviet Union's military deployment in the Far East became increasingly obvious.

It even deployed nuclear weapons in the border areas, pushing Sino-Soviet relations to a freezing point.

When the increasingly acute Sino-Soviet contradictions finally broke out in the armed confrontation on Zhenbao Island, at that moment, the rift between the world's two major socialist camps was exposed to the world.

Although this small-scale conflict did not change any national borders, it profoundly marked China's resolute resistance to Soviet military hegemony.

Previously, although China and the United States had been in a long-term confrontation, the rapid deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations still made China feel unprecedented security threats.

The Soviet Union, a former ally, suddenly transformed into a powerful enemy that demanded to build military facilities on Chinese territory, which undoubtedly exacerbated China's strategic anxiety.

Although the exchange of fire on Zhenbao Island was short, it was enough for both sides to realize that their past closeness was a thing of the past.

After this conflict, the Soviet Union became increasingly isolated on the international stage.

The complete breakdown of cooperation with China not only affected the Soviet Union's international status, but also triggered a chain reaction within the country.

During the decade when relations between the two countries were most tense, in order to guard against the Soviet Union, China transferred its industrial bases to the south and remote mountainous areas. At one point, China even evacuated many political leaders to secret place just in case.

The Soviet government could no longer rely on its former alliance to ask for China’s support, which to a certain extent accelerated its internal economic and political crisis and catalyzed the ultimate disintegration of the Soviet system.

During Cold War after the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations while the Soviet Union was competing with the United States for world hegemony, Soviet Union was also at odds with China, which made Soviet Union almost impossible to win the Cold War against the United States.

After entering the 1980s, seeing China's growing national strength and rapid economic development due to reform and opening up, the Soviet elite has realized that falling out with China is a major mistake in the Soviet diplomatic strategy.

In May 1989, when Gorbachev tried to mend relations with China, Gorbachev was already a powerless politician. Gorbachev appointed Arkhipov, a senior expert, to lead a team to review the history of Sino-Soviet relations in the hope of rebuilding friendship. However, the report material written was not only an analytical report, but more like a confession. The report clearly pointed out that the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations was a major mistake in the Soviet diplomatic history. The report said: “**The Soviet Union's foreign policy not only lost a powerful ally like China, but also pushed China to the West, allowing the United States and other countries to benefit from it”.**

This profound re-evaluation reflection to change the course of history, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union became a reality in the near future.

If the Soviet Union had not disintegrated, one possible scenario would be that it would have adopted a more moderate foreign policy and a pragmatic domestic strategy, striving to maintain good relations with other socialist countries, especially China.

Soviet Union's hegemonism over China caused the socialist countries to begin to become alienated from the Soviet Union, which was very detrimental to the unity of the socialist countries. The Soviet Union's hegemony, which deviated from communism, even caused the Soviet ideology to begin to waver.

The deterioration of relations between the Soviet Union and China forced the Soviet Union to use a large part of its military power and funds to guard against China. For example, the Soviet Union stationed a million troops and more than 10,000 tanks on the border between the two countries. On the one hand, this greatly weakened the Soviet Union's suppressive power over Europe, and on the other hand, it consumed a large amount of military expenditure.

After the Soviet Union and China relations became hostile, the Soviet Union began to vigorously support Vietnam, which also consumed countless resources on Vietnam and made the Soviet Union more passive in international diplomacy.

The deterioration of relations between the Soviet Union and China caused the Soviet Union to completely lose the huge market of New China. As one of the world's top military and industrial powers, the Soviet Union produced countless weapons. If the Soviet Union had really maintained good relations with China, then China would very likely become one of the Soviet Union's largest arms customers, which would be extremely beneficial to the Soviet Union's economic development.

Perhaps the Soviet Union would no longer pursue the all-out confrontation of the Cold War era, but would choose peaceful coexistence and work together for the development of socialism.

In this hypothetical historical context, the Soviet Union could coexist with the capitalist world, seek common development, and move step by step towards an ideal communist future.

However, the disintegration of the Soviet Union became an irreversible reality.

If the Soviet Union still existed, its image might be that of a huge country that strongly suppressed internal separatist forces

**Soviet Union could be quite vigilant and surveillanceful of foreign countries and could always struggle against the remnants of the Cold War thinking.**

However, every exploration of a new social system will inevitably lead to mistakes. The historical trajectory of the Soviet Union has provided a profound lesson for subsequent socialist countries.

China has learned from these lessons, taken steady steps, avoided the fatal mistakes of the Soviet Union, and gradually embarked on a development path with Chinese characteristics.

Along this path, China has not only maintained the continuity of its socialist system, but also achieved rapid economic development, which to a certain extent verifies the resilience and vitality of its social system.